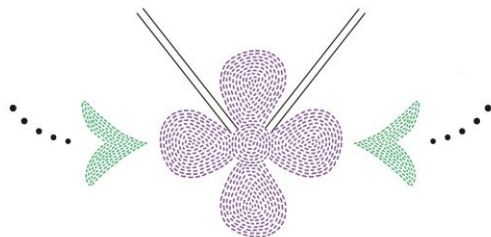


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



Enquête nationale
sur les femmes et les filles
autochtones disparues et assassinées

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part I Statement Gathering
Ramada Hotel
Edmonton, Alberta**



PUBLIC

Thursday August 9, 2018

**Statement - Volume 457
Jennifer Tourangeau,
In relation to Yvonne Desjarlais**

Statement gathered by Kate Langham

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Documents submitted with testimony: none

Edmonton, Alberta

1
2 --- Upon commencing on Thursday, August 9, 2018
3 at 16:00 p.m.

4 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** So, we reviewed the
5 consent form off camera, just because we thought it would
6 be a better fit. So, this is Kate Langham, statement
7 gatherer for the National Inquiry for Missing and Murdered
8 Indigenous Women and Girls. We are here in Edmonton,
9 Alberta at the Ramada South. And, it is 2:00 p.m., and
10 we're going to start our testimony.

11 So, if you can just start by introducing
12 yourself.

13 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** My name is
14 Jennifer Tourangeau. I'm from the Denesuline Nation of
15 Lutsel K'e Dene, and in the Northwest Territories. I'm 38
16 years old. I was adopted in 1981 to an amazing family that
17 has helped raise me. My adoptive parents always let me
18 know who I was, who my family was, and that -- and who my
19 biological parents were, which helped, in a way, from the
20 time I was really young, too. So, part of this, kind of,
21 goes back before the other part.

22 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** That's okay.

23 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** So, both my birth
24 parents was -- my birth mother's name was Yvonne
25 Desjarlais, and my father is Joe Desjarlais. My biological

1 parents. My adoptive parents are Linda and (indiscernible)
2 Tourangeau, who lived in Fort Smith. They live in Grande
3 Prairie now.

4 When my adoptive parents knew -- like, my
5 dad knew who they were. My dad used to work for the
6 Government of the Northwest Territories for Municipal and
7 Community Affairs. So, if you would go to Lutsel K'e,
8 which used to be called Snowdrift, prior to -- they
9 changed. So, he would always -- my family would always ask
10 how I was. So, they knew -- they kind of refer to the
11 family who was raising Yvonne's daughter. That is, I
12 think, the rough translation from Denesuline, which I
13 unfortunately don't speak.

14 So, I've had contact with my biological
15 family. I've met a few of them over time, but not a real
16 close relationship. So, with that, I was able to, when I
17 was 13, 14, able to meet my biological mother. Rough -- it
18 was rough. It was not -- I think the biggest thing was,
19 like, at the age of 13, but also I am diagnosed with FASD,
20 so you kind of have to put that in perspective of my mental
21 understanding, I guess, at that age.

22 But, the biggest question I really had of
23 her was why she gave me up. And, I don't think even for
24 those who are not -- that have a disability, it's not
25 something you can actually comprehend at that age. It's

1 completely -- so what ended up happening after and with --
2 that was I ended up OD-ing off of enough meds that --
3 without -- had my brother not found me. So...

4 I wouldn't say it ended badly, it just --
5 was just really confusing. I didn't fully get it. And,
6 dealing with that -- I found dealing with the fact that her
7 lifestyle choice was not the more -- it seemed to be the
8 forefront of her, aside from the traditional values of when
9 she wasn't in that lifestyle, which sort of -- like, I
10 haven't fully understood. I think, even now, why -- if the
11 traditional values that you honour those and that, but
12 you're still -- and that helps you, then why can't you stay
13 just -- not more -- since then. But, again, I don't know
14 her full story. I don't have that. I'm only getting
15 pieces of information here and there from my uncle and that
16 others who are willing to share what they can.

