Translation

Friday, March 16, 2018

Public Volume 70

Maurice Kistabish and Beatrice Reuben Trapper,
In relation to Kathleen Kistabish Reuben

Heard by Chief Commissioner Marion Buller
and Commissioners Michèle Audette, Qajaq Robinson
and Brian Eyolfson

INTERNATIONAL REPORTING INC.
## II
### Appearances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assembly of First Nations</td>
<td>Jeremy Kolodziej</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL)</td>
<td>Non-appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concertation des luttes contre l’exploitation sexuelle</td>
<td>Non-appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conseil des Anicinabek de Kitcisakik</td>
<td>Non-appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directeur des poursuites pénales et criminelles</td>
<td>Anny Bernier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gouvernement of Canada</td>
<td>Anne Turley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government of Québec</td>
<td>Non-appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami</td>
<td>Non-appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innu Takuaikan Uashat mak Mani-Utenam (ITUM)</td>
<td>Non-appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach</td>
<td>Non-appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, Saturviit Inuit Women’s Association of Nunavik, Ottawa Inuit Children’s Centre</td>
<td>Beth Symes, Anne Curley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Femmes autochtones du Québec</td>
<td>Representative, Pauktuutit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regroupement Mamit Innuat</td>
<td>Non-appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Résidences Oblates du Québec</td>
<td>Non-appearance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III

TABLE CONTENTS

Public Hearings
March 16 2018

PAGE

Opening Remarks 1

Witnesses: Maurice Kistabish and Beatrice Reuben Trapper, 5

In relation to Kathleen Kistabish Reuben

Heard by: Chief Commissioner Marion Buller, Commissioners Michèle Audette, Qajaq Robinson and Brian Eyolfson

Commission Counsel: Marie-Audrey Girard

Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-Keepers: Melanie Morrison, National Family Advisory Circle (NFAC), Sarah Nowrakuluk (NFAC), Laurie Odjick (NFAC), Sedalia Fazio, Louise Haulli, Audrey Siegl, Pénélope Guay, Kathy Louis, Oscar Kistabish, Évelyne St-Onge, Bernie Poitras Williams, Laureen “Blu” Waters-Gaudio, Martha Greig, Moreen Konwatsitsawi Meloche, Patricia Kaniente Stacey, Michael Standup, Elaine Kicknosway, Charles-API Bellefleur, Edouard Chilton, Sharon Tardif-Shecanapish, Winnie Bosum, Priscilla Bosum

Clerk: Maryiam Khoury
Registrar: Bryan Zandberg
### List of Exhibits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Witnesses: Maurice Kistabish and Beatrice Reuben Trapper  
(in relation to Kathleen Kistabish Reuben)

Exhibits

(No exhibits)
--- Upon commencing on Friday, March 16, 2018, at 11:59 a.m.

MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Good Morning! Good morning, Commissioners. I’d like to introduce to you Maurice Kistabish and Beatrice Reuben Trapper. Beatrice is Maurice’s aunt. They are here today to share the story of Kathleen Kistabish Reuben, Maurice’s mother and Beatrice’s sister.

Kathleen’s children always believed that their mother had drowned, but they recently found out that she had been murdered. This is the story that Beatrice and Maurice will be sharing with us today.

First, before we commence, I would like to ask the Clerk to please swear in Beatrice and Maurice.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Bonjour. Oui, Beatrice, in English? Good morning, Beatrice.

Do you swear that the evidence you will give today will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MS. BEATRICE REUBEN TRAPPER: Yes.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Thank you.

MS. BEATRICE REUBEN TRAPPER: Thank you.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: That’s it? That’s all?

Thank you.
MR. MAURICE KISTABISH: I didn’t understand.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Oh, it’s definitely my French! I will start again. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MR. KISTABISH: Yes, I swear.

CLERK: Thank you. Thank you.

MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Beatrice and Maurice, thank you very much for being here with us today. To start, I would like to ask you to introduce yourselves to the Commissioners. Perhaps we could begin with Maurice and after, Beatrice, could you please introduce yourselves?

MR. MAURICE KISTABISH: Good morning. I’m just going to introduce myself, I’m just going to explain who I am as well, I’m going to say it in my mother tongue, the language of my mother and the language of my father. I want to thank the Inuit woman -- I thank you. I’ll like to thank you to be here. (Speaking in Native language) I am gonna speak my dad’s language. (Speaking in Native language) In English? I have to? Thank you very much anyway, bye.

MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: And Beatrice, if you could introduce yourself, please?
MS. BEATRICE REUBEN TRAPPER: I’m very grateful for being able to speak in Cree, my language. It’s the language my sister spoke; she always spoke in our native language. She was Maurice’s mom, and every time we talked to each other, it was always in Cree.

Today, it’s a very painful day. It’s difficult to turn away from what I bear, but I really do want to share what has happened. I even thought -- I thought that I was really going to hurt them. I’ve never wanted to tell them what we knew and what the police had told us.

