National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Truth-Gathering Process

Part 1 Statement Gathering

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Statement - Volume 344
“Woman D”

Statement gathered by Frank Hope

Verbatim Words West
II

ORDER

Pursuant to Rule 7 of Legal Path: Rules of Respectful Practice, Chief Commissioner Marion Buller ordered that all names be made anonymous in this transcript and any related documents. The order for anonymity was made June 25, 2019.

NOTE

Where not required by other statute, redactions to this public transcript have been made pursuant to Rule 55 of the Commission’s Legal Path: Rules of Respectful Practice, which provides for “the discretion to redact private information of a sensitive nature where it is not material to the evidence to be given before distributing the information to the Parties. The National Inquiry will consider the public interest in releasing this type of information against the potential harmful impact on the individual whose personal information is at issue.”
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Documents submitted with testimony: none.
MR. HOPE: My name is Frank Hope, statement gatherer. Today is Thursday April the 5th, 2018. We're at the Sheraton at -- in Richmond, B.C. The time is 9:40 a.m. And your name is?

MS. WOMAN D.: [Woman D.]

MR. HOPE: And in the room, we also have a support for [Woman D.] on -- [Woman D.], her mother.

MS. WOMAN C.: [Woman C.]. My name is [Woman C.].

MR. HOPE: Thank you. Okay so we'll begin. [Woman C.], so what brings you in today and what would you like the commissioners to know and any recommendations that you may have also?

MS. WOMAN D.: I want to share my story with them because it's -- I think it's the story of a majority of First Nations people all over the world because of -- because of the inter-generational effects of residential school. And they, by the sounds of it, want to hear from us why -- why all these women are missing and have been murdered.

And I think it has to do with the fact that there hasn't -- there's been healing done with people -- with residential school, but not enough.

You know, like there's still -- there's still so many broken and lost and I think that if they hear our stories, they'll have an understanding of -- of what, you know, what our people experienced in their lives. Because -- because our grandparents and our parents were stolen and they were abused in many forms and -- and had their childhood stolen from them. And because they were raised in that way, you know, like if they didn't grow up in a loving, caring, safe environment by people that loved them, by people that wanted the best for them, by people that accepted them then how could they do that for anybody else? How could they create that for themselves? They stole their -- not just their childhood, but the ability to -- to be a parent.

And I just feel like I don't like the whole process of how they -- yeah, they've apologized, but there's always something in the small print. They put our survivors through hell again with
that process when they were -- when they had to
prove that they went to residential school and
they had to prove that -- that all this horrific
stuff was happening to them. That they were
neglected, that they were starved, that they were
beaten, that they were raped. You know that they
witnessed other children being raped and being
murdered.

And then continuously on a daily basis being
told that there's something wrong with them
because they're First Nations. Because they have
different colour skin. Because they speak a
different language. Because -- because we have
different beliefs. You know we all believed in
the same God, but it's so hard to put into words.

But, like I -- I want the truth to be heard.
And I want it to be accepted as the truth. I
don't want nothing in small print, you know,
anymore. I want them to take ownership for what
they did to generations of our people. Cause
even though my grandparents went, and my dad
went, I was affected. And their childhood was
stolen from them and so my childhood was stolen
from me. And I want them to see that. I want
them to honestly and truthfully see that with
wholeheartedly and accept it. That that's what
they did, that's what they created and that they
need to be a big part of fixing it. They can't
back away, they can't say it's been long enough,
you should be over it, because everybody heals
differently. There should be no question or
doubt or any funds running out to have the
healing continue with our people.

They wonder why our people struggled with
education and it was because those schools were
the first schools and those were the first
teachers that our people met. And that got
passed on, passed on, passed on, passed on,
passed on, you know?

Like I feel like today, our schools need to
be blessed. I feel like because that memory,
even though it's not the residential schools, I
feel like somehow that memory lives in the
schools. I feel like it affects our children and
it affects the -- the way you know things are
taught in the school. I think that if we did
some, you know, we blessed the grounds and --
that we could cleanse that building and have a new -- new -- new start, new memories of school. Because I even, I have, like, bad memories of -- of some awful teachers in school.

I was in grade 3 and I was called a little bitch by a white teacher, you know? And thank God, my mom just walked in -- at the moment she called me that. But was that teacher fired? No.

And then I happened to walk into a class in [City 1] to pick up my sister, and just as I was walking in that teacher was calling my sister a bitch. And I was like, did she just call you a bitch? And she goes, yeah, let's go and she was scared you could tell. She just wanted to go. I'm like, but shouldn't, you know, we do something about it, she -- she can't do that. She's like don't say nothing, let's go. I was like shouldn't we tell mom? And she's like no. She was so scared of that teacher, she didn't want us to tell anybody.

