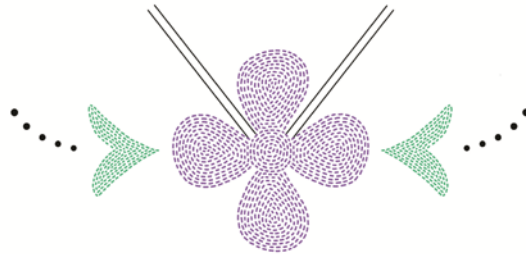


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



Enquête nationale
sur les femmes et les filles
autochtones disparues et assassinées

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Statement Gathering
Chateau Nova Hotel
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories**



PUBLIC

Tuesday January 23, 2018

Statement - Volume 201

Bertha Lennie, In relation to Mariella Lennie

Statement gathered by Marie-Audrey Girard

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II

ORDER

Pursuant to Rule 7 of *Legal Path: Rules of Respectful Practice*, Chief Commissioner Marion Buller ordered that the name of one person present during this statement be made anonymous in this transcript and any related documents. The order for anonymity was made on June 17, 2019.

NOTE

Where not required by other statute, redactions to this public transcript have been made pursuant to Rule 55 of the Commission's *Legal Path: Rules of Respectful Practice*, which provides for "the discretion to redact private information of a sensitive nature where it is not material to the evidence to be given before distributing the information to the Parties. The National Inquiry will consider the public interest in releasing this type of information against the potential harmful impact on the individual whose personal information is at issue."

III

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Statement Volume 201
January 23, 2018 PAGE
Witness: Bertha Lennie
Statement gatherer: Marie-Audrey Girard

Testimony of Bertha Lennie 1
Reporter's certification 27

Documents submitted with testimony: none.

Statement - Public
Bertha Lennie
(Mariella Lennie)

1

1 Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

2 --- Upon commencing on Tuesday, January 23, 2018

3 at 1:54 p.m.

4 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: So, this is
5 Marie-Audrey Girard with the MMIWG. We are in Yellowknife,
6 and it's 1:54. In the room with me this afternoon are:

7 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: Bertha Lennie, and
8 it's spelt B-E-R-T-H-A, Lennie, L-E-N-N-I-E.

9 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: And your
10 relationship with --

11 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: And my relationship
12 with Mariella is I'm her auntie, and she was my first
13 niece.

14 [PERSON 1]: [*Three lines redacted -*
15 *identifying information*].

16 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Yes.

17 MS. AGNES BEYONE: I'm just supporting
18 them.

19 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Give out your
20 name, please.

21 MS. AGNES BEYONE: Agnes Beyone (ph).

22 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Thank you.

23 MS. JEANIE RASMIS: My name is Jeanie
24 Rasmis (ph), and I'm supports for them.

25 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Excellent.

1 Well, thank you so much for being with us this afternoon.
2 As I said before we started the tape recorder, you are here
3 this afternoon with us voluntarily, and you're agreeing for
4 us to videotape and to audio a tape this session this
5 afternoon, yes?

6 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: We agree.

7 [PERSON 1]: I agree.

8 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: I agree.

9 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Excellent.

10 Thank you so much. So, my first question for you this
11 afternoon will be: What would you like to share with us
12 this afternoon? What would you like the commissioners to
13 know about your nieces?

14 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: I will like to share
15 my information on how the process would -- at the very
16 beginning of this investigation, which is still unsolved.

17 When my niece was found after a year --
18 she came here to go to school, and met up with the wrong
19 group of friends, I'm thinking. So, she started the party
20 scene with her friends and did not attend school after all.
21 And she was staying with me at the time and coming home at
22 all hours of the night living a kind of a risky lifestyle,
23 for me -- for Yellowknife, anyway -- and a girl that hasn't
24 really lived out of Tulita, a community of 500 or less at
25 the time, and then, suddenly to be in the city, for her, I

Statement - Public
Bertha Lennie
(Mariella Lennie)

3

1 was scared for her.

