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Statement - Volume 453
Alisha Roode, In relation to Laura Pilon

Statement gathered by Kate Langham
II

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--- Upon commencing on Wednesday, August 8, 2018 at 15:13

MS. KATE LANGHAM: So, this is Kate Langham, statement gatherer with the National Inquiry for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. It is Wednesday, August 8th, and we are here in Edmonton at the Ramada South, and we will begin our statement at 3:13 p.m.

And so, if you would like to introduce yourself?

MS. ALISHA ROODE: My name is Alisha Roode, and well, when I was little, my name was Alisha Pilon, and that’s what my mom’s name was when she died, was Laura Pilon. I don’t know.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah. And so, you can just start ---

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: --- however you -- however you feel comfortable to start.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: So, basically, I thought that I would just talk about, like, I don’t know, who I knew her as.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, how her murder, like, affected me as a kid and, like, I guess that’s pretty much it.
MS. KATE LANGHAM: Perfect.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Because I don’t know much about her. I was, like, four when she passed away, and I just -- I didn’t have a chance to know her at all. My family kept her like a secret almost from me, and they never told me the truth about what really happened to her.

I always, like, thought that she got in a car accident growing up, but I wanted to know, like, everything about her. So, I would ask so many questions all the time. I would just be bugging them. Like, they would go wild, like, “fucking leave me alone”. But, I don’t know. I just wanted to know who she was.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Of course.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, they never -- they would never answer any of my questions. They would always push it away and, like, I don’t know, say things like, “No, no. It’s, like, middle of supper.” Like, you know, “Now is not the time.” And, always, like, it was a bad subject to them.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, I always wondered why -- why they were, like, so embarrassed to talk about her, or why they were so ashamed of, like, to mention her. Or, how come I wasn’t allowed to know who she was? And, I was the baby out of, like, three kids. I have an older
brother and an older sister. And so, they had a chance to know a little bit about who she was, and I don’t know. I kind of envy that a little bit, but it’s funny as you grow up, you realize that they’re envying you because you don’t have any memories. Sometimes that’s easier.

But, I don’t know. I kind of just grew up wondering. And then eventually, you know, you can’t just wonder forever. So, I started researching and seeing if I could find something about her online, like a high school picture or, like, a letter or, like, anything at all. Anything. A birth certificate, death certificate, anything at all, and I couldn’t find anything, like, for a long time. It wasn’t until I was, like, almost 19 that I seen, like, a baby picture of myself, and on the baby picture, it’s like the only one I ever seen, my last name was Pilon. And, I was just like -- I don’t know. I didn’t know she was married when she died and, like, I was just so, like, sheltered from everything, really.

And so, it was, like, kind of just clicked into me, and I was, like, oh, maybe I should, like, research her name with this last name and see what I can find, and then she popped up, like, right away on this list of, like, missing and murdered Indigenous women of Canada list.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.
MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, I called my uncle and I asked him if that was her, and he said that it was, and that’s pretty much all that I’ve ever, like, really been able to find about her.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Okay.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Even now, like, I don’t know. I keep looking and I keep, like, trying different -- like, punching in different things and, like, punching in us in relation to her, and, like, just trying to find anything at all, and that’s ultimately why I got involved with this.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Is because, like, you start to wonder and, like -- I don’t know. Last year, I went through, like, a phase where, like, I thought maybe she wasn’t even dead.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah. When you don’t have any information, of course; right? You’re going to come up with all sorts of things.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. Your imagination kind of runs wild.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And then, I don’t know. I was, like, contacting all these different people and, like, asking everyone I could. Like, even just people who
I thought might remotely even know who she was. And, I got, like, an email back from the cemetery finally. They told me that she was there, that, like, so -- that’s, like -- it’s a confirmation, but it’s not, like, much of one.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** But, it was still, like, enough to kind of put things to rest for a bit. I don’t know. I feel like growing up without knowing who she was made me, like, really lucky because as I grow older and stuff, I find that, like, I’m very much like her. Like, to a tee, like, everything. And, I thought it was pretty crazy how you can not know somebody but still make all the same choices as them. And, like, down to leaving the country and like -- or, like, leaving the province and, like, going across the country at a certain age to, like, coming back with, like, half-dyed hair. Some of it is blonde, some of it is black, and then finding out she did the exact same stuff.

Like, I would get a little bit angry because I would, like, talk to my grandparents, and I would be, like, “Well, why won’t you tell me this stuff?” Because I could have saved myself from making so many of the same mistakes as her.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Then I was like it feels
like I never got a chance. Like, a lot of chances or choices in my life, big ones, were taken away from me because of that reason. I didn’t really know, like, the details of, like, how she died, because I was told, like, so many different things growing up. And, like, I don’t know.

I was talking to my sister, like, this past summer. And, like, the story that I knew was that she got into a car accident. And, then, after when I found out that she was on that list, my auntie told me that, like, she was murdered. And, then, it was, like, my family was, like, embarrassed of it, because they’re, like, I don’t know, they’re old-fashioned, and they’re from, like, a different time where covering things up was a lot easier because you wouldn’t bring, like, I don’t know, embarrassment to the family. Or, like, if something horrible happened. Especially if she was like me and, like, wild and free, and, like, we just roamed around and just were happy, got into trouble and stuff like that.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: She was, like, a big jokester and, like, she would mess around with people all the time, and she would party all the time and, like -- so, like, when she was -- basically, around the time that she died, she left me and my brother and my sister at my
grandparents, and she was married at that time. And, my
auntie told me that she was having, like, a fight with her
husband, and that he was really abusive towards me, my
brother and my sister, and even her. And, she left us with
my grandparents to keep us safe so that she could get away
from him, because she was scared of him.

So, she went to Ontario. And, like, my
uncle said that she was gone that whole summer before, kind
of like me. I don’t know. I did the exact same thing.
But, she came back just, like, December, like the 1st or
something of December, and I didn’t see her, but she talked
to my older sister. She told my older sister that she was
okay and that she was going to come back in a couple of
days. She was just going home to pack up her stuff and,
like, basically say goodbye to everyone there and come home
and, like, we were going to all be able to go back to,
like, living the way that we were.

And then, I don’t know, she, like, left
Ontario, and my grandma got a call, like, on December 4th
saying that they found her or something like that. And,
this is where, like, I’ve heard two different versions of
the story, where, like, my sister tells me that it was
really bad, and that she was, like -- she was really hurt.
Like, I don’t know. It was all bad. I don’t know how much
details, like, you want to know, but, like, I guess I could
just say what they told me.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Whatever you’re comfortable with sharing. Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: I don’t know. I was, like, 21 or something when my sister told me this. And, like, as I got older and stuff, she just opened up more and more over time, and she told me that, like, she was stabbed a bunch of times, and then they found, like, her body underneath, like, half underneath her mattress, and she was half naked or something like that. And then she, like, didn’t go into much more detail after that because she started crying lots.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Like, she just told me that’s why she’s so protective over me, because, like, you see things happen and then it’s like you’ve already seen it before and you want to protect them from making all the same mistakes. But, you can’t because they don’t know what actually happened, so then you just look like you’re being over protective and, like ---

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: So, then, being, like, the younger one, you just want to rebel and you don’t even realize what the hell they’re actually talking about at the time.
MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And then, I don’t know. Like, this past summer when I talked to my sister again, she told me, like, I don’t know if it would be the second half of that story or, like, the ending of it, but she told me that my grandma had to fly to Ontario, and she went by herself, because she had to take her off of life support or something like that. Like, she was so, like -- I don’t know. She was just hanging on.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, yeah, my grandma had to take her off life support by herself. She came back with, like, her ashes and, like, a leather jacket or something like that, and that was the only things she brought back. It was just those things. And, like, that’s, like, that’s the end of that.