So, I just feel like that -- the way that the -- the -- the way that they seen our people when they -- when there was first contact, I feel like that has been passed on too for up to today. Like they labelled us and I just I don't know. I just want -- I just want them to take ownership and to see that we're not struggling for nothing. We're -- this pain is real. The hurt is real and that the part that bothers me the most is that they will come up with an apology and -- but yet there's always something in the small print, you know?

Like when a -- when survivors went to court to prove that all that stuff happened to them, they signed the papers, they never got half the money that they were supposed to get and that at the end when they signed it. It was -- it was, you know, so and so, by signing this, so and so is saying that that these things may or may not have happened and that there is so and so is signing to say that his -- his or her children can never -- can never, what is it?

MS. WOMAN C.: Bring the -- bring the government to court.

MS. WOMAN D.: Bring the government to court. What is that? What is that? They shouldn't -- that shouldn't be in there. They don't have a right
to say that. Because this is going to be ongoing, the healing is going to be ongoing until the end of time. Because there's so much to heal, you know? They wanted to kill the Indian within the child. And that sentence alone paints an ugly picture of what they were willing to do to make that happen. And they did that in the residential schools.

So, but I wanted to say that my traditional, my ancestral name is [ancestral name], and I feel such pride inside when I say that because it's who I am, it's my identity. And that's what they're trying to steal from our people. I take great pride in who I am and where I come from and my culture and my language and culture. And if it wasn't for them, if it wasn't for the contact of Europeans and if it wasn't for -- for the residential school and the potlatch ban and the Indian Act, then I would be a fluent speaker in my language. I wouldn't be struggling today to learn my language. And they stole that from me and my children.

I have two boys, 21 and 18. I was raised by my mom up until I was 16 and then I went to go and live with my dad. And it was then I really got to see how residential school affected him and he never ever shared his experience. All he shared with was -- with us that, you know, because it was -- it was living with him. He -- he totally lived his life I guess like how he was in residential school.

He got up at the same time every day, you know? He -- he -- he -- and then -- and this, you know, he -- he -- because he was starved in residential school, it was so important to him that we have three big meals a day, you know? He would go to work at 6:00 in the morning, but he would -- he would make me breakfast before he left. And -- and then he would phone me at lunch to make sure that I ate. And I -- I would tell him, yeah, I had a sandwich and he'd say, no, that's not enough you need to have more. Like no dad, I'm full, you know? He's like, no, that's not enough, right?

So, in his mind, you know, it's still there, right? And then there was a certain, there was a way of doing everything, you know? When I was
cooking the pot had to be right on the burner. If I made my bed it had to be a certain way. The laundry basket had to be in one spot in the room. And when I washed and dried the laundry, it had to be a certain way. And I swear I was doing it the way he said it, but it wasn't right. And it -- it was -- it meant so much to him that he started doing my laundry because he felt I wasn't doing it the way that -- that I should do it.

And, you know, and it was something going to go live with him after living with mom, because with my mom we would hug, and we said, I love you, you know? But then going to live with my dad, and my dad was -- and I -- I had no idea that that's how it was going to be and -- and, you know, like me and my brother, we taught him -- we taught him how to love again. We taught him how to hug. We taught him how to say, I love you again. And I didn't understand that, you know? And he sat there quiet all the time and he was so angry and impatient, and he not be like, dad, I'm -- I'm going to go out for a bit, I'll see you later, I love you. He would just sit there on his couch and watch T.V. or stare out his window. And I thought, hm, maybe -- maybe he didn't hear me.

So, the next day, dad, I'm going out, I love you and nothing. And I thought, hm, see like what's going on, right? So, the third day I went and stood in front of him. I said dad, I'm going out. I love you and I hugged him. And his hug hurt. He grabbed onto me really tight and he was just like on the back and I was like whoa, right? And then after that I was told that he went to residential school and that, you know, he -- he doesn't know how to do those things and my dad didn't know how to parent.

I was told by my -- by his best friend [Father's best friend] that, you know, because -- because, you know, because we were raised by my mom and -- and -- and he -- he was abusive to her, you know? He beat her -- he beat her up and he -- he -- so I feel like I've -- I've known fear, fear was instilled in me right from the womb, because my dad was willing to put his hands on my mom even when she was carrying me. He didn't care that -- that -- that there was a
chance that by him doing that to her, he could
terminate the pregnancy. It didn't matter to
him, you know? So, that's the anger and the rage
that my dad lived with. My dad refused to share
his experiences.

