National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Statement Gathering
Richmond, British Columbia

PUBLIC

Friday April 6, 2018

Statement - Volume 354

Telquaa Helen Michell & Frank Martin, In Relation to Telquaa’s Sister & Mother

Statement gathered by Frank Hope

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II
ORDER

Pursuant to Rule 7 of Legal Path: Rules of Respectful Practice, Chief Commissioner Marion Buller ordered that all names, except those of the witnesses, be made anonymous in this transcript and any related documents. The order for anonymity was made June 11, 2019.
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Documents submitted with testimony: none.
Statement - Public
Telquaa Helen Michell
& Frank Martin

Richmond, British Columbia

--- Upon commencing Friday, April 6, 2018
at 1:12 p.m.

MR. FRANK HOPE: My name is Frank Hope, statement gatherer. Today is April the 6th. We're at the Sheraton in Richmond, BC. The time is 1:12 p.m., and your name is?

MS. HELEN MICHELL: My Indian name is Telquaa, and that's what I grew up with until I was about six, seven years old and went into the Catholic residential school. At eight -- seven, eight years old after that, then I became Helen Michell with their new name system for us.

MR. FRANK HOPE: Okay. Thank you. Your name is?

MR. FRANK MARTIN: My name is Adoni (ph) - - my real name. My name is Frank Martin that they gave me in (inaudible).

MR. FRANK HOPE: Yeah, thank you.

MS. NORONHA: My name is Sanda Noronha, and I'm a support.

MR. FRANK HOPE: Thank you. We'll start with you, Helen. In regard to you coming in today, what message is it that you'd like to give the commissioners and any recommendations you would like to give today?
MS. HELEN MICHELL: As a grandmother, a clan mother, and an Indigenous human rights defender, an Indigenous rights defender for -- throughout most of my lifetime, I've hit so many roadblocks throughout all these years and not get nothing done, I feel like, but in this whole process of being a human rights defender, I found that it's very hard for us as Indigenous people to be standing up in the front lines to protect our rights, our land rights, our children's rights, and our elders' rights, and trying to protect the land that was supposedly ours to begin with, and now we -- we are all homeless now, and I find that I lot of the women from this band that I come from on my side of the family were all evicted from the band, and I was one of them that was evicted, too.

So I'd like to commissioners to know that this province is the only unceded territory in Canada, and because of all this going on, we've had so much problems in this province that it's so scary to me that, without anything being done, it's going to be a very hardship time for my daughter, my granddaughter, and my great-granddaughter, who are alive today because of my standing up and fighting for our rights, our rights to live, our rights to stay out of poverty, our rights to have homes, our rights to have grandparents, our rights to have our own parents, and our rights to have our own land back, and yet,
it's been so hard for us, and there's nowhere to turn for any of us, and when we do try to find ways to make things right for us, we are always being attacked by the system, whether it's welfare system, social service system, band chief and council system, the justice system, and the worst part of that -- all that is that we have always had to be run-in with the RCMP of BC.

And our records go way back when we were five -- when I was five years old that we had our own land at Maxan Lake. We had our own places to live. We had everything all our own, and as soon as the government chiefs came in, we started losing everything. People were getting murdered for their Indigenous names through their territory and whole families were being slaughtered by them, and I think that this -- all this needs to come out to the forefront to make things right in this province, because so far, we've lived through so many police brutality meetings in this province, so many encounters with the RCMP in this province. Like, they act as judge, jury, and executioner with us as Indigenous people of the land, and we don't have no recourse to get into the courtrooms to say our say, and we all -- I've been -- always been charged for assaulting a police officer when, in fact, it was the other way around. I get badly beaten up by an officer for standing up for either my rights, my
children's rights, or my elders' rights. Any human person that needs my help, I help them, and this is how I make my way. 

Because in all the years that I'm -- I'll be 65 this year. All those years, I couldn't find nothing or no one to help us with our situation, and to this very day, I still don't find -- still haven't found anybody to help me with our rights, what is ours, what is -- why are we here, why are we in the city, why are so many girls in the city and lost in the city, too, and lots have gone missing and murdered, and I've seen so many young girls from my home, which is part of the Highway of Tears area, lots of them get murdered, missing, a lot of sexual assaults going on in that territory, and I...

Because I seen all this happen after the residential school era, guys all started coming back from residential schools, they started coming into our house where we had three girls and a lot of young kids all under age ten -- my sister's kids. Everyone was being attacked by a residential school person, and there was a whole family [one line redacted - identifying information]. Her family is the one that was going around raping the girls, and I got so fed up, because they took my dad away, and put him into a sanitorium where they said he had TB. I never saw him again.
And my mom and my older sister were taken away, too, because an RCMP officer said that they tore -- my mom and sister tore his clothes off at Burns Lake. So they took my mom and my older sister away, too. So we were left to fend for ourselves as kids, but because my mom taught me how to use a .22 rifle, I used that gun many times on a lot of those men that were coming to our place and trying to rape the girls. I'd shoot over their heads, shoot around them, but I never shot any of them.

And all that had -- there was no one there left for us, and I survived that day because my sisters were all there, and we grabbed three babies -- there was three babies. My sisters' -- two of my older sisters' and my brother were all the same age. So we had to run and hide from the rapos (ph), I called them. Like, he'd come into our territory, and it was just such a big fight for us, and I never -- to this day, I still stand up and fight for anyone that needs my help, whether it's child apprehension, water rights, land rights, Indigenous rights.

The story goes so far, man.

And it got worse after the -- what they call the famous Delgamuukw court case in Smithers, BC. After that started happening, it got worse. I got charged for assaulting [a band member]. So I was charged in the next room of the same courthouse in Smithers, BC, where
they were doing the land claims court case on the other side, and that courtroom I was in was just filled with all the traditional people of the Wet'suwet'en territory, which is also part of the Dene Nation, and I was, like, a witness, but I was also being charged for assaulting [members] of my band, and in doing all that, I got so beaten up by them.

To this day, it just makes me wonder. I shouldn't be alive today with what I went through the [certain band members], with the justice system, with the RCMP in this province. So many police brutalities, not only against me, but my husband was so beaten up at times, I couldn't recognize him. He was beaten up with the police baton because he was -- I've never seen a family so brutally beaten as him and I in our whole lifetime in this province.

We died a few times. I died twice. He died about three times in his lifetime, but somehow, the -- I find myself in heaven at the last time, and I was told that when I was there that -- my grandmother said to me, she says,

"You can't stay here,"

and I was -- I wasn't in pain. I had no pain. I had no sorrows or nothing. I was happy to be in heaven. My grandmother told me, she said -- who had passed
away 40 years before, she said, "It's not your time. It's -- you have to go back," because I got run off the road by an RCMP car between Clinton and Cache Creek back in 2000. That was the worst time of my life, because I thought I was going to die back then. I did die for a half-hour, and I was in a coma for six weeks, and I was paralyzed from the head down. I was on life support, and when I came to, the -- I couldn't speak. I couldn't move. I thought I was -- why did I come back to Earth? Because the way I am, the way I feel right now, I can't do nothing anymore, where I used to be a singer, a talker. I stood up for people's rights. I did a lot of things that should have put me six feet under by now, but because of what my grandma said back in heaven, she said, "Your time is -- it's not your time yet. You ought to go back. You got work to do." And throughout all of this, I've suffered so much. Man, I've never thought I would live to this day or see this day where I can speak to someone about what's happened to us as Indigenous people of this only unceded territory of Canada, and from what I see is that I hope that things could be set right for us, Indigenous women,
especially the women of this province.

