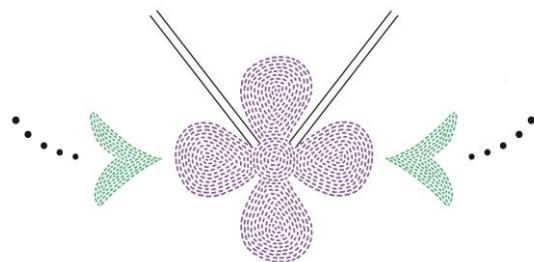


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Statement Gathering
The Saa-Ust Centre
Vancouver, British Columbia**



PUBLIC

Saturday April 7, 2018

Statement - Volume: 378

A.V.

Statement gathered by Caitlin Hendrickson

II
ORDER

Pursuant to Rule 7 of *Legal Path: Rules of Respectful Practice*, Chief Commissioner Marion Buller ordered that all names in this transcript and any related documents be rendered anonymous. This order was made April 18, 2018.

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Documents submitted with testimony: None.

4 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay. So I'm just
5 going to note that it's 4:01 p.m. It's Saturday, April 7,
6 and we're at the Saa-ust Centre in the Downtown Eastside of
7 Vancouver.

11 MS. A.V.: Okay.

12 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And then from
13 there I'll leave it open to you to share with me what you'd
14 like the commissioners to know.

15 MS. A.V.: Okay. My name is A.V. That's
16 spelled [spells name].

17 And so I am an Indigenous woman, and I'm
18 very grateful that this opportunity is being provided to me
19 by the commissioners and the Government of Canada.

I'm also an immigrant, and so it's been unique for me to be here because of my immigration status. I am a Canadian citizen, and growing up here, because I did grow up here since I was a child. It's been awkward. It's been awkward to be Indigenous, but a little bit excluded because I'm not First Nations from the Canadian

1 perspective.

2 But nonetheless, the efforts that have
3 been made in Canada through my life here, since the '80s,
4 have helped me. I've sort of benefited from it in the
5 whole, you know, decolonisation and reconciliation with my
6 own Indigenous heritage so that there's a little bit less
7 division within me because there is a lot of that and
8 there's -- I've become very aware of the effects of
9 colonization, and we call it conquest in [country where
10 witness was born].

11 So I'm very grateful, like I said, for the
12 work that's being done here that I've been able to benefit
13 from.

14 The difficult parts have been and the
15 violence that I've experienced here, and the treatment of
16 myself and my statements when I made them to the police.

17 And specifically the fact that I, when I
18 made my statement to the police I brought them -- I brought
19 forward a serial rapist, and because of their outright
20 dismissal of my report, he was able to continue to rape at
21 least another 20 women, and so their negligence and
22 incompetence in dealing with my claims not only resulted in
23 myself being injured emotionally and physically really
24 because I lost my ability to do a lot of physical things
25 because of my mental issues. There's pain. I got pain in my

1 body, everything.

2 And then the impact on my son as well and
3 on my family. Like it's just -- it's like a wave. So not
4 only, like I said, the impact to me and my family, but also
5 the families of the women who were -- who went on -- who he
6 went on to hurt.

7 Eventually they did catch him and they did
8 -- they did prosecute him. He was convicted and he's in the
9 midst of being sentenced through an application for a
10 dangerous offender. So I'm still waiting for my justice,
11 and yet I find myself unable to access that justice because
12 of everything that I've lost since then.

I -- you know, I -- like I said, when I
came here I graduated with honours, you know, from school
and high school, and I went to post-secondary. I had, you
know, I was a professional. I was a homeowner. I had a
career. I was a sales manager at a medical device firm, a
manufacturing firm. And my income, according to the
numbers, was like in the top six per cent of Canada. But
after the assault and after the way things were handled
with the police, and also the way my workplace handled the
aftermath of all of that, I ended up losing my job and I
lost my home and I lost all of my savings, and I managed to
sort of hold onto like whatever was left of my life through
getting help from the government agencies that were out

1 there that were able to provide help -- like you know,
2 subsidized housing and income assistance -- but those, as
3 grateful as I am for them because I am very grateful, were
4 very difficult, very, very difficult to access. Cost again
5 a lot of woundedness. And I sort of discovered sort of
6 personally what they mean by the poverty trap.

7 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Can you expand on
8 that, on the poverty trap?

9 MS. A.V.: Yeah.

10 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: From your point,
11 what is that like for you?

12 MS. A.V.: Yeah, from my point of view it's
13 the fact I had to sell my house, and I got a substantial
14 amount of money, which I was allowed, so when I applied for
15 disability benefits I was allowed to put that into a trust
16 because that's what the sort of rules said that I could do
17 and I could hold onto up to \$200,000 in that trust.

18 But when I applied for income assistance
19 the process was so onerous and the people -- the lady that
20 kind of initially took my call and my case, her lack of
21 training and her threatening kind of behaviour scared me so
22 much that it made it, made me -- it took longer for me to -
23 - to deal with getting that trust set up.

24 And it turns out that my bank, which is
25 the Royal Bank, had -- they had no idea how to set up such

1 a trust. I was -- I had an advocate somewhere who gave me
2 the phone or whatever of a notary who charged me \$100 or
3 \$500 to set up the trust papers, but that whole process
4 took six months. And by the time I got all that said and
5 done, my initial application was closed and I didn't know.
6 So then I was basically forced to reapply again, and there
7 was a lot of avoidance of that.

Because of my own mental health perspective, I was scared again of dealing with the -- I thought that's how they all were, you know, because she was accusing me -- well not accusing me, but she was -- I was staying in a home, which right now I'm thinking was really cheap rent. It's like \$1,500 for a three-bedroom. And she's like, oh, you know, when they see how much you're spending on your rent they're going to think that you're hiding money. They're going to think this. They're going to investigate, you know, and she was really -- Like maybe in her mind she thought she was trying to help, but all she was doing is pressuring me to be afraid to get services.

20 And then she used language like -- because
21 my son's father is not paying any child support, she said
22 the language like well, they're going to go after him, and
23 I don't really care what they do to him, but just the way
24 that she presented what the Ministry does by investigating,
25 threatening, going after people, and things like that, it

1 just, the entire impact of that was that it took me an
2 entire year to get to the point where I could apply for
3 disability benefits, and in that time my nest egg that I
4 had saved up for myself, or not the nest egg, but my
5 equity, the only money that I had to help me out with
6 things was spent on living, living expenses and health
7 expenses.

8 And the fact that I couldn't cook for
9 myself, I couldn't go get groceries, I relied a lot on
10 expensive like junk food type things. So you know, people
11 would -- that around me would all like criticize me that I
12 spent my house money on pizza, and that was very hurtful. I
13 mean, obviously not entirely true, because a lot of money
14 on pizza, but that's the essence of selling your house to
15 live off of it and then losing it all.

16 So I also lost my RRSPs because I had to
17 also cash them out and put them supposedly into the -- into
18 the trust. But because, like I said, everything took
19 forever, and the benefits dragged on, I guess, for a year,
20 I lost all of that too.

21 So by the time that I finally was awarded
22 disability benefits, I had nothing left, like zero money,
23 like \$5,000, which I kept, which to me is like compared to
24 the initial amount is nothing.

So it sits there in a trust, thinking

1 maybe one day I'll have money to put in there, because
2 after all that work I'm thinking I am not going to let go
3 of this trust. But -- the trauma and the hurt and the pain
4 of having lost everything really put me in a very poor
5 place to think about working again because like I said, I
6 come from a professional background. I can work. I have
7 skills. I have a ton of experience. But not being able to
8 wake up in the morning, eat, basically sleeping all day,
9 being bedridden with depression and triggers and PTSD and
10 everything, how could I work? I mean, that's why I was
11 accepted for disability.

12 I wanted to get better. I thought maybe I
13 could get better. So I tried to look at how I could get
14 help so that I could heal physically and mentally. And the
15 only thing that I thought at the time could help me was
16 maybe an occupational therapist because that's what they
17 do. They work with people to help them get back to work.

18 Well, unless it's a Work B.C. issue nobody
19 pays for it. I have no money for that. So how am I supposed
20 to pay for a doctor to help me get back to work when I have
21 no money? And I think everybody would want me to work, but
22 without help how can I do that? It's not covered by MSB.
23 It's not covered by the Ministry. It's not like income
24 assistance, it's not covered. And the Work Safe B.C., I
25 eventually found out, I didn't even know you could do this,

1 make a health, make a mental health bullying type claim for
2 injuries and such.

