National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Truth-Gathering Process

Part 1 Statement Gathering

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Statement - Volume 120

Sylvia Grier, In relation to Flora Muskego

Statement gathered by Daria Boyarchuk
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**Item 1**  Profile of Flora Muskego from CBC Winnipeg: Profiles of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (1 page)
NOTE 1: Where not required by other statute, redactions to this public transcript have been made pursuant to Rule 55 of the Commission’s Legal Path: Rules of Respectful Practice, which provides for “the discretion to redact private information of a sensitive nature where it is not material to the evidence to be given before distributing the information to the Parties. The National Inquiry will consider the public interest in releasing this type of information against the potential harmful impact on the individual whose personal information is at issue.”

NOTE 2: The use of square brackets [ ] in this transcript indicates that amendments have been made to the certified transcript in order to replace information deemed inaudible or indecipherable by the original transcriptionist. Amendments were completed by listening to the source audio recording of the proceeding and were made by Bryana Bouchir, Public Inquiry Clerk with the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQ, May 1st 2018 at Vancouver, BC.
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

--- Upon commencing on Wednesday, November 22, 2017 at 14:56

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Hello. My name is Daria Boyarchuk, and I am the statement gatherer for the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Today, I'm honoured to welcome here in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, on November 22nd, 2017 at 2:56 p.m., Sylvia Grier. Her -- she's here to share with us her story of her aunt, Flora Muskego, who was murdered on December 9th, 1960. And, Flora is also going to be supported here by our health support representative.

MS. PEGGY ALLEN: Peggy Allen (ph).

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Thank you. Sylvia, I would like to begin by asking you a question. What would you -- what would you like the Commission to know about Flora, about her life?

MS. SYLVIA GREER: I'm here to basically talk to whoever -- to the Commission about my aunt, you know. It's over 50 years later, and I want her story -- I'm speaking for her. I'm sure she -- you know, because nobody really knows whatever happened to my aunt, you know? She left a son who has never, ever known his mother. He was just a baby. She's got grandchildren that, you know, that talk about how they had a grandmother that was murdered.
But, nobody -- you know, people in our community of Norway House in Northern Manitoba remember the name. But, it's not -- but I think she's -- I definitely believe that she needs a spot in this Commission -- in this gathering of all this tragic, sad, you know, events that have happened to families. And, I really, truly believe that she has to be part of it.

Now, I haven't really given it a whole -- it came to us by surprise, actually.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: I was just young. I was only eight years old when my aunt passed. She was young 22, very pretty, you know, full of life woman. And, when she passed away, it was like a hush and really like -- she had frozen; she died in the cold. That's what I heard all these years, knew, because my grandmother didn't, you know, my grandmother didn’t really speak much of her.

And, that is a -- that was a thing in the community. Like, when somebody dies, it was very hush, hush. Like, they would -- their spirits moved on, you know, like. And, it wasn't until just over a year ago when I got a call. My sister called, and she said, you know this Inquiry, this Missing and Murdered Inquiry is coming up, all these Commissions. And, we got a call, she said, from a reporter in Winnipeg.
MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm. So, this is your sister?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Yeah, my sister had gotten this call.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: And, I said, “Well, what are they looking for?” And, she said, “Well, they're looking for information about Flora Muskego, our aunt.” And, she said, “I didn't know her,” because you know she was just -- she was just months old when this happened. And, she said, “Well, the only one in our family that knew her is my sister, Sylvia. So, call her.”

And, lo and behold, a couple months later -- I kind of forgot about it, you know? And, I thought, well, this is kind of weird, you know? Why would they be looking for information on Flora now?

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: But, anyway, she did call me. And, for the first time in over 50 years, she's one of the first Aboriginal women in Manitoba listed as having been murdered. She was one -- they were profiling these women in Manitoba that had gone missing, and were murdered and stuff, and she was one of the first recorded women.

