National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth Gathering Process – Part I
Public Hearings
Maliotenam/Uashat mak Mani-Utenam, Québec
Teueikan Mani-Utenam Community Hall

Translation

Friday, December 1st, 2017

Public Volume 36

Elizabeth Mameanskum and Alma Mameanskum;

Lucie Sandy and Gloria Sandy, in relation to Alicia Sandy

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PUBLICATION BAN

A publication ban has been issued with respect to the niece referred to by Ms. Elizabeth Mameanskum and any information that would disclose the identity of this child. An order was issued on October 1, 2018, by Ms. Marion Buller, Chief Commissioner of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
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APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations
Assembly of the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL)
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Conseil des Anicinabek de Kitcisakik
Government of Canada
Government of Quebec
Innu Takuaikan Uashat mak Mani-Utenam (ITUM)
Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach
Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, Saturviit Inuit Women’s Association of Nunavik, Ottawa Inuit Children’s Centre
Quebec Native Women
Regroupement Mamit Innua
Les Résidences oblates du Québec

No Appearance
No Appearance
No Appearance
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No Appearance
Me Marie-Eve Robillard
Me Anne McConville
Me Anne-Marie Gauthier
Me Thomas Dougherty
Me Rainbow Miller
Me Anne-Marie Gauthier
Me Thomas Dougherty
No Appearance
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Clerk: Jean-Luc Dorion  
Registrar: Bryan Zandberg
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Witnesses: Elizabeth Mameanskum and Alma Mameanskum

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Witnesses: Lucie Sandy AND Gloria Sandy (In relation to Alicia Sandy)
Exhibits (code: P01P070501)

1. Declaration of Sébastien Vollant (English translation), Event number UMM-150622-001 (one page)

2. Expert report – Crime scene “Death by suicide by hanging” Victim Alicia Grace Sandy, Event number UMM-150622-001, (four pages) Note: Document translated into English

3. Coroner’s investigative report regarding the death of Ms. Alicia Grace Sandy inter alia, (48 pages)

4. Images displayed on the screens during the public hearing
--- The hearing began on Friday, December 1 at 9:10 a.m.

MR. LOUIS-GEORGES FONTAINE: (Speaking in Innu language) People will speak in Naskapi. And we will have French and English translators. There are no Innu translators. But we understand the Naskapi language. So, if anyone needs headphones, they’re in the back.

I would like to remind everyone to turn off your cell phones. Thank you for turning off your cell phones during the hearings. It’s been fine for the past two days, so thank you for that, out of respect of the people who are in front.

And I would like to remind everyone that there is a bus going to Setp-Îles and Maliotenam, between Sept-Îles and Maliotenam. And if you want to give gifts too, you can bring them here to the front. Now I’ll turn it over to Jeannette.

MS. JEANNETTE VOLLANT: Hello everyone. This is our last day, and it’s going to be a very beautiful day.

I wanted to tell you something. There was an elder who told me about something that happened to him in the car. He saw an eagle fly over, fly over the community of Maliotenam. This is like a messenger who takes suffering and pain to the Creator. That’s what I had to say.
There will be translation in French, English and Naskapi. The two people sharing this morning are two Naskapi women from Kawawachikamach.

As you can see, people are coming from all different communities. And the Naskapi are part of us because they live close to us. So they are included in this inquiry.

The bus, well, it will shuttle back and forth, every day. And the donations, don’t forget the donations, the basket I told you about. You can give something to the Commission, which will be a part of our truth, our history. So be as generous as you wish.

MR. LOUIS-GEORGES FONTAINE: (Speaking in Innu)

MS. JEANNETTE VOLLANT: Okay, we’ll start the day with prayers. I’ll ask Lucien and Grégoire to come in front, Denis Maisonneuve.

MR. LOUIS-GEORGES FONTAINE: Brigitte.

MS. JEANNETTE VOLLANT: And Brigitte, Father Ali and Louisa who are going to pray for us in their own way.

MR. GRÉGOIRE KANAPE: Oh!

MR. LUCIEN ST-ONGE: Hello, my name is (inaudible). I am a Bear Clan. I’m in the way (inaudible). Oh!
In life, there are two things that make us function: love and fear. That’s all. When we talk about fear, everywhere, no matter where you come from, there’s fear in everyone’s life. Jealousy, fear: think about it. Where does it come from, fear, anger, violence? It all comes from fear.

Jealousy: in one couple, sometimes someone in the couple goes to see another, then, after that, it causes anger. And you, in your head, you’re afraid she’ll leave with someone else. You look at the other one and you think he has more possessions than you. And now, once again, you’re afraid. That’s where the fear comes from again.

There are many things that have touched you, and then, often, these things come from fear. All the things we have heard, often, well, we have functioned that way because we have functioned with fear. We won’t talk about all those things here, but that is fear.

And when we talk about love, it’s another thing that makes us function. When we talk about love, well, that’s prayer, spirituality. Once again, it’s love. Consciousness, once again, is love, so that you can know everywhere what is happening in your life, so that you are conscious. That’s love. There are many more things. Once again, the Creator is also love.
As I was saying, I have mentioned two things to you, but I have said many things. These are the things that make us function. All the things I talked about, about love, and all those beautiful things, well, it’s connected to the Creator.

Today, you are all listening to me here. No one listens to me. No one, no one, and today you’re not the one listening to me. Maybe it’s your father who is listening to me, maybe it’s your mother, maybe it’s your grandmother who is listening to me, maybe it’s the residential schools, all the things that happened in our lives, it’s them listening, who have taught us all things. And the rest of us, we’re not like that. We listen to everything that has come before.

MR. GRÉGOIRE KANAPE: (Innu language)

MR. LUCIEN ST-ONGE: We say, when we listen, we hear bits of testimony. Grégroire when he speaks, they are fine words. I heard, when they spoke, the people who testified, I listened to them, and they were talking about the priest. When they talked about the priest, he was like the Good, the Creator. And when we listen, we listen, I say “You are listening to me”, but the best way to listen is --

MR. GRÉGOIRE KANAPE: (Innu language)

MR. LUCIEN ST-ONGE: -- is to ask questions.

MR. GRÉGOIRE KANAPE: (Innu language)
MR. LUCIEN ST-ONGE: The one who listens, the one who speaks. Now I’m talking. They are lovely words, but ask yourselves the question. The way I speak, the things I speak about. Ask yourself questions when I speak.

If you don’t ask yourself questions, what I said, I’ll put you to sleep, then you’ll take me as the Creator, you’ll worship me, then I’ll lead everything here, I’ll tell you what to do. You will do like me, like the words I used.

No matter who, who is here, even if he is very respectable, you don’t know who is coming here. He has great words. But I too when I speak, ask yourself the question, you, ask yourself the question and take the things that make you feel good, and that fit well in your belief, in your way of being. That’s how sects, that’s how sects work. They simply listen to those who speak, and then they will give their faith.

When I have spoken to you about prayer, about spirituality, it is each of us, each of you here, and when we do the countdown of all beliefs, there is one who goes to the Creator. And there’s a prayer.

The best way to listen is to ask yourself questions about the --

MR. GRÉGOIRE KANAPE: (Innu language)

MR. LUCIEN ST-ONGE: -- not to along, I also
told you here about consciousness. The Creator has given each of us the way to believe, to think -- and we are all different -- not to get involved in just anything. Each of you, go with your heart. Thank you very much.

MR. GRÉGOIRE KANAPE: I’m going to continue a little bit with fear. About thirty years ago, forty years ago, I was in the bush with my father. This was a new area we were visiting. We were going to spend the fall, winter and spring in that area.

Then, in those days, there was no GPS; there was no Google Map, right? But there was a big mountain. And my father, once, looked at the mountain. He said to me, “Tomorrow, Grégoire, we’re going to go up the mountain and look at the land.” It was the highest mountain there was.

So in the morning, well, we leave, we go up, we go up. I don’t know how long it took us to climb that mountain. While we were going up, for me, it was a new territory. I was scared at times, huh? Sometimes I thought to myself, “Tabarnouche, it’s a huge mountain!” Now, I was already wondering how we were going to do it. We’d get there in the evening. It’s going to be dark, we won’t see anything. But we kept going, we kept going. Fear was already slowly setting in so as not to see what we wanted to see.

Finally, we arrived at the top of the mountain, on top of the mountain. And when we arrived, there
was like a big -- a point of land, then at the bottom there was a lake. We sat there. My father used to carry a thermos with him all the time. So we had a drink, we ate before looking at the land.

Finally, we took a look. We could see a lake over there. The big river was not too, too far away. You could see, at the bottom, there was a beaver lodge. I could see it. And my father said to me, “Go to the edge of the cliff and then look, look -- he was telling me, he said to me -- look.”

So I went. I looked at it. The head of the mountain was there, then, there I was. I was scared, right? Really, that was the fright of my life. But my father who was there said, “But go ahead! Look! I want you to look down.” I was there. Then I leaned over, I was almost on all fours, I wanted to see because I had been sent.


He says, “Look, I saw you, I saw you go. You were scared.” “Ah -- I said -- I was certainly scared! Didn’t you see how high that cliff is? It took us almost all day to climb the mountain, and then you tell me to look down. Oh!” He says, “Look, you used fear in a bad way. In the past, in the past -- he says -- people, our people, my grandfathers,
my grandparents used fear the right way.”

He told me, “If you would have used fear in a good way, you could have gone to the edge of the cliff and down the cliff. Your fear would have made you walk -- he said -- because your fear would have guided you, it would have guided your legs, your hands, it would have guided everything, you know, everything you own. You would have been able to go down the cliff, and then brought me something from below, down the cliff, something from the bottom of the cliff. But today -- he says -- people use fear in a bad way. People use fear to back away -- he says -- a little like you did. You were there, and then you backed off.” At that moment, I realized that even fear could move us forward if we use it in the right way.

For a long time, I walked with fear. I come from a family, a big family. I have two older sisters. Often, I used my fear. I was afraid of my sisters. Why? Because they were two women. And when I was born, I was the first boy. It wasn’t very good for them, was it, because my father was proud of me. I was his first boy. It was like the heir to the territory. So I was afraid of my sisters. And I used that fear, sometimes, to mess with them. But today, I love my sisters.

I used that fear to do a lot of things. When we were young, the way we lived, to get yourself accepted
into groups, you had to do what the others did because you were afraid that they wouldn’t accept you. But I did a lot of things that weren’t too good because I used my fear.

Today, I still have that fear, but I move forward with my fear, I move forward with this fear. Yesterday, I saw people who were afraid. They talked, so they could move forward with their fear.

There are many, many things today that are used in the wrong way: fear, anger, jealousy. We were talking about jealousy earlier. But, all those things, we can use them in a good way. When we walk, when we’re angry, there’s something going on inside you. But if you say, “Why am I angry?” and I ask myself the question. So I’m going to identify where that anger comes from and turn it into something positive. Right?

So today, well, I invite you, each of you, here, if there is something happening to you today, something that scares you, that bothers you, look at it. “Why is this happening to me?” It didn’t just happen like that, from above. It didn’t arrive like that. It was there, you took it. So look where it comes from. It can get bring you a long way sometimes. It can open, it can open us up.

This morning, when I woke up, no, last night, we were going to sleep there, at the hotel, then, outside, there were people. They were partying. But us, we wanted to
I was in nothing but my underwear. So then I go to see them. I open the door. There were three of them. I said, “Excuse me, sorry for bothering you, but we want to sleep.” They’re looking at me. And he says, “The light is on.” I said, “Yes, I turned it on because I heard some noise. I thought someone needed help.”

