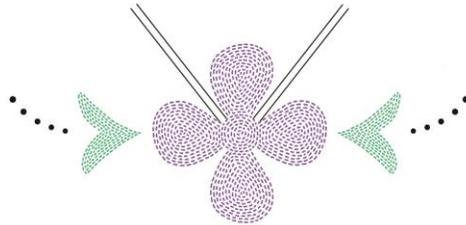


National Inquiry into  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls



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 I Statement Gathering  
Hilton Vancouver Airport Hotel  
Metro Vancouver (Richmond)  
British Columbia**



**PUBLIC**

**Saturday April 7, 2018**

**Statement - Volume 374  
Paula Potter, In relation her cousin Charlene**

**Statement gathered by Frank Hope**

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## II

### NOTE

Where not required by other statute, redactions to this public transcript have been made pursuant to Rule 55 of the Commission's *Legal Path: Rules of Respectful Practice*, which provides for "the discretion to redact private information of a sensitive nature where it is not material to the evidence to be given before distributing the information to the Parties. The National Inquiry will consider the public interest in releasing this type of information against the potential harmful impact on the individual whose personal information is at issue."

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Statement Gatherer: Frank Hope

Documents submitted with testimony: none.

1 Richmond, British Columbia  
2 --- Upon commencing Saturday, April 7, 2018  
3 at 1:58 p.m.

4 MR. FRANK HOPE: My name is Frank Hope.  
5 Today is April 7, 2018. We're in the Sheraton in Richmond,  
6 B.C. and the time is 1:58 p.m. And your name is?

7 MS. PAULA POTTER: (Indigenous language  
8 spoken). My ancestral name is Horse Woman. My white given  
9 name is Paula Potter and my Cree name is Horse Woman and my  
10 Lakota name is Red Heart Woman. I come from the Cree,  
11 Lakota, and Scottish nation, Northern Alberta, Woodland  
12 Cree.

13 MR. FRANK HOPE: And we also have in the  
14 room.

15 MS. HARRIET PRINCE: (Indigenous language  
16 spoken). My Indian name is (Indigenous language spoken).  
17 My clan is Caribou and I originally come from  
18 (indiscernible), Manitoba. I've been residing -- a visitor  
19 here for 31 years in Vancouver. Thank you for asking.  
20 (Indigenous language spoken).

21 MS. ELIZEBETH ADAMS: My name is Elizebeth  
22 Adams from the Muskat (ph) nation. Born and raised in  
23 Vancouver B.C.

24 MR. FRANK HOPE: Okay. Thank you. So,  
25 Paula, what brings you in today and what message do you

1 have for the Commissioners, including any recommendations?

2 MS. PAULA POTTER: I am a family member  
3 and a survivor of the Downtown Eastside of Edmonton and I'm  
4 also a survivor of residential school and '60s group sexual  
5 abuse and physical abuse and mental abuse. I had my  
6 childhood stolen from me and I'm a survivor of the judicial  
7 system that puts our young people in jail instead of  
8 helping us. I'm also a survivor of two suicides, my  
9 husband and my son.

10 Watching our males push through the  
11 judicial system, and so I have -- and then my cousin, Char,  
12 was murdered in the Downtown Eastside.

13 My perpetrators were 13 and 14, and they  
14 were -- their mother was left dead in northern Alberta.  
15 They were left as babies, so they got molested and then  
16 they ended up molesting me.

17 And so I believe that when they found my  
18 auntie, she was naked, so they denied us to bury her. And  
19 then those two little boys didn't have a mother to protect  
20 them. And they got sexually abused and then they passed it  
21 onto [family members] as well. So there's a lot of sexual  
22 abuse, a lot of alcoholism.

23 I just think that in our inner  
24 generational trauma, that drugs get harder next generation  
25 because they're not only carrying their own pain, but

1 they're carrying their mother's and their grandmother's  
2 pain since time of colonization. So I'm here to speak for  
3 the women, the men, myself, and our people.

4                   So I wanted to start, like, I've been  
5 thinking about it for three days now. I wanted to start  
6 with I was a little girl as three years old on the island  
7 in Victoria when my brother was born. And my mother and  
8 father were together. My uncle went to boys' school, my  
9 uncle [name redacted], and I could see pictures of me as a  
10 little girl crying, and everybody in my family says he was  
11 the one sexually abusing us. I don't know.

12                   I think I was five years old and he hung  
13 himself in our house. That was because the counselor at  
14 the boys' school was sexually molesting my uncle. And when  
15 my uncle was released, the counselor kept coming to the  
16 house, picking him up, and taking him, and I think he was  
17 still sexually abusing my uncle.

18                   And my other uncle would come and visit me  
19 when my mom was at work. He would come visit me at night,  
20 and that was when I was three years old. And I would have  
21 to give him oral. And when I was -- I just have, like,  
22 blacked out memories, because it just kept happening.

23                   I remember the room when it first started  
24 and then it jumps to when I was six years old, when my  
25 cousin, who I talked about in the car, he wanted to abuse

1 my family -- a family member who is male. And he would  
2 make me watch porno so I wouldn't hear the sounds. But  
3 being a six-year-old little girl watching porno, it's not  
4 right.

5                   And then his brother -- because my auntie  
6 had two kids that didn't have their mom. His brother liked  
7 us girls, so we'd have to watch porno and then he would  
8 come visit us in our beds when my mom was at work.

9                   My mom thought my grandmother's house was  
10 a good place, but it was a house of torture for us  
11 children. The adults drank, and my uncles and cousins  
12 sexually abused us over and over again.

13                   And then that's where me and Char we would  
14 go hide over in the train tracks. We'd go hide in the  
15 tractor, this tractor lot. That's where we'd go play and -  
16 - Char is my best friend, because we both were getting  
17 abused together. We'd go hide together and that's where we  
18 felt safe in each other's arms.

19                   And then she moved here with her mom, and  
20 her mom was shooting up, marrying for money. She would  
21 shoot up all the time.

22                   My mom didn't shoot up. She would work.  
23 She would work sometimes two jobs, because my white dad  
24 never paid child support. The court system never made him  
25 pay. And my mom also struggled with my grandmother drank a

1 lot.

2                   And we'd get hit when I told my grandma  
3 what my cousins were doing. I got hit and got told that I  
4 was lying, and so I never told my mom, because I was scared  
5 to get hit again.

6                   And then we're in that house, I think, for  
7 two years. [Victim 1] was trapped in that house with those  
8 two boys all her whole life, and [Victim 1] has mental  
9 health. [Victim 1] won't even talk to us. Now, [Victim 2]  
10 doesn't talk to me either. It's really hard to walk this  
11 journey with [family members] not talking to you. It's so  
12 much pain.

13                   And Char and them moved over here. My mom  
14 gave us up to my father -- and he's non-native. And she  
15 told the lady, my step-mother, who lives on the island, who  
16 I think Creator is punishing, because she's very -- going  
17 struggling lots.