17 But, being that as it may, it took me until,
18 I think, 25, to come to the full -- well, at that point,
19 realization that it was never her intent to hurt me. It
20 was just her lifestyle choices and the addiction, and that
21 that made it all that possible. Well, not really possible,
22 but why -- the major factor for what had transpired to her
23 giving me up. Like, for some -- like, I'm not sure. Like,
24 there's some bits and pieces I know enough to, kind of,
25 piece what happened before I was born and that. So, it's

1 still, kind of, putting all the pieces together just to
2 kind of figure out what was going on and that.

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

4 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** So, after that it
5 was pretty much being able to forgive her, basically. And,
6 letting that go in the best way I could at the time. And
7 then I had -- so, 2012 was, kind of, a lot of changes for
8 me. My then best friend came up, and I kind of dragged her
9 up here. So, she moved in with me, and then I started,
10 actually, at Grande Prairie Regional College and began my
11 first year as a fine arts student.

12 And so, it was in my first semester when --
13 it was actually during Christmas break, actually, I get a
14 text or a Facebook message from a lady who I know. She's
15 from Lutsel K'e and said, "What's your phone number?"
16 And, I'm like -- so, I gave her my phone number. This is
17 on December 30th.

18 **MS. MARY ANNE GILES:** Thirty-first.

19 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Yes. Well,
20 December 31st. So, she gave me a call and had told me,
21 "They found your mother's body in Yellowknife." I'm like,
22 "What?" It was a shock, for one. So, I'm like, "Okay."
23 So, I tried -- she didn't have very much information, so I
24 tried calling another -- looking on my Facebook and trying
25 to call others who I know from Lutsel K'e who I know

1 personally, who I grew up with, family and that. We're,
2 kind of, all interrelated. So, okay, my cousin, my uncle,
3 who the heck -- how are you related to me? Which, kind of,
4 becomes a running joke in a way because it's like -- yeah.

5 So, with that -- so I talked to one of them
6 and she kind of gave me a little bit. But, she's like,
7 "Nobody knows. They just found her." So, she didn't know
8 what was going on. At the time, and still even now, I
9 don't have very much contact with my biological siblings or
10 anything. I have two of them on my Facebook, but it's -- I
11 couldn't even contact them.

12 So, I called my mom here, the one who has
13 been -- my adoptive mom, the one who is my mom. Pretty
14 much. She will always be that. And so, yeah, I told her,
15 and she's like, "Do you want to come over?" I was, like,
16 Mary was in ---

17 **MS. MARY ANNE GILES:** I was in Spruce Grove.
18 I just came from Comox. And, I felt something was wrong,
19 so I immediately phoned her.

20 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Do you want to introduce
21 yourself, too, just for the transcript?

22 **MS. MARY ANNE GILES:** Oh, sorry.

23 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** No, just to keep it clear
24 for the transcript.

25 **MS. MARY ANNE GILES:** I'm Mary. I am her

1 wife. And, I've been with her for this whole thing. And,
2 at least I can tell my part of what went through -- I was
3 heading from Comox, where my family is, to Spruce Grove, my
4 sister, and all of a sudden I got a wave, almost like I
5 knew something was wrong. And so, I immediately phoned her
6 to find out what was going on. And, I was supposed to stay
7 for a few more days, but I immediately came back home.

8 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** So, I kind of,
9 like, told her. Her family didn't fully understand what
10 was going on, I think. Like, at the time we were just
11 getting to know each other. So, we weren't really in a
12 relationship as we are now. So, it kind of was...

13 So, during that time I had -- I wouldn't say
14 there wasn't any support for me, because I actually had no
15 idea what I was supposed to do. Because I'm adopted, I
16 don't know if the RCMP would have my name, or anything, or
17 any information about -- well, this is who -- well, there's
18 me. Levon (phonetic) has another daughter, she's adopted.
19 This is who her -- I don't know if any of that -- if that
20 information was ever given to the RCMP of who their contact
21 was or anything.

