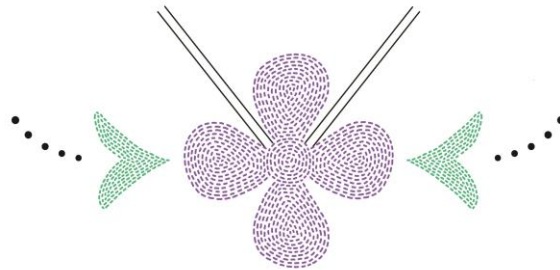


National Inquiry into  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls



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 367**

**A.B.**

**Statement gathered by Jayme Menzies**

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## II

### ORDER

On May 14, 2019, Chief Commissioner Marion R. Buller ordered that all individuals and social services organizations named in this public transcript, and any related documents, be rendered anonymous. This order was made pursuant to Rule 7 of *Legal Path: Rules of Respectful Practice*.

III

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Statement Volume 367  
April 7, 2018 PAGE  
Witness: A.B.  
Statement Gatherer: Jayme Menzies

Statement of A.B. . . . . 1  
Reporter's certification . . . . . 31

List of documents provided by witness:

ITEM 1 Business card of the witness.

1 Vancouver, British Columbia

2 --- Upon commencing on Saturday, April 7, 2018

3 MS. JAYME MENZIES: So the audio has  
4 started. The video has started. My name is Jayme. I'm  
5 from Manitoba. And the date is April 7, yup. Okay, the  
6 floor is yours, [A.], go ahead.

7 MS. A.B.: So I'm [A.B.]. I'm a very  
8 proud member of the Squamish Nation. Today is my  
9 grandson's birthday, so I think it's very fitting that I  
10 come and talk about the levels of violence that First  
11 Nations women experience, witness down here in the Downtown  
12 Eastside.

13 I felt obligated to come and talk to them  
14 because it's a little bit cheaper for me to come here than  
15 it is for me to go over to England like my great-  
16 grandfather did. But nothing has changed down here. As I  
17 child, my mum was with a series of non-Native men, and  
18 every one of them beat the shit out of her. And every one  
19 I called the cops, and every one the response was the same.

20 And here I am 60 years later and nothing  
21 has changed. The same shit still happens. I'm so  
22 disheartened. I've been working down here for ten years.  
23 And in the last couple of weeks I've witnessed way more  
24 violence than ever before. And I don't know what's making  
25 it worse, but I know the response is wrong. I was in an

A.B.

1 SRO building doing my rounds and I hear a man screaming at  
2 a woman. Well, you know he's screaming at a woman by the  
3 things he's saying to her. And so I run up the stairs and  
4 walk in the room, and there is at least ten white people  
5 standing around a Native couple, while the man yells and  
6 screams and calls her every dirty name in the book. And  
7 all the people -- and they are men and women -- just stand  
8 there and watch it; same as they did when I was a kid and  
9 the stepfathers used to beat up my mum, nobody did  
10 anything, they just watched. Finally, somebody picks up  
11 the phone and calls the cops. And guess what the cops do?  
12 Handcuff the woman and take her out of there, and she's  
13 barred.

14 So that made me sick for like a week. I  
15 was sick about it. I just couldn't figure out what went  
16 wrong and why does everybody stand around and talk about  
17 it. It turns out that it's WorkSafeBC. They're told that  
18 they can't intervene, that if it's a domestic violence  
19 situation that staff can't put their life in danger. So  
20 that's a clear example of systemic racism and how it works  
21 against us.

22 Two weeks -- well, about ten days later, I  
23 was with a police officer and explained to the police  
24 officer how I felt about this situation, and how  
25 disheartening it was for me to witness it, that nothing has

A.B.

1 changed. And the same couple come around the corner on the  
2 street. And he is saying the same stuff to her again, and  
3 again, and again. And I turn and I say to the police  
4 officer, "This is the couple I was telling you about. This  
5 is what goes on." So the police officer watches this for a  
6 few minutes. When the violence escalates to the point  
7 where it becomes a concern to her, she pulls her wallet out  
8 of her back pocket with her badge, because she was in plain  
9 clothes, races over and removes the woman and harasses --  
10 tells the woman, "You need a safety plan."

11                   At that point I'm really upset now because  
12 what is your safety plan if all the staff in your building  
13 know, and they just stand and watch it, and then you get  
14 put in handcuffs? Now there's a cop there and she watches  
15 it and then you get shit for it. What is the safety plan?  
16 Call Ghostbusters? Like -- or if you ask a cop how many  
17 people have been -- how many men have been incarcerated for  
18 beating up women, the answer is a big zero. They do  
19 nothing about it here in BC. The only time the cops ever -  
20 - anybody ever does any jail time for assault -- no matter  
21 how severe. I have women that I've worked with that the  
22 cops have watched their boyfriends punch them in the face.  
23 Still nothing happens. The only time they get in trouble  
24 from the police is when they breach the conditions the  
25 judge sets.