And then when -- when me and my brother went
to go live with him, we couldn't handle it
anymore. I -- I don't know how long we lasted
and we just took off and we just went to go --
started to stay with friends and with family.
And -- and then I guess social workers were
called and -- and then they contacted me and my
brother and they came to get us and we went to go
see my dad, you know? And they're like [Father's
nickname] what's going on? And he goes, all I
can fuckin' say, is fuckin' residential school.
And he just started crying really hard, and we
never seen my dad cry. So, we started crying and
we just couldn't do nothing but hold him and
that's all he said.

And then the social worker said, is
everything going to be okay? We said, yes. So,
so she left and so, like --.

I don't know at what age my dad went to
residential school, but he was pretty young, and
he graduated from residential school. Because I
was told by -- the stories by other people that
attended residential school with him and he was
known as the protector.

They said that he just seemed to know when
-- when something was happening because he would
just show -- show up, you know? And when
somebody was being beaten or strapped and then he
told a staff member to stop -- stop hitting them,
and then that staff member said, if -- if you
don't stop talking, then you're going to get a
beating and a strapping too. And -- and then he
continued to go at the kid. And then my dad said
whatever you do to him, I will do to you. And
then that staff member didn't believe him and so
he started again, and my dad ripped that leather
belt out of that staff member's hands and started
beating the staff member with it and whipping him
saying, see how it feels? See how it feels?

And so, I feel good knowing that my dad was
able to do that. He was able to stand up to the
staff members and he was able to protect some
people in there.

But him going to that school really changed
him, and I wonder today what kind of -- what kind
of person he would be if that didn't happen in
his life? What kind of boy he would be, what
kind of life he would have had if -- if that
didn't happen, you know?

I try to imagine what kind of father he
could have been to me and my brother if he didn't
go to residential school, you know? All the
things he could have taught us, he knew so much.
He was -- he was a traditional harvester. To me
that's important. That's our way of life and he
could have taught that to us. And my heart aches
because he -- he was denied that love and my
heart aches because he had to go through those
things, you know? My dad was starved, my dad was
neglected. For all I know -- and my dad was
probably raped, my dad was beaten, my dad was
told on a daily basis that there's something
wrong with him.

They didn't teach him love. They taught him
anger, they taught him hate. So, he took that
home when he went back home. And he blamed -- he
blamed my grandparents. He felt that they were
the ones that stole his childhood. He felt they
allowed him -- them to take him to residential
school.

So, he felt that it was my grandparent's
fault for him -- like they thought, they allowed
it, but those people lied to my grandparents.
They lied, they told them that -- they made it
sound like a beautiful story, like it was a
beautiful place, like, like -- oh your children
are going to be going from this loving home to
this loving place. They're going to be raised by
these -- these intelligent, you know, teachers,
right? They're going to raise them, they're
going to clothe them, they're going to educate
them, they're going to feed them. Your child's
going to be, you know, going to come back to your
hometown educated, right? That's what they said.

And so, they -- they -- and some of them
were just -- just literally ripped from their
homes. Literally stolen. There's families that
hid, literally hid in their attic or hid
somewhere for literally seven days just to make
Statement – Public 8
Woman D

sure that -- that nobody could come at their door
and nobody could steal their children. You know,
like that's the things that happened.

And so, my dad the -- the first thing he
does when he gets home after he leaves
residential school, is he went to beat the shit
out of my grandparents and he blamed them for
what he went -- for them sending him to
residential school or, you know, that -- that
stuff and -- and you know, my aunties and uncles
talk about how -- and I know a couple of my
aunties went to residential school as well. And
you know, he -- he -- they -- they were all
afraid of him. He was that angry, right? He was
that -- that shut down -- that, you know?

And when we were finally going to go and
live with him for the first time in our lives,
you know? Or to my, you know, as long as I can
remember, I know him and my mom -- my mom left
him when I a year and a half. And then we
finally went to go live with him when I was --
was it 15?

MS. WOMAN C.: Mm-hm.
MS. WOMAN D.: Yeah. And he was so afraid, you know,
he didn't know how to -- he panicked, he was
like, he -- he phoned his best friend and he was
in such a panic that his best friend thought that
somebody died. That there was like this tragic
accident or something happened, right? Because
my dad was in such a panic. He was like, what's
going on, what's going on [Father’s nickname]?
And my dad's like, my kids are coming to live
with me. And he was like, oh shit that's it? He
was -- I thought that something happened. And he
goes, well I don't know what to do, I don't know
what to do. I've never raised them, I don't know
how to raise kids. He's like, what do I do, what
do I do [Father’s best friend]? He goes, I don't
know what time to tell them to be home. He goes,
I don't know what kind of food they like, I don't
know how much money to give them every day, do I
give them money every day?

You know, and -- and [Father’s best
friend]'s like, he goes, just ask them what they
like and cook them what you like, you know? And
-- and -- and then you decide what time you want
them to be home, you know, and -- and then you --
you give them whatever amount of money you want
to.

