National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part I Statement Gathering
Hilton Vancouver Airport Hotel
Metro Vancouver (Richmond)
British Columbia

PUBLIC

Sunday April 8, 2018
Statement - Volume 397
Sharna Sugarman
Statement gathered by Sheila Mazhari

Charest Reporting Services
ORDER

Pursuant to Rule 7 of *Legal Path: Rules of Respectful Practice*, Chief Commissioner Marion Buller ordered that all names save that of the witness be rendered anonymous in this transcript and any related documents. This order was made February 21, 2019.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Statement Volume 397  
April 8, 2018  
Sharna Sugarman

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Testimony of Sharna Sugarman</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporter’s Certification</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement Gatherer: Sheila Mazhari</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List of documents provided by witness:

Item 1. Recommendations to the MMIWG Inquiry (one page double-sided)
SHEILA MAZHARI: Okay. So hello my name is Sheila Mazhari here statement gathering with the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Today is April 8th, 2018. We're here to receive the testimony of Sharna Sugarman. And we're at the Hilton hotel in room 209 in Richmond, BC. I'm going to read the consent for public statements. The information you share will normally be shared firstly with the governments and the other parties withstanding at the inquiry. The parties withstanding include such organizations as the Native Women's Association of Canada, police services, assembly of First Nations, and many others including some individual First Nations. However all of these governments and organizations are required to sign confidentiality agreements and are legally bound not to share the information or details you or others speaking to the national inquiry provide. If your statement is considered public or is given in a public forum, your full name and transcript of everything you have said on audio and videotape will be transcribed into a statement which is legally required to be provided to the governments and the parties withstanding. A public statement can also be used to write public reports, prepare educational materials, support research or question witnesses such as police witnesses.

So what have you chosen for your consent?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: I've chosen to go public.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Perfect.

SHARNA SUGARMAN: I think it's vital, not just for my story, but for me to add, you know, substance to the inquiry. I think it's anybody's personal perspective if they want to keep it private or if they want to go public, so yeah.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Thank you. All right. Let's go into the introduction.

SHARNA SUGARMAN: My name is Sharna Marie Sugarman. And I was born [date of birth], 1969 in Lethbridge,
Alberta. I am a Sixties scoop child, which I have recently found out through the other part that the federal government is -- the other process that they're doing. I was adopted at 11 months of age and grew up in Kingston, Ontario. And I had -- I came from a -- raised in a middle-class family. I had two older brothers. My beloved father -- I consider him my father -- passed away when I was 12 and that was very devastating for me. My adopted mother and I were never tremendously close, and it makes sense why; that will become part of my story.

And I am educated. I have a BA with honours in psychology, I have a masters with honours in abnormal psychology, and I have one pending in criminology. I am a social justice advocate and have been for close to 30 years. I am also a mental health and addictions counsellor. I volunteer my time here in the Downtown Eastside helping the women. I have pushed for this inquiry in my own capacity for a very long time. I have written to my MLAs, my MP, and the prime minister. And I also would like to see an extension given to the inquiry. I think it's vital.

I think it is, like, you know -- it's, like, making a pie. You can't, you know -- if you -- you have to have enough substance and ingredients in the centre in order for it to be complete. And they have got half of the ingredients, but they need the rest for in order for it to be -- to come to fruition. So I support that and I have written to Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Carolyn Bennett in my capacities as a First Nations aboriginal.

I have a beautiful 17-year-old daughter who is the light of my life. She is a beautiful child. And I have raised her in an advocate’s lifestyle. She does her own advocacy and volunteers her time as well with the homeless down in the Downtown Eastside. She's been doing that since she was little. I used to take her into the parks in Kingston and help with the homeless. And she -- for her fifth birthday and her eight birthday, she didn't want any presents and she asked for any donations for the homeless and the food bank and the SPCA. And she got so
much money, it was ridiculous. So she was
really, really proud of that and she does that
every year now. She asks her friends to --
instead of buying her something, is to donate to
their favourite cause. So I am very proud of her
on that part.

She's very much wanting to get involved with
mental health and addictions. I have, sadly, in
the last almost two years of living down here in
the Lower Mainland gone through 13 narcan kits
with overdoses, sadly, due to the fentanyl
crisis. That plays a role -- the way that I look
at the inquiry and all the atrocities that have
happened to my people, to me it's like a tree
that's diseased. And the branches branch out.
One of it is for the residential school
survivors; one of it is for the murdered and
missing; you know, another branch is for the
mental health and addictions and the fentanyl
crisis. You know, the other ones are how the
bands are treating their own members. The
discrimination that happens, the racism that
happens, you know, our loss of our culture, the
truth and reconciliation commission, all of this
stuff.

And in order for this tree to heal, we need
to feed it all of the tears and all the
heartache, but also the power and the empowerment
that had come from this, from the women, from the
families, from the people that are trying to
raise their sons to be better, to not hit women,
to respect women, to raise strong daughters,
strong sisters, strong aunties. And to respect
our elders. And for all of that to feed the tree
because we only have one planet. We only have
mother earth, and she is so battered right now.
And she is angry and she has every right to be.

So that's what I look at all of this and, of
course, the atrocities that the federal
government and the catholic church have done to
my people. It doesn't surprise me that the pope
has not offered an apology to the residential
school survivors. If he did, it would be opening
up probably one of the biggest class action suits
in the world.

You know, I'm a Sixties scoop child and I
was taken from my family and placed in a
non-Indigenous family. But it was still my family.

My story is I've been a very outspoken person in my community against any type of injustice and generally injustices that have happened where the police are concerned. I do have friends that are still police officers with the Kingston Police Force. I've heard their stories and their opinions on why they haven't moved up in the ranks because they don't want to deal or have any leadership over these kids that they say have no respect, that are here just for the paycheque, that are bullies, that are goofs. You know, some of them said they're assholes.

There's all these different things.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Police officers?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Police officers speaking about their own police officers. So I have had some officers that have commended me with my work, being in the parks in the middle of the night, trying to help the youth to wonder why a 14-year-old boy is -- 3:00 o'clock in the morning in a park and Skeleton Park in Kingston. And I have had cops say, Well, he's a little punk-ass. He's a little drug dealer or whatever. And I'm, like, I don't look at that. I wonder why a 14-year-old child isn't home. Why isn't he home? What's going on at home for why he doesn't want to be there? Is there abuse? Is there drugs? Is there alcohol? Is there sexual abuse? Is there anybody there that even cares?

So what I have noticed and when I have been outspoken and living in low-income areas as I put myself through post secondary and grad school, is I'd have officers, you know -- I would call them for, you know, whatever it was. If there was a disturbance next door, a domestic violence, and I would have officers say to me, well -- I had one cop come in my house one day and say, Oh, it's actually nice in here. And I looked at him and I said, Actually nice in here? I said, What were you expecting? A couple of milk crates and a pizza box?

I said, I didn't bring you in here to critique my house. I came in here [sic] because, you know, a girl next door is covered in bruises and she's got a jerk for a boyfriend or whatever.
I'd have had other police officers say, Look where you live, Ms. Sugarman. And I say, I live in the City of Kingston. Where do you live? I said, Oh, I said, because I don't live in the affluent area of town, so then you would take me more seriously? And you're also saying, what, that I should have to put up with this kind of behaviour because I'm living here? I'm living here because this is what I can afford. I'm putting myself through school and I am a single parent, so I can't afford to pay $2,000 in rent. I'm paying 800 or 900, whatever I am paying. That's not the point. You work for the City of Kingston, so you work and you're supposed to serve and protect all of the citizens. You don't get to pick and choose.

So what happened with my story was I believe that I was being targeted by certain members of the Kingston Police Force because I was outspoken. I don't -- I never had a criminal record in my life. I have never been charged with anything. And my daughter and I were living in a triplex and the couple that lived below us, it looked like the boyfriend was selling drugs because there were people coming and going at all hours. He would go out to this shared shed that we had, though it even had dividers in it, and I couldn't understand why he was in there two, three, four times a day considering all he had in there was typical tools and couple of bicycles and recycling bins.

But he would go into the shed and come back out but never have anything to show for it. It's not like he came out with garbage bags or his bike. And then people would stop by. And normally I don't normally care about that, but what bothered me there was one time in the summer and it was hot and I had my back door open to get a breeze, and these two young guys came upstairs and they thought it was his unit. And they asked for him by name.

And I looked at them and I said, No, this isn't his unit; he lives downstairs. And I could tell they were sketched out. They were, like, you know -- and I looked at them and I said, Wow. So I showed them to the door -- and my two dogs at the time too weren't happy that they kind of
Sharna Sugarman

walked in the house. So I walked downstairs with
them and I could -- down the back stairs, like,
the patio stairs, and I could hear them. And
they were itching to get their fix. And I am
just, like, I am not having this around my
daughter.

So I talked to the landlords about it and
they were really shocked by it. They were, like,
Oh, we never thought that, whatever. And I am,
like, Well, you know, if he does it off property,
I don't care. But I don't need two sketched out
guys coming to my back door. My daughter was,
like, 8 years old at the time. And I said, I
don't need that around me.

And the landlord was a very aggressive guy.
He was Caucasian; his wife was Asian and she
seemed very, very docile around him. They had
six children. He was really, really abusive to
his one son when he was there cutting the grass.
Like, he would yell at him, he would yell at the
wife, you're not doing it properly. Just really
abusive.

And our toilet had broken down in my unit.
And they were supposed to come by and fix it and
replace it. So they showed up, they hadn't even
given proper notice to come into my unit. And I
come home and they're in my unit. And I am kind
of, like, What are you doing in my house? And
the husband is, like, I'm allowed to be in here;
I own the place. And I am, like, No, that's not
how this works. This isn't an emergency. It's
not like the house is on fire or there's a flood
or something. And he didn't respect the
Residential Tenancy Act. He's, like, It's my way
or the highway. And I am, like, Yeah, no.

So he went. And he had this huge toolbox
and he made his wife -- and I am not kidding,
this toolbox was huge. It had to weigh about
80 pounds easily. And he made her carry it into
the bathroom. And I could see in her -- he drove
a really nice sedan and he drove a really nice
truck and she drove this old Ford Escort. This
really old beat up car. And he was going to take
my toilet off. And I went and looked in the back
of her vehicle. There was no new toilet anywhere
to be found.

So I called him and I said, You're not
taking my toilet off without a new one here. And he was that kind of guy, like, he was really -- you know, he was cocky, he was ignorant, he was all these things, and I looked at him and I said -- I said to him -- I called him on it. I said, You're planning on taking my toilet and leaving me without one, aren't you? And he's, like, Yeah, that's probably what I am going to do. And I said, You need to leave now. I said, I'm not putting up with this.

I said, You may be able to treat her like this and talk down to her and belittle your children, you don't do that in my house.

So at first he wasn't going to leave. And I said, You leave or I call the police. I said, for one, I said, You're illegally in my house. You're not supposed to be in here without 24-hour written notice. So they got up to leave and then he's, like, I'm going to get my toolbox. And I went like this to him and I said, I'll go get it or she can get it, but you're not coming back in my house. Well, he walked towards me and started calling me all these names including the C-word and said, You don't talk to me like that. And he walked into my hand. And I just kept it like this and I said, You are not going any farther than my kitchen; get out.

So he went outside and he was swearing all the way down the stairs. I had never really met him before. I had always dealt with the wife. But I did get the feeling -- she was the type of woman when he was around and if it presented itself where he was attacking somebody else, then she would feel more empowered and be a little bit more -- you know, but if it was him towards her or the children, she was very docile and she was scared and meek. So she was a little bit more courageous around him where I was concerned. And I just looked at her and I said, I don't know how you put up with this. That's abusive.

So she got the toolbox and I -- she could hardly even pick it up, so I picked it up. And I put it out on the front -- on the back stoop and I said, he can take it from there. And next thing I know, I called the police because I said I'm not -- I don't want him back in my house unless it's through legal -- you know, he can
have a plumber here or whatever. I said, I am
not -- he's a menace. He was quite a large man
too. Next thing I know, the police show up in my
house and I'm thinking they are there because I
called them. They come into my house and they
arrested me for assault. They said this was
assault. I had assaulted him.

My landlords had gone down to the police
department, said that I had assaulted him, said
that I had been harassing their downstairs
tenants -- the guy that's been selling drugs for
the past three months that I have noticed. I
took down license plates, I spoke to the drug
unit. They were all confirming that, yes, that
sounds very much like drug-related behaviour.

I had given blood at the police station
where they had a blood services clinic, talked to
an inspector there about the behaviour that I had
seen, and he said, That completely sounds drug
indicative. That is just, like, textbook. And
he said, Have you talked to our drug unit? And I
said, Yeah, I know one of your officers. I've
talked to him. I have got his cell number. I've
talked to him personally. All that stuff.

And they're, like, Good, sounds good. They
said, We don't need that -- you know, all that
stuff. So next thing I know, this cop has put --
and I am supposed to write a huge exam the next
day. I have got my books all over the place.
That was the other thing that bothered me is they
were in my house and I am, like, I have an exam
tomorrow morning at 9:00 A.M., a three-hour exam.
You have no business being in my house. Like, I
had my -- made sure my daughter was picked up at
school and stuff so I could study. And so they
put cuffs on me, they're leading me down the
stairs, I have still got, like, lounge pants on.
I had flip flops. They wouldn't even allow me to
put proper shoes on and a sweatshirt. The cop
behind me, who I believe his name was [Officer 1], I
have got a female cop ahead of me, then there's
me and then there's the cop. And he leans into
the back of my hair and says, I knew we would get
you at some time, you fucking bitch. And I just
sort of turned and looked at him. I have never
been arrested in my life. I don't have a
criminal record.
My mother, my estranged mother, was trying to get more access to my only child and she had already tried, you know, through letters and all this stuff. And I said you're disrespecting my authority as the parent. She was taking her around my daughter's biological father who had nothing to do with her and it was against my wishes.

SHEILA MAZHARI: This is your biological mother or your adopted mother?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: My adopted mother. But my daughter's biological father.

So I cut off access and I said until you respect my words and my rules, no more. And so I get to the police station and I am booked and all of that stuff. Then I'm in a room and this police officer by the name Detective [Detective 1] comes in.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Can you spell that?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: [ Spells Detective 1’s name].

SHEILA MAZHARI: And how about officer [Officer 1]?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: I'm not sure what his first name is. [Officer 1] would be [spells name], I believe is how you spell it. And he was Caucasian. Very, very pale. His hair was, like, blond blond blond. [Detective 1] I knew only because her younger sister and I had known each other since public school and, ironically, [Woman A] moved onto the street I grew up and she was only two doors down from my mother's house.

[Detective 1] walks into the interview room, and I am kind of shocked to see her at first. But she's not in police clothing; she's in civilian clothes because she's a detective. And I am, like, Hi [Detective 1]. And she's, like -- she told the brass that she wanted this case because she knew my family. Well, she didn't know my family. She knew my family but she didn't know any of us personally. And I looked at her and I said, You have asked to be on this case? And she said, Yeah. And I said, How is that not a conflict of interest? How exactly are you supposed to be objective and not biased?

And I attributed it to her nephew, [Woman A]'s eldest son and my daughter are about six months apart, and the kids used to play together on my mother's front yard. And there
was one time she was there with [Woman A]'s kids and [Child A] was acting up and wasn't listening. And when [Woman A] -- excuse me, when [Detective 1] took him back in the house -- and he was a boy's boy. He was, like, definitely a boy's boy. And she kept telling him what to do and he wasn't listening. And when she let him back up into her sister's house, when she opened up the door and he went in, she slapped him across the back of the head.

And [Child A] was the type of kid that he would hold his tears in until there was nobody around. Like, even if he fell off his bike. He was a tough kid. I heard him cry inside the house. I had never seen [Woman A] or brother-in-law [Man A] ever spank their children, let alone cuff them in the back of the head. And I called her on it when she came back out. And I said, What do you think you're doing? And she looked at me like I was from Mars and she's like, What do you mean?

And I said, Why did you just smack [Child A] across the back of the head? She's like, You need to mind your own business. I said, I am minding my own business. I said, I have never seen [Woman A] or [Man A] ever, ever, not even spank [Child B] and [Child A], let alone do that.

And I end up taking [Daughter] and leaving sort of the play group and I said, I am disgusted in you. I said, Do you think because you're a cop that you get to do that kind of behaviour? Because I don't even believe inspanking children. I have never laid a hand on my daughter. I just -- to me it teaches violence. That's the way that I see it.

So when she came in and it was just that summer, so this is only, like, two months later that all of a sudden she's the lead on my case. And I said, What exactly am I being charged with?

So I was being charged with criminal harassment of the couple downstairs for making false reports about him selling drugs and going to their landlords. And I was being charged with assault because apparently this is assault, even though he walked into my hand. And I said, Assault on what? I was absolutely blown with that. I looked at her and I said, Who the hell -- who did I punch? What are you talking about?
So, again, let me reiterate this. I have never been arrested in my life; I have never been charged. They put me in Quinte detention centre.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Can you spell that?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Quinte is Q-u-i-n-t-e Detention Centre. And it's in Napanee. It's just outside of Kingston. It would be a 40- to 50-minute paddy-wagon drive.

So I looked at her and I said, You're putting me in jail? I have never been arrested in my life. This is not like it's some indictable offense. These are summary charges. And I looked at her and she said, Well, you can't return to where you live at the triplex. The landlords don't want you there. And she said, And the people downstairs don't want you there either. And I said, Fine, then. I'll stay at a friend's house or I'll stay at a hotel. She put me in Quinte Detention Centre, and there's no doubt in my mind the only reason I was there is I'm outspoken and I am Indigenous.

So I went to Quinte Detention Centre for the weekend and ended up hiring [Lawyer 1] who was a renowned criminal defence attorney in my home town.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Can you spell his --

SHARNA SUGARMAN: [Lawyer 1].

And he took on my case. When I was in the jail cell after I was processed, the cop that I knew on the drug unit that I had spoken with, his name is [Officer 3], was coming in to give everybody that was staying there, they buy McDonalds is basically what they do. So he was coming in to give me a hamburger and fries. And I will never forget it when the cell opened and he walked in and he saw me, and he did, like, a double-take. And he's, like, What are you doing in here? And I looked at him and I said, [Officer 3], I would really like to know that too. I said, I have no clue.

And he was dumbfounded. He just looked at me and he was just, like, Sharna. And I was, like, Yeah. And he's, like -- and I said, You need to talk to somebody. I said, I need to know why I'm in here.

SHEILA MAZHARI: How do we spell his last name?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: [Spells name].
SHEILA MAZHARI: [Officer 3]?  
SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yes.  
SHEILA MAZHARI: Just for the record. Because sometimes it's spelled ...  
SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yeah. So I spend the night there in the cell. The other thing that was really, really embarrassing and humiliating was I got my period that morning. And I bled and I asked for feminine products. And you're in a cell and you have got one of those stainless steel, you know, all-in-one toilet things. You're on a cement bunk, no mat, no nothing. It was heated, that was only thing, but they still had the air conditioning on. It was freezing in there. So the only heat I got was from -- that emanated from the cement. I bled through my pants. They never brought me any feminine products and I kept asking for it.

I was taken to Quinte Detention Centre. And even some of the guards there that I knew personally but some of them I also knew through my advocacy, again, they were, like, What are you doing here? And I was, like, Yep.

So I was on -- I'm on SSRIs, which are antidepressants, serotonin reuptake inhibitors. And I didn't get my medication in all that weekend. So that's another injustice that happens. I did see the nurse. They said -- I told them that they could call Shoppers Drug Mart, which was my pharmacy. They never did. So I went into withdrawal.

I was also at the time in the -- I was in the public population with the females. I recognized a couple of the females that I had advocated for. One of them recognized me and the other one did not recognize me because she was too out of it from drug use. I managed to -- that weekend I was put into what they call -- it's sort of, like, on good behaviour. So they moved me out of the general into the protective custody -- it's sort of, like, a -- there's a cell room where there's, like, five different beds all in one room, and it's for good behaviour. So then I was allowed to do -- you're allowed to do chores, so I was doing stuff with the laundry.

When I met with [Lawyer 1], to my
recollection, I told him under no circumstance do not come to me with a plea. We are taking this right to trial. I am not pleading guilty to anything because I haven't done anything wrong.

So he took it to chambers in regards to the assault because I explained to him. And he got some disclosure from the Crown. So they went to chambers, and I believe it was Judge Beaman was her name, so it would be B-e-a-m-a-n. Judith Beaman, I believe her name was.

So they went to --

SHEILA MAZHARI: This is in Kingston?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: This is in Kingston. They went to discuss the assault charge, and Justice Beaman came back and said that's not assault. If she did this and she was just saying you're not coming back in and he walked into her hand, that's on him; that's not on her. So it was thrown out. It still comes up on my CPIC, though. It just says no charges ever laid, but it says "assault." So ...

SHEILA MAZHARI: CPIC?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Canadian Police Information -- Canadian Police Information something. Anyway, we call it CPIC. You guys call it Police Clearance, I think out here.

So he was really mystified. And then I remember [Lawyer 1] telling me that he was going to Australia for, like, six weeks. So usually December is -- like, I had got charged in October. It was actually Thanksgiving day weekend. So I spent the whole weekend in jail.

SHEILA MAZHARI: So what was the date of the incident with the landlords? Do you remember?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: I think it was somewhere around October 8th because I remember my mother's birthday is [birthdate]. And that was the long weekend. It was a Thursday, I think that it happened, because I had my exam the next day.

SHEILA MAZHARI: In what year?


SHEILA MAZHARI: Okay. And what happened to your exam? Are you going to go into that?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yeah, I ended up talking to my profs and all that stuff. This is my criminology masters that is on hold. So that still hasn't come to fruition. One also because it's very
expensive to go through school and that's part of this as well that my band won't pay for any of my post secondary education.

So I'm in jail over the long -- long Thanksgiving day weekend. My daughter has no clue where I am. My mother got an -- hired a -- we had a hearing in September in family court where Justice Robertson had told my mother -- also, at the time I think my mother was about 70 years of age, something like that -- and she told my mother -- like, she had no grounds. Like, she basically said, You're not going to win this case. Like, Sharna isn't a drug addict, she doesn't beat her child, she's in post secondary, she's in grad school. You know, you're just defying her wants and her way she's raising her daughter who she doesn't want her around certain people. You're being disrespectful. And she said, you need to work this out. She also said, You're also incurring a legal bill that you really don't need.

But my mother's lawyer jumped all over it when I got arrested. My mother got temporary interim custody of my only child, which just devastated the hell out of me. I just watched my life go into this tailspin, and I had to be compliant. My mother dangled my daughter in front of me like an apple. My poor daughter didn't know what the hell had happened.

And when I got out of jail, I ended up -- I had a -- I had conditions. I wasn't allowed to -- you know, typical, wasn't allowed to drink, to keep the peace. I wasn't allowed around all these people that the Crown had for their witness list. And one of them was the mother of this little boy that my daughter had befriended on the street that we were living on. And I would pay for this boy anywhere we went. Like, whether we went to Dairy Queen, we went to the movies, wherever we went. And I understood his family was low-income, but his mother got quite a bit of money from the government for being on disability and then all of her child benefit tax.

And just the one time I asked for her -- he wanted to come to the movie we were going to. And all I said to him -- he was a couple years older than my daughter. And all I said is I will
Sharna Sugarman

pay for your ticket but if you want any goodies
you need to get a few dollars from your parents
because then -- you know. I told him I would get
the popcorn, but if you want, like, a candy bar
or anything like that, you're going to have to
get that.

Well, his mother gets on the phone and
starts chewing me out saying that I have paid for
everything up until now but now all of a sudden I
want some money. So I just said to her, I said,
I'm not an ATM and, you know, you're not chipping
in for my gas money or anything like that. Give
me a break.

Well, all of a sudden she was on the witness
list and, of course, when I had my meeting with
my attorney and he was, like, Okay, so what can
you explain these people [sic] -- what -- and I
sat there and I said, Why is she on this list? I
don't understand. I said, She lived across the
street and down a bit from us.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Witnesses for what the landlords did?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: No, these were witnesses for the
Crown. So they were also on my condition list
when I was released from jail. So I wasn't
allowed to contact them, which was fine. I
didn't -- had no desire to want to contact any of
these people; right.

So I said to him, I said, I have no clue
what this woman can tell you. I said, I don't
even understand why she's on the Crown's list.
And so I was kind of miffed at that. I said,
You're going to have to dig at the Crown then
because I can't give you any information on her,
why she's even on there. It doesn't make any
sense to me.

So I get out of jail, and I had to have a
surety. Again, I have never been charged in my
life. I don't have a criminal record. I had to
live with my very good friend who was my surety.
I had to live in her house. And I was -- and she
was Caucasian. And I couldn't get over it.

So that was all fine and dandy other than
that my mental health started to go downhill.
And I started having, you know, just -- I just
got very depressed because I went from, you know,
trying to complete my second masters and raising
my daughter to I'm in jail. I can't live in my
own house, and now I'm living in somebody else's
house. And I couldn't fathom what was going on;
where this was all coming from.

So the assault charge was thrown out because
this isn't assault, but before my attorney went
on his six-week sabbatical down to Australia, he
couldn't get any disclosure from the Crown
whatever. Nothing. And he had been a criminal
attorney for 35 years at this point. This is all
he's ever done. And I had a meeting with him and
he just sat there shaking his head and he said,
I've never seen anything like this. He goes, I
don't understand this.

So he goes away for six weeks. Comes back.
Still doesn't have any disclosure from the Crown.
So he talked to me about it. So he asked for a
meeting -- like, a preliminary meeting or hearing
or whatever with a judge and the Crown in
chambers. And, again, he's saying to the judge,
I don't have anything. I don't have one piece of
evidence, nothing.

And so by this point it had been probably
four or five months since I have been charged.
So the judge is saying to the Crown at the time
like, Where is the disclosure? So the Crown, you
know, basically said, We'll get to it. And then
I said, Well, you've got a week. I'm giving you
a week to give [Lawyer 1] what he needs. Still
nothing.

So then I'm still trying to fight my mother,
who is utterly relishing having this power over
me. And my daughter is devastated because we're
very, very close. My two brothers are completely
useless. They're not doing anything to help.
And all of a sudden come June, this was the other
thing that happened, which was just unbelievable.

[Child C], the little boy, called [Daughter],
and by this point we have moved into a new place.
I've now moved out of my Surety's place --

SHEILA MAZHARI: [Daughter] is your daughter?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: [Daughter] is my daughter. [Daughter].