My grandfather was really mean to us growing up. Like, they weren’t happy that they had to adopt us. They weren’t happy that they had to take on that burden and, like, that’s exactly how they seen it; it was like a burden. We were, like -- they never signed up for more kids and, like, they would talk all the time how you live your life. You don’t expect to be like basically starting over from scratch. And, like, it wasn’t until I was, like, probably around 19, because I left for Ontario when I was...
19. So, after all -- I found out all this stuff, I kind of
just up and split.

   MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

   MS. ALISHA ROODE: Just got on a bus and
just left, and I didn’t know that she actually did that
when she was that age.

   MS. KATE LANGHAM: Okay.

   MS. ALISHA ROODE: So, I wonder what she
found out.

   MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

   MS. ALISHA ROODE: Like, they adopted us.

They felt like it was their duty after my mom passed away
that they should adopt us. But, my grandma’s mom was sick,
too, at the same time, and she ended up dying on Christmas
Eve. So, that’s -- like, when I think back in retrospect,
I know they were really mean to us and shit. Then I try to
think of, like, what they were going through.

   MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

   MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, like, to lose your
daughter and your mom in the same month, and then have,
like, these three kids that you have to take on and --
like, it would be a lot to handle. So, I get why they’ve
had, like, shit that they had to deal with before they
could ever come to terms with that. They made a lot of
mistakes and, like, they didn’t raise us right, but at
least we had them.

It wasn’t until, yeah, like I was 19 before I left or whatever, I talked to my grandpa, because he got cancer. He got prostate cancer. And, I don’t know if he was going through some end-of-life, like, revelation and shit that he had to, like, come to terms with the stuff that he had done to us growing up. But, he decided that now is the time to talk to me and, like, own up to everything. And, he apologized and stuff one time when we were sitting outside. And, like, we were just sitting on the deck having coffee, and he said that he was really sorry for, like, the way that he treated us, and that he always, like, blamed us for my mom’s death. He always thought if she didn’t have kids then she wouldn’t have wanted to, like, drink and kick back and, like, the stress of, like, doing that and then picking, like, somebody who was abusive it and, like, it was just too much for her to handle. And then he was like, and then just look what happened to her, and then we get left with you guys, like — but, like, something inside of him had to tell him that that was wrong, for him to, like, come and apologize to me.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: I don’t know. I didn’t really know what to say to him at the time, but I just said, like, you’re really lucky that I am the person that I
am, because I was, like, I don’t know. The way that you treated us and, like, how mean you were and everything, I just said I will never act like that towards somebody. I don’t know. I will always, like, stand up for people and -- it will probably get me in trouble one day. I always figured that would be the way that I died or something, was like protecting somebody else, but ---

It’s just like you don’t have a voice if you don’t choose to use it. So, that’s why I stick up for some people and, like, put myself out there like that. So, I told him, like, I’m proud of who I am. I’m happy, but I said, “But, at the same time, you have to think about -- like, my brother and sister, like, [Brother] and [Sister], they are the people that they are because of you, and that’s something you will have to live with for the rest of your life.” Because my brother is, like, a really angry alcoholic. He’s just so full of so much anger. And, my sister has, like, detachment issues. She’ll, like, she’ll turn her back on us in a second, because it’s easier for her to do that.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Sure.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: We all have, like, different ways that we view, like, my mom’s death and everything. And, as much as, like, I’m here today and, like, I’m talking about it, they will not -- they, like --
they basically joined my grandparents in the whole hiding it and like -- and my sister just said that, like, I don’t realize how lucky I am to not have the memories of who she was, because she was just like if she could bring her back, she wouldn’t. She said that of all the shit that happened and all that stuff, she just wouldn’t. She said that she’s exactly where she should be, and I have issues with that.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Because I’m like I don’t care if she was bad. She could have changed. Everybody should have a second chance.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah. It’s just the way she’s coping with it maybe. And so, that part of you that’s always standing up for people and that really is comfortable using your voice, is that the piece that brought you here today? Yeah. Because you wanted to share some things there?

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Because I always told her I would never give up on her. And, like, she doesn’t have a voice. That was taken from her, so -- and, my family fought so hard to, like, make it so that she never existed.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** That I’m just not going to let that happen.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.
MS. ALISHA ROODE: Because I don’t care how bad she was, how bad, like, our upbringing was. I think I would rather have had like a shittier mom that, like, was just an asshole instead of having to deal with foster care and, like, grow up in that kind of cold-heartedness.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah. Did you and your siblings end up in foster care at times?

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Right after my mom died, because my grandparents -- like, my grandma was too busy dealing with her own mom.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: They had to put us in foster care right away.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: So, my grandparents had to, like, fight for us to get out of there after. But, we ended up -- like, we were really lucky when I was really little, because I don’t have a lot of memories, like, with my mom. I don’t have any, actually. But, like, some of my earliest memories are from being at this home, and they ended up being -- like, I don’t know if we were in foster care a lot before my mom passed away.

But, my sister apparently knew how to use the phone, and she knew, like, when they got to somebody’s house and whatever, she should call my grandma right away.
and let her know where we are. And, when she called, it ended up being, like, really good friends of my grandparents.

So, they knew that we were in a good place and like -- and they were really good people. Like, I still call them mom and dad to this day, and, like, I’ll still go out to their house for, like, Christmas Eve. And, like, they’re good people. They never, like, raised their voice at us even when we were shitheads. And, like, they dealt with a lot of kids coming in and out, but we stuck so much that, like, their daughters are like my sisters and, like, you know, I’m like -- I don’t know. I have cousins that are part of that family line and, like, we’re not actually related, but we don’t even see it as that.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** For sure.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** They were good. And then once we got -- like, my grandparents fought for us to be with them. And, they were so frickin’ abusive that we just -- I always just constantly got put back in foster care. And then, I don’t know what the heck it was, because growing up, you don’t really understand what’s really going on.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** But, they would always eventually just -- they wouldn’t tell me much of what was
going on, but just one day, they would just take me back there, and it was like some fucking sick joke or something. Because, like, I knew that they didn’t want us. They never treated us like they wanted us. So, then, you get taken away and then there’s, like, the idea that you might be with, like, a family that cares.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** And then I used to actually think that, like, because of, like, my foster mom and dad, [Foster parents] like, they were so good that I thought that I was, like -- I thought they would all be good and everything would always be great, and they would always treat you like you’re one of their own and, like -- but they do not.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Some of them are, like, it’s just a job. And, they make it known that, like, you are not part of their family.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** You’re only visiting. And so, I used to listen really good, and I would just end up at all these places. And, then, eventually, after a while, they would just pick me up and take me home. Like, it was like nothing that had happened mattered.

And then they would do all the same shit
over again. My grandpa would be really abusive to us and, like, my grandma would, like -- they both, like, hit us a lot. They had a lot of anger. And then it was just constant like that, up until I was, like, probably, like, 16 or 17. It would be, like, a repetitive cycle of going back into foster care and then living there for, like, three to six months, and then eventually going back. And then when I was 12, I just started running away.

My grandparents always joked about, like, the bad things and, like, the things that you would be embarrassed of and stuff. But, some of them were pretty funny stories. Like, I guess the first time I ran away, I was six. And, like, I have a six-year-old right now. So, to think that she would want to run away from home and stuff is, like -- like, you have to be a shitty parent to have your kid, like, fucking -- to, like, be in the mindset that I was when I was that age and what I was thinking, what I was going through.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: I was totally content with living at the park forever, and, like, going to the waterslides every day.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: That was going to be my life. Yeah. We had a lot of freedom growing up, though.
Like, I don’t even let my kid outside, out of my sight. I just can’t do it. And then being that age, I’m just, like, trying to ride a bike halfway across town and like ---

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** But, it would definitely break my heart to know that, that my kid would rather do that than, like -- yeah, that does sound pretty good. But, I don’t know. My kid would say, like, every day, “You’re my best friend,” and I can honestly never say that I ever had anything like that.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** So, I’m pretty sure she would never think about running away from home, because why would you run away from your best friend?

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** It doesn’t make any sense. So, I don’t know. It’s, like, brought a lot of detachment from everything, because you grow up and you’re always like -- basically when foster care, what that teaches you is, like, you’re always looking for your family. Like, always. And, it’s just about, like, you’re just trying to find where you fit in, and they do a good job at making you know that you don’t fit in anywhere.