And I was told by my auntie who died last year, and she was 80 years old, and she told me, and she said -- because they used to laugh at my Indian name, Telquaa, and then she said,

"Your -- don't laugh. That name come from a grand chief from the 1800s,"

and I was a grand chief, and I didn't know this, but in between finding out that I am a grand chief at 40, 50 years old -- from the time that I was small, I didn't know I was a grand chief until I was in my 50s and 60s, and they said that because the government chief was pointing out to the government in their territory who the traditional people are and who isn't, and because they were relocated to our territory, a guy called [Person A] and his daughter [Person B] and now [Person C], all the [members of their family], they were relocated into our territory, and in that whole process, they signed all the trapline property, everything, over to themselves, and we ended up with nothing.

They got rid of my dad, lied to my mom, telling, saying to her that they would look after her 100 percent if she moved on the reservation, and after she moved on the reservation, they started apprehending all our kids. [A number of] my brothers' and sisters' kids were
all apprehended, and to this day, I'm still fighting for my
nieces' kids, my brother's daughter's children, that are
still in foster home and foster care, and the worst part of
all of this was my mother.

Because my mom and my grandmother had the
highest Indigenous names to the territory that we come from
in Moricetown and Smithers, they were being under attack by
the treaty process people, with the land claims people at
the Delgamuukw court case, who wanted the Indigenous names
to the territory so that they could claim it as their own.

Through this Delgamuukw court course in
Smithers, BC, they started killing everyone, and they
killed -- they started with my sister, [Sister 1], who was
killed in a car accident close to our home at Rose Lake
before we moved on reservation. Then they took my dad away
and said that he had to be in a sanitorium in Prince Rupert
called Miller Bay because he was contaminated with TB.
They took him away. I never saw him again, and then they
took my mom away, and my grandmother was not looked after,
so she died on her own, but my mom was murdered in the
Burns Lake hospital, not by the hospital itself, but by [a
number of] Aboriginal women who were in the Delgamuukw
court case proceedings, and they're fighting for Indigenous
names to the territory.

My mom and my grandmother had big names,
so they got rid of them. Granny first, but my mom, they --
I phoned the hospital that morning, and I asked -- I said,
"I just said I -- I felt something
last night. I want to know for sure
what's going on,"
because I just seen my mom a week ago
before in Burns Lake hospital, and my grandmother -- the
nurse at that hospital said that my mom passed away last
night. I said,

"How could she pass away? She was
healthy. She was doing really good
in the hospital,"

and she said,

"Well, [a number of] women came into
the hospital and went to her room at
3:00 o'clock in the morning last
night, and they put her on one of the
springer -- spring-up chairs, and
they started pushing towards the
washroom, and when they got her to
the washroom, they pushed her hard
off her chair so she went flying and
went -- hit her head -- cracked her
head open in the hospital that day --
that night."
MR. FRANK HOPE: Just take a nice breath, Helen. Helen, just take a nice breath. Take a breath, yeah. You're fine.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: Do you want a drink?

MS. HELEN MICHELL: My mom and I were close all the time. She took me hunting, and most of the times, I went hunting for her and camped with her and everything, and I was -- besides trying to be with my mom and go through with this, I was being processed through the court system down here. I was always under attack by this -- by the police, the social services, and a policewoman by the name of [Police Officer 1], she was the one that was threatening me. She said,

"You can't go home to your mom's funeral. I'm not letting you go."

I said,

"I'm going anyway,"

and she said,

"If you leave the city, I'm going to be at the edge of the city waiting for you to pick you up and throw you back in jail."

But I went, talked to a lawyer to let me go home to my mom's funeral that time, and when I got to my mom's funeral, the coffin was shut tight, and I couldn't
figure out why. Why is it like that? And no one knew.

Even my family didn't know all this, of what happened to my mom, and then, when that lady -- the young lady nurse told me what happened that morning, the next morning after my mom died, she said,

"Those ladies went in there and killed her that night."

When we had the funeral and the coffin was shut tight, I said,

"Why is that coffin like that?"

All the funerals I ever went to, not one coffin was shut tight. We always have our rights to see our parents, and no one -- everybody kept their mouth shut. No one said nothing, and I knew there was something wrong here. It's not right.

And then, later on, 30 years later down the line, because the computer era came in after that, I started checking how my family all died, because I already had buried my three -- two nephews and a brother. They all died because of my actions, for speaking out and speaking up. They started taking out my whole family members one after the other because of me.

I found out my mom didn't die from what -- they said she had respiratory problems. My mom never had respiratory problems in her whole life, and that's what was
written on her death certificate I found on the computer, and then, later on, I found out that other people knew all about this, but no one would tell me that my mom was killed in the hospital in Burns Lake, and when the Delgamuukw court case went on, [a number of] Indigenous people that were in that Delgamuukw court case stole Indigenous names of all the people, traditional people, including my mom and my grandmother and a whole line of other people from that territory were all -- names were stolen. People were sent to jail. Other people were murdered. Young girls were gone missing. Some my friends -- close friends were being murdered.

One girl, who -- my best friend that was so close to me, her and I were like sisters -- she was shot. Then my friend across the highway from where we lived, [Friend 1], she was murdered, and all this went on when they wanted land of our -- wanted our territory as the Indigenous people of our territory. And I thought why my mom and dad and everyone kept my Indigenous name a secret was no one wanted to let people know that we had Indigenous names to our territory, that we are the grand chiefs to our territory, and I didn't know this until my aunt told me. She said you're holding a name that belongs to a grand chief from the Carrier nation from my dad's side, and I thought,
"Wow, I never knew this."

So there was a secret -- sort of a secret society that was holding us, people like us, secretly under so that the government chiefs won't come around and kill us or take us away and put us in a place that -- they threatened us a lot of times with called Essondale, and Essondale was a threat over a lot of Indigenous people's head, not only from the band chief and councils, but from the RCMP and the justice system.

"If you don't listen to me, we're going to send you to Essondale,"

and a lot of us -- lot of us went through a lot of that, those places. Only my family went through Oakalla Prison for Women, Oakalla Prison for Men, BC Penitentiary. All those places were built for our people so that they could get rid of us, the true traditional people off the lands of BC -- and the hospitals.

Then they started building the schools for people -- like, they said that we're mentally -- or kids that we were in mental -- not mentally there or what. So they start sending kids to a place called LeDac School (ph). It was not a residential school before. It was a day school where they were sending my older sister and my [nephew]. They were saying that they were going to help them -- make them feel better from their mental state, and
yet, they used shock treatments and all the bad things that
they use in those hospitals against my family to make them
mental cases.