So, we got 20 bucks a day. Yeah, yeah. I
was like, yeah, dad, I go, can I have money? And
-- and -- and I was thinking two bucks, right?
And then he gives me 20. I was like, do you want
me to go break it? No, it's yours. Oh, okay,
you know, so I'm like running, right? Okay,
yeah. And then my brother goes, did you ask dad
for money? I go, yeah did you? And he goes, how
much did he give you? And I go how much did he
give you?

So, like that was something right. Like he
-- he didn't know. And then -- and then our
curfew -- we were the only ones out of all our
friends in the summer -- at summer time who had
to be home on weeknights at nine o'clock and on
weekends at 10 o'clock, you know? And like that
was his rules, right? So, I'd be like laying
there -- and I had to be up and out of bed and,
you know, nine o'clock was sleeping in.

His mind was still trained for residential
school, right? Because it was summer time, he
bust through my door and he goes wake up, wake
up, we slept in. He was in a panic, and I sat up
and I go, what time is it? And he goes, nine
o'clock. And I go, dad it's the weekend and it's
summer. And I laid back down and he goes, get
up, get up, have a shower, make your bed, I'll
make us breakfast. And I was like, okay.

You know, out of all my friends I was the
only one out the door before nine o'clock.
Showered, the streets were empty, it was summer,
you know? And I knew my -- my best friend, my
childhood best friend, her name's [Friend] and
door was always open, it's, you know, it's
a -- it's a, you know, we all know each other,
right? So, the -- her door was always open.

And I knew that, and I didn't want to just
like walk the streets, right or go kick rocks or
whatever. So, I -- I would go to her place and I
didn't want to wake her up. She had a T.V. and
couch in her room, so I just went to go lay on
the couch and watch T.V. and she woke up and she
goes, [Woman D.]? And I go, yeah, my dad told me
to come out and play. So, she was like, oh.
She'd just go back to sleep and she just got, you
Statement – Public

Woman D

know, after a while just got used to me being there first thing in the morning.

And so, it was -- it was -- I'm really glad that me and my brother came back into my dad's life and I'm really glad that we taught him how to -- to -- to love again and to -- to -- to say I love you and to hug, you know? And to eventually he started to hug where it was gentle, and it was nice, you know?

And then -- and then to see him with his grandchildren and then to see that that softened his heart a little bit more, you know? And to have a little bit of that experience before he -- before he died, you know?

And I feel like -- like I didn't have enough time with him. I feel like I never really got to know the real him. I really wish that I did, and I know that -- that, you know, I believe in the spirit world. So, I know that -- I know that he's with me today and I know that our spirits are connected. And I know that we could still -- I could still hear his voice, you know? I know that our spirits can talk to each other and -- and I know that he knows I'm telling, you know, our story today and that -- but I just feel like it was residential school that took him from me too, because he took his experiences to the grave and those -- by holding on to those experiences and not sharing them and not letting them go and not healing them, it made him sick.

Because, you know, we were -- we were coming down here on medical and one of his appointments, he goes, my heart doesn't even look like a heart anymore. And I said, how come dad? And he goes, it just doesn't look like a heart anymore. And he -- he showed me the shape of it and how it looks now -- or how it looked then, and I thought wow. So, like all that changed his heart and it affected the relationship that he had with me and my brother. And so, that's the story with my dad.

Now the story with my mom. And after my mom and [Mother’s Ex-partner] (sic) split up, a time after she met this man named [Mother’s Ex-partner] and he was a -- a horrible man. He was a -- pedophile, a child molester. He abused us in every way. Our lives were controlled by him.
I say we were pretty much his puppets because it was play when I say you can play, talk when I say talk, laugh when I say you can laugh, eat when I say it's time to eat and you're going to eat everything that I cook for you, right? And -- and it was -- I truly believe that -- that if I didn't eat what he cooked for me that it didn't matter how sick it made me, or how much I didn't enjoy it, that I was going to have to eat it until it -- until my plate was cleared. Even if it was old or moldy that he was going to force me to eat that food that he made, cause that's -- he, you know, he insisted on it.

You know, it was, you know, like I -- I remember -- I remember my brother sitting over his plate trying to eat it and trying to swallow it but he couldn't, and he was like -- you know, trying to get sick, right? And [Mother's Ex-partner]'s saying, eat it, fucking eat it. If you get sick on that plate, you're going to fuckin eat that too.

And so, like that -- that's how our lives were with him. We always had bruises under our arms because if he didn't like the way we were acting in public or around people, he would just walk by us and give us a pinch. He would like, give us a look -- he was such a fake. He was such a fuckin' fake. He -- he wanted the world to think that -- that he was this great man, being this great step-father to these kids and that. He was, you know, that we were a happy family. But he was just a fake.