And then, eventually, one day, you just stop going back. You go live at a friend’s house or, like,
somebody’s mom will take you in, because they want to, like, be nice to you and shit and, like, everybody -- all of my friends’ moms, they were like my mom. They all, like, took me in like that was nothing. Eventually, I would just stop going back home.

And, the frickin’ sad part is they didn’t even care. Like, when I would leave and stuff, they wouldn’t say, like, “Where are you going? What time are you going to be back? Make sure you’re back at a decent hour.” It was just, like, “Okay, bye,” and they’d be, like, sitting there. Like, “All right. I’m going to leave this phone number here, like, of my friend’s house just in case something happens,” right? Nothing. “All right, then. Bye.” Like, fuck, you attempt to parent yourself.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And never quite, like -- I don’t know. They just -- I don’t know if they had so much stuff, like, that they just didn’t know how to re-grasp that parenting mode.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: We had good moments too, though. Like, it was bad and they were really hurtful and stuff, but, like I said, having them was better than not having them.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.
MS. ALISHA ROODE: Like, my grandpa would take us camping and stuff all the time, and my mom used to go with us when we were real little, he said. And, like, that was something that, I don’t know, that we have in common, I guess. Like, as much as we’re wild and free and stuff like that, we were really down to earth and, like, feel more at home when we’re in the bush and, like, with nature.

And, she was really spiritual. She used to write poems all the time and, like, I don’t know. She liked plays and, like, she’s just a really artistic person, and that’s who I ended up being.

As I got, like, older and I was, like, researching her and stuff, I was, like, trying to trick my family into telling me bits and pieces about her because, like, they would always immediately slough it off. But, if I caught one of them when they were drunk or, like, messed up or something, they would tell me stuff.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Smart.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And tactical.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. Well, you have to think outside the box. Yeah. So, like, as the years go on, I’ll find out little bits and pieces. Like, when she was in Ontario, she was dating somebody there. And, when she came back, she brought him with her and they stayed at
my uncle’s house for, like, a week. So, like, she was in town, like, a week before her death with this new boyfriend or whatever.

So, it kind of just, like, started putting pieces together for me; that if she was married here and he was a really abusive person, and she went over there and she found this new guy and was going to come home and start a new life, like, there’s, like, a couple of options there of, like, stuff that just really sticks out. Like, her ex-husband probably found her and was, like, no way. Like, if I can’t have you, no one can.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Or, maybe she decided to split off with that guy from Ontario and tell him that she was going to move on with her life. There could be, like, the same exact scenario there. Like, uh, uh, no way. People are crazy, whether you know them for two weeks or, like, for five years. Or, it could just be like something totally off the wall. I don’t know.

You, like, research stuff, and you see, like, the police involvement and stuff like that around that time. And, like, when my mom died, it was, like, when a lot of hype was going around about Sandra, like, in Ontario area, in Thunder Bay.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Okay.
MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, there was just -- there was just a huge amount of press saying that there was somebody out there and he was hurting these girls who, like, lived my mom’s lifestyle and, like, were street walkers and, like, Aboriginal. And, like, she was in the bad side of town and, like, she basically fit right in with all these escorts and, like, stuff like that.

Whether or not she did that I’ll never -- like, I’ll never know that. But, she definitely put herself in the same -- basically the same situations I put myself is where you find that, like, where you have nowhere else to belong, you try to go with the people that will let you in with the least resistance.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: For sure.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, that’s usually, like, the people of the streets.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yes.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, yeah, there are a lot of bad ones, but there are some that watch out for you. And, when you don’t have any other options, you don’t have family to turn to when things get hard or, like, you don’t have a mom even or a dad you can just go back and, like, live with them when things fuck up and, like, you screw up your life and stuff, that’s not an option. So, like, your friends are your only option. And, like, there was, like,
a time when -- I don’t know. I don’t know. They ended up being my family more than my family ever did.

   MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

   MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, whether or not my mom was murdered and stuff, I most likely would still be doing the exact same stuff. Like, just trying to help and, like -- I don’t know, just being good, even though I’m, like, with the wrong crowd or, like, I’m struggling. I don’t have a lot of money and I don’t come from, like, a really awesome background. It’s all good.

   MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah, you’re a good person.

   MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. Well, you have to try.

   MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

   MS. ALISHA ROODE: Being bad is easy and, like, being an ass is easy, and being mean to people and, like, all that stuff; that’s easy.

   MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

   MS. ALISHA ROODE: It’s a lot harder to, like, go out of your way for somebody and, like, just genuinely mean it. You don’t have to gain anything. And, like, I don’t know. I try to do the stuff and I think about, like, what she would want. Or, I ask her for guidance and, like, little things like that. And, like, I
don’t know. Every once in a while, I feel like I feel her. Like, she’s letting me know that I’m on the right path of something or, like, I don’t know. That’s probably why I ended up making a lot of the same decisions as her, because I try to think of, like, what she would do or, like -- well, I’m pretty bang on.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah, you’re connected there.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Yeah.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** I was really worried last year because last year, I’m the same age that she was when she passed away.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Okay.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** And, she died, like, a week before my 5th birthday. And so, I just -- I don’t know. I had a lot of bad things happen to me in this timeframe, and I just thought that something horrible was going to happen to me. I thought I was just going to follow all in the same footsteps, and I was really scared last year. And so, I thought, like, well, if I’m going to die, then at least I want to see, like, a mountain first or, like, something cool like that.

So, I tried to go and, like, tried to do it, and things kept going wrong, and horrible things kept
happening. And then -- well, I didn’t die, like, a week before my -- like, because I didn’t die on the exact day that she died. In my head, that’s, like, how it would go, and then I was just, like, well, obviously that’s not how it goes. I would die, like, a week before my daughter’s 5th birthday, not my 5th birthday, like, you know?  

And then I actually got into, like, this really serious car accident a week before my daughter’s 5th birthday, like, to the day.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Wow.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Yeah. So, I don’t know. I don’t know if that’s, like, the closure I needed or something but, like, I thought if I was going to die, that would be the day that I died, and then, like, a horrible freak accident happens and then I didn’t.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yes.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** And, I tried -- like, now, it kind of feels like that’s the day I started living.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Ah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Because now I’ve outlived her and, like, now I can, like, create my own path.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** And, like, just stop trying to live in her footsteps. It was, like, the single worst thing and best thing that ever happened to me.
MS. KATE LANGHAM: That’s really powerful.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. And, like, it was hard looking for her, like, all these years and stuff and, like, frustrating and stuff, but I thought being part of something like this would be, like, the closest thing to closure that I will ever get. It’s just so that if she is, like, listening, she can know that, like, I did everything I could.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, now she won’t be forgotten.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: That’s right. There’s a big, active commemoration here by you coming and sharing her story, for sure.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. I wish I knew more about her to tell you guys, or, like, more about her accident and stuff, but -- I tried to get my family involved and they would just rather forget it than be part of something like this.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: I don’t know if they’re scared or, like -- or what. Because, like, even me researching it, my auntie would tell me just to be careful and, like -- like, always let on like she knew something more than what she would say. And, like, her husband at
the time, his name was [Aunt’s husband]. I would always speculate that that was who my dad is, because I never knew who my dad was. Nobody ever told me. And, they would just simply say, “I don’t know.”

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** No matter what, no matter how drunk they were, like ---

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** No matter what, I would always, like, try to pop it in there and just, like, “Oh, by the way, who is my dad?”

