National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1: Statement Gathering
Maison de la famille
Maliotenam/Uashat mak Mani-Utenam, Quebec

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Danielle St-Onge & Caroline St-Onge
Heard by Jayme Menzies

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1. Letter from the Centre d’aide aux victimes d’actes criminels dated November 11, 2016 (1 page)
2. Ruling from the Court of Quebec (10 pages)
MS. JAYME MENZIES: OK, I’m starting the audio. OK. OK.

I’ll introduce myself. My name is Jayme. I live in Winnipeg and my family is of Métis origin, from Rivière-Rouge, and it’s 10:53 a.m. on November 28.

Would you like to introduce yourselves?

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: Yes. My name is Isabelle Dubé. I live in Montreal. I’m from Gespeg, in Gaspésie, so I’m Mi’gmaw and the Commission hired me for the week to provide support to the families and people sharing their testimonies. So, thank you for having me here.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Thank you, Isabelle.

Before you introduce yourselves, I just want to confirm you’re comfortable with the audio and visual recording. Is that OK?

So, maybe you can introduce yourself, Caroline?

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: Hello. My name is Caroline. I’m Danielle’s mother and I’m from Maliotenam. I’m here with my daughter for her testimony, and I’m very emotional at the moment.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Thank you, Caroline.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: My name is Danielle. I’m an Innu from Maliotenam. (Breathes).

OK. I was molested by a family member, an
uncle, when I was 5 and 6 years old. The first time it happened, I was five. It was in the fall, and he, the one babysitting us, asked my brother if we wanted to play hide-and-seek, so my brother left to go count. That’s when he started touching me over my underwear. That happened twice at home, in the same circumstances, playing hide-and-seek.

Then, the summer I was six, I had one of my aunts who is the same age as me. I went to my grandparents’ to see her so we could play. I went inside, he was there, and he asked me to follow him to the basement. I went downstairs and into his bedroom with him. In the bedroom, he took me and put me on the bed. Then he lay down next to me and held me and started rubbing himself against my pelvis. I could feel that he had an erection. I didn’t feel well, I felt uncomfortable. I didn’t know what to do or how to get out of there. He said, “That’s how the adults do it.” He wanted to show me how... Yes, how the adults did it. I didn’t know. I was just six years old.

A one point, I was so uncomfortable that I said, “I have to go to the bathroom, I have to go upstairs, to the bathroom.” He let me go. I left by the door right away and went to the restaurant just across from my grandmother’s. I went in and never said anything to anyone. It’s like... It’s like it was a bit my fault, I don’t know. I didn’t feel well, and I remembered that vividly for a
Then, when I was 15 or 16, there was... A woman gave a talk at school during an awareness raising week. She told her story about how she was sexually abused by a family member. I was at school and I couldn’t speak because of my emotions. There was a lump in my throat and I just listened. I wanted to leave and it was like I had a flashback that I wanted to erase. And when... When she told us her story, I thought, “Hey! Me too! I remember that, that’s what happened to me, too!” (Sighs).

When that happened, my parents often used to go into the bush without me. I’d tell them that I was going to sleep at home, with three or four friends. When they slept over, we would talk and I told them about... I told them, “Do you remember when the lady came to talk? Me too, I had a flashback, I was molested by...” I told them who it was, a family member, and I told them the whole story, about what I remembered and about my (indiscernible), I remembered. I also remembered the rooms, what was in the rooms, the furniture, the blankets, the curtains, and...

After that, I said it another time... Well, with all that, from the time I was 16 I did a bunch of therapy. You know, I told my... Well, I was always trying to find ways to heal, because I was 17 when I started drinking, and 18 when I started using drugs, and it’s not
just... Drinking Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and still
going to school and going to therapy, and it never worked.
Sometimes... I didn’t know how to get rid of all that, but
I thought that when you went to therapy, well, you talk
about it, after that... No, it came up all the time.

And one time, when we were doing lodges in
(indiscernible), they were spirituality lodges, but there
was also the psychologist that I was seeing, he came to the
lodges too, and he... I said I had been abused, but no one
listened. They think that when... Like stress, I told my
parents, but they thought maybe it was like stress... What
did they call it?

