National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Statement Gathering
Prince George Conference & Civic Centre
Prince George, British Columbia

PUBLIC

Thursday February 5, 2018

Statement - Volume 223

Sharon Lynn Patterson

Statement gathered by Kerrie Reay

Coast Reporting Services Inc.
## II

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**Statement Gatherer: Kerrie Reay**

**List of documents provided with testimony:**

**Item 1** Two Prince George Red Dress Campaign stickers
KERRIE REAY: Sharon, if you are ready?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I am.

KERRIE REAY: So, um, for the record, this is Kerrie Reay. I'm a statement taker with the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. It is February the 5th of 2018 and we are at Prince George, B.C. and the time is 11:20 a.m. With me is Sharon Patterson. You are Metis?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yes.

KERRIE REAY: And you reside here in Prince George. And you are here to talk about your survivorship, but you also like to see yourself as a warrior as well. So in the room we also have Gertrude Pierre and that's P-i-e-r-r-e. And, Gertrude, you are here as health support for Sharon. And I should make reference that Patterson is P-a-t-t-e-r-s-o-n. Also I just need you to confirm that you are here voluntarily, that you are agreeing to be video and audio taped, --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yes.

KERRIE REAY: -- and that your statement will be public?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yes.

KERRIE REAY: Okay. Okay, Sharon, this is your space, this is your time, and I invite you to share your truth with the National Inquiry.
SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Thank you. I just want to introduce myself. I am Sharon Patterson. I am 57 years old. I'm a grandma, a mother of four, and a photographer. Um, I think I will start my story back to the first time I remember witnessing or feeling abuse. Um, I grew up in a family with eight kids, five brothers and three sisters. I'm the second youngest. I was the middle child. I was kind of always just there, the middle child. I wasn't the baby that got the attention. I wasn't the older sister. I was just the middle kid. I was the scapegoat too that got blamed for everything. 

But my earliest recollection -- recollection is, um, I was three years old, and I know I was three years old because I looked to the right and I seen my sister in a crib, which means she was a baby. So if I'm three years she's a baby. I'm three years old and I was in my mom's bed and my mom was washing the floor. And I can remember having to -- having to go to the bathroom and I can remember being scared to ask to go the bathroom. Mom didn't like anybody walking on the floors after they were washed. And it was either take the risk and ask or pee the bed and then pay for it, right? My mom's bed. And so I said to Mom: Mom, I have -- I have to go pee. And the next
thing I remember -- we also had long hair and it was always in a pony tail or whatever or a braid. The next thing I remember, she came over and grabbed me by the hair and I remember landing outside the bedroom door; just because I asked to go to the bathroom.

And then I believe from that moment on probably until I was like 12 years old when I was as big as my mom and she couldn't beat on me anymore, I was beaten as a child from the age of three, that I remember, until 12 for all kinds of stuff. I was kept home at the age of eight. My mom and dad drank a lot. And I was kept home when my mom was hung over. I was made to stay home and do the cleaning and do the cooking and run errands. And we lived right across from the school. And I can remember being a child thinking, I'm going to get in trouble if the principal sees me; I'm supposed to be at school.

Um, my mom and dad fought. They drank a lot. They fought a lot. There was a lot of abuse. I can remember hiding in closets and hearing the fighting. I can remember, um, another time. I think I was closer to five, lived in the same house. And this wasn't the first time this happened either, but I remember this one really distinctly. It was Easter weekend and a big -- they were drinking. A big -- we
were all in bed sleeping, us kids, waiting for the Easter bunny to come. And I remember all this noise and crashing and I remember my dad hit my -- my mom and then my brother hit my dad, and then next thing I know -- um, we always wore those long flannelette nighties. And the next thing I remember is my hand up like this holding a big person's hand, bare feet, in my nightie, running to the neighbour's house for safety. And we hadn't -- this wasn't the first time we ran there. We ran there many times. Um, and then my dad went to jail. And I don't remember -- that's what I remember from that, that part.

And I mentioned this to my sister a few years ago and she says, there's no way you could remember that. I said, I just told you exactly what I remembered. She goes: That was my hand you were holding. I had [Sister 2], the baby, you know, two-year-old or whatever, and I was holding your hand and we were running to the Briton's house for safety. Ah, and then Dad went to jail and I don't remember much of that after that, right?

But it was like a regular occurrence in our family and I thought it was normal. I thought everybody lived like that. I didn't like it. I knew it felt wrong. But I also thought everybody else
lived the same way as we did until I started spending
nights at other people's houses and it's like what?
What's with these guys? They hug each other. They
tell each other they love. There's no fighting or
yelling and... So at an early age I knew it was wrong
but I could never seem to escape it. Um, I'm sorry.

KERRIE REAY: No worries and no rush.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And one of those times when I was
kept home from school to clean and cook, and it was
old-school back in the day. My mom used to hard wax
the floors and then polish them and then buff them.
And my sister and I were doing dishes and we started a
fight. And Mom was at the end of her rope for
whatever reason. She always seemed to be at the end
of her rope. And, um, I think she smacked my sister
and sent her to her room and, of course, I said, why
do I always get in trouble for everything she does?
My sister. Because I was always told I was older and
and I should know better.

And because I said that to my mom, my mom used to
do this: She would grab me by the arm right here by
the wrist, and whatever she could grab she would just
start whaling on you. And what do you do? You run.
So I ended up running around in a circle while being
beaten, and beaten until she was -- expelled all the
energy she needed to get out. And at that particular
time, I still have a scar today from it, she had
this -- wait, my mom had a Chihuahua and it had a
purple dog leash; you know, one of those metal clip
things. And that's what my mom was beating me with
that day.

And on the inside of my leg here I have got
this -- you know the loop, metal loop? I have that
scar because when she hit me it went into my leg and
peeled back a big chunk in that -- that shape. And
while my leg was bleeding and blood was running down
my leg my mom made me get down to finish waxing and
polishing the floors on my hands and knees while the
blood was running down. I didn't even get to go to
the bathroom and clean myself up.

I actually thought my mom hated me most of my
younger years. I never could seem to ever do anything
right. I seemed to be the scapegoat for everything.
And I am just trying to go in order of some of the
more traumatic things that I experienced.

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm. Um-hmm.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Um, so I really believe from the
age of three until 12 that I was unnecessarily abused
for all kinds of things that I didn't do. And then
when I was 15 I got kicked out of home. I was still a
kid in high school. I didn't get to finish high
school. I got kicked to the curb, nowhere to go.

I ended up getting a job, getting an apartment,
and then I couldn't afford the apartment because back
then I was making $3 an hour at MacDonald's. It's not
enough for a person to survive. And so I had been
dating this older guy. I was 15 and he was 21. And
since I moved in with him another cycle of abuse
started. And when I asked for help I was told I made
my bed, you lie in it.

And I really feel back in the day when I was
young and going through my abuse, um, there wasn't a
lot of help. There wasn't all the stuff there is even
today. I didn't know I was Metis back then, whether
that would have been worse for me, you know, the way
the stigma is with women today. Um, I just don't
[unintelligible].

I don't think I got a lot of help when I did
report. I didn't always report because after
reporting a couple of times I didn't get any help, and
I was made to feel like, oh, go see your doctor, take
some pills and you will be better in the morning,
right? Um, so there wasn't a lot of support there.
There wasn't a lot of support groups. There wasn't a
lot of family even for me to reach out to, and when I
did that's what I was told: You made your bed, you
lie in it. What do you do?

So I ended up staying there for three years in
that relationship and being abused; with a scar on the
back of my left arm. Um, we were at this party. I
think I was 17 at that time. This same relationship.
And, um, he told me to come outside and I went
outside. And he was jealous of something and he took
me and he slammed me up against this old garage. And
there was a nail about this long sticking out, an old
rusty nail with a head about -- I don't know, about
that big on it. And it went into my arm, about this
far into my arm. I have a covered over hole now. But
it didn't wreck anything or damage anything, thank
you. But I couldn't get out of that relationship
either. I had to end up moving from Prince George
away to Chilliwack to get away from him.