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** And, they would always be, like, “I don’t know.” I’d be, like, “I’m pretty sure it’s [Aunt’s husband], isn’t it? Yeah, it’s definitely [Aunt’s husband],” and just see what they would say, and then they would just -- like, they were really solid with that one.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Okay.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** But, I always thought because he would hurt my brother and sister a lot, but he never hurt me. My auntie said that he would always, like, favour me and, like, spoil me and stuff. So, I thought of, like, history and all of these different events where there’s, like, a man and a woman together, and when they
split, he will generally hurt, like, her children and then
he’ll save his own.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And so, that’s the, like, only thing that made me think that he’s probably my dad.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: It’s because he just always favoured me and stuff. There have been, like, instances where they just favour one kid. But, my grandparents would always say that they got married after I was born, and I was just, like, that don’t mean nothing. Like, unfortunately, not everyone follows the holy sanction of marriage. Gees.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Nope.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. Your logic is gone. But, I would tell my auntie that I was going to try and find him and just, like, see what he had to say or, like, maybe befriend him and just see what kind of person he was. And, she would always just tell me that was a really bad idea, and she would just say, “Don’t do it.” Like, basically make me promise that I wasn’t going to go looking for this guy.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, like, she was probably right to do so. Like, I don’t know who he is, and
I know that if he hurt kids and stuff, then he probably
wasn’t the best guy ever. But, it makes me curious. But,
with my luck, I would go find him and he would know exactly
who I was. Because I can’t -- I don’t know if he’s been,
like, watching me my whole life or, like ---

**MS. KATE LANGHAM**: Right.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE**: There have been crazier
things that have happened.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM**: For sure.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE**: So, I just know that if I
find him, I probably will find some answers.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM**: Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE**: But, you have to think,
like, at what cost, or, like, what price will I have to pay
for those answers?

**MS. KATE LANGHAM**: That’s right.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE**: I don’t know. Something
just tells me, though, that, like, I just can’t leave it
alone for some reason.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM**: Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE**: I just have to keep
digging and keep looking and keep finding, like, as much as
I can until I found out what happened to her.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM**: Right. You’re a
determined person.
MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: For sure. Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: I just know that if something ever happened to me, I would hope that somebody would, like, do the same thing for me.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Like, have my back like that. Because, like, if you died and something horrible happened to you, and that person just got away with it ---

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: --- well, that’s kind of a scary thing.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: So, there was police involvement, then? There was some sort of an investigation?

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. Like, the Thunder Bay police.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Okay.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: My grandma dealt with it all, though.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah. And so -- and didn’t share that information with you, obviously.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: No.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Do you know what year ---

MS. ALISHA ROODE: 1992 is when -- like,
December 4th, 1992, is when she died.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Okay. In Thunder Bay.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. Everything about, like, the way she died and everything, from, like, what they’ve told me and everything, it was just kind of, like, the saddest story I ever heard. And, like, after, like, you know, you find out bits and pieces after, and, like, I never had a really good relationship with my grandma and grandpa. But, then, when I found out that, like, my grandma went there by herself and, like, she only brought back one thing, I was really angry at them. Like, I wanted to burn down their house or something.

Like, I obviously didn’t because that’s crazy but, like, I just couldn’t understand how you could -- like, I don’t know, treat somebody like that. How you would let her die by herself in the hospital. And, like, I tried to think of all the variables, like, of what you’re going through, too, like, dealing with your mom and all this stuff.

But, like, that’s your kid. I wondered why my grandpa didn’t go or, like, why we weren’t allowed to go say goodbye. Even though we’re children, like, I think that’s important, because -- I don’t know. When you go pull the plug on somebody, I’d like to think that they would still be in the room somewhere. And, like, that
would make a difference.

And, like, her coming back with only one thing, I thought, like, either she really just hated her so much that she just couldn’t be bothered with bringing anything back. And, when I asked my grandma about that, she said that she had nothing, that she had lived in, like, this little one-room apartment and she didn’t have anything. And, I was just, like, come on, now. We are women. How the hell does she not have anything there? We’ll pick up rocks and make, like, friggin’ -- like, there’s no way that she had nothing there. It just doesn’t make any sense. We make crafts out of sticks. Like, we don’t need anything.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM**: That’s right.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE**: So, then I was thinking, like, the only other thing I could think of was that everything else was, like, kept, because it was a crime scene. And, if it is the story that they were saying, like, to be stabbed that many times, like, there’s got to be a lot of blood. So, that was, like, the only other thing I could think of that didn’t end with her being a dick.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM**: Right.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE**: And, I like to think that, like, as evil as they were and stuff, like, I don’t
know, that they would have a heart somewhere. It wasn’t until my grandpa was faced with his own, like, death that he, like, grabbed a frickin’ soul. And, like, after my grandpa told me that stuff, they just went really cold.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Okay.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Like, I don’t talk to them anymore.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah. So, he’s still alive, your grandfather?

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. He ended up getting, like, prostate cancer at the same time as his best friend. And then his name is [Friend], and his best friend’s name is [Friend] and, like, this is so stupid.

Yeah. And, it was, like, my uncle’s wife’s dad. And, he was, like, a doctor, and he was a really nice guy. And, like, we always went to their house for, like, stupid birthdays and stuff like that, and they were loaded rich. Like, their daughter is [Friend’s daughter], if that makes any sense.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah, okay.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Like, that Canadian singer?

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Mm-hmm. Yeah.
MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, he was just a really nice guy. I don’t know what happens behind closed doors or whatever, but we would always pretend like he was our grandpa. That’s our grandpa [Friend]. You have your grandpa [Friend]. Like, we’d trade them and stuff. And then, yeah, my grandpa was just, like, an old alcoholic and, like, really harsh. And, like, if you have to think out of the two, it was, like -- it was wild because he, like, lost his best friend, the other grandpa or whatever. He passed away.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, I think that’s, like, what, like, snapped my grandpa out of everything. It’s because, like, he was such a dick, and now he survived something, like, pretty major. So, it’s kind of like that’s his second chance.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, like, as soon as he made peace with what he did, it was just, like, that’s all he had to do and that was done.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: He could just move on with his life. And, I just let them. I just stopped calling them. They were just -- like, I don’t know, man. Sometimes you just -- it doesn’t matter if you’re blood
related or not. You just walk away, and you just don’t care if they fucking call you, because you’re, like, too much has happened. And, like, growing up, my grandpa used to always say -- because me and my sister would get into crazy fights. And, he would always tell me to be the bigger person, and just, like, let it go and, like, you know, “She’s your older sister and she took care of you and you” -- I’m just, like, holy crap. “Well, when is she going to let it go?” Like, this is stupid.

And, he was actually, like, the person that taught me a lot of, like, these major life lessons. I don’t know. Like, stupid little sayings and stuff.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** That stick with you?

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Yeah.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** For sure. So, like, I am really grateful. That’s why I always say, like, I’m happy that I did have them over, like, nothing. Because you try to take the good over the bad and, like -- and, like, now, the bad memories are almost like funny bad memories, because you’re just, like, I can’t believe that shit actually happened to me.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** And, there could be both; right? You can be pissed off and still be grateful ---

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Yeah.
MS. KATE LANGHAM: --- at the same time. It doesn’t have to be one or the other.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: There could be both.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: The way that they were was, like, some kind of, like, joke twist of crap. Like, birthday presents were, like, I don’t know, like, things that just didn’t make sense at all. Like, a gumball machine and we weren’t allowed to chew gum.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Like, a computer game and we can’t play on the computer, and we’re, like, what the hell? I don’t even get it.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: A CD player with no CDs. Like, everything was like a joke twist. I’m just like you’re grateful ---

MS. KATE LANGHAM: A setup.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: --- that you got something, but, at the same time, you’re just, like, “You could have just kept it,” like, this is stupid.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. And, like, I don’t know. Like, one time they gave me, like, a pink snakeskin Philadelphia Flyer watch, and I’m just like, “Do you not
know me at all?” Like, can you say with one piece of jewellery how much you don’t know me? Like, pink? Come on now. Snake skin? What the hell? A watch? I don’t fucking wear a watch.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, like, the Philadelphia Flyers? I just, like, ripped the Leafs all the time. So, I’m just, like, “You don’t even listen when I talk, do you?” It was just a big joke. But, then you don’t say any of that and you’re, like, thank you.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: It’s like dumb stuff like that growing up that you just -- you never really understood why.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Like, a suitcase when I was 16, and then I was, like, “Okay, I’m going to use this.”

