National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Statement Gathering
Thunder Bay, Ontario

Tuesday December 5, 2017
Statement - Volume 166
Diane Geissler,
In relation to Kathleen McGinnis
Statement gathered by Alana Lee

INTERNATIONAL REPORTING INC.
41-5450 Canotek Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K1J 9G2
E-mail: info@irri.net – Phone: 613-748-6043 – Fax: 613-748-8246
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Documents submitted with testimony: none.
Statement – Public
Diane Geissler
(Kathleen McGinnis)

--- Upon commencing on Tuesday, December 5, 2017, at 6:22 p.m.

MS. ALANA LEE: This is Alana Lee, Statement Gatherer, with the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. It is November, or sorry, December 5th, 2017. It is currently 6:22 p.m. We are at the Best Western Inn in Thunder Bay, Ontario, here with Diane Geissler. Diane Geissler.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Geissler.

MS. ALANA LEE: Sorry?

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Geissler.

MS. ALANA LEE: Geissler, Diane Geissler, and she’s here to talk about her late mother Kathleen McGinnis and, Diane, you’re here on a voluntary basis.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Yes.

MS. ALANA LEE: Yeah, to provide a statement --

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Yes.

MS. ALANA LEE: -- okay. And you were part of the public hearing yesterday?

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Yesterday, yes.

MS. ALANA LEE: Also in the room we have with us Diane’s husband. Would you state your name?

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: Yes, Wolf Geissler.
MS. ALANA LEE: And we have health support as well.

MS. TERREA HARRIS: Terrea Harris (ph).

MS. ALANA LEE: And again, you -- you agreed to have it video and audio recorded?

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Yes.

MS. ALANA LEE: Okay, perfect. Diane, what would you like the Commissioners to know? What would you like to tell us?

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Well, I know yesterday I gave some -- some part of a statement, but because it was so public I didn’t really finish --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- and it was so emotional I didn’t get to really finish my thoughts. I worked up to when my mother was killed, and what she was doing on the highway at the time that she was struck and killed.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And the fact that I have the medical examiner’s report. The difficulty of getting the report, and the fact that it was -- a lot of it was blacked out.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: But I kind of ended
there so I wanted to kind of continue from that point. We know how she died --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- she was struck by a vehicle. But it was the circumstances of her being there that were -- that are so mixed up and the fact that no full autopsy was done --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- because the examiner said it wasn’t required because she was intoxicated and --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- but they just -- there was so many contradictions between the police report and the autopsy that even just looking at it that’s what I wanted really to -- to -- it -- the report left more questions than anything.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: The police reported that she was dressed for the weather, but when they did the autopsy they say -- when they -- they -- they listed her belongings and they listed her as having a blouse, pair of pants, pair of panties and socks.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: It was April 5th, or April 4th, 1978 outside of Calgary, Alberta.
MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Where’s her shoes?

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Where’s her jacket? We looked at the weather report for that area, and it was minus degrees at night time and it was snowing just the day before.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And yet, the police say she’s dressed for the weather, but the -- but the coroner said she doesn’t have that on her body.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Which -- which one didn’t do their job or which one --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- you know, what is left, that the two contradict each other and it -- it -- to me that’s baffling. Like, you would expect to have some kind of shoes on her feet --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- and a jacket or -- and -- and I just -- it -- and that’s something that, you know, I don’t know if that’s in with the part that was blacked out but --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.
MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- it’s certainly not in there.