Um, and then at -- I want to say I was 18. I,
ah, met this guy. This big guy. A lot of people were
scared of him. And the stupid part of me thought he
was going to protect me. He didn't protect me. He
beat me. He was the worst out of anybody that's ever
abused me or hurt me.

He's no longer with us, and I feel kind of guilty
for talking about him, but this is what I had to live.
I have forgiven him and moved on -- all of them. I have forgiven them and moved on, even my mom. I still love my mom. But it's still wrong. It's so wrong and it needs to be changed -- mother or not.

So I met the father, the father of my oldest child. My oldest child is going to be 38 in August. And, like I said, I thought he was going to be there to protect me and it was quite the opposite. I got like smacked, backhanded. He used to -- when we got a place he would get away out of town, and then he would take the money and he would take the car keys and the car, and then I would just be abandoned there on my own, no phone, nowhere to go. Nobody knew, right? Because how could I let anybody know? Um, and then we moved into this trailer park at Cultus Lake, Chilliwack. And it was called Sleepy Hollow and it was down -- you had to drive down in to get to it. That's why it was called Sleepy Hollow. So you went down this big hill and then the trailer park was down in there.

And, ah, I got woken up one morning. I used to sleep in like a muscle shirt, you know, a wife beater shirt -- a good name for it -- a muscle shirt and a pair of panties. And I got ripped out of bed by my hair, thrown down the hallway, and then he says -- I
heard from behind me: You better run, bitch.

Sorry. Sorry.

KERRIE REAY: That's fine.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: You better run because I'm going to kill ya. And he had had his dad's double-barreled sawed off shotgun -- army, from the army base. And so he chased me out of the trailer, up that hill, and about two miles down the road. I was trying to get to my brother's house. And I was in bare feet, a pair of panties, and the muscle shirt, and I'm running. And I'm running alongside of the ditch and he's in the car behind me and he's got the shotgun out the window. He said, I'm going to kill you now.

And I just -- my life flashed before my eyes, a whole bunch of things; I seen me and my sister in the sandbox when we were kids. And then he would just do it while I was running. And then I got as far as the mall and he got me, and he got me back in the car. And I am like, oh, my god, I am so dead. And I was kicking and screaming and everything and I couldn't get out.

He took me back to the trailer, threw me in the trailer, and then where do you go in a trailer? The only place I could go in the trailer was to the very far end of it, which was our bedroom. And I'm -- my
feet were bleeding from cutting from running and
stuff. And I can remember being against the wall with
my eyes closed just waiting for it. And he says, I'm
going to kill you now. And he shot it. And I was
terrified to open my eyes because I thought I was
going to be dead, looking down at me dead like looking
at my body. There was blanks in the shotgun. I
didn't know that.

And then the police were called that time. They
came. There should be a report somewhere. Um, they
came and then all he did was get in trouble and not
allowed to have firearms for five years. And then I'm
like, oh, my god, what about in five years when he's
allowed to have a gun again and he comes hunting me
down? Because he said he always would. I could not
get away from that man.

And then I ended up pregnant to him with my
oldest son. And I always wanted a baby; I just wanted
someone to love just me for me and who I was and I
could love that person back and not get beat or hurt
or threatened or anything. And while I was eight
months pregnant when I was living out of town,
isolated, so there was physical, mental, emotional,
monetary abuse going on. And I still -- I'm still
young. I'm not even 19 years old yet, right? I'm
still -- I'm 18 at this point and I'm pregnant. I'm
eight months pregnant and I am cowering underneath the
kitchen table because he's trying to beat me up, and
he's going to try and kick the baby out of me, and he
did kick me in the stomach.

And then I did something I never thought I would
do and I have never done it again and I've felt guilty
ever since. He had this machete on the counter. So
it was an old farmhouse and I am under the table, and
if you went right there there's the door, steps going
down, and then outside. And after he beat me and
kicked me in the stomach -- and I didn't know if I was
going to lose my baby or not. And how was I going to
get help? There's no phone. Um, he went out that
doors.

And something in me just -- I don't even know if
it was me or not. I grabbed the machete and at that
time I wanted to kill him. I wanted to kill him so
bad. I threw the machete at him as he was going down
the stair. If he had not of stepped down that
stairs... And before I threw the machete and had it I
had a visual of his head pinned to the wall with the
machete. And when I threw it he stepped down and it
missed him and he just kept going. And he didn't come
back for about two weeks after that. And then I was
terrified. I had nowhere to go. I had to stay there. I had no nobody to turn to.

But at that time I wanted to kill him. I can't believe I'm admitting that. But I did. I wanted to kill him for all the damage he done to me. Plus he was violent to his own mom and his own sisters. He used to take their car. He used to just go in there and take money and...

Another time -- so I couldn't get away from this guy no matter what I done. Wherever I went he hunted me down. He stalked me. He threatened people that I knew. He beat up a friend of mine with a baseball bat. They gave me a restraining order a couple of times, and you know what he did? Rip.

And then he -- he'd phone my mom and he'd say to my mom, do you know where Sharon is? And whether my mom knew or not she would just say, no, why? See what I was up to, right? He goes, because I just killed her, slit her throat and she's in the ditch dying as we speak. He -- he tormented my poor mom and my family for years.

In -- in -- at that time in that one-year span I think I moved seven times and every time he found out where I was. It was like he had people watching me. He always knew. And he phoned: Oh, I seen you at the
grov\-\-ry store, or I heard you were at Value Village or whatever. I'm like, how does he know where I am? I couldn't get away from him. So we ended up moving into -- um, it's on (indiscernible) Street, those apartments. I forget what they are called.

KERRIE REAY: Here in Prince George?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah. We lived in a basement suite. And I had just come back to Prince George. I have a lot of family and friends here, right? So a friend of mine came over for coffee this one day and my so-called man at the time had gone out. And when he came back my friend was there and we were having coffee, and right now he thought we were having an affair or something. And he grabbed my friend and threw him out, and I tried to get out and he grabbed me by the throat. And my friend knew enough about my life and my situation with this guy. So he left there and went over to the Spruceland shopping mall and phoned the police and said, you had better get over there, he's going to kill her.

And when the police came pounding on the door I was in the bedroom being held down by my throat and he was trying to rape me with my two-year-old son in the bedroom. And you know what? That was more horrible. The most important thing was that I wanted my son out
of there. I didn't -- I wasn't so worried about what was happening to me. I didn't want my son to see it. And then he came over to his dad and started pounding on his dad: Don't you hurt my mommy.

And then when the police did come he told me, you stay in here, you and [Son] stay in here. And I thought, no, this is my only way I can get out, I need to get out. So I went running to the door. And then he put his arm -- puts his arm around me like that and when I went to talk he squeezed it; you know, a warning don't you say anything. And then I just went like this to the policeman, look what he just did to me, he was trying to rape me, get me out of there.

And that's how I got out of there.

KERRIE REAY: Sorry. Sorry. No, sorry, you are good.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: So that's how I got out of there.

KERRIE REAY: Can I just ask for clarification? When you are talking about this, um, fellow that was holding you by the neck, is this the same fellow that is the father of your son from Chilliwack? Did he follow you to Prince George?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I left Chilliwack to get away from him.

KERRIE REAY: Do you remember what year that was?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Probably '81, '82ish. Because I'm
just thinking [Son] was two. So....

KERRIE REAY: And then you came to Prince George?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And I -- yeah, but then, um, I wasn't -- when that almost rape thing happened, that was probably '81, '82. Because [Son] was almost two years old, I think, at the time.