And we're into a new triplex. And [Child C]
called -- because back then I didn't have a
cellphone. We still had a landline. So he
called my daughter and she picked up the phone.
And at first she said, Oh, momma, it's [Child C] on
the phone and he wants to see me. And I remember
Sharna Sugarman

thinking, okay, I'm not allowed to have any contact with his mom. So he wants to go to a movie or something. And he said, I've already talked to my parents; it's fine. He said, I can meet you. And I was still sitting there thinking, I don't know if this is a good idea.

So I got on the phone quickly with him and I said, [Child C], I really don't think this is a good idea. You know, I'm really sorry. And he's, like, Oh. And he's still -- I could hear his mom talking. And then she said something, like, Oh, you're not allowed to see her now? What's the problem? Like this. And she grabs the phone and gets on the phone and starts yelling at me. And all I said was, [Woman B], I can't talk to you and you know that. And I hung up.

Next thing I know, the cops are at my house a couple days later. And this officer was very, very respectful of me. He didn't put handcuffs on me or anything else. They told me I was in breach, that I had communicated with somebody on the list I wasn't allowed to communicate with. I said, I didn't call her; she called me. I had call display.

I got put back in Quinte again. Back in the detention centre. I stayed there -- I'll never forget it. I got out the day Michael Jackson died. I stayed in Quinte for 12 days. Because what they do, when you're put in those positions -- because I know how it works -- they're hoping that you're going to crack and you're going to turn to your attorney and go, fine, get me a plea. Just get me out of here.

When I was in Quinte, I got put in protective -- I was in general pop at the beginning and I got assaulted by this girl. I was on -- they had two pay phones on the wall and I was calling one to talk to my lawyer and one to talk to my daughter. And this other girl was manipulating and monopolizing the one phone. And it doesn't take much to set off the inmates when they're in there.

And I had sort of earned their trust there because a couple of the girls by this time I had -- they had remembered me from helping them on the streets and with the Elizabeth Fry Society and things like that. So -- and I was also
counselling some of them because some of them were doing -- you know, not doing well inside the system. So I was earning respect. And I had respect of the guards. I was not considered an issue in there.

This girl clocks me on the back of the head with the hand receiver of the phone. Well, they're quite hard plastic. And she took the cord and wrapped it around my neck. Well, I managed to turn around and I managed to fend her off me. But this was all -- the camera was, like, here, but the camera would not pick up that part of the wall. It wasn't within the eye of the camera.

So we get separated by the guards and they took me out of general pop and they put me in protective custody so I had my own cell. And I spent the next -- I think it was about seven days. And the person that was occupying the cell next to me was Tooba Yahya and she is the wife --

SHEILA MAZHARI: No. Can you spell her name?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Tooba was spelled T-o-o-b-a and Yahya is Y-a-y-a [sic], as far as I know. She was the wife of the Shafia family, S-h-a-f-i-a, who intentionally murdered their daughters and the first wife of the husband in my home town. They were found in the Rideau Canal. She was in protective custody in the cell next to me.

So I would hear her cry literally all the time. And I would hear her pray because she's a Muslim. They would bring her meals in a bag because she would have to have halal meat because she -- it has to be slaughtered a certain way, the kosher way.

So I ended up talking to her through the vent at the bottom. I had no clue who she was at first. So she seemed very nice and I talked to her and she would ask me, Do the guards have the right to beat me? And stuff like that. And I said, No, they don't.

The guards -- the females seemed to be not respectful of her, but they were -- they didn't bother her at all. So I talked to her for quite some time. I never asked her why she was in there. The guards were the ones that told me who she was and why she was there. And, of
course, this was all happening -- you know, the murders and everything happened while I was in jail, so I didn't have access to the media. So I had no clue what was going on. And, of course, I had no contact with really anybody else. It's not, like, my mother called me or anything like that. I was lucky if I heard my daughter's voice every couple days. And that was very hard because I had never -- I had never been away from her, really, at all.

[Lawyer 1] came to see me and I told him, again, unequivocally, I am not pleading guilty and you're not coming to me with any plea. And when I told him, he said, You're not supposed to be -- he goes, You know you're not supposed to have contact. I said, I didn't contact her. And I told him about her son. I said, Her son called my daughter. I said, He's about three years older than she is. And I said, I have call display. And he looked at me and he said, Can you get me the phone? And I said, Yeah, I can. I called my [Friend 1] who went over to my house, got my handset and took it down to his office. And it clearly -- and not only that, it had her name on it. Clearly showed the date and time, same thing as he got -- anything that he got from the police reports clearly showed I didn't call her. So that's why they let me out. I spent about 12 days in custody in a jail cell in a detention centre because I refused to play their game.

And that's what they do. They wait until you crack until they break you. And that's why some people plead guilty to things because they're getting beat up in jail. They're getting all these things and they want out.

Well, I am not pleading guilty to something I didn't do. And by this time I was -- oh, I was furious. I was burning inside I was so mad being kept from my daughter. So get out and all of a sudden the charges are withdrawn from the Crown. After nine months of this I have lost my house, I had to drop out of school, I have lost my daughter, which was the greatest loss that I had, you know. So that was in June of 2010, but -- excuse me, 2009.

So I spend the summer trying to make the
best of it. Seeing my daughter when my mother
would let me, which was ridiculous because there
were no accusations, they were nothing. She was
just using -- of course, when the charges were
dropped, she didn't have anything to stand on
anymore. So I took her back to family court.
And, of course, she had a high-paid attorney. I
only had somebody from Legal Aid. And the judge
had decided that my daughter was to be returned
to me.

And at that time my daughter was at a camp
and they said when the camp is over, she needs to
go back to her mother. So my daughter comes back
to me, and I have told my mother, I'm done with
you. That's it; I'm done with you. I am so done
with you. You just don't do that.

So this is when this attack happened. So --

SHEILA MAZHARI: Before we get into that ...
SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yeah.
SHEILA MAZHARI: Would you like to say the names of
the landlords?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: His name was -- her name was [Landlord],
which was [spells name of landlord].
And his first name was -- oh my God, it's
escaping me. Scottish name. [Landlord] and
her husband's name was ... Oh, it will come to
me.

Yeah, and then -- so September comes around
and I am doing my advocacy --

SHEILA MAZHARI: 2009?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: 2009. And this is the night that
the attack happened. So I went out in my
advocacy role to Queen's University for
homecoming weekend and it was a horrible weekend
weather-wise. And I went out to hand out free
condoms, talk to any women to let them know where
the rape crisis centre was, where the health
centre was, where the hospitals were, just in
case. I had a huge army backpack that I borrowed
off a buddy that had been in the military, and I
was collecting beer bottles. And what I was
doing is I was pouring them into plastic beer
cups and then handing those back to the people so
they couldn't use them as weapons at the police
or smashing them on the ground. So if somebody
was walking their dog the next day, they
definitely had some horses on horse mount --
police mounted horses.
So I did that for, I don't know, about four
hours or something. Went home and I was on the
top floor of my triplex on [Avenue].
SHEILA MAZHARI: Can you spell [Avenue].
SHARNA SUGARMAN: [Spells avenue].
SHEILA MAZHARI: And this is in Kingston?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yes. 1024, I'll never forget it.

1024.
SHEILA MAZHARI: In Ontario?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yeah. I was blasting the Tragically
Hip. I went to high school with The Hip; they're
friends of mine. And I was just sort of, like,
decompressing from being out in the cold weather
and, you know, dealing with drunks and all of
that stuff. And there was a knock on my door.
And when you get into my building, you would open
the door and it was -- it was the exact same
design as the one that -- where the [Landlords] were
except for the staircase was on the other side
and we were on the top floor. So you would open
the door and you would come up the staircase and
then there was my door, like, right there.
And I hear this knock on the door and I am
thinking ... So I went and I am, like, Hello. I
didn't even open the door. And it was a Kingston
police officer. So he's, like, Kingston Police.
And I opened the door. And I recognized him from
years ago going into the gym and whatever. His
name was [Officer 2]. And I am, like, Hey,
[Officer 2], how's it going? And he's, like, Hi Sharna.
And he's, like, Can you turn the music down a bit
please. He said, We've had a call.
And I looked at him and I said, A call? I
said, There isn't anybody in the building. I'm
the only one home. And he's, like, Sharna,
please. He's like, Tonight is already stressful
as it is. Because it was homecoming and I'm,
like, Okay. [Officer 2], no worries. I said, I'm going
to bed anyway. I have got a big day tomorrow.
So I turned off the music and I went to bed.
And I wake up to this banging on the metal
aluminum door, like, old fashioned door. And it
set off both my dogs. They were growling and I
was, like -- and I had already also taken my
sedatives for the night. And I was just, like,
What the hell? So I get up and my daughter had
stayed with my mother that night. That was another part of the agreement that we had that, you know, she had to care for my daughter if I ever -- that's what she got from the family court judge, which I really didn't like.

SHEILA MAZHARI: If you were ever busy, you mean?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: If I ever needed childcare she had to be the first choice, which I was just, like, whatever.

So I went through my daughter's bedroom, which overlooked the front of the house, and I looked through her window and I see this [Man B]. And [Man B] is spelled [spells name]. And this guy was a chronic drunk. He would order -- couldn't drive because he lost his driver's licence to DWI. He was from Wawa, Ontario, which is W-a-w-a.

He would order either a 12 or a 24 of Coors Light every day after work and he would drink. And he was proud of being an alcoholic. He was just this young punk-ass. And the girl that -- his girlfriend who lived in the -- she originally lived in the basement unit. And then when the couple that lived below me moved out, because he was another loser, he was abusive, and they moved out. So they moved in to the unit below me -- or I should say [Neighbour 1] did because [Man B] didn't until later.

And he's absolutely hammered and he's banging on the door. He's calling me the C word, he's calling me a bitch and all this stuff. And I opened up the window and I said, What are you doing? Or something to that effect. And he's, like, Fucking let me in. Like this. And I said, I'm not letting you in in that state. And I said, And you also don't live here. I said, Where's your girlfriend? Where's [Neighbour 1]? And he's like, I don't know where that fat bitch is. You know, kind of thing. And I am, like, Well, I'm definitely not letting you in now. I said, You don't live here.

So he's still banging on the door. Well, they knew because I had sadly and stupidly confided in [Neighbour 1] when she was going through something. I sometimes when I'm helping somebody and if they're telling me something very personal or raw for them, I'll disclose something from me
so that I can say, you know, you're not alone.

So she knew I had been charged because she had
also asked me one day why [Daughter] wasn't living
with me. Like, [Daughter] would come and go. So I
let her know what happened. And I thought she
was a nice girl and she's, like, Oh my God. I
can't believe that. She said, You need to fight.
And I said, I am fighting to get her back and,
you know, fighting these charges.

So sadly she went and told her douche bag of
a boyfriend. So this is when he says, Oh, well,
I'm going to call the cops and tell them you just
punched me. And I'm, like, Oh, I'm not dealing
with this. So I went back and that's when I
called directly down to the Kingston Police and
asked to talk to the watch commander.

So [Watch Commander] comes on.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Can you spell her name?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Do you know how to spell [Watch Commander]?

SHEILA MAZHARI: Just for the record.

SHARNA SUGARMAN: [Spells name of Watch Commander].

And so I get on the phone with the watch
commander, because I don't even bother -- I just
go right to who I know is in charge. So I let
her know what was going on and she says to me --
I disclosed who I was as well. And she says,
This guy, is he intoxicated? And I said, Oh,
he's hammered. I said, He's a chronic alcoholic;
he's drunk every night after work. He works in
construction. And I said, He's drunk all the
time.

And she goes, Oh, well, Mr. Happy will
probably be spending the evening with us then.
And I said, You know what, I would really
appreciate that. I said, Because I'm a little
tired of this. I said, I have to get up tomorrow
morning and all this stuff. She said, Don't
worry about it. She said, Well, you know it's
homecoming? And I said, Yeah. I said, I was
down there earlier tonight. So this is all being
recorded. And she said, Well, when my officers
show up, if there's any issues, she goes, You
have them call me directly. And she goes, And
you tell them he's to be removed from the
property because he's not a tenant.

And then -- whether that's -- he just goes
on his merry way, because she also asked me if he
was driving. And I said, No, he doesn't drive.
I said, He already lost his license for drinking
and driving.

So I see these two cops show up in two
separate cruisers. And one of them is a
Caucasian with dark hair, looked like about maybe
around 30 years of age. And the other guy was an
older Caucasian guy, and he had like -- looked
like almost, like, white hair and a white
mustache. And I said through my daughter's
window upstairs that I had spoken with -- I
think -- I don't know if she was a sergeant by
them or she was a corporal, but Watch Commander
[last name] was how I referred to her, I believe.
And that this is what she's told me, and if you
have any issues you're to call her directly. But
he's intoxicated, he's harassing, I have been
asleep, I don't need this.

So they're talking with him. I figured
that's it. I went back to bed. Then I can hear
them coming up the stairs a few minutes later.
And I am lying in bed going, it's, like, 1:30 in
the morning or something by this point, and I am,
like, what do they need now? So he bangs on my
door. So I go and I opened up the door, but I
had a chain. And I said, What? Like, what do
you need? And he's, like, I need you to open the
doors. I need to talk to you. And I said, No, I
don't have anything to say to you. I said, If
you have an issue, you call your watch commander.
I said, I'm done here. He's drunk. He's in a
public place. Deal with him.

So the cop says to me, I want you to open
the door right now, more aggressively. And I
said, No, this conversation is over. So I shut
my door. I said, I'm going back to bed. Dead
bolted it. Turn around and he goes, You fucking
bitch. And he kicked in my door. Blew my dead
bolt right out of the thing, broke the door jam
and everything. And I just remember going,
like -- thinking, like, oh my God. Ran into my
bedroom to grab the phone. He comes in, grabs me
by my hair. I grabbed the phone. The phone fell
all over the place. Throws me on my bed but I
also hear the other officers say, Holy fuck.
What the fuck did you just do? We can't do that.
Sharna Sugarman

And he goes, Yeah, looks like I just did.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Which one was the one who did --

SHARNA SUGARMAN: The younger cop is the one that assaulted me.

SHEILA MAZHARI: And kicked the door in?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Kicked the door in.

So he's throwing me on my bed and calling me every name in the book, and I am telling him, Get off me right now. Get out of my house and get off me. He's calling me a bitch. He's calling me, like, every name in the book. And next thing I know he's got his -- trying to put his hand up my top. He managed to put my hand down my pants and inserted his finger in my vagina and was laughing while he was doing it. Saying, Yeah, that's the best you ever had, and all this stuff. And I am sitting there at the time, I remember thinking -- because I boxed for five years when I was younger. And also there's my rape training that I have.

And at the time all I wanted to do was claw his eyes out, but the whole time I'm going, it's a cop. It's a cop. It's a cop. And I was just so floored. I was, like, sitting there -- it was almost surreal. And next thing I know, he's pulled me up, he's pulled me by my hair. So he's already groped the hell out of me. He's already violated me. And pulls me up, and I remember my dachshund and my smooth fox terrier barking and him yelling at them, Shut those fucking dogs up. My smooth fox terrier, he hoofed him underneath his rib cage and with his foot and threw him across my apartment, and my dog landed on my dining room table chairs. And I heard him yelp. And I remember yelling at the cop going, Don't you fucking touch my dogs.

And I didn't realize until later because when I did this last year with the SIU, I didn't -- before I met them I didn't review any of the emails, anything I had sent to the standard of conduct officer at the time with the Kingston Police. I wanted to recall everything that I knew in my brain. I didn't want to have to refer to anything. But apparently I had forgot at the time but I have remembered now after talking with the SIU, the other cop is the one that put the -- the older cop is the one that
Sharna Sugarman

Statement - Public

1. put the handcuffs on me.

2. They took me out down the stairs. So I
3. can't even shut my apartment door. They did but
4. they couldn't -- it wouldn't shut. It just would
5. touch the jamb. And -- excuse me -- [Man B] is
6. standing at the bottom of the stairs laughing at
7. me. And he high-fived with the cop. This guy is
8. absolutely obnoxiously drunk, Caucasian. He's
9. the one that's being obnoxious and drunk and
10. intoxicated. I'm in bed and next thing I know,
11. I'm leaving in handcuffs.

12. Cops haven't told me why they have got me in
13. handcuffs, haven't mentioned anything. He throws
14. me in the back of the older cop's cruiser. They
15. drive me down to the new police station. And all
16. the older cop kept saying to me -- I'll never
17. forget this, all the way -- I am so sorry. I am
18. so sorry. I am so sorry, ma'am. I am so sorry.
19. And I am in the back and I am livid. And I said,
20. You damn well know that what you are doing is
21. against the law. You have no right to break down
22. my door. You don't have a warrant, you don't
23. have just cause and what you're doing right now
24. -- and I said to him, I said, If you want to make
25. this right, you turn around and you let me go.
26. You take me back home right now.

27. So I get to the police department and I am
28. livid. I am in there -- they take -- because you
29. go into a -- you go into a garage because it's a
30. brand new police station, the garage door comes
31. down, they bring you out of the cruiser and you
32. go into a door, and then you're in the processing
33. room. I am demanding to see [Watch Commander].
34. I said, You get her down here right
35. now.

36. And nobody is listening to me. There's cops
37. all over the place. They just made me sit on the
38. bench. No charges, no nothing. Didn't tell me
39. anything. Put me in a cell, that was it. Next
40. morning doors opened up, there's a guy wearing a
41. white shirt, so that means that he's a higher
42. upper; he's probably an inspector or whatever.
43. Opens the door and said, You're free to go,
44. Ms. Sugarman. And I looked at him and I said,
45. And you are? And I said, I want to know the name
46. of that officer. And he said, I'm not at liberty
47. right now to discuss any of that with you. And I
said, What are you charging me with? I said, Have you charged me with anything? He said, No, he said, You're free to go. And I said, Do you have any idea what happened last night? I said, You have no right to do what you did. You completed violated my charter rights and my civil liberties and my human rights.

I'm in my pajamas, I have no money, I have no shoes. They called me a cab. I stood outside the police department. So this, again, is, like, October. So it's cold out. Cab picks me up, takes me home. I had to go -- not only that, my landlords were in Portugal at the time, so their brother-in-law was looking after the unit. And the other thing that had been going on in my unit was the heat -- the thermostat was in [Neighbor 1]'s unit, and what [Man B] would do when she wasn't home or when he was leaving is he would turn it off. So there would be no heat in the apartment. And he was playing games.

I kept telling the landlords to put a cage over it, which means that it's locked and they're the only ones that control it. I paid for a plumber to come to check out the furnace to make sure it wasn't the furnace. And they said there's nothing wrong with the furnace. They said somebody is playing with the heat.

He came downstairs while the plumbers were there, which I was paying for, and made -- it was unbelievably disgusting, his behaviour. He was telling them, he said, Hey, if she can't pay for the bill, I hear she gives pretty good blow jobs. Maybe she could pay for it that way, guys. Ha ha ha.

SHEILA MAZHARI: This is the plumber?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: No, this was [Man B], the loser that was drunk talking to the plumbers. And I was just standing there going, Oh my God, like, Who raised you? What's wrong with you? And the one plumber finally had enough, and he turned to him and he goes -- he goes, Is this your unit? Like this. And he goes, Yeah. And he goes, That's where the thermostat is, isn't it? And he goes, Yeah. And he goes, Yeah, you need to stop fucking around with that, you little piece of shit. He was really mad. And he goes, And you stop talking about that lady around me. He goes,
You don't talk like that around me, you little punk.

And [Man B] was, like -- he was just this little stick thing of a guy. And he was just, like, Oh man, I was just trying to make fun. And he goes, Yeah, you're not funny. He goes, Get out of here.

It was Donaldson Plumbing was the plumber. Because I ended up talking to the owner afterwards. And she said, If you need anything in writing for the police, I will give it. She said, There is nothing wrong with your furnace.

So I had to call [Landlord’s brother] was his name, that was the wife's brother, to let me back into the unit because I don't know if it was [Man B] or the police, but what they did is -- I thought the door was completely busted and it was busted, the dead bolt was busted, the chain was busted, but they turned -- the little lock on the door handle was enough to lock the door. Well, I had no keys. I had nothing to get back in.

So he shows up, and I am still -- the cab driver is eventually really nice when I told him what happened. He stopped his meter. And he said, I don't care. He goes, I will wait here all morning with you. I can't believe what you have gone through. And he's, like, You need to call the media. You need to call a lawyer. And I said, Yeah, I know.

So [Landlord’s brother] shows up. I go in and get my wallet, check on my dogs. My apartment is just a mess from the cops being in there. And paid for my cab ride. And I remember calling [Lawyer 1], I remember calling [Lawyer 2] who was the executive director -- who still is the executive director for the Kingston Community Legal Clinic.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Can you spell his last name.
SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yes,[spells Lawyer 2’s name].

SHEILA MAZHARI: [Lawyer 2]?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: [Lawyer 2] is his name.

SHEILA MAZHARI: He's the director of ...?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: He's the executive director and senior lawyer for the Kingston Community Legal Clinic.

So I'm just -- I have got so many emotions going through me. And my landlords come back,
and [Lawyer 2] is advocating for me in the legal capacity with the landlords for me to try to keep my place. I ended up losing my unit. They --

SHEILA MAZHARI: On what grounds?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Oh, they just said that -- again, that I was harassing -- well, this was the other thing. Okay. So this cop does all this to me. The charges that I had were all thrown out by the Crown. By this time, I have already called the Centre of Conduct Unit who is [Watch Commander]. This is also her role. I have left her several messages.

SHEILA MAZHARI: So what conduct?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Standard -- professional standard and conduct officer. Their role is to take any complaints from the general public against officers or civilians. And you can do a formal or informal complaint. It's sort of first stage. But by this time, because of my charges being thrown out and everything happened, I was starting -- I had retained a civil lawyer.

Well, [Watch Commander] for some reason thought that she was on the receiving end of this civil complaint -- or this civil matter so she wouldn't hear me at all. She wouldn't -- this is why I still don't know this officer's name. She said, I can't interview you, I can't -- nothing. I said, Well, then, there's somebody else that needs to take over your role for this situation. I am not letting this go.

So what did they do? To protect the cop, they swing around and charge me again with criminal harassment of [Man B], of the drunk, who wasn't even a tenant in the building. And for public mischief that I had made that night when I called the watch commander that it was an unfounded call. He wasn't drunk. He wasn't causing a scene. I was in bed asleep, but apparently all of that didn't happen.

And they had to do that in order to protect the cop for kicking in my door. So they think after putting me through hell for nine months to the point that I pushed the Crown with my attorney to get the charges dropped -- because he did. He had many meetings with the Crown. And the Crown went to [Lawyer 1] several times and said, Okay, we'll drop the criminal harassment if
she pleads guilty to this. And he said, Don't ever come to me, he goes, I'll tell you right now. She's a tough cookie. She is not going to comp to anything, so we're going right to trial. The day of the trial for the charges that were withdrawn -- and I am not kidding you -- we're at trial, the day of my trial, the Crown that was generally the one that he was talking to apparently was involved in another case. This other Crown attorney came up, which was really ironic, her name is [Crown attorney 1] who I had helped as an advocate with one of her victims through a sexual assault trial with a military personnel.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Can you spell her name.

SHARNA SUGARMAN: [Spells Crown attorney 1's name].

She went to [Lawyer 1] and said, I'm not interested in your client. If she agrees to a peace bond, meaning no contact with these people, I'll drop the charges. And he came back to me with it and I said, No. I said, I want to go to trial. I'm not agreeing to anything, not even a bloody peace bond. Didn't find out until later, much later, do you know why she did that? Because one of the lead -- because one of her lead witnesses refused to come to court that day. She has a legal obligation to tell the defense to disclose that one of her witnesses refused to come to court. Because I saw everybody in the waiting room and I went down a separate hall to be away from them. And I said to [Lawyer], I said, So-and-so is missing. She's not there. And he said, Are you sure? And I said, Oh, yeah, I'm sure. I kept going because I had to go that way to go to the bathroom, and she wasn't there. And I said, I find it very odd, I said, That the Crown is now coming up to you and is willing to basically drop everything for a peace bond. And I said, Isn't she supposed to disclose to you whether or not there's a witness not testifying? And he's, like, Yeah, she is. But this was all afterwards. So I am arguing with my attorney and he's, like, Sharna, please. He goes, It's a peace bond. He goes, There's no -- like, he goes,
We've got a very strong case, he said, but this makes it go away really fast. And I was like -- I don't know why I agreed to it, but I did. I think I did one of those you're an attorney and you have been doing this for almost 40 years, kind of thing.

So we get into -- before the judge and everything has been agreed to. But the weird thing was before we were called to the judge as we were sitting there, so I am in the one row here and then there's a wooden kind of, like, barrier here. And the lawyers sit here, and then there's their chairs in front of the judge. And my lawyer is sitting on the bench with other lawyers. And [Detective 1], [Detective 1], and [Crown attorney 1] are sitting together in the chairs. And I leaned over and I said, [Lawyer 1], I said, I need to ask you something.

And you could hear me. And he said, What's that? I said, I need to know the name of a really good civil attorney. And he looks at me and he goes, Oh -- he goes, You're going to sue the cops, aren't you? And I said, Yeah, I am. They heard me. And you should have seen the look -- the colour went right out of [Detective 1]'s face. And the Crown looked at her too. They both sat there and whispered and were writing on --

So I have already seen the peace bond at this point, that I am not to contact any of these people. They're not to contact me. I am not basically on probation -- nothing like that. It was just -- I think it was good for, like, six months or something. It was nothing -- nothing on it was anything I would have objected to. I was, like, whatever. So I have already seen it and I have agreed to it.

Next thing I know, these two little hens are having a little chitty chat after they hear I'm going to sue their pants off. When the peace bond was given to -- I believe it was Judge Masse. And Masse is spelled M-a-s-s-e. He's reading out the conditions. Well, all of a sudden -- and it's already -- it's been typed out. There's handwriting at the bottom of my peace bond saying that under no circumstance will Sharna Sugarman ever call the Kingston Police
again other than -- ever again. And the judge
sat there and read it. And he questioned it, and
he said, Hang on a minute here. Because they're
already alluding -- they're thinking that I am
nuts and that I am just calling the police;
that's all I like to do.

Well, I live in a low income area that also
had drug dealers and stuff like that. But the
police were expecting me to put up with that kind
of behaviour, like I told you before when they
were saying, Well, look where you live,
Ms. Sugarman. And I am, like, Well, I live in
the city of Kingston, so you're basically telling
me you pick and choose where you think people are
worthy of, what, your services? Give me a break.

So the judge reads it, and he says, I am not
signing off on this. He said, You're telling me
she doesn't have the right to call 911. And he
kind of made a joke. He said, You guys are
opening yourself up to a lawsuit. He goes, If
she sees something and doesn't call because of
this and someone dies or whatever. So they
modified it. But it basically said that I was
not to call unless it was a credible call.

