National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Truth-Gathering Process

Part I Statement Gathering

Sheraton Airport Hotel

Metro Vancouver (Richmond), British Columbia

PUBLIC

Friday April 6, 2018

Statement - Volume 365
Shirley Turcotte

Statement gathered by Belinda Lacombe

A.S.A.P. Reporting Services Inc. © 2018
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement Volume 365</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 6, 2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Witness:** Shirley Turcotte

Statement by **Shirley Turcotte** ........................................ 1
Reporters certification ..................................................... 28

Statement Gatherer: Belinda Lacombe

Documents submitted with testimony: none.
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.”
--- Upon commencing on Friday, April 6, 2018

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: First of all, we’ll start off by making sure you have a little bit of sage here to help you get grounded.

I’ll introduce myself. So my name is Belinda Lacombe, I’m a statement gatherer with the National Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry. I’ll ask you to introduce yourself and spell your name please.


MR. JACK WONG: I’m a support person, my name is Jack Wong, J-A-C-K W-O-N-G.

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: Okay. We’re here in Richmond, B.C., it’s April 6, 2018 at the Richmond Sheraton Hotel.

All right, so you get the floor. You get to share with the Commissioners whatever it is that you feel they need to know.

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Okay. I wasn’t planning on doing this and I’ve been actually supporting the inquiry as much as I can from behind the scenes and also helping support people through their own statements. The reason I thought I wouldn’t do it is
because I’m already so public about so many things. But
listening to people talking, I feel like there’s some gaps
in what they’re saying, so I wanted to give a statement.

I’m going to start with that I’m the
daughter of a pedophile. As a daughter of a pedophile,
that has a lot to do with what’s happened in my life. As a
daughter of a pedophile, that also -- my father was Métis
and my mother was Mennonite white.

So growing up as a child, you know, it was
always -- the family was pretty dispersed because nobody
wanted to relate to a family that had a pedophile in it of
course. At the other end of things, the Mennonites don’t
like you to marry Indigenous peoples. So there was, you
know, a lot of talk about being dirty squaw and dirty
Indian. You were either too Indian or not Indian enough;
not Indian enough for the Indians, and not white enough for
the whites.

Plus, being the daughter of a pedophile,
of course there was no interrelatedness among the families.
Because, of course, my mother was rejected for marrying an
Indian and marrying a sex offender as well.

So I would say that the reason I’m talking
about being the daughter of a pedophile, because it has to
do with why we lost our children and how they went missing.

So even at the inquiry here when they
asked me, who was it that went missing, there were two
children that went missing. Those children have motivated
my entire life, because I never knew -- I thought one was
dead, and I didn’t know where we would ever find the other.

But to be able to say that these children
are the, you know, both my sister and my niece, because
it’s an incest baby and, you know, a possible nephew and
brother are missing, that was complicated when you were
given the registration, because I think that was alarming
for the Inquiry people even to be able to register that.
So it’s always complicated being the daughter of a
pedophile.

So the first, you know -- well, first I
want to say to the police and to the state, to the
Government of Canada, you know, you knew very early that my
father was a sex offender, we went to court very early, and
you did nothing to protect us from him getting the children
back.

He was charged with contributing to
juvenile delinquency. I think I might have been about six
years old when that happened. I never got to live with my
mother again, and I did get to go back to live with him,
which meant deeper torture, deeper -- more horrifying
experiences that, you know, that are terrifying and beyond
that.
Of course, you know, the thing about being Indigenous is to be able to find place and land and home, and that wasn’t possible because being the daughter of a pedophile community is not wanting you back, that’s for sure.

So I was never able to get really in contact with the family on my father’s side. I do believe the state has something to do with that, in the sense that not following up on children who had been tortured or traumatized. You know, Indian kids just didn’t matter. Métis people didn’t matter. Half-breed children didn’t matter.

I guess the thing, when my sister first got pregnant -- she got pregnant a couple times of course. These are likely my father’s babies. The first child, when the baby was born, we were told the baby died. We figured she did die, and I know my sister had to sign some papers and God knows what happened, but baby was gone. The second child, we kept that child for a while. The child was around for a couple of years, and then the child was taken, a little boy. He was taken.