KERRIE REAY: And you came to Prince George and he somehow found out you were back here?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah, he stalked me. And when I came to Prince George he was -- everywhere where I went and moved he found me. And he would come and kick my door in and beat me, and then I would get a restraining order. And it's -- you know, I tried to explain this doesn't -- you need to put him in jail, this isn't working.

And then, um, while he had a -- that restraining order he beat one of my friends with a baseball bat, and I seen the baseball bat and there was scalp and hair and blood on the baseball bat, and he still got a slap on the wrist. He -- I don't know how he managed to get away with everything he did. Everybody was scared of him. Everybody was scared of this guy. So stupid me for thinking, oh, he's going to be my protector and, in turn, he became the worst abuser I ever had. Okay. So after....
KERRIE REAY: So did the police -- the police took him away then?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: They did. They took him and talked to him and stuff. I never charged him for anything because of not getting help from the police all those times. I didn't want to go into court and be told that I was a whore and I deserved it or stigma; back in the day if you were raped you asked for it. That's what I was told: I must have done something to make him rape me, and who rapes their own partner?

So I got out of there. I got out of that place, and I got a place in an apartment called Spanish Villa. It's here in Prince George as well. I think I was on the first floor. And he was doing everything he could to find -- to find me, and he did find me. He always found me. And I'd have this -- this one -- well, this incident happened. I happened to go upstairs. I didn't have a phone. My sister and her girlfriend were there and [Son] was still like two -- right? -- one-and-a-half, two. He's still little.

And, um, I had to go upstairs to use my friend's phone, and while I was upstairs he came to my place. He kicked in the door. He chased my sister around with a butcher knife. My -- you know, I'm 19, 20. See, I'm 20, 21. My sister is only 17, 18 years old.
He chased her around with a butcher knife demanding where I was. And he said, it's a good thing she ain't here because she'd be dead right now. And then he stole my son. He took my son away to Chilliwack.

And I got no help from anybody because there was no custody. He was our kid, right? And I hadn't had time to get in to court after -- and I was pretty messed up. I hadn't had time to get in to court to get custody of my kid yet, right? My son. And so I called the lawyer after [Son] was stolen and was told, you don't have custody, he don't have custody, there's nothing we can do. I said, well, how am I going to get him back? I had to go back. I had to go to Chilliwack and steal my son back.

I went to Chilliwack. I'm not proud of this, what I did, either. Because I -- even I -- it's what I had to do. I don't think it's right and I don't think it's right for kids to have to go through it. But I went to Chilliwack. I stalked out the place where they had him, his mother's house. I knew his mom went to work at a certain time. She worked on the army base where that gun came from. And his sister, one of the sisters, would have to stay home with him because they were in school. Someone had to watch him, right? And I knew she wouldn't let me in. So I
knocked on the door, and when she opened the door she
went to close it. And you know on the bottom of
screen doors there's that silver metal?

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I kicked that off and I scooted
through there. And I told her, you get my kid's -- my
son's stuff together because he's coming home where he
belongs. And she says, you are a psycho. I said, no,
your brother shouldn't have broke in and threatened my
sister with a knife and stole our child to begin with,
right? So then I got [Son] and his stuff and we came
back to Prince George, and then I went to court and
got custody of him.

But that wasn't the end of that story either. He
still -- I could not get rid of that man. And he
always told me: If I can't have you nobody is going
to have you, and I'm going to take you out. Maybe
today, maybe tomorrow, maybe five years from now, I'm
going to come back and get you. So I've lived in fear
most of my life, I guess. Um....

KERRIE REAY: Did you say he's passed away?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yes.

KERRIE REAY: When did he pass away?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Oh, goodness, it has got to be
about nine, ten years now.
KERRIE REAY: So you have had that fear almost your whole adult life then?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I don't have it now that he's gone.

KERRIE REAY: No.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: When I -- when I heard he passed away I was relieved. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. But I was relieved. He's my son's dad. But I knew he could no longer hurt me or anybody else again.

And then he used to get visitation with our son, and he would come back all messed up. He's still kind of messed up today and he's violent because of what he witnessed. And, you know, part of me thinks it's my fault because I didn't get out soon enough and I kept my kids with me and they witnessed and heard and seen some of that stuff. Had I been stronger and was able to get out or had someone to turn to to help me get out, my kids wouldn't have had to go through that stuff.

KERRIE REAY: And, you know, that -- that is part of what the inquiry is really looking at is how it -- you know, it stays generation to generation.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Intergenerational --

KERRIE REAY: Yes.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: -- abuse. And, you know, my grandma, I don't know anybody above my granny. And my
granny was born in 1898 and died in 1989, and I don't
know any of my relatives of my mom's above that. But
it -- all the abuse started way up there and has come
down. My mom was kicked out and had to -- my mom was
kicked out at 12 and had to raise her six-year-old
sister, and it just cycled down through the
generation. So my mom -- there was my granny, my mom,
me, my daughter, my granddaughter. Now my mom is
gone. So now we're down to four generations. But it
still has filtered down through the families.

My daughter ended up in a very violent
relationship that she couldn't get away from, and
everybody tried to help her. And I understood because
I've been there.

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: But she got out. She's out. She's
out. I raised -- while she went through that he
abused her and he abused my eight-year-old
granddaughter. So [Daughter], my daughter
[Daughter], she lost her daughter over a lot of that
stuff. But me and [Partner] took her. We raised her for
almost four years and we got her counselling. She's a
great kid. And my daughter's got her daughter back.
She went back home to Tumbler Ridge last July and they
are doing awesome. I'm so proud and so happy of them.
And I talked to her about what I was going to do and she's proud of me. I want it to stop. I told her that it's up to me and her now to stop this chain. Because we don't -- I have lived it. She's lived it. And we don't want [Granddaughter] to live that or anybody else. I have a niece in McBride who is getting bullied at school, and that's so wrong too. It's time to stand up and say no, no more.

KERRIE REAY: When you spoke of your mom, um, being, um, kicked out of the house at 12 and your background is Metis, was your mom First Nations?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: No, my dad.

KERRIE REAY: Your dad. Okay.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah.

KERRIE REAY: And was your mom --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah.

KERRIE REAY: -- and her mom from this area, from Prince George area?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: No, um, my mom was, ah -- my mom is from, um, Ontario. They were in Ontario and then they -- I think my mom and dad got married in Kemple [phonetic] Saskatchewan.

KERRIE REAY: Okay.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: A big family too. Not enough of anything all the time and five boys getting into
trouble and then -- and then, um, there's something else I want to mention. When I was also growing up
aunties, uncles, grandmas, grandpas, babysitters were allowed to beat on us and discipline us or do whatever
and get away with it.

I can remember being terrified at the age probably about seven or eight of being locked in a
closet under the stairs. I'm terrified of spiders. I don't like spiders. I have gotten better with spiders
because I garden. But I know there are spiders in the
underneath the stairs closet. And she locked me in there without a light. And I remember when I came out of there -- trying to beat, dig, and get out. And I told my mom and nothing was -- she was allowed to babysit us again.

And I wanted to retaliate when I got older. I thought, I'm going to pay her back. But what goes around comes around. It's not for me to decide. I need to look after me first before I can get to anybody else. And that is kind of what I'm trying to do. Be a good person and, um, move through life. And I was a survivor, but I'm a warrior now. I did -- surviving is where I needed to be at that point in my life at the time. But I'm living my life now.

My life has been very good for the last 15 or so
years. I was looking at this and, ah, out of my 57 years of my life 38 of it has been abuse. So for the last 19 years I've been abuse free. And for the last 15 years of that life it has been great with my partner, [Partner]. He's awesome. He's helped in my healing.