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: Post-traumatic?

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Yes, that’s right.
Maybe they didn’t notice... Hear, maybe they didn’t want to
hear that... After that, I let it go.

Then in 2007, something happened with my
abusing uncle’s side of the family, and it was like we were
fighting, we weren’t speaking, and that’s when I told...
Well, they heard that I was molested by someone in their
family.

Then in 2010 I called the police to file a
complaint. I called them. When I called the police, well, I
had a friend who was a police officer, and he told me, “I’m
not the one you should talk to, you should talk to the
investigator.” They transferred me to the investigator. So I said, “I want to file a complaint.” We hadn’t been speaking to the rest of the family for three years. So, I said, “I want to file a complaint.” So he told me that since I was the only one and that there had never been any other complaints, I might have to wear a mic and go see the molester and ask him why he did what he did. I didn’t have the guts to do it, to go see (indiscernible), and he might have just shut the door on me anyways. I said, “Oh yeah, like in the movies!?” He said yes. I had to think about it. I didn’t want to see him again! So I said, OK, I’ll wait a little bit, because my grandmother was really sick at the time, not dying, but I thought she might pass away soon. I said I’d wait so that my grandmother didn’t have to go through that. I decided to wait before filing my complaint. Right.

In 2012, I became depressed. I wanted to talk about it, but I didn’t know how, and I kept thinking about it... My grandmother died in 2011, and my grandmother and I were... She was my grandmother, my mother, my friend, and we were always together. When she was gone, it’s like we lost a part of ourselves too, and I became depressed in 2012. I didn’t go out anymore, I stayed at home, I didn’t see anyone and I just took care of my... My baby and my children, and the only place I went was to my mother’s. If
I left the community, it was to go into town, but with my parents. I felt comfortable with them, but if I was with other people I was scared of running into him, because I knew... He had already heard that I had told my parents that he had molested me.

And then, in 2012, my parents knew a woman from La Tuque, from Lac (indiscernible).

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: Lac du (indiscernible).

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Yes. And they explained because they felt guilty that he had done that to me, because at first it made me sad too that they had left me with him. I still think about it. I held it against them. But when I went to therapy, it was for residential school victims (indiscernible), a special therapy for that, and when I went... Well, there was no room for me, and at one point they called me and I got a sponsor. They found me a spot maybe because I had depression or... I went. It was a three-week therapy, and it helped me and I felt liberated because I was only with other people who experienced... The same things as me, so we understood each other. I left there in April. I started in March, and I left at the beginning of April, and I felt good.

Then I came back to my life here, and following the therapy, I decided that I was going to file a
complaint, and that I would continue what I had put aside... What I learned in therapy was that I had to report him so that I could move on with my life. So I called my parents in early May and said to my mother, “We’re going to go to the police station. I’ll tell you when, I’ll be ready, but I’m going to report him. I have to report him to move on. If not, I’ll stay stuck in the same place.”

We went on May 13, 2015... Uh, 2013. I filed my complaint and reported him and it took... It took a while for the prosecutor... Well, how it works is that they... They went to see him, and he was never there, the accused, and it’s like it was always to his benefit. “Oh, I have somewhere to go, I’ll be back later... Tut-tut...” And in 2014, that’s when I saw the prosecutor and I was told that it was... That according to the judge I could take him to court because they asked me if I could testify and I said yes. So when they told that to the judge, he said he would give me a preliminary investigation date.

At the same time, in October 2014, I got pregnant, and my preliminary investigation was in January 2015. And then we went, we were like... They asked me to testify and his lawyer started asking me questions, “Were you...” That was harder, that part. “Do you remember what kind of underwear you had on? And what you were wearing?” All that kind of stuff. I remembered, but inside,
you know. And they asked, “How long... Why are you reporting him now, and not before?” When your family is very close, like it was until 2007, I couldn’t just say, “OK, I’m going to report him.” And it (indiscernible)... It would (indiscernible). You think you’re going to ruin everything.