So we thought the first child died and we thought the first child was deformed because we thought the eyes were crossed or something was off about that infant, so there was no -- we really did believe that child died.
The boy, we felt -- he was taken at two, and there were a lot of threats involved that, you know, there was no system there to help my sister raise this beautiful boy, this darling boy.

So he was adopted out. We looked for him forever. In fact, all of the work I’ve ever done has been about missing children, trying to save the lives of children, which was a good thing because that really -- I did a lot of really good work in terms of trying to save children, save children’s lives, motivated for Indigenous peoples and Indigenous children especially.

We put out -- we’re trying to find this boy who was adopted [indiscernible] and given a different name and sent to a different province.

I didn’t find out what they changed his name to until many years later, in fact just a couple years ago. It took me so much to try to get his name from the government. They just would not give me where they had placed him, where they had sent him, what province he went to, you know, or was he sent to another country.

When I finally got his name -- and it’s a blur for me, I can’t keep -- I can’t hold that colonial name, like that colonized name, I can’t -- I only know him as Davie or baby, right? I keep falling back to what I remember him as. You can’t imagine that these babies,
they’re awake for us for the rest of our lives. So I can’t see him as the man he grew into, I just still see the little boy. I love him, because he’s really motivated all of my life’s work, plenty of my life’s work.

But I put out his name over Facebook and over -- you know, and I’m quite well-known in the country, I sent his name everywhere and everybody was looking for him, the new name. Where they had sent him was apparently B.C. -- from Manitoba to B.C., which was really ironic because I’ve lived in B.C. since 1980, which was bizarre, he could have been there.

But it just seems that he never -- we could never find him. It’s likely that he’s dead and that’s why we just can’t find him. Because we just can’t find a trail for this guy. But there’s no way that any one of us can go look at death records. It’s just still as raw and painful as it was when we were children. We can’t find him dead. We don’t want to know -- we don’t want to know if he’s dead. That would be unbearable.

But the stranger things is because we thought the girl was dead, we assumed she was dead, when we were seeking children of my sister’s last name a young girl, a younger woman, wasn’t even yet -- she was thirty-something, came looking for us. So this young girl that we thought was dead, this infant that was dead was actually
never dead. The hospital just said she was dead. You
can’t imagine what it’s like to have an adult woman come to
your family saying she’s looking for her mom, looking for
her mother and her sisters, and family.

So she found us. That was very
complicated for all of us. It was torturous, imagine
having to tell her that her father was my father. Huge
amounts of agony in terms of discussing her life, our
lives. She lived a very very different life than we did.
She grew up wealthy, and her politics are very very
different from ours and her life is very different.

You know, we grew up -- I was homeless
from as long as I can remember as a child, starving,
homeless. I have to say that starvation, for me, was far
worse than pedophilia. Homelessness and starvation are
huge.

You can get used to a fuck if you have to,
if you have to you can get used to it, but starvation and
trying to find food for other children who are starving and
homelessness, where to sleep tonight, those things are not
things you can get used to, at least I never got used to
it.

So poverty is at the core of a lot of what
goes down for Indigenous peoples in this country and for
the murdered and missing. Because what happens when
there’s poverty is you get dispersed; all of us children
got dispersed. I don’t know my siblings very well, we had
years and years apart. Because we were all sleeping in
different beds and trying to get food in different
locations. Because you don’t have a core safe place in
which to grow in.

So when you say murdered, it’s murderous
to -- it’s an ongoing murder to not be able to know,
connect, or find your siblings. That alone is murderous.
They’re alive, they’re alive and you can’t find them.

It’s made our family very tight. Like, my
siblings and I are very close, but we are completely
different, and this is the really -- the heart issue. Some
of us are highly educated, some of us have done a lot of
healing, some of us are broken and totally unable to get up
off the sidewalk. Some of us are dead. I believe my
brother, the one who I had raised since he was three, I
believe he died of a broken heart and neglect and...

It’s hard when you’re children raising
children, to have your children die on you. It’s because
it’s not just a sibling that dies, it’s a sibling and a
son.

So Canada’s been very disappointing for me
and I’m a well-known Canadian who has done a lot of work in
the healing. I feel very healthy. I’m very blessed, I
feel very healthy, I’m a world traveller, I come and go. I have, you know, an extremely blessed life, but it’s very difficult to live in two worlds, because I do live in two worlds, because I am so fortunate.

