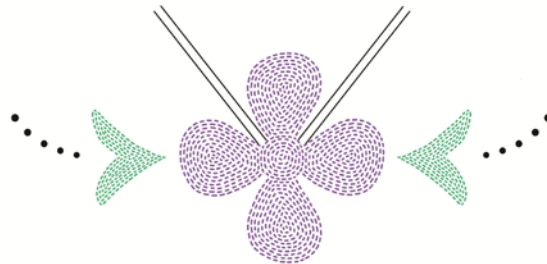


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Statement Gathering
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan**



PUBLIC

Wednesday March 28, 2018

Statement - Volume 420

**Mable Charles,
In relation to Happy Charles & Eva Charles**

Statement gathered by Francine Merasty

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Documents submitted with testimony: none.

Statement - Public
Mable Charles (Happy
Charles & Eva Charles)

1

Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

1

2 --- Upon commencing on Wednesday, March 28, 2018.

2

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: This is Francine
4 Merasty with the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered
5 Indigenous Women and Girls speaking on the record with
6 Mable Charles of Lac La Ronge Indian Band, and she's
7 traveled here from La Ronge. We're here in Prince Albert
8 and the date is March 28th, 2018. Mable, you are here to
9 voluntarily give your statement in the matter of your
10 niece, Happy Charles, and your sister Eva Charles. Um,
11 there's only two of us here in the room. Mable, your
12 statement will be audio recorded today. Um, you didn't
13 want to have a camera. Can you please confirm that you
14 agree with it?

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MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yes, I agree with it.

16

17

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Mable, what do you
want to share with the inquiry?

18

MS. MABLE CHARLES: I'm not sure.

19

20

21

22

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Well, in your
intake, it says you want to share about your niece Happy
Charles and your sister Eva Charles. So who do you want
talk about first?

23

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um, Happy Charles.

24

25

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Okay. So what
happened to Happy?

1 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um, she went missing
2 from Prince Albert on April 3rd last year, 2017, and
3 they've searched, but they have not found her. They
4 searched all spring, all summer, all -- pretty much all
5 fall --

6 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

7 MS. MABLE CHARLES: -- and they haven't
8 found, found her. And then they were going to start
9 searching pretty quick again.

10 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

11 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um, she was last seen
12 in P.A. on April 1st. She left La Ronge on April 1st, so
13 she was in P.A. for three days and then she went missing
14 according on her boyfriend. But I don't know, she could be
15 missing earlier than that. I'm not sure. It's just
16 [Boyfriend]'s word, eh?

17 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah. Can you tell
18 me about Happy? How old is she?

19 MS. MABLE CHARLES: She had just turned
20 42. Yeah. She just turned 42 in March last year.

21 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And did she have
22 children?

23 MS. MABLE CHARLES: She had five, has five
24 children. Four -- three of them are grown up, and one was
25 17, and the youngest was 8, I think, eight-year-old boy who

1 was in foster care. The rest were on their own.

2 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah. And how many
3 brothers and sisters does she have?

4 MS. MABLE CHARLES: She only has brothers.
5 She's got four brothers; one older and three younger.

6 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Hum. So she was
7 the second person, the second oldest.

8 MS. MABLE CHARLES: No, she's the oldest.

9 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay.

10 MS. MABLE CHARLES: The oldest, then her
11 brother, her brother Dallas, and then the three boys of
12 Carson's, Carson's three boys. Yeah.

13 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, I see.

14 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah, yeah.

15 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And at the time she
16 disappeared where did she live?

17 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um, she was living in
18 La Ronge in a student apartment.

19 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay.

20 MS. MABLE CHARLES: And then she came down
21 to P.A. She was just going to be here for a little while
22 and then go back to La Ronge, just taking care of her, um,
23 banking, because she didn't get her GST. She had to go
24 straight to the Royal Bank and straighten it out.

25 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, I see. So

1 she's been missing less than a year, but it's going to be a
2 year next week?

3 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

4 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So can you tell me
5 about when she was reported missing and how the
6 investigation happened?

7 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um, she was reported
8 missing, geez -- Monday was the third of that year. Four,
9 five, six -- I'm kind of thinking she was reported missing
10 on the 6th or the 7th. We didn't know about it until
11 Friday because we were in P.A. Thursday that week -- and we
12 were there at Lake (inaudible) and I had a bad feeling
13 behind me. Somebody kept coughing and I'd look and there'd
14 be nobody there. Two times it happened and I had bad
15 vibes. Then I went back to La Ronge, and that's when her
16 boyfriend's mother said that she was missing. And normally
17 she doesn't say, she doesn't care because she always goes
18 back and forth from La Ronge to P.A. Happy, and this time,
19 she, she said that she had to be reported missing, and it
20 was very strange for us, because she's a very cold woman,
21 and she could care less for her. So she was reported
22 missing then, and the police did not voluntarily put the
23 missing person report. It was different from others, they
24 said, requested by the time family. It wasn't a normal
25 one. It was almost as if they were forced to put it, put

1 it on the news. So that really made me mad because they
2 should have taken it as a serious thing.