What happened, about my sister -- when I was told what had happened, it really affected me. My late husband told me -- well, he died, I’ve been a widow for 20 years ago. And today, I’m going to tell my story and share it with you.

I’m 76 years old, and I’ll leave this story to my nephews, whom I love very much. This is why I’m sharing what happened to my sister; it was 50 years ago that this incident happened. My nephews have grown up since then. They already have their own grandchildren, and perhaps they even have great-grandchildren, I’m not sure.

The situation is very serious; it’s etched in my mind and I’ve kept it inside for such a long time, this story from my past. I didn’t want to hurt them, my
nephews, so I kept the details to myself and this pain has hurt me a lot, has made me suffer a great deal. I kept it to myself because I didn’t want to share it with anyone.

When my husband was alive, I was always telling him “Let’s tell them, let’s tell them.” And he’d say, “No, you’re going to hurt them a lot, especially the men,” because it was especially the men who would be affected. And I’ve watched them get married and they’ve treated me well since their mother died. They always came to see me when they needed something or they wanted my cooking tips, they were always coming to ask my advice, my nephews. Now, only four of them are still alive.

I’m going to tell my story, I’m going to tell you what happened, what happened to my sister. I’m going to talk about it today and get this story out, because it hurts me. I miss her. She was only 43 years old when this happened.

When I was given the news, my parents were still alive, but they were old. The police came to our house to tell us what had happened. My parents didn’t understand English or French so we had to translate the news for them, my husband Harry and I, that’s what we did.

The police gave us all the details, the remains that had been found, particularly when they brought them to the hospital to do an autopsy. And he said to us,
“I can’t tell you if it’s drowning or something else,” because there wasn’t any water in her lungs. It’s as if they had simply thrown her body into the water; the back of her head had been crushed and that’s where the water got in.

They told us they couldn’t confirm it was a drowning, but something had happened. They saw two men taking her towards the river; there was one who was dragging her. I think they brought her there after they did what they had wanted to do to her and then, they just tossed the body in the water.

There were three who went towards the lake, but only two came back. So the police said they were going to investigate to find out what had really happened. So we asked my parents what needed to be done or whether to stop the case right there. My mother said that it shouldn’t be let go, dropped. But it was very painful for them. They didn’t want to leave things open for the police to really investigate what had happened.

So, my parents didn’t want the case to proceed. So we let things be, and we stuck to the idea, or my parents stuck to the idea, that it was a drowning. But that wasn’t the truth, when they told us she had drowned; it’s something I always kept to myself, I never shared it with anyone.
Not too long ago, maybe two years ago, we had a circle like this one and we were sharing our experiences and that’s when I started to talk about it, and I let it go.

I really hurt them, made them suffer with this truth, Maurice and other brothers and sisters; in fact, there were two. There were two brothers and sisters when I shared this story, and I can tell you that it has hurt me a lot too, as I, I was alone, because my husband had already passed.

And I remembered my late sister. She was always so nice to me, and she took such good care of me, she visited me often. And one day, she said to me, “Take care of my kids for me, always keep an eye on them.” At that time, none of them were married and it was always like that; I’ve always helped them. Later, when they got married, each time they went through a rough period, I was always there for them. I’ve helped them throughout their lives.

I think God gave me strength and continues to give me strength to do it, and the only person who’s above me is God, who watches over me, who takes care of me and who takes care of every one of us. It’s He who controls our lives.

The burden I’m carrying is still very heavy,
what happened to my sister. But it’s God who gives me strength to share my story with you. Even if it hurts me, it’s God who comes first.

I’m doing okay. My granddaughter is taking care of me. I have many great-grandchildren, Maurice takes care of me, my grandchildren too. Everyone takes very good care of me. Maurice makes sure that I have everything I need, he’s always checking up on me, making sure that I’m okay. And I can tell you that yes, I’m doing pretty well in my life now. Sometimes, my leg hurts, I have a bad leg.

And today, I can say that I’ve let it go and the more I talk about it the better I feel, I feel relieved.

So, they’re now able share this story, they can tell their children what really did happen to their grandma. That’s how I see it, and now, I want to thank you for listening to me.

**MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** Beatrice, I will have a question for you. Can you – could you let us know a little bit about Kathleen, how you remember her, how she was?

**MS. BEATRICE REUBEN TRAPPER:** I don’t hear you.

**MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** Do you want to put the Cree interpretation? Beatrice, can you hear? Is it okay
So can you ---

MS. BEATRICE REUBEN TRAPPER: I’m really deaf.

MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Can you tell us a little bit about Kathleen, how you remember her, your sister?

MS. BEATRICE REUBEN TRAPPER: What memories do I have of my sister? I can talk to you about my sister. She was a responsible person. She was always taking care of our parents, she had a lot of respect for our parents. That’s how I saw her. I was always helping her, even when her kids were small. We lived in a tent, I was 12 years old and I spent a summer with them, I lived with them when I lived with her children. And she treated me so well and she was like that with everyone. She spoke well of other people and always gave food to others when they were lacking. And that’s what I remember, when I was 12. And when she died, I was 27 years old.