MS. ALANA LEE: Yeah.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Witnesses say she doesn’t smell of alcohol and she didn’t appear drunk, yet --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- when they do the autopsy --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- they claim she is intoxicated and when they do the -- the blood report, yes. They did a toxicology report and it does say that she has alcohol in her system, quite a high amount of alcohol in her system.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And when I look at that and I looked -- again, I looked on the internet too -- for her weight it was a very high amount of alcohol in her system that to me, I think one more drink and she probably would have been --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- you know, dead from alcohol poisoning.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.
MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And I’m looking at that going --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- how did she get to this highway that is nothing around it but corn fields and wheat fields.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: There’s no houses, there’s no bars, there’s no nothing.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And yet she’s in the -- she’s in here with no shoes, no jacket --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- and to me that -- that just -- and it’s not investigated -- or it’s not shown in the investigation.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: They took the -- like I said, there’s some statements there, some of them are totally blacked out and the first guy -- one statement is the first person who stopped for her.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And he says he drove by and he turned around to come back and there’s a semi behind him and he thinks the semi clips her.
MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And the semi does stop. But nobody calls, I know they don’t have cell phones but he had -- the semi had a CB and nobody calls. Four cars stop and nobody calls for help. It’s when the fifth car strikes her and kills her, then they call the police to come.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Not until she’s dead?

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: To me that’s, you know --

MS. ALANA LEE: Raises a lot of questions.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: It does. They say the first -- that -- that one statement says she’s -- she appears agitated and every time someone stops she goes back on the highway to flag down another vehicle.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: That’s not the behavior of someone who’s -- I don’t know, in their right mind.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm. M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And -- and that’s something that’s not explained in these reports and then to have it say that -- the -- it’s just so confusing.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: That when they say I
know she’s listed as a, you know, pedestrian accident but
-- and that’s something that the family said when they
looked. My aunt who is -- she said that in her mind she
believes that she was dumped there.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And she told me that at
the time she remembers that they were looking for a
vehicle. None of that’s in the report that I got.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: So what family
remembers from that and from what I’ve handed in this piece
of paper, there are so many blanks and so many
contradictions she -- I don’t believe that she was -- in --
in my heart, I don’t believe that she was just hitchhiking
and got struck.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: I think there’s more to
this story than -- than what they’ve given me.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm. And how did you come
about this information?

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: It -- well, I guess
that I’ve -- I’ve -- was always curious about my birth
family and I did find out my birth name in 1991 and --
through my husband pushing me, guiding me, pushing me and
then I found -- I found out who my birth mother was, but I
couldn’t really -- nobody would really talk about her back then.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm. M’hm.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** Now I understand why.

You know, when I found but -- and then, like I said, about 2005 when the computers were more advanced and you got the internet, I decided to put her name in the search engine and I typed the name -- her name in the search engine. That’s when it popped up that she was on the Highway for Tears.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm. M’hm.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** And she was listed as murdered.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** And that’s all the information -- again, it was like I just stopped.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** To me it was -- I didn’t know what to think or -- I just remember thinking: Oh, my God.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** But, again, I couldn’t -- and then I -- that’s when I realized. I thought, no wonder they didn’t want to talk about her and how -- how do I, as her daughter, come to them and say: What happened?
Tell me about my mom’s murder.

 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm.

 **MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** I just, I couldn’t. I couldn’t get up the courage to do it and I didn’t even know if -- I knew they didn’t talk about it back in ‘91 so I didn’t know whether -- would they be willing to share now.

 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah, (indiscernible).

 **MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** And how do you -- hurt -- the family.

 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah.

 **MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** How do you pressure a family to talk about their murdered sister and aunt?

 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah.

 **MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** And --

 **MR. WOLF GEISSLER:** When they already had two in the family that was --

 **MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** And there was two more sisters, so there was three sisters all together on that list.

 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm.

 **MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** My mother was the first one to pass away and then her two sisters also. Another sister -- my mom in April in ’78 and her sister in November of ’78, and then another sister here in Thunder Bay years later. And how do you go to the family and say: Tell me
about it.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: When part of me wasn’t even sure if I --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- if they even accepted me or that I was part of them.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And how do you tell them to -- tell me about it now.

MS. ALANA LEE: Yes. Let me ask -- tell -- tell us a little bit more about that ‘cause, before we got the camera and audio rolling, you had mentioned -- or you had just mentioned your birth family. So can you say a little bit more about that? So you were adopted out when you were younger?