And all that -- all this went on in this
province in my lifetime, and I think it -- this story
should not be hidden. It should be heard. It should be
well-exposed, and I think that I'm not the culprit here.
I'm the -- I'm the human person that is trying to make
things right in this province for my family, for people
that can't speak out, for people that are scared to speak
out, and I think it's time that things have to be told the
way it should be, not held back, not hidden, and I think --
so many people died for what they believed, and the worst
part of it all was that the trapline territories from
especially my home was one of the main reasons why my side
of the family was getting killed.

I have a brother alive right now, and he's
-- one of his legs was gone, and he got shot. His leg got
shot off by [Person D], and I never knew to this day why
his leg was shot off, and yesterday, [another brother] came
to me from Burns Lake, and he told me, he said,

"You know what? [Person D], [Person
D], shot [Brother 1] in the leg when
they were at their place partying,"

and I said,
"Why did he do that?"

He said,

"They wanted the trapline."

So that trapline fight has been going on for three generations now, and now I'm the -- the third generation is trying to get that trapline back from them, because they all forged ten names under that trapline [a period of time ago] and without our consent, without telling us.

And this goes on with a whole pile of other Indigenous people from the Wet'suwet'en Carrier nation that have been fighting for their traplines also, because I met a lot of other people from the Carrier, my dad's side, his relatives, who had traplines in their territory, and we all went to the trapline conservation place in Burns Lake one day, and we -- well, we told the conversation officers that,

"This trapline is ours, this trapline is theirs, and this trapline" -- and this is all the traditional people of the territory, and after we done that, those very guys all got shot, too. They all got killed. They got murdered. Even some of them are still missing today in the Carrier side, my dad's side of the family.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: The south side.
MS. [HELEN MICHELL]: South side of Burns Lake called Francis Lake. It hurts to see it. I lived -- I outlived all of this -- all of them, but I know so much about them and the territory where we all come from that -- why is this all going on? All for the resource of the land and that the tribal chief and councils don't care about us, as long as they get the names to the territories and the traplines of the territories, and they -- to begin with, they start taking all our kids away.

I lost my first kid when I was 16 years old, and the [band member] back then was [Person B] again, and she turned around and gave my kid away -- he was only six months old -- without telling me. I told the hospital I was going to go back there to pick up my son because I had to place to live, and I was on the street. I went back to the hospital, and they told me, they said, "Oh, your kid got adopted out."

That was a devastating time.

To this day, I had never seen that kid again until they started doing the Facebook stuff on computer again, and then that young fellow found me after 40 years. He's now 49 years old.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: (Inaudible)

MS. HELEN MICHELL: He was adopted into a white home. He was not only adopted into a white home, but
he was also shipped out of the country. He said he spent most of his lifetime in [Country], and I said, "Wow, how could they send kids out that far away?"

And he said, because the family that they put him in, they were -- not Catholic, Christian, some kind of Christian priest and wife. So the kid was sent -- got raised in [Country], and he came back here, and he found my sister, [Sister 2], and [Sister 2] told him that I was still alive and that I'm over here, and I didn't know what to do, and to this day, I don't want to see -- I'm scared to see him. It hurts so much, because I was so beaten up back then.

There was so much alcohol involved in that kind of life. There was so much sex abuse going on, and women couldn't protect themselves. When I had that baby, [Person E], took a bottle, a broken bottle, tried to slash my face. When he did that, I quickly turned my head like this, but because he missed my face, he still got me here, and that -- I couldn't get the doctors to help me to fix it, so my whole face just swelled right up. So I couldn't look after my baby, and the baby had to go to the hospital. And then [Person B] told me that --

"Somebody's going to look after your baby for a while,"

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and I thought,

"Oh, man, maybe I could just let him
go for a little while, but I'll get
him back." I never did see him
again.

There's others in my family, too, other
nieces and nephews who got their babies ripped right out of
their -- out of their womb. Right from the day they were
born, they never saw their baby to this day, and that still
goes on with our Indigenous family. I call this genocide
and ethnocide of us as the original Bear Clan families of
Maxan Lake, BC. We have to survive, and in order to us --
to survive, I have to speak on their behalf all the time.
I won't let nothing slip after they took that baby away
from me, and I told Mom, because Mom was still there, and
she said,

"I can't help you, because I'm only
on a small pension,"

and the band was so good at starving my
family, my mom. Now my brother is the last one living on
their reserve. They're starving him, too. They won't help
us one bit with anything.

My family -- some of my family live on the
streets in Edmonton, Vancouver, Prince George. Many are
homeless. We wouldn't get our education. I tried to go
for a law degree in Blue Quills University in Alberta, and
I was trying really hard. My marks were up in the
nineties, and I wanted to be a lawyer so I can fight these
guys in the courtroom, but the band chief and council,
[Person B], again, told me, she says,
"I'm cutting your funding off.
You're getting too smart for us."
And that's when my law degree went
downhill, and I just ignored it, and I decided, if I can't
go to law school, then I'm going to fight for my rights
anyway. I'm going to be in the opposite end of every one
of them in that courtroom, and that's what I've been doing
to this very day is I'm still in the courts right now.
And in Burns Lake, because the RCMP
officer, [Police Officer 2], is related to [identifying
information redacted]. He was the one that threatened to
kill my husband on the side of the road when we went home.
I heard him tell Frank once, because he's -- he pulled us
over on the highway, and he told us, he says,
"I could just put you -- take you
right out here on the road,"
he told Frank. He says,
"I could kill you right here,"
and I stuck my head out the window, and I
told him,
"I heard that, and I'm a witness to it if you do that."

And every day, since then, he kept after us in Burns Lake, pulling us over, attacking us. It never ended there. He's...

And then I hear from the young girls in the town that he's sexually abusing the girls in a sweat lodge, because he was a cop, and he was -- he owned a sweat lodge in Burns Lake, and he worked with the social service system of Burns Lake, and a lot of the young girls were being -- getting pregnant by not only him but by another social worker in that -- in that Burns Lake social services office, and I remember his first name is [Person F]. And he was raping a lot of these young girls that he had under his care in Burns Lake, and because I was exposing all of this to the justice system in Burns Lake, I was -- I was told by the court there that they -- one day, they said,

"You got to leave this town. If you want to live, you got to leave this town and never come back again."

We managed to get rid of that social worker, and we heard that he moved to [City 1 in British Columbia], but I was evicted, so we had to leave everything behind, and we had to leave Burns Lake again to start all over again.
We went -- I just tried so hard to live, to make life of -- make a life for all of us as hurting people. It was so -- such a life that we should never have to live. I buried everyone in my family -- half my family who all got murdered.

And in 2000 -- we went to New York in 1994, Frank and I and a couple of my nephews and my niece, my daughter and my son, all went to New York, took our case to the United Nations in '94, came back here, and things settled down a little bit, and then it got worse again after.

In 2000, we were coming back from my home in Burns Lake and Moricetown. [Person G] called the cops on us, told them that we had a gun in our van, and we didn't even have a gun in the van, and it was just his talking stick that they thought was a gun, and the [Person G] was also the uncle to [band members] of my reserve, and he was the one that called the cops and told them to evict us off of our own fishing grounds which was in Moricetown where my grandmother caught salmon, where my grandma is buried.

We were told to leave that territory, too, and on the way back here, between Clinton and Cache Creek, we were ran off the road by an RCMP car on our way back to Vancouver that time, and that was when I was -- I died for
half an hour, and the ambulance and the RCMP covered my
body up, told Frank that I was dead, and my body was over
there and covered up.