She was always coming to see my kids, and she’d kiss them, she’d hug them. She was a good cook; that’s it, those are my memories of her. I was still in school, and I babysat her kids and one day she said to me — we didn’t have money, we weren’t using money and she said to me, “You do so much for me” and she bought me clothes, a
dress, some shoes and a sweater, and that’s what I wore to
school. That’s how she paid me; she gave me big hugs, she
said to me, “I love you so much. I really love you.”

I was a good student. She gave me clothes
and I’ll never forget what she did for me. She bought me
clothes so I could go to school, and when I was growing up,
she was always doing nice things for us.

Once, my parents left for the territory,
they left to go hunting and she came to our place, and she
brought some things, some (indiscernible), she gave them to
my father and she said “You’re going to eat this.” They
were so happy! He gave her a big hug to thank her.

And she did the same for others. She was
always preparing food and she’d give it to others. That’s
how she was. She was really nice, kind. She was always
doing something for other people, even when we were in the
territory. I saw how she was taking care of her children;
she’d make peat bags or moss bags for her babies.

She wasn’t the type of person to get angry.
She was always laughing. And that’s what I remember about
her, her smile, her laughter, and I miss it so much! There
are so many things that I could share, about the type of
person she was. Even with her children -- she loved her
children so much, she took such good care of them.

It’s difficult and it’s sad, when you lose
someone, especially someone who wasn’t even sick. It was so
sudden. That’s what hurts so much. And I know my parents
were unhappy about the way she died, that she hadn’t been
sick, it was something that was done to her and they
carried that inside them. They never spoke about it, they
kept everything that had happened to their daughter inside,
and it caused them a lot of pain. It was very painful for
them.

My mother left us at the age of 80 and me,
I’ve almost reached that age! I’ll be celebrating my
birthday this month. I still have a sister, I still have
three sisters. There are two sisters, Helen and Francis. We
were all girls in my family. My parents didn’t have any
sons. There were seven of us.

MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Beatrice, when did
you decide to let Maurice and his siblings know what
happened to Kathleen and how?

MS. BEATRICE REUBEN TRAPPER: It’s been only
two years since I told them. I had never said anything to
them when they were young. Even after they got married, I
never told them and this was something I carried with me
and I always thought, “This is only going to hurt them.”

My late husband had told me not to talk
about it because it was going to hurt them and me, and I
believed it. So, I had kept it to myself, I always
respected what my husband said to me.

But one day, two years ago, we were all together in a circle and it was during an event, in a gathering and we were asked if anyone had been keeping something inside for a long time that was affecting them and the person was asked to share. And I thought, “This is the time to talk about it.” And Maurice was there and his brother Allan was there.

And yes, it did hurt them when I spoke about what had happened, and Maurice was married at the time, but it was still very painful for him. And there, I finally -- I got it off my chest, and it was important for them, it was important for me that they forgive me for having kept it to myself all that time, for having repressed it for all those years. I asked for their forgiveness, I asked them to forgive me for not telling them sooner and for keeping it to myself for such a long time, but I didn’t want them to be hurt. And that’s how it happened.

**MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** Thank you, thank you Beatrice. Maurice, I wanted to ask you if you could share with the Commissioners your mother’s story from your perspective?

**MR. MAURICE KISTABISH:** In 1967 -- I will speak in French, because the translations, anyway -- I don’t want to confuse people if I switch from English to
I will just speak in French, so it will be no problem for the translators.

In 1967, the year, some of you may remember, it was the year of the Expo and at the time it happened, there were eight of us kids: six boys and two girls. And in 1967, me, I was 18-19 years old and my brother Oscar was two years older than me, and the other siblings were younger than me. The last two, Allan and Isaac, they don’t remember their mother because they were too young.

And we weren’t yet, let’s say, prepared for that, for it to happen. I myself wasn’t ready. And probably, if we compare it to what is happening today, the young people today, they’re better prepared to deal with these tragedies. Probably also because I spent seven years at a residential school, until the age of 16. So, I only had a couple years to get to know my mother. The seven years I spent at the residential school took me away from my mother. And I was too young as well, to enjoy my mother’s presence before I went to the residential school.

What I do remember, though, is the love my mother had for her children; that, I felt it, I saw it. She always cared for us despite the lack of financial resources, the little resources they had. She raised us well, just as -- my father too.
And I remember that -- all couples, at one time or another, have arguments, we would say. And I remember when my father -- it was always after he drank, in those days, I remember that our mother, she was like -- she protected us, she stood in front of my father and we, we were behind. And I remember, we held onto my mother’s skirt, we were so afraid of our father when he yelled at my mother. But I never saw my father hit or beat my mother. This, it was just shouting between a couple.

So my mother, she was like a mother hen, as they say, she protected her chicks, and that’s the kind of person she was. We were always protected. And that’s what -- the seven years of residential school, that’s what we missed too. Then you leave the residential school, and I didn’t even have the time to enjoy having her around because, in 1967, she was gone.