A.B.

1                   So how is that not systemic racism? Like  
2 how is that not society saying, "It's okay, you can beat up  
3 your wife, but don't you dare not listen to the judge. If  
4 the judge tells you that you can't go to 5 Orange Street,  
5 you better not go there, because if you go there you'll get  
6 -- then you'll go to jail. But go ahead, beat your wife as  
7 much as you like." Like that's just horse shit. And it  
8 just keeps going on, and on, and on.

9                   I keep talking about the glass ceiling.  
10 First Nations people have no choices in the economic world  
11 either. You know, we're always told, "Get a job.  
12 Assimilate, get a job. You're a part of Canada." Where  
13 can we work? Do you see us at Shoppers Drug Mart? No. Do  
14 you see us in -- driving a bus or a cab? No. Where do you  
15 find us? On skid row in the lower sections of society.  
16 And those of us that work are allowed to work taking care  
17 of the people who are a part of cultural genocide. That's  
18 it. How is that a nice option? How is that fair? How is  
19 that not discriminating when those are my choices: to  
20 raise my family, I have to work with addictions or be  
21 addicted? And that's it, I have no other choices.

22                   And I think that's wrong. And it really,  
23 really pisses me off that 60 years ago, when I was a child  
24 calling the police crying and telling them, "He's beating  
25 up my mum, he's beating up my mum, come and help me", and

A.B.

1 60 years later nothing has changed? It's still exactly the  
2 same. Like give your heads a shake. You don't need a  
3 bloody inquiry to know it's wrong. You just need to  
4 retrain your police, change some of your policies. If  
5 WorkSafeBC says it's wrong to have people going in and  
6 stopping violence, then who does stop it? Like what are  
7 the answers to this? If workers can't stop it because that  
8 puts them in danger, and cops don't stop it, how are or  
9 why? Like what is the purpose here? Where is our  
10 protection? That's -- my biggest question is: Where is  
11 our protection? You keep us in poverty on our own land;  
12 you keep us tied down with nothing; you feed us drugs; you  
13 feed us fentanyl; you feed us carfentanyl; what are we  
14 supposed to do?

15 So it makes me angry and it makes me sad.  
16 I would be less angry if I was speaking to a Native woman  
17 because then they would understand what I went through.  
18 When I speak with non-Native people I just get angrier and  
19 angrier. What are you doing to stop it? Like nobody does  
20 anything to stop it. It's just all so approved of. And  
21 it's disgusting to live like this. It's disgusting to live  
22 on your own land, in your own country -- and I pay taxes,  
23 huge taxes, because I work all the time. I work 60, 65  
24 hours a week down here, and I pay over \$1,000 in taxes.  
25 Still owe the government money at the end of the year. And



A.B.

1 for what? Like what am I doing it for?

2                   That's how I feel now. I'm so  
3 disheartened after this last two incidences that I don't  
4 even know -- I don't even want to come to work anymore. I  
5 might as well just quit and be on welfare like everybody  
6 else. There's no point. I can't stop the violence and  
7 nobody else is going to do anything about it. And I got  
8 two granddaughters coming up, and I think, "What's going to  
9 happen to them? How are they going to live?" Like it's  
10 just wrong. And you shouldn't need to have hundred of us  
11 line up and tell you it's wrong. You should know it's  
12 wrong, and you should fix it without asking us. That's  
13 what I think.

14                   It's not that hard to fix. You look  
15 through your policies, you see where it's wrong, you see  
16 what doesn't work, and you change it. That's how easy it  
17 is. And if the Canadian government or the Canadian systems  
18 cared about us in any way, they would. But it's because  
19 we're so -- we're the shit under everybody's feet. We know  
20 it down here, and we're angry about it, and we're upset  
21 about it, but we have no recourse. We have nothing.  
22 There's nothing. And this little inquiry isn't going to do  
23 shit either. It's going to spell out the same thing as  
24 *Forsaken* did. But what changed? How many years has it  
25 been since *Forsaken* was -- that inquiry around Picton, what

A.B.

1 he was allowed to do? And all of those recommendations,  
2 none of those have even been enacted. So what good is  
3 this? That's how I feel.