11 So I prioritized the police thing and
12 trying to get benefits from crime victims assistance. I got
13 denied.

14 That was the other issue. I got denied
15 that the first time. The second time I applied for it, they
16 did accept me, but it took two years. And when I made a
17 claim to get money for my lost job, they denied that. And
18 their basis for denying it was what in my mind I thought
19 was ridiculous. I could have fought it, but the injury was
20 too much. I can't even go back and look at that because I
21 haven't even healed from that yet, and that was eight years
22 ago or seven years ago. How they twist everything around to
23 make it look like -- they don't want to take
24 responsibility. They want to be accountable. They don't
25 want to put employers in a position of being the bad guys

1 because then that's bad for business, right? And that's
2 what matters. It's to keep the business afloat.

3 So then me, who I'm a very capable and
4 skilled and experienced person, I can't even get back to
5 work or get help for it. But -- So there was that. There
6 was the RCMP the way they handled everything. There was the
7 Work Safe as well. When I tried to apply for that, they
8 denied it as well.

9 The only help I got was from the not-
10 profits, non-profit housing people. I got a house and I
11 thought, well that's housing first. You know, how can I
12 work if I don't even have a good place to live? And so that
13 was my plan. I thought, I'll get myself on the disability
14 benefits. I'll get a house. I'll -- I'll therapize myself.
15 I'll just do it, and I did.

16 I am -- I thought I could do gradual entry
17 back to work with a very low stress job that was beneath my
18 skills so that because there was a trauma, because of the
19 way my bosses treated me, they bullied me after they found
20 out what happened to me. So I did that, and I worked part-
21 time for two years. But then that job sort of dried out.

22 And my son got into trouble because of the
23 aftermath of all of this that happened to me affected him,
24 affected his mental health. It affected my ability to me a
25 mom to him, and he got sick. He got mental health issues.

1 He got depressed. He became suicidal. And everything that I
2 needed to -- I needed to turn my focus to him. So I stopped
3 taking care of myself and I just took care of him.

I stopped all my healing. I stopped all --
pretty much everything so that he could be good again. And
between that and just life things, when last year I found
out that the offender, the one that raped me in 2010, he
had been convicted. That was a big blow to me. It was a big
blow.

10 People thought well that seems validating,
11 and I thought, no, it's not validating because it's not
12 good news to find out that you were in the claws of a
13 serial rapist. It's not. There's no -- there's no relief
14 there. There's nothing there. There's only anger and rage
15 against the police that were supposed to protect us and
16 they didn't. I handed that to him. They had him and they
17 let him go.

18 And then because all of that has been
19 unhealed in all this time, the police aspect, I was really
20 very, very, very vulnerable and triggered substantially. My
21 vulnerability put me in a position to be raped again, and I
22 was raped again by two men, separate men, separate
23 incidences in one night in October of last year, so about
24 six, five months ago.

I made a new police report. Again, not

1 because of me, because I have zero -- zero confidence that
2 I would get justice for myself, but I just thought again,
3 look, it's on them to protect women. It really is on them.
4 And people who do this sort of thing -- and we already know
5 this, there's no excuse -- there's -- they're not -- they
6 don't rape just one person. They're serial rapists, most of
7 them.

8 And that's what I did. I just put it back
9 on them and just say, you need to protect women from these
10 people.

11 It's been six months and I haven't heard a
12 word from the police. They said that they would get back to
13 me. That is part of -- I believe legally they're supposed
14 to come and tell me what has happened or transpired. Not
15 one thing from them.

16 So that, all of that is -- what I believe
17 puts people in, and women specifically in danger, and
18 children, not just girls, but children because the
19 injustices, they compound, and one thing leads to another.
20 And vulnerable people, because of their vulnerability, get
21 re-victimized. And that's what happened to me.

22 But instead of looking at that they just
23 think, I mean I don't know what they think, but there's a
24 lot of fear. I have a lot of -- I had a lot of fear in
25 reporting again because I thought that they were going to

1 dismiss everything again and not do anything again. And
2 from being there and witnessing what these men do to women,
3 by how -- what they did to me, I know that they -- it
4 wasn't just me that they did this to.

5 I wanted access to a lawyer to help me
6 make my statement, but there is nothing to help women with
7 that because the police, the way -- they question, the way
8 they question you, you're actually a suspect, and every
9 suspect needs to have a lawyer present.

10 Yet when men are treated like suspects de
11 facto, and yet we don't have access to a lawyer to be there
12 with us when we make our statements. And yes, I know we
13 have access to advocates, but they're emotional supports.
14 But when you're making a police statement it's a legal
15 issue. It's not an emotional issue. This might be an
16 emotional issue, what we're doing here. I don't need a
17 lawyer for this, but I do need it when I'm making a police
18 statement.

19 The way they questioned -- the way they
20 questioned me the first time and the second time with
21 leading questions, with making me -- putting things --
22 putting questions in such a way that I could answer them in
23 a way that's going to exonerate the man -- was a big thing
24 that I found frustrating.

Also, me not knowing what some of the

1 legal terms meant, like when they said did he use force?
2 Did he use threat?, there's a colloquial meaning to that,
3 but then there's a legal meaning, which is different. And
4 me not knowing them made me answer wrongly.

5 But then if you go back and say, well wait
6 a minute, now that I know the real truth, my answer's
7 different. Well now they construe that as well you're
8 changing your story. So now you can't be believed.

9 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Can I ask you a
10 few questions about both of those incidences? So in both
11 2010 and 2017 were you taken for medical care? Was a rape
12 kit done for either of those incidences?

13 MS. A.V.: The second one, yes.

14 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay.

15 MS. A.V.: But not the first time.

16 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And the police --
17 you haven't heard if they found anything from that. And I
18 don't want you to share more than what you're comfortable
19 with, but I'm wondering if you can walk me through a little
20 bit about the first time in 2010 about what happened and
21 what immediately happened after when you went to the
22 police?

23 MS. A.V.: Sure. So this was a man who used
24 the Internet to meet people, or his victims. So he -- he
25 came to me through Facebook, and the story of violence

1 there is that I was involved in an abusive, toxic
2 relationship and I couldn't escape it. And not having the
3 skills or -- I had some support, but it wasn't what I
4 needed because nobody identified the narcissistic type
5 things that were going on. They just said: Leave him. But
6 no -- I didn't get proper counselling, but I was in the
7 care of doctors. But it wasn't the right kind of care, I
8 guess, to help me actually leave. So I got it in my mind
9 that if I met somebody else and I saw what a real person or
10 a real man treated, the way a real man treated a woman,
11 like in a nice way, would motivate me to leave the other
12 person. So that was my motivation for accepting an invite
13 from a stranger, from a strange man who said nice things.

14 And I'm Catholic. He was Catholic, so I
15 thought, you know, people of faith have, you know, they're
16 peaceful type people and, you know, I wasn't going to be
17 dangerous. And I made it clear to him that I wasn't
18 interested in anything sexual or romantic. It was just pure
19 friendship, and I wasn't even trying to meet him in person.
20 It was just -- but he sort of kept pushing to meet.
21 Eventually we did. And even then I always told him that it
22 was purely platonic and that I wasn't interested in
23 anything with him.

24 And -- so we would hang out. You know, I
25 went to his place a couple of times, and every single time

1 I had firm boundaries to not -- for him not to do anything
2 to me, which he kind of, you know, abided by. So he gained
3 my trust that way.

4 But initially he did lie. He did say that
5 his job was to be a modelling agent, and his pickup line
6 was you look like somebody I just worked with, a model I
7 just worked with. And right away I knew that was a lie
8 because my self-esteem is too low, I know I don't look like
9 a model, so it has to be a lie. But also it also sounds
10 like what you say to somebody if you just picked them up.
11 And I don't know. I just -- I just saw right through that.

12 But I guess just my own stupidity to not
13 realize that a man who lies to you right off the bat is
14 somebody you shouldn't keep talking to; but I did. And
15 throughout some of our conversations I found him to be very
16 pushy and a little bit toxic, the way he made me feel
17 sometimes.

18 But, you know, it just seems like I
19 ignored all my -- all the red flags, you know, and that's
20 part of what being vulnerable is, is that unless you've had
21 the right kind of therapy or education or even training to
22 be aware of what a red flag is and to know what to do about
23 it, you know, you just see the stop signs and you just
24 speed on through.

25 And anyway, so on one occasion he invited

1 me over to watch a soccer game, and I -- immediately I said
2 you know what you want is -- is to sleep with me. And
3 that's why you're inviting me. And no, I don't want that.
4 And specifically I don't -- I don't want you -- I don't
5 want to be in your bed or -- that's all you want, and I
6 said no. And he like, no, no, no, it's not like that.

10 So he -- the way he said hello to me with
11 his hug, it was very sexual in nature. And I -- and that
12 confused me and threw me off, off track. And from that
13 point forward I was also triggered because I was not
14 expecting that -- that contact, that kind of contact. I'd
15 been raped in the past. I was abused as a child. And in
16 fact not only had I been raped in the past, I've been raped
17 multiple times in the past as well. So yes, it was
18 triggering for me for him to do that to me. And I was
19 confused and I froze and I didn't understand what was
20 happening. I didn't understand where things went from we're
21 friends and all of a sudden it's sexual.

