National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Statement Gathering
Happy Valley - Goose Bay, Labrador
Happy Valley-Goose Bay Hotel

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Statement - Volume 460
E.M. & S.M.

Statement gathered by Kerrie Reay

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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 on June 17, 2019.
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MS. KERRIE REAY: All right. So we'll get started. This is Kerrie Reay. I'm a statement-taker with the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and today we are in Goose Bay, Labrador. It is August the 8th, 2018, and it is 5:20 p.m., and with me today is E.M., and E.M. is here to -- to speak, to tell her truth, and along with E.M. is her mother S.M., who is here to support E.M.

For the record, E.M., you spell your name as [spells first name], and [spells last name]?


MS. KERRIE REAY: And, S.M., it's [spells first name], and [spells last name].

MS. S.M.: That's correct.

MS. KERRIE REAY: And are you here voluntarily today?

MS. E.M.: (Indiscernible).

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay. So, E.M., this is your time and your space, and if you need at any time to stop, I'll also watch to see and may ask if you need a break, but as I said, it's -- it's your space and time, so I invite you to start with your truth wherever you feel
comfortable.

**MS. E.M.:** Okay. Before we came here, I asked my mom when her statement had gone, and what I took from it was my mother lived a lot of abuse, and I'm pretty sure that her mother did, too, so I feel that -- looking back on it now, that's -- my grandmother, my mother, myself, and my children, that's four generations of abuse that has happened, and that's pretty sad considering that it's not like it hasn't been spoke of or, you know -- the help wasn't asked for, you know? Like, I feel like a lot of it had been from childhood on.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** M'hm.

**MS. E.M.:** For all of us, really. Saying that, that comes back to how my grandmother grew up, how my mother grew up, how I grew up to how the first couple of years of my children's life started to where we are right now.

I grew up with my mom and my dad, and my dad left, with leaving my mom with two girls to raise on her own with a whole lifetime of abuse and generation after generation of alcoholism that had never been treated, and that, really -- like, today, right here, right now, I truly believe that my mom did the best she could with what she had, and I'm grateful for that, you know, because that -- I was raised by a very strong woman, which helped me get to
where I am right now, and my mom knows, you know, everything that I'm about to talk about today.

Yeah, so we grew -- that's how it started, you know? Right now, I struggle with, you know, having a voice in the past, like, year and a half of, you know, stopping what I look at as, like, a cycle of abuse and alcoholism. My mom has stopped 18 years ago and is, you know, like, getting help for her problems that she -- that I only learned about when I was 18 years old, so, you know, to me -- I grew up with alcohol, like, being socially acceptable. You know, like, I didn't -- I didn't really -- I recognized it was a problem throughout most of my childhood, not only in my home but everybody else's home growing up in the '80s, but I didn't realize until later on that that's a coping mechanism. You know, that's a huge coping mechanism that people use to -- to forget and to try to, like, drown -- it's a crutch. That's how -- that's how we grew up.

My mom was a hard-working woman. My dad was no support at all to my mom and dealing with, like, abandonment issues and abuse your whole life, that's the last thing that you want when you get married and have two kids. I found that -- you know, my mom held down a good job. She -- like I said, she was a hard-working woman, but there was also, like -- there was something different about
it. Like, I knew that, like, my dad's family was completely different than my mom's family, coming to realize there was -- there was a lot of abuse and a lot of neglect that was going on, and it was never addressed, so I feel like what's normal to some people is not necessarily normal to everybody else, so -- I truly believe that, like, when it comes to how you feel about yourself, like, unless you work on that, that's going to continue throughout your whole life, so low self-esteem, low self-respect, you know, what you tolerate from other people is something that was just passed on through it.

You know, my mom drank most of our -- most of my life, and I kind of, like, didn't understand that, so when it came to the time when -- you know, it was, like, 15 or 16, and it was that time to, you know, like, be around all of that, you know, like, that was the fear for me, but that's what makes you socially acceptable. Like, I dealt with a lot of what I would feel like -- and no judgment to my parents -- was a lot of -- I don't know, just a lot of self problems, you know? We had, like, social workers involved in our life, not for very long. I don't remember there was a huge -- there was no -- my mom never abused myself and my sister. There was a lot of love and, like, structure, but there was also, like, a lot of -- no self-care on her part, I guess. Like, she didn't deal with
any of her issues that she had going on, and -- but a lot of isolation, I would think. My mom isolated -- like, my sister and I were her world besides work, and -- yeah, I think that the abuse that she had -- had leading up to meeting my father and then the abuse she continued to take after -- during, with him, and then afterwards kind of, like, was the stepping-stone to myself and my sister and how we felt and what we saw. Like, we never saw love or anything like that, you know? All we saw was sadness, really, that I can remember. There are, you know, a lot of good times, but -- the only reason I could say that is because I relate to it leading up to -- you know, that's why I said my mom did the best she could with what she had at that point until -- you know, all of that stopped for her.

The first real -- I knew it was different when -- growing up in the '80s. We had a babysitter, and she had an older son. We suffered a lot of -- I -- I've suffered a lot of sexual abuse, physical abuse, financial, emotional abuse to the fullest throughout my whole life, but I thought that was normal. Like, I really didn't -- like, because I didn't have a voice. I found that once -- I don't know -- I don't even know how to say that. I guess it, like, fit in. I never had, like, a father figure around, so I wasn't shown it, you know, and I
can honestly say that I don't think that my mom even was shown that, right? I think you're taught love and stuff like that and self-respect and everything like that, so if you don't see it, you don't know it, and if it's not talked about, then, you know, anything that you get is kind of what you get.

So yeah, I suffered a lot of inappropriate stuff as a child that I didn't know. I remember developing my conscience really early. Like, I wrote an article for CBC on sex workers, because that's at the end of the journey -- the end of my journey. That's -- that's where I ended up, and it wasn't until then that I started remembering stuff that I'd stuffed down my whole life, like the sexual assault and when it started and, like, the abuse and -- and stuff like that, and that was really -- it was an eye-opener for me. It was huge. I can recognize, like, how -- once it all stopped, you know, you just stand back, and it's almost like a ghost that you see it all play through, and you're just like, wow; it's like, that actually happened.

So I remember, like, this older boy, and I remember, like, the fear being put in me, like, do not say anything, right? And from then on, like -- like, that's -- that was a young girl. Then I was taught to, like, keep everything secret when it came to, like, men,
especially, like, older men and stuff like that, and I always thought that that was -- that was okay.

So after that experience, I had moved up with my dad, and my dad was very -- very abusive. Like, so, like -- I don't know. I had developed, like, an eating disorder at this point, and -- you know, it was just constant second-guessing, like, distorted body image, like, never having that confidence, never feeling like you fit in, even with your own family.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** How old do you think you would have been at that time?

**MS. E.M.:** Then, I was, like, 12. I was 12 at that time. And it was just, like, a control thing with my dad, you know? Like, my dad had left, like, 5, and my mom had raised me from 5 up until this point, and then he just swooped right in, you know? It's like -- and you're so young and you're so impressionable. Like, if you have this one parent saying it's worse than what it actually is, you know, like, looking back on it, he was -- he came in and, you know, swooped me and my sister up away from my mom and said now I'm going to change your life, and as a young impressionable girl who had been neglected by your father their whole life, you're like, yeah, you know?

But I mean, like, that was probably the worst decision that I've ever made that -- you know, ever,
because I had left my mom and went to Alberta with him, and then it was just control and just so much mental -- like, mental abuse, you know? Like, already working with, like, a low self-esteem. Like, that was just -- (unreportable sound). Like, I still battle with a lot of that stuff now. Like -- yeah, so that was the beginning of it, and I always had, like, this fear in me about my dad, you know? Like, all I saw was in my life, men are going to use you for what they want, and that's okay. I watched my dad use my mom financially, you know? Like, he used her, and then once he was done with her, he was gone. Like, she educated them. She, you know, took care of the household, worked a full-time job while he sat at home and did nothing, but I -- I do remember my parents not sleeping in the same bed. I do remember him being gone all the time and her trying to hold it together, like, and taking care of my sister, and I did not see that, and that's horrible, like, looking back on it.

So -- but when I lived with him, I saw a completely different man, but, like, a lot of alcohol. Like, a lot. Like, I was made to wake up every day and, you know, make -- take care of him, like, be his slave, but at the end of the day, he would beat me down. Like, I was never good enough, and I was too fat, and, you know, stay away from guys, and he was extremely racist, and -- you
know, it was just, like -- it's -- such an early age, it
was so -- wow, it's -- it's crazy to, like -- to think
that's what I was battling with, but -- then I
went -- lived in Alberta, and it was just -- so -- so
multi-cultural. Like, there was just all different
cultures, all surrounded by me, and here I was, like -- it
was like I was a ghost in my own body. So I left. The
abandonment kicked in again, and he was in a relationship,
and he had just up and gone --

MS. KERRIE REAY: When you say "up and
gone" --

MS. E.M.: Up and --

MS. KERRIE REAY: -- did he leave you and
your sister at home?

MS. E.M.: My sister was with my mom at this
point.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay.

MS. E.M.: I can't speak for my sister and
her past --

MS. KERRIE REAY: No. No.

MS. E.M.: -- but she had moved back -- she
had experienced the same kind of thing with my father. She
had indulged in alcohol and drugs at a really early age,
and she decided to come back.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Is she older than you?

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay.

MS. E.M.: Yeah. So I remember coming home. I remember the abuse. Like, his girlfriend was really abusive. Like, she was a very sick woman. She also had an eating disorder, so all this stuff was being pushed on me, like -- you know, and with a lot of control, and she up and moved out one day, and then I was to blame for that, a 12-year-old child. Like, that was my fault, and -- you know, when I came home from school, I went to -- I was really good in school at this point, and I came home one day, and there was a puppy there, and then my dad was gone, like, the next day, and I lived in Alberta, and -- like, it was crazy, and I spoke to my father about this the other day, and he's -- he's an alcoholic, and he still drinks, and he has no recollection of this in any way, shape, or form.

So at 12 years old, again, fear of talking because no one's listening. I can -- I moved in with one of my friends, and, like, this is the '90s. Like, I think back on it now, and, like, child services would be all over that, and -- you know, this generation, but -- yeah, I moved in with my friend, and -- and then --

MS. KERRIE REAY: And how old would have you been?
MS. E.M.: 12. I still was 12.


MS. E.M.: 12 -- 12 or 13 at this point.

Yeah.


MS. E.M.: And I don't know what happened to the dog. All I know is that he -- he came -- I came back one day to get clothes, and he -- he was coming and going and coming and going, but I was never there because he'd come while I was in school, and I was like, I can't stay here, and it -- this didn't surprise me coming from him, so I stayed with my friends for the summer at this point. Like, for instance, like, my father lived in Alberta, minus 40. Both of them had vehicles. Neither one of them would walk me to school. Like --

MS. KERRIE REAY: And where were you living in Alberta?

MS. E.M.: In [Community 1], this little community outside Edmonton.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay.

MS. E.M.: So minus 40, get up, walk to school, you know, at lunch time, walk home from school because you're not allowed in there to eat. We have to portion your meals. Like, I remember the whole time, like, that -- during that age, not being able to go to the fridge
and get food, so -- you know, that was -- that's a --

MS. KERRIE REAY: In your home?

MS. E.M.: In my home.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay.

