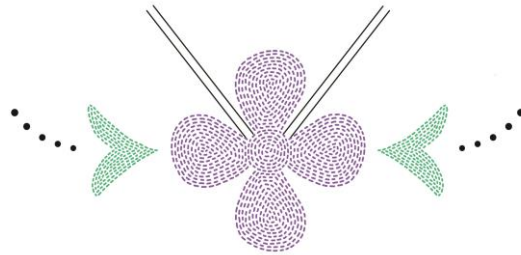


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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 401

**Candice Norris, Vicki Haynes, Cori Kelly
& Amber Kane,**

In relation to Shannon Elaine McDermott

Statement gathered by Caitlin Hendrickson

A.S.A.P. Reporting Services Inc. © 2018

II

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Statement - Volume 401
April 13, 2018 PAGE
Witnesses: Candice Norris, Vicki Haynes, Cori Kelly
& Amber Kane

Testimony of Candice Norris et al 1
Reporter's certification. 89

Statement gatherer: Caitlin Hendrickson

Documents submitted with testimony:

1. Names and spellings related to statement (1 page)

Statement - Public
Norris, Haynes, Kelly & Kane
(Shannon Elaine McDermott)

1

1 Vancouver, British Columbia

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

3 at 4:50 p.m.

4 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And then if you
5 want somebody else to witness, or I can witness it. Do you
6 want to...

7 So absolutely, let's start with a prayer.

8 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Okay.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Grandmothers and
10 grandfathers in the sacred four directions, Great Spirit,
11 we come before you now and ask for your strength to be with
12 our sister, Candice, as she goes through this important
13 process to lighten her load, to help make the way for some
14 healing for herself and for her family in this painful
15 time. We know that a lot of terrible, terrible crimes
16 against humanity have been committed against this woman's
17 family, and we pray that you'll help her to be safe in this
18 process, to not be harmed in any way. We pray that all of
19 the grandmothers will be with her and keep her strong and
20 protect her heart. We think of Heather right now, the
21 other ones that are out there hurting, and we pray that
22 you'll take care of them and help them to heal and find
23 safety. We love them so much, and we know that it's really
24 hard out there right now on the street. I think of Skylar
25 (ph) being by right now on his journey home. He's with

Statement - Public
Norris, Haynes, Kelly & Kane
(Shannon Elaine McDermott)

2

1 you, grandmothers and grandfathers. He's being cared for,
2 and his suffering is over, so help us with the preparations
3 to send him along in a good way, and for today, we pray for
4 -- we'll still have the strength, direction, guidance, all
5 our relations.

6 --- Everyone speaking over each other.

7 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So I'll get you
8 to introduce yourself, and you can introduce your supports
9 in the room. If any of your supports -- if you speak at
10 any time, can you just identify yourself on the recorder so
11 that when the transcribers are listening to it they know
12 who is speaking, and then after that you are free to bring
13 what you would like the Commissioners to know.

14 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: My name is Candice
15 Norris. That's my colonized name. My spirit name is Kihew
16 Atayoocan Esquao. I'm Eagle Spirit Woman. I am Cree and
17 Dene, from the Northwest Territories and Alberta, Edmonton,
18 Alberta area, as well as Irish/Scottish.

19 This is my part -- my buddy, my best
20 friend, Amber Kane. This is my partner in crime and work,
21 and Vicki, and this has been a big support with me. This
22 is Cori Kelly.

23 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Thank you. So
24 wherever you'd like to begin with what you think the
25 Commissioners need to know about your life and your

1 experience.

2 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Okay. So first off,
3 I need to say, you know, I may seem a little bit cold and
4 dry when I speak, because I've done so much work on myself
5 to be able to get to this point. That's why I wasn't going
6 to cancel today.

7 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

8 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I took many years to
9 get to this point where I wouldn't fall apart, so I can use
10 my voice in a good way, and help bring changes to our
11 future, and put some accountability on some of those who
12 didn't do what they were supposed to do to take care of us.

13 So when I grew up, I grew up in a -- in
14 the city of Vancouver. I grew up with children raising
15 children. My parents were just young. My mom was 14 when
16 she had me, or pregnant at 14 when she, you know, was
17 pregnant with me, and my dad was only a young man, 18
18 himself, and so they were just babies having babies, and
19 that was typical for our whole family.

20 There was no culture in our life. Our
21 culture was baseball games and beer, and whatever comes
22 along with those, and, you know, that happens to be
23 violence and arguing, and the men were held -- we had no
24 cultural teachings, whereas in our teachings we're just
25 learning how the women -- we did nothing without the

Statement - Public
Norris, Haynes, Kelly & Kane
(Shannon Elaine McDermott)

4

1 women's counsel. In my home the men were allowed to eat
2 first. They stood in the line-up. They worked hard for
3 the money so they get to eat first, so -- and that's the
4 way I grew up, believing that men had the all -- all, you
5 know, final say in everything, and I was okay with it,
6 because I was along -- that's how I was taught growing up,
7 and that's how they were taught.

8 We had no culture. We had no -- you know,
9 I remember being a young girl, and hearing I was a Cree
10 Indian, and I'm like, 'Cree? What is Cree? What does that
11 mean?' And nobody could tell me what a Cree Indian was,
12 but I'd be proud of that Cree Indian blood, and that's all
13 I knew.

14 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

15 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: So growing up I tried
16 to find out, you know, what kind of Cree am I? You know,
17 Bush Cree, Flatland Prairie? You know, what kind of Cree
18 am I? And nobody could tell me, you know. Nobody can tell
19 me.

20 Having grown up in that kind of lifestyle,
21 I've witnessed violence against women in many, many
22 different ways. My grandma had a man that beat his kids,
23 and he beat her kids. He had three kids of his own with
24 her, and then the rest of the 11 kids were from another --
25 from my grandfather, my biological grandfather. This man

1 beat these children, and he tortured them, and he did
2 unspeakable horrors to these beautiful young babies. You
3 know, I look at my two beautiful babies, who are five, and
4 I could never imagine them going through what my family
5 gone through at the hands of a non-Indigenous man.

6 I will never, ever blame my family for the
7 life they have, for what they taught us, because they
8 taught us what they knew, which was violence, which was
9 alcohol, which was their way of dealing with their pain.

10 That carried on. That carried on for many
11 years. So I ended up growing up believing it was okay to
12 be violent, it was okay to be an alcoholic, it was okay to
13 be a drug addict, because everybody else was, and that at
14 that time -- I myself have no teachings, no connections to
15 my culture. I always wondered, you know, I always wondered
16 who I was.

17 I remember watching cowboys and Indians,
18 and their portrayal of us savages, you know, and I remember
19 being just a young child and being so angry at what they
20 portrayed us First Nations as, and I remember somehow part
21 of me connected with that anger, you know, part of me felt
22 what they were doing was wrong. Little did I know I would
23 grow up and find out just how wrong it really was. You
24 know, even though it was just a movie, it still triggered
25 something inside me, and anger and hatred, and fight-or-

1 flight.

2 So I grew up very, very unaware of my
3 culture, and I was actually even told by my biological
4 grandma that I was -- when I had asked her one time, I
5 said, 'Grandma, is it okay, you know, what kind of -- what
6 kind of Indian am I?' And she says, 'You're not an
7 Indian,' and I looked at myself. 'I've got brown hair and
8 brown skin. So, yes, I am.' And she just, 'You're not an
9 Indian. Indians are dirty.'

10 So it was from that moment that I had
11 started gaining shame of being First Nations. I mean, I
12 always had this pride, but somehow I -- that's where I
13 understood what people thought of First Nations.

14 I remember, you know, because the parent -
15 - our parenting, our parents were children themselves, so
16 they didn't really -- I remember walking around in the
17 Downtown Eastside with my little baby brother and seeing
18 all this -- you know, people drinking and passed out on the
19 streets, and wondering, is that what we are? This is what
20 I believe, what we are, you know. I didn't know any other
21 way.

22 So that's where I started to, you know,
23 question who I was, and then -- so that took me to 20-
24 something years of drug use and alcohol abuse in the
25 Downtown Eastside. I became homeless. I was sleeping in

Statement - Public
Norris, Haynes, Kelly & Kane
(Shannon Elaine McDermott)

7

1 back alleys behind Carnegie. I was doing -- doing things
2 to support my drug addiction. I was not a very nice woman
3 at all, and I actually took pride in that ugliness, because
4 that's what we did in our family. The stronger you were --
5 I was taught to be strong, so I took pride in being strong,
6 and it took many years of that abuse, that self-abuse, that
7 abuse of my community, and it took -- took a long time for
8 me to realize what I was doing to my community, I was
9 actually feeling about myself, about my situations, about
10 the way I grew up, about not knowing the strength of women,
11 not knowing how important women are in our life. I always
12 believed the men to be the strong ones. I always believed
13 the men to have all the power. I always -- that's what I
14 was taught growing up.

15 It took many years. It took many years of
16 that self-abuse, to the point where I got myself sick. I
17 ended up getting HIV 23 years ago, and when I found out, I
18 found out, I thought it was a death sentence. I thought
19 for sure this is the way I'm going to die. And this is at
20 the height of the AIDS epidemic, and I remember watching
21 all my friends that we -- we all hung out. Everybody got
22 diagnosed all at the same time. Most of them are dead.
23 AIDS took them, took their lives, because the doctors back
24 then didn't tell you there was options, there was choices,
25 that it's not a death sentence, you know, and I think if I

Statement - Public
Norris, Haynes, Kelly & Kane
(Shannon Elaine McDermott)

8

1 wasn't told I was pregnant at the time, I would have been
2 part of that statistic. I would have been dead too,
3 because the doctors didn't tell me, you know, that there
4 was a way.

5 I remember when they told me I was
6 pregnant, the nurse had a phone, and I'm pregnant, and she
7 says, 'You're HIV,' and the first thing she -- I'm like,
8 'What about my baby? What's going to happen to my baby?'
9 You know, because I didn't have any information, you know,
10 and she says, 'Okay. We'll take care of that right now.'
11 She was so ready to call and have the baby aborted, you
12 know, and I adamantly said, 'No. I will not get rid of
13 this child,' you know. I saw this as an opportunity as
14 somebody to finally -- something for me to strive to get
15 better, for somebody to love me unconditionally, you know.
16 This is what I saw when I was pregnant, you know?

17 So it was because I was pregnant that I
18 had to -- I went out and I learned everything I possibly
19 could about being HIV and non-transmission for my child.
20 My baby was born -- back up. While I was pregnant, I went
21 into a detox. I went to a detox, and I spent, I think it
22 was eight glorious days, or nine glorious days, in a youth
23 detox, with a very beautiful woman taking care of me, and
24 it was actually very -- you know, not painful compared to
25 my later detoxes, but, you know, I slept and I slept, and

Statement - Public
Norris, Haynes, Kelly & Kane
(Shannon Elaine McDermott)

9

1 started feeling better, and I started feeling the magic of
2 being a person without drugs, which I've never known in my
3 life. Even as a child I walked in a cloud of pot smoke
4 and, you know, and I was always stealing booze from the --
5 from the elders and the people in my family, so I never
6 knew sobriety even as a youth, so the first time I
7 discovered sobriety was when I was pregnant with my
8 daughter in detox, and I was so excited. I felt hope. I
9 felt myself. I felt -- I knew who I felt like. You know,
10 I never knew who I was before, but I finally got to know
11 who I was in that detox, and I was introduced to a good
12 spirit, a good Creator to take care of me, and they said,
13 'Okay. You're better. It's time for you to go.' I'm
14 like, 'Okay. Where am I going to go?' They sent me right
15 back to Main and Hastings. No home, back to being
16 homeless. All that time getting better.

17 I stayed sober for three hours. They put
18 me right back on the streets. You know, they should have,
19 as a detox, put me in a home, put me somewhere safe, help
20 me take care of my child. They just set me up for failure.
21 They got me better, they did their -- their helping up, as
22 they -- as you call it. They helped me up, but put me
23 right back.

24 Now I even felt like more of a failure,
25 because now I had a taste of what recovery was, you know,

1 and -- so, yeah, so that's -- I really wanted to stress how
2 important it is to make sure if you're detoxing these
3 people that you make sure they have a place to go, a place
4 to sleep, someplace safe when they're being released from
5 these detoxes and recovery houses and treatment centres,
6 you know? There's still some treatment centres or recovery
7 houses who are taking your money and just letting you go.
8 They're not there for the right reason.