After the preliminary investigation, the judge said that there had to be a trial, that I would... It wasn’t, how would you say it... Not approved, but “it’s your time to go.” They said they would wait until after I gave birth. So I gave birth in May 2015 and my court date was for September 2015. You go to court, you wait and you wait, and it gets postponed. Oh! Then they said, “We’ll schedule it for February.” Argh! It’s hard! While I was waiting, as the victim, I couldn’t sleep two weeks beforehand because of the stress leading up to February. I started acting differently at home, my children, I don’t know, I treated them... I wasn’t myself. I was stressed out and not sleeping. I was tired and scared.

So then I was sitting at home, waiting for the court date on the next Tuesday. A police officer knocked on our door on the Friday before the court date. I said, “Yes?” He said, “I’ve got your papers.” I asked, “Why?” Jokingly, I said, “I hope they didn’t postpone it!” He didn’t laugh and he said, “Yes, they did.” I
started crying and he said, “Are you completely ready for Tuesday?” So I called my parents and said, “They’ve postponed it again.” I went back and looked at the date. It was postponed until April. So I went... We waited.

April finally came. The same thing happened; I couldn’t sleep for two weeks beforehand. It’s always the same thing. The month of April came and I showed up with my witnesses, and they came back and the prosecutor came over to me in the afternoon, around 2 or 3 p.m., and said: “It’s been postponed.” I said, “Why? I’m so ready, I have to do it now.” He said, “Since you have witnesses, well, he has witnesses too. We have to assess his witnesses.” Can you believe it! I was so pissed off! Sorry, but can you imagine, making me go through that again! I said, “When is it going to be?” I was told they would call me. When I got home, I was even more upset than when I hadn’t been sleeping and my children... They put up with me, with that.

After that, they called me in September. When I met with the prosecutor in the morning, I said, “I hope it’s going to happen this time!” You know! After three, four attempts, on top of the waiting time since 2013, it was 2016 by then. I said, “I hope this time it happens because I’m even more ready than before.” So we’re sitting there, it’s 11 a.m., and it gets postponed to 2 p.m. So we’re waiting and waiting, and then... Then he pled
guilty and he was given 10 years on the list of sexual
offenders, a two-year restraining order for him not to come
near me or to my workplace or home, and 2 years of not
being allowed near children under 16, and he had to pay
fees to two charity organizations.

So, that was in September 2016. I work at
the Council. So he came to my workplace because he’s a
fishing officer. He came to my workplace and I called the
police and said, “Look, this man can’t be in my workplace.”
Because when I got the papers from the court, they didn’t
say that he couldn’t come to my workplace, but I went to
the court to get the stenographer’s copy. It said that he
couldn’t come to my workplace. You know? So I called the
police and said, “Look, this guy can’t be in my workplace.”
He said, “It’s a public place.” Because I work for the Band
Council. Right. Then, (indiscernible), that couldn’t be
right, because it’s a workplace, regardless of where I
work.

So then he came back in... Between September
and December 2016, he came back at least three times. I
didn’t stop calling. He came back twice this summer, but
one time he came in and I was with my colleagues and he
looked me straight in the eyes and turned around and... My
work colleagues noticed and said, “Did you see what he did?
He was looking at you.” And when I see him around, you
know, I’m scared of him! I know he wouldn’t, but still...
You know, he molested me. I couldn’t say anything and I
suffered through it, and it’s like he’s bullying me. He
would do it whenever I saw him around.

Then in July, a lawyer called me. Some
Indigenous women gave my name, because it wasn’t his first
time to be... Well, they talked about him in the news and
it turns out I wasn’t the only one. I said, “Look, my case
is done. I don’t know if you need me, but I’ve already been
to court.” And I said, “Can I ask you a question?” She
said, “Yes. What is it?” I said, “The stenographer’s paper
and the papers with the court order that I received weren’t
the same. But he still comes to my workplace and they keep
telling me it’s a public place and they say... In the
stenographer’s copy, it clearly says that he can’t come to
my workplace.” She asked me to send them to her. So I did.
She told me that he couldn’t come to my workplace, no
matter where it is. If I’m in a supermarket, he’s the one
who has to leave. (indiscernible) they explained.