22 And my previous history of trauma kind of
23 put me at a disadvantage in defending myself because when I
24 was abused as a kid I wasn't asked for consent. Things -- I
25 was ordered to do things. So I learned to just obey, you

1 know, or comply. And it was by somebody with authority over
2 me. So when I was 16 I experienced statutory rape, and that
3 relationship was exploitative in nature. So when I said no
4 it was not allowed, otherwise it would be sort of
5 psychological silent treatments and mad and being mad and
6 whatever, so on and so forth, so I really couldn't say no.

7 So I was conditioned to not -- to not have
8 my no be dismissed, my feelings not being taken into
9 consideration and my desires not being necessarily
10 important or relevant in a sexual scenario.

When I was 20 I was at a party with a co-worker, and even though we were sexual I was not intending on having sex with him. I ended up passing out in his bed because I was going to spend the night. I couldn't drive, and while I was unconscious he undressed me and started raping me, and the rape was so violent that I woke up in pain, and he was -- he was hurting me quite a bit.

18 And knowing his history of battery with
19 his girlfriends, I was scared to fight or say no. I thought
20 he would actually force me, and I knew I had zero chance,
21 especially because I was so, so drunk, which I didn't even
22 recall drinking that much either, so I was worried that I'd
23 been drugged.

24 And so the only thing I could do to make
25 the pain stop was to literally act and pretend like I was

1 enjoying it, so maybe it would be over sooner.

2 And between the trauma of that and the
3 drunkenness of everything else, it actually stayed, it kind
4 of programmed me to always act that way because later on
5 that year when I was in an attempted rape situation, I did
6 the exact same thing with the pretending to love everything
7 at the same time when I was saying, let me go, because this
8 person was holding me tight, and he looked at me like I was
9 crazy because I was saying, no, I have to leave. I don't
10 want this. Don't do this. Don't take my shirt off. Don't do
11 this. Yet I'm sort of like acting like I'm enjoying
12 everything.

13 And it was just all trauma reaction, just
14 from before.

15 So you know, it happens again, and you
16 know, there's other times, there's so many times of rape.
17 My son was conceived in rape later after that, and I said
18 no so many times again, and I was ignored.

19 So when this time around came and I said
20 no ahead of time, I said no, I couldn't figure out how to
21 get him off of me. I couldn't figure out how to tell him to
22 stop and to get away from me because the fact that he had
23 his hands on me, he was all over me, that kind of prevented
24 me from thinking properly. And I would say things like I
25 don't think I'm ready for this because that's -- I remember

1 that's something that worked once, and it didn't work.

2 Then I thought, well maybe if I get him to
3 go get a condom he'll stop touching me and then I can just
4 leave or, you know, get a break. Think, you know, just stop
5 being around me or grabbing me. But he refused my requests
6 for that as well.

7 When he -- he wanted to penetrate me, I
8 kept saying, like I didn't say no, but I kept saying, wait.
9 I don't know why I said wait instead of no, but that's all
10 I could think of. And I blocked him with my body so he
11 wouldn't be able to do that, but he kept trying and I kept
12 blocking him till he finally managed to do it anyway.

13 And then instead of saying -- because at
14 that point I was -- I was -- mostly just repeating myself.
15 It was just like, you need a condom, you need a condom.
16 That's all I could get out. That was my way of saying get
17 away from me, like literally stop what you're doing, get
18 away from me. I didn't really -- I didn't want to have sex,
19 but it was just my way of getting him to be off of me.
20 Because no, obviously it didn't work. I already told him I
21 wasn't interested in sex. I already said I wasn't ready.
22 You know, I already tried different things. And that never
23 worked. He didn't care about what I wanted, so I thought
24 well maybe if I say, you should protect yourself, maybe
25 he'll care about himself.

1 But the police took that as oh no, that
2 means consent because that lets him know that you want to
3 have sex. I'm like, well, still he's not allowed to have
4 sex with me without a condom if I'm saying you need a
5 condom.

6 The thing is is that when I kept saying
7 that and he didn't get off of me I was getting ready to
8 push him off of me, physically push him off of me. It was -
9 - it's hard to know how long it lasted. It seemed like a
10 minute. Maybe it was two or three. I don't know, but the
11 point is is that he actually finished. He pulled out. He
12 finished. And then to me that's a completion of the act.

13 But the way the police said it's like well
14 he did what you said. He got out. And I'm like, no, he
15 didn't get out. He finished is what he did. So that made me
16 really angry because he did not do what I asked. Instead he
17 just finished what he was doing and he was done with it.

18 But the way they construed that is saying
19 that he did what I asked, which wasn't -- which he did not
20 do that.

1 were normal. Like I had no idea about anything. I never
2 reported a rape. I'd even thought I'd never been raped
3 because every single experience I had, they all matched
4 each other. So I'm thinking, this is how things are.

5 I thought that rape was when somebody
6 pulled you off of, you know, from the street and -- from
7 the bushes and some random stranger came to you with a
8 knife. I didn't understand what date rape was or intimate
9 partner whatever. I didn't know any of that stuff.

10 So I was confused, and I told the police
11 that the whole thing confused me. But they took that as
12 well I didn't know if I liked it, which that's not what I
13 said. I said I didn't know why I wasn't fighting. I didn't
14 understand. It took trauma counselling to understand why I
15 didn't fight, why my actions were all pre-programmed from
16 my previous experience. And I explained this to the police
17 because I went back after a year because even back then
18 they didn't tell me what -- after I left like 20 messages
19 and had advocates left messages, they wouldn't even get
20 back to us.

21 I made a complaint to the police that they
22 would not call me back, and finally that's how I got a
23 second interview to find out what happened.

24 And this is where they told me that they
25 had dismissed everything, that they declared it unfounded,

1 that it was all consensual. And that hurt because I thought
2 if I couldn't get the guy or the police to believe me, how
3 can I ever be safe? How can a no ever mean anything?

4 So that second interview was extremely
5 traumatic because the police decided to, reminded me a lot
6 of my abusive relationship where things get twisted around.
7 They do something that apparently looks like a nice thing
8 that they're doing, but in reality what they're doing is
9 the opposite.

10 So the police would say, well I'm taking
11 two hours of my time. Like I'm -- he would say I must or we
12 are or I am, he called it a serious -- crime investigator
13 or something like that. Serious crimes. So he was doing a
14 nice thing.

15 Like he's saying he didn't even have to
16 sit down with me and explain anything to me, but he was
17 doing -- what he was doing was really nice. But then he
18 turned around and said that this guy, what he did to me was
19 -- made him maybe a jerk and that he wouldn't like it if
20 his sister dated him, but what he did wasn't illegal.

21 And he also said that even though they
22 believed me, they also believed him, and that they thought
23 that what he said to me is not what they wrote in the
24 report. What he said to me was that there was not enough
25 evidence to conclude that it was non-consensual, which in a

1 way makes sense.

I'm thinking, all right, well you know, whatever. You do what you do and that makes sense. But in the report they wrote it was consensual. And that was a huge violation of me because, well just for so many reasons because that one thing gave me nightmares.

7 I would have nightmares that I was getting
8 raped, and I would think in my dream, oh, I have to say
9 specific words; otherwise the police won't believe I didn't
10 want this. Like think other things, whether it's I don't
11 want this or -- or wait or anything that seems hesitant,
12 it's not enough. Like hesitancy is not -- no. And it
13 doesn't matter that it's not yes, but it's not no, and what
14 they want is no.

15 But what I know now is that legally
16 speaking, that doesn't even hold water in a court, the fact
17 that you didn't say no. That you need is an affirmative
18 concern -- consent. But that's not the way they
19 investigated things. Those were not the questions they
20 asked me. They didn't say, how did you say yes? Or I bet
21 you anything they didn't even ask the guy, how did you get
22 her to say yes?, because I never said yes.

23 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm. Well in
24 that case too like -- you're saying what they want to hear
25 is no, but they don't think about the danger that could put

1 the woman in in saying no, in getting more violent.

2 MS. A.V.: It's true.

3 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Like it sounded
4 like you had some solid defence mechanism going because
5 you've experienced before that you were trying to ease him
6 off. And that's not consenting, that's protecting yourself
7 from being more badly hurt.

8 MS. A.V.: And the thing is is that none of
9 this defence is mental. Everything is all instinctual. And
10 that's why when in the moment things are happening, I'm
11 trying to think, and none of it makes sense.