2 She was pretty, outgoing, she could meet
3 anybody she wanted, and she was only 18 at the time. And I
4 did take her aside and talked to her about what happened,
5 why are you not going to school, and you know, the risk out
6 there was taxi drivers and taking rides with different
7 people. Eventually, they may want something for a ride,
8 for the free ride.

9 So, I talked to her about that. And then
10 at the time, she had a boyfriend here who also was going to
11 school at Kaychewon (ph). This was 1990, and she continued
12 to keep doing what she was doing. I phoned her parents and
13 I said, "You know, she's not going to school. You should
14 see if you can get her back, get her sent back," so they
15 said, "Well, let us talk to her," but she was never around
16 during the day. I couldn't get ahold of her whenever I
17 wanted. There was no cell phones at that time.

18 Anyways, life went on for a while there
19 and all of a sudden, two days later after she was missing,
20 I found out that they couldn't find Mariella. And she was
21 staying with one of our cousins, and -- I won't name his
22 name -- and, of course, I suspected this person and that
23 person because you're hearing rumours about her being --
24 later on after they found her, that's when I started
25 thinking, "Well, this person might be the suspect."

1 But the RCMP, to me, at that time, didn't
2 do very much. Like, they didn't go searching for her, I
3 don't -- well. And we'd ask them questions and would not
4 tell us anything new. They say the same thing, "There's
5 nothing new. We don't know what happened."

6 And in May, they found a body in the lake
7 at Great Slave by Con Mine. She was there, I don't know
8 how long, but the person that spotted her, I knew him, and
9 he told me he saw a body out there, but not up close. So,
10 apparently, she was in the water for the whole year there.
11 She floated to the top and [*one line redacted pursuant to*
12 *Rule 55*], so there was lots of decomposition. And plus,
13 there had been that [*one line redacted pursuant to Rule 55*]
14 or she was unrecognizable, I think.

15 I wasn't in town at the time. I was going
16 to school, and I don't know why they didn't ask me as a
17 family member to identify her. It was hard to believe that
18 at first, it was her. I still didn't believe it was her,
19 and they buried someone. Then they brought her body back
20 to Tulita and then went home for the funeral. It was
21 really, really hard on my dad and my mother because that
22 was their first grandchild.

23 Of course, they didn't talk too much about
24 it. I don't remember if they did or not, but they didn't
25 say very much. They all kept everything inside. So did my

1 sister and my brother. It was like they just buried her
2 and -- well, we're not a family that talk about things like
3 this. We just sort of keep it inside. Nobody got together
4 like now where we're sitting here together. We didn't do
5 that in those days. So, it was like everybody left with
6 their feelings.

7 I left back to Yellowknife because I was
8 going to school, and my brother had to go back to wherever
9 he had to go, I think for work. And my sister and my
10 mother and my father, nothing was said, like, nobody
11 expressed their feelings although you could tell we're all
12 feeling the hurt and pain, but no one was saying oh, I feel
13 this way or I feel that way. That bothered me. I wished I
14 could have opened up for the family, but I wasn't trained
15 in that field, so I didn't bother. I just went back to
16 Yellowknife.

17 So, the cops had ask me questions and I
18 told what I knew. And at that time, I had a common-law
19 husband that was very abusive, and I thought he might be
20 involved, but I just found lately, when the police came to
21 see me, that he did take a lie detector test and he passed
22 it apparently. So, that kind of laid my mind to rest
23 because I have felt guilty about that. I felt the guilt
24 because I thought, Well, he was supposed to be my boyfriend
25 and my ex-common-law husband, and they were going out to

1 party together. So, of course I was suspectful, and then I
2 figured, Well, going out to Con Mine, you're going to have
3 to need a vehicle unless you're in the Con Mine area. But
4 I got --

5 So I had lots of ideas; they suspected her
6 boyfriend, and they suspected my cousin, where she stayed,
7 and they suspected [Person 2] at first, but they ruled out
8 [Person 2], and I think they might have ruled out [Person
9 3]. But the one that's still not ruled out, he's still a
10 suspect. But anyhow, we'd asked the cops, "Well, how did
11 she die? What did she have on? How did she look when she
12 was dead? Was she intact together, like, her body
13 together? How did she die? Did she get shot? Did she get
14 stabbed? Did she get strangled?" We didn't know, and they
15 wouldn't give us any information. Nothing.