OK. The month of... I sent her this and the
lawyer lady sent the two documents to the prosecutor. In
August 2017, this year, I received another document saying
there had been a mistake, and that as of August 2017 he was
no longer allowed in my workplace. OK. I’m like, alright,
I’m happy now. That’s dealt with.
But in October 2017, I got a call from CAVAC. They told me I had to go to court. I asked them why. They want to change their request because he wants to get in the Band Council. I said, “Why? I’m not the one who decided that, the judge did.” “No, they want to change it and they absolutely want you to be there to defend yourself.” It took three and a half years of my life, I was scared, I was stressed, and for him, it took a year... A month and a half to get his sentence amended.

I went. I told myself that I had to go to defend myself. I went back there. I went in and they called me up, having payments (phon.) then, “Where do you work?” And all those questions. I said, “I work for the Council.” I explained it to them. “Do you know which department?” “Well, I work with the political department too.” OK. When it was his lawyer’s turn, he said, “When you were young, at the time you said you were abused...” I looked over at the judge, you know? We were talking about my work. I started crying because I didn’t know what was going on. Did they bring me to court for the same thing again or... Then they asked for a postponement. I came back and he started explaining his job, and now he can come to the Council, but with... He has to call the police, the police then have to call me, but... Do you know, I just want to say that sometimes justice... I was a victim, he
damaged me, and for his job he can just go directly and
even... Those three and a half years were tough... It made
things hard, you know, my parents and... In all those
years.

In November 2016, I saw on Facebook that he was being awarded! He helped several women, while I was
damaged by him, you know, the dialogues (phon.) we had...
They were giving him an award. I made a complaint and said, “How can you award him, the man who damaged me and...” Do
you know, it’s like abusers, molesters are always put on a pedestal and the victims are always down below, trying to
climb up and... It’s tough. And all my relatives that were there, they... They were also affected and he just walks
around like nothing happened. It’s hard, you know.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Thank you for sharing, Danielle. Can I ask you a question? During the court
process, was any support provided to the victims, you, and
also for your parents, things like that at the beginning?

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: There was my psychologist... Well, the guy who worked for the community.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yes.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: He came but...

MS. JAYME MENZIES: By...

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: And CAVAC came with me, but after...
MS. JAYME MENZIES: OK. But that was arranged through the court.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: No, I called to ask them to come with me.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: OK. And nothing for your parents.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: No.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: ... Your children...

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: No, nothing. But my son, he was a victim of (indiscernible) all the time (indiscernible) was abused (sobs). I’m sad and ... (sobs).

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Is there a sentence or an order that you think would have been fairer? What sentence do you think the judge should have...

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Well, it’s in the long-term, you know. I wanted to report him, to end this. I wanted to go to the end, and I took the time, but other women might not want to report because they know that my case took an eternity.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Uh-huh.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: ...Almost four years, three and a half years, and after that you have to live with other people bullying you... I still experience that, even my family gets bullied. You have to report him, yes, but you also need to help the people after.
MS. JAYME MENZIES: Uh-huh. So, is there a process you think would be more appropriate than the legal system, a court like that?

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Well, taking less time.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: OK.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Taking less time for the victim because it’s long and hard.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Uh-huh. Does your uncle live here too?

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Yes.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yes.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: We see him, I see him and...

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm.

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: Throughout everything you went through, and especially from the moment you reported him, what was the range of emotions you went through?

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Oh, there was stress, fear, you know, sometimes shame, too. When a woman is sexually abused, her life isn’t like that of a normal woman, you know? A normal woman, relationships are... Well, you have relationships, but that’s not what I experienced because I wasn’t able to say no to men. I didn’t know what a normal relationship was supposed to be like. I said yes
to most men I was with. And now, today, when I look at myself... They used to talk about me when I younger too, because I said yes to everyone. (Sobs) A woman (indiscernible) doesn’t respect herself. He took my childhood, my girlhood, my womanhood. (Sobs).