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And how many days,
4 like --

5 MS. MABLE CHARLES: That was about, geez,
6 maybe ten days after they put that bulletin, I think, maybe
7 more than that. Because it was just --

8 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: After she went
9 missing?

10 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

11 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay.

12 MS. MABLE CHARLES: I think it was about
13 there -- just took, yeah, took quite a while.

14 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And what were their
15 investigative efforts?

16 MS. MABLE CHARLES: I have no idea. I
17 don't think they did anything. They didn't question the
18 last person seen with her; and that is her boyfriend. They
19 didn't question him.

20 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: They still haven't
21 questioned him?

22 MS. MABLE CHARLES: They still haven't
23 questioned him. Like, it was going on to May and my sister
24 said,

25 "So when are you guys going to

1 investigate, interrogate him?"

2 And they said,

3 "Oh, we can't really bring him in
4 because he's always drugged out."

5 "Can't you put him in cells 'til he
6 sobers up?"

7 "No, we can't."

8 I would have forced him to sober up so I
9 could take a statement, but they wouldn't. It was almost
10 like they weren't, they could care less. That's what I
11 thought.

12 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And who is this
13 boyfriend?

14 MS. MABLE CHARLES: [Boyfriend]. It's
15 just -- I think he's quite a bit younger than her, like,
16 maybe ten years. And they have a son together that is
17 eight years old. Her last child. But the thing is he was
18 placed in foster care with his little brother. And he
19 brings a lot of money that little boy from foster care.
20 And then from the special needs provincial I think they get
21 \$1,500. Yeah, for you -- I think they got her to sign that
22 form that says she's FAS. So they get quite a bit of
23 money.

24 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, yeah.

25 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

1 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And is, and is --
2 what's that guy's name? [Boyfried]?

3 MS. MABLE CHARLES: [*Repeats boyfriend's*
4 *name*].

5 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Is he involved in
6 his child's life?

7 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Oh, not really. Not
8 much. He'll go visit once in a while, but he (inaudible)
9 streets here. He's heavy into drugs.

10 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And can you tell
11 me, um, things about your niece, Happy, like, how she was
12 as a person. Like, her personality? What she liked?

13 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Well, she was quite
14 different. She had a lot of friends, on the street and off
15 the street. Like, she was approachable for a lot of
16 people. They joked around with her and she was easy-going
17 with them. And she's generous. But, um, when she did
18 something, she did it with full force. Like, if she was
19 going to gamble, she'd do it, like, to excess, and if she
20 was going to drink, she'd drink to excess; stuff like that.
21 Everything was full, full speed ahead, I think.

22 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And

23 "on the street."

24 What do you mean by

25 "on the street?"

1 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um, the people she met
2 on the street, like the ones she mingled with, that she
3 befriended, they were pretty good to her. They talked, and
4 I don't know they -- a lot of them knew, knew her.

5 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: But she wasn't --
6 was she homeless, or?

7 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um, pretty much
8 homeless most of the time. When she was living in P.A.
9 before she came to La Ronge, she was living on the street.

10 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay.

11 MS. MABLE CHARLES: She'd find a hot spot
12 to go and sleep, a register or something like that.

13 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

14 MS. MABLE CHARLES: And she, she found a
15 place that was good for her, like our house, [Boyfriend]
16 would go over there and wreck it for her. And he had a
17 place to stay. His mother always grabbed him to go home,
18 but she did not want Happy there.

19 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay.

20 MS. MABLE CHARLES: So Happy was always
21 left out in the cold, and that was a pattern for I don't
22 know how many years she's been doing that. But she talked
23 about sleeping in alleys and places where there was a vent
24 coming with hot air, until she got chased away. So just
25 really struggling for home. So most of the time she

1 probably didn't even sleep.

2 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah. And how long
3 was she homeless?

4 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Oh my God, she's been
5 homeless forever. She's been homeless for a long time. I
6 think when the little boy was about two.

7 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

8 MS. MABLE CHARLES: I think that's the
9 last time she had a place of her own. Two, three. So that
10 he's nine, now, so about six, I guess, since the last time
11 she had a place. And then she went to our house, but that
12 only lasted a couple of months because he messed it up for
13 her.

