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Françoise Ruperthouse,
In relation to Emily Germaine Ruperthouse

Heard by Commissioners Qajaq Robinson,
Brian Eyolfson & Michèle Audette

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**Witness:** Françoise Ruperthouse, in relation to Emily Germaine Ruperthouse

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Montreal, Quebec

--- Upon commencing on Tuesday, March 13, at 9:11 a.m.

**MS. KONWATSITSAWI M. MELOCHE:** (Mohawk language spoken) We are here this morning. Again, welcome. (translating self) Good morning. (translating self) Hello. Good morning. We are here this morning to start another day of public testimony and we will start our morning with an opening prayer by Sedalia Fazio.

**MS. SEDALIA FAZIO:** (Prayer in Mohawk language).

So I say good morning and welcome. Welcome to Tiohtià:ke, in my language, known today as Montreal, Kanien'kehá:ka territory.

My name is (Mohawk name). I’m Bear Clan. I’m from Kahnawake.

So I open this day by saying let our minds become one as we think of these families that will be here today and as we think of the loved ones who are lost or the loved one who have passed on in the spirit world. We are here for them today. So let our minds continue thinking about them and our hearts continue praying for them.

And there were people who were wondering why we have this chair behind me. We have this empty chair, and for each family who comes here to testify today, that chair will be occupied by their loved one. That loved one’s
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I was saying this morning to someone that at home, when we have a gathering or a meal, we always have that empty chair and that empty plate, and that’s for our loved ones who are no longer with us. And everyone knows to put a piece of their food on that empty plate to feed the spirit of that loved one.

So keep them in your minds today as we listen and let us pray that the right words come out, and not only that the right words come out but the right words are heard and understood and that all our allies who are out there start helping us with all these things that hurt us each and every day.

Many people don’t realize what the Indigenous people of these lands have gone through and what we continue to go through each and every day.

You know, we often hear “Get over it; that was 500 years ago.” No, it wasn’t. It happens each and every day. If you live in our skin and look like we do, it happens to us each and every day. So let’s keep that in mind and pray that the right words are heard and the right words are understood.

Have a good day. (Mohawk language spoken).
MS. KONAWATSITSAWI: (Mohawk language spoken). Okay. We are going to now get started. I just want to say Nia:wen for her powerful words. I have been coming to the City of Montreal for just about 20 years. I did a lot of studies in Montreal here, and I went to many universities, and she’s right; I could mix in both worlds very well, but I still get treated a little differently.

And I was telling a gentleman yesterday, when he asked about, you know, “Is it true?”, I said, “I had been rejected,” you know, not dressing like this, not a fringe, not a feather, not a bead, nothing on me at all to indicate what I was, trying to hide. So if you find yourself hiding every day, that’s when we know there’s possible racism out there.

And I had still been rejected from going into a dance club, but that’s the way it is for us, and it’s a challenging thing to understand. But I do invite everybody out there -- and I know there’s lots of people out there who say, you know, “I work”, but I hung out in the Apple Store across on Saint-Catherine Street, and there are thousands of people in that store on a Monday, a Tuesday, and I always look around and I say, “Do these people work?” Like, I thought people in Montreal were always working. They’re always in this Apple Store.

So come on out, if you were out in that
Apple Store today, take a good 90-minute, 10-minute walk down to Place Bonaventure, beautiful hotel here -- we’re in the basement. We’re with Mother Earth because that’s what keeps us grounded. That’s why we’re in the basement a lot of times. But come on out if you were in the Apple Store today or if you’re in the Apple Store this week, please come out, because I know people have time on their hands in Tiohtià:ke, in Montreal, because I see them. And sign up at the public registration. You get a tag. You could come on in in here, the hearings. As today, we will be starting with Hélène Françoise Ruperthouse, our family, community public hearing today.

And I want you to also know that the Inquiry, as challenging as it may seem to some people, it is family-led. And if anybody who has ever lost a loved one knows the challenge behind telling our stories, it’s a difficult thing.

And I have to commend the people who spoke yesterday, Cheryl McDonald and the Blackned family, for giving us their truth. And like Commissioner Audette said, “We have to have truth here.”

And as Cheryl spoke yesterday, I asked her permission if I could write what she said, and she said, “Yes, when we’re being hurt, tell people. And when somebody tells you they’ve been hurt, believe them.”
An interesting story: a couple of weekends ago, I went to see a doctor who said to me, “Can you believe that ‘me too’ is getting so far?” I said, “Could you believe that men too have gotten so far?” So ‘me too’ is one letter away from ‘men too’. So that means we’re looking at equality here. And when men have to begin to worry about how they dress when they bend down, who they’re walking towards, towards a hall, you will know what it is to be a woman and walk in our skin, because it is a challenge. For me to walk down an alleyway in Montreal, make sure all my Spidey senses are up, and for men, it may be similar, but it’s not quite the same.

So please hear, listen, take in. And that’s what the public hearings do when you come in, is that you will feel a different sense than you will behind a screen, because I watched the hearings behind the screen and I know it’s a different sense.

So I just want to welcome you all to come on out. And I do know that I have a few people coming in from Ottawa, literally on the train to come in. So, you know, the women, bring your male folk. Bring your young men because the sons and our daughters need to know what time it is. And right now, we have this Commission because somebody heard us. Somebody believed us to a point that, yes, we still have to prove, like Commissioner Audette said
yesterday, we still have to prove that there’s stereotypical behaviours and prejudices out there, which there absolutely is, and I can attest to myself.

But I do thank you all, and I just want to challenge you to come on in today. And thank you for those of you who have come in today. Thank you so much.

But please drink water because it is challenging testimony. It is painful. So as our tears disappear from our bodies, I want you to drink water to bring them back in, okay? Because it is a -- it’s a tough hear sometimes.


So Hélène Françoise Ruperthouse, we are calling her up.

As the family approaches, I just want to thank you all. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: So hello, kuei.

So, the National Commission has a tradition as it stops in the various locations across Canada. We also have the privilege of having a large Inuit family sharing their wonderful culture that is still very much alive. So while the families get settled and the grandmothers come and stand around the lovely Françoise,

we’ll ask Martha Greig to say a few words, please.
Thank you.

**MS. MARTHA GREIG:** (Inuktitut language). I just want to mention a little bit about the Qulliq again while they’re getting ready. As I told you yesterday, this oil lamp is very important to our lives. It gave us the strength and the heat to survive. And also, even the men did have -- did bring portable ones because they also need to be out in the land and cook what they harvested, what they are blessed with.

And I just wanted to share that I had a beautiful dream last night that all this room was surrounded by angels. I even had goosebumps. So to all the people that will be speaking, you will be surrounded with love by angels. So that’s a good -- I thought it was a very good start to do this.

Thank you.

**First Hearing: Françoise Ruperthouse, in relation to Emily Germaine Ruperthouse**

**MS. FANNY WYLDE:** So good morning, dear Commissioners. I would like to introduce the first witness of the second day of this week of hearings. On my left here is Françoise Ruperthouse, who will share the story of her sister Emily Germaine Ruperthouse, when she was four or
Françoise Ruperthouse  
(Emily Germaine Ruperthouse)

five years old, was brought to the Amos hospital and never returned. They found her several decades later.