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: What impacts do you think this has had on your family? You talked about it a little, your children, your parents. What do you think? Your story must have affected them too.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Uh-huh. Yes. When I said that... I’m the only girl; I have three brothers. I protect... Well, when I told them my story, they couldn’t believe it. But I’ve always asked them not to take sides, because they speak to family. I respect them, but I’ve told them not to get involved in my life, “I’m telling you what happened to me because I just want you to know what happened because we’re going to... you’re going to hear things about me and...” Sort of defeated, they... We heard... When he... When his award was taken back, I was in the news... They saw what I had posted on Facebook, that he was receiving an award while I... How I wrote that...

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: He was being valued.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Yes. He was being valued and I’ve been devalued. I wasn’t trying to get valued either, but what was pissing me off... He was
standing there, all proud and... Barely two months before he had gone to court and pled guilty to being an abuser.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: But the Inquiry’s commissioners will listen to your testimony. Do you have any suggestions for them regarding police investigations, educational support, justice, anything? A message for them directly?

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: (In Innu).

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Uh-huh.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: (In Innu).

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Like the justice, you know, to take the time to assess why they’re going to court, what the case is. If, for example, it’s about an argument, that can take the time it takes, but if it’s abuse...

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Uh-huh.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: You know? In the news I saw a story about a young girl from... who was my age, 5 or 6 years old, and he pled... They asked... How do you say? He gave a...

(In Innu).

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: His statement.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Yes.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: OK.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: It took so long, and
the young girl had forgotten her story, you know. It takes too long...

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Uh-huh.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: For... It’s really hard to go through these trials. I’m someone, for example, who remembers a lot, which means that I never forgot that moment; it’s seared into my memory. I even remember little things, like when we would go on trips or things like that. I have a really good memory. So when I went to court, I didn’t mind testifying because I could remember everything.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Uh-huh.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: But when it’s all present for a young girl, after that they lose their credibility... Because they get mixed up in their stories, the years. Not everyone remembers things that well, you know? They should take the time to assess the time frame required when someone files a complaint, otherwise... Look, my case lasted three years and six months. That’s a long time when you’re a 12-year-old girl.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Uh-huh.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: ...You forget things sometimes.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Uh-huh. You’re right.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: I could suggest that they assess how much time...
MS. JAYME MENZIES: Uh-huh.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Look, for him, it took a month and a half. Straightaway. He wanted to get in the Council, he took me to court, it wasn’t that... Even though it was two years. He still had 11 months before being allowed in my workplace. But no, he wanted to come back and it was straightaway, the court... They summoned me one day, whereas for me it took a very long time.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Uh-huh.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: But I don’t think about that anymore, and... Also, I filed my complaint in May and it took until August or September for the police to go see and ask if he had molested me. It took all summer.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Uh-huh.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: But I’d filed my complaint. Why didn’t they go see him? It’s the time it takes to... To do all that, the court process, justice. So that’s what I’d like them to review and assess.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: (Indiscernible) Do you have any other questions?

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: Yes. Well, speaking of the court process, was there anyone, like lawyers or anyone else, who explained to you how it worked?

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Well, there was the prosecutor, but when you’re not... He asked for an
MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: Anticipation?

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Yes. What’s that?

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: Good question.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: I don’t know the word in French, sorry.

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: Anti… anticipation.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Anticipation? Who did he ask that from?

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Oh, he asked… Can we stop? I’ll go get my paper.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yes.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: From the court.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yes.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Where are my shoes?

OK. Good. Wait. Because yes, he asked to not… A thing…

(SHORT BREAK)

MS. JAYME MENZIES: We’re resuming. One moment, Danielle, I’ll just...

We’re resuming at 11:30 a.m. Yes, thank you.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: OK.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: So, you’re going to present a document. Can you tell us about it, what you understand about it?

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Yes. I got two
(indiscernible), two orders with different dates. So, I was telling you about [confidential information – five lines blacked out].