And, you know, I was so shocked. I was so shocked at that, because I never ever considered her having
been murdered.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: I considered -- I thought that she had frozen, that she had died in the snow, you know? Now, you know, because I was so young, and nobody talked about it, nobody ever really questioned that, you know? It was -- it was a very emotional moment, you know? Like, oh my God, you know, like.

So, I explained to her how I never knew that she was in this category of murdered Aboriginal women. And, that took on a whole new context, you know? I started talking to people. I started trying to find out, had she been? And then, of course, CBC was also doing some investigation. So, you know, they asked me if I knew anything about the investigations and stuff like that.

But, I didn't.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: So, please correct me if I'm wrong. You did not know that your aunt was murdered until last year?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Until last year, nobody, like in my family.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: But, the sister, though, the younger one who got a phone call, did she know about this?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Well, she was kind of --
like all of -- we were all shocked. My mother -- my mother was, you know, we couldn't even talk to her, [personal information]. She wasn't even herself anymore. And, she was the only sibling that was -- that could have offered some answers, you know? And then, you know, they started talking to some people in the community. And, well, this was not -- and I had heard, you know? Like, I grew up knowing that there was more to her death than -- but, we accepted that because that's what my grandmother had accepted. Had -- you know wanted us to know that, you know? I know that if she wanted us to know more, I know that there would have been more, you know? But, I can't imagine what it was like for her to know this all these years. And, it was very traditional -- not so much traditional, but we distrusted the RCMP.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Everybody distrusted the -- any kind of authority ---

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: --- in our home community. There was very, very little trust. And, years ago -- I mean, years ago, I guess they didn't even investigate. And, that was another thing that I found out from CBC was that -- I said, “Well, we always had a police station in Norway House. We had a massive police station
in Norway House.” So, there's got to be something there, you know?

So, I directed her to the -- to that. There's got to be some record. And, we always had a hospital in Norway House. There's got to be some records in the hospital. And, I thought, you know, being CBC, it should be much -- it would be much easier for her to get those records and ---

MS. DARIYA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: --- you know? And, denied. And, sure enough, you know, she -- but there was no investigation. There was a doctor that had pronounced her dead after being brought into the hospital. We know that she had already died, of course. She was already -- she had been -- her body had been found; pronounced her dead.

I found out just over a year ago that she was actually three months pregnant when she died. So, that -- those were really big. Not only had she not gone; now she's -- she was also -- and she had -- now, she had a baby. She had been pregnant. And, I never really knew about that either.

So, it was very, you know, like, all that information was just really, really shocking for all of us, really. And then with the RCMP too, they did contact the
RCMP and tried to get some of the records. And, there was
no file on her about her death ---

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: --- at the local
detachment. There was -- not that she could find anywhere.
And, the only record that they -- she looked back in the
papers, in the Free Press it's called -- the provincial
paper in Manitoba. It wasn't the Free Press. It was the
Tribune, I guess. It was one of them.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: It was a provincial paper
anyway. There was a little article stating, you know, that
she had -- that Flora Muskego was found deceased, member of
the Norway House Cree Nation, on such and such a date.
And, that was -- I guess it was about maybe a month after
the -- after the actual death that this little notice ---

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Like an obituary?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: No. It wasn't an
obituary. It was just -- it was almost like a news
clipping, you know?

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Yes.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Of a death -- of her
death.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: But, you know, it -- but,
I sort of understand. Like, I know with my -- with our families back then, it was -- it was not a customary thing to pursue such things, because there was so little -- there was so little contact, or little -- no respect whatsoever for the community in terms of policing back then, you know?

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Mm-hmm.

**MS. SYLVIA GRIER:** I don't know how much it has changed nowadays. But, I mean, it's -- it was very -- so, I can understand my grandfather and my grandmother not pushing this. Or, maybe they did. We don't know, you know?

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yes.

**MS. SYLVIA GRIER:** Like, I was just a kid. I don't know how far they went to try and -- to try and invest how the body -- like, you know? Was she beaten, was she -- I've learned that there was a couple of women that had been with her, and had left her, you know, with a group of people. And ---

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** At the time of her...?

