National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Truth-Gathering Process

Part 1 Statement Gathering

Prince George Conference and Civic Centre

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Statement - Volume 233

David Tom, In relation to Jane Tom

Statement gathered by Caitlin Hendrickson

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Documents submitted with testimony:

1. Photocopy of death certificate.
CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: This is Caitlin Hendrickson, statement taker with the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. It is 9:20 a.m. on February 7th, 2018. We're here in Prince George at the Civic Centre, and I'm sitting here with David Tom, and he's here to speak today about his sister, Jane Tom. Also in the room we have Denise McKinley, mental health support with Carrier Sekani.

You've agreed today that we would be videotaping it today and audio recording it. Can you please state that you're okay with that.

DAVID TOM: Yeah.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Thanks. And we had a discussion about what you're going to be sharing with the commissioners today, and we'll hold your statement as a public statement. And so with that, I am going to let you start wherever you would like to start.

DAVID TOM: Well, today is February 7th, 2018. My sister passed away way back 1994. They found her in our -- my cousin's bedroom. She was naked and she was laying on the floor. I would like to find out what happened to her, and I didn't have any cop's
report or coroner's report when it happened. It was way back in 1994. In those years, my mom was alive, and mom wanted to do something, but mom passed away, too. She died 1997.

And it is hard. I lost all my family. My brothers and my sisters, my mom and dad. I'm just by myself. And I have one sister left. She's in Burns. She's getting old, too. And I have my nephews and my niece. My sister had two kids, [Jane’s Daughter] and [Jane’s Son]. That's Jane's kids.

And it is tough for me to see what -- how she died, and I didn't get any report from the cops or anybody those days. And I went to a coroner's office down here in Prince George. They were working on it. And they supposed to phone me back if they have anything updated so I could come down, see what happened to my sister.

I been thinking about these stuff. Nobody couldn't help me. I asked my leaders, my chief and counsellor to help me on this. They didn't want to. They didn't want to step in their system, family problems, they didn't want to help. They -- I been talking with my buddies, good thing my buddy [Friend 1] told me to phone Penny about this issues and stuff like this.
CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: I seen these people on APTN News. They were down in Ottawa. Wouldn't mind be there with them, think about my sister. It's been so long, too many years I've been thinking about it, but I've been seeing the counsellor left and right. Good to lay it out. And stuff really bothers me sometimes. Always saying this to myself, wish my family were still here with me. They would have dealt with it long ago.

But it is hard for me. I'm by myself.

Nobody couldn't help me, and nobody does want to get behind me and stuff like that. I have a counsellor at Burns, he's my cousin, but he couldn't be close to me because it's confidential stuff we're going to talk about it, so I told him I'll just do it on my own.

It is tough for me, like. Somebody has got to pay the price what they did to my sister way back 1994 when they found her at [house address]. And I wanted to find out what happened, and that's why I'm here and see if you guys can help me.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: It's been so long I've been watching these people,
they lose their loved ones, their daughters,
especially the parents, brothers and sisters,
grandparents, grandfather, uncle, and aunts. I
don't have uncle and aunts. They're all passed
away. And it is tough.

Like I want to let my nephews and my niece
to know because I want them to help me, but they
don't want to be involved, so I'm doing this for
my -- two kids of Janie's, [Jane’s Daughter] and [Jane’s
Son]. I wanted them to be here, but I didn't let them
Know because it was too late to talk to him because my
nephew [Jane’s Son] is a drug addict and alcoholic, and
her (sic) sister, [Jane’s Daughter], lives down here. She
doesn't drink or anything. She's a handicap.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: And I didn't tell them I was going to do this, but
I'll talk to them slowly when I go home and then
I'll come back here and probably Friday deal with [Jane’s
Daughter], because [Jane’s Daughter], she always miss her
mom. She wanted to see her, but she didn't have a chance
to see her mom. She was apprehended when she was
small.

It is, you know -- nobody can help me, but
I'm -- I want to do something about my sister's
case. It's been so long. Even though it's going
to be 30 years, something like that, or 100 years from now, I can still deal with these issues, but myself, I'm 57 years old, and I want to do this for [Jane's Son] and [Jane's Daughter]. Because I'm the Only uncle they have.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: And it's been so many years, so many years passed, and leaders, see if they can help you. No, they're not involved with these kind of stuff they were saying. I can tell you one thing about our leaders, other bands, sure, they can help their members, but me, nobody wouldn't help me.