4 I'm only here because it's cheaper to come  
5 and talk here than it is to go over to England. But you  
6 guys have to do something and you have to stop it. And  
7 only you guys can. We can't. As Aboriginal women we can't  
8 stop it because we can't fight our defenders, our beaters,  
9 they're men. And we can't fight the cops. Like there's  
10 nothing we can do when they're arresting us because we've  
11 just been treated badly. Like what are we supposed to do?  
12 Do you have any answers at all? Is there any answers?  
13 That's what pisses me off, is nobody says anything,  
14 everybody just sits and listens.

15 I think that's all I have to say. I think  
16 you guys should fix it yourselves. It shouldn't be us  
17 fixing it. I say the same thing to the police chief when I  
18 meet with him. Like it's bullshit, it's just bullshit how  
19 many people are hurt down here. You walk the streets, you  
20 see it all the time. Any block, you're in the  
21 neighbourhood, go around the corner and you'll see a woman  
22 getting beat up, or you'll hear a man calling her down.  
23 And the disgusting things they say to the women down here  
24 too. Things I don't even like to repeat, but I'm going to  
25 say it because it's in a national inquiry. There's a man

A.B.

1 fighting with a woman and he tells her, "You're nothing but  
2 a fucking piece of skin to make my dick wet." And he's  
3 announcing this on the street. And that's what we deal  
4 with down here every day. Now because we're poor we're  
5 expected to deal with it? I don't think that's right.

6                   If we're addicted, half the reasons these  
7 people get addicted is male violence. If you ask a lot of  
8 the girls, "How did your addiction start?" "Oh, I came to  
9 party, I went to a party, and the guys gave them all free  
10 drugs." Once they're drunk they inject them, and they wake  
11 up on Monday morning and they're addicted. Okay? So --  
12 and that's one of the things that men do to get women to  
13 work for them. Where's the protection to stop that? Yes,  
14 they go out to party, but come on.

15                   And then with all the shit that Trudeau is  
16 doing in northern BC and across the country with fracking,  
17 with mining, with hydro damming, with LNG-ing, all of our  
18 land is being raped. So all those reserves up there --  
19 because that's all Indian country. Where are they going?  
20 They're coming down here. 13,000 First Nations people live  
21 in this end of town, and every week there's more coming.  
22 And they're coming here because there's nothing out there  
23 for them to do anymore. There's no animals. They can't  
24 live off the land. There's no jobs. There's no animals.  
25 Like the coyote calls, the bear calls, and everything else

A.B.

1 that the government has done to end all that up there. And  
2 you can't fish anymore, that Japanese thing took care of  
3 that.

4                   So what are First Nations people supposed  
5 to do? Have you seen pictures of what the land looks like  
6 up there and how they've taken it from people? Either the  
7 clear-cut in BC, or the fracking and what's happening in  
8 northern Alberta. That's all Crown land, which means it's  
9 Indian land. So all of those Native people come down here.  
10 Oh, good, they can get a welfare cheque. Oh, good, they  
11 can get an SRO with a room down the hall, a bathroom down  
12 the hall. How is that living up to treaty responsibilities  
13 or the Royal Proclamation of 1763, where the Canadian  
14 government promised us a certain amount. None of that is  
15 happening either. If we had homes maybe we wouldn't be  
16 here. Like we shouldn't be telling you guys this. You  
17 guys know this. The stats are out. What is that thing the  
18 government does every four years where they do the -- check  
19 everybody's house, who lives in it?

20                   MS. JAYME MENZIES: The census?

21                   MS. A.B.: The census. The census reveals  
22 all this information. All the information about how little  
23 money we get is revealed. You guys know if you look for  
24 the lowest earners, more than 60 percent of them are going  
25 to be First Nations. You look for addictions, more than 60

A.B.

1 percent of them are going to be First Nations. Look for  
2 incarceration, more than 60 percent are going to be First  
3 Nations. Look at children in care, more than 60 percent is  
4 going to be First Nations. Look to [Social services  
5 organization 1] drop-in centre where people in street bay  
6 sex work, more than 60 percent is going to be First  
7 Nations.

8                   Are we flawed? Are we DNA flawed? Is  
9 that what the Canadian government is saying to us? Is that  
10 what the Canadian population is saying to us? "There's  
11 something wrong with you, this is all you're good for."  
12 That's how it feels. Okay? And that's not a good feeling.  
13 It's not a good feeling to grow up with. You ask any First  
14 Nations woman something about her life, she'll tell you,  
15 "All my life I thought there was something wrong with me.  
16 I always thought there was something wrong with me. I knew  
17 there was something wrong with me." You'll hear them say  
18 that in every kind of way. "There's just something wrong  
19 with me."