And at the time it happened, too, because I was always -- because my Aunt Beatrice was always there, she babysat us. We were always at her house; she babysat us, she fed us, she was like a second mother to me, to all of us, my Aunt Beatrice. I can say that she was the only aunt who was doing that for us and I felt that there was love from my aunt for us, for Kathleen’s kids. This, I felt it and I saw it too.

And as she said, my aunt is a good cook.
Yes! She made the best bannock I have ever tasted.

When it happened, as I was saying, we weren’t prepared. When they told us she had drowned, we thought “She drowned.” It’s, when there is a tragedy, a car accident or a drowning, you always tell yourself, “Okay, it happened suddenly, it happened that way.”

Then, two years ago, it was in 2016, my mother had died in 1967, and I realized my Aunt Beatrice was saying to us, “I need to talk to you, I have to tell you something.” It was at least a year, six months, she had been saying to me: “I have to talk to you, I have something to tell you.” We, we thought it was -- I don’t know, something else.

Okay. And then, when she told us, it was a big blow for sure. I collapsed in my chair and the reaction I had, my nose started to bleed; I don’t know why, but anyhow. Finally, I found out what she wanted to say, my aunt. And me, like she said, I have married since then. I’ve been with the same woman for 42 years, I have children, I have seven children. I have 13 grandchildren and I have eight great-grandchildren.

So, when I found out, two years ago, I thought -- this was always -- not hidden, but they never told us why she had died. We, we always thought she had drowned, she had drowned, okay. And I remember, my brother
Oscar, we’d go past the river, because our community is on the Harricana River, and we go past the river. And Oscar, he always said, “This is the river that took our mother.” That was a long time ago.

So, that’s how it happened, and right after my aunt opened up, I said to myself, “Oh my God! What am I going to do?” Especially for my kids. You know, in a family, you have a mother, you have a father, and I see the example of my wife and me, I see my children, my grandchildren, my great-grandchildren. It’s happiness; it’s happiness when -- for them, they love to see their parents, they love to see (Speaking in Native language), they love to see their great-grandfather. It’s joy for them. But me, for me, my children did not experience the joy of knowing their grandmother and their great-grandmother too.

That’s what is hard. What is also hard is the way she died. She was murdered, she was killed. And as they told my aunt, she had a hole in her skull and that’s where the -- also, she testified that there were two sets of footprints on each side, shoe prints as if someone was dragging her to the river. So, she was knocked out, she was killed, then they threw her in the river. This is not a drowning; that’s the shock, she was murdered, she was killed, now.

I went to see a psychologist, I went -- to
the clinic. We have a clinic in Pikogan, I went to see
those specialists and I said, “How am I going to tell my
children?” Because they need to know, even though they know
her only through photos. Do they need to know? Because we
never told our children, each of my children, how she died.
We simply said that she drowned. Even my nieces don’t know,
because they asked my aunt: “What happened to our
grandmother?” That’s what they asked. But she was too --
she still wasn’t sharing what she knew.

I don’t know how to do it, tell my children.
For the good of my children, of my children, should I do as
my aunt did for us? I’m not upset with her, my aunt, for
what she did; she did it to protect us. She did it so we
wouldn’t feel pain.

But I remember, at the funeral, I couldn’t
go near the casket, because living without my mother, it
was impossible, because she’s the one who raised us, she’s
the one who fed us, she’s the one who took care of us. And
all the people here, around the room, if we didn’t have a
mother, we wouldn’t be here. So I’m telling you, by the
way, everyone here owes nine months of rent! [Laughter]
Just kidding, that’s the way we speak, Indigenous people,
sometimes, to break the tension, for -- sometimes, you have
to kid around!

The hardest part in all this, is that I
Maurice Kistabish and
Beatrice Reuben Trapper
(Kathleen Kistabish Reuben)

1 don’t know how my children are going to take it. It’s
2 because they love -- my children love their father very
3 much, they love their parents very much and for them, it’s
4 unthinkable that, were we to leave, both of us -- they told
5 us that, anyway. On the other hand, the experience I have
6 had, I can tell you that, between losing a father and a
7 mother, if I had to choose to lose one of them, I would
8 choose to lose my father, then afterward, my mother, if
9 life --
10
11 After it happened, we were -- as I said,
12 there were eight of us kids, six boys and two girls. And
13 not long after, we were placed here and there; me, I lived
14 with my aunt, at my uncle’s house, I had a bit -- it was
15 like that for about two years. We were separated and my
16 sister Agnès (ph), one of my sisters was taking care of the
17 children, her brothers and sisters. You can’t ask a young
18 girl to -- she was 16 years old, my sister, my little
19 sister, 15 or 16 years old. She was taking care of her
20 younger brothers and her sister, it was --
21
22 And me, I left. I kept thinking, losing my
23 mother, it makes no sense in my life. I left my community.
24 For over 15 years I stayed away from my community and I
25 went to stay with my grandparents, my mother’s parents, in
26 Matagami. I was in Matagami for five years, where the
27 [inaudible] community is, you go right past it on the way
there. I never stopped once in five years, after my mother
died.