And I forgot to mention that the guy who abused me is a member of my... Well, I said that he’s a family member, but he also claims to be the high spiritual chief. His name is Léo St-Onge.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Thank you for sharing that.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Yes, sharing...

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: He’s a highly ranked person.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Yes. It’s...

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: Like you said, in the community.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Yes. Highly ranked, and...

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Even today, still.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Yes, even today.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: OK. Thank you. I have no other questions for you.

Do you have questions for Danielle?

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: I don’t have any more questions.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: We can speak to your
mother and we’ll come back to you after, if you think about anything else to add.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Uh-huh.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: I also want to say that if you think about something tomorrow, or this evening, Wednesday, you can come back and we can talk some more. So it’s not the end for you today.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Uh-huh.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: And even if you think of something next week, you can call us or write to us. So, you don’t just have today to talk; we have a relationship now and we can add messages to your testimony anytime. OK?

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Uh-huh.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: OK.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Can we take a break?

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yes.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: OK.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: We’ll take a break, no problem.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: OK. (In Innu).

(SHORT BREAK)

MS. JAYME MENZIES: We’re resuming. OK. We’re resuming at 11:50 a.m.

When you’re ready.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: Kuei! Hello, my name
is Caroline. I’m Danielle’s mother. I’ll start at the
beginning, when she made her statement and she asked me to
come with her, and I didn’t know about anything. I knew she
had been molested and all that, but... When she made her
statement, I didn’t know anything. I went with her to the
police station, and that’s when I learned what happened to
her. And, deep down, maybe I’m happy she did it that way,
and that she hadn’t told me earlier. Maybe I wouldn’t have
been able to go with her, but I was learning about it as
she made her statement.

It’s so hard for a mother, and for the
father too. You feel guilty when you learn your child was
abused because you’re responsible for them from birth...
For the rest of their lives. I’ll be Danielle’s mother
until my last breath, and her last breath. And I felt so
guilty.

Even today, when it gets brought up, like
now, talking about it, and even when (indiscernible), when
a woman talks about the abuse she’s experienced or...
There’s always a twinge of pain inside.

As for me... There are services everywhere,
but sometimes you don’t know, or you’re so hurt at the time
that you... You don’t think about them, and when you’re
feeling better after, you forget about it, so it remains.
It remains. There are services and counselors everywhere.
Back when I experienced things like... I was abused, and it seems like those services didn’t exist back then, and today they’re everywhere, because sometimes we forget and... To use those services.

And now, for the process, the lengthy... The lengthy justice process, I deplore that service and it seems to me that when you report someone, you’re the victim and it’s the prosecutor who takes your case... You don’t have your own lawyer, it’s the prosecutor. What we experienced, what I saw, what my daughter experienced, I...

There’s no bond with the prosecutor, because he’s in a rush, you know, he’s going this way and that, he comes back over, he... Yes, sometimes he would take five minutes to quickly explain something, but you don’t have time to go over everything, you know?

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: And you don’t dare ask questions because his cases are already... He’s in the doorway, explaining things from the doorway. When you have a prosecutor, when... You report something, there should be a bond with him, so that you feel comfortable and can ask questions. And especially, I think we don’t have time to ask questions because you see the person and they’re too quick, they leave, and that’s what used to happen. It lasted until...
MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: I changed prosecutors twice.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Uh-huh.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: It wasn’t the same one.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm!

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Twice, without knowing who I would end up with... Because him, he has his own lawyer that he paid for, you know? Whereas I get whoever I get. It was a woman one day, then another day it was a man, then the same man again, then at the end it was the woman, and... You don’t know who to talk to anymore, how... They just look at your case and say, “OK, sure.” When you’re the victim, I think you end up with (indiscernible). Yet he hired the best lawyer for himself. But we’re in the ... Well, the best! He still lost, OK? But, you know, when he stayed with him, I mean... When you have the same, you get a better idea, right?

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: The people who are supposed to defend you don’t even know you.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Uh-huh.

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: They know you through your file.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: Uh-huh. I deplore the way it works. It’s like she said: the prosecutor, the
prosecutor’s assistant, and obviously even the CAVAC, to a certain point, they’re all human beings, I understand that they get sick, that it’s another...