18                   But we were kids and she would put us in a  
19 garbage bag and tie -- tie garbage bags around our necks,  
20 throw us underneath the bed when my dad wasn't there, and  
21 we had scabies and we had lice. She wouldn't change our  
22 clothes. My mom would send clothes, and she would give it  
23 to her own kids. She made me wear the same shoes. My feet  
24 never -- I have size five feet and they're E wide, because  
25 my feet quit growing because she made me put the same tight

1 shoes on. I could barely walk when I was a little one.  
2 She started making me eat dish soap and I had the runs  
3 almost nine months when my mom came and got me.

4 And then I thought the sexual abuse was  
5 over, and I was glad to be at my dad's because nobody was  
6 touching me anymore.

7 MR. FRANK HOPE: How old were you then?

8 MS. PAULA POTTER: I was six, but -- or  
9 eight. I think I was eight and my brother was six. But  
10 that was only for nine months and we came back. My mom had  
11 met a man and it became physical abuse.

12 My mom met a Ukrainian man, and every pay  
13 cheque, he'd beat her up with chains and two-by-fours, and  
14 I would jump out of windows to go get my mom police. I  
15 would tell them,

16 "Can you please let me charge him,"  
17 because my mom always drops the charges.  
18 And they wouldn't listen to me. And he made me sit there  
19 while he beat my mom up and the blood would fly all over  
20 the place.

21 Every two weeks for, I think, three years.  
22 My mom thinks it's six months, but I think her trauma just  
23 shortened the time, because I was eight. And then when I  
24 was 11 -- when I was 11, I started getting promiscuous,  
25 trying to look for somebody to love me, because this whole

1 time, like, my cousins always teased me because I was  
2 sexually abused, nobody could hug me or touch me or play  
3 with me, because I would cry because my body was sore from  
4 them touching me. And I always cried and everybody would  
5 say,

6 "You're just a crybaby."

7 They still to this day sometimes I'm  
8 always crying.

9 But then, my step-father when he was  
10 beating my mom, he beat her and beat her, and I became  
11 promiscuous and then I stole their car. I started stealing  
12 their car to get away from the house. I think I was 11  
13 years old when I stole the car the first time.

14 Then my mom started hitting me with her  
15 extension cords all over my back, till it was one black  
16 welt. And I know it's just the violence that my mother was  
17 going through. I don't blame my mom, because she was  
18 getting beat by this man and she wasn't strong enough to  
19 leave him. And she ran him over with us kids in the car in  
20 Prince George. We moved to Prince George and we moved  
21 back, and I just have like blotches of memory of my  
22 childhood.

23 I don't have a really good -- I try to  
24 focus -- I have a few good memories now because I've been  
25 doing a lot of therapy, but I try not to go in there,

1 because it's all blacked out and everything that's there is  
2 really painful.

3                   And I know that Char, my cousin who got  
4 murdered, she went through the same thing. We come from a  
5 small town where everybody drank. (Indiscernible).  
6 Everybody would go drink.

7                   And my mother, like her story is that she  
8 was eight years old looking after -- I had 40 aunties and  
9 uncles and she was the fourth youngest, and she had to look  
10 after all these kids and she was eight. So my mom didn't  
11 get the proper skills. Plus back then, you weren't allowed  
12 to get past Grade 8, so they didn't -- colonization and the  
13 residential schools, like, we didn't go to residential  
14 school.

15                   My grandmother was hidden in the bush, but  
16 her brothers went, and they went there and fed my  
17 grandmother. So I believe that they brought that sexual  
18 abuse in then, because the brothers went and then they go  
19 feed my grandmother out across the lake. And she was out  
20 there by herself and they were getting abused.

21                   And because my grandmother -- whenever we  
22 tried to tell on the boys about something, she wouldn't  
23 hear it, and I think it had to do with her own denial about  
24 things. That's how I kind of went through the history of  
25 the sexual abuse.

1                   And my mom thought that she was putting us  
2 in the safest place with her family, and I couldn't tell  
3 her because it started when I was three. I didn't know  
4 what it was called. But my mom asks me to this day,

5                                   "Why didn't you tell me?"

6                   And I didn't know what it was called. I  
7 didn't know what was happening. All I thought it was part  
8 of -- part of life. I thought I was meant to be a piece of  
9 meat for men.

10                   And so when my step-father asked to sleep  
11 with me, that was it. I had enough. I had enough. At 11  
12 -- 12 years old, I ran away to the bar and I started living  
13 on my own.

14                   My first rape, the guy sodomized me from  
15 the bar. He took me home from the bar and he flipped me  
16 over and he sodomized me. Even though I got raped, I still  
17 go back on the street and sell my body, because if I go  
18 home, they'd molest me and bother me in sleep. If I sell  
19 myself on the street, at least I can get a hotel room where  
20 nobody is bugging me and I had a little bit of peace and I  
21 had a little bit of control.

22                   But then, I couldn't handle the  
23 molestation. It felt like getting molested every time on  
24 the street, and so that's when I started doing drugs. I  
25 started shooting up at 13 years old and I was doing about

1 40 hits a day. And then back then, the shots were \$40, so  
2 I also would dress myself up as a nine-year old.

3                   And one of the woman in the downtown of  
4 Edmonton -- I used to think she was my friend, but now I  
5 think she wasn't my friend. You know? She would pretend  
6 to be my mom and sell me to child pornography, and I think  
7 now I thought I was being smart and out smartening these  
8 guys out of their thousands of dollars because I was nine,  
9 but I was 12 and 13. I was like I was still a kid, so I  
10 wasn't really out smartening anybody. And then they would  
11 rob me. The adults around would take all my money after  
12 selling me like that.

13                   And then men downtown, older men, 35 years  
14 old, 40-year olds -- my children, my two older children,  
15 their dad was 35 years old and I was 14 when I met him.  
16 And he protected me. I stayed with him for protection, not  
17 because I loved him.

18                   And then I got pregnant and then they  
19 kicked me out of the Cecil hotel in Edmonton. They kicked  
20 me out a week before I gave birth. They gave me my child  
21 from the hospital and I had an apartment.

22                   But my mother-in-law, she was paraplegic  
23 and she lived at these same apartments with my daughter's  
24 auntie -- great auntie. And her (Indigenous language  
25 spoken) was there, her grandma; and her grandma was

1 paraplegic and she had bed sores all over. She was in a  
2 wheelchair. And they took the baby over there and she'd go  
3 grandma whispered to me,

4 "Help me. Please help me. She beats  
5 me."

6 Her own daughter beats her.

7 "She leaves me for weeks in the bed."

8 She doesn't change her -- like, she only  
9 changed when we would come over with the baby. And so I  
10 called the Humane Society on her, so she called Child  
11 Welfare and got my daughter taken away from me, because I  
12 was shooting up. Right?

13 And my daughter went to my mom, and I  
14 thought it was the best place to put my kids. I didn't  
15 know how to be a mom. I didn't know how to look after me.  
16 I didn't know to stop doing drugs. I was in so much pain  
17 and so stuck in the fast money and the drugs. And you get  
18 to thinking that's what you deserve. I thought I was put  
19 on this earth to suffer. I thought I was put on this earth  
20 to be men's sexual toy. That's what I thought my purpose  
21 was, not to be a mom.