Okay. Um, at another point in -- while I was still with the father of my oldest child, um, his mom was babysitting our son and, ah, he was going to stay overnight. So we were going home, and he borrowed his moms' car, a little old station wagon of some kind. That was back in 1980 or something. And, ah, he started driving and then he started getting mad and I'm like, oh, no. And her door handle to get out was broken off on the passenger side. And I'm already starting to think, how am I going to get out of here?

And then it start just started escalating. He hauled off and backhanded me and my nose is bleeding, and then he says, okay, I have had enough, I am going to end this for both of us right now. And I am like, what you talking about? He gunned it and started driving right towards a tree. He was going to kill us both. And I don't know what I -- how I did it. I grabbed the stick shift and I just pulled it all the way back, which should have just shut the car down.
It did something to it and he started fiddling. And I was already rolling down the window, and I was out of the window and I ran.

And I ran and I ran for blocks, running through people's yards trying to -- this was probably at about 1 o'clock in the morning. Most people were sleeping. I was running for my life. I ran out of my shoes and I never did find them. And I ran to one house and knocked, nobody answered. And then I ran and I ran again. And I seen a house with lights on and I ran. I'm like: You guys have to help me. He's going to kill me. He just tried to run our car into a tree.

And so they brought me in, gave me a glass of water, and they phoned the police and a report was made.

I was taken to the hospital because that time he had, um, punched me so many times. There's a police report in Chilliwack on this one. There was pictures. Um, my -- my eyebrow touched my cheekbone. It was just like this big horrible goose egg on my eye. And they took pictures and they took a report and I got a restraining order, and he still came after me. Could not get away from that guy.

KERRIE REAY: Would it be okay to ask at this point, because one of the themes that I'm hearing with this man is that you -- you got the restraining orders but
there was no enforcement. So were you able to report the violations that he was still --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yes.

KERRIE REAY: -- stalking you?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yes.

KERRIE REAY: And what -- let's take the Chilliwack. What was the policing, um, response in Chilliwack?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Um, the restraining orders is what they -- all they said that they could do to help me. Um, I can't -- it's really jumbled up. But I can remember at one point where I was beat up and I said I -- because that time -- that was that time. I can't even remember what I was wearing. Um, I said I don't -- I'm not charging. I don't want to charge him. And they said, why not? I said, because he's going to kill me or he's going to kill one of my -- he's going to hurt my family. That's what he always told me: He's going to hurt my family or he is going to take me out. Um, but then I think there was -- I think there was a law passed where if you weren't going to charge them the police could charge them anyway. They took the onus off of you. It came later.

KERRIE REAY: Yeah.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah.
KERRIE REAY: One of the things that the inquiry, um, is looking at is those patterns of violence and such, severe violence and the lack of protection that comes when there seems to be this ongoing, um, reporting. And so I know you made a comment that you didn't want his name used because this is public. But I would like to, when we are finished the recording for the inquiry, get that information. Because I would like to know if you would like the inquiry to look back at those police reports on him to see what kind of pattern existed, given that you lived, ah, for maybe 15, 20 years in fear of your life never knowing when he was going to show up. Are you okay with that?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yes.

KERRIE REAY: Okay. Because it is certainly something that the inquiry is, um -- is -- and is part of the terms of reference for the, um, response. At that time, um, one of the other things that the inquiry is interested in is racism and discrimination. And you referenced yourself as, um, that you were -- that you weren't aware when you were younger that you were Metis. So when you were older did that ever -- were you ever questioned about that? I'm just trying to see in terms of the reaction of policing to your particular situation.
SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: No, I didn't find out until I was like -- after I was 40 that I was Metis.

KERRIE REAY: Okay. Okay.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I feel ripped off that all my life I -- I feel cheated, right?

KERRIE REAY: And your father had --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah, dad.

KERRIE REAY: So was your -- your father had a First Nation parent or both parents were First Nation? Your grandparents?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: My grandparents.

KERRIE REAY: Both were First Nation and, by the sounds of it, from Ontario.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: French. Yeah.

KERRIE REAY: Okay. Okay. Ontario or Quebec?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I think we lived in Ontario.

KERRIE REAY: Okay. But, I gather, you --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Ancestors back -- when we did our ancestry going back all those years --


SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: -- came from France.

KERRIE REAY: Okay. But married into a First Nations community?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I don't know the -- I really don't know the whole story.
KERRIE REAY: Okay.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And now Dad is gone and Mom is gone. And before Mom left I went through pictures and wrote on the back of them.

KERRIE REAY: Uh-huh.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And I have got a history of our family traced back, but I still don't know a lot of it.

KERRIE REAY: Yeah.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: My brother [Brother 1] who -- he passed away last January. Um, he's the one who did all the researching and his wife in Kamloops.

KERRIE REAY: Okay. And your partner in Chilliwack, was he Caucasian or First Nation?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: The father of?

KERRIE REAY: Of [Son].

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: No, he Caucasian. He's a big Caucasian.

KERRIE REAY: Okay.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Okay. That's that. I'm 20. Now I'm -- now I'm away from -- finally got away from that guy and I'm in Prince George still. And I met another one. This one is the father of my three youngest kids. We were together for nine years. Um, so from 22 to 31 this is kind of the life.
He was a controller. Controlled everything. Um, he once -- after I left him he used to come to my work and sit in my workplace and kind of stalk me, and then he'd follow me home. He wouldn't do anything but he would follow me home. And many mornings I would wake up and he'd be sitting outside of my apartment door passed out sleeping or whatever, or he'd come to my door at night and cry I love you and all this stuff. I couldn't get rid of him. And the police never really did anything there either. This was in Tumbler Ridge, a new town.

Um, one time he almost broke my arm. When I was walking home he grabbed me and he had it, twisted it. And I remember my hand touching the back of my head. I can't do that anymore. And he was, ah -- so he physically hurt me maybe once or twice, but -- but, you know, for the nine years I was with him it was mental, emotional, um, monetary.

He withheld money. He wouldn't even let -- if the Family Allowance was coming in he would take the keys so I couldn't go get the kids' cheque and go get them what they needed. He had to decide. He controlled everything, the bank account, everything. Um, he was a cheater. Stupid me. I didn't think he would. Oh, no, he would never do that to me.
Um, and that man is still kind of somewhat in and out of my life because that's where my granddaughter and my daughter live right now. Um, he used to do this too when we were mad -- when he was mad at me for whatever. He came home one night and -- like he used to work four nights and then four days and four off. And he came home one night unexpected because we thought he was gone to work, right? And so when he went to work lots of times the kids and I would just have pancakes and bacon and eggs for dinner. And he came home and I made him a plate and he threw it and smashed it into the wall in front of the kids; like why would you make me a dinner like this? Or he used to come in and he'd go, oh, didn't clean today. And that's all it would take.

Um, and when we were fighting, you know, you'd try to get away. You are up against the wall and he'd go like this, bam, punch a hole in the wall, next time it will be your face. So I lived in fear quite a bit while I was with him too and couldn't get away from him either.

Ah, um, but within that relationship I started my healing. I, ah, met this wonderful man, who is no longer with us, [Counsellor]. He was the counsellor in Tumbler Ridge. And he told me that I
was a good person and that I had a lot to give and a
lot to live for and that everything wasn't my fault
and I didn't deserve what I was getting. So I
counselled with him for a couple years and then I made
the break.

Like we had a daughter. My youngest is my
daughter. And when she was a year old I just couldn't
take it anymore. I tried. I tried. I tried. And so
finally I just told him, I'm leaving, I'm taking the
kids and I'm leaving. And he laughed at me. He
didn't think I would, but I did. I took the kids and
moved to Lethbridge.