And I leaned over and tried to get [Lawyer 1]'s
attention because they're addressing the Crown --
or the judge, right. I'm trying -- I actually
said to one of the lawyers, Can you get [Lawyer 1] for
me. And he was kind of like, I can't right now
because he's addressing the judge. And I kind of
hate that behaviour. I'm, like -- I don't think
it's disrespectful. I'm trying to tell my lawyer
that was not part of the agreement. I never
would have agreed to that. You're telling me I
don't have the right to call emergency services
because the cops screwed their job and charged me
and, you know, here we are and you're screwing up
my life.

So that gets done. And I talked to [Lawyer 1]
afterwards and he goes, Yeah, I noticed that. He
goes, That wasn't on the original. And I got mad
at him. And I said, Why didn't you say, Your
Honour, my client and I didn't agree to that.
That was not part of what the Crown brought me.
So that was, like -- I think I got charged again
in November of 2009. And when that happened,
that's when I had a total breakdown. I
absolutely lost it. It was nothing but racial profiling. I was -- I felt humiliated, I felt belittled.

And, again, my mother went and acted with her family lawyer and tried to get custody of my daughter again. And I am sitting there going, what in the hell is going on here? Well, I had a total mental breakdown and I tried to take my own life, which was the second time in my life I tried to do that. I tried to do it when I was 16. My dad -- my beloved dad died when I was 12, my adopted father who was my dad. And I started having horrible flashbacks and that's also what prompted -- I couldn't control the visions I was having and the flashbacks I was having.

And I was having flashbacks because of what the cop did to me when he sexually assaulted me. It triggered all of these repressed memories that I was having of my adopted mother, [Adoptive mother], and [Adoptive mother] is spelled [spells name], abusing me when I was a young child and a young youth. She was sexually molesting me. And that's why I tried to kill myself when I was 16. And I went through serious therapy all over this and I've grappled with it and I have come to terms with it as best as anybody can. I was in the hospital. I was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, which I still have to this day. I had lived with depression most of my life because my body doesn't produce enough serotonin, but also the trauma that I had gone through. But I had never been an anxious person in my life. So it's the anxiety that I have an issue with. So when I was in the hospital and diagnosed with that, they also came back and they said, these flashbacks, these images, these really, really, you know, vivid images that you're having is what you repressed what you were younger and that's why you have such an acrimonious relationship with your mother.

SHEILA MAZHARI: She's the same woman that was taking care of your daughter?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: And then I sat there and I had a whole breakdown over that because I'm, like, oh my God, if she's touching [Daughter], you know. So long and short of it, I got my daughter back.
My daughter really started to turn on her grandmother too. You know, she became -- my daughter is a very well behaved child and teenager, but she became very resentful towards her grandmother. And my mother would start calling me in tears demanding that I tell [Daughter] to be respectful of her. And I said I'm not telling my daughter to be respectful of you. Look what you have done.

So then she would start -- she had [Daughter] basically move back home with me. Even though she was lying to her lawyer saying she still had my daughter, she didn't. She was only with my mom for a very short amount of time.

SHEILA MAZHARI: And [Daughter] is -[spells name].

SHARNA SUGARMAN: [Spells name].

So my mother was, like -- and I sat there and I said, You're -- I called her every name in the book and I said, This is what you have done to me. And I said, Who does this? And she had she would always say, I don't want to talk about that. I don't want to talk about that. It's in the past. It's in the past. I don't want to talk about that. And I went to my brothers about it. My eldest brother who is my adopted parents' natural child was already out of the house by then because he's almost ten years older than me. And my other brother -- when we moved, I met a guy, my former partner, when I was in the hospital, and he was also a patient. And we moved in together. He was going through a really bitter divorce and his wife had turned his two teenage kids against him. It was awful.

And we moved in together. And then in October of 2012 [Ex-partner] got a job in Saskatchewan in his field. And we ended up moving out there. And I moved on December -- I left Kingston and drove out there, waited for everything to be packed up. And then my brother brought [Daughter] out to me. I let her finish the semester in school because there was only a couple of weeks left. And my brother [Brother 1] brought my daughter out and she's been with me ever since.

My mother made an agreement with her -- I honestly had to agree to it because I didn't want to have to keep flying back to Ontario for any
family court things. I couldn't afford that. So she made an agreement that I agreed to, grinding my teeth, that [Daughter] -- my mother would pay for her to fly back every summer for a month when school was done and that she could call anytime she liked. And [Daughter] could call her collect, if she wanted, if we didn't have long distance service or anything like that.

And that only transpired, I think summer of 2011 she went back and the summer of 2012 and I think '13. She hasn't been back since. My mother passed away in July of 2016 and that is -- that's when my healing started.

When I was in Saskatchewan and talking with my attorney, he suggested that -- he thought that -- at the time that my mother should have been charged. And I said, Well, I agree. So I called the sexual assault unit of the Kingston Police. I had to because that's where the crime took place when I was molested from the time of about age of 5 to 13, and I talked to a constable [Constable 1].

SHEILA MAZHARI: And [Constable 1]?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: [Constable 1].

And she believed me and we -- what happened was I was living in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan. And that's two separate words. And they did a video interview set up with the RCMP. And all the RCMP was basically a liaison for the Kingston Police. So I was on camera, and the officer basically asked me the same thing. Tell your story. I think she asked me a couple of quick questions. And then that videotape was sent to the Kingston Police.

I don't know if they brought my mother in first or if they brought my brothers in first. But they brought both my brothers in for an interview, my eldest brother -- basically everything that I had said was verbatim. I said, My eldest brother moved out when he was, like, 18. I would have been, like, 10 at the time. And I said, I don't know what my brother does know and what he doesn't know. I said, I know my other brother probably is the one that -- because his bedroom was right beside the guest room which is where my mother would take me.
In my house, if this was my upstairs, the stairs are here and you come up and my bedroom was here overlooking the front of the house, the guest room was here, my brother [Brother 1]'s bedroom was here, and then down the hallway a bit was my brother's [Brother 2]'s room and right across was the master bedroom and then my dad's den was here. And we lived in a very large house.

So I would go to bed in my own bed at night. And, of course, being the youngest I was the first one obviously to bed. And my mother generally would be -- because she was drinking, would get me out of bed, like, pick me up, literally -- I would probably still be asleep, and take me into the guest room and shut the door. And that's where the molestation would happen. And it was right next door to my brother's bedroom.

So my brother had to admit, and he did, that he remembers unequivocally many times that he would see me go to bed in my own bed but for some reason I would wake up in the guest room and leave with my mother in the morning. Or he would see my mother come out and then me out after her or vice versa. And he couldn't explain it to the police officer. Because he said, Was your sister ill? Was she recovering from surgery? I mean, there was all these questions I'm sure that they asked. He said, No. He said, There was no reason why my daughter -- not my daughter, my sister would not be in her own bedroom.

And he also admitted that I had a very acrimonious relationship with my mother and that had really stemmed after my dad died. My father was everything to me. I just adored him. He was just the most amazing, beautiful human being. And there's times that I think that he maybe -- he would have been the type of man that if he suspected my mother doing that, he probably couldn't bring himself to accept it. Like, he just -- it would have been too much for him. So I think he probably would have thought about it and said, You're crazy, you're crazy [Father], you're crazy, like, that's just not happening. Or my mother would have been manipulative enough to explain why she was staying in the same bed with me. Like, she wasn't feeling well, or she
Sharna Sugarman

had a nightmare last night or whatever it was; right.

SHEILA MAZHARI: What year did this statement take place?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: This was 2011.

SHEILA MAZHARI: In what month?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: I think it was -- I think it was March. There was still snow on the ground. I remember that.

So when I talked with [Constable], when she brought my mother in -- now, keep in mind when I was arrested, I never asked for an attorney. I let them question me. I said I have nothing to hide. I'm not guilty of anything. When my mother was brought in for questioning over this -- and she knew it because I brought it up at family court. I brought it up in front of the judge, and the judge was the one that told me that I had to contact the Children's Aid Society to make sure my daughter wasn't being abused and that I also had to contact the Kingston Police.

My mother in the courtroom didn't say a word in family court. Now, I'm sorry, anybody ever accused me of harming a child or harming an animal, I'm going to be really vocal about it. I'm the type of person that would say, You better have me on video because it never happened and come hell or high water, you're going to regret saying that. Those are two things -- I might be guilty of a lot of things in life. Those are two things I'll never be guilty of.

My mother didn't even make a peep. If the roles were reversed, I don't care in front of a judge, I would have flipped out. How dare you even accuse me of that. I would have been inconsolable. My mother didn't say a word.

She goes in for her interview. She knew why she was going to the Kingston Police, why they were bringing her in for questioning. So she goes in. And the cop explained it all to me. She was very, very vivid in her description of how my mother's demeanour was and all this stuff. She said she was very guarded. When she told my mom, she said, [Adoptive mother] you know why you're here. There's been an accusation. She explained to my mother -- I think she had already interviewed both my brothers by that point, and both my
brothers totally explained exactly what I said in
the videotape. And when I spoke with [Constable 1].
on the phone, I said, I don't think my
eldest brother [Brother 2] -- I said, If he
suspected anything, I don't know if he would have
it in him -- both of my brothers, I really don't
know if they would have it in them to rat out my
mother. Because my one brother said to me, he
said, If it did happen, Sharna, please let it go.
Mom is getting old and all that stuff. It was a
long time ago. And I sat there and I said, Don't
you condescend me. I didn't do anything wrong
here. I was a child. I don't care how old mom
is. You don't do that to a child. But when my
mother went in for her interview and the police
officer said I'm going to ask you some questions,
my mother proceeded to say to the officer, On the
advice of my criminal attorney, I have been asked
by my family attorney to speak to a criminal
attorney, which she did, I'm not answering any of
your questions.

Who does that if you're innocent? And
that's what the officer told me that she told
her. She said, You know what that tells me as a
cop? She said, You're not willing to answer any
of my questions? And she said, No, I am not on
the advice of my attorney. I'm not answering any
of your questions. And my mother left.

And the constable called me that day because
I asked her -- I also was emailing with her as
well in Saskatchewan. And they couldn't charge
her. She went to the Crown. She said there's no
doubt in my mind that this happened to you. And
she said also after speaking with your brothers,
she said everything that you told me is exactly
what your brothers told me. And she went to the
Crown, and the Crown did not charge my mother
based on the fact of her age. The fact that the
abuse had been so many decades ago and there was
no physical evidence. It wasn't that they didn't
believe me, but the Crown also said they didn't
think they would get any jail time for my mother,
so it wasn't worth his time.

And I am, like -- I'm of the opinion, it's
another part of colonization in this country. I
do not believe-- and it's not just with my
people. I think it's with anybody. If you're a
victim of a crime, especially something as heinous as child molestation or rape or something like that and, God forbid, murder, I don't think it's the Crown's call. They get to sleep well at night. You don't have the right to take that justice and that closure and that process away from the person.

And she pleaded my case to him and she also told him, she said she has contact with Ms. Sugarman's only child and they were concerned about that as well. Believe me, I have berated my daughter as anything. And I also told her -- I said -- because my daughter was also taking karate at the time. And I said, If Nana tries anything, you do what you have to. Get out of there. She has promised me that nothing has ever happened but she doesn't -- she never trusted my mother again after that.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Did she have contact with her after that?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Not really. Not once we moved out west. She went home -- my mother would call. She would send, like, cards, like, birthday cards or anything like that. [Daughter] went home a couple of summers in a row for, like, a month. And she did -- my daughter is an equestrian, so she would do equestrian camp. My mother kept her calendar with my daughter quite busy. I called every night and talked to my daughter. She also had my phone number, so she could call anytime. We emailed, all those things. She didn't after -- my daughter is 17 now, she'll be 18 in June. She hasn't seen -- my mother died in July of 2016.

That's the other thing. We didn't find out for six months that my mother was dead. I actually found out through -- a fluke through -- in regards to her estate. A friend of mine that I went to high school with contacted me through Facebook, and she works for the bank that my mother banked with. And she said, You need to get ahold of me. She goes, It's official capacity. And I'm just, like, that's kind of weird.

So I called her and she said, You need to talk to my boss. He's been trying to get ahold of you. And how she found out was even a fluke.
 She was just walking the halls between breaks and
overheard her boss saying to some guy, I don't
know how to get ahold of this Sharna Sugarman
girl. She [sic] goes, I got to talk to her.
She's the -- you know, she's -- her daughter is
the beneficiary. And my friend was, like, I can
get ahold of her. Because we had been friends
since high school.

So turns out my mother completely
disinherited me, which I wasn't shocked at. But
she left everything that she would have given to
me to my daughter. So I'm my daughter's, like,
trustee. But when I got an email from CIBC
Wood Gundy, and I sat there and I thought about
it, and I was, like, my mother must have died.
This poor guy that I was on the phone with, I
called him and I said, Can you tell me when my
mother passed away? And he's sitting there,
like, dead silence. And I remember he's, like,
Can you hold the line for a second? And I am
like, Yeah, sure. He comes back, like, a minute
later and he goes, Ms. Sugarman, I'm so sorry.
He goes, You didn't realize your mother passed
away? I said, You know what, I have no contact
with my brothers.

My brothers basically -- we basically became
estranged over this because my one brother wanted
me to let it all go. He was in a quandary of
whether to believe me or believe my mom. My
other brother and I are estranged because I can't
stand his wife. She is a piece of work. And she
had also pushed my daughter when she was five
years old right in front of me at a family event,
and you don't touch my child.

So that's what I have been dealing with for
the past year and a half with her estate
attorney. But no, my daughter hasn't talked to
my mom, anything like that. My ex and I broke
up -- he left Saskatchewan about a year after we
lived there. He up and walked out on [Daughter] and I
one day. He had mental health issues that
stemmed from his divorce and his estrangement
from his two beloved children because his wife is
using them as pawns and all that stuff.

And he went into a hospital in North
Battleford, which is just about an hour from
Meadow Lake. And I brought him home because it
was the Thanksgiving day weekend and, you know, you don't see any psychiatrist over the weekend. And his psychiatrist actually was in India on vacation, so she wasn't going to be back for a while.

Long and short of it, he ended up walking out on my daughter and I and took up with some girl that he met in the hospital and completely left us. I called the hospital to make sure that he made it back because I drove him to the hospital, but he left his vehicle at my work because I was working at the Meadow Lake hospital in my capacity as a mental health counsellor. And I was also working in the detox unit.

So I drove him to the hospital to pick up his vehicle because we were living out in a farm. We get home. I was going actually to pick [Daughter] up because she was with a friend of mine who was also a teacher. But we had made a deal that she said, you know, by the time you go get him and come home, I might take the girls to a movie. And I said, Fine, if she's here, great. If not, she said -- she goes, She can sleep over. I'll take her to school tomorrow. She goes, You and [Ex-partner] need a night together.

So they weren't home, so I knew that. Then I talked to her -- her boarder and she said, No, she decided to take them to a dinner and a movie. And I said, Okay. That's great. So I drive all the way home.

We lived about 20 minutes outside of the city, of the town I should say. I get home and the whole house is lit up with candles. And he's got a fire going in the fireplace. And we had a lovely evening together, a couple hours because it was late. We went to bed. We were passionate together. And the next thing I know, he's telling me he wants -- he should be by himself. And I'm just, like, where the hell is this coming from? I was totally floored. And I got up and I am just, like, Why the hell did you just sleep with me then? This is not -- I'm not that type of person.

So I had a bit of a panic attack and that was part of my post traumatic. I cannot handle my anxiety. I'm not an anxious person and it's a hard thing for me to cope with. So I jumped in
my car, I drove back to my work, and I sat in the spiritual room there and an elder came in. They ended up giving me a little shot of Lorazepam to calm me down. So I sat with my coworkers. I ended up sleeping in one of the emergency bedrooms because it wasn't busy that night. Get up the next day, drove home, and he's got a bag packed. Hasn't got all of his other stuff, just a bag packed. He's not telling me anything, but he said, I'm going back to the hospital. He suffered from anxiety. And he's, like, I need to go where it's safe, I need to go to the hospital. And I'm, like, You need to talk to me. Where is this coming from? Like, you know. And it was just not like him.

And so he left and I was devastated. I was on his next to kin, so I could talk to his medical team. Not only that, I worked with some of the mental health nurses because they would also come to our hospital as well. Well, I called the hospital and said he's on his way back to the hospital. It should take him about an hour and a half. And they knew I was upset, and they said, Look, just take care of yourself. They said, You know he'll be safe here. Call later and let's, you know -- they said, I'll talk to him -- the one nurse I knew, and she said, I'll talk to him and see where he's at. She said, This seems really odd. She said, He was really looking forward to going home and spending time with you.

Because I was bringing him home for the weekend because I knew he wasn't a threat to himself and because he was self admitted they couldn't technically hold him. His psychiatrist was coming back on Monday from holidays, so they said, look, go home for the weekend, bring him back Sunday night and then he'll see his doctor in the morning and, you know, we'll go from there.

So -- but when I called later that night, a couple hours later, he had taken me off as his next to kin, so I couldn't get any information. And they tried -- implored him. They said, You need support; you need -- you know, and she's well educated, she knows what's going on and, you know, it will also give her
some peace of mind.

So they just said, Talk to the doctor on Monday. Well, the doctor calls me at 7:30 Monday morning and asks to talk to [Ex-partner]. And I said to her, I said, He's not here; he's at the hospital. And I could hear her flipping through papers. She said, No, no, no; it says here he checked out last night at about 9:30. And that, you know, she said, There's notes here from the staff saying they tried to implore him to stay here, but because he was self admitted we can't hold him. And that he's going home to his family, is what he has told them. And I said, He's not here. And she's, like, Oh.

So then I'm becoming concerned because it's already almost 12 hours since he's left the hospital. So I called his mom in Ontario, I called his brother, I called his sister. And I tried to be very calm and I said, Have you heard from -- they knew he was in the hospital. And they're all, like, No, we haven't heard from him. And I was, like, Okay. Well, if you do, tell him that I need to hear from him. Trying his cell all that stuff. So the doctor calls me back about an hour or so later and she said, Any luck? I said, No. And I said, Now I'm not sure what to do.

I have got this thought did he roll his jeep and is he in the ditch, where is he? Where would he have gone? And I told her about what had happened the other night, and she said, Oh, yeah, I've read the notes here. And I said -- she goes, Can you think of where he would go? And I said, No, I have absolutely no idea where he would go. I said, He doesn't have any friends here. He didn't make any friends. I said, He just did work and -- like, when he's with somebody, he makes that person their life -- or his life. And he's a bit of an introvert as well in some ways.

So I said, I'm not sure what to do. I have called his family and all of that stuff. She said to me, she goes, You need to call the RCMP right now. And I said, Really? Do you think it's too soon? And she goes, No, no, you call them right now.

So I called the RCMP. Before the end
of the day, by 5:00 o'clock that day, I was standing -- and by that time too she had also called the RCMP. So that makes it even more affirmative is you're getting a call from a psychiatrist; right.

So before the end of the day I was standing in front of a judge getting a warrant of committal for my common-law partner. They thought he was a threat to himself. So it was only good for the province of Saskatchewan. It was only good for a week. And I asked the justice -- the judge to give the RCMP permission to go into his banking information to see if he had used his ATMs or anything. He said, I can't at this point. He said, In a couple days more, then they'll have more real authority to do that. So I am just sitting there just reeling from this going, like -- and I am calling him, I'm emailing him, where are you? Where are you? Nothing. Nothing. Giving them full description of his jeep, his license, all that stuff. So this is out as an APB, so it's across the province. Cops called me couple of days later to tell me that they went into his banking information, that he had fuelled up in Thunder Bay. That's when it hit me that he had actually really abandoned his family.

We moved out there -- I left my job, an Indigenous job that I had part-time but very well paid job, and my advocacy, everything, to support him to go out -- I had to become financially dependent on him until I got the job at the hospital, which was only casual. And he left us with nothing. All of his stuff was there, and I didn't know for probably about another month that he had met somebody in the hospital who he's still with, I believe, to this day. They drove to Alberta where she had family, and then they drove across Canada to where she is from in Nova Scotia and set up life there for a bit of time. It really devastated my daughter. She really loved him.

But then something else really traumatic happened. When he finally got through to me or when he finally contacted me and I said, you know -- I still had no clue that this woman existed. I still had no idea that she -- because
he never gave me the impression that he was like
that. You know, I told him, I said, you have
left us destitute; we have no money. Like, he
was emailing me telling me he was going to cut
off the gas and -- and not that he was going to
cut it off, but he was closing the accounts and I
needed to open them in my own name and stuff.
And I said, well, what about your stuff?
Like you left all your clothing, you left, like,
everything that your wife would allow you to take
out of your house, your matrimonial house, it's
still here. He wanted me to send it to him to
the address that he provided me. And I said, I'm
not sending you anything. You're going to grow a
pair and you're going to come back here and stand
before me and [Daughter] and you're going to explain
yourself, you coward. By this time I was mad and
really hurt.
So we had bought a snow blower. I
brought my washer and dryer from when we moved.
We had a flat screen TV. All of these sort of
big ticket items. He said, well, sell those and
you can live off those proceeds, whatever. So
some of them were in this detached garage that we
had. We had the house and then we had this
detached garage. But the garage door had seized,
so it was partially open. So I had everything in
there. I had listed some stuff on Kijiji. And
he had also taken our internet stick. That's the
internet because it's all through the government
and because we were in a rural area, that's all
we had. Well, he took that when he left. So we
had no internet at home. So I drove in every
time -- and not only that, the jeep that I had
was a jeep that he bought me before we moved out
west.
And I said to him, I can't afford to
make any car payments. I'm still paying off my
student loans; right. And I said I'm also
leaving a job going to no job. So I drove into
town every day to go to the employment centre so
I could access the email to see if he had reached
out to me. There was a neighbour down the road
from us that lived on -- I swear to God, like his
acre. He lived on an acre. And he had these two
white horses, these to grey horses, that
literally were in a paddock about this big of
this room. So they had no room to manoeuvre
around in and, of course, it gets cold in
Saskatchewan.

So they had been on our farm -- because we
were living on a 40 acre farm. We had no
livestock. And I said, we have got all this tall
grass, this beautiful -- let them come here and
fatten up for the winter; right.

So I had already -- every morning -- it
was already getting cold. It was November. And
we had a -- like, a trough for them. And I went
down -- I would have to go down in the morning
usually and break up the ice. So I went down,
did that. And that morning I forgot, so when I
went into town and checked the email and he
wasn't there. And I had also -- my daughter was
taking the school bus to school.

I came home and drove my jeep down to
where the trough was for the horses, and I
watched this white pick-up truck come into my
driveway -- so I'm living on a rural property --
and it backed up to my detached garage and these
two aboriginal guys got out, one of them was
really, really heavy set and the other guy was
quite tiny. They started loading -- they loading
my snow blower and my ex's golf clubs and a bunch
of other large items that I had in there. And
they obviously didn't see me. And I was quite a
good distance from them, but, of course, in my
head, I'm, like, you little such-and-suches. So
I went storming up there and I am, like, Hi guys,
what do we think we're doing, kind of thing.
Like, who the hell do you think -- what you're
doing? I could tell they had both been drinking.
The larger guy didn't seem as intoxicated as the
smaller guy.

I told them to leave. I said, Get
everything off the back of your truck.

Sadly I had a large dog at that point
but I had left the dogs in the house because it
was cold out and I didn't know how long I was
going to be in town. And normally they're always
with me, and this was the one day that they
weren't. They grabbed me. And I spent the next
couple of hours being sexually assaulted,
sodomized, burned with cigarettes. They both
were speaking Cree. I didn't understand a word
they said. They pulled my -- I was wearing a sweatshirt, a heavy sweatshirt at the time. They pulled that over my head. I had -- they took a beer bottle because they were drinking beer. They sodomized me with that. What stopped them was my daughter's school bus came home in front of my driveway. And they realized that the bus had stopped. I don't know if they thought at the time -- like I said, I don't know what was going through their head, but they obviously -- it scared them. So then they spoke English to me and they said -- my daughter got off the bus, so she exited from the far side of the bus and came around. And I yelled out to her not to move. And she stood there. I said, Stay there. And she stood there and obviously she didn't continue moving.

So the bus driver got off the bus and was probably in his head, he was, like, okay the kid is still standing in the middle of the road and why are you still standing there. I heard her say to the bus driver, My mom said not to go anywhere. And so he started holding her hand and said, Honey, I'll bring you home and started walking in. They got back in their truck. And because in Saskatchewan you only have to have a licence plate, like, on the front, not on the back, I never got their licence plate because there wasn't one on the back.

So they told me that if I called the cops or told anybody that they knew where I lived, they now knew I had a little girl, and they would come back and violate her and they would slice our throats. I was covered in blood. They had ripped -- I had pants on similar to this, and they had taken out a hunting knife or jack knife and sliced my pants. I grabbed a moving blanket that was still in the garage -- a blue blanket that you get at U-Haul, and I wrapped it around me.

They had punched me in the face and in the nose and stuff like that. I yelled out to the bus driver that it was fine to send my daughter. And my daughter -- and I will never forget the look on her face because obviously I had blood on my face. I had to lie to my daughter. I told her I slipped on the ice
because we had patches of ice. I said, Mama
slipped and I fell and I banged my face. I'm
okay. I'm okay. And we went in the house and I
tried to act as normal as possible. Got her
something to eat. And I think I popped her in
front of the TV and threw on a movie. And I
said -- and I did the one thing that as a rape
counsellor that you shouldn't do, but I
understand why women do it. And I said momma is
just going to have a shower. And I went and
showered. I just wanted everything that they
had -- that they had put on me and in me off me.
It is the most -- you have never felt so
disgusting in your life.

So I went and showered, and I could see all
the abrasions and the cigarette burns on me and
stuff. And I became -- that night I didn't sleep
a wink. I slept with a cleaver and a chef's
knife underneath my pillow. I had my daughter
sleep with me that night. I could hear my
dogs -- that was the other thing when this was
all going on. My one large dog just barking up a
storm inside the house. Like, they did not stop.

And when I got in the house with my
daughter, my large dog was just frothing at the
mouth. Like, there's no doubt that he could hear
me screaming. And our neighbours were nowhere
close. And not only that, it was cold out. It's
not, like, summer, people are out; right. And,
of course, they kept telling me, putting their
hand over my mouth and whatever. And any time I
did make a lot of noise, that's usually when I
got punched.

So I didn't sleep a wink that night. I was
terrified that they were going to coming back.
And where my bed was situated in our -- in the
master bedroom which was on the back of the
house, when the sun came up in the morning, which
was actually quite late in Saskatchewan, all I
could see was the garage through my French doors
that led off the bedroom.