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yes. Mm.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: Even with the counselors? How often did they change?

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Yes, (indiscernible) three counselors.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: One got sick, so the other... It makes it so hard for the person who’s reporting and... Even those around you change. I get that they’re human beings, and they get sick, but it’s awful when it happens, you know, for the person.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: And I’m not saying it’s harder for us because it’s a family member, but it’s not easy when it’s within the family.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: With social media, we experienced a lot of things...

(In Innu).

At one point, it said... OK, maybe it was just on Facebook, but Facebook is open to everyone, and it said that it wasn’t her uncle who had...

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Abused.
MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: Abused her, that it was me.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: That my mother was the one who abused me.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: They said that, you know. At some point, I have my son, he’s not Lucien’s son... His father isn’t Lucien. You know, it’s so mean!

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: My other brother and even his aunt and, “you said you loved me,” and... Geez! That’s just being mean for no reason. And you have children who are... My eldest is 20. He saw all that, and my niece saw it all. Everyone in our family has been hurt by this...

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Uh-huh.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: ... after.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: It isn’t easy. Especially when it’s in the community. Everyone knows everyone else. It’s like you fart and the neighbour hears it, you know? And everyone had seen what had been posted on Facebook. And how can you feel? The day after it happened on social media, my partner and I went into town to get a coffee and go to the mall, and Lucien said to me: “Caroline, let’s go on, they’re the ones suffering the most.” We went on and... But it hurts, whether you like it or not, and it hurts most when it comes from your family. If someone else had said that, I would have told him to
go...

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: To hell.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: But when it’s a family member, it stays with you. You look at them and think...
You don’t understand how they can do that to a family member, say such horrible things. And sometimes I wonder if women and girls will speak up after seeing everything we went through? There will be fear.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Uh-huh.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: I ask myself that question sometimes. Because the day they posted all that, my daughter got a lot of supportive messages, but in private. They didn’t want to post them publicly because they were scared.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Uh-huh.

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: Yes.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: You know? But they, the family members, didn’t see how many people told us not to give up, to keep going. They didn’t see that, because it was in private.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Uh-huh.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Even today, some people post stuff but they (indiscernible) no one. What she’s talking about was them actually using my name, and they would tag me, and name my father, mother and my
brothers. But today, when other family members post something, I know right away that they’re talking about me, you know? It hasn’t stopped.

I’ve even asked a friend who’s a lawyer, I said, “I need you, I want to know what I can do, I’m panicking.” He said, “Do you want the advice of a friend or a lawyer?” I said, “Both.” “Forget about them. You’re stronger than them.” You know? They post stuff and they’re the worst. That’s how I see them. I have to move on instead of continuing to listen to them and read that... But I can say that since I started the process, in 2013, I’ve respected myself, my children, my family, my parents, my brothers, my sisters-in-law, and their children, and I’ve never posted a thing on Facebook. Nothing.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Uh-huh.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Except that one time when I saw he was being awarded at the Dialogue de la vie. That’s the only time I posted something. And yet, I know a lot of stuff, but for the sake of my family, myself, my children, I’ve never said a thing on social media and I’m proud of myself. Otherwise it’s like (indiscernible) it never stops, so... That’s how it was, for me. I’m the one who spoke up and that’s how it works, with respect. That’s how I could tell you how that happened.

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: I may have a last
question for you both. Following the legal process, after all that, during the Inquiry Commission, how do you feel now?

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: Well, I feel good. I feel good, but I... I wouldn’t say I’ve turned a new leaf, that keeps coming back up, you know? It’s ingrained in... My counselor told me that it’s there to stay, I just have to learn to accept it. Accept what happened to me. I’m working on it, but I can’t change it. I was abused, I’m a girl who was abused, and I’ll always be a girl... (Sobs), but I just have to learn to live with it. I’ll never be able to erase it. I have to keep moving forward. My children, my partner, my family—I’m fighting to keep going forward. That’s how I see it.

Thank you for listening to me.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm.

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: Thank you.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yes.