Even I asked the chief and the band manager, the counsellor to help me. They didn't want to.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: So I'm going to do this on my own. I get support from my buddy Ron Blend and [Friend 1], they can help me. If I get another counsellor to deal with these stuff, they can help me.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So why do you think your band isn't supporting you?

DAVID TOM: They don't want to be involved.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Why is that?

DAVID TOM: I don't know why because sure it was if their own
family get beat up or get killed, sure, and
everybody is going to put their nose in there. I
been asking them so many times. Way back when it
happened, my cousin Betty was a chief, Betty
Patrick, and before was Emma Palmantier, she was
our chief, too, now Wilf Adam is our chief.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Can you ask Wilf Adam for help?

DAVID TOM: Pardon?

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: You've asked Wilf Adam for help?

DAVID TOM: Yeah, they don't want to help. Even though I ask
the leader so many times in the meeting, they don't
want to be involved. Even we have AJA, I brought
these stuff, and they say they're not allowed
helping our people. What are they there for?
We're the one who voted them in. And they should
help our members, right?

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: Because they can't say no. Because I seen this
APTN News, every other area, like Saskatchewan,
Saskatoon, sure, their leaders, they help them.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: So many loved ones they lost, what about our band?
Why can't they do that, help our members, but the
chief and counsellors, they don't want to help.
They just do their own policy and all that stuff.
They say have to do the policy first.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm?

DAVID TOM: I've been dealing with the R.C.M.P., too, in Burns Lake, nothing come up, so I went down here, coroner's office, they're working on my sister report, if something comes up, they'll give me a call, I have to come back down here and look at it. And then maybe I bring it to you guys. You have an office here in town, right?

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Not here, no. In Vancouver.

DAVID TOM: Oh, in Vancouver. I wouldn't mind maybe before I leave, maybe you can give me your fax number and stuff like that, and I'll fax it down.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: I can give you my e-mail address. It can be scanned and e-mailed to me.

DAVID TOM: Yeah, I've been asking them so long.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: These leaders, they don't want to help. My buddy told me you should phone Penny, so I did that, because I want to deal with it, and I need help. Maybe I -- I was talking to Brenda Wilson out there. They said they can easily help me.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: And I'll be happy if they do help me.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Yes, FILU is really good for you to be
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David Tom  
(Jane Tom)

getting connected to because they can help you probably a little bit quicker than we can. We can look into requesting these reports. I just don't know when we would be able to get them because we've got thousands of reports to request.

DAVID TOM: I know. I seen that on the news.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: It's going to take a while to deal with these issues.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: It's going to take time. But my sister died way back '94. It's been so long, and I've been thinking and worrying how can I do this, but good thing a friend of mine told me see Penny, so I phoned her up. They might help me. Because I never seen any coroner's report or anything.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm. No, it's good you came today.

DAVID TOM: It is really bothers me. How would you feel when your sister get killed or whatever and naked, laying on the floor? How would you feel? It's hard.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Absolutely.

DAVID TOM: M-hm. I've been thinking about it every time, but I couldn't do anything. If I do something, it will be a different story. I am hereditary chief for
Lake Babine. I speak for my caribou clan.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: I have a name. I don't want to be rude to my members.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: That's all. I can't say anything to nobody. If I say something, then the whole family will probably jump me, that's why I don't say anything. If I say one thing to another family, everybody is going to put their nose in. Yap, yap, yap. That's how it is back home. So I don't say anything to nobody.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: I keep things to myself.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: If I tell my nephews and my niece, they will get together, and I don't want them to be enemies with my own members.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: Always keeps things to myself.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: I don't tell anybody. I don't talk about anybody, and I don't tell anybody about it. You know, I just -- that's myself, when people say something to me, I just walk away. I just let them talk. I don't say anything back to them. If I say
something back to them, it's going to get worse, so
I know the tools on my own.

Because I went to treatment, Round Lake,
way back in '97, when my mom passed away, I went to
Round Lake for six weeks program to deal with all
my anger and my grief.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: I know I met Joe Michelle and -- you know Michelle
way back from the Elders on Salmon Arm?

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: I met with them. They talked to me one on one. It
was nice. Now -- back home us we don't have enough
Elders. All our Elders are all gone. Maybe a few,
maybe half a dozen left.