I wanted out of that house so badly, and I ended up having a huge breakdown. It took
about a week for it to really all sink in. And I
kept reaching out to [Ex-partner] and telling him to
get us out of this house. That that was the
least that he owed us. And that I was not
abandoning everything that we owned. I wasn't going to do that.

And his family basically turned their backs on us. And I ended up having a breakdown, went into the hospital, which is the hospital I worked at.

SHEILA MAZHARI: What was the name of the hospital?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: [Hospital] -- yeah, it's called [Hospital], I believe is what it's called. And it's underneath the Prairie Regional Health Authority, which is the sort of -- like, you have Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health. And when I was talking -- I don't know if it was -- I assume it was one of the nurses. They wanted me to report it, and I said, No. Like, I was fearful and all those things. Somebody went and there was already police officers in the hospital there and in the emergency room. Because the hospital -- it was brand new, but it was a very, very tiny hospital. It's tiny tiny.

Next thing I know, there's two police officers coming in to my room and they want to talk to me. And I just lost it. I said, Get out; get out; get out; get out. I just remember going, Get out. And I didn't want to talk to them. I also, of course, didn't trust them because after what I had gone through with the other officer.

So I was in the -- my friend [Friend 2] who had taken [Daughter] -- well, I drove down to try to get my ex out of the hospital, she stayed with [Daughter] -- sorry, [Daughter] stayed with her. So she got her to school every day. I tried to keep my daughter's life as normal as possible.

And, of course, I didn't want child protection to be involved.

SHEILA MAZHARI: And she didn't know what happened to you?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: She does now, but it took a while for me to -- I didn't think -- [Daughter] would have been 11 at the time. And she already was going through enough with the abandonment that [Ex-partner] did that she did -- I believe she believed that I just fell on the ice. I didn't let her see my body. It was just my face. And I just said, Yeah, mama slipped and I didn't get my hands down
fast enough and, you know, it does happen and
whatever. So I eventually told her later.

We moved to BC in -- the first couple of
days of January 2012, so this is about six weeks
later.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Can I just get the exact date of when
the incident took place.

SHARNA SUGARMAN: The assault?

SHEILA MAZHARI: Yeah.

SHARNA SUGARMAN: It happened on November 8th, 2011.

And my attorney that I had hired back in Ontario
who has now been disbarred. That's another part
of this. His name is John Farant. And his name
is spelled F-a-r-a-n-t. He was supposed to
launch a civil suit against the Kingston police.
The other part that I forget to tell you was back
when I was in the hospital, my uncle had become
my surety on the second round of charges. And I
was living in my grandparents' old duplex. He
lived in one half and I lived in the other. And
I ended up having a big breakdown because it was
just not where I wanted to be and it was just --
I couldn't believe after everything I had gone
through, like, I'm sorry -- there are -- what do
you call, like, career criminals out there where
they have a rap sheet this long. I'm not one of
those people.

I would not have gone through everything I
went through to get charged again, and the only
reason I got charged was because they needed
something to give onus of why the cop kicked my
doors in. Apparently through the SIU
investigation he came back and they felt
justified because they thought I was going to
breach my conditions of my peace bond. You can't
do that on an assumption. You actually have to
breach. How am I breaching inside of my own
house asleep when the guy is drunk outside
banging on the front door who isn't even a
resident or tenant of the building?

So the reason that I am coming back to this,
when I went into the hospital and I tried to kill
myself -- this was the other thing -- I had
driven my car, had my two dogs in the car with
me, and I put my keys in the glove -- I locked
the glove compartment with my keys and I pried it
open and I threw the key in there. So there
would be no way that I could be -- if anything happened that I wouldn't operate the vehicle or anything like that.

I called my mother and I remember talking to my daughter and telling her how much I loved her and all of that stuff. And I couldn't deal with the flashbacks I was having. They were just so constant and all the time. It didn't matter if I was asleep or I was awake and I couldn't hack it. Like, everything that I had repressed for most of my life came flooding back, and it was just too much. And then not having my daughter there, it was just too much.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Was that the first time in your life you had flashbacks?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yeah, and they're brutal. Like, they're -- like, I can't describe them. It is, like -- it's like being -- I don't know if you ever seen Clockwork Orange movie. You know when he has got his eyes propped open? It's like that. You can't escape it. And they just -- it comes on and you sit there and it's -- I'm watching these -- my mother violate me and I am reliving it and I can't turn it off.

I would wake up -- my daughter -- when my daughter was with me, even my ex would tell me they would wake me -- I would be screaming in my sleep, Get off me, get stopped at [sic], don't touch me, get off me. And I wake up in sweats. I would be waking up bawling. And it was just brutal, and I don't wish that on anybody.

SHEILA MAZHARI: And that year when you -- do you remember -- I think you told me but just to have, again, the year you went to the hospital?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: 2009. Yeah, it would have been in November of 2009.

I earn the trust of the medical teams in the hospital. I have been in the hospital a couple of times in my life and I earned the privilege of being able to go out for a walk or whatever very fast. And I went for a walk because my dogs were still at my uncle's house and for the first little bit -- it was my mom's younger brother -- one of my mom's younger brothers. And he was also afflicted with polio when he was a young child. So he had been on disability his whole life.
And my uncle [Uncle 1] was fine looking after my dogs at the time. And I would walk, I would leave the hospital and walk to my uncle's house, which was about a 10 or 15-minute walk from the hospital to go see my dogs, which gives me a lot of therapy. The same large dog I was telling you about is still alive and he is like my therapy dog. I really wanted to bring him to the inquiry because I have seen dogs in the hotel this week.

But the one time I went over, I had taken in before this happened, I took in one of my brother's friends who had been -- was going through a separation with his wife. And he had -- like, nothing abusive or anything, but just, you know, she didn't want him living at home anymore. And he kept showing up at my section of the house because my brother used to live in that part of the duplex before he bought his house. And I would come home sometimes and I didn't have a lot of furniture in the house -- and I would come home and [Uncle's Friend] would be in the house. And I am, like, How did you get in here? And he's, like, Oh, I know how to get in here. And he's, like, There's lots of times -- it was an old house.

And I told him he could crash. I said, But don't make this a regular thing. Well, he had nowhere to go and all of a sudden he wouldn't leave. And I said, No, you need to leave. I said, I am not comfortable with this anymore. You're also bringing alcohol here. I said, You're drinking a lot. I don't want that around me right now.

Well, he went and talked to my uncle and my uncle said it was fine for him to stay. So I went and talked to my uncle and I said, It's not, I said, I am not comfortable with him staying here. And I said, Then he needs it start paying rent because this is ridiculous. You can't afford this. And I didn't like the alcohol. I did catch him one time using cocaine in the house and that's when I flipped out. I was, like, I am not having that around me. I don't do drugs; I don't want any of that around me.

And my uncle all of a sudden decided he didn't want -- and he didn't tell me at the time but he didn't want to be my surety anymore. He
Sharna Sugarman

went down to the provincial court, walked down there, which is all within walking distance and removed himself as my surety. So when that went into system with the police and everything which I didn't know about, he told me about it later, that means that I didn't have somebody that was willing to support me and sort of be accountable for me. So when I found that out and I got in a big argument with my uncle about that, and I was really disappointed that he did that. He also didn't want my dogs. That was the other thing he did, he didn't want my dogs. Took my dogs to the humane society and surrendered them.

This is all -- I find this all out within a 24-hour period and I have just lost -- I have got these thoughts of my dogs being alone, I have got are they going to be adopted out. I'm in the hospital. I am just beside myself. I had the psychiatrist, I had the medical team call my uncle, they called my attorney, called my mother, my mother wouldn't take the dogs. Nothing.

So I'm walking back home after being at my uncle's house. I am no longer allowed to stay at my uncle's house, that's the other thing he said. He said, You're in the hospital, and he said, [Uncle's friend] needs a place to stay. He's willing to pay rent right now, like this. I'm walking back to the hospital. I'm hysterical. I'm so upset. I just feel like every support I had is gone, and I see this cruiser. And then I'm getting, Oh, crap, here comes the cops.

So I managed to get back in the hospital before the cop came. I get back into the mental health unit, which is all, you know, like, you have to be buzzed in and stuff. That night two cops showed up at the hospital demanding that the mental health nurses, that they have -- they're going to remove me because I no longer have a surety. The nurses advocate as best they could. There was no doctors there by this time because it was, like, 10:30 at night. They're coming, they're talking to me. And I said, I'm not leaving. Because actually my psychiatrist -- because I had a fear of the police, so he wrote in my records on every page under no circumstance is Sharna to be released to -- in the police custody unless there's a warrant, unless there's
something he can't override.
Well, they didn't have a warrant. They
wouldn't let them in at first into the unit.
Then they threatened the nurses with obstruction
and a bunch of other stuff. So the one nurse
finally caved, buzzed them in. By this time the
one cop, and his name was [Constable 2]. Don't
know his first name. I think it's [Constable 2].
He's livid. He's already been -- you know, they've
already -- in his opinion -- wasted his time for
the past hour trying to get into the unit. He
takes me out in handcuffs. He's really harsh on
them. He's got his hand clamped down on them and
he's really tugging on me. My ex who befriended
me in there and the other patients were really
agitated. The one guy was, like -- wanted to
challenge, and I said, Don't, don't get involved.
I said, I don't want to see you harmed.
He gets me outside and he's still clamping
down hard on my handcuffs. And it was the other
cop was, like, Relax, calm down, to him. Takes
me down the staircase, we get outside and they
have got one of those doors, like, the outside
doors, the [Hospital] doors where you can't get back
in. Well, as soon as it shut he threw me up
against it as hard as he could, and he was
swearing at me and stuff like that. They put me
in the cruiser. They took me back to the
Kingston Police unit, and I am telling them, I
said, You have no right to remove me from there.
And they're telling me about my uncle. I said, I
don't care what my uncle has done. I said, I am
in a hospital getting care. I can't leave
without signing out, all of those things. And I
said, If you need me at court, then you just need
to tell my attorney and I will be there.
They threw me in a police cell for the
night. They laughed at me; they thought it was
funny. Well, the one cop laughed at me; the
other guy didn't laugh so much. And I did tell
them that they were violating my rights and that
they would find themselves on the end of a civil
matter and a human rights complaint. They threw
me in a cell for the night. I went before a
justice that day --

SHEILA MAZHARI: Do you remember the date of this?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: No, I have no -- it was in December,
I remember that.

SHEILA MAZHARI: 2009?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: 2009. And I remember the Crown and, sadly, he's not alive anymore. His name is [Crown attorney 2]. He was mortified. I have -- and he's a really hard ass. He was so apologetic to the justice that I was removed from the unit. By this point, I no longer needed an surety. The reason why they did that is because I no longer had a permanent address because my uncle removed himself from being my surety. My uncle also did tell me that he felt like he was being harassed by the Kingston Police because the officers were coming by the house too often and asking him questions. And I think they were harassing him hoping that he would do this. And that's exactly what happened.

So they put down the Hotel Dieu mental health unit as my temporary address until I found a place to live, which at this point was what I was doing and with the social workers inside the hospital. So I go back to the hospital with this brand new, you know, instructions from the -- conditions from the court. And this little son of a bitch -- I don't even know if he was a nurse, but he was always on the unit, his name was [Health worker], wouldn't let me back into the mental health unit. Because it says on it there's some type of wording that says "if" or something like that. And he's reading it and he's being cocky. And he says, it doesn't say here that I have to let you back in here.

And I said, You're letting me back in here. I said -- he had my stuff all packed. He said, Well, you didn't come back here last night. I said, I was removed here by the police last night. What exactly did you think was going to happen? He wasn't on duty the night before. One of the custodians was there and he came over and tried to intervene. And [Health worker] is, like, I'm handling this; back off, kind of attitudy [sic] thing. Wouldn't let me in.

Hands me all of my stuff in a white plastic bag and says, We have already given your room to somebody else. By this time it's after court hours. I can't go back and talk to anybody. My
lawyer is gone for the night. I called his line, got through to his service. I said, It's an emergency please let [Lawyer 1] know this. And I couldn't believe it. I was absolutely appalled. I am teetering on exhaustion, I am teetering on the abuse that I have gone through, the violations of my civil and human rights. All of those things being thrown up against a [Hospital] door by a cop while I have handcuffs on. 

So they hand me all my stuff, and I went downstairs. My ex came down because he had passes as well, he could leave. And he came outside and sat with me. And we were becoming friends then. And he wanted to stay with me and I said, Don't. I said, I'm going to figure this out. I said, You have got your own journey and stuff like that. 

So I called my uncle and pleaded with him that if I could stay with him, and he said, No. He said, I've been harassed by the police; I don't want this anymore. So I didn't know what to do and, of course, at that time my head was just swimming. I didn't sleep the night before in the cell at all, nothing. And I wasn't sleeping well in the hospital as well. 

So I became desperate. I went into my belongings that they had given me and I found all of my medicines. And some of them were my narcotics for my back and stuff, which were all locked up in the nurses room. But when you leave they give you back all your stuff. So I downed all of them, walked into the emergency room and told them I had just overdosed. Got taken in, they gave me charcoal to vomit up and stuff and the doctor and the nurse that I spoke to, ended up finding me on the system as an inpatient. I hadn't been removed yet. Well, this doctor lost it. He was just infuriated. And -- sorry, she was a female. Sorry, the nurse was a male. And I told him what happened. And I said, That's why I did what I did. I said I'm not going back to jail. I'm not going through this again. 

She took me upstairs personally and there's [Health worker] in there. And she took him in and she said, You, with me now. And he just looked at her and she looked at me and she said, Don't you ever go near this patient again. She goes, I'll
have your job. She was furious.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Do you remember her name?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: I don't remember her name. It would be in my health records.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Do you have your own health records?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: I think my family doctor here in BC has some of them. I know I asked -- I did sign consents for her to get all of them. I don't know if she got all of them. I have no clue. But I could, you know, look into that.

So I am back on the unit. The patients are all just happy as hell to see me, but they're also, like, what in the hell is going on and all of this stuff. And yeah, it was -- I had the -- the head of psychiatry was there. There were a couple of other big wigs. I think the chief of staff was there as well all within 24 hours of me being returned, and I am sure in their head they were, like, lawsuit.

And yeah, it was really a brutal, brutal experience. And then we ended up finding this townhouse, and my ex and I moved in. We also moved in another patient with us, another female who needed a place. So we rented this four-bedroom townhouse. And, you know, we -- my ex and I became really, really close really fast. And my mother brought [Daughter] a couple times when I was in the unit. My mother would never come fully into the hospital. She would go as far as the nurse's station. And my daughter never felt threatened. Like, my mother -- I never grew up in a family that understood or took the time to understand mental illness. I'm the black sheep of the family. My brother likes to call me crazy and all these things. Well, I'm not crazy. And I find my family is quite ignorant towards mental health.

My mother used to say to me when we get in these big fights and especially after I accused her of molesting me, she would tell -- she had it in writing with her lawyer and she brought it up several times and she would say it in front of my family that because I was an Aboriginal child, it must be fetal alcohol syndrome. It automatically means that my biological mother must have consumed alcohol when she was pregnant with me. Because there would be no other reason why I
would be as angry as I am. It's nothing that she
did wrong or anything like that.

And, you know, I used to love to say to my
brothers, I'm, like, I'm sorry I have a masters
in abnormal psych and, I'm sorry, what do you
have? That's why I got into what I do because I
can be empathetic towards people. And I don't
have any relationship with my family whatsoever
and I am happier for it.

So my daughter is my beginning and end all
of my life and I absolutely just adore her.
She's just the most beautiful soul. I just adore
her. And she's a very empathetic and very
compassionate person and she deplores any type of
discrimination as I do, and she tries her best
with the homeless. And, you know, she'll text me
sometimes when she's in Vancouver with her
friends and she'll say, Mama, I found, you know,
somebody. Can I buy them a sandwich? Can I get
them something? You know, because she's always
checking in with me with that. And she knows
that as long as we're financially doing okay -- I
mean, I'm not swimming in money by any stretch of
the imagination -- that's what she likes to do.
And I am so proud of her for that.

And she did, she's told my mother off many
times. And my daughter is not that type of
person, but she came down very hard and she has
written -- in the past she's written -- she's
showed me the emails to my mom where she goes, I
know what you did to my mom and you could have
done that to me. There was only a couple times
that [Daughter] told me that she was a little
uncomfortable with my mom. There were a couple
of times, I guess, my mom wanted to snuggle with
her in bed. And [Daughter] said, No, I don't want you
to. And my mother tried to persist and [Daughter]
said, No, out now.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Even before she knew?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: No, she knew by then. She suspected
by then. But she was also resentful to my mom
because she couldn't understand why she wasn't
with me. And by this time CAS, which is the
Children's Aid Society, was involved because the
judge had ordered me to contact them. And they
came back with their report saying there's
nothing wrong with Sharna's parenting. And they
couldn't understand why this was a family case and all of this stuff. And, like I said, the one judge said to my mom a month before I was arrested, she said there's no reason for this. Like, all it is, is you're disrespecting your daughter's wishes, you're being -- you know, you're being noncompliant. She's asking you not to bring her around certain people and you're doing it sneakily. I'd find out through my daughter. My daughter would be telling me, I saw so-and-so today. And I would be like, I'm sorry, you saw who? So then I would call my mother. And that's how it happened, is she kept doing it. And then she would write it writing, I won't do it anymore; I won't do it anymore. And she kept doing it.

So I finally cut her off. And I said until you realize I am her parent and what I say goes. I'm not asking you to spank her; I'm asking you to not take her around people I don't trust and I don't want her to have any contact with. And you're being defiant and you're being sneaky about it. And that's also when she changed her will. And I don't care about that.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Did you ever go to counselling for the effects of what your mother did to you?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yes and no. I've had counselling off and on, but not since -- I just got a vehicle last summer so that's been an issue because I was living -- I am very much connected with horses, so we lived on a horse farm when we first moved to BC. We have lived on a couple of them.

We went through quite a very unsettling time in BC. We had some landlords that were far from the up and up. I was assaulted by one and he was charged and convicted. But we had to leave the house because of that because he lived in the downstairs part.

We had another landlord that I didn't find out until the neighbour next door that the for sale sign that I thought was on his property, because it was a shared piece of grass, was actually for the house that I was renting and it was in foreclosure, which they didn't tell me. We had another one where we lived on a horse farm down in [Village] with this sociopath. And she and her family ended up stealing everything that
we owned, like, everything. I was assaulted by her mother. She threw a rock in my face. And when I went to the RCMP about it, he turned around and charged me with public mischief. Said it never happened. I had this massive bruise on my face and he determined it because the grandfather had a little hand video camera. And he filmed the day that I was trying to get my family out of the house. And his daughter through a rock over -- lunged it from about here to the door, hit me in the face, but over her five-year-old granddaughter's head. She could have easily have hit this child. This rock was probably about the size of a clementine. But because of this video, even though the video wasn't complete, it doesn't show the assault in the video. This cop thought I was lying.

I took it to trial, was found not guilty. He was completely berated by the judge in Penticton. Stated that I clearly had -- was the victim of an assault. And I also think it was racially motivated because I was Indigenous. And [Village] has a very large -- for the size of the village -- Indian reserve around it.

What has happened since then, I have demanded that the RCMP purge my records. This was the -- he was the top cop at the time. He was Corporal [Officer 4], and now he's Sergeant [Officer 4]. And he's actually in Richmond now. He left his post in [Village] and took up -- I found that out at trial.

Then this [Officer 5] is his name. I don't know his first name. I called last year, last summer, and demanded that he purge my records and he won't. And I asked him -- I said, Is it because I'm Indigenous? And he said, Yeah, that's part of it. So now he's facing a human rights complaint, which has now been accepted by the Canadian Human Rights Commission. I want it all purged. He's also told me a lot of the information in those files has nothing to do with me; it has to do more with the other people. And I said, Fine. Then you can sit down with somebody and you can pick it apart, but you're going to get rid of anything that has association with me because I am not -- I don't have a criminal record. But if I do a CPIC it shows the
charges even though it says not guilty and it
says withdrawn. It still has a stigmatization on
it.

The irony is underneath the human rights
code, it's against the law in regards to certain
things tenancy, employment, stuff like that, to
not hire somebody because they have gotten a
pardon for a conviction. But there's no
protection for anybody underneath the human
rights code that's been charged and even though
you're not guilty or you're acquitted, there's
nothing there to say that that's a violation.
You actually have to have the conviction and the
pardon in order for it to violate the code, which
I disagree with.

So that's where I am at there.
SHEILA MAZHARI: Can we just go to [Village]. What
date did this incident --
SHARNA SUGARMAN: That happened in September of 2013.
SHEILA MAZHARI: And do you have the name of the woman
that threw it?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yeah, [Woman C], and [Woman C] is
spelled [spells name]. We lost everything we owned.
And we also lost my beloved Siamese cat that I
had rescued. He was not an outdoor cat, and
that's what started it. I took my -- we already
had tension in the house because the SPCA kept
coming by about the horses on our property.
[Landlord 2], is the girl that
I was sharing the house with.
SHEILA MAZHARI: Do you want to spell her name?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yeah, [Landlord 2]. And her
last name is [Landlord 2]. She was about
27 years of age, and she told me that all the
horses on her property was because she was
starting a horse rescue. And that the horses,
some of them that were emaciated, had come to her
like that.

Well, I realized after being there for a
couple of weeks that that wasn't the case. She
was the one that owned all these horses and she
couldn't afford to feed them. And she only
worked at Walmart. And there's no way between
the rent and everything else, her car payments,
all this stuff -- I just did a rough math and I
am, like, there's no way you could afford this
many horses.

But the SPCA showed up about a week after we moved there because the farm is in [Village] just as you're leaving the village on Highway 3, and somebody had seen one of the mustangs and a foal, and they looked quite thin. And that's why they reported it. So when the officer showed up, I introduced myself, but I said, No, I am not the owner of these horses. I said, I just moved here with my daughter. And he said, Well, you know, I have got a complaint. And I said, Okay, well, let me go get the owner. And I went in the house and I told her who he was and why he was there. And she's, like, Oh my god, get rid of him. And I looked at her and I said, I'm not getting rid of him. And she's, like, Well, I don't want to talk to him. And I said, You have to talk to him. He has a legitimate reason to be here. And I looked at her and I said, You need to -- I said, What you should do is take him around the whole farm and show him every animal that's here, and that way if he has any concerns, they can be addressed then. I said, You don't send him away. I said, That's not how this works. And it also makes him -- a red flag go up.

So I said, Fine. I said, If you don't want to deal with him, I'll deal with him. So I went out and I took him around the whole property and let him see every horse. And there was a couple of chickens there and we had a donkey and we had two pot belly pigs and an alpaca. He had some concerns about a couple of the horses because she had stallions, and that's one thing that also was a red flag to me. Horse rescues don't keep stallions. They'll geld them because they're not looking to breed; right. They're trying to keep the population down.

And [Landlord 2] had three stallions at the time, and she wouldn't geld them. She is not right in the head at all. The whole family are nothing but sociopaths. So long and short of it, her mother is this short, obese, just this foul-mouthed person. And she's missing half of her teeth here, and I don't know how we brought it up one day about it. [Landlord 2] is the one that punched her mother in the mouth. That's why she's missing her teeth. Her eldest daughter.
She has three adult children.

She has guardianship of -- at the time, of her five-year-old granddaughter. And I was living in the same house with the father, her youngest son. And MCFD was involved with the family, and she would speak so brutally to this child. She would say, If your father had worn a condom my life would be better now. You know, You better not be such a problem to me as my kids were, you know. It was just horrible. And she was just this delightful little girl.

So when things start getting ugly and I started putting two and two together about the horses and the state of the farm, I went to [Landlord 2] and I said, Here's the deal. I'm not paying you rent come the first of the month. If you don't have enough hay for these horses, that's where my money is going. I will get hay and I am feeding them.

Her family was coming to me and saying that they wanted me to help her. That they felt that she had serious mental health issues that she wasn't addressing. And I said, I can talk to her. And they said she needs to be hospitalized. I think she needs this. She needs -- and I said, You can't do anything like that. And they said, Why? And I said, because she's an adult. You don't have any leverage over her. She has no children, so you can't threaten -- well, we'll take the kids or we'll call MCFD if you don't get the help that you need. I said, I can talk to her. I said, She's already talked to me herself about a couple things that she's concerned about. I said, But I can't force her to do anything.

I actually think she's bipolar. That was my assessment of her after living with her for several months. And she's also an animal hoarder. That's the other thing I noticed. So I ended up buying the donkey off of her. I paid $500 for him. And there was this abused horse named Shilo that my daughter had gotten close to. And Shilo had -- she was also an auction horse and we think that she had been hit down her muzzle and that at one point she had had a break. She was very, very head shy and you couldn't really get close to her, but my daughter managed to.
So I bought Shilo for $500. I was helping this man that had -- I had met through my former landlord, the one with the foreclosure, who had been in a horrific -- he was a truck driver and he was in a horrific crash in the States, even though he was Canadian. But he had to go to the US for all of his coverage because the company he worked for was American. So I was taking him to his appointments in Tenaska and just over the border because he wasn't allowed to legally drive. We came back and she had taken -- so I have already bought -- and I have got the contract signed, all that stuff, the purchase of the donkey and the horse. [Landlord 2] took Diesel the donkey, Shilo the horse, the goat Billy, the alpaca all to the auction. And we never saw them again.

And that's when things really deteriorated. So I also -- not only did I demand where they were, I said, You're going to give me back my $1,000. Never saw any of it. Came home the day I was assaulted to my cat being outside -- my beloved cat who never went outside. He was not an -- he was a scaredy-cat. He would not be outside. And he comes up to me and he's got this look on his face and he is talking to me but he's looking at me, like, what the hell am I doing out here. And the other reason I didn't want him out is she had three large dogs and they were all tethered outside, which I do not support. But her one dog Finnegan who was this white Akbash crossed, I think, with a Shepherd was a cat killer. She got off her tether one day and grabbed one of the barn kittens that was only about four months old and swung it around like a rag doll. I tried my best to get it away from her and I couldn't. And it died.

So I was terrified of my cats being outside. My other cat was inside the house. And after she threw the rock in my face, I left. Got in the car, went over to this -- the man's house that I was helping and I called the police from there. [Officer 4] called me back about an hour later, didn't come and see me for three days. By this point, that evening I went back with the RCMP, got our belongings, tried to get my cats, my Siamese cat was never seen again even though I
Statement – Public
Sharna Sugarman

put him in the house. Got my cats and my two
dogs and we went into a local motel. And he came
by to see me. I was furious, like, I remember
talking to him saying, What do you mean you're
not coming to see me. He drove out to the farm
to get their side of the story before mine.