20                   And then I found out what was wrong with  
21 me. What was wrong with me is I'm First Nations. And  
22 that's when I got angry. All these years I put up with  
23 this violence, I put up with this shit, thinking that it  
24 was me; and it wasn't me. It's the system. It's the  
25 society. And it angers me that nobody does anything about

A.B.

1 it. It really, really angers me. Look at our babies, look  
2 at our children, look at them in care, look at how quickly  
3 you guys are taking them. They're not even given a chance.  
4 You know, they're taken right away. I have mums telling  
5 me, "I don't go visit my kids in care anymore because the  
6 social workers told me I couldn't speak my language to  
7 them." Like what kind of sense does that make, that a  
8 mother is not allowed to speak in her own language? Yet  
9 you get on a BC bus and you'll hear ten other languages.  
10 But our language isn't good enough? And that's how it  
11 feels. Like you can speak French in this country, you can  
12 speak East Indian in this country, you can speak any  
13 European language, but try speaking First Nations, and, oh  
14 no, it's all hell breaks loose, our language is bad.  
15 Everything about us is bad.

16                   If we're that rotten of a people, well, I  
17 mean I can't say, "Why aren't you doing away with us?"  
18 Well, you are. That's exactly what's happening. They're  
19 killing us off so they don't have to answer the land  
20 question. They're killing us off so they don't have to  
21 meet the requirements. You know we're only 800,000 people  
22 in this country now? Do you know that if you leave your  
23 dog outside overnight you get fined, but we're allowed to  
24 be outside overnight? And nobody thinks there's anything  
25 wrong with that? Like that's just fucked up. And even to

A.B.

1 be a citizen of -- if that was happening in my house I  
2 wouldn't allow it. And yet everybody sits back.

3 All the white people think it was hundreds  
4 of years ago, or that's how they justify their ignorance.  
5 And that's another thing, it's not my job to educate non-  
6 Native people either. I shouldn't have to be exposed to  
7 their stupid questions on the bus, or -- from one end to  
8 the other the systemic racism is killing us. Okay? If it  
9 isn't you guys doing it intentionally, it's what you've  
10 done secretively in the policies that's doing this in.  
11 What do you think is going to change after this inquiry?  
12 Do you think anything is going to change?

13 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Are you asking me?

14 MS. A.B.: Yeah.

15 MS. JAYME MENZIES: I hope a few things.  
16 I can't be certain, but, first of all, I hope that just  
17 people being given the opportunity to share and be heard  
18 will be one -- one step, because just being heard is --

19 MS. A.B.: That's a part of it. We can't  
20 speak at our jobs.

21 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yeah, that's what I  
22 mean.

23 MS. A.B.: If we speak out at our jobs  
24 then we become the problem.

25 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Totally. So to just

A.B.

1 be heard I think is hopefully one good step.

2 MS. A.B.: Well, it's a very small step.

3 MS. JAYME MENZIES: It is, it is. It's  
4 too small, don't get me wrong. But I hope that that's one  
5 -- I hope there's a bit of healing there anyway. And then  
6 I mean the national inquiry, we employ 80 percent  
7 Indigenous staff, and we're all on the same page, and we  
8 really are hoping for meaningful change. Ultimately our  
9 report, our recommendations, our educational tools will be  
10 given to the government and to other institutions. And  
11 from there we can all continue to push for those to be  
12 implemented.

13 MS. A.B.: How do we push? I'm the only  
14 person, the only Native person that works in what the boss  
15 calls "the leadership team".

16 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mmm.

17 MS. A.B.: So that's there -- I'm a  
18 program coordinator at [Social services organization 1].

19 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Okay.

20 MS. A.B.: And I'm the only Native person.

21 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Right.

22 MS. A.B.: And so I've got to walk in to  
23 12 people.

24 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Right.

25 MS. A.B.: All the other program



A.B.

1 coordinators that are non-Native, and try to deal with  
2 their ignorance.

3 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Right. So the hope is  
4 that when we release our report, and then we release  
5 recommendations for every single institution, that you can  
6 then take those documents, bring them into your meetings  
7 and say, "Look at the statistics and look at this report,  
8 the federal Canadian-wide report, and it's recommended that  
9 in communities like [Social services organization 1] that  
10 these things be implemented." So --

11 MS. A.B.: But they never happened after  
12 the whole Picton inquiry. There was a long list of  
13 recommendations and none of them have been met.

14 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yeah.