12 Like when I was raped in October, I did
13 feel that I couldn't run because it was late at night. I
14 was wearing heels. I was drunk. He was strong. He would
15 catch me. He wasn't drunk. How do I know that he's not
16 going to freak out if I start saying stop, stop, stop, I
17 don't want this or whatever? How do I know if I let it
18 known that I think I'm getting raped, how do I know he's
19 not going to freak out and kill me in a panic? Because men
20 do that.

21 I actually read a recent court thing where
22 they're sentencing somebody because that's exactly what he
23 did. He wanted to have sex with a girl, but he didn't know
24 how to do it. She freaked out and he killed her. It
25 happens. So it's not -- it's not unbelievable to think that

1 a woman in that situation might fear for her life or her
2 safety.

3 And it happened again when in October I
4 was at a party, and this man who I'd never met in my life,
5 I was even scared of him, and I brought an ex-boyfriend of
6 mine to the party. Like I arrived there by myself but left
7 because I felt so unsafe because that man was there, that I
8 wanted to get like reinforcements from somebody that I
9 could trust.

When we -- after drinking some me and --
well I went out to have a smoke and that guy went out there
with me. And that's where he kissed me, but he did not give
me any warning. I did not give him any indication that I
was interested in him. He just did it. And because it was
an aggressive move that he just like I know how -- how
someone -- when someone's abusing you or wants to abuse you
they test you to see how you're going to react, to see
whether you're going to fight them or whether you're going
to let them. And that's what that was. He was testing me.

20 So the fact that I knew that he was
21 testing me, it made me even more scared, but it also made
22 me feel defeated because I knew that the only way to --
23 like basically I was already there like with a grizzly
24 bear. You know, you're already in danger. You're already
25 there. You could run, but you better run fast. But you know

1 they're going to catch you, and that's how I felt. I
2 thought, I can't do this. I thought I can't keep doing
3 this, keep fighting these people off. And I shut down. So
4 instead of running or fighting, I shut down. But even so,
5 even in my I guess psychologically -- psychological state
6 of defeat, of being defeated, I still fought.

18 So unfortunately, because of my
19 experience, I knew how to answer that question. And they
20 asked, the police asked me if I'd been drinking, and I
21 said, yes, and I told them how much. But I was not making a
22 claim that I didn't remember anything because alcohol's a
23 double-edged sword. Yes, it can be a defence for being too
24 drunk to consent, but it can also be a defence, well if
25 you're too drunk and you're not remembering, you're

1 blacking out, how do you know you didn't consent?

2 So they're -- I did not black out and I
3 did not -- and I did remember everything. So that's not
4 what I was saying. What I was saying is that it does impair
5 your ability to reason, to have good judgement, and to make
6 good decisions, and decisions that I needed to be making
7 was like to leave the party.

I did try to leave the party before things got out of hand, but my ex-boyfriend, he'd actually gone off into a separate room and went to sleep and he didn't -- I couldn't get him to wake up. I couldn't get him to wake up. So I felt stuck and that I couldn't leave the party.

13 This time around the police did not ask me
14 if he threatened me, but he did, and the threat was you're
15 next. That was the threat, those were his words: You're
16 next, it's your turn. Because like I said, I was at a
17 friend's birthday party, and her and him got involved. She
18 took him to a bathroom to do whatever in there, and when he
19 came out he said: You're next.

20 But prior to that when they had started
21 getting sort of intimate in the couch while I was there,
22 they were interrupted by somebody at the door. He came at
23 me and he tried to do things to me, and that's when I
24 pushed him off with my feet, like with my legs because he
25 was kneeling, so I pushed him off, like literally kicked

1 him away. I never said no, but kicking somebody in the head
2 to stop him from doing things to you, I think that's --
3 that's probably more no than no.

4 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

5 MS. A.V.: But when he came back the second
6 time and said you're next, and then she didn't know what
7 had happened, she just thought everybody was having fun.
8 She's like, great, yeah, do it, do it, do it! She didn't
9 know that I was not consenting, that I did not want any of
10 that. She didn't -- she was way gone anyways.

11 So inadvertently, she contributed to what
12 he was doing to me, and that's how between -- she sat next
13 to me between the two of them. They trapped me, and I felt
14 trapped, and I felt defeated and I felt like I didn't know
15 what to do to get out of the situation because now, on top
16 of it, I was scared that my ex-boyfriend was going to walk
17 in on everything and think that I was part of it, which I
18 wasn't.

19 But on the other hand, I wanted it to
20 stop, so that would be good too, but then I'd have to deal
21 with him freaking out, and I couldn't deal with that
22 either, so.

23 I tried to push his head away from what he
24 was doing to me, just push him away, but all I kept
25 thinking too was just like -- this doesn't look good at

1 all. Nobody's going to believe me that I don't want any of
2 this. Nobody's going to believe me.

3 And that -- and my -- like my previous
4 experience with the police interfered with my ability to
5 protect myself that time as well. So their actions caused
6 actual damage to me seven years later, because they get in
7 your head.

8 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

9 MS. A.V.: And instead of protecting me,
10 they disarmed me. Instead of giving me something to protect
11 myself, but they disarmed me by not believing me, my no.
12 And the culture as well that they are basing their, I don't
13 know, judgements or their gut instincts on a culture that's
14 very sexually permissive. Nobody -- I felt like they
15 thought that it was completely plausible that a woman would
16 be all for and ready and available for whatever the guy
17 wants.

18 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

19 MS. A.V.: Like that, I felt that, like the
20 myths surrounding women, and I suppose our sexuality or
21 something or -- were sort of used against me because if I
22 say, in 2010 if I say no, I'm not going there to do that,
23 and yet that's the first thing he does when I get there,
24 and the police found it completely plausible that I would
25 switch my mind from the moment I entered the door, like how

1 does that even make sense? It doesn't. It doesn't make any
2 sense whatsoever. But to them it did.

3 And that's related to, like I said, to
4 myths about how men and women deal with each other, and --
5 which again are complete myths and also how I suppose women
6 are there for -- to please men.

7 And yet their mind, their mindset was on
8 this is all consensual. But what they don't -- they did not
9 do an unbiased appraisal of the situation because yes,
10 there's a side that says, oh, maybe the guy just wanted to,
11 you know, seduce her or whatever, and because she didn't
12 fight and it was a misunderstanding and they're thinking,
13 oh well, it's personal, right? Sure, maybe it could be
14 that. It wasn't, but maybe it could be that.

24 You don't know what's happening, and
25 police in their training should know that this is one way

1 that offenders operate. They move very quickly so that the
2 woman doesn't know how to react. She doesn't know what's
3 happening. She doesn't know what to do, and by the time
4 she's sort of figured out what's happening, it's over and
5 done with. He's done what he's needed to do.

6 And that was the reality because that's
7 what this man did. He was an online predator who found
8 women: Facebook, Plenty of Fish, different places. And what
9 he did to them was even worse because I was not the kind of
10 person who was interested in modelling or acting. But what
11 he did to the other women is he presented himself to them
12 with different aliases and he promised them auditions.

13 And for -- whether it was, I don't know,
14 commercials or TV, but he said, mostly porn. And that's how
15 he would get them into -- into sexual situations. And
16 that's -- and he -- so he filmed everything for them, and
17 that's how they were able to catch him because there was
18 proof of what he did to them.

19 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

20 MS. A.V.: But so when I presented them --
21 him to the police, I presented a man who lied about his --

22 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Occupation?

23 MS. A.V.: Occupation. About his name, and
24 the line he used on me is the line he used on all those
25 women. And I knew that he was a fraud, and like I said, I

1 had my own issues as to why I continued to be with them,
2 but I'm the victim. They're the police. They're the ones
3 that ought to be like wait a minute, yeah, that's a red
4 flag. That they didn't follow up on his occupation, so they
5 could have caught him on the job lie. They could have
6 caught him on how -- his MO, which was online.

7 And they had every -- like they had the
8 opportunity to examine his online whatever activity. They
9 could have caught him earlier, and then all those other
10 women would have been spared what it was. But at the end of
11 the day I'm only one woman and they don't care about one
12 woman. They only care about catching a guy who's already
13 had a serious history of crime.

14 So really I feel like -- well even though
15 he did it to 20 different women than me, they only had
16 enough evidence to convict him on five charges. So that's
17 what they like to do. They like to bundle everything up. So
18 I feel like I'm devalued. I'm worth one-tenth or one-
19 twentieth of a person. Because what they should be doing
20 for one woman they're doing it for 20.

21 And in this case, with the Inquiry it's
22 even worse for Indigenous women because it's not 20's not
23 enough, 10's not enough. Maybe that might be for different
24 races, but for Indigenous women it's 50, it's 100, it's
25 200, and then they'll do something.