I have everything that I could possibly want or need, right? So when I go to the dinner parties or whatever I fit right in, but I don’t fit at all, because it’s living in two words. I’m both the colonizer and the colonized. I am one of the same.

So to watch Canadians allow children to be taken from homes in alarming numbers that are equal and even greater than the residential school era is not only terrifying, but horrifying. So while I have the best beds to sleep in and the best foods to eat, the best friends and good company, I have to always juggle the reality of racism and the pain of that.

So, you know, it is both a crushing thing and a motivator, so it motivates me to design really good programs. I never regret that I was put in a mental institute for schizophrenia instead of it being addressed as post-traumatic stress, which it was. Because in that institute, I could see how western medicine was just way off the mark when it comes to genocide. It really was not helping.

I saw how the treatment of people in the
mental institute, and it was many years ago so I’m an old
woman now, but it motivated me to work on finding the
things that kept me alive during the most horrific
experiences; being locked in a basement for nearly five
years, all these horrifying things that happened, there was
always land and life there.

So I could always find something in land
that could help me through a horrendous day, and that I
believe that’s our culture that saved my life, the culture
of land. So I could start designing programs around
complex trauma that were related to genocide and related to
land and to bring back the things that actually did work
and kept those of us that did survive alive.

Of course, as most Indigenous peoples
going through homelessness and all the different things we
went through, suicide was always always there, we were
always trying to kill ourselves; either jumping in front of
cars or drinking poison or any way to kill yourself that
you could imagine. Right now, the tendency is for people
to want to hang themselves. But the trends change through
the years.

So suicide was always part. Nobody
expected to live and I certainly didn’t expect to live this
long. I don’t know, I wanted to say something about
suicide, but I don’t know what it is exactly. I’ve lost my
train of thought, which happens.

Was I going somewhere with that? There

was something I’m sure.

MR. JACK WONG: I don’t have it.

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Do you have it?

Did you hear me say...?

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: I don’t have it, but
can I ask you a question?

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Yeah, go ahead.

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: I just want to know

the date when your brother passed away. Can you remember

that?

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: You will never be

able to keep a date in my body about the date that my

brother passed away. My husband can keep the date and

every now and then I’ll ask him,

“When did [L.] die?”

But because my body won’t retain it.

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: Okay.

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: There’s certain

things that don’t... You remember my brother’s death?

MR. JACK WONG: Yeah. You brought the

watch to me, and I think it’s about 10 years ago.

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Yeah. I won’t be

able to say the month, the day, the year.
MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: So about 10 years ago?

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Yeah. I won’t be able to -- yeah.

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: Okay.

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: I can’t keep any dates.

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: So would you like that I don’t ask you about dates?

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: No, ask, go a head. Because that’s -- for them to know that trauma’s like that. I consider myself well, and I can’t retain a date. Then you go to court and somebody asks you a date like or, you know. Trauma’s an interesting thing. Some things are too unbearable to hold in your central -- so you hold it someplace else, which is fine, it’s not a problem. It’s only a problem for the courts and the police.

Any other good questions or is that --

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: No, that was the only one so far.

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: There’s really nothing that the Inquiry can do for me that I can think of. I just want to say that poverty sucks --

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: Is there anything else you want to say about the western -- like, how that
MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Oh yeah. Yeah, that didn’t work and that, you know, going through -- I feel very lucky having gone through so much of the systemic horrors of the medical world, you know, the therapeutic world and how that...

Because I think to be able to be a good witness I was able to watch and see what they were up to and see how that really didn’t fit and that what they were doing might be good for, you know, mommy didn’t love you, but it had -- it was nowhere even close to the mark of what was needed where kids are -- intergenerational trauma where kids are stolen by the state. Just like it’s not a mommy didn’t love you thing at all.

It’s -- you know, there were no mothers sometimes for generations because of the state’s interference in our lives. The brutality of the residential schools and the brutality of racism that has struck down so many of our peoples.

Any comments from you? You’ve known me a long time and, I don’t know, anything you want to say? You’re allowed to talk, help the Inquiry.

MR. JACK WONG: Okay, I didn’t know about that.

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: I’m giving you...
Statement - Public

Shirley Turcotte

1 permission, yeah.