MS. E.M.: You know, I remember

binge-eating. I remember, like, them being upstairs doing

something and eating, like, a full package of crackers

or -- you know, knowing that there was chips in the

basement, and in between, like, doing their laundry and

making their beds and washing both bathrooms and doing

everything like that, going down and sneaking chips and

eating them to the point where I would, like, throw up the

next day, you know, getting in trouble for that. That's

what, like, I -- I dealt with, being -- living with him.

And I remember during that summer while he

was gone, I got phone calls right before school had

started, so it would have been August, and he called and he

said, E.M., come home and pack your bags, you're going back
to Newfoundland tomorrow. To me, I don't know if this is

true, but from -- from me, it almost felt like it was a

business exchange between my parents. I know -- I know

that my dad came home and, like, fought for lawyers. I

don't know if he had given my mom money for some reason,

but as a child, that's -- that's what I remember. I don't

know if there's truth behind it, but I do know he was a
very intimidating man, and he, like -- you know, tried to kid -- kidnap me at one point, and I was removed off a plane because he was trying to take me out of Newfoundland, and my mom had custody of me.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** And that was prior to being 12?

**MS. E.M.:** This is -- yeah.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay.

**MS. E.M.:** This is leading up to it, and he had won that, and -- you know, he went up there and that's -- that's the life that I lived. I was like, I would have much rather stayed with my mom, you know? Like -- that's something my mom didn't make me feel that way, you know?

So I got -- that day, then, when he called and he said come home, you're leaving, I remember I sat down, and I remember him drinking the whole time and making me feel like I wasn't good enough. Conscientious is just a word that when I think about it or hear someone say it, like, I feel like I'm going to vomit because it's just a word that he, like -- he deflected how miserable his life was and I'm guessing the abuse that he must have, like, faced as a child and the inadequacy and stuff like that, that that's what he pushed on me, and it was horrible, and little does he know -- I'm not blaming my father, but,
like, as a child, you look -- that -- that was my first relationship with a man, and it just ruined it. Like, to this day, ruined it.

Yeah, so I came home and then -- got on a flight and then came home. My mom and sister were -- were here, and it was just normal. Like, my mom, my sister, like, we were really close, but then I started going to school, and that's when drug use started for me. I took that really hard. I think that was, like, my first bout of, like, depression. Like I said, like, everyone in high school and stuff like that were -- you know, were out drinking, and I -- my mom was, like, a weekend drinker, so that was, like, not what I wanted, so I remember being around my mom and watching her drink but hanging out with her, you know what I mean, and, like, playing cards and stuff like that. Yeah, so I had quit school at this point.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** How old do you think you would have been?

**MS. E.M.:** When I was -- quit school?

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** M-hm.

**MS. E.M.:** Started quitting school, my attendance stopped, I was, like, a straight -- like, I would say As and Bs up until this point, until Grade 9 --

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** About 14?

**MS. E.M.:** Yeah. 15, because I was held
back a year. Then I was held back a year in Grade 9 because I stopped going to school. I mean, as you can imagine, like, going through all of that -- like, your father, like, you're wanting that relationship so bad, and that's what you experience, and then he's like, I don't want you again and, like, came back, and then -- you know, my mom had recognized -- recognized that my mom was very, like -- I would say she -- she was supportive towards whatever me and my sister were. You know, like, there was consequences to what we were doing, but I don't know, I guess she just recognized the depression, I don't know, or the abandonment, and -- that was fine.

So I did go. I never accumulated any credits during high school. I did go, but then when the depression would hit, and I would stop going. I spent a lot of, like, Grade 10 and 11 in my room reading books, and I started smoking pot at that point. I started smoking pot, and, you know, like, coming back from Alberta during this transition back in, I came back, and all of my friends were, like, smoking and smoking pot and drinking and having sex, and at that point, you know what I mean, all I knew was, like, I don't want any part in that because of what I had experienced, and the abuse and, like, you know, stuff, I didn't want any part in that, but I knew, so impressionable, that I had to do all this stuff in order to
have friends.

So that was fine, and I picked the most abusive boyfriend that you could possibly imagine, the most controlling. Oh, it was -- it was the beginning of the downward spiral. It was almost like he was my father. I remember being with him, and he used me a lot for, like -- I would -- I felt like I was his drug mule, honestly. Like, you know, where his parents were so strict, and my mom wasn't, and she would never suspect what I was doing. I got away with it, and -- he was very abusive. I remember waking up one night. There was -- you know, like, he -- when we -- I'd lost my virginity to him, and it -- it wasn't nice in any way, shape, or form, and then he had broken up with me because he was, like, I didn't want you, I just wanted your friend, kind of thing, then me latching onto that. Like, a couple months went by, and then I got back with him, and then, you know, waking up in the middle of the night and him being on top of me, choking me, you know, and -- and stuff like that, and I remember going back to that depression stage after that happened, locking myself in a room for a couple of days but not being able to go and being, like, hey, this is what I'm experiencing.

And then it wasn't until, like -- I don't know, like, little things. Like, I remember I had bought
him something, and he didn't appreciate it, and he made a spectacle of me in front of all of his friends, you know, and called me down to the dirt, but I took that because that's what I was -- I was used to, you know? Then until we broke up, and that was fine, and that's when I just became -- that's when I found alcohol, honestly, and that's when alcohol gave me that "I fit in" kind of thing, and that's when -- the eating disorder totally took over then. I started losing a lot of weight, and then I felt good, but I looked like death, but I knew that alcohol and drugs were going to keep that from me, so I was battling with the insecurity, the alcohol, the drugs, the boys, and then trying to keep it a secret.

But alcohol and drugs just made me someone completely different. You know, then I recognized and I'd let anything happen to me at that point because I knew next day I would wake up, and, you know, it's either I fit in or I had guilt and shame, and then I could just use drugs and just get rid of that all together, and that's what I did. I did that for a long time.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** So what do you mean you would let anything happen to you?

**MS. E.M.:** I put myself in really bad situations. Oh, there was -- oh, my God, at that stage -- I don't know. I just -- I felt like I would -- I
needed that acceptance, so it was like, multiple partners, like, rough.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** So high risk?

**MS. E.M.:** Yeah. I -- that's -- yeah. So that -- that was, like, bad. That was really bad. A lot -- like, a lot of, like, physical abuse. You know, I'm -- I'm not going to -- I'm not going to say, like, rape in any way, shape, or form, but -- you know, that's -- that's what men knew that they were going to get from me, so that's what they got. Propositions. You know, that was the beginning of -- I -- I know now, I'm educated on it now that in any way, shape, or form, if -- if you have, like, an agreement, like, that's sex trade, kind of thing, so, like, that was just something that was -- that was huge. Like, going out with guys, and then, you know, being like, well, if you do this, then we'll drive you home, or I'll take you out and we'll do this and -- you know, and that's -- that was it, but of a life of want -- looking for acceptance and negative male attention, that's just where I -- it was almost like it was a high I got off it. Some people call it daddy issues, but whatever. Yeah, so that started, and then I'd moved to Michigan.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** And how old would have you been?
MS. E.M.: I was, like, 19.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay.


MS. KERRIE REAY: As an adult?


MS. S.M.: [Child 1] was about two years old.

MS. E.M.: I was about 20. I think I was about 20 --


MS. E.M.: -- because I got pregnant -- no, I got pregnant with [Child 2] at -- I had [Child 2] at 21, so it might have been 19, 20. I don't -- yeah. There's -- I'm just going to say it. There's a lot of -- there's incest in our family. Like, there was a lot of sexual abuse and incest that went on in our family that came out later on, but I didn't know that until, like, a while later, and that's -- you know, that's not my story to tell, but I became extremely close with, like, my uncle when they came. That's who I -- that's who I went to Michigan with, and that's when I recognized -- like, that was when I started knowing that I was an alcoholic and everything like that, and he had battled with the same kind of thing, so he was, like, giving me, like, hope and
everything like that, but then it was just, like, I had
recognized then that everything that I was experiencing,
like, the abuse and being promiscuous and the alcohol and
drug use was something that I had in common with a lot of
my family. I never experienced any incest or anything,
sexual assault from any of my family, but I knew it was
there, you know what I mean?

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay. M'hm.

MS. E.M.: Like, I knew I -- I was being
(indiscernible), so I -- for some reason, during that stage
of my life, I was able to, like, cut that line. That was a
line, but you know what I mean? It was almost, like, going
through my whole life and being like -- I don't know.
I -- I have a sponsor through AA --

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay.

MS. E.M.: -- because I'm an alcoholic, and
we talked about this a couple of weeks ago. Like, the
feeling of, like, being able to have a conscience then and
then drawing that line, it -- it was something that I was
surprised that I was actually able to do back then. Like,
through the -- the father figure. My uncle was like a
father figure.

MS. KERRIE REAY: When you refer to your
uncle, is that your mother's brother or --

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay.

MS. E.M.: Like, your step -- half-brother.

Yeah.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay.

MS. E.M.: But the curiosity being there, because any man that was in my life, that's just what I was used to, you know what I mean? Men want me for one thing and one thing only, but yeah.

MS. KERRIE REAY: But he didn't?

MS. E.M.: No. Like, couple of weird little incidents, but, like, no. There was never anything -- anything like that.

MS. KERRIE REAY: So you -- so what I hear you saying was that your uncle was very supportive, recognized boundaries with you.

MS. E.M.: M'hm. We used a lot of drugs together.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay.

MS. E.M.: So there was times where it was, like -- lines were crossed, but then the inadequacy. Like, I remember flying back and forth with friends and, like, getting jealous over that, you know what I mean? Just distorted thinking. Like, that's just what I grew up with, like, feeling inadequate and being, like, what's wrong with me, kind of thing, but then also battling with, like,
that's your uncle, kind of thing. Just crazy.

MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm.

MS. E.M.: But, you know, I'm -- I'm okay with talking about that because from growing up from where I was to understanding it, how would I have known any different, kind of thing?

Yeah, so a lot of drug use, a lot of, well, you should date this person because if you date this person, then we'll be able to fit in with this group. So I knew that right then and there, like, offering myself was something that was normal at this point, but I was beating down my self-esteem, and --

MS. KERRIE REAY: Was that your uncle's suggestion to you?


MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay.


MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay.

MS. E.M.: Because we were using, like, a lot of drugs at this point, and --

MS. KERRIE REAY: So there weren't really any boundaries, then?


MS. KERRIE REAY: Yeah.

MS. E.M.: That's probably the only
boundary. Yeah. So that's, like, sex trade as -- as it
is, and, like, going to, like, clubs and stuff like that
and being, like, the pretty girl and getting whatever
everybody needed because -- at my expense, you know?

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** Right.

**MS. E.M.:** So -- but to me, that was normal,
and I'd, like -- like, coming from no self-esteem to that,
I was -- I was okay with that at that point. But being in
the States and having to come back, I had to come -- come
back for a couple of weeks, and that's when I met my kids'
dad. There was a lot of men in between that, and then,
like I say, when I pick them, I pick them. So I picked,
like, the sickest, most in -- like, insecure human, someone
just like myself at that point, and I had gotten pregnant.
I would -- the relationship with him went from a lot of
neglect, a lot of beating down. You know, at the end of
it, he was, like, you know, just calling me down all the
time, pouring drinks on me, financial abuse. Like, I had
two kids, you know, had no control over anything like that,
and I knew that that's not what I wanted for my life, and I
had two small children at this point, and I remember my
child being 5 and going to Kindergarten and going to school
with headaches all the time, and then being, like, I heard
my mom and dad fighting, and I was like, all right, enough
is enough, and I left.
Before leaving, I had been in women's shelters with my two kids, you know, like, going and asking for help; you know, how do I get out of this relationship, the fear of not being able to do it on my own and the financial abuse, and after having, you know, like, it beaten in my head that I had quit school, so I was uneducated and, you know, good for nothing and everything like that. It was -- it was hard to find that -- that confidence to actually get out of it, so I had gone to the shelter a couple of times, and -- until finally, I was, like, I don't even care what I have to do, I'm going to get away from this for the sake of my children.