But they understood, didn’t they? If I had been scared, I would have said, “Well, I can’t go -- you know, they were drinking.” Well, I went to see them, and they understood. They said, “Sorry, sir.” Well, I’ve been thinking about them this morning. Why? Well, they were in an advanced state of intoxication. They must be sick this morning. And, today, well, I’m sending good thoughts.

We had some good news yesterday. Our friend Charles, apparently, he got away with it -- not too much worse, not too much damage, huh?

And I would like to take this opportunity to wish our dear Commissioners, our Elders here, the gentleman, sometimes, who holds the Bible or the feather, in fact, the whole team -- it is the last day -- but all of you who are here.

Again, I would like to mention that there are many empty chairs. As I have always said, the chair that is empty, well it’s a spirit that is there, that sits, and that
FATHER ALI: I’ve thought about this day, I wondered what we should pray about today. And thinking about yesterday and especially about the way the prayer was organized, I thought to myself, since we are a team, let us try to broaden our horizons since the elders, they talk to us about their experience, what they have lived, their experience and their spiritual journey and also since my brother, Denis, tries to help us discover the biblical wisdom, where the word of God comes to seek us, tells us the words that we need -- that should touch us and that comfort us and set us on the way.

So I thought, maybe I’ll also be inspired by wisdom, and so I tried to search a little bit on the Internet. I found a prayer -- it’s not mine, I found it, but I found it interesting -- that we call the Prayer of the Six Directions (Indian Prayer) I found it very interesting because it touches a little on what we are experiencing here and what we experience on a daily basis. So I said to myself, “Maybe I’ll say it. I will do it as a prayer for us.”

Great Spirit of Love, come to me with the power of the North; make me courageous when the cold winds of life fall upon me. Give us strength and endurance for everything
that is harsh, everything that hurts, and everything that makes me squint. Let me move through life ready to take what comes from the North.

Great Spirit of Light, come to me out of the East with the power of the rising sun. Let there be light in my words, let there be light on my path that I walk. Let me remember always that you give the gift of a new day. And never let me be burdened with sorrow by not starting over again.

Great Spirit of Creation, send me warm and soothing winds from the South to comfort me and caress me when I am tired and cold. Unfold me as your gentle breezes unfold the leaves on the trees. And as you give to all the earth your warm moving wind, give to me warmth so that I may grow close to you.

Great Life Giving Spirit, I face the West, the direction of sundown. Let me remember every day that the moment will come when my sun will go down. Never let me forget that I must fade into you. Give me beautiful color; give me a great sky for setting so that when it is time to meet you, I come with glory.

Giver of All Life, I pray to you from the Earth. Help me to remember as I touch the Earth that I am little and need your pity. Help me to be thankful for the
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Opening Comments

1 gift of the Earth and never to walk hurtfully on the world.
2 Bless me with the eyes to love what comes from Mother Earth
3 and teach me how to use well your gifts.

4 Great Spirit of the Heavens, lift me up to you
5 that my heart may worship you and come to you in glory. Hold
6 in my memory that you are my Creator, greater than I, eager
7 for my good life. Let everything that is in the world lift my
8 mind and my heart and my life to you, so that we may come to
9 you always in truth and in heart.

10 Amen.

11 MS. BRIGITTE MAISONNEUVE: This morning,
12 listening to the message that everyone is sending, everyone
13 is walking with fear. Today, women will move forward with
14 faith. This morning, I find myself in front of everyone and
15 I am filled with fear. I want to show you that I can do
16 anything even though I’m afraid. Despite these fears, I can
17 do anything. That’s why you must never give up, you must never
18 surrender.

19 When I was young, people laughed at me at
20 school because I wasn’t strong enough. Enough is enough.
21 Today, I want to be able to walk without fear. This is what
22 I want for women today.

23 We have shared many stories and one day we
24 will all be better. And even God, believe in God. And I want
25 to thank all those who participated in this event to help all
the women. The women who have experienced things, all the women I have met here, they feel better. And today, I will hold you in my heart.

MR. DENIS MAISONNEUVE: I am going to talk to you about a word that is not beautiful, not as serious as what Grégoire said yesterday, about the holes we have in our faces, but I have a word that is really not beautiful and it’s a word that is being rejected nowadays. We don’t want to hear it anymore; we don’t want to pronounce it anymore. The word is sin. We don’t want to hear that word anymore.

But, we saw it in all its ugliness, with the testimonies we heard: abused and mistreated young girls, the young girl in Québec City who we heard from yesterday, knives on both sides of her body and the cigarette burns on her body. She was a victim of the ugliness of sin. And what I’m getting at here this morning is that you have to be very careful not to get into the trap of misplaced anger, as he said -- your name?

MR. LUCIEN ST-ONGE: Lucien.

MR. DENIS MAISONNEUVE: Lucien, Lucien. We must also be careful not to embark on a path of sin. It’s waiting for us; and it’ll wait for a long time.

I will read you a verse in the Epistle to the Romans. I’m going to put on my glasses. The apostle Paul says “Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is
right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends."

And when I listened to the testimony yesterday, half of me -- I have two nationalities: through my mother, I am of Anishinabe nationality, and through my father, I am Québécois nationality -- and when I listened to the testimony yesterday about those police officers in Québec City and the paramedics who were really mean there, the anger inside me was rising. “How is that possible? Why did they do that?” I was falling into that trap of sin. But the apostle Paul tells us “Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord.”

It is the Lord’s duty to chastise, to punish. It’s not up to us; it’s not up to us. Let us leave it to God. And please believe me. Those who have treated disappeared and murdered women badly, I tell you one thing: perhaps justice on earth is far from perfect, but there is divine justice, and that justice is perfect. And rest assured that God will take care of these people.

But let us be careful, we, we, because the Scriptures also tell us that all those who have sinned are deprived of the glory of God. We’re bad by nature. Badness is eating away at us. The wickedness is trying to grab us. Let
us turn to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, help me, Lord, help me. I am too carried, by my sinful nature, to be evil in my heart too. No, Lord, help me.

We’re going to sing a song, another song that Jeannette translated. Jeannette translated a song. It is a song known in French, but Jeannette helped us to translate it. The song is called win e tenkek (ph.). It is God who will take care of things. If you want to put me also the --

(SONG)

Lord our God, Lord, we stand before you for one last day. And Lord, you’ve seen all these testimonies. Lord, you have seen these suffering hearts, these people who have been mistreated unjustly. And Lord, we pray for these people.

We also pray, Lord, for those people who do not dare to come to the microphone, those people who are afraid to testify. Lord, I pray for them too, Lord that you may be able to bring about a healing, Lord, in the hearts of each and every one of us.

And Lord, keep us from retaliating with hatred, anger. And Lord, it is up to you, you are the judge, and Lord, justice for these people is in your hands. And us, Lord, guard us from harbouring bad feelings towards anyone. Who are we to judge the speck of sawdust in our brother’s eye and yet pay no heed to the plank in our own
And Lord, bless this day, Lord, bless those who will testify this morning. In thy name I pray, Lord Jesus.

Amen.

MR. LUCIEN ST-ONGE: Hello! I would ask the gentleman, because we often hear the drum and the one who will sing the drum, the teueikan. Oh, excuse me. I will ask, I will ask, I will ask that he ask our grandfathers and our ancestors, the Creator, the spirits, that he call the women, so that they can have light, so that they can walk in the hand.

I would like to call on the fire keeper. He has been here all week. He kept the fire going. From 11:00 in the evening until the morning, they took turns. I would ask Jean-Sébastien if he could play or sing.

COMMISSIONNER MICHELE AUDETTE: I don’t think he needs the drum holder.

MR. LUCIEN ST-ONGE: No, no.

COMMISSIONNER MICHELE AUDETTE: Ah, ok, ok, ok.

MR. LUCIEN ST-ONGE: Hum, hum. (Speaking in Native language.)

MR. LUCIEN ST-ONGE: When we play the drum, it’s also a way to share. Each of you, in your heart, give
this to the Creator, all these things. As Grégoire said, all these things, violence, fear, all these things, are a gift from the Creator. But it’s up to us to know how we’re going to use it.

It is also a great gift to talk to each other when things bother us. Grandfather William used to say, “You have to say the things that need to be said.” Things that, the words weren’t right before. When someone talks about you behind your back. Why don’t you go see him, and talk to him? So, you go see him, now you go see him, and you say to him, “I don’t like the way you speak, if it’s anger that’s talking.” When you use fear in that way, well, you’re using it in the right way. Today, I too will pray for everything. That’s it! That’s all!

(DRUMMING AND SINGING)

(BREAK)

COMMISSIONNER MICHELE AUDETTE: I had to talk to the big boss first. God, I feel like I’m in the living room with everyone.

Hello, thank you very much for the beautiful prayers, thoughts, messages, the encouragement for the families. And while today is our last day with you physically, spiritually it is not the last, and I want us to feel that as a group.

There is a major process being carried out
across Canada, a process that has never been done, where
the federal government, the provinces and territories are
being told, in a context that is their own, in a legal
context with incredible and courageous people -- to tell
the truth.

And to make this truth, there are magical
people in the background, people we don’t know. I am home
here, some of you know me, and it is because of you that I
became the woman I am, and you continue to help me thrive.

But I just want to take a few seconds to
tell you that behind that team, that inquiry, I mean, there
are humans. There are men, there are women, there are
family members, there are survivors, elders, young people
and not-so-young people, and in between, like me, who, on a
daily basis, will bring families here, will organize, will
think, will create logistics, will create a structure that
has never existed.

And, a year and a half ago, the federal
government appointed five people. Today, there are four
left, but we are worth fourteen easily.

Our youngest: dynamic, speaks French, speaks
English, speaks Inuktitut, a young woman who, at first
glance, may seem intimidating, but, ultimately, she has a
big heart, she is generous, she can go anywhere, she never
judges. And I am blessed to work with this woman who helps
me to translate a vocabulary, a jargon, a culture that I
have not learned which is the legal world, and that is,
Qajaq Robinson, so beautiful, so strong.

She was born in Iqaluit. Iqaluit means where
there is fish. She is our only Canadian, here in the team.
And this woman, after that, she grew up in Iglouvik.

A WOMAN NOT IDENTIFIED: - lik.

COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Igloulk, but
I switched it to Inouglik. Yeah. Inouglik. Where there are
igloos. That’s what it means.

Now, that’s a remarkable woman. She’s a
mother who left her child behind to come and give her love,
her energy, her legal knowledge and her knowledge of the
North that we don’t have, we being the other Commissioners
and the other members of the team. And it’s about making
sure that this report will reflect the Indigenous peoples,
including the Inuit. So proud to work with you.

And then we have a man, a great man, a great
man. He’s not here right now. He is working, gathering the
truth from a family in a safe place, what we call in
camera. He is our fire keeper he is our keeper of the east
gate, he is also our protector, but also the keeper of our
rights. He too has worked all his life as a lawyer. He
comes from a community in northern Ontario, a Métis like
me: half Indigenous and half Canadian. And this man worked
until recently with the Human Rights Tribunal in Ontario as
vice-chair. He defended human rights. And we have this
warrior among us.

But warrior, that doesn’t mean you have to
shout loudly or hit yourself on the head, but you have to
think strongly, then hit in the right place with your
spirit. So, Brian, I’m sure you can hear me talking about
you, thank you for being part of the circle.