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: I was -- my mother was a teenager and she was in residential school.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And my father was a few years older than her and he was part of the residential school also but she became pregnant and had me and from what I find out, I actually got in -- I was in contact with a women that’s -- funny story, she -- she runs a restaurant, and my husband and I have a cabin and we often
would stop at the restaurant ‘cause it’s on our way, it’s three hours from Thunder Bay so it’s half-way point, so we’d stop, have coffee or -- or a meal. And one time when we were there and we were talking and she mentioned how I looked so familiar --

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** -- and I mentioned who my birth family was that’s when she realized that she actually had known my birth mother. My birth mother used to babysit her.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** So --

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** Yeah, my birth mother babysat her and she says she remembered her babysitting her when she was pregnant with me.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** And how my mother was so looking forward to being a mother and she could hardly wait to have the baby and be a mother.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** And when I was born I lived with my mother and her parents.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** A traditional lifestyle
from what I understand and they had a trap line and lived
from the land --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- hunting, fishing,
and they lived on the reserve.

MS. ALANA LEE: What reserve?

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Rainy River First
Nation, Manitou Rapids and one -- they -- they would often
go in once a month to Fort Frances to do groceries --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- to get any, you
know, groceries, supplement groceries that they needed and
one day my mother had gone in with her -- with her mother
and her sisters to do grocery shopping and because of the
distance they would often -- sometimes would stay overnight
just depending upon the ride and --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- ‘cause it was --
even though it’s what 30 kilometers, in the 60’s
transportation wasn’t so easily and sometimes they had to
walk --

MS. ALANA LEE: Yeah.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- so they would stay
overnight and come home the next -- so they’d gone in
grocery shopping and it was after they’d left I guess
Children and Family Services came and apprehended my brother and I.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** We were staying with my grandfather and my uncle and they were the ones who were taking care of us, and they apprehended us and I was adopted quite quickly.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** I wasn’t in foster care, I was adopted I think almost immediately.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** My mother was from what my aunts and uncle and cousins had said was that she was quite devastated and my mother never went on to have any more children. It was just my brother and I, she never -- never forgot about us and never stopped looking for us.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** She loved us.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** And that’s the hard part.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** I will never know my mother. I don’t even know what she looks like. There aren’t any pictures of her other than of her as a baby in
one of those little carry -- wooden carriers -- the
bundled --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- things -- I don’t
even know what they’re called. But there’s a picture of
her in that.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And you can’t even see
her face. You see her, because it’s a black and white
magazine photograph.

MS. ALANA LEE: Oh, okay.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: It was an article and
the picture was part of that article, so it was photocopied
from the original magazine, and so you can’t really even
see her features. You just -- I just was --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- that was her and --
but I have no idea what she looks like, what she looked
like at all and I never -- I will never get to know.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And so for what I’ve
known is what I’ve read in -- in the paperwork.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And, sorry.

MS. ALANA LEE: Oh, it’s okay. Just you
take -- take a couple of deep breaths, have a drink of
water if you like.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** I mentioned yesterday
that in 2014 our family was approached by a newspaper
reporter.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** David Bruser from the
Toronto Star. He was doing -- he wanted to do an article
on the Highway for Tears Missing and Murdered Women, and he
came across the three sisters’ names, so he approached our
family and asked us if he could do an article and I agreed
to be part of that article. And that was -- it was through
his help that -- I was always told that she passed away in
B.C. so when I tried to google her in B.C., we couldn’t
find anything on her.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** And it was -- that was
when David Bruser had mentioned that she had actually
passed away in Alberta, not B.C.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** She was on her way to
B.C.

**MR. WOLF GEISSLER:** (Indiscernible) in that
report that he had.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** There was no report --
was no name but he -- but then I googled the Calgary Herald
and that’s where I found her -- a small little couple lined
obituary of her.

   MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

   MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And the date that it
says that she passed away we could correlate with the
article that she was a victim of a highway accident.

   MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

   MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And he said that he
found out that there was a medical examiner’s report on her
and he suggested that I look to see if I could get that
report.

   MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

   MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And when I first
contacted them they looked it up, they found her report and
said: Oh, yeah, we have a report. Now, you have to
formally apply for it and they had the file on -- on the
desk and so I said: Well, how do I do that? And they
said: Oh, you have to send us your birth certificate.

   MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

   MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And I said: Well,
that’s not going to help because on my birth certificate it
lists my adoptive parents.

   MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

   MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And that’s when they
told me I had no right to that information, because I --
she gave me up for adoption. I was no longer her child --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- so I had no right to it. And that’s when I told them that that wasn’t right
because I was not given up, she did not give me up. I was taken, and at no time did she sign away her rights to me --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- you know --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- that --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- that she didn’t sign away anything.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm. When in fact you were part of the 60’s Scoop is what you were (indiscernible).

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: I was -- I was part of the Scoop.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: The woman that I had spoke with, she said that, and I mentioned this yesterday off the record, she could tell me that if I presented my birth registration which they were now opening up -- people could ask for their birth registrations then -- she said:
If I could find -- get a copy of that then -- then they
might accept that instead of the birth certificate.

    MS. ALANA LEE:  M’hm.

    MS. DIANE GEISSLER:  And I did I -- I
applied for her -- my birth registration and that piece of
paper -- how do you explain it, my mother’s writing, her
handwriting --

    MS. ALANA LEE:  M’hm.

    MS. DIANE GEISSLER:  -- her signature.  This
was a part of her that I was finally given.  That’s
something I will cherish forever.  She filled it out, she
signed it.  I finally had a piece of her, something I never
had before and I sent a copy of it in and they did send me
her -- the medical examiner’s report and finally 2014 from
’63 to 2014, I finally had a piece of my mother.  Part of
her, a description.

    MS. ALANA LEE:  M’hm.

    MS. DIANE GEISSLER:  Yes, a very gruesome
description but a description of how tall she was, how much
she weighed, scars, tattoos, piercings.  There, finally a
piece that I could say my mother was this tall and she
weighed this much.  Similar to my middle daughter, same
height, same weight and I’m thinking, finally, I can put an
image --

    MS. ALANA LEE:  M’hm.

    MS. DIANE GEISSLER:  -- I mean I can’t put a
facial image, but all of a sudden from nothing to --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- I can imagine a shape. You know, at the beginning of the Inquiry when they were talking about the red dress and they said: Imagine your loved one, I couldn’t.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: I can’t, I can’t imagine her in that dress because I don’t know what she looked like. People say that they don’t know what this Inquiry -- if it’ll be any good. But if these stories aren’t even told, how can you stop them. How can you stop another girl, woman, from going through this? How can you stop other children from growing up not knowing?

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: That’s what I want. I don’t know if I will ever know the true story. But if they never know part of the story, how can they stop them from happening and that’s what I believe in. I believe this Inquiry to help stop this from happening --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- from a police looking at a woman and saying: Oh, she’s just a drunk Indian, we don’t need to find out what happened to her. That’s not the legacy my mom is leaving behind.
MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: She was a woman, she was a mother, she was a sister and an aunt. That’s what needs to be left behind from her. This Inquiry has given me my family --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- that’s what it’s done. Those cousins that I sat with yesterday, until this Inquiry I wasn’t --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- I didn’t feel like I was part of the family, that’s what this Inquiry has given me, my family.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: That’s why they would support me and we have to continue. I hope there’s an extension -- there’s talk that they want to try to get an extension, I hope it’s an extension.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Because they need to continue --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- giving us our family back.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.
MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Sorry.

MS. ALANA LEE: That’s all right. Do you have any recommendations? I know you had mentioned some just --

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: I think part of -- part of it is that the -- these records should be opened up.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: You know, I wasn’t even given the original accident report, it is all whited out.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: That’s something the family should have been received, without any whiteout on it at all and I’m not given that. So give the information to the family.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Let the family know what’s happened to their loved ones.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Yes, it’s hard, but it’s harder not knowing. The police need to start treating with respect whether it’s missing, whether it’s death. The families, the investigation, it needs to be done respectfully. Just because traditions are different or -- or you know --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.
MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- it’s hard what I’m trying to say because I was not lived in the culture because there is traditions, there is -- police should be respecting that.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: When they go into these communities to talk to the families, they need to know that there may be traditions that they need to follow. There need -- you know what I’m -- and to respect the families themselves when the families say --

MS. ALANA LEE: (Indiscernible).