16 And finally, this past year just in
17 December, I got ahold of -- we were speaking about the
18 conference, she said, "Yeah, you could request to talk with
19 a RCMP if you like, on the phone or --" I said, "Well,
20 that's one thing I don't want to do because that's all
21 we've been doing. We've been phoning and no results. They
22 keep on telling us the same thing."

23 And Marie and Tony Mandeville (ph) told me
24 that if I request, we can get the medical report. So
25 that's what I did, and they came to meet me in my home. I

1 said I didn't want to go see an environment of the police,
2 cop shops, that sort of thing, so I told them that I would
3 like them to come to my house, then I can ask all the
4 questions, which has kind of put my mind at ease about a
5 lot of things I was suspecting myself. I think it was
6 mostly guilt I felt because I told her to leave, and I
7 shouldn't have did that, but I didn't know what else to do
8 with her.

9 So, with all this that we finally found
10 out -- or I finally found out, they gave me the medical
11 report, and I read it. A lot of my suspicions were laid to
12 rest at that time. After finding out my common-law was
13 cleared as a suspect and Mariella's body was identified by
14 her teeth, her dentures. And they said she had a pair of
15 jeans on that were open and down to her legs and she didn't
16 have a shirt on. Her face was unrecognizable, but they
17 checked, they couldn't see well, whether she was choked or
18 didn't see any stab wounds or any wounds like that on her
19 body, but they found a mark on the top of that side of her
20 head that was in contact. And one shoe was off, I think
21 they said.

22 So, like I said, finally, the cops came
23 through, gave me that piece of information, or at least I
24 could say, now I know how she possibly died. She wasn't
25 stabbed; she wasn't shot, but they found out that it might

Statement - Public
Bertha Lennie
(Mariella Lennie)

8

1 have been that -- well, they couldn't tell whether she was
2 drowned. They couldn't tell whether she was alive before
3 she went in the water, they said, because usually they
4 would say if she was drowned; there would be water in her
5 lungs or something. They didn't see that. They didn't
6 really have too much else to say, just how she might have
7 died. They don't know exactly how she died.

8 And before all this, I went to a psychic
9 and she told me that if I were to brought up a piece of
10 material or a clothing of hers or something or a picture,
11 she could tell me a little more about who that person might
12 be that did this. And I asked them to bring me a photo.
13 They did bring me that photo or they posted her picture all
14 over, but I didn't go back to the psychic; I didn't have
15 that money.

16 So, I told Wilfred about that, my brother.
17 I said -- and I also told the police, "If you give this to
18 my brother and my sister-in-law, I think this would help
19 them to see that was really her." Because psychic said, "I
20 don't see her in the ground -- I don't see her in the
21 water; I see her in the ground when she died." Well, that
22 again opened up a lot of questions for me. I don't know
23 whether that body was hers. I really didn't know who was
24 buried there and that bothered me. That's why I asked for
25 the autopsy report to see how they identified her.

1 What we heard was, she was identified by
2 another police officer who was from Deline, who was not a
3 relative or maybe a distant relative, but she was working
4 with RCMP then, and she identified her, but I thought that
5 was not right when I was in town. Maybe I would have had a
6 better idea. It was just really difficult all in all
7 because there's so many questions that were not answered at
8 the beginning for all of us. And my brother even said, "I
9 still don't know how she died." And I told the police, "If
10 you go to see Wilfred, please bring this report to him, and
11 I think that will really be beneficial for him and Sarah."