And at a certain point, my father --
the trapping ground is closer to Matagami, where I was
working. I often went to see my father at his trapping
ground. He came to see me in Matagami, but I never went to
my community in those five years. At one point, my father
said to me: “That’s enough, come back home.” So, I left my
job and I moved. I said, “I work, and I have a family.” “We
have a job for you.” “Okay, but I have a family, I need a
house.” “We’re going to give you a house.”

And my father was a councillor, he and the
Chief were partners in crime, they were two buddies. They
arranged for me to have a house, and I already had a job.
So I went back. And in the five years that I had been away,
I saw that the kids had all grown up -- the young girls,
and --

In Matagami, I was staying with my
grandparents. I saw what they did with me, they always had
good intentions towards me. And now I know why, because
they knew what had happened. At one point, I had been
staying with my grandfather for almost a year, six months,
and my grandfather told me “That’s enough, you need to
start working.” Okay, he was acting like my father. That
same day, I found a job and I’ve been working ever since.
I started a family, and I went back to my community. The most important, in this, as he said, at the beginning -- my mother was a Cree from Waskaganish, and my father was an Algonquin from Pikogan. When I was young, I remember, I was always with my family on my mother’s side, with her family. That’s how I learned Cree, because we were living in clans; the Trapper Reuben family was there, the Kistabish family there. That’s where I learned Cree, by listening. That’s why I speak -- I thanked my mother for that, I thank Beatrice for that, and I thank my father because I learned to speak Algonquin.

My mother’s presence is always here. Even my sisters -- as you can imagine. Let me tell you something: at the time of the tragedy, my younger brothers Isaac and Allan were playing in the back. You know how brothers are when they’re young? They’re always bickering, fighting, then one of them inevitably starts crying; I think it was Isaac, the youngest. He was sobbing, he was saying, Mommy! Mommy! She had already left, his mother. And my next-door neighbour heard them, her name was Philomène, she heard them and she thought -- I found out later, she said: “When I heard the little guy sobbing, me too, I started to sob, because the little guy, he will never see his mother again.”

That’s why my aunt, my uncle, my
grandparents decided not to tell us how she died; they wanted to protect us. Now, today, was it the right thing to do? Yes and no. But now, it’s up to me and Oscar, my brothers, to figure out how to tell our children, each one.

We don’t want to get together -- because we’re four children -- four of Kathleen’s children are left, four boys, because recently, the baby of the family died, last summer. In fact, it was the baby of the family, he’s the one who blamed me for not telling him what kind of mother she was. Myself, I wasn’t able to say what she was like -- I couldn’t do it.

Okay -- okay, I need to get through this. Because on top of this, she was young -- she was 43 years old. Me, I’ll be 70 this month, on March 24. Me, I saw, I was able to see my children grow up, my children were able to know me, my grandchildren have known me -- but not her. She didn’t even see her grandchildren, she only got to know her children. And she loved us!

Now, it’s over -- yes, it’s over, but the grief is always there. And now -- I had even -- I need to say things that nobody -- at one point, I said to myself: “I think it may be better if I too left this world,” tendencies -- we often have bizarre thoughts, suicidal tendencies. “Maybe it’d be better if I went?” Then I would remember my children, I always thought of my mother. I
Hearing-Public

Maurice Kistabish and
Beatrice Reuben Trapper
(Kathleen Kistabish Reuben)

said, she didn’t have the luxury, she didn’t have the joy of having her children, her grandchildren, so no, I’m going to keep on living for as long as I can.

So I decided to live. And I think I will be able to, because I am okay now. I grieve, but I will be able to get through it, with God’s help, with the help of whomever, the Creator (Speaking in Native language). Also, I have a wonderful wife; we’ve been together for 42 years.

Two or three years ago, I had a Christmas dinner, I started to count how many of us there were; there were 37 of us. So it’s a big family, for my age. [Laughter]

That’s when I said, okay, I have to keep going! Life is important! Life -- maybe for us, it is not important, sometimes, it is not important, what we’re good for, but it’s the the children’s joy, it’s the grandchildren’s joy. They love to see you. Everyone is -- it’s the feeling.

Now, the biggest -- the biggest step I have to take is how to tell my children. So perhaps there’s someone here, an expert, the steps I need to take. I don’t know yet.

I’m going to end there, by telling you that I’ve taken an important step -- that is, two steps: the story of the residential schools, and my mother’s story.

Now, I know -- [silence]

Thank you -- I thank you for your support. I
tell myself, life is so beautiful, and life is too short not to enjoy it. The joy of being a parent, the joy of being a grandfather, the joy of being a great-grandfather, and also the joy of watching your children have fun, when you see the children talking to each other, laughing together, that’s this joy that keeps me going. It’s that joy that keeps me going, let me tell you; I want to live for another 30 years! [Laughter]

I thank you very much. Thank you for your support. Thank you.

MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Maurice, Beatrice, I want to thank you for joining us here this afternoon to share this, to share the important message, Maurice, that you also shared with us at the end. Thank you for telling us about Kathleen, as well.

I was wondering if, before concluding, there is anything else you would like to add?