And, you know, like I would -- and I -- I -- the way I see it is, like the -- the sexual abuse happened for about seven years and a lot of the memories -- like I don't remember all the memories. I know it went on for that long and I -- and I have -- I could -- like the way I see it is, to -- to protect me and to keep me sane, that God took a lot of those memories and put it somewhere for me. And -- and I'm really grateful for that, because I think that if He left all those memories in my mind that I wouldn't be here today. I -- I might be dead or on the street and homeless and addicted to some horrible drugs.

So, I'm glad that I don't remember all those memories, but I know that it happened.
And there's this story that I heard, and I really felt like it was my story. It was this little girl asking -- asking God, God how could you let this happen? How -- you know your -- I'm supposed to be your child, you know. How could you let this happen to me? How could you let my dad do that to me? You know, you're -- you're so powerful, you -- you can move mountains, you -- you -- you created the world, so how could you let this happen to your own child?

And then God's response was, I -- I -- I was there and I was -- I've always been here for you and I never left you and your dad wanted to do more to you, but I whispered in his ear -- and I can't remember what He whispered in his ear, He goes, but I kept on whispering in his ear and that's why he only touched you. He wanted to do more, but he only touched you.

And -- and that's not to make it any less traumatizing, you know? But, you know, I -- I -- that spoke to me, you know? And -- and He said to the child, I'm going to -- this is what I'm going to do for you, I'm going to take some of your memories of that and I'm going to put it away and that -- and the one thing that I'm going to leave with you is the will to never give up on yourself. The will to never stop healing and -- and wanting change and moving forward. And I feel like that's what God did for me too.

So, when I heard that story I totally resonated with it, because I really -- and I, you know, I -- 'cause I wondered, how come, you know, like there was so many times that he sexually abused me, how come I only have a handful of memories? And then when I heard that story, I thought okay that's what happened. I prayed, and I prayed, and I cried, and I cried, and God heard me and so, that's what he did.

And because the nights were the worst. I would -- I would -- try to stay up as long as I could cause I knew that if I fell asleep or if everybody -- the house fell asleep, that I was going to wake up to him bothering me. And I never said nothing to nobody.

And we were going to bed and I guess my sister could tell that I was trying to do everything just to not have to go to bed and go
to sleep. And she says, if you sleep with me
nothing will happen. And I never questioned it.
I never said, you know? You know I never -- I
never said nothing. I -- I jumped on it, I said
okay. I got off top bunk and I went to go -- she
said sleep on the inside. So, I said okay, so I
slept on the inside and sure enough, he -- he
never touched me. He never bothered me. And so,
I felt so good. I felt so free. I thought, this
is it, this is all I have to do is sleep with my
sister and he's not going to touch me, right?
Thought that was it. I thought that was done.
So, I felt brave and I decided to sleep on
the outside, but then I woke up with him
bothering me again and I thought, it doesn't
matter where I sleep, he's going to bother me.
And, you know, I have -- there's times I
tried to speak up to him, and I feel good about
that, you know? Like I feel there I was this
little child, you know, speaking to this grown
man, supposed to be a grown man, saying you can't
do this to me. You can't -- you can't touch me
like that, it's not right. It's not okay. I'm
-- I'm going to tell mom.

And -- and -- and he got mad, you know, he
got -- I remember the -- the rage in his face,
you know? Like he was so pissed off and, you
know, it looked like he wanted to corner me, he
wanted to get me, you know, he wanted to get me
bad or something. And -- and so, I was like, I
got to go to school, you know, and then I took
off really fast and I thought he was going to
chase me out the door, but he wouldn't do that,
you know? He was careful to not show anything in
public. Everything was behind closed doors.

And -- but I feel like the whole town knew.
I feel like everybody knew what he was doing to
me, but -- but it was so normal, and it was so
around the time that if you don't talk about it,
it's not a problem. That people, I don't know if
they felt like it wasn't their place to say
something or what, but I just feel like too many
people knew for too long, you know? And it
wasn't -- it wasn't reported. And it was -- it
was too normal in our community for that to be
happening in the homes, you know?

Like, 'cause I remember seeing my sister,
because that -- that was my sister's biological father, you know? And -- and we don't have the same parents, but my -- to me she -- she is my sister. I seen her go lay down in his arms and we're in primary at the time, you know, primary school. And she goes to lay down beside him in his -- in his arms, so I go lay on his other arm. And -- and he puts his hand in my -- in my panty. And then -- and then, so I -- I look over to [Sister] to see if he's doing the same thing to her too, right? And I thought, hmm, it didn't feel right but I was thinking maybe that's what dads do, right? Maybe that's what dads do.