And the fourth person is Marion Buller.
Marion Buller, she is the first Indigenous woman to become
a judge in British Columbia. That’s no small feat. That’s
incredible! She’s the Chief Commissioner. She is a woman
who must ensure from beginning to end that everything is in
compliance, both in terms of the spirituality protocol,
when we go to a territory, but to also ensure that terms of
the laws in each province and territory and the federal
government, when we ask the right questions of
institutions, Ms. Buller with her experience, with her
knowledge, and with her love that she has for the cause,
she can guide this investigation.

So we have different leaders, we have
different strengths; we have different capacities, either
academic or self-taught within the Commissioners, which
means that this major social will take us somewhere.

I always say -- and I will close with this --
- the four Commissioners and the fifty or so people who come from the Indigenous communities (Métis, Inuit, First Nations, Quebecers and Canadians) have, at one time or another, experienced one or many situations. And today, sometimes they cry with you, sometimes they rage for you, but they are there for you and with you. And it’s for me -- I call it magic, a miracle. And this morning, that’s how I want to say “thank you” to them, so that together we can convey this truth.

It has been moving. I’ll see you later.

There will be a press conference, there will be families talking, we will say, “Goodbye, iame, see you soon”. For me, that’s it, physically, we are leaving, but spiritually we have several warriors, and very strong ones, strong.

No matter what is said on the outside, I know it from the inside, and then I’m not afraid to say it, we’re going to succeed. Why? Why? Because we have to succeed. Why is that? We must pay tribute and honour the courage of all these families.

And when we fall, what I expect from my community is that they will pick me up. When I make a mistake, what I expect from my community is that I will be taught to do the thing or things in a better way.

And that’s the way it is. We are your tool, passionate, determined, and I wish you a wonderful day.
Thank you.

**Ms. Jeannette Vollant:** It has to go to my height, huh, I’m not tall. There’s going to be something very special right now.

**Mr. Louis-Georges Fontaine:** With the permission of the attorney for the Naskapi families, I would ask Mr. Gervais to share these words. If you want to give gifts to the commission, I invite you to do so.

**Ms. Jeannette Vollant:** The families who came to share this week, those who come from Pakuashipi, have something to give, a donation. And right now, they’re behind me.

And this man, this gentleman, he’s a translator; he’s the one who accompanied these families. So I’ll give him the floor.

**Mr. Gervais Malleck:** Kuei, hello. I’m Gervais. I am accompanied by two Elders from the Pakuashipi community. (Speaking in Native language.)

I will give; I will not take up any more time in this little ceremony. I will give more time for the Elders to speak, but I will translate. (Speaking in Native language.)

**Ms. Louise Rock:** I would like to welcome everyone here today. Today, I bring a present, because we have lost many people, many women, and many men. And this
is the present I want to give you today, the present I want to give you today.

I would like to greet you, all the people who are here. I’m here, I came here to testify. I also came to offer a present, a present that is very meaningful for the Pakuashipi community. The gift means not to forget our children that we have lost. Women’s tragedies, that’s what it’s going to represent, the present I’m going to offer to the Commissioners. I don’t want to reveal it to you; I want to show you right now, I want to show this to the Commissioners first. After that, we will show it to the rest of you.

The present I am going to offer is our hearts, it also represents my heart as a mother, which I bring here for the Commissioners.

I would also like to thank the people who are always on the front line to help us. I want to show this to the others.

MR. GERVAIS MALLECK: This gift represents, not bundled, a baby. The shape is a mother’s heart. You see little mittens, little moccasins, little socks, which represent the lost babies, disappeared from the Pakuashipi community, then the mother’s heart which is red, pink. That’s what it represents.

MS. LOUISE ROCK: We have lost -- pink also
means there are many girls who have disappeared, the disappearance of children.

What you see here is caribou skin, the moccasins, plus mittens. There’s also the baby’s bottle that’s pink.

**MR. GERVAIS MALLECK:** (Speaking in Native language.)

I will now show it to the rest of you. This gift represents, the pink that represents all the girls who have been lost, and the heart shape is a mother’s heart. Normally, that’s not in the shape of a heart, but it represents the heart of all mothers. The mittens represent the warmth so that our children don’t get cold. It’s made of caribou skin, woolen socks, moccasins, and the little bottle that represents babies, girls, which also represents lost women.

And Agnès wanted to give a present to the Commissioners so that they would not forget the missing children in Pakuashipi. (Speaking in Innu language.)

**MS. LOUISE ROCK:** This represents, it’s in the shape of a heart; it represents the heart of all mothers, because mothers love their children very much. That’s also what this baby pouch represents.

**MS. LOUISE ROCK:** I thank you very much.

(SHORT BREAK)
MS. JEANNETTE VOLLANT: During the time for hugs and thanks, we will take a break. After the break, there will be a woman who will come to testify with Ken Rock, as a counsel representative. So, it’s time for a break.

(BREAK)

COMMISSIONNER MICHELÉ AUDETTE: Hello. I would like to invite two women, two women who work on a daily basis for the advancement of Indigenous women, Pénéloppe Guay and Viviane Michel, to come forward here. I don’t know if you heard me. Audray, and Suzanne, a song to honour you, for the work you do in the field with politicians, with leaders, all the way to the United Nations, to make people understand what women experience on a daily basis, Indigenous women. So, we sing to you The Woman’s Warrior Song, the song of the warrior, for the work you do.

(SONG)

First Hearing:

Witnesses: Elizabeth Mameanskum and Alma Mameanskum

Testimony heard by the Chief Commissioner Marion Buller and the Commissioners Michèle Audette, Brian Eyolfson and Qajaq Robinson

Commission Counsel: Ken Rock

Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Pénéloppe Guay,
Éveline St-Onge, Anne-Marie André

Clerk: Jean-Luc Dorion

Registrar: Bryan Zandberg

ME KEN ROCK: Kuei, Hi.

We would like to thank everyone for the time you are taking today to listen to those who will share their stories. And we are happy that we can speak in our Innu language.

Today, we have two people who will share their stories, Alma and her sister Elizabeth, who will tell us their stories, what they have experienced in the past. They will talk about their daughters, their granddaughters and also about what happened with police officers.

So this morning, Alma is going to talk about her daughter, what happened to her -- she was harassed by a police officer -- and Elizabeth Mameanskum will talk about her daughter.

So I think we’re ready, we can start. Perhaps we should swear in these two women now.

The Bible. Alma Dominique.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Alma --

MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM: English.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Do you swear to tell the truth --

MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM: English.
MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: English, okay. Alma.

Okay, good. Thanks.

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM: Yes.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Thank you.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Elizabeth, do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MS. ELIZABETH MAMEANSKUM: Yes.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Thank you.

ME KEN ROCK: Thank you.

Can you, Alma, tell us, can you talk to us and for your daughter, Charlotte, can you tell us about her?

MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM: I was at home, in my apartment and I went shopping, when I came back home, with my shopping, my children were no longer there. They were taken away and I didn’t know.

I was drinking and taking drugs at the time and it was the social worker who took my children away. They were taken to a home. My two daughters, they were so small. There was Isabelle.

And then I went to get my children. I heard children crying upstairs. There was a guy who locked the
door. And what I noticed was that the door was closed, locked with a rope. And then I was able to take my daughters. I attacked the guy, hit him and pushed him down the stairs. A woman said to me, “Go ahead, and go with your children.” So I took them outside and I had the police officers following me.

At the time, we lived on the Matimekosh reserve and my parents lived there too. So I ran and it was bad outside, bad weather. I was holding one of my daughters. When I arrived at my parents’ house, I brought them inside in a room. I brought Charlotte to the washroom.

The police asked me to bring the children back and I said “No.” I told them I wanted to keep my children and then the police said, “Only if you go to therapy will you be able to get your children back.” And he took my daughter from me, but my mother refused to let the police officer take my children. It was my mother who wanted to take care of my daughters.

And then they took my daughter and I saw Jean-Guy Vachon — he was the social worker — and I asked him, “I want to bring my daughter so that I can buy her silver,” and the last time I saw my daughter, I gave her a scarf and I said “I’ll see you at Easter.” And that was the last time I saw her.

ME KEN ROCK: How old was your daughter at
Elizabeth Mameanskum and Alma Mameanskum

the time?

MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM: She was five years old. On April 14, she would have turned 36 years old. I always think of her when I see young women. And she was my first child.

ME KEN ROCK: And, then, when they took your daughter from you, where did she stay?

MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM: She stayed in a house with a family, the Osmond family (phon.). And there was a guy who was sick. Before the guy killed my daughter, he raped her first and then he killed her.

When I think of my daughter, I look forward to seeing my daughter again. She was my first child. And today, today, today I have two daughters. I have my daughter and granddaughter and I protect them as much as I can.

ME KEN ROCK: How old was your daughter when she was assaulted?

MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM: April 14, she would have been six years old.

ME KEN ROCK: Do you know the date of this assault and of this murder, when your daughter was murdered?

MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM: It was in 1981 or 1982. She was born in 1980. But on her tombstone, it says 1981.
Her father’s name is Jean-Pierre. I am very sad when I think of my daughter, my child.

**ME KEN ROCK:** What happened next? Was there a report?

**MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM:** Yes, he was in jail for only two years, the guy I’m talking about. The guy I’m talking about, he did the same thing he did to my daughter to another girl and he went to jail. He ran away. The child was found on the ground. And I was told this story.

**ME KEN ROCK:** Is there anything else you want to share about your daughter?

**MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM:** I would like for other children not to have to go through the same thing, that they not get taken away from their homes. There are probably many little girls who are being taken away from their homes. You have to take care of your children.

**ME KEN ROCK:** How long did your daughter live in this house?

**MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM:** She stayed there for about a year, one year. Many times I went to that house to pick up my children and every time I got there, they called the police. I will always remember those police officers who took my children away.

**ME KEN ROCK:** Had you had other children before?
MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM: I had two daughters.

ME KEN ROCK: Both were already born at that time?

MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM: Isabelle is my second daughter. My other children had not yet been born, only after I got married.

ME KEN ROCK: And today, can you talk about what you told me concerning the police officers?

MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM: Everything happened when I was at home in Matimekosh. And there were friends knocking on the door. And then I went through the window, I got out. I went to see a friend. I was nice out, it was sunny and I was walking. I was walking and I went to see a friend.

And I looked on the lawn, at the post office, there were people starting a fire so I went by, she saw me and I said, “Come here, what’s going on?” And she said, “I was looking for you.” And I said, “Well, I was looking for you too. You’re so drunk, I’m taking you home.”

And I brought her back home. We were walking. There was a car coming. It was the police and they stopped. And then they turned their lights on and the police said, “Dance.” And she said, “Why would we dance?” “Because you and your friend, because you and your friend
Elizabeth Mameanskum and Alma Mameanskum

have beautiful bodies.”

And then we kept walking and I told my
friend, “We have to hurry.” So we walked fast. There was a
recreation centre and there was a playground and we went
through the playground.

And then a car came, it was going full
speed. It was the same police officers. And he said, “Get
in the car.” And we said, “No, why would we do that? I’ve
done nothing wrong.” He said, “No. I heard you were in the
recreation centre.” And he accused us of stealing
something: cakes. He also accused us of going for a swim.
So I said, “If we had gone swimming, we’d be all wet.” And
he said, “No, get in the car anyway.”