**MS. SYLVIA GRIER:** At the time -- yeah, that evening that they were -- the evening that they were together, but that they had left her, you know? So, it's really -- it's such a mystery, like, you know? Did somebody, you know -- did somebody strangle her? Was there any marks on her? Like, there's just nothing there.
MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: So, even though they found out that your aunt got murdered ---

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Yeah.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: --- you found out about a year ago, you still to this day do not know how she died?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: We still to this ---

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Under what circumstance?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: --- day do not know how she physically died.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Or, if there has been a suspect. If he has been ---

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Yeah.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: If there’s justice?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: There was no -- nothing that we know of that, you know, that -- of anybody that was even -- like no word. Like, even in the community. Like, the two women. Well, one of them has passed on. But, there's one like -- and still to this day, she, you know, she says she's told my sisters, "I wished I wouldn't have left -- I wish we wouldn't have left her there," you know?

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: "I wish we would have waited for her," you know, or whatever.
MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Sylvia, these pieces of information that you're putting together into this one big puzzle, the newspaper clippings, the stories of these women who were with your aunt, where did you -- where did you find that? Did someone -- like, did someone contact you, and tell you this? Or, can you tell me more about this?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Well, once I found out, you know, once we kind of recognized or understood the ---

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Right.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: --- this new reality that, you know, that she hadn't just passed away and, you know, just laid down in the snow. Maybe she was drunk. I don't know, you know? Had she been drinking, you know? Lots of people freeze to death wandering around in the cold, you know? Was this -- was this how she died? But, it's just not -- in Norway House, there's such an underground of, you know, like, of people that, you know, had suspected, you know, things. And, but, you know, like, it's -- all of it is hearsay like, you know? And, most of them are passed on. Getting back to Flora though, she had left the community of Norway House.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: I'm not exactly sure when she left. She would have been in residential school. She
would have probably gotten out when she was 16, you know, because most of the kids got out of Res, you know, when they were 16. And then she had travelled to Winnipeg. She worked in Winnipeg. She worked in a hospital. I've heard in both the Health Sciences Centre, which is, you know, and the St. Boniface, possibly also, in those two hospitals as a cleaning lady, you know. I have ---

MS. DAYA BORACHUK: She was a nurse, you said?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: No. No. She wasn't a nurse.

MS. DAYA BORACHUK: She wasn't a nurse?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: She wasn't a nurse. She was a, you know, like a cleaning -- they clean the rooms ---

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: And, stuff like that, you know? I have -- the picture that I have of hers ---

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Would you mind showing us that?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Oh, I wish I would have brought the full. But, she's standing with her uniform, you know? Like, they all have the same uniform, her and her friend. But, anyway, this doesn't really do her a whole bunch of justice, but she's -- it's a very small
picture for one thing.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Thank you.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: I'll just show you. And, that's just part of the story, that was in the profile, that CBC sent me -- or that they put out.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Okay.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: But, anyway, she got pregnant, and she couldn't work. Like, it was very hard for her to work, you know.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: And, I imagine that -- you know, she decided to come home with her baby. Now, he had been born in June of 1959. He still lives in Norway House. Her one and only son.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: How old was he at the time?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: He was just over a year old.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: A year and a half, pretty much. Yeah. June to December. So, anyway, I remember this woman. Like I say, I was only -- you know I would have only been seven years old. But, I have such an amazing memory of this woman, you know, making her way across the river -- we lived right by the river in Norway.
House. And, she had this bundle, you know, walking across the lake, you know? It was all frozen and stuff. And, you know, bringing her -- you know, she was coming home to stay. She, you know, she needed family.

Yeah. So, it was wonderful having her. Of course, you know, being a little girl, she was this beautiful big, big sister. And, she showed me things that, you know, little girls are, you know. She had beautiful clothes, and she had makeup, you know, and she would do me up and stuff like that. It was so, you know. And, she was -- she was just -- actually, she was very much more like a -- much more like a big sister to me in that year. And, I remember it so vividly, you know? And, I only knew her for such a short time. We were walking to the -- going to the, you know. She'd take me to the -- we had a little picture show hall, you know, where they had movies and stuff.