15 MS. A.B.: So what's to say these will be  
16 met?

17 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Honestly, I wish I  
18 could tell you it would be a fix. And I agree with you,  
19 I'm on the same page with you, there are so many issues  
20 that I want changed too.

21 MS. A.B.: Mm-hmm.

22 MS. JAYME MENZIES: And we are just doing  
23 our -- we're just trying our darndest to be a big voice in  
24 Canadian leadership's ears to change things. And I wish I  
25 could promise that there would be change in every area from

A.B.

1 drugs, to child welfare, to hospitals, to the justice  
2 system, to policy, to land. I can't promise that, but --

3 MS. A.B.: Well, can the discrimination be  
4 removed from some of these --

5 MS. JAYME MENZIES: The policies?

6 MS. A.B.: Yeah.

7 MS. JAYME MENZIES: That's -- we'll  
8 definitely propose that, and we're definitely going to push  
9 for it. I mean the federal government organized this  
10 inquiry and is funding it, so I would like to presume, and  
11 we would all like to presume, that they are willing to hear  
12 what we have to say when we come out of it. And that's --  
13 I mean, we're hanging onto hope like you and like everybody  
14 else.

15 MS. A.B.: Well, I met Trudeau when he  
16 first got elected and I thanked him for the hope, but I  
17 don't have it anymore. I think he's a big disappointment.  
18 I think he's a huge letdown. This pipeline is another  
19 factor. That's violence towards us.

20 MS. JAYME MENZIES: I agree.

21 MS. A.B.: This is Squamish land and he  
22 thinks it. And the mayor has now said, acknowledged that  
23 it's unceded Squamish land. So what's the best thing to  
24 do? If we can't give it back to him then we might as well  
25 destroy it. We'll fill it up with concrete and then we'll

A.B.

1 pour our oil over it, and then even the Indians won't want  
2 it anymore, and we'll be able to do what we want with it.

3 MS. JAYME MENZIES: I'm with you.

4 MS. A.B.: That's how it feels. I have  
5 absolutely no hope in Trudeau anymore. I have no hope in  
6 the system. I can't stand my boss, who I think -- and gets  
7 offended at me when I tell her that her policies are the  
8 same as colonizers', like -- that there's no difference.  
9 That's what we mean when we say systemic racism, is it's  
10 written into the policies.

11 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yeah.

12 MS. A.B.: And then she gets offended  
13 because I've called her a colonizer and doesn't want to  
14 talk to me anymore. How is that an answer? I become the  
15 problem.

16 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yeah.

17 MS. A.B.: And I'm tired of that. If I  
18 stay quiet then my insides eat away at themselves and I  
19 feel lower self-esteem, lower hope for my grandchildren. I  
20 feel like I'm disappointing them and letting them down by  
21 not speaking out to stop it. And yet if I speak out, then  
22 I'm the problem and I have issues at work for the next week  
23 with people being rude.

24 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Right.

25 MS. A.B.: People ignoring me. Any of my

A.B.

1 proposals being rejected because I'm a problem. So how do  
2 I resolve that? How do I -- because the one thing you  
3 can't say to anybody Canadian is they're racist. Nobody  
4 wants to hear that they're racist. They hardly, hardly  
5 accept that they're settlers.

6 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yeah. The other  
7 element is we hope that what will come out of this is  
8 education. So one way to solve ignorance and racism is an  
9 understanding. Right? We hope that with some of the  
10 movements that have been happening, but even some of the  
11 resources that we put out after this, that people that  
12 didn't understand the history of, you know, our First  
13 Nations, or Inuit, or Métis, et cetera, will then come to  
14 an understanding, and that ignorance and that racism will  
15 slowly go away. That's --

16 MS. A.B.: And even all the new Canadians,  
17 what, do they take a little oath when they get here to hate  
18 us? Because they arrive already knowing that they're  
19 better than us.

20 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Hmm.

21 MS. A.B.: And they let us know that. You  
22 know that in Chinatown First Nations people can't go over  
23 to Chinatown and sleep in their doorways? Go walk the  
24 streets, you'll see it. The division is very clear,  
25 Chinatown is touristy, so we can't dare have poor drunken

A.B.

1 Indians or poor high people in Chinatown because that's  
2 tourists. So all the Chinese people come down into the  
3 Downtown Eastside, and they line up and they take all the  
4 resources or the benefits, but we can't go to their side.

5 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Hmm.

6 MS. A.B.: And I think that's unfair. And  
7 the police enforce that as well because the tourism in  
8 Chinatown is more important than housing people.

9 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Right.

