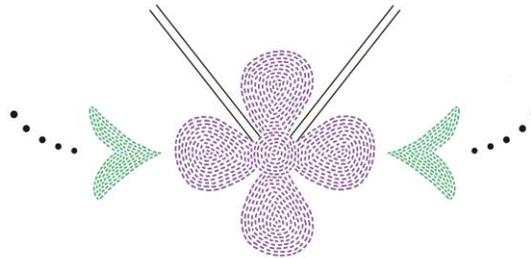


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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
Vancouver, British Columbia
The Saa-Ust Center**



PUBLIC

Friday April 13, 2018

Statement - Volume 403

**Mark Handley,
In Relation to his Infant Sister**

Statement gathered by Caitlin Hendrickson

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NOTE 1: 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."

NOTE 2: The use of square brackets [] in this transcript indicates that amendments have been made to the certified transcript in order to replace information deemed inaudible or indecipherable by the original transcriptionist. Amendments were completed by listening to the source audio recording of the proceeding and were made by Bryana Bouchir, Public Inquiry Clerk with the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQ, July 3rd 2018 at Vancouver, BC.

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Statement Gatherer: Caitlin Hendrickson

Documents submitted with testimony: none.

1 Vancouver, British Columbia

2 --- Upon commencing on Friday, April 13, 2018

3 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So we're
4 recording now.

5 MR. MARK HANDLEY: Okay, good.

6 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: I'm going to
7 introduce myself. My name is Caitlin Hendrickson; I'm a
8 statement gatherer with the National Inquiry into Missing
9 and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. It's 11:19 a.m.
10 on Friday, April 13th. We are here at the Saa-Ust Centre
11 in Vancouver, B.C.

12 I'm going to go over the consent form with
13 you and then after that I will ask you to just introduce
14 yourself and you'll be free to start with what you'd like
15 the Commissioners to know.

16 [*Discussion regarding consent omitted*].

17 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And then I'm
18 going to witness here. And with that I will get you to
19 introduce yourself. If you could spell your last name for
20 the people who are going to transcribe it and then you can
21 talk about what you'd like the Commissioners to know.

22 MR. MARK HANDLEY: Sure, okay. My name is
23 Mark Handley, H-A-N-D-L-E-Y. Just to give you a bit of
24 context, I was born Dean John Cochrane (ph); I'm an adoptee
25 and I'm from Saskatchewan. My birth father is from

1 Mistawasis. My birth mother is from Cumberland House. So
2 that's Plains Cree and Swampy Cree, and I was born in
3 Prince Albert.

4 I wasn't adopted at birth, I went through
5 several foster homes, I think it was five, before I was --
6 five foster homes before I was adopted. My parents were
7 British that raised me and I have one other sister that is
8 adopted and one natural sister and one natural brother from
9 my parents. So I grew up in a very blended family.

10 And I'm referred to as a "Sixties Scoop."
11 I was referred to as an "apple" and I think I've paid my
12 dues enough within the Aboriginal community over the last
13 20 years that I don't refer to myself as an apple anymore.
14 And that was a reference point of when I came into the
15 Aboriginal community that was really reiterated numerous
16 times and now it's -- it's something I've dropped from my -
17 - from how I identify myself.

18 It was in the late '90s that I got
19 reconnected back into the Aboriginal community. And
20 ironically I was working for the United Native Nations at
21 that time and I had a job as a family reunification
22 officer, so I worked with other adoptees and foster people
23 like myself reconnecting them back to their families or if
24 they wanted just to get their status. It was either of
25 those two directions that people went for when they were

1 wanting to get services from the UNN at that time.

2 So I began my search roughly around the
3 same time to be able to get my own status and that was what
4 -- really what I wanted to do was get that, so that would
5 be the late '90s and I would be in my mid-20s at that time.

6 And what I found, it was a really actually
7 a long process in total by the time I started looking to
8 when I actually found -- got my status card and met my
9 family, it was a four-year period. And so for whatever
10 reason it was just like -- there was a lot of research to
11 do.

12 I met my birth mother first and on my --
13 when I was adopted on my birth certificate -- before I got
14 my adoption order, but on my birth certificate it just
15 showed my birth mother, it didn't show a birth father. So
16 one of my first questions to her was: Who is my father?

17 My father was -- and she named him,
18 [Father], he went through residential school and there's
19 quirks in his personality and our relationship, he's still
20 alive, that sort of plays -- play itself out because I
21 think is what he went through in residential school he's
22 not a nice person, he's quite selfish, and he's, I believe,
23 cruel.