Anyway, but then all this trauma. She lived a whole year. And then ---

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** So, did she live alone with her baby?

**MS. SYLVIA GRIER:** No, no, no. She lived with my -- with us, actually, because -- oh, this is such a complicated -- my mother and father had their own house. My grandmother and my grandfather, you know, we had our own house. My oldest brother and myself were pretty much
migrated over to my grandmother's. And, my -- it was
actually our grandmother that raised my older brother and
I.

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Mm-hmm.

**MS. SYLVIA GRIER:** So, when Flora came, you
know, like that's where she was. But then, of course, my
mother, you know. So, it was all family. And, she had
another sister that, you know, that lived in Norway House,
you know. All these brothers. She had two brothers, two
of my uncles. So, there was lots of family around, but she
gone, of course, my grandmother assumed responsibility for
the baby, so.

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** [Custody of the child]
(Indiscernible).

**MS. SYLVIA GRIER:** Yeah. So, you know, she
raised my nephew, [Nephew 1].

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Mm-hmm.

**MS. SYLVIA GRIER:** And, until I left -- I
left to go to residential school when I was, you know, just
around 13 turning 14 anyway. So, I -- when I left, you
know, he was eight, seven -- he would have been about six
years old by then, you know, six, seven years old when I
left. But then, you know, it's so -- it's so hard to -- to
believe that, you know, the story of her freezing to death
not be, you know? It's so much more easier to contend
with, you know, that she did something.

But, the murder part of it has really,
really shook -- but it seems like so many people have -- a
lot of people in the community had accepted the fact that
something had happened to her, but nothing was ever done
about it. We had two tragedies that same year. My father
passed away. Again, you know, it was June of 1960.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: So, he passed away in
1960. And then a few months later, Flora was gone. And, I
know, and I talked extensively with my mom about my dad, my
father.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Because he was -- it was
an accidental death which was never, ever investigated
either. And, you know, they're always -- again, there was
very little -- there was very little respect for the law,
like, you know? It was -- the police was, you know, you
didn't run to the police for anything back then.

So, you can see, like, the trauma that all --
you know? And, you can almost accept that, yes, that's
how these people -- you can imagine how the police were
always involved and, you know? Picking us up to make sure
that we were sent away, you know? Like, you know, like the
police came if you wouldn't -- if you weren't going to allow your children to go to residential school, you know? The police were always -- you could never make trouble because -- but making trouble would be trying to -- let's say trying to see your child in residential school, like. So, there's very, very little respect, you know, either way.

So, I don't know if all that is all part of it, you know? Did they not want -- did they not want to investigate? Why did they not investigate? That's the question, like, you know? Like, it's really -- like, it boggles my mind why.

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Is there something you would like the Commission to help you with, to help you investigate and solve the unresolved murder of your aunt?

**MS. SYLVIA GRIER:** Well, I think in some ways, yes, absolutely. It would be wonderful to, you know? Like, to have somebody look at it a little deeper, or -- you know? Like, is there something else that could be done, you know? Is there something else that could be looked at, you know? Her death caused quite a -- quite a -- how would I call that? Lots of anxiety in the community, her death.

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Mm-hmm.

**MS. SYLVIA GRIER:** There was a massive
Statement - Public
Sylvia Grier
(Flora Muskego)

gathering to put a stop to the vendor sales. We had a --
there was a local pub in Norway House.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Like, in the Métis community, the off-reserve community and, of course, we're all one community pretty much, just little lines drawn between -- between the community. And, they had a vendor where you could actually go get your booze. And, most of the areas -- like, a lot of people would just go and drink in the bushes.

So, there was a lot of drinking going on, you know, in the community. And, lots of, you know. And, the reserve was, you know, like it was receiving the brunt end of all this, you know, drunkenness, and you know? But, when she died, they made a concerted effort to put a stop to the liquor coming out of the -- out of that vendor. And, they did for a short period of time.