10 MS. A.B.: And you don't want all these  
11 drunk people or high people who are doing whatever, digging  
12 in the cracks in the sidewalk, in our tourist areas. We  
13 can't let tourists see how we treat Indigenous people, or  
14 how we handle poverty or mental illness. Because that's  
15 the other thing that comes down here is all the mental  
16 health issues.

17 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm-hmm.

18 MS. A.B.: And I mean the jib use is  
19 creating more mental health situations.

20 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Sorry, the...?

21 MS. A.B.: Jib, crystal meth.

22 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Oh, okay, sorry.

23 MS. A.B.: Because there's more and more  
24 of that coming down here too.

25 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Oh, okay.

A.B.

1 MS. A.B.: And that creates problems. You  
2 know, the police don't do anything about drugs down here.

3 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Hmm.

4 MS. A.B.: They don't -- they do not. You  
5 can inject in front of them, you can sell in front of them.

6 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm-hmm.

7 MS. A.B.: They do nothing. The only  
8 thing they're concerned with is property crimes. Try  
9 selling it on a bike and you won't get away with it,  
10 because they'll stop you to find out if you bought that  
11 bike or if you stole it.

12 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mmm.

13 MS. A.B.: So that pisses me off.

14 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm-hmm.

15 MS. A.B.: The fact that we have speed  
16 limits on Hastings Street. The reason they're there is  
17 because the people are so high or so drunk, they may not  
18 know enough to cross the street safely.

19 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Right.

20 MS. A.B.: So we lowered the speed limit  
21 to 30 kilometres.

22 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Okay.

23 MS. A.B.: Which is a good thing.

24 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm-hmm.

25 MS. A.B.: We don't enforce it. There's

A.B.

1 20 cops on that street. Any time you look out there, and  
2 the cars go zooming by, 50, 60, 70 miles an hour. Anytime  
3 somebody gets hit by a car, they're dead instantly, it's  
4 not like they can live. And then the cops release a report  
5 saying, "Speed and alcohol was not a factor." Well, how do  
6 you kill somebody with a car going under 30 miles an hour?  
7 But it's because nobody comes to claim the bodies, right,  
8 because they come from all across Canada now; they're not  
9 here attached to their family, and they're homeless.

10 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Right.

11 MS. A.B.: Okay? So First Nations people  
12 down here believe that we're being killed off for our body  
13 parts too. Because there's way, way more organ donors now,  
14 thanks to us.

15 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Hmm.

16 MS. A.B.: You know, because first they  
17 get everybody to sign away your organs on your BC ID or on  
18 your driver's licence, and then when you're fentanyl-ed out  
19 they've got this piece of paper and they take your organs.  
20 So I mean they're doing a lot of that too.

21 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Hmm.

22 MS. A.B.: I don't know what the answers  
23 are. I don't think we have the answers. It's like the  
24 violence towards us I say is not our issue, "Don't try to  
25 tell me how to keep myself safe. Go try and tell men not

A.B.

1 to hit women." I raised my son not to hit women. It's not  
2 hard to do. It's a really easy thing. You just teach them  
3 respect.

4 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm-hmm.

5 MS. A.B.: Okay? That's how easy it is.  
6 And if they get to be a grown-ass man and they haven't  
7 learnt that in their home, then it's up to the courts and  
8 the judges, even the cops. I've suggested that. When the  
9 cops pick up a man for domestic violence, their comments to  
10 them are things -- and I've heard it, "Don't worry, you'll  
11 be out in an hour."

12 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Hmm.

13 MS. A.B.: Like why don't we have big  
14 bully cops going, "What kind of a man are you? Why are you  
15 hitting women?" Like why aren't they taking a stand  
16 against it? And the reason I think they're not is because  
17 half of them are beating up their wives too. Their  
18 attitude is still that you smack your wife if she gets out  
19 of hand. And that applies across the board.

20 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm-hmm.

21 MS. A.B.: It's not just First Nations,  
22 it's just worse down here.

23 MS. JAYME MENZIES: No, that's a societal  
24 thing, yeah.

25 MS. A.B.: Yeah. So it's harder on us,



A.B.

1 but right across the board. So how come white women aren't  
2 helping us? If you go down to South Surrey White Rock  
3 Women's Place, which is a nicer rich, white neighbourhood,  
4 and you talk to the women that are going in there looking  
5 for support, "My husband is a police chief, I'm beat up.  
6 My husband is a fireman and I'm beat up. My husband is on  
7 city council and I'm beat up." That's what you hear down  
8 there. And that should tell you how pervasive --

9 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yup.

10 MS. A.B.: -- it is to beat up women. So  
11 why are we scrambling down here when it should be all women  
12 saying no to it? Like white women think -- they don't talk  
13 about it because it's shameful for them and their friends.  
14 I don't get it. I don't get it. I just don't understand  
15 why it isn't stopped.