14 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

15 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

16 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Do you know
17 anything about her life growing up at home?

18 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah. She was -- she
19 grew up with her, um, grandparents, like, her grandparents
20 took her because my sister was young. And then they helped
21 out with her and periodically they'd give her back to try
22 and live with her mom, and she'd go back and forth between
23 the two. She couldn't decide where she wanted to live. So
24 she was usually back and forth and her grandmother died
25 when she was nine, and that's when she started smoking and

1 other things.

2 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

3 MS. MABLE CHARLES: -- when she was nine
4 years old.

5 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Did she experience
6 any kind of domestic violence or violence in the home?

7 MS. MABLE CHARLES: I don't think so. Her
8 parents weren't drinkers.

9 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Okay. Did she go to
10 the residential school?

11 MS. MABLE CHARLES: No, nobody did. We
12 didn't go to residential school, so they didn't go.

13 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

14 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

15 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And you've said her
16 youngest child would -- or is in foster care. Were any of
17 her other children in foster care?

18 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah. They were the
19 three older ones. The one that wasn't in foster care was
20 the one I took in, the youngest girl. She's 18 now, but
21 the other three were in foster care until - geez - I think
22 2007, maybe 2005. And then they were going to be sent
23 south, so we grabbed them and we took them. Jena took some
24 and I took some.

25 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Can you tell me

1 some things about Happy, like, what her strengths were?

2 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Her strengths. She's
3 got -- she was quite spiritual and she was also good with
4 traditional, preparing traditional food, like, um, ducks
5 and stuff like that, filleting fish. She enjoyed those
6 things, being out in the bush.

7 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum. And she
8 was friendly with people.

9 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um-hum.

10 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

11 MS. MABLE CHARLES: And she was available,
12 like, if people needed her for something, she'd jump at it
13 and go help them.

14 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

15 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Always a good listener
16 if you had problems.

17 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: What do you think
18 would you have helped Happy?

19 MS. MABLE CHARLES: I don't know.
20 Probably a wilderness camp where she'd get counselling from
21 Elders, traditional stuff, like her grandmother used to be.
22 I think that would have helped her, and older (inaudible).

23 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um, do you have
24 anything else more to say about Happy?

25 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um, she was, um, I

1 think she started last - for the fall before - she was
2 going, um, I think she was going on a road to recovery.
3 Like, she was cut off methadone, so they put her --
4 (inaudible) pill of some kind (inaudible) and she took that
5 daily. And she was really -- I've never seen her like that
6 before, since she started drugging, and she was calm and
7 just in good spirits, like, it calmed her down that pill.
8 And it wasn't like the methadone where they're running
9 around seeming to look, like, for more drugs. She was
10 always interested. She would just stay home with her kids.
11 Like, she went to live with them last fall. And she did
12 things with them. And December -- early December -- her
13 little brother brought her here to come get that medicine
14 because she ran out, and when they went to the doctor, they
15 refused it. She got cut out. Like, [Boyfriend] went and
16 told that doctor that she was using, but she wasn't. And
17 the doctor believed him, so he cut her off. I think some
18 female doctor. And then my nephew said,

19 "Did they take a pee test?"

20 And he said,

21 "She was in there too short to be, to
22 have take taken a pee test. I don't
23 think so,"

24 he said. So they took their -- the guy's
25 word for that. And from there he, he took off the La Ronge

1 and made sure she went back on the -- like, he didn't want
2 her to sober up and get clean. And like, she was doing it
3 for -- I think she was clean for about three months. And
4 that was a really good thing, if it had worked. And then
5 the time she disappeared, like, a few days before she came
6 to P.A. - because she came to P.A. April 1st - a few days
7 before that, we had texted her, we had messaged her to come
8 to P.A. --

9 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

10 MS. MABLE CHARLES: -- and then when I
11 confronted him in May - when I saw him downtown - he said,
12 "I never told her to come here. I
13 told her to stay in La Ronge."

14 And I said,

15 "No, you told her to. I know you
16 did."

17 But he didn't know I read messages, and
18 he kept denying that he told her to come. I didn't want
19 her to come here because she didn't have a place to stay.
20 But he was telling her to come --

21 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

22 MS. MABLE CHARLES: -- yeah, because I
23 don't think she would have come if he hadn't told her to --
24 other than getting her, her Royal Bank thing done.

25 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah. So where do

1 they do searches?