So before handing the floor over to Ms. Ruperthouse, I would like to ask the registrar, Mr. Zandberg, to please swear in the witness. The witness would like to be sworn in with an eagle feather and the bible, a combination of the two.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Thank you, Ms. Wylde.

Before our registrar gets here, I would like to ask our grandmother who is welcoming us, she has something for you.

MS. SEDALIA FAZIO: I forgot to mention, you will see around the room there are brown bags, and you will see boxes of Kleenex. These brown bags are for tears. Take your Kleenex that you’re using, put them in those brown bags. They’ll all be collected at the end and they’ll be given to me and they’ll be burned in the sacred fire.

(translating self) I forgot to mention that there are brown bags and boxes of Kleenex. Those are for your tears. All the bags will be collected at the end of week and they’ll be given to me and they’ll be burned in the sacred fire.

So for everyone, just put your Kleenex in those bags, please. Thank you.
MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Hello.

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Hello.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: So Françoise, do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Yes.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Thank you.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: So good morning. You have been sworn in, right. Good morning, Françoise.

So I would like to ask you to introduce yourself to the commissioners, perhaps starting with the community you are from.

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: I’m going to take off my glasses. My glasses are bothering me.

Hello. My name is Françoise Ruperthouse. I come from Pikogan, a community of about 1,000 registered members. About 650 of us live in the community. I come from a big family. My parents had 17 children.

Earlier we talked about empty chairs. Well, at our house there were two empty chairs. This is for my mother. There were 17 children in the family, 11 girls and 4 boys. Why am I the only one here today? Half of the family members have passed away and there are others -- I think the others didn’t have the strength to come and talk
about all of this. It bothered me at first, but this morning I’m better, calmer. I can understand that today it’s hard for both -- if I find it hard, I can imagine the others, how they might feel.

So we are a large family, but I’m probably the most stubborn of all of us. That’s why I’m here. The reason -- the reason I’m here is to understand and find out what happened to my brother and sister who went missing.

One thing I must say before starting is that my mother -- I asked my mother what she wanted me to do when I got here. She said -- she cried. The three of us cried, me, my sister and my mother, because my mother lives with my younger sister. She said, “I’d like you to give the government, the people who took my two children, a good punch.” She told me that today. She is living with that anger and pain. She’s been crying for the past three days. She’s not here because my mother, she doesn’t walk much.

I said earlier, half my family is dead and my mother is still alive. My father was the first to die, my father who pushed me a lot to find my sister. He never let up. He always said to me, “Keep looking.” I was in Quebec City and he said to look for my sister.

**MS. FANNY WYLDE:** So if you’re ready, Françoise, I would like you talk perhaps about Emily’s birth and her life before she was sent to the hospital.
Françoise Ruperthouse
(Emily Germaine Ruperthouse)

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Okay. I was talking about my mother, her suffering.

Fine, my sister was born in Amos. In what year? Sometime in the 1950s. There are so many -- it’s hard for me to know. I have all the papers here. You should have them, too. My sister was born in Amos and she was an active little girl. She ran everywhere. My mother said that my sister ran all over the place and that she was a real handful, that she was constantly on the move and that she was always taking off her moccasins in the summer. It was outside. She ran in the field a lot. She liked to -- she was always yelling.

And at one point, while she was running, she got stung by a bee. My mother -- my parents had to bring her to the hospital. While she was in the hospital, she disappeared. My mother doesn’t know what happened. My parents never knew where she went. It took -- my parents didn’t speak French or English. They didn’t know what was happening with their child. They didn’t know where she was. She wasn’t there anymore. She was no longer at the Amos hospital. They wondered what happened and where she had gone. For many, many years, they wondered, “What did they do with our baby?”

To start with, this is the second child who left. She is the second child who left, who went missing
from the Amos hospital. There was another baby who had gone
missing earlier. That was my brother. My brother, he had
come from the woods. My mother brought him to the hospital.
He was accompanied by -- there were three people who went
to the hospital that time. They, they lived in the woods,
and they arrived in a helicopter, a seaplane. I remember --
I’m not quite sure. Messeevin (ph), that means it was a
plane. She said that he was brought to the bank of the
Harricana River. They brought their children to the
hospital. The two others were twins. They were my cousins.
They were my Aunt Madeleine’s kids. All three went to the
hospital, but my mother, it was her first child to go
missing. His name was Tony.

My mother said that it was a few months
after he went to the hospital. My mother stayed -- what my
aunt told me yesterday, she wrote to me, she texted me, she
said my mother had a house close to the hospital that used
to be -- an old credit union that was there. She stayed
there and they had visitors who told them that their child
had died, but that child, they didn’t know where he was.
They never brought back a body. There was no body. There
was nothing, no certificate. They just said, you know,
“Your baby died.” That was when he’d been at the hospital
for a few months, she said. But listen, the boy entered the
hospital and then he went missing a few days later, but she
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never saw him again. About two or three years later, they said that he had died. And on the certificate -- I don’t even know if it was a certificate -- do you call it a death certificate? We have a paper, a paper that says my brother died at the age of seven at the Baie-St-Paul hospital, whereas my parents were told that he died when he was about three years old, after he was brought to the hospital.

What did they do with our brother? Why did they hide? Those are the questions my mother is asking now. What did they do with my brother during those years he was at the hospital? What did they do with my brother and my sister?

After my brother entered the hospital, a few months later, that’s when my sister went to the hospital too and she went missing as well. That’s two children. One was not enough; they had to take another one.

My parents asked themselves all their lives, “Where is my baby? Where are our children?”

It breaks my heart knowing that my mother suffered her entire life, my father wondering what happened to our children, and that today we discover that my brother did not even die at the age of two or three as they said but that he died when he was seven. What did they do with these children?

I said earlier that Emily walked everywhere.
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She played like a normal child. “My daughter was a handful and she was on the go all the time.” It was always -- she ran in -- she was often in the field. The field was this high, and she wasn’t very big and she ran in it. She loved to play there, and then one time she got stung by a bee, and that’s when she went to the hospital. But Tony had already gone missing.

They don’t speak Indian. My parents don’t speak French, and they couldn’t go back and forth to the hospital. They stayed in the woods. But in the summer, they tried to stay in the city as long as they could.

You know, when we say that our children -- the children went missing, I remember that -- I don’t know who said it, but I heard it. We didn’t know where the parents lived. Those are big lies. I think it’s a big pack of lies because they weren’t able to reach my parents for these children, but they were able to reach all the other children to bring them to the residential school.

It’s important for us to know what they did with our children. I searched for information everywhere. I’m a person who likes to know things. One of the things I discovered by reading tons of articles was that medical experiments were done on Indigenous children. Is that what they did with my -- my sister and my brother? I want to know what happened.
MS. FANNY WYLDE: Members of the technical team, if you will, Françoise would like to show some photos to the commissioners. If you could put them up on the big screen, please?

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: This is the picture -- that’s the condition we found my sister in. She was disabled. When we found her, they said that -- it was a -- it was a beautiful day. We were so happy to find her.