It's best to listen to the Elders, but we
don't have Elders anymore in our clan. There's
just about two or three in our clan. Each other
clans have same thing, they have maybe four or six
Elders.

That's our four clan, frog, beaver, bear,
caribou, in our territory, and we have to work as a
nation. When we lose a loved one, everybody works
together.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: That's how it is. And it is tough for me, but I
wish I can get help. I wish my leaders could have
dealt with this way back in '94, then I wouldn't be
sitting here talking about my sister, but it
bothers me so much, I have to do it, and I want to
see how she died. I want to find out her report,
the coroner's report, and I need to deal with it
one way or the other because it is tough. It
bothers me so much.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: And I couldn't let go. If I let go, it'll make me
really more angry and stuff like this, so that's
why I always see a counsellor, talk to them about,
but now there's a new counsellor working for the
band. She went for training in Vancouver. I'll
probably see her next week, on Tuesday. I always
talk to her. She's a nice woman.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: And she helps me, too. She doesn't know all the
members in our community, but she's a pretty good
woman. She's just like her, and she's good to talk
to. I can talk with any other counsellor except
for her and Ron Blend and [Friend 1].

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: They're my buddies. But that counsellor is a new
one, I'd like to deal with her more. Like stuff
bothers me, I always give her a call, and we'll go
for a coffee and talk it over and let it out, walk
it off and shake it off, that's how I feel better.

But my sister's case, I want to find out
really -- I want to see the coroner's report and
stuff like that. I'm doing this for my nephew and
my niece because they miss their mom.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: My nephew is an alcoholic and he's drug addict, but
he'll be okay if he sees a counsellor. I talk to
him once in a while. I don't see him in Burns very
often, but he's in Burns, but he put himself into
trouble all the time.

But I need to do this, like I want you
guys' support. I've been asking my leaders, see if
they can help me. Nobody could do it so they're
not in their policy for these stuff. Look, what's
going to happen if our community, so many loved
ones we lost in our community, nobody even stepped
in, they just leave it up to the family.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: My cousin got killed on the road. He got slashed
way back, and we have to wait for these coroner
till 12 hours later; he was on roadside for 12
hours. These coroners were coming from Vancouver,
Prince George, Terrace, we have to wait for these kind of stuff when it's happening in our community.

Same thing what happened to my brother in 2006. He got killed at the mall. And I've been dealing with his case still. And I asked the leaders, see if they can help me. They don't want to help me. That's what they're there for, right?

I don't have any support. Not one of them ever say did you do something, did you want help, anybody ever say that to me, and it's tough, like in our community. Especially when you start losing loved ones, every member show up for our loved ones when they're gone.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: That's not right. They say love one another. How we're going to love one another? Back home, it's pretty tough to live. It is hard when you lose a loved one. I lost grandpa not too long ago, three weeks ago. We just buried him in Babine. He was 98 years old. His birthday coming up this month, he would have been 99.

And I say just have to pray for him when we lose our loved ones. That's what I've been doing to our family. Always go to their grave and pray for them, talk to him. All my family are all gone.
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David Tom
(Jane Tom)

Just one sister left. And it is tough, when you see your family get killed, it's hard.

Same thing happened to my brother at the mall, and these guys, they're still out in the street. I need help. Who is going to help me?

I'm just by myself. I have cousins, but they don't want to be involved. I got no aunties, no uncle, they're all gone. If I had my aunties around, they would have helped me. My aunties are real close to me, but them, too, they're all gone, they're all passed away.

Like -- hope somebody can help me deal with my sister's case. I'll be happy. It is tough trying to do something for like myself, but I should leave it in God's hands. I can't leave it in God's hands. What we're going to do if we leave it in God's hands, all we have to do is just pray for them, pray for her? It's not the answer.

Somebody has got to pay the price what they did to her and how she died. I want to find out. It's been too long. And it is tough. It happened in our community.

You go other nations, same thing, same thing happened in other nation, nobody can deal with these problems, right? They lose their loved
one in that community, it's hard to deal with it. And it takes time to deal with it. That's how it is. It is tough.

I seen this so many times when they lose a loved one. You know, I always talk to the family if they lose a loved one. I always speak to them, give them good words, talk to them, tell them just pray for them. Crying is not going to solve the problem. Crying is just making themself more hurt. All they're going to do is just pray for their loved ones.