22 And then I had my son and I stayed with  
23 this woman. And her mother sold her when she was a little  
24 girl to men. She had nine kids and I couldn't get it why  
25 welfare would let her keep her kids, because her kids would

1 mix her drugs for her. I called Child Welfare on her.  
2 They didn't listen, because her fridge was full. They let  
3 the kids stay there, so I don't know what ever happened to  
4 them. But that's where I was with my son.

5                   And my son was allergic to latex, so I had  
6 to feed him with an eye dropper. They didn't tell me as a  
7 mom -- they didn't tell me at the hospital to give him goat  
8 skin because he was allergic to rubber, so he'd get canker  
9 sores as a little baby. He almost died. He come in the  
10 world really struggling and I used lots of drugs while I  
11 was carrying him. I remember getting almost killed  
12 carrying my son. Somebody grabbed me on Jasper from behind  
13 and choked me, and I was in my second trimester. They put  
14 me on the highway and I woke up and a tire was coming for  
15 my head. I just lifted my head and the tire went like  
16 that. I was pregnant and they pulled me down to the ravine  
17 how many times in Edmonton.

18                   One time, a guy grabbed me off the street,  
19 pulled me into the ravine, and he had a knife and he cut my  
20 clothes off. And they must have it somewhere in their  
21 Edmonton bus, because he cut my clothes off and then he  
22 sodomized me. That's the second time I was sodomized.

23                   Like, between this, like I'd been raped  
24 already about a hundred times, because these are, like, the  
25 more brutal rapes. Another time, I was beaten up by a guy

1 with rings so much so I got put in a hospital.

2                   The one with my son though, when I was  
3 pregnant, they pulled me down to the ravine and they cut my  
4 clothes off and he sodomized me and said he was going to  
5 kill me because I didn't -- I shouldn't have a baby. And  
6 that's when he left me on the highway to -- then another  
7 one, I was raped in that ravine. I went running out naked  
8 on the road. Nobody would help me.

9                   And then another time, I got charged by  
10 the police after a rape. I got charged with indecent  
11 exposure because I was 14, and I got raped and they charged  
12 me and it's in my file. I got charged with indecent  
13 exposure, so I spit on them cops. I said,

14                               "You guys are sick. I'm the one  
15                               raped and you're charging me."

16                   And another time, I got failing to yield  
17 to a vehicle, because I got hit by a car and the cops  
18 charged me with failing to -- because they said you're just  
19 after insurance money.

20                   And then another time I got raped, I was  
21 in the car pulling a date with this guy and he gave me the  
22 money, and he grabbed my private and my butt and he pushed  
23 me out of the car and drove. Pulled me by my skin on the  
24 inside for a whole block. He ripped my inside. I was  
25 bleeding all over. And the cops pulled up and they got him

1 three blocks away, but they failed to give me any victim  
2 services, nothing. And they got the guy. I don't know  
3 even know if he went -- they never even took me to court to  
4 face this guy, nothing. They caught him red-handed with my  
5 stuff. They gave me my stuff back. Dropped me off at the  
6 hospital and that was that, and they never followed up with  
7 me. There was no victim services. There was nothing. And  
8 I had to go back out to work so that I could pay for my  
9 hotel room, and I was, like, ripped on the inside.

10 And that always happened like that. So it  
11 got to the point where -- and there was when I was 14, I  
12 used to work in Edmonton. There used to be this cop that  
13 used to come drive and say,

14 "If you don't give me a blow job, I'm  
15 going to arrest you."

16 And the I don't remember the cop or the  
17 --

18 MR. FRANK HOPE: Is that city?

19 MS. PAULA POTTER: That's Vancouver -- or  
20 Edmonton police.

21 MR. FRANK HOPE: Edmonton police.

22 MS. PAULA POTTER: And then they threw me  
23 in city cells when I was 14. I had already 28 charges as a  
24 juvenile in the west end, but they put me in the adult  
25 because I lied, because I knew if I -- juvenile. I was

1 going to go to juvenile for six months, so I lied about my  
2 birth date, and they put me in city cells with prostitutes.

3 And those prostitutes were trying to pimp  
4 me out and they were going to make me a sunshine girl.

5 They had pictures of me naked and I got caught up in this  
6 big ring of prostitution ring. And so I stole all their  
7 clothes and took off with the carnival to Regina. And  
8 that's the time that in Regina, all the people were -- all  
9 the Natives were getting stabbed. So I went from this  
10 prostitution violence into racial violence, and I was only  
11 14.

12 And the first time I ever come to  
13 Vancouver, and I ran here and I was -- that's the very  
14 first time I was pregnant. That's when I was 13. And  
15 through all this, I would always go back to my mom's every  
16 now and then.

17 They charged me 28 times as a juvenile for  
18 stealing and for alcohol. I was what they called an unruly  
19 teen, but how can I know rules if all I've known is abuse?  
20 I was just like a wild animal just trying to live. That's  
21 how I felt. You know? I was trying to make my way in this  
22 world without having to be sexually abused.

23 And I'm still only at 14. 14, 15, 16, 17,  
24 because I had my children when I met my youngest's father.  
25 He taught me how to deal drugs and so I didn't have to sell

1 my body anymore. And that to me was kind of good. It's  
2 kind of, you know, how they look at drug dealing as a  
3 crime? But sometimes it's not a crime. It's a way out.  
4 And it's a way to get my drug needs met, because by that  
5 time, I was just totally hooked and it had control of me  
6 and I wasn't living. I was existing for the drug. I  
7 didn't eat. I would stay up for 21 days. I wouldn't eat.  
8 I was like 97 pounds.

9                   There's pictures of me when I was here  
10 using -- and the elder knows me. When I was using, I was  
11 really skinny. I wouldn't eat. I'd go through lots of  
12 times and not eating and not drinking.

13                   And then when I was a little girl, I  
14 wouldn't stop eating, because I was trying to comfort  
15 myself with food, because nobody wanted to play with me.  
16 Only Char, my cousin Char, was the only one who played with  
17 me when I was small. My other cousins called me cry baby.

18                   MR. FRANK HOPE: What was her full name?

19                   MS. PAULA POTTER: I don't know what her  
20 last name is, because my auntie married three times, and I  
21 don't know what she was registered under.

22                   MR. FRANK HOPE: So Char was short for  
23 Charlotte?

24                   MS. PAULA POTTER: Yes.

25                   MR. FRANK HOPE: Was it Charlotte?

1 MS. PAULA POTTER: Yeah, Charlotte. Yeah,  
2 but Charlene. Not --

3 MR. FRANK HOPE: Charlene?

4 MS. PAULA POTTER: Yeah, her full name is  
5 Charlene. It's on the murdered and missing register -- her  
6 last name. My mom and my Auntie Essa (ph) -- I could get  
7 you guys the name. So me and Char, we're really close and  
8 we shared all that trauma together and the street together.