That’s at the hospital where we found her. There wasn’t even a pillow. Her head was flat. It seemed that she never had a pillow. Her head was always lying flat. They kept her in a lying position. She ran all over the place there.

That’s another place where -- that’s when she arrived in Amos, because we had her transferred -- when we found them, we had my sister brought there. It was radical. I said to the others at the Baie-St-Paul hospital -- this hospital was called, the ward my sister was in, it was called the monster hospital. I think they’re the ones who created this. That’s what they say, but we have our doubts about them.

But that’s when she arrived at Amos and we were really happy to see her. She was too.

The doctor told us that Emily wasn’t conscious, that she didn’t know anyone, that she didn’t
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Françoise Ruperthouse
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know anything, and she had no -- it’s as if to say she had
no feelings, but that’s not true because that’s the
condition we found her in.

It’s funny, isn’t it, after several years of
searching, I found my sister at Baie-St-Paul with the help
of the Centre d’amitié autochtone de Québec [Quebec City
Indigenous Peoples’ Friendship Centre]. The woman’s name
was Joanne Pinette (ph). She’s no longer alive. She’s the
one who helped me. She said, “Françoise, if you want, I’ll
go with you” to see my sister. But I was really -- I was
really not in the shape I’m in now, I wasn’t able to go and
see her because she told me she was disabled and that she
was not conscious, that she didn’t know anyone, that she
didn’t recognize people. So I didn’t want to go alone.

That’s when my father was really pushing me
to find my sister and that’s what -- I went to the Centre
d’amitié autochtone in Quebec City for help, and they
helped me. So I didn’t go then. It was in the ‘80s -- my
daughter hadn’t been born yet. She’s 26 years old. It was
more than 26 years ago. I wasn’t pregnant either, so at
least 27 or 28 years ago maybe.

They called us. At one point, I returned to
Pikogan when my father was quite ill. My father, his
greatest wish was to find -- that I bring my sister home.

He was constantly bugging me, “Bring your sister back. Try
Françoise Ruperthouse
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to bring your sister back. Work hard at it.” We managed to bring her back, although it took time for me to get going on it, because I had to make changes in my life before being able to do something to help others. I had to change a lot.

So my sister, when -- I was quite young, but I took care of my sister when she came, when we found her. But at the time, the Baie-St-Paul hospital, they had kept my sister for more than 30 years. They never, never called Abitibi. They never gave my parents any information to say, “Your daughter is doing well; your daughter is like this” or “She’s here at our hospital.” They never did that. But when she got sick, they did make a call to Abitibi to say, “Your sister is dying.” She had pneumonia and she was dying. She was truly on her deathbed. She was in a coma when we got there. Earlier, her eyes were in -- it’s probably because they knew that we had -- we had tracked her down a few years earlier.

But I say this because why did they decide to call that day when she was dying?

MS. FANNY WYLDE: You mentioned a bit earlier that the hospitals -- the Baie-St-Paul hospital told you that Emily wouldn’t recognize you anyway.

Can you tell us how the reunion went?
MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Right, when they called and told us that we needed to come and see my sister, the Pikogan health centre helped us, because our family, we were very poor. There was no money, and we weren’t well educated either.

So when we got there, they had always told us that Emily would not recognize anyone. She’s not conscious. She doesn’t know anyone. “She wouldn’t recognize you anyway.” But when we got there and took care of her, she was in -- she was sleeping a lot, so we took care of her. We put a sponge -- a stick with a sponge at the end of it, I moistened her mouth. We each took our turn. And it’s like she came back to life. At one point, we gave her juice.

Those are our hospital passes. Look at my sister’s colour as she looks at my mother. The first thing, when my sister woke up, she looked at us. She looked at us and she recognized us. She recognized my mother right away, and the first word she spoke was “Mom”! We all cried. My mother was so upset. She said, “All I want is to bring my baby home to Abitibi.” That was -- that was one of the most difficult things we had to deal with. My mother was still fit and then she cried and she said, “I want to bring my baby home right away, today.” We couldn’t even do that.

The doctor who said she wouldn’t recognize
us, I said to the doctor, I said, “She recognized us. She even said ‘Mom’ to my mother.” And he was like, “That’s impossible.” It was quite something to find our sister in that condition even though my mother had seen her run, talk, shout in the past, and we found her in a state that we couldn’t even understand what had happened because they didn’t tell us. We don’t have any medical records for my sister. We don’t even know if she was vaccinated. We know nothing, nothing.

Like Tony’s medical record, the two were in the same hospital. When I said earlier that the two -- my brother and my sister disappeared, they were both in the same hospital. Why both in the same hospital?

The feelings we’ve had, that my mother has had lately, in the past two years, the reporter who came to help us -- I looked for a little help just about everywhere to try to help my parents. I participated in many, many, many things. I want to know, not just me, my mother -- my father is no longer alive, but I know that his biggest dream was to find out what happened to his two children.

We lived with Emily for about 10 years. I can say that it’s her too who -- she doesn’t know it, but it’s thanks to her that I was able to get through -- to get through all of the challenges in my life, and I think the same was true for my mother because when I wasn’t feeling
well, I went to the hospital. In the end, we managed to
bring -- I forgot to mention it, but we brought Emily home
a few months later. My mother wanted to take her right away
when we were at the hospital. She said, “We’re taking her
back. We’re taking her back today.” And we wanted to, I
wanted to as well, but the doctor didn’t. It -- we were no
longer the ones who made the decision, besides he also told
us, the doctor. He said, “You aren’t the ones who are going
to decide because the public trustee is responsible for
your sister. You’re not responsible for her.”

We took steps to -- that’s right, I was
angry. I’m the type of person who’s very -- my father
always said that I was the enfant terrible in the family
and it stayed with me, but when the doctor said to me, “You
can’t take her,” I said, “We’re going to take her
anyway.” I said, “I do know we’re going to take her out of
this place, that’s for sure. I’m going to take her. I don’t
care what happens, but we’re going to take her.” And he
said, “No, no, no, you can’t.” And then he explained some
things. I calmed down at one point because I was getting
more and more angry. Sadness, anger, we had all those
emotions. And my mother wanted to take her too.

In the end we -- when she came back to life,
my sister -- I forgot this part -- we called a priest. I,
already, I went to a residential school and I already don’t
Françoise Ruperthouse
(Emily Germaine Ruperthouse)

believe in priests. Well, listen, there must be some good priests because this priest said a prayer as we had asked before he died.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: The last rites?

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Yes. Thank you, Fanny. Yes, she knew all the words.

The doctor -- not the doctor, the priest came to say a prayer and that’s when my sister woke up. My sister and I, when we -- later, when we talked we said, “She really didn’t want to go,” and things like “She’s allergic to the priest.” We don’t know what happened, but in any event, she didn’t want to go, my sister.

It was a sad event, but the way she woke up, it’s as if she didn't want to die. It’s not that. Maybe it was a way of saying, “Come and get me.” That’s how we understood it later. It was her way, “I’m tired of being all alone.” She must have felt that we existed and that we -- because the doctor, when he told us she had no feelings, no -- you know, she wasn’t a robot. She wasn’t a machine. Being disabled doesn’t mean you’re a robot and that you’re not aware of anything. That’s when we realized.