But in between -- before the breakup, I had started drinking a bit then. It was -- I had started a new job because he would not pay for child care for -- you know, like, just financial abuse, you know?

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** He controlled the money?

**MS. E.M.:** Controlled all of the money. He was using drugs. He was never home. [One line redacted - personal information] when I started saying that I was going to leave him and -- that it was just -- like, that -- like, that stuff I never even think about, like, that he did that, but, yeah, when I told him that I was going to leave him, that's what he did. [One line redacted - personal information], and -- and he was the breadwinner,
so he was just, like -- and taking care of -- like, paid
the bills, and he made it well known that he paid the bills
and, like, abuse like this. Two children, snowstorm, I
need milk for the child: Walk. I'm not coming home. So
okay, you get up, you walk in a snowstorm to go get the
child milk or, you know, like, I need -- you know,
any -- anything. Like, I -- if I were to think about -- I
need tampons or something like that, it goes back to, like,
my father and be like, well, you know, what do you -- what
do you want for that? Like, you know what I mean? Just,
like, neglect of basic needs, I guess, but I took that for,
like, I don't even know -- I think I was with him for,
like, seven years, so when I finally left him, I left him
with our house. We had a house that we own and a car, and
I left with nothing, and I remember going and -- I can't
remember if I went to my mom's first or I went to my
friend's house, but either way, I -- I remember ending up
with nothing, you know, barely having enough to feed the
children, but [one line redacted -- personal information].
Like, if it was his turn with the kids, him calling me and
manipulating me into feeling -- oh, my anxiety's so bad,
and then me hearing that he was out using drugs and stuff
like that.

That lead me to, like, a bad place, battling
with alcohol and drugs earlier on, and I was able to stay
sober the whole time being pregnant with my kid. That's when I fell back into. Then I found that crutch again. I had gotten my own place with the kids, and I was on social assistance at this point, and I was finally getting on my feet, and I remember having a little bit of freedom because we had gone through a divorce, and the judge ordered him that he had to take care of his kids, and I enforced that. I -- as much as I possibly could because I didn't want my kids to grow up the way that I grew up without their dad. And then when they would start -- when they would go, that's when I would drink, honestly. Started, like -- you know, Mondays and Tuesdays for a couple of hours, and I would drink a little tiny bit, and then I would get up, and that was fine, and then on the weekends, the weekends was -- that's when I would let loose.

Anyway, long story short, after that divorce, I had given up on all hope of being accepted by anybody else, and then I let the abuse from years before just happen again. Like -- you know, just, like, married men and low self-worth and -- you know, not even caring about it because if I was under the influence of alcohol, it didn't even matter. I wouldn't even remember. That happened. I had gotten into a relationship, and as I'd been controlled, I started developing that attitude that I was going to be the controller. I started taking control
of what I was doing and what I -- I was manipulating the other person into getting what I wanted because so low self-esteem at this point.

I had been in a relationship that I -- shortly after -- there was two main relationships that brought me to my breaking point, I guess. I dated a guy after -- after my divorce, and I fell madly in love with him, and he didn't want me, so again, I was facing "I don't want you," kind of thing. I started drinking more and more. Then I got in a relationship with another guy who was a great guy, but I didn't know how to handle that, so I was always trying to sabotage that, so I started cheating on him with the guy that didn't want me before, started using drugs, started lying, started -- everything like that, and just inflicting pain on other people that I had inflicted -- that I endured, like, my whole life.

I remember the last bit of abuse that I had experienced was unwanted. We were highly intoxicated one New Year's Eve, and I remember -- my father was in the house, actually, at the time, and my dad -- like I said, my dad's a heavy drinker, and I -- I went to go to sleep, and when I went to sleep, I woke -- well, I would pass out, I guess. I woke up to someone, like, touching me, and I thought it was -- at this point, I thought it was -- I thought it was my boyfriend at the time, and then I'd kind
of roll over, and I was like, no, leave me alone, and it
stopped for a minute, and then I felt it again, but it
wasn't -- this wasn't gentle. Like, this wasn't -- this
was like, kind of, like, extremely, like, rough, and then
the second time I had woke up, and I was like -- my
boyfriend had had his arm around me, and I was like,
that's -- that's not him. So I woke up in a panic,
and -- I didn't have control over this abuse, so I woke up
in a panic, and I said, you know, I think there's someone
in the room, and (indiscernible) was, like, no. He's like,
there's no one in the room. He's like, go back to sleep.
And then I felt it again. So I got up, crawled over him,
went over and turned on the light -- turned on the light,
and in the corner, there was someone standing legit in the
corner, like, back on, and it was my friend's husband, and
I was, like, what is going on right now? And I knew there
was a lot of drugs and a lot of alcohol involved in this.

I remember in between one of the times that
he was touching me, and my boyfriend at the time was trying
to get my dad out of the house because we were trying to
hide the drugs and stuff from him, and -- so while my dad
was in the house, I was being molested by my friend's
husband while my boyfriend was trying to get my dad out of
the house, and I remember leaving -- getting him out of the
house, not saying anything -- anything to this man,
and -- because I got back in bed and, like, laid there for a couple of minutes. I was like, am I going to say anything? And then I was like, I -- I have to, she was my childhood best friend.

So I rolled over, went to my mom's house, and it was the first time I ever opened my mouth about anything, and it was, like, the first and the last time that I opened my mouth about anything because of the reaction that I had gotten. It was just, like, well, that's you, E.M., you kind of deserved it, and you know, my girlfriend was -- my friend was, like, we have a marriage and everything like that, so -- you know, it was like, almost like they didn't believe me that it had happened, and that -- that was bad.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** When you say they didn't believe you, is --

**MS. E.M.:** It was his word -- his word against mine.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** So was this his -- your best friend saying that?

**MS. E.M.:** Yeah. And then she kind of resented me because she was -- you know, I was -- you know, I was the bad one, you know? Like, there was -- our families, they judged -- we talked about this on the way here. Like, our -- we were judged by the sickest family
ever, and that was, like, four generations of families, 
too, and --

MS. KERRIE REAY: But can I just clarify, 
who -- who said you deserved it?

MS. E.M.: My best friend and her husband.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Oh, okay.

MS. E.M.: You know, it was like, that's 
E.M., so it was okay, you know? Like, coming from a 
dysfunctional family of alcoholics and a dysfunctional 
mariage, and look at you, you're on welfare, raising two 
kids, and -- you know, like, that's -- that's -- that's all 
you're going to be, that's -- that's who you are, so you 
just, you know, take that. That was hard. That was a hard 
one.

I remember going down shortly after and 
going out with my girlfriends one night, and I -- I 
was -- I was drugged, I remember that, and I remember 
waking up in, like, a -- up in a cab, I remember that, and 
I remember being scared but doing nothing about that too. 
Don't even remember what had happened, my friends just 
letting me go on and not caring.

So that was, like, the start of it, of being 
like -- on top of everything, but when, like, it comes to 
being an adult and taking care of myself, that was -- that 
was bad.
MS. KERRIE REAY: Can I just ask you --


MS. KERRIE REAY: -- you mentioned that your father was in your home. Had he come out for a visit?

MS. E.M.: Oh, he had moved back at this point.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Oh, okay. Okay.

MS. E.M.: In this -- in -- I had two children in between this time, and -- after the marriage, I had two kids. I left him, and my father came home to be close to the grand -- to his grandkids.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Oh, okay.

MS. E.M.: Because he had three.

MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm.

MS. E.M.: That's not what he wanted. So yeah. So, like I said, the man -- the girl who had said, you know, that's your own fault, it was our grandparents to our parents to us to our kids, four generations of families being friends, you know, and -- yeah. My dad was in the house. I -- I don't even know if I've ever told him about that because I don't know if he would believe it. To this day, like, they denied all of that. They were, like, why aren't you guys friends anymore? You know, and it was just, like, oh, that's just Sue. Like, blind eye -- turn a blind eye to it.
So after that, that was fine. I had messed up that engagement that I was with that guy, and, you know, was extremely, like, inconsiderate and dishonest, and alcohol was rule -- like, ruling my life when I didn't have kids at this point, and I had cheated on him multiple times, you know, because I was always looking for that acceptance, that love and everything like that, and --

MS. KERRIE REAY: Sorry, you said you didn't have your kids at this time?

MS. E.M.: Yeah. When they're -- they would go with their grandparents.

MS. KERRIE REAY: With their grandparents?

MS. E.M.: Yeah. Because their dad never took care of them, I co-parent with their grandparents now.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Oh, oh, okay.

MS. E.M.: [One line redacted - personal information].

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay.

MS. E.M.: [Two lines redacted - personal information]--

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay. Okay.

MS. E.M.: -- because he's sick.

MS. KERRIE REAY: The children are having contact with their grandparents, his parents?

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay. Okay.

MS. E.M.: So let's fast-forward a little tiny bit. After that relationship that I had ruined with that, every relationship -- I never committed -- I stopped committing myself to people at this point because I knew I was -- I couldn't commit. There was no way. Like, I was fine, E.M. was fine, but once I started using drugs or alcohol, I was not fine. I just became that abused little girl, pretty much, is what it was.

So I had gone through another relationship, and this person had been in active addiction, so he was a drug addict, and, you know, lied and cheated and manipulated and, you know, stole everything from me, so when that end -- crashed and burned, I had given out my -- I had moved in with him, and when that crashed and burned, I ended up moving back in with my mom, and I had said prior that I had fell in love with this guy who didn't want me, but in every -- every relationship in between then, I always went back to him. It was always drunk E.M. showing up at his -- at his door, like, spilling my heart out and him, you know, getting what he wanted from me but rejecting me, so he manipulated the shit out of that, which is fine.

So during this time, he and I reconnected. I was living with my mom at this point, and this is when I
started getting really sick. I started putting this man before my kids. I stopped going to work at this point. I started staying up all night and using drugs and then trying to hide it from my mom, so living with two kids in your mom's house, it doesn't take long before your mom starts figuring out what's going on.

So she asked me to leave, and I had -- I had left, playing the victim the whole way, don't get me wrong. Like, you know? Like, why -- what is wrong with you? Really, it -- it was all me.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** And did you take the children when you left?

**MS. E.M.:** Yeah, I took the children. I had moved out. I -- I had this job at this point. I was running a restaurant, and I worked really hard to get that, so I was able to be a functioning alcoholic, and -- yeah, not until I started throwing drugs into the mix, and this is when I was at my mom's and reconnecting with this person, like, that didn't want me all of a sudden. I figured out that, okay, well, this is what's going to connect us. Like, all of a sudden, drugs and alcohol keeps -- whatever I've ever wanted from a man, this is what I've got to keep going with him because that's the feeling that I like. You know, I'm accepted by him.