I was going to college in Tumbler Ridge and I won
myself a $250 scholarship for English. And within
winning that, it's like somebody sent me a lifeline.
Within winning that scholarship I was able to pack up
my kids, move to Lethbridge, go to college there and
start a new life. So that's what I did. And that was

So I'm 32 now. Right into another abusive
relationship. I used to wonder what the fuck is --
whoops. What is wrong with me? Why? Is it the way I
look? Is it the way I talk? Is it the things I do?
Like I couldn't understand why every -- so every --
these are all my main relationships, and every
relationship I got into I was in for a number of years. I didn't just have one and go on. Um, every one I was in I ended up getting abused in one way or another. And I just thought -- finally just thought it was me. It has to be me and something that I'm doing or not doing.

But within the counselling I learned a lot of stuff. The counsellor made this, um, drawing and everybody has their own space and you are supposed to have like a two- or three-foot radius. That's your space and people, you know, should be respectful of that. Well, he made a picture of [R.] and he made a picture of me and then our four kids. And then he goes, see how you guys all got a circle around you? You guys all have your own and, you know -- and then he made [R.]'s and it encompassed all of us, which meant we didn't have our own.

And then he cheated. He cheated I don't know how many different times on me. And given where I was and what I had come from, I didn't know what real love was. And I think all my life I was looking for love in the wrong places. I just wanted someone to love me and ended up with all these abusive people.

So in Lethbridge I'm with this guy. I'm ten years older than him. And he gets jealous and starts
beating on me. And one time he beat me so bad I got vertigo. I had vertigo for almost a week. I couldn't even -- like to get up to stand up to go to the bathroom -- have you ever had vertigo?

KERRIE REAY: Uh-uh.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: It's like everything is just going around like this, right? I didn't report it or -- because I was embarrassed. A lot of times I didn't tell anybody anything because I was so embarrassed. Embarrassed that I let it happen to me and embarrassed that I couldn't get away from the situation. And then I got one last one. So after I got away from this guy -- um, I spent three years in that relationship. So now it's like 1995. I'm -- from 35 to 37. I met this Russian guy, and he taught me how to read cards and fortunes. And then he started hitting me and I didn't even know why sometimes. He locked me in a bedroom one time. I was in the bedroom and he barred the door so I could not get out. I was locked in that bedroom for two frigging days, nowhere to go to the bathroom, nothing to eat or drink.

And I -- when I did get out of there I ended up having -- I had carpal tunnel. I had surgeries on both of my wrists. Um, and after I had the surgery and I came home to that guy at my home -- this was
supposed to be my home. I don't even know what happened for this situation. I was in bed sleeping and the next thing I know -- same, same undershirt and a pair of panties. And the next thing I know I'm being grabbed by my hair, ripped out of the bed, like grabbed from the bed onto the floor, dragged through the house by my hair to the back door and then thrown outside onto the deck, and my hands are still in band-aids and stuff -- I just had surgery -- and out onto the deck for all the neighbours and everybody to see in my panties and T-shirt because I was useless now because, you know, I couldn't use my hands.

And then finally there was a whole bunch of different beatings and abuse and stuff with that guy too. But you know what? When I look back, I stayed with him the least amount of time. Because I think, by looking at my story, it went from wow to wow to wow to wow to wow. So some seeds that were planted were starting to work. Like I need to get the hell out of here.

This is -- and at that time I had a place that I could go to when I did get out. I had a place to put my stuff in storage and then I got an -- I got my apartment. He didn't come around and stalk me and stuff like all the other guys, though. And so it was
-- he did a few drive-bys and stuff, but I didn't get
the extent that I did from the other guys.

Want to hear something really weird? He's on my
Facebook friends. So this is the guy that I was 10
years older. And I -- I put a little thing out there
that I'm going to tell my story, and one guy liked it.
Like liked it like good that I'm going to do it. I
hope he has some time to think about what he did and,
hopefully, he made some changes in his life. This was
in Lethbridge too, the Russian guy.

And in -- in between these I've been in and out
of counselling a number of times. I've been to
groups. Um, I've been to a few women's groups. I
have hosted -- I've been -- um, you know what, I
think, was one of my saviours throughout my life is my
volunteering. I have volunteered since I was like 11
or 12 years old. I was in Girl Guides. I go
volunteer because I'm giving from my heart and I -- it
just makes me feel so good. I still do it today.

Um, I planted some seeds in my granddaughter too.
She's -- it's hard now that she's moved away because
she was my Relay For Life partner, my Terry Fox. She
was the one I did all my fundraising stuff with,
right? But now she can do it with her mom.

I don't know if I left anything out. That was
most of the stuff that I had, um, wrote down to tell
you. Um, and now today I'm no longer a survivor. I'm
a warrior. I'm a volunteer. I'm a grandmother. I'm
a photographer. Um, I have stuff to give now. Before
I had to take from everybody else because mine -- mine
was empty. And somebody would hug me and I would just
try and steal all their good energy. And now I have
energy to give back because I'm full.

And I found another outlet just yesterday. I
went down to the Omineca Arts Centre and I was taking
some of my red dress decals that I created to drop
off, and I got asked to come into the circle of
drummers. And I got a drum handed to me and I spent
the next two hours drumming. It was so amazing. And
I think that's -- I -- like I know I have shed some
tears, but it's part of that chapter I'm telling and
then that book is going to go closed.

But I think it helped me, the drumming, and I'm
going back Sunday. When I was down in the room
downstairs with the really tall lady, [L.], um, she
comes over. She goes, do you need a drum? I'm like,
I'm not drumming. She goes, you drummed yesterday.
Are you going to come and drum with us? I'm like, no,
I don't know any of the songs, I think. She goes, you
don't need to know the songs. You just get up there
and drum, girl. That's the heartbeat.

So I'm going back Sunday. I'm going to stay going back and I'm going to make a drum and, hopefully, become part of it. So then somebody else will have to take the pictures. Because I'm always the one there taking all the pictures, right?

KERRIE REAY: Right. Right.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: But, yeah, life is good now. Um, I'm pretty well -- well-known in the community for my photography and do a lot of donating of my photography to raise money for different things. Um, I created the decals. Um, I'm going to make a calendar for me.

KERRIE REAY: Would you like to just hold these decals up for the video just so that we can see?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: So last April, um, I spent 22 days in my mom's hospital room while she was passing away, me and my three sisters. And my -- the middle -- the youngest sister, she lives in Calgary and she has this beautiful machine called the Cricut. Cricut. Not like the chirping guy. So Cricut. And she can cut out anything. And so we were laying there. She's telling me that she's getting this machine and I'm thinking, so when you get this machine you need to make me some kind of a red dress sticker or something so I can raise awareness and raise money with it,
right?

And so -- and so, um, in October this came to fruition [sic]. And first I got just the Prince George red dress one because this is where it all started for me. And then I had, um, a gentleman from Ontario ask if I had any that just said red dress, and I sent him 10 to Ontario to get it out there. And through these will come awareness and will raise monies to host our stand-ins, buy a banner, you know, gift our speakers and performers.

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And it's my voice for this campaign and it's helping me heal.

KERRIE REAY: And would you like those to go in with your, um -- with your statement as part of the legacy for the National Inquiry?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I would love that. Thank you.

KERRIE REAY: Okay. Thank you. So I have a -- I have a few questions, if you wouldn't mind, and it's to go back to the beginning of your story and you talked about your family.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah.

KERRIE REAY: Because as we were talking we talked about that systemic violence --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah.
KERRIE REAY: -- going from generation to generation. And, um, your -- you feel that it's -- your mother was left at 12 and left to be out -- like kicked out from the home raising -- raising her sister.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah.

KERRIE REAY: Right? And, um, so you spoke a bit about your mom's side of the family because you understood that. But do you know much about your dad's side of the family? And I guess why I am asking is, being Metis, I'm just wondering if any of your family were part of the residential school experience?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Not -- not that I know of.

KERRIE REAY: Or the Sixties scoop?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Not that I know of. I don't think so, no.

KERRIE REAY: No. Because, of course, the Sixties scoop would have been you, right?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah, because I was born in 1960.