That's what I learned from this treatment Round Lake with the two Elders. They walk with me, they talk with me, like when -- a room like this, one-on-one, take turns. In our community, nobody doesn't do that. It's tough.

But we have to deal with the counsellor, talk to them, but now we have good leader, counsellor to talk to, lady counsellor, she's just like her, she's a good woman, and she's out training. When she comes back, I'll probably talk to her more about my sister.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON:  M-hm.

DAVID TOM:  It is tough. You know. I wish the chief and counsellor, they could help, but not one of them
ever step in to my -- step in community or we're
going to help you do this. It's not right. You go
see the other nation, they help their families,
right? That's how it is. But our band, they don't
do that. We're the biggest band, Lake Babine
Nation, and the chief and counsellor, they don't
want to help the members. Like cases like this,
they have to help.

I was watching APTN News again here coming
in. The leaders they help their members out in
Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Regina, chief and
counsellor and all the Elders and members, they get
together and meet with them. I was watching that
news. So many loved ones they lost in those area,
especially the women. Like, it's hard. That's how
it is.

Like my sister, that's how I miss her. It
is tough, but -- sometimes I want to do something,
but I leave it, just let it by, I walk it off and
shake it off. That's when I go see a counsellor.
It's better to see a counsellor.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: Yeah. That's all I can tell you.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm. Do you know when in 1994 she was

killed?
DAVID TOM: January 13th.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm. Do you know if anybody was arrested at that time?

DAVID TOM: Nope, nobody, but there was my cousin [Cousin 1]. My niece passed away. Her name was [Niece 1], she was there, and the other lady was [M.A.].

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Sorry, that was [Niece 1] --

DAVID TOM: Pardon?

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: What was her name, [Niece 1] --

DAVID TOM: [Niece 1].

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: [Niece 1]. And she's passed away as well?

DAVID TOM: Yeah, she died. In 2006.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And have you ever been in contact with the police, have they ever given you like a police investigation number?

DAVID TOM: No. But I got a number from the coroner's office last month, I went there, and I wanted to see if my sister's coroner's report, they're working on it, but they never get back to me yet.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: Say it's been closed so long, and I asked them -- but -- I just want to see how she died and what kind of report I can look at it.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.
DAVID TOM: They're working on it, and they couldn't -- you know, down south in the main office in Vancouver, they can't release anything when it's over date, like over pass and stuff like that. That's what the lady told me in that office, but she's going to try. And she'll phone me. I gave her my number, too.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Can you tell me about growing up with your sister and what your relationship was like with her?

DAVID TOM: She was my sister and me and her always do stuff with my mom when she was alive. All my sisters always work with my mom doing moose hide and stuff like that. My mom used to do a lot of stuff for -- for -- for the band, like selling crafts and stuff like that. She was a beautiful woman. She was always there for us, like for our family.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: That's all I can tell you. She likes doing moose hide with mom, and fish and moose, everything.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: That's how she was. She likes helping everybody. She likes looking after the Elders, too.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.
DAVID TOM: Doing stuff. That's how she was.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: But they say alcoholic was involved, like drinking business when it happened.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: And I want to find out the truth, what happened. I didn't hear anything, like -- mom told me she was naked there, and then what happened -- pretty sad, but mom, she was gone, too. Bothered me so much, that's when I went to treatment down Round Lake. Deal with all my grief and all that stuff.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: It is tough. Now wonder, like here I go again, how it -- they feel that -- their family get killed real bad, right in town, and they can't deal with the problem. That's how I did. Nobody can help me. I can't deal with the problems. They couldn't help me. That's how it is back there.

Since my brother, too, got killed, we had candlelights outside the mall, just once. That time Evelyn George was our counsellor for Lake Babine Nation. She's the only one who cared. The rest of them didn't care.

That's what we did, we had a candlelight for my family. I wish somebody like her could help
me, would be nice, but I don't know, the leaders, they want to be involved.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm. What was it like in your home growing up? So you had your mom there. Was your dad there?