9 And then there's some very beautiful ones
10 who make sure you have a home before they let you go, and
11 those -- we need more of those. We need a way to regulate
12 these recovery houses to make sure that they're there for
13 the right reason. They're not taking the money and feeding
14 us donated bread and old vegetables, you know, and roast
15 meat once a week, you know.

16 There's been -- and, you know, the good
17 homes always had a good program. They always made sure
18 that we were giving back, that we took care of each other,
19 that we always checked in with one another. Those -- the
20 programmings of these recovery houses and detoxes are so
21 important, because they're teaching us how to live, because
22 obviously nobody taught us how to live before. Nobody
23 taught me how to live. I was, like I said, taught how to
24 be an alcoholic.

25 I say this, and I can imagine some of my

1 family members might feel hurt. I don't mean to hurt any
2 of my family. I'm just here to speak my truth, and tell --
3 talk about what the lack of culture, what colonialism has
4 done to our blood line, you know?

5 I love my family, would never do anything
6 in the world to hurt them, you know, and I just, I pray for
7 my family every day, because some of them are down here on
8 Main and Hastings. Some of them are being brought back
9 from ODs over and over and over again. Some of them are in
10 and out of jail. Some of them are doing life.

11 I am burying my nephew Levi on Monday, who
12 died of an overdose. I'm (inaudible). And I'm so angry.
13 I'm so angry, because I live in the Downtown Eastside. I
14 hear the sirens 24/7, and it's when I don't hear the sirens
15 is when I really get scared. On the morning that they
16 discovered my nephew, I woke up that morning and had this
17 gross feeling. I can hear the sirens, and the sirens
18 sounded so loud. They sounded so loud, and the first thing
19 I said, the first prayer, was, 'Don't take one of mine.'
20 And that's what I heard, and my first prayer that morning.
21 'Don't take one of mine.' But they'd already took him,
22 taken my boy.

23 My boy was a special, special man. He was
24 a two-spirited boy, born a young woman, born a little baby
25 girl, that I had the privilege to hold in my life, in my

1 arms, for the first couple months of his life. I knew Levi
2 as a baby girl, and then the Ministry came, and it took her
3 from us, and then I never seen -- I never seen him again,
4 and nobody showed me how to contact him, how to find him.

5 I tried finding him. I remember getting
6 nurses, going, you know, snapping at me, like, 'Why now?'
7 And it's, 'What do you mean, why now?' I had to sober up
8 to find my nephew. And he actually found me. I am
9 currently raising his baby sister. And the little girl got
10 to know Levi and really loves Levi and, you know, went to
11 school, has been talking about Levi every day since he's
12 been gone, and talks to Levi, and I don't tell -- I don't
13 tell her what she's doing is wrong. I don't tell her -- I
14 don't tell her how she's grieving is wrong, because I
15 believe, if she believes she's seeing Levi, then I'll let
16 her see Levi. We were allowed to have those gifts before
17 colonization. We were allowed to grow up with those. I
18 will not take that away from my children.

19 I'm eight-and-a-half years sober, close --
20 September will be nine years clean and sober. You know,
21 I've been kicking the can of recovery around for over 16
22 years, knowing relapse is a huge part of my -- my -- my
23 story, and I wanted to talk about my addiction, and I
24 wanted to talk about the time Pickton was around and my
25 friends were disappearing. I wanted to talk about when I

Statement - Public
Norris, Haynes, Kelly & Kane
(Shannon Elaine McDermott)

13

1 was 17 years old, I was a young little girl, young woman.
2 First time I had ever done any hard drugs I was tricked
3 into it. I was tricked into doing cocaine at a very young
4 age, you know, from some boys who wanted something more
5 from me, you know, and I always said -- I remember them
6 asking me if they want -- if I wanted to do some, and I
7 said, 'No. Cocaine is for losers,' and they started
8 laughing at me, and I go, 'Why are you laughing?' You
9 know, I didn't understand why they were laughing. And they
10 said, 'Did you like that, what you just smoked?' And I'm
11 like, 'Yeah, of course I did.' They said, 'That's what it
12 was.'

13 So it didn't hurt me that time. So that's
14 how I started it. I continued on from there. It didn't
15 hurt me the way I thought it would. It hurt me in so many
16 more ways.

17 So when I told my best friend at the time,
18 who was also my cousin, who is also my sister, my mentor,
19 she was my blood, and she was my sister -- her and I used
20 to go out drinking and partying all the time, and I
21 remember her -- I telling her that story how I got tricked
22 into doing that cocaine, and she got really angry at me. I
23 said, 'But it didn't hurt me.'

24 So from there on we continued on, and she
25 had asked me, you know, one time if I wanted to try it a

1 different way, and I did, and I saw that it didn't hurt me,
2 that it actually took away all the self-doubt, all the
3 hatred that I had towards myself, that I'm not good enough,
4 I'm not pretty enough, all that negative self-talk. Those
5 drugs took that away. You know, I actually was beautiful,
6 I was actually, you know -- I felt like somebody other than
7 me.

8 We continued that lifestyle for a few
9 years, and as you know -- I don't know, down here, in the
10 Downtown Eastside, the drug dealers liked young girls.
11 They liked us young, 14-, 15-year-old girls. They are the
12 ones that took us in and fed us drugs and turned our beauty
13 into scabs and fallen teeth and HIV AIDS, just so they can
14 -- they can hurt -- hurt our youth and our innocence.

15 And that's who we began hanging around
16 with, was -- she had a drug-dealer boyfriend, and he always
17 -- was always feeding her dope, and I remember one day
18 looking at what she was doing, and I said, 'Don't do that.
19 That's too much.' And she said -- she says, 'That's okay.
20 I can handle it.' Because it's too much, you know? And I
21 remember turning my back on her, and then all of a sudden I
22 heard -- I heard her hit the floor. I heard something hit
23 the floor, and I turned around, and I thought she was
24 joking again, and I said, 'Don't do that. Wake up. Get
25 up.' And she didn't get up. And I said, 'Get up.' And I

1 looked at her, and I seen her lips turning purple, and I
2 realized that she was truly OD'd this time, and she wasn't
3 breathing, so I'm screaming at this dope dealer. I'm like,
4 'Open the door, open the door. Call the cops, please, you
5 know, we need an ambulance. Call an ambulance now.'

6 And what he did was he pulled out the
7 phone from the jack and he locked us in. He locked us in
8 that room. He was so worried about covering his own ass
9 that he let that little girl lay there, turning blue.

10 So I did the best I could to try to keep
11 her alive. You know, I remember doing mouth-to-mouth and
12 pushing on her chest. I remember trying to keep her blood
13 moving, you know. I put cold compresses on her neck, and
14 then all of a sudden, you know, she woke up, and she
15 slapped me. She says, 'I'll be okay.' And then she laid
16 back down, and that's when I heard her snoring, a snore
17 I've never heard before, and I heard her snoring. So she's
18 alive, so I remember, okay, I'm going to bed. She's alive,
19 she's safe, you know. Again, the guy still wasn't letting
20 us out -- out of the room. He still didn't return the
21 phone.

22 And I stayed with her for a couple hours,
23 you know, and I didn't understand what that snoring was,
24 because I'd never heard her snore before, but I heard it,
25 so she was alive, you know, and then I remember finally --

Statement - Public
Norris, Haynes, Kelly & Kane
(Shannon Elaine McDermott)

16

1 finally falling asleep beside her, in the next bed beside
2 her, and I couldn't have been asleep for very long. And
3 then I heard, 'Smack, smack, smack,' and I'm wondering what
4 this smacking noise was. That drug dealer was on top of
5 her, punching her in the chest like this, and he said, 'Get
6 out, get out,' he's screaming, and he's screaming at
7 everybody in a different language, and he -- and he said,
8 'Call the police, call the police,' so at sometime while I
9 was sleeping he put the phone back in, so I called the
10 police, I called -- I called the ambulance, pardon me, not
11 the police, I called the ambulance, and I was on the phone,
12 and I was holding that young girl in my arms, praying for
13 her to come back, and I just remember holding her and
14 crying, and on the phone with my family thinks she's not
15 waking up, she's not waking up, and I just laid there, and
16 I rocked with her. [Crying] I just rocked her. And I
17 rubbed her hair. She never let me ever touch her hair, and
18 I rubbed her hair, and I rocked her, and I talked to her,
19 'Come back, come back.' She didn't come back. She didn't
20 come back.

21 And the police, they showed up, of course,
22 and I'm screaming. I'm like, 'Why is...' I said, 'He
23 could have saved her, he could have saved her, he could
24 have let me phone, he could have let me call an ambulance,
25 he could have -- he could have helped me, he could have

Statement - Public
Norris, Haynes, Kelly & Kane
(Shannon Elaine McDermott)

17

1 helped me save her,' and I remember she's gone. She's
2 gone. [Crying] My best friend is gone.

3 And it becomes -- I remember seeing a
4 whole bunch of police there, and my auntie showed up, and
5 I'm like, 'What -- are they going to charge him with
6 murder? Are they going to charge him with murder?' 'No.'
7 Nothing happened. They let him go. They let him go.

8 So he -- he stayed around, and he ended up
9 being -- continued being a part of our family for many --
10 excuse me, sorry -- he stayed around, and he ended up, you
11 know, not paying for what he did, and he continued hanging
12 out with the young girls in the family, and, you know, my
13 addiction eventually took over, and I ended up hanging out
14 with him again. Instead of that anger of taking my best
15 friend, my addiction got stronger. I could never
16 understand. I could never understand why, you know, after
17 holding a dead person in your arms, why you can get over --
18 over your abusers and hang with them again. I could never
19 understood -- as I'm continuing these drugs and hanging out
20 with this guy, I could never understand why, why am I
21 allowing myself to do this. I didn't realize how powerful
22 those drugs were. I didn't realize that those drugs had
23 control of me, you know, that those drugs were making all
24 the decisions in my life.

25 People think it's a choice, that we choose

1 to be drug addicts, that we made that choice. No. We
2 didn't make that choice. Nobody made a choice. No little
3 girl wakes up and says, 'I think I'm going to be a stripper
4 today. I think I'm going to be a prostitute today.' What
5 little girl wakes up to say that? No little girl wakes up
6 and says, 'I want to be raped today.' Nobody makes those
7 choices.

8 Addiction is not a choice. I was tricked
9 into it the first time, and then I was bound to it for the
10 rest of my life, for -- even though I'm not an addict any
11 more, I still have to watch every step, every -- every
12 thought that runs through my head, I have to make sure I'm
13 not overdoing it or underdoing it. I have to really be
14 aware of every step I take, every thought.

15 So, you know, after Shannon -- after this
16 happened, you know, my addiction went really bad. I went
17 straight down. This is when I ended up on Main and
18 Hastings, and I ended up, you know, selling whatever it is
19 -- it took to sell, whether it was my body, if it was
20 drugs, if it was my clothing. Whatever it took to supply
21 my drug habit, that's what I did.

22 And I remember feeling such disgust at
23 myself to allowing myself to being there, but I couldn't --
24 again still could not understand why I would let myself be
25 there, but that craving for that drug was so strong and so

1 powerful and so overwhelming, I could never understand why
2 I kept making the choices I was making.

3 You know, so I am angry at the police at
4 that time -- for that -- from that incident with Shannon.
5 That's my relative that I had lost. And as time went on, I
6 remember the police were coming through the bars, and they
7 were -- they were particularly violent towards us First
8 Nations, and I remember just being a young girl, 18 and in
9 the bar, and I was with somebody who I thought I loved and
10 everything, and not knowing that he was -- he was a dope
11 dealer. I just thought he was somebody I loved, and I
12 remember the cops coming in, tackling him for no reason,
13 and I'm saying, 'Don't take him. I love him, I love him,'
14 and -- and I remember the cops grabbing me and throwing me
15 on the ground, and I'd get up, and they'd throw me on the
16 ground again. They threw me down four times, and they
17 broke my arm. My arm was broken by the police, the
18 Vancouver City Police. And they ended up taking him away
19 and leaving me there with a broken arm.