2 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um, in the beginning
3 we first started at, um, the last place she was at. Down
4 the hill from there, like, P.A.G.C. And we went down
5 there. And they were checking all the railroad tracks all
6 the way to SIAT --

7 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

8 MS. MABLE CHARLES: That way. Yeah, we
9 went over there. All the way over there. And then they
10 went to Westside, all the way out the west, and then they
11 went, we covered, I think we covered the whole city. We've
12 seen a lot of needles, we've seen this and that. And then
13 they started searching in the forks, and then north, south.
14 They went everywhere. Yeah. And went -- they even went
15 to, um, LT area because an old lady felt the vibes there.
16 So they went and searched, but they didn't find nothing.

17 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Where's LT area?

18 MS. MABLE CHARLES: LT? It's by
19 Christopher Lake or Waskesiu. Going to Waskesiu there's,
20 there's a restaurant there called LTCL (ph).

21 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

22 MS. MABLE CHARLES: That's where that one
23 woman kept crying, she said, every time she passed. So she
24 wanted them to search but, but they never found nothing.
25 And I think somebody went to search halfway house, too,

1 because they heard noises over there, some woman screaming
2 in the bush. Periodically, they'd stop there and they'd
3 hear somebody screaming. So, yeah. They searched quite a
4 few places.

5 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So who was the last
6 person that was seen with her?

7 MS. MABLE CHARLES: That was [Boyfriend].

8 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, and what does
9 he have to say?

10 MS. MABLE CHARLES: He said he left her
11 at, I think he said YWCA. He left her by YWCA and he went
12 to -- well this was nighttime. I think he said he went to,
13 I think he said he went to Canadian Tire area. He went to
14 Canadian Tire and by the time, when he came back -- oh,
15 they were supposed to meet at Canadian Tire or they were
16 supposed to meet somewhere else. And she wasn't there. So
17 he come back and look for her, but she wasn't there where
18 he left her.

19 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum. Um-hum.

20 MS. MABLE CHARLES: So did, I don't know.
21 He does -- he made sure he was seen in the Tim Horton's,
22 Tim Horton's -- that video there that shoots those people -
23 - camera --

24 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

25 MS. MABLE CHARLES: -- at about an hour

1 after. He made sure he was walking there. So he was
2 visible in the video, in the camera thing. Security
3 camera, yeah. But in that, um, P.A. Did I say P.A.G.C.?
4 I meant P.A.C.I.

5 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

6 MS. MABLE CHARLES: P.A.C.I. that's where
7 -- not P.A.G.C., P.A.C.I. The video there, it shows there,
8 like, in the little thing like this there, um, the police
9 say they look like, she looks like she's taking a leak.
10 But when you look at her, she looks like she's hiding from
11 something or someone, and then she comes around. And then
12 we see her over here by the grounds, by the yard, the
13 playground, I guess, and she's standing about here, but
14 it's such a faded picture, and like this. And then you can
15 see a taller figure. So we couldn't get a figure -- we
16 couldn't see who it was. It was like she was talking to
17 somebody.

18 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

19 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um-hum. But it looked
20 like she was scared or something, the way she was acting.
21 Yeah, I didn't really like that investigator. The
22 investigators, they didn't seem to take is seriously and
23 they were looking through, um, the treaty numbers
24 (inaudible) numbers. And they said she used her treaty
25 number in La Ronge April 13th, or something. And then we

1 figured it out. It was a white woman that was using her
2 number.

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

4 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah. So that got her
5 off track, and she was told to quit using it. But she
6 still kept using it and making everybody mad because it was
7 -- they were thinking that she was using her own number,
8 but that woman was using it.

9 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

10 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Do you want to talk
11 about your sister Eva?

12 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah. I could, I
13 could talk about her. Yeah, Eva left for Vancouver in
14 spring of '79, in May of -- no, we left her Easter '79.

15 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

16 MS. MABLE CHARLES: -- she went over there
17 to try and get work because she wasn't getting any work in
18 La Ronge. But she went with a friend of hers, and they
19 took off and um --

20 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: How did they get
21 there?

22 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Her friend had a car.
23 She was already working there. She was some postmaster,
24 you know, those mail delivery --

25 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

1 MS. MABLE CHARLES: -- that's what she
2 was, but um --

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And how old was
4 she?

5 MS. MABLE CHARLES: 24. She had just
6 turned 24 when she moved there. And her friend was same
7 age. But her friend had been living there for about three
8 or four years because she went there. And she always
9 talked a lot about Vancouver, so she got her to go with
10 her. And then she stayed there, she found a job and lost
11 it maybe a month and a half. And by the time she was there
12 two months I think they parted ways. And then she became,
13 I think she became a street person.