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- you know.

MS. ALANA LEE: Yeah.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: They need to be taught, especially if they’re policing in areas that have traditional reserves --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- and people, they need to learn how to treat and police in those areas. I know a lot of reserves are having their own police force now, but there are so many that like, live in the cities.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Just because we live in the cities, doesn’t mean that we’re not Anishinaabe.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.
MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And you know, so they need to start learning.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: When you think of the other cultures, and you think of Muslim and that, they treat them with respect --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- and they -- you know, they don’t -- and -- and that’s what they need to do with us, they need to treat us with respect.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And that’s what I hope this -- this Inquiry does, it needs to bring teaching.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: We’re part of Canada.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And that needs to be acknowledged and not -- not just acknowledged but actually part of --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- part of their laws, part of their, you know.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: I think that’s it, I’m not sure.
MS. ALANA LEE: Is there anything else you’d like to add, I see that you’re writing some notes.

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: I -- I know she wanted to (indiscernible) notes on the anomalies as to why if somebody would have looked at that accident report they would have said: There’s something not right here.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: And one of them, I will -- I made a -- kind of a list here. The fact that she didn’t have a backpack, do you want to comment on that? Because the family had --

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: She was hitchhiking from Thunder Bay to B.C. and like I said, her possessions, I mean --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- where’s her backpack, where’s her --

MS. ALANA LEE: Shoes.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- where’s her shoes, you know, where’s her -- yet, they found her ID.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And her ID had her name and address here in Thunder Bay.

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: And yet what did they do?
MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And yet, there’s a statement in that -- that paperwork saying that and I -- it doesn’t say who the people were --

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: They were trying to ID her; right?

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Saying they’re trying to ID her and they have an alias name for her, but where did that come from? Like, it’s totally out of left -- why would you even look for an alias when you already have her ID?

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And the family has confirmed her ID, but then all of a sudden, they find an alias and this person -- one statement in there says: We -- you know, it said we and then a blacked out name confirmed that this person was also known as and it gives an alias name. Well, why would you -- where did that come from? It’s not even explained. It’s just kind of thrown in as part of the -- why were they looking for an alias when they had her ID and had -- and had already contacted the family and the family confirmed her ID.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm. And so the documentation that you’re speaking of right now, I just want to make it clear for the record, that you did already put this -- this information has already been shared with
the Inquiry.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** Yes, I gave -- I gave
--- I gave the full medical examiners report --

**MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** -- to Jennifer Cox

(ph) --

**MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay. So --

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** -- who --

**MS. ALANA LEE:** -- legal.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** Yeah, who -- who
photocopied it --

**MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** -- and gave me back my
originals.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** And she gave copies to
both Commissioners.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay, okay. And so that was
the only documentation that you provided -- not the only
but that was medical report and --

**MR. WOLF GEISSLER:** Police report,

statements.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** Police, the -- that --

**MR. WOLF GEISSLER:** The summaries, that was
all that stuff, eh?
MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- that was all in that
and --

MS. ALANA LEE: Okay.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- I also provided my
birth registration --

MS. ALANA LEE: Okay.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- the letters from
Children and Family Services.

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: Your adoption order.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: My adoption order.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: So I provided all of
that.

MS. ALANA LEE: Okay.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: I also had
documentation on both my aunts --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- so I also provided
that documentation, what I had from both of their --

MS. ALANA LEE: Okay.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- from those --
what’s, you know --

MS. ALANA LEE: Okay.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- their cases, I
guess.
MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: You were going to comment on the -- the -- the fact that the people have stopped were all males and then --

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: M’hm. From what I can understand in -- in this statement, yeah, that -- that was part of it is when the first person who stopped, it was a male.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And he’s the one who said when he stopped and talked to her, she didn’t appear drunk and he couldn’t smell alcohol on her but she appeared agitated.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And then the truck driver who they thought clipped her was a male --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- and again, she wouldn’t -- when he tried to talk to her she flagged down the next person --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- and then he got out, she flagged down the next person, and when he got out she went back on the road to flag down another vehicle and they couldn’t keep her off the road.
MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And it was the fifth vehicle I think, that struck her.