And then he took my friend, because she was
drunk, but I didn’t want to get in that police car. Well, I
accidentally hit my head on the car door and I had blood
all over my face. And then, when the police officer put me
in the car, he said, “Get in the car. Stop complaining.
I’ll take you home.” But he took us somewhere else. He took
us to the police station. And at first, he called her in,
he brought in my friend and she said, “Don’t fall asleep;
I’m so afraid of the police.” So I said, “Well, I’ll watch
you sleep.”

And then the police officer was talking to
me and touching my hair. “You have beautiful hair,” he
said. I said, “Don’t touch me!” And then he started looking at my breasts. And I told him not to look at me. And he asked me not to look at his penis.

And there’s a garage with a police car there. That’s where they used to keep the Indigenous people. It doesn’t look like a police station. It’s a garage and there were two cages. It was only for Indigenous people. And he brought my friend inside there. And my friend said not to sleep. So I didn’t sleep.

But then he took me in. Then he took me somewhere private. Then he pushed me. I was so scared, I was so angry that he came back for me. And I heard steps. And I heard chains, too, on the person who was coming towards us. I looked and I saw this tall police officer and I said, “I’m so glad to see you.” This one, he was defending Indigenous people.

He said, “What are you girls doing here?” And I told him about it. He opened the garage door. And then he said, “Go home.” And I brought my friend back to her house, to my house. We walked, walked. And on Gaba (ph) street where the hospital was located, when we arrived at the hospital, a dog chased me. And he attacked my leg and that’s why I walk the way I walk today.

So I finally got to the hospital. A doctor named Dr. Baw (ph) was there. He said, “If they don’t kill
that dog!” Then the police officer arrived. It was the one at the beginning that brought us to the police station. He said to the doctor, he said, “What did they do? I’ll take them home.” And with my eyes, I said no to the doctor, meaning “No, no, don’t let him.” And the doctor said, “No, no, they’re going to stay here. Her friend will take care of her and I’ll check her leg.” And I was shaking, I was furious, I was very scared.

Then, when the police left, I told the doctor, “Can I go home now.” And the doctor said, “I would like to see you again tomorrow.” But we ran from the hospital, we took the Naskapi road, we ran and my friend said, “But, you, with your leg, do you hear the car? There’s a car behind us following us.”

There was a dispensary on the Naskapi Road and this police officer was stopped. He was not allowed to go on the reserve. So he didn’t have enough time. But I was so angry. My friend said, “My God, he’s mad at us! He’s not going to stop, this police officer.”

Me and my friend, we were very close. We took care of each other. Her name was Esther. My friend’s name was Esther. So we went to her bedroom window and her sister Hannah asked us, “What is going on?” And I slept at my friend Esther’s house.

My father asked my friend’s father, “Are my
daughter and your daughter at your place?” “Yes, yes, they
are sleeping here,” he replied. And my father said, “Tell
her to come home.” I went home, I went into my room, and I
went to bed.

My mother woke me up: “The police are here.”

His name was Matthew Mackenzie. He was a police officer, a
police constable at the time. There was a police station at
Lac-John. And the white police were not allowed to go
there. So we left with Matthew Mackenzie. They brought us;
they brought us to the police station. And that police
officer was there, that police officer was there.

They asked us, “Where are the things you
stole last night?” He said that we had stolen a ring, a
valuable ring. And in my defense I said, “No, we never
stole anything.” He was furious and he was banging his
fists on the table and he was enraged and he really wanted
us to confess that we stole something. And I told my
friend, “I’m so scared of him.” And I was trying to talk
to the police officers and explain to them that they
couldn’t try to convince us that we had done something we
hadn’t done. We hadn’t done anything.

Then he told us, “You’re going to be
arrested. If you don’t bring back those things you stole,
we’ll arrest you.” And I said, “But why put us in jail? We
didn’t do anything.” He called us savages. And I didn’t
answer. And I even told my friend not to answer, not to be sassy.

When I think about it, what I went through, what I experienced with that police officer, I was violated. I felt really bad when he touched me or when he tried to touch me.

Then there was this man who came and said that in the morning -- when my friend came back, she said, “I’m so scared, they scare me so much!” I said, “Me too.”

We went to the village. There was a pool table, a room where you could play pool, billiards, and when I came out, this officer was waiting for us once again. He said -- my friend repeated to me, “My God, he won’t leave us alone!” And he said, “I’m going to meet you somewhere.” It made me feel like I was dating him. I was abused by him; it’s almost like he was abusing me. If he had raped me, I could have gotten pregnant.

ME KEN ROCK: What year did it happen?


ME KEN ROCK: Which police officer?

MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM: The one who pushed me around. I heard that there was a woman who had already laid charges against him and I heard, after that, that he committed suicide, in 2016, he committed suicide.

ME KEN ROCK: This police officer? Where did
he work? Did he work for the non-Indigenous, in the village of Schefferville?

**MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM:** Yes, in Schefferville.

**ME KEN ROCK:** And your whole story, in fact, took place in Schefferville?

**MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM:** Yes.

**ME KEN ROCK:** Do you have anything to add regarding the police officer?

**MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM:** I wish I had had some help. What this officer did to me, I’m not the only woman to have suffered the same fate. Many women have gone through the same experience.

**ME KEN ROCK:** I can continue with Elizabeth Mameanskum, but if you have anything to add, I’ll come back to you. Is that all right with you?

**MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM:** Yes, that’s fine by me.

**ME KEN ROCK:** Hi Elizabeth. Can you tell us about your niece whom your sister was talking about before?

**MS. ELIZABETH MAMEANSKUM:** I was 25 or 26 years old at the time. I would go out with my sister. We would go to the Royal Tavern, to the disco, we drank, of course, we were young. And my sister said -- we weren’t completely drunk, but we were having fun -- “Let’s go see our niece where they keep the children.” I said, “Okay.” Yes, when people are drunk, they think they can do
anything, anything and everything. And often they do.

I still remember it. It was snowing. Then we walked to the house. It’s about a 10 minute walk. And we went into this house, the door was not locked. We went in and Ms. Osmond (ph.) was there. She screamed at her husband.

“No, no, I want to see my niece,” I said. And I could hear a child upstairs. And I was yelling “Charlotte, Charlotte!” Her name was Peshiesh (ph). That’s her Indigenous name. “Peshiesh (ph),” I said. And I told her, “We just want to see her. I just want to see my niece. I want to see her face. That’s all I’m asking.” No! She refused. “I’m going to call the police,” she told us. Mr. Osmond was furious. And then I saw one of his sons, the guy who attacked my niece, my sister Alma’s daughter. “Please, I would just like to see her. That’s all I’m asking.” And he started yelling at me. “I’m going to keep her, because I’m going to start working. I’ve already filled out all the paperwork. I’m going to get a job and I’m going to be able to take my niece away from this family so I can keep her.” And, in fact, they called the police.

My sister and I left. We were running and that’s when, during the night, that same night, my niece disappeared. I went to the Royal, me and my sister, it was snowing and I heard someone -- everyone calls me Iem (ph)
on the reserve -- “Iem (ph)” someone said. Someone called me, a child. It was the same night our niece disappeared, she was assaulted. I guess they were afraid, they were afraid that she would talk about what she had experienced, that she would talk about what had happened to her. It’s the same night, the same night my niece disappeared. We didn’t know anything about it. We slept elsewhere, in a house in Matimekush. We didn’t go home. We moved near Koa. We slept at our friends’ house.

When we woke up in the morning, we went back to the bar. We were young at the time. Of course, at the age of 20, we were already having fun. Then we went to the tavern and there were friends of ours who were there. And that’s when we were told that my sister’s daughter, Peshiesh (ph), Charlotte, they told us, we were crying.

Then we went home. My mother and my sister were very sad, we cried. That was in Kawawa (ph). And then I was thinking, “I shouldn’t have gone there yesterday.” But she was probably happy to hear our voices. She probably heard us when we called her name. She was probably really happy in her heart to hear our voices. Those were probably our last words she heard. My mother was gone. My mother would have come today, but she’s not here because she has cancer. And in fact, my mother passed away.

ME KEN ROCK: When I met you, you told me
about your granddaughter, didn’t you?

MS. ELIZABETH MAMEANSKUM: Yes. My granddaughter’s name is [name deleted]. My brother’s daughter [brother’s name deleted], she disappeared in August 2012. She had a daughter. Her name was [niece’s name deleted]. Our niece, I don’t even know where she is. She was placed elsewhere. She’s probably 6 or 7 years old as we speak.

ME KEN ROCK: Is this your son’s daughter?

MS. ELIZABETH MAMEANSKUM: No, my brother [name of brother deleted], my brother’s daughter [name of brother deleted], and her name is [name of niece deleted].

ME KEN ROCK: And this child was placed?

MS. ELIZABETH MAMEANSKUM: Yes, she was placed in 20[date deleted]. She was born in 2009-2010, I think.

ME KEN ROCK: And what was her mother’s name?

MS. ELIZABETH MAMEANSKUM: [Mother’s name deleted].

ME KEN ROCK: It was the daughter of [name of brother deleted]?

MS. ELIZABETH MAMEANSKUM: Yes.

ME KEN ROCK: And after she was born, was she placed?

MS. ELIZABETH MAMEANSKUM: In fact, they took
[niece’s name deleted] away. They took her and we don’t even know why they took her. Why didn’t they explain anything to us? Why didn’t they ask other family members to keep her? My mother used to take care of kids; she always took care of other young children in the past. My mother was still alive at the time. At that time, she was maybe 6 or 7 months old.

And when the father died, the baby was probably 6 or 7 months old when the father died. At the funeral home, there was a non-Indigenous woman holding the baby in her arms, but she did not want to enter the funeral home. My parents were around the coffin, my brother’s coffin, and I went out and this non-Indigenous woman was standing outside and holding [niece’s name deleted] in her arms.

She thought I didn’t understand French, but I understood her. She said, “Your twin is coming. You really look like him.” And I didn’t say anything. And then I went to see, to look at [niece’s name deleted]. I said, “I am the sister of [brother’s name deleted].”

ME KEN ROCK: And this child was placed?

MS. ELIZABETH MAMEANSKUM: She was placed, yes, with a non-Indigenous family, a non-Indigenous woman.

ME KEN ROCK: And [brother’s name deleted] did he try to get his daughter back?
MS. ELIZABETH MAMEANSKUM: [Brother’s name deleted] was living with [mother’s name deleted] at the time. He said, “They’re going to bring her, we will be able to visit her.” And we were leaving for Sept-Îles to visit [niece’s name deleted] and we were going to [brother’s name deleted].

And afterwards my brother [brother’s name deleted] told me that [niece’s name deleted] had burnt her hand. “How did she burn her hand?” We were told she burned her hand on a heater. It didn’t seem to be a burn caused by a heater.

The DYP or, in fact, the DYP’s social worker, child protection, Louise, Kawawa’s (ph) wife, she used to work in Schefferville. She was in charge of the case. She didn’t give us any papers. She could have met us so that we could have talked about us to [niece’s name deleted], to the family of [niece’s name deleted]. That was never offered to us, we could have taken [niece’s name deleted]. And it was that woman, that Louise, who placed [niece’s name deleted].

We met with a lawyer in Sept-Îles. His name was Mathieu. And I still remember that lawyer. He asked us for $10,000 so he could work on this case so we could bring back [niece’s name deleted]. And from what I’ve heard recently, they no longer want to deal with this case. I
Elizabeth Mameanskum and Alma Mameanskum

think he’s non-Indigenous. They don’t want to help the
Indigenous people.