Also there was a time just before that when I
was in bed and [Landlord 2]'s -- the mid child [Child
D] was there, and she seemed to be the only really
levelheaded one out of the whole family, which
isn't giving much credit. And [Landlord 2] was going
off saying that none of her animals were leaving
the farm. If anybody were to interfere with her
life or her farms or take anything from her,
meaning her animals, and she said, I have got
a -- and I don't know weapons at all, but some
type of gun in her bedroom and that she's not
afraid to use it. And [Child D] is, like, you can't
threaten people with violence. And I took it --
because she was -- when she said it, she walked
towards my bedroom and stood outside my bedroom
door, and that's when she said, I'm a pretty good
shot and all this stuff.

And I got up and I went out and I said, Are
you threatening me with violence? Are you
threatening me with a weapon? And she just
looked and she goes, You can take it anyway you
want. She goes, But no one is fucking around
with my life here. So I ended up talking to the
police. I drove to the RCMP and spoke to them
about it. And they came out, same cop, I think
it was [Officer 4] at the time. Talked to
the grandfather. And when I talked to the
grandfather about it, he said, That's it. I've
had it with her and her attitude and all this
stuff. And he went out, the cop went out and
talked to the grandfather. The grandfather said
he had taken all the weapons that they had
registered in the house, and there was also a
crossbow and a bunch of other stuff. So he
already had all this information. And he talked
to [Landlord 2] about it and confronted her and said,
You can't be threatening people with violence or
whatever. And she completely denied it. And it
was, like, not even a few days later that I got
assaulted by the mother.

The mother didn't even live on the property.
She lived in the village. And I used to say that to her. I said, You have no right to be here. You don't live here. This is [Woman C]. I said, You have no right to be here. You don't live here. And you have no right to harass me. I live here. I've paid rent. You know, all this stuff.

So I get assaulted. [Officer 4] doesn't even come to see me at the hotel for three days, shows up, takes photographs of my face. By this point the bruise on my face is now getting that yellowy-brown look. Which at trial the judge saw it and he said, Clearly she's got a bruise. Because he did, he asked him, he said, Who took these photographs? And the corporal testified and said, I did Your Honour. And he said, What does that look like to you on her face? He said -- not only that there was also some abrasions. Like, there was some little cuts and stuff.

So when we left, I hired a friend of mine who had a -- like, sort of, like, a moving business on the side, to go and move our stuff out. And when they arrived, I gave them an itemized list basically literally down to the last spoon of what in that house was mine. I never got back the majority of my stuff. It was about $25,000 worth of stuff that I never got back. About 3,000 CDs, because my family used to own a music store, about 1,000 DVDs, all of my clothes, all of my daughter's clothes, my antiques, two Persian rugs that I got on my travels, paintings, small appliances, an equestrian saddle that I bought actually off of [Landlord 2] for my daughter, obviously my beloved pet. And when they showed up, they put a padlock on [Daughter]'s bedroom door, so nothing inside my daughter's bedroom ever came out.

They took my flat-screen TV. And when I talked to the superintendent who was [Officer 6]. I remember him saying to me, it's too bad you didn't have a receipt for those. That and my red microfiber couch. And I said to him, I can get one. I said, I bought them -- those two stores in my hometown. I bet you they have it because my brother worked at one. Well, I did. They faxed them to the RCMP in Penticton and it clearly says that I bought
them when I bought them, the description. And
the TV had serial number on it.
SHARNA SUGARMAN: He was the superintendent in
Penticton at the time.
SHEILA MAZHARI: Superintendent of ...?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: RCMP. So that happened. And so the
movers came, took what they could. And the girl
was talking to me on the phone and she's just,
like, Your couch is not in this living room. And
I'm, like, It has to be; it's been there since we
moved in. And she's, like, Well, it's not here.
They wouldn't allow - [Woman C] would not allow them
to go down into the basement. And I said, Well,
obviously she's put some stuff down there.

And I kept talking. And I did talk to
[Officer 4] that day and I said, You need to
tell [Woman C] to back off. She does not live
there. She has no say over this. She was never
my landlord, anything, not even a roommate.

So they took what they could. They came
back the next day because it was getting dark and
they also -- they only had, like, a truck and a
little trailer. [Officer 4] came back with them the
next day and outside the cattle gate were boxes
of mine with some stuff in it with water that
they had poured in. By this time it had frozen.

These are photographs, precious photographs
of my late beloved father, ruined. Photographs
of my daughter, ruined. They had a chain lock on
the gate, so the officer jumped the gate, went up
to the house because she said, I'm not leaving
without this flat-screen TV and this couch. She
said, They won't let me into the one bedroom.
I've got some of the stuff, but a lot of this
stuff that's on this list is not even here.

And so he went in and met [Woman C] who was
there again. And she said that she wasn't giving
the TV back. That she knew the TV was mine but
she wasn't giving it back. Pretty much that's
theft. So then when he asked about the couch,
the grandfather, [Man C] was his name even though
his real name was [Man C] He said, Oh,
I'll bring that down. I'll be right down with
it. So the cop went back down to the bottom of
the driveway. Grandfather apparently came down
on an ATV, dragging my couch behind it, and it
was covered in horse manure. Brand new couch.
I don't think the couch was even six months old.

SHEILA MAZHARI: And is this all detailed in the police report?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yep. So the mover, when I talked to her, I said, What did the cop do at that point? She goes, Oh my God -- she says, His face was just red as an apple. And I said, Yeah, but he didn't do anything, did he? And she said, No, he didn't.

So I -- he kept telling me this was a landlord and tenant matter. And I said, Excuse me? I said, This is a criminal matter. That is theft, and that is destruction of private property. You damn well know they don't own any of that stuff.

So I said to him, I said, Let me put it to you this way, officer: If you had -- let's say you had a fully furnished duplex, you lived in one side, you had tenants in the other side and it was fully furnished, and you go to get rent on the 1st of the month. Can't find your tenants, they're ignoring you, cell calls, all that stuff. Hmm, a couple days go by, still no contact from your tenants, and you go into that unit thinking they have left, and you walk in and everything that you own that was in this fully furnished suite is gone. I said, Would you not consider that theft? He said, Well, I think that's a little different. I said, No, it's not. It's the exact same thing. Those are my belongings and they stole them. And you did nothing about it. I said, Why? Because they're Caucasian and I am Indigenous? I was furious.

I have spent the last part of the last few years, because I have been on disability, replacing everything that I owned that I could own that -- you know, like, there's certain things, like I say with people when there's fires. I call it the three Ps, get people, pets, and photos out. Everything else is replaceable. You can replace a TV, you can replace a couch; you can't replace those things.

And he did nothing about it because he was so hell bent with wanting to charge me -- because he hadn't charged me by this point. The charge came a couple of months later. So that's why he
Sharna Sugarman

didn't want to do his job in my opinion. He was more hell bent about coming after the Indigenous person than he was the Caucasian family who had stolen all this stuff, who had committed a crime of throwing a rock in my face, who has done whatever that gave me unbelievable depression over what happened to my beloved cat. I don't know even know if he's still alive. I don't know if they have him. I don't know whatever happened to him.

I had the SPCA go back because they were already under investigation over their horses. And the SPCA went right to the front door and asked to come in the house to look for the cat, and [Landlord 2] said, You're not coming in the house.

SHEILA MAZHARI: When you came and you saw the cat, you said your cat was --

SHARNA SUGARMAN: He was outside.

SHEILA MAZHARI: And he was looking --

SHARNA SUGARMAN: He was looking at me terrified going, Meow. Like, Siamese are vocal cats. And I picked him up and he was shaking. And I remember looking at [Woman C] and I put him back and I am thinking, What the hell are you doing out of the house? He's not even not the kind of cat that if you open the door that he would run to go outside. Because we wanted to test him, and any time I put him out on the deck, he would run right back into the house.

SHEILA MAZHARI: And then what happened when you had him in your --

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Oh, he was shaking and she was laughing.

SHEILA MAZHARI: But he was okay after that, or ...?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: He was. And I put him back in the house because I was supposed to go and pick up the guy that I was helping and possibly go over the border again for a doctor's appointment. So I said, You need to call, talk to them. If we need to go, then I need to get [Daughter] out of school and we'll all go and all of that stuff.

And I came back after dropping her off at school, and I said, I will be at home, just call me if you need me, then we'll go. If not, I'm home for the day kind of thing. And when I -- when she saw the cat, she turned to her father, and I will never forget what he said -- because
he's Siamese, so he's Asian. She turns to her
cat -- and I told you about the white dog that
they owned that had killed a cat previously. She
turns to her dad, she goes, Hey dad, she goes, I
wonder if Finnegan would like some fucking chink
food tonight for dinner; meaning my cat. And I
looked at her and I said, Don't you ever touch my
cat. I was so mad. And she's, like, Don't you
fucking tell me what to do, you bitch. Sort of
like this. And I was, like, bring it on woman.
If you touch my cat, it's, like, touching my kid.

So that's when she chucked the rock in my
face. It was literally a couple of minutes
later. And she turned to her dad after it hit me
in the face -- and it went right -- like, it
lobbed right over her granddaughter's head. It
could have easily have hit [Child E] in the in the
back of the head. And she laughed as soon as it
did. And she's, Oh dad, look at that; I still
got a pretty good fucking arm, eh? And they both
started laughing. And the child just looked at
me, and obviously I had this huge welt and this
red mark on my face. I was just dumbfounded.

All I wanted to do was scoop her up and go
because I have -- the way that she would talk to
this daughter -- I'm convinced this little
girl -- she would probably be -- probably about
12 now.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Do you want to say her full name?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: [Child E], so I think that's
[spells name], I think it is. And [last name]
is her last name [spells name],
[describes name].
I'm convinced this child is either going to
be pregnant, a teen pregnant mother, or she's
going to drop out of school. She's going to be a
statistic with having that woman in her life.
She's should have been sterilized. She never
should have had children. She is just a vile
human being.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Do you think [Child E] is in danger
and she needs --
SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yep, I went to MCFD about when she
did that. She's been removed a couple of times
by MCFD, to my understanding.

SHEILA MAZHARI: And what does MCFD stand for?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: Ministry of Children and Family
Development. It's child protection services in this province. No, I talked right to the actual worker. And I said, You need to get that child out of that family, out of that house. She's, you know -- she's not going to make it. She's in danger. Told them everything that she has said that I have witnessed that has been said to the child. You know, telling her your dad should have worn a condom and I would have a better life if you weren't around and, you know, screaming and yelling at her and stuff. Just awful.

And I just -- it's unbelievable. And -- so nothing was ever done. [Woman C] was never charged with assaulting me and I pushed it and I pushed it. By this time when I went to trial, [Officer 4] was already down here in Richmond and had left his post in [Village] and he was now a sergeant. I remember the Crown saying, Oh, you were promoted; they promoted you. And I am, like, They don't promote you. You actually have to write an exam in order to move up a rank. So it's not like they tapped him on the shoulder and said, Good job; here you go.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Can we spell [Village] for the record.

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yeah, it's [spells name of village].

SHEILA MAZHARI: That's in BC?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yes. It's in the southern Okanagan. Yeah, so that's what I went through with that. They won't charge her. The RCMP came back when I did demand them that they did charge her for that, and they charged her with theft and all of those things and the criminal harassment. Same thing you always get. Because my family no longer lived in [Village], they didn't think she was a threat anymore at least to me.

SHEILA MAZHARI: So they did charge her with --

SHARNA SUGARMAN: No, they never charged her.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Not with theft, not with anything?


SHEILA MAZHARI: And have you tried to pursue that or appeal or anything?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Well, I went all the way through to [Officer 6]. And I sort of got the run around with him. Because he's the superintendent for Penticton and Penticton is the overseer of the [Village] because [Village] is just a village.
There is only, like, 1,000 people.

No, he just kept saying -- couple of times he said, Leave it with me. And then nothing. He just kept saying -- you know, he understood my frustration. I always loved that when they say, I understand your frustration. And I am, like, You're not doing your job. You shouldn't be able to pick and choose. And the reason -- the biggest reason why the video during my trial was there was no -- there was no shop -- there was nothing in it. So the cop assumed the assault never happened. Well, there was no time stamp, there was no nothing on it. So when everybody was up on the stand including the grandfather who was the one shooting it. I asked him, I said, When did this happen? What's the date and time of this? And he couldn't tell me.

Also in the scene -- there's no audio. It's all just -- he didn't activate it or whatever. It's all visual. Honestly, I was the only one that could tell that that was me in the foreground or the background. It's so far away.

When I said that to the officer who was in the stands. I said, How the hell do you know that's me? He goes, Well, I have talked to you before; I had met you before. And I said, You can tell that far away that that's me? I said, That's amazing. That's quite the distance away and most of it is the back of me coming in and out of the house. And you can tell that that's me. I said, That's amazing. Because you can't zoom in. It's not, like, on a phone, You can't zoom in, nothing.

And then in the scene at the end when [Woman C] was on the witness stand and we had it and we played it to her, she's doing this [clapping hands] in the video. So I asked her, I said why are you doing that? Why are you doing that behaviour? And she's sitting there trying to be all -- she's, like, That doesn't mean anything. People just do that. It doesn't mean anything. I said this doesn't mean -- I said, What does this mean when somebody does that to you, as I said to you. I said, Doesn't that mean fuck off, flipping you bird? And she's, like, Yeah. And I said, so this doesn't mean violence? This doesn't indicate you're going to punch somebody?
And she tried to play it down. And the judge said to her -- she said, Clearly -- he said, Clearly you're indicating violence. And he goes, And who is the one that got hit? Ms. Sugarman. So the cop really got reamed out by the judge and he apologized to me at the end of it. He said, Clearly you're the victim of a crime here. Possibly several. And I took the stand on my own. I represented myself, that was the other thing. That's the other problem. That's another recommendation I'll have for here.

In the province of British Columbia, if it's a summary offense, you don't qualify for Legal Aid. And especially if the Crown is not seeking any jail time, you don't qualify for Legal Aid. So you have to represent yourself if you can't afford to pay your own way to hire a lawyer. So I had to represent myself. And I think I did a pretty good job. And the judge commended me on that as well. And I remember him telling, then, [Officer 4] that he needed to speak to me and make sure that, you know, justice is served. And they never did.

So that's what happened with me, and that's why I don't trust the police even though ironically I've thought about joining the RCMP. I was actually contacted by their recruiter a couple years ago, which was really fluky how I got contacted by her. It was because I'm Aboriginal. And I don't have any wanting -- I have never wanted in my life to be a cop. My whole being, if I ever do it, and my daughter's thinking about it as well, is only because of all the wrongs that have happened to Indigenous people, and I want to be part of the change. I could never violate anybody's civil liberties. I could never do half of the things that these police officers have been accused of or things that they have been found guilty of. I believe that cops have to be held to a higher standard than your average person. And until that happens, nothing is going to change.

That is my, definitely, issue with this inquiry is the fact that if the recommendation comes back or there's enough testimony, as I'm sure there are -- I said that to Briar Stewart from CBC today when I was just chatting with her.
I said, Did you notice that there's no cops here during the inquiry? And she said, Yeah, I noticed that. And I said, Yeah, that would not sit well with the families. I said, It's private security here. Nobody wants to see an RCMP cop here.

So that's one of the things that needs to change. You know, we all know it's there. We all know that systemic racism is there. We all know that they have picked what cases they have wanted to deal with. We know that many of these women probably would have not have fallen victim to Robert Pickton had they listened to people that came forward to them. So there is this -- my people are considered not to be credible and that we don't matter. And I have had police officers say to me that I am affluent -- they'll say to me, Wow, you're well spoken and you have a really good lexicon.

And I don't know whether to take it as an insult or a compliment and I have said that to them. I said, How did you expect me to speak? And I have said to most cops -- I said, I have a higher education than you do. I've travelled the world. I've seen things. I'm a forever learner. Is it because I'm Indigenous that you're shocked that I can form a sentence or that I have a good vocabulary or whatever it is? And I do. I don't always take it as a compliment.

I don't know how often they say that to a Caucasian person. Do you say that -- I said that to the one cop one day. I know he meant well, but he was Caucasian, and I said, Can I ask you something? And I [sic] said, Yeah. And I said, How often have you caught yourself saying that to a Caucasian person? And he kind of looked at me and paused and he said -- he's, like, I'm not sure what you mean. I said, Well, you have just told me that I am well spoken and that I am articulate and that I have a good lexicon and I can form sentences and all of this stuff. And I am asking you how often do you say that to a Caucasian person that you interact with?

And he just looked at me and he couldn't answer me. And I said to him -- I said, To me it's an insult, you know. You're not saying to me, oh, I like your dress, you look so nice
today. I don't take that as sexual harassment either. I think that you can give somebody a compliment. It's not, like, saying hey, nice legs or whatever, right. But I just said that to him, and he couldn't quantify it for me. And I just sat there and I was, like, there you go, you know.

So I know who I am. I know my story, I know my truth, I know what happened to me. Do I think that there's going to be any accountability on the police's part from this? I don't think so. You know, where the human rights complaint is, there's only so much that they can do. I think the cop that sexually assaulted me, one, should be charged, and two, he should lose his job and his pension.

You can't -- the police want respect from the general public but you have to give it to get it. When there's a crisis or somebody's missing or a pedestrian got hit, they'll come on the news. If you have any information please contact us. We're reaching out to the public. We need your help. Well, when I needed your help, what did you do? When this cop violated me, what did you do? You closed rank and to this day, I still don't know this son of a bitch's name.

And my fear, which I told the SIU, and I will give you permission for this -- like you said, if you're allowed to subpoena anything, you need to subpoena my records from the SIU.

SHEILA MAZHARI: The SIU is special investigation --

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Special investigations unit. And they are the independent body that oversees the police services in Ontario.

I just, you know, I can't get over how often and how redundant the majority of the stories that I have heard this week and the ones that I have heard in the past where the police failed to do their duty, failed to serve, failed to open an investigation, failed to listen, failed to be empathetic, failed to be compassionate, anything like that. And the only thing I can compare it to is what's happening in the united States with African Americans. How often do we hear about a black man that was shot because he was holding a cellphone. Oh, I felt threatened with my life. Really? Do you not learn any de-escalation, and
just because he's black, it's like they say, you
know, shoot because the colour of black.

I don't think -- I don't blame my people
whatsoever for not trusting the police. I think
they have earned it. They have earned the
distrust. And commissioner -- former
Commissioner Paulson, when he apologized to the
Aboriginal community and the AFN, he said, I know
there's systemic racism in my force. I know I
have racist cops in my force, and I don't want
them here.

Okay. And how long was he commissioner for?
And what did he do? They're not even unionized
and they want to form a union. How powerful do
you think they're going to be once they're
unionized. A union does everything it can to
protect the job no matter what the person did.
You literally -- I hate to say it, but you
literally have to kill somebody for a union to
say, sorry, you're on your own.

And, you know, the report that was out, the
story that was out from the Fifth Estate about
the police, of all these people that have been
shot and killed by the police in the last
20 years, only two officers have ever been
convicted. And because it states underneath the
criminal code, if they feel or the Police
Services Act, if they feel threatened, they can
use lethal force. And some of these stories that
you hear, and the guy is 30 feet away from you.
The majority of people that they deal with on a
daily basis have mental health issues, and if
they're in a zone, if they're in a state and
they're not rational and they're yelling at them,
Put your hands up, be compliant, lie on the
ground, they might not even hear you, especially
if they have something like schizophrenia. They
don't hear you. And your first instinct is to
shoot them?

You know, I don't like guns, I don't like
weapons at all, and I have talked to people about
that. I said, God forbid if I ever became a cop,
I really don't know if I could walk around with a
gun on my hip. I really don't like weapons at
all. But come hell or high water, I would do
everything in my power to never have to raise
that weapon. And they just don't have enough
mental health training. That's another recommendation. You're at the depot for five, six months and I heard -- they get a weekend, a weekend, of mental health training. To me, that's, like, becoming a doctor and you get a weekend of, you know, learning how to bandage and do a cast and do all of that stuff. But all the other stuff is -- like, it doesn't make any sense. It doesn't fit the mold, it doesn't fit the criteria for me to become a properly trained police officer.

And if not, wait for backup. Contain -- if there's people around, if there's civilians, then you get them out of here. If it's in a neighbourhood, you close your doors, lock the doors, go back inside. Contain it the best you can. It does not mean you kill somebody. And if you feel you have to use your gun, can you not shoot them in the leg? Tasers? Anything. You don't take a life.

You know, to me it's just -- we're not the United States. I never want to be like the United States. You know, I always say the only thing that makes us close to the United States is we are geographically connected; that's it. But we are nothing like them. And it just scares the crap out of me.

But more often you're going to find in your data that the police are -- they play a huge role in this. And I think that's going to be -- I don't know how the commissioners are going to -- they can't ignore it. But it saddens me as an Indigenous person, as a Canadian, as a social justice advocate, as a survivor of violence by the hands of a police officer, that the inquiry cannot recommend or lay charges. That is the one thing I have heard from most of the victims and survivors that I have heard from this past week at the inquiry. That is definitely the one thing that does not sit well with them. And I can't blame them. They cannot have immunity. They cannot be not held accountable for their conduct, their actions, you know.

Their actions and their conduct, in my opinion, cost many people their lives. And in my situation -- and I remember saying that to the SIU, my biggest fear about coming forward about
this, certainly there was fear, physical fear, physical reprisal, but I did tell them the one reason why I came forward was in my gut, I believe that this cop that violated me, there's other women out there that he has done this to. He's a predator with a badge and a gun.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Sharna, do you mind if we take a mini break?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: No, I'm actually done.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Are you? I have a couple --

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Oh, you have questions?

SHEILA MAZHARI: Yeah.

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Oh, that's fine. Your hand must be sore too.

SHEILA MAZHARI: No, no, it's fine. So first I just wanted to clarify, do you know [Adoptive mother]'s birthday? I don't know if you do.

SHARNA SUGARMAN: My mother's?

SHEILA MAZHARI: Yeah.

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yep, it's [date of birth].

SHEILA MAZHARI: And her date of death?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: I believe it was [date of death].

SHEILA MAZHARI: And what about the incident in Kingston with the older officer? Did he see the younger officer assault you?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: I don't know what the SIU got from that. I don't believe he was ever in the bedroom. The way that my bed was set up, if this were my front door, my bedroom door would have been here and my bed would have been against that wall. So he most likely would have -- probably his view point, even if he was standing in the doorway, would have been the back of the officer, the way that he had thrown me and stuff. So I don't know what he could have seen. He probably heard me, because I definitely said get off me and get your hands off me and you're hurting me and all those things. I know I remember I said all that.

I was really in shock. Like, I was, like ... because all I wanted to do was get him off me and that meant hurting him physically. But in my head, I kept going, He's a cop, he's a cop, he's a cop, he's a cop. That's all that I could hear and I was just, like -- anybody else, any other man, I probably would have lost it.

And the only reason with the two Aboriginal men
when they sexually assaulted me in 2011 was they
overpowered me. I mean, the one guy was -- he
was easily 300 pounds. He was about 6'3"
probably. And they pulled my hoodie over my head
so my arms were locked in. And then we had some
saw horses in the garage, and that's what they
had me over. And then they had a knife against
my throat and stuff like that. So it's a lot
different when you're in that scenario.

But I don't know what the second cop saw. I
know he's retired now. The SIU couldn't give me
much information because they weren't charging
him. That was one thing they told me, which I
disagreed with. He knows who I am, so why can't
I know who he is? If they charge him, then
they're allowed to disclose to me who he is. And
I'm, like, He's a public servant, you know.
That's the other thing I've had with some
officers that I have interacted with in my life.
An officer underneath the Police Services Act
has -- you might not have to say your last name,
but you have to give your badge number. So if an
officer doesn't say I'm Officer Smith and you ask
for their name, he doesn't have to legally give
you his name.

A lot of them have their names stitched on
their vests or whatever. If they don't have
that, they have to give you their badge number.
They're mandated underneath their services act to
do that. And I've had some cops not do that to
me.

Speaking of, just back about racial
profiling and I was -- the only reason is the
CBC -- CBC Fifth Estate back in I think it was
2004, and one of their things -- and I remember
watching it and just my brain just lighting up
going, Oh my God. I'm part of this statistic. I
came home one day, I was walking home, my
daughter was at Montessori, she was there for
preschool. And I went to the store, got some
groceries, and I was walking home, and this
cruiser pulls up beside me. It's, like, 1:30 in
the afternoon, bright sunny day. And he gets out
of the car and he starts asking me questions.
And I am standing there with my groceries. And
within -- I don't know how long -- less than a
minute. Next thing I know he's asking me what
ethnicity I am. And I looked at him and I said actually I'm First Nations.
And he's, like, oh he said, What tribe are you from? And I looked at him, and I said, What tribe am I from? And so by this point I'm sitting there thinking and I am, like, Why are you asking me these questions? And not only that, where are you going with this? Like, you haven't said to me why you have stopped me.
And the police are not allowed to stop you for any reason on the street unless they have a valid reason. Because there was an incident with an African Canadian boy in Burlington, I think it was. It went all the way to the Supreme Court. And obviously he had been harassed by the police in his lifetime. And I think he was 17 years old or something, and these cops stopped him on a bridge. And he challenged them and he said, You have no right to stop me. Like, he wanted them -- he wanted ID and who are you and all this stuff. And he said, Why are you stopping me? You have no right to stop me. I haven't done anything wrong.
Well, they harassed him and they roughed him up and they arrested him. And the cops ended up getting charged. It went all the way to the Supreme Court, and the Supreme Court ruled. The police are not allowed to stop you without due cause, and they have to have a valid reason. Obviously other than if they have a warrant or whatever.
So this cop has already stopped me in the middle of the street, has not even given me a reason why he stopped me. So after the comment about what tribe do you belong to, I started getting irritated. So I said to him, I said, Why have you stopped me? And I said, What exactly is your reason here? Well, he got a little terse and he said, I'm the one asking the questions here, ma'am. And I said, Not any longer. No you're not. Not any longer.
So I said to him, I said, May have your name please? And he's, like, What? And I said, Your name? Officer, constable, whatever it is. And he goes, I'm not giving you that. And I said, Fine. I said, Then give me your badge number. Wouldn't give that to me either. So I told him,
I said, You actually have to give that to me. You're mandated under law to provide me with your badge number. Wouldn't do it. Got in the cruiser. I looked at the number on the cruiser and the licence plate.

I was furious by this time. Was half a block from my house, went home, went upstairs and called the Kingston Police. Went right to the chief's office and I said, I want to know why this officer stopped me. Found out later, not even a year later when the CBC's Fifth Estate came out -- and I don't know what the title of their show was, but you could Google it -- the then chief of police of Kingston, which was Chief Closs, and that's C-l-o-s-s, had given this data company permission to collect data from his front line officers. And he had given them permission to collect racial data on the people that they stopped and interacted with.