1 And that's the devaluation that -- and
2 that is -- that's how I feel. Like I'm one-twentieth, one-
3 200th of a person. That's my value to the police, and
4 really that's -- they're the ones out there whose job it is
5 to protect people from violence. It's nobody else's job.

6 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

7 MS. A.V.: And I'm scared. You know, after
8 having gone through that in 2010 and then now again, part
9 of me is not sure what my -- what's in my future because I
10 thought I was -- I might be lucky I'm still alive, but the
11 statistics aren't good, you know, for people like me.

12 So I have to keep fighting and I have to
13 keep -- I have to get myself stronger, and I need help to
14 do that. And it's like trying to get blood from a rock to
15 get any help that's meaningful or what you need because
16 that's the other thing: the help that's out there, it's
17 very regimented.

18 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

19 MS. A.V.: You know, it's like we'll pay
20 for your eyeglasses, but we won't pay for physiotherapy.
21 Well, what I need is physiotherapy, all right? They won't
22 pay for that. That's not covered by anything or anybody.

23 So I need physical strength so I can last
24 a day at the job, you know. You know, those are all what
25 mental health people call protective factors.

I need education on self-management and I
need support to do that. And that's not covered by anybody,
so I have to pay for it, which again, I can't afford. So
when I asked them, look, if I'm physically strong and I can
handle my pain, then I might be able to handle a job. And
they're like, oh right, well those things are health
issues; those are not work issues. We can't pay for that.
So they said no.

15 And that's the trap. That's going back to
16 that poverty trap.

17 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Would you say
18 that your diagnosis of fibromyalgia came following
19 extensive trauma?

20 MS. A.V.: Yeah. I had -- the worst fibro
21 pain that I had was while I was working. So that would have
22 been 2010 in the middle of all of this.

23 And even before, because like I said, I
24 already have -- like this was sort of like a wake-up call
25 for me in 2010. That was finally the first time that I was

1 able to get some rape counselling, and I understood a lot
2 of the trauma behind that sort of thing.

3 But the pain was already there. And as
4 soon as I stopped working the pain subsided, right? Like so
5 now it's more manageable, but that's only because I --
6 there's no -- well there's no work stress. I sleep a lot.
7 I'm in bed a lot, you know? If I was to have a full-time
8 job and my kid, I'm a single mom, the pain would come back,
9 right? And that's the thing.

10 And it's -- well, the pain's one part of
11 it. You know, suck it up. What I can't suck up is fog,
12 mental fog, right? I can't suck up that. So -- I used to
13 volunteer. I got fired from volunteer positions because I
14 couldn't do that job either. I couldn't show up there on
15 time. I couldn't do the math, simple math, like selling two
16 hot dogs together. I couldn't -- my working memory wasn't
17 there. I'd forget what things cost. And so I couldn't --
18 yeah, I couldn't do that because the job was supposed to be
19 in the kitchen or -- and I couldn't work with people
20 because I was so sensitive about what they thought of me or
21 they were criticizing me.

22 And that was what I suffered, the trauma I
23 suffered through at work because they were male bullies,
24 and they scrutinized me literally to death, and then they
25 fired me. So after seven years of exemplary work there they

1 just -- They're like, yeah, we're done with you. You're no
2 good.

3 So it's been a real uphill battle, and I
4 feel like this past year, it's just gone down again. And
5 now that I can't even live with my son, like I said, he's
6 gotten into trouble. And because of his issues that I don't
7 really want to get into too much, I'll just say that I
8 can't live with him. And the reason I can't live with him
9 is because he's not allowed to live with me in my building.
10 If I lived somewhere else, I could be with him. It's just
11 not -- he just can't be in that building.

12 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Is it a no go on
13 the address?

14 MS. A.V.: Yeah.

15 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay. That's all
16 I need.

17 MS. A.V.: Yeah.

18 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: How old is your
19 son?

20 MS. A.V.: He's 15.

21 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay. So he's
22 with your grandparents -- or your parents?

23 MS. A.V.: His -- yeah. Yeah, my mom, so
24 his grandma. And I go back to -- the only reason I can't
25 live with my son is because I'm poor. If I had enough money

1 to pay for market rent I'd just move out and be with my
2 baby, right? He's 15, but he's still my baby.

3 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

4 MS. A.V.: And -- but it's that whole
5 poverty issue.

6 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Yeah.

7 MS. A.V.: Right? And with the whole
8 housing crisis now, it's even worse because even if I had
9 the money I don't even know if there's rentals out there.
10 There's so much discrimination, you know. There's so much
11 discrimination against people who don't work or who have
12 disabilities or who are on income assistance.

13 And the way that system's set up, it's a
14 nightmare because you have to disclose to them all these
15 private things. You have to get an intent to rent. You have
16 to get your landlord to sign all of this stuff. And there's
17 a lot of logistics that I haven't been able to figure out
18 how to get a lawyer, or not a lawyer, a landlord to not
19 rent it to somebody else while I go get the Ministry things
20 set up. Like --

21 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: It's very deficit
22 based system.

23 MS. A.V.: What's that?

24 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: It's a deficit
25 based system, and it's hard to get anyone outside of that

1 system to work with you.

2 MS. A.V.: And, you know, part of me
3 doesn't blame the landlords. Who wants to deal with the
4 Ministry? I don't want to deal with the Ministry, right?
5 It's not -- And yeah, I'm, because of what happened I am in
6 danger of being evicted. The landlords where I am are nice.
7 I don't -- they may be not aware of my situation or they've
8 got other fish to fry, but I feel like I'm on borrowed
9 time.

10 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Are you in
11 subsidized housing right now? And is there a time limit or
12 do you have long-term housing with, is it B.C. Housing?

13 MS. A.V.: No, it's [Housing Organization].

14 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay.

15 MS. A.V.: So -- so -- like they -- they
16 have grounds to kick me out. Don't tell them that, but they
17 do. And like I said, they haven't like because they just
18 haven't, right?

19 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Do you want me to
20 remove that name from the record?

21 MS. A.V.: Sure.

22 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Yeah. Do you have
23 a police file number for when you made the report in
24 October 2017?

25 MS. A.V.: Oh. I can get it. I don't right

1 now, but I can get it.

2 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: That's okay. It's
3 good information to have should I flag this with our legal
4 team and they look further into things because then they
5 can like actually look at what the police may have done
6 from now.

7 One thing I would like to get you
8 information for is the family information liaison unit
9 because they might be able to lend you some support as well
10 in contacting the police and seeing like have they actually
11 done any work in terms of any of what you've already
12 reported? You said that you went to the hospital. You did
13 all of the investigative, the rape kit and everything. So I
14 want to get you connected with them so that they can help
15 you with that.

16 One thing I just, I wanted to make a
17 comment on is you said that you wanted, you need help to
18 get stronger. First of all I want to acknowledge how strong
19 I think you already are because every word that's come out
20 of your mouth in this session has been so eloquent.

21 You even talked about like how very
22 educated you are. It's very clear. And you've kind of made
23 your story come out in such a flow that, you know, really,
24 I acknowledge like the way you just -- it rolls off of you.
25 And that only comes from really, really deep inner

1 strength, and so I wanted to acknowledge it.

2 MS. A.V.: Thank you. Thank you.

3 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So in terms of
4 getting stronger, what do you think that you need to do
5 that?

6 MS. A.V.: Well I mean definitely the --
7 What my plan was, like I said, it was because I contacted a
8 pain clinic, and I did -- I took all their recommendations
9 from the free stuff that they could give me, but we reached
0 a point where the rest of their recommendations were for me
1 to take their paid classes and also physiotherapy so I
2 could learn how to do the non-pain causing exercises.

13 I got depressed again, and so I had --
14 there's still some courses I could take that were free, but
15 I was so depressed I couldn't even make it to the sessions,
16 and then they started to bill me. Like if you miss a
17 session they still bill you like \$75 or whatever. And I'm
18 like, no, I should just cancel that because I can't afford
19 it, and they were nice enough and they waived that.

So it was -- you could tell that that
clinic named Change Pain, they're phenomenal. I love them.

22 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: What is it
23 called?

24 MS. A.V.: Change Pain. So they've been
25 very good to me and they've helped me out a lot with, like

1 I said, everything that they've -- It's sort of like a new
2 thing in B.C., and they're trying to advocate a lot for
3 pain management. So they're doing literally business not as
4 usual. And that's sort of what needs to happen in so many
5 ways.

6 And for me, part of my healing -- part of
7 what I need to sort of move forward and just put all of
8 this behind, I feel like I need closure with this issue,
9 with my previous police statements, and now this one. And
10 when I was going through initially I went through a period
11 -- You talk about me being educated. A lot of -- I am not --
12 - I do not have a university degree. I just self-educate
13 through the Internet and whatever research and library I
14 can find.