MR. JACK WONG: Okay. Racism kills, it’s
cost the lives of 100 million, 150 million natives in North
America. It’s been systemic, it’s been ongoing, it’s 10
generations, if not more, and it’s still taking lives. You
know, I’m happy that there’s this first baby step in
recognition of what’s been wrought upon the Indigenous of
this world, not in just Canada. But Canada has done a
great job in doing it.

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Do you see how the
trauma that runs through my generations has pushed forward
a movement? Because I do think the intergenerational grief
and horror just pushes Indigenous peoples forward to
creating things that they need because this other thing has
not worked.

MR. JACK WONG: No, it hasn’t worked and
this new kind of reawakening of cultural awareness I think
has brought about some new growth --

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Yeah.

MR. JACK WONG: -- and a new approach.

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: I’d like to say new
growth, new approach. But I also want to add, it doesn’t
give me my babies back. It does not give those children
back. That broken heart is forever there and you can --
and I’m a healed woman and, you know, I’m a woman who is,
you know, the grandmother of Aboriginal focusing range of
therapy.

But it doesn’t give us our children back. I want that to be really clear. Maybe that will help me
work to the day I die, and that’s a good thing. Maybe I’ll never get to retire, because I can’t have my babies back.

Canada should never have done that and it shouldn’t be doing it now. It needs to change Child Welfare immediately, immediately. This is wrong. You need to help families keep their families together even pedophile families, even children that have children by their fathers. You don’t have the right to take their babies away and call them dead. You do not have that right. This is wrong.

Thank you for giving us a forum. I’ve supported the Inquiry as long as I could, because these stories need to be told and we need to change things yesterday and the day before, and the day before that.

Meegwetch, thank you.

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: Can I ask you --

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Yeah.

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: -- can you talk a little bit about what does work, Shirley?

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Well, what does work is --
MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: Around complex trauma and [indiscernible/speaking at the same time] --

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Around complex trauma, what does work is that when you are connecting with the horror in your body, the suffering, the trouble, to be able to recognize and to be able to -- the feelings, these deep deep powerful feelings, to be able to understand them, not as I feel my feelings, but as a collective horror. Because you can’t get better when these powerful powerful movements of pain come up through you. If you think that’s all yours, you know, you’re going die from it.

But if you recognize that we’re holding this together and it’s ours and that’s it’s collective and that it’s intergenerational, there is so much more room for dancing, for healing, for help, for healthiness.

So what helps is not to look through a Western lens, but look through an Indigenous lens that is collective, that is intergenerational and that recognizes the trauma from the -- the historical trauma that’s not our enemy, that’s our wisdom.

The historical trauma, the intergenerational trauma, you know, it’s not all about suffering, it’s also about, wow, look what we’ve learned, look what we’ve done. These are experiences we have. We are experts in genocide. No one knows genocide like
Indigenous peoples know genocide.

This is not me, my feeling, this is our genocide experience that we know how to navigate, move around, and to work with. The western lens where everything is I, me, my, my feelings, I’m this, I’m that, is so narrow that it kills us.

When there’s a symptom in my body, I’ve got to see whose is it. This might not even by mine, it’s something I’m sharing, it’s a collective thing.

Indigeneity is about collective experience. Therapy in the western world is very narcissistic, it’s all focused on I, me, my. That does not help with genocide.

Also there’s sort of this overlay that PTSD in complex trauma is a negative instead of, you know, it may be a lot of knowledge, a lot of really important knowledge. The idea that the trouble that I’ve had comes up through my mother, my father, and through the ancestors and moves on over into my son, I am so grateful for that, that my son knows what it’s like to be the daughter of a pedophile. I am happy about that, because he knows exactly what to do, how to move, what steps to take in the country next because that’s knowledge, that he can then move forward to try to make lives better, and he does. He knows what it feels like to be me a little bit, maybe not fully me, but he knows a little bit because it’s the river that
runs through.

That’s not damage that’s coming forward, that’s information on what steps to take. Now, right now he’s the -- putting in the Office of Indigenization for the City of Toronto to try, you know, what’s it called again? I don’t know what it is, it’s some big thing there in Toronto bringing Indigenous knowledge to the City of Toronto. It’s about fuckin’ time.