12 And you know, that was indeed her that
13 they found. That's basically all I needed to know and just
14 how did she die, and they still didn't have a firm answer.
15 But the whole family suffered about that for a long time.
16 Everything seems to be so hush-hush. We didn't want to
17 talk about it with Wilfred or Sarah. And they didn't --
18 they never brought it up. It was always kept inside. So,
19 now that I found out, to me, I feel like this has helped me
20 to see that autopsy report, and I know that it is her in
21 the grave. I also know that -- have an idea of what was
22 found was her and how -- they said she didn't hardly have
23 any hair because of the water. It probably all went. She
24 had long curly hair. She was a really beautiful little
25 girl.

1 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Can you tell us
2 a little bit more information about what happened when she
3 disappeared, like how long did it take you to realize that
4 she disappeared when you called the cops? What happened?
5 Can you tell us a bit --

6 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: I didn't call the
7 cops, somebody else did.

8 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Okay.

9 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: They said the last one
10 -- like I said, we were hearing all kinds of rumours, "Oh,
11 she was partying at the Con Mine at those trailers." And
12 then they said, "Oh, she was with other people downtown."
13 But the cops also told me that she was last seen at
14 Discovery Inn. She was leaving around six o'clock. Six
15 around that area. She was last seen then, so, somebody had
16 picked her up, I guess.

17 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Okay. Do you
18 know how long did it take from that time, the last time she
19 was seen at Discovery at 6 p.m., and the time that the cops
20 were called, like how many days in between, do you know?

21 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: I'm really confused in
22 those days because I was -- myself gone through a lot of
23 personal problems with physical/mental abuse, so I wasn't -
24 - I'm still not aware of what time the police called. Were
25 the police called and who called? I don't know that.

1 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Okay, that's
2 good. And I know you're here this afternoon to talk about
3 your niece, but you brought the point about yourself and
4 the abusive relationship you were in. Is that something
5 that you would like to share with us today, what happened
6 with your husband in this relationship?

7 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: Well, we continued to
8 stay together. I totally stopped drinking at that time. I
9 was no help to my niece at that time. I could have helped
10 her maybe if I stayed sober, like totally sober. I was a
11 binge drinker, and I didn't think properly, you know. My
12 mind wasn't clear, so I don't know -- after she lived with
13 our cousin downtown, I don't know if it was him that
14 reported her missing or maybe the parents. I don't know
15 that part, but when I lived with this man, he was very,
16 very abusive.

17 It was a point where I finally left him
18 after ten years. It took four years for me to get totally
19 away from him, but he was stalking me and threatening me
20 and I put him in jail because of all of that. So, at that
21 time that Mariella has gone missing, it was like everything
22 was chaotic as I was going through this.

23 I finally -- when he beat me the last
24 time, he hit me with a guitar and I guess I had got knocked
25 out and he got frightened because there was a whole bunch

1 of blood on the floor. And I had a nightgown on and he
2 somehow finally woke me up. He says, "Get and up change
3 your clothes, I'm taking you to the hospital." I looked at
4 myself. I had a cut here and a cut in my head, and my face
5 was this big and oh, my God, I looked like a monster. But
6 I don't know what made him wake me up and take me to the
7 hospital.

8 Then after that, when I decided I have to
9 do something different, I have to stop drinking, get away
10 from him forever. I tried that, and I even went to the
11 social services for the first time to get some kind of
12 help. I told them I want to go back to school, and my
13 father always said, "Never to go to social services, you
14 can do it yourself." And you know, I had to bite my pride
15 and forget about that and just say I need help.

16 So, I got help from social services and
17 that's how I ended up changing my lifestyle. And when they
18 found Mariella in May, I was sober and I was going to
19 school. And I went back to the crazy man that I was
20 running from to begin with. We spent another ten years
21 together and he didn't hit me ever after that. He stopped
22 abusing me, but verbally still. Jealousy and all that.
23 But he was a very vicious man. That's why I suspected him
24 too. He was jealous. And if he had a young beautiful girl
25 like Mariella, he said he had a young girlfriend that was

1 18 years old, which happened to be my niece's age, and
2 says, "I don't need you anymore."