9 And that's just, like, some of the rapes I  
10 got in Edmonton. And then I was charged as an adult since  
11 16, 28 times, and a judge told me if I go to court again,  
12 you're going to spend a year in jail. And, like, I got --  
13 it just kept getting worse. Like, I went from drug dealer,  
14 then I went to helping drug deal houses and guns, and it's  
15 like when I get trapped in this world, it sucks you in and  
16 you get further and further away from where you went to be  
17 and you can't get out. You don't see a way out.

18 And these guys, they own you. They tell  
19 you sit down. Go do this. Go pull a trick here. You go  
20 in the room with that guy and make him happy and then we'll  
21 give you some drugs. And it's like that. And it's like  
22 getting molested times ten. And then you get stuck in  
23 there and they're bear macing you and throwing you out  
24 windows.

25 It's not just, like, murdered and missing

1 women. How come they're not investigating if it's drug  
2 dealer related? Why they got to be always a serial killer?  
3 Why weren't they investigating these big gangs and what  
4 they're doing to our women and our men and our children?

5                   They glamorize this lifestyle of, oh,  
6 you're going to "Scarface" during -- you know? But it's  
7 not a "Scarface" dream. It's more like "Hostel" or "8mm,"  
8 where they do these snuff movies and sexual movies, and  
9 that's what I believe Pickton did. I believe he made  
10 sexual movies of extreme violence to sell, like child  
11 pornography. I believe that.

12                   And I went the Inquiry to check these  
13 things out. Why isn't anybody checking out -- why isn't  
14 there people -- when our women go dying downtown and get  
15 thrown out windows, why isn't it that our men -- and they  
16 keep saying it's suicide. Why do they say it's suicide? I  
17 know we're all hurt, but I don't know as an addict how I  
18 could jump out a window, because I'm so full of paranoia.  
19 Why would I do that? Like, I've been under that drug for  
20 30 years and I can't see how I'd do that.

21                   But then my son committed suicide after  
22 two months of doing heroin, so who knows what they're  
23 putting in that heroin that makes people think like that.  
24 Plus the spirit of addiction wanting to take control of us.

25                   I'm like why isn't there elders that can

1 go through these housing units to smudge these places out?  
2 Why don't they have funding for that? Why don't they have  
3 funding to come cleanse the places where people jump out  
4 the windows or pushed out the windows?

5                   You know there's places downtown where  
6 there's young girls who are locked up in a room with a cage  
7 and getting sold? How come the cops aren't doing sweeps in  
8 these buildings? How come they aren't having housing  
9 people doing room checks in the whole house or doing  
10 monthly inspections to make sure that there's no rooms like  
11 that?

12                   I don't know. I don't know how they can  
13 get away with it. And it's not just this city. It's in  
14 every city. There's slumlords that just sell the houses so  
15 that there can be these drug dens and prostitution rings.  
16 And they kidnap our young girls and they -- because they're  
17 young native girls, oh, they just ran away. We won't have  
18 to look for them. They just ran away from you, so the cops  
19 don't look for them. And they could be in one of these  
20 rooms getting sold against their will. And even if they  
21 did run away, I'm sure they didn't want to run away to a  
22 hotel room when they got locked up and sold. So those are  
23 the things that are out there.

24                   And then there's another time I -- so back  
25 to where I was with my -- I met my youngest's father. He

1 taught me about drug dealing and I quit shooting up for a  
2 little while. I love my little girl, [Daughter 1]. I love  
3 my son and I love [Daughter 2].

4 But Vanessa saw me pulling tricks and she  
5 said,

6 "I don't want to be around you,  
7 Mommy. You were (indiscernible)."

8 And I didn't know that she'd seen that.  
9 My biggest regret is her seeing that.

10 And my two children, I look at how I let  
11 my children down. You know? It's really hard to sober up  
12 and then look at all the pain that you carried on and how  
13 much it's affected your children and your grandchildren,  
14 and to face it and try to change it. And that's why I'm  
15 here. I want to make change for all our children.

16 So I met my -- and then we broke up. I  
17 couldn't take him. He kidnapped my daughter away from me  
18 for a whole month and I didn't call the cops on him,  
19 because that's the dad. Right? What's the point in  
20 calling the cops, because they don't given to us anyway.  
21 So I didn't know where [Daughter 1] was for a whole month.

22 And my cousin -- they were with my cousin  
23 and some prostitutes, I guess, were feeding my daughter.  
24 And I didn't tell my mom, because she would call the cops  
25 on me. So I stuck with this going home and my daughter not

1 being there.

2                                 And then there's a book out about my  
3 daughter's dad's death written by a cop, and it's all lies.  
4 In Timmins, Ontario, they shot my daughter's -- his name is  
5 [Daughter 1's Father]. And they said

6   "Oh, this gang from the west."

7   And you can look up for the book.

8                                 I want to write a book to explain who he  
9 really was, because they write him that he's a gangster.  
10 They were a drug gang going across country and the cops had  
11 to kill them. And they have pictures of him and this woman  
12 he only knew for two weeks.

13                                 I was with this man for five years. I  
14 beat him up with a frying pan -- and they're trying to say  
15 he shot her to death and then shot himself.

16                                 And I believe the cops went in there and  
17 killed them, because they sent him back in an AIDS coffin.  
18 He didn't have AIDS. I slept with him just before he took  
19 off, so I don't have AIDS. So they sent him back in an  
20 AIDS coffin. It's because, I believe, so that I couldn't  
21 see how many gun shots he had.

22                                 And the cops said, oh, that they took down  
23 this gang from the west and they made it sound really  
24 horrific, when it was just two brothers and a girl. It was  
25 two brothers that went drugstore robbing to get some drugs

1 so that they could go across country. You know? It  
2 wasn't, oh, they're a gang and they were doing -- so they  
3 made it sound like it was really horrific.

4                   And then they had a shoot out with the  
5 cops, and I think they injured a cop when they were robbing  
6 a drugstore and then they followed him into the bush.

7                   And they sent me a death certificate that  
8 said July 12 to July 21. Now, how do you have 11 days of  
9 time of death? That's kind of crazy. All the things they  
10 know when you die. So that's the first murder for me was  
11 my child's dad.

12                   Then I came here and I found out my cousin  
13 Char -- in '96, I came here. My mom wanted to move away  
14 from all the -- because she found out about all the sexual  
15 abuse. She wanted to move away for my grandkids, because  
16 she had custody of my grandkids. And that time, social  
17 services took my daughter away from me and I had to go --  
18 they took my daughter away from me and then they -- when I  
19 found out that she was -- her dad died. I went to -- I was  
20 trying to get her back from welfare and I went to Beaver  
21 Lake Treatment Centre.

22                   It's like all this time I tried always  
23 find Creator. Right? I guess it wasn't meant to be back  
24 then. The bears would come scratch my window and the bears  
25 could come sleep beside my window -- and I'm bear clan, so

1 I think it was my ancestors just walking with me.

2 I would hitchhike all the time in Alberta  
3 back and forth from Slave Lake back to Edmonton. I stayed  
4 sober for nine months. Then my uncle, he was dying of AIDS  
5 come and told me what he did to me when I was three, and  
6 that's why I remember the sexual abuse at three. It's  
7 because he came and then all the nightmares came and the  
8 nightmares of being visited at night. And I can't pinpoint  
9 -- that's why I'm all over the place, because I can't  
10 pinpoint it in a direct lineage of stuff. It just comes in  
11 flashes. And there's so much.