24 He's ironically a Correction -- CSC, he
25 works as an elder in residence, so he flies around into

1 Saskatchewan to different institutions doing his elder
2 work. So he's known in the community as doing that.

3 But his father, my mushum, my grandfather,
4 is [Grandfather]. And there is a high school in
5 Saskatchewan that was named after him, the [Grandfather's
6 name] High School, and so that's skip the generation is
7 sort of how I reference back into where I see myself and
8 not so much like as my father but more as my grandfather
9 who I follow as.

10 So my birth mother, I met her, we -- I
11 went to -- she had married into the Opaskayak Cree Nation,
12 OCN, in Manitoba and she had married. After she had given
13 me up she had married [Step-father] was the [elected First
14 Nations position] for about 20 years into that period, so
15 that's when I walked into her life.

16 So my siblings that she had kept -- she
17 kept her six kids after me, so they grew up and they were
18 quite political, (inaudible) they were contributing, well,
19 they still are, members in the community in Northern
20 Manitoba, so they all -- so I really don't have a close
21 relationship with them. For me, it was like one person
22 meeting many people; for them it's them just meeting one
23 person. And I wasn't part of that family structure, so I'm
24 kind of excluded as an adoptee of being not part of that
25 family.

1 And then on my birth father's family, he
2 kept his core family and then I had three other siblings,
3 and we're referenced as the "throw away kids" because we
4 weren't raised by him. And I was the only one adopted, the
5 others -- the other two, [Sister 1] and [Sister 2], they
6 were raised by their mothers, so the family dynamic there
7 is splintered as well.

8 And when I first got back into the
9 Aboriginal community or into finding out who my birth
10 family was, there was a story that people were referencing
11 and that was back in the -- I think it was '76/'77, there
12 was a -- just to go a step back. My father was from
13 Mistawasis living in Saskatoon and so I have a number of
14 people I know that are based here in Vancouver where I'm
15 based that would -- that knew my father when he was quite a
16 heavy drinker and a partier and very social in that
17 generation of Aboriginal men in Prince Albert at that time.

18 So it's -- so he was married to this woman
19 from [First Nation in Saskatchewan] I think it's called,
20 and they had four kids -- five kids. And the story from
21 what I understand is she -- and I'm not sure if she
22 actually did it, [Father's wife] -- she threw and shook
23 that child and that child died as a result of that
24 interaction, that beating, and she went to jail for it, so
25 [Father] didn't. So I don't know what the complicity or

1 what actually happened within that scene.

2 And the reason I want to bring this
3 forward is to bring acknowledgement to that child. And
4 I've not really heard the full story, just from one sibling
5 telling me the story of like something happened there.

6 And my brother [Brother], he passed away
7 last year due to an illness, but he was entrenched in the
8 gang life in Saskatoon. And we weren't close but he would
9 tell me stories but he never told me that story, and I know
10 that probably impacted him as a child because he would have
11 been about four or five when that happened.

12 And at that period when [Father's wife],
13 she went to jail, I don't know how much time she served but
14 it would have been within a women's federal institution in
15 Saskatchewan somewhere, I'm not sure which one, and
16 [Father] turned around and stopped drinking. I guess that
17 was a life change time in his life of where he went into
18 sobriety and now he speaks as one in sobriety.

19 But it's really, I think, impacted his
20 life not having the skills to be able to acknowledge his
21 children. And that's where I come out of that, that not
22 having that relationship, and I blame that on his
23 residential school experience of not being able to express
24 how to be a father and respecting that role there.

25 So I think that's basically what I wanted

1 to share --

2 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay, do you
3 mind --

4 MR. MARK HANDLEY: -- and I'm not sure --

5 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: -- if I ask a
6 few questions?

7 MR. MARK HANDLEY: Oh please, yeah.

8 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So you said your
9 father's community was Mistawasis?

10 MR. MARK HANDLEY: Mistawasis, yeah.

11 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Where is that?

12 MR. MARK HANDLEY: Mistawasis is west of
13 Prince Albert. It's part of the Prince Albert Grand
14 Council, so it's the -- there's four tribal places:
15 Mistawasis is -- Mistawasis, Ahtakakoop. There's four
16 bands that are (inaudible/voices overlap).

17 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And which band
18 did you manage to get registered with?

19 MR. MARK HANDLEY: Opaskayak Cree Nation.

20 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Opaskayak.

21 MR. MARK HANDLEY: And that's OCN. O-P-A-
22 S-K-A-Y-A-K. And as I say, back there just
23 (inaudible/voices overlap) --

24 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Sorry, can you
25 spell that again?

1 MR. MARK HANDLEY: Yeah, O-P-A-S-K-A-Y-A-
2 K.

3 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay.