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Useful, yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: This is fine. Yeah.

But, like, on the bad -- like, that was, like, stupid shit that they would just do just to, like, poke fun. Like, they got me a TV once and a DVD player, and then were, like, “No, you were really bad this year, so you don’t get it,” and then put it in the garage. And, it literally
became, like, a staple joke in my house. Like, they’d always be, like, “Remember that one?” I’m, like, “Shut the fuck up.”

MS. KATE LANGHAM: So funny. Ha, ha, ha.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. And it’s still in the garage, and he still watches TV on it, and it’s just, like, I hate you. Every time I see it, I fucking hate you. And, he just thinks it’s the deadliest ever, and I just never understood why you would want to mess with a kid like that and, like, just do stupid stuff like that. It’s, like, unnecessary, like, stupid torture stuff.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And then -- I don’t know. Like, I know that none of this stuff would have happened if my mom was still alive. Like, for sure. She would have -- and it’s most likely why she never lived in her hometown and, like, was never close to them or anything. She was, like, the black sheep of the family.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Like, when they tell me stories about her, they tell me, like, I don’t know, during, like, a family, like, I don’t know, they’re taping everyone at Christmas or something like that. She’ll be the one that’s, like, passing all the kids in front of the camera and, like, messing around like that. Like, pictures
of -- like, video of, like, my oldest cousin. He’s like, “Oh, auntie, no,” and she’s just, like, laughing and stuff. And, like, I don’t know. She had the fire department called to her apartment once because she fell asleep with, like -- for some reason, the stove, the one stove was, like, on full blast and I don’t know why. It makes no sense at all, but the fire department was, like, oh yeah, what the heck is going on here? She’s, like, “I’m making noodles.” They’re, like, “Oh, with one on high? That doesn’t even make any sense.” Like, found stupid blades nearby and, like, stupid shit like that. Yeah. It was all bad.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: So, she knew how to have a good time.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. Yeah. And, my brother actually has, like, a permanent -- like, scar on his fucking foot from trying to climb up and get cereal or something. And, like, this is before we knew what anything was and, like, you kind of see, like, where my brother’s and sister’s, like, view of things came into play.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Because, like, there’s, like, the funny story of, like, yeah, the fire department coming, but then there’s, like, my brother’s scar on his foot from, like, climbing up on there and stepping on that
stove one time. And, it’s, like, I don’t know. I’m really
grateful that I don’t have their memories.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right. But then you get
to make meaning for yourself.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah. And, at the same
time, too, you’re looking for information.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah, absolutely.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: My brother never opened
up about any -- like, at all about it. He never -- he
never talked about her.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Like, still to this day.
And, actually, we get into a lot of fights now that we’re
older, because we used to -- like, my sister ran away when
she was 12. My grandparents told me that she died. And
so, I grew up with my brother, like, just across the hall
whenever I wasn’t in foster care, because for some reason,
they only took me. They never took my brother too.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Okay.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, yeah. So, whenever
I would come back, I would stay across the hall from him.
And then when my sister was, like, 18 or something like
that, she was just turning 18 -- we’re all three years
apart -- she, like, I don’t know. My cousin was getting me all ready for this stupid supper or something, and I just really didn’t know what was going on. I was only, like, 12 or something at the time. And, when we got there, I ended up, like, ruining the whole event because she came out and, like, my grandparents thought that I was going to be really happy or something, that, “Yeah, your sister’s here,” and la, la, la.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** She’s not dead.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Yeah. And, I actually said that. And then I was, like, “So, mom’s, like, here too; right?” And, I was super excited, and I just, like, killed the whole friggin’ event.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** I, like, made my auntie cry and, like -- I don’t know. I just didn’t understand it.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Of course not. So, she came back when she was, like, 18?

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Yeah.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah, okay.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Yeah. She came back.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** And, you thought she was dead for that whole time there.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Yeah.
MS. ALISHA ROODE: Like, stuff like that, that I just never understood why they would do that to us.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Like, I get it. Maybe they thought that it would make it easier or something like that with us to deal with her being gone.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah, but it didn’t really make that easier, did it?

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Oh, heck no.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: No.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Although you did just kind of put her in, like -- you’re, like, okay, she’s gone.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, like, you didn’t wonder or anything like that.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Do you know where she was during that time?

MS. ALISHA ROODE: No. She told me that she had got, like, a boyfriend or something when she was 14 or something.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, she was -- basically his mom did what, like, a lot of moms did with me, and took her out of a bad situation, which is my grandpa ---
MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, like, let her live there and grow up there. And, she, like, finished high school there and everything.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: She was good. It wasn’t until I was in high school that I met this girl at the high school I was going to. I didn’t want to, like, start high school without knowing anyone. And, I was coming from, like, a smaller school, and I was just, like, which one of you girls are going to be my best friend? Like, you’re going to be lucky. Yeah.

And then I picked out this one girl. She just looked cool. She had, like, a jean jacket on and, like, patches and, like, I don’t know. She looked cool. I feel like it was, like, the end of the eighties. It wasn’t, though.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Nineties, same, same.

Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. She was really cool, though, and, like, we hung out every single day. And then me and my sister kind of, like, getting back together, and my sister invited me for supper at her in-laws. And, when I showed up there, this girl from high school was there, and she’s, like, in her pyjamas. And, I was just,
like, “Ashley, what the hell are you doing here?” She’s, like, “I live here. What are you doing here?” I was, like, “What?” Her brother and, like, my sister were dating, like, the whole time. And then we randomly met on our own and became friends.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM**: Connected.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE**: And then it was just, like, yeah. I was, like, holy crap. See? We were meant to be friends. Like, this was always going to happen. Whether I decided it or, like, they decided it ---

**MS. KATE LANGHAM**: It was decided.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE**: Yeah. Yeah. And, like, my sister split up with her brother and, like, we were, like, we get each other in the divorce. You guys are crazy. Like, screw that.

It actually caused a huge rift between me and my sister, because my sister was never there. She didn’t even know how to be a sister.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM**: Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE**: And then this other girl came in and basically did everything that you’re supposed to when you’re somebody’s sister. And, like, that’s, like, how all my family really ended up being, was, like, friends that decided that they wanted to be there. And, I don’t know. I always thought of it as more because you have the
choice.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Like, you don’t have to be here. We’re not blood related. But, you want to be here and you’re going to.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: So, that means more to me than what they ever did, I guess. Little, like, things like that. Like, whoever took her from us, took my mom and stuff, didn’t even realize, like, the rift that they were about to cause ---

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: --- and basically broke our entire family, and we never found our way back.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, even though she was, like, the black sheep and -- she still had more pull on everything than she even probably knew. That’s why I think I feel her sometimes.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Because I don’t know if I -- like, if spirits are real and, like, sometimes some get left behind or they choose to stay or something. Sometimes I feel like I made her stay because I wasn’t going to let her go.
And, like, growing up, my sister would always say, like, “Just leave it alone.” And, like, “Just forget about it.” Like, “Move on with your life.” Or, me and my brother, all of our major fights are about my mom because I won’t let it go and he doesn’t want to deal with it.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, like, we don’t talk anymore.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, I just don’t understand why. And, that’s, like, the ultimate reason why we fight, is because I can’t let go and he won’t.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right. It’s two opposites of the same thing.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: We’re pulling, like, at a frickin’ rope or something. And then my mom’s in the middle.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah. Were you or your siblings -- like, were you ever offered any counselling or anything like that along the way?

MS. ALISHA ROODE: I remember going to a counsellor, like, a lot when I was little. And, I found, like, with this counsellor was, like, the main reason why I kept getting taken away. But, they were never there when I
would get taken back.