ME KEN ROCK: Where is that child now?

MS. ELIZABETH MAMEANSKUM: I don’t know.

ME KEN ROCK: You haven’t seen her since?

MS. ELIZABETH MAMEANSKUM: No. My brother was
the youngest one. His baby.

ME KEN ROCK: Was she placed on a reserve?

MS. ELIZABETH MAMEANSKUM: From what I heard,
she went to Montréal, that’s what I heard, before she was
kept in Sept-Îles, off the reserve.

I would like to have some help. I don’t want
to go through the same thing my sister did. I would be so
happy to get back [niece’s name deleted]. If we could only
visit her. My father is still alive. He is 83 years old. I
wish he could see his granddaughter [niece’s name deleted],
his granddaughter. I am the eldest. My mother is now
deceased. She was really sad when her [brother’s name
deleted] died.

ME KEN ROCK: Would you be happy to see the
baby?

MS. ELIZABETH MAMEANSKUM: Yes, I would be so
happy. I can still see her hair, her black hair. And she
smiled the last time I saw her.

ME KEN ROCK: Before the child was placed,
Ms. Elizabeth Mameanskum: No one talked to us; no one wrote to us, no one met with us. I would like to save up some money so that I can pay the lawyer.

Last year, I walked from Kawawachikamach (ph) to Fort Mackenzie. There were a lot of us and we did a long line. And that, I would like my friends, the friends I was walking with, I would like to be reunited with them.

ME KEN ROCK: When I met you, you said that you would be happy if this child could know her culture, her language.

Ms. Elizabeth Mameanskum: I don’t want her to lose the culture, the language. And I would like her to get to know her whole family. The children who were placed in residential schools, the DYP, the DYP is trying to do the same thing and they want the children to lose their language, their culture and their family.

I’d really be happy to see my niece again. [Niece’s name deleted]. I could be happy if I had her with me. It’s going to take me a long time. I would like someone to help me, in order to get her back. It would make me very happy. And you Ken Rock, I’d be very happy if you could help us get our niece back.

And we’re still sad about our situation. That’s why my sister is sick: because she’s always sad. And
for me, it helped me to do this walk, this Fort Mackenzie walk. When we walked, we saw a coffin. I talked to the Elder; I told him my whole story. I gave him the names of my parents, Matthew Maketsamekitsimaknesh (ph).

I asked to be given strength. “And for me my life is, and well, I am very honored that I can be in front of your coffin,” I said “Give me the strength to keep finishing this walk so I can see my children and grandchildren.” It was the evening; it was the night when we finished this walk.

After my conversation with the Elder, I went out with a guy; I was walking with a guy. His name was Martin Vieux, and we walked together. It was really beautiful where we walked, it was near the lake. And the snow was bright.

And the Elder helped me a lot. I have this Elder in my heart. He’s the one who’s helping me today. It is thanks to him that I am here, alive, today. It is always from him that I seek strength. Thank you, thank you very much.

Thank you Ken and thank you Annie. I’m very glad you’re here.

ME KEN ROCK: Is there anything else you want to tell us, Alma?

MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM: Everything that
happened to me and my friend with this police officer, I would like to have help, to be helped, not just for my friend, but also for when I lost my child.

I received documents, I gave them to a lawyer, but I didn’t really pay attention to what’s in those papers, because of what I have been through with my daughter. But I still have these documents, the documents I received. Now I’m never going to give up, I’m going to work hard. What I have experienced, with me and my daughter, and what we have done today, I am so sad when I think about it. But I will continue my journey and I still have strength in me and I will never give up because of what I have experienced and I will never abandon the cause for my daughter.

I still have these documents at home. I take good care of documents. I put them all together with a rubber band so no one would touch them. I’m never going to throw them away. I still have these documents.

That’s what I wanted to share with you. I’m never going to give up. I’m never going to give up, because we’ve all lived through different situations. I went to Val-d’Or; I met a lot of women there. Some of them spoke English. I was so sad to hear their stories. Some of them are so young: 15, 16 years old. They were so pretty.

And I still think of my daughter when I saw
those young girls who were murdered. I showed them a
t picture of my daughter. Look at my daughter’s picture,
every woman I met looked at it. One of these women, she was
so sad. She said, “She was so pretty your daughter.” I
said, “That was my baby, my first baby.”

And, even today, I still feel her. I know
she’s present. She’s here, I know it. Once I was asleep and
I heard a child say to me, “Mom, mom, I love you, mom, I
love you. Don’t give up. I’m always here for you.” So I
see her, she smiles. She was so sweet. She was glowing. And
when I think of her, I feel less sad. But she’s probably
trying to tell me not to be sad; she probably wants to tell
me that it’s fine where she is now. I was dreaming about
her and looking at her picture.

One of my sons, John-Peter, gave me a gift,
a poster of my daughter. “Mom -- he said -- if my daughter
was still here, if she was alive -- ” “Your big sister,” I
said. “I wish I’d known her, my big sister,” he said, my
son. My sons, when they wake up every morning, they look at
the picture. And every April 14, on her birthday, we go to
church; we go to the cemetery to offer her a benediction,
to pray.

Sometimes I want to give up, but I always
think of my mother, I think of my mother. And once, my
mother, she said, “My daughter, I will always be with you,
Elizabeth Mameanskum and Alma Mameanskum

have strength. And that helped me. “I’ve always prayed for you.” So I’m not giving up. I’ll be able to continue.

Sometimes I’m all alone at home and I talk to myself and I talk to my daughter, to my daughter’s picture. I ask her to help me to have strength. “Give me strength. I love you, my daughter.” And also, “It won’t be long: when I’m older, I’ll find you, and I’ll see you. I’ll see you in heaven. We will be together again.”

ME KEN ROCK: Are you all right? So I think that’s the end of the testimony. I don’t know if you have any questions.

COMMISSIONNER MICHELE AUDETTE: Thank you very much, thank you very much for your strength. Just coming here must be very difficult. We can feel it, but you’re the one who’s living it, who has to go through it. And by sharing with us, I hope it helps you, that you can know that you are not alone, that we can receive and honour the truth you give us.

As for questions: Well, when you lost your daughter, did the police or the system, were they there to support you when you had that shock, that trauma? Was there anyone who was there to help you, whether it was social workers, the justice system, or the police?

MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM: No. And my mother.

COMMISSIONNER MICHELE AUDETTE: Your mom?
MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM: My mother. The whole family was traumatized. It was devastating for us. We didn’t know what was going on. I was in my twenties at the time.

And why can’t there be justice? Why can’t there be justice to bring back [niece’s name delete], my niece, my brother’s daughter? There should be justice. We’ve been living with this for so many years.

If my mother were here, she would have been here. She would have cried. I worry a lot about [niece’s name deleted]. I would like there to be a campaign. I want to run a campaign, so we can bring back [niece’s name deleted]. Let’s bring back [niece’s name deleted].

COMMISSIONNER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I have a few questions if I could ask you. I wasn’t quite sure: the man, who killed your daughter, was he the foster parents’ child in the foster family?

MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM: Yes.

COMMISSIONNER QAJAQ ROBINSON: And once she was killed, was there an investigation, not necessarily by the police, but was there an investigation in relation to this foster home? Why was she placed in that house? Why she was taken away? Was there anything done by these two social services in relation to this placement in this foster home?

MS. ALMA MAMEANSKUM: You’re asking why she
was placed in this house? Why was she placed? There were
others, and the other children who were taken away, were
there any investigations? Well, no.

COMMISSIONNER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you. We
have gifts that we want to offer you. The grandmothers will
present them to you. They’re eagle feathers.

ME KEN ROCK: Thank you very much. Can I ask
for an adjournment?

(SONG)

MS. JEANNETTE VOLLANT: Thank you. Now it’s
time for lunch. Then at 12:30 p.m., there’s going to
be a press briefing here. If people want to come and
attend, they are invited. Now we’re going to have
lunch.

(BREAK)

COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: The white
boxes. Bernie, Bernie Poitras. Where is she? She’s so cute!
Why don’t you come over here?

Marion, Qajaq, you came to our home, my
Maliotenam. You have heard men, women, elders and young
women tell you all their suffering, all their sorrow. They
have hope in us. I’m going to continue to live here. I’m
going to keep seeing these women after the inquiry. They
will expect us to bring hope; they will expect us to bring
change. And, this is the commitment I am making, to
continue to my last breath the love I have for all the women, even from other Nations.

So we are giving you moccasins, my mother, my aunt and me, to remind you that you have committed yourself here with my world, with our communities, and our Nations, here in Uashat Mak Malotitenam, you must honour the new path you are charting for our Nations.

**MS. EVELYNE ST-ONGE:** May I speak now?

**COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Yes.

**MS. EVELYNE ST-ONGE:** When I heard that my daughter was going to work as a Commissioner, I went to the ceremony in Ottawa. And that morning, I took my daughter to a room in the hotel. I saw you; you came to get my daughter. It was as if I was giving my daughter for Canada, for the Innu, for everyone, for First Nations. Thank you very much.

**MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ:** Ms. Qajaq, it’s a gift for you. Rest your feet and go far with the moccasins. Thank you.

**COMMISSIONNER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Thank you.

**COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** You are going to have to walk your talk. What is “walk your talk” in French?

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** In French we say “joindre les bottines aux babines,” “ajouter le geste à la
parole.” “Mettez les paroles en actions.”

MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: That’s good, red
attracts spirits, good spirits, and keeps the evil spirits
away.

COMMISSIONNER MICHELE AUDETTE: That’s all.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: I apologize; I
would like the commissioners to stay. I would like to
invite a member of the Uashat Mak Malieotenam Nation
Council, Ms. Michel.

COMMISSIONNER MICHELE AUDETTE: Do you want
us to stay here, on the right?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: Yes.

It’s Michel from the band, from the band
council here, who would like to offer you a gift.

MS. VIRGINIE MICHEL: I would like to offer
this gift to the Commissioners. They have done a lot of
work. They worked really hard. Our hope is that they will
continue to move forward. I made them myself. Every woman
has work to give inside herself.

When we face difficulties, this can
represent a flower. A flower can be crushed. And we, as
women, need to know how to protect this flower and recreate
it because we are blossoming as a flower. Like a flower, we
blossom. We must work on ourselves; we must dedicate
ourselves to our children, to our husbands. And I’m going
to ask Jean-Charles to place these things, these flowers, these decorations.

I’ll do a little translation. No, I can’t even translate, he’s speaking English.

COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: They’ll listen to you in English here.

MS. VIRGINIE MICHEL: Ok, Ok, that’s it. Hello! I’d like to give you a gift to say thank you for coming here into our community. We are happy to welcome you. I made this gift with my hands because, at times, I think to myself “Every woman inside us has abilities to give, to share.”

I congratulate you and honour your courage because your work, it is difficult, to listen to all this violence and suffering that people have opened their hearts with you.

That flower, which I saw in the insignia, I said to myself, “We all have a flower inside us. We must take care of it, water it.” We must be able to take care of this flower in order to say “no” to violence and have the courage to refuse, and then learn to respect ourselves in order to give it as a part of our heritage to our families, our husbands and our children. That is the meaning. Speaking French doesn’t come very naturally to me, but I do it with my heart. Thank you.
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(Speaking Innu language). We call her Ketun, here, in our community.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: They didn’t know!

MS VIRGINIE MICHEL: Ah, they didn’t know that. It was really spontaneous to call her Ketun.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: Canada knows.