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: Did you want to add anything, Caroline?

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: Yes. Throughout the three and a half years of the process, we always held ceremonies. My husband does them, and we got help from other leaders to continue and to continue going on, and still today we have sweats, ceremonies, and all that. And
at one point I learned something about guilt throughout those three years and it’s that the only guilty person in this whole story is him, the abuser.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: I trusted him to take care of my children and if I’d known what he was going to do, obviously I wouldn’t have left my children with him.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: So, he’s the only guilty one. It’s not that I’m... I haven’t forgotten about it, but I tell myself that it’s him. I trusted him completely. I trusted him. At one point, the first time my daughter told me about it, I held her in my arms and we cried together and I asked for her forgiveness. Forgiveness for leaving her... For leaving her with him. But after I asked for her forgiveness, I understood that the only one guilty here was him.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: And I think that if there are people who... If it isn’t easy for them to get counselling or anything, there are still ceremonies that help a lot. A lot, quite a lot. And that’s open to anyone. And even the counselors, the services, they should have more information about the services. OK, there’s something going, there you go, the front line counselors are there.
Oh! Then things calm down and people forget.

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: Yes.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: Huh? Whoops! Another event, another tragedy happens and look! Services and radio ads, everything, then everything calms down and... There should be more awareness, information... It was all undone (phon.) on the radio. To find the time to... And here, the ads are... I don’t listen to the radio much, but when I... Sometimes I hear, “Yes, yes, there was a ceremony.” They should hold one every day.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Uh-huh.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: Like how do you call them? Not ads, but clips, you could say. That’s what I think. I’m not saying that there aren’t any in the community, but to continue to promote the services and inform people.

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: That’s a good idea.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Uh-huh.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: So, you know, that’s it. So that when something happens, you can get help.

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: Uh-huh.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: Because when you’re on the spot, you don’t think about it. Like us, when she walked, hey, we still had our ceremonies, all that, you know? But I don’t know today, right now, you listen to me
and it’s like... Pffft! A small relief. And when you’re there, you relive it, you feel it, and in the meantime, I pray for the person, for the testimony to go well, for her to feel well. And I admire my daughter.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm!

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: Oh, yes!

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: I admire her a lot, and I think I cried more than she did when she made her statement. Sometimes, she’s the one who was supporting us, and we were always with her and her father and I walked with her. This is the first time her father isn’t with us, but it still went OK.

So, thank you.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm!

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: Thank you.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: I hope that...

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: We’ll help more people with the Commission.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: I hope so too.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: That’s what I hope.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Uh-huh.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: Break the silence.

MS. ISABELLE DUBÉ: Yes, exactly.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Uh-huh. Thank you for being here today. As I said, we might make copies of your
documents and if you have other documents, like poems or artwork that helped you, we’ll copy those too. You can have dinner with us and watch the fire here (indiscernible), whatever you want (indiscernible).

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: She has a lot there.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: I have some at home too.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: OK, I’ll just take copies here.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: I’ll go get the ones from the stenographer, all the papers...

MS. JAYME MENZIES: OK.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: ... And I’ll bring then back, I’ll be back in a bit...

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yes.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: ... With that.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: OK.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: And I’ll make copies.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: Bring them back whenever you can, the office is right here. If I’m not here, there will be someone else in the room who can make copies, OK?

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: OK.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: OK.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: So with the name, they’ll know which person the meeting was with...
MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yes, we have records for each one.

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: Uh-huh.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: (In Innu).

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: Well, give her yours.

(Indiscernible).

MS. JAYME MENZIES: I’ll just finish this, if you don’t have any other...

MS. CAROLINE ST-ONGE: No, no, it’s done.

MS. JAYME MENZIES: OK.

MS. DANIELLE ST-ONGE: OK. (Indiscernible), because I have three orders.

END OF RECORDING
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I, Jocelyne Lacroix, hereby certify that I have transcribed the foregoing and it is a true and accurate transcription of the digital audio provided in this matter.

Jocelyne Lacroix, August 17, 2018

* This certificate refers to the original transcript in French.