MS. BEATRICE REUBEN TRAPPER: [Sound issue] — — one of her children, a girl, she’s 10, and then the seven-year-old left home; she wanted to be independent. They were older. There was Maurice and Oscar, who had been placed elsewhere. Mainly, they took care of themselves, and the other boys had been separated, had been placed in different homes. Allan and Noah were placed in different homes; they were placed with relatives, in a Cree home.
Mr. Maurice Kistabish: Perhaps, to add -- at the time, it’s because the justice system, it wasn’t like it is today. Today, people have to, the justice system, needs to be more -- when there’s a --

Let me tell you: I know a bit about what’s happening in the world, I read a lot, I watch the news a lot. We, Indigenous people, we’re like a minority. We’re treated like second-class citizens; what happens to an Indian, oh well… that’s one less. Indigenous people in Canada are like black people in the United States, black people in Montréal. It would appear that, when this happens, these things, if it had been a non-Indigenous person, there would have been more services. That’s what we experience; that’s the reality.

When I lost my mother, I was part of the labour force for 15 years and, in the outside world, I witnessed the discrimination against me. I was even arrested once. He was the one who provoked me, and I, I reacted, I just responded. When the police came, it was the white man who confronted me, he was the one who --, and when the police came, they picked me up right away, me, they took me away. Why? Because the other one was in the
right, and yet the story -- that’s not what had happened; he provoked me. Me, I was taught, I was shown to respect people. My father said to me, “Respect -- when someone comes to your home, welcome them, give them some tea, some bannock.” That’s the respect he taught us. My mother too, that’s what she did. She offered food. It’s how most Indigenous people are raised. This is how our parents raised us.

And when you have to contend with the system in a city, that’s not what happens. It appears that there is no respect for the individual. Now, is this going to change? It may have changed a bit, but improvements are still needed. Go anywhere in the city and you see it; me, I see it. Yet, I am a person who speaks to everyone. I’m not shy, I go to see, even -- I’ll even take the first steps to connect with a non-Indigenous person. Most -- we, Indigenous people, the non-Indigenous people accuse us of these things: “You, you’re always keeping to yourselves.” But I’m not like that.

This needs to change. We, too, we need to change. If the other has to change, I, too, I need to change. It’s by doing this that we need -- what my parents taught me, I put it into practice. That being said, everyone is free to do whatever they want. Now, everyone is free to do what -- it’s the freedom of expression, it’s
freedom, because I know that, some people are perhaps more shy -- I don’t know. This discomfort needs to be eliminated, too. If I was --

At one time, I wasn’t able to speak in front of a mic; I would shake, but I got over it. I think that if I was able to do it, so can you. Yes. You can do it. Thank you very much, the people who are here; may you live well, and continue to enjoy life.

Thank you again.

**MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** Thank you very much Maurice. If I may, I have one last question. You just mentioned -- you said that things need to improve. Do you have any recommendations that you want to share with us about how to improve? How do you see these improvements?

**PAUSE/BREAK**

**MS. MOREEN KONWATSITSAWI:** I’m asked to try to check that the cameras are all in sync with the mic. Okay.

**MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** So, we’ll pick up where we left off.

Beatrice, I would like to ask you - you mentioned that when the police came and met with your parents, they said something about tracks. Could you confirm -- could you tell us in more details what exactly the cops said?
MS. BEATRICE REUBEN TRAPPER: When the police came to our house and told us what had really happened -- well, there’s a river, not far away. When you head towards the reserve, you have to go by it, you have to go by this river, and it’s in this river where they threw her body.

The police told us that they had seen, like, foot tracks, footprints, and there were three of them. The tracks in the middle were not the tracks of someone who had been walking; you could see that she had been dragged. And even the way the foot touched the ground, it was not as if someone had been simply walking. It appeared that there were two people, one on each side, who had most likely forced her, or -- I can’t say that she was dragged, but they tried to make her walk and that’s what the police had seen, as tracks.

This is the evidence that remained on the scene, and it’s from there that she was apparently thrown into the river. On the way back, there were only two sets of footprints. When I said there wasn’t any water in her lungs, there wasn’t enough water in her lungs, or any at all, and it therefore couldn’t be confirmed that she’d drowned; that’s what the doctor told the police, that it couldn’t have been a drowning. And that’s what the police told us.

After my parents had been informed, they
Maurice Kistabish and
Beatrice Reuben Trapper
(Kathleen Kistabish Reuben)

didn’t want to go further, they didn’t want an investigation, and they wanted to put an end to it. I remember the pain that struck my parents, but that’s what they wanted and we respected their wishes. So the police didn’t pursue it any further and simply closed the case.

MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Thank you, Beatrice. Maurice, so, before the break, you were talking to us about recommendations you wanted to make. So, could you please continue with what you were going to tell us?

MR. MAURICE KISTABISH: The recommendation that -- I’m used to working in an office, I’m a councillor in my community and the presence of my Chief, David Kistabish, who’s here, I really appreciate that he’s here and we support one another.