15 But in the library I found zero
16 information on how police conduct sexual assault cases. I
17 found one book, which is outdated. There was a new version
18 of it, and my case was right there, like literally my case
19 was -- if they'd gone by the book they might have caught
20 him, but they didn't even go by the book.

21 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

22 MS. A.V.: Anyway, so I requested that the
23 Vancouver Public Library get the updated version, so I
24 didn't check back to see if they did or didn't, but they
25 took a note of that.

1 And I -- part of me holds onto this anger
2 against the specific people that handled my case because it
3 was their personal biases and myths and whatever training
4 or non-training that they received that have caused this.

5 I wish that there was a way to hold
6 individual public servants accountable, like -- and what I
7 wish there was because when I tried to Google them, the
8 constable and the inspectors, there's some information on,
9 like for example police complaints or if they're named in
10 news articles you see that.

11 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

12 MS. A.V.: But what I wish there was was
13 like the way doctors have it. They're registered in their
14 College of Physicians. You have where they went to school,
15 who accredited them, where they worked, and blah, blah,
16 blah. Just a public profile, right? They have that for
17 doctors. Well, police people are public servants, and when
18 they mess up my case so much I want -- I want
19 accountabilities. Like who trained who? What -- like and
20 what did they teach you and why didn't you use what they
21 taught you?

22 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm. It's a
23 good recommendation.

24 MS. A.V.: Like just -- like -- And also, I
25 want to know that you've actually solved actual cases. Like

1 what are the cases, because it's a public record for --
2 when you've convicted people.

3 You know, I was able to go online and
4 download the oral decision from the judge that convicted
5 this man in 2016. And everything's all on there obviously.
6 I don't know whether the names of the police people are in
7 there or not, but obviously whoever did work on that, that
8 belongs, they contributed to bringing that to -- to
9 justice. So good. List all the stuff, all your accolades
10 and all the cases you've -- all the people you've put away.

11 You know, like I want to know that you're
12 good at your job because you did not do a good job with
13 mine. So that was one thing that I really wished I had
14 access to. I wish I had access to a lawyer. And even now I
15 want a lawyer right now because I still think that -- I
16 want justice. I do. But I don't know, I do not want to face
17 them myself because of the way they hurt me already when I
18 went to them on my own, I don't want to put myself through
19 that again. I need somebody to protect me from the
20 protectors, so I want a lawyer --

21 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

22 MS. A.V.: -- to advocate for me, someone
23 that knows what they -- what the police people's job are
24 and what the laws are and what my rights are because, yeah,
25 I could do this myself maybe, but it would take me forever

1 and how am I going to go to work, right?

2 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

3 MS. A.V.: That's not my job to be a lawyer
4 for myself, if I want to be protective in society. So
5 that's one thing I found missing like in a grand scale. No
6 woman ever gets legal advice before making a police report
7 for their violence, whatever violence was done to them.

8 And the other thing that of course I don't
9 get access to, because I did a freedom of request for
10 information, I got a redacted copy of my own statement,
11 which kind of pisses me off because it was my information
12 that I gave them and I'm not allowed to have it, the
13 complete version of that.

14 So it's all any time where I said anything
15 about the offender that got bleeped out, any private
16 information about him. And it's -- and for me I find that
17 so offensive because here he is, he violated my personal
18 integrity, but we're worried about his privacy.

19 The other thing too, part of holding the
20 police accountable is what exactly did they ask him? You
21 know, nobody wants to tell me what his answers were, fine.
22 But I do want to know what the police asked him because it
23 just doesn't seem like they did a proper test to see
24 whether or not he fit the profile of a serial rapist.

25 You know, I think that any time a man gets

1 accused, he should be tested to see if he fits a profile.
2 Instead they -- he is supposed to be treated as he's
3 innocent before proven guilty, but at the same time he's
4 potentially a very dangerous person. So you can't -- when
5 you're investigating you actually do have to play the
6 devil's advocate and you do have to see does this man --
7 does this man's actions match up with offenders -- typical
8 offenders' actions?

9 It's like the MO online predator, yeah,
10 that does. That's one way to doing it. Gaining trust and
11 then turning it around. Yeah, that does it. You know, being
12 asked -- being -- having -- making requests and ignore
13 them? Yeah, that matches up, too. Right? Lying about who
14 you are? Okay. Yeah, that's one. These are all facts that
15 were there in my case. Maybe, you know, if somebody said to
16 me, well, even after we looked at your case there's some
17 legal problems so that we couldn't go forward with it, I'd
18 understand that. But I would still want them to say we
19 screwed up. We had enough to get him here because of the
20 way he --

21 He had already raped women by that point.
22 You know? They should have built a case. They should have
23 had something ongoing on him. They should have talked to
24 women that he talked to. But yeah, they screwed up, and
25 that's what I want. I want them to acknowledge that they

1 screwed up. They had him and they let him go.

2 So all those things weigh -- weigh on me.

3 And my -- my lovely friends tell me, well why can't you
4 just forget about it? I said, look, I did. I forgot about
5 it. I never even healed from it. I just buried it, but look
6 what happened. The news come up and it says oh, look here,
7 here's the big face of your rapist splattered all over TV
8 and the news. And that just shook my world and it --

9 Two weeks later I got raped again. And,
10 you know, so there's just some things that even though you
11 try to forget, you move on, you just say, well let karma
12 deal with it or whomever, they come back until they're
13 properly dealt with. And that was initially what my plan
14 was.

15 I wanted to properly deal with everything,
16 put everything behind me, put everything to bed and then
17 get on with my life and building all those protective
18 factors that doctors say I need to do with having a social
19 system around me, friends, family, work, activities.

20 But that all takes time because every
21 single time I deal with somebody and they break your trust,
22 it makes it difficult.

23 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Do you have any
24 other recommendations that you think the commissioners
25 should know? I think you've given some really solid ones

1 about the police and the accountability.

2 MS. A.V.: Yeah, there's -- yeah, there is
3 one other one.

4 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Sure.

5 MS. A.V.: One of the things that made me
6 really, really upset were some of the numbers thrown around
7 about the -- what do they call it -- the conviction rate,
8 right? They say it's like three per cent or something like
9 that.

10 That's -- that's very embarrassing. It's -
11 - it's intolerable. You take a murder conviction rate, it's
12 higher than that. It needs to -- that needs to be brought
13 up. And just literally whether by law or mandate, I don't
14 care what they have to do, they need to bring it up equal
15 to that murder rate -- conviction rate and because all --
16 all you ever hear from police, whether it's the RCMP or
17 whether it's the city police, it's like oh well, it's he
18 said, she said. Oh, it's tough to investigate. There's so
19 many excuses. But what there really isn't is a will to hold
20 themselves to a higher standard.

21 Like if -- if I had a three per cent
22 closing rate in my job as sales when I was doing sales, I'd
23 be fired.

24 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

25 MS. A.V.: You know, there's a minimum

1 level of productivity that's required out of every worker.
2 There's -- just they're failing, and I just -- Even to just
3 say it and then not do it it's a beginning because it's --
4 no one ever bitches, goes, yeah, I know, it's sad. Yeah,
5 it's bad. But nobody actually makes it be a mandate.

Even if they fail at their mandate I would
take that, but at least have it be a mandate first, right?

8 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

9 MS. A.V.: That's a first step. Then work
10 it up, right? So that's what I would like to see. I would
11 like that -- all those conviction rates mandated to be at
12 an equal level as the murder ones.

13 But for that, for the police definitely,
14 that's the violence part of it, and then the other part of
15 it is the housing side of things where -- that's a big
16 stumbling block in the poverty, in the poverty trap because
17 like I said, in my case right now I feel like how can I
18 focus on -- on building like a life with a job and things
19 like that when, you know, my housing security is in danger,
20 and I can't even live with my own kid?

21 Like his well-being is a priority and it's
22 affecting him that he can't be with me. So that, I need to
23 prioritize that, and like you know, make my own housing
24 first policy, right, my personal housing first policy. And
25 that system is very gated. It's very -- aside from the

1 housing crisis that there's nowhere to live for anybody and
2 it's too expensive, you can't even advocate yourself with
3 building managers or know what their rules are because
4 everybody has different rules and they don't even follow
5 their own rules.

6 And they sort of, B.C. Housing just sort
7 of treats -- treats you like a number, an application, and
8 that's it. And nobody actually takes the time to look at
9 each person and see how to house them. Nobody does that.
10 Yet they have the information who needs housing. But nobody
11 -- it's nobody's job to see where we can fit you, right?

12 I have a transfer request, so from my
13 building, and what needs to happen is somebody somewhere
14 needs to move out so then I can get their place. But
15 there's like all these other homeless people that don't
16 even have a place to live and they are probably going to
17 get that spot.