So that was fine. Like I said, my mom had
started -- I was being extremely inconsiderate, coming home 6 and 7 o'clock in the morning, you know, like, under the influence, disrupting her household. So she asked me to leave, so that was fine, and I was able to, you know, manipulate and fantasize about how I was going to keep this new house going that I had just gone out and got, and really, deep down inside, I can honestly say the only reason I went and got that house and didn't get something in my own means was to impress this guy, and I was so sick at that point. Like, there wasn't even -- I don't even -- I think it was, like, probably four or five days before the kids even stayed in the house, so the first night, it was just all drugs and all alcohol, and that was --

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** How old would the children have been at this time?

**MS. E.M.:** This would have been, like --

**MS. S.M.:** Two years ago.

**MS. E.M.:** -- three years ago.

**MS. S.M.:** Two years ago.

**MS. E.M.:** Two years ago. So I was -- at this point, I was able to -- like, the children weren't around, but I was able to find out any excuse as to why the children weren't -- couldn't come home, and -- so I was extremely inconsiderate. Like, it's horrible. I know.
But I -- I didn't -- I -- well, I wasn't able to take care of them at that point.

So this went on. I got that house in October, and from May, I guess, May, June, July, August, September, October, so we had, like, six months in between. I had received something for my child tax that -- and there was drug use all -- like, I was functioning at my job.

MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm.

MS. E.M.: But when I didn't have my kids, that's what I was doing. Child tax had sent me this letter that I was supposed to send or they were going to cut me off, and that was the last thing that I was thinking about, so in October, they actually did cut me off, and that was something that I had budgeted into how I was going to pay for my house, and I didn't get it, and -- so I was in panic mode, and at this point, I had already burned bridges with my mom and my dad and my sister because I was -- I used them. I lied to them. I manipulated them, and, you know, like, my pride would never go to my family again and be like, hey, guess what, you were right.

MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm.

MS. E.M.: Because at this point, my family had recognized, like, you've got a problem, you know, but total denial. I didn't want anybody pointing fingers at me. I just wanted to get rid of everything, and I just
E.M. & S.M. wanted to do my own thing. I had freedom and thought I was doing this great job at -- at life. Meanwhile, I was destroying it.

So my first instinct when I didn't get the child tax is I went into panic mode, and the second thing that went through my mind was, like, how are you going to get money? Then the third thing that went through my mind is, you're going to get it from men, because that's where I usually got everything from, so that's what I did. I started leading two separate lives. I was able to manipulate my family into taking the kids more often. I had a daytime job, but then I started escorting, but I was able to tell them that I was working at a promotion company, which I don't -- in my mind, I thought that was great because I didn't know what else to -- I was too sick and not even smart enough at this point to even come up with anything better at this -- at that time.

But meanwhile, it was, how am I going to fake it to everybody that my life is good right now, keep the kids going, keep my drug habit going, and keep my sanity? So that -- that was a huge downward spiral for me. Little did I know that making that phone call was probably the worst phone call and worst situation I've ever put myself in.

MS. KERRIE REAY: And what was that phone
call?

MS. E.M.: To start escorting.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Oh, okay.

MS. E.M.: So that was fine. So within six months, I was able -- I was working both jobs, having my kids two, six months later, walking into the Waterford, completely destroyed, social workers in my life, and completely abused and broken and shattered, wanting to, like, kill myself. I put myself in a situation that was the end result for any person to go from, you know, I'm a hard working woman and a great mom to I'm going to sell myself on a daily basis to provide for another man, not to provide for my kids, because I was able -- I knew that they were taken care of because they had a good home from their grandparents, and my self-worth had gone. I had become everything that I hated about my family. I had -- everything that I was like, I'm not going to become, I had become, and, like, I keep saying self-worth. It's because I felt like I deserved that. I was empowered by it because I was -- like, I had that control, and I was being abused anyway, so why not have that control over it and make money at doing it?

MS. KERRIE REAY: And it was your decision.

MS. E.M.: It was my decision.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Which gives you that sense
of control.

MS. E.M.: Yeah. I was fed by, like, the man that I had worked for. You know, like, oh, you know, like, you're making all of this money, but it's, like, you have no idea the amount of drugs that I have to use in order to get through this day and, you know, the situations, the abuse, and, like, the times of being, like, I can't even do this and, like, the obsessive-compulsive, like, showers and the flashbacks and, you know, the depression and, like, the self-harm on top of all of that, and it was just the worst, horrible ending to something so beautiful to me. You know, I -- I kept all that a secret. Like, everything was a secret my whole life, so I was living a lie --

MS. KERRIE REAY: But that's how you coped.


MS. KERRIE REAY: From what I'm hearing that those secrets are how you moved on, how you kept in your --

MS. E.M.: I never let --

MS. KERRIE REAY: You feeling you were moving on.

MS. E.M.: I never let anyone see how I truly felt.

MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm.

MS. E.M.: Before I had gone and checked
myself into a detox centre, I was seeing, like, three
different -- three different men in my own personal life on
top of these three people -- well, two of them. The other
guy, I was funding. Like, I was providing everything for
him. Like, I was working to feed our drug addiction to,
like, pay for him, you know what I mean? Just to keep him
in my life. So I was working in the sex industry, and men
were getting something from me, but I was paying to have
someone in my life, if that makes any bit of sense.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Yeah, it does.
I -- I -- I understand.

MS. E.M.: It -- it makes --

MS. KERRIE REAY: I do understand.

MS. E.M.: Looking -- it's insanity to me,
but that's what I did, and it --

MS. KERRIE REAY: It worked for what you
needed.


MS. KERRIE REAY: Yeah.

MS. E.M.: You know, and then I had that
job, and I had this man that I was paying for, but then I
also had two other men, one that I could sit down with and
cry and be open and honest and be, like, hey, I'm a sex
worker, and he was a civil engineer, you know, and we could
relate because of the -- you can relate to anyone with the
amount of -- the right amount of drugs and alcohol. He made me feel comfortable. He made me feel like the real E.M. Like, I could go to him and felt comfortable. I felt alive. Honestly, as depressed as I was, I still felt alive, and then I had another man. I don't even know why I had him in my life. I think that was just my ego, and then I had this other guy who I was supporting who never wanted me.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** It's the same guy from years --

**MS. E.M.:** Yeah. Four years --

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** It's still -- he's still -- still there?

**MS. E.M.:** Four years that went on. And during all of that, you know, I -- the drugs got really, really bad, and I -- I went and asked for sick leave from my job, and I was going through a lot of sexual harassment in my job, and -- but that was it. I was just used to that. You know, I didn't know how to say no to any of this. I just played along with it until, like -- until I had gotten pregnant, and I needed to go have an abortion because I had gotten pregnant by this guy that I was pretty much paying to have in my life, and he wanted no part in it, and I had to -- went to my boss, and, you know, I said I'm pregnant, and I need this work -- time off work because
I need to have an abortion, and I went in to my work that
time, and he was, like, I can't give you that time off. He
was like, it's not my fault that you're pregnant and you
have to have an abortion, and I went to my doctor right
away, and I was like -- she was like, your sick leave --
she was like -- you know?

MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm.

MS. E.M.: And that was probably -- that was
probably the best thing, but it was probably the worst
ingo the job, but, like, working the other job and
then balancing all of this at that point, and I think it
was probably -- that was in February. By the end of
February, I woke up -- I didn't wake up one morning. I'll
be honest. I had showed up at my mom's door, and after
this man that I was paying for, he was kicking me out of
his house, and at the -- the depression was so bad at this
point. Like, I was just crying all the time.

Actually, I'm going to re-track because the
week before that, I was still up for -- I was on, like, a
2- or 3-day binge, and I was working, and for some reason,
something inside me said, call your dad and tell your dad
the truth. And I called my dad, and I told him, I was,
like, hey, Dad. And I don't know if subconsciously, like,
I went back to the person who -- where it all started, but I called him, and I was like, I know I have to be honest with someone about what I'm doing in my life because I can't -- at this point, I had already -- this is my first trip into detox, and I told him what I was doing, and I said, Dad, I'm selling myself for money, I don't want to do this anymore, and I need help.

And that was fine, and I went home, and I remember using for a couple more days, and then he -- I don't think he told my mom. This is a blur because I was in a really bad state, but I remember using a couple more, and this is when my conscience of like, hey, where are your kids, E.M.? Like, you don't have a job now, and you're taking all this abuse, and men are pretending that you're, like, 8-year-olds, and, like, they're hitting you and they're degrading you, and you're degrading yourself, and -- you know, you're like -- you can't keep -- continue doing this.

So I remember going -- this -- the guy that I was paying, he -- he was kicking me out of his bed one morning, and my first instinct was to get up and to go find someone else to use drugs with, but at 8 o'clock in the morning, no one -- unless you're still up -- everyone was still asleep, so I ended up at my mom's door, and I went, in, and I said, Mom -- I went in and I called the recovery
centre in St. John's. They said the only way we can get you in is if you go to the Waterford, so I did that, and --

MS. KERRIE REAY: And the Waterford is -- sorry?


MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay.

MS. E.M.: So it's, like, a --

MS. S.M.: It's for mentally ill people.

MS. E.M.: Yeah. You have to get, like, a psychiatric --

MS. KERRIE REAY: So it's a psychiatric (indiscernible).


MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay.

MS. E.M.: So I went in and I told my mom, and, you know, she was -- she was upset clearly, but that was the first time that I was like, all right, so I'm waving a white flag as a parent right now. Like, you're going to have to -- please, can you call their other grandparents, and I can't -- I can't do this anymore because -- I just can't, and I --

MS. KERRIE REAY: So can I ask you, when you told your dad, what was his response?

MS. E.M.: Get out of where you're to. No more supportive than that. And I was like -- I repeated
it. I'll never forget that, and he's like, all right, leave where you are and go home, and I was like, Dad, do you -- do you need me to repeat what I just told you? And he was like, yeah, I heard what you said; but to this day, almost two years later, it's not something that he talks about. Like, he won't talk about it. He kept -- and I understand why. Like, I'm his daughter, but -- yeah, that was -- that was my first phone call.

MS. S.M.: But after your first stint, then, at detox, when you came out --


MS. S.M.: -- you went to your father's and took 60 Valium.

MS. E.M.: Yeah. So he -- he doesn't -- he didn't recognize it. So when I went in the psychiatric hospital, they got me into the recovery centre, and I spent four, five days there detoxing, and -- and I was still feeling bad about myself then. Like, I still -- I was still in contact with this other guy that I was paying, and -- you know, still trying to feel accepted, and I was like, my life was -- you know, at this point, I had social workers, and my family had just found out what I was doing, but I felt free because I was like, this is the first step of me getting away from this life altogether. I was like, I don't even care who judges me anymore because it's like,
I'm going to die if I keep doing this.

So I stayed there for a couple of days, and when I got out, that man that I was paying, he didn't want nothing to do with me because I wasn't -- I didn't have any money, so I went back to an abuser, my ex-husband, and they let me out, and I was able to manipulate my family into thinking that I was going to an AA meeting, and I ended up using that whole weekend, and it didn't take long for me to be right back to the recovery centre, but I think now that I look back on it, now that I'm educated, I think psychosis started kicking in at this point because --

MS. KERRIE REAY: The withdrawal part?

MS. E.M.: Yeah. Like, I was just -- (unreportable sound).

MS. KERRIE REAY: They say that that -- that can happen.