3 So, on that one, Mariella went missing. I
4 thought maybe it was him because we had a van and they used
5 to party together and come home with all hours of night.
6 And I didn't know whether he was -- what they were doing.
7 It was hard for me to put up with that, but when I finally
8 said enough is enough -- and I'm still kind of confused for
9 that first week because I ended up going to the hospital.
10 I had to be there overnight because I might have had a
11 concussion. I just had to keep me awake.

12 There was so many things he did. He shot
13 a bullet through my hair laughing, thinking that he was a
14 good shot. Meanwhile, I had two kids in the bedroom. All
15 of that, before I finally came to realize I can't live like
16 this anymore, living in fear, never knowing if -- we were
17 both jealous at that time, but after when I decided to stop
18 drinking, he got even worse, and he quit, too. He got even
19 worse thinking that every time I'm out, I'm looking for a
20 man.

21 The last three years or four years was the
22 hardest where he was stalking me. They kicked him out of
23 my community because he was threatening me there, and he
24 couldn't come to my community anymore, but he lived in the
25 next community. He kept phoning me and threatening that he

1 was going to burn my house down; shoot my legs off; kill
2 the closest things that I love; and it was like I was just
3 living in fear all the time.

4 So, for most of the ten years after
5 Mariella, I still phoned cops every now and then just to
6 find out what they found, anything new. It was always the
7 same "No, nothing new. We can't tell you anything because
8 it might jeopardize the investigation." But when I finally
9 left that evil person, now I'm by myself. I live by myself
10 and I like it and I don't even want a relationship. I just
11 want to live happy by myself.

12 And now, I'm starting to really deal with
13 my feelings, so I go to a therapist and basically, just to
14 find out why was I sitting in that mess for so long. And
15 I'm starting to mention my niece's murder to him, to the
16 therapist. So, I'm just trying to let everything go from
17 the past, but I want to settle this thing with Mariella, my
18 niece, to find out if there's anything new. But for now,
19 the police said they're still investigating. They'll never
20 give it up until they finally find the person.

21 So, for now, I'm just basically trying to
22 heal myself and try to get on with life. I'm 66 and I want
23 to live the rest of my life with some peace and happiness
24 in my life instead of worrying, and I think all of this
25 worrying is making me ill or has made me ill. I'm now --

1 I've got diabetes, and then I got arthritis at the same
2 time. It's just like, Now, what do I do. I got to look
3 after my health. There's nothing else I can do.

4 So, when you go into the counselling, I'm
5 trying to help myself to get better, health-wise as well as
6 mental/emotional. So, from here on, I'm just going to
7 concentrate on me and getting healthier and better. I want
8 to be a better person. I want to be that person I should
9 have been when Mariella was just a young girl. If I had
10 been able to give her a good support, she might have not
11 have gone where she went. But she just left a lifestyle
12 like that at her home. My brother and my sister-in-law had
13 a tumultuous relationship. And then she comes to mine,
14 which is no better.

15 So, I got to heal from that, too. I feel
16 responsible. I feel guilty because I wasn't there for her.
17 That's basically all I need to say now. Just got to be
18 patient and wait to find out if the murder can be solved.

19 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Do you have, by
20 any chance, a picture of Mariella with you?

21 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: Not with me, no. They
22 plastered a bunch of posters when -- at the time she went
23 missing. On media, too. I had that same picture, but I
24 didn't bring it with me.

25 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: No problem.

1 [Person 1], is there anything you would like to share with
2 us about Mariella this afternoon as well?

3 [PERSON 1]: Are you done?

4 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: Yeah, I'm done. Here,
5 hold my pillow.

6 [PERSON 1]: [*Registrar's note:*
7 *confidential testimony omitted*].

8 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: Can I interrupt?

9 [PERSON 1]: It seems like they're not
10 doing anything.