MS. ALANA LEE: What do you think that means? What does that mean to you?

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: To me, when a woman is agitated and refused to accept help from a male --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- to me, that’s assault.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: She’s afraid of the males.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: She doesn’t trust them. No shoes and no jacket on.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And not letting these men near her.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm. M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: I mean it doesn’t say it, there was no rape examination done.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Part of it is the condition.
MR. WOLF GEISSLER: You wanted to comment --

okay, you wanted to comment on --

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: When the vehicle struck her, he admits to saying -- seeing the vehicles stopped on the side of the road. But he said: But I didn’t see her ‘cause she was in dark clothing. He struck her in the right-hand lane of the highway going 100 kilometers an hour.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: He never even slowed down for the vehicles that he saw on the side of the road.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm. M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: If those people were in trouble would you have not at least slowed down --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- or moved into the left-hand side of the lane.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: He never --

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: They said there were hazards, there were -- they all said they had hazards on.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- but he never slowed.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And he struck her going that hard.
MS. DIANE GEISSLER: So hard that her leg was torn at the hip and landed 150 meters from her body.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm. M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And no investigation is needed because she was intoxicated. This is a violent death.

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: Specifically, do you remember what the accident -- the toxicology report said? Was an investigation required: No, and then what was the comment at the top.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: I can’t remember.

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: No, it wasn’t -- it said: No, intoxicated Native. No investigation required because this was an intoxicated Native.

MS. ALANA LEE: It said that?

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: On the -- on the coroner’s report.

MS. ALANA LEE: Wow, and the inquiry has a copy of that?

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: Yeah, yeah.

MS. ALANA LEE: Okay.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: They identify her as Native.

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: And there was no charge,
this guy came blasting through there with all these
vehicles with their hazards on at 100 kilometers an hour
and they didn’t charge him with anything.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Pedestrian at fault.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: She at fault. No
investigation needed, no further investigation needed.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: I don’t know what they
blackout, but what they’ve given me, had this woman been
a white woman --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- they would never
have ended it this way, ever.

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: They would’ve either
tried to figure out where she came from, who dropped her
off, how she got there.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And those -- there
would have been charges. That -- those driver -- that
driver would have been charged.

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: And the truck driver.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And the truck driver.

He didn’t even report until after she was dead, that he hit
-- might have clipped her. And nobody got charged because
she was at fault.
MS. ALANA LEE: You had mentioned earlier that the inquiry has -- has -- in -- in a part that this process has helped you to get -- get your family back. What -- what else would you like to see from the inquiry? I know you’ve provided information but is there anything that you would like? I don’t know if there’s any way we can help assist with further information or anything like that. I know you probably had already had a conversation with legal but is there anything else that you would request and like to see?

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: I want an apology.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: From that police force.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm. Do you know what police force it was?

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: The RCMP.

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: Calgary.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Calgary.

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: Yeah.

MS. ALANA LEE: Calgary RCMP?

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: No.

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: No, it was the town next door.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: The town next door, Strath something or other, it lists it but an apology.
MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: An apology from the medical examiner’s office.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: No investigation needed because she is an intoxicated Native. I want an apology.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Had they done a further investigation would they have found out that she was raped?

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Would they have found more abrasions on her?

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: They say: She’s got abrasions all over her body, from being hit.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Somebody needs to look at these discrepancies, dressed for the weather.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: But not --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- not listed. I mean, even I can see that, if I see and I’m the investigating officer and I mark down oh she’s dressed for the weather but then the autopsy comes back, they all get a copy of
Diane Geissler
(Kathleen McGinnis)

that.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And it says that she doesn’t have shoes or a jacket on.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: I mean, immediately, doesn’t that send up a red flag, that the two reports are so contradictory?

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: But was she drinking or not, you know?

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Was she dressed for the weather or not?