14 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Your sister?

15 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah. She never said
16 much, but she did talk about Friendship Centre she kept
17 going to over there in the city. And, um, she never found
18 another job after that. She was more of a person that
19 wanted to visit than a person that would --

20 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

21 MS. MABLE CHARLES: -- kind of waste time
22 working. She liked to visit and talk to people and stuff
23 like that. Money, she didn't care about money. And, yeah.

24 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So what happened to
25 her?

1 MS. MABLE CHARLES: She was, um, murdered
2 in a disco dance hall.

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

4 MS. MABLE CHARLES: She was stabbed in the
5 back by a guy -- I don't, I'm not even sure if that was her
6 boyfriend or what. But it was a white guy that stabbed her
7 in the back. He spent five years, I think, in jail. He
8 got convicted for it and sent to jail.

9 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: In the '80s.

10 MS. MABLE CHARLES: '79.

11 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, in '79. The
12 same year she moved there.

13 MS. MABLE CHARLES: She was only there --
14 she died September 15th, '79. She was only there four
15 months -- five months, yeah. She was only there --

16 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, wow.

17 MS. MABLE CHARLES: -- yeah.

18 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Can you tell me
19 something about her, like, how, like, her background?

20 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Well, she grew up the
21 same as me. With didn't have no liquor at the house. My
22 parents didn't drink. They used to drink, I think, before,
23 but they were so scared of us getting thrown into foster
24 care or residential school, so they totally quit. And then
25 my dad didn't even go to (inaudible) he stayed behind.

1 Because my mom didn't speak English, and she was scared to
2 get us taken away, so he stayed home a moment. He'd fish
3 and stuff, but he didn't go out much to do any money-making
4 things because he was too worried. And then, um - yeah. We
5 survived, but, um, she started drinking early, too. She
6 was about 13 when she started drinking.

7 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

8 MS. MABLE CHARLES: And I don't know why.
9 The other kids that we hung out with weren't drinking much,
10 except the kids from residential school that come in.
11 They'd drink all summer. I think that might have been who,
12 who introduced her, and then, and then she became addicted
13 and she just -- she was doing good in school, she was
14 almost done high school, but she took off to (inaudible)
15 Lake, and it was almost like she was attracted to people
16 that were, like, abusive. That's who she stayed with, and
17 the ones that were good were not worth it, I guess. And
18 that's the same pattern I see, I saw in Happy. The same
19 general thing.

20 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: How was her
21 personality?

22 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Her personality was,
23 it was the same. Like, friendly and approachable, but the
24 ones -- if you said to her family, boy, she'd go fighting.
25 She attacked people. A lot of people were respectful of

1 her, not scared of her, but they didn't want to get her mad
2 because she was a scrapper.

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

4 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

5 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So when she had
6 died, did they bring her back to La Ronge?

7 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah. They did,
8 actually. They sent her by, um, train, I think -- by bus.
9 I think it was train. And exact -- that's -- my mom had
10 sent her money --

11 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

12 MS. MABLE CHARLES: -- um, about a week, a
13 few days before she passed away. Sent her money. And the
14 way they said things was, um, my mom said to tell her come
15 back in (inaudible).

16 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

17 MS. MABLE CHARLES: So I said,

18 "Yeah, my mom told you to come back
19 in the fire truck."

20 I guess that's what they call the train,
21 eh? And she started laughing, and that's how her body came
22 back, actually. But she didn't come back alive. And they
23 didn't find the money that she had been sent. Eh? There
24 was nothing. I think she had \$15 on her. All her money
25 was gone, too.

1 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And what had
2 happened to her friend? Like, they weren't hanging out
3 anymore?

4 MS. MABLE CHARLES: No, they weren't
5 hanging out anymore. But when she passed away, she -- that
6 friend came back and she brought a few friends that she had
7 made over there. That Eva had made over there.

8 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Did they have a
9 falling out or something.

10 MS. MABLE CHARLES: I'm thinking. Yeah.
11 Yeah, they did. Which is terrible to do in a city.

12 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah. Especially
13 if you're far from home.

14 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

15 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

16 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah. But she never
17 disclosed much when we'd see to her or talk to her on the
18 phone, she never said anything. She never wanted to worry
19 anybody.

20 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And how did your
21 family take your sister's death?

22 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Oh, really hard. Um,
23 my mom was really shattered. And --

24 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Your dad?

25 MS. MABLE CHARLES: He was, he was strong.

1 He was, um -- I don't know, his, he was there for support
2 for her and stuff like that, but he seemed, like, um, he
3 wasn't overly religious. But I kind of had a hunch he was,
4 kind of, because he always had his Bible on the bed. But
5 he never went to church. And he said,

6 "I read the Bible once in a while,"
7 he said. But I think that's what kept him
8 going, was his belief.