Now, I don't know if that was -- I don't know if that was the only thing they could do, you know? I know that the whole community was very affected by it. And, that -- and actually made it happen. But, as far as -- as far as, you know, was there somebody else, you know? I don't know. And, nobody else seems to know. The people that might have known, why didn't they -- you know, when they pronounced her dead, you know, did they look at the
body to see if there was anything wrong?

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Like, but there's nothing. Like, they couldn't find any information.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: You were eight years old at that time.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Yeah.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Do you remember that day at all, or do you remember how ---

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Oh, I remember the confusion -- I mean, the whole, like, everybody being so crazy sad.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: (Indiscernible).

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Plus the wakes, and oh, my God.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: It was like, you know? Like, in those days, like, they were massive gatherings. And, everything happened at the house, and -- you know? The whole community. And so, I do remember. Like, my father's had just happened too a month before this.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: So, one of the adults told you -- told you that Flora had frozen too in the snow, right?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Yeah.
MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: And, [little kids will believe that] (indiscernible)?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: No. Well, we -- yeah, like, it was almost -- it was almost like -- and I, I guess, you know, from my -- I'm just happy that she -- her baby. Like, I think she -- he was -- he was the glue in our family, like, you know? Somebody was left behind, you know? There was a piece of her that still...

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: How is [Nephew 1] doing today?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: [Nephew 1] is not a -- [Nephew 1] is married, and you know, he's -- he has four daughters. [13 lines redacted - Rule 55].

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: (Indiscernible) and kids.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Yeah. He's loving, he's got the grandchildren come and go there. [Three lines redacted - Rule 55]. He kind of called my mom, Mom, all these years too, you know? Because, you know, everybody else called her Mom, so, you know? And, it wasn't until late, late, late, like he realized that -- that he had a different mother.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Oh.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Yeah. He didn't even realize that that was not his mother, you know, his real
mother, until he got old enough. And, I think -- and I think that that's probably how it was done within the family, you know? [One line redacted - Rule 55].

But, yeah, lots of -- I think for my -- I don't know how my grandmother survived all that grief. My mother, you know? And, it's quite amazing to, you know, like, to think that she -- that she did (indiscernible). Was it my next door neighbour? Like, I don't know. Like, we don't know. Was she walking somewhere, and did somebody -- you know? Like, somebody ran into her, you know? Because we have lots of scooters, lots of, you know. I mean we didn't have cars back then but, you know.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: To think about the suspect who might have been involved in Flora's death is ---

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Yeah.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: --- you know walking on the streets today.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Yeah.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: And, he's -- like you said, a next-door neighbour.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Yeah. Like, we just don't know, you know? And, so many people commit suicide.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Have you ever received any phone calls, or any kind of -- has there been contact
with you or other members of the family from unknown, unidentified people who wanted to talk about Flora?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: No. Mostly, you know, I think mostly from -- that's why we were so shocked. It was, you know, mostly from -- it all started with Marsha.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Who is Marsha?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: It was the CBC person. What the heck was her name again?

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Anyway, she started -- that's how it all started was, you know, that she had -- that she was doing this investigation and doing a profile on her. And then (indiscernible) you know. No, that's, you know, I tried to tell her. I said, no. And, she said, yeah, she's identified in their search for all the different names and people in Manitoba that -- in preparation, you know, with all this Commission coming up.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: How is Flora identified on the CBC list, unsolved murder or ---

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Yes. Pretty much unsolved. Yeah, unsolved. Yeah. So, it's -- now, I don't know. I mean, it certainly would be wonderful if, you know, somebody -- if there was even something that could be done, you know? Like, I don't know where to go next either, you know? Like, I don't know, should we be talking
to a lawyer, should we be talking to somebody, you know? Like, should we be talking to some kind of an investigator, you know.

Like, I said to my sisters. I said, well, you know, why don’t we just have a community meeting in Norway House and just invite anybody that has any information, you know?