MS. KATE LANGHAN: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, like, the underlying issue never changed when I went back, so it just never made any sense.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: So, eventually, after time, you just stop talking to them because nothing is changing and nothing is -- it just didn’t matter.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And then when you meet a new counsellor, it’s almost like you start telling your story to all of these different strangers and, like, all they can say is, like, “Oh wow, that’s crazy. You’re very strong.” I’m, like, okay. And then they’re, like, “I really don’t know what to do with that.”

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Especially as a kid.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. Strong. I don’t feel strong. I cry a lot. I’m, like, barely hanging on. I have no idea what is strong about this.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yes. What do you think is needed, you know? What do you think you would have needed, or what do you wish would have been available to

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you when you were young, or all throughout?

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** I did like the counselling and stuff like that, but we never did anything together.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** So, we never got to work on things together.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** So, it was always, like, like when I went into foster care, I went by myself, and they never talked to me and my brother together. Never gave us the opportunity to, like, be in the same room and, like, tell them what happened so that you can actually see what was going on, like, as a bigger picture.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right. Help understanding where each other is coming from.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Yeah.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah. So, something like family counselling, or some sort of, like, together work would have been really helpful, you think, for your family?

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Yeah. I definitely think so. Because, like, a lot of times, the way you see something isn’t the way someone else sees something.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Almost all the time.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Yeah. So, it might have,
like, helped to, like, maybe solve a couple of situations that didn’t need to go as far. Or, like, take other situations that didn’t go as far and take them ---

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right. Or, give you guys some tools to work things out.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** For sure.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Something like that.

Yeah. Yeah, that’s a really good point. Anything else? Like, you’ve obviously had extensive experience in the foster care system or -- you know? And, on both sides, being raised by family and by being in the foster care system.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Yeah.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Do you have recommendations there about changes that need to be made or things that would have helped you as a young person?

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** That they just, I don’t know, need to, like, really watch out who the hell they’re hiring. Because they’re, like, a couple of families that were just evil. Yeah. If there was, like, little boys that were, like, in their home -- because a lot of these foster homes have a child that they adopted themselves.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** And, like, nine times out of 10, that child is evil as -- like, evil. I don’t even
understand it. I think that’s why they adopted them, is because they just knew that they were lost. But, like, when you throw a bunch of other children who are, like, traumatized and, like, have all this shit that’s happened to them into the mix with a child like that, it’s like they have their full reign of, like, what they’re going to do.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, they run the show.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right. And, it’s really hard to live with somebody like that.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Oh, for sure. It just adds to it.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Because you’ve already been, like -- like, dulled down. Like, if you’ve been sexually assaulted or, like, if you’ve been physically abused or whatever, like, you’re already kicked down.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: For sure.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: So, for somebody to come in with that power and they’re just hurting, it’s, like, really, really easy for them to do that. They already basically win when they come and they already see, like, everyone’s -- like, they’re like a lion.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: There’s like a power difference or something there.
MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. Because we’re not confident anymore. Like, we kind of lost that with the stuff that’s happened. So, maybe we would have fought back before, but when you have that taken away from you -- I don’t know. I don’t know. Listening to those kids would probably make a huge-ass difference.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, like, the hardest thing about being in foster care was when they would, like, blatantly make it known that, like, you’re not their family. I don’t even know if that word should be used ever.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Because, like, you -- everybody should know that, like, that’s not your family, that you’re going to go home to your family and that’s your family. And, like, you shouldn’t get those confused, because it causes, like, a lot of separation, like, abandonment issues and, like, all kinds of things like that.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Like false advertising almost.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. For real.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: So, then, when you
finally do figure it out, clue in, or, like, they do little things to make it known that you’re not, it hurts.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: For sure.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: But, other than that, I don’t know. It all made me, like, really strong.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Absolutely.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. But, I’m not like everybody else, though. Like, I don’t know. I just fight it all the time, and I just won’t let things like that beat me. I’ll decide.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Because there are a lot of things that are, like, trying to push you down and stuff and, like, I don’t know. Just one day at a time.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: That’s right. And, what’s life like these days for you?

MS. ALISHA ROODE: I don’t know. They’re hard. Like, they were simple, though. I have two daughters, and my one daughter is now -- she’s six. Her name is [Daughter 1]. And then she has a little sister, [Daughter 2]. And, like, for their whole lives, life was great. It’s like the happiest that I ever was. They definitely give me purpose and, like, I didn’t need to
be around a lot of people and, like -- I don’t know. I was very content with just being a mom.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: I was really happy doing that. I was excited to do all those little things. But, life is different and doesn’t always -- like, you don’t always have a choice.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: I don’t know. I just wanted to make sure that, like, my oldest, [Daughter 1]-- because we are, like, two peas in a pod. We, like, look identical and, like, apparently, I look a lot like my mom. So, like, as my grandpa got older, I don’t know. One time I showed up there and he thought that I was my mom and, like, that my daughter was me.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, he was, like, talking to my daughter, but he was calling her by my name and he was -- I don’t know. He showed me a side that I had never seen of him, and he was just, like, talking to me as though I was my mom and he’s, like, “Laura, you’re late. You were supposed to be here two hours ago.” And, he’s, like, “Where’s Alisha?” And, he’s, like, talking to my daughter, and I was just, like, holy fuck, what the hell? It’s, like, snap out of it.
MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: But, it was actually -- like, it was kind of cool to see, because he was, like, so mean, such a mean person, that it was nice to have seen that maybe when I was little and, like, she was alive, then maybe he was nice.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, like, he was different and, like, maybe that just changed him or something.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Ah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: But, he definitely, like, treated my little daughter -- like, he spoiled her. I wonder if that’s how he was with me.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right. It’s almost like you got to do some time travel there.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: For sure.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Get a little glimpse.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Definitely. Yeah. I like watching all of our home videos and stuff like that, too.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: I bet.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: But, I find, like, as the
years went on, my mom’s pictures always disappeared from
the photo albums. And, I only actually have, like, two.
But, I don’t know. She looks happy. Like, one of the
photos, she’s, like, 17 or 18, and she’s on the train.
She’s going to Ontario. It’s pretty crazy, actually, that
I have that photo. She’s, like, passed out on the seat.
Yeah. And then I took the bus to Ontario when I was, like,
19.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, I got there and,
like, this woman found me out there, like on Facebook of
all things, and she told me who she was. She said that she
was my mom’s best friend growing up and that our families
got separated, like, around the time that she died. And,
that my family never told me anything about her. I didn’t
even know that she was actually, like, my fucking third
cousin or something like that. And, like, her kids are,
like, I don’t know. I call them my cousins, like, my first
cousins. But, like, it’s crazy to think that I had family
like that. And, like, she was so close to her. She had
pictures of her and everything.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, when she contacted
me, I had never even been to Ontario before. I didn’t even
know where I was going when I went there. I just, like,
pulled out a map and was, like, “London, Ontario. All right.” It was so stupid.

But, yeah, my mom was, like, down there in Barrie.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Okay.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** And, like, this woman asked where I was, and I told her, and she was just, like, I’m only, like, a few hours north of that right now. I was just, like, “No way. Come and get me.” Which probably isn’t, like -- I do a lot of questionable things like that, where it’s, like, a complete stranger in a different province and you’re, like, “Come and get me.”

But, I don’t know. Sometimes you just -- I used to have a lot of faith in people, I guess, when I was younger.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** And, like, she sent my uncle and my one cousin to come get me and, like, they’re just wild. They’re just buck. He’s just drinking. My cousin’s just drinking, and I was, like, holy crap, I guess I’m driving. But, they actually came and got me, though, which I thought was, like, pretty wild that my -- I call her my auntie, but she’s, yeah, like, my third cousin, that she would just be, like, “Go pick up your cousin.”