20 I remember which cops these are, I
21 remember the nicknames they -- and the fear that people had
22 when they walked through the Downtown Eastside, you know?
23 And that -- that is violence carried on through the police
24 to us First Nations, First Nations people, First Nations
25 women.

1 Then the other way that they let the
2 violence carry on is when Pickton was going through, and he
3 was -- he was taking our beautiful women, our beautiful
4 friends. I knew so many of those women, and those faces, I
5 knew so many of them. They were acquaintances. Some of
6 them were friends. Some of them were, you know, my
7 partners. They were -- they were people special to me.

8 And I remember just some of them I just
9 seen through the street, walking through the street with
10 mental-health issues, and many different things, and I
11 remember we knew, but there was only about 25 faces on the
12 list at the time, and we knew women were disappearing, and
13 I remember I quit selling my ass. I quit being a hooker.
14 I quit that, because I wanted to live. I needed to live.

15 And I remember watching my friends every
16 night, every day, three, four times a day, walking back up
17 to that corner, and I'd cry, and I'd say, 'No, stay with
18 me, stay with me, don't go, don't go. Let me walk you to
19 the corner. Let me -- let me look after you. Let me...'
20 You know, I would put myself in debt with drug dealers to
21 protect my friends, because I didn't want to lose them, but
22 I lost them anyway. I walked them to the corners, and I
23 watched them get into cars, you know, and most of them came
24 back. Some of them didn't.

25 I'm not saying I'm the last person that

1 saw them. I'm just saying they disappeared. I remember
2 the young little blonde girl. She was such a pretty little
3 girl, and she had a man who was always -- she was just so
4 young, and she was seeing a much older man, and he was
5 forcing her to go out. If he was -- I remember hearing him
6 screaming from three blocks away, screaming her name. 'I'm
7 sick, I'm sick,' and, you know, and I remember seeing her
8 eyes pop open. I'm like, 'Don't go, don't go. Please,
9 don't go.' This is the height of Pickton. 'No,' and I'm
10 like, 'Just, he can take care of himself. He's a full-
11 grown man.'

12 But this young girl, she -- I think she
13 was like 14, 15 years old. She went anyways, because he --
14 he was sick, and he was forcing her to, and even though I
15 stood up to him and stuff, she was afraid of what would
16 happen once I wasn't around, so she went anyway, and when I
17 seen her face on the poster, it just ripped me apart,
18 because she was just a young, pretty little girl, just a
19 young little girl, and she was on that list.

20 So I remember one time, because I had
21 given up being a hooker, I ended up starting to sell drugs,
22 and -- to support my habit, to feed myself, to do whatever
23 it took to survive the streets, and I was also very -- like
24 I said before, I was very violent. I didn't let anybody
25 come close to me. I was very -- I had huge walls. I was

1 very protective of myself and my space.

2 And I remember one of my -- coming in and
3 out of jail, I remember I was standing there at Carnegie on
4 the corner there, on the wall, and I was falling asleep. I
5 was actually having trouble standing still, because I was -
6 - I hadn't slept in four days, you know, and I was, what
7 they call doing the Hastings Shuffle, and I was swaying
8 around, and I was tired, and all I wanted was sleep. All I
9 wanted was sleep.

10 So I remember putting my head down on the
11 wall at the time, and just started falling asleep standing
12 up, and then I remember as I'm sleeping I hear, 'Hi,
13 Candice.' And being who I was, I looked up, and I scowled
14 at this guy. 'Who are you?' 'My name is Ivan.' And I
15 look up, and there's a short white guy with glasses, bald
16 head. He wasn't -- he wasn't -- he wasn't much taller than
17 me. He wasn't taller than me at all. He was a short white
18 guy, and he says, 'My name is Ivan.' And I'm like, 'Yeah?
19 So?' And then I put my head back down. And he says, 'I'm
20 a friend of your mom's.' I'm like, 'Yeah? Actually,
21 everybody knows my mom.' And then he says, 'Oh,' and then
22 he goes on, and he says -- he started telling me her name,
23 and he says, 'I know Sharon. I know your sister. I know
24 your brother,' and he started naming every one of my
25 relatives that were there in the Downtown Eastside. And

1 I'm like, 'Oh, okay.' That's -- so my walls kind of slowly
2 went down, and he says, 'Are you okay?' And I -- and he's
3 saying -- I said, 'No, I'm tired. I'm really tired.' He
4 says, 'Do you want something? Can I get you something?' I
5 said, 'No, I just need sleep.' He said, 'No, I'll buy you
6 -- I'll buy you some dope.' I said, 'I don't want dope. I
7 just want to sleep.' He says, 'I'll get you some.' I
8 said, 'Look, buddy, I'm not a hooker, okay? I'm not a
9 hooker. I just want to sleep. I haven't slept in four
10 days,' you know, and for a drug addict to turn down dope,
11 they are pretty tired, you know, so I was pretty tired, and
12 all I wanted to do was sleep, and I remember him, he kept
13 telling me, 'I'll buy something, I'll buy you something,'
14 and I'm just like, 'No,' and I went for -- and I was
15 starting to pass out again, and, you know, like, this
16 particular memory I'm talking about at one time consumed
17 me. Every time I closed my eyes I would see what he was
18 wearing. I'd hear his voice. I'd see his glasses. Every
19 time, you know, I see a van of the same shape and colour, I
20 would see him. The vision was so clear. But I had stuffed
21 it so deep that it didn't affect me. It didn't affect my
22 everyday life, you know, until one day when I was pregnant
23 with my now second -- second child, I remember this -- this
24 man came and picked me up in a taxi to take me to a
25 doctor's appointment, and I just remember just freaking

1 out, and I kept looking at this man, and this man -- and I
2 couldn't breathe, and I wanted to puke, and I just all of a
3 sudden had a panic attack, which I've never had in my life,
4 and I couldn't understand why I was having this panic
5 attack, and then they'd send the same guy, every doctor's
6 appointment they send the same taxi driver, and each time
7 that fear was getting deeper and deeper and deeper, and I'd
8 look at him, and I felt unsafe, and then boom, on the -- it
9 was on that third day why I realized what happened. This
10 man looked just like the one that picked me up that day,
11 and he looked -- he had the same mannerisms, and I think it
12 had something to do with his crazy driving too really
13 triggered me, so -- but I remember everything, everything.
14 The colour of his clothes, colour of his eyes, everything.
15 The way he stood, with his stance, you know? And I -- I
16 cried and cried and cried for three days straight when I
17 realized what I was so scared of, that this man had
18 triggered something so deep that I'd buried so deep.

19 The story is, once the man -- once that
20 man Ivan came and picked me up, he -- he kept trying to
21 tell me, you know, 'Get some dope and -- I'll buy you some
22 dope,' and I kept saying, 'No. I just want someplace to
23 sleep.' He said, 'Oh, I have a van in the back,' so I go
24 to the -- you know, I'm just like -- again, I tell him,
25 'Look, buddy, I'm not a hooker. I don't want dope. I

1 don't want nothing. I don't want you touching me. I just
2 need sleep.' So it took -- you know, it took a while, but
3 I finally ended up agreeing to get into his van and fall
4 asleep. He says, 'Don't worry.' He says, 'I'll buy you
5 some dope anyway.'

6 And I don't know why he kept trying to
7 push this dope on me, and I remember falling asleep and
8 telling him again, 'I don't want you touching me. I don't
9 -- I don't want your drugs. I don't want nothing.' And I
10 remember as he was driving away, I remember him asking me
11 if I wanted to go to a party, and, 'No,' he says, 'There's
12 a lot of free drugs, a lot of free dope, you know, you'll
13 be taken -- taken care of,' you know, and I remember him
14 telling me his -- where he worked. 'I work at the Number
15 Five Orange (ph). I'm a cook there, you know, I've been a
16 cook there for a number of years,' you know, everything,
17 and then I remember driving, and he kept asking me if I
18 wanted to go to a party, and I said, 'No,' and finally I
19 thought, if I gave in and answered his questions he would
20 leave me alone, so I finally -- I said, 'Okay. Where's
21 this party?' And he says, 'It's in Port Coquitlam,' and
22 me, at the time, I never left the Hunter Block, so I didn't
23 know what Port Coquitlam was, and I was like, 'Where is
24 that?' And he says, 'Outside Vancouver.' I said, 'Well,
25 how am I going to get back?' And he says, 'Don't worry

1 about that.' That's all he said. 'Don't worry about
2 that.'

3 So then I remember falling asleep, and
4 then him waking me up, and he's trying to stick a pipe in
5 my mouth, and he's trying to put dope in the pipe, and I'm
6 like, 'I told you I don't want it, I don't want it, I don't
7 want it,' but he was trying to get me to light it and
8 everything, and I remember, even though I was so tired, I
9 remember everything so clearly, and I remember him actually
10 lighting that, and the dope fell out, and I remember
11 watching it fall, and I just fell asleep, you know?

12 So I remember just laying -- laying on a
13 blanket or a heap of something. I don't know if it was
14 blanket or clothes, but I was laying on something, and I'm
15 pretty sure it was a brown blanket, but I remember laying
16 there and waking up to him on top of me, trying to take my
17 clothes off, and that's when I started screaming, and,
18 'Hey, hey, hey, I told you, this is -- I didn't want to do
19 this. I told you I'm not -- you know, again, I'm not here
20 for this. I just want to sleep.' And I remember him, when
21 I opened my eyes, I remember how scared he looked. He
22 looked shocked that my eyes were even open. I remember
23 just -- him just -- you know? And I'm -- I never, ever
24 understood why he looked so surprised that I opened my
25 eyes, and that's when I got up, and I started fighting, but

1 I was pretty weak, and, you know, I remember fighting this
2 guy, you know, 'Get off me, get off me,' and, you know, the
3 more the fight-or-flight kicked in, you know, I was
4 fighting harder, and realized I was trapped in there.
5 There was no handles in that van. The van was a white
6 gutted van. Nothing inside. No handles on the inside. I
7 never even noticed this, because of the state I was in when
8 I got in. But trying to get out, I realized there's no
9 handles, and I remember, if it's okay to swear --

10 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

11 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: -- him telling me,
12 just like, 'Sit the fuck down, or I'll fucking taser you.'
13 And that's when the deep fear came in. That's when I
14 really started fighting, and I'm scrapping full-force with
15 this man in a tiny van, and he pulled out his taser. I
16 seen the two little -- it actually looked like one of those
17 old-time electrical razors, but I seen when he pushed a
18 button, I seen the two electric things, you know, the
19 electricity, and I knew he wasn't bullshitting, you know,
20 and that's when I really got scared, and he actually
21 tasered me. He tasered me, and he -- through my jacket, my
22 jeans, and he tasered me, and I remember, that's what woke
23 me up, was when he tasered me, I think that's what saved my
24 life, because my -- my fight-or-flight became so strong
25 that I -- you know, he couldn't contain me in that little

Statement - Public
Norris, Haynes, Kelly & Kane
(Shannon Elaine McDermott)

28

1 van any more, so he had to jump through and jump out to let
2 me out. I remember him opening the door and throwing me
3 out on to the sidewalk. I remember where he threw me. It
4 was just on Clark Drive, just before that bridge,
5 underneath the Sky Train, just about one -- about one block
6 before it. I remember him throwing me out, and I'm laying
7 there, finally, and I watched him speed off and do a U-ee,
8 take off, and I remember laying there crying and crying,
9 and then I looked -- I looked up, and there was a grey
10 undercover, and I finally was like, 'Yes,' you know, I was
11 relieved to see these grey undercovers, and I -- I, you
12 know, 'Help me, help me, help me.' They turned around,
13 pulled a U-ee, and they came to me, and they started asking
14 me my name and what happened, so I told them the whole
15 story. I told them the man's name. I said, 'He just drove
16 away, not even two minutes ago. He's driving that way.'
17 You know, they asked me these questions. And I realized
18 not one of them has got their -- their little pad open.
19 Not one of them took my statement. Not one of them fucking
20 cared that I was crying for help and that that man drove
21 away, that they could have been right behind him. If they
22 took off, went looking for him, they could have found him.
23 They were right that far behind him, you know, and instead
24 of -- instead of taking my statements in their little pads,
25 'What's your name?' 'Candice Norris.' 'Where do you

1 live?' 'NFA.' 'Eh. No, where do you hang?' 'Main and
2 Hastings.' 'Well, let's take you back there.' They took
3 me back to the scene of the crime without one fucking note,
4 one -- nothing, you know?