12 Like, then I came here in '96 and I became  
13 a traditional grandmother and I did that for about a month.  
14 I learned songs. Like, I'm hereditary medicine line. I  
15 remember times of my childhood, my kokum skinning animals.  
16 And that's where I felt safest is where there was none of  
17 the boys around and it was just me and my kokum. I got all  
18 gifts of medicine from my kokum and my mom when the boys  
19 weren't around. That's the good part of my childhood.

20 All the rest I try to -- I wrote a little  
21 to all perpetrators. I try to let that go. It's really  
22 hard to let it go when it's etched in your DNA and it's  
23 part of my whole childhood. And so how do you let  
24 something go that's in there? Even though they say a child  
25 learns everything until they're five, well, for half of

1 mine, I was getting taught sexual abuse. How do you  
2 unlearn that? How do I get my innocence back? How do I  
3 get to be a child?

4                   And I believe it's not my mom's fault. I  
5 believe it's the government's fault. It's church's fault.  
6 Why didn't they give us 248 acres when they were giving it  
7 all out in the 1800s? Why did they make us all go on game  
8 reserves? Were we not human beings? That's the part that  
9 hurts me so much.

10                   Like, watching my mom and grandma be so  
11 poor that we have to catch rabbits to have meat, you know,  
12 and eating muskrats. And our people had to -- and it's  
13 good meat now that you think about how processed meat and  
14 everything is now a days.

15                   But, yeah, so I moved to Vancouver in '96,  
16 and I think I was 28 years old. I've already been on the  
17 streets 14 years and I've already been raped a lot. Like,  
18 I got raped by men and it got to the point where rape was,  
19 okay, if you have no money, you're going to rape me, I  
20 don't really don't want to be hurt. Just do what you need  
21 to do and get it over with. That's where it got to.  
22 You're going to rape me anyway? Do what you need to do if  
23 you're going to go in my butt or whatever you're doing. Do  
24 it so I can get out of here.

25                   So it got to the point of being really

1 submissive where it came to rape, because I didn't want to  
2 get beat. And then some of them would want to beat you  
3 anyway.

4                   And then dealers would do that too,  
5 because you owe them money, so you had to suck them off.  
6 And then I came to Vancouver and I got a gun pulled on my  
7 head right by the Astoria and the cops were -- in the broad  
8 daylight. And the guy was making me give him oral with a  
9 gun to me head in the back alley behind the Astoria. Where  
10 were the bouncers or anybody? Like, nobody came out. And  
11 that was like for a whole friggin' 45 minutes I was behind  
12 there doing that. And I'm like I go by there today and  
13 it's busy all the time. What? Did people just walk by?  
14 You know?

15                   And girls getting raped down there all the  
16 time in cars and we can't even go to the cops and say we've  
17 been raped, because when we do, we get told you went in  
18 that car willingly, so you can't file rape. If we have a  
19 licence number, we can't file rape, because you got into  
20 the car willingly.

21                   Well, I didn't get in the car willingly to  
22 get raped. I got in the car to strike a deal for money.  
23 And maybe solicitation is illegal. Maybe they need to  
24 legalize it and make it safe for women, so that young girls  
25 weren't getting put in rooms sold, because some women do

1 chose that lifestyle and I don't want to take that choice  
2 away from them. But we should make it safe for them,  
3 because it's not going to go away. And then, at least,  
4 girls won't be getting exploited. Right? It should be a  
5 woman's choice, not a -- it shouldn't be a government's  
6 choice to say what we do with our bodies, because they made  
7 all this abuse and some of them that's where they're at.

8                   For me, I choose to be my temple now and  
9 I'm on a man fast. So I stay away from men right now,  
10 because all my learnt teachings about men are wrong. Like,  
11 there's some really good men out there, but I don't know  
12 how to pick them. I always pick the guy who is going to  
13 hurt me, and so now I don't pick them. I'm waiting for  
14 Creator to pick them. And if I'm meant to walk the rest of  
15 my journey alone, that's okay, because I've been with over  
16 a hundred thousand men and they've all abused me in some  
17 way. 30 years of prostitution, I don't know, over a  
18 hundred thousand men.

19                   Like, I have track marks from my life of  
20 trying to commitment emotional suicide. I used to shoot  
21 myself up in the neck in the mirror just to numb it. Numb  
22 my whole pain.

23                   I got here and Robert Pickton wasn't yet -  
24 - like, it wasn't scary yet when I got here in '96. I  
25 think I was on the corner with Sarah de Vries, and we were

1 down by the Ray-Cam, and I seen her there, and then she was  
2 never seen again. And we were on the same corner down by  
3 Ray-Cam, by the alley, and she was living in a house behind  
4 the UGM, and it was early morning. It was just me and her,  
5 and then I never seen her again.

6 And then there's another girl that used to  
7 flash. She was the girl that got him caught. She used to  
8 flash everybody her private part. She had mental health  
9 issues. And the cops knew this and she'd do it to cops.  
10 She'd do it to everybody. Why did they let a mental health  
11 person that was putting herself out there like that -- why  
12 did they let that just go? You know?

13 And then they watch how they put our  
14 people -- they wouldn't take -- they don't take us to  
15 mental health hospital. They take us to city cells. Our  
16 men, they put labels of violent and they do that to us  
17 women. They put that label of violent. What gives the cop  
18 the training to label us with a psychological disorder of  
19 violence and gives them the mental training to do that?  
20 Because it stays on your record for life. What gives them  
21 that right?

22 They don't have psychological degrees. If  
23 they're going to do that with violence or mental health or  
24 bipolar, there should be an assessment before they're  
25 allowed to put that on your file for any person, especially

1 First Nation, going through all the trauma we're going  
2 through. They should have to have us go through a  
3 psychological assessment, man or woman, before they label  
4 us as violent, because let's see you not be violent through  
5 all that abuse.

6 Like, women, we can talk about it. Our  
7 men bury it and it comes out in anger. And I understand,  
8 because my son, he's dead from this, this intergenerational  
9 pain. My son took his own life.

10 So back to '96, Pickton was driving around  
11 and Sarah went missing, and I started noticing -- I start  
12 to put tobacco down. I start to put tobacco down because  
13 the women started going missing. Every night, like playing  
14 Russian roulette out there, and there was no outreach  
15 teams. There's no outreach teams that work past midnight.

16 If you really want to help us women all  
17 over Canada, start making outreach teams when we're awake,  
18 not when you're awake. We're awake to 6:00 in the morning.  
19 Our rush hour is midnight. When the bars close, that's  
20 when they need outreach workers, when the women are walking  
21 around drunk. That's when they need workers to help people  
22 get home. That's when they need people out there make sure  
23 the drug dealers weren't beating the shit out of people,  
24 because there's no cops out at that time.