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yes. Yes. That’s a wonderful idea, actually. Yes.

**MS. SYLVIA GRIER:** And, just have a -- we haven't done it yet.

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Mm-hmm.

**MS. SYLVIA GRIER:** But, I mean, you know, it's something that we could -- that we maybe could do, you know? And, you never know. There might be somebody come out of the wood work and say, you know, “I saw her walking here.”

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Mm-hmm.

**MS. SYLVIA GRIER:** And then, “I saw so and so,” you know, like.

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** A community effort.

**MS. SYLVIA GRIER:** Yeah. Yeah. Try to make it more of a community effort. You know, as far as [Nephew 1] goes, he's absolutely convinced. Like, he wasn't even shocked, because he had already been convinced -- this is
her son.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Right. Right. He was convinced of?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: That he had -- he was convinced that she had been murdered.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: And, I later found out that some -- actually, one of the ladies, you know, that had been with her ---

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: --- that had left her wherever it was.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: I guess they were drunk and partied together, you know?

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Like, she had come up to [Nephew 1].

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Okay.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: And, said, you know, “I've always been sorry.” Like, I mean, I don't know what her exact words were.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Right.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: But, more or less saying, you know, that your mother was, you know. I have always
been sorry that we left her where we did, type of thing, you know? She would be -- she would be here today.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: And then the same thing with, you know.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: So, did they leave her on the -- near the Fort Island, or? Because the article that you shared with us ---

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: It -- yeah, it was on it.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: It describes that, you know, they found her in the snow ---

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Mm-hmm.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: --- in the airport island.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Mm-hmm.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: And, is this somewhere -- is there where those women, her friends, left her?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: That has never, ever really been absolutely clear to me, anyway, not to me that they have in fact -- no. This is -- Fort Island is this kind of like a big, massive island. It's not the mainland of Norway House. And, half of it -- most -- about three quarters of it is reserve ---

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: --- and then there's
these bits and pieces that are where the bar is. And, I believe that this is where her body was found, either near that area ---

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm. So, what do these women who were with her that night -- how do they describe this bar? Where did they go? What did they do?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: I haven't physically talked to them myself.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Okay.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: It was just -- I know that [Relation 1] -- as a matter fact, my [Relation 2]---

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: --- his wife, this is his wife's mother. Now, she is ---

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: This is his ---

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: This is one of the women that ---

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Who was ---

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: --- that was with Flora.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: --- with your mom.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: That was with Flora.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Sorry, with your aunt.

And, who felt sorry leaving?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Yeah. Yeah. And, she's the only one -- she's the only one that remains today, in
fact.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: And, I have asked. In fact, I have asked somebody to approach her. Like, I don't know her, you know? I mean, I know her to see her. But, I -- I don't know what she wants to tell, you know? Why hasn't she said anything more about it? Like, you know? Like, why would she go up in a drunken haze to a drunken kid and say, oh, you know.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Like, I remember your mom. Sorry that we left her. That type of thing. Where did she leave her, you know, like.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Have you ever thought of getting in touch with her or...?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Oh, yeah. Absolutely, I have. As a matter of fact, I did, past summer, 2016, when I was there this past summer. But, she's not a very well woman either.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: You know? Like, she's very -- she's -- like [Woman] says -- like, her own daughter says, I mean, she's drunk 90 percent of the time.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: She's very ---
MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Alcohol dependency?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Bad alcohol. But, I think -- I think that was my primary thoughts was to share her, you know. Like, to share that. I mean, there's rumours, there's -- yeah, some speculation of the -- which I didn't even know about that. That's what really caught me, you know [off guard in terms of...] (Indiscernible).

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: So, how do you think the Commission can help you?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Oh, my gosh. How can they help?