4 MR. MARK HANDLEY: And what they say is
5 like just the way it sounds.

6 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And is that a
7 Cree nation?

8 MR. MARK HANDLEY: Opaskayak Cree Nation,
9 yeah, and it's in Manitoba.

10 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Do you remember
11 much about your experience being in foster placements
12 before your long-term adoption?

13 MR. MARK HANDLEY: No.

14 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay.

15 MR. MARK HANDLEY: No. But I've got my
16 adoption records and they showed me that I was placed in I
17 think it was four, the fifth being where I was adopted
18 into, and it was in Price Albert, Melford, Coal Lake, and I
19 forget the (~~inaudible~~) [other] city or town. But --

20 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay.

21 MR. MARK HANDLEY: -- but that was a
22 normal thing to do, was like move the child at night-time
23 and then move them into whatever home they're going into,
24 but I don't remember.

25 And when my parents got me I asked what

1 was I like after coming out of those different places, they
2 -- I was supposedly a good kid.

3 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: How old were you
4 when you were finally placed with your -- the family that
5 you were raised with?

6 MR. MARK HANDLEY: About a year old --

7 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay.

8 MR. MARK HANDLEY: -- so.

9 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Do you have any
10 documents that you would like to share with the Inquiry,
11 like your adoption records or anything like that?

12 MR. MARK HANDLEY: I don't have any right
13 now.

14 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: No, that's okay;
15 I just mean like afterwards. If there is something that
16 you wanted to provide as part of your testimony it just --
17 it's a greater tool for the Commissioners to see.

18 MR. MARK HANDLEY: If I can think of one
19 I'll provide one.

20 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Sure, yeah.
21 It's totally optional. It's just a suggestion.

22 MR. MARK HANDLEY: Okay.

23 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And what was
24 life like with your family, growing up with adopted
25 siblings as well?

1 MR. MARK HANDLEY: I consider it normal
2 but it wasn't normal. It was like, I mean, being adopted
3 and my parents were British so I had a really British
4 upbringing, living in England probably a total of six
5 years. I went to a university in France for a year so
6 really away from. And the cultural loss is what I notice
7 now.

8 And I think that if I had wanted to -- you
9 know, we want money, we want to be able to be within our
10 own incomes, but I've really worked to maintain myself in
11 the Aboriginal non-profit off-reserve program.

12 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hmm.

13 MR. MARK HANDLEY: That's what I've
14 gravitated towards, but that shows you like I'm seeking a
15 cultural loss. I'm seeking to acceptance within the
16 community and that's still where my heart is. I gravitate
17 towards that, so.

18 I'm not -- if it had been normal I think I
19 would be doing -- I'd be making money, having -- owning
20 homes and doing different things like that or have a
21 certain amount of wealth, but I'm immersed in the
22 Aboriginal experience.

23 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And your
24 adoptive sister was she Indigenous as well?

25 MR. MARK HANDLEY: No, she was part black

1 and East Indian --

2 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay.

3 MR. MARK HANDLEY: -- so I was really --
4 and she's never gone back to look for her birth family to
5 build a -- look for that identity. She had a -- she
6 started her family almost right out of high school, so that
7 was her -- what I see as her way of accepting herself and
8 who she was going through adoption.

9 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And what is your
10 relationship like with your adoptive family?

11 MR. MARK HANDLEY: Very close. I know
12 what my parents are having every day. I'll talk to them
13 once or twice a day. They're not long conversations,
14 they're not deep conversations, but there is communication
15 that happens there and I think it's reciprocal in both of
16 us needing each other.

17 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And do you have
18 a relationship with your mom now that you've met her?

19 MR. MARK HANDLEY: I went -- I moved back
20 to Saskatchewan because she was going through the last
21 stages of her diabetes and she had lost her leg, she had
22 dementia, she was blind. It was really -- a really harsh
23 recognition of watching somebody have diabetes. You hear
24 about it as a statistics but it's -- but actually seeing it
25 firsthand.

1 And my other -- her other five kids, six
2 kids they -- four of them are on the needle and just one is
3 not -- doesn't have diabetes. So I sort of battle with
4 that whole concept of like, you know, I'm scared of getting
5 diabetes. So living here in Vancouver I got what I call a
6 60 block diet. I try to walk 60 blocks a day. I may
7 manage it maybe three times a week, but it's about an hour
8 and 20 minutes of walking but that's how I keep that off.

9 And the other thing about being adopted is
10 that there's genotypes and phenotypes. Genotypes of what
11 you're directly inherited with and what your -- why you're
12 -- you look the way you do, and phenotypes are what your
13 environment is.