22 So, there wasn't -- there was that
23 disconnect, because I know the only way -- like, I probably
24 could have called Yellowknife RCMP, but I was still in
25 shock, and I had no -- it's not something, like -- there's

1 no, like, "So, if this happens, if your blah, blah, blah,
2 please call this, and we will direct you to how to help
3 you."

4 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Exactly. It must have
5 been very confusing.

6 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** It was. And, I
7 don't really know -- my parents were as supportive as they
8 could be, but I don't know if they even knew what they were
9 able to do for it.

10 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

11 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** So, it was --
12 there was a lot of miscommunication all around. I had no
13 idea who -- so with that -- and the thing was when we found
14 out when -- I was able to find out when Yvonne's funeral
15 was, because they had to send the body out for autopsy and
16 do all that prior to. So, I was able to get a hold of my
17 sister, Pauline's, number. So, I called her up, and that
18 call didn't go very well. I'm not sure exactly -- I know
19 that for a lot of that with my biological family and that,
20 they are still in that side, full of alcohol, and that's
21 how they cope. That's what they've grown up with. That's
22 how -- like, it's normal. And that I get. I get that. It
23 sucks, but yeah, I get it.

24 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Totally.

25 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** So, with that I

1 had told her I want to -- how do we do this? And then what
2 I had also said is I want my dad up there. Okay, simple
3 request, because if you're speaking -- he speaks fluent
4 Chippewa and Denesuline. If you're -- I don't have -- I
5 don't know the language, and I don't know...

6 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Of course. It makes good
7 sense.

8 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** So, basically her
9 answer was no, and that was it. So, I actually never
10 attended her funeral.

11 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Okay. Yeah.

12 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** And, also, I
13 wasn't sure, because it happened, but her funeral was when
14 I was supposed to be back for my second semester -- or my
15 first day of College.

16 So, I did have quite a bit of support at the
17 College. There was an elder who -- I wouldn't say we got
18 off on the wrong foot, it just sort of took us a little bit
19 -- okay, this is what happened. Okay, this part's about --
20 like, just to kind of figure out -- okay, how to create
21 that relationship, okay, how do we work, create that
22 relationship with each other so that we can -- because he
23 was -- I'm very wary of men. I'm not sure where that comes
24 from, actually. I'm not sure exactly -- I've always been
25 very -- I'm not sure exactly if there is something that I

1 don't know about, or if it's just -- aside from my
2 brothers, but they have never hurt me or anything. But,
3 you know, that's always just been how I've always been, and
4 that, so -- and that was bad.

5 So, it took him and I a bit to develop that
6 relationship, so that -- I know that now it's -- like, I
7 trust him, but it's building that, sort of -- I think it's
8 because I'm smaller than him. I'm only 4'10". Like,
9 seriously. I'm always like, "Hi, I'm down here." And,
10 just, I guess I haven't figured out how to -- well, then,
11 and sometimes it's coming to that -- to, like -- yeah.

12 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah, it can take time to
13 build relationships and trust. For sure. That's really
14 important.

15 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** So, he helped me a
16 bit. Like, he helped me the best he could with working
17 through this. He understood. And, my teachers were good,
18 too, because I told them, like, yeah, this is what -- and,
19 like, they understood. So, this kind of -- so, the only
20 way, really, with any of this was online media and that.
21 That was the only way, at the time, that I knew how to --
22 and, no one actually asked -- actually offered to say, hey,
23 so -- or, any resources or anything that could have said,
24 hey, so, if you want to find out what's going on, this is
25 how we can do it ---

1 MS. KATE LANGHAM: Okay.

2 MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU: --- during that
3 process.

4 MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

5 MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU: But, nobody ever
6 -- and, I guess I also -- I didn't know where.

7 MS. KATE LANGHAM: For sure.

8 MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU: Like, with --
9 because I know that with Women of Alberta thing could have,
10 but I don't know if they would even have any jurisdiction
11 to the territories. And, that's where that barrier becomes
12 really evident, is if I'm here ---

13 MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right. Yeah.

14 MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU: --- who do I go
15 through? If I'm not in -- where the -- I don't want to say
16 "issue".