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: What would you like the Commission to -- do you have any recommendations? Like, you can see the Commission help you, help your family, and help other families resolve these unsolved murders of women and girls?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Well, I think, number one -- number one, I hope the Commission really pushes government, really pushes for, you know, like, real investigation into these -- into people that are missing. Like, I know that you have to wait 24 hours, you know? I know, you know? Like, there's -- we hear so much, "Oh, well, she was, you know, walking the streets," you know? But there's never -- I think there's got to be an investigative team, almost. But, it has to be very
culturally -- almost culturally appropriate, you know? It has to add to that, because you know, it is so -- I work for the courts.

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay.

**MS. SYLVIA GRIER:** I work for the legal system. And, only because I -- you know, I -- the Manitoba government was doing a pilot study to see if maybe a couple of Cree-speaking people within the justice system might help solve some of this nobody understanding what the heck's happening to them in court.

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Mm-hmm.

**MS. SYLVIA GRIER:** So -- and it was a two-year study, which still goes today. It was wonderful. We worked strictly for the defence team, and it was mind-boggling.

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Mm-hmm.

**MS. SYLVIA GRIER:** It was mind-boggling for me, you know? But, even more so for people that had no clue what kind of a justice system it was. What the justice system really was, you know? You're trying to tell -- you're trying to tell a 30-, 40-year-old that's been charged with whatever, "Well, there's no evidence here." You can't plead guilty just because -- well, you might have done it. But, they have no evidence that you did it, so you plead not guilty. If they find out -- if they bring
more evidence and prove you guilty, that's our system.
That's how our system works. You don’t come in here and
say, well, I'm guilty, you know?

So, it's -- and I think it was -- it was
very interesting because, I mean, even the legal teams were
very, very unaware, you know? Kids sitting with their head
down --

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: --- while they're being
-- you know, the judge, and prosecutor, and whatever.
That's a sign of respect, I mean, you know. Like, how many
kids would -- and then the judges would yell at them, "Look
at me when I'm talking to you," you know? That's a sign of
disrespect. You know, it's staring at you in the face.
So, I really hope that if one thing, that there's some kind
of a team. And, to make it -- and to make this like a real
problem within society. Like not just in the Native
society.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: This missing, like,
people just -- just don't care. There's very, very little
thought when they hear of Aboriginal women. And, I don't
know how you fix that, but it's -- it's something that has
to change. And, it's not just, you know. I know that
Aboriginal people also have to change. And, we as

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Indigenous people have to change. We as, you know, society has to. And, I don't know who forces that, who -- you know? Like, is there somebody running around across this country, over and over, and over again murdering women, you know? Like, how do we know? How do we have tears? Like, because, they're not being -- nobody is investigating.

Helen Betty Osborne from our own community; if it wasn't for that Constable Urbanoski that really had a like a real push to find out what happened to that girl, and was genuinely pushed, there would not be a single person in jail for that murder. But, I think that that's -- so, we need more of those kind of people, I think. And, you're going to have -- there's going to be so many revelations, and I can't even imagine what the finale is going to be.

But, I think my -- my part in it all is just to -- is just to be involved. And, can I -- like, if I find out more information, is there somewhere I can take that, you know?

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** So, like, more services to -- or, let's see, like a list of resources that you can go to.

**MS. SYLVIA GRIER:** Yeah, resources.

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** You know, when something happens to family, so they know ---
MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Yeah.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: --- who to call, who to contact.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Oh, gosh, yes. That is so -- that is so desperately needed.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: So, it's kind of like we know that, you know, we call 911 when something happens.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Yeah.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: So, it's something -- something similar to that, in that context; right?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Oh, absolutely. And, the trauma, like, you know, to understand the trauma ---

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: --- that these people -- that the people are going through initially, you know? Like, I remember my youngest daughter years and years ago. She was only 13 years old. She was hiding at a friend's. And, we had a rash of -- there was cab drivers, there was all kinds of suspicions with a couple of women that had been driven out on the highways and, you know, north of Thompson, you know.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: And murdered. And, I will never, ever, ever forget that moment when we couldn't find her. And, the kids told us, oh, she took a cab home.
And, you know, the most wonderful thing about that was
everything was mobilized immediately. We called the RCMP.
We said she got in a cab; this was the colour of the cab.

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Mm-hmm.