And when I came to -- I didn't come to for
a long time, but Frank said that I was -- he came over and
grabbed my hand, and somehow my breath came back for a
while, then I went -- they took me to the hospital, but the
ambulance told Frank that I was dead for a half-hour.

When he took me to the hospital, they had
to take me to the Kamloops hospital to put me into a --
where I was in a coma for six weeks, and after the six
weeks, I came to, and I woke up, and I thought -- I
couldn't move. My body was dead, but my eyes were rolling
around, and that's when I knew that I'm -- I died that day,
that night, and it was just so hard. I thought I'd never
be able to talk or speak or dance or walk or sing again.

And the doctors tried to tell Frank, put
me into a home, a care home, because I won't be -- he won't
be able to look after me anymore. He'll have to feed me
and have to teach me how to walk and talk and everything.
I was like a baby again back then, but when I laid in that
bed for -- after the six-week coma, for two months after
that, and I went to G.F. Strong in Vancouver, worked hard
to get myself going, and this is how far I've come with
myself, and I'm very proud, and I'm so proud of Frank for

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being beside me. If he wasn't beside with all this, all
these years, I could never want to live.

We both have so many scars on our bodies
from the RCMP of this province. Frank died in their hands
two or three times. I died in their hands twice, and then,
[one line redacted - ongoing litigation], I was brutally
beaten by -- first by RCMP officer by the name of Emond in
Chilliwack, and he -- he just about killed me on that
highway, even though I was on an electric scooter, and then
they put a -- took him away. I thought they killed him,
because they dragged his body into the back of the car in
Chilliwack, in Abbotsford, and I thought he was dead.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: It was down in...

MS. HELEN MICHELL: And then they didn't
tell me if he was okay. They took him away and said they
were going to take him to Chilliwack, and when they finally
got me home, they used a special car to bring me home with
my electric scooter, took my van away that night, too.

I phoned everywhere to see where he was,
because I knew that two cops had took him away in a car.

They used the sleeper on him and put him out, and then,
when they got him to the police station later, I found out
that he was -- he never came out of that sleeper state. So
they had to call the ambulance in to come and try and
revive Frank, and they never told me all this, and I phoned
there. And then they -- they released him after they
revived him in Vancouver, farther away from me, and I never
-- I phoned every hospital. It took me four or five days
to find Frank finally, but that officer charged me for
assaulting him, and I went to court, and I won that case
against him. And he -- that case set precedence in that
court for me to charge him, and I charged him.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: We couldn't get a
lawyer to...

MS. HELEN MICHELL: I couldn't get a
lawyer to help me to go -- take it through a distance more
than what was going on. [A number of] years later, I got
beat up by [City 4] officer, the name of [Officer 5].

MR. FRANK MARTIN: (Inaudible)

MS. HELEN MICHELL: And he was under --
the under cop of Emond, who is now the sergeant or the
corporal of --

MR. FRANK MARTIN: Commanding.

MS. HELEN MICHELL: Commanding officer.

Emond is now the commanding officer in [a city in British
Columbia], and somehow or another, he sent that [Officer 5]
after me because of the court case before. Now I am in
court now in [City 4] against [Officer 5] for badly beating
me up, and I ended up in the hospital, and in the whole
process, [a number of] policemen from [City 4] area were
all surrounded me at the hospital trying to take me to jail
for assaulting a police officer in that case -- the police
officer that I supposedly assaulted.

[Nine lines redacted - matter currently in litigation]. I was hurt, and my butt was just all black
and blue. My finger is still broken to this day from his
abuse toward me, and he -- it's been -- that happened on
[date].

I was charged for assaulting him, and then
after that, they couldn't come up with the assault charge,
so now I am -- I turned it around. Now I'm charging him
for assault, and that case has never gone to the court yet,
and they've promised me -- because he's been investigating
himself. He's been very abusive toward me -- not only him,
but the other policemen -- RCMP officers in Agassiz and in
Chilliwack, because I live in Harrison Hot Springs.

I was always attacked, and I mark it on my
calendar, and for two or three -- for three, maybe four
years in the whole process, I was -- marked every time that
I got pulled over, and they were pulling me over, the RCMP,
and they're laughing at us, both of us, just laughing their
heads off and saying things that were making us mad, and
then, one time, three, four cop cars pulled us over on our
back road to the main highway on one side of the bridge,
and they said,
"Oh, we can just tell -- call these
guys, and they'll pull you over on
the other side, too."

So they let us go and then, on the other
side of that big bridge in Agassiz, another set of cop cars
were sitting on there, and then they pulled us over and
pulled us out of the car and started looking through our
car and everything and attacking us, and yet they were just
playing cat and mouse with us all this -- all those years,
and I'm still waiting for my court case to happen for this
police brutality against [Officer 5].

Because how much they attack Indigenous
women in this province, man, if I wasn't a strong woman, if
I wasn't a healthy woman, I would be dead in their arms a
long, long time ago, and because I believe -- I believe in
the Creator, I believe there's a stronger power out there
that'll help me through this all, I could win one day. We
have many body injuries, broken bones, brain injuries,
spinal injuries. He's got so many broken bones in his
body, too, he shouldn't be alive and walking today. He got
beat up by ten policemen in Vancouver in 1993, and that was
a time when a lot of the women were going missing on the
east end of Vancouver, and we knew lots of those women. A
lot of them came to us and told us that they were being
attacked by the city police.
There was two men and two women, white police of Vancouver, that was really under -- attacking our Indigenous people, and the two men were -- we nicknamed them [Police Officer 3] and [Police Officer 4]. I'm sure a lot of Indigenous people know about these two guys. They killed my brother, too -- [Brother 2], my younger brother, in Brandiz Hotel in Vancouver, and then they let me know why they killed him.

A lot of the women told us that there's two women in the police system, too, two blonde women, and these were my cousins. [Cousin 1] and [Cousin 2] were sitting there one day and telling me this, and they said, these two women cops just came, broke into our room, and started beating us up and throwing all our stuff around in our room. Now that -- now we're on the street and we're -- these women were all scared of these four policemen.

I knew that there's something bad going on in Vancouver regarding women and the police. There was no way that we could go to the police to complain or get any kind of charges done, because it was them that was attacking the people they didn't -- Indigenous people on the street.

I don't see how many other people put up with what we put up with, that could live what we lived through. My stand is to bring my family back to my
homeland at Maxan Lake by Burns Lake where my grandfathers
put that land aside with Indian Affairs back in 1928. They
promised to care for us and look after us under their
fiduciary responsibility, but in the end, we only became a
number on their paper, and they kept all the monies that --
trust fund that's supposed to come to us from our land and
our resources, we've never seen nothing of. One day, I
would like to see them all go to jail for what they did to
us, my family.

I know we are the last province in Canada,
the last province to -- they're still doing illegal
treaties here, making illegal treaties. The last province
where everybody comes to die. There's a place down by
Stanley Park where they call Siwash Rock. That rock -- I
know we put so many people's dead ashes there, because that
was where they wanted to rest. Many of them were murdered
in this province in the downtown east end. Many came here
because they lost their land all throughout Canada, lost
their rights to their kids, lost their rights to their
grandchildren. It's like we are a fourth-world country
here as Indigenous people living in a rich country called
Canada.