25 From 3:00 to 6:00, I've watched people get

1 stabbed. I've watched people be batted. I've watched a  
2 whole bunch of violence go down and there's no cops around,  
3 because that's the time they minimize all the outreach  
4 searches. There's nobody out on the streets, so there's  
5 nobody to report all this violence.

6                   That's one of the recommendations I would  
7 make too. Why don't we have outreach at night when the  
8 girls need you? Why don't we have vehicles that drive  
9 girls home? Why can't we get that? I've followed things  
10 they have for elders. Why can't we have that for  
11 prostitutes?

12                   You know, where they can hit their phone  
13 or an app, where they can hit the phone to pinpoint where  
14 they are because they're in trouble, and have an operation  
15 -- some kind of organization tracking that; that states  
16 that they won't get charged criminally and that this won't  
17 be evidence for any police to hold against them, so that  
18 that way they can be safe. If they're going to keep  
19 prostitution illegal, they should at least do something to  
20 save their lives.

21                   So back in '96, we go through all this  
22 trauma. There's all these outreach workers and I'm  
23 watching the girls missing and murdered and people  
24 overdosing and nobody doing nothing. And me and my friend  
25 were working with Gallery Gachet. We started working on

1 our national overdose -- at this time, I'm a part of  
2 Western Aboriginal Harm Reduction. I'm the vice president.  
3 It's addicts for addicts, and I started working -- Creator  
4 started me on my journey, I guess, of starting to heal.

5 I started working for addicts with  
6 addicts, and we're trying to do a monument. And I did a  
7 medicine wheel in Oppenheimer Park before they did the new  
8 one where they built the medicine wheel. I did the old --  
9 an old ceremony of a sunrise ceremony in Oppenheimer Park,  
10 and here's the power of the Creator. I did a missing and  
11 murdered medicine wheel and overdoses, and we did over 400  
12 different coloured rocks for the medicine wheel. I got  
13 them all natural covered from mother earth. I didn't use  
14 paint, so I'm a natural artist.

15 And I did this medicine wheel, but I  
16 tobaccoed the whole Oppenheimer Park. And for a month,  
17 there was no drug use where I did the sunrise ceremony.  
18 Nobody did drugs on that park. And I watched, because I  
19 live right above. So I was amazed. The ancestors cleansed  
20 that. And then that totem pole came, then two more totem  
21 poles, then they tore down that whole site. And people  
22 used to use lots there and they made a new one.

23 What I don't get is how come -- I don't  
24 know west coast culture, but how come they don't wash the  
25 moss and the black soot off the totem pole? Because that

1 eagle up there is crying. I don't know. It's crying,  
2 because it sees the pain of the people, but it's always  
3 crying. I can hear it cry when I'm down there. It breaks  
4 my heart.

5                   So that's the monument before all these  
6 other monuments came up. I was part of them. My mom  
7 helped start -- my mom walks with Harriet. My mom helped  
8 start the old Old Women Centre, where the Inquiry is right  
9 now on the 44 Cordova. My mom was the elder then and she  
10 helped start the march, because my cousin Char was murdered  
11 in a dominion and she was stabbed to death. She was  
12 brutally stabbed to death.

13                   The office is right here. Five doors  
14 down, she was stabbed to death. You can't tell me that the  
15 staff didn't hear her getting stabbed to death. Like,  
16 that's the thing, it's like they had these guys -- I'm so  
17 glad that there's organizations now. But back then, the  
18 landlords or the -- these guys should be held accountable  
19 too, those old landlords, where these murders happen,  
20 because they let these gangsters in -- the owners of these  
21 buildings. Why aren't they getting charged? Because front  
22 desk people hear what's going on. They know what's going  
23 on in their buildings.

24                   Same with those others guys who own the  
25 Balmoral and the Regent. All kinds of violence happens in

1 there too and nothing gets done. And I'm sure there's a  
2 Gibson's block that it used to happen in Edmonton. There's  
3 a building in every city that this is going down. Why  
4 aren't we holding the landlords -- if drug dealers -- if  
5 you can hold a landlord accountable for drug dealers being  
6 in the suite, why can't you hold them accountable for  
7 violence that's happening on the residents? Why is it  
8 always us Natives that are getting charged, but not the  
9 land owners?

10 And look at that young man that got killed  
11 in Saskatchewan. That guy got away because he said it's  
12 his yard. My heart goes out to that mom.

13 Anyway, back in '96, I'm walking the  
14 streets. Girls are going missing. There's no outreach, no  
15 mental outreach that helps us. Right? There's no mental  
16 outreach that says: How are you doing? Are you  
17 traumatized from your sisters going missing? What can we  
18 do to help you? We didn't even get talked to by anyone  
19 when girls were going missing. And all of us girls are  
20 telling each other,

21 "Take the licence."

22 So we were looking after each other.  
23 And we'd hire guys to watch us, and then those guys would  
24 exploit us for more drugs to watch us.

25 It's because -- so that -- and for me, the

1 ancestors told me don't leave Downtown Eastside, so I never  
2 left Downtown Eastside. And I got into a pig truck and I  
3 told the homicide -- they told me it wasn't the people they  
4 were looking for, but then we found out that the Pickton  
5 farm was actually Piggly Wiggly's. And it was an actual  
6 bar that the cops used to go and party at in the '70s.

7 Now, how long have women actually been  
8 going missing there? And how many of them are actual cops  
9 and lawyers and judges? Why was it swept under the carpet?

10 Because I've had lawyers come pick me up.  
11 I've had men with lots of money and they just give you 500.  
12 I've had guys give me vials of drugs. Like, there's --  
13 like, it's a big industry, but there's guys in there that  
14 got lots of money.

15 I've had tricks that have paid me to strap  
16 me up and whip me. I've had guys that I'd have to whip  
17 them. I've had guys that like to film it. I've had guys  
18 that like to put things up your butt and film it. I've had  
19 guys that like you to dress in plastic so that they can  
20 pour all kinds of stuff on you and it either looks like  
21 shit or it looks like blood. So there's a lot of fetishes  
22 going on in the streets, and the women were subjected to  
23 that because we're addicted and because we're in pain.

24 So we're just getting -- we get to a  
25 point, I think, when you go through sexual abuse, you get

1 to a point where you say, well, I was exploited by  
2 everybody else, so might as well just exploit myself now.  
3 You get to a point where you get so desensitized to  
4 exploitation that you're willing to be exploited at any  
5 level, so long as I get the money.

6                   And if I get \$500 for you strapping me  
7 five times, okay. And so that's where it gets to. But  
8 then you can't walk for three days, but you got five eight-  
9 balls or half-balls or whatever it is. So it's the drug  
10 addiction takes over and your safety is no longer a  
11 concern, and you get to the point of getting exploiting  
12 yourself for your drug. You know what I mean? So you're  
13 willing to go through anything, and that's how it was when  
14 Pickton was taking the girls. Even though we knew it could  
15 be one of us, the need for our drug outweighed the risk and  
16 we'd go out.

17                   I was hurt a lot in the city of Vancouver.  
18 There's drug dealers that exploit me and try to kill me.  
19 They bear mace me point blank and push me into moving  
20 coming traffic. By the grace of God, I made it across  
21 though and I couldn't see. That was in 2010 and I quit.