9 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

10 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um-hum, yeah. Because
11 we had another sister we lost in '75, a couple of months
12 after Happy was born.

13 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah. So what
14 happened?

15 MS. MABLE CHARLES: That one had a car
16 accident. She was drunk driving.

17 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh.

18 MS. MABLE CHARLES: But that's why her
19 name came about. Happy Mary.

20 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Your sister's name
21 was Happy?

22 MS. MABLE CHARLES: No, my sisters and I,
23 we went to the hospital. And I don't know, for some
24 reason, we must have known that it would be the last
25 Christmas we'd all spend together. So I said,

1 "Let's -- decided we'd name her Merry
2 Christmas and Happy New Year."

3 And she was supposed to be Merry Happy, M-
4 -E--R--R--Y. But there's too many Merry Charles, so we
5 switched the name to Happy Mary. This was our final
6 Christmas, and stuff. Yeah, they were pretty similar when
7 you think about. Even their feet were similar. I used to
8 wonder about her, and where did I see those feet before. I
9 said,

10 "Oh my God. Eva had those kind of
11 feet."

12 They were kind of, like, um, kind of,
13 like, um, cut off; but they weren't. But that's how they
14 looked like. And that's exactly how -- they walked the
15 same, too.

16 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

17 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

18 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So what
19 recommendations would you make to the national inquiry?

20 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Oh, you know what I
21 would really want for them to look into - but, maybe that's
22 already done - you can't get anywhere with the police,
23 because even the RCMP said that's outside their
24 jurisdiction when they were asked for help. If, if there's
25 a way our family could ask for outside agencies to come and

1 investigate. That would be nice if they could have access
2 to somebody that could take over from where the police and
3 RCMP aren't doing enough --

4 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

5 MS. MABLE CHARLES: -- and brushing them
6 aside, where somebody will take them seriously and start
7 doing their own investigation and stuff, and that is legal.
8 That's what I'd like to see. I forgot to mention that when
9 I was talking last. That's what I --

10 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So who, who did the
11 investigation? The City of Prince Albert?

12 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah. The city police
13 that was, um -- first they had two different guys, and now
14 they have this Brent guy. But -- we don't know --

15 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And who's the
16 contact person, like, with your family?

17 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Regina.

18 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Who?

19 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Regina. The mother.

20 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay.

21 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah. That's the
22 contact person. She's the one that talks to them.

23 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: That's Happy's mom?

24 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah. That's the one
25 that contacts.

1 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And she, she talks
2 to a guy named Bret out at the city police?

3 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Brent, yeah, Brent.

4 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, yeah.

5 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

6 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Is that his first
7 name or his last name?

8 MS. MABLE CHARLES: That's his first name.

9 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Okay.

10 MS. MABLE CHARLES: I don't know his last
11 name.

12 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Because usually
13 when they have constables, they use their last name, eh?
14 Constable so-and-so, but this guy's name --

15 MS. MABLE CHARLES: At the beginning,
16 there was a Scott Hayes and somebody else. But he kept --
17 unavailable. I think they only talked to him two or three
18 times. He didn't bring to us, to the case, but I think
19 they didn't take the disappearance seriously. They assumed
20 she was in another town. She was here, she was there.
21 They never really took the family seriously --

22 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

23 MS. MABLE CHARLES: -- because she never
24 made contact after that time. She didn't phone her parents
25 or anything.

1 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

2 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So your brother is
3 sharing as well --

4 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um-hum.

5 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: -- and then Happy's
6 two children.

7 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

8 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Is there anybody
9 else that can share? Um, what happened to Regina? Can she
10 share?

11 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah, Regina and
12 Carson are going to go together at 1 o'clock, I think. And
13 then her son Carson Junior is coming in. And I think
14 himself and his girlfriend are going to share, too. I
15 think that might be written on there.

16 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah, yeah.

17 MS. MABLE CHARLES: And I'm not sure about
18 the girls - the other two girls - if they got a ride, yet.
19 Because they're not connecting with their rides right now.
20 And we were trying to bring them last night, but they
21 didn't talk to us 'til we were on the road. We were quite
22 a ways from La Ronge, so --

23 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, I see.

24 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um-hum.

25 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um, well I guess

1 that's about all the questions that I have. If you feel
2 that you need to say more, then you're more than welcome.
3 Do you have anything else to add regarding your sister or
4 your niece?