17 MS. KATE LANGHAM: Like, the incident.
18 Yeah.

19 MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU: The incident has
20 happened, there needs to be a bridge between services
21 saying, okay, here. And, them saying, yeah, well, she's
22 here, and that's where we, kind of, found out towards the
23 end of what, because again all the information on that was
24 right there on that paper.

25 MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right.

1 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** And, I think I
2 also it was -- there's that, but also -- it kind of --
3 there's some negative aspects like that, but positive, kind
4 of, interesting, I guess. We all know healing comes in
5 different forms. And, for me, I'm an artist. That's how I
6 do it. That's where mine comes from. And, that's what
7 kind of pushed my art into a whole different direction, and
8 still kind of does, when I tap into it. But, that's sort
9 of where a lot of -- it kind of pushed me, in a way, of
10 dealing with that, but also seeing -- kind of giving me an
11 eye-opener but also in a mode of, I guess, to what I want
12 to do with the diploma I have, and that.

13 So, that was 2012. And, the other ironic
14 thing, really with this was, the year she was murdered was
15 the first year of my schooling.

16 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

17 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** And then it took
18 four years, and that was my final year of schooling, when I
19 graduated, was when everything finished.

20 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Okay.

21 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Yeah. And, that's
22 when -- so, we kind of found out through media and that.
23 So, there was a lady at GPRC, she's the on campus liaison
24 for the Friendship Centre, and one other one, who I totally
25 adore. So, both of them together, when we finally -- when

1 it came down to the final stretch, I guess? I don't know.

2 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yes, that's a good word.

3 For sure.

4 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** I guess, of the
5 whole thing, like, I was up and down completely. Like,
6 just -- and that.

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

8 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** So, with that,
9 what we kind of had to try and figure out was, when they
10 were going to do the sentencing of impact and that, was
11 where we started hitting roadblocks, because Victim
12 Services Alberta said, no, it's a case in the Northwest
13 Territories, but you live in Alberta. So, it became this
14 whole -- a little bit -- like, it was a yo-yo, I guess.
15 Again, there was that.

16 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

17 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** So, I think that
18 part there needs to be kind of -- okay, it needs to be
19 handled a bit better.

20 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** That's an understatement.

21 **MS. MARY ANNE GILES:** Huge understatement.

22 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** So, we were able
23 to get a hold of the lawyer who was dealing with the case.
24 So, we were able to do that, and we're able to get -- he
25 sent us a victim impact statement, which it took me a while

1 to even get through that, like, at the time. So, what they
2 were able to -- these two women, and I love them for it,
3 were able to, with the lawyer, using GPRC's videoconference
4 and that, connect me right into the courtroom.

5 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Wow. Okay.

6 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** So, that helped.
7 They couldn't fly me out there, which I think would have
8 probably -- probably may have done more harm than good,
9 because all my family was there, and ---

10 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Totally.

11 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** I think it would
12 have just kind of thrown me off. So, people who were meant
13 to be there with her -- like the school and Mary, and my
14 parents, and the worker, and that were there, and my victim
15 statement was read first, actually, which kind of surprised
16 me. I didn't see the person, which they made sure. And, I
17 think it was more just how it was set up. But, some of
18 them -- it was really evident, really, the amount of pain,
19 and that, that the others were going through. I don't
20 know, really, what supports, or if there was anything done
21 to help them.

22 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

23 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** So, I can't even
24 -- I don't know, and I'm not going to speculate or anything
25 on that.

1 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Sure.

2 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** So, I don't --
3 that was, sort of, the biggest, I think. And then the
4 person was sentenced 13 years to life for second-degree
5 murder. My mom, my adopted mom, knew her.

6 **MS. MARY ANNE GILES:** Honey, let's take a
7 pause, and have a smoke and refresh? We'll need to pause
8 for a few moments.

9 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Okay, no problem. It is
10 2:27 and we will pause the recording.

11 --- Upon recessing at 14:27

12 --- Upon resuming at 14:46

13 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Okay. So, it is 2:46,
14 and we are ready to resume the statement.

15 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Where was I?

16 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** You had just spoken about
17 the sentencing, that he had been sentenced 13 years to life
18 for second-degree murder.