22                   But it doesn't stop there. Now, fentanyl,  
23 I work in the Downtown Eastside and fentanyl is taking a  
24 life almost every day. I saved a life two weeks ago. Six  
25 Narcan shots to get these people to come to. Some of them

1 you can't even get breath into and it's scary.

2                   When did my son die? He was 18 -- 2015.  
3 2014, my son was in jail, and he sun danced when he was  
4 nine years old for his mom to quit that lifestyle. And he  
5 was angry at Creator because it took too long, because he  
6 needed me when he was nine. [*Private information - 18*  
7 *sentences redacted*].

8                   And then he was such a sensitive, gifted  
9 boy, and then he was so angry. But I was strangled when I  
10 carried him and I did so much drugs and alcohol.

11                   And every time I went to the courthouse  
12 and I told the judges,

13                   "I shot up with my son. It's not his  
14 fault why he's here. It's mine. I  
15 shot up. Please help my son. Put  
16 him in mental health because he's  
17 suicide."

18                   I went to three different judges and I  
19 phoned the cops, and the cops would say -- the cops would  
20 say,

21                   "Oh, he looks fine to me."

22                   Where do they got the mental expertise  
23 to tell me my son looks fine? He's choking me out and  
24 trying to hang himself and pull a knife across his neck,  
25 and that's not fine to me. My son loved me.

1                   And he would look on his page, his  
2 Facebook page, his last year -- all, everything, it just  
3 said suicide, suicide, suicide. And I kept telling the  
4 cop,

5                   "Just look."

6                   My son was a gifted powwow dancer and a  
7 father, and his children deserve to have their dad.

8                   He even tried to charge his [Family  
9 member] for stabbing him seven times, and the Crown  
10 prosecuting said, I'm not taking it, because he finally had  
11 enough. Like, my son would never tell cops anything. He  
12 knows my son. My son would never tell the cops anything.  
13 He actually wrote a statement against her and then the  
14 Crown prosecutor said,

15                   "I'm not putting this through."

16                   So they didn't stand up for him.

17                   Welfare, because my son was narcissistic  
18 and bipolar, the system for welfare took too long. He  
19 said,

20                   "Oh, fuck it, I don't need their  
21 help."

22                   So he was 28 years old without any  
23 welfare. No money. And my son would make native art to  
24 try to make money, but it would be like \$5 here, \$10. It's  
25 not enough. So he would use that to buy cigarettes and

1 then he'd buy cigarettes and then he'd have to buy weed.  
2 Then he'd buy weed. Then he'd buy alcohol. Then the  
3 alcohol, he would start doing drugs.

4 And he did heroin for the last year of his  
5 life. I watched my son deteriorate. I kept asking for  
6 help and phoning the police and going to court houses, and  
7 saying,

8 "Please, he's going to kill himself."

9 And a week before he killed himself, he  
10 got axed in the head. I made a suicide call through his  
11 friend on the corner. And because he had a warrant, they  
12 didn't do nothing about the suicide call. And the lawyer  
13 was trying to get him confirmed, and they didn't tell his  
14 lawyer and they released him.

15 And then a week later, he hung himself in  
16 my backyard, and I had to find my son hanging with my  
17 grandchildren. He was hanging on the fence where he  
18 couldn't just stood up. You know how much strength that  
19 would have had to take to hang yourself sitting down? And  
20 as a mom, I should have never, ever, ever, had to bury son,  
21 not when I asked for help.

22 Same thing, I was a little girl -- it was  
23 before I got into sex trade. I've phoned Child Help line.  
24 I don't know who answered that time. And I said,

25 "My mom is whipping me because I like

1 boys, and I stay out late."

2 And the person on the phone said,

3 "Then you must deserve your lickin'."

4 Another time, I was locked up and I told  
5 the counsellor everything I needed help with -- all my  
6 sexual abuse. I went to her for six months. And she told  
7 me after six months,

8 "Everything you told me in the  
9 beginning is true."

10 I said,

11 "Is that what I've been doing for six  
12 months? Validating the things I told  
13 you I needed help for?"

14 So I was really angry. I felt  
15 psychologically raped, because she didn't believe me and  
16 she had to investigate everything that I said before she  
17 would help me.

18 She said,

19 "Now I'm going to begin helping you."

20 I said,

21 "I just friggin' came here for six  
22 months."

23 I was a teenager at this time and I was  
24 doing drugs. I was on the street and I was trying to get  
25 out of there, and so I did reach out.

1                   But every hand that I reached out to would  
2 fail me. I just got to the point where I said they don't  
3 want and care. Why am I even bothering? So I quit  
4 reporting the rapes. I quit standing up for myself. And  
5 then I sobered up and I tried to stand up for my child.

6                   And I'm not angry with the police, but I'm  
7 angry with the whole system. Why are they allowed to make  
8 psychological evaluations on our people? Judges too.  
9 They're not medically trained. That's the thing I think we  
10 need to change is that -- if they're going to put those  
11 things on their file of any First Nation person, they need  
12 to have a medically trained person diagnose that. Not  
13 somebody who thinks this act is violent.

14                   Because it shouldn't be on own womens or  
15 our mens -- this is a violent perpetrator or this is a  
16 violent criminal or a violent individual, because once they  
17 put that on there, on CPIC, it stays there. So now  
18 whenever a cop comes to deal with you, they're dealing with  
19 you as a violent individual. They're not dealing with you  
20 as a human being that needs help.

21                   If they didn't have that -- and with my  
22 son, they had that "violent" on there because he jumped out  
23 of a moving vehicle when he was 14 on Commercial Drive.  
24 And then he was drunk because we come and picked him up,  
25 and the cops were trying to drag him off the street and he

1 got violent with them. But so then they put "violent" on  
2 there and it stayed on there, but it followed him into his  
3 adulthood.

4                   And he tried to do a police assisted  
5 suicide and he dressed up a gun. It's on Facebook. He has  
6 ermines hanging off of it and he's dressed like our powwow  
7 regalia. And he went to go hold up a liquor store and they  
8 charged him with -- and you could tell it's a toy gun.  
9 They charge him with imitation firearm and he was looking  
10 at three years the month before he committed suicide.

11                   And I don't know what happens to him in  
12 jail, but they always put him in the violent offenders, and  
13 he always comes -- when I go to visit him, he's always beat  
14 up. His head is shaved. He says he shaved it, but I know  
15 -- I know gangsters. They do that too. They shave you  
16 bald. And I don't know what's happening for him. He goes,

17                   "I don't want to talk about it, Mom."

18                   So something happens to him in jail.

19                   And he was looking at three years, so  
20 maybe that was part of why he committed suicide. It's  
21 because they were criminalizing him and he had a mental  
22 health problem, and he didn't have -- he wasn't a criminal.  
23 My son was a good boy. He was just lost in his pain.

24                   And all of us that are out there, that's  
25 what we're doing. Alcohol and drugs is not our problem.