5 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah, that -- what I'd
6 really like to see is, um, support systems set in place,
7 like, well, I don't know -- I always call La Ronge,
8 "The town that doesn't care."

9 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

10 MS. MABLE CHARLES: But, if they could
11 possibly, if I understand the support system there, I think
12 P.A. was pretty good for support. I found more support
13 here than La Ronge. But they could get a support system
14 going in the communities where the people are from, eh?

15 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

16 MS. MABLE CHARLES: And for people to get
17 together and try and help the family. So it's not just
18 family looking. It would be good.

19 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So are you talking
20 about, like, for people that have lost others through
21 murder or through missing?

22 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah --

23 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Or just support for
24 anybody?

25 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah, support for

1 anybody.

2 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

3 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah. That would be
4 good.

5 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Well, what kind of
6 services do they have in La Ronge for people that are
7 looking for help, like, even mental help or anything --
8 mental health?

9 MS. MABLE CHARLES: I don't know. I don't
10 really know what they do over there. A lot of things,
11 like, Regina and Carson are spiritual, eh?

12 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

13 MS. MABLE CHARLES: So they're kind of
14 looked down on because everybody's Anglican over there. So
15 the support they get is usually from their own people that
16 do the same.

17 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Spiritual, what do
18 you mean? Like, Native spirituality?

19 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah, spirituality.

20 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay.

21 MS. MABLE CHARLES: They're into Native
22 spirituality, and, um, I don't know. It'd be very nice if
23 they'd just look past that and try and help them. Try and
24 help them with a fellow human.

25 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So you feel that

1 they're being discriminated against because of their
2 spirituality?

3 MS. MABLE CHARLES: I think so, yeah.

4 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

5 MS. MABLE CHARLES: I think they would
6 have been more help if they were, if they weren't into
7 that. But I don't know where the support would be coming
8 from. It would be nice if the Band could do that.

9 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

10 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah, I know, um, the
11 Native women tried to help out quite a bit in La Ronge, the
12 Native Women's Center. They do try their best to help, but
13 there's only so much they can do, too, because I think
14 their money isn't, isn't there for that; but they try their
15 best to help them.

16 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

17 MS. MABLE CHARLES: I work with the native
18 women, and we have that quite a bit. A lot of the women
19 from the Native Women's Centre --

20 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Do you volunteer or
21 do you work, like, at a job with them?

22 MS. MABLE CHARLES: I have a job with
23 them.

24 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay.

25 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah, so a lot of them

1 searchers were from there, too. The volunteers to go
2 search.

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh.

4 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

5 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: For what
6 organization? Native women?

7 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah. The La Ronge
8 Native Women. So quite a bit of them went to volunteer to
9 come and search over here. And they probably will this
10 spring, too.

11 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So, how long have
12 the searches been going on? Like, months at a time? Weeks
13 at a time?

14 MS. MABLE CHARLES: It's mostly on
15 weekends when people can get away. And they had wanted to
16 do that for, like, a week straight, because they feel like
17 they're getting close. But then they have to be home and
18 come back. And it'd be good to have it in a steady, like,
19 daily kind of thing. Maybe a good two weeks, then maybe
20 they could get somewhere.

21 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

22 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Like... and these, um,
23 walkie talkies and bright stuff. Like, they had these
24 bright jackets --

25 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

1 MS. MABLE CHARLES: -- you know, but, um,
2 I don't know how good it'll be to search now because of all
3 these farm, farm things that are happening, the shootings
4 and stuff. So it's best to go north. To go look in the
5 bush.

6 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

7 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah, well, with Eva
8 we had closure, but with this one we don't.

9 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum. Yeah.

10 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

11 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Did Eva have
12 children?

13 MS. MABLE CHARLES: No. She never had
14 children. Neither did my other sister that died. She was
15 22 that one.

16 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh.

17 MS. MABLE CHARLES: They never had
18 children. They had, they suffered from a lot of kidney
19 problems.

20 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh.

21 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah. They both had
22 really bad kidneys. But I don't know if that bothered your
23 reproductive system, but, but they did have bad kidney
24 problems.

25 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

1 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah, it's pretty hard
2 to see people go search week after week and not be
3 disappointed after.

4 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

5 MS. MABLE CHARLES: But the thing that
6 really bugs me is that they didn't question the boyfriend.

7 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

8 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Or his mother. And
9 they still haven't to this day. Somebody trying to come
10 in?

11 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Well, they peeked
12 their head in, but they left.

13 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah, but they still
14 haven't talked to them. And at one time, they said he was
15 under surveillance when we seen himself in La Ronge. She
16 phoned him back and said,

17 "I thought you had this guy under
18 surveillance. Do you know he's in La
19 Ronge?"

20 "No."

21 So they got busted there. Like, they
22 didn't even have him under surveillance. Because they were
23 going to put him under surveillance so they will see where
24 he goes, and they'll go check the places. But it doesn't
25 look like they did. Yeah, I think it was just shoddy

1 police work.

2 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

3 MS. MABLE CHARLES: I think it might have
4 been solvable, like, if they had gone right away to check
5 the boy, the boy and his mom and their house --

6 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

7 MS. MABLE CHARLES: -- because in the end
8 of April they moved from that house. So they didn't go
9 check for anything.

10 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

11 MS. MABLE CHARLES: They moved from that
12 apartment and moved to Emma Lake or something. All the
13 evidence - or if there's evidence - it would be gone.

14 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Where is that guy
15 from, [Boyfriend]?

16 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um, well he was raised
17 in La Ronge, but his mother's originally from (inaudible)
18 and his dad's, originally from Sandy Bay. [Boyfriend's
19 father]. [Boyfriend's grandmother]'s son.

20 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

21 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: What's the mother's
22 name?

23 MS. MABLE CHARLES: [R.]. [Boyfriend's
24 mother's full name]. (Inaudible) like -- ma.

25 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh.

1 MS. MABLE CHARLES: -- very strange woman.
2 She used to talk about when she used to stay at, um, her
3 place. Happy, she would say,

4 "I don't understand staying in
5 there."

6 She said,

7 "That one, she goes to work, comes
8 back, sits in her room. Just sits
9 there. Sometimes she'd look out the
10 window. The TV sometimes would be
11 on, and she'll just stare in one
12 place,"

13 she said. Daily living. That's all she
14 did and then she'd go to bed, get up again, like a zombie.
15 She found she had creeps from her mother-in-law. I don't
16 know what else to add, though. The main thing is that
17 police thing.

18 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Did Happy use drugs
19 for a long time?

20 MS. MABLE CHARLES: I believe so, yeah. I
21 think it was quite a while. Nobody in La Ronge was doing
22 that.

23 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

24 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: What kind of drugs
25 did she, was --

1 MS. MABLE CHARLES: I'm not even sure.

2 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: But you said she
3 was on methadone.

4 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah, she was on the
5 methadone program back in La Ronge, and then P.A., and then
6 she got cut off in P.A. I think she might have used
7 crystal meth for a while. But she was an injection, she
8 was an injection user, so I don't know what she, what she
9 injected. Um, about a year before she went missing, they
10 came to P.A., and [Boyfriend] had injected her in her vein
11 up here. And it was infected, like, her -- she was really
12 big. And she nearly died. And, um, [L.], she was only
13 three, she was only three at the time - my nephew's boy
14 [sic] - she came running up there and said,

15 "(Speaking native language). Come on
16 Happy, you're coming with he."

17 It's almost like she was telling her to
18 not do that anymore. Like, to go with her and be well.
19 But, yeah, that was a scare there. To inject on the neck.

20 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

21 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah. I'm not really
22 sure what kind they were using. Because a lot of people
23 squish T-3, too, eh, and inject them.

24 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh.

25 MS. MABLE CHARLES: So I'm not sure. When

1 I used to talk to her, I didn't talk to her about her drug
2 use. Just general things, pleasant things --

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

4 MS. MABLE CHARLES: -- yeah. Because I
5 didn't want us to get her aggravated by talking about it,
6 because that was her mom's place to talk to her about it.
7 Yeah.

8 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Do you want to take
9 a break?

10 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

11 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Okay, I'll just
12 pause this for a bit.

13 So we're back on the record and, um, is
14 there anything else used like to add, Mable?

15 MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um, no. No, there's
16 nothing else.

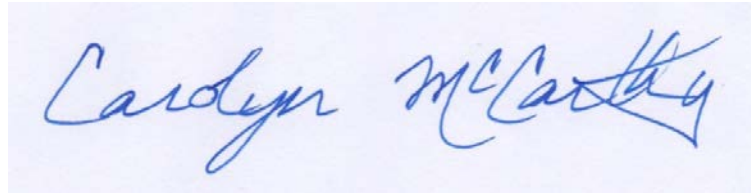
17 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Okay, thank you.

18 MS. MABLE CHARLES: I'm done, yeah.

19 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So we're done.

20 --- Whereupon the proceeding concluded.

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

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carolyn McCarthy".

Carolyn McCarthy,
Stenographer and Authorized Court Transcriptionist