But anyway, my point is if he didn’t know this history in his bones, he wouldn’t choose to do something to make the lives of children better. He is still saving the children we can’t find, and thank God for that.

So I’m tired of people looking at complex trauma from a western lens that says we’re all fucking up in intergenerational trauma is something that we’re trying to get through instead of something that we’ve experienced and learned from and can step forward in and use as our knowledge, our intergenerational knowledge for our next steps. There’s a lot of next steps. We have a long way to go.

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: Thank you.

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Thank you.

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: After hearing you say that, you spoke a little bit about child welfare --
MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Yeah, a lot about child welfare.

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: -- and how there needs to be a change.

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Yes.

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: Right now, I heard you say.

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Yes. There are a lot of changes happening.

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: So my question to you, Shirley, is can you speak a little bit about how you see that? What changes your...?

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Well, mostly--

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: I mean, this could be like some recommendations too.

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Well, I believe allotted -- mainly get the money back to the places that can put the programs in place that are so exceptional. There are exceptional programs, and really it’s a local area -- every area, every nation has its own ideas about what would work in their particular communities and they’re wise in that, they’re wise and knowing a culcom(ph) program works best over here, you know.

There’s a million -- there’s so many brilliant ideas coming out of different nations on what
would work best in their local area, but they’re not funded and given the support to put in place the things that they know would work to be able to keep the children in the home.

Some programs are, you know, if the parents aren’t doing well the parents have to go and caregivers come into the home so the children aren’t displaced. There are sister programs and, you know, culcom(ph) programs, like I said. There’s all kinds of programs that it’s not a problem about the ingenuity and brilliance of local communities to know -- local Indigenous communities to know what will work. The problem is getting the funds in place that would allow those programs to work.

Indigenous people know how to keep their kids and they know how to keep their kids well. The colonizing world is to get the fuck out of the way so that that could happen, because the programs are there. The problem is that, you know, not having the rights and not having the funding, not having the space to do what we know works.

Also to introduce cultural programs into those like Indigenous tools for living, for an example, where that’s again another brilliant program that can work for many ages and many... But the thing is to get the funding in place and to get the -- I think, you know,
Canadians really couldn’t give a shit about Indigenous peoples in Canada.

I mean, we look here at the inquiry and I look in the room, the public room here, I’m in Vancouver for goodness sakes, how come every chair isn’t full of (inaudible) or state people wanting to do something right for the disparity that is here in our country for Indigenous peoples? The chairs are empty.

There’s an apathy across this country and so they don’t want to turn the money over, the funds over so that we can get on with a job that we know how to do really well.

So the recommendation is get the hell out of the way, give us space and the resources to do what we know how to do. Stop suggesting things, get out of our way, we already know.

It’s going to be very much what each area knows best. What would work in Moose Factory when I am in Moose Factory -- I go all over through nations all across the country and into the States too. You know, what will work in Moose Factory is not going to be the same thing that’s going to work up in Wet’suwet’en Territory when I’m up in Northern B.C., which is not going to be the same thing that’s going to work in Peguis when I’m in Manitoba.

You know, they all have answers. Toronto
has some amazing child welfare answers for their problems, amazing. But the resources to keep those things ongoing, implemented, and to carry that through, we don’t have the good will of Canadians to have that happen, and that’s the problem.

You know, so what has to happen, you know, to me -- and, you know, our men are in jail and our women are in jail. What the hell is going on here? I just watched CBC yesterday, and the numbers of people being shot by police is like at a all-time high, and of course they’re brown people and black people, right? So keeping our people alive is getting even harder.

So, you know, when you see clustered suicides -- and I work in Moose Factory, I work in many places, and when I see 13 kids die I know it’s not 13 -- they’re not -- those kids that died, that’s the suicide of their entire nation. Their whole nation is committing suicide, it’s just coming out through those 13 people, right? They’re speaking, the kids, the youth, are speaking, those youth that are committing suicide are speaking and they’re speaking for their whole nation.

There is a disparity that has got to be expressed.

Since Truth & Reconciliation the stories have been coming up and the suicides are a lot higher because we expect change; if you’re not going to change --
or we’ll die. Kids don’t even know why they’re dying, they
don’t even know that it’s collective intergenerational
trauma saying you’ve got to change Canada, you’ve got to
change this now or we’ll die on you. I mean, you know,
because we are collective.