So when we brought her back, my sister, we succeeded a few months later with the help of Isabelle Matachi (ph) who was a social worker, we succeeded in -- she worked really hard. My goodness she worked hard. And we
Françoise Ruperthouse  
(Emily Germaine Ruperthouse)

pestered her too. My father was already dead, but his  
greatest wish had come true. And my mother, she was able to  
live for a period of time with the daughter she had lost.  

Any time we had -- I had problems, when I  
wasn’t well, the first person I thought of was to go and  
see her. And instantly, when I went there, when I saw her,  
all my problems disappeared. Me, it was nothing. My  
problems were nothing compared to what she went through and  
what my parents went through.  

Just the times when my daughter doesn’t call  
me for two or three days, it bothers me. When my sons don’t  
call me for a few days, it bothers me. How many years did  
they live like that?  

It affected the lives of my mother’s other  
children as well. I became terrible, but that, I -- they  
called me the black sheep because I was more demanding than  
the others, I guess, but I think my parents didn’t want to  
bring us to the hospital anymore. I remember being really,  
really sick, so sick that I heard the furniture talking.  
It’s crazy what I’m saying, but it’s true. I was so sick. I  
don’t know how to explain it, sort of like -- I saw the  
furniture. I could only move my eyes and I saw the  
furniture talking to me, the chairs talking to me.  
Everything was moving and I was going crazy in my room. I  
heard my parents talking on the other side of the room, and
it was loud, loud. Everyone was talking loud and everyone was talking to me, even the chairs. Wherever I looked, someone or something was talking to me. I was completely delirious. I was really sick, and they never brought me to the hospital.

I didn’t see my parents bringing their children to the hospital very often.

I remember another time, my throat -- I had a sore throat. She didn’t want to bring me to the hospital. I must have been about 10. I asked my brother to come with me to the hospital because it was hurting too much. I had a serious case of tonsillitis. I went by myself. I was about 10 years old.

That’s what it did to my mother. Of course, they also started drinking. I can’t say that it’s only because of -- not just, but I mean, it’s not -- the only reason for their drinking problem, it wasn’t just that incident, but it was the surrounding incidents as well when their children were taken away from the residential school.

My mother, what she’s experiencing these days is anger, and she doesn’t understand why all of this happened. “Why did I lose my children and why not the others?”

You know, it’s been just a year and a half or so since we found out that the second one, Tony, died
and she never got his body back to be buried. She never buried her baby.

Which makes me -- I really want to swear right now. What makes me furious is that they never called my parents to say, “Your child --.” Of course they said that one was dead, but the other, why did they never call? Why did they never say, “Your daughter’s here.”

But they were able to find children everywhere to bring them to the residential school, for example. They found my sisters and my brothers to bring them to the residential school, but they weren’t able to find my parents to give them news of my brother and sister? There’s a problem somewhere.

Who decided that my parents’ children were to be taken away? Who decided that? I want to know. It’s us, the children who stayed who experienced all the repercussions of those events.

Two minutes?

MS. FANNY WYLDE: The witness would like to ask for a short five-minute break, please.

--- Upon recessing at 9:55 am
--- Upon resuming at 10:08 am

MS. FANNY WYLDE: So, dear Commissioners, we are going to resume the session. Thank you for giving us this break.
So, Françoise, if I may, I understand that you would like to submit some documents to the commissioners. May I submit them now?

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Yes.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: So I would like to submit to the commissioners a first copy of the medical record of Tony Ruperthouse, the young brother -- who is in fact Françoise’s big brother. You can see the birth date of the child, Tony Ruperthouse, on the second to last page of the document. So on the second to last page you’ll be able to see the birth date of the child Tony Ruperthouse.

In addition, I have a second document to submit to you that the witness would like to file. These are documents the witness had in her possession. You’ll find on the last page of the document, which shows the length of time the child Tony Ruperthouse stayed at the hospital. It says that the child remained at the hospital for five years, 1 month and 19 days. So I am submitting this second document to you.

And lastly, a third document showing that Tony Ruperthouse was buried in a communal grave in Baie-St-Paul. The third document, please.

So, Françoise, if I may, after having submitted these documents, I would like us to take a little time, to go back to the circumstances surrounding Tony.
So, about how old was he when he went to the hospital, based on your information?

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: He was 2 or 3 maybe.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: Okay.

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Perhaps we’ll never be able to -- I will never know exactly what age because my mother has become quite confused. Two incidents happened close together. So -- but what I do know is that when they brought him to the hospital, not long after -- I say not long after because I can’t tell you the months or days the people came to my mother’s house and my brother Mucho (ph) overheard. My mother asked Mucho to go to the other side. He heard my mother being told that her son had died at the hospital.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: So shortly after he was hospitalized, it was announced to your mother that the child had died in hospital?

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Yes.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: And the documents show that he died several years later.

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Yes.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: So that’s why these documents are being submitted.

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Mm-hm. And
right, these documents, we signed papers, my mother and I.
We asked -- there’s a reporter who came to do the work we
weren’t able to do. So she’s the one who had those papers.
Otherwise, we, we didn’t even know what to do. Listen, I
said it earlier, it had an impact on the family, both the
children and my parents. We didn’t really know what to do
and the personal, the family value, we didn’t value
ourselves at all back then.

These days, I, I feel it’s important to know
what happened. My mother -- at one point, my mother wanted
to basically give up on finding out what happened, but in
the end -- I said, “Mom, what happened is not your fault.
They’re gone. You had two children stolen from you. It’s
not your fault.” It’s because she wanted -- that’s when I
noticed that I’m also -- I worked in aid relations for a
number of years and I still work in the field and that’s
why I notice that my mother, she doesn’t put much value on
herself. She finds that it’s not -- she doesn’t feel
important enough for us to be working on this case. It’s
unfortunate to think like that. It’s because that’s how she
was treated.

That’s it. I needed to say it.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: So Emily was brought to
the hospital after being stung by a bee. Did the hospital
staff inform your parents that she was transferred to Baie-
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St-Paul?

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Never. My parents never knew, neither Tony nor Emily, they were never told that the children were transferred to another hospital. It was as if -- they disappeared. Where are my children, one after the other?

MS. FANNY WYLDE: And when you finally found Emily years later at Baie-St-Paul, what did you do to find her?

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Well, that’s what I was saying earlier, that it was the Baie-St-Paul hospital that made a call to Pikogan to say that Emily was very sick, that she was dying. We asked for help. My mother definitely wanted -- I wanted to go too, because we didn’t want, we didn’t know.

Listen, how is it that it took so long for us to be able do something, to move, to go -- how is it that we -- because we were used to living without them. We never thought everything -- we never imagined it was so serious. We didn’t know. We didn’t know the history. I never -- the family never tried to find or get information on what happened, thinking that maybe -- we didn’t even think of that. It was only when -- it’s my father who pushed me to -- it’s my father who got me into it. It’s my parents who ended up -- my father finally said, “I want to
know what happened. Where are my children?” He really
wanted to reconnect -- he really wanted to see his daughter
again.