MS. E.M.: Like, hysterical. Like, I wasn't -- like, the stuff that I -- like, I -- I -- I've done, like, it's just -- that's not who I am. So the second time that I went into detox, the withdrawal wasn't that bad, and they'd already offered me all the services and stuff like that, so it -- it was on me to take it, so, you know, my life was disgusting at this point, and I was isolating, and -- you know, I was still able to manipulate men to get what I wanted, and all I was doing was covering
up, like, all this pain, and so when I got out of the
recovery centre for the second time, I felt like, I'm
asking for all of this help and nobody is helping me.

So child services was in my life, and I was
able to get nine days clean at this point, and then I had
relapsed, and I was open and honest with my social worker
because they were just great, and -- but I felt -- I was so
disappointed when I had relapsed. That night when I had
relapsed, it was, like, 4 o'clock in the morning; I don't
remember if I drove, or I don't remember if I got a cab,
but I remember showing up to the one house where I knew I
could get alcohol, and that was my dad's. I showed up at
his house at 4 o'clock in the morning. He had opened the
door like it was -- like it was nothing. He just opened
the door and then went back to bed, never questioned me on
why I was there, and that was so out of the normal. Like,
I would never show up and -- I looked, and there was no
alcohol there, and at this point, I was so tired of my
life, I was just, like, I just want to go to sleep. I'm
just tired. Like, I don't want to have to go to these men
anymore. I don't want to think about how I failed my
family and my children, and I went over -- like, it was
like an out-of-body experience. I watched -- it's like I
watched myself walk over to a table full of pills and just
ate a bottle of Valium and just -- just laid down on the
couch and put ear phones in my ears and laid down.

And then, like, the next day, the next evening, I woke up, so my dad had just saw me there with my coat and my shoes on and a bottle of pills and a bottle of water and never bothered to try to wake me up, and it was almost like a higher power, a thousand percent, because I opened my two eyes, and when I opened my two eyes, my two kids were looking at me, and I've been sober since that day. I went and told my mom that -- what I had done, and I was in rehab two days later, and that's what brings me here, that all of this -- well, it's almost 17 months later. What I've done for myself was completed rehab. I've reached out to every community organization that's offered in St. John's for the addictions, alcohol, the drugs. I'm part of the Blue Door Program for the sex industry, for sex trade workers.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** And -- and what's that about?

**MS. E.M.:** The sex -- what -- Blue Door?

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** M'hm.

**MS. E.M.:** The Blue Door Program is to help women stop working in the sex industry, offer basic necessities and support and counseling, and it's just -- it's a great program. They help you with -- and it's just the basic --
MS. KERRIE REAY: Giving back.

MS. E.M.: Yeah. So I'm a part of that.

That has been a huge help to me to get the therapy that I need for the abuse and stuff like that. That's been helpful. Doing DBT and CBT, so cognitive behavior therapy, and -- just to retrain my brain to not think that that's all that I'm worth. In my sobriety, I had -- like, I had multiple sponsors, and I've gone into schools. I have wrote articles for people in the sex industry to see that there is a way out. Within three months of getting sober, I had gotten my kids back (indiscernible) and everything like that.

MS. KERRIE REAY: So when you mentioned earlier that child services were involved, was that because it -- taking your children into care, or were they watching your children being with the grandparents?

MS. E.M.: I went and told them -- I told them the truth. I was like, I'm not a fit parent right now.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay. Because the -- I -- I didn't want to interrupt when you were talking --


MS. KERRIE REAY: -- when you were talking there. So you yourself went and -- and --
MS. E.M.: When I checked myself into rehab, I told them all -- not to rehab. To the detox --

MS. KERRIE REAY: To -- yeah, to the social worker.


MS. KERRIE REAY: And so what did -- where did your children go?

MS. E.M.: They went with their grandparents.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay. So that -- there was still -- the children were still with family?


MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay. And how old were your children then?

MS. E.M.: 11 -- this is only 17 months ago.

MS. S.M.: A year and a half ago.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Yeah. And so they would be how old?

MS. E.M.: My son just turned 13, and my daughter is 9, almost 10.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay. Okay.


MS. S.M.: But the -- social services didn't take them.

MS. E.M.: No.
MS. KERRIE REAY: No. No.

MS. E.M.: No, no, no.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay. Okay.

MS. E.M.: They -- they worked with us really close.

MS. KERRIE REAY: They -- they have them with the grandparents --


MS. KERRIE REAY: -- rather than take them into care. Okay.

MS. E.M.: Yeah. But that was my own doing. Like, I went to them. I -- I was honest, and I knew -- like, I have a really supportive family between their other grandparents and my family. That wasn't an issue. The children were going to be taken care of.

MS. KERRIE REAY: But that's -- but that -- that's really a -- a testament to the courage that you had in terms of making sure that your children were looked after.


MS. KERRIE REAY: You know, right? That's -- that's (indiscernible).

MS. E.M.: I'm no good to them if I was living the way that I was, and I didn't go in there and sugar-coat it. Like, I told them about the sex industry.
I told them about the abuse. I told them about the drugs. I just wanted to be heard, and I wanted to be pointed in the right direction onto how I have to stop this and what I have to do.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** Did you ever sense what the -- the trigger was? What was that moment, that defining moment? Was it waking up one morning -- because, again, I didn't want to interrupt --

**MS. E.M.:** That's okay.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** -- and you were talking -- you were talking about waking up, and it was like -- it was like something came over you that you -- was there anything particular that --

**MS. E.M.:** I've --

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** -- triggered this?

**MS. E.M.:** What I've recognized is that I have a fear of criticism, so I'm a huge people-pleaser.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** M'hm.

**MS. E.M.:** Like I said, I had no self-confidence. I quit school. Like, never fit in, but it was just, like, I found this -- this strength one day. Like, I'd always told myself, E.M., you're going to do this. You're going to do this, and it's going to be fine, but it was just, like -- I actually say it in the meetings that I go to that my sobriety is probably the only -- and
parent -- well, I went through a rough patch parenting. My sobriety is the only thing that I've ever done for myself and committed to that I've taken serious, I've never been dishonest to. I've never, like, taken a break from it. I've never manipulated it. I've -- you know, like, that's being sober --

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** (Indiscernible).

**MS. E.M.:** Yeah. The being sober and not putting drugs and alcohol in my body rips -- takes everything away from me. Like, everything. Like, if I don't touch that, then I truly am who I am. I started -- I went back to school last December. I'm doing fine with that. I love that. You know, that recovery centre that I went into, [one line redacted - identifying information], and I go in there a couple times a month to speak to the people who are just starting to where I was. It's -- I guess it's just dedication to myself. You know, before anything else, you know, like, I have to wake up and think about that, like, where I can be, where I was to where I am right now because I know how fast my life can --

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** Change.

**MS. E.M.:** -- spiral down if I just --

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** And what about your children? How -- have you -- how's the interaction with them (indiscernible) change?
MS. E.M.: I have been very open with them. We told them that it was depression at first, but coming from generation after generation, their dad is an addict. We were going to (indiscernible). We were on our way to a pow-wow, actually, last summer, and it was my first weekend -- it was in July -- that I had full rights to my kids since that February, and I was like, you know what, I don't want to lie to them. I was like, I'm not lying to them because I know that they're going to face this themselves, like, this disease, because I think it's a disease, so I was like, I'm going to start educating my kids right away. I --

MS. KERRIE REAY: Hm. Break the cycle.

MS. E.M.: Yeah. I'm -- and I educate -- and we talk about it. We're very open and honest. They know I went to rehab. They know that I go to meetings all the time. I just tell them the truth; like, open communication. Like, they know nothing about the sex industry.

MS. KERRIE REAY: No. M'hm.

MS. E.M.: They know that I'm -- I'm single. Like, there's no, like -- like, I'm seeing somebody now, but it's not the obsession part of -- that I need someone in my life is not there because I'm so grounded with, like, my kids and my recovery and my school and, you know, just
doing stuff for myself. Like, you know, like, we have a great relationship, you know? Like, it was rough at first with my -- with my daughter because I was installing that fear of abandonment into them, so I had to give them that reassurance that, hey, guess what, I'm here, and I'm going to protect them, and that's -- that's where we're to right now. Yeah. Like, they take notice to drugs and -- they take no -- I look at alcohol as a drug because of the program that I work in.

MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm. M'hm.

MS. E.M.: But they notice that. They don't like being around it. If they're around it, they'll tell me.

MS. KERRIE REAY: And is there a sense from your children that they had -- some -- because you spoke about when you were young --


MS. KERRIE REAY: -- and you realized what was happening in the family home.

MS. E.M.: I put my -- the way I look at it, the way I talk to my kids is how I would -- would have wanted someone to talk to me --

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay.

MS. E.M.: -- when I was that age. Like, my son, if he's -- like, if I can't -- if he won't listen to
me, I'll write down on a piece of paper and leave it in his room, write it in his journal, give him some inspiration, give him some motivation, confidence, you know what I mean? Like...

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** And that you care.

**MS. E.M.:** Absolutely. A thousand percent.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** Because I -- that's what I've heard through your truth is about looking for acceptance and looking for love --

**MS. E.M.:** Yeah.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** -- and looking for -- for caring --

**MS. E.M.:** Yeah.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** -- and not being able to find that, you sought it out, and that included finding ways to do that that involved alcohol, involved drugs, but you've come so far.

**MS. E.M.:** Yeah, and you know, like, my mom and I are sitting here right now. It was because of my own doing my mom and I didn't really have a relationship for the first -- I think I was about nine months sober before we start -- before we started speaking again, and then I just had to be honest with her, and, like, there's some stuff that when the time comes we will talk about, but I take full responsibility for anything -- like, for anything
that I've done or put them in -- you know, like,
I -- my -- I went into rehab and didn't really realize the
effect that I was causing on everybody around me until two
weeks into rehab, and my -- you know, here I had people
taking care of my kids, and my mom was packing up my house,
and I can only imagine what she saw going in there, and I'm
grateful for what I have and the people that I have, but I
feel like going through a life full of dishonest
being -- just abusing other people because I've been
abused. You know, you've got to prove who are you and how
hard you work to stay healthy, and then once you do that,
then the relationships can be built again.

MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm.

MS. E.M.: So that's what I'm doing. I'm
learning. I'm building healthy relationships right now.

MS. KERRIE REAY: And I would -- would think
from what you're saying, you're also choosing those
relationships carefully.

MS. E.M.: Yeah. I don't see my dad. You
know, my dad [one line redacted - personal information].
My dad was like, come over for a beer. I'm like, no, I'm
good. You know, he -- he doesn't get it, and I don't
expect him to get it.

MS. KERRIE REAY: You made a comment earlier
about your -- your dad's own issues.

MS. KERRIE REAY: So are you aware of issues that face him and -- that may be part of the reason that he's turned to alcohol?

MS. E.M.: Bits and pieces, but, like --

MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm. Because you're talking about all -- the generational stuff, and --


MS. KERRIE REAY: -- and I'm just wondering if it's on both sides and whether you have an understanding at all of --

MS. E.M.: It's father issues with my dad too.


MS. E.M.: Definitely. Definitely father issues. He will not talk about it. Like I say, he stuffs all that -- he's what, 62? And he's still drinking on a daily basis; you know, [one line redacted - personal information]. And I -- you know, I made -- my sister and I, she was home a couple of months ago because she was Halifax, and we all went out for supper -- like, for dinner, and I -- that's a big no-no for me because my dad is so close-minded, and -- you know, he's just a very sick man, and I'm careful about who I put myself around, family or no family.
MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm.