1 It's not a problem. It's a solution. It's a solution to  
2 all this pain. And let's see these people walk through  
3 this pain and have the heart to work for the people,  
4 because that's how Natives are. We take our pain. We turn  
5 it around and help the people that are going through that  
6 same pain. We're that resilient. We're that strong.

7                   And I use my son now for any mom who has  
8 lost their child. I tell them I can't tell you what it  
9 feels like, but I know when I buried my son, I buried a  
10 piece of my heart that will never come back. And the same  
11 thing with my cousin Char. The only thing is this last  
12 murdered and missing, I got bullied out of the march and I  
13 couldn't put tobacco down for my cousin, because other  
14 families are starting to hurt each other too.

15                   And I don't blame anybody, but we get so  
16 frustrated that we take it out on one another, because  
17 there's no answers. When are they going to change the  
18 history books and tell the truth? When are they going to  
19 admit that they did all these things? Because if they  
20 don't, we're still going to have cops that are racist the  
21 way they are. We have to start with the little ones. We  
22 have to start teaching them the medicine wheel that we all  
23 belong. We're all human beings and we all carry pain.

24                   Us First Nations carry pain, but black  
25 people carry pain. Hispanic carry pain. People of colour

1 in this country that have been here since the 1800s carry  
2 more pain. The black people because they're disconnected  
3 from the land. The red people because we were taken -- the  
4 land was taken away from us, our way of life. We used to  
5 follow the buffalo, and the buffalo was taken. We can no  
6 longer just go nomadically around because of the fences  
7 that were put up. We had freedom to go whenever we wanted  
8 on Turtle Island, and they took that away.

9                   And we used to live -- child welfare says  
10 you can't sleep with your child, but that's what we've been  
11 doing since the beginning of time. Our children slept here  
12 because we knew they were safe from animals. Well,  
13 perpetrators are animals too and my children feel safest  
14 when they sleep here, and that's where I felt safe as a  
15 little girl. So for you as child welfare to come in and  
16 say that's abuse, that's BS. They shouldn't be able to  
17 dictate to us our culture.

18                   They don't go into a Chinese home and say,  
19 listen, you can't make your wife walk three feet behind.  
20 They don't go into East Indian home and say you can't have  
21 the women over there and the men over there. So why are  
22 they allowed to come into a Native home and say you have to  
23 have a bedroom for every child? But I'm only going to give  
24 you enough to pay for a one-bedroom. They want you to have  
25 a bedroom for every child, but then the housing units will

1 only give you -- oh, you have two boy children. Here you  
2 go, but your teenage boy can't have his own room, because  
3 he has a mental health issue and he needs his own space.  
4 But they won't give you that, because they want you to stay  
5 in two rooms. They want you to have a bed for every child,  
6 but, oh, you can't have any extracurricular things. But if  
7 I take your child into foster care, I'll give them 2,000  
8 plus, pay them back every receipt that they give me.

9                   Why can't they lift our Native families up  
10 that way? Why is it got to the point where you want to  
11 spend the money on jails? If you supported the young  
12 mothers going to school and not have to pay that back, you  
13 would help our Native nation. If you supported them where  
14 they could do outings with their children, if they  
15 submitted their receipts for regalia and got that money  
16 back, that's what they should do.

17                   And giving mothers money so that they can  
18 take their children to powwows and ceremonies outside.  
19 Making it -- that's what new reunification looks like to  
20 me. You know? The reconciliation, that's what  
21 reconciliation looks like to me.

22                   You took it all away. You should be doing  
23 everything to give it all back. Give us a piece of land  
24 where we can make ceremonial places and we don't have to  
25 worry about land tax or anything. We build a sun dance, we

1 can build a you we pee (ph) centre, and a healing centre.  
2 Those things we need in every city. And even up north to  
3 deal with the suicide. We need ceremonial places to do  
4 honourings. To do community gatherings. All the way. All  
5 over North America. That's what we need.

6                               So I don't have -- if you have any other  
7 questions, I'm just like -- like, I have a bigger, bigger  
8 story. I'm writing a book, but because it's -- I'm just  
9 only at 14 years old right now, because I've been raped 170  
10 times. I've had a gun to my head five tames. I've been  
11 pushed out of moving vehicles five times. I've been pulled  
12 down to the ravine three times. I've been left for dead  
13 twice. And multiple times I've been -- I gave sex away to  
14 save my life. I've been whipped by drug dealers. I've  
15 been bear maced. I've been beaten and left for dead in  
16 alleys.

17                               And going to the archives of Edmonton when  
18 they shot everybody in the house in the head, I just went  
19 downtown to get some money. I came back and everybody was  
20 shot in the head in the house. So Creator always looked  
21 after me, I guess.

22                               I was only 14 then and I was really badly  
23 beaten by 30 black men from the York hotel. They wanted to  
24 own me. And again, I wouldn't get owned, and I think it  
25 was because of all the struggle I went through before that.

1 I was able to take a beating from 30 men.

2 But, yeah, that's what our people go  
3 through. I hope something comes from this missing inquiry.  
4 My hope is that, you know, us people and us families that  
5 are sharing it and are survivors are sharing their stories,  
6 I hope that the people -- the people that don't know us,  
7 listen and quit treating women in Downtown Eastside of any  
8 downtown eastside like we're garbage. We need to be lifted  
9 up. We're your hurt children, and would you do that to a  
10 child that's crying underneath a counter after being  
11 sexually abused? That's how you need to look at us people  
12 that are addicts over (indiscernible).

13 MR. FRANK HOPE: How old are you now?

14 MS. PAULA POTTER: 52. And I ran a  
15 women's lodge. I help women that are going through all the  
16 pain. Look, I just skimmed over it, but that's some of it.  
17 That's a lot in there.

18 MR. FRANK HOPE: Yes.

19 MS. PAULA POTTER: But this is the more  
20 painful stuff.

21 MR. FRANK HOPE: Yes. I want to say in my  
22 language (Dene spoken) for sharing that. You know, I  
23 usually have questions, but you gave a very impactful -- I  
24 mean, I think your story is -- there's nothing really  
25 anything else for me to ask or to add to it or question.

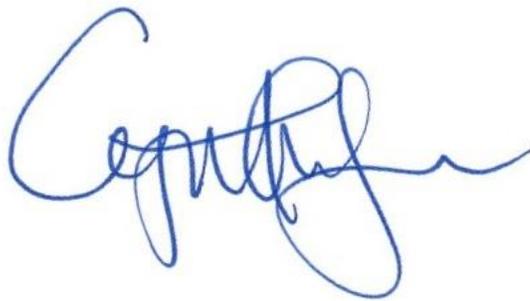
1 I'm just honoured with your bravery and your courage. I'm  
2 moved.

3                               So if you don't have anything else to say,  
4 we'll end it right there. I'll mark the time and then  
5 we'll wrap it.

6                               So it's now 3:20.

7 --- Whereupon proceedings adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I have, to the best of my skill and ability, accurately recorded by shorthand and transcribed therefrom, the foregoing proceeding using real time computer aided transcription.



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Cynthia Yan, Court Reporter