18 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

19 MS. A.V.: In the meantime there's like
20 hundreds of us who are waiting for transfers. And I just
21 want somebody to look at the transfer people and just say
22 let's switch you. We don't need to wait. I mean, we don't -
23 - Because those are open spaces that can't be opened or
24 unoccupied because there's something else going on here,
25 which has nothing to do with us.

1 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Yeah.

2 MS. A.V.: But it's nobody's job right now
3 to do that, to say, oh look, in B.C. Housing here's a
4 registry of hundreds of people who are just waiting to
5 move. Let's just switch them with amongst all the
6 buildings, and then that waiting list is going to go down.

7 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: That's pretty
8 solid, yeah.

9 Look, there are a lot of things that make
10 so much sense, and you're just wondering why -- why isn't
11 it happening?

12 MS. A.V.: You know, my thing is look, just
13 give me access. I'll do it myself. And that was -- that's
14 my other thing. I just wish that the whole Freedom of
15 Information was there, was -- and not as gated as it is
16 because -- Maybe I don't need to know the building
17 manager's name, but it'd be sure nice to know their email,
18 like building manager at this building dot com. Right?

19 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Yeah.

20 MS. A.V.: And so I say, look, this is who
21 I am. This is me and my kid. This is our life. This is, you
22 know, what our life is like. Please, if you have something
23 come up, remember us. That's all I'm asking for.

24 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

25 MS. A.V.: So -- So -- anyway, so I was

1 just -- with some of the services that I connect with, you
2 know, I float around some ideas. Like well how about a
3 housing fair, just so that everybody can meet each other?
4 Like the people who are offering housing meet, or give the
5 people an opportunity to advocate for themselves with the
6 people that make the decisions and have some movement that
7 way. So that idea's already gone out there.

8 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

9 MS. A.V.: Right? But what I'm dealing with
10 right now in addition to my own stuff, I'm helping, as I
11 was saying before, I'm helping my friend [A.] who's given a
12 statement already.

13 And her situation is that she's homeless
14 and she's been staying with me until something happens, but
15 she -- that situation's getting sort of to the end of its -
16 - its sustainability there because I'm not allowed to have
17 her over. I'm in subsidized housing.

18 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Guests can only
19 stay for so long.

20 MS. A.V.: That's right.

21 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And it could put
22 your housing at jeopardy to have her there.

23 MS. A.V.: Well, that's what I mean. That's
24 what I mean. I already qualify for that, if they figure it
25 out and if they decide to do something about it.

1 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Yeah.
2 MS. A.V.: Right? So not only is she
3 homeless, I'm already in danger of becoming homeless. Not
4 just because of her situation but because of my other stuff
5 that I have going on. So it's combined. Now there's
6 multiple things.

7 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

8 MS. A.V.: And I've been helping her to
9 advocate for herself because her situation, she's in crisis
10 right now, and her human rights were violated. And what
11 I've noticed about her is that her ability to find housing
12 for herself is -- it's being obstructed by the injustice,
13 the weight of the injustice of what was done for her.

14 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

MS. A.V.: So the fact that it's so difficult for her to get some peace on the justice side of it, she hasn't been able to devote as much time or energy into asking for housing because every time you ask for a house, every time I try to make an appointment for her there's a chance she might not show up because she's too angry, too tired. She's got disabilities and like basically her disabilities are my disabilities. We have the same similar -- that's why we get along so well.

24 And -- yeah -- it's -- it's been hard for
25 me as well, and like I've noticed some of the flaws in the

1 system, like more so with her with regards to housing than
2 with anything because, you know, my situation's I need a
3 transfer, but I have a home. Well, she's in absolute
4 homelessness, and there's not even room in the shelters for
5 her. And they're not willing to pay for a hotel for her
6 either.

7 So how is she going to survive on the
8 streets with her kids? And then that's the other part,
9 they're going to take them away if she's homeless for long
10 and in the streets. So. And this was all created by housing
11 people already in the system. This wasn't created by some
12 random guy in, you know, whatever.

13 It was -- it was created by the people at
14 V.N.H. And the lady there that kicked her out, she had no
15 oversight. When we asked for oversight we were denied. I
16 went there. [A.] just stormed off. She was just crying. It
17 was too much for her. So I had to speak for her, and I sat
18 there and I talked to other property managers who are equal
19 to that property manager. But they have no oversight. They
20 can do whatever they want and nobody tells them. They don't
21 have a superior or a supervisor or whoever that is doesn't
22 care or got fired or I don't know what happened. But they
23 are unwilling to make themselves accountable as well.

24 And -- and I found that very scary because
25 that really opened up my eyes to the fact that anybody in

1 the system for the B.C. Housing and the affordable housing,
2 we think that we have security housing, but it's not
3 because anybody could come in and kick them out for any
4 reason whatsoever. They can make things up. They could do
5 whatever they want, which is what happened here. And to
6 pump up numbers perhaps, you know, to say oh, we've housed
7 all these people, you know, to --

It's no use if somebody's there 15 years.

9 It's like we don't care about helping one person for 15
10 years. We prefer to house hundreds of people every two
11 years.

12 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

MS. A.V.: That looks better. Right?

14 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: But they're not
15 looking at the statistics of where they've moved on to.

MS. A.V.: Or why or what happened to them
after.

18 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

19 MS. A.V.: So what's happening in that
20 situation is people are getting evicted without them
21 already having new housing, and they're being put into
22 homelessness. And -- and it's not just people, it's
23 families because I know of two families that -- not just my
24 friend [A.], but I know of another -- another. And then
25 [A.] told me about one -- somebody else, so that's three

1 families that I know of now personally who were all of them
2 evicted without already having somewhere else to go.

3 And I'm just thinking that should just be
4 illegal. You cannot evict somebody into homelessness. No
5 reason. Zero. Zero reason whatsoever. Especially families.
6 So that's the biggest issue that we have here besides the
7 issues that this -- this is a federal commission?

8 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

9 MS. A.V.: Well, housing is a local issue.
10 So when the federal government isn't paying attention to
11 what the local municipalities do in terms of providing
12 housing for its people, there's an issue there as well.

13 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

14 MS. A.V.: Because yes, I know this is
15 Vancouver and yes, there's B.C., but then there's the
16 federal and if the federal government cares about
17 individual people, then that does mean having to deal with
18 the local governments.

19 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

20 MS. A.V.: And if the City of Vancouver
21 can't pay for my friend [A.] to have somewhere to live, I
22 mean I'm not talking about this commission per se, but --
23 and if between all the governments, between the city and
24 the province and the federal government, they all need to
25 figure out a place for her to not be there in the streets.

1 This is Canada. She got evicted in a snowy, snowy time.

2 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

3 MS. A.V.: Yeah, it's -- I don't understand
4 how that's allowed to happen at all. And you know, that's
5 the worst part, it didn't even need to happen. All you have
6 to do is prevent people from evicting people into
7 homelessness and you've saved yourself that headache.

8 In the meantime, yeah, I don't know what
9 we're going to do because -- this is the other part, and
10 this is how it's affected me. When she got evicted, and
11 immediately I said, no, I need to help you. I can't stand
12 to have people that I know be homeless because I've lost my
13 house so many times, not just through the immigration. Like
14 I was a kid. I didn't ask for it. I lost all my stuff
15 there.

16 I lost my house again in 2010 and then I
17 had to move out of my expensive three-bedroom. Now I might
18 lose this place. Like I know what it means to lose your
19 home. And so it really hit home, you know, what this means,
20 what this means for her. So I wanted to help her.

21 We had one day -- she was evicted on a
22 Thursday. On Saturday we called the Ministry of Children
23 and Families to help us house her for a night because at
24 the time I was thinking I can't put myself and my son in
25 risk of losing the one place we have.

1 So at that time I was just like, you know,
2 I can't really have them come here, but you know, maybe
3 we'll call, we'll get help. And innocently I just thought
4 they'd help us. They refused to help. They just said, oh,
5 we'll just put you in shelters, but because of [A.]'s
6 family makeup, she can't be separated from her adult child.

7 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Yes.

8 MS. A.V.: And they did not care. And they
9 made it look like she was being difficult when she actually
10 wasn't. She's preventing probably -- she's probably saving
11 his life is what she was doing. Like they would never dream
12 of saying to a mom we're going to have to separate you from
13 your three year-old. He's going to have to go into some
14 adult men homeless because he's a boy.

15 Like that doesn't make sense, but when you
16 have somebody with a cognitive disability and other mental
17 health issues the way her son was, and especially with the
18 way he's being protected, because she's taken really good
19 care of him, he wouldn't last, so. So but anyway, so they -
20 - they said to her, no, we won't help you. We only help you
21 by putting you into the shelter.