Incidentally, I imagine he always thought
that Tony died as a baby, young. We say baby. But to know
that he died at the age of 7 -- first of all, is he really
dead? There’s doubt -- we don’t know for sure.

I’ve talked to the family a lot recently.
I’m in it all the time and I cry constantly. I’m always
complaining. I’m always swearing.

Vivianne knows how impatient I can get
sometimes. That’s all I have inside me. What did they do
with my brother? What did they do with my sister? Why is
she disabled today? I mean she was disabled until the day
she died, although she ran all over the place and was quite
a handful; she was constantly screaming before she left.

Same thing for Tony, he was sick when he
went in. My mother said, “I know he had pneumonia.” She had
children before that. She knew what he was sick with. In
the report, we see that it says -- yes, there’s not much.
What did they do with my brother during those seven years?
I have nothing on Emily, but what did they do with my
brother? How many pages are there? There’s nothing written
down. Did they vaccinate him? Did they give -- what did
they do with my brother to try to keep him alive? Did they
give him something? What happened?

My child, me, when he has bronchitis,
bronchiolitis, pneumonia, I can bring him to the hospital.
I’m close, yes. I speak French. I put up a big fuss if anyone goes to take my children, my grandchildren, but my mother, she brought her baby saying, “He has pneumonia. I know he has pneumonia.” And then she never saw him again. And he ended up at the monster hospital. What’s that about? Where’s the problem? It says that --

MS. FANNY WYLDE: On this point, I ask that the commissioners turn to the third page of the first document I submitted. We see that the child Tony was one year and six months old. There is a tentative diagnosis of bronchitis and pneumonia and the result, it says that he was cured. The first document that I submitted to you, on the third page, you’ll see that it says that the child, he was indeed diagnosed with pneumonia, bronchitis/pneumonia. The result at the right says cured.

If I may, Françoise, I have a question. When you found Emily at Baie-St-Paul, did you question the Baie-St-Paul staff when she arrived, how she got there? Did you ask questions?

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Ah yes. We didn’t even have time to ask questions. There was a nurse who came to meet us when we got there. She said, “I want to
see you. I need to talk to you somewhere quiet.” She brought us to a quiet corner, I don’t know where. And boy!
She said to us, “When your sister was brought here, she was walking, talking and shouting. She ran everywhere.” I said, “But how did it start? Why is she like this now?” She said, “As for that, I have no idea.” She did like this. She backed up. She said, “You’re going to have to talk to the doctor about that.”

At that time, I said it earlier, we were really happy to find our sister. We didn’t know what to do, how to act. We just wanted to take advantage of the time to be with her. I didn’t take the time to ask the nurse for her name. I didn’t take the time to get information. I was too -- we just wanted to be with my sister.

My mother -- I told my mother what the nurse had told us. She said, “I know.” She said, “I know the condition my daughter was in when she left. She was running, walking and talking. She was yelling all the time.” Did something happen? Could her allergy have burned some things in her brain? I don’t know. There was just one doctor. I would like to have a doctor validate this. As she got older, did my sister have something that burned because she was allergic to the bee that stung her? Did it break something? Did it affect my sister’s physical, intellectual development? Did it break something? Can the doctor tell me
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that today?

They too, when she told me that my sister was running all over the place and talking when she arrived, we started to have doubts. We started to have doubts.

My brother, I asked Jeff -- my brother's name is Jeff, one of my brothers, my younger brother -- “Do you feel like going there with me? “No, no, no, I won’t go. It’s too hard for me.” It’s hard for me. I’ve been in recovery for the past 25 years. I understand my brothers and my sisters who don’t want to sit here. They all found something. It’s okay.

The first thing my brother said to me was, “I know, I’m 100 percent sure that they did medical experiments on our brother and sister.” We all think so anyway. I would never hide the truth because that’s how we think.

Just the fact that the nurse called us when we arrived and said, “Come over here; I have something to tell you. Your sister was walking and she was running everywhere when -- we didn’t know what she was doing here at the monster hospital.”

The reporter who worked on the case, she met -- we had to -- I had to go and meet with her, but I can’t remember what I had. I wasn’t able to go. I think I was
sick or I don’t know, but we had to go see -- we had to
meet with the director at the time, the director who
received Emily and Tony. The two children were in the same
hospital and they never looked -- they never checked as to
whether they were brother and sister. Yet the papers
clearly indicate that the father is Joe Alfred Ruperthouse,
and the mother, Hélène Joséphine Wylde (ph) Ruperthouse.
Emily, it’s the same thing, they knew who Emily was. They
knew. That’s why they were able to contact us. They knew
who she was, but they didn’t make the connection. They
didn’t look, check whether they were brother and sister. I
get the impression that they couldn’t care less. They don’t
care when there are children, that it’s a job. That’s sort
of how we understand it.

We think that medical experiments were done
on my brother and sister.

Is my brother really dead? I don’t know. It
raises some doubts. My mother is 84 years old. She just
turned 84, and the doctor often says, “She's at least 10
years older than normal, than an 84-year-old woman.” So
physically, she’s about 94 years old.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: Françoise, after all these
years, when you discovered the truth in your research, did
you question the Amos hospital? Have you ever asked them
why they transferred the babies?
MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: We never did that. It’s only when the reporter came that she started to do some research. She’s really the one who did the work. Us, we didn’t know what to do. I never thought of doing research, doing something. My mother, she wanted the facts. She wanted where to search -- we didn’t think of all that. It felt like a huge, huge, huge amount of work for us. One can find out a lot, but we didn’t know where to start or where to go. It’s been too long. The story was trivialized. Where are we going to go to search for answers when it happened 60 years ago?

But still today, we’d like that -- I would like to turn back the clock and be able to do what I did there.

What I want to know -- sorry, Fanny -- I saw that you’d come up -- what I’d like to know most of all is what they did with my brother and sister. What happened at that hospital for -- what happened? Why did they do that to my parents? Why did they decide to take this child when there were also my aunt’s twins, who are my cousins, who went at the same time. They took my baby -- I say my baby; it’s not my baby, it’s my brother. It’s my brother who left and went missing. The two others stayed in Amos at the hospital.

But I know that my aunt, when she was drunk,
her French was really good. Maybe she already spoke French at the time, but my mother, she didn’t speak French.

God, it’s hard to talk about this story because my mother has lived with so much guilt, my father too, to the point where they became -- you know, I strongly believe that when you drink, when you drink, it’s to drown something out. When you’re addicted, it’s because you have a problem. I think my parents were filled with guilt, remorse. It’s not my son, it’s my daughter, but I live it. And why didn’t we do anything about it also?

Who in the Pikogan community knew about it? I did some research. Almost everyone knew what happened, that the children went missing, that they left, but there are all kinds of different answers.

I was even told that my mother tried to borrow money to go and get the baby’s body, the body of the little boy. No one lent her money. No one gave her the help she needed to get her baby’s body. She was left -- they were left on their own even. Nobody -- nobody helped my mother, my father, to get the baby when they were living in a community with lots of people who knew what had happened.