And so, I didn't say nothing, I didn't do nothing. It bothered me for the day and it kept on playing in my mind. I kept on having questions, what -- what was that, right? You know kind of thing and -- and -- and how come he did that and -- and is that, you know, like just confusion and that.

So, it's like that was an experience with him and -- and another one was, my sister died in a -- in a plane crash, but if I look back and -- and think about our life, he was -- he was doing the same thing to her too. Because, you know, you look at the -- because she used to wet bed. And she used to wet bed just so he wouldn't touch her. And, you know, sometimes I would wake up in the morning and I -- I couldn't find her. And -- but yet she made her own bed in the closet. She -- the -- the dark was a better safer place for her than her bed. She would rather be closed in a place that was absolutely pitch black than to sleep on the bed where there could be some light. And -- and she was a child then, you know? And I opened the closet door, I said what are you doing? And she wouldn't talk about it, she wouldn't say nothing. She wouldn't even answer, she would just get up and start getting ready.

And, so that's another sign that -- that she was being sexually abused too by her dad. And she, you know, cause her dad went to jail for -- he -- he sexually abused many of my family members. And so, he went to jail for sexually abusing me -- how long did he go for with me? Go to jail? Was it three years?

**MS. WOMAN C.:** Three years, but they only served -- he
only served two.

**MS. WOMAN D.** Served two years and that's it. Like that's so -- like how does he only get two years, right? What's that going to teach him? You know it's -- he's only going to get out and go and do it again. And -- and he did.

So, he gets out of jail and then he sexually abuses my -- my late [Cousin], and it was my sister that walked in and -- and seen it. You know my [Cousin] was still in Pampers. And he didn't know that my sister walked in the home and seen it and he got -- it got -- he got thrown in jail.

[Sister] went to go visit him in jail and he said that people are going to be saying things about him, but it's not true. And she said, I just came to tell you that it was me that reported you and -- for what you did to [Cousin] and that that's why you're in jail today. And she got up and left.

And I feel like that's why her life was taken at such a young age, you know, 15 years old. Because she felt responsible, you know, for -- for the ones that her dad was sexually abusing. She felt like she had to protect all of us.

And -- and then not only that, you know, her -- she's got -- she had a memory of her mom trying to drown her when she was a baby. Holding her under water, you know? So, I feel like God took her because the pain was too much for her to carry any more and that God needed to give her peace and take her from this life so -- so that she couldn't hurt anymore.

But what makes me sick is that [Mother’s Ex-partner]'s still here today. [Mother’s Ex-partner] is living on the skids now and he's terrified of our family. But I still got this rage towards him because -- 'cause he stole my childhood. He stole my innocence. He stole -- he shattered my trust.

I struggle with trust today. And -- and allowing people into my life and I'm -- and I'm working on, you know, we're working on our relationship. You know we're really -- like with our family. With the healing. Like I don't have a -- and I -- I envy when I hear somebody talking
about the relationship that they have with their
sibling. I don't have that with mine. I tell
them, you're even lucky that you get to fight
with your brother because I can't even do that
with mine.

So, I'm still really hungry for -- for that
connection that I never got to have as a child,
with my mom and with my brother. And to me
that's -- that's huge, you know? I still need
that. I'm 42 years old and we're not going to
stop working on it, you know? We're not going to
stop the healing and we're going to continue to
make things better for ourselves and for our
family.

But you know, you -- I still can't help but
feel the -- the frustration and the anger and the
rage that -- that we have to do this, you know?
That we have to fix what they created, you know?
We have to -- and I feel like we have to because,
like -- like who are we without our family, you
know? Like -- so I really -- I really want -- I
really want -- I really want that relationship
with my -- with my mom and -- and my brother and
actually my whole family, you know?

I'm tired of those walls being up and -- I
would love to see healing for our people and for
my community because we're so struggling with --
we're so struggling because not enough healing
has taken place yet.

I believe that they instilled in the
children that attended residential school, got
passed on. That belief that we're not good
enough, that there's something wrong with us,
that we're not smart enough, we're not, you know,
we're -- we're just, we're not good enough for --
for anything. Not even our way of life, you
know? Like that belief has been passed on from
generation to generation. And I
want that God, I want that belief God. I want to
see our people flourish and rise.

I want to -- and -- and -- and there is good
things happening in our community. There are
people that are, you know, there's just -- that
are flourishing, that are rising, that are
succeeding, that are -- are graduating, that are
healing, that are, you know, that are -- that are
today learning from our past experiences and
becoming amazing parents because they didn't want to -- they -- they wanted the cycle broken and they, you know, created a beautiful life for themselves and for their children.

And I see that happening in our community now, but still there's -- there's way too -- there's more people hurting than people succeeding, and I want to see our -- more people succeeding.