**MS. SYLVIA GRIER:** Go find her. And,
everybody -- like, everything happened so quickly. But, I
worked for CBC Radio. Everybody knew who I was. And, you
know, but if I would have been General Jones, you know,
like I know nothing would happen. And, that's what hurts.
That's, you know. But, I will never forget when the RCMP
came to my house that night about 3:00 in the morning ---

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Mm-hmm.

**MS. SYLVIA GRIER:** --- and they were asking
us about our daughter's marks, identifying marks on her
body.

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Mm-hmm.

**MS. SYLVIA GRIER:** Like, it was just so, you
know. I can't -- my mind just completely -- I completely
lost it. But, you know, here a few hours later, we found
her. But, those two hours were brutal, absolutely brutal.
And -- because I had all the -- like, my husband is non-
Indigenous so, you know, it just seemed like it was
everybody did what they (indiscernible). They did it for
her. Nobody did anything, not for Flora. Nobody [looked
for her] (indiscernible). Nobody tried to find her. No
And, I raised my girls to be so tough and --
statistics out there. I have been in residential school,
been hunted down, you know. Like, gone through the whole
fricking gambit, but [anybody] nobody could do whatever to
us. [Nothing was ever done about it] They better find
another place.

And so, I know it's [asking a lot]
(indiscernible) lots of -- lots of stuff asked of the
Commission. And, I hope -- I really hope, and I pray that
something constructive comes out of it. It's been -- so
much has been happening to derail this whole -- to derail,
it seems, the whole Commission the time that it's been on.

But, you know, it's something. It's --
yeah, and we're -- we did it. Like, I mean, we mothers.
It's us that's been screaming for something to be done. We
can't do anymore. We have to -- we're losing our children.
We're losing people we love. Like, just how do you
explain, you know, lots of people that say, "Oh, my God,
no. You didn't go to residential school." Well, of course
we did.

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** You didn’t have a
choice.

**MS. SYLVIA GRIER:** I didn't have a choice.
My parents didn't have a choice, you know? Like, I was
very lucky; I didn’t have to go when I was five. My father and my mother -- and I remember visiting cousins between a chain-link fence, visiting them at the residential school in the backyard on the occasional time that we were allowed to visit. But, yeah, so there's not -- I just can't even imagine how much more Aboriginal people -- I mean, we as -- I don't know how we survive all this. It's just -- but, we do.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Mm-hmm.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: It's -- I mean, it's too bad that, you know, that Flora never got her -- anyway, it's not going to bring her back. But, it upset me, you know, there's still -- there's a new kind of heaviness about her, her being [gone] (indiscernible), which -- I can't talk anymore.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Would you like to stop and take a break, or would you like to continue?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: I think I'm good. I think I'm going to have to be done.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Okay.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: I don’t know if there’s -- you don’t need anymore? You don’t need anymore.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: You would like to conclude this?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Yeah.
MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: As long as you’re comfortable to do that. And, I will stop the video and audio as well. It is 3:59 [in the afternoon] (indiscernible).

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Okay.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: And, this can conclude.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Yes.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Do you feel like your story has been heard? Do you feel like you have given the voice to Flora?

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Oh, I think so.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Okay.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Like, absolutely so.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Okay.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: As long as it's, you know, like -- and to the -- did you turn it off already?

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Oh, no, it's still running.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: I just want to say I know it's long and drawn out, but I hope somebody listens because, you know, she -- she was somebody. She was a loved one. She was an aunt. She was a mother. She's a grandmother now. She could have been. Anyway, I think I'm done.
MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Thank you, Sylvia.

MS. SYLVIA GRIER: Because I get silly.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Thank you. It is 4:00 p.m., and we will conclude our statement with Gloria -- Sylvia, sorry, Grier, and her giving the voice to Flora Muskego, her aunt, in the case of an unresolved murder.

--- Upon adjourning at 16:00
LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST’S CERTIFICATE

I, Shirley Chang, 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.

Shirley Chang

March 14, 2018