My mother borrowed money to go and get the body and one answer she got was, “The baby’s not there anymore. He’s dead. Why waste money like that?”

MS. FANNY WYLDE: If I may, Françoise, I
understand that your mother wanted to go and get the baby’s body. Is that because the hospital notified her to come and get the body?

**MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERThOUSE:** No. She didn’t even know where to get the body. She asked to get it, but she didn’t know where to go. She didn’t even know where to go to get her baby, but she wanted to find him. The reporter is the one who located the baby, but my mother, when she found out that he had died, when they said -- when the people came to tell my mother that the baby had died, she wanted to go and get him, but she didn’t know where. But it was her -- how should I say -- her maternal instinct that said, “I want my baby. I want my baby. I want to bury him.” Yet she didn’t even know where he was.

And it was a lie too because he wasn’t dead, the little boy. He had ended up at the Baie-St-Paul hospital. He lived until the age of 7. What did they do with the baby during that time? Because they knew my parents were alive. They knew.

There’s a lot of anger. My mother, yesterday, as I said at the start, she shook her fist at me. It was anger she was showing. It’s unfair.

**MS. FANNY WYLDE:** When you wanted to bring Emily home, I understand that the doctor told you that Emily was now under guardianship.
What steps did you have to take to bring Emily back? If you could share that experience? What was it like for you, the challenges you faced in bringing Emily home?

**MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE:** We left there really frustrated, for sure, pleased that my sister had come back to life and when we left, she was sitting on the floor talking. She was wearing diapers, pyjamas. She had gloves. She was sitting on the floor and looked at us and laughed. She laughed and she had a beautiful smile. And we were crying because it was time to go home, but the doctor said to us, “You can’t take her because the public trustee is responsible for her.” I said to the doctor, “We’re definitely coming back for her. We’re coming back to get her. Get ready to lose her. We’re coming, regardless.”

We went outside and we left. When we got there, there was a long silence in the car. It was a long time before anyone talked, not knowing what to say -- talk about our feelings. We weren’t able to say it, but we cried. A few times I looked at my mother. She was next to me and she was crying. And I said, “Mom, we’re going to get her. We’re going to bring her back.” We left.

My anger is the reason we succeeded. Seeing my mother cry like that, when we got to Pikogan, the first thing we asked, that we said to ourselves that we were
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going to do, we were going to meet with Isabelle, and she’s
the one who would help us do the work. Back then, it was
called the Minokin social services. We went to see her and
asked for help. We had to bring back -- we absolutely had
to bring her back as soon as possible. So she, she was a
social worker. It was one step at a time, but for us it was
right away. As a dependent person, we wanted her right
away. So she worked hard that year. It seems to me that it
wasn’t very long. We didn’t wait for many, many months, it
seems to me.

We asked for a space at the special needs
house, the Clair home in Amos. They found a spot for her at
the Clair home in Amos. It wasn’t -- oh my God, when we
found out that they had a space, we knew, she had to come
by plane, bring the things, and they were getting ready at
the other end. We were so happy that she was going to be
living close to us.

That’s -- that’s when -- because of those
special moments, we didn’t think to do anything because we
were living, living with her. We didn’t think to do
anything. I didn’t know the story. My mother didn’t talk
about it much. She didn’t talk about it at all at home, but
we really felt -- I really felt the lack of love. I really
need to be loved. I need affection. I need someone to hold
me.
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I look at my daughter’s leg. My mother had big legs and she was the one I leaned on. She didn’t take me in her arms. I hung on to her leg and she walked like that. That’s how I managed to bond with my mother. So affection and all that stuff, there wasn’t a lot of it in our house. So it impacted our lives as well.

But the moment my sister arrived in Amos, we couldn’t be angry, or try to get answers to everything that had happened to my mother, to my parents. I always refer to my mother because my father is no longer alive, but I see her, my mother, today, all her sadness, and her anger. My mother is suffering a lot today. She is truly suffering a great deal. She’s been crying for three days solid.

My sister texted me last night. She said, “Françoise, Mom’s crying all the time.” I said, “Let her cry. Just stay by her side.” My sister died in 2010. I had gone on a trip outside of Canada. She had pneumonia and wasn’t able to -- and how is it that she had pneumonia in a hospital, in a place like that? Okay, it happens to everyone. But just the same, she got pneumonia and died. But you know, the whole time we were living with her, those were good times, so we couldn’t stay mad and look for problems everywhere. We just wanted to live with her, and I think that that’s what my mother wanted too.

But she’s no longer here. She passed away
too. Since that time my mother has gotten very, very weak. She lives with a lot of anger, but also a lot of sadness. But we talk about these events and she gets all mixed up. She says, “I lost my husband. I lost my father, my mother, my sisters, my brothers. I lost my children.” She counts her children. She lost six children, six children who died plus Tony and Tommy who died. So she’s lost a lot of people. She has lost many, many people. So she lets go of all these emotions on me. She has repressed them, but they come out bit by bit. We pick her up. We try to be careful. That’s one of the reasons she’s not here today. She has a hard time walking. I know -- she also told me that every day, she has her TV in the living room and she sees the people -- the missing children. She says, “They lost their children too.” She listens to it. She doesn’t even understand French, but she watches and she can understand it. She watches TV all the time.

So that’s what my mother is experiencing these days, anger, sadness, guilt, remorse.

Emily was -- it was one of the best moments of her life, finding her and taking her in her arms. She went to see her all the time and she always recognized us. Every time Emily saw me, when I got there, she would say “Ha!” That’s what she did. And when she shouted, “Ha! Ha!” like that, it was because she was happy to see us. She
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shouted, and sometimes I teased her. She was very aware. We had some good moments. And when she saw Mom, she still said “Mom! Mom!” That’s what she said. It’s not true that she wasn’t aware, this woman. We had some good times with her.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: In closing, Françoise, I’m going to give you time to give some recommendations to the commissioners, some observations.

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: It’s time for the recommendations?

MS. FANNY WYLDE: If you are ready, please.

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: I have my phone; I wrote them in my phone. I didn’t want to forget anything. It’s important to us that you look for answers. It’s really, really important.

The first thing I’d like for us to know -- I’d like an investigation into the two missing children -- who gave the authorization to send the children to a monster hospital, because that’s really what they called it. It was a monster hospital, but my brother and my sister were not monsters when they were at the Amos hospital. We really need to know.

My mother is still holding up. I’m sure she wants answers before she dies.

The second recommendation is to find out why they didn’t inform my parents and who signed the
authorization to send the children to the monster hospital. I say this with a lot of anger because it was not up to them to decide who should send who to a hospital like that. Why did they send her like that? I would like to know who, who signed the papers. Why were my parents not informed? I would like research done on why my parents weren’t informed of the whole disappearance? Why did my parents not sign papers to send the children to another hospital, especially the monster hospital. I hate that hospital because they called it the monster hospital. They knew that it was a monster hospital and they sent them there even though they weren’t monsters when they were at the Amos hospital.

Another one, this is my recommendation. I would like the government to apologize to all the mothers and fathers, who lost, that the government apologize to all the families who lost their children through hospitals.

How are they going to do that? I think they need to -- it’s up to you to find out how to do it.