MS. VIRGINIE MICHEL: Her name is Ketun here in our community. So thank you. (Speaking Innu language). May God guide you in all the listening you will do, and may God bring peace and healing to all these people, to all these families who have come to open their hearts to you and to the entire world.

Yes, by symbol (Speaking Innu language).

It’s adjustable. (Speaking Innu language), Viviane, my little Viviane. It’s for Viviane, is she here? Viviane, too, has worked a lot, a lot, a lot in amongst the women, and she has a lot of heart, a lot of courage. Viviane (Speaking Innu language). And that goes for you too. And Viviane (Speaking Innu language). Thank you. (Speaking Innu language).

MS. VIVIANE MICHEL: Thank you.

MS. VIRGINIE MICHEL: (Speaking Innu language).

MS. VIVIANE MICHEL: I just want to add -- I
Elizabeth Mameanskum and Alma Mameanskum wanted to talk to you about the importance of what is happening today. The fact that we are opening our hearts, we are sharing our stories, our suffering as women, for women who have been abused, for the missing women. We were also able to show how significant it was, how it affected us, the importance of these facts and the impact. There is a lot of emotion today.

Hey, here in front, it is really very emotional.

I work a lot for the female cause, not for prestige. On the contrary, when you are a woman, when you are an Innu woman, I think it is innate everywhere, in everyone, to work for your people, and really from the heart.

And Native Women is an organization that works with other organizations. We participated in the World March of Women, where we had the opportunity to talk about the cause of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

And we wanted to show the people of Quebec and Canada what the impact of this has been, 1,200 missing and murdered women. We did a Die-in. It was very crowded. There must have been thousands of people at that World March. For the die-in, we asked 1,200 people to lie on the ground when they heard the drums. And it was something to experience. It was perceptible.
You know, the First Nations people are a visual people. To learn, you have to see as well. And the people, the 1,200 people who were lying on the ground, that made a big impact, a big impact of existing disappearances.

And there was someone who threw this necklace at me. It’s very significant: a woman without a face. We know nothing. We don’t know where our women are. What is going on? Are they alive? Where are they?

I feel I have a responsibility to give this necklace. You know, things arrive into your life and they must leave when it’s time. I will give this necklace to Ms. Muller, who is really the Chief Commissioner, with the great responsibilities she has to assume.

To wear it each time in all the work you have offered to the Commission. But not just to the Commission. When the women’s cause challenges you, it comes to you and it can leave again. You’ll know when it’s time.

CHIEF COMMISSIONNER MARION BULLER: Thank you. (Speaking Innu language) And we’ll continue with the program for the day. Thank you very much.

(BREAK)

MR. LOUIS-GEORGES FONTAINE: (Speaking Innu language). We must not forget that we have another hearing. (Speaking Innu language). We can start.

Please take your seats. (Speaking Innu language).
We’re going to hear the next testimony.

We’re going to want to continue to offer our support to the families who are here. So it’s very important, I think, it’s the end of the week, one of the last hearings. They are as important as the first ones that came to the Commission. We offer them the same respect, the same encouragement. Me Ken Rock is the family’s representative.

Second Hearing:

Witnesses: Lucie Sandy and Gloria Sandy

In relation to Alicia Sandy

Testimony heard by the Chief Commissioner Marion Buller and the Commissioners Michèle Audette, Qajaq Robinson and Brian Eyolfson

Commission Counsel: Ken Rock

Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Anne-Marie André Pénéloppe Guay and Evelyne St-Onge

Clerk: Luc Dorion

Registrar: Bryan Zandberg

KEN ROCK: Kuei. Hello, thank you for
Lucie and Gloria Sandy
(Alicia Sandy)

giving me the opportunity, once again, to tell our story, to give me the opportunity to speak. Lucie and Gloria have a story to share.

We’re going to talk about her daughter. The police and the medical examiner said it was a suicide. We will hear Lucie tell her side of the story. And Gloria is Alicia’s aunt. There we go. Then I suppose it’s time to swear them in.

(Speaking Indigenous language) The Bible.

English.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Gloria, do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MS. GLORIA SANDY: Yes.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you.

Lucie, do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: Yes, I swear.

ME KEN ROCK: Gloria, can you tell us or talk to us, rather, a little bit about your niece?

MS. GLORIA SANDY: My niece, her name was Alicia. Alicia had two children: I took care of the girl and my sister took care of the boy. Alicia was 21 years old when she left. And the story we were told is that she committed suicide.
But we don’t believe it. We don’t think she committed suicide. And the reason we don’t believe it is what we’ve heard from others who talk about it. That’s how the reports were presented. But those who found her, who found my niece, who examined her, told us that. But we were also told that they did not believe that she had committed suicide. Many people have told us that they do not believe that Alicia had committed suicide. And also the Elders, my father also does not believe it. All these people don’t believe that this was a suicide. I don’t believe it either. And also based on what my sister told me.

The investigations were insufficient. It didn’t take long. And the way they found her. When they told us that she had committed suicide, she was found under a tree, in the woods, under a bush. It was a small branch. Everyone knows that a small branch can be so easily broken if it was indeed a suicide. Also, we were given answers too early on in the investigation. And also, as she was found.

The police, the police who were there at the time. Yes, but what I would really like to know is, yes, they are police officers, but are they good? Are these police officers competent enough to conduct this type of investigation? What happened?

We have experienced investigators when people commit suicide. I think it was all hidden because
she was an Indigenous person. If it was about a non-native woman, there would have been a more thorough investigation. They would have tried to understand what really happened.

Also, Alicia loved her children a lot. She had had difficulties in her life, yes, it’s true, I know, but we were always right there behind her. We supported her and her children.

Also, when the second child was born, her baby, I was called while I was working, to go see Alicia because she was going to give birth very quickly. So I left work very quickly, there was nothing to stop me from leaving. I received a call in the morning and by noon I was already on the plane to get to Alicia quickly. At home, in our family, when we face difficult times, we support each other.

So I went to see her just before she gave birth. And she was asked the question “Will you keep your daughter?” She replied, “I’m going to give my daughter to my aunt.” I know she was having a hard time, I know she was drinking. And the doctor asked me, “Will you keep the child after she’s born?” And I said, “Yes.” And if I would have said “No,” that child would have been taken away immediately. If I had said, “No, I will not keep the child,” the child would have been taken right away. But I said, “I’m taking care of this baby.”
And I know how difficult it is for parents when their child is taken away from them and they never get to see that child again. That’s how it was on the reserves. When the child is taken away, the child must be, it is better for the child to remain on the reserve.

Even though I was taking care of this child, Alicia called very often to ask questions about her children. And I never stopped her, because she is the mother, she was the mother. She is the one who gave birth to her children. And I always thanked her for giving me her baby. Her baby is magnificent.

ME KEN ROCK: So today you still take care of this child? Tell me a little bit about what you told me earlier, what you were thinking, that you wanted to know what had happened.

MS. GLORIA SANDY: I often think about it. Now that she’s 3 years old, I think about this thing that comes to my mind. This is very difficult. I always think about her. And I wonder, “What am I going to say to this little girl, Alicia’s daughter?” This is really very difficult. This is really very difficult when I think about it. What words will I find to explain to this little girl why her mother is not here? One day, she will probably ask me where her biological mother is. And today, I still show her the picture of her mother. And I tell her, “That’s your
mommy."

But still, I wonder how I’m going to empower myself to help this little girl, to raise her. And one day she will understand that her mother is no longer alive. And I will always be there. She’s going to find a mother in me.

I have three children of my own. They help me a lot and I often thank them. And today, that’s how I ended up here today. They are watching the little one. She’s like their little sister. They really treat her like a biological sister, as if she were their real sister.

I am very happy to care for this child, I am very grateful to be able to care for her.

**ME KEN ROCK:** So you were asked to raise this girl?

**MS. GLORIA SANDY:** Well, as it works, her name is Hazel, Hazel. The DYP or the child protection agency, well, I often go back to court. I want her, I really want her. Every day, I am afraid. I’m afraid they’ll take her back and say, “We are taking her away from you. We’re going to take your Hazel away from you.” I’m always afraid. I’m always worried if I do something wrong.

And I always have to react. I always have to attend. I’m from Koa. If I have to go to Sept-Îles, I have to call them to let them know and tell them where I am going. I need to talk to the DYP. “I have to leave from
this date to that date.” I have to report back. They seem to be watching me all the time. I’m afraid. I’m afraid if she ever hurts herself or something happens to her. And I even have to explain how she hurt herself so that no one will think I hurt her or that one of my children hurt her.

It is very difficult to raise a child who is not your own. It’s two, three times more difficult than if the child is yours. And my father said to me, “You really need to raise her.”

ME KEN ROCK: Did you ask to adopt her?

MS. GLORIA SANDY: Yes. They answered me. Well, I’ve been to court several times. It’s dragging on. In January, it should be the final step. They keep postponing the date. But now it seems it will be in January. In January we will get the final decision, but I will never give up. I want her.

I’m going to give her what she didn’t get from her mother. I want to give her my love. I’m ready to give her all the love I have, just like her mother would have done.

ME KEN ROCK: Thank you.

Lucie, do you have time to talk about your daughter? Lucie, can you tell us about your daughter, about when she was a little girl?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: My daughter Alicia was born
on October 6, 1993. At the time, we lived with my parents, and I didn’t leave her, not until she started going to school. And she was always successful in school. She loved camping.

The first time she had a child, the first pregnancy, she actually lost the first child. I accompanied her when she was transferred to the hospital. When the child had to be taken from my daughter’s body, I had to be there, but she ran away, she wanted to run away. And I took my daughter and told her, “You have to push.” And I had to take my grandchild out myself.

I wrapped him in a blanket and gave the baby to my daughter. And she said, “Mom, my son is dead.” I said, “Yes, your baby has not been on this Earth, he has not suffered. He didn’t see any suffering. He’s in a good place.” They always told her, when she lost her child, that she lost her child because her blood was very thick and there were clots.

Because when my other grandchild was born, the one who lives with me now, Johnny, when he was born, I talked to my daughter on the phone. Then I took the train on the Tuesday. I was close to Sept-Îles and one of the people who worked at the station came to me and took him away. And I said, “Who? Our grandchild!” I was very angry. On the train, you’re not allowed to smoke on the train, but
I still lit a cigarette and, and as soon as I got off the train, I saw my daughter standing outside. I saw her; she was just walking next to me.

The next day, I went to pick up the DYP worker, Helen. She wanted me to go to court right away. And I told her, I explained it to her and she said, “We’re going to court first, before we do anything else.” “There are many things you didn’t do right,” I told her. “You should place this child on a reserve.” And they asked me to take my grandchild for 30 to 60 days and the parents signed the document.

And the social worker, she didn’t even come to see me at home; she wasn’t able to come to my house. But the second time, she came. And I said, “I asked you to knock first.” I was so angry with her. She was always treating me like I was doing things wrong. And when she came in, I turned my back to her and said, “Get out of my house and never come back to my house again.”

My daughter knew I was never going to leave my grandchild, my grandson. I was working and when she knew I was going to take good care of her son, she started going out. Then she had two children. And Gloria has the second one.

And when I brought Johnny, my grandson, home, I was very happy. And I told my daughter, “Never try
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1 to take your son away from me. I am very happy to keep him.
2 He will leave when he turns 18 years old.” And she said,
3 “Yes, Mom.”