5 So that's how -- I truly believe if they
6 would have listened to us, not so many women would have
7 disappeared. Like I said, the list was still relatively
8 small. I mean, and one life is painful, you know? The
9 list was still pretty -- you know, at 25, and I'm not --
10 I'm just guessing around there, and I remember that was the
11 theme of how men took care -- those police took care of us,
12 and I remember -- the only time I ever got into trouble was
13 when I was tired. Anytime I got into any -- let my guards
14 down, I forcibly let my guards down, was because I was
15 tired, and I needed someplace to sleep. I was homeless,
16 you know, I had nowhere to sleep.

17 And I remember another time, you know,
18 after that incident, him dropping me off, and the cops
19 dropping me off, nothing ever came of that, nothing. But
20 there's another time where I was -- again, I needed sleep,
21 and I ended up -- there was a man that people knew from the
22 Downtown Eastside, and, you know, I remember seeing his
23 face around, so I felt comfortable enough to get into a
24 vehicle with him and go sleep at his place, and again, I
25 gave him the story, 'I'm not working. I need sleep,' you

1 know, and again I woke up to him trying to take advantage
2 of me.

3 But when I opened my eyes I see the knife
4 on the table, and that scared the shit out of me. It
5 scared the shit out of me. So I remember jumping and
6 grabbing that knife when he was trying to force me to have
7 sex with him. I remember grabbing that knife and standing
8 in the corner and telling him, 'Let me out of here. I just
9 want out of here,' you know? And I remember him still
10 coming at me, you know, and I remember I had to defend
11 myself, you know. I hurt this man. I was defending myself
12 from him coming at me. Big, tall, non -- non -- non-white
13 man, non-Indigenous man, and he was huge, and he was coming
14 at me, and I remember defending myself, just -- just
15 flailing, you know, not trying to hurt or anything, just,
16 'Get back, get back, get back,' you know, and then it ended
17 up -- I ended up hurting him, and I remember screaming,
18 'Rape, rape, rape,' in his apartment, you know, and it's a
19 small SRO. I know people can hear me. And I'm screaming,
20 'Rape,' at the top of my lungs, and this man is, you know,
21 still coming closer to me, and all of a sudden the door
22 gets kicked in, and I was relieved that, you know, somebody
23 came in, but the person that jumped in was actually there
24 to pin me down, and -- and basically told me I was an ugly
25 Indian and nobody would want me, so why would he try to

1 rape me. What? I'm an ugly Indian and why would he want
2 to rape me? He can have any woman he wants. And as he's
3 holding me down, you know, he held me down until the cops
4 came. The cops came, and they -- they bullied me, and they
5 hand -- they hog-tied me, and they were really rough, and I
6 kept telling them, it's self-defence, it's self-defence,
7 you know, and I told them this story over and over again,
8 and they threw me -- I was thrown in the paddy wagon. I
9 was thrown in jail. The perpetrator, who actually did this
10 violence on me, was Scot-free. He got taken to the
11 hospital, and I was the one that got taken away, and I
12 remember the cops sitting me on the floor in what was the
13 old city buckets (ph) at the time, sitting me on the floor,
14 and I can hear them laughing and making fun of me. 'Yeah,
15 she tried to rob this guy, and a robbery gone bad,' and I'm
16 thinking, who are they talking about? And I see them all
17 looking at me, you know? They're saying I tried to rob
18 this guy. It was a robbery gone bad, and I stabbed him.
19 I'm -- 'No,' and I tried to tell them the truth, you know,
20 like, this is what happened.

21 So I ended up in interrogation for hours,
22 and they -- over and over again I had to tell them over and
23 over for hours, you know, and I said, 'Find the taxi
24 driver. He can -- there's a taxi driver that drove us
25 there. He can tell you all this,' you know, and so I

1 remember as I'm sitting on this floor and hearing them
2 saying I rob -- and they're like, 'Yeah, she came in with a
3 see-through dress, and, you know, she's just a hooker,' and
4 I'm just like, I can hear them, and they're insulting me
5 and calling me a hooker, and, 'Look at the way her dress
6 is.' Like, I had a dress, yeah, but I had a pair of pants
7 on underneath them, you know? They were actually really,
8 really putting me down, and making fun of me, laughing at
9 me, you know, laughing at the clothes I had. I was now
10 wearing their fancy greys at the time, so, yeah, I remember
11 them making fun of me, and -- those charges eventually got
12 stayed, and then they could be reopened at any time, you
13 know. After, you know, hours of interrogation, they
14 finally let me go, but again, there's another -- the
15 perpetrator getting away, and the victim being tossed and
16 not believed, made fun of. I was not safe. I was not safe
17 to ask for help from the police. I was not safe.

18 You know, if we felt safe I'm sure more of
19 us would have asked for help. I'm sure most of us did ask
20 for help. If I was treated that way, I can imagine how
21 many others were treated that way.

22 So I'm really angry. To this day the
23 police are not listening. They're not helping our people,
24 because I still have family members out there. I still
25 have my sister, who can tell you, quote stories similar to

1 mine. You know, there's -- there are -- I remember, you
2 know, telling the police after I got sober, 'My sister just
3 got stabbed. My sister just got hit in the head with a
4 hammer. What are you guys going to do about it? What are
5 you going to do?' Nothing was done.

6 I told them, the one that took this
7 statement about -- with Ivan, actually, I told them that,
8 'You know, if you talk to my sister, she can tell you about
9 that same gutted van driving around,' you know. There's so
10 many women after finally being able to talk about. I
11 realize there's more than just me that had an experience
12 with a white gutted van. You know? But what the fuck are
13 they doing about it now? I got not one phone call, not one
14 letter of support: 'Are you okay? Do you need support?'
15 You know, like, I still to this day will take pictures of
16 bald white guys with glasses, random pictures of bald white
17 guys with glasses in my phone.

18 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

19 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: And -- and I don't
20 think I'll ever let go of that fear. I get on the bus with
21 my children, and they get -- I keep them close to me. I
22 keep them tight. And I watch all these men around my kids,
23 you know, and I feel like I have to be on guard 24/7. I
24 don't think I'll ever let go of that, you know? I don't
25 ever feel safe. I don't ever feel safe.

1 taken me to ceremonies, my first ceremonies. They've
2 taken me to, you know, my best friend's family took me to
3 ceremony who were part of the organizations down here, you
4 know? If it weren't for what these organizations have done
5 for me, I wouldn't be here. I wouldn't be telling this
6 story. I'd still be somewhere crying every time I seen a
7 bald white guy, you know? I would still be trying to punch
8 these bald white guys out for looking at my babies. You
9 know? I'm at a point where I can pray for people. I can
10 pray, and I can ask for change. But first of all I had to
11 change myself and I had to work with all this trauma that I
12 carry as a baby, as a baby, watching things as a baby.

13 And then I live in the Downtown Eastside,
14 and I watch my children going to school, and I see -- I go
15 to the school, and I see hope. There's hope. I see
16 Indigenous children. I see blonde hair, blue eyes, I see,
17 you know, the -- the Asian communities. I see every race
18 in my community. So I was excited to send my son to
19 school, you know, and I was excited, because I remember
20 when I sent my daughter there, the prejudism (sic) that
21 happened, and I was excited, because the community had
22 changed so much, and I thought my son would get the best
23 care.

24 I had to fight for his care. I had to
25 fight his classroom. I had to tell them, you know, my son,

1 you know, I knew he had -- I knew he had some sort of
2 mental-health issues that he had, you know -- I don't truly
3 believe he has a mental-health issue. I truly believe he's
4 just an Indigenous boy who's not being heard, whose gifts
5 are not allowed to be honed and nurtured. I have to work
6 extra to support these children, because the Ministry did
7 not support me fighting for this little girl.

8 Now, I watch this classroom that my son is
9 in, and there's three other Indigenous boys in that
10 classroom, and they all got threatened to get kicked out of
11 school. My son's been forced to put on ADHD medications,
12 which I fought against his whole life. He is now being
13 forced to take these medications. Otherwise he's not
14 allowed to come to school. Two other Indigenous boys in
15 his classroom are going through the very same thing. the
16 difference is their mother didn't stand up for them the way
17 I stood up for my son. I told 'em, 'Do you know what I do?
18 I advocate for Indigenous women in my community. I will
19 advocate for my Indigenous son.' Next thing you know I get
20 a phone call next day, 'Oh, we found childcare money for
21 you.' 'Oh.' And yet those other two mothers who didn't
22 have the voice that I have are struggling with their
23 children, going to school part-time, one hour a day, you
24 know, because they don't have the capacity to raise our
25 Indigenous children. They get given extra money to take

1 care of our Indigenous children, and they're not taking
2 care of them. They're taking them out of school. And I'm
3 -- I've even -- I straight out tell them, 'You guys get
4 money for my son. You find a way to take care of him. I
5 have to work two jobs because I cannot support this little
6 girl on disability alone. I need to take care of my girl.'

7 I work with Indigenous women in the
8 Downtown Eastside. I do research, and I do -- I work with
9 SWUAV, Sex Workers United Against Violence, and it's -- all
10 this work that I do touches me in some deep, profound way.
11 I believe that our women have the right to be heard and to
12 be safe and, you know, that they have the right to be safe
13 and whatever they have to do to take care of themselves. I
14 believe that women should be treated with respect and
15 dignity. I believe that women need to be at the tables
16 when decisions are made. Nothing about us without us. I
17 believe they have to be there to help nurture the changes
18 of our future.

19 There's so much -- so much more I can talk
20 about that I probably have forgotten about.

21 --- Cell phone ringing.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sorry.

23 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Yeah.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm in progress.

25 You can't call me. Goodbye. Okay. Sorry, sorry about

1 that. She's gone.

2 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Where was I?

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Was Monica --

4 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: You were saying
5 that there was some things -- that you might have forgotten
6 some things?

7 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Yeah. There are
8 probably a lot of things I have forgotten that I really
9 wanted to touch on. You know, again, I wanted to speak
10 about my nephew and how, you know, in the light of this
11 opioid crisis, you know, we have to do everything we can to
12 make changes for our people, for -- to save our people, our
13 young ones. My nephew is only 22 years old.

14 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

15 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Just a young -- a
16 young baby. I just finally got to know my nephew. He was
17 in -- in Ministry care his whole life. So I didn't get to
18 grow up with him, with his pictures. I don't know -- I
19 didn't get to know who my nephew was. And then he came
20 looking for his family. He came looking for us.

21 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

22 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: And that --

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Do you want to talk
24 about (inaudible) aged out of care?

25 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Yeah, I was just

1 getting there. So when -- can I -- can we pause for a sec?

2 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Yeah.

3 --- Recording is paused.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No, I think you've
5 covered everything so far.

6 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So it's 6:19.
7 We just took a short break, and so we're going to resume
8 with Candice here telling -- telling her story, so you can
9 go ahead and pick up.

10 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Kihew Atayoocan
11 Esquao. I'm Eagle Spirit Woman. I'm speaking about the
12 pains and injustices that's still happening, today's world,
13 and with our people, with my people. Like I said, I never
14 knew who my people were. I'm just starting to know who my
15 people are and where my home is. My home is with my
16 people. I finally found a place to be comfortable. I'm
17 comfortable with my culture, comfortable with my people.
18 Not all of our children are granted that truth. I speak
19 about these children who are in foster cares, in the foster
20 system. Like I said, I had to fight for three years for a
21 little girl to come home, to come to me, her biological
22 auntie. Before contact, if something happened to mom, the
23 children went to aunties, they went to grandmas, they went
24 to cousins, they went -- we had a responsibility to take
25 these children. It was my responsibility to take this

1 little girl, just like it was my responsibility to take my
2 first little girl, who died (inaudible). I had to fight
3 and be told, not verbally -- I remember these people
4 working with this system that's supposed to help aboriginal
5 children, look at me and smile and say, 'You're doing good.
6 You're one of our successes.' (Inaudible) yet their
7 actions are saying, 'You still can't have that little
8 girl.' Like, why can't your mouth match your feet? You're
9 telling me I'm doing a good job, but I can't have my baby.