DAVID TOM: My mom and dad, they're -- okay, well, we all stayed in one house.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: My sisters, all had different rooms -- well, one, two, three -- three bedrooms. Mom and dad stayed in their own bedrooms, me and my brothers stayed in our own room, my sisters they got their own room, too.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: But we worked together as a -- doing stuff.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: My dad was a trapper, hunting. My mom was doing craft stuff for our members, like for the band, selling moccasins, gloves, vests, and moose hide.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: All my sisters were helping her doing moose hide, too.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: That's how they learned. My other sister passed away not too long ago, two years ago. She died of
cancer. Her name was Cecilia Brown. Pretty tough, but I'm still talking to the counsellor about my stuff.

And I have one sister left. Her name is Frances Lonny. She's still in Burns Lake, too. I didn't tell her about this, but I'll tell her when I get home. To do with this, it bothers me, you know. She knows, but she didn't know I was coming down, but she knows I'm going to deal with it. I told them once, I'm not going to give up. Somebody has got to pay the price for what they did to my sister.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: It is hard.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: It is, yes.

DAVID TOM: My sister lives on her own. She has her own kids looking after her. And it is tough, but I'm staying with my nephew and my niece back home.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: And they look after me, and I look after them. That's how it is. That's all I can say because I need to find -- see if you guys can help me. God, I need somebody like -- the truth what happened.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: I never seen any reports or anything. That's why I
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David Tom
(Jane Tom)

came down, to deal with the coroner's report.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So one thing that you mentioned was that

Jane’s Daughter] didn't grow up with her mom.

DAVID TOM: My sister was alcoholic that time, drinking.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: He was staying with his own cousin, [Cousin 1].

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: That's their daughter, [Cousin 1]'s daughter.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So who did she grow up with?

DAVID TOM: She stayed with those Mennonites. Her name was

[A.M.].

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So she was in foster care?

DAVID TOM: She's her mother. [A.M.] was the mother.

She raised Jane’s Daughter].

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay.

DAVID TOM: When she was old enough, she let her go. Now she's

on her own. She lives in Prince here.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm. You said that she's got some

disabilities?

DAVID TOM: She's a handicap.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Yeah. What does that mean?

DAVID TOM: Well, she's crippled a little bit.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Is she in a wheelchair?

DAVID TOM: No, she can walk.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay.
DAVID TOM: She has her own kids, but she lives somewhere up here in Prince George, behind the mall, she was saying, somewhere in an apartment.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: Maybe I'll probably have time, me and my buddy probably go see her.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And [Jane’s Son], did he grow up with your sister?

DAVID TOM: Mom grew -- my mom and dad.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So he lived with his grandparents?

DAVID TOM: And their mom, too.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So you say that at a point in her life, she was struggling with alcohol?

DAVID TOM: Who is that?

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Your sister.

DAVID TOM: Just once in a while.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: She doesn't drink that often, but when she end up with that guy, cousin, that's when she started drinking, alcoholic, and when they drink, [Cousin 1] always beat up my sister.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: That's what happened.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And he's your cousin?

DAVID TOM: Yep.
CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Is that the same house that she was found in?

DAVID TOM: Yes. When they drink, he always beat her up. She gives her broken nose and black eye. One time I seen her in the hospital. I told her, Jane, that's enough, you shouldn't be with him if he wants to treat you like that.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: And I told her you better charge him. Because womens are more important. They have soft body. What if you didn't make it? It's going to be too late. But they had condition, they're not supposed to see each other, but they still sneak around.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: That's when my sister, I don't know what happened, they found her in the bedroom, naked.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: That's what mom told me, too, so I'm going to deal with it one way or the other. But I wish somebody could help me deal with it.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: It is hard. You know. It is tough when you lose a loved one. Really tough.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: I seen my grandpa right in front of me, sleep
beside his bed. He passed away slowly. It's okay
when they die in bed, right. It's different story
when you find them out in the house in the middle
of nowhere, it's pretty sad, right?

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: Or out in the bush somewhere. It is tough. That's
how I felt. But I talk about it and I go and I
feel better.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: When they die in bed, it's okay. When they find
them, it's no good story. It's hard.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: Hard to make a turn. You can't make a turn, left
or right, and you can't turn back. You just have
to look straight forward every day about these
stuff. That's how I learn on my own. When the
treatments that the Elders talk to me about this
stuff, that's how I'll be strong.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: (unintelligible) I stayed strong, I didn't have to
cry, just have to pray for them.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: That's what they told me, so don't cry, you're the
one going to look after my kids, sure enough, it's
going to happen. You know, he has three kids, and
some grandchildren he has. It is tough.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Is [Cousin 1] still alive?