Before the government made the government
chiefs, we had our own land, our own territory, our own
homes, our own way of life which was called a potlatch
system, the true potlatch system. After the government
chiefs came in, they made their own rules, their own laws,
and they got rid of everyone that owned names to the
territories from their territory -- our territory.

I don't know what you call reconciliation
today, but I think that reconciliation should be true to
the word of what that means. What does reconciliation
mean? To make things right in this province, you have to
start from the grassroots people, which is us, and get rid
of the treaty chiefs, the government chiefs, and all the
names that they've taken from us as the true traditional
hereditary people of the land that -- that names come back
to us so we can have our true potlatching system back. As
it is now, everyone is making money off the land, resources
in the potlatch system, but we see nothing coming to us as
the true Indigenous people of the lands.

There shouldn't be no more treaties made
in this province because of what I know, what I feel, what
I see, what I hear. We are the youngest province in this
country, yet it's still going on today.

Yesterday, I picked up a young hitchhiking
girl from Chilliwack from Agassiz side, and she was
standing on the side of the road just freezing. She was
only about 12, 13 years old, but with all her makeup on and
everything, she looked like she was 18, but she was so
skinny, like, and hungry. She was so filthy and dirty.

She said -- when we picked her up, she said,

"Everyone just drives by me and points at me and laughs at me and throws things at me,"

and I said,

"That's the kind of system we have today, uncaring one,"

and that's how I see the young kids of today, and I fight to keep my daughter and my grandkids and my great-granddaughter out of that kind of system so that they'll have a better life, a better future, a strong future.

I feel bad for the girls that have no voice. I feel bad for the girls that really want to work and really want to live, really want to do better, but there's no one on that other end to help them. It seems like the more money they get for their treaty -- illegal treaty thing in BC, the more harder the stone, their heart, becomes. They have no care after that money gets into their hands. How long is that money going to last?

That land lived for generations and generations and generations until the last 100 years. Now the land is being so destroyed now to this day. Our water's being contaminated. Everything has gone downhill
because they took it all away from us. Now it's trickled down to the European people, the settlers, who really don't care about the land either.

I've seen settlers in my home who've felt for us, who know of us, and tell my brother while he –

"I knew your grandfather. We used to sneak up there and give your grandfather food because the government chiefs were after them."

So many of them got -- had to hide back then so that we could live today, especially me. There's too many of -- land-thieving, too many lies, too many bad things happening, too many sexual assaults.

Some of the young girls think it's the norm. I don't think it's the norm. I took my kids out of that system that way because the drugs and alcohol, cocaine, was really devastating that society up there in Burns Lake area, and they're treating my kids bad. So I took the kids away from their original dad, and I told Frank, I said,

"I want my kids out of there,"

and to this day, because I did that, my kids are now doing really good. One's a welder, and my oldest daughter is taking good care of herself in [City 2 in British Columbia], where she had a life of her teeth.
being knocked out and her life being turned upside down,
and she couldn't go to the police for help. The police in
Prince Rupert where she was beaten up, they just really
don't care about Indigenous people at all.

When the policemen first came to this
country, they were put here because they were here --
supposed to be here to protect us as Indigenous people.
When did that all turn around? They're protecting the
chief and council, the government chief and council,
instead of protecting the people like us. We are the
criminals. We are the ones that have to fight for
everything that we have today. We have to fight for our
breath to live. We have to give breath to our children and
our grandchildren so they can live.

Where do we go from here as Indigenous
people? I know this is the end of the road here in
Vancouver. I've seen people come from other countries and
other provinces across Canada, and I've met lots of them,
and lots of them come here to die because this is the only
beautiful province left. They think this is the only place
where they could live. I've seen whole families die here
in Vancouver, and lots of them are buried in that
Fraserview graveyard.

Back in the '60s and '70s and '80s, we
were just teenagers back then, but we were really the true
hereditary people of this province. We were chiefs. We were true hereditary chiefs of this province. Some knew that they were, but some of us didn't know we were. I didn't know I was a hereditary chief until later on. A lot of them started standing up and fighting for their rights in Vancouver, and that's how Bonaparte Standoff started, and the things started getting worse because the RCMP started turning on all of us. A lot of the people that were walking down the road would get killed on the highway somewhere between Victoria and Cache Creek.

Our stories need to be told. Our stories need to go out there. We can't be silenced anymore, and I hope there are more stories like mine out there that has a chance to be heard, and I really hope that there is a chance for us as Indigenous people, especially the women. There has to be a change. There has to be a way. We cannot live in poverty anymore. We cannot live landless anymore. We cannot live.

To this very day, we live to fight. We fight to live. Fight for our next breath, even though we're in our sixties now. If I didn't understand English very well, I wouldn't be here. I'd be six feet under a long time ago, but because I'm a fighter, I want to keep going and keep fighting and making things right for my daughters, my granddaughter, my great-granddaughter, and
children yet unborn, to save what we have here.

In all the 60 years I've lived, I've seen my animals disappear. I've seen the river go bad, the waters go bad. I never seen it like this. The elders never let another person homeless, never let another person starve. Today, with all the money they have, they have more starving people, more landless people, more voiceless people, and the one family is the only leader for generation and generation. People that don't own the land are living on that land. They should all go back to their own territories so we can live and look after our own territory again.

I buried too many people. It hurts so much. When I look behind me and I look around me, who is going to carry this on after we're gone? Who is going to look after all of that? Nobody.

Until I met Frank, I never found myself. I tried to be a white woman going through school and wanting to be a lawyer and everything. When I met Frank, I thought, there's no way I'm going to make it in that world. They won't let me. So let's do it this way, and we went -- made a plan. We called it Plan A, Plan B, right to Plan Z. We're going to start fighting and standing up for our people and our rights, our land rights, animals. This province needs a voice, and we are going to be their voice.
So we had planned our routes in every
courtroom in this province. Our names are in every court,
whether it's fishing rights, hunting rights, children's
rights, Indigenous rights to our territories. I'm still
standing and fighting for our trapline at Maxan Lake, which
rightfully belongs to us under their system, too, and at
Smithers Court -- Supreme Courthouse, I told the -- the
dependently asked [Person C], [five words redacted --
identifying information]. She said --

"This case is about Maxan Lake and
trapline, isn't it?"

The judge asked [Person C], and she
said,

"Yeah."

She said -- the judge asked her,

"Who is that -- who belongs -- who
does that land belong to? Who does
that trapline belong to?"

And [Person C] told her -- told the
judge,

"It belongs to them. It's going to
me."