11 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: When I spoke with
12 Constable Bancroft (ph), he told me the case will never be
13 closed until it's solved. And now, he's head of
14 investigation. He's had -- they follow-up any kind of
15 clue. They said they have one not too long ago that
16 discussed that he had some information. They followed up
17 on that and it was nothing. It didn't really do anything.

18 But what he did say was, it will never be
19 closed until they found her killer. And I forgot to
20 mention that Mariella left behind a boy, her son. Now he's
21 an adult. He's 26, and my brother and Sarah, the
22 grandparents, raised him.

23 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: What's the name
24 of Mariella's son?

25 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: Mariella's son's name

1 is [Mariella's Son].

2 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: And how old was
3 he when Mariella disappeared?

4 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: He was just a baby.

5 [PERSON 1]: Four months.

6 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Four months.
7 Okay. And where is [Mariella's Son] today? Is he still
8 living here, or?

9 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: [Mariella's Son]?

10 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Yeah,
11 [Mariella's Son].

12 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: He lives with his
13 parents -- his grandparents.

14 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: So, the last
15 time that you talked with Constable Bancroft --

16 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: He's the one that
17 showed me the pictures, and I asked questions, he answered
18 me.

19 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: So, they are
20 still on an active investigation nowadays until today.

21 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: Yes.

22 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: [Person 1], you
23 were talking -- I don't know if you would like to add
24 anything else regarding Mariella and Mariella's
25 disappearance and what happened to her. You were still

1 talking when we then talk about the open investigation, but
2 you were still talking about -- like, the questions that
3 you have and what will happen now. Do you have anything
4 else you would like to add regarding that?

5 [PERSON 1]: I just have -- what really
6 concerns me is that, like why is it so long for them to
7 solve this? It's just NWT; it's not like New York.

8 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: That's a good one.

9 [PERSON 1]: It's just a small place.

10 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: You have to take the
11 whole family felt like the police weren't doing enough at
12 the time. And about that time, there was two other
13 Aboriginal girls that were missing. I don't think they
14 were solved either.

15 [PERSON 1]: [*Registrar's note:*
16 *confidential testimony omitted*].

17 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: So, would that
18 be a recommendation, for instance, have more support for
19 families of murdered or disappeared women and girls. For
20 instance, we were talking about possible recommendations
21 that you could make. Would that be one of them?

22 [PERSON 1]: [*Registrar's note:*
23 *confidential testimony omitted*].

24 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Is there
25 anything else you would like to add about Mariella's -- not

1 necessarily disappearance or not necessarily about the
2 murder, but here at the commission, we really want to
3 honour the victims.

4 So, if you can tell us a little bit about
5 her as well because sometimes it will treat people as a
6 file, but we know Mariella is was a person, a loved one, so
7 if you want to share good memories about her or a good side
8 of her, we would like to know as well a little bit about
9 her, how she was as a person, like good memories that you
10 can have with her that you would like to share to honour
11 Mariella.

12 And we've been talking about her
13 disappearance, about her murder, but there have been
14 positive sides of her life. You were saying how she was
15 beautiful and lovely, so if you want to share something
16 about her with us as well as something we want to hear to
17 honour her, the person she was.

18 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: When she was born, she
19 was so tiny. She was kind of sick that she had stomach
20 problems, so they would send her always to Inuvik at that
21 time. And of course, her mom would go with her, but she
22 was so cute. They would put her in a little jumper. And
23 she had curly hair too, like half curly and half straight
24 here and there. I said she sure took on the half-and-half
25 of mom and dad; dad has curly hair, mom has straight hair -

1 - and then, she treated there and start bouncing up and
2 down. Didn't think that she just went through surgery or
3 whatever they were doing once we were in Inuvik.

4 But mostly, I was away from my family; got
5 married, stayed in Inuvik for 10 years. So, I didn't get
6 to see her very much but whenever we did go, she was always
7 pleasurable to be around. She was easygoing. She would
8 have been about the same age as my daughter at the time. I
9 think she would be a year older maybe.