KERRIE REAY: Right. Right. Okay.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: No, I don't think anything like that happened to our family. Um, my dad didn't see his mom and dad for a long time. I don't know what was going on there. I met my grandmother once. My grandfather was already passed away. I never got to meet him. Um....
KERRIE REAY: Sort of I guess what I'm asking is that the
violence started before your generation?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Oh, yeah.

KERRIE REAY: Two generations before? I'm trying
understand where that violence came from.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: My grandma kicked my mom out at 12
with a six-year-old to... Like....

KERRIE REAY: So it was almost a repeat --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: What she did to me.

KERRIE REAY: -- what she did to you?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah.

KERRIE REAY: And at 15 you talked about there was -- um,
so at 15 we're talking mid '70s?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah, '75.

KERRIE REAY: So, I mean, at that time you said there was
no help. And so I'm wondering where did you look for
it? Was there like -- was there social services?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: There was little help. There was
help but not like it is today.

KERRIE REAY: You mentioned that, yeah.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Um....

KERRIE REAY: It just felt that, from your truth, that, um,
in the time you were growing up there was no support,
no place to turn. You had no family to turn to, no
services to turn to.
SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I did go to -- this is later in life like with the husband and my three kids. I did end up taking, um, my -- my -- I hadn't had my daughter yet. I ended up taking my three boys and stayed in a safe house. I stayed in a safe house once this stuff was going on --

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: -- with the guy in Lethbridge too.

There was help out there but it was far and few between.

KERRIE REAY: And what about Chilliwack? Because that really seemed to be that, ah, you know, the restraining orders weren't working. There wasn't enforcement from the police, from what you are saying. You know, the death threats. The actual -- um, you said, you know, driving a vehicle that was a -- that could have claimed your life. And was there no resources at that time in Chilliwack? Because you were saying that was probably like '79, '80, '81?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, there was some like the police. Um, I don't know if there was victim services back then or not. There was later in life. I accessed that later in my life. Um....

KERRIE REAY: But not at that time?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: No. I was -- I was just, um,
terrified to tell anybody or to report stuff because
he said he was going to kill me. He would kill me or
he would kill -- I was more afraid he was going to
hurt my family than me.

KERRIE REAY: Right. Right.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I had been there so many times
already.

KERRIE REAY: You mentioned that your father, um, went to
jail. Ah, when he went to jail did you see him
afterwards? Like was he in jail a long time or a
short time?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I don't think he was in jail for a
long time, and that was for assaulting my mother, and
then my brother punched my dad -- my dad. And it's
like, okay, I hate you, Dad, for hitting my mom and
now I hate my brother for hitting my dad. What --
there was my brother in the closet, and hiding in the
laundry basket, and that was the night we ran in the
rain.

KERRIE REAY: Was that the only time that you were aware of
that your dad went to jail?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: No. I think my dad had been in
jail a number of times.

KERRIE REAY: Okay.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And for abuse. And it always
happened when they had been drinking.

KERRIE REAY: Okay. And you said there was lots of --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yes.

KERRIE REAY: -- consumption of alcohol?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And lots of times they'd go out to
the bar. And, you know, we're kids in bed. We are
going to school the next day. And they'd bring people
home to party, --

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: -- you know, and then a big fight
breaks out or....

KERRIE REAY: And when -- and when those -- when those
parties occurred, um, were the children safe from the
people who were coming to the parties?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I think so because we weren't
supposed to be out of our bedrooms.

KERRIE REAY: Okay.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I walked on a lot of egg shells all
my life. I'm tired of walking on egg shells.

KERRIE REAY: Well, you are a warrior now. It sounds to me
like you are not doing too much of that. Your son
[Son], you got quite upset there at one point when you
were talking about the violence that -- that he
endured and you also referenced very briefly, um, that
he has a tendency towards violence.
SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah, and he's -- he's always, um -- I think he just got off of probation. I know prohibition was going through my mind. Probation. He just got off of probation. He's been in a number of -- he's been in and out of jail too mostly in the [City] area.

KERRIE REAY: Okay.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And we've tried. He just came here and, um, lived here for almost two years and everything was going good [redacted - private information] and then things just started going sideways, and it came to the point where I told him: You have to go. You can't come back here. You can't come back here and say those things to me in my house.

KERRIE REAY: Okay. So were you starting to see --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: [R.2].

KERRIE REAY: -- the abuse was now coming from your son?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I started to see his dad, yes. And some of the things he said to me, it's like he has scared me more than once in my life.

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I think a lot of the family is kind of scared of him.

KERRIE REAY: Okay.
SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: When he's good he's good, but there's that flip side, right?

KERRIE Reay: And that -- and you said he’s [one line redacted - private information]?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah, [one line redacted - private information]. Yes. But he don't think there is.

KERRIE REAY: No. Okay.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And there's nothing you can do at that point.

KERRIE REAY: No.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: But, for me, being the mom, I kind of feel like I'm in the rock and the hard place where he's my son and I love him, but I -- I can't let him abuse me or talk to me like that or anybody in my house. So he's gone back to [City]. I haven't heard from him since he left in October or November.

KERRIE REAY: Okay. And your health is important.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yes.

KERRIE REAY: Right? You are a warrior now and that is -- you have got control of your life. And, um -- and to do that sometimes it comes with some hard decisions.

And they are okay. Those are okay decisions.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah. I'm doing pretty good health-wise. I was telling Gertrude that four years ago I got diagnosed. [Two lines redacted - personal health
information]. And they have monitored
it for the last -- so it has been four years since
they have been monitoring it. And, um, it hasn't
changed. [Two lines redacted - personal health information].

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Everybody that I know of that's
died from [five lines redacted - personal health information].

KERRIE REAY: Okay.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And then the doctor says, you know
it can't go from that area into there, right? So I
was checked. The last time I was checked they said
they were just going to leave it now and that if
something starts happening then I go back. I had
quite a few MRIs, and I was pretty scared for those
three or four years, though.

KERRIE REAY: Oh, I bet. I bet.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: But people say, how do you get
through that? I said, I got a life to live. I've got a
granddaughter to grow up with. And I don't even try
thinking about it because I really believe what you
put out there comes back to you. Whether it's bad or
good it's going to come back.

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm. Right.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: So I just -- I said, I got a life
to live. I'm just getting on with my life. I don't
even think about them most of the time.

KERRIE REAY: And in doing that you referenced a fellow by
the name of [Counsellor]?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: [Counsellor].

KERRIE REAY: And was that a turning point for you where
you were actually were able to access some services
that were starting to show up in communities and --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: That was in Tumbler Ridge and he
was the counsellor in town.

KERRIE REAY: And what -- what triggered? Can I ask, what
connected you to him? How did that happen? Because
it sounds like it was a big turning point for you.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I met him through a friend, I
believe, and then I needed help.

KERRIE REAY: And --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And Tumbler Ridge is a small
community, right? Still a small community. So I
ended up going to counselling with him once a week. And
then, um, we tried counselling, me and the hubby,
together, and then he just would sit there and lie the
whole time. I -- and then one day I got mad and I got
up and I said, okay, I am not doing this anymore. I
said, excuse me, [Counsellor], I'm going home. And then, you
know, the partner gets all mad. And I am like, I am
not going to sit here and spill my guts and be as
honest as I can so I can try and heal and heal our
family and our children, and, you know, so forth and
so on, and you are going to sit there and lie and deny
everything. So I said, I think it's better if I just
do my own counselling and you do our your own
counselling, and that's how we did it.

KERRIE REAY: And I guess because one of the things the
inquiry is looking at in terms of recommendations in
terms of supporting people, women and girls, that are
coming out of those violent relationships, and you
have described a lot of violence, and a lot of courage
here by you today. Huge courage --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: It's time.

KERRIE REAY: -- to share your truth.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Happy birthday, Mom.