DAVID TOM: Yeah.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Yeah? Does he still live in Burns Lake?

DAVID TOM: Live in the same --

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Lives in the same house?

DAVID TOM: Yep.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: But he was never arrested for anything that happened there?

DAVID TOM: Not I know. Mom never told me about that.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Do you see him?

DAVID TOM: Once in a while. Don't talk to him.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay.

DAVID TOM: Might get more angry if I -- you know.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: But we're all in the same reserve, but I don't bother them. They don't bother me. It's good.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Now, given what you've shared so far, and you had said that if you were to talk to people in your community, you would find that they would probably retaliate against you. If people found out that this was a public record, would there be any concern of -- for your safety then?

DAVID TOM: Nope, I'll be okay. Because I told them I'm not going to give up.
CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: I say that in potlatch, I talk for my people, I'm not going to give up what happened to my family.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: I'm going to come forward one day, sure enough, I'm coming forward. That's what I mean, nobody can help me.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: I'm doing this for myself, for my family. But they're gone. I'm just doing it for my nephews and my niece.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: They care about me so I want to do something about it. And I'm the only uncle they have.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm. And I want to acknowledge your strength and resilience in being here and doing that for them, because it's not easy, and you said that you went to Round Lake. That's really great that you acknowledge that you needed that kind of help and support and that you go to counselling and you know when you need to do that. I think that's really great.

DAVID TOM: I've been seeing a counsellor every week, but my counsellor won't be back till next week, but there's another white guy named Ron Blend.
CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: He's a counsellor. He used to work for the band.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: I talk with him.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: That’s good.

DAVID TOM: And same thing with [Friend 1]. [Friend 1], he's my buddy.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: We share our talk. We don't talk about it in public. We just keep it to ourself, just go for a coffee somewhere.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: Talk about it and let it out, go for a drive.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm. So one thing that I would like to ask is do you have any recommendations for the commissioners as to what you would like to see change in your community and in Canada?

DAVID TOM: Well, something needs to be changed for our community. Drug and alcohol counsellor, they got to do their job in our community.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: The chief and counsellor, they have to talk to our members properly. That's what I think needs to be done, and there should be a police officer maybe walk around our community. A lot of stuff happening in our community, like drugs, alcohol. I
see some kids doing that so -- nobody can't deal
with it, then later they should deal with it.
These drug and alcohol counsellors, chief and
counsellor, they should be the one doing stuff for
our members, change.

When they go out meeting, they do stuff on
their own, they never tell us what's happening in
our community. That's why a lot of stuff happening
in our community. But I say that in potlatch, how
we're going to change, you say you guys going to
love one another, nobody love one another in that
community. Too much hatreds in that area. But our
leaders have to start pulling up their socks --

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: -- for our members. And they have to be there for
our people. We're the one who nominate them in our
community. They're the ones supposed to make a
change. The Elders, we had Elders, we had a church
chief in our community, three of them. They're all
gone.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: Our church chief, when there's something happening,
we have meeting with the whole members. They bring
them up to the hall and they talk to the members.
Quit doing this, quit doing that. That's when they
quit doing this and doing that. I tell you one thing, when there's death happening, people play music driving around full blast, they don't care. That's how it is back home. And if I have church chief, sure, members will be quiet down, they wouldn't doing this, doing that. They used to have a meeting with them every once a week. Nobody doesn't do that anymore.

It is tough. But these leaders have to start pulling their socks up for our members. Chief and counsellor and drug and alcohol counsellor. Drug and alcohol counsellor, they're the ones supposed to talk to our members when they're out on the street. They have to talk to them slowly. They can't wait for them go meet them in the office. It's not the way it's supposed to be.

I was watching that one video down outside the William (unintelligible). And what was that video of me? That video, one priest giving moose to our members, that's how it was, and that one lady, one couple, they moved that priest from our community. That's what they did way back there.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.
DAVID TOM: That's what we need to be doing this in our community. The counsellors, they have to start pulling their socks up, get those people off the street before something happen. Look at that -- last month, one young man, they found him out in the beach there, washroom, froze to death.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: Things like this. Nobody can deal with it. See, it's up to these drug and alcohol counsellors, they have to pulling their socks up. Look after our members, get them off the street. They don't talk to them.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: They just want them to meet them in the office. It's not right to be in the office. They're the one supposed to talk to our people. That's what they're there for. They can't sit in the office 24/7, no ways. They're supposed to go out there and help our people not to do stuff.