10 Once, we went out in the bush and Sarah
11 and the children were all out there. They got along really
12 well, Leeane (ph) and her. Well, they were about the same
13 age, and they each had one -- I think Junior was the
14 youngest at the time, and my son was about ten months
15 younger than Junior. So, Mariella would dress up her
16 little brother and Leeane would dress up my little boy, her
17 little brother, and they'd put them in swings, like the
18 whole swings. I have pictures of them. We got sitting
19 side by side, one little white boy and one little Native
20 Aboriginal boy just looking at each other, and then they
21 put them in Jolly Jumpers together. We have pictures of
22 those.

23 But those were the good days, and of
24 course, those little girls were so proud of their little
25 brothers -- or their little brother, and just be -- they

1 spend lots of time with them, but you know, that was like
2 their dolls, their real dolls. Just little things that I
3 remembered. But as I grew up and older, I just never lived
4 at home, so [Person 1] would have more idea of what her
5 life was like when she was growing up.

6 [PERSON 1]: [*Registrar's note:*
7 *confidential testimony omitted*].

8 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Thank you for
9 sharing Mariella's story with us and for coming here today.
10 At the beginning of this session, you also told me you
11 would like to talk about [Person 4] [...] [*Registrar's note:*
12 *confidential testimony omitted*] [...] Is there anything you
13 would like to add about [Person 4]? I don't know if you
14 knew her or like --

15 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: Well, I barely knew
16 her because like I said, I've always been away from my
17 hometown, so I just heard about this [...] [*Registrar's note:*
18 *confidential testimony omitted*] [...] That's one of the
19 reasons I wanted to be here. I wanted to be able to tell
20 people what is new, what's -- well, you know, it's not my
21 place to say that because it's really Wilfred and Sarah's -
22 - if I had your permission to say what I could, I would,
23 but I can't do that without them saying yes, it's okay. I
24 could have spoke about -- well, at least if you want to get
25 with an RCMP, talk to them, they will give you information.

1 Not like years ago, they wouldn't share
2 anything with us. We wanted to know more about -- well,
3 what was she wearing sort of thing, what wasn't she
4 wearing. They didn't really let us know anything. So,
5 like I said, when Constable Bancroft brought me this
6 information, that was the best piece of information I could
7 have received, and [Person 1] can go there too and ask to
8 see that medical report, and so could Wilfred. And then
9 Constable Bancroft said as he's going, "If Wilfred wants,
10 he can go to Tulita and he can ask questions and show him
11 that report, and I think a lot of questions will be
12 answered for them, too."

13 Like I said, when they brought her to
14 Tulita, nobody knew who it was because it was a closed
15 casket, because of the damage to her body. They couldn't
16 show her. So, for them, I guess it's like a mystery. Who
17 really is in that box and if they would have told Wilfred
18 and Sarah right away, Oh, this is what we found, you don't
19 have to tell us any more than that. But at the time, they
20 wouldn't give us any information, which is wrong, I think.
21 There's no harm in telling us, "This is how she was found."
22 That wasn't going to, you know, hurt the investigation in
23 any way, at the time, I think. They always say -- the only
24 person knows it, but that's not always the truth.

25 And one thing I'd like to add is, it seems

1 like Aboriginal people; women, children, whatever, who go
2 missing are not attended to right away or like they would
3 intensively like they would with a Caucasian person.

4 So, that's one thing I said before. They
5 need to communicate with the family members, what they know
6 was soon as they can. Well, the family members, I don't
7 think, are going to spread the word that, Oh, this is how
8 she was found and this is what she was -- not found or
9 whatever. Release that later, mind to rest soon.

10 That's really all I have. It's so
11 important to have people to follow up when they are
12 healing. If they can have such -- we need some really good
13 counsellors from here that can help people just in this
14 field, maybe. Families are really important to get
15 together, start opening up and talking together not just
16 waiting. You know, they wait for years before they can
17 talk about anything. I don't know how else you can open it
18 up with my family, but I would just be easy to talk about
19 it like even talk to Wilfred about what I got from
20 Constable Bancroft.