I would like them to come and see my mother in the condition she’s in. Who’s living with my mother? It’s us. We’re the ones dealing with her suffering.

Those are my recommendations. It’s hard to come and talk about all this stuff here. It’s really hard to talk about all of this stuff. I spoke for my mother, and for my family, for my father. I want it to make a
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difference. I want something to come out of it. I don’t want it to sit on shelves like they did with the residential schools, and like they did with other files.

I know that the government has been having a hard time with Indigenous peoples. All they had to do was not take our things and treat us that way. Things would be different today.

We need to get something out of this. If someone comes to hurt someone in my family, I’m a grandmother, I’m a mother. I have four children. And I have 14 grandchildren. I have one great-grandchild. I work really hard to keep my children, my grandchildren safe. Someone hurts -- hurts them today, I guarantee that it wouldn’t go well. I would never let anyone harm my family.

And my parents, the fact that they lived through that, it’s like treating -- it’s as if they didn’t have any life inside them. It’s as if they were -- they were treated like animals. That’s how they treated my parents, “We have the right to take your children as we wish. We’re bringing them to the residential school and we’re bringing them to the hospital.” You know, they’re the ones who decided. It wasn’t up to them to decide. We have lives. My parents have feelings and they have emotions, and I want justice for that.

Thank you.
MS. FANNY WYLDE: Migwetch, Françoise.

Now I would like to invite the commissioners, if they have any questions or comments, to share them. Migwetch.

COMMISSIONER MICHELLE AUDETTE: We are showing your community, Amos and Baie-St-Paul, so that my colleagues can see the distance that separated your family and your sister.

Thank you, Ms. Wylde.

Thanks especially to you, Françoise, first of all, for having the courage to come here, far from your home, to talk about something that has been a heavy burden for a very long time.

Thank you for accompanying your friend. It’s always important to be supported in the truth process.

What you are doing today, there are people who work for the federal government. There are also people who work for the Government of Quebec. So in each province we go to, there are what is called interested parties, so the lawyers representing institutions or governments or Indigenous organizations. Quebec Native Women is also an interested party.

So your message is being heard. Your message, it’s clear that it’s unacceptable. It is unacceptable. You made it clear. Why were people treated
that way? And what’s sad, we are now able to, the four
commissioners -- my colleague is in another room, behind
closed doors -- that in Northern British Columbia,
Yellowknife, Whitehorse, Rankin Inlet, Goose Bay,
Maliotenam, everywhere we have gone, there were children
who never returned after they got sick, never returned.
These are not isolated cases. Canada must formally hear
this. The inquiry unfortunately offers this place to say,
“It happened. It’s not an isolated case. It happened over a
long period of time.”
You said it right, residential schools, and
today, more and more mothers and sisters are going to come
and say, “My brother never came back. My little sister
never came back.”
If you stay longer today, there will be
families talking about this, and not just one, several
families. I really admire them, as I really admire you.
The inquiry has special powers that Truth
and Reconciliation didn’t have, nor the Royal Commission of
Inquiry, giving us the right to request documents by way of
subpoena.
I’m going to let my colleague -- we just
talked about this -- she has some more specific questions
for which Ms. Duchesne, the reporter, perhaps was unable to
get access because she doesn’t have the same authority as
the Commission in terms of access. We must use it.

We also have the ability, Commissioners -- yes, there is a report coming out with some recommendations, but in the meantime, it doesn’t stop the chief commissioner or one or more of the commissioners, from saying to the governments, plural, that there are some things that need to move forward.

So we obviously have the cooperation of Fanny here, who’s going to help us go further, to find out exactly what action needs to be taken, and we must do it. I said it yesterday; we won’t have two inquiries like this one.

For example, on the apology, this is an example, and to link Emily’s voice, Emily’s spirit with all the other children who have parents who deserve justice.

So on that matter, I, I -- I admire you a lot. You’ve been pushing, you’ve been speaking up, for many years. So I honour that. I am very honoured by it. And it’s unfortunate that this happened to you and it’s our job, the Inquiry too, to establish is it because we are Indigenous peoples?

**MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE:** Mm-hm.

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** But in a country that needs evidence -- but we said it yesterday, we know it, we experience it in our day-to-day lives. Our five
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senses unfortunately are faced with it. So I have to say thank you for having had the courage to come here, and continue to deliver this message. Keep on educating Canadians, because people have listened to you, are going to be able to re-disseminate this testimony that will serve as evidence for us.

There’s going to be a very, very important part in the second phase, extension or not, where we ask questions of the institutions. Part of the Commission’s job is to question the institutions. And the whole issue of child protection is one of the key priorities and the matter with police. So, childhood issues, this also affects health services.

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Mm-hm.

COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE: So those are issues and they know it -- the governments have been following us from the beginning -- that for me, as a woman and as a commissioner, it’s fundamental and these are questions we are going to ask them, accountability. That is also our purpose.

But our purpose is also to make a difference. I see myself as an instrument, to change things through your truth, your testimony, hoping that your mother will receive what you are asking for --

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Mm-hm.
COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: -- and all the thousands of parents who lost children.

So we are wearing our commissioner moccasins until the government says, “Thank you. You have completed your job.” But you know me -- you’re going to become familiar with my colleagues -- that afterwards, it’s not over either. We will have to fulfil these recommendations, the significance of organizations pushing the state, the provinces, the municipalities to apply the recommendations. I’m going to personally monitor the situation, that’s for sure.

Thank you so much. Thank you, Vivianne.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you. I’m sorry, I only speak a little French with my son.

So I have a couple of questions. I want to thank you very much for having the strength and courage to come and share with us this horrific experience your mother and father and family continue to deal with and to try and find understanding in. As a mother of a seven-year old, I can’t imagine this. As a Canadian, I can’t imagine that this can happen. It’s not fair.

I have some questions about the documents. The documents that Fanny provided us ---

MS. FANNY WYLDE: I’m sorry, they were provided by the witness.
COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Okay. That you handed to us, a technical lawyer, you.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: Well, it’s on record, so I want to make sure.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: That you provided. Were these -- it was the reporter that obtained these from the government?

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Yes. They weren’t from the government. She got them at the Amos hospital.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Okay. And these are all the documents she was able to obtain?

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: No, we only received the -- she only received Tony’s record. As for Emily, she didn’t manage to get any of her records. That’s why you just have Tony’s record. Emily’s record, we were told it was the public trustee. She couldn’t get them. The request had to be made by the public trustee. So we weren’t successful at all.

And recently I called the hospital to see if we could get the papers. We need to travel with my mother to take her to the hospital. And I said, “She doesn’t even speak French. She doesn’t even speak English.” I said, “Do you want me to bring her?” She said, “Yes, of course.” But I said, “She has a hard time walking.” But I said, “Okay,
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that’s okay.” I was thinking I would bring just anyone, a mother who is in shape and she’ll sign for my mother. She doesn’t know my mother. I’m going to do like them. That’s what I was thinking.