KERRIE REAY: But, um, part of it is moving, going forward.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yes.

KERRIE REAY: Right?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: You have got to go

(indiscernible) --

KERRIE REAY: And what -- what happened for you as a

survivor and now a warrior that allowed you? What was
there that sort of not triggered but helped you take
that step towards healing and your journey towards
better health for yourself and for your family?
Something happened in Tumbler Ridge is where I'm going.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah. Yeah.

KERRIE REAY: Because for all those years --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I always volunteered.

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And, you know, if your front yard is good your whole household is good. Not true. So that's -- I grew up with that thinking from my parents, right?

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And, um, I don't know what it was. I don't know what made me go to [Counsellor]. But it was ever since I started seeing [Counsellor] it -- just little seeds were getting planted.

KERRIE REAY: Right.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And then I stepped out of my comfort zone --

KERRIE REAY: Okay.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: -- and I said, I want to go back to school. That's a big risk. I got kicked out when I was 15. I want my education. I'm the only one in my family that graduated. I did it years later but I graduated.

KERRIE REAY: Congratulations.
SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And, um -- and then it was like rocking the boat. I'm going to rock the boat. I'm not going to tip it over but I'm rocking it. I'm going back to school. So I went and registered. Because my counsellor says, you have every right to go back to school if you want to, right? And through that going back to school and my volunteering in the community. Um, and I got a job at the Royal Bank cleaning the Royal Bank. You have to be bonded. So I was bondable. And then, um, I won the scholarship. And then I thought, okay, I can't go any further here. I need to get out of here. And then it all just....

KERRIE REAY: So what I'm hearing is that the counselling provided a -- some strength, a bit of a safety net as well --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah.

KERRIE REAY: -- as you made some decisions and, it sounds like, taking control --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah.

KERRIE REAY: -- back?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah.

KERRIE REAY: Some things fell into place for you as well like getting the scholarship and it just allowed you because of that -- not because but that support --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yes.
KERRIE REAY: -- with the counsellor helped move you forward?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah, big time. And then, you know, growing up thinking -- I was told I was stupid and I was never going to amount to anything. And then, you know, you get with these guys and they tell you you are fat and you are useless and you are stupid. You know, after so many years of that you start believing them. And I remember finding myself in a closet one time with the doors closed bawling my eyes out thinking, I hate my life, it sucks, there's nothing I can do to change it and it's always going to be like this.

KERRIE REAY: And you proved yourself wrong.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I did. I did. And then when I left Tumbler Ridge to move to Lethbridge to go to school I just became active and involved and had my kids. I was always that outgoing, um, volunteering person, but I was always -- guys always just -- and then, you know, the Russian guy in Lethbridge there, he beat me up one time because of what I was wearing or he seen a guy look me and he beat me up, you know. It's like...

But if I wouldn't have gone through all that stuff I wouldn't be the person I am today, I think. I
don't think people have to go through all that stuff
to become the person they want to be, but my life was
a different story.

KERRIE REAY: So thoughts about, um, for the recommendation
piece of the inquiry and the violence that sort of
permeated from the time you were a child until about
15 years ago, what recommendations for women that are
experiencing that? What sort of things do you think
could help them move forward or to escape? Because
you -- you made that comment a number of times. And I
am mindful that you were talking about a time in the
'70s and the '80s --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah.

KERRIE REAY: -- and you said that they were different.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah.

KERRIE REAY: What would you think is changed for women
today?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: It's always been escape. All the
relationships I was in was escape. And then the
father of my three kids, he kicked me out and then
when I was packed and ready to go he wouldn't let me
out of the house.

KERRIE REAY: But you said you felt like you couldn't
leave. So --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah.
KERRIE REAY: -- my questioning, to myself, is in terms of the recommendations --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I didn't think --

KERRIE REAY: -- as a survivor and a warrior.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I didn't think there was enough help for me. I didn't think there was -- I didn't have any safety nets. Like, I mean, if your family is not going to help you who is going to help you, right? I didn't -- I was young and didn't know. Um, safety nets are huge. Having somebody that you can call and talk to any time. I did that too with number of women. I'm here 24/7. Any time you need a ride, you need to get out call me. Um, and I still see it going on in relationships today and even in some family members. And it's hard to stay out. It's hard.

KERRIE REAY: Yeah.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: You can let them know that you are there for them, but you can't go in and change things. You can't make them change. You can't make someone escape or whatever until they are ready.

KERRIE REAY: Right.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And I -- I don't know if this is still the stats, but back in my day it took a woman sometimes going -- leaving 10 times coming and going before she actually left. And I look at all my
relationships and I didn't just leave the first time and stay away. I couldn't. I didn't think I was capable --

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: -- of raising kids on my own. I didn't know if I could get a job to raise kids. I didn't have my education. I didn't have my high school yet. And back then to pack groceries you needed grade 12. I couldn't even pack groceries. And then I felt stupid.

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm. So what I'm hearing is that safety net and the services for women need to be in place --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yes.

KERRIE REAY: -- for them to actually escape the violence?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yes. Regardless of your culture. That shouldn't have anything to do with it. We are all human beings.

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: We all deserve not to be abused.

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm. Now, one of the things that you had mentioned earlier was your photography and how that's been part of your healing journey and something that you were considering about helping to support the legacy further outside of your truth in terms of the National Inquiry?
SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yes. Yes. I attend as many of the events in town. Um, I'm a photographer for a lot of the events in town, and then I take the pictures and I post them on social media and then just tell people to share, and they go all over the place. I have friends around the world, right?

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And that's the best platform. One of the best platforms. My photography keeps me sane. I was -- I was telling Gertrude that I go to water. I'm a fire sign.

KERRIE REAY: Yeah.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Someone asked me why water. I said, because I think it grounds me, right?

KERRIE REAY: Yeah.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And today, because everything is frozen, I go to the shower or I go have a bath. And then when I first decided I was going to do this and I went into the shower and all the memories were coming back, I just stood there and let the water wash them away.

But photography is -- I don't know. Ah, it's my passion. It's what I do. And, um, I am, this year, looking into making a calendar from my red dress events, our red dress events, and some of my own -- I
have 46 of my own red dresses that I have collected,
and I take them out and set them out and do different
pictures with them. So I'm going to make a calendar
and I want to donate at least part of the money to The
Red Dress Society to help with events, um, speakers.
KERRIE REAY: And you mentioned that, perhaps, if there's a
calendar you'd like to donate that to the National
Inquiry, a calendar?
SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I would donate it. You betcha. I
would love to do that.
KERRIE REAY: I just want to take a look at my notes, um,
just to make sure that -- and that we will -- after
we're off the record, um, you will give me the
information so that we can look at --
SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yes.
KERRIE REAY: -- the possibility of taking a look at that
time when you were in Chilliwack, particularly, and
Prince George in the early '80s --
SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah.
KERRIE REAY: -- and the lack of policing support in the --
enforcing those restraining orders.
SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Um, after the thing that happened
here in Prince George, I had a constable named
[Police officer]? I think it was [Police officer]. And we
had this connection, and it just seemed whenever I -- I had
his -- he gave me his card and I could call him if I ever needed to. And then like he was around for about six months and then he just -- he disappeared. I didn't understand where he went. And I was told that they removed him off my case because he was getting too close. It was... Right?

KERRIE REAY: Hmm.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And like he's a police officer. Isn't that what he is supposed to do?

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: But, yeah, um....

KERRIE REAY: So I do -- I -- there's another question, and it probably seems a little out of context, um, because I'm asking it towards the end, and that was, you know when you were describing the violence in the family home, was there any of the children who were removed from the home by any social services or foster care?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Okay. So my oldest brother, he was in the navy already. And then my second oldest brother, he was married and out on his own. Um, but the six younger ones, or the four before me, like me and [Sister 2], so the two older ones were already out living their lives. And then there was, um, [Brother 1], [Sister]. My brother [Brother 2] went off and lived with a family on the Bonaparte reserve because he couldn't
stand our family anymore.