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** And then they went.
MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. And then they left, like that. And, like, she welcomed me into her house, like, open arms. Like, even though I was a complete stranger, it didn’t matter.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, she was just fighting cancer at the time. So, she had, like, a wig and stuff. And, like, she smoked a lot of medicinal, like, a lot. But, I think she needed to. But, it was, like, a whole other side of things, and she told me a lot about, like, who my mom was as a person, like, personality-wise.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, we would just hang out every day. We would just, like, watch frickin’ Maury (ph) and just hang out. And, like, she said it was weird. Like you said, it was like going back in time or something like that.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: She always felt like -- I don’t know. When we had a moment together and it would be, like, just us, she would always just look real sad. And, she just -- I don’t know. She said that I would have loved her.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Like, I would have, like,
yeah. Even though she was wild and stuff, she was just, like, “She loved you kids, like, more than anything. And, like, it may seem like she left you guys at the end,” she was, like, “but she did that for you guys.” Like, sometimes you have to make sacrifices like that.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** That must have been really good to get that whole other perspective.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Yeah.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Definitely. Someone that was, like, willing to share and, like, any question I asked, she answered with, like, stuff that actually was solid, not “I don’t know.”

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah. Totally different from what you heard growing up there.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Yeah. And then -- well, when I came back, I told them, like, that I seen her out there and everything. They weren’t too happy and everything, but it kind of, like, mended our family a little bit. It brought her back into the picture.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah. Like, you got what you needed and without having to get it from them; right?

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Yeah.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Maybe some relief there for them?
MS. ALISHA ROODE: For sure. To be around somebody that, like, actually truly loved her was really nice.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, like, she actually told me about, like, who she was married to before and, like, little bits of stuff like that, that I might not have ever known.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, like, as life has it, I have, like, run into the people just randomly, completely random. Like, my brother’s dad, like, she was married to him before this [Aunt’s husband] guy, and there was, like, a lot of, like, whatever. They would talk about what happened during that time when she was with him and all that stuff. And, I guess he was, like, madly in love with her, and he was just crazy for her, and she just was too crazy, too wild. Like, she just wanted to go and was always getting drunk and just fighting with him, and then just basically keeping him on the hook all the time.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Just mean stuff. So, I randomly got stuck out in Nipawin, like, in the winter time. Like, completely random. And, he contacted me on Facebook, because him and my brother still connect. And
then my sister and my brother still connect. So, like,
they found out through la, la, la, that I was there and,
like, he contacted me, and he was just, like, “I know you
don’t know who I am,” la, la, la, and he told me, like, who
he was, basically. And, he was, like, if you ever need
anything, like, I will come help you out. And, I was,
like, so stuck. I was, like, starving and couldn’t figure
it out, and I just, I couldn’t -- I couldn’t call him. I
just didn’t want the first time that we met to be your ex-
girlfriend’s kid that now needs something.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Like, I didn’t want to
put any, like, shame to her name or anything like that. It
would be, like, one more thing in your past coming back
after she already broke your heart. And, I told him that,
and he was, like, “No, no, no. It would be okay. Like,
it’s all fine. It’s not a big deal.” And, I was just,
like, I don’t know. You’ll understand one day.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: I just wanted to be
different. I don’t want to, like -- I don’t know. She’d
be proud of me for not, like, giving in like that. And
then I feel like when I finally do meet him, it will mean
more. It will be better. He sent me, like, pictures of
them back in the day.

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MS. KATE LANGHAM: Okay.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Like, just drunk.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. And, like, now I’ll talk to him now. He said he doesn’t drink anymore, and, like, he had a family with some other woman and stuff like that, but he’s, like, basically talked about how she was always the one.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Like, if she had not died like that, he was, like, I’d still be sending her drunk messages. Now it would be drunk texts or something like that.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And then back then, it was, like, drunk love letters.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right. Put it in the mail.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah, phone calls and stuff.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Oh man. But, yeah, he said that she was, like, she was so beautiful. And, like, we all have, like, these stupid Métis teeth, where it’s like jutting out eye. And, I always figured my dad had to
be, like, white or something, because I’m, like, half normal and then half Métis. Yeah. I don’t know. It’s my science mind.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** My brothers are both -- like, he never wanted to get his teeth fixed because he looks like her.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Oh okay.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Like, she has both of them.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** And then, like, his dad and then my mom were both Métis, 100 percent. So, people would always bug him and stuff about his teeth, and call him, like, “can opener,” like, stupid shit like that. And, he just didn’t care. He just loved it.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** He was just, like, whatever. Like, to him, it was like a deeper meaning.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Of course. Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Yeah. My sister, too, has that stupid thing. Stupid teeth. It’s pretty funny, though. It’s like things like that that other people would consider, like, maybe like a flaw or something like that. We’re just, like, nah.
MS. KATE LANGHAM: Part of you.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah, definitely. If that’s all you can have, then, like ---

MS. KATE LANGHAM: It’s better than nothing.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: For sure.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. My sister looked a lot like my mom too, actually. Like, when you hold their pictures up next to each other when they were growing up, like, they’re just, like, identical.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah. So, you’ve mentioned that this is, like, a way that you’re sort of commemorating and memorializing your mom. Is there anything else that you’ve thought of that you’d like to do in the future, or any other ways ---

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Well, when I got into that car accident, like, two people died. Two, like, innocent people. And, I thought because I lived that I’d have to, like -- I should -- I can’t just be okay. I have to, like, be better. I have to be great. I have to be amazing. I have to, like, do something where I can save people too, or something, or give them something I never had. Like, just a chance. Just a chance to do anything different.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.
MS. ALISHA ROODE: Choices. So, I thought that if I could do anything that would, like, save a lot of people and, like, make a difference in their life, it would be, like, some kind of treatment centre. Something where, like, we go back to our roots and, like -- because I didn’t have, like, a family to raise me like that. I always thought if you think of like traditional-wise, you think it takes, like, a community to raise a family. And so, that’s how I would want the treatment centre to be. Like, everything self-sustainable and everybody pitching in, and everybody helping everybody.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And then, at the end of it, because a lot of us don’t have anywhere to go back to, if you didn’t want to go, you didn’t have to. You could stay and, like, that could be your family.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Creating, like, a healthy, sustainable community family for people.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Okay.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: So, that’s still something that you think about ---

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Oh yeah, for sure.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: --- that you’d like to ---
okay.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Yeah. Because, like, basically, like, that idea, too, like, it takes a community to raise a family. So, when I got to Edmonton and I thought, like, if I don’t have any family, then I’m going to have to, like, reach out to the community. So, I’ve just been reaching a lot. And then, you know, every once in a while, somebody grabs your hand.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** And, it’s, like, the strangers that have, like, made the most impact with my life than anybody else.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** And, they’re just -- I don’t know. They’re giving me a chance.

**MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

**MS. ALISHA ROODE:** Yeah. So, like, when I first got an email about this whole thing, it was, like, last summer. And, I was, like, crying around a lot because I just got into that car accident and, like, just a lot of guilt from those people. So, I wasn’t, like, an easy person to be around. And, like, right before that, I mentioned my daughters and stuff. Well, like, I never had, like, a dad or a mom to raise me, and they have their dad. And, like, he was a really abusive person too.
So, when I left him, we went, like, a whole summer without seeing him, and then he decided to come back in our lives, and he wanted to be a dad to them. And so, I thought I would give him a chance.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And then I thought I would do, like, week on, week off.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, he picked them up on his week and then I never seen them again.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Okay.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, it took me, like, I don’t know. Like, I tried to go to the cops at that time and, like, I haven’t went to the cops many times in my life, but ---

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: --- I asked them for help that time, and they just said some stupid-ass sentence like possession is nine-tenths of the law, and I don’t know. You grow up in foster are. You’re used to picking you up and dropping you off, and that’s something that you just have to accept. You don’t have much of a say with it.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: So, when it happens to your kids ---
MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: --- you forget that you have a voice. You forget that’s not okay. Even though it wasn’t, like, Social Services picking them up or anything like that, I just -- I forgot that I had a voice and I -- I don’t know. I didn’t try hard enough or something. And, I just went down into, like, a really dark hole and I just started giving up.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, being reckless, and making a lot of poor choices. And, I didn’t want to be here anymore. There’s, like -- and, like, even on top of me not wanting to be here is I also thought I was going to die, too. So, it was, like -- it was tough.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And then when I got into that car accident, it gave me something I never had before. It gave me, like, the will to fucking -- to want to be here, to want to try. Because I figured if I didn’t die then, then it’s not happening. And, like, I might as well quit now, because that was, like, a wild -- like, I should have definitely died then. And, if I’m trying all the time and it’s not going to happen, well, then, maybe I should try something else. So, then, that’s when I just try to think of the opposite of it then. If I just, like, took
giving up off the table and I took all that stuff off the
table, then what do I have left? Well, I guess I have to
try.