4 ME KEN ROCK: So Lucie, your daughter, had
5 some difficulties?

6 MS. LUCIE SANDY: Yes, indeed. She went to
7 prison. There was a police officer who forced her to go to
8 prison. When they handcuffed her, they squeezed the
9 handcuffs very tightly on her.
10
11 The next day, I went to the police officers
12 and asked them the question. I said, “Why did you need to
13 squeeze the handcuffs so tightly.” There you go; I asked
14 him the question “Why?” He wouldn’t even look at me. I
15 said, “Look at me!” He looked away and started laughing.
16 “I don’t think you’re doing your work properly. You’re not
17 doing the right thing. She’s a woman, she’s not a man. She
18 should not be treated in the same way.”

19 ME KEN ROCK: Now you’re talking about the
20 police officers in Kawawa (ph)?

21 MS. LUCIE SANDY: Yes, they released her.
22 They kept her for just one night and then she came to my
23 house. And she told me how she had been treated.

24 ME KEN ROCK: Was she put in prison again
25 afterwards?

26 MS. LUCIE SANDY: I really wanted to know who
that police officer was. So I went to the police station. No one heard me come through the door when I arrived.

I went towards the garage, where the cell was, and I heard my daughter scream, “I want to talk to my mother, I want to talk to my mother!” And the police officer was there, he was laughing. And I asked him, “What are you doing? Are you making fun of my daughter?” And they told me, “You have no right to be here. You have no right.” I said, “Yes, of course I have the right to be here. That’s my daughter.”

She heard me say that to the police officer. She said, “Mom, they’re tough on me.” “What did they do?” I said. There was a non-native white police officer, he threw me to the ground and they closed the door.

And I went to see the police officer. One of them was holding me and I told him, “Don’t grab me. I didn’t touch you.” Then he locked the door. They forced me to leave the police station. And I said, “No, I’ll be back.” And then I left. My other daughter was at home. I told her, “I’ll be back in a while.”

And I went to the house of one of the Naskapi police officers and told him “come;” I told him what happened. He went to the police station. My daughter was in the other cell. He had switched her from one cell to another. And I told the police officer, “They’re not going
to believe me.” He went to see my daughter; he went to talk to her.

**ME KEN ROCK:** And what happened next?

**MS. LUCIE SANDY:** And then they took her by plane later in May. They flew her to Sept-Îles. She was handcuffed; she was on a stretcher, as if she had done something wrong, as if she had killed someone. It was a Monday or a Tuesday when they took her by plane. And I left on a Friday to see my daughter in Sept-Îles. And Gloria was a little girl.

**ME KEN ROCK:** (Speaking Indigenous language)

**MS. LUCIE SANDY:** So I went to see my daughter at the hospital and give her what I had bought for her. But I didn’t like where she was staying. She was in the psychiatric ward. And I said, “I don’t like it that you put her there.” And then the nurse arrived. And I asked the nurse, “Why is she here?” The only people who are in that ward are the people, the people who want to kill themselves.

And I told my daughter, “What did they do to you here?” She said, “They gave me medication.” I said, “What medications?” “So I don’t have to think.” And I told her, “Don’t take that medication they’re giving you. They give you something; if they give you something, throw it away. And she said, “Every time I take it, I sleep and I
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don’t notice the day go by.”

And I didn’t want to go home. I stayed at
the hotel. It was a Sunday. She came to my hotel room.

ME KEN ROCK: (Speaking Indigenous language)

MS. LUCIE SANDY: Yes, she was released from
the hospital. They wanted her father to pick her up from
the hospital. He helped her leave the hospital and she came
to see me and I took care of her. And I said, “Let’s go
home.”

ME KEN ROCK: And what happened afterwards?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: It was around June when she
called me. I was at home, doing the laundry. I was
downstairs. So she called and cried, she was crying. I
said, “What’s going on?” And she said, “I was raped.” And I
said, “Who did this? We have to call the police.” She
hadn’t even called the police yet, but she wanted to tell
me this story. And then Gloria came to talk to her. I had
no money, I couldn’t leave. We had just returned from Sept-
Îles. But then she called the police and the police did
nothing.

ME KEN ROCK: The Innu police officers?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: Yes.

ME KEN ROCK: But you were already in Kawawa?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: Yes, I had already come

back in May. But she was raped in June. And then someone
called me again. It was, the police had arrived at my
house, they went in, but I had already left for work, so I
turned back and went straight to my house.

It was the non-Indigenous police officer,
she went into the house. She should have at least said,
“Sit down; I need to tell you something.” Or she could have
invited someone, but I thought, well, graduation is coming
up this weekend so I thought, “Maybe one of my children has
been drinking.” And then she said -- She was totally
unprofessional. They said, “Someone found your daughter.
She committed suicide. She hung herself.”

ME KEN ROCK: Do you remember what date it
was when the police came to see you?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: It was June 22.

ME KEN ROCK: Which officer was it?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: It was a white woman who
worked for Kawawa (ph).

ME KEN ROCK: And what happened afterwards?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: That’s all I remember. I
called my sisters Gloria and Diane. And, after that, I
don’t remember anything. I don’t even remember going to
Sept-Îles. All I remember is that at one point I was
already in a hotel.

ME KEN ROCK: Did the police come back to see
you in Sept-Îles?
MS. LUCIE SANDY: An awful guy, I asked him questions, but some of my questions he couldn’t even answer. He couldn’t even tell me what I wanted to know.

ME KEN ROCK: What did the police say during the investigation?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: They immediately said it was a suicide. But I don’t think my daughter committed suicide. I don’t think so. The police officer I met, showed me a document, he showed me a document in French. And I said, “No! I want to see a document in English.” And they wrote the reports in English afterwards.

ME KEN ROCK: Which officer?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: It was Guy Olivier, I believe that was his name, Guy Olivier.

ME KEN ROCK: This was on the reserve in Uashat?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: Yes.

ME KEN ROCK: And there was an Innu police officer who met with you?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: I met with Guy Olivier. And in the report, what they wrote: in her bag, they found her address and they found her Puma bag. In the report they didn’t write anything about finding a knife in her backpack.

ME KEN ROCK: How do you think they cut the
straps on the backpack?

**MS. LUCIE SANDY:** He wanted to show me the pictures he had taken and the social worker stopped him. If someone - it was Andrea Tshernish (ph) who found her. He also didn’t believe that my daughter had committed suicide. I thought it showed that the police didn’t do their job.

My daughter, she was an Indigenous woman and he was a non-Indigenous man. He was a white man. I always thought it wasn’t important to them, whether it was an Indigenous person or not. When it is someone who is not Indigenous, then they investigate, they complete the investigation. And when it’s an Indigenous person, well, it never seems to be complete.

**ME KEN ROCK:** The police officer, Guy Olivier, you’re talking about, was there another officer who investigated?

**MS. LUCIE SANDY:** No.

**ME KEN ROCK:** Is he the only one who met you?

**MS. LUCIE SANDY:** There was another officer behind him, but I don’t know who he was. He was a Montagnais, a Montagnais officer. That was in February.

Since my daughter is no longer with us, no one has given me any support. There is no support.

**ME KEN ROCK:** Did your daughter have any problems? Did she try to straighten out her life?
MS. LUCIE SANDY: Yes, once she went for therapy in Montréal. And she even said at the time, “Why would I kill myself? I have children.” She left in December for therapy, she came back, but she never talked about the fact that she wouldn’t want to be in this world. She loved her children very much. She even wanted to finish high school.

ME KEN ROCK: How old was she at the time?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: She was 21 years old.

ME KEN ROCK: Where did she attend school?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: At JSMS.

ME KEN ROCK: And the police officers, when they met you, you said earlier Andrea Tshernish (ph) found your daughter.

MS. LUCIE SANDY: And it was during his walk, his morning walk that he found my daughter. But he didn’t notice until he got close to the area. Then he wanted the police officers -- to say that there was someone sleeping there.

ME KEN ROCK: Did they meet with him?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: No, he was never questioned. They didn’t even bother to question him.

ME KEN ROCK: The coroner’s inquests, the public inquiry, were you there? Did you go?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: Yes.
ME KEN ROCK: Can you tell us anything?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: It was only in French. There was no English at all, very little English, but I had someone who translated for me.

And in the end, the coroner asked me if I had more questions, any more questions. And I asked him, asked the coroner, “Why was it reported as a suicide? Was it really verified? Has everything been verified?” Did he go to the scene where my daughter was found? And I even told the coroner, “When it’s a non-Indigenous person, we do a full investigation, but when it’s an Indigenous person, we never complete the investigation.”

ME KEN ROCK: What did the coroner say, after all that? What was the conclusion of his report, the report on your daughter?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: That’s what he said, that it was a suicide, that my daughter committed suicide. And he wanted to close the investigation. And I said, “No, I have the right to keep the investigation open.”

ME KEN ROCK: You mentioned earlier that she was raped. What happened?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: They told my daughter, they took a statement, they told her, “We’ll take care of you, we’ll find the one who attacked you,” but they never did. He remained at large. He was never arrested.
ME KEN ROCK: Is there anything else you want to add?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: I would like to ask that this be taken seriously when it is an Indigenous woman, when something happens. When there is support. Formal investigations must also be completed.

I found it very difficult to keep my grandson. Sometimes he asks about his mother. And I told him, “Your mother is in heaven,” and we say prayers for her. But he always asks me questions about his mother.

ME KEN ROCK: It’s very difficult, your situation. Do you have any recommendations, anything you want to share?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: For me, my recommendation would be: well, what we are going through, I know that there are other families, other families who are certainly going through the same thing. And I think we must consider the children, children who have no family, we must offer them consideration, we must offer help. We must try to see how we can offer them support.

MS. GLORIA SANDY: There should be help. Where there are children in daycare centres, in schools and also where they live, in their home. It takes a whole community to make a child feel good, to make the child feel good in their skin. There are many needs and we have to
figure out how we can help people. That’s where I have
expectations. I would like to know where we’re going. You
have to figure out how to read a book, read it to a child.
Well, that’s something we need to talk about in our
communities.

My sister’s grandson, he goes to school now. In two years’
time, the little girl will go to school. And
that’s where I think there should be a lot of help for the
children. I think that a child must be a leader and that it
is the child who must lead, who must lead us.

And there are many problems. When someone
tries to find support, they are always refused. We are
told, “No, we can’t find a way to help you.” But I would
appreciate it if the government was aware of this, if they
could provide support to communities, not put children on
the back burner. Everyone needs help.

From what I have heard here today, people’s
difficulties are very serious. We offer you our truths that
you are hearing, but we want something in return so that we
have strength. We want answers so that we can continue to
move forward. It is very daunting for a person to speak
about their suffering.

But once we’ve told our stories, what
happened to us, it becomes easier. And we are always ready
to receive answers. And we want to hear that it’s not
always going to be like that for men, for women, for children. We want to know that there is respect. That’s what I think.

ME KEN ROCK: And for you Lucie?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: Same thing.

ME KEN ROCK: Same thing, same thing she said.

I would like to submit as an exhibit the expert report on the crime scene, it is a document, a report dated --

MS. LUCIE SANDY: When they put her in the coffin, and I was next to it, my aunt was there, and my aunt, she told me -- “Look - I told her - look at my daughter, there is a line down here”, but I thought, “If someone commits suicide, the line would be higher. But on her, the line is lower.” And I looked at her fingers, it seemed like she had to fight or scratch someone. And I think she was assaulted. When I looked at her hands --

(CHANGE OF INTERPRETER, A FEW WORDS LOST.)