My city when school isn't in session -- so if isn't between September and May and it's June through the summer, generally the residents of my home town, very Caucasian. There's not a lot of -- probably a little bit more, but back then there wasn't. This is 14 years ago. When school is in session, because we have got RMC, Queen's University, St. Lawrence college, we've got a variety of different ethnicities. But when the data came back through the CBC investigation that they did, it turned out the front line officers for the Kingston police were more apt to stop somebody of a physical minority than anybody that was Caucasian. And I am part of that data.

And I remember watching it and my brain just lit up and I was, like, Oh, that's why he was asking me these questions. Because I never got an answer from the chief of police office. I got a lot of apologies, and I said, He has no right to stop me in the middle of the street for no reason. He has no right to ask me my ethnicity and all of that stuff. Because by this time, I remember -- I think it was in June so I was already tanned. And I said, And he has no right to not give me his badge number. You have to provide that to anybody that asks for it.

SHEILA MAZHARI: And this happened in what year?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: I think it was 2003, and then the
Sharna Sugarman

CBC report I think came out in 2004.

SHEILA MAZHARI: And it was the summer, you said?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: I remember it was warm. I think it was June.

SHEILA MAZHARI: And what about -- so whatever happened to those two Cree man? Nothing?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Nothing.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Because you couldn't identify them?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Not only that I couldn't identify them, I never really saw their faces because they pulled my hoodie over my head; right. And you live in such fear. And there was a -- I think the RCMP had -- I think I read in the paper or somebody told me about it. They had had -- there was several reports of break ins in the rural areas around Meadow Lake, so they were asking people to be vigilant and if they saw anything, to report it.

And, of course, I couldn't shut the garage door at my house because it was seized, the chain had seized. And it had been like that since before we moved in. And my ex had put -- obviously the snow blower was in there and it wasn't even -- I don't even know if it was six, seven months old. Brand new. And there was some other large pricey pieces in there. And then I moved some of the stuff out of the house in there because I had it on Kijiji, and I had people contacting me back. That's another reason that I had to go to town every day because it was all on email and I didn't have internet at home.

And that's why the stuff were in there. They obviously were canvassing the areas. And I think they just -- because when you drove by, down my road, if you stopped in my driveway -- my driveway was quite wide and you could see the detached garage right there. So if you looked well enough, you could see things.

And who knows, maybe they had -- they didn't see any cars. That's the other thing, you don't see any vehicles. And when they came, my jeep was down with me in the lower part of the farm down in this part because I was going down to check the water for the horses. So they didn't see my jeep and they just drove in, they backed up, because they didn't have a back plate; they just had a front plate and they started loading...
stuff in. And, of course, me being ballsy, I walked up and said, What's up, boys? What do we think we're doing? And I had no idea that that's what they were going to do.

So needless to say, no, nothing ever came of them. I put Saskatchewan behind me after we left for BC. I did talk about it in therapy when I was in the hospital. They kept imploring me to report it and I said I can't. I said, I can't even -- I don't know if I could describe them to a sketch artist. I said, It happened all so fast, and I said, my hoodie was over my head the entire time. And I said, When they did punch me, they either picked me up and my face was covered and they punched me or they would -- and I was over like this and just would come around this way. I said, I didn't even see the fist coming; I just would feel it.

I ended up getting -- when I moved to BC I was eating something one day and I had this big, hard crunch and I have never had any problems with my teeth but I had to have oral surgery on this tooth and I still don't know if I am going to lose it or not. What they think happened was, from the punches that I had, that I have got a hairline fracture on my -- like, in my upper jaw. So I just had another surgery about a month ago and they redid -- I had the route canal removed, had it filled in, and then they think that there was an air pocket in there and there was some infection in there.

So I went back in, they cleaned it all out again. They have resealed it. If I get another abscess, then the doctor -- I have seen two specialist now and they have said you'll have to remove it and I am going to have to get a bridge and stuff like that. So that's probably what that's from, is from the violence that I sustained from the attack.

SHEILA MAZHARI: And all of this is documented in your hospital records and the police reports?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: There was never any police records for that.
SHEILA MAZHARI: Because you didn't -- but you didn't even -- because you said the nurse in the hospital was --
SHARNA SUGARMAN: Somebody in the hospital because --
there is always usually a police officer in our hospital, like, for some -- whatever reason. And I think that's what happened is either at the time -- either somebody from the mental health unit or somebody in the hospital trying to be kind to me, and they went and there was already two officers in the hospital. And next thing I know they were coming into my room and I just lost it. I just lost it. And that was nothing more than the fact that I don't trust the police and I didn't want to deal with it right then. I thought, also, that they would be -- you know, I knew at some point I would be discharged and I would have to go home. And I thought I'm isolated out there, you know, and we were nowhere close to moving yet. Nothing was happening in that way. So I didn't want to deal with it and I was fearful.

Because they -- I mean, they threatened my child's life and it's just when you're in that moment ... But I just remember seeing the officers and I just remember losing it and saying, Get out, get out, get out, I don't want to talk to you, get out, get out, get out. And I was really mad.

I remember my -- the community mental health nurse who was also a colleague of mine talking to me about it and saying, You have to report this. You have to. And I sat there and I said, I don't have to anything. I said, I cannot describe these guys, you know. I said, It happened -- even though it felt like forever, I said, I didn't see anything for very long. They grabbed me literally that fast and whipped my shirt off. They were -- I think what they were trying to do is not only were they trying to block my face, but I think they were trying to get my hoodie off me but I was struggling so much that by that point they had what they wanted, is they just cut my pants and sodomized me and raped me and did all of that, that they didn't care. And also -- I don't know -- like I said, I couldn't understand a word they were saying. They were speaking Cree and I don't speak Cree.

So I don't know what they were saying. But, you know, the only English that I heard from them was just, You don't call the police, you don't do
anything. I don't know if the police would have
done anything. I don't know, you know, when --
it's so hard from my training and from my
education and my background as a rape crisis
counsellor and stuff like that, everything that I
tell victims to do, I understand when you're in
that mode, it's so hard. And when I already have
a distrust with the police -- like, I remember
when I gave my video testimony for -- or against
my mother at the Meadow Lake RCMP, it was a
female cop that videotaped it and sort of asked
me my questions. But before -- and I said this
to the SIU, and I said -- I have no idea if it's
on the videotape; I have no clue.
    I remember talking to the female cop about
the cop that violated me back in Kingston and I
asked her for help and she was very standoff-ish
and she said, Yeah, no, we don't do that. We're
not here for that. You know, this is a courtesy
we're doing. We're just doing a videotape. And
I remember just sort of sitting there thinking,
we don't do what? Investigate a crime?
    So when you're met with all of these
different kinds of things, it's very hard to
think that your case matters to them, you know.
And it's not just Indigenous people. I know
other people -- I know lots of visible
minorities, I know low-income people, uneducated
people, homeless people. They just don't think
that the police care so they don't bother. Or
they have tried to get some type of support or
justice or, you know, police services and it
falls on deaf ears. Literally, if you're not
rich and Caucasian and whatever, or a fellow
police officer --
    Well, here's a prime example of what
happened in my hometown. This is another reason
I got involved with violence against woman and
sexual assault. I met this female Kingston
Police police officer through a mutual friend at
a gym that we were going to back in the 90s. And
I was back between me travelling through my 20s.
And she had -- she was a police officer and so
was her husband. And she had gone to her
supervisor, and in the brass, as they refer to
it, about her husband's behaviour and that she
felt that he was becoming undone and that she
didn't feel safe and that she was concerned, not
only about her safety and the safety of her two
young kids, but also maybe that he should be put
on sick leave; that he shouldn't be carrying a
weapon and stuff.

And I'll never forget listening to her
because that's how I met her. And the reason why
was our mutual friend said, This is what Sharna
does and you can talk to her in confidence and
she's there for you and all that stuff. Her
superiors had told her that the way to help her
husband with his stress and all that stuff is she
should give him more blow jobs and if you got on
your knees a bit more ... And all that stuff.

He went home on Christmas Eve and what cops
are supposed to do when they leave is they're
supposed to surrender your firearm and it's put
away -- like, there's somebody in a locked cage
that does this. And he didn't do that. He went
home and murder/suicide that night.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Do we have -- we can look that up?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: His name was Ian Nicholson,

SHEILA MAZHARI: N-i-c-h-o-l-s-o-n?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: I believe so, yeah. And I think it
was about -- year 1999, for some reason, stands
out in my head.

SHEILA MAZHARI: And do you remember her name?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: I believe her name was Lisa.

SHEILA MAZHARI: And that's the same -- Kingston?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yeah, they were both Kingston police
officers. And he killed her with his police
issued firearm that was not locked up. And she
had been going to them for a better part of a
year and she gets told just give him more blow
jobs; get on your knees more. Maybe we should
put you both in the cruiser and, you know, ha ha
ha.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Do we know the name of any superiors
or is it -- if you looked it up --
SHARNA SUGARMAN: It would all be there. All those --
I don't know if some of those officers, some of
those inspectors and stuff, whether they have
retired now. Some of the those supervisors I
think now, if they were corporals or staff
sergeants then, they would be higher ranking now;
they would be inspectors. And if they were
higher ranking than that, they might already be retired because I know the standard and conduct officer [Officer 7] that I dealt with before [Watch Commander], that's who I thought I was calling and he had just retired and he was only, like, 55, I think, when he retired.

Because you can retire after -- with full pension after 30 years. And most cops become cops, you know, by the age of, like, 25 sort of thing. So if you put in your 30 years -- you know, some of them work well into their 60s and 70s, if they want to, but after 30 years you have full pension.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Do you think there's this inherent corruption all across the --

SHARNA SUGARMAN: I don't think there's a police force that doesn't -- I don't think there isn't one of them without blood on their hands. And I think they all know it. I think it's more prevalent, obviously, in the larger municipalities and definitely the RCMP and the OPP, but I don't think there's one small detachment that doesn't have it.

And [indiscernible] the RCMP, especially the more west you go -- like, in Ontario we have the OPP, which is the Ontario Provincial Police, and we have the RCMP as well, but most municipalities -- like, I have the Kingston Police Force, we have the Toronto Police Force, Ottawa Police Force. So most of them have their own municipal police forces and then we have the provincial and then we have the RCMP. But the more western you go, a lot of it is RCMP. They don't have -- other than the Vancouver Police -- really mostly it's all RCMP.

And they're hired by the municipality. Like, Langley is a city but it's RCMP. So there's this thing where the board of directors and the CAO, which would be your chief administration officer, they're all the ones that higher the RCMP for their municipality and the councils and all of that stuff. But the officer is still paid on a federal payroll, on a level. They're not paid on a municipal. And that's the other thing that the municipalities have an issue with is they have to pay the payroll and sometimes they're, like -- you know, when they're
doing their budgets and police forces always --
like, I know with my hometown literally almost
annually the police -- the police are asking the
board for a 2.3 increase or whatever in payroll
or whatever.

They have to come up with their
justifications of why they're asking for that,
you know, whatever it is. You know, whether
they're buying new equipment or they want to hire
a couple more members or whatever it is. But
they're paid very well. I know that the RCMP,
the officers feel in comparison to some other
municipalities -- like, I have known some RCMP
officers that now work for the Vancouver Police
Department because they think they have -- they
get better pay and better rates or whatever it is
or better days off. Because the way the RCMP
usually works is they work four on, four off. So
they do four [sic] days and then two nights and
then they're off for four days. But if you look
at the grid -- and you can find the payroll on
the RCMP website -- you can see what you started
off with. I think in the first year that you're
a constable you start at about $57,000. Well,
within a year you can be up to 100,000. There's
not that many occupations that you can jump that
fast.

I definitely believe that there are some
really good cops out there. I'm not bashing
every cop. I'm not. I've met many decent police
officers, but I have also had those same decent
officers tell me about the corruption inside of
their own force, especially the RCMP and what
happens if you speak up or you do this or you do
that. So it is, in my opinion, it's also
systemic disease inside its own force. And
corruption is not good for anything.

And the politicians know it. You can't tell
me that Mr. Goodale, Ralph Goodale -- you can't
tell me that Prime Minister Trudeau doesn't know
it. They know especially, you know, hard hitting
cases like the Colton Boushie case.
There's no doubt in my mind that Justin Trudeau
knows from the way that he reacted that justice
wasn't served. But until these officers and, you
know, people talk about better training. You
can't train racism out of somebody. It's
inherent in them. It's what's been taught to them.

Underneath the human rights code, you can be as xenophobic, Islamophobic, homophobic, racist as you want in your head, but the minute you say anything in your capacity as your job, you're liable, you're accountable. You have now contravened the code. But I believe -- and this is another one -- recommendation. I don't care what police force you're at, whether it's national, provincial, or municipal. I think every police officer should have to wear a vest camera and should have to have a dash camera. And they cannot manipulate it, they can't obtain anything that has been recorded and all of that information cannot be stored within the force. It has to be an independent body. And if for any reason -- it's, like, you know when you go shopping and they have got those little tags on clothing and either it beeps when you go out or it's a dye pack. So if you steal something and you go home and try to break it off, and you got a white shirt and you pop it off, all this blue dye comes out. There should be some type of mechanism -- same thing with turning over their police issued firearm, their gun. If they try to tamper with the camera, there has to be something that happens to the camera. Like, there's something that allows somebody to know that it was -- somebody tried to tamper with it. That's one of the only ways anything -- because it doesn't just protect the public that they're dealing with, it also protects the officer. Because I know officers have been accused of things that they didn't do or whatever, but if somebody is saying some cop assaulted them, well, there it is.

SHEILA MAZHARI: What do you think it would take to implement something like that?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: I don't think the cost -- if that's what the problem is, you know, it has to be absorbed somehow. Whether it's through funding from the federal government and part maybe from the municipalities that hire the RCMP because they don't have their own police forces, but it's -- we're passed that. There's just too many -- there's just been too many violations and
too many crimes that have happened for it not to be. I think it's vital. To me, it's just another tool for them and it's maybe another tool that's going to help people to maybe eventually trust the police that don't trust the police. I certainly know myself -- I had an incident just at my house not even two weeks ago over a very violent woman that lives in my basement that has pled guilty to assaulting her former roommate. She's getting evicted from my landlord. It's going to take some time to get her out. And the officers were there and I had my phone out and I was videotaping it. And I can even show it to you. And the officer is, like, are you taping us? And I said, Yep. And he was, like, Oh. And he also didn't like my big dogs at first, which weren't doing anything. They were just at the top of the stairs. He's, like, Oh, you put the dogs away? And I am, like, What are they doing? They're standing there wagging their tails. They're not baring their teeth. They're not growling at you. So I put them outside and he's, like, I just don't like dogs. And you can hear me saying, Well, I don't like cops.

So then I'm talking to them -- it wasn't me that called the police; it was actually my former roommate. So the cops are -- I think the cops in the video are asking me for my ID and I said, I'm not giving you my ID. And the guy is, like, Why not? And I said, Because I'm not the one that called you; she is.

And when I talked to the police, I always give them -- if they ask for ID, I give them my driver's licence and my status card because I want to see how they treat me being an aboriginal person.

SHEILA MAZHARI: You're not afraid?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: No. No. No. There isn't anymore harm that they can do to me. And I will tell you why in a second. So [Tenant 1] is talking to them and I am filming it. And I can't remember what the one officer said to me. He was East Indian and he didn't have an accident. He was obviously first generation born here or whatever. And I think -- I proceeded to say that I have thought about becoming an RCMP officer. And his response to me was, Oh, yeah, we don't need anymore of you on
the force. And I said, Anymore of me, what? Woman or First Nations people or both? And I'm talking to his corporal because I didn't like his demeanour and I also asked for his name. He wouldn't give me his name. So I said fine, give me your badge number. I always ask them for their business cards.

SHEILA MAZHARI: While you're filming? This is while you're filming?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: You know what, I haven't watched it in a bit. And let me see. Where is it? SHEILA MAZHARI: You know the laws surrounding that. So is there anything illegal for filming a police officer?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: No, there is nothing illegal about filming a police officer. There's nothing illegal about filming anything. And not only that, I was inside my own house, but I did put my phone up at one point on my ledge and they denied it later, but they turned it off. And when I spoke with [Officer 8], and he's actually from Australia, he was very concerned about -- let me see. I think this is it here. So just a second.

SHEILA MAZHARI: [Officer 8] is --

VIDEO PLAYING:

The RCMP are here and there are six officers here and [indiscernible] unit because [Tenant 1] called them and she was screaming and yelling and I think she knows about the eviction. It is Friday, March 16th, and I tried to record it, but I think all you could hear was the dogs, but she was also yelling at the cops.

So they're all inside right now, so I don't know what that means. I'm out on the deck for evidence for the [J’s] [phonetic] because they have always asked us to video record, so that's what I am doing. But [Tenant 1] was the one that called tonight because it was quite ugly. So I am not sure, but I do know and the landlords know that [Woman D] has a -- sorry, there's a truck going by -- [Woman D] has a peace bond against her as of three weeks ago for pleading guilty for assaulting her former roommate, [Roommate 1] [phonetic] and it's quite strict.
So I'm not quite sure what the conditions are, but [indiscernible].

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Okay. And then I think I have another one. That's where they turned off the -- VIDEO PLAYING:

Well, she was screaming and yelling [indiscernible]. You realize you're getting evicted, hey, on the 1st? [Indiscernible] it doesn't matter. She's threatening every day. [People speaking over each other].

It's fine.

I'll meet you out front?
Yeah.

This woman lives downstairs. It's just -- piece of work. Let me see if I can find -- maybe this one.
VIDEO PLAYING:

[indiscernible] did you live by [indiscernible].

Obviously, yeah.

It's not obviously.

It should be.

Were you the person that -- is your dog friendly?

Very friendly.

Oh.

That's Kingston and they're both [indiscernible].

Okay. So you want to sit out there?

Yeah.

Can you -- [indiscernible].

Yes, I am reporting this [indiscernible]. I said if you're asking me if I'm recording this, I am.

Why?

For a lot of reasons. I'm First Nations; two, my landlords have asked us. [Tenant 1] is the one that called you guys.

Can we put the dogs away? Did you call?

Why? What are they doing?

So what -- they're big dogs. I'm a little nervous.
Do they look like they're scaring you?
It's a small request. Some people aren't comfortable with it.
Really?
[People speaking over each other].
I don't like dogs.
Well, I don't like cops, so there you go. Let's go boys, outside.
Because what we're responding to or what the [indiscernible] are responding to, there's a dispute between two people, male and female, that's what our report says. We get here and it's just this lady clueless as to why police are here and [indiscernible].
So what's going on with that?
He's also closest when the cops are here.
Go for it.
Say hi to [M.] [phonetic]. You afraid of cats?
I don't mind cats.
Okay. Good.
I love dogs.
I like dogs too.
Well, what were my dogs doing?
Nothing.

So he turned it off.
SHEILA MAZHARI: He turned it off?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yeah. So the African-Canadian officer was the one that didn't like my dogs but he says at the end he only likes his own dog. The other officer's voice is [Officer 9]
is his name and he wouldn't give me his badge number or his name. I got it from his corporal, who called me later that night but I had my phone on "do not disturb" so I didn't talk to him until the next day. He was very apologetic. He said that he would -- that he was there supervising of this unit.

When I told him that he turned off my camera or my phone, he said I have to go right now. He goes, I have to address this right now. He seemed very angry about that. Called me back, I think, the next day or the next time that he was in because they would have been four on, four off. And he said that they were adamant that
they never touched my phone. And I said, Well, they did. And I said, He also wouldn't give me his name or his badge number. And he said, Well -- and he gave me his name. I also told him he would be facing a human rights complaint because of the disparaging remark that he made that, We don't need anymore of you on here. Sadly that's right after that happened was when he made that remark.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Did you ever -- so how do you go about filing a human rights complaint against --

SHARNA SUGARMAN: The RCMP, it's underneath the -- each province has their own -- it's usually -- like, this one is the BC Human Rights Tribunal, but because the RCMP are federal, it's underneath federal jurisdiction and it's called the Canadian Human Rights Commission and you can find them online and you can fill the complaint out online. So I have already heard back from the commission. Generally when you file it, it will show you, you fill it all out and you submit it and they'll give you a confirmation number. Generally it says -- I think the timeline is usually 30 days from the time you should hear. I'm getting the feeling that they're backlogged because I didn't hear from the commission for almost four months. I have a contact now Heather Thompson is her name. We have talked now twice and she's aware of what happened.

So how the commission works is you file your complaint, and same thing with a tribunal. If this were a provincial -- like, if it was the Vancouver Police, then it would be underneath the BC Human Rights Code because they're provincial, but when it's federal, it has to be the commission. And they will overlook your complaint and then on the merits of it, whether or not it falls underneath their mandate, meaning, you get to check off all of the protected rights underneath the code, so it could be mental health, it could be your gender, your sex, your marital status, family status, like I said, a conviction where a pardon has been granted. It could be disabilities, meaning mental health, it can be harassment, it can be sexual harassment in regards to commission.

Not every province covers all of them,
usually it's religious beliefs as well or
nonreligious beliefs. And then you give your
statement, what happened to you. It has to be
with the -- the commission has to be within a
year of when you believe that the violation
occurred. In the province of BC, sadly, it's
only six months. Most of the provinces -- I know
in Ontario it's a year for the Ontario Human
Rights Tribunal.

They'll look it over and they'll decide
whether or not they're going to accept your
compliant. If it is accepted, then they send it
to the respondents. The respondents don't know
anything about this until it's accepted. Then
it's sent to the respondents, they have a certain
timeframe to respond. I think it's usually 30
days from the time that it's -- they're served.
And then there's a process. It could be
dismissed. The respondents have the ability to
apply for dismissal based on whatever they feel
is the reason. If they don't think it would be
successful or whatever, generally you don't
submit any evidence to the tribunal or the
commission until it's requested. So there are
all these proper forms that you fill out online
and that's what's submitted. That's the only
thing that they really see. Most of the time it
generally doesn't go to a hearing. A lot of time
you can also tick off whether you agree to
mediation, which is a very good tool to use.

A lot of these things are settled before
they go to a hearing. But the human rights code
is law in Canada. And I have advocated for many
people, especially immigrants that come to Canada
that are from countries that do have -- if they
don't even have human rights or they have
deplorable human rights existences in their
countries. So I've been doing this for probably
almost 30 years.

I tend to, in regards to filing this one
with the RCMP, it's not a knee-jerk reaction. I
try to go through a process that I am happy with
while they're talking with their superiors or
whatever before I would go to that. But making
remarks about my Indigenous heritage or sexism, I
don't tolerate any of that.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Did you want to spell those officer's
names?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: I only have the one officer's name. The one that's actually on the complaint and his name is [Officer 9] so [spells first name] I believe is [spells last name], or it might be [spells last name]. And he looked very young. [Officer 8] told me that some of these guys are, like, rookies. They have only been cops for a year, if that.

SHEILA MAZHARI: And this is with the Vancouver Police Department?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: No, this is RCMP.

SHEILA MAZHARI: They were RCMP?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yeah, this is in [City 1] where I live, yeah.

SHEILA MAZHARI: And let's talk about the SIU. Yeah, do you want to go into a little bit of how --

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yeah, I contacted them through their website. I had actually spoken with [R.W.] who was the business card that you saw.

SHEILA MAZHARI: [R.W.].

SHARNA SUGARMAN: [R.W.].

He's not a former police officer. There are some investigators even in some other provinces where they are former police officers. I don't generally agree with that because I think that there's some biases that come with that -- that can come with that. Like, I don't ever think that the police should be investigating the police. That just -- it never works. There's never -- you know, there's no objectivity there. I contacted the SIU, you know -- the other thing people need to keep in mind too, which is another part of the way life is. I was trying to get on with my life and trying to get back on the path that I was on. I was on a very healthy path. I was in post-grad school and raising my daughter and next thing I know, my whole life went down the toilet, literally.

And I was healing from, you know, the assault. I was -- I'm still healing from the post traumatic. I definitely wouldn't wish that on anybody. You know, I'm pushing now nine years with it. I'm a lot better than I used to be, but I certainly -- there's lots of aspects in my life that are not back to normal by any stretch of the
imagination. I don't -- I have never been somebody that suffers from agoraphobia, which is a fear of crowds. And there's times I've been in supermarkets too busy and I have turned to my daughter -- she's old enough now -- and I'll say, here's the card, you pay for it, I got to go. I'll be in the car because I can't hack it. I've never been like that. I've never had a problem with crowds.

The anxiety is brutal. Because I don't want to use medication every time and that's one thing that I do find that some doctors are, like, here is some Ativan, pop a pill. And I'm, like, I don't want to live like that. That doesn't solve anything. I didn't go to the SIU back in the day, I think, because I was trying to get on with my life and I was dealing -- fighting my mother in family court was my paramount situation, getting better, all of those things. And what prompted me to contact the SIU was actually a high profile rape case Manitoba, I think it was. And it was Justice Robin Camp. And I was watching the news and the sexual assault victim was on the stand, I believe, giving her testimony and he turned to her and said something to the effect of, Why wouldn't you just keep your legs together.

And I was so eviscerated by that. I just felt like he cut every woman that has ever had the courage to come forward in half. And I was disgusted. I was -- I wanted his head. I wanted him removed from the bench so badly. And I was so incensed. And I remember talking to friends of mine about it and some of my advocate colleagues and we were all just, like, oh, hell no. No man -- you don't -- and you don't ever say that to a victim, especially in your capacity as a judge.

And then there was another sexual assault judge residing over a case and I think it was in Newfoundland. And same sort of thing. Was, you know -- made some disgusting remark to her. And I just thought, who are you people? Like, this sense of entitlement that you think that you have and this thought that there's no reprisal for your comments. That's not how society should be and that's not how you should conduct yourself in
your role.

So then obviously the media got all over it. And the one female attorney, God love her, filed a complaint with the judicial council. And sadly, you know, it went through the whole thing and he was humiliated and all this stuff, but instead of being disbarred or being removed from the bench, he resigned, but he still got his pension. So that's another recommendation. I don't believe any police officer or any judge, anybody that's paid by the public -- by the taxpayer, if you're found guilty of a criminal offense or some type violation of somebody's civil liberties or something like that, one, you should lose your job, and two, no pension, nothing. Nothing. I don't care how long you have been on the force. You don't do that.

And I don't think until things like that become fruition that anything is going to change. Like, you know, if a doctor violates -- if a gynecologist violates a patient, and we know there's a few of them out there, not only do they lose their license, they go to jail. So why wouldn't that happen with a police officer? Why wouldn't this judge that made that disparaging remark -- and he doesn't say he didn't. It was on the record. And he admits he said it. He apologized, but still, you don't say that.