21 I said, "If you have a chance --" I did
22 tell him to -- "Give this to Wilfred," and I said, "I think
23 it may answer a lot of questions for him." And he said he
24 would do that. And the nice thing is they came to my
25 place. I didn't have to go to their office. And I said I

1 didn't want no phone-to-phone. I want to have a person-to-
2 person meeting, and in my own environment not their
3 environment, so that has helped.

4 [PERSON 1]: [*Registrar's note:*
5 *confidential testimony omitted*].

6 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Is there
7 anything else you would like to add about Mariella and
8 [Person 4]? Before I'm asking my last question about
9 recommendations, is there something else you would like to
10 share with us today?

11 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: I've said pretty well
12 everything that I need to say, I think. I can't add
13 anything.

14 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Okay.

15 [PERSON 1]: [*Registrar's note:*
16 *confidential testimony omitted*].

17 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: I see. And on a
18 broader picture, why do you think there's such a high rate
19 of violence against indigenous women and girls and how this
20 violence can stop?

21 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: Well, I always think
22 it starts from the home. You see, Mariella's family, my --
23 and our family and our parents, they were heavy into
24 alcoholism. Lots of fighting, lots of violence. So, when
25 you grow up -- when I grew up I thought, well, it's okay,

1 my mother got hit, so why should I complain if I get hit or
2 hurt when it's just a slap, you know. So, I got a bruise,
3 big deal.

4 So, you stay with that stigma from family
5 to family unless one family cleans up their act and stops
6 it. So, with that, violence goes, like, in cycles. So,
7 your family sobers up, now, my brother has sobered up. The
8 younger children are starting to grow up without having
9 that same violence and no alcohol in the home. So that's -
10 - it gives them better life and they know that while if
11 they go out now -- you know, you got to be safe.

12 But the girls, the younger girls, and
13 Junior, they were grown up and seeing all this violence and
14 chaos at home. So, to them, it was a normal thing, you
15 know, not like when I was talking to Mariella at the time
16 about it. I said, "You know, you can't go out and just
17 take rides," for instance. I said, "You don't know what
18 they could do."

19 Yellowknife is starting to get violent
20 like down in the South now, like you never know because
21 they had come up here and they're working and they could be
22 cabdrivers and they're very nice to you at first, but in
23 the end, they're going to want something, and if you don't
24 give it to them, maybe they'll, you know, kidnap you, do
25 harm to you, but I guess she didn't believe it. Well, you

1 know, she can handle it, she probably thought because she
2 lived in it and she knows how to deal with things, but it
3 wasn't so.

4 And it all starts from the families
5 however you look at it. You can't stop it because it's
6 going to go on. That person probably grew up in a violent
7 home, too. Dysfunctional home. That's how I believe it
8 starts.

9 [PERSON 1]: [Registrar's note:
10 *confidential testimony omitted*].

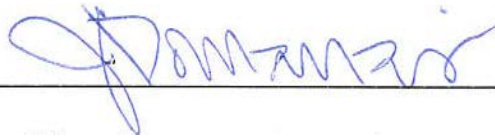
11 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Well, that was
12 all my question for this afternoon. Thank you so much for
13 coming here and sharing Mariella and [Person 4]'s story
14 through with us. We really appreciate you coming. We know
15 it's not easy, and for us, it's really important to receive
16 those stories and to know about Mariella and [Person 4].
17 So, thank you so much for being here this afternoon. So,
18 if you don't have anything to add, I will turn off the
19 video recorder and the audio recorder.

20 MS. BERTHA LENNIE: Yes. Thank you.

21 MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: So, it is 3:26
22 and we are turning off the recorders.

23 --- Whereupon the statement concluded at 3:26 p.m.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I have, to the best
of my skill and ability,
accurately transcribed from a pre-existing recording
the foregoing proceeding..

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Domanais", is written over a solid horizontal line.

Jovelle Domanais, Court Reporter