MS. E.M.: And just the stuff that he started getting on with, and I was just, like, Dad. He was like, do I look like an addict? And I was like -- my sister and I looked at him, and we were like, do we look like we're addicts? And I'm like -- but the difference is my sister and I are moving forward with our life. We're changing it. Like you said, we're stopping the cycle. Like, he just...

MS. KERRIE REAY: [One line redacted – personal information]

MS. E.M.: [one line redacted – personal information]. Absolutely. It's kind of funny. She was not here in the province when I went through my rock bottom, but she was supportive.

MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm.

MS. E.M.: Until -- like, you know, she was super supportive, and it wasn't until a couple of months ago that we reconnected, and it was like my sister had met me for the first time sober. We'd gone out for supper, and, you know, she had, like, a glass of wine, and I had green tea, and that's fine, but it was, like -- I guess the -- what I was opening up to her about and being honest and why -- the experience, that gave her that strength to open up to me about it, so that felt good. Like...
MS. KERRIE REAY: Do you find when you're talking about it that there's some empowerment back to yourself?

MS. E.M.: Like I said, it's the only thing that I've ever committed myself to. Like, I find it -- well, in the program that I work, I find the more that you talk about it, the less hold it has over you.

MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm. M'hm.

MS. E.M.: So it's -- it's not -- I don't mind talking to people about it because there's so many women that deal with it on a day-to-day basis that don't have that voice to talk about it.

MS. KERRIE REAY: And you know what it's like.

MS. E.M.: I know what that's like, yeah, and I find the more that I talk about it, the more that I'm that much further away from walking back into it, and I recognize, like, the signs. Like, there's people that, like -- that man that I was paying, like, I haven't spoke to him since the day before that I had gone into rehab. I've ran into his family, and they just pretended like I didn't exist, but --

MS. KERRIE REAY: He's not healthy for you.

MS. E.M.: That's -- he's not -- I would guarantee if I were -- he would be able to manipulate me
within an hour. Doesn't matter how long I'm sober, he's one of those people that for some reason, my disease just latches onto.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** M'hm.

**MS. E.M.:** I had to do a recovery plan in rehab, and he was the first person. If I'm hanging out with this person, I'm guaranteed to relapse, so I stay away from him, absolutely, every way. I haven't spoke to him.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** And it sounds like you've surrounded yourself with people who will help you stay on the road to recovery, because it's -- it's like you said, you've had a long lifetime --

**MS. E.M.:** Yeah.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** -- of not taking care of yourself.

**MS. E.M.:** The only people that I have in my life right now are either recovering addicts or alcoholics, all in recovery, and the people from the Blue Door Program. Those are the only people, and, like, I was selfish when I was using and drinking all the time that it was, like, what are you going to give me, but I'm selfish like that in my recovery too. It's, like, how are we going to help each other? Like, what -- you know what I mean? What am I going to do for myself on a day-to-day basis? This is part of recovery for me. Like, when we leave here, I'm going to
an AA meeting, you know? So it's just...

    MS. KERRIE REAY: And understanding. You know, that's one of the things I've also heard. You seem to really have great insight into yourself, what's happened, what your needs are, and what you need to do for yourself.


    MS. KERRIE REAY: And -- and coming here took -- takes a lot of courage to -- to share what you've shared today.


    MS. S.M.: I've never had a drink with either one of my children.

    MS. KERRIE REAY: And -- and you've been -- you've been sober 18 years?

    MS. E.M.: Yeah. (Indiscernible) --

    MS. S.M.: 18 years --


    MS. KERRIE REAY: Very much so.

    MS. E.M.: And you know what's huge is,
like, my mom went with me to my first AA meeting, and she sat there, and she was like, oh, I don't have a drinking problem, like -- you know, even though she's -- and then we went to an AA -- she joined me for an AA convention, which is, you know what, most people are like, oh, I want to do this with my family, I want to go on a trip. I'm like -- it was, like, mind-blowing having my mom go to AA stuff with me because it's so important, and she introduced herself as an alcoholic, and that was, like, yay, my mom. Like, that's huge, and I wrote my sister right away. It's, like, little things.

MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm.

MS. E.M.: Like, a lot of people -- like, I could say right now, like, oh, I'm just waiting for the day for my dad to recognize that he's sick and that he's done some wrong and own his part. It was, like -- how do I say this? It's something I've always waited to hear coming from my mom's mouth because then I know that once she says that she's on the road to getting to where she deserves to be, and, like, she's got lots of help for herself, you know?

MS. KERRIE REAY: M-hm.

MS. E.M.: Like, just talking about it, and -- and stuff like that, it's -- it's huge. Like, being survivors of all this stuff.
MS. KERRIE REAY: And -- and that's where you actually started your truth was talking about the generations.


MS. KERRIE REAY: And you now as a fourth generation have the insight about the need to stop that cycle --


MS. KERRIE REAY: -- and have found that within yourself, that -- that commitment, that passion that you need to -- to keep you motivated and to be successful like your mom --


MS. KERRIE REAY: -- some 18 years.


MS. KERRIE REAY: And -- and I think, you know, you've -- you've talked so much about the need of getting something for your father, some acknowledgment of -- of you and as being his daughter, but I also hear you saying I understand now that, really, all I can control is me.

MS. E.M.: Yeah. I have no control over --

MS. KERRIE REAY: What he does.

MS. E.M.: I -- I accept everything about him. I accept that it took me 33 years to be, like, all
right, this has got to change, and he might never get to
that point. He might be okay spending his whole life
drinking --

MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm.

MS. E.M.: -- to relive the same day over
and over and over again, the same self-pity. I don't want
to live like that.

MS. KERRIE REAY: You don't want that for --

MS. E.M.: I didn't see that for my mom.
Like, you know, sometimes, like, even -- you know, when my
mom got sober, I would have nightmares and call her and be
like, Mom, were you drinking last night? She'd be like,
no. It's the same thing, and I can only imagine that my
kids probably had the same dreams of me being drunk, you
know, kind of thing, but it's just -- I came from a strong
woman.

MS. KERRIE REAY: And your children see
hope, too.


MS. KERRIE REAY: Right? Because they have
their mom back.

MS. E.M.: And it's kind of funny because
before, my kids were, like, always about their other
grandparents. God love them. They're great.

MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm.
MS. E.M.: But now me and my mom are totally sober. There's no -- nothing. Like, we went out for my son's birthday, and when we all sat together, both families, when there was alcohol served, my kids wanted to get up and go. They were like, mm-mm.

MS. KERRIE REAY: No.

MS. E.M.: We don't -- we don't want that. My kids don't need the socialization of, like, sitting around and having a drink with supper or any -- we talk about feelings. You know, they -- our kids see emotion and love, like, hugs. You know what I mean? Like, I was never really shown hugs when I was younger. That's changed now, like, as we've gotten older, you know, and my kids are mauled, you know what I mean? Like, kisses and hugs, and that -- little things like that is so important.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Yeah. Absolutely.


MS. KERRIE REAY: And I think that -- you know, that is certainly something we hear, is, one, the sense of abandonment, and -- and the -- the talk of I know my mom loves me.


MS. KERRIE REAY: I know my mom loves me, but then they speak of the -- of the same thing that you speak of --

MS. KERRIE REAY: -- is that the -- those themes that -- that continue from generation to generation.

(Indiscernible) --

MS. E.M.: I don't believe that people can love anybody unless they love themselves. It doesn't matter if you're a parent or not, and I -- I expect -- like, I -- like we talked about my dad, like -- like I said in the beginning, my parents did the best they could with what they had.

MS. KERRIE REAY: And when you talk about the -- the generations, and you identify as Mi'gmaq, were any of your family in residential school? Was there a residential school experience?

MS. S.M.: I was in an orphanage.

MS. KERRIE REAY: You were in an orphanage? You lost your parents?

MS. S.M.: My dad, and then our mother gave us up.

MS. KERRIE REAY: And were you ever aware of your parents being at a residential school?


MS. KERRIE REAY: No. Okay.

MS. S.M.: But they were born in the '30s.
MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm.

MS. S.M.: So...

MS. E.M.: I have to use the washroom. I'm sorry.

MS. S.M.: They were married when they were 50 -- in 1951.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay. Yes, because the residential school goes back a long time.

MS. S.M.: Long time.

MS. KERRIE REAY: We'll just stop this for -- it's 6:46. We'll just stop this to --

MS. E.M.: How much longer do -- would you like?

MS. KERRIE REAY: This is your space and your time.


MS. S.M.: It's all your time, honey. I'll go have a smoke with you.

MS. E.M.: Yeah, and then I --

--- Upon recessing

--- Upon reconvening at 6:55 p.m.

MS. KERRIE REAY: I'll start the video.

Sorry, I need -- I've reached that point, put my glasses on.

MS. S.M.: I have to take mine off.

So we are back on the record. It is now 6:55, and this is with E.M., and her mom S.M. is here. 6:55. So, E.M., you -- we were just starting to talk, and we were off the record, and you were making a comment about the loss of people that have been in your life that you've been speaking about.


MS. KERRIE REAY: So...

MS. E.M.: I just -- one of the men that I'd spoken to -- spoke of during this, we just buried him a couple of months ago. Probably -- he died -- what was it?

MS. S.M.: [Date].

MS. E.M.: [Date], yeah, and it was heart-breaking. Absolutely heart-breaking. But then again, looking at it like -- he was a really sick man, and when we put him in the ground, like, I had no hard feelings towards -- I claimed my part in a lot of -- in that particular relationship, but, you know, like, if we -- I thought about it when I was outside. Like, murdered and missing Indigenous women. I read a book for school. It's called "April Raintree," and it's about Native women and the stereotypical -- promiscuous, alcoholic, you know what I mean? It's so sad. But when I -- I read that book, the first thing I thought of was, like, pain, generation after
generation of not being taught any different, because I can relate to how many times -- what got me into the Blue Door Program was -- in St. John's, probably last September, there was a sex worker who had gone missing, and they -- she was found dead. That impacted me. Even though I was sober at this point. It -- the severity of, like, what I have done in my life experience --

MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm. M'hm.

MS. E.M.: -- made me be, like, first of all, grateful, but how am I going to get the help for that so I don't go back to that? I mean, I put myself in numerous situations in, like, hotel rooms and stuff like that --

MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm. M'hm.

MS. E.M.: -- you know? Just being with, like, people I have no idea who they are or what they could do to me. You know, I'm lucky to have escaped situations that I've been in and just be, like, no, I'm sorry. Yeah, so I just -- did you notice how I said I'm sorry? That's -- I'm working on that. Criticism. Fear of criticism. That's where that came from. I don't like to let people down. I'm afraid of judgment. I'm afraid of -- you know, I work on that a lot, all the time.

MS. KERRIE REAY: But really, tied to all the comments you talked about, wanting to be loved and to
be accepted, criticism is the form of pushing somebody away.

**MS. E.M.:** Yeah.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** So it goes hand in hand that if you're looking for love, you don't want to be criticized, either.

**MS. E.M.:** No. I want to be totally accepted.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** Right.

**MS. E.M.:** You know, the people that I have -- well, the person I'm seeing right now, I probably offer way too much information. Like --

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** M'hm.

**MS. E.M.:** But I just want someone to know who I am. This is where I've been, this is what I've gone through, and that fear of being criticized, but I was like, you know what? I'm not going to grow or change, anything, unless I tell you who I am and where I've been.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** It's been a long journey for you, and you're at a place, I can hear, where it's -- this is who I am, love me as I am, accept me as I am.

**MS. E.M.:** But I don't need --

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** Because you're okay with who you are.
MS. E.M.: Yeah, I don't need -- I'm not looking for anybody to love me at this point.