So that was the first round, and now the
second round, they all forged their name under our land.
There's [a number of] names to our trapline territories who
1 they added on themselves, forged their name on our paper
2 without our permission, without our consent. They
3 amalgamated our Maxan Lake Band into their band without us
4 knowing, without asking us. Everything was done in
5 silence.
6       With the system you have today, why isn't
7 all this being made right? It's time to give it all back -
8 - give it back to us, give back our life, give back our
9 future.
10  Okay.
11  MR. FRANK MARTIN: Okay. She asked me to
12 finish up for her.
13  MR. FRANK HOPE: I'm just going to switch
14 the camera to you.
15  MR. FRANK MARTIN: Okay.
16  MR. FRANK HOPE: Okay. Go ahead.
17  MR. FRANK MARTIN: Okay. In all the
18 things that my wife, Telquaa, just mentioned in her
19 statement to you and to the people that need to hear it, in
20 our -- in our old ways, how we see ourselves as first
21 people to this land, all these animals, each one of these
22 animals had a big family, and each one of these animals has
23 a big piece of land that goes with it.
24       So each family has a property that goes
25 with this, marks our land -- so markers of our land before
the settlers came. This was what ruled our people. This was our rules that went with this, so that we could look after our families and our land, our children, and our clan mothers, our womenfolk.

After contact, they outlawed the potlatch system and took everything away and changed all the rules and the laws that govern our people. Since that time, we have noticed all the different things that the colonial system's done to us, from our childhood to now. We talk about looking after our -- our folks and ourselves and our family. We find that our women, some of -- her brother, her sister and her brothers, all them got killed and went missing, or some of them are still missing, and one of the reasons that we find that all of this is going on has to do with why they took away our potlatch system and our title and our rights to our land. So they take all these away, and they put them in the back so they're not recognized.

MS. HELEN MICHELL: And burn them.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: Now we begin to face what you call the institutions that govern our people and our affairs, Indian Affairs, the provincial government and federal governments, and each one of them agencies and government people that look after our affairs continuously eroded our inherent rights that were gifted to us by the Creator to hold and maintain our land and look after our
families.

My wife calls it genocide and ethnocide.

It's still an ongoing thing according to my wife because we still have womenfolk that are being threatened by the authorities that she spoke about, the welfare workers, and the police, and the children's apprehension.

So in order to stop the missing and murdered men and women in our families, we chose to stand up, and we pulled our children right out of the whole school system, the education system, because it wasn't -- it was being used against us. They were apprehending our kids from the schools and picking on the mothers with the social workers and the police.

So that's called institutional racism, and when you find these institutions collaborating -- the RCMP, the social workers, and the chief and councils -- to eliminate the traditional landholders using the system that they modified to process our families, to break them up, and -- that's what she's explaining, is that the outcome -- the outcome of the abuse of the government agencies and the authorities in relationship to the treatment of our families and our family members should be changed. We should have some of our inherent rights returned to us so that we can better oversee the rights of our children and our people be looked after, protected.
And one of the things that they -- that they were so afraid of was that our people believed very strongly in a Creator of all good things, and every day, our people had ceremonies to give thanks for everything that they were gifted with on all these lands and all these family clans. They all have rules of order that they followed.

Over the years, all the nieces and nephews we lost to the welfare system hasn't stopped. We have two cases right now where we have -- a couple of her nieces that are going to court in [City 2 in British Columbia] and in [City 3 in British Columbia] for their children yet. So they're still attacking the womenfolk through the processes, and they're -- and when you try to go and help them, they make it hard for you, even though they say reconciliation means bringing your families together.

So the whole idea of looking and making change -- making change from our point of view is that it's okay to have all of these investigations and hearings like this to expose and to see what we could do about it and what kind of recommendations us, as families that are losing all of these women and men in our families because of our title and rights to our land -- not just here in BC. It's happened right across this country, up north, south, east, and west. It's an ongoing -- it's an ongoing fight,
and it's a national -- that's why they have -- that's why they call it a national inquiry, this one of murdered and missing women.

To get to the roots of the problem, we have to develop strategies to take our children, the youngest generations that we have, and realign them with our cultural beliefs and our cultural ways, giving them back their identity that had been so far gone and so far taken away from us.

MS. HELEN MICHELL: Generations.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: Many generations. In the -- well, the way in which we will be able to do it is called breaking the chains. Breaking because we're in a bondage situation with that system. They've got us bonded down.

Over the last couple of years, few years, they still chase us around and beat us up, beat Helen up, beat me up, even though they know it's wrong and that they're going to have to face the consequences. They still use those tactics. So they had to have somebody higher up in the government agencies to oversee these kinds of things that are going on with the policing of our people are way -- are way in deep with why our womenfolk don't trust the police.

If one of my nieces or nephews are having
problems, they're not going to call the police. They're going to call me, and they're going to talk to me and tell me,

"This is what's going on, and this is where I need help."

My niece -- two nieces lost their children to welfare, so they called us and said,

"What should we do?"

And so we put a plan together to get those children back.

So these are the kinds of things we have to rebuild as our family circles is the strategy.

MS. HELEN MICHELL: Trapline, too.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah, and build that base in the communities you come from.

So because our families have no homes on the lands that we came from because everything was taken when we were -- when the families were relocated, because of the resources of the land -- so it goes back to the land again and why those people are all missing.

Now, the parts that she's expressed about the traplines being held by different government chiefs now, and their families all are being used to put pipelines on their land for the oil and gas extraction in Alberta to go through our land up in Burns Lake area and for the
forestry clear-cutting practices.

So these are the things that we're against
-- not just the system, but we're against the agreements of
the corporations that got those contracts on those land
bases that we come from that were made by the provincial
government and the government agencies responsible for us.
So that's where a lot of the folks are being hurt is where
these kinds of conflicts are going on, and it hasn't
changed since the coming of the fur trade and the gold
rush. It's the same thing. We still don't have protection
from the police. As a matter of fact, we have abuse from
them.

So I believe, truly believe, that we had
to reactivate all our old warrior societies in our
communities and our healers in our communities to
strategize on how we can better develop protection against
what I just mentioned -- the corporate world and the
governing system that runs this country -- because they're
in conflict with our traditional laws and values that all
are only there to protect us.

So our plan for our children and our
future generations was that -- and we're still going
forward with -- is we do a reclamation to the land we come
from, which is Maxan Lake, her land, and we build our own
community development education system where we re-educate
them about our way of life, and it gives them some viable
educational support that would give them good economic
benefits, which will come from the lands that they come
from.

That's sort of our recommendation, but we
still have the fact that we're dealing with physical abuse
from the authorities, like the [Police service 1 officer]
who she's still going to court for because they beat her
up. Even though she's disabled, they still beat her up.

You know, they're -- I can't -- I can't see how the
government, police, and authorities can continue doing
these kinds of things to our womenfolk. I mean, it hurts
me deep inside as a husband and a father and grandfather to
see this go on with my own family when they're supposed to
be there to protect us and look after us since they were
made and brought here -- the RCMP, I'm talking about. They
-- so what's happened to my wife, Telquaa, and myself is
we've been traumatized by the system of the physical abuse
and of the mental abuse of all the paperwork and all the --
stuff around the different actions that are going on in our
families. So the trauma part has a lot -- a lot of harm.

So a lot of healing needs to be done between ourselves.

So the best part is to have really good
food all the time. So you had to have some sort of an
economy to have good food, and mine and hers was doing
artwork. We survived by doing a lot of artwork. We went to -- we went to New York City doing artwork to complain to the United Nations when she said we made that trip.