And then I said, “No, it’s not a suicide.” “Someone strangled your daughter - he said - someone strangled your daughter and she was struggling for her life.” Then he gave me the number of the medical examiner. Everything was in French. And then I said in English “Can you send me something in English?” And they said, “There’s
no one here to do the translation into English.”

I was not happy when I saw the condition of her hands. There was no care; her nail polish was not well applied because she is an Indigenous girl. But when it comes to a non-Indigenous person, they take great care of the body, of the corpse. But when it comes to an Indigenous person, they are less careful.

And I don’t believe the reports.

**ME KEN ROCK:** As I was saying, I would like to submit these exhibits: Crime Scene UMM150622.001. It is an exhibit, the first document I submit as an exhibit.

Another one, a statement from Sébastien Vollant, the same file number as the one I have already provided, and I would like to submit the report of the coroner’s or medical examiner’s inquest report, a public inquiry, which conducted the inquiry into the suicide deaths of five Innu people in this community. And the conclusion for these five cases was suicide, and her daughter is part of this report. So I would like to submit these documents as exhibits, evidence and documents.

Do you have any questions?

**CHIEF COMMISSIONNER MARION BULLER:** I have a few questions. There’s a very nice picture.

**ME KEN ROCK:** The interpreter cannot hear the Commissioner clearly.
CHIEF COMMISSIONNER MARION BULLER: There we go; we had to turn on the microphone.

There is a very nice picture that is displayed on the screen. How old was Alicia when this picture was taken?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: In the picture, she was 20 years old. She died at the age of 21.

CHIEF COMMISSIONNER MARION BULLER: Where did Alicia live, or maybe not where she lived, but where was she when she said she was raped?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: Here in Sept-Îles.

CHIEF COMMISSIONNER MARION BULLER: All right. Thank you, that was it for my questions.

COMMISSIONNER MICHELE AUDETTE: I don’t know, Mr. Rock, what happened, maybe the battery in my interpretation system wasn’t working so I missed something.

When the police were investigating in Kawawach, did they conduct an investigation or did they ask questions of the person who allegedly found your daughter? No?

ME KEN ROCK: No, the investigation was conducted here in Uashat, but the Kawawachikamach police went to meet her and told her that they had found her daughter and that she was dead. So it was the Kawawa police officer who told her, because she was in Kawawa at the
COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay, thank you. And when they spoke to you, you were talking about the issue of English, French, you were reading English, as a second language, right, not French. So everything was provided to you and your family in French? Was there someone who was there with you to help you understand?

Ms. LUCIE SANDY: Yes, there was a translator.

COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And later, did you receive a written report in English?

MS. LUCIE SANDY: Yes, in the mail.

COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Do we have that copy, Mr. Rock, in English?

MEKEN ROCK: The crime scene expert report is in English.

COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: All right, thank you very much.

I am very much in favour of healing and resolution, which is called closure. We need answers, whether it is for small incidents or tragedies. We, and I will repeat, wherever we go, when a family and a survivor share with us what happened to their loved one, this is not a trial here, we are not in court, we do not have specific mandates or capacity, competencies, we are not the police.
We cannot do what the police should have done (investigate, all that), but we strongly believe that with the expertise of our lawyers and of course our colleagues who, before being appointed Commissioners, are, were lawyers, have that background, that experience that I do not have. So we really have very interesting discussions at the end of each day. And we want to make sure we share the information.

Slowly, but still quite quickly, we are building something because we are talking about many truths that have been shared since we began, in a very short time. To be strong and prepared when the institutional phase takes place, with reports, information, etc., it is important for us to build the right questions and ask them correctly. We still have FILU (ph)? What is it in French? ULIQ (ph)?

**ME KEN ROCK:** UQLIF (ph).

**COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** UQLIF. What is the word they use in English?

**ME KEN ROCK:** I don’t know.

**COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay

Have you met them? Did they meet with you? Did they sit with you, the unit for liaison between families?

**MS. GLORIA SANDY:** No, we haven’t met them. But we intend to; we have talked about it a lot. We are
looking for any form of help, any form of help; we are looking for anything that could help us. Even if it takes time, we’re looking for help. We are patient; we want to receive this help.

COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: My last question: when you heard the sad news, who was there to support you on a spiritual, mental, emotional level?

MS. GLORIA SANDY: In fact, the first person to receive the news was my sister. And, as she mentioned before, she was alone and the police officer came to see her and her grandson was there. He was probably 3 years old, 2, 3 years old, yes, in those days. And I know it must have been devastating to hear that kind of news.

And I think it would have been helpful to have asked for help from someone in the community, a community worker, a social worker or a nurse, a nurse, some form of medical attention, even a priest, someone, to have someone else there to share that kind of information. It’s not right to just say it outright like that without any sensitivity.

There was no support until the family arrived. When I was at work, they brought me into the office and they told me I had to leave right away. So I understood that there was something wrong. There were all
kinds of ideas going through my mind and I was trying to
guess and I was thinking to myself “I hope nothing bad
happened.”

And when I went to her house, she was
screaming. At first, I had no idea what was going on
because I didn’t even understand what she was saying. I was
watching, and there was no one there to support her. And my
parents, my sisters, my brothers finally came.

These kinds of tragedies, everyone should be
informed. Every community needs to be informed, I think.
This issue needs to be addressed. And we should see to it
immediately. When you lose someone, even in an accident,
there should be a team, a team of people who are ready to
be on standby, who are on call and who are there to support
grieving families, no matter what the situation. And we
haven’t seen anything of the sort. And I know that there
are many professionals in the community. And that I think
we have to address this, there has to be a team dedicated
to this kind of thing.

**COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** We will
conclude here.

**ME KEN ROCK:** Could we ask for an
adjournment?

**COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Yes, thank
you Me Rock.
ME KEN ROCK: Thank you.

COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And ask our kukum, our grandmothers, to come in front.

MS. GLORIA SANDY: I would like to say something.

COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Yes.

MS. GLORIA SANDY: I would like to thank all of you. Thank you for listening to our stories. And on behalf of our family, I would like to thank you because talking about it again helps us, expressing ourselves, feels good. It helps us to heal a little bit, to come to some kind of resolution. Obviously, I know it’s going to take a long time, but thank you.

COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Thank you. On behalf of the National Commission of Inquiry, we have grandmothers from Sechelt, British Columbia. Yes, grandmothers who harvested these eagle feathers along the Salmon River. It is for you, to give you strength, to give you love, to support you.

MR. LOUIS-GEORGES FONTAINE: (Speaking in Innu language). Now, for the day, we will adjourn the meeting and go to the sacred fire. I would like to invite our grandfather. So we’re going to leave from here and go there. We will walk towards the sacred fire to close the week, this week we spent together. And we will go towards
this sacred fire. It has been maintained 24 hours a day.

Now we will ask our grandfather Grégoire, along with Lucien St-Onge and other people who made sure the fire kept burning, so I’m going to ask the grandfather to come on up.

The fire goes out slowly.

They’re going to take this to Thunder Bay when they start the next hearings.

There is a closing ceremony then immediately after the encouraging testimonies from the ladies, the Neskapies of Kawawa. We will have a closing ceremony and also put out the sacred fire, and then the ashes will be transported to Thunder Bay for the next hearings in Thunder Bay, Ontario. So this is going to be our ceremony and there’s an Elder, Mr. Grégoire Kanapewho, who will be doing the closing, the closing of the (speaking in Innu language).

Grégoire, can you come here? Take your time. We are waiting for you. You will be able to explain the procedures for closing the ceremony and the time, the schedule.

(SONG)

MR. LOUIS-GEORGES FONTAINE: (Speaking in Innu language), the Commission and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (Speaking in Innu language). So this is our closing of the
week in regards to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. So I ask, people can participate in the closing, a dance and we do a procession to the sacred tent where they have tended to the sacred fire. So I give the floor to our Elder, Mr. Grégoire Kanape.

MR. GRÉGOIRE KANAPE: Kuei. Hello everyone, close your eyes and clap your hands. A little humor to finish. So as we were saying earlier, before closing here in the room, we would like to express some thanks for everything that has happened here this week.

So we will start right away by thanking the families, the survivors who testified and all those who supported and accompanied them; the community of Maliotenam for its warm welcome; the community hall and its team for offering us this beautiful place; the spiritual church with all the traditions that accompanied us this week; the Elders, the caregivers, the supporters who were present every day; the members of the health team for their support; the presenters who spoke to us between each narrative; the drummers, the singers who helped the families to enter with honour; the translators who helped us understand Innu-Aimun, Naskapi, French and English; the Tshakapesh Institute for their cultural support; the banik and herbal tea (speaking in Innu language) - that’s not
written - the banik and the herbal tea; the fire keepers, it’s important to mention them, the fire keepers, they were present twenty-four hours; after the fire keepers, the ones who helped to prepare the tipi; the dancers, the jingle dress dancers who opened with us on Sunday evening; the Tipinuaikan Centre (ph) for their lantern ceremony yesterday; the Maison de la famille for their hospitality; the caterers for our good meals; Noëlle, a volunteer who made coffee, tea, snacks; Minibus Fontaine for the shuttle services every day; the media who now have the responsibility to spread the truth; the list is long; the technical team; the lawyers, logistics; the commissioners and their grandmothers; and the members of the family advisory circle who listened to us; Charles Api who opened with his teueikan and his wife Marie-Angèle. We are with them.

Okay, since we started with the teueikan, we’re also going to end here in the room with the teueikan. During the four days, that teueikan accompanied me, but I didn’t use it because there was already a teueikan in the room, that was the teueikan of our friend Charles. And that’s what we do out of respect, right? When there’s a teueikan like that, well, we let the host teueikan do the job. And I had my other drum.
Earlier, well, I went to get my teueikan to sing a song for you, and those who want to dance don’t be shy, and this is how it’s going to go, I’ll sing you a song and then, well, I invite you all to go to the tipi.

In the tipi, our brother Lucien is waiting for us there. We’re going to be there too. And how is that going to unfold? There are prayers that were hung at the very beginning. We are going to take these prayers, then we are going to put them in the fire, all the tears that have flowed during these five or six days, here, well, all these things, the prayers, they are impregnated, our colours there are impregnated with these things, these prayers, we will put them in the fire. And, likely, everyone who wants to, will offer tobacco to the fire and after everyone has passed, well, we’ll close the tipi and the fire will go out on its own.

Surely, before doing all these things, we will take the ashes of this fire that was lit here and put them down and we were given a small bottle containing all the ashes since the commission began. Shortly in Thunder Bay, well, they’re going to light a fire with these ashes. That’s how it will go.

(DANSE, SINGING AND DRUMMING)

--- EXIBITS (Code: P01P07501)
Exhibit 1: Declaration of Sébastien Vollant (English translation), Event number UMM-150622-001 (one page)

Exhibit 2: Expert report – Crime scene “Death by suicide by hanging” Victim Alicia Grace Sandy, Event number UMM-150622-001, (English translation) (four pages)

Exhibit 3: Coroner’s investigative report regarding the death of Ms. Alicia Grace Sandy inter alia, (48 pages)

Exhibit 4: Images displayed on the screens during the public hearing

--- Upon adjourning at 3:30 p.m
TRANSCRIPTION CERTIFICATE*

I, Véronique Olivier, certify that this is a true transcript and in accordance with the digital recording provided for this hearing.

________________________
Véronique Olivier

March 8, 2018

* This certificate refers to the original transcript in French.