MS. KERRIE REAY: But the acceptance of who you are.


MS. KERRIE REAY: It's, like, this is me.


MS. KERRIE REAY: And I'm happy with me.


MS. KERRIE REAY: I'm good for me.

MS. E.M.: I set a lot of boundaries, people from my past -- yeah, it's just -- people from your past, once you've done damage and they only know that side of you, some people are close-minded and don't want to know who you actually really are, and I'm okay with that. I'm like, if that's who you want to remember me by, that's okay, but I was also extremely sick, and -- telling people the truth. A lot of people can't handle that.

MS. KERRIE REAY: No.

MS. E.M.: They're just like, whoa, you're owning up to this? And I'm like, yeah, absolutely. And I recognize all that.

MS. S.M.: But they don't own up to what they've done.

MS. E.M.: No.
MS. KERRIE REAY: Well, and -- and it's like every -- one of my favorite memes or memes, however you pronounce it, is -- so an elephant with an umbrella in the back of the elephant, and it's basically saying, everybody carries a burden.


MS. KERRIE REAY: Don't judge.


MS. KERRIE REAY: Right? Be kind. Because we don't know what experiences people have had that have got them to where they have been.


MS. KERRIE REAY: Right? And so it's --


MS. KERRIE REAY: Yeah.

MS. E.M.: It's -- you know, it's like, I get through the whole, like, am I fighting through the control thing? Am I trying to have the power over this conversation, relationship, absolutely anything? But, like, I really have to stand firm in every relationship that I have that I'm -- my sponsor always teaches me, you have -- tells me, you have to teach people how you want to be treated, so that's -- if I set boundaries right off the bat, then there's no room for it to be something else that
it's actually not, because I know how easily persuade [sic] I am, so I just avoid all situations like that, and that's finding people who are okay with that. Like, to be, like, hey, I've worked in the sex industry, and if I use drugs and alcohol, this is who I'm going to become, like, that's fine. Like, if that's, like, a sexless relationship, then that's -- that's how it has to be. I'm totally fine with that. That's where I'm to at this point, because, like, looking for love from someone else is not -- I've looked my whole life for that, and now I'm just -- my main priority are my kids, my sobriety, and my school.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** Wow, you've come a long way.

**MS. E.M.:** Yeah.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** And you're working hard at keeping that way.

**MS. E.M.:** Absolutely. Yeah.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** Good for you.

Congratulations.

**MS. E.M.:** Thank you. I appreciate it.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** Yeah.

**MS. E.M.:** So that's where I am, and I just hope that -- male or female, because it's so common even in males. I've met a lot of men that --

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** M'hm.
MS. E.M.: -- have lived the same kind of life I have.

MS. KERRIE REAY: I'm sure.

MS. E.M.: Men don't -- men don't talk about it, but for some reason, once I start talking about it, like, if I share any of this --

MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm. M'hm.

MS. E.M.: -- in a recovery centre or an AA meeting or something like that, I'm guaranteed at least one person's coming up to me afterwards and being, like, thank you.

MS. KERRIE REAY: And even to open the door for somebody else a little bit.

MS. E.M.: Yeah. But it's been a lot of -- I did an interview with someone from Eastern Health talking about how to treat people when you go into a hospital that have -- that are suffering from what I've lived through, and I was like, all you got to do is listen to them. Don't look at them as a number. Calling them by name would be a start, not an eye roll. You know? That's all I wanted. When I went in to ask for help, that's all I wanted, someone to take five minutes out of their day to point me in the right direction, and --

MS. KERRIE REAY: And listen.

MS. E.M.: -- and listen, and I found that
in the support system that I have going on right now.

   MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm. Well --

   MS. E.M.: You know, like, my therapist wrote me yesterday. She was like, good luck, E.M., you know I'm here. Like, I really -- so, like, strong women in my life right now, and men. Like, I have a man sponsor because I need to develop, like, a healthy man/woman relationship, and, you know, he's -- he's teaching me that, and -- yeah. It's a learning curve. Doesn't happen overnight.

   MS. KERRIE REAY: No, and didn't take overnight to get where you got to --

   MS. E.M.: No.

   MS. KERRIE REAY: -- either, right? And I think that's part of that. It's part of -- you talked earlier about the eating disorders.


   MS. KERRIE REAY: A lot of that's about control and --

   MS. E.M.: Oh, that's -- that's something that is on -- it was -- it was so high on my recovery list to -- to deal with that, but I go to a women's processing group, and that's -- we talk about a lot of that, and it could be, like, on a day where it's, like -- you know, all different shapes and sizes, and it depends on what kind of
mood everybody's in. We don't talk about scales. We don't talk about food. It's just trying to be all positive, encouraging, like --

MS. KERRIE REAY: Right.

MS. E.M.: -- accepting who you are. If you're so -- the way I look at it, if you're so broken and damaged on the inside, how are you going to feel good the way that you look on the outside?

MS. KERRIE REAY: And often, people don't really see themselves on the outside when they look in the mirror.

MS. E.M.: Yeah, and you, like --

MS. KERRIE REAY: You don't.

MS. E.M.: You bank all those negative --

MS. KERRIE REAY: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. E.M.: -- comments that people --

MS. KERRIE REAY: File them all away.

MS. E.M.: Oh, yeah, and they're always the first ones to come there and be, like, yeah, do you remember that one time?

MS. KERRIE REAY: Yeah.

MS. E.M.: Yeah. I'm working on that.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Yeah. Well, you're working very well.

MS. E.M.: Thank you.
MS. KERRIE REAY: You can -- you can hear it in your voice, you can -- you can see it in your smile, you can see it in how you talk to your mom, and -- you know, the -- the body language is there about, yes, I -- I've got this, and -- and motivated by your children and your self-care, because I think that is the key, too, is -- is -- and you've said it over and over: I've got to take care of myself.


MS. KERRIE REAY: I've got to take care of myself first if I can be -- to be there for my kids, and to take --

MS. E.M.: It's the only way.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Yeah. And sometimes, that's a hard place to find.

MS. E.M.: It's --

MS. KERRIE REAY: You know? You --

MS. E.M.: -- so scary.

MS. KERRIE REAY: I bet.

MS. E.M.: Like, I have a -- a couple of girls that I sponsor, and that's the first thing that I say to them. I'm like, take care of you. If you're healthy and your cup is -- if your cup is full --

MS. KERRIE REAY: Yeah.

MS. E.M.: -- anything that's overflowing,
you have to offer that to people, but you have to make sure that your cup is full, and if it's not -- if it's not full, don't even bother. Like, take -- take care of yourself. That's...

MS. KERRIE REAY: And in terms -- can I ask, you don't have to answer.


MS. KERRIE REAY: In terms of your recovery plan, and you've -- you've identified the risks for yourself, and -- and I -- and I come back to your finding a lot of compassion in yourself and kindness to support other people.


MS. KERRIE REAY: Is that part of a risk factor for your own recovery? Have you identified that as -- as something -- when you use the word about the cup overflowing --


MS. KERRIE REAY: -- it -- I -- I just -- I thought to myself, you're doing so well. You know, if -- if that overflowing stops --


MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay. Okay.

MS. E.M.: I have a couple of younger
friends. They're just starting out in recovery, and I didn't have any boundaries set with them, so, like, they're 19 and 20. They're just trying to get off, like, hard drugs.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** Uh-huh.

**MS. E.M.:** I try to interact with people that don't have the same drug of choice as me.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay. It's safer?

**MS. E.M.:** It -- it is, because if one's going to relapse, I'm -- like, I was a cocaine and alcohol.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay.

**MS. E.M.:** And if these people are injecting opiates, I'm not going to go from cocaine and alcohol to shooting opiates, like, overnight. That's not how it goes. If you're, like, a drug addict, you find your way back to that drug of choice.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay.

**MS. E.M.:** But, yeah, these people have a hard time, and I got really emotionally connected, so when they relapsed, I took it to heart. I took it personally, but then I had to go to my sponsor and build a little plan for me to keep myself safe.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** Good. Good.

**MS. E.M.:** And that's what I do, and it's nothing to them. It's just I come first, and that's what I
had to say to them. I'm like, I go into these meetings and I volunteer, you know, a couple hours of my time to talk to them throughout the day, like hey, how's it going, kind of thing, but other than that, I've always been a people-pleaser, go out of my way to make other people happy. I don't -- I can't do that.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** Good for you. Good for you.

**MS. E.M.:** Yeah.

**MS. S.M.:** It was nice to hear her laughing this morning.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** Ah. Good.

**MS. E.M.:** Yeah, we had -- I'm so excited to be here. Like, even --

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** Oh, good.

**MS. E.M.:** -- this is -- while we're here, I was like -- I was saying, I haven't -- I don't remember the last time you and I have done anything like this. Maybe 10. I remember -- have a memory of being in Toronto with my mom when we were 10.

**MS. S.M.:** We lost just our -- our closeness.

**MS. KERRIE REAY:** M'hm.

**MS. S.M.:** And it was gradually going, going, going, and even the 28th of February when she came
to tell me that she was a drug addict and an alcoholic, I did everything I could, you know, that first month of March. There was disappointments with her relapsing, but when it happened the second time, two days I had her (indiscernible).

MS. E.M.: She took action, yeah. And that's the thing. Like --

MS. S.M.: Yeah.

MS. E.M.: A lot of my recovery is -- you're so selfish with you're doing all of these things. You don't realize -- one addict affects 30 other people in their life, and we don't recognize that, and I mean, I can only imagine -- like, I've gone through some stuff with my son, and it affects me, but I got that strength because even though my mom -- my mom did set boundaries because she had to take care of herself after this, because I'm a grown adult. If you're not going to take action for your own life, no other can do it for you, so I understand that. I don't take any of that to heart. I truly believe, and I say it a lot, I feel -- I watch a lot of it in the past year and a half. A lot of people in recovery, if their parents are buttering their bread for them, they fail. My family were just like, you're a grown adult, we're here, we love you, kids are going to be taken care of, but you've got to take control of your own life. I honestly feel if I
had my family to enable me, I wouldn't be where I'm to right now.

MS. S.M.: And it's her journey.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Yes. And -- and with your mom who's had -- had sobriety for 18 years, there's a strength there --


MS. KERRIE REAY: -- that helps you do what you need to do --


MS. KERRIE REAY: -- because you know she's there. That's what I -- I'm sensing and hearing.


MS. S.M.: I've never been ashamed or embarrassed of her or her sister.

MS. E.M.: I don't get that feeling from you. I feel -- no, not at all. I feel if anything, we come from a judgmental family; a lot of sick people on my mom's side and my dad's side, absolutely. I'm not worried about the judgment. I -- like you just said, about -- it stops -- it's stopping right here, so anything beyond right here, right now is only in their memory, honestly, and if they're going to live in that memory, that's on them, and if they're not going to see -- not a lot of parents stand by their kids and, like, would come and do this; like, me
being able to talk about this in front of my mom,

it's -- it's just that freedom of not -- it not being a

secret or -- you know, my ex-husband, like, he knew I was

working in the sex industry, and he tried to manipulate me

like it was a secret, and I said it to my social worker, I

was like, there's nothing that anyone in any part of the

world can tell you that I haven't already told you. It's

always going to come out of my mouth first --

  MS. KERRIE REAY: Right.