10 So it took three years of fighting and
11 having people come with me, every meeting, recording every
12 -- you know, every meeting they took notes for me. I still
13 want to go after them, and I want to sue them, because it
14 was my -- my daughter -- she's my daughter now -- it was my
15 baby's right to be with her biological, cultural family,
16 and they took that away from her, and they took that away
17 from Levi. Levi had a right to get to know his family
18 before he came -- he came out. He aged out of care. I was
19 actually finally in contact with a foster family, and he
20 aged out of care. They took him out three months early.
21 And he had no place to go, and he didn't know who he was.
22 He wanted to get to know his people. He wanted to get to
23 know his mom. He wanted to know his family.

24 By the time Levi got to us, our family was
25 so broken apart. Our family was so spread apart, and we no

1 longer do the big gatherings we used to. So many of our
2 people died of these colonial illnesses, and that were
3 never ours before contact.

4 So after all our elders started dying, our
5 family really separated. My children grow up without their
6 family, in a good way. I get to -- I actually get on the
7 bus and I travel, you know, a couple hours on the bus to go
8 visit my family, but that's few and far between, because
9 it's hard with two little -- two little ones, and my family
10 are not rich. We're -- most of them defined as poverty,
11 you know, but if you tell them that, they would say "no",
12 because they have a home, they have a roof over their head.
13 They have their little family in front of them. But I
14 know. I see the big picture. You're living in poverty,
15 and they have to struggle for food sometimes, you know.

16 So they can't be there to help me raise my
17 children, the way it was supposed to be. We were supposed
18 to raise each other's children. Our children were supposed
19 to grow up together. Before contact that's the way it
20 would have been. Children -- they came into our
21 communities and they seen these little aboriginal children.
22 They were -- never got yelled at. They never got spanked.
23 The elders spoke to them from the minute they came out of
24 their mom's belly, and they spoke to them and whispered in
25 their ears, took turns, all the elders took turns

1 whispering to our babies.

2 Our children don't have that opportunity.
3 They watch these children, and they watch the children's
4 gifts that they had, and what they were born with, their
5 strengths, and they nurtured those strengths. We don't
6 have that. We have people telling, 'Your kid's not good
7 enough to be in kindergarten. Your kid has to be on
8 drugs.' For the very gifts that would have made medicine
9 people back when our people -- before they had contact.

10 I'm saddened and angry about my nephew,
11 Levi. You know, he came home to meet his people, and there
12 was no people to greet him. We were all sick. We were all
13 broken. We were all poor. And none of us lived close
14 together any more.

15 So Levi ended up coming to the streets,
16 Main, Hastings, looking for his mom, the only family member
17 he knew, and his mom is still entrenched, still suffering,
18 still marginalized. And he found a mom who was heavily
19 addicted with severe mental challenges, and he kept trying
20 to connect with his mom, because he wanted -- he wanted to
21 know his family. He needed to know where he came from.
22 And instead he developed a drug addiction, and he died. He
23 died as a result of that drug addiction. Levi passed away
24 on March 20th of a drug overdose, alone in his room on a
25 welfare date. And he still never really got to know his

1 family. He developed this addiction, and he didn't want to
2 come bring his addiction around me and his little sister.
3 He felt that it would disrupt our lives, so he didn't want
4 to come close to us. The people who were capable of being
5 there for him, he didn't feel like he could be around.

6 And I remember that pain in my addiction.
7 I remember I didn't want to be around family, because I
8 didn't want to bring my pain to that family. So I
9 understood, so I couldn't question his decision, except
10 saying, 'I'll be there when you're ready,' and that's all I
11 could say. And he was never ready. [Crying]

12 I wish I could have done more for him, but
13 I know it's a battle he has to fight on his own. I was
14 there when he needed me. I was waiting for him. He never
15 came back. And now I have to bury him. Now I have to bury
16 him. And I'm going to make sure he's buried in the best
17 way possible. His spirit will be taken care of. He'll be
18 sent with his feathers. He'll be sent with his food.
19 He'll be sent with a blanket. He'll be sent in a good way,
20 the way we sent our people before contact. He'll be sung -
21 - there'll be songs for him. We'll remember him.

22 I'm so angry that there was nobody there
23 for him, that they took away his supports. I'm so angry
24 that there's nobody there to do those checks, those
25 wellness checks. We know there's an opioid crisis going

1 on, and yet nobody did a check, a wellness check, on him,
2 on a welfare day, even though the board said, 'High risk of
3 OD.' Nobody checked on him. The coroner told me the
4 actual date that Levi died. He was in that room for two
5 days by himself before he was discovered. I was always
6 wondering, if you've just seen him yesterday, why is there
7 already significant body changes? They said, 'No, he was
8 sitting there for two days.'

9 You know there's a crisis going on. You
10 know that people are dying. I believe you should be
11 knocking on those doors more often, especially on welfare
12 day. There's no reason for him to be alone for two days on
13 a welfare week. I'm angry. I can't blame anybody. I will
14 not blame anybody for my nephew's addiction. I will not
15 own any of my nephew's addiction as well. My nephew
16 followed like the rest of us what he knew. He seen -- he
17 seen it, and it was what he knew.

18 I'm not angry at the building itself, I'm
19 just angry that he was allowed to be left alone for two
20 days.

21 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

22 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: You know, I cannot
23 place blame on anybody, because ultimately my nephew was
24 sick, and I wish he had more supports. I wish there was
25 more mental health for him too. You know, the teams did

1 wonderful with him, you know, our team, the team he had,
2 took him -- allowed him to be -- meet the elders, allowed
3 him to get comfortable with his two-spirit, you know, with
4 -- with his transgender side, you know. If I'm speaking
5 the wrong language, I -- forgive me, because it's still
6 fairly new to me, the language.

7 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

8 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I only know the term
9 "two-spirit" from my mom, so Levi was just finally getting
10 people who would teach him more about what he's going
11 through to guide him --

12 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

13 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: -- through what he's
14 going through, and I'm so grateful that he had an
15 opportunity to have organizations, because he didn't have
16 the family to teach him and guide him, but he found family
17 and organizations that taught him how to be strong, taught
18 him how to accept, to try to guide him in accepting who he
19 was in life, and I'm forever grateful for these
20 organizations that were there for my nephew, when my nephew
21 wasn't comfortable enough to come home to us.

22 So I will continue walking this walk, and
23 I'll walk in a good way, and I'll continue working with our
24 women. I have no desire -- when I'm hurting and crying, I
25 have no desire to pick up drugs, because I know if I pick

1 up one drug I will die. There's nobody that's bottoming
2 out any more. At one time drug addicts bottomed out and
3 they got better. Nobody's bottoming out any more. They're
4 losing their minds or they're dying. There's hardly any
5 bottoms any more.

6 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

7 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: And if you're a
8 recovering addict, you understand what bottoming out is.
9 There's nobody's bottoming out any more. I'm watching
10 people, young children, die daily. Sometimes three, four
11 people a week that I know and love. I don't have time to
12 cry.

13 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

14 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: You know? I
15 internalize, and I shove that in, internalize it, thinking
16 I'm okay, until I come out sideways, and in the wrong,
17 weirdest places, and so I'm grateful I have the support
18 system. I gained a family through the Downtown Eastside,
19 through all the organizations that helped me with -- with
20 my housing. Rain City, they are doing everything to
21 support me and my children right now, and without them I
22 think I would be a lost basket case to help me prepare
23 through the many deaths that we've had in the last month,
24 all the bad news, the illnesses of my family. They've been
25 there, and that's been the family that's been supporting

1 me.

2 As much as I love my blood relatives, my
3 blood relatives are still uncapable (sic) of helping me the
4 way I need to be, and that's allowing me to cry, allowing
5 me to feel, allowing me to just be me, you know?

6 So I walk this walk in a good way, and I'm
7 learning the medicines, and I'm learning prayer -- how to
8 pray and be comfortable with it. I'm comfortable with
9 singing songs from our ancestors, and I know if I keep
10 walking this way and showing my family, it's okay. I know
11 they'll follow. I have hope, because my children have
12 never seen me get high. They've never seen me get drunk.
13 They've only seen me cry, which, I'm okay with crying in
14 front of my children. They've seen me reach out and ask
15 for help, which, nobody taught me that growing up. They've
16 seen me light a smudge when I'm -- when I'm -- when I'm
17 upset.

18 So I'm giving them better tools than I was
19 ever given. They've already -- are ten steps ahead of me
20 at their age. They -- they're comfortable with when their
21 mom is having a bad day. I taught them when they were
22 young, and I told them, I said, 'Well, nobody taught me how
23 to be a parent, so if you see that I'm being too harsh, I'm
24 talking too loud, it's okay to bring the medicines and get
25 me the smudge right there. It's okay. And I won't get

1 angry.'

2 So a few times I've walked around with
3 cedar in my hair, and now it's a common practice. I put
4 cedar in my hair when I -- when I go out. I don't have it
5 today. I just ran straight here. I put cedar in my hair
6 to protect me.

7 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

8 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I smudge with my
9 children. My children come to sweat lodges. My children
10 are knowing the way of healing, and the comfort of being
11 allowed to cry, and being okay, and I let my little boy
12 cry, because men cry, and men ask for help. My men were
13 not taught that. My men are still suffering. There's no
14 help in the Downtown Eastside or anywhere else for our men.
15 Our men are leaving their children. I'm not saying my men,
16 my family, but I'm saying women in the Downtown Eastside,
17 most of them are single moms raising -- raising their
18 children while their men are out. I am a single mom,
19 raising two children on my own, without the father's help,
20 even though one is my niece and one is my son, their
21 fathers aren't around, and it just breaks my heart to -- to
22 know that so many children are being brought into a world
23 without family, without the guidance of the men, because I
24 truly believe only a man can teach a man -- a boy how to be
25 a man, you know? I do my best, though. Trying to teach

1 him to pee standing up was fun. [Laughter]

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Was it a little
3 messy?

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I remember those
5 days.

6 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Still a little messy.
7 So, you know, so that's what -- we need more support for
8 our men, we need -- we need more programming's for men, we
9 need to give our men a fighting chance to be fathers, you
10 know. It's so many -- there are men who are capable and
11 willing to be fathers, but our women are broken too, and
12 some of them won't let them see their fathers --

13 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

14 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: -- their kids. I'm
15 not saying it's all men, it's not all women. It goes both
16 ways. You know, I just, I do know that there's no supports
17 for men, and I think we need to make the supports happen,
18 to make a stronger community.

19 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

20 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Because our circle is
21 incomplete. Our children sit in the middle here. The
22 children, the mothers, and then aunties, and then the
23 grandmothers. When those children are hurting they have
24 somebody from every circle protecting them, and then the
25 men were supposed to stand outside us --

1 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

2 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: -- protect us women.

3 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

4 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: They're not there.

5 Our circle is incomplete, and we need help for those men.

6 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

7 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: We need to complete
8 our circle. We need to bring back the healing for all,
9 from our children to our men, to our women, bring back the
10 matriarch teachers and our two spirits. We have to
11 remember our medicine people. My mom always taught me from
12 a little girl how special two-spirit people are, because
13 they get to walk with two spirits, the male and the female.
14 They have one foot on each side, that they were our
15 ceremony keepers. And when colonial life -- colonization
16 came along, that was taken away. It was wrong to be gay,
17 it was wrong to, you know, cross-dresses, in our old
18 language, you know, it was wrong, and that was taken away,
19 and now I see -- I see some beautiful, strong, two-spirited
20 people leading ceremony and bringing healing, and I'm so
21 grateful for that, because my nephew got to be a part of
22 that. So that's -- that's what I have to say.

23 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

24 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I have spoken.

25 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Meegwetch. I do

1 have a couple of questions. Did you have something? Okay.

2 Speaking directly about Levi, did he come
3 out while he was still in care? As a two-spirited person?

4 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: When he was 16, from
5 -- from the talk from the mom. I mean, I think Cori could
6 probably answer that better, but from my understanding from
7 the foster mother's point of view is, yeah, that it was 16
8 when he came out, but --

9 MS. CORI KELLY: It would probably fit in
10 well if I said a few words now. I was going to give a
11 statement on my own about this, but --

12 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Can you identify
13 yourself for the record?