Well, so that's why I say that we can -- we can re-establish ourselves and our communities. It doesn't matter where we're from. We have an inherent right, and we have jurisdiction to do it because it's ours. They can't stop us from doing it. You know, there's -- there's no blocks anymore after the reconciliation happened. They say,

"Well, what do you want to do -- you want to do as reconciliation?"

She says,

"Well, reconciliation, to me, is the land we come from comes back to us, and our rights, our inherent rights and our jurisdiction comes back to us, all of our lands and our territory so that we may be able to govern our families according to our ways."

That's part of the thing that I believe reconciliation is, and like I said, it's got to start with our little ones growing up now, because it's harder to change the mindset of the children that are already grown
up, but if we start with the younger generations -- that's what we've been doing of the -- about the 35 years we've been married is changing the mindset of our children and the mindset of our grandchildren and our nieces and nephews. And the only way we did that was by pulling our own kids out of school and by being an example.

So we had to have examples in our communities. You're an example in our community, you and your wife, or actually probably on a national level now, because everybody knows you. See, that's what we need. We need people who have it in here -- the gifts. See, we're all gifted by the Almighty Creator, and we accept those gifts back again. We have a long, long walk to go, but I'm pretty sure we can make it. And that's when I have to say for her.

And, you know, all the abuse I've -- like, she still hurts from being called out, the cars, and being beaten up in the Fraser Valley. It isn't just the beatings. In the seven years we lived in the Fraser Valley, they took ten vans away from us, just pulling us over and taking them and putting them in the pound so we can't buy them out. So they put us in poverty.

So it's not just the beatings. It's the poverty that comes with going to court, poverty of losing your vehicles, you know, and that slows us and hinders us
from continuing the work that we've been doing. See, the
reason why that they attack people like us is because they
see us making progress. A year and a half ago, the
international Indigenous representative James Anaya came
from the United Nations --

MS. HELEN MICHELL: To Musqueam.
MR. FRANK MARTIN: -- and he came to
Musqueam, and we went and made a presentation to him there
like we're doing here to you, and we made a presentation in
relationship to why our womenfolk are being murdered and
missing, and it all had to do with the same thing again,
about re-governing ourselves and re-straightening out our
real true value within our community.

So we didn't keep the fight in this
country. We take it out to the international community for
support. So if we don't have support, we can't get the
police and the government agencies to back off of us. If I
didn't talk to them and we didn't go to that meeting, I
think they would be still chasing me around.

So for the last two years, they haven't
bothered us -- maybe a year and a half -- but before we
went to see that Mr. Anaya and made the presentation about
the authorities coming down on us and abusing us because of
what we're doing, we didn't have a chance. Like she said,
we went everywhere. We went to the court workers. We went
to lawyers. We went to BC Civil Liberties -- you know, all
the agencies that they have to protect our rights as
people. You can't get help. You know why? Because they
all work together. That's why it's important to get it out
to the international community.

So that's the other recommendation besides
getting our children, our youth, started on a new track and
a new education plan.

MS. HELEN MICHELL: That, too, being
disabled, it took seven years to get that.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah. So that's my --
that's my thing, is it boils down to the fact that we have
to change the institutional racism today, this day and age,
and the policing and the social services, the
administration of our people.

I'm finished.

MR. FRANK HOPE: Okay.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: Thank you.

MR. FRANK HOPE: I just need
clarification. The police brutality we're talking about is
-- which police department are we talking about?

MS. HELEN MICHELL: The RCMP.

MR. FRANK HOPE: The RCMP?

MS. HELEN MICHELL: Royal Canadian Mounted
Police.
MR. FRANK MARTIN: In the Fraser Valley.
MR. FRANK HOPE: In the Fraser Valley?
Okay.
MR. FRANK MARTIN: And in Burns Lake.
MS. HELEN MICHELL: Yeah.
MR. FRANK HOPE: And Burns Lake, too?
Okay. So let's see what else. There's just a couple more questions I think I may have just for clarification.
MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah, [five lines redacted - ongoing litigation].
MR. FRANK HOPE: Okay. You mentioned you were threatened with a place called Essondale. Is that a correctional facility?
MS. HELEN MICHELL: No, that's a...
MR. FRANK MARTIN: It's a mental institute where they use the Mental Health Act against you, and they can confine you for any -- as long as they want.
MR. FRANK HOPE: Where is this?
MR. FRANK MARTIN: It's in ---
MS. HELEN MICHELL: Port Coquitlam.
MR. FRANK MARTIN: Port Coquitlam. It's in the Lower Mainland.
MS. HELEN MICHELL: What's it called?
It's not called Essondale now.
MS. NORONHA: Is it Riverview?
MS. HELEN MICHELL: Riverview, yeah.

MR. FRANK HOPE: Riverview?

MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah.

MS. HELEN MICHELL: It's called Riverview now, but back then --

MR. FRANK HOPE: Okay.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: Back then, it was -- it was Essondale.

MS. HELEN MICHELL: The RCMP used to threaten Mom and Dad and [Sister 3] about it.

"If you don't listen to me, we're going to send you to Essondale."

MR. FRANK HOPE: Yeah. Okay.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: Back in the '60s, that's what they did to me. They sent me there.

MR. FRANK HOPE: Okay. [Seventeen lines redacted – ongoing litigation].

MS. HELEN MICHELL: Another thing, because we both became disabled from police brutality over all these years -- because we're disabled, it's harder for us to maintain a good life the way we should when we weren't disabled, and being disabled is even much harder now, and I'm sure a lot of other Indigenous people, too, were made disabled by the system, made disabled by the RCMP that beats them up or threatens them, made disabled by the
social services system.

Even my scooter, it took me seven years to get a scooter from the welfare when they could just give it to the other person the next day, but they made me fight for it for seven whole years, and in the whole process, because I'm fighting for my scooter, I got two -- what do you call those workers at [Location]? I got two workers fired, and because they got fired, they hightailed it back to England where they're both from, because they didn't want to get charged here, and that was in Chilliwack.

So all those systems that are supposed to be there to help us, to assist us, are all working together to keep us --

MR. FRANK MARTIN: Down.

MS. HELEN MICHELL: -- down so that we can't get nothing or starve us to death or threaten us or get the RCMP to beat the hell out of us.

You know, it's -- even -- the only reason why I got a lot of things and the scooter was I went to the ombudsman of BC, and the ombudsman lady just like -- just like that, just like lighting a fire, took papers there. They got all that sent right away, you know?

MR. FRANK HOPE: Okay. You mentioned that there was a period where many of you were being evicted from your communities and your land. What year was it that
you were evicted from?

MS. HELEN MICHELL: Before the land claims court started happening in '87 or '89 -- I can't remember, but I have the court papers at home.

MR. FRANK HOPE: In the mid-'80s?

MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah, the late '80s.

MR. FRANK HOPE: About the mid-'80s?

MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah.

MS. HELEN MICHELL: They were using band council resolutions to evict me, and they used the RCMP -- was standing right behind the chief -- band chief and council.

MR. FRANK HOPE: Evicted from which community?

MS. HELEN MICHELL: The Wet'suwet'en First Nation band, which is my band now.

MR. FRANK HOPE: How do you spell that again?