And then, like, three days after that car
accident, I got a call letting me know that my daughter was
in Social Services.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Okay.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: He dropped off my oldest
one in, like, Saskatchewan. Like, just dropped her off at
Social Services. Just abandoned her there. And so, like,
as much as you try to, like, give your children the life
that you, like, you want them to have the better -- best
life that they have, you don’t want them to live the same
way that you lived, and then she ended up in the exact same
spot that I was anyway.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: And then life happens.
Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: And, is she still in care
in Saskatchewan?

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. Like, I found that
out, like, last -- basically around this time. Like,
August, because that car accident was in July.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And then I just started
trying to, like, take steps. So, you go from, like, being homeless and, like, having nothing to, like, you want to be somebody that not only, like, she’s proud of, but you need a safe home. You need, like, you need everything ---

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: --- for her to come back to.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: And, that takes time.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, I’ve been, like -- I’ve been working towards it a lot. And, like, I’m getting there.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: I’m getting close.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: I don’t know. I say, like, this stupid saying, and I’m just, like, even the slow boat gets to its destination eventually.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: But, like, I thought -- I was happy that she was in there. Like, I was really fucking sad for her, because I know what it was like when I was that age and, like, I just never wanted that for her.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: No.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: But, I see it as, like, a chance. I have a better chance of getting her back, her
being there, than me not knowing where she is at all.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yes. Yes.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, I found out that, like, with him taking the girls like that, I could call, like, the RCMP and have my youngest daughter, like, picked up. But, then I was, like, but I can’t do that right now, because I want to make sure that I have everything, like, yeah. Because when she does come back, then they’re going to be, like, on my butt making sure everything is perfect for her.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Because he will try to find a loop -- like, he will try to do anything he can to make sure that he ends up with her and not me.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, like, I was a frickin’ kick-ass mom before. I was great.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: So, I don’t want to take any chances or anything, like ---

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: I want it to be perfect for them.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, like, sometimes
that’s just the simplest of things. Just, like, a safe
house that they can come out of their own bedrooms. And
then I have to have, like, financial stability, and then
community resources. So, like, I’ve been looking into,
like, counselling and stuff like that.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Because I want to be
right with myself, too, like, so that I’m good for them.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah. How old is
[Daughter 2]?

MS. ALISHA ROODE: She is four. She just
turned four.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Okay. And, [Daughter 1]
is six now?

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yes.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Okay.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Both their birthdays are
-- like, [Daughter 2] is [date of birth] and then [Daughter
1] is [date of birth].

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Awesome.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, like, they’re good
little girls. They don’t -- they don’t have, like, a bad
bone in their body.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Oh, sweety, it’s -- yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: So, I hope that I can,
like, you know, like, reaching out to all the community resources and stuff like that, they’ve been, like, kind of helping me get my stuff all together.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Good.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Because I want to get them back young enough so that they don’t have any trauma from this and they don’t remember and, like, yeah. So, changing your life, eh? You go from making poor choices every single day to, like, a 180. So, that means, like, I don’t go out very often anymore. I stay home and I do art now. I needed a hobby. Something, like, safe, and something I could do by myself.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, that was, like, just healthy.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: So, I chose painting. So, that’s what I do now.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Okay.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. It’s a quiet life but, like, when I think of, like, what I’m going to get at the end, it’s worth it. I’m, like, nowhere near who I want to be or anything like that but, like, I don’t know. It’s not about me.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: You’re doing things.
Yeah. Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. I always said that I wasn’t going to be the kind of parent that, like, took away, like, her dad or anything like that. And then now that I’ve gone through all of this, I don’t know anymore. Because I think of, like, how could he do that to them, too? Because, like, they’re the ones, ultimately, that are suffering.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: And, do you have any idea where he is with [Daughter 2], where they’re living?

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Just in Saskatchewan somewhere.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Okay. In Saskatchewan.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: I think. I hope.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: He basically, like, cut me out of everything at that point.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Like, the second he picked them up from daycare, he, like, blocked me on Facebook. He blocked my number. Like, everything. And, I didn’t exactly know -- like, he didn’t have a house at the time. I just figured he was going to take, like, the girls to his mom’s or, like, to his grandma’s or, like, something like that.
MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: So, it’s not even like I could show up at his house and, like, attempt to take them back.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, I always said I just didn’t want to introduce trauma into their life like that. I didn’t want it to be, like, an epic fight where I have to go take them back or, like, anything like that.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right. Yeah. At least not yet.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: I want it to be, like -- where at least when I do, I have backup.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah. That’s right.

Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Well, do you have any other recommendations for the Commission? You’ve made some really solid suggestions about what more is needed and what should be done differently, as well as your dream about the treatment centre; right?

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: That’s a solid
recommendation in and of itself. That’s something that would work.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. I think it would be fun and be somewhere safe where I can raise my kids, too. And, like, maybe other people can raise their kids too and, like ---

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: --- become a good thing. It’s a good one.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah. Actually, I don’t know. I feel good with that.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Okay.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Can’t do too much.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right. You don’t want to spread it too thin. Yeah. Is there anything else that you want the Commission to know?

MS. ALISHA ROODE: No. I just hope with, like, all of this that it will, like, somehow point people in the right direction of where to start sniffing and figure out what actually happened with her.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, like, I don’t know that much, but I’m sure if, like, people started asking my family again after all this time or, like, I don’t ever
know what happened with the case ---

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: --- or anything like that.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: It would be -- I bet you my family would want to, like, open up now after all these years than at the time. And, I know it probably won’t make a difference, like, after so long. Who knows what was even there for, like, evidence and all that stuff, but ---

MS. KATE LANGHAM: It might make a difference to you.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: For sure. To know that they at least tried ---

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: --- would definitely, definitely, like, kind of bring everything to a close. Yeah. Because I just know as the years went on and stuff, I don’t know if there was, like, a detective that called my grandparents and stuff like that.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: But, I don’t think that they would have wanted to be involved anyway.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Okay.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: They probably would have

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just pushed it off and -- like, so then, as a detective,
why would you keep going forward with something that nobody
is asking questions about?

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: So, it’s really easy to,
like, slide something under the rug then.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: It’s usually the people
with the families that won’t leave them alone ---

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: --- and that won’t accept
what they’re being told. Well, I’m going to be that
family.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: And, that’s pretty much
it. Just to see if they want to reopen. Like, I heard
that they were going to try to look at some of these cases
and stuff.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah. It feels like
we’re kind of coming to a close here.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah, I’m good.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Is there anything else
that you want to share while we have this time together?

MS. ALISHA ROODE: I pretty much, like, said
everything I need to say about, like, who she was and,
like, how it affected me and ---

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Just, I don’t know. I’m glad that I even got to say that.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah. Well, you’ve shared some really powerful testimony, and I really honour you for coming here today and doing that. It takes a lot.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Thank you.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Especially when you’re met with so much resistance, and you have been met with so much resistance around this your whole life. Yet, you’ve continued to hold it.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Yeah.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right? And, you’ve continued to nurture that. And so, yeah, thank you very much for coming today to share with us.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Thank you for listening.

MS. KATE LANGHAM: You bet. So, it is 4:40, and that brings us to the end of our testimony here today.

MS. ALISHA ROODE: Perfect. Thank you.

--- Upon adjourning 16:40
LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST’S CERTIFICATE

I, Shirley Chang, Court Transcriber, hereby certify that I have transcribed the foregoing and it is a true and accurate transcript of the digital audio provided in this matter.

Shirley Chang

September 7, 2018