But I called my sister back. I said, “Try to go to the hospital with Mom.” You know, my mother doesn’t go out with just anyone. She doesn’t go out with everyone. She doesn’t even want to go out to take — go for a drive with me. She’s always -- either my car’s not right or my driving, or I complain too much. To her, I’m the black sheep of the family. They said that. My mother, she has her favourite kids, and I’m not her favourite. But when it comes to complaining, I’m the right person.

So I asked my sister, I said, “Go to the hospital with her and ask for all of Emily’s records.” But she lost custody, so we don’t know if she’s going to be able to -- we have a file that says we might be able to get it because - me, I could get it because I had been - we had applied for me to be the trustee, that I be responsible for Emily, but I never got a reply.

I showed the papers to Fanny yesterday and Fanny said to me, “The judge signed here. I think you’re responsible. You could.” So that means that I might be able to get the papers at the hospital. But I, I haven’t seen those papers. I only saw them when the reporter sent them
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to me. I never saw those papers. My mother received them, but she didn’t show them to me, because my mother, when she had Emily, it was perfectly normal that she wanted to control everything. “It’s my baby and I’m the one who’s going to --” I said, “Okay Mom, that’s okay.” I was right there and, you know, okay, right. She handled all the money. Yes, it’s true, we did that, but for the doctor’s records -- not the doctor’s -- but Emily’s medical record, I’m going to do something when I get back home.

So that’s all -- for Tony, that’s all there is. There’s nothing, nothing else. And that, there’s nothing in writing except for one thing that stood out for me, it was that he was diagnosed as ill, idiocy.

On which page was it, Fanny?

MS. FANNY WYLDE: If you go to the last page of the second document I submitted to you, you’ll see that he was diagnosed at the end with idiocy. This one, at the end, you can see he was diagnosed with idiocy.

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: How can you diagnose a two-year-old child as an idiot? Me, I think they’re the ones who are idiots.

What do you think, dear?

MS. FANNY WYLDE: The commissioners will be reassured to know that in preparing Ms. Ruperthouse’s testimony, the Inquiry issued a subpoena to the Milieu
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hospitalier d’Amos [the Amos hospital], as well as Baie-St-Paul and, according to the information I have to date, they sent or are going to send the documents. Once again, it’s a matter of time before we can access it all through our software.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Thank you, Fanny.

In the subpoena request -- with the subpoenas, was the trusteeship requested?

MS. FANNY WYLDE: That’s a fact that just appeared in the testimony, but after the testimony, we can always submit requests to the institutions.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Is that okay with you?

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Mm-hm.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you, Fanny.

I was reading the documents you gave us, this one here. I think this is the first package, and the second page, and these were documents that were created back in 1958. Is that correct?

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Yes.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: And what strikes me and what I want to read, because I want people listening to see this and hear this, you asked the question
why did they not tell your mother and father? They knew Tony’s parents. It’s right here ---

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Mm-hm.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: --- on every page.

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Mm-hm.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Joseph Alfred, Tony’s father, Emily’s father, your father.

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Mm-hm.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Marie?

COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE: Yes, Marie-Hélène.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Marie-Hélène Joséphine, your mama. They knew.

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Yes.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: They also know Tony was an Indigenous boy. It says that he came from a “nation indienne”. It also says, “In case of an emergency, contact the agent indien, person responsible.”

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: It was the person responsible. They called it the agent -- back then it was an Indian agent who knew where all the Indigenous people were, the families, where their camps were, where they were located.

COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE: For the
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federal government.

Ms. Françoise Rupertthouse: Yes, for the government, of course. They knew where to find us. It’s not true that they didn’t know where my parents were when they said that they had to be sent.

Commissioner QajaQ Robinson: Yes. I see it here and it says the Department of Indian Affairs is responsible. I wanted to point that out because it shows that they knew who your parents were. They knew how to find them. So I just wanted to confirm that this was telling me what I’m reading.

Thank you so much. Those are all the questions that I have.

Brian, do you have any specific questions? Do you want to say something?

Thank you. Migwetch.

Ms. Françoise Rupertthouse: Thank you.

Commissioner Brian Eyolfson: I don’t have any additional questions for you, Françoise. I just want to really thank you for coming here today and sharing with us and telling us about your sister and your brother and what your parents and your family went through, and for having the strength and courage to do that and coming to be a part of the National Inquiry. So thank you very much.

Ms. Françoise Rupertthouse: Thank you.
COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: So, you and your daughter, would you agree to the Commission giving you a gift, an eagle feather?

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Then I’m going to ask our grandmothers -- this is the first time I am able to speak in French to our grandmothers, and to Pénélope, Bernie, Blu. You’ll see, they’re all cute. They’re really cute.

And where is Louise? I don’t see her. Ah, that’s because she’s tiny. Louise, you too. Look, they’re cute. They are great ladies.

And I would like you to know the story behind these feathers. They have a lovely story from Bernie’s territory.

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Mm-hm.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Bernie, she lost her mother, her sisters and her brothers in the Downtown East Side and she has been advocating for 33 years in the downtown area for men and women in a vulnerable situation. So she is helping us with the inquiry.

Do you know Pénélope?

MS. FRANÇOISE RUPERTHOUSE: Mm-hm, yes.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Our lovely Pénélope. Blu is Brian’s grandmother. She does a very good
job of defending the whole two-spirit community, a very strong woman, very strong. And the wonderful Louise, she is the kokum in Qajaq. We all want to take her home with us.

You can explain the story behind the feather.

**MS. BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:** They wanted me to explain this to you in French. I’m sorry, I can’t. I just want to say howa (ph) to you for your strength. Sorry, I forget, you speak French. I’m all confused. I just want to say howa to you in my language. I just want to say howa for your strength and for your daughter here too. That was very powerful and emotional. And thank you for your courage and your strength to come here.

I want to explain. The eagle feather started in my territory, in Haida Gwaii. It started with over 400 eagle feathers that the matriarchs picked on the shorelines. So we’ve done a call-out nationally to every grandmother, Sundance chiefs everywhere in Canada. So this has come from the Sunshine Coast, between Vancouver Island to Vancouver in a reserve that’s called Seashell. It’s a small, remote area that they’ve sent the eagle feathers. So it’s made its way all over here.

So we just want to say howa to you again on behalf of the Commissioners.

If you would be so kind to accept the gifts?
(PRESENTATION OF GIFTS)

MS. FANNY WYLDE: As the gifts are being given, I’m going to ask if we can adjourn this session, Commissioners?

Thank you.

EXHIBITS (code: P01P13P0201)

--- Exhibit 1: Folder of ten images displayed during the public Testimony of Françoise Ruperthouse [Filename: P01P13P0201_Ruperthouse_Exh_1]

--- Exhibit 2: Authorization to provide the information contained in Tony Ruperthouse’s record, #DT9060 (nine pages)

--- Exhibit 3: Reply to an access to information request concerning Tony Ruperthouse HDP 11054, document provided by the Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux de la Capitale-Nationale (three pages)

--- Exhibit 4: Communal grave (“fosse commune”) information for Tony Ruperthouse (three pages)

--- Upon recessing at 11:16 am
TRANSCRIPTION CERTIFICATE*

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

Nadia Rainville

March 23, 2018

* This certificate refers to the original transcript in French.