22 I called back and I said, look, right now
23 she just came to my house to use the phone so we could get
24 help. You guys said no, but now you're putting me in
25 danger, okay? So now it's not just one family; now it's two

1 families because she's there, and if she has nowhere to go
2 I'm not going to tell her, well leave, and literally leave
3 her in the sidewalk. And the lady's like, oh, well you just
4 need to call the police then.

5 And I just thought, are you insane?

6 Because even the police couldn't get [A.] out of her
7 original home when she was being evicted. They had to call
8 the Ministry for help because they weren't allowed to do
9 that. Even the police are not allowed to take somebody
10 physically out of where they live.

11 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

12 MS. A.V.: So the only way they actually
13 managed to get [A.] to leave her apartment was to call the
14 Ministry of Children, have them find her room at the Y, and
15 then she left.

16 But this -- this government lady expected
17 me to do it as well from my house, so it's not just
18 repeating the trauma, but she expected me to do something
19 that even the police themselves couldn't do it -- or sorry,
20 couldn't do because they're not heartless. I'm not
21 heartless.

22 But her answer to me really -- like --
23 well, after I got off the phone with her I cried for an
24 hour because of how she treated me. Right? And this isn't
25 even about [A.] anymore. This is about how this lady

1 treated me. I called her for help and I said I have this --
2 I have this problem, you know. I can't offer my home. I
3 wish I could, but I can't, not at this time.

4 And she's like, oh, well if you don't want
5 her there call the police. And I'm somebody with mental
6 health issues. So if I did that and something happened to
7 [A.], what would happen to me and my mental health and the
8 guilt?

9 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And your previous
10 interactions with the police.

11 MS. A.V.: And -- well then there's that.
12 Like how could she say that to me?

13 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

14 MS. A.V.: And like seriously is the
15 government so hard up for money? All we asked for was one
16 night. Are they so hard up for money that they can't give a
17 homeless person \$150 so they can have somewhere warm to
18 sleep? And not just a person; a family with children.

19 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm. Yes, and
20 she just told me about her situation.

21 MS. A.V.: That's right, so it impacted my
22 ability to help her because when I was treated that way, I
23 felt powerless. I felt dismissed, little, like I couldn't
24 do anything. And I didn't help her for a whole week or two.
25 I had to recover. And in the meantime she's floundering,

1 struggling with her things and whatever, and she had to do
2 it alone because I couldn't even help her. Like the one
3 support she had got shot down by the people --

4 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Well that's the
5 Catch-22, right? Like you know exactly what she's going
6 through, and so you're there saying let me help you, but it
7 takes a toll on you. And --

8 MS. A.V.: That's right. It does -- well
9 I'm happy with the toll if the toll wasn't that people
10 saying stupid things to you or refusing to help when they
11 know they can. And that's -- that's where the injustice is,
12 right?

13 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

14 MS. A.V.: And so that was, both of them,
15 it was MCFD and Income Assistance who together that weekend
16 kind of took us down both.

17 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Yeah.

MS. A.V.: Right? And then the last part
that I noticed was with VACFSS. When -- we thought, again,
innocently that Vancouver Aboriginal Family Services would
actually help out Aboriginal families. We thought that they
were educated and sensitive on the issues that Aboriginal
families go through. And yet the help they offered my
friend was to place his son -- her son in temporary
placement.

1 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.
2 MS. A.V.: And as far as I'm concerned
3 that's equivalent to saying to -- somebody from Jewish
4 descent, would you like to shower in my gas chamber because
5 the trauma and the genocide that's happened to Indigenous
6 families is that. They themselves call it baby snatching.
7 And there's been, the federal cases that have been won
8 because of all the advocacy that's been done and there's
9 all these apologies. There's reconciliation. There's been
10 recognition that --

11 And even in B.C. there was just recently a
12 case, right, where the Ministry took a baby away. Now they
13 have to give it back because they did it for no reason at
14 all. And the help that they're willing to offer my friend
15 is to take her kid away? Like it just -- Of course she hung
16 up on her, but the impact of that, and this is what [A.]
17 may not have told you, is that now she cannot use that as a
18 resource anymore. Those -- what she was supposed to -- what
19 they were supposed to do for her is actually help her find
20 housing.

21 Her problem wasn't that she couldn't take
22 care of her kid or her kid took up so much of her time that
23 she couldn't find housing or that she needed to put him
24 somewhere. That was not her problem. Her problem is I just
25 need somewhere to be. But she no longer could use them as a

1 resource.

2 So a huge thing that I needed help -- like
3 I need help to help her. I couldn't even go to them on her
4 behalf because then she would probably flip me off for
5 trying to go back to them. Right?

6 I don't even know where that came from,
7 why they would offer to take her kid away from her. Like as
8 help. And then to frame it as somehow being helpful. You
9 just don't do that from a -- not from a practical or
10 rational perspective and certainly not from a historical
11 sensitive healing perspective. You don't do it in any way,
12 shape or form.

13 So luckily that's -- she's been homeless
14 now for two months and that was over a month ago. So I
15 said, look, every time she calls for a shelter she cries
16 because they say no. She can't call 20 shelters and cry
17 every single day until she finds -- and you know -- And I
18 can't do it either because they say, well no, the client
19 has to call. I'm nobody. They treat me as nobody.

20 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Yeah.

21 MS. A.V.: I'm not an advocate, even though
22 I'm advocating. So I say, you know what? Go back to VACFSS.
23 I was finally able to create a situation where I could
24 safely say go back to VACFSS, Get them to do the hard work
25 for you because this is hard on you.

1 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

2 MS. A.V.: Right? So she did. But she just
3 left a message and they probably haven't called back. They
4 haven't done anything. It's the weekend. They probably
5 won't do anything until Monday anyways.

14 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

15 MS. A.V.: So anyways, I guess that's
16 pretty much the -- the majority of what I wanted to let the
17 commissioners know, and my sincere hope is that they
18 actually care about doing something differently.

19 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm. Well one
20 thing that I can do too is I'm going to give you my card so
21 that you have my contact information. And if you have
22 anything else that comes up, like the file number that I've
23 asked you for --

24 MS. A.V.: Oh, yeah.

25 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: If I have any

1 other information that I might need to get from you,
2 because I'm probably going to just send this to my boss
3 just to review it to see if there's anything that we should
4 be looking deeper into, because you've brought up a lot of
5 serious issues that you faced. And it can be --

6 MS. A.V.: Yeah, but a lot of different
7 government places, like they all work together to keep you
8 down.

9 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Yeah. And well,
10 we're not part of the government. We're funded by them, but
11 we're independent from the government in this Inquiry. So
12 I'm hoping that they can look at some of what you've had to
13 say because, like I said, it's very eloquently delivered
14 and I think you have a lot of profound things to say, so I
15 hope that -- like it's going to be reviewed by
16 commissioners no matter what, but I think it needs to have
17 a closer look taken at it too.

18 So I want to say thank you for what you've
19 shared today. Is there anything else that I haven't asked
20 you?

21 MS. A.V.: Yeah, probably at this time I
22 don't think so. I think -- I just wanted to make sure that
23 I had my say about [A.]'s situation because it's -- it's --
24 I think like when you talk about profound things, my
25 philosophy is that family is really the best place to --

1 for people to go to for help.

2 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

3 MS. A.V.: Unfortunately a lot of people
4 don't have the families, right, that they need to have.

5 Like I am so blessed. My mom and my
6 brother, they -- I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for
7 them. And when I see my friend with lots of family but not
8 the kind of family that can help her, I can't -- I put
9 myself there as that because families cross office hours.

10 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Yeah.

11 MS. A.V.: They cross needs. It's not just
12 housing or just money or just a food card, you know, or
13 just pay for this. Families do it all, you know? And -- No,
14 families help do it all and they're really the primary care
15 for every single person out there.

16 So supporting families remains the -- and
17 in this case, families in kind, like what you guys were
18 saying, helping people help themselves is great. So that's
19 why there's a lot of frustration. If like -- just let me in
20 your office. I'll do the work myself. I'll fix things and
21 then I'll go away, right? I'm not here to cause trouble for
22 anybody. I'm not here to make work for anybody. I'm just
23 here to -- and like there's the myths that people want to
24 be in their situation and that they don't want to help
25 themselves. It's that their people won't let them. They put

1 barriers for what they need to do. So -- I just want to
2 reiterate that, that it's people, and people and their
3 families and their support network --

4 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Hmm-mmm.

5 MS. A.V.: -- that really feeds people's
6 souls, right, and keeps them going. Yeah. But no, that's
7 it.

8 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay. Well again,
9 thank you very much for everything that you've had to share
10 and for sharing so candidly. It's very much appreciated on
11 behalf of the National Inquiry.

12 It's 5:51. I'm going to shut off the
13 camera.

14 --- Whereupon the statement concluded at 5:51 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.

A. Facione

Antoinette Forcione, Legal transcriptionist