As for the recommendations, I’m used to doing that. When there’s a break-in or when something happens in the city, be more attentive; the police forces, legal services too, listen to both parties and not just one version over the other. Officers who are cops -- me, I recommend to these people to learn about the history of the Indigenous people in order to know how to react. Because sometimes by knowing a group, by knowing us, Indigenous people, it’s another version that you have, as a non-Indigenous person.

Because, I will give an example: there is
one who is living in our community, his name is Sylvain Nolet. He’s living in our community because he is in a common-law relationship with one of the women in our community, and his brother is racist. He told us. It’s a lack of understanding in the city. Even if Pikogan, we are connected -- there are some who are still reluctant. But if you go to Val-d’Or, it’s another thing -- I don’t know. Maybe we, our part, it’s to raise awareness in schools, raise awareness when there are activities, be involved in activities. Because discrimination, racism, it’s what children learn from their parents. The way children act and behave comes from what they are taught by their parents.

Let’s be honest: when they treat us like kawish (ph), children, they hear it, they see it. It stays with the young people; when they grow up, they use their parents’ words, imitates their parents’ actions, their parents’ behaviour. We must educate our people from the start.

Our role, us, the First Nations, is to make this happen: to give information sessions, know our culture. Just an example: when they say “Indian time,” this, it means, everyone is familiar with this expression which means “relax, it’s coming.” When you go to a meeting, and someone is late, it’s not ideal, but -- we have that,
“Indian time.” And what do you want us to do? We can’t change an entire decade for -- so, it’s to know us in this, in what we are.

Going back to the tragedy: when my aunt told us about it, I went to speak to some Elders, because I, I also speak Algonquin. I asked them, and right away the answer was: “She was killed, she was murdered”; that was the first thing they said. So people knew about it too; they didn’t want to tell us. It was unmissable.

I also want to return to another case, my younger brother Allan: there was a tragedy in his case. I just spoke to my brother earlier, and he said, “If mom had been there, it may not have happened,” because a mother is always there to care for her children. I’m not blaming this on -- but the usefulness of a mother, that’s it, to protect her children.

So, just, the Hervieux family, I love them, I’m very fond of them. I’m very fond of the mother, I knew her. Mrs. Hervieux, by the way, she’s a good mother. And one more thing: what I want to say to the children, I’ve seen some children here, the message I have for you is to listen to your parents! That’s the recipe for a good and beautiful life. Always listen to your parents -- even when you’re grown up. It’s the most important lesson. So this is the recipe: listen to your parents! [Laughter] Thank you.
MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Maurice, I would also maybe, just to clarify one thing: in which community did this tragedy happen? The tragedy ---

MR. MAURICE KISTABISH: It’s true, we completely forgot. My community is about three or four kilometres from the town of Amos and the tragedy occurred --- well there’s a place where the Indians used to hang out, a bar. And there was a man, he was called Tarzan; he a was big, strong guy. What he did, he abused our women, abused our mothers; in other words, he cruised around, tried to pick up our mothers. And when it didn’t work -- her husband would always defend her. More often than not, the husband would take quite a beating because of Tarzan, because he couldn’t have her, in other words.

When my aunt told us that, my brother Oscar wasn’t there, I told him and he said -- right away he named the two suspects. We know the two suspects. But the problem is that these two suspects are not longer around, they’re dead now. So --

MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD: Can you clarify for us -- really, the community, I didn’t understand where it was, exactly?

MR. MAURICE KISTABISH: The community I’m from is called the community of Pikogan, we are Abitibiwinis (ph). It’s an Algonquin community and the
reason my aunt is here, it’s because in this community,
there are a lot of people who were originally from
Waskaganish. My mother was originally from Waskaganish, and
another, the Diamond family, if you know Billy Diamond, the
one who signed the James Bay Agreement -- 40% of the
population comes from that family, the Diamonds. Me, I
don’t come from that family; we, we’re the Reuben family
(Speaking in Native language). And there’s another family,
the Trappers, the Frank family. Let’s just say that it’s
very -- we even have a Vincent Sioui with us! [Laughter]
We’re very -- we have a good mix of people.

And it’s typically -- as a community, we’re
a special community. We speak Algonquin, we speak French,
we speak English and we speak Cree. And there’s also
Atikamekw. It’s very -- that’s what’s great. Especially
Vincent Sioui, he’s a specialist -- I think he has a PhD,
I’m not sure. It’s good to have him. We adopted him right
away! [Laughter] The Pikogan community is an Algonquin
community which is located three or four kilometres from
the town of Amos, which has a population of roughly 30,000.

And we have a good relationship with these
people, for example, I mean today, which wasn’t the case in
those years, in the years of the tragedy. There was always
some form of discrimination happening then. But there is
less now. We even inter-marry and we play together. I can
say that we have a good relationship with the non-Indigenous town. Anything else?

**MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** No, that’s great. I want to take the time to thank you; thank you for being here with us today. Before concluding, I would like to leave the floor to the Commissioners, if there are questions.

**COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE:** Do you want to go first?

**COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Thank you. Thank you, Beatrice. Thank you, Maurice.

I just have one question. In 1967, what was the police force in Pikogan like at that time?

**MR. MAURICE KISTABISH:** You mean SQ, or municipal? What kind of police there was? SQ.

**COMMISSAIRE QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Thank you. And I think, Beatrice, you already said this, but when your parents said to the police they didn’t want it to be investigated further, the police listened?

**MS. BEATRICE REUBEN TRAPPER:** It caused them a great deal of suffering, because they were told how brutally she had died. They said, “Well okay, we lost her, she lost her life,” so that’s how they saw it. So the police respected my parents’ wishes because they were old too.
What I think -- her life is gone. Just leave it at that. So they didn’t investigate because they were old (Speaking in Native language).

Because my parents, they were really hurt. They just want to leave it like that. I was thankful, but still it was inside of me all these years. So I let it out two years ago, but it’s still there.

So he’s talking about his brother Allan. He came to me last summer and he talked about his mother. I know he kept it all these years. So that’s why I let it go, let it come out. So I talked to him. He came over at my house. I think he was five or six, seven years old at that time. And the youngest was five years old, Isaac. He passed away this summer. So my parents, they left it like that, but we still – we couldn’t – I couldn’t able myself to tell him about exactly how the mother died and all that. It was just too painful. I was young at that time too. I had a lot of children with me. I appreciate it. I let it out myself.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you and thank you for sharing it with us, both of you. Thank you, thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Thank you.

I don’t have any more questions. I just want to say thank you, Maurice, Beatrice, for coming here and
telling us what happened to Kathleen and telling us a bit about her and sharing that with us all here today and talking about -- telling us about your family and how you’ve dealt with that. I just really appreciate you coming and participating and letting us all know. So miigwetch.

COMMISSIONER MICHELÉ AUDETTE: Thank you very much. Thank you very much to Counsel Girard for all the questions; it clarified a lot, and obviously, my colleague, Ms. Robinson, who is also a friend, thank you very much. Thank you Brian.

It was -- I saw a lot of courage, to have dealt with this all these years, 47 years! And seeing not only the resilience, but the forgiveness, too, from Maurice, the willingness to understand how Beatrice could have lived this, this is a life lesson you taught us. It’s a life lesson and I have a lot of respect.

So, I want to say a huge thank you to you. The work we do, it’s not even work any more, it’s a passion; we’re here with you and we will continue to walk beside you during this historic inquiry, this great commission.

There are also five little people dear to me who are supporting me: my children who barely see their mother, who see their mother more through FaceTime. They came here today to tell you they are with you. My daughter
said to me, “I carry them in my heart, Mom, and I’m okay with sharing my Mom with all these survivors and all these families.”

So, on behalf of my family, and my colleagues and particularly the National Inquiry team, we would like to offer you a gift, if you accept? (Speaking in Native language)

(GIVING OF GIFT)

MS. LAUREEN “BLU” WATERS-GAUDIO: (Speaking in Native language)

Your strength and your courage is much like this gift. These feathers came from a community member here, this particular community, and he is from Restigouche. He went to his house because we ran out of feathers and he disassembled one of his sacred items to gift to the families. That’s how much the Inquiry and the people who come and support it love our people, because we’re so grateful that we hear your story and we understand you, and we want to make recommendations to stop our women and girls, trans into spirit from being murdered and going missing.

This - what’s the word - this routine that we do here with the feathers originated in British Columbia, and the matriarchs of the families out there decided they were going to do this for the Inquiry. So they
sent hundreds of feathers, hundreds that people donated and collected so they could be given to the families. So these feathers can take your prayer to the Creator because that eagle is the one that flies the highest. So they started this tradition and we are carrying it on.

We’ll be returning to Vancouver, and what I hear already is there’s 200-300 feathers waiting to gift to the families because they feel your pain. They understand your story and they want to help you with your journey. So that’s what these feathers represent, as well as they have some seeds for you to plant in the ground, and when they grow, you see the beauty, because we see the beauty of your family member that you explained to us. So these will be a tribute to hear, these flowers and these plants that will grow.

So they’re going to offer you this as a thank you. It’s only a small gift, but we can never give you as much as you would need to take away the pain, but we hope through this offering, this eagle feather and these seeds will help you on the next part of your journey.

So for this I say miigwetch, hai-hai to your family.

(SHORT PAUSE)

MS. MOREEN KONWATSAWI: So, (translating self) thank you everyone. We are going to stop for lunch.
Lunch is served, most people have already eaten. So, please, we will take about 30 minutes. I know it’s a little quick, but we do have a long day and we have another family coming in. There is another family coming to testify, and it’s very important that we allow everybody to eat. It’s very important to eat, and there are many glasses of water as well, please, drink water! [Laughter] So, please take care of yourself and we’ll be back in 30 minutes. Thank you. 30 minutes. (Speaking in Native language)

--- Upon adjourning at 13:46
LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST’S CERTIFICATE*

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

Julie Lussier
May 22, 2018

* This certificate refers to the original transcript in French.