MS. HELEN MICHELL: W-E-T --

MR. FRANK HOPE: One second. W-E-T --

MS. HELEN MICHELL: -- S-U --

MR. FRANK HOPE: -- S-U --

MS. HELEN MICHELL: -- W-E-T --

MR. FRANK HOPE: -- W-E-T --

MS. HELEN MICHELL: -- E-N.
MR. FRANK HOPE: Okay. Officially, you're still a member of that band, though, right?

MS. HELEN MICHELL: Yeah. They amalgamated my Maxan Lake band into theirs in late -- early '60s, late '50s after my dad died and said that they were going to take care of us, but they never did.

MR. FRANK HOPE: Let's see. How long did you say you'd been through that whole brutality with the authorities? About how long has it been going on now?

MS. HELEN MICHELL: We've been together 35 years, and all that time was just fighting with them in the court system getting beaten up.

MR. FRANK HOPE: That's when you've been -- like, as activists since that time?

MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah. Yeah.

MR. FRANK HOPE: For about 35 years now?

MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah.

MR. FRANK HOPE: Okay.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah, I got all kinds of broken bones. I got collarbones broken, my teeth bones broken. I got no teeth.

MS. HELEN MICHELL: His face was hanging down when I found him.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: All -- my head's all fractured in the back.
1. MS. HELEN MICHELL: And ankles...
2. MR. FRANK HOPE: All this has been documented?
3. MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah.
4. MS. HELEN MICHELL: In the hospitals and...
5. MR. FRANK HOPE: In the hospitals and --
6. MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah.
7. MR. FRANK HOPE: Has there ever been any type of charges laid or any --
8. MR. FRANK MARTIN: No.
9. MS. HELEN MICHELL: No one wants to pursue it.
10. MR. FRANK MARTIN: Couldn't get any -- couldn't get them in the courts. Like I said, we called Civil Liberties. We called Legal Aid. We called court workers.
11. MR. FRANK HOPE: So you followed those processes and --
12. MS. HELEN MICHELL: And because --
13. MR. FRANK HOPE: -- nothing happened?
14. MR. FRANK MARTIN: No.
15. MS. HELEN MICHELL: And because we brought some of this up to some of the lawyers in the past, many of those lawyers were actively fighting for people like us,
they got their law to be taken away for doing that.

MR. FRANK HOPE: Yeah. This is important for the commissioners to be hearing.

MS. HELEN MICHELL: Mm-hmm.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: Mm-hmm.

MR. FRANK HOPE: And that's exactly why we're doing this.

MS. HELEN MICHELL: A lot of the lawyers, because of the -- that the Wet'suwet'en land claims court case was going on, some of those lawyers were working with us, too, and because they were working with us and coming out with information that was up for us, they got attacked, too, and some of them got -- one guy got put in -- lawyer got put into a mental institute.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: [Lawyer].

MS. HELEN MICHELL: [Lawyer].

MR. FRANK MARTIN: (Inaudible) -- she was a native from [Province], lost her degree in -- they made her dead, too.

MS. HELEN MICHELL: And her husband.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: And her husband, yeah, too.

MS. HELEN MICHELL: They killed her husband.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: They ran her off the
road the same way they ran us off the road, and I don't
know how her husband died. They said they just found him
dead, but we know differently.

MR. FRANK HOPE: You were purposely run
off the road --

MR. FRANK MARTIN: By RCMP.

MR. FRANK HOPE: -- because of the work
that you're doing?

MS. HELEN MICHELL: Yeah.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: We were -- we were
actually coming from her home, from her fishing grounds,
and we were getting our fish for the year, and the treaty
chief called the RCMP. The RCMP came and took our van, and
they didn't charge any of us. They just said,

"We're taking your van,"

and they left us on the highway. So we
took a cab to Smithers. That was the closest town. And
then we ran around looking for the cheapest car we could
buy, and there was one we bought. There was an old
convertible. It didn't have no seat belts in it, but we
used that car to leave that town, and on our way back home,
they ran us off the highway this side of Clinton.

MS. HELEN MICHELL: RCMP.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: And there was a native

lady driving --
Statement - Public
Telquaa Helen Michell & Frank Martin

MS. HELEN MICHELL: Two.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: -- behind us, two of

them that were coming from the same area we were coming

from.

MS. HELEN MICHELL: Social workers.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: She was a social

worker, too, and she was a witness to that.

So when we were run off the highway, she
died on the side of the highway. I was knocked out, but
when I came to, I crawled up the highway, and I told them I
-

"Where's my wife?"

And they said,

"Oh, she's over there. We covered

her up. She's dead,"

and going on all this. So I crawled

over, and I grabbed her hand, tried to talk to her, and I

said,

"Hey, she's not dead. She's

breathing. Come get her."

And yeah, so --

MS. HELEN MICHELL: I was paralyzed from

the neck down all that time.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: So, yeah, so -- then,
you know, even when we were living there in Burns Lake
area, they must have took at least ten vans away from us in that area, too.

MS. HELEN MICHELL: Shot all our dogs.

MR. FRANK HOPE: For fishing on your --

MR. FRANK MARTIN: Not just for fishing.

They'd just pull us over and say there's something wrong with our van and take it away.

MS. HELEN MICHELL: Because I moved back there to live back on our land at Maxan Lake, and because they all knew each other, and [band members], they all knew how to attack us and where it hurt us most.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: But it all boiled down to, again -- what it boils down to, again, is that the lands that the families belong to are the lands that the oil companies want to put the pipelines on and the forestry companies want to timber on and the mining companies want to mine on.

So we have all these three different big - - super big money companies giving all this money to these guys over here and lots of it. So that's the dilemma that we were faced with. It was terrible, eh? We're still faced with the same dilemma, except we seem to have the upper hand now because we got to James Anaya from the United Nations, and then, recently, the government signed on saying that they would recognize the international
agreement on Indigenous people's rights and so I'm kind of banking on using the international community in terms of getting more changes in Canada, in Canada's agencies and how they deal with our people and how they deal with our youth and our women and, you know, our families in general. 

MS. HELEN MICHELL: You know who knows all about this, too, is Grand Chief Ed John. We come around to him just about every chance we would get to tell him all of this, what we've been telling you, and he's -- I heard he went to the United Nations, too, and I don't think he belongs there, because he's not the right guy. He's gone through so many --

MR. FRANK MARTIN: Who?

MS. HELEN MICHELL: Eddy John.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: Oh, yeah.

MS. HELEN MICHELL: And what's his name?

Stuart Phillips (ph) knows about us, too, and it seems like no one knows how to help us. All we can do is just tell our stories and hope that someone hears us around the world and opens an ear and opens an eye and opens their heart to help us with what we need to do.

MR. FRANK HOPE: Well, you will have the commissioners to hear you.

MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah.

MR. FRANK HOPE: We'll end right there?
MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah.

MR. FRANK HOPE: If you can just sit for a couple of minutes, I'm going to shut off the video, and then I'll shut off the audio. And the time now -- I've just got to mention the time. It's 2:54 p.m.

--- Whereupon the proceeding concluded at 2:54 p.m.
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I have, to the best of my skill and ability, accurately transcribed from a pre-existing recording the foregoing proceeding.

Ren Zacchigna, Certified transcriptionist