14 MS. CORI KELLY: Yeah. So my name is Cori
15 Kelly. My spirit name is First Star Born. I'm a person of
16 mixed ancestry, Blackfoot from Siska Nation, and Irish, and
17 I'm part of a ceremonial family with Candice, as well as, I
18 was a support worker for Levi, who also called himself
19 Skylar, and was born as Brittany, and I know -- I know
20 Levi's mother, Heather, and I got to know Levi when he was
21 trying to -- when he was aged out of care and trying to
22 find family. He was just really, really lonely and aching,
23 like, his heart just ached for his family, and, like, that
24 kid was such a loving -- just a generous, loving, big-
25 hearted person, and when he came to Vancouver he just right

1 away was so vulnerable to predators, was not street-smart.
2 He was -- we don't know what happened. He was found
3 several times by police, picked up by the ambulance.
4 Nobody knows how long he was out there. He was found non-
5 verbal, don't know what happened.

6 When he found his mom, he was just so
7 happy to find, like, blood relative, and he loved -- like,
8 it was like he already loved his mom before he found her.
9 Like, he was totally comfortable, and you could just see
10 between them both, like, they looked the same, they were --
11 they laughed at the same jokes, they were, like, happy, and
12 that was like unconditional love, and same as when he found
13 Candice. We found out that she lived in one of the
14 buildings with, you know, was working at getting Levi's
15 sister, and they were so happy to be reunited, and we had a
16 very beautiful day where we went out to gather medicine
17 together, and he was just, like, free, because he was
18 playing with his little nephew and picking medicine with
19 his auntie, and he really felt good.

20 And he talked about that day over and over
21 again, like, reliving it in his mind, because of how he
22 felt, and when he'd get mad and run away from the, like,
23 antics that the other kids in the collective house where
24 they lived, he would run to the elder's house, this elder
25 that he loved, a little old Cree woman from -- this Cree

1 woman came from the same area of Alberta where the family
2 came from, and so -- he didn't know that, but he would run
3 to that elder's apartment and climb over her balcony and
4 knock at the sliding-glass door, and she'd let him in, and
5 they would have tea, and he'd sit there with her and just
6 felt safe.

7 So I saw that beautiful, like, family that
8 had been broken apart by all this agencies, organizations,
9 structures, police, the Ministry, residential school, all
10 these things that took away their culture and their family
11 togetherness, and in spite of all that they just kept on,
12 like, fighting to be together, the way that Candice has
13 fought to get that little girl back. And this woman is
14 exhausted from this fight.

15 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

16 MS. CORI KELLY: She's the strong one in
17 the family, and she's so tired, and the idea that this
18 woman is going to bury that beautiful young person that she
19 loved so much and that her sister loved so much and that
20 her brother loved so much, and she needs help and support
21 for herself as a mother, like anybody would. If I -- if I
22 in my family was burying someone in my family, I would need
23 someone to come and help me with my children, to help me
24 with my dishes, you know, bring me food, but in this family
25 they have to depend on organizations and agencies and

1 service providers, artificial -- artificially created
2 supports, people that are being paid as jobs because --
3 because this system has taken away the natural connection
4 that they -- that they would have had.

5 So the damage has trickled down through
6 the generations, and now this woman is here fighting for
7 the next generation to not have to suffer in this way.

8 So I have a lot of respect for you,
9 Candice, and for what you're doing, and your, you know --
10 when you say you don't feel safe anywhere, probably, you
11 might be at the sundances, safest place, right? You know,
12 you're right to not feel safe.

13 So that's all I have to say about this
14 situation.

15 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay.

16 MS. CORI KELLY: Good people.

17 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Levi's little
18 sister, how old is she?

19 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: She's just turned
20 five.

21 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Turned five?

22 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Tomorrow was supposed
23 to be her birthday party, but it's pouring rain.

24 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Oh, yeah.

25 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: So -- and we planned

1 on going go-karting for her birthday, so the weather looks
2 like it's going to be drenched. I thought it would at
3 least be cloudy so we can do it.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It said periods of
5 rain.

6 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Yeah, but it looks
7 like it's going to be torrential again. So --

8 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: What agency did
9 you have to work with to have her placed in your care?

10 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Backpass (ph).

11 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay.

12 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Mm-hmm. And I say
13 "worked with them" loosely. They didn't work with me.
14 They fought me every step of the way, even though their
15 words kept -- their forked tongue would tell me, 'You're a
16 good mom, and you're doing good, you're one of our success
17 stories.' Wait, I'm not your success story. I did this
18 first.

19 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

20 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I'm not your success
21 story. You're trying to claim my success. That's wrong.
22 I was doing this before I fought for my niece, and they
23 still found a way to tell me that all the parenting courses
24 I was going to, all the culture I was going to -- I
25 remember taking my little girl to a sweat lodge, and then

1 when I came home, brought her home, was so happy that this
2 little baby sat in a sweat, slept so peacefully during the
3 sweat lodge the whole time, you know, and she had no -- no
4 discomfort whatsoever, and then she went home, back to the
5 foster care, and all of a sudden I'm starting getting phone
6 calls from the Ministry. 'She's having nightmares, she's
7 having nightmares, and what did you do in those sweat
8 lodges?' 'What do you mean, what did we do in those sweat
9 lodges? We prayed. And that's all we did, was pray.'
10 She's having nightmares and she's seeing this and she's
11 seeing that. No. No, that's not okay.

12 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

13 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: So they tried to use
14 my healing against me in that way as well. Every good step
15 I took, they found something wrong with it. I know it was
16 good, because it was good for me, made me stronger.

17 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And do you have
18 permanent custody of her now?

19 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I do. Yeah.

20 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And, sorry, I'm
21 just getting some clarification. Like, which -- which team
22 did you work with? Did you have to go through the
23 protection side or through the guardianship?

24 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I think it was
25 guardianship, yeah. So what happened was I'd get so close

1 to getting her home. She -- that little girl went through
2 nine social workers, seven head -- 17 -- what do they call
3 them?

4 MS. CORI KELLY: Team leaders.

5 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Team leaders.

6 MS. AMBER KANE: Team leaders, yeah.

7 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Four head of
8 directors, and, oh, countless -- so every time I'd get
9 leeway with that little girl, you know, and they'd say, you
10 know, 'She's coming home, she's coming home,' a new worker
11 would come in, and we'd have to start all over again, all
12 over again, and prove myself to another person, and then
13 another person, and it got to the point where I almost
14 quit. I took two weeks off of visiting with her because I
15 was going to quit. I was going to give in and say, 'Yeah,
16 you're right, I'm a bad mom.' I almost believed it.

17 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

18 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I took two weeks off,
19 and I said, 'Fuck that. That's my baby,' and I went
20 straight into ceremony even harder and even fast -- even --
21 even more intense. That's how I fought for my niece, is in
22 my ceremonies, in my sweat lodges, and in the sundance. I
23 brought that prayer to the tree, the sundance tree, for my
24 little niece to come home.

25 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

1 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: You know, I fought
2 for that little girl to come home, and -- and that's how I
3 went after that. I said, 'You do not have a right to take
4 this Indigenous child away from her Indigenous family.
5 What is a non-Indigenous person going to teach my
6 Indigenous child about being First Nations? What are they
7 going to teach her about culture and ceremony?'

8 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

9 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: 'My kid's already
10 gone through more ceremonies than those foster care --
11 those people in the foster care.'

12 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

13 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: 'That girl has her
14 own feathers now, she has her own fans, drums, rattles,'
15 you know -- not fans, feathers, drums, rattles.

16 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

17 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: You know? Some of
18 them did come from foster care, but she's also got them --
19 she's got songs. That little girl can sing a (inaudible)
20 song anytime. She's just turned five, and she can sing any
21 song.

22 MS. CORI KELLY: She's always singing.

23 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: You know?

24 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: When did she get
25 permanently placed with you?

1 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: This will be -- it's
2 been over a year, yeah. It's been over a year, so when I
3 found out I was moving to my new apartment, so, yeah, it's
4 been over a year.

5 MS. AMBER KANE: Oh, yeah, it's been over
6 a year.

7 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Yeah. So...

8 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And how old is
9 your son?

10 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: He's five. They're
11 both five.

12 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Oh, so very
13 close.

14 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Yeah. Seven months
15 apart.

16 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Oh, wow.

17 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Yeah. And I'm -- I'm
18 so angry, because, you know, I should be at home raising my
19 children, but I'm not. I'm out working, trying to provide
20 for that little girl.

21 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

22 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Because the Ministry
23 does not support me. They do not. They say, 'We will not
24 fight you, but we will not support you,' so I --

25 MS. CORI KELLY: Because she's in the home

1 of a relative.

2 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Yeah.

3 MS. CORI KELLY: So if she was in a foster
4 care, they would be getting a lot of money --

5 MS. AMBER KANE: Yeah.

6 MS. CORI KELLY: -- because she's in the
7 home of a relative --

8 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: What -- sorry,
9 my background is a mess, and so I'm just wondering, so you
10 have her under Section 54.1?

11 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: No, I wasn't entitled
12 to that.

13 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: No?

14 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: No.

15 MS. AMBER KANE: It's different now.

16 --- Everyone speaking over each other

17 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: 5401 is the new one.

18 MS. AMBER KANE: Oh, is it the newest one?

19 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Yeah, the --

20 MS. AMBER KANE: Oh, okay.

21 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: -- no longer have them in home of a
22 relative, now it's the 5401 --

23 MS. AMBER KANE: Oh, okay.

24 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: -- which is where the
25 children is placed in your family, but under the Ministry's

1 care. The Ministry would still be there and still be
2 paying for it, but, no --

3 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Actually, sorry,
4 it's actually -- 5401 is when a child is placed in the
5 permanent care of a relative before a continuing custody
6 order is granted.

7 MS. AMBER KANE: Oh.

8 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So still in the
9 child-protection phase.

10 MS. AMBER KANE: Yeah.

11 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And there's no
12 file open, but there is still a monetary support, so, like,
13 there's still a monthly payment for 5401. 54.1 is when the
14 CCO has already happened, so I was just wondering if you
15 had the 54.1 or --

16 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I don't have nothing.

17 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So how is she
18 placed with you?

19 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I had to go through
20 the Family Law Act.

21 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Oh, okay. So
22 you have --

23 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Through -- through my
24 -- through my culture.

25 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay. So you

1 have guardianship of her under FLA.

2 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Yeah.

3 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Oh, okay.

4 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: And I don't get
5 support for that --

6 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Yes, no, there's
7 no support for that --

8 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: No support, so -- and
9 as you know, she gets child tax, and what do they get?
10 They get \$100 universal care and 200-something-odd dollars.
11 So, yeah, that's gone in one shot, you know. Those kids go
12 through -- my babysitter can tell you how many clothes they
13 go through. You know, they grow so fast.

14 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Yeah.

15 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: You know, and I can
16 drop -- I can drop \$500 every time I shop.

17 MS. AMBER KANE: Easy.

18 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: You know? And that's
19 not easy, to drop \$500 when you're a single mom.

20 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

21 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: You know.

22 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Yeah.

23 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: So that's -- that's --
24 - so I have to work, and when I -- a whole part of my being
25 just wants to be at home with my kids. My friend hears me

1 struggle, hears me cry. She's the one that I have to run
2 to, all my organizations.

3 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

4 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: When my kids -- when
5 I'm struggling: 'Please take my kids. I'm struggling.' I
6 have to work just so I can keep feeding my kids so that
7 they can have what they need. You know? Disability, and
8 I'm so afraid, and I was on camera now, and I'm not going
9 to deny it. I am so afraid to be, you know, 'You're making
10 too much money.' No, that's another thing that -- even
11 though you're allowed to make \$800, that's still not enough
12 today. I want a nice house where I can raise my kid in the
13 yard. \$2,300.

14 MS. AMBER KANE: Yeah, it's crazy.

15 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: \$2,300 for a two- or
16 -- two-bedroom place, you know, and I so want to be out of
17 low-income housing, but I can't --

18 MS. AMBER KANE: Can't afford it.

19 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I can't afford it.
20 And I have to work -- I have to work a lot just to keep my
21 kids in clothes.

22 MS. CORI KELLY: Clothes and food, yeah.

23 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: And food. And
24 babysitting. You know? I'm not supported in any way how -
25 - through the -- from the Ministry, from the government.

1 The only organization -- I have organizations and I have my
2 friend here. My family, I know they would be here if I was
3 closer. I know they would be.

4 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

5 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: You know? But we're
6 not close to each other. We're all separated, and, you
7 know, it takes two hours to get on a bus with them.

8 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

9 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: To visit my family.

10 And I just so crave to be around my family --

11 MS. AMBER KANE: Yeah.

12 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: -- you know? And
13 it's just not -- it doesn't happen. My poor daughter,
14 she's 22 years old, and she's lost right now. She's --

15 MS. AMBER KANE: Yeah.

16 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: -- she's going
17 through her own mental-health issues, and she's -- she's
18 run away from home. Her friends and her family can't find
19 her, and she's not telling us where she is.

20 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

21 MS. AMBER KANE: She's refusing.

22 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: She's -- she's
23 technically missing, because she's not telling -- but she's
24 still in contact, letting us know she's okay.

25 MS. AMBER KANE: Yeah.

1 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: But she's not. She's
2 not --

3 MS. AMBER KANE: She's not --

4 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: -- in the province --

5 MS. AMBER KANE: -- getting any info,
6 yeah.

7 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: -- I don't know where
8 she is.

9 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: This is your
10 first daughter?

11 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: This is my oldest --

12 MS. AMBER KANE: The oldest.

13 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: -- daughter, yeah.

14 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: I did have a
15 question about that, because you were talking about your
16 pregnancy, along with your diagnosis. Was she able to be
17 born without HIV?

18 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Yeah.

19 MS. AMBER KANE: She's fine.

20 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: She's safe, yeah.
21 They're technically by law not allowed to say kids that are
22 -- so they tell us kids are no longer being born with HIV
23 99.99 per cent of the time since '94. They're not allowed
24 to say 100 per cent, because that's a room for error, you
25 know. 99.99 per cent gives them that room.

1 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

2 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: But kids are no
3 longer being born with HIV.

4 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

5 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: As long as they're on
6 medication.

7 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

8 MS. AMBER KANE: They have to take the
9 medications as prescribed.

10 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm. No,
11 just, I really want to acknowledge your strength in that,
12 with the moment of getting such a diagnosis, but then also
13 finding out that you were pregnant and taking those
14 measures for your daughter, and so I really acknowledge all
15 of the strength that you've brought to the room here,
16 because you have overcome so much, and to fight for your
17 niece, who is now your daughter, as well, and just where
18 you are now, so I just want to raise my hands to that.

19 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Thank you.

20 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: One thing that I
21 wanted to ask was, you had spoken about your mom having you
22 at such a young age, and I'm just wondering if you could
23 speak a little bit about how things were when your mom was
24 raising you.

25 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: My mom, she was

1 raised by a residential-school survivor. Her own mother
2 was a residential-school survivor. And my mom knew how to
3 hit. She was taught by her mom how to hit. So her -- like
4 I said, there was a lot of drinking in our family, and a
5 lot of violence. Women were basically seen and not heard,
6 and if they stepped out of that line then they got a smack
7 or a beat, or whatever you want to call it.

8 I'm just being gentle right now, but my
9 mom -- and she -- she got hit a lot, and then when the
10 abuser would leave, she would come and beat us kids. She
11 would beat us up. Wooden spoons, leather belts. Quite
12 often we would go to school with welts and spoon marks on
13 us. My baby brother, my younger brother, he took the worst
14 end of it all, and he's actually doing life right now. He
15 got, I do believe, 14 years, and intake.

16 MS. AMBER KANE: Yeah.

17 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: So it's a -- I don't
18 know -- you know, having to lose somebody that you love in
19 that way feels like, not a death, but, yeah, my mom, she
20 actually, she beat us when nobody else was around, and
21 everybody knew. The whole family knew what was happening,
22 but they felt helpless. They didn't know how to help us.
23 They didn't know how to help us, because it was so common,
24 you know.

25 I've been speaking to an auntie. I

1 haven't -- I lost contact with, with -- through my
2 addiction, but we're speaking again, and she's telling me,
3 so the horror stories of my family, that what they went
4 through, and then she's actually supporting me speaking
5 here.

6 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

7 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Otherwise I'd be
8 really scared about what I'm saying, because I don't want
9 to hurt my family, but it's not my intention to hurt my
10 family. It's my intention to share our stories, to make a
11 stronger future for our children.

12 So, yeah. My mom, she -- eventually when
13 we were 11 years old she left, she finally left. I
14 remember being so mad at her, because she kept coming back,
15 kept coming back. 'Why do you keep coming back?' It
16 wasn't because I didn't want her there. I just didn't want
17 to get beat up no more. She kept coming back, and I never
18 understood why she kept coming back. And I remember
19 getting madder and madder every time she would come back,
20 you know?

21 And finally she left for good and went
22 back to Alberta when I was 11, and the first thing she said
23 to me was, 'You look after my children. You make sure my
24 kids are fine.' So sometimes you'll hear me refer to my
25 brother and sisters as my children, because I was the

1 oldest girl that took care of those little kids when --
2 when there was no adults around, and that's the way it was
3 in our families. Us older girls were left quite often with
4 24 kids, you know?

5 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

6 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: And we were the
7 oldest, and we were five and six. My cousin and I were
8 five and six, and, you know, once -- once in a while there
9 would be a babysitter, an older, 12-, 13-year-old
10 babysitter, but most -- for the most part it was young
11 kids.

12 So, yeah, when my mom left, she ended up
13 getting into a heavy, heavy addiction herself, and ended up
14 on the streets of Main and Hastings, and that's how we
15 reconnected with my mom after being separated from my mom
16 all those years, through jails and Ministry -- the Ministry
17 came and took us away from her one time, and, you know, we
18 reconnected, the same way Levi reconnected with his mom.
19 We reconnected on the streets of Main and Hastings. That's
20 where I got to know my mom again.

21 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

22 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: On the streets,
23 shooting up with my mom. And I watched my mom die of AIDS.
24 I watched her die of AIDS, and it was a hard -- a hard
25 thing to watch. And she did it alone. There was me and my

1 -- I was the only one sober at the time that could support
2 my mom. My aunties would come pick me up once in a while
3 to help support me, but, you know, I was -- did this all by
4 myself, looking after my mom, watching her die of AIDS.

5 My brother tried to help, but it was too
6 much for him, and he ended up back on the streets, you
7 know. So it was a -- it was hard.

8 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

9 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: You know, especially
10 knowing I have the same disease, you know, watching
11 somebody die of AIDS sure slaps in the reality, and that's
12 why I fight so hard to take care of my health and take care
13 of my medications and -- and I speak freely about my
14 illness, because I want people to learn from me.

15 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

16 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I want people to
17 learn that you don't have to be ashamed. You don't have to
18 listen to the kids who are laughing. There are kids who
19 are making fun of my daughter, my 22-year-old daughter,
20 about me. They tease her about me. I don't care about
21 them teasing me. I worry about my kids getting teased by
22 the other kids.

23 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

24 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: That still happens.
25 You know? And -- but I tell my story wherever and whenever

1 I can.

2 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

3 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: But this particular
4 story I have not told yet, and I needed to tell it, and it
5 took a lot of years to get to this point to be able to tell
6 this story.

7 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

8 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: So...

9 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Thank you.

10 When you were going through your periods
11 of addiction did you ever find yourself involved with
12 having to deal with child protection on your -- with your
13 own children?

14 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I'm grateful I have
15 my family. They actually -- I remember when one of my --
16 at times I remember asking my stepmom at the time, 'If I
17 should ever fall down and get hurt, please take my baby.
18 Just take her. I don't want her hurt.' So I didn't
19 realize when she snuck -- she snuck my baby away from me,
20 it was her doing what I asked her to do. That's why I
21 never -- I was never angry at her --

22 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

23 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: -- because she did
24 exactly what I asked, is take my baby from me if I can't do
25 it.

1 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

2 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: And she did. Even
3 though she snuck around and took my baby, you know, had a
4 little -- little plan, at first I was angry, but I know now
5 she did exactly what I asked her.

6 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

7 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: So, no, I had -- I
8 had family, it's just when I was sobered up is when the
9 Ministry came in and took my daughter from my family, and
10 that's -- by that time I was already in recovery, and
11 that's when I reconnected with my own daughter.

12 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So she came back
13 to you at that point?

14 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Yeah, when she was
15 five.

16 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Oh, okay.

17 MS. AMBER KANE: She was living with me,
18 actually, at the time, and then --

19 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: No, no, I'm talking
20 when she was five.

21 MS. AMBER KANE: Oh, five. Oh, I thought
22 you were talking about 13.

23 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: So, yeah, when she
24 was five, yeah, so --

25 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay.

1 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Yeah.

2 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So there was
3 stuff happening in that home and she was removed from there
4 and brought to you?

5 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Yeah.

6 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay.

7 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Well, no, no, not
8 brought to me, no. I had to fight for her.

9 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay.

10 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I had to fight for
11 her and do my recovery and, you know, get my own place.

12 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

13 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I kind of had to
14 accelerate my recovery plan, and I was planning on a long,
15 leisurely trip in a recovery house, but that happened --
16 that changed really fast when they took my girl, so I found
17 a place, and I brought her home, you know? I did end up
18 relapsing, and -- after almost five years, you know. When
19 my mom died, I took that really hard, and --

20 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

21 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: -- again doing that
22 by myself. I relapsed, and my kid ended up back in her
23 original care, and then my daughter was getting hit by that
24 caregiver, so she ran away, and ran to her, to my best
25 friend.

1 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So that was at
2 13?

3 MS. AMBER KANE: That's when she came to
4 stay with me.

5 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Oh.

6 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Yeah, and then that's
7 again another accelerated treatment, because I went back to
8 recovery, and then I had to -- I was going to let her come
9 live with me in the recovery house, but then she would have
10 had to follow the same strict routine as me, and I didn't
11 think it was fair that a young child had to go through the
12 same routine as I was --

13 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

14 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: -- because of my
15 addiction.

16 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

17 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: So I moved out, and
18 before, you know, before I was ready, but the Creator said
19 I was ready, so here I am.

20 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

21 MS. AMBER KANE: And she's been clean ever
22 since. She's been doing very well.

23 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: I've been taking
24 notes this whole time, and I'm running out of space,
25 actually, because you've said so many things, and I've just

1 really been rivetted by what you've said. I've heard some
2 really great recommendations come from you about -- about
3 what we need, about regulating the treatment centres and
4 the support for the men, the support that is lacking in the
5 community for the men, because I think that's where a lot
6 of it comes from, is their trauma and their experiences
7 aren't being treated or healed.

8 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Mm-hmm.

9 MS. CORI KELLY: Can I say something just
10 that I think is an important thing to --

11 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Yeah.

12 MS. CORI KELLY: Levi asked to go to
13 treatment three times during the time period that --

14 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Mm-hmm.

15 MS. CORI KELLY: And there was no
16 treatment for a trans person that was safe.

17 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Mm-hmm.

18 MS. AMBER KANE: Yes.

19 MS. CORI KELLY: And so he went to
20 different treatment centres, but he never found that safety
21 in treatment.

22 MS. AMBER KANE: Mm-hmm.

23 MS. CORI KELLY: He really looked for it,
24 and, like, he wasn't making excuses. He was extremely
25 genuine about his wish to find healing. It wasn't there.

1 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

2 MS. AMBER KANE: That's very, very true.

3 Actually, that's one of my dreams, is to open up a two-
4 spirited treatment facility, recovery facility. That's
5 what one of my long-story dreams are, because I believe
6 totally that we need so much out there for two-spirited
7 people, as well as men, as well as women, but --

8 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

9 MS. AMBER KANE: -- for the two-spirited
10 there is nothing, and she's correct, there is nothing.

11 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm. Sorry,
12 can you just identify yourself again for the record?

13 MS. CORI KELLY: Oh, Cori Kelly, Levi's
14 support worker --

15 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And can you also
16 identify --

17 MS. AMBER KANE: I'm Amber Kane. I'm
18 Candice Norris's long-time best friend and family helper, I
19 guess. I help with the kids, I look after her kids.

20 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Family.

21 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Family.

22 MS. AMBER KANE: Yes, I'm family.

23 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Family helper.

24 MS. AMBER KANE: Extended family -- yes.

25 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So anyway, like,

1 I've just, I've noted these terrific recommendations that
2 you've had, and I'm just wondering, are there any other
3 recommendations, things that you want to see come out of
4 this Inquiry?

5 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Oh, there's a lot. I
6 could talk about -- how much time do you have? [Laughter]

7 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Well, it's
8 encroaching on dinnertime.

9 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Okay.

10 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: But whatever
11 you'd --

12 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: So --

13 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: -- like to share
14 with us.

15 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: So the treatment
16 centres, there's no detoxes left, like, hardly -- people
17 are waiting for -- they're losing their lives waiting for
18 these recovery -- for these beds.

19 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

20 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Recovery houses, most
21 recovery houses will not take you unless you're detoxed.

22 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mmm.

23 MS. AMBER KANE: Yeah.

24 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: We need -- okay.
25 This is another totally different -- when I was in the --

1 on the street, when I finally ended up in an SRO, I
2 remember wanting to quit drugs so many times, but I didn't
3 know how. I remember even chasing cops around, 'Officer,
4 Officer, help me find a recovery house,' and that's a
5 (inaudible) story, but we won't (inaudible). [Laughter]

6 But anyways, so I remember asking even
7 police officers, 'Help me find a recovery house. Help me
8 out of here.' I didn't know how to get out of there. I
9 remember times -- if you are a recovering addict, you'll
10 know this story. I'd lay in my room and I'd try to sleep
11 it off, but I was addicted more to heroin, so I'd sleep for
12 four days straight. By the time the fourth day comes
13 along, there was -- I couldn't get past the fourth day
14 ever, ever, and I found out why. Our spirits are coming
15 back to us on that fourth day, and it made sense now.

16 But I could never get past that fourth
17 day, you know, and so many times I wished someone would
18 just come up, bring me some food, bring me some
19 medications, bring me some T3s, bring me something to help
20 me detox in my own home.

21 MS. AMBER KANE: Mm-hmm.

22 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I always ended up
23 having to get out of bed and crawl back down and hustle
24 again, when I didn't want to.

25 MS. AMBER KANE: Yeah.

1 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I didn't want to. I
2 had to, because the pain was unbearable. If you know
3 anything about drug sickness, is it's puking and shitting
4 and sweating, hungry but can't eat, weak and tired, but
5 your mind is saying, 'Let's go, let's go.' Everything is
6 fighting against you. And I was laying there, and I had to
7 crawl out of bed in that way to go get high again, because
8 I couldn't make it past that fourth day.

9 So it's a choice, right? So I chose that.
10 And my recommendation is we need mobile teams. We need
11 mobile teams who will go to these homes, who will be okay
12 with prescribing whatever needs to be prescribed, to go up
13 with an elder, to go up with a doctor, go up with a nurse,
14 to be okay to be -- meet people where they're at in their
15 homes. We need that, especially today. You know?

16 I think if people would have showed up at
17 my door at those times I would have survived. I would have
18 been out of there sooner. You know? We need those mobile
19 doctors, units, with elders and support and food, you know?

20 They weren't telling us about how -- how
21 we could hook up TVs and hook up fridges in our SROs. They
22 didn't tell us that stuff. If I had a TV I might have
23 stayed home. If I had food I might have stayed home.
24 There were so many things going against me, so that's one
25 of my hugest recommendations, is we need a mobile team. We

1 need more detoxes. We need more treatment centres geared
2 towards First Nations people, because if you look at the
3 coroner's report, it is Indigenous women are hit the
4 hardest by this opioid crisis, but it's not being spoken
5 about in the media. We are being hit the hardest. We need
6 those treatment centres geared towards our First Nations
7 people, and the elders who will work with those, who are on
8 methadone and on Suboxone, because there are some elders
9 who are really afraid to work with -- and I just witnessed
10 this not even a year ago -- people who are on drugs, and
11 they're not on drugs, they're supporting, they're living
12 harm reduction, they're living the best way they know how,
13 you know? I support Suboxone and methadone. However, I
14 fully believe we need to heal our people first, and then
15 maybe we won't need -- have the need for all the other
16 stuff in the long run.

17 MS. CORI KELLY: Is 90 days enough to
18 treat someone who's --

19 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: No --

20 MS. CORI KELLY: -- a lifetime generation
21 --

22 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: No, like I said, I
23 was rushed out of treatment centre, and I ended up
24 relapsing anyway, because you need to know what is -- what
25 is the court issues that's hurting -- I always believed

1 when I went to treatment that I had to look at the pain
2 that I inflicted on people. I never, ever dreamed what
3 people had done to me is the reason why I was so sick.

4 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

5 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I thought I was sick
6 was because of what I was doing to people.

7 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

8 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I understand now the
9 life, the pain, the trauma has everything to do with why I
10 did what I did, why I think the way I think. To this day I
11 still have sick thoughts, like I said. I'm overprotective
12 of my children. I think she can tell you that. I'm
13 overprotective of my children. I'm -- the one thing that
14 can probably make me snarl nowadays is somebody looking at
15 my kid for too long. I'm pretty much -- I'll pray for you.
16 If something's bugging me, I'll pray for you, but when it
17 comes to my kids, I will put a snarl and, 'Get your eyes
18 off my kids,' you know? So... I am overprotective, and
19 like I said, still taking random pictures of white bald
20 guys with glasses, so...

21 MS. AMBER KANE: Yeah, and anybody who
22 wants to go to treatment or recovery in the Indigenous
23 community and get Indigenous teachings, like, for myself, I
24 had to go all the way to Vernon to get that kind of
25 teachings. There's nothing in Vancouver if I want to stay

1 in city. There's nothing here for that -- for those kind
2 of teachings.

3 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

4 MS. AMBER KANE: There is no residential
5 aboriginal treatment centres in Vancouver.

6 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: What's your name?

7 MS. AMBER KANE: Oh, my name is Amber
8 Kane.

9 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Well, that's
10 really it for my questions, and if you have any other
11 things to share that I haven't already asked that you think
12 that the Commissioners should know...

13 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Mm-hmm. Sex workers
14 are women. They're people. We need to give all women a
15 voice. I work with sex women to give women a voice. You
16 know, sometimes it's scary to have that voice, but we do it
17 in an artistic way, to bring their voices to the policy-
18 makers, the ones that are telling us we don't have the
19 right to lights, they don't have the right to safety, they
20 don't have the rights to do what they're doing, you know?
21 I believe women need to be protected more by the -- by the
22 government, by -- by the police, by our own people. I'm a
23 mother.

24 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

25 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I'm a sister. I'm an

1 auntie. I was also a sex worker and a drug addict, but
2 that didn't define me.

3 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

4 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I'm a mother first, a
5 sister, and an auntie, and overcame sex work, but not
6 everybody has that support or knows how to get out of that.
7 For those who don't know, they need that support, they need
8 those voices.

9 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

10 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: They need to be
11 heard. They're afraid to speak. You know, they need to be
12 given a platform that they're comfortable with speaking at,
13 to ask for that help.

14 Can you address that?

15 MS. VICKI HAYNES: Is there something in
16 particular you were wanting to get at?

17 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Just about what the
18 work...

19 MS. VICKI HAYNES: My name is Vicki
20 Haynes. I am the project coordinator for SWUAV's program.
21 We have a voice, Indigenous women who do sex work speak
22 out. It is our primary goal to complicate the national
23 narrative that's happening right now around sex workers to
24 humanize sex workers and to push for more safety and more
25 rights for sex workers, because sex work is not illegal,

1 and everyone deserves to take care of themselves in
2 whatever ways are available to them at the time. The
3 government does not have any business telling us what we
4 can or cannot do with our bodies when they refuse to take
5 care of us, and so our work is to bring Indigenous women
6 together who have done sex work or who are currently doing
7 sex work so that they can have a chance to talk about who
8 they are, talk about what that work has done for them, why
9 they chose it, whether or not they want to leave it.

10 We don't have a judgment about their
11 choices. We're just there to support them and to see them
12 for who they are and to allow them to talk about what sex
13 work has allowed them to do, because often it's a tool
14 that's available to them to leverage themselves out of
15 somewhere that's worse. And when you aren't willing as a
16 government and as a society to alleviate the situations
17 that make that the best option, then you have no right to
18 tell us that that's not an option.

19 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Mm-hmm.

20 MS. VICKI HAYNES: So we're using that
21 strength, we're uplifting those women, and giving them the
22 opportunity to feel good about themselves and about their
23 choices and to say even if they don't like those choices
24 they are not bad people for having chose them.

25 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Thank you.

1 MS. VICKI HAYNES: On the ragey side of
2 the bed tonight. [Laughter]

3 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So because I
4 don't have any other consent forms, maybe I can get your e-
5 mail addresses, and I can send you a copy of it, and you
6 can bring it back to me. I think that will probably be the
7 easiest way. And are you three comfortable with having
8 your names be on the public testimony? Because we could
9 also --

10 MS. AMBER KANE: Oh, yeah.

11 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: -- take it off.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have no problem
13 with that.

14 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay. Thank
15 you.

16 Is there anything else that you'd like to
17 discuss today?

18 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: No. I think -- I
19 think that's good. I just -- I just really encourage the
20 ability to keep moving forward and bringing the medicines
21 to our people and to erase the stigma that we've had for so
22 long. I've had to erase it from my own mind, the stigma of
23 my people, that we were drunks and alcoholics. Now I know
24 that we're broken and hurt and we need to be lifted up. We
25 need -- like I said, we need to support each other. We

1 need our allies to help us.

2 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

3 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: You know, not look
4 down and lift -- give us a help up. We need one another as
5 partners. You know, things -- we're living in a world
6 where, you know, we need one another, we need to unite, we
7 need to work together to bring healing, and I truly
8 believe, you know, you have to get on the same page as the
9 colonizers to work with them, to help us up, to help us
10 walk on our own.

11 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Mm-hmm.

12 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Does that make sense?

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah (inaudible).

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: How do you feel?

16 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: I'm okay. I feel
17 better. Sore stomach is gone. [Laughter]

18 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: It's quite a
19 process. I've sat in, I don't know, maybe 30 of these now,
20 and the other ones because I see all of the ones that my
21 team takes for testimonies as well, and I think it's one of
22 those things that I think that in almost every circumstance
23 we've seen the person leave better than when they came in,
24 so --

25 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Mm-hmm.

1 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: -- I hope that
2 is what it's like for you, that you're feeling heard.

3 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Mm-hmm.

4 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: We have Roseanne
5 here for quick aftercare, because I know it's late for
6 everyone, and you have so much going on.

7 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Mm-hmm.

8 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: I really want to
9 acknowledge your strength and honour your family, and
10 deeply sorry for what you're going through with your
11 nephew.

12 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Mm-hmm.

13 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And I hope you
14 have the love -- I think -- I know that you have the love
15 and support that you need to get through this next while
16 and this next hurdle in your life.

17 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Mm-hmm.

18 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: But I also
19 acknowledge that this is a daily thing for you who live in
20 the Downtown Eastside.

21 MS. CANDICE NORRIS: Mm-hmm.

22 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And I truly want
23 what you want, is I want this fentanyl crisis to stop.

24 MS. AMBER KANE: Yeah, I --

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Stop taking our

1 young ones --

2 MS. AMBER KANE: -- fentanyl crisis
3 myself, two kids, have lost one to fentanyl and one to
4 murder, but, yeah, it's crazy.

5 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Yeah. So thank
6 you so much for coming today and powering through, because
7 I know you weren't feeling at your best when you came in,
8 and I think that you delivered what you had to say
9 beautifully, and there is a lot of strength in your voice
10 with that, so...

11 It's 7:27 p.m., and we're going to shut
12 off the recording.

13 --- Whereupon the statement concluded at 7:27 p.m.

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



Andrea Kovats, Certified Court Reporter