I want to see those people that -- that think they don't deserve any better, I want to see them walking taller, living better, you know? Taking care of themselves and taking care of their home and seeing that living a -- that they deserve a healthy life, you know? That they deserve -- they deserve a great life. That they don't need to numb themselves anymore with alcohol or drugs and that, you know? I want to see our people feeling proud of who they are and where they come from. Proud to say that I am [First Nation 1], you know? And that, you know, this is who I am and this is where I come from and this is my language and this is my culture, this is my beliefs and my traditions, you know?

Like I want to see that in our people and in our children and that -- instead of all the -- the brokenness and the alcoholism, you know, cause it's just -- it seems like the -- the people that you see struggling with alcohol, you know the ones that don't even have money to buy it, but yet somehow, they can get drunk every day and they just follow the parties, you know? I want to see them -- I want to see them healthy and living a healthy lifestyle and I want to see more things in our community to make that happen. Like I feel like there's not enough of that in our community.

I wonder, you know, like -- you know they have the -- like how come there isn't any, like residential school program or survivor program in our community, right? How come -- how come the funding has stopped? The funding should have never stopped. Like it should be ongoing that, you know, like there should be programs where there's regalia making, drum making, food harvesting, times where we're serving the elders and then -- then without realizing it, that --
that connection is -- is -- is being mended again
and being brought together. That -- that gap is
being filled and that, you know, you're going to
see -- hear the voices of the elders and our
community again and they're going to feel like
they have a voice in our community and they're,
you know, the stories are -- that are going to be
told are going to come from them, you know?

And I want to see -- it would be nice to see
like dance practices again happening.
Traditional dance practices happening in our
community and more like healing workshops
happening. And I think that they should be
training our people to do that for our people,
not bringing outsiders in to do that for our
people. I think our people should be doing that
for ourselves and we should decide on our own
what -- what -- what we need in order to heal and
grow and move forward from the trauma and create
all these programs right from, you know, infant
programs, girl power, you know?

And it -- it's got to be balanced out
because they seem to -- well I guess because
women seem to be more open to share and more
vocal that there's more programs offered to
women.

But I really feel that it -- we can't
neglect the men anymore. We can't leave them
out, because they're a big part of the healing
too. You can't heal just one part, right?
You've got to heal everybody, because we're --
it's a part of the circle, you know? Once one is
affected, then it's going to, you know? Like
just imagine if the women and the men get healed,
the effect it could have on their families for
the children and for the future generations.

Just positive changes that it could bring
our people and I just want to see more -- more in
our community, you know, offered to our people
for -- for healing.

So, that's why I think that -- that's why I
think those women are missing, and those girls.
Because they -- they lost their way. Somebody
seen the brokenness in them and took advantage of
that.

And so, if -- and if that's healed in us
today and healed in -- for our children, then
there's no way that we could lose our way. You know, it's -- and there's no way that anybody could take advantage of us like that. If we were stronger that -- that there's no way anything like that could, you know, could happen.

So, that's what I want. I want them to see how -- how we were -- how we were affected, you know? That there's so much that needs to be healed, there's so much that needs to be fixed and that they're a big part of it. And that they need to accept it. They need to accept it as the truth and they need to -- to -- I don't know if they need to move forward with us in a positive way. I know that we could do that as First Nations people, you know with our language and our culture. But I think that they should always provide the funding for -- so that the healing never stops with our people.

Because our people heal in different ways and in -- and at different times. You can't tell a person that, you know you need to just deal with it now. You need to talk about it, right? Like -- things are going to come up at different times and I believe it's your -- your -- your -- it's your body taking care of you, like and the Creator. It's only going to give you so much that you can handle, right? And it's piece by piece, like part at a time.

I'm going to give you this right now and this is what you're going to deal with, okay? You know kind of thing, and it's like, and then that's what you're given to -- to deal with.

There's no more that you can deal with or handle in that time. Even we have no control over it. We could get impatient and frustrated that we're not fully healed yet, but you know, like we just have to listen to our bodies too.

And so, I think that the funding should never ever stop. It shouldn't have ever stopped. Because I worked with a residential school project when it was in my community and it was something to hear those stories. You know, I never expected these people to come in and literally share their experiences with me.

And I, you know, I see it as -- as a -- as a blessing that I got to work in that program, because I got to do the research, you know, I got
-- but it was tough. Because I -- it affected my
sleep and even during the day, if I closed my
eyes, I was surrounded by residential school
girls, you know, like that's what I seen.

And I -- I didn't understand why the
Minister kept coming -- coming to visit us on a
daily basis and it was like, what are you doing
here, right? And -- and then he was like, in
case you're wondering, you know, and this is a
tough job, you know. You guys have a tough job
and so if ever you want to debrief, you know, I'm
here.