He should have been removed from the bench and he should have lost his pension, period. What's wrong with that? Why should the taxpayers have to pay for somebody who should know better and they come back with this thing that -- well, they're going to have this sensitivity training. I'm sitting there going, oh my God. We're not talking about -- like, in regards to my human rights thing, my advocacy and my activism, we're not talking some mom and pop, you know, hot dog stand where maybe they're not from this country and they don't know better. He's a judge. How long was he an attorney? How long has he been on the bench?

There was another female judge in -- was it Calgary? This was only a few months ago. She was coming in to give addressing, like, a tutorial, something to do with the Law Society with the law students. And she walked into the
Sharna Sugarman

Statement - Public

1. forum and it was dark and she had got on the
2. microphone and she proceeded to say, I have never
3. seen so many dark-faced people in my life. I'm
4. actually a bit afraid. She said, Normally I have
5. police officers around me. Addressing -- because
6. they were African-American students in the
7. audience. And it was actually recorded. The CBC
8. actually played what she said.

9. And I was driving my car and I -- honestly I
10. was -- I just sat there and I was, like, who are
11. you people? Like, who talks like that? She came
12. back and apologized and said that it was very
13. wrong, which she said, and she realized -- and I
14. am just sitting there going, oh my God. Like I
15. said, you can think that all you want in your
16. head and it's bad enough that you do, but the
17. minute you open your mouth, your accountable.
18. And you should be held liable.

19. And these people -- like, you know, we don't
20. live inside of a courtroom. That's not real
21. society. And they say that justice is blind and
22. justice doesn't, you know, seek colour and gender
23. and all of those things; bullshit. When they
24. makes comments like that, you can't tell me they
25. don't bring that on the job.

26. SHEILA MAZHARI: So how do you think we can change
27. that besides the value [indiscernible] you've
28. already given, but ...

29. SHARNA SUGARMAN: Well, you know, judges are appointed
30. in this country. In the United States they're
31. elected in most capacities. I have had this
32. argument with some people that I think that
33. judges should be elected in Canada. But some
34. people think that they shouldn't because they may
35. want to be -- you know, if they're more of a
36. conservative, you know, if they were -- if
37. they're conservative in their natures or their
38. values, that they might be more apt to rule in
39. that -- I don't know. There's just not enough
40. accountability when -- like, when the general
41. public breaks the law, whether it's jay-walking
42. or a parking ticket or whatever it is, they
43. assume -- that's the other thing. You're
44. innocent until proven guilty in Canada. Well,
45. there's a court of public opinion; we're all
46. guilty of it.

47. There's a part of me, as an advocate, that
believes that whether you're charged with
stealing a pack of gum or murdering somebody, I
don't think the victim or maybe even the -- the
victim or the person should not be made public
until the verdict is read. If the verdict is
guilty, then, yes, they should say John Dear has
been found guilty of first-degree murder in the
death of so-and-so. Because when you're not
found guilty, you still have a stigma and still
the court of opinion is still there.

And we live in a world of social media where
everything is instantaneous and instant
gratification and news on 24/7 kind of thing. So
I don't know if -- I don't know that if somebody
is charged with a crime, if their name should be
made public until it's completely gone through.
Because we don't know, there's certain cases and
they're usually high profile cases where there's
a gag order. Where the media is not allowed to
report anything. Well, why does that person get
that privilege over somebody else, you know?

In my hometown, once a week you can read in
the courts and it will show all alphabeticalized
[sic] who has been charged, full name, age, and
what they have been charged with. Could be a
breach, could be theft, could be whatever. Not
everybody that's charged is guilty. Not
everybody that is found guilty is guilty either.
We all know there's lots of innocent people out
there. But with saying that, and probably being
a hypocrite, I also believe in the death penalty,
you know.

I grew up in Kingston which is considered
Pen City. We have, like, eight penitentiaries.
It costs a lot of money to keep some of these
murderers and these, you know, prolific rapists
and stuff behind bars. On average somebody like
Paul Bernardo who has been in solitary -- like,
in protective custody for, you know, 20 years
now, about 180 grand. Do you know how well I
could live on 180 grand, you know?

So I also believe that I would like to see
more inmates out helping cleaning up the
environment instead of sitting around and
watching TV all day or working out in the gym. I
believe in hard labour, especially for some of
these -- like, you know, the Harper Government
got rid of our prison farms, the dairies and stuff like that. And my grandfather was a prison guard at the Collins Bay Penitentiary in my hometown because he was a World War 1 vet. And what they did was they offered the jobs to the veterans first before they hired any billets. And when he lost their dairy farm in Smith Falls during The Great Depression, he became a prison guard.

So a lot of countries like in Australia, if you're convicted of murder, life is life. And I mean life. You're never getting out again and they have hard labour. I'm not talking about, you know, breaking rocks with your hands or something like that. But, you know, our homeless don't even get three squares a day and a roof over their head. I don't want to see anybody's civil liberties or human rights being violated either, but I will tell you one thing: One thing why child molesters are not kept in the penal system has nothing to do with the fact that, like -- I can tell you, there's no cure for it. It's a compulsion. And unless they find the part in the brain that they can lobotomize -- you can chemically castrate them all you want. It doesn't do anything. That's, like, saying to somebody that's heterosexual and saying, By the way, when you wake up tomorrow, you're only ever allowed to be with men. You can never touch a woman again. They would look at you like you're nuts.

It's all about power and it's all about violence and all of that to them. It's the way they're brain is wired. You can't change that with therapy. It doesn't work. And the only reason why pedophiles are put back out in the community is because when they're in the prison systems, it causes so much upheaval with the other inmates because there is a subculture. There's a hierarchy there. There is a level that they will not put up with. You harm a child, you harm an animal, you're fucked in the penal system if the general population gets -- they're done.

So I am kind of, like, well, you want to go on general pop, you go in. You come out alive, that's up to you. That's up to the rest of them. I don't want to put a child molester in protective custody at $180,000 a year, you know.
So unless the federal government wants to build some type of super jail or super prison out in the middle of nowhere where these kind of predators are put in and they're never seen again, fine. But the only reason why they're rotated back out into the society is because it's too much for the guards to take on. When they are in there, it's like anarchy.

And I don't blame the other prisoners, you know, but that's one of the only reasons. Why in the hell would you release somebody out into society that has intentionally raped children? I heard some of the testimony this week. Some people were molested by people at six months of age. They had never been able to have children because their insides are destroyed, yet these people are still walking on the streets.

There is absolutely nothing in that that makes sense. The calamity that these people do to other people. To me, when you harm a child, that's it. You are not a human being to me. You know, you are the scum of the earth. You don't deserve to breathe. You don't deserve to walk the streets. You don't deserve any liberty in that capacity. So if you're not going to lock them up for life, something has to be done. And maybe we need a prison where that's just where these predators go. If you're convicted of sexually molesting a child, raping a child, and in that due process, the child dies, that's where you go.

You know, because they do have these super jails, these super prisons in the States that are underground. They don't come into contact with the guards. Everything is electronic. They'll go to this door, this door opens, they walk down 3 feet, this one closes. It's all like that. They don't touch anybody. It is a -- what's it called? Pelican Bay? Is that what it's called? Something like that in the States. It's a super prison and it is so effective. They don't -- the inmates don't touch each other. They never come in contact with each other. They can maybe see each other through Plexiglass, but there's no contact. They eat in their cell, you know, if they get out one hour it's literally, you know, they're nowhere near anybody else.
Some people -- some human rights people might think that that is -- Amnesty International, who knows, might think that that's inhumane. I'm sorry, what they did to those children and what they did to those people, you can't forget that, you know. And some people think that some criminals are created. Yes, that's very possible. Violence when you live in such a horrific environment and whatever, but not everybody comes out that way, you know.

But at what point do -- at what point do you take into consideration the decent people that are living in our communities that hadn't done anything? Like, I certainly, as an advocate, I -- my family store -- we have hired former prison inmates before. They weren't child molesters. We knew that they were petty theft or drugs or something like that. But nothing violent, nothing like that.

But I certainly don't want a child molester living on the same street as me. And in the States, you have the Sex Offenders Registry and you can actually find that stuff out. We don't really have that here in Canada because it would be a violation of their privacy. They have lost their privacy rights, in my opinion. At some point, enough is enough. And I just think there are some crimes that are committed in this country that there's no -- there's no going back on. There's no, like, first-degree murder, parole after 25 years. Well, the person you died [sic] -- that you murdered -- first-degree means that you had intent. Why should they get to walk the streets again? Why? If it's a matter of money, well, then that's something that the federal government and Corrections Canada has to look into. But I don't fully believe in all rehabilitation programs. You know, 9 out of 10 inmates that you come across, all of a sudden they've found God when they're inside, and I roll my eyes half the time going, okay, whatever.

There has to be -- our criminal justice system and our criminal code has to be completely revamped. Another thing, our animal cruelty laws in Canada have not been updated or amended since 1987, yet studies and statistics and data have shown that most sociopaths that have harmed a
human being have harmed animals in their life,  
whether they have tortured them, dissected them,  
whatever it is that they have done. And you  
can't -- that's fact.

So at what point are our laws going to  
actually really protect people on a daily basis  
when you hear about these people and when it  
comes out once they've graduated to harming a  
human being or a child. You know, it's amazing  
all of the information that comes out, like,  
Robert Pickton. People knew about him for years.  
Nothing was done. And look how many woman died  
on his farm, and I can't imagine what they went  
through before they died.

So what should happen to those police  
officers, if they're still employed, that didn't  
do their jobs? And it's not just the frontline  
workers. It's not the frontline cops. A lot of  
time it's the higher-ups. They're going to their  
supervisor, they're going to their inspector,  
they're going to their superintendent and saying,  
look it, this is like the fifth call that I have  
had from this family or this woman or this man  
who's telling me that this stuff is going on  
here. And you guys keep telling me to ignore it,  
you know.

And that's what I have heard from some  
police officers in my life. I have heard them  
say, I know what happened; I know this stuff was  
going on. I tried. My superiors said, Knock it  
off. They always come back and say lack of  
resources or whatever. Lack of resources, my  
ass. I don't recall the last time that a police  
officer's paycheque wasn't cashed, you know.  
This isn't overtime at DQ where all of a sudden  
you're supposed to be making, you know -- having  
30 hours a week and all of a sudden you're doing  
130 hours a week. Police work, like hospitals,  
it's 365 days a year, 24 hours a day.

So here we go with the legislation of pot  
coming in and it being, you know, hopefully  
legalized before the end of the summer, I'm  
hoping the revenue that comes from that will be  
put back into mental health and addictions, could  
be put into social and affordable housing, could  
be put into women's programs, antiviolence  
programs, lots of different things. But it
certainly -- it better not be lining the pockets
of any politicians or anything like that.

My recommendations here are -- well, number
one, hold police accountable; number two, more
mental health and addiction funding, and that
could come from profits of pot; three, increase
shelter costs for people on social
assistance/disability to reflect inflation and
actual rent costs.

In British Columbia, for me on my disability
right now, my shelter costs $570 a month for my
daughter and myself. What do you think I could
rent for that? An average room, just to rent a
room in somebody's house, is $500 to $600.
So they have never taken inflation into
consideration with this. Had minimum wage been
kept up with inflation since The Great
Depression, so we're going back a good 70-plus
years, minimum wage right now would sit at about
$24 an hour. Most people could live fairly
comfortably on that. The rents in this province,
like in other places, are ridiculous. There has
to be -- I would like to see a rent freeze or
something like that. And I also, as an advocate,
because some of these places that I have seen,
not just in Vancouver, but in Saskatchewan and in
Ontario when I was an advocate, I would like to
see landlords have to register their buildings,
whether it's, you know, huge apartment building,
to a triplex, to a room in your house. And it
has to pass an inspection; meaning, it's up to
code, not just smoke alarms and things like that,
but if there's any mold, cracked windows,
whatever it is.

This is a business and there's lots of
people out there that don't -- there's lots of
people out there too that are not -- they're not
declaring this income. So if they're licenced
through their local municipality and if they
don't have a municipality, then they should be
licenced through the province. And it should
pass inspection. If it doesn't pass inspection,
that municipality, whether it's through their
building department or the health unit, whatever
you want to do, should be able to put a padlock
on that house. Almost the same -- some type
of -- you know what they do with evidence, they
have those one-sided sticker things. Can't rent here. Didn't pass inspection. I'm not talking about it having being white-gloved, but there are some slumlords out there. There are some deplorable places that are covered in rats feces and things like that. And they're charging an arm and a leg for people. No. Sorry. This is not a third-world country; this is Canada. So that's what I would like to see.

In regards to children being apprehended, I think social workers must be held accountable for when children are harmed or die in care. We all know that if the child dies with the parents and it looks like a suspicious death or it is a homicide, they're going to be charged. And if there's any other children in the house, they're removed.

So if a social worker removes an Indigenous child or a child for any matter, but we all know the high rates with Indigenous children in care, if something happens to that child, look at Phoenix Sinclair. Why wasn't the social worker and possibly her manager, whoever it was that signed off on that child to be removed, they should have been charged criminally. They should not have immunity because of their job.

They made a decision that for whatever reason the child was not protected or doing well in the home that they were in, their family's home or their parent's home or whatever. Obviously I think that Indigenous children, if there's an aunty or a nohkom, which is a grandmother, or another -- even a friend that is willing to take the child in. For whatever reason, if the parent becomes ill, is incarcerated, has addiction problems, whatever.

Whatever you think that's harming a child -- and I am sorry, I have counselled so many people with addictions, from judges to police officers to doctors to nurses to janitors to the homeless to stay-at-home moms to students. So don't stereotype people. No one is immune -- this is my saying: No one is immune to mental health or addictions, period.

And that's where a lot of the systemic racism is, is that they feel that my people can't care for their children. Well, in some
generations, they couldn't because when you're removed to go onto a residential school at the age of five and you're ripped from this loving home that you have known, and you're beaten and you're sodomized and you're sexually abused and you're harmed for the next 13, 15 years of your life and you end up trying to seek any type of love or comfort that you have, and as a female you become pregnant and have a child, I'm sure they're wondering whether or not they're being a decent parent.

It doesn't mean that every Indigenous family that lived through the residential system doesn't have the ability to raise their children, but if they need help and support, that doesn't mean removing the child. In my opinion, unless you can see that the child is malnourished, sexually abused, covered in bruises, maybe, or [indiscernible] and broken, something like that, something that there's no way to argue and nobody can explain to you why that child is in that condition, yes, removal is probably the best thing to do.

But I had a situation where my child was removed after I was assaulted by my landlord. We were put in, by the RCMP, into a transition house. And I told them right from the get-go that if -- because it wasn't a partner, it wasn't anything like that -- he was charged, he was found guilty. I told them that if there was somebody in their community that needed a bed -- we were at the Kamloops Transitional House -- that I would do my best to stay at a motel or a hotel or something. I said because, yes, I was fleeing abuse, but it wasn't perpetual. It wasn't a partner, it wasn't anything like that and he wasn't anywhere near the area because this happened in [Town 1] [phonetic] in the Okanagan.

But when I was there and I was sitting in the office to use the phone to call about housing, the workers came in and started talking in a very disgusting manner about the women and most of the women that were in the house were aboriginal. And they were breaching confidentiality and talking out loud about medication they were on or court hearings that
were coming up or something like that. And I am sitting there and I finally put the phone down and I said, What do you think you're doing? And they looked at me and they said, What? I said, You can't discuss the women like that with me in here; I don't work here. And they're, like, But we know you and we know that you'll keep the confidence and we're just -- you know, we're just venting right now. And I said, Uh-huh uh-huh uh-huh, you're breaching their confidentiality. And yes, I'm not going to tell anybody about it, but you don't get to count on that. You don't have a right to do what you're doing.

So I went to management about it. But within that time, the ladies did everything they could to make our stay there very uncomfortable. So you're supposed to be able to stay in a transition house and it's supposed to be a safe zone. Well, they made it a war zone. One of them called MCFD on me because my daughter wasn't in school. Well, my daughter wasn't in school because I had already called the school district, left messages, I had driven to -- after talking to the women which, was the closest elementary school in the area, went by. Talked to the secretary, gave her my name, told her where I was staying. I said, I would like to get my daughter enrolled, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

No phone calls, nothing back. Emailed them, everything. Next thing I know, I get this phone call from MCFD and it was a Caucasian woman working out of the Secwepemc Aboriginal Services in Kamloops.

SHEILA MAZHARI: How do we spell that?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: Oh, Secwepemc? Oh, hang on.
SHEILA MAZHARI: When they transcribe things, they ...
SHARNA SUGARMAN: That one I'm definitely going to have to look up because I know it's S-e-c -- I'm not even going to attempt. So it's spelled S-e-c-w-e-p-e-m-c.
SHEILA MAZHARI: And that's Secwepemc?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yeah, child and family services agency.
SHEILA MAZHARI: In Kamloops?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yeah, they're on reserve in Kamloops.

So she calls me and says that she's had a
call from staff that they're concerned about my
daughter not being in school. And I said, Well,
I'm concerned about that too but it's not
something that I am ignoring. But I also
challenged her and I said, Last time I checked,
being in school is not a child protection
concern. It's not underneath the mandate or
underneath the provincial Child Protection Act.
And she said, Well, I just want to talk with you
to see if there's anything that I can help you
with.

Well, we were leaving that day. I decided
to take my family out because of the conduct of
the staff. I wasn't comfortable. And I also
didn't want the staff to bully any of the other
women that were in the shelter. So I decided to
leave and I put us in a small motel in Kamloops.

So her name was [Staff member 1].
[spells name].
SHEILA MAZHARI: And [Staff member 1]?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: [Clarifies spelling].
And she called me and she said, Okay, can we
meet? And I said, Well, I need to get out of
here first. I'm just going to -- because I have
a file on her. Yeah, [Staff member 1] is how
she spells it.

So this was back in February 2013. And she
met me at the motel under the guise that she was
going to help us get her into school, help with
possibly getting housing, if I needed any food
cards, anything like that. Well, she showed up
with an RCMP officer and removed my child and my
child lost it and I lost it. And she tried to
physically -- you're not taking me, you're not
taking me. And I looked at her and said, You
lied to me. And she said, Well, I didn't want
you running off again. And I said, What are you
talking about running off again? You're here,
aren't you? I said, I'm not running from
anything.

But we had been -- because the two things
that we had experienced since the assault was I
had a hard time finding housing that was pet
friendly. That's one problem in this province.
That's another recommendation is especially when
it comes to abused women, especially in the rural
areas, there needs to be transitional houses in
rural areas and there needs to be -- whether
they're volunteers or whether it's part of their
funding, even if it's a taxi, for these women to
be able to get out. The problem with women when
they live on farms is they won't leave their
livestock.

I helped a woman get out two years ago from
a very abusive relationship. She literally lost
all of her teeth, her nose had been broken I
don't know how many times. Her husband had
picked up a shift. We managed to get her two
horses out. We had friends come in with a horse
 trailer, got a couple of her chickens out, and a
friend of mine owns a horse rescue, even though
it wasn't any close nearby [sic], she took the
horses in and we got her into a transition house.
We got her dog to stay with a friend of mine that
took the dog in.

These are reasons why women won't leave.
It's just as much as if they can't get their
children out. So that's an issue. That's a very
huge issue. And I have noticed that with some of
the recommendations I have heard from some of the
women in regards to urban centres, domestic
violence and violence isn't just in the urban
centres; it's everywhere. It's in the north,
it's in the rural areas, it's on the reserves.
So it touches all corners of this country, sadly.
So that's an issue. There has to be transitional
housing in the rural areas.

So she took my daughter. And she was white.
And they put my daughter in an aboriginal foster
home. And I am sorry, not every foster parent is
in the system for the betterment of the children.
They get paid very well. Really well. And not
every foster parent is on the up-and-up. My
daughter was abused while she was in this foster
home. She had never seen violence in her life.
She was forced to finish her meals even though
these meals were huge and she was full. Not only
that, at first her appetite was suppressed
because she was stressed out. She had objects
thrown at her by the biological grandson of the
foster parents. She came back to me with a
bruise on her forehead from a little Hot Wheel
car that the kid whipped at my daughter.
SHEILA MAZHARI: How old was she at the time?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: 12. This little kid got away with murder in the house, but all the other foster kids would get yelled at by the foster parents. She was forced to attend church when we're not religious and she told them that. So they denied her dinner that night. She wasn't allowed to eat.

SHEILA MAZHARI: And were you trying to get her -- were you -- who could you go to during that time to try to get her back?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Oh, I went to the office. I went up the food chain. I went all the way to the executive director. I raised Cain.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Executive director of ...?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Of Secwepemc, who was also white.

SHEILA MAZHARI: So it was them who made the decision? It had nothing to do with child and family services of the province?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: It is their -- aboriginal services, it still is underneath MCFD, but it is a separate -- all MCFD has aboriginal services and they can be on reserve. This one is on reserve in Kamloops. So I get an email saying:

Morning Sharna, can you please call [Social worker] or myself --

And [Social worker] was her supervisor who was also white.

-- as soon as possible. We want to talk to you about returning [Daughter].

And she -- they had her for -- I think it was around -- around two weeks. But within those two weeks, they apprehended my daughter on -- I think it was a Thursday. For some reason it's standing out with me on a Thursday. But they -- I yeah, I stayed at the Acadian Inn. Sorry, I just lost my train of thought.

Yeah, they removed her but she didn't go to school for about another week. Yeah, that was their whole reason of why they took her from me, which is not a child protection concern.

So we went to court. And I also talked to her supervisor, who was also Caucasian and the executive director. And I was hell bent. When
also I talked with [Daughter] -- this is when she started telling me about the abuse in the house, and I brought that to their attention. Oh, I know this family; that can't be possible. Oh, no. I said, Are you calling my daughter a liar? I said, I have never even spanked my daughter ever. She's never seen violence, you know, other than maybe on the school grounds, a kid pushing a kid over or whatever.

And when she showed up with the bruise on her forehead, I said, How did you get that? And she told me right in front of the social worker, and you should have seen the look on her face. Her face went ghostly white. And I looked at her and I said, You're going to return my child right now. You have put my child in a violent home. You think just because the home is aboriginal that it's safe?

And when we went to court, I said to the judge the whole reason why they removed my child. And he scratched his head and he said, I'm sorry, how is that a child protection concern? And she went on to say that she was concerned for me for my mental health because we had lived in the transition houses. We went from the Kamloops one to the Vernon one to the Kelowna one to the Penticton one to the Salmon Arm one all in the span of four months. And not for any other reason than trying to secure housing. And I worked every day. The workers all supported it. They knew that. I wasn't sitting on their laurels. I wanted the hell out of there. But I wasn't willing to surrender my pets, my beloved pets, to have a roof over my head. And that's a very big huge problem, at least in this province.

There are people that surrender their pets not because they don't love them and can't care for them; they have to make a choice between a roof over their heads or their pets, and that's wrong. Landlords come back, oh, they mess up -- well, it's a business, then get out of it or whatever.

Thankfully my landlords, I adore them. They're pet lovers and I love them for it. But I have always told people, I want you to meet my pets first. Please don't put me in the same category as other people. I'd have my dogs here.
all week if I could. So that was the problem.

And also that the rent costs were egregious. They're just obnoxious. And some of the places that I saw I wouldn't let a dead dog lie in it. And I would even say that to some of the landlords. I had a landlord say to me once -- I got to the point I wouldn't even tell them I had two cats because they're, like, four animals? They would make it sound like you're bringing in a heard of buffalo. And it's like you tell the truth and you get shot down.

But I had this one landlord say to me once, who liked me and liked my references and all that stuff, and then he comes back and he goes, Just wondering, would you be willing -- he said, I'm just a little uncomfortable with -- at that time I had three pets. And he said, Would you be willing to get rid of one of your pets? And I said, Can I ask you a question? And he said, Sure. And I said, Do you have any children? And he said, Yeah, I have three, and he goes, And two grand kids. I said, Would you be willing to get rid of one of those? And he goes, Oh, I really don't think that's the same. I said, It is in my books. I said, Thank you very much. I said, No, I would not like to rent from somebody like you. I said, My pets are not disposable objects. And I hung up on him.

So she was trying to backtrack I think by this point, somebody within Secwepemc or somewhere had told her you apprehended a child based on something that we don't have jurisdiction over. And not only that, while she was in care, they didn't even put her in school.

SHEILA MAZHARI: So was any complaint filed against the injury that your daughter sustained, or ...?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yeah, I filed it with them. She was returned pretty fast after that.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Anything beyond them? Like, did it go to --

SHARNA SUGARMAN: No, it never went anywhere. The majority of the time anybody files these informal complaints and all of that stuff it never does anything. Like, with the RCMP when you do a formal or an informal complaint, actually I just got a call this week from the centre of conduct officer in Langley. I was at home from the
inquiry -- oh, no, it was just before the inquiry, excuse me. Because she called me here when I was at the inquiry. And I was just online going through Facebook to sort of, you know, destressing or whatever, and I came across this article for -- I think it was for the Langley Times and I took screenshots of it. And this woman -- and she just says, I'm RCMP. So I didn't know whether or not she was a cop or whether or not she was civilian. And she wrote -- her name is [Officer 10] [phonetic] and this was on the Langley Times post March 29th:

I'm RCMP. I've bought many a lunch at McDonalds or Tim Hortons hats, mitts, socks, even jackets. I can truly say the act of panhandlers use money for drugs. I'm not speaking to all of our homeless; I mention just the panhandlers. One died a couple of weeks ago that I have known for eight years to an overdose. I know these people well. I have driven my share to Creek Side in hopes for a bed to detox.

Another thing she wrote -- she wrote:

Please do not give the homeless money. Why do you think they stay there? They are fed well, have all the services they could possibly need, and now the public helps fund their addiction. In Langley, we only have about ten who actively panhandle. What do you think they do with that money? They buy drugs with it. And before I get yelled at, yes, I am in a position to know this as a fact.

And I was absolutely incensed about this because, one, I know for a fact that she -- because I wrote:

Who I decide to give my money --

The whole article is that the City of Vancouver and the City of Langley apparently are now possibly going to pass a bylaw making it illegal to give money to panhandlers or to the homeless.
Like, they're going to fine you. So I said:

Who I decide to give my money to is my business. How about the board of directors for the City of Vancouver giving themselves a $15,000 retirement gift?

That's what they have done. So when you leave the board -- within six months of leaving the board of directors for the City of Van, you get $15,000.