16 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm-hmm.

17 MS. A.B.: If we pulled it together to get  
18 enough policies and enough legislation to say, "We're going  
19 to fine you if you leave your dog outside in the cold  
20 weather", but we can't pull it together to write a policy  
21 that says, "We don't leave people outside either"? Like  
22 what kind of sense does that make? And how do you think it  
23 feels when an animal has more rights than you have? That  
24 doesn't feel good.

25 I don't know what else I can say other

A.B.

1 than my whole childhood was spent -- because my mum had a  
2 series of men. They all beat her up. And I called the  
3 cops every time, and never once did they do anything. Back  
4 then a man's home was his castle. And the men would stand  
5 at the door, because they never did not answer it to the  
6 cops, and they would just swear at the cops and tell the  
7 cops, "So what, what are you going to do about it", when I  
8 was a kid. And all the cops would do is tell my mum,  
9 "We'll wait five minutes and we'll escort you out safely."  
10 My mum had six kids, usually one or two babies, what can  
11 you gather in five minutes to get out safely and be okay?

12 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm-hmm.

13 MS. A.B.: So I grew up not believing that  
14 bullshit about the cops will save your life, or the cops  
15 will help you. They've never protected me, not once, not  
16 in my abusive relationships. I'm single now and I've been  
17 violence-free for more than 20 years, but it was not an  
18 easy out.

19 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm-hmm.

20 MS. A.B.: It was not easy at all. And  
21 the cops provided nothing: no help for me as a child and  
22 no help for me as an adult. The courts provided nothing.  
23 Do you know what my husband was allocated child support for  
24 three kids? \$50. So tell me that I'm not pigeonholed down  
25 here. And that was it. It didn't matter what I said or

A.B.

1 asked for. \$50, that's it? Like give me a break. That's  
2 all my dad paid for me in child support was \$50, for me and  
3 my brother, for two of us. And then 25 years later a judge  
4 awards me the same amount for three kids? How -- you  
5 wouldn't get that. I don't know, you would get a lot more  
6 in court. Why is it we're viewed as less?

7                   And that's how it is. It just it doesn't  
8 matter what avenue you look down. If we go to the hospital  
9 because we're sick, they treat us like shit. If you go to  
10 the courthouse because we've had something happen to us,  
11 we're treated like shit. Get on a bus, we're treated like  
12 shit. You walk into a restaurant, we're treated like shit.  
13 You walk into a department store, if it's not Army and  
14 Navy, if we've tried to dare go up Granville or down  
15 Robson, we're followed around the stores like we're crooks  
16 and criminals. So Canada has to change.

17                   MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm-hmm.

18                   MS. A.B.: White Canada has to change.  
19 And it's not even white Canada anymore. You know, the  
20 reason they're selling all this land off to foreign  
21 investors is because then they don't have to answer the  
22 Indian question. That's what I think and that's what I  
23 believe. If they sell it all off to other countries, then  
24 the government is off the hook. And that's exactly what  
25 they're doing because we're prime real estate here in BC.

A.B.

1 You know, we're the last frontier on the whole planet.  
2 South America has some, but basically there's nothing else  
3 pristine. And we're losing that here, and we're giving it  
4 up without any kind of a struggle, and we're not even  
5 saying anything to it. We're just letting them sell, "Sell  
6 it off, sell it off."

7 I don't know. I don't know. Do you have  
8 any questions for me? Because this is just upsetting me to  
9 talk about it.

10 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yeah. I don't have  
11 any questions. You covered a good gamut of things, but I  
12 don't want to rush you, I just want to make sure like if  
13 there was any individual that you wanted to speak about  
14 specifically, or if you're more -- I mean this was a broad  
15 and really important to review a lot of the issues in the  
16 area, but if there's anything more specific you wanted to  
17 talk about. That's all.

18 MS. A.B.: Well, just the young couple.

19 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yeah.

20 MS. A.B.: You know --

21 MS. JAYME MENZIES: This past couple of  
22 weeks.

23 MS. A.B.: Yeah, like what is her safety  
24 plan?

25 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yeah.

A.B.

1 MS. A.B.: What do I do to keep her safe?

2 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yeah.

3 MS. A.B.: If building managers and the  
4 front desk staff and everything just watch it, and then the  
5 cops just watch it, what can I do?

6 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm-hmm. What is  
7 [Social services organization 1]? What kind of work do you  
8 do?