And I thought, I'm not going to need to
debrief and it wouldn't be with you, right, kind
of thing. That's what I thought. And -- and I
didn't think at the time, but two weeks after
into the job, and I got to do research, then I
knew what he was talking about. I needed to
debrief. I needed to let go what I researched,
you know? I needed to put that somewhere and he
was willing to be the one to take it, you know,
to hear it.

And he was awesome, he was like -- he was
like -- I was like, I -- I was like I'm pissed
off. I'm so mad. He goes, you got a right to
be, you got a right to be. He goes, be pissed
off. He goes, swear if you need to. He goes, he
was a Minister -- he was like, just fucking get
it out, you know? And it was like, you know, he
listened to everything I said, he didn't judge
anything. And -- and what I shared with him,
when I was angry he was just as angry too, right?
You know, and so it was good to have like
that support there for us, because what we were
taking on and reading on a daily basis, and
hearing you know from these residential school
survivors was -- was so much. And so, you know,
and it was something to read, you know.

We got sent to B.C. archives and I can't
believe they've got this stuff documented, you
know? Like they're -- like my uncle [Uncle], you
know, like oh [Uncle] is doing good and we're --
we're -- we're happy to say that he's -- he's --
he's left his old ways and he's not potlatching
anymore. But, you know, we're worried because
he's going to be going home for the summer and he
says he's going to be doing fishing. So, we're
Statement – Public

Woman D

going to check on him.
I'm like wow, you know, like they document
that stuff, right? And they literally document
that they wanted to kill the Indian within the
child. Like all that stuff is there. And they
question -- they question why we're struggling
today when, yet they wanted -- they wanted to
steal -- they wanted to wipe us out and yet they
question why we struggle.

And so, that's it, you know. That's --
that's why we struggle and that they need to take
ownership. Like I want justice. I want -- I
want justice for our people. I want them to -- I
want somebody to take responsibility for what
they've done to generations of our people. And I
want the healing to begin now. And I don't want
no more questions and no more doubt, you know? I
want them to just back off and accept who we are
and -- and, you know? Like a way they could be a
part of it is provide the funding and if they,
like I -- yeah.

Thank you for listening.

MR. HOPE: Mm-hm. Okay, I have a couple of questions,
just to -- just to clarify some things here.
Okay, your father's name was?

MS. WOMAN D.: [Father], but you know what, I -- I
named my -- I named my son [Son].

MR. HOPE: Mm-hm.

MS. WOMAN D.: And then I said I named him after you
dad, and he goes, my name's [Father’s first
name]. And I go, what? And he goes, my name's
[Father’s first name]. I go, how come everybody
calls you [Nickname for Father]? And he goes,
because there was too many [Father’s middle name]
in the -- oh too many [Father’s first name] in
the residential school when I was going.

MR. HOPE: Mm-hm.

MS. WOMAN D.: So, they -- they called me by my middle
name and that's why they call me [Nickname] now.
And so, that's the sad thing that he lived with
that name for his whole, you know, for his life.

MR. HOPE: Mm-hm.

MS. WOMAN D.: All because there was too many
[Father’s first name] in the residential school,
so he's called [Nickname]..

MR. HOPE: Mm.

MS. WOMAN D.: Mm-hm.
MR. HOPE: Okay, can you spell your traditional name?
MS. WOMAN D.: [Spells name].
MR. HOPE: [Spells name].
MS. WOMAN D.: [Spells name].
MR. HOPE: [Spells name].
MS. WOMAN D.: Yeah.
MR. HOPE: How do you spell that -- how do you say that again?
MS. WOMAN D.: [Ancestral name].
MR. HOPE: [Ancestral name]. And that means?
MS. WOMAN D.: [Describes meaning].
MR. HOPE: Mm.
MS. WOMAN D.: And that name belonged to my granny [Grandmother]. And then it was passed down to my mom, and then they passed it down to me.
MR. HOPE: Okay.
MS. WOMAN D.: Mm-hm.
MR. HOPE: Okay, the -- do you know the name of the residential school that your father went to?
MS. WOMAN D.: [Indian Residential School] in [Community].
MR. HOPE: [Indian Residential School]. Okay. Your brother, is he younger or older?
MS. WOMAN D.: He's older.
MR. HOPE: Older?
MS. WOMAN D.: Mm-hm.
MR. HOPE: Okay. Okay, so I have no further questions and I just want to say, in my language [foreign language], thank you for coming in to share your -- your truth and for me to bear witness to that. So, I just want to end that right there with the time at 10:54 a.m.

(STATEMENT CONCLUDED)
I hereby certify that this is a true and accurate transcript of these proceedings recorded on sound recording apparatus, transcribed to the best of my skill and ability in accordance with applicable standards.

C. Brown
Court Transcriber