And I was really, really angry at this comment that she wrote. And I wrote back to her on it saying that I would be contacting her superiors, which I did. And the standard of conduct officer contacted me back. Actually called me the other day when I was here. And she spoke with [Officer 1] who is the top cop at Langley. And she said, That's egregious and we're not allowed -- she's not allowed in her capacity as a police officer -- she's now told me she is an officer because I said, She just says "I'm RCMP," which could be civilian as well. I said, Or maybe she's not. Because it just says [Officer 10]; it doesn't have her last name. But she is a police officer because I sent her all of the -- through an email and by the photographs of her, she said, yeah, I know who she is.

So I asked to be able to address this officer and she said, Yeah, you can't do that. I said, Why? She said, That's not our policy. And I said, I don't care about your policy. I said, She needs to hear that she's out of line. She needs to also know that not every homeless person is an addict. She also needs to know that what somebody wants to do with their own personal money -- and I have told people this. I said, If you're not comfortable giving somebody money, then go buy them a sandwich, bring a sweater, go to Timmy's, give them a gift card. If you're not happy with giving them cash or comfortable -- that's fine. There's lots of other ways that you can help the homeless. But to make disparaging remarks like that, unacceptable. And she agreed.

So I still don't know this officer's name yet. And she said, Leave it with me. And I said, That's fine. I realize, you know -- give
you some time. So hopefully I might hear from
her maybe later this week or next week. But
that's what I mean. I cannot stand -- and I said
that to her, I said, Wow you're really
misinformed. I said, I don't know where you get
your evidence or your data from or whatever, but
not every panhandler, not everybody that lives on
the street is an addict. The chances of them
having an undiagnosed and untreated mental
illness, very high. But who are you to speak
like that? And she can't do that in her capacity
as a police officer. So I'm holding her
accountable.

But then for [Officer 1] to come
back and say that I can't address her -- and
also, it also states that it has to be handled
internally so I won't know what happens with this
officer, whether she's reprimanded, or if she is,
what that is. And I said that to -- her name is
[Officer 2]. And I said, so how do
I know if anything even happened? And I said,
With all due respect, you're asking me to keep
your word [sic]. I said, I don't think that
she's earned that right or that privacy or
whatever. I said, I don't want her to be in
tears. I'm not going to scream at her or
anything, but she needs to realize that you don't
make comments like that. And when you're a
police officer or when you're working in the
public sector, you don't get to treat Canadians
like that. These are human beings, you know.

So you buy them Tim's or you buy them
McDonalds or whatever, good for you. But what
somebody wants to do with their money, that's up
to them. There's lots of people that would like
to just give change or whatever to the homeless,
great. My big thing when I come across homeless,
definitely the guys that I zone in on is if they
have a dog. And I'll go right up to them and
say, Do you have dog food for that dog? And I
want to see it. Do you have water for that dog?
You've made somewhat of a choice to a certain
degree to live on the streets; that dog didn't.
So that's one thing I am on.

But I do it in a very respectful manner.
But I can't stand people marginalizing people.
And the corporal agreed with me. She said, No,
that is unacceptable. So we'll see where that
goes. But like Bernie Williams said, I don't
care if you like me or not; I know who I am. And
I only like people that are genuine and, you
know, want better for somebody else or whatever.
This world has been ruined by capitalism and
we're no better for it. The 1 percent are or
whatever. But at the end of the day we only have
one planet and it doesn't matter if you're Oprah
Winfrey, Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, once --
what's the old Cherokee proverb is [sic]? Once
all the plants die and the water is turned black,
you can't eat your money, you know.

My people, the Indigenous people in this
planet, are really going to be the ones that are
going to save this planet in the end. But after
all of the systemic racism and hatred and bigotry
and discrimination, we are still there and we
still have hope for humanity at the end of the
day. That's the way I see it. We will rise.

I love Mother Earth. You know, I don't --
they talk about going to Mars and stuff like
that. I'm sorry, I don't want to live in a
biosphere. I want to live here. This is home.
And she's damaged and she's reeling and she's
hurt and we have to fix her. I don't know if
there's time anymore to fix her, but we all have
to play our part. And these things that are
going on and I am not making light of them, but
this is not helping anybody heal.

You know, humans -- we're a species that
evolve and yet we're the only species on this
planet that have ruined this planet. We have
other species, beautiful creatures that share
this planet and these oceans, they never asked
for any of this and we're polluting their homes
and their environments and we're encroaching all
the time because we think that we're superior.
Well, we're not.

When it came down to it, at the end of the
day, there are so many species on this planet
that could kick our asses, and rightly so, you
know. If it came down to, you know -- like,
these trophy hunters, I'm like, you want to kill
that lion? Kill it with your bare hands. If you
do, well, there you go.

Anybody can shoot something if you wanted
to, but why should you shoot something? You should only hunt in order to feed something. And when my people bag a moose or whatever, they share it with the elders. Every part is eaten. Same thing with the Inuit. My God, they eat seal eyeballs for God sakes. You know, every piece is used and they also give a blessing and a prayer to the animal when it's killed for giving its life for their family to be able to live.

You know, I have the ability with my status card to -- I can hunt and trap and fish 365 days a year. There's my status card. But I don't. One, I'm a hypocrite. I could never -- I couldn't hunt anything, but I certainly could never trap. I don't believe in trapping. I think it's an unbelievably cruel and obnoxious device to use on an animal. I just -- it's inhumane and every part of it is just wrong.

But, you know, this inquiry had to happen and I thank Prime Minister Trudeau for keeping his promise. I would like to see an extension. I'd like to see the inquiry go to all the territories and all the provinces and -- but I would like to see the inquiry have some teeth. And that's where I have concerns, is if you cannot hold some of the these agencies accountable and if it comes down to, recommendations of firings or terminations of jobs or criminal charges, then it's just written on paper. It doesn't -- you know, like --

Marion Buller is a retired judge as, you know, Murray Sinclair was with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. They should have been able to have the authority, if it comes through the investigations, if people have to be criminally charged -- you know, with the SIU, the way it works, it's the director that decides in the end whether a criminal charge -- he has the same authority as a Crown prosecutor. Why can't Marion Buller have that authority? We have now got a new female RCMP commissioner Brenda Lucki, I believe her name is. We're 2018. The RCMP is shattered, literally, internally, externally from the viewpoint of a lot of people. What power does she have to eradicate a lot of these heinous and law violating officers under her. Paulson did nothing. So what's the point of having a
commissioner? Like, nobody should have immunity. If you break the law -- the law is there for everybody. The law does not see in colour or affluence or disability, anything like that. The law is the law, and without the law, humans cannot function. There's nothing but anarchy. We're the only species on this planet that needs laws. Everything else there's fight or flight or you're predator or you're pray. Nature is raw and cruel but it's just. It is precise. It is what it is. We're the only species that has to have laws or all hell breaks loose.

So what can the inquiry provide to my people as some type of reassurance that any type of real justice, especially for some of these people that lost family members -- Robert Pickton -- or their loved ones, their remains were found. But these were people and they could tell by the DNA sort of roughly how long they were -- they died -- how long ago they died. And some of the these women were reported missing and last seen at the Pickton farm and yet the police did nothing. How can you not hold that person accountable? You could be held accountable -- if you committed a crime and showed up at my house and said, oh my God, I got to get out of here and I give you 100 bucks, I can be charged with aiding and abetting, whether or not I think you're innocent or not, yet in their capacity as police officers, they did nothing.

So who told them not to -- which officer -- was it a high ranking official? Was it a frontline worker that said, I don't feel like going there today? These are sex trade workers; what do I care? You know, that's how this is all perceived. And I think there's a hell of a lot of merit to that. You didn't treat them like human beings, like somebody's child, somebody's loved one. They were disposable people.

These aren't pedophiles that, in my opinion, are disposable objects. They're people that should not even be able to breathe anymore. Prostitution is not illegal in Canada. The Supreme Court ruled on it. It doesn't matter what you think. If I called and said, my daughter is missing, you better get on it right now. But it's amazing how often if you have
money or you have affluence and you're Caucasian, they're all over it.

SHEILA MAZHARI: You didn't finish reading the --
SHARNA SUGARMAN: Oh, that's right. I'm sorry.
SHEILA MAZHARI: That's okay.
SHARNA SUGARMAN: So yeah.

More affordable housing and rural transitional housing, including pet care and livestock care. Six, using public schools in the summer, maybe even over weekends, Christmas breaks, March breaks for shelters.

You'd use them in an emergency, you know, if we had an earthquake or anything like that. So why can't it say -- 6:00 o'clock on a Friday night until 7:00 o'clock on a Sunday night, why can't the gymnasiums be open with cots for the homeless? Why? You know, if they want -- they can have some police officers there, they could hire security, whatever, you know. And my last one:

Addiction is a health care issue, not a criminal matter.

So it's clogging up our criminal justice system when it has nothing to do with that, you know. Like I said, no one is immune to mental health or addictions.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Did you want to talk a little bit about your work at WAVAW?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: I just started my job at WAVAW. But I would have been coming here anyway in my own capacity as an advocate and to support the women without question. WAVAW has been very paramount in the community for over 30 years.
SHEILA MAZHARI: Can you spell it?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: WAVAW is spelled W-A-V-A-W. And it stands for women against violence against women. And they have a 24-hour crisis line, which is generally run by volunteers 365 days a year. I also do crisis counselling strictly for First Nations usually on the weekends and I have been very busy obviously because of the fentanyl crisis.

And with the inquiry coming up, I had a lot
of calls from people that were dealing with, you
know, their anxiety about all of that and --
yeah, I do that usually on Friday and Saturday
nights. I usually start at midnight until about
8:00 in the morning. St. Patty's day night I
started at 9:00 o'clock in the morning and I
didn't finish until 1:00 o'clock the next day.

Mental health funding in this country is not
funded enough. Mental health surpassed --
underneath the World Wealth Organization about
five years ago, it surpassed heart disease as the
number one health concern or problem, issue on
the planet. And when -- and I am finding a lot
of police officers that I have spoken to are in
agreement that addictions and mental health
should not be a criminal matter, especially
addictions, drugs, and stuff like that.

Portugal has now decriminalized all drugs in
their country and they're actually seeing their
crime rates have dropped immensely. Their
costs -- in-court costs and police costs have
dropped immensely. You need to leave it up to
the experts and the people that are in these
fields. I think that mental health needs to
start at an early age in the public systems as
part of the education. What parents decide to do
at home in their house as long as they're not
harming a child is their own choice, but I
certainly would encourage people to talk openly
about mental illness in their own homes, because
one in five people suffer from mental illness.
And I know in my home -- I know my father never
would have been like that. He never
discriminated against anybody in his entire life.

He was Jewish and he was one of the first
Jews ever accepted into the private golf club in
my hometown. And he was -- he brought in a man
that he had befriended who was African-Canadian.
And some of his buddies sat on the board of
directors and they pulled him aside -- and my
father's name was [Father], but everybody called
him [Nickname]. And somebody that he
was really shocked at pulled him aside and said,
What are you doing? Can't be bringing a black
guy in here. And this was, like, in the 60s. My
father turned and said, I beg your pardon? And
he said, Well, you know, people are going to
look, and ... He said, Well, if he goes, I go. Because my father wanted to sponsor him for membership. And at first the board was against it. And my father went into the board of directors, chewed them all out and he said, You either let him in, he said, Or I'm out and I will go to the media and you know exactly how many people in the city will listen to me. The guy had membership by the end of the day. He was the first -- he went to -- apparently he went to my father and was, like, I don't want to cause any problems. I don't want to cause any problems. And he said, You're not causing any problems; they're the problem.

But the other members of my family, they need an up and comings when it comes to mental illness. But that's their problem, you know. But yeah, mental illness is definitely an addictions -- and it's not an easy fix. I have an issue with -- and I have worked at some of these addiction centres where they have, you know, zero tolerance policy. Well, it's very hard to be realistic and think that somebody isn't going to slip up and then your first instinct and policy is to throw them out? Well, some of these addiction centres cost $30,000 a month. Most people can't afford that. And if you do slip up, you don't get your money back. You sign all of that when you register and when you sign in.

I'm sorry, would you say that to a chemotherapy person? Oh, your first treatment didn't work or you got sick during it; we'll cut you off. Never. But the body is addicted to something. The person may want to be clean and wants to get off it; the body is craving whatever it is it's addicted to. And come hell or high water, if you have watched somebody go through withdrawal, it's horrendous. You can't -- that's just not a realistic way of dealing with healthcare, you know. I don't know. I've never agreed with that. I understand the -- I understand the implications and the issues if somebody's caught bringing in cocaine or something like that into treatment centres; I get that. But give me a break, you know. Like ...
I always look at it like they don't really understand addiction then because it's not a one-cure-all for everybody. Everybody is different and the biggest thing is -- the only thing they really have in common is at the end of it, they will always be addicts. They will have to work at this for the rest of their lives. Sure, there are people out there that have been clean a year, 30 years, 20 years, whatever it is and they have had a wonderful way of kicking their addiction or their habit, but for some people it will be a life. And sometimes it's because of the trauma they went through.

The majority of people, in my opinion, that suffer from addiction are trying to escape and have it because they are trying to deal with some type of trauma they went through. Could have been something from their childhood, their youth, could have been a car accident they were in, could have been a surgery that went bad and the doctors are, like, here you go, Sheila, here's some morphine. Next thing you know you're an addict by no fault of your own. Same thing with somebody that was molested as a child and they abuse a substance. You know, it's a numbing thing.

Is it the right thing to do? No, probably it isn't, but it's all, like, a domino effect. When you're not mentally well and your self-esteem is battered and bruised, you don't have a roof over your head, you've lost your job, you have lost your kids, whatever it is that you have gone through, what the hell is it just to get loaded or get yourself high? It's like going on vacation for a week. We've all gone away and been hammered for -- solidly for a week and made jokes going, thank God I had a camera because I don't remember being on that catamaran or whatever. But that's not what you do normally when you come back. Well, that's not normal behaviour either, but that's how people manage to get through their day. And those are the people that we need to pick up, not to push down.

And if you can't do this work -- this job isn't for everybody. Believe me it's not. It's horrible sometimes to watch people suffer the way they have. But I have dedicated my life to be an
advocate. I'm raising a child to see this world for all of its beauty, all of its atrocities, everything. And if she can do anything to help somebody, then I'm proud of her, you know. Maybe she'll never make a million dollars, but if she can save a life in that timeframe, that's everything, you know, and that's how I've raised her. She used to come around with her little plastic little wagon and we would have blankets in there and toques and sweaters and everything and she'd meet the guys -- I had three guys in my hometown called Dave and they could never call me Sharna; they could never remember my name, so they used to call me Sugar because my last name is Sugarman, so that always stuck. And they used to call her Little Sugar.

And she would come around and, you know, we would go -- we would rally and we would collect stuff and whatever and we would go around and she still does it to this day. When I went to Cuba in 2010, she saved up all her clothes for the year and I bought a -- I borrowed a buddy's hockey bag, rolled all the clothes in it and we took them down and divvied them all out to whoever we could and whatever. And, you know, it's just little things like that, but the smile that it puts on people's faces because you -- she was telling me about a gentleman that she met down in Gastown, because her friend lives on Abbot Street, and I think his name was Rod. I think that's his name. It's either Ron or Rod. And he's an elderly homeless guy and he's a veteran, which is very sad. And she just stopped to talk to him one day and apparently his face lit up that somebody wanted to talk to him and that he was so thankful that somebody just wanted to say hi and how is your day and all this stuff. And she took him into a cafe and got him something to eat and a hot drink and stuff like that. And she came home to me and she was almost in tears about it. And she said, Mom, you know how much it hurts me to see the homeless people. She goes, But the elderly people really, really -- it hurts me.

And I said, I know. It's really hard. When we come in to Vancouver, I generally come down Hastings Street from the highway and when I get
down to around Main Street or whatever, it's just so hard watching these people day in, day out be on the sides and I see these tents. I'll go to Oppenheimer Park in Vancouver and advocate and try to help people to get off the streets or try to get them in a shelter or try to get them on social assistance.

And up until -- I remember in Ontario -- I think it was just before my daughter was born, you couldn't even get on social assistance unless you had a permanent address. Well, how can you have a permanent address if you're homeless? So we pushed and we advocated and we lobbied the provincial government and they allowed people to be able to use shelters as a temporary address so they could at least get a cheque. And that's what I mean by politicians -- they don't get it. And I would love to -- honestly I'm going to challenge you guys if it ever gets to this -- and I apologize to whoever is transcribing this that I have gone on, oh my God. My apologies.

I would like to see every municipal, provincial, and federal politician try to go a year on what they would be eligible for if they were on social assistance or disability. And I bet you you would see things change really fast.

I know there was an MLA, I think down in Surrey just a couple of years ago that tried to do that. And within -- I think it was -- he was trying to do it for a month and I think it was -- I don't even know if he was on his ninth day and he was already on the streets. And he told his family -- he had a wife and two young kids -- and he said, No, you're not packing me any food. You're not coming and bringing me anything to eat. He lost a bunch of weight.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Do you know his name?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: No. I believe he was East Indian. You would have to Google it.
SHEILA MAZHARI: In Surrey?
SHARNA SUGARMAN: I think it was in Surrey. For some reason it stands out. This was about -- well, it's been since I have been in BC, so somewhere in the last six years.

And he was on the news as well. But yeah, he ended up living on the street. And it was cold. And he didn't even do it in the middle of
winter. I think he did it in, like, June or something. It was, like, May or June or September or something like that. And it was very humbling for him. But I would love to see all the politicians try to do that. They couldn't do it, you know.

This is not what bothers me -- and, like, that comment that the officer said in the Langley Times saying that they're fed well and they have got all these services, people on social assistance and disability are not thriving; they're surviving, and barely sometimes, you know. Unless you're on disability, you can't get a bus pass. Transit should be covered. In my home province, we have what's called Ontario Works, and if you're on social assistance or what people call welfare, the province will pay -- you can apply for what's called -- what do they call it again -- Community Startup Fund, I think, or Program. And they will pay your, like, last month's rent because we don't do damage deposit in Ontario. You pay first and last month's rent. And then there's also -- the landlord has to apply whatever the -- whatever the provincial -- what is it called again -- the provincial rate for the money because they're supposed to hold the money in the bank. It's supposed to askew money over time and you have to apply that no matter how long you have lived there.

But you can apply, a family can apply for -- I think it's every two years up to -- I think it's up to $2,000. And if you want to use part of that towards your last month's rent or whatever it is. But the rest of the money can go towards -- like, let's say it's somebody -- a mother fleeing an abusive home, well, you can use that money to buy what you need. If you need more clothes, if you need small appliances, you just have to bring in the receipts. But you can buy stuff off Kijiji and, you know, somebody just writes you a little receipt or whatever or you can go to the Sally Anne and get a voucher. And there's all these things that you can do.

But in Ontario, transit is covered. You get a bus pass. All your prescriptions are covered. Dental is covered, obviously to a certain degree, eye exams, stuff like that. But in BC, not
everything is covered. For children it is but not always for the recipients. I think transit is huge. You know, not everybody can live in an urban environment or is right downtown or whatever. And, you know, people say if you can't afford to live in Vancouver, you shouldn't live there. Well, who the hell do they think these people are that are working at Starbucks and local restaurants and your bars and your hair salons and stuff; they're not millionaires. I actually know somebody that lives in Abbotsford that is a hairdresser but she works in Downtown Vancouver. That's her commute five days a week. And I am, like, why do you do that? She says, Well, I can't afford to live there. That's crazy. But when people say that, well, if you can't afford to live in Vancouver -- I see that online all the time. And I sit there and laugh and I go, Are you an idiot? Are you a moron? I said, Where do you think -- like, how much do you think these people are getting paid to work at McDonalds and Walmart and everything? I said, Do you not think they have these businesses in Vancouver? Who do you think is pumping your gas?

You know, and then they talk about minimum wage, about $15 an hour. Well, sadly that's what capitalism does. As soon as somebody makes 15 bucks an hour, your rent is going to go up, this is going to go up. It's never ending, you know. The governments need to really freeze some of these things. Same thing with foreign investment in regards to buying properties here. I'm sorry, I'm not saying this as being racist, but if you're not a Canadian citizen, you shouldn't be able to own anything here if you're not occupying it. If you're not occupying your 5 million dollar house in West Vancouver because you live overseas, well, then you're property tax should go through the roof for vacancy tax.

And I also think that if there's houses that are vacant by the owners, whether they're for sale or not, they should have to rent them out. Why should they stay vacant? You know, affordable housing, you know, there's some municipalities -- like, in Maple Ridge, you can have a basement suite in your house, but the owner has to live in the building, so whether
they live in the basement or upstairs. So in
order for you to get that and to get the building
permits, you have to prove to them that you're
living in the house. Well, there are some people
that don't and so then they're building these
basement suites illegally and that's why I'm
saying I think things need to be -- you should
have to pay for a license to be a landlord. It
doesn't have to be huge. It can be $100 or
whatever it is. And maybe when you're units pass
inspection, you get that money back. But you
also get -- like, when you have to get a building
permit, you have to post it somewhere. It has to
be public so somebody can -- and go, oh,
so-and-so is doing this and it's a building
permit.

Same thing with that. Or, like, a liquor
licence; it has to be visible. So if you own a
triplex, it should be somewhere visible for your
tenants or, you know, somebody comes in from
Fortis or BC Hydro and it's there with a date.
I'm from the municipality. Yes, this complex or
these units passed inspection on such-and-such a
date. And maybe it has to be re-inspected
depending on the severity or whatever it was.
Maybe every couple or years or three years or
maybe there's -- like ICBC, maybe you can build
something up if your places are passing
inspection and they're great. But there's so
many pits out there and slumlords that are taking
advantage of people.

Same thing with the Residential Tenancy Act.
You can't have any protection underneath the
Residential Tenancy Act if you share a kitchen
and bathroom with your landlord, which is the
most bizarre thing I have ever heard. But the
reason they have that is they implemented it
years ago when a family rented a room to their
son or something. And when he became -- you
know, his behaviour went wrong or something, they
got him out of the house and somehow it went
through the courts or whatever. And back in the
day, the BC government came back and said, okay,
well, we'll change it where if you share a
kitchen and bath with the landlord, then you
can't file against anybody. And the same thing
with the landlord; the landlord can't file
against you either.

But then there's no protection because there's lots of people that are low income and they have to rent a room or international students or students that have to rent a room from somebody because that's all they can afford but they have no protection; meaning, you could come home and find your stuff out on the front lawn and there isn't any -- if you need to -- there isn't anything -- you don't have any recourse. Yes, my God. I could go on for hours. I feel like I'm venting.

SHEILA MAZHARI: You have such amazing and valuable insight. I really appreciate ...

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Well, I just want to see my country better. We're too rich of a nation to have one homeless person on our streets. To me, it's a stain on all of us. It's unacceptable. There is no reason for it, you know. And Bernie hit a couple -- Bernie Williams hit a couple of really good points today. And some people don't realize this when I educate them, there are a lot of agencies out there where their CEOs are getting paid a few million dollars a year, yet they're supposed to be nonprofit or not for profit. Give me a break. If you can pay your CEO that kind of money, like, that's not -- that makes no sense to me whatsoever. You know, like, how can you justify that? How can you -- well, look at the United Way, their CEO, I think, makes 2 and 4 million dollars a year. Really? You know? People need to do their research on certain things.

And I would like to see, too, with some non-profits as well, if you're looking to, you know, put your agency somewhere and a building is willing to bring in the nonprofit, I think their rent should be much lower so that they can utilize whatever funding or donations they have more towards -- for, you know, their frontline workers helping the homeless or women or children or whatever they're doing. And maybe that owner of the building can get some type of serious tax benefit or something or reduction from the provincial and federal government for -- instead of renting out their space for $15,000 a month, they're renting it out for half of that or less
than half of that because it's going to a nonprofit because it's going to an agency that's trying to help the homeless or women against violence or whatever. I know where I am at, WAVA -- I don't even want to know how much they pay for rent there. It's a beautiful office, but I don't even want to know how much they pay. And that's what I would like to see.

You know, it can't always be capitalism and what's best for me or, you know, dog-eat-dog world. I just -- I don't -- I just don't acclimate to that whatsoever. We're all one people trying to -- we should really -- all we should be doing is we should be trying to save this planet, not fighting each other, all those things. I always tell anybody whether it's online or I meet them, any immigrant that comes to my country, I welcome with open arms. If you're coming here fleeing oppression or hate or war, you know, all these immigrants that are fleeing the United States, I don't blame them. I welcome them here. But when people sit there and say oh, they're terrorists, they're illegals, blah, blah, blah, I'm, like, you know what, if you're not Indigenous at one point, you're an immigrant too or you hale from an immigrant. But I'm not fearful of the people that are crossing into Canada from the United States or Syrians that are coming from Syria; I fear you and all this racism that you are spewing right now. Who are you? Who do you think you are to do that? How dare you.

These people -- don't tell me that Syrians, if they could, would want to go back to their home country. That's where -- that's what they know, that's what they love. But their country has been decimated by war. Maybe in 20 or 30 years, maybe some of their generations, if they're still alive, some of their ancestors will be able to go back if they want to. But in the meantime, I welcome them here.

And people say, we don't have enough housing for our people. Yeah, we don't but we can do both. It doesn't need to be a competition. But affordable housing needs to be built. There's enough condominiums and there's enough million dollar houses and stuff like that. When are
municipalities and the provinces and the federal
government really going to take a look at this.

The average rent cost in Vancouver is, like, $3,100. Who the hell can afford that? You know. There are low income people in every town, village, and city. And certainly there's tons of them in Vancouver. And people say, Oh, well, if you can't afford to live in Vancouver, you shouldn't live there. Okay. So then you're going to see a lot of these small businesses go out of business. You're going to see all these places close and then they're going to complain and go, oh, I can't get my favourite coffee anymore at Starbucks. Well, who the hell do you think works there, you know? People are just -- blinders, you know. And they love to sit behind their computers and bitch and complain. And I say either be part of the solution or shut up.

I'm going to let you go because I got to --

SHEILA MAZHARI: Okay. Sharna, can we spell your name for the record?

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Yeah, it's S-h-a-r-n-a S-u-g-a-r-m-a-n, Sugarman, just like it sounds.

SHEILA MAZHARI: Thank you so much for sharing.

SHARNA SUGARMAN: Oh my God. I can't believe what time it is. I feel so bad.

SHEILA MAZHARI: No, don't feel bad.

SHARNA SUGARMAN: I should feel bad. I'm, like, oh I'm probably not even going to use up my two hours. Oh My Lord.
(PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDED AT 5:00 P.M.)

REPORTER CERTIFICATION
I, Alyssa Fontaine, Official Reporter in the Province of British Columbia, Canada, do hereby certify:
That the proceedings were transcribed by me from audiotapes provided of taped proceedings, and the same is a true and correct and complete transcript of said recording to the best of my skill and ability.
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name this 16th day of May, 2018.

______________________________
Alyssa Fontaine
Official Reporter