9 MS. A.B.: Well, I'm the program  
10 coordinator and I do outreach wishes for women in the sex  
11 trade.

12 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mmm, okay. Thank you.  
13 And do you find that you have supports for you in this  
14 work?

15 MS. A.B.: Absolutely not. Absolutely  
16 not. There's absolutely no support for me. And I've  
17 asked, and asked, and asked. I've asked to go to my board  
18 of directors, and I was told that I couldn't. I have  
19 repeatedly asked for support for the kind of work that I  
20 do.

21 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yeah.

22 MS. A.B.: Because I arrange funerals for  
23 people, I help women get their kids back, or help them to  
24 supervised access to their kids, which is heartbreaking. I  
25 help them through family court, I help them find housing.

A.B.

1 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Heavy stuff.

2 MS. A.B.: Yeah. And I've got no support,  
3 no nothing in my job. My boss hates me. I'm the problem.  
4 So -- and she's told me over and over again to go find  
5 another job, and cut back my hours because I'm such a  
6 problem. So that's why I just get more -- and now I'm 64  
7 years old, and I'm paying 1,200 month rent, and I can't  
8 even retire because where will I move? Like I can't pay my  
9 rent on pension. So I'm feeling almost desperate or really  
10 frightened about my own future.

11 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Right.

12 MS. A.B.: At this point. And working for  
13 someone who doesn't value the work I do, or doesn't  
14 appreciate the work I do, or doesn't recognize -- I have  
15 150 women on my case load.

16 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yeah.

17 MS. A.B.: And they're the reason I stay.  
18 And a boss that doesn't recognize it and just wants me out.  
19 Right? Because she doesn't like -- I'm the problem. I  
20 bring up the racial stuff.

21 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Hmm.

22 MS. A.B.: I don't know how to handle  
23 that.

24 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Is it a City of  
25 Vancouver organization or is it a provincial organization?

A.B.

1 MS. A.B.: It's a non-profit.

2 MS. JAYME MENZIES: It's a non-profit.

3 Oof.

4 MS. A.B.: Yeah, there's nothing I can do.

5 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Hmm.

6 MS. A.B.: So. Oh, I already know there's  
7 nothing I can do about anything. Like I just get angry and  
8 that's all.

9 MS. JAYME MENZIES: I can't think of an  
10 answer myself, but if you -- we do have aftercare available  
11 through the national inquiry, and if you can think of  
12 something that you feel could help you that we could do for  
13 you, that's an option. And we'll definitely stay in touch  
14 with you, and our health support workers will be in touch  
15 with you, for example. But if it's anything -- you know,  
16 whether you would like us to connect you with some sort of  
17 mental health side of things, or if you need help in some  
18 other way, or if you --

19 MS. A.B.: I need the same thing everybody  
20 else needs, a chance to be okay and affordable housing.

21 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yeah.

22 MS. A.B.: And I don't want to live in an  
23 SRO, but it's like that's how the policy streamline us.

24 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm-hmm.

25 MS. A.B.: Is right down here to Main and

A.B.

1 Hastings, and then give us shit for being down here. After  
2 they move us down here then they want to dislike us or let  
3 us know how distasteful we are for being down here. So  
4 that's not fair either. Like I've worked my whole life,  
5 but there's no -- there's no money in social services.

6 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm-hmm.

7 MS. A.B.: You know, it's not like you  
8 ever get anywhere or you ever get ahead. I just was able  
9 to feed my kids. And with the cost now, I have a harder  
10 time taking care of just me than I did taking care of my  
11 own kids. My rent is 1,200 and then you still have phone,  
12 transportation, car payment, lights, heat, internet, and I  
13 make \$15 an hour.

14 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm-hmm.

15 MS. A.B.: So it just feels hopeless.  
16 Right? It feels absolutely hopeless to be First Nations.  
17 --- (Knocking on door)

18 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Mm-hmm. Oh, is that  
19 probably --

20 MS. A.B.: Yeah, it probably means we have  
21 to go to work. That's what the phone call was, the boss.

22 Was that you, [E.]?

23 MS. E.: Yes.

24 MS. A.B.: Do we have to go?

25 MS. E.: Yeah.



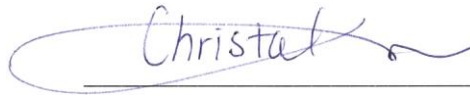
A.B.

1 MS. A.B.: Okay.

2 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Okay. Well, I'll turn  
3 off the technology.

4 --- Whereupon the statement concluded

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 realtime computer-aided transcription.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christal" followed by a flourish. The signature is written over a horizontal line.

Christal Chan, Certified Court Reporter