I went to Moricetown in Smithers, Moricetown counsellors, drug and alcohol counsellors, they have a drop in centre in Smithers, eh. People, they drink so much, they just help themselves there, the drop in centre, talk about their stuff. I seen that. That's what
we need. Stuff like that in Burns Lake, drop in
centre, that's what we need.

So people can slow down, and you never see
people get drunk on the street 24/7. I see a lot
of people drinking there on the street, but I don't
see them anymore. I was doctor's appointment last
month, I went for scope test, I went down the
street, go for a walk, I don't see anybody hanging
around on the street anymore. See going drop in
centre, they're doing craft or they can do art,
whatever. I went there. Nice place. If they have
no places there, they got room for them, that's how
it is in Smithers. That's what we need in our
community. That place needs to be changed.

I've been dealing with Chris Beach,
whatever, that mayor from Burns Lake. I talked to
him we need a drop in centre, they're working on
it, and he never give me an answer back. Same with
our leaders. I'm trying to put in a drop in centre
for people who are drinking too much on the street.

It's the only way they can change, the only
way it can work, train them. That's what I told
the band, chief and counsellor, get the boys
together and train them. Same with drug and
alcohol counsellor, just talk to them, send them
David Tom

out for detox, change their life for -- send them out for treatment.

Sure, I used to drink a lot. I never drink. But I go off and on, sure, but I don't. If I want to drink, I'll go and drink somewhere else, so nobody wouldn't see me.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: That's how I am. I don't drink in our area. I don't drink. But I quit drinking. I promised that to myself, to the priest, so I don't drink anymore.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: But anyway, that's what I need -- like the counsellors have to start stepping up for our members, and they have to start supporting them. Like here I am, who is going to support me? Nobody. Right? Nobody, but maybe you guys can help me. That's how I look at it.

Now I feel better if you guys supported me, help me with my sister's case, I would be happy. I want to let this person pay the price for what they did to my sister or whatever. I never seen the report or anything. That's what I want to know.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So is there anything that you would like to see from the commissioners and the National Inquiry to honour your sister's memory and those
that we have lost, other women and girls?

DAVID TOM: I wouldn't mind, but it's going to take time, eh, about these stuff. I know -- I seen this on the news again, people -- too many people making requests and all that. They're not going to deal with this problem like today or tomorrow. It's going to take time down the road, right? That's how it is. I wouldn't mind. I really wouldn't mind support, like, you know what I mean.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: If I get support, sure, I can deal with it. Every day, I've been thinking about it, but finally I get into it. Hope something will come true for it, but it's going to take time, right?

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: I wouldn't mind. And I thank you and her listening to me, and I like to thank Penny --

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: -- bringing out here to deal with these problems. It bothers me. Like I said earlier, who is going to help me? Who is going to support me? Nobody. Right? Just me, David Tom here, trying to deal with my sister's case. I don't see any reports or anything, but I wish you guys can help me.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.
DAVID TOM: I know it's going to take time. Right? When I
talk to Brenda Wilson earlier yesterday, she says
she's going to help.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: That would be nice. And she will, she said, you
know, call me whenever, when stuff comes in or
whatever, reports and all that, coroner's report.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: And they'll phone me and deal with it. That's what
I want to do.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm. Is there anything else that you
would like the commissioners to know that we
haven't already discussed?

DAVID TOM: I wouldn't mind discussing with them, like -- like
I said, I don't mind. That's what I mean, it's
going to take time, right?

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: The issues, like whenever they look at the report,
well, then they'll call me and deal with it.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: I don't mind. I like to. I really like to.
Because I need support, but who is going to help
me?

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hm.

DAVID TOM: Again. Maybe you guys can help me. If you guys
want to do this for me, I would be really happy.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay.

DAVID TOM: And that should be it for me today.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Thank you very much for sharing, and I
will just say for the record that it's 10:06. I'm
going to conclude the recording and we'll continue
to talk after.

DAVID TOM: All right.

CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Thank you.

DAVID TOM: Thank you.

[PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED AT 10:06 A.M.]
I, Vicki Webster, 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 12th day of March, 2018.

____________________________
Vicki Webster
Official Reporter