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And my mom and dad were good with
	hat. So [Brother 1] and [Sister] and [Brother 3] were

all put into foster homes.

KERRIE REAY: What about yourself?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: No, I never went in one, but I was

threatened with it daily. If you don't behave, --

KERRIE REAY: So some of your --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: -- if you don't do this....

KERRIE REAY: -- older siblings? So just --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah.

KERRIE REAY: Just to get my mind, I have that there was

five children in the family.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: There's eight.

KERRIE REAY: There's eight children?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Five boys and three girls.

KERRIE REAY: Oh, there we go. There's the five, five boys?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah.

KERRIE REAY. Okay. Okay.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And then the two older boys were

already off doing their own thing.

KERRIE REAY: Okay. Yeah.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Um, so -- so my older sister and,

ah, the brother above me and the brother above my
older sister, they were all... And stuff happened to them and they are -- that's their story, though.

KERRIE REAY: Right. Okay. No, but it's part of --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: It is.

KERRIE REAY: -- understanding the system of systemic violence.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And my sister still -- since my mom has passed away my sister is still having a really really hard time. Both of them. I kind of came through it gracefully.

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And they are having a harder time. I mean, everybody grieves differently.

KERRIE REAY: Yes. So, um, we talked about counselling. And, as a survivor, you talked about your strength and your resilience started when you started with [Counsellor] but also that you found a lot of strength in giving back to the community --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Um-hmm.

KERRIE REAY: -- through your volunteering. So I'm just -- I'm just trying to make sure that some of the themes that the inquiry is looking for in their recommendations that I don't miss. Because you have -- you have taken such -- as I said earlier, such courage to share so much and so personal. I want to
make sure that I can capture some of those themes.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Okay.

KERRIE REAY: So, um, we've talked about commemorating the -- you have got the dresses that you have given, the sticker dresses. The calendar will come. And, ah, we've talked about making things better. You have highlighted the need for services, the need for safety nets for women --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah.

KERRIE REAY: -- and girls. Is there anything else in terms of what you think the inquiry needs to understand from -- from your truth or that you would like to offer in terms of anything else that would support some recommendations?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I think quite a few of the times in the different situations that I wasn't believed, that they believed the abuser.

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Which made me think, why do I -- why should I even say anything then?

KERRIE REAY: And that's policing? Okay.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah. Um, I think one of my -- another of my -- just in the last like three years, one of my breaking points to put myself out there more was, um, I seen an ad on the TV that Prince George was
going to host the Canada Winter Games in 2015. And I said to my hubby, I said, I don't know what I'm doing but I'm going to be part of that. And so when they put out the applications, like I had just a basic little camera but I took some pretty amazing pictures with that little camera, right? And I put myself out there. I am going to go. I want to be a photographer for the Canada Winter Games.

KERRIE REAY: Okay.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And some people scoffed because my camera was, you know....

KERRIE REAY: You can do some pretty good [unintelligible overtalk].

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I said it's -- I said it's not just the camera. It's the eye.

KERRIE REAY: Right.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Right? And so I went for it. And when I went there there was all these -- there was 50 of us. And there was all these other people with these lenses like this and they are looking at my camera, right? And I said to the -- Nikon came up. Nikon came from, I don't know, Ontario or whatever.

KERRIE REAY: Right.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And they would clean people's cameras and stuff for them. And mine was a Canon. I
said, yeah, I know you, can't touch mine because it's a Canon and it's little. And he goes -- and these guys are still scoffing away. And he goes, no, Sharon. He says, we can't touch yours, but we can loan you one. I'm like what? We can loan you a Nikon. I'm like what? And they loaned me an $8,000 -- (indiscernible) a $8,000 Nikon and I had it for 22 days in a row, and I went out there.

So my job with the winter games, I did their job during the day and then at night the Lheidli Tenneh had their own pavilion with all these amazing performers and stuff and all the spirituality and drumming and bannock. So, um, me and my daughter, we did my work in the daytime, and so I got my daughter to become my assistant.

KERRIE REAY: Okay.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And so I took her everywhere with me and we went to all the different sports and everything, and we spent every night over at that. I have some amazing pictures of the performances and that. And that -- like that camera has a lens like that on it. And then I came away from that and then I had to go back to my Canon. I'm sorry I abandoned you, my little camera, right?

KERRIE REAY: Ah.
SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And then just started taking --

just go out. Well, that's what I started with. I
just started taking. And it allowed me to put myself
out there.

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I am as good as some of these other
people. I can take pictures like this. And then
about a year-and-a-half ago I saved up money and I
bought myself a $2,000 Nikon. It's not 8,000, but
it's $2,000.

KERRIE REAY: Yeah.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And I have taken some amazing
pictures with it. And so that's --

KERRIE REAY: Okay.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: -- my voice.

KERRIE REAY: Okay. And you also were speaking that you
were finding your voice in drumming --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah.

KERRIE REAY: -- as well? So you are starting to connect
with your culture?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yes.

KERRIE REAY: Good.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I went to take some decals to some
ladies at the drum session yesterday and they invited
me into the circle. And they gave -- Jen gave me a
drum and then I just -- because I have seen so many of
their performances.

KERRIE REAY: Um-hmm.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And the drum is the heartbeat,
right? And I thought, wow, this is so good for me for
what I am going to go do tomorrow. So I drummed for
two hours. They said, you drummed for two hours?
That's a lot for your first time. I am not even sore.
I'm going back Sunday. And then eventually I'm going
to -- they are going to have a drum workshop. I'm
going to make a drum.

KERRIE REAY: Good.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah. Yeah, it's very very very
very, ah, spiritual and healing. And we had a
gentleman come through here. His name was Caribou
Legs. He ran from Ontario.

KERRIE REAY: Yes. Yes. Yes.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: And he -- to cleanse the Highway of
Tears. So me and my girlfriend went up, ah, to the
bon voyage just before he started his running. We
were part of the smudging ceremony. And I gifted him
five of my decals and he gifted me this.

KERRIE REAY: And you have been here today holding that.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yes.

KERRIE REAY: Sharing it with your truth.
SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yes. So, with that, I feel really good right now.

KERRIE REAY: Oh, good.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: I feel like I want to cry because I feel so good. I feel really -- rushing around in my chest. I feel light. I feel like I just went poof to a hundred pounds.

KERRIE REAY: Good. Good.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Thank you.

KERRIE REAY: Any last comments?

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: No. Thank you for having me here and allowing me to tell my story. And I hope that if my story can help one woman or girl....

KERRIE REAY: Yes. And it will be part of the legacy of the inquiry.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Wow.

KERRIE REAY: It's a public -- um, it's a public session, although, we're private in here.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Yeah.

KERRIE REAY: But it is public. So it will be that legacy. And I know I have said it before, but I think it needs to be said again, phenomenal courage to share --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: Thank you.

KERRIE REAY: -- what you shared today. And we -- it's your truth and we want to honour that. And so thank
you very much for being here and --

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: It feels --

KERRIE REAY: -- giving your time.

SHARON LYNN PATTERSON: It feels good to tell the whole, whole thing. I am sure there's pieces in there, other stuff that happened, but that was the gist of it and it feels good to share.

KERRIE REAY: All right. With that then, I'm going to turn off the recording.

[PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED]
REPORTER'S CERTIFICATION

I, Janet Chorney, Official Reporter in the Province of British Columbia, Canada, do hereby certify:

That this is a true and accurate transcript of these proceedings recorded on sound-recording apparatus, transcribed to the best of my skill and ability in accordance with applicable standards.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name this 9th of March, 2018.

Official Reporter