  MS. E.M.: -- before it comes out of anybody

else because it's my life. It was --

  MS. KERRIE REAY: It's your story --


  MS. KERRIE REAY: -- it's your truth, and

it's your journey.


  MS. S.M.: I have -- I have anger built up

on -- with some of the people that she's encountered

through this -- the drug journey.

  MS. KERRIE REAY: Right.

  MS. S.M.: And -- because of -- I guess not

the criticism but the remarks of, well, look where you came

from.


  MS. S.M.: The dysfunctional family.
But -- they might have thought we were dysfunctional, but I -- I was always home.


MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm. M'hm.

MS. S.M.: I'd get off work and home. I was never a downtown person. No matter what was written in a court paper from her father --


MS. S.M.: -- that was put before lawyers and a judge --

MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm. M'hm.

MS. S.M.: -- which was totally all lies, and -- because I was never a downtown person. I was never -- I was home all the time.

MS. E.M.: All the time.

MS. S.M.: Didn't matter.

MS. KERRIE REAY: It's always easy for people to sit in judgment, right?

MS. E.M.: No. Yeah. But that's on them. They're taking that --

MS. KERRIE REAY: That's right.

MS. E.M.: -- to the grave.

MS. KERRIE REAY: That's their own. That's their own.

MS. E.M.: Only we know what was --
MS. KERRIE REAY: The truth.


MS. S.M.: One thing I've always said to my girls, grow -- rearing them up, even when they went away, and -- was that we'll say if they ask for something, we will say, but they didn't. Didn't -- (indiscernible) have happened the next day, but they did get what they wanted.

MS. KERRIE REAY: And did -- one of the things that you briefly touched on at the beginning, and it's something that the -- the Commission is -- is looking at, as well, and that's the systemic -- and not just the intergenerational violence but the systemic racism and discrimination, and you briefly referenced it at the beginning, and -- is there anything you would like to say?

MS. E.M.: I've -- you know, I've thought about that, and I have had people when they find out that, you know, I'm Mi'gmaq and stuff, they'd, like -- oh, and I'm like, what does that "oh" mean? You know? Like -- like, really, what -- what does that mean? And they're like, well, I get, you know, where you're coming from and why you turned out, like, the way that you have, and it's just, like, wow, you know what I mean? It's just like, I feel that if you live in a little tiny place, right, and you don't know any different, you don't -- you're not shown any outside hope or anything, and
I can say this because I went to rehab with a -- with a beautiful woman that goes -- that lives in Nain, and it was the first time I'd ever met anyone that came from such an isolated community, and she kind of intimidated me the first time that I met her because how she looked on the outside was how I felt on the inside. She presented herself like I've been through everything, don't look at me, I'm here, I need help; and I did the complete opposite of what she would have expected. I went up, and I became -- like, latched onto her. Like, she even said it to me, when I hugged her, she was like, that is the first time that she's had -- like, that she -- if she would call me right now, she would, like, I'd love to give you a hug, and she -- how fast she, like, opened up to me, and -- you know, like, when I was in rehab, I was trying to get her to not go back to Nain and go into the city and go into the Native Friendship Centre and see what could be offered to her to give her a different way of life, you know? I was like, you don't have to settle for just -- for just that.

MS. KERRIE REAY: You said you -- you said small community, so were you from a community outside of St. John's?


MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay. Just referencing St. John's --

MS. KERRIE REAY: -- is a smaller community?


MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay.

MS. S.M.: I mean, when E.M. talks about this young girl, she came and she was dressed in all men's clothes.

MS. E.M.: All men's clothes, yeah.

MS. S.M.: Right from the runners too big for her.

MS. E.M.: Her boyfriend's pants, her boyfriend's shoes.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Oh, dear.

MS. E.M.: Yeah. Actually, to tell you the truth, we'd only took, like, little -- we had got to bring two 50-pound bags for us for our own personal stuff, but we only packed backpacks, and we packed a 50-pound suitcase of clothes that we had in our house that we were no longer going to have -- to use, and we called the shelter here this morning to see if we could drop it off to the women.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Isn't that nice.

MS. E.M.: But they said that we had to drop it off somewhere else because they don't specifically take donations. So yeah, we have somewhere that we're going to drop that off to before we leave.
MS. S.M.: Tomorrow.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Oh, okay. That's lovely.

MS. S.M.: I want to do -- apparently, there's a lot of homeless here as well.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Oh, okay.

MS. E.M.: Try to do something --

MS. KERRIE REAY: Oh, that's -- that's --

MS. E.M.: -- for them along the way.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay that's -- that's lovely. That's very, very nice. That's the kindness, right? Kindness and the love. Yeah.

MS. S.M.: We have a lot of empathy for other people.

MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm.

MS. E.M.: Absolutely. No judgment. Like I said to my mom in the airport, I was like, what kind of locals are we going to talk to? That's all I want to do. Like, I'm not even joking. Like, I'm excited to go to the AA meeting. I'm so excited.

MS. KERRIE REAY: And what time does it start?


MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay. Well, we are at 7:15.

MS. KERRIE REAY: So just so you know. So is there anything else that you think would be important from your experiences and your lens (indiscernible)?

MS. S.M.: Strange that once people find out that we're Mi'gmaq, we're looked at totally different.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Is -- is -- can I ask, is that being First Nation, or is that being Mi’gmaq? Because it's just the way you said it. I'm not quite sure.

MS. S.M.: Well, we only got accepted into First Nations last week.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Oh, okay.

MS. S.M.: Right? But as of the 31st of August, we are stripped of our -- we're no longer Mi’gmaq. We're going to be considered white people.

MS. KERRIE REAY: And -- and we had briefly -- you had briefly spoken about that before we got on the record, and you're not really sure if that's a decision of the Mi’gmaq band or if this is coming from the Federal Government?

MS. S.M.: Yeah. One is claiming the other.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay.

MS. S.M.: But we are first-generation Mi’gmaq.

MS. KERRIE REAY: First-generation Mi’gmaq?

MS. S.M.: My -- my father was on the 1945
census as a French Indian.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay.

MS. S.M.: That's what they called them back then.

MS. KERRIE REAY: So Métis?


MS. KERRIE REAY: No? Oh, okay.

MS. S.M.: That's what Mi’gmaq is. French.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Oh, okay.

MS. S.M.: We're -- we're Jackatar.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay. I'm from the west coast, so please excuse --


MS. KERRIE REAY: I don't -- I don't know the differences. I -- I know some, but --

MS. S.M.: Well, French Indian is Jackatar.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Oh, okay.

MS. S.M.: Yeah.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay. And that's Mi’gmaq?

MS. S.M.: Yeah.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay. All right.

MS. S.M.: But we didn't -- we got accepted, got our status. Now they're going to take our names off the register, which means I guess 1st September, we're white people instead of being...
MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay. Well, that doesn't really sit well, does it?

MS. S.M.: Doesn't sit well with me. I'm broken-hearted, and --

MS. E.M.: You're awfully dark to be a white person.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Yeah, I know. (LAUGHTER)

MS. S.M.: I...

MS. KERRIE REAY: Is there any recourse? Is there any avenues for you to --

MS. S.M.: No. No. They're telling us no because the Mi’gmaq of Newfoundland were never recognized.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Oh.

MS. S.M.: Because in 1949, Joey Smallwood at the time said there were no Mi’gmaq left in Newfoundland.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Oh.

MS. S.M.: That there's no --

MS. KERRIE REAY: And at 1949, it was confederation. Is that --

MS. S.M.: They joined the confederate --

MS. KERRIE REAY: -- is that -- is that the --

MS. S.M.: They joined confederation, but they took the census from 1945 for to start this band up,
and we proved our lineage --

MS. KERRIE REAY: M'hm.

MS. S.M.: -- and now they came back and said, no, you can't be a part.

MS. KERRIE REAY: And so the alternative would be to have to take it to a court?

MS. S.M.: We're in court.

MS. KERRIE REAY: You are in court?

MS. S.M.: Yeah.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay. Well, good luck, because that just doesn't seem right.

MS. E.M.: No.

MS. S.M.: I think the most important part of all this is to show the injustice, the wrongdoings, the stealing, the changing of records, the using of wrong identifications on women like my great grandmother. You know, why would someone want to use my great grandmother and say that -- that she's their great grandmother when...

MS. KERRIE REAY: Oh, so there's been -- so if I'm hearing you, there's a manipulation --

MS. S.M.: Big.

MS. KERRIE REAY: -- of the records --

MS. S.M.: Yes.

MS. KERRIE REAY: -- is what you're saying?

MS. S.M.: Yes.
MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay.

MS. S.M.: So it's been very heart-breaking.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Yes. Oh, dear.

MS. S.M.: And -- you know, like, people getting awards, doctorates, the whole gamut, and they're rewriting history to fit their story.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay. And when you -- just for the record, this is S.M., E.M.'s mom talking, [one line redacted - identifying information]?

MS. S.M.: Yes, I did.

MS. KERRIE REAY: [One line redacted - identifying information]?

MS. S.M.: Yeah.

MS. KERRIE REAY: [One line redacted - identifying information]--

MS. S.M.: No. [One line redacted - identifying information]--

MS. KERRIE REAY: [One line redacted - identifying information].

MS. S.M.: -- [One line redacted - identifying information].

MS. KERRIE REAY: Yeah.

MS. S.M.: Some of my prayers that I put in front of everyone that I'm praying for my father and my grandmother and my great grandmother to have the
recognition that they should have had, and we're -- and for
us, myself and my daughter, my grandchildren, we are all
being stripped of -- it's just like a rape. You know, like
they're -- they're taking what? First time in my life that
I could have something to say that it's mine, and it's
gone.

MS. KERRIE REAY: And what I'm hearing is
the band, although they are the ones taking you off the
registry, are laying the blame with the Canadian
government.

MS. S.M.: Yeah.

MS. KERRIE REAY: I sense from you, though,
you think it's the band.

MS. S.M.: The Federal Government wouldn't
know who S.M. is. It's the band who gives the information.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Hm.

MS. S.M.: It's the band who made the
regulations. It's the band who made the changes.

MS. KERRIE REAY: And the band is people who
are elected officials --

MS. S.M.: Yes.

MS. KERRIE REAY: -- to the -- to the band.

MS. S.M.: Who are fifth, sixth generation,
and not first --

MS. KERRIE REAY: Right.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay.

MS. S.M.: We go back seven generations.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Yes.

MS. S.M.: And, you know, it's just -- but it will be fought out in court, and I will be there every day.

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay.

MS. S.M.: With a cushion to sit on.

(LAUGHTER)

MS. KERRIE REAY: And so, E.M., just to cycle back to the beginning, we talked about the consent.

[Registrar’s note: off-the-record discussion about consent omitted].

MS. KERRIE REAY: -- that -- and that will be public. Okay. Well, such courage to come here, and thank you on behalf of the Inquiry and the commissioners for sharing your truth. It's such an important truth, and thank you for trusting me to share, and on behalf of the Inquiry, in reciprocity, we have some white sage seeds for you to take home --

MS. E.M.: Thank you.

MS. KERRIE REAY: -- and to plant, and there is also -- Petra Turcotte, who is our senior archivist with the Inquiry, is interested in pictures as it grows, if you
like, so --


MS. S.M.: Oh.

(LAUGHTER)

MS. KERRIE REAY: Okay. So it is 7:25.

--- Upon adjourning at 7:25 p.m.
LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST’S CERTIFICATE

I, Jenessa Leriger, 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.

Jenessa Leriger

September 10, 2018