So, you know, when those kids are dying
they’re dying for all of us because we’re not -- because of
the apathy of Canadians across the board. It’s so
disappointing to come here and see those chairs empty.
It’s so heartbreaking, I can’t tell you. I’m really pissed
right off about that.

Am I saying this -- how am I sounding? A
little off or...?

MR. JACK WONG: Well, you’re angry, you’re
pissed. Tell us more how you feel, Shirley. You’re a
little unclear about that.

--- Laughter

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: As if you haven’t
heard enough through all the years.
There’s a long way to go.

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: Yeah.

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Good. Anything
else?

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: So I just -- there’s
one more thing.
MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Okay.  

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: I just wonder if there’s a way that you could share here today -- is there something that could be done in Canada that would bring more awareness to those Sixties Scoop babies? Because that seems to be --

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Okay. So this is the hardest one for me, the Sixties Scoop. Because, you know, I can’t even put my name on that list of people because it’s too heartbreaking. So it’s almost as if the trauma around our missing kids in our family -- as if the trauma is so big and so bad that you can’t ask me to help with that. I help with so much in Canada; I help in, you know, creating Indigenous therapy programs, training therapists all over the nations. I help so much, don’t ask me to help with the Sixties Scoop, because it can’t -- I can’t bleed there.

It’s so interesting, you know, you see me lecturing on almost everything, but you don’t see me touching the Sixties Scoop because I can’t, I can’t find my babies. I’m going to be forever in that there. So you’ve got to ask somebody else to do that piece. I feel like I do my piece so much I can’t do that piece.

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: Okay.

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: That’s trauma, and
it’s a healthy trauma. It’s not even like a broken trauma. It’s like, of course you can’t help there, Shirley, you can barely -- you’re still looking for your babies. I’m busy looking for babies. Even though you don’t see me looking for babies because I can’t bear to look, I’m looking for babies. I can’t bear to look at death records or anything like that.

Even though [L.] was adopted out and she was in a good family, I’m still looking for her as the baby. Even though, because the woman that she is is not the Indigenous family that I know, because in the colonization she was put into a non-Indigenous family and so she grew-up with a completely non-Indigenous world.

I come from an Indigenous world, and so I’m still looking for her in the Indigenous world. I can’t find her. Who I see is my dear sister/niece in the colonized world. You can’t even imagine the conversations to have with her, you know, after all these years to be able -- she’s asking me,

“Do I call you sister or do I call you auntie? What do I call you?”

These are the conversations we have to come up with, which maybe would have been sorted out if she had been here a long time ago. But because she shows up later in life, and we think she’s dead, we have to have...
these absurd conversations; am I your aunt, am I your sister...?

I have to say to her,

“Well, I don’t know. What does it feel like?”

“Do you feel like my sister’s children are like your sisters or do they feel like your cousins?”

She says,

“Well, they feel more like sisters.”

I said,

“Well, then call me aunt.”

You know, these are very complicated conversations because the state just fucked things up so badly that we have to have these horrible conversations.

Then there’s this conversation, well, can you help us now? What do we do about the Sixties Scoop? Like, fuck-off already. Don’t ask me that. You know, you can ask me how to build therapy programs or how to look at something through an Indigenous lens and, you know, what medicines work here?

You can ask me those things, but don’t ask me things about the little missing babies because I can’t help you. I can’t even barely help myself on that one.
MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: Okay. That’s a good thing for the Commission to know --

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Yeah.

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: -- about that question. Okay.

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: Thank you.

MS. BELINDA LACOMBE: Is there anything --

any last --

MS. SHIRLEY TURCOTTE: I just thank goodness it was you as the intaker, the whatever, because I felt you were amazing and non-intrusive and lovely. I hope that anyone else that’s doing this are as competent and good at what they’re doing as you are.

I appreciate you being here so much and I appreciate the Inquiry. I know it’s been extremely difficult and complicated, I can’t even imagine. But we’ve got to get the stories down, and we’re doing that. Just keep going, keep at it.

My dear friend Jack, as always through the years, comes with me across the miles, over the miles.

Thank you everybody. Meegwetch.

MR. JACK WONG: Meegwetch.

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

Jennifer Cheslock, Transcriptionist