14 And so I know that growing up that I was
15 fed properly and so that's why I think I've been -- I don't
16 have diabetes is because of that. So I'm grateful for
17 being adopted, like it's -- it was my hand that I carry so
18 it's -- I'm okay with it.

19 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Do you have any
20 recommendations for the Commissioners about what you'd like
21 to see come out of the Inquiry for First Nations, Inuit and
22 Métis people?

23 MR. MARK HANDLEY: It's not so much a
24 recommendation but the acknowledgement of non-status Métis
25 and Inuit, because quite often it's like are you treaty or

1 are you status, that seems to be the preference.

2 But I grew up thinking I was Métis so I
3 identified to that more and then when I found out I was
4 status it was kind of a bonus. But I think it's important
5 to have the inclusion of what the Indian Act acknowledges
6 Métis.

7 Because I'm going through the Sixties
8 Scoop thing right now and they're only paying out the
9 people that are actually status. I don't fully agree with
10 what that is, but the inclusion of Métis, non-status, and I
11 guess at some point a recognition of the people that didn't
12 make it.

13 When I left or started to get my
14 education, I went in for criminology and things like that.
15 But I noticed that within the federal institutions a lot of
16 those people were non-status, Métis or adopted and they're
17 the ones that were, you know, living in that federal
18 institutions and I was just like that could have been me,
19 you know, very similar backgrounds. But I think my parents
20 that I was raised by, my father was a teacher, my mother
21 was a teacher but she was just a homemaker, but it was a
22 really -- yeah, it was -- it was a healthy upbringing.

23 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Can you remind
24 me of your birth name again?

25 MR. MARK HANDLEY: Dean John Cochrane. I

1 was named after Dean Martin. And John was my grandfather's
2 name and Cochrane is her maiden name.

3 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Well, I'm glad
4 to hear that you kind of -- like it sounds like you went
5 through a lot to get those answers of where you are from
6 and what your identity is --

7 MR. MARK HANDLEY: Yeah.

8 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: -- but you're
9 one of those more successful stories of being able to find
10 those answers.

11 MR. MARK HANDLEY: Yeah. Yeah, I feel
12 that, I really do. But I'm still working grassroots, sort
13 of like at a really kind of grassroots level of -- yeah,
14 but that's where I'm at.

15 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: M-hmm. And I
16 appreciate you coming in and sharing what your thoughts are
17 --

18 MR. MARK HANDLEY: Yeah.

19 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: -- and
20 acknowledging your background.

21 MR. MARK HANDLEY: Thank you.

22 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: I'm glad to hear
23 that this has been a fairly positive experience for you.

24 MR. MARK HANDLEY: Yeah.

25 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And if you have

1 any other thoughts or recommendations that I haven't asked
2 you, feel free to share.

3 MR. MARK HANDLEY: Okay. And basically my
4 sharing today was more to bring acknowledgement to that
5 sibling that I never met. So --

6 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: The infant,
7 yeah.

8 MR. MARK HANDLEY: So it's like when you
9 say girls and stuff like that, you know what I rarely
10 acknowledge her and -- but I think it's one degree of
11 separation from almost all Aboriginal people of having
12 something horrific like that and knowing about that. So I
13 can't imagine like what happened that night, so.

14 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Do you know that
15 sibling's -- what her name was?

16 MR. MARK HANDLEY: No, I don't --

17 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay, that's
18 fine.

19 MR. MARK HANDLEY: -- but yeah. But she -
20 - but the mother served time for it so there would be a
21 record of when that incident happened.

22 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: What was her
23 name again?

24 MR. MARK HANDLEY: [Infant sister] -- oh,
25 I'm going to say [Infant sister] but there's an E in there

Statement - Public
Mark Handley
(Infant sister)

16

1 somewhere. [Infant sister]. [Father] is my birth father.

2 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Yeah. That's
3 fine, yeah. We don't -- if you can't remember that's okay.
4 If there's nothing else you'd like to share I can shut off
5 the recording --

6 MR. MARK HANDLEY: Okay.

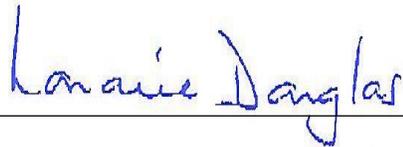
7 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: -- and you can
8 do some after care.

9 MR. MARK HANDLEY: Okay, cool.

10 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: It is 11:43 and
11 we're going to shut the recorder off now.

12 --- Whereupon proceeding concluded.

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



Lorraine Douglas, Transcriptionist