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: Right.

MS. ALANA LEE: Right.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: She doesn’t smell of alcohol and doesn’t appear to be drunk, but the toxicology report comes back with -- I think it’s like 294 blood level and 304 urine level.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: That’s high.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: You know? And she was 110 pounds.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.
MR. WOLF GEISSLER: You were -- I know that you wanted to comment on the fact of how -- when they were put in a vulnerable position because of the residential school --

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: I think that’s --

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: -- and the 60’s Scoop.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- that’s --

MR. WOLF GEISSLER: Both (indiscernible) families.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: That’s part of it. I mean, they ask why -- you know, part of the inquiry was why is that statistic so high for -- when you think about it. She’s put in residential school and told -- and I’m going to use the terms that --

MS. ALANA LEE: Yeah.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- they would have used. You can’t be Indian anymore.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: That it’s savage and you can’t follow your traditions --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: -- that it’s a disgrace and often the children were abused and beaten because they would follow their religion. They’re told their families don’t want them anymore and then when she does find that
her family wants her and she has me, then she’s told: Oh, because you live a traditional lifestyle you can’t be a mother, you’re not good enough to be a mother. Not that she’s done anything wrong. She wasn’t drunk, she wasn’t on drugs, she wasn’t abusive. But because you choose to live a traditional lifestyle, you’re not fit to be a mother. And then you wonder why she’s in a vulnerable position.

She was not the disgrace, she was not the unfit. She needs an apology, that’s all I want because she’s dead and died at ’78. I couldn’t go through the residential school inquiry because she died before -- before the cut off. But she was still part of it and I -- I deserve an apology.

I want CAS to apologize for taking me and telling her was unfit to be a mother. I want an apology.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** And you had mentioned that it’s just now that you’ve started to learn your cultural traditions.

**MS. DIANE GEISSLER:** You know, it is -- it’s hard for me to step in and say: I’m an -- I’m Anishinaabe, I’m Ojibwe, because I have no idea what it means, none. And it’s really hard to learn. My adoptive family said first six months of my life, I never spoke, I never had emotion.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M’hm.
MS. DIANE GEISSLER: When I found my birth family, my uncle told me Anishinaabe Ojibwe was the only language spoken in the home.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: I didn’t know English, and yet I’m thrown into this family. They loved me, I never wanted for anything and I don’t fault them.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: But I had a mother who wasn’t at fault either and it’s so hard because how do I choose? I want to be with her, but I would never give up my adoptive family either because they were loving and kind. How do I choose? That has to stop and I’m hoping that’s what this inquiry does, it stops it. Race should not play a part in anything. If you measure a white woman’s worth, an Anishinaabe should be measured with that same ruler, and that’s what I want this inquiry. The same measurement, the same worth and the same respect. My mother deserves that. I deserve that. My daughters and grand-daughters deserve that. I can’t pass on the teachings and I can’t pass on the heritage, that was stripped from me and it’s hard being a 54 year old woman and having to learn things that an infant would learn.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: I never had a sweet
grass and I looked at it and said: What is this? I have
no idea what this even is.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Yet it was part of my
heritage, part of --

MS. ALANA LEE: Thank you. Thank you for
sharing that.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Thank you.

MS. ALANA LEE: Very crazy, very -- very
real. Very powerful words that you can say
(indiscernible).

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Thank you for listening
to me.

MS. ALANA LEE: Thank you for sharing.

Thank you.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And thank you for
giving me some respect back, that’s what I felt here at
this inquiry from those Commissioners was respect.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: And from you, and I
appreciate that.

MS. ALANA LEE: Thank you.

MS. DIANE GEISSLER: Because this is giving
me my mother, something that I never thought I’d have. So
thank you.
MS. ALANA LEE: It’s 7:10, and I -- we’re going to conclude.
--- Upon adjourning at 7:10 p.m.

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

I, Lynn Bailey, Court Transcriber, hereby certify that I have transcribed the foregoing and it is a true and accurate transcript of the digital audio provided in this matter.

Lynn Bailey
March 11, 2018