19 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** So, it kind of
20 took me -- when the Walking with Our Sisters came, like,
21 it's a callout, I guess, to say we're dealing with this and
22 that. Like, this is what -- I had gone to the first
23 meeting. I had wanted to be a part of it, but I didn't
24 know how, or what, at the time. But, I also -- at that
25 time, I also didn't realize the amount of my own personal

1 self-healing I had to go through with everything that had
2 happened with -- dealing with the -- all the emotions, and
3 all the past trauma that had occurred, and that. And,
4 also, just trying to get through that.

5 I was also working for GPRC, so it was kind
6 of made a little bit more difficult, I guess, in a way,
7 because I was working for them, doing the redesign and that
8 for GPRC, and that. But, I also needed to work through all
9 the trauma, and that, that I had thought I had dealt with.

10 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

11 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** But, it ran
12 deeper, I guess, than I realized. But, that seems to be
13 the case. Having been -- the intergenerational impact with
14 residential school and that, and dealing with that, it,
15 sort of, I guess, affected my outlook on some things with
16 issues I need to deal with, with my spiritual
17 understanding, and that. And, kind of, figure out where I
18 -- not really where I stood, but more what was my own
19 truth, really, which, in a way, is more the traditional
20 ways of knowing and being rather than the westernized and
21 the whole religious aspect, I guess.

22 And, also working on my relationship with
23 Mary, and getting through that, working on that, which was
24 more, at that time, it was -- I didn't feel that I deserved
25 her love. I'm not sure if that was prior to -- with Yvonne

1 -- like, I know the connection is with that, with the
2 rejection, the abandonment issues that I had, and having to
3 work through all that. But, also, finally realizing that
4 she is here to stay. It's like, okay.

5 But, it was also just her and I working --
6 mostly me working on myself to get to the point where I
7 don't have to change for anyone. I don't have to -- I am
8 two-spirit, that's who I am, and that -- and, it was also
9 the Walking with Our Sisters that kind of made me realize
10 that I am gifted. I learned that through my uncle, who
11 knew my mother well, and they grew up together and that.
12 So, he kind of gave me some information there on stuff.
13 That I'm like, okay, so this is why.

14 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

15 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** I wish somebody
16 had told me that earlier as to why I can read people
17 easily. Like, the energy and that, and just why I get
18 certain instinctual feelings and that, and I sometimes see
19 things or are able to say yes, this. Because I never
20 really knew; I thought it was just -- well, part of it is
21 experience, but just things that, kind of, came to me that
22 people needed to hear. And, they're like, where does that
23 come from? I don't know.

24 But, the other part was sort of, I guess,
25 being able to put to rest, I guess, a lot of that, and just

1 say, yeah, I'm not -- with certain things. And, the
2 Walking with Our Sisters really did a lot of good for me.
3 Being able to be a part of it as two-spirit. So, I was
4 able to -- I didn't feel that I had to sacrifice one part
5 of myself, just because that's what they -- no, I'm both.
6 I'm male and female. So, if I choose to be this, or I
7 choose to -- there's no ---

8 MS. KATE LANGHAM: And, and...

9 MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU: Yeah.

10 MS. KATE LANGHAM: Yeah.

11 MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU: And, that's sort
12 of how -- it really allowed me just to be able to be a fire
13 keeper, allowed me to be -- do both roles, in both sides,
14 and honour both, without having to just simply staying with
15 -- you're female? Yes, but I don't feel it today, so
16 here's the deal. And, that's sort of how -- it's trying to
17 find that within the community. Certain people understand,
18 certain elders do, but not everybody. There's still that
19 -- those issues there that they have to resolve.

20 MS. KATE LANGHAM: Right. For themselves,
21 yeah.

22 MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU: Like, one of the
23 elders -- actually, when we were at the Walk with our --
24 when we did the sweat, she was like, "Well, would you like
25 to wear pants underneath your dress?" Seriously? I can do

1 that? Because I was never -- because I walk in both.
2 Okay. It took me -- it's just those small things that the
3 offer is there, and they say, yeah, I see. I know. I get
4 it. I respect it. So, let's allow both for you to be
5 there without you feeling like you're having to compromise.

6 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Beautiful.

7 **MS. MARY ANNE GILES:** I think she's trying
8 to say it was empowering.

9 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Oh, I got that loud and
10 clear.

11 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** The other was ---

12 **MS. MARY ANNE GILES:** I think one of those
13 things that she was trying to say was "empowering".

14 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** I spoke my story
15 at the opening, and I just completely broke down. Like,
16 just bawling. And, I had told them, none of the family
17 ever told me anything. They knew who I was. I have a lot
18 of them on my Facebook, but none of them told me anything
19 of what was going on with the case, with the trial,
20 anything.

21 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

22 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** They know who I
23 am. They know I'm Yvonne's daughter. They know this,
24 this, and this. But, still. And, my cousin, he was there,
25 and it was really -- I wasn't expecting it. She hugged me,

1 and was like, "I'm sorry." She didn't -- like, I didn't
2 know -- because it's, kind of, I guess -- I think all of
3 them assumed somebody was handling that, and that.

4 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

5 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** But, nobody was
6 handling anything, I hate to say it. But...

7 **MS. MARY ANNE GILES:** Let's just say it was
8 a gong show.

9 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Pretty much. And,
10 it's not -- it's nothing against any of them.

11 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Sure.

12 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** They were all
13 going through the same thing. Everything was so messed up.

14 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

15 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Like, I don't know
16 what -- but, again, being adopted adds a whole other
17 complexity, because I don't know -- what I know, the -- and
18 there was no secret in the community of who adopted me.

19 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

20 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** But, the social
21 workers are, like, well, her family doesn't find her --
22 blah, blah. I was like, that's not happening. I hate to
23 say it, but -- so, I don't know if that was the whole
24 Sixties Scoop part ---

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

1 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** --- because I was
2 taken from Yvonne and Joe in 1980. I came to my then
3 foster parents at 14 months old, December 23rd, 1980. I was
4 a Christmas present.

5 **MS. MARY ANNE GILES:** They kept her.

6 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Yeah, they kept
7 me. So, in a way, I guess, with me and with Yvonne, I
8 think the biggest thing was, I guess, and it's still, in a
9 way, kind of -- I don't know if it's still -- or, it's
10 lessened.

11 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

12 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** I never got to
13 tell her "thank you". I never got to let her know that I
14 forgave her for what happened, or that I get it, and
15 everything. And, I don't -- I'm sure she does know, but
16 that part, and that's now gone. That's what was pretty
17 much ripped from me is that, was being able to -- I don't
18 know, and I honestly don't think that she and I could have
19 really had a relationship. But, at least for her to know
20 that I don't blame her for what she went through, for all
21 of that. I get it.

22 And, I don't know -- and, it would be nice,
23 really, to have that answer, is I know she loved me. And,
24 I think one of the hardest things is to give up your child.
25 And, that's the hardest. And, I get that. I see it. But,

1 I also need that in order for me to be able to walk away,
2 and close that door, to not look back.

3 So, the Walking with Our Sisters allowed me
4 to purge a lot of that. A lot of that pain, and that.
5 But, I don't have that other part, I guess. I don't know
6 if that will ever -- and I think that's, sort of, just --
7 if there is ever any way for me to get that answer. And, I
8 honestly -- the other part, I think is, I honestly, and I'm
9 not sure, is if she was able to go over, or if she is stuck
10 right now. Because she wants to be, but it could also
11 maybe be others who are still holding on, I guess, in a
12 way, in that sense.

13 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

14 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** And, I would
15 rather her be able to go and not be stuck. And, I don't
16 know if that -- if she is there or not. I don't -- I think
17 the other really is meeting the rest of the family. I
18 think that part would be -- they're like, well, you need to
19 reach out. Well, I have. I'm not pushing it. It's up to
20 them now. I'm not -- they need to be willing to take that
21 step as well. And, I think that was part of it.

22 I was talking to my mom about this, like,
23 before, and she's like, "Well, what does the family say?"
24 And, I'm like, "I don't know. They don't talk to me."
25 "Well, maybe they don't want to." It's like, it's not

1 about them, it's about me. And, I think the thing is, I
2 don't really think my mom knows me. I think she wants to,
3 but I think that's more her, I think, really. But, I think
4 that's just what they all see is as a little girl, again,
5 which I get, but it's like, sorry.

6 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

7 **MS. MARY ANNE GILES:** Do you need to pause?

8 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** I'm okay.

9 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** You know, I'd heard some
10 -- throughout your testimony here, I've heard some really
11 strong and clear recommendations that you have. And, you
12 were just mentioning them as suggestions, but I'm wondering
13 if you would like to put those forward as recommendations
14 for the Commission.

15 And, the piece that you've really spoken
16 very articulately to is that lack of connection between
17 communities; right? Where you were in Alberta, so you
18 weren't eligible for Victim Services because the incident
19 happened in a different territory.

20 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Yeah.

21 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** That really speaks to a
22 huge gap that we have going on here.

23 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Yeah.

24 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** And so, is that something
25 that you would like to put forward as a recommendation?

1 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Yeah, is that
2 something, like a liaison or something ---

3 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

4 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** --- that can be a
5 liaison between, say, that person who lives here and what's
6 -- so at least you have that two-way communication.

7 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Totally.

8 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Because, I have no
9 idea who -- I was like, who, what? Like, the two people
10 who were -- like, they were stunned as well. But, she
11 lives here. But, the incident happened in Yellowknife.
12 But, she lives here.

13 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

14 **MS. MARY ANNE GILES:** She's very expressive.
15 She's talking with her hands.

16 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Oh, you almost got poked
17 there.

18 **MS. MARY ANNE GILES:** That's why I moved
19 backwards.

20 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** But, that is
21 something that does need to be addressed.

22 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

23 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** And, I don't know
24 -- and, I think this, kind of, has to go to, I guess, to
25 Yellowknife, I guess, is when they were looking for family

1 members, aside from who they knew there, if my name was
2 mentioned as one of the kin, next of kin, I guess, wouldn't
3 they have tried to figure out where?

4 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah. Yes.

5 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** And, I don't know
6 how that would look. Like, I don't know -- I guess the
7 thing is, I would have -- I don't know if I would have to,
8 or who would, to figure out exactly how the process was
9 done, because I don't know.

10 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right. And, something
11 else I've heard you speak to in a few different ways here
12 is, like, consideration for the whole family; right?
13 Children that were adopted out. It wasn't your choice to
14 be adopted, you know, out. You were received by a loving
15 family, for sure, but those bloodline ties are really
16 important, too. And so, wondering about some sort of --
17 you know, how do we do that piece? How do we make sure
18 that we keep the whole family connected, and informed, and
19 supported? Yeah.

20 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Yes, because I
21 don't know other who have been -- if they even have that.

22 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

23 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** So, I think I'm
24 one of the lucky ones. But, how many are there who do know
25 and have -- again, I think it's sort of a -- it's sort of a

1 -- it kind of interlinks into that Sixties Scoop.

2 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Totally.

3 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Completely, in a
4 way.

5 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Totally.

6 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** I think someone
7 was asking me about that.

8 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

9 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** I don't know if
10 you even qualify for that, because it wasn't -- like, right
11 now I'm kind of, at the moment, trying to get a hold of
12 Yellowknife adoption place there, who deal with that. I'm
13 like, do you have my original birth records? Because my
14 actual birthname when I was born was changed. And, if you
15 look at my birth certificate I have now, it has my adopted
16 name on it, and it says Lutsel K'e, but I was born in
17 Yellowknife. So, it's like -- but, it would be nice to
18 have the original birth certificate as well.

19 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** The family that adopted
20 you, were they an Indigenous family or...?

21 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** My adopted dad is
22 Denesuline from Fort Resolution. My mom is actually from
23 Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia.

24 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Okay.

25 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** So, they do have

1 two boys, my older brothers. The oldest is 10 years older
2 than me, so I was the spoiled one.

3 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah, two boys and a
4 princess.

5 **MS. MARY ANNE GILES:** Now, they've got two
6 princesses.

7 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah. Beautiful.

8 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Which is kind of
9 the most interesting, because she's the oldest of hers.
10 So, it's two girls and a boy. It's kind of a strange
11 relationship.

12 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Or, not so strange.
13 We're pulled together for all these reasons.

14 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Yeah. Just kind
15 of opposite of -- so...

16 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Opposites attract. I'm
17 wondering if there is more, if there is anything else that
18 you would like to share with the Commission?

19 **MS. MARY ANNE GILES:** Would you like to take
20 a smoke and think about it?

21 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** We can have a
22 smoke.

23 **MS. MARY ANNE GILES:** I know your process.
24 Sometimes you halt and then...

25 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** I think I've said

1 everything I need to.

2 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** You really have provided
3 us with a lot of really good information and some really
4 eye-opening gaps; right? You've pointed to some big gaps
5 in the system and you've spoken to them really
6 articulately, so thank you for that.

7 Yeah, and I just want to make sure that if
8 there is anything else that you need to say, this is your
9 time here. Any more recommendations for the Commissioners
10 about changes that need to be made?

11 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** There's a lot, I'd
12 say.

13 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

14 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Like, there's a
15 lot. Like, not just...

16 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** How did you connect with
17 your supports? Because you said you found your support
18 people. How did you do that?

19 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** The College was
20 one.

21 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

22 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Like, there is an
23 elder in residence.

24 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

25 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** And then, again, the

1 College, but then -- and that was, sort of, aside from my
2 counsellor who was helping me at the time to work through
3 that, or some of it.

4 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

5 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** That was, sort of,
6 mostly the College really ---

7 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Okay.

8 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** --- I think,
9 towards the end of it. But, the other part was -- a lot
10 was just using my art to work through everything and let
11 that be my voice. And, I think that's for me, and I think
12 for a lot, would be the best tool, because some of us, even
13 me, don't know how to articulate our emotions. I mean,
14 it's, again, a generational impact of suppressing them.
15 So, how do you actually let it out without the negative
16 impact?

17 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

18 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** More towards the
19 positive, and that's what simply I'm trying to do is create
20 a program -- create and design a program that works both
21 traditional Indigenous ways of knowing and art therapy into
22 one. Something similar to the Walking with Our Sisters,
23 but onto an individual aspect, where ceremony is used in
24 conjunction with art and both come as one in order to help.

25 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Right.

1 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** But, also, what I
2 also find is it has to be the communities. It's nothing
3 against the government and that, but as a Nation, since the
4 *Indian Act* and since, we have depended on the government to
5 give us what we need. When prior to, we've done it
6 ourselves. We knew what the heck we were doing, and then
7 all that changed when the *Indian Act*, and the treaties, and
8 everything else came into our lives.

9 And, it's -- we haven't lost that knowledge.
10 It's there. You have to be able to access it again. And,
11 that's what has to now happen is in order for us to heal,
12 we need to stop relying outside, and start doing it within
13 the communities, and have it community-based, not -- the
14 funding, sure, but we have to be able to do it ourselves,
15 because we're not -- there is no other way it's going to
16 happen.

17 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Brilliant.

18 **MS. MARY ANNE GILES:** This is actually in
19 its infancy stages right now.

20 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Something you're actively
21 working on?

22 **MS. MARY ANNE GILES:** She's actively work on
23 it right now.

24 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** I'm working on it,
25 I just need to figure out how -- I know how it looks, I

1 know what I want it to look like, and I can tell you. But,
2 I need somebody else to be the...

3 **MS. MARY ANNE GILES:** Liaison?

4 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Not really
5 liaison, but more ---

6 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Like, to make the
7 framework kind of thing?

8 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Yeah, to make the
9 framework. I can tell you what I'm seeing, but I have a
10 hard time -- the logistics part of how it -- of what I'm
11 seeing onto paper, and that is what ---

12 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** You're the artist and the
13 