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

Monday April 23, 2018

Statement - Volume 410

“Woman A”

Statement gathered by Caitlin Hendrickson

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ORDER

Pursuant to Rule 7 of *Legal Path: Rules of Respectful Practice*, Chief Commissioner Marion Buller ordered that all names be made anonymous in this transcript and any related documents. The order for anonymity was made May 7, 2019. Redactions are set off in square brackets in the text. All names and place names have been removed. The events described by Woman A. took place in British Columbia.
NOTE

The use of round brackets ( ) in this transcript indicates that amendments have been made to the certified transcript in order to replace information deemed inaudible or indecipherable by the original transcriptionist. Caitlin Hendrickson, Registry Clerk with the National Inquiry, completed the amendments on August 29, 2018 at Vancouver, British Columbia. Information incorrectly transcribed has been marked with a strikethrough. Ms. Hendrickson listened back to the source audio recording of the proceeding to make all amendments.
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Documents submitted with testimony: none.
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Woman A

Vancouver, British Columbia

--- Upon commencing on Monday, April 23, 2018,
at 4:23 p.m.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So here's the consent that you can look at while we're talking. So my name is Caitlin Hendrickson and I'm a statement gatherer with the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. It's 4:23 p.m. and we're here on Monday April 23rd. We're here at the Saa-Ust Centre in

Vancouver, B.C.

(Off-the-record conversation about informed consent)

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So if you want to start with what you think is important for the commissioners to know, I'll just kind of leave it to you. This is a very self-driven process, so it's what you'd like to share, what you think is important. I might and you a few questions here and there, but typically I will not really interject very much. So whenever you'd like to begin.

WOMAN A: So everything, like, even from when I was just so little, even when it's from family. Okay, I don't know, I'm born [in the 1970s]. I was born in [Municipality 1]. We had a house there. I just remember, like -- do I have to, like, try to give an address or any kind of details?
MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: No, don't worry.

WOMAN A: We had one of those, like, fold-down campers, and it was, like, up and it was my next oldest brother and nephew, both older than me, and my brother is, like, [a number of] years older and my nephew is something like [a few years] older. And I still remember my pants down and the brother instructing the nephew to touch my vaginal area. And I just remember that he bolted and I don't (remember) mean all the details.

I skipped a couple (but) of when I was looking at my memories, I skipped a couple of memories of other children inappropriately touching me or instructing me. I skipped that. But I'll just mention that. And then so that was [when I was a child] because we moved away from there when I was [a child]. And I finished [school grade A] there in [Municipality 1] and then we moved to [Town 1].

And then sometime in the next couple of years -- there should be records of this one -- I was sexually assaulted by my uncle, [Uncle 1]. And I called the police, the RCMP then. I was under -- it was somewhere between 5 and 10 years old, I think. And there should be records of it. Because I called the police and they came. And if there's records of it, can I even tell about it?

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Whatever you're comfortable sharing. If I have specific questions after,
I'll kind of come back to that. But if you don't know, it's totally fine.

WOMAN A: This is sexual trauma. And it involved touching. His hand in my vaginal area. And then I got away, though, and I called the police. I don't know. There's charges, I think. It's -- I remember I had to sit in the courtroom. This, like, tiny courtroom in [Town 1]. And he was, like, right in front of me. And I had to recall what happened while he stood right there, or he sat right in front of me. That was traumatizing.

And during this -- this is when another incident came out that happened in between [Municipality 1] and this current time that I'm talking about. So I was younger. Sometime in between there. Maybe the year previous to this happening with [Uncle 1]. His name was -- I believe there was charges that came out of that, too. His name was -- I can't remember right now, but there should be records of it, too. He was from (inaudible) ([First Nation 1]). He was a teenager and he sexually assaulted me, too. He touched me. I don't know what else to say about that. There was charges that came out of it because I remember hearing that -- but at the same time I don't know which one had the charges -- if it was from -- because they paid me [a sum of money] just, like, [at a point in time] I got [a sum of money]. They were trying to track me down. So it makes me
think that it was at that meeting, that there was just one, then, that got charged. My uncle, maybe.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Maybe what we could do is we could kind of go back to the beginning. One thing I forgot to ask is to have you introduce yourself. So maybe you could state your name for us and then maybe tell me a little bit about your family and growing up.

WOMAN A: Okay. My name is [Woman A] my dad was a [occupation]. I guess I'm told by other siblings that he was physically abusive to my mom and my other siblings, but I don't remember. He never hurt me, that I ever recall. So my mom, she wasn't violent, she was an alcoholic. I only saw my dad get violent, that I recall, just once he got mad at me, raised his fist at me one once, that was it. But other than that, [one line removed - identifying information]. But my dad had [a number of] kids and my mom had three with him, including myself. All my other siblings are [five words removed - identifying information]. So it's kind of like being on [one line removed - identifying information], practically.

The toll I think it took on my mom, looking after my dad, because after [Municipality 1] and she was really -- she used to cook and everything used to be so much different, and then we moved to [Village 1] and it just got worse. Eventually she just started practicing
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Woman A

1 her full-blown alcoholism. And that's when those things
2 happened.
3 That one teenager that I was saying, it
4 was during while she was partying at a friend's house. The
5 other one was right at our house.
6 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: How old were you
7 when that happened with your uncle?
8 WOMAN A: That was somewhere between 5 and
9 10. I'm going to guess, like, 7 and 10. Because I was older
10 when that happened with the uncle because that story with
11 that teenage boy, that happened before the uncle. So --
12 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Could you tell
13 me a little bit more about your mom? Did she attend
14 residential school?
15 WOMAN A: Yeah, they both did.
16 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Do you know what
17 school.
18 WOMAN A: [Residential School in City 1]. I
19 know my dad got [an illness], he didn't even attend for
20 very long. He went till grade two and then he got [an
21 illness] and got [injured]. So he was in the hospital.
22 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: How long was he
23 in the hospital for?
24 WOMAN A: I don't even remember all those
25 details.
MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: He'd have probably spent a fair amount of time there for [an illness].

WOMAN A: Yeah.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So your mom drank but your dad didn't?

WOMAN A: Well, I think he was, like, social because I saw pictures but I didn't -- I don't have memories of him being intoxicated. But I remember her. But he passed away in [the 1980s]. I just turned [an older child]. And there was a big age difference between the two of them. He was born [in the 1920s] and she was born [in the 1940s].

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: What was that like when your mom was intoxicated? Do you remember?

WOMAN A: I got left a lot. Or sometimes I remember being in the car while she drove. There was always people around. (Parties).

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Were your siblings grown at that point?

WOMAN A: Just my next two oldest ones were still in the house. But they were, like, older teenagers. My brother, [Brother 1], was [a number of] years older than me. And my sister was [a number of] years older. And then the rest of them were from his first wife and much
old than me. We used to hang out with my other brother, [Brother 2]'s kids down the block. So is that it for those ones?

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Maybe you could talk a little bit about -- so you said you went to court with them about your uncle?

WOMAN A: Yeah.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: How were you supported through that process of going through the police reports and court?

WOMAN A: I don't remember. And just remember they came to the house and interviewed me. I remember getting a phone call when they were ending, it was from my aunties on my mom's side and they got mad at me, yelling at me, saying I was a liar. Calling me a whore. We had to go over the statement a couple of times and I think because I was maybe traumatized, that's where the story of the other one came out, because I was getting confused. And I didn't mean for it to come out.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: How did your mom treat you in that process?

WOMAN A: She was really mad. She said, what did you do? Why did you call the police? Where did he go? What happened?

She'd left (inaudible) (something by my
bed,) some forks and spoons and a but(ter) knife or
something. Woke me up before she left and said that they'd
be back. They were going to go for a beer run. I woke up
and he was in bed with me and I was in the dark and I
reached for it when she left and it wasn't there. He must
have seen it and moved it. I don't know. I don't know what
else to say about that.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: How did that
affect you growing up after that?

WOMAN A: I don't think I'm that close to
that side of the family. It's always been something
difficult that -- just knowing all those years that those
aunties said that to me made me unable to turn to them. Or
feel comfortable with them. I know that I was angry at my
mom for -- she told me not to tell my dad because he had
heart problems. I didn't want to be the reason to cause his
heart to fail because the shock. (inaudible) (He wouldn't
be able to handle it), so I never did tell. So even though
I went through (inaudible) (the courts) I think the one
person I wanted to tell, I didn't tell. (inaudible)
(Because he died. He used to always hold her accountable
and say, “What about [Woman A]? What about [Woman A]?,” and
then) he passed away. It just got worse.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: How did it get
worse?
WOMAN A: Well, from there we moved to [City 1] because he went into a coma. That's when he passed away. He never made it out. After he passed, we moved to -- we were staying in an apartment right by the hospital in [City 1]. And my sister beat me when we lived there. My sister -- my next oldest sister. And she couldn't -- I was all scratched up, had blood dripping off my face. And somebody, a man there, one of the party buddies, he was always around, he got her boyfriend and they both came in and said, stop, stop that.

And they interfered and -- nothing was done about that.

And then I don't know -- there's stuff like - when (what) do I tell them? I started walking and hitchhiking and -- I don't know if I felt so comfortable hitchhiking. I'd walk for miles, though, by myself at night. We moved to ([inaudible]) ([City 2]) after that and left me there. She didn't even tell me she was going to leave me there. She moved to [City 3] without me. I stayed -- I finished the rest of the [school grade B year]. All of that was in the [school grade B year], that year that he went into hospital. Started at [School in Village 1], I went to ([inaudible]) ([School 1]) in [City 1] and then to the [School 2 in City 1] and ([inaudible]) (and then to [City 2] all in that year). They must have just felt pity for me
and just passed me anyway. I didn't fail into [school grade C] and I was in (inaudible) ([City 2]) I finished [school grade B] and then [school grade C]. And they knew, too, that she just left me there, because I started my period and they asked me if I had anybody, and I didn't have anybody to call.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Who were you living with?

WOMAN A: My auntie (inaudible) ([Auntie 1]), she was through marriage through my half-uncle, [Uncle 2]. They worked together. Yeah, my [Auntie 1], at that time, she was a drinker. So was just kind of unsupervised, basically. I would hitchhike. I started hitchhiking. My friend (showed) saw me walking along the tracks ('til) and we'd go (out of) to town (where) and nobody could see us on the highway. Truckers, all kinds of different --

I know I was way too young, but that's where I gave -- I guess I gave permission that I was under age, so probably -- I don't remember if it was -- I don't remember -- I was old enough to count outside, so I was thinking it was that summer, that [school grade B] going into [school grade C]. I had sex with -- he was a teenager, he was, like -- I don't know, he was, like -- he was older than me. 18, 19. Because they were all drinking, so I don't know -- you could assume they were old enough, but I know
he was, like -- because my cousin got upset with me and said he was too old for me. And then she said I shouldn't be dealing with that anyway. So [school grade B] and [school grade C], that's, like, [an older child].

It was in the summer because I know -- I know when I finished [school grade C], she just showed up in the night again and just took me. Basically the last day, or the last couple of days of school. So that's when I think it happened, [school grade B] going (in)to [school grade C]. (I would have still been [an older child].)

And then she came (from [City 2]) and got me and we moved to [City 3]. And I was beat. This where I say I was probably beat almost to death. I didn't report it. (By) my brother, (inaudible) (and the lump was so big) I couldn't put my hand around it and touch my hand. It was so big. And later in life in my 20s I went to go see an X-ray guy because my jaw was bothering me, and he asked me when I broke my jaw, and I said I never broke my jaw. And he said, yes, you did, do you want to see the records?

And he showed me the x-ray and showed me the difference between both sides. And it was the side that was on -- it was all swollen. My eyes were swollen shut. So that was -- it was [in the 1990s]. I remember working in [school grade D or E]. I think it may have been [school grade E]. Because when I remember my timeline, I started
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1 off (inaudible) (living with her in [Location in British Columbia]) where I got beat up because of the later place.
2 I think it was in [school grade E] it happened. So [in the 1990s]. I had to stay home and if you look at my ([School in City 3] records, you'd see I missed -- for as long as
3 that lump on my head to go away and the swelling and my
4 black on -- my face was just black and blue all over the
5 place. To me it felt like forever because I didn't leave my
6 room. I couldn't even get up. It was hard for me to just go
7 to the washroom, I remember. And just recovered in my room.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Did you have any
1 medical attention at all?
2 WOMAN A: They asked me not to report it.
3 I don't know what else to say about that.
4 Do I just keep moving forward?
5 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: If that's what
6 you'd like to do. So with you were (going to [School in City 3] at the time) -- that was when you moved to [City 3]? You were living with your mom again?
7 WOMAN A: No, I was living with my sister, [Sister 1]. My mom was living with her boyfriend.
8 MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: And what were
9 the events leading up to what happened with your brother?
10 WOMAN A: He doesn't really -- he doesn't
11 seem to recall, he says. I make my own assumption that he
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Woman A

was on (maybe some kind of) drugs because -- I don't know, he was just so much more severe. I wasn't getting through to him. That and just the combination of being blacked out and everything, I guess. But don't tell -- I don't know the dates so I couldn't tell. And I was just a kid anyway.

(Inaudible) (I’ve never had a very good gauge) probably because I grew up with all of this, it was normal for me.

But he came in, it was just him and I home, and she told me, don't let anybody take that (coat) -- just stuck in my head. Like, she just told me that. And he came and (inaudible) (he was trying to take that) jacket. She just bought it for me, and I said, no. And it was just me trying to practice my (inaudible) (boundaries), not a good time to try that because I just remember her saying it to me, don't you let him take that off you. But it nearly cost me my life trying to protect that.

So that's what led him to it.

Then we moved to (inaudible) (from there we moved to [City 4]) and --

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Do you want to go --

WOMAN A: A couple more minutes.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Take a deep breath and try to figure out if you want to move forward.

WOMAN A: So from [City 3] we moved to
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Woman A

[City 4]. I again was staying with my sister, [Sister 1], there. And then -- no, I forgot about [Village 1]. It was the first thing, [Village 1], after [City 3]. So for my [school grade F year] I was living in [Village 1]. And she moved me there and left me living there alone again. Family cabin. And so unsupervised and I was raped while I lived in this -- not inside this house but on (while I lived [in City 3].) (inaudible) I never got it reported (I didn’t report it.) I was raped more than once in one night.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Would it be a strong assumption to say that with all of these subsequent incidents where you've been sexually assaulted or physically assaulted, these haven't been reported because of that initial reaction that your family had when you reported your uncle?

WOMAN A: Maybe.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Because you got such a negative reaction and you were trying to protect yourself?

WOMAN A: Yeah. Every time it's just, like -- I know in the end it's what I think.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: It just sounds like everything that happened after that court process, you never reported it again.

WOMAN A: Yeah. I never thought of that.
MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: How do you feel that impacted you?

WOMAN A: Not reporting it that time?

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Yeah.

WOMAN A: I guess I -- (inaudible).

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: That's fair.

WOMAN A: Yeah, I (hadn't) realized --

well, you know, when I was raped I told a family member, I told my niece. It was her family, too, on her mom's side.

So she didn't know what to do or say, she was a teenager herself. I didn't have my mom there, I didn't know what she'd have said or done anyway. I got home and I had (inaudible) (sap) in my hair and I didn't want to phone anybody or tell anybody. (I felt really ashamed) I had a (to) fight with him and I was telling him, no, and we rolled down an embankment together because this is how much -- he just raped me. He falls down an embankment with me up in [(Lake 1)]. It was, like, a grad party or something. I was telling my -- after it happened I went and told my niece about it. I want to get out of here. (Inaudible) (I want to go home) she said, well, go home, then. I just remember being shocked, like, how -- so she put me in a car with somebody and she told me -- I remember in my head, just go with his brother and his brother will make sure you're okay, and he'll stay away from your if he thinks
you're with his brother.

And so I sat on his lap and he was just, like, hands all over me and stuff. I did end up having sex with him, probably because I got to say -- I don't know, he was older than me, too. He was older. I think he was old enough to be (inaudible) (buying alcohol then). Anyway, so his younger brother left. But his younger brother, he was, like, stupidly, he had it in his head that we were together. He just raped me. I had to fall on him. I took his body weight. He landed on top of me off that embankment. And then he stared at me, and said, it didn't have to be this (inaudible) (messy. I screamed at him it didn't have to happen at all) never happen at all. They just left me there. So when I left with the brother, I missed that other one in there.

I missed -- I want to talk about it but it's jumbled up, the story, because I got raped at the beginning of the night by another -- somebody else. He's, like, the same age as me. We were in the same home room. And I just remember thinking, like, I thought you were nice. I woke up and he was doing that to me, he was raping me. He (too) was (inaudible) (trying to) act like we were together after that. So I drank heavy after that and I (inaudible) (jumped in someone’s car and they brought me up to (indiscernible) Lake). (I)t happened again. That same
one that raped me there raped me again up there. So he raped me twice that night. And -- which is probably why I was caught off guard and -- I didn't want to go back there (to the bathroom) by myself. I was telling him, that just happened to me. I guess there was a part of me that was just trying to act like it didn't happen. (I was telling myself) it was ludicrous, but it happened. And then it happened again. And then that other guy got me when I was trying to go to the bathroom. I said, ("I don’t know where to go.") - I was terrified, and she said, just (inaudible) ("Just go right there") and there was lights from the fire (inaudible) (flickering) how could nobody have seen it happen? (Inaudible) (How did nobody see what) happened. So I fought him so hard, he caught me with my pants down because I was going to the bathroom. And (it was pretty violent) then so then after that, I ended up with that brother because -- I don't know. I think I just lost my mind. (Inaudible) (He said he cared for me and then I realized what am I doing I need to get out of here,) away from this guy (inaudible) (he’s not taking care of me,) he just wanted sex with me. It was stupid. So I (inaudible) (ran out of there in the) early morning and I got on the highway and I just put myself -- I hitchhike home and I didn't know where my keys and my wallet were, so I had to climb in the window. Nobody was home. I had stuff (sap) all
over my hair. I tried to figure out how to clean this mess before anybody seen it (me). I couldn't pick it up (get the sap out). So my niece came in, I have been trying to knock all day. I said I just -- I was trying to get this out of my hair. I was hiding behind the door. She came in and ended up asking her mom and she helped me, just the two of us. We didn't go show anybody else what happened. And then I told her, but (but) I didn't report it. I told her. And that's her family, and she didn't know how to react because that was her family that did that. And (inaudible) (it still doesn't get) talk(ed) about. But that's that. That was that. It was, like, one of my worst nights when I was a teenager.

And then that was [school grade F]. And I was pretty messed up, so I ended up getting in a fight with this adult woman at a barn dance, kind of thing. She was like a grown-ass woman and I was just this teenager and had all this crap that was happening. But she was trying to fight me, fist fight me. She grabbed my hair, she started punching me. I think I had already so much savage in me, I didn't let her get the upper hand and I was just crazy.

And then I moved to [City 4]. I don't know, there's a story between there. It's really, like, again, I put myself in the situation. I trusted him and he got me intoxicated. I woke up to him (inaudible) (raping

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me). There's a story in between there. There's another story in between there, too.

That's when I got intoxicated with a group, they were all older adults. We were in a bar and the last time I remember -- the next thing I was -- I was in the back of someone's vehicle and the next thing they were driving, and the next thing there was an older man raping me. I don't know if you include those kind of stories.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: All of your stories are important. Whatever you feel you can share, as many details as you can remember. It's okay. I think you've painted a pretty clear picture of the harm that's been done to you and you don't have to recall every single moment because that can be, like, ripping off a whole bunch of band aids and --

WOMAN A: Yeah, it was, like --

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: (It's also what you want to come out of this as well, right?) What do you want to see happen with the inquiry? How do you want your story to impact --

WOMAN A: (Inaudible) ((Sobbing) (it) makes my people look bad.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: It's not making your people look bad. It's about --

WOMAN A: I want Canada to know who --
that's why I made myself come here.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: You don't make people look bad. Each person that's done this to you has had something happen to them. And that's what we're trying to identify, are these intergenerational causes of violence, and how to make those cycles stop. The next generation of sons are not raping other people's daughters, right? You're not trying to shame your people, but you had a tremendous amount of trauma in your life that sounds like you haven't talked about very much, and this is really difficult to do that, and I'm acknowledging that it takes a great deal of strength to be where you are right now. You're a very strong woman.

WOMAN A: I have talked myself blue in the face. I used to be able to talk -- I don't know -- it was like I was desensitized from it. Just like a real (robot) -- go off and talk about it. I brought myself to a therapist. I ended up just walking from school in [City 4] and just ended up walking inside a counselor's office. And I just started sharing. Because I guess I couldn't hold on to any of that anymore. I couldn't hold it all anymore. So I started talking and talking. I'd go there after school, I don't know how often. But then they said, it's starting to seem like sessions, and I just wanted to say, I don't normally see, like, the opposite gender. He was trying to
get me to see someone else, but it was just, like, I was more comfortable. I was all spaced out. And I sat in his office and I just started talking. I wasn't like that. I was a shy, quiet kid. But anyway, I haven't even got to what happened to me in my 20s. It was one of my worst --

I was drinking. I went out to a nightclub and supposedly I was just hooking up with this guy. But he ended up having roommates. When I tell my story to a therapist, they say it sounds like possibly I was given something, because then I was woozy and then the rest of the weekend was in and out. And I just remember there was a couple of times I was really weak, lifted myself to the window and I was trying my hardest to yell out and I couldn't. No energy, nothing. And I just lay back down. And said, by time I did get out of there, I had no energy. It was the whole weekend had passed. And they had me since Friday until Sunday. And I was severely raped and traumatized and sodomized and that didn't get reported.

And that wasn't even the final rape. I was in my 20s and still I got raped again after that. Back in [Village 1]. And it was involving drinking, too. I got back to [Village 1], I was so broken after what happened. It was [on a particular day]. I had no business, I didn't want to go out. I didn't plan on going out. I was just home. And then my cousin came to get me. Nobody comes to get me
(inaudible) (in my hometown). It's [on a particular day],
let's go. Let's go, cousin. It made me feel -- (included I
guess) so I went with them and I ended up being raped that
night. (Inaudible) (As you know, people say,) you're so
beautiful. (inaudible) It's not a blessing. It's a curse.
People objectify you. Like, (your prettiness), your beauty
is for everybody. So I would see it. I'm beautiful,
everything that's happened -- I don't know -- I was trying
to -- I was trying to (avoid this) uphold this (inaudible)
(happening to my daughter). In this past year she was
raped. And I don't know what happened. She won't talk about
it. I have (From) someone else's writing, (inaudible) (on -
- one of those) social media sites, (inaudible) (bullied
her and said stuff). The way that they wrote, it was
somebody, they said Caucasian, and then they said, this
Caucasian person, lock(ed) her in his basement (inaudible)
(and had his way with her) and I'm, like, why wouldn't she
tell me or talk to me? Why can't we do something about
this? And she'd tell me nothing. And everybody says,
that's just the way it is. I can't force her to tell me
anything. So nothing came out of that either.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: How old is she?
WOMAN A: She's [a teenager]. Her
(inaudible) (Dad committed) suicide a couple of years back.
I had a partner, he's an alcoholic and he ended up leaving
us about a ([a period of time]) ago. (inaudible) (I don’t know what I’m going to do for her) we're at an age where she's really hard to connect with. She's mad and angry. I got hit by a [vehicle] a [number of years] ago) now, and that night when I got in my cab, the cops (inaudible) (ended up in our house and strong-armed me around --) big-ass bruise on my leg from them because they took me -- I think my sister -- one sister (we don’t get along), I think she tried to use that situation to (inaudible) (to try to get her into her) custody, because at that time she tried to take -- just take her. She picked her from the foster care and she just started driving around (out of) town with her. I was, like, on the phone (with [Daughter]) and said, where are you going? We're supposed to have our first visit that day. Within half an hour -- where are you?

And she goes, I don't know, and (but) she's not telling me. Don't talk to me. I tried to ask her where we're going, because I told her that I have an appointment. I know that we have our first visit today.

They told me that you wanted to go visit with [Sister 1] and [Sister 1] was going to bring you over (to go see D.) That's what the foster people told me. And she was, like, no, that's not even true. I didn't want to, but then [Sister 1] showed up.

I said, you don't have to (hang out with
her or) visit with her if you don't want to.  
 Anyway, that was, like, very traumatic for her.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Is your daughter currently in care?

WOMAN A: No. Nothing came out of that. Nothing against me.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Was she in care at some time?

WOMAN A: Yeah, for four days.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay.

WOMAN A: And they released her and they released -- they said I was clear from everything.

I said, yeah, it would be clear because I didn't do anything. I got hit by a [vehicle] that -- earlier that evening, I didn't get handled right, I (the ambulance) sent away my witnesses who said, I'll stick around, should I get a statement when the police get here? Or what's happening? The ambulance people both told him there's more than one witness here. And he told those witnesses, no, show's over, you can all go now.

And my head and every, I was not okay after I got hit by the [vehicle], so I was slow reacting. I don't know if that was the trauma or what, but it was too late. By the time I -- I wanted to say, wait, wait, because

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they just kept talking over me. The ambulance people. Don't I need those guys? No, these cases, they're all the same. They follow a process or whatever. And it was, like, are you sure?

And then they wanted to bring me -- the cops were going to bring me -- they wanted me to point out the spot. I got out of the ambulance and I took 1 or 2 steps away from the ambulance and I was trying to point to them, right there, I was crossing the street -- and then they just disappeared. They were by my side. I was, like, how long have and been talking to myself here? And it just seemed very bizarre. And then I went in the ambulance and stuff, I said, I'm really stiff and I'm getting -- I don't want to be in pain sitting in the waiting room, can I -- is it an option if I go to see the doctor the next day? Or how does this work? I don't know what to do. I don't have anybody with me. I just don't know what to do.

Anyway, it was when the police were trying to take my statement, that's when I got out of the ambulance and I turned to my side and they weren't there, and that's when I just walked home from there.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: What was the circumstance around that, that you didn't (your daughter ended up in care for four days?) --

WOMAN A: Well, [E.] and I went over to
someone's house and had some drinks on the way back from her [holiday] dinner. We all went. Everybody went. And then on the way home, [Daughter 1] went home and then we stopped at his cousin's place for some drinks. And then she put us in a cab to go home. I got home in the cab and at some point he didn't -- he got out of the cab. And I was, like, what -- he just randomly disappeared when he's drinking. And so I got back to the house and I was trying to find my phone. I was trying to figure out what to do. Should I call the -- I'm just going to wait for him. And then he just got back right before those cops came and he went upstairs. He was trying to tell me his story. He's, like, I just got beat up down the street and he's, like, those punks, they didn't get anything, though, because I didn't have anything on me.

And then he just goes up the stairs and I'm, like, what? What happened? Wait, I'm just trying to look for my phone. I go, okay.

He goes, yeah. And he goes upstairs. Then I was, like, downstairs because before he showed up I was looking for my phone. So I'm, like, okay, I'll be right upstairs.

And then while I was looking for the phone, that's when the police -- because the police ended up knocking on my inside door and I opened it and that's
when I -- they put me down to the floor and they got him from upstairs and dragged him down the stairs. And that's when -- they put in the report that she was all traumatized by -- and she even said this herself -- I was freaked out because of the way that they busted in. And, like, she said, and how they handled you. And I was, like, I know, really rough. And I said, here they're trying to say that you were traumatized already, but the way that they just busted in and all that, that freaked her out, and she ran upstairs. Because she wasn't (was) even awake and she was asking me, who is that? I was, like, I don't know who is at the door at this time of night. And they went to the door. My god, it's the cops. And she was, like, cops? And then I locked it. As soon as I locked it, they pushed the door in. And that's when all that (the chaos) broke open and she ran upstairs.

And then that's when they took her into care. They took me downtown into the police station and arrested -- whatever -- they had me overnight and then they had him in the hospital. They assumed that I hit him (inaudible)... (He ended up with a stab wound) and they said (assumed) that I did that. In the midst of all that, I had no idea. Then I was trying to explain to them, you know what, I just got hit by a [vehicle] tonight and you guys are, like, pushing me -- I don't know what injuries and all
that you might be causing on top of what's already happened to me. If you guys just look at your file, I have it written, because they had my arms down to the ground and stuff. I said, you just take a look at that paper because I had it tacked to the wall. And I was, like, I'm all stiff, I'm in a lot of pain right now and you guys are, like, you don't need to be using this force. You, like, could have just told me to go on the ground and I would have went on the ground. You don't have to, like, use all that force. So they did. They checked it out and then after that they were easing. But they still used excessive -- they let me use the washroom and all that stuff that night. There was cops in there laughing at me. Even female cops. So, yeah, that was my first real awakening of -- what I went through what you were talking about, I went through when I was younger. How I feel about reporting it and stuff like that. Well, this -- I have seen police rough people up before, but this is my experience. And after that I was, like, no. I was pretty desperate when just in this past little while that my daughter ran off in the middle of the night. She was (feeling) very emotional. And then -- I called my sisters. I took her phone off her. I was over her phone. I took her phone and called my sister [Sister 2] and told them to come and get her. And when I told her that they were coming for her, she took off. She took off because she knew -- it's
different (rules). She didn't like it when she was in foster care. She was -- I said, so you think I'm too hard on you? (Inaudible) (With rules, I didn't grow up with...).

I have to give up things. I had to include everybody. I had to (inaudible) (have) my counsel. I don't know. Those are some situations I think need to be in there for how -- I can see, I guess, I haven't had my own experience like that before to show me -- I can see why other people don't like going to the police and stuff. Because after that I was, like, no, now you've changed me. (I was a fence-sitter.) Now I'm quiet person, but now I'm going to be speaking out. So any time I'm wrong now, I don't just sit on it. But yeah, at least the question with all this other stuff, that's unreported. Because of what it would do community-wise. Like I was saying, there was some families that did things to me that are both my family and the family of my family. I don't know if that makes sense.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: (No, I get it.)

Yeah, it does.

WOMAN A: So the repercussions of all of that, I --

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: So what do you want to see changed? What recommendations do you have for the commissioners to help break those cycles of intergenerational trauma? Because like I was saying, you
said it yourself, you don't want to be blaming or shaming your own people but some things happen to the people (who have wronged) you around along the way that taught them that this is okay.

WOMAN A: Yeah.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: How do we change that where people understand and are healing from all of that past trauma and how to stop that cycle?

WOMAN A: I think this is something very well that was planned for Canada to be doing to our people. They wanted us to be so messed up that we're going to be so busy healing over here that we don't even know that they are still stealing our land right from underneath us. So as much as this might sound whatever, but I know it's connected with giving the land back to the people so they can have their pride and have their culture and feel free to go out. And that's part of the healing. Feel free to go out, collect their medicines to go and practice their culture by being (right) raped out there. And not have to worry about no trespassing signs and all this ridiculousness where we don't even know where we can go anymore. Nobody knows where they can go pick berries. Like, literally I Googled -- I was trying to go berry-picking and (inaudible) (I was laughing at myself when I was doing that) but that's what I see has a lot to do with it. As
Statement - Public
Woman A

long as we're being victimized and then treated like
victims and put over here in the victim corner while is
this the bigger picture, and it connects us -- it's always
connected to our land. The land is our culture, it's our
identity. And so many things about that picture, the land
connection, involves police force, which doesn't help the
people feel safe. People want to live those relationships.
There's no relationship. The only relationship is the
nonexistence of it. But I think that that's what -- I think
that's what needs to happen, is at some -- that's one part
of it. Then when you have this land and you have these
resources, which are our own economy, there's funds that --
you know and nothing specifically for all of this trauma.
And I mean, there's no way to umbrella that -- when they
say the reconciliation, I say reckless reconciliation. I
say some people accepted money. That's, like, a little
handful here, pebbles here, took money. But there's all of
this here, all the rest of the millions that were killed,
what about them? That's reckless. That's almost as bad as
these chiefs signing deals, land deals saying we'll deal
with you.

So I think that there's no neat and tidy

clean picture about all of this. As much as everybody, and
the way the system is built, it needs to be neat and tidy
to work with the system. But it's not that way. Humans are
not that way. Neat and tidy, fit in a box. That's just not
the way it is. We're not going to know the answers, it
evolves as we go. And this is the beginning, I can say. It
was enough to get me out of not ever reporting any of this
stuff. For me to want -- I like the sounds of what you guys
are doing. I want my story to be useful so that I don't
want to say that's (that it’s) hopeless. Because the way
that I'm coming at it is sounding, like -- you know, how
are we going to get there? That's hopeless, when they give
us this picture -- give the land back. It's like saying
give Canada back, right? And the automatic reaction is to
laugh at it because -- that's the real things that need to
be talked about. Which is five years ago, ten years ago,
maybe a year ago, two years ago, where was this idea of
this project?

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Nowhere.

WOMAN A: Yeah. So when people say --
remember that natural reaction is to just chuckle, to give
the land back, to give us our rightful -- then maybe we can
stand up and sit up taller. And then we will want to be --
okay, just for (inaudible) (like a settler, take this plot
of land out of all of Canada and everything and we're going
to give you this), this is yours. So today I give you
(inaudible) (the deed to that and I hand that to you,)
you'll feel like you won the lottery, right? You're going
to feel like -- now imagine if you did that for our people that are broken and all this stuff. Then they're going to be sitting upright, they're going to be, like -- they're going to do all this work because they are going to realize, I'm going to take care of this, because if I just die off and I don't have any -- all the things connected to it, all the future generations, I don't have anyone to leave it to, I didn't do anything to take care of it, there's nothing to pass on because I didn't take care of that land.

Well, that's basically us. That (land also) represents us. There's a whole bunch of us, all just broken, devastated, crushed and if you did give them something that was -- it is theirs. Not if you give them something that hypothetically was theirs -- no, it is theirs. Why is it such a ridiculous notion? If somebody asked us of the notion of this project 5 or 10 years ago, I wonder what the reaction would have been. It could have been -- yeah, I'd like to see that happen, kind of thing. But so I don't like to think that things are impossible because I have seen some things. And a part of that is surviving a lot of that stuff that I survived.

Because (There's even) a story in there that I didn't get in there where I had to jump out of a moving vehicle moving over 100 kilometres because there was
-- I hitchhiked and there was a man trying to touch me sexually. And so I was trying to get him to stop, and so he started choking me. And that's when I had to jump out. And that was [on a particular] night. My sister, she dumped me on the highway there because she got mad because they were drinking. I wasn't drinking. There's stories like that.

There was another story where I was [a teenager]. That's when I met -- and I end up with this man who was [a number of] years older than me because of all where I came from. And he saw -- and this man gave me some attention. He was a native man. I stayed with him for, like, [a number of] years. And I raised his kids. But we had a break up in between there, right around the time (after) that I met him. And I left him in the middle of the night and I hitchhiked to [City 4]. And I went back to my mom's and in that journey, in that hitchhiking trip (from [Town 2]) to [City 4], there was this older man who picked me up, and he was starting to proposition me and asking me how I wanted to do this, and I said, do what? And I still had some of my innocence in me to really, like, I didn't expect this from this old white man. Like, I didn't expect he was going to proposition me like that. What are you talking about?

Normally I just -- he just seemed, like, uncomfortable, like, as if, like, I wasn't playing along.
And because I had asked him a few times, I don't know what you're talking about, this conversation is making me uncomfortable, so I want to get out here.

Because he pulled off on a rest stop. And I said, is this not what I was hitchhiking for. And then he -- and then he freaked out. He started following me. I ran and I tried (had) to hide in some bushes and stuff. He drove past a couple of times trying to look for me, but I hid and he was yelling, I wouldn't (have) hurt you.

But he was trying to proposition me for sex. And so I was pretty shaken up by that because I hadn't had that happen before, those other times that I hitchhiked. So and I'd always heard about the men in our communities getting beaten. Like, even my own brothers getting beaten by the cops. So I think having that in my head, too, couldn't make me feel safe to contact them. And also what would they do about it? Like, this guy being hooded (reported) on, and then what would happen? He'd just be on a committee mad at me because I went and got him in jail and all that stuff? You know? It's not a system that you feel too confident in stirring up trouble. It's like trying to stir up trouble with (inaudible) (KKKers) or something and thinking that there's going to be no trouble in the end. There will be. And so when you start bringing up sexual trauma, rapes and stuff, people get really -- in
small communities, maybe larger ones, too, but they get
defensive. And nobody wants to own up or believe it or all
that kind of stuff. So that was a lot for me to carry to
weigh out, is this community who already doesn't know me
very well, is it going to (and already doesn't) stand
behind me just out of just being me and my -- one of their
community members raped me? Is that going to make it
easier or more hellish for me? And I'm living here alone.
If I was to report it, what are the other implications that
will happen? Not with just the law or social services but
say anybody in that community found out I was alone at
night, right? So you put all those pieces together and it
just wasn't ideal for me to just walk up and feel safe and
feel like that was somewhere for me to -- so for all of
this to be shown ahead of time, I'd say again, I think this
is in a good direction because the truth does need to be
told about, like, these times (patterns) need to be shown,
truths need to be told because just like how they had the
truth and reconciliation for the residential school
survivors, we also need that same for the next generations.
And that's what I am. I didn't go to residential school,
but my parents did. And that's the story of what happened
after they did what they did to my parents, and then sent
them home to have kids of their own. And that's the next
generation, whatever we're called, we're that. I'm sure
there's lots more similar stories to mine that are just
same patterns of what happened at the residential school.

So I don't like hearing about deadlines.

That whole stressful thing about the deadlines with the
truth and reconciliation of the residential school
survivors, because there's tons of them out there that are
still (so) sole in their addictions, they are so broken,
that they can't even see straight to even start talking
about it. And they just let those deadlines pass because --
and so like I say, that reckless reconciliation because
people took money. There's all those ones -- what about the
dead? And they didn't get to say anything. Some of them
died in the residential schools. Some of them survived
later but then couldn't live with -- all the different
stories. Some of them, the bodies -- because the nutrition
(and everything else) and all the rest of it. There's so
many different things of why they didn't make it. But for
some to take - (it's what I feel like) again, another thing
that Canada wanted was that division. Here, you guys take
this money and then now it's all a clean slate, right? But
no, it's not. It's not because for one, I want to speak
about the ones that died. Because my parents were gone
before this whole thing took place. What about the ones
after? My generation? The ones after the (ones that went
to) residential school? It's kind of like you're getting
raised by people who were fully trained by those people
that beat the crap out of them. So I don't know -- it's a
step in the right direction, is all I can say for now. As
long as there's communication, grass roots is grass roots
and why all of this other stuff, this whole systemic ends
up becoming oppressive, is because these systems start
losing connection and sight of the people. (The)
grassroots. So keeping these dialogues and keeping the
communications open, if there's really going to be any real
(impact) -- I hear you guys talk about follow-up, but I hope
the follow-up is also going to be for all of this, too.
That it just doesn't get cut off at this one interview.
Through the follow-up there might be more things that come
out that are useful. Because you don't want to just try to
take all the useful stuff out of these two hours and then
in the after care maybe there's more.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: It is open, too,
as well, if you have more to add, I will give you my
contact information. So you can always submit more in
writing or if I'm able to, I can do follow-up sessions.
That might be a little harder to manage. There's only
so many registrants that haven't had the opportunity to speak
yet. But definitely I want to leave it open to you to
provide more information or if you want to provide photos
or documents or art or -- we're really encouraging people,
if they have any art that they do, to also contribute to
our artistic archive.

    I do have one last question for you and I
just wanted to know -- where is it that you draw your
strength from for yourself and your daughter? Because I
sense a lot of strength and you seem to have powered
through so much so where is it that you draw your strength
from?

    WOMAN A: It's probably just -- I freak
out. I freak out to everything. Even to come to this
appointment. And I break apart. I felt like I broke into a
million pieces. And I grew up like that because I didn't
have somebody there to turn to. You know, like a kid should
have. So I second-guess myself. I have so much anxiety when
I have to make up a decision. When I have got to decide
something, I'm, like, that now. But probably because I have
always had to -- you know, I'm trying to explain it. Like,
because I had to. I had to. I was just this little kid. You
see this little toddler and you go through the ages. 5, 6,
7, 8, 9, 10. All those ages, you'll still be telling them --
- the 5, 6, 7, 8-year old, 9, 10-year old -- that they
don't have to worry, you did such a good job, I'm so proud
of you. And don't worry about all of those details. I
didn't have anybody to do that. So I had to do that. I
remember lots of things -- it's one of the reasons why I
have these perfectionist things, because -- and it probably
stems from residential school, too, like the perfectionist
things. Like, the crumbs. To get the little crumbs, but
then the adult would see this little five-year old trying
to fix those crumbs, and it would be, like, no, no don't
worry about that. You know?

And so I remember growing up with this
voice, it was, like, when do I do? What do I do now?
What's the next choice? What -- you know, freaking out.
And it wasn't until even just recently I realized I did
that. And I'm still doing it. I'm freaking out and my
voices inside me are saying -- my voice was telling me, you
can't possibly survive this. You can't possibly get through
this. And I do. So I guess at some point I started looking
at that and started realizing, why are you freaking out
about -- you've said that to yourself before. You said
you're not going to get through this, you couldn't possibly
get through this, but you did. So somewhere just even in
the past five years, I'll say, I started realizing -- so I
don't know -- you said, how did I get through all of those
years? I freaked out. I don't know what I'm doing, I don't
know what I'm doing. I don't have any parents to call, I
don't have any siblings to -- because I don't talk to them.
I don't talk to anybody. So I grew up like that. Just not
having anybody. So you have coping skills. Which doesn't
mean you're not freaking out on the inside. My god, my god.
Now I realize when I really freak out, and the volume is
really up on the inside of -- I'm saying to myself, you've
said this before. You've enough experience now that you
know you do get out on the other side. And now I can share
that with my daughter. I tell that to her when she went
through her rape. I was able to tell her, I'm so sorry,
baby, that this happened to you. But I just shared though
(shared with her) that (inaudible) (, “I know it doesn't
feel like it right now but this is going to make you
stronger), you're going to get through this, and I'm going
to be here with you.() (inaudible) (I didn’t have anybody
to) get through it with, but you do. And I'm going to be
here. And so ever since I had her in [the 2000s], I did
have a suicide attempt, but I'll never do that again. I
felt pretty low at that time, but nothing -- because now
after going through that, watching my daughter lose her
dad, it really made me realize, and after surviving my own
and having to face her and having to realize, my god, what
did I do? But there's no way -- I learned so much out of
all of that.

And I can share with her now, when she's
feeling that low. (I told her) I know it's not exactly the
same, but you do get through this you're going to know,
because you're going to be the one guiding your little ones
 Statement - Public  
Woman A  

1  -- she's got a niece. Her brother has a baby. I told her  
2  you're going to have your chance to make babies  (be giving  
3  these) words of advice to you, this wisdom. And it'll be  
4  based on your experience because you got through it. It's  
5  not easy to go through these things when you're on your  
6  own, because I think it changes you, too. Hardens you.  
7  Because I certainly wasn't like this.  
8  
   I often wonder, even (if I’d cry), so when  
9  I do cry, I'm kind of impressed because then it shows I'm  
10  not completely dehumanized and there's still hope for me  
11  yet.  
12  MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: You know, I ask  
13  that question because I think that -- I like to acknowledge  
14  every person's strengths (that walk through this door)  
15  because this is not easy to come and sit in front of a  
16  camera with a stranger to talk to people that are not in  
17  the room with you. But to reframe it in a way where you're  
18  acknowledging your strength rather than me saying, listen,  
19  I sense the strength. You're acknowledging that strength  
20  within yourself. And you are teaching your daughter that  
21  what happened to her isn't okay. When it was normalized for  
22  you over the years, you're telling her that. It's not okay,  
23  you're going to be stronger for this. So I want to  
24  acknowledge your strength in supporting your daughter and  
25  being where you are today.
WOMAN A: Thank you. Thank you for trying to -- I can't imagine what doing this is -- it's got to be really difficult.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Can be.

WOMAN A: I heard how intense it was for the truth and reconciliation interviewers and I thought, I tried to be ready. That's why I got through the first three stories okay, because I did write those down. And then I started to space after that (and got overwhelmed) so I stopped --

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: I recognize you've got limited parking time and I do want you to (connect with [T.] and) have a few minutes for your after care. Do you have anything else that you wanted to add?

WOMAN A: No.

MS. CAITLIN HENDRICKSON: Okay. It's 6:09 p.m., I'm going to shut off the recorder.

--- Whereupon the proceeding concluded at 6:09 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.

____________________________
Rubina Jan, Certified Court Reporter