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Statement - Volume 420

Mable Charles,
In relation to Happy Charles & Eva Charles

Statement gathered by Francine Merasty

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March 28, 2018
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Documents submitted with testimony: none.
Upon commencing on Wednesday, March 28, 2018.

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

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

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

MS. MABLE CHARLES: I'm not sure.

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?

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um, Happy Charles.

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Okay. So what happened to Happy?
MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um, she went missing from Prince Albert on April 3rd last year, 2017, and they've searched, but they have not found her. They searched all spring, all summer, all -- pretty much all fall --

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And did she have children?

MS. MABLE CHARLES: She had five, has five children. Four -- three of them are grown up, and one was 17, and the youngest was 8, I think, eight-year-old boy who
was in foster care. The rest were on their own.

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

MS. MABLE CHARLES: She only has brothers.

She's got four brothers; one older and three younger.

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, I see.

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah, yeah.

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, I see. So
she's been missing less than a year, but it's going to be a
year next week?

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And how many days,

like --

MS. MABLE CHARLES: That was about, geez,

maybe ten days after they put that bulletin, I think, maybe

more than that. Because it was just --

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: After she went

missing?

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay.

MS. MABLE CHARLES: I think it was about

there -- just took, yeah, took quite a while.

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And what were their

investigative efforts?

MS. MABLE CHARLES: I have no idea. I
don't think they did anything. They didn't question the

last person seen with her; and that is her boyfriend. They
didn't question him.

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: They still haven't

questioned him?

MS. MABLE CHARLES: They still haven't

questioned him. Like, it was going on to May and my sister

said,

"So when are you guys going to
investigate, interrogate him?"

And they said,

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

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

"No, we can't."

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And who is this boyfriend?

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, yeah.

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

MS. MABLE CHARLES: [Repeats boyfriend’s name].

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

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

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And "on the street."

What do you mean by "on the street?"
MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um, the people she met on the street, like the ones she mingled with, that she befriended, they were pretty good to her. They talked, and I don't know they -- a lot of them knew, knew her.

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay.

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

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

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

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Can you tell me
some things about Happy, like, what her strengths were?

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

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

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um-hum.

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

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

MS. MABLE CHARLES: I don't know.

Probably a wilderness camp where she'd get counselling from Elders, traditional stuff, like her grandmother used to be. I think that would have helped her, and older (inaudible).

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

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um, she was, um, I
think she started last - for the fall before - she was going, um, I think she was going on a road to recovery. Like, she was cut off methadone, so they put her -- (inaudible) pill of some kind (inaudible) and she took that daily. And she was really -- I've never seen her like that before, since she started drugging, and she was calm and just in good spirits, like, it calmed her down that pill. And it wasn't like the methadone where they're running around seeming to look, like, for more drugs. She was always interested. She would just stay home with her kids. Like, she went to live with them last fall. And she did things with them. And December -- early December -- her little brother brought her here to come get that medicine because she ran out, and when they went to the doctor, they refused it. She got cut out. Like, [Boyfriend] went and told that doctor that she was using, but she wasn't. And the doctor believed him, so he cut her off. I think some female doctor. And then my nephew said, "Did they take a pee test?"

And he said, "She was in there too short to be, to have take taken a pee test. I don't think so," he said. So they took their -- the guy's word for that. And from there he, he took off the La Ronge
and made sure she went back on the -- like, he didn't want her to sober up and get clean. And like, she was doing it for -- I think she was clean for about three months. And that was a really good thing, if it had worked. And then the time she disappeared, like, a few days before she came to P.A. - because she came to P.A. April 1st - a few days before that, we had texted her, we had messaged her to come to P.A. --

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

And I said, "No, you told her to. I know you did."

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah. So where do
they do searches?

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Where's LT area?

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

MS. MABLE CHARLES: That's where that one woman kept crying, she said, every time she passed. So she wanted them to search but, but they never found nothing. And I think somebody went to search halfway house, too,
because they heard noises over there, some woman screaming in the bush. Periodically, they'd stop there and they'd hear somebody screaming. So, yeah. They searched quite a few places.

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

MS. MABLE CHARLES: That was [Boyfriend].

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

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

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

MS. MABLE CHARLES: -- at about an hour
after. He made sure he was walking there. So he was visible in the video, in the camera thing. Security camera, yeah. But in that, um, P.A. Did I say P.A.G.C.? I meant P.A.C.I.

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: How did they get there?

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.
MS. MABLE CHARLES: -- that's what she was, but um --

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And how old was she?

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Your sister?

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So what happened to her?
MS. MABLE CHARLES: She was, um, murdered in a disco dance hall.

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: In the '80s.

MS. MABLE CHARLES: '79.

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, wow.

MS. MABLE CHARLES: -- yeah.

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

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Well, she grew up the same as me. With didn't have no liquor at the house. My parents didn't drink. They used to drink, I think, before, but they were so scared of us getting thrown into foster care or residential school, so they totally quit. And then my dad didn't even go to (inaudible) he stayed behind.
Because my mom didn't speak English, and she was scared to get us taken away, so he stayed home a moment. He'd fish and stuff, but he didn't go out much to do any money-making things because he was too worried. And then, um – yeah. We survived, but, um, she started drinking early, too. She was about 13 when she started drinking.

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: How was her personality?

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Her personality was, it was the same. Like, friendly and approachable, but the ones -- if you said to her family, boy, she'd go fighting. She attacked people. A lot of people were respectful of
her, not scared of her, but they didn't want to get her mad because she was a scrapper.

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

MS. MABLE CHARLES: So I said, "Yeah, my mom told you to come back in the fire truck."

I guess that's what they call the train, eh? And she started laughing, and that's how her body came back, actually. But she didn't come back alive. And they didn't find the money that she had been sent. Eh? There was nothing. I think she had $15 on her. All her money was gone, too.
MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And what had happened to her friend? Like, they weren't hanging out anymore?

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

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

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

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

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Your dad?

MS. MABLE CHARLES: He was, he was strong.
He was, um -- I don't know, his, he was there for support for her and stuff like that, but he seemed, like, um, he wasn't overly religious. But I kind of had a hunch he was, kind of, because he always had his Bible on the bed. But he never went to church. And he said, "I read the Bible once in a while," he said. But I think that's what kept him going, was his belief.

"MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah. So what happened?

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh.

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

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

MS. MABLE CHARLES: No, my sisters and I, we went to the hospital. And I don't know, for some reason, we must have known that it would be the last Christmas we'd all spend together. So I said,
"Let's -- decided we'd name her Merry Christmas and Happy New Year."

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

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

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

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Oh, you know what I would really want for them to look into - but, maybe that's already done - you can't get anywhere with the police, because even the RCMP said that's outside their jurisdiction when they were asked for help. If, if there's a way our family could ask for outside agencies to come and
investigate. That would be nice if they could have access to somebody that could take over from where the police and RCMP aren't doing enough --

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

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

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

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

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Regina.

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Who?

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Regina. The mother.

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay.

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

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

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah. That's the one that contacts.
MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And she, she talks to a guy named Bret out at the city police?

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Brent, yeah, Brent.

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, yeah.

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Okay.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Because usually when they have constables, they use their last name, eh?

Constable so-and-so, but this guy's name --

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

MS. MABLE CHARLES: -- because she never made contact after that time. She didn't phone her parents or anything.
MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um-hum.

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

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah, yeah.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, I see.

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Um-hum.

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um, well I guess
that's about all the questions that I have. If you feel
that you need to say more, then you're more than welcome.
Do you have anything else to add regarding your sister or
your niece?

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

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

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

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah --

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Or just support for
anybody?

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah, support for
anybody.

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

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

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

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah, spirituality.

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So you feel that
they're being discriminated against because of their spirituality?

MS. MABLE CHARLES: I think so, yeah.

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay.

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah, so a lot of them
searchers were from there, too. The volunteers to go
search.

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh.

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

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

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

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum. Yeah.

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Did Eva have
children?

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.
MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah, it's pretty hard to see people go search week after week and not be disappointed after.

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

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

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

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

"No."

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh.
MS. MABLE CHARLES: -- very strange woman.

She used to talk about when she used to stay at, um, her place. Happy, she would say,

"I don't understand staying in there."

She said,

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

she said. Daily living. That's all she did and then she'd go to bed, get up again, like a zombie.

She found she had creeps from her mother-in-law. I don't know what else to add, though. The main thing is that police thing.

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: What kind of drugs did she, was --
MS. MABLE CHARLES: I'm not even sure.

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

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

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh.

MS. MABLE CHARLES: So I'm not sure. When
I used to talk to her, I didn't talk to her about her drug
use. Just general things, pleasant things --

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

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

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

MS. MABLE CHARLES: Yeah.

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

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

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Okay, thank you.

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

MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So we're done.

--- Whereupon the proceeding concluded.
Mable Charles (Happy Charles & Eva Charles)

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

Carolyn McCarthy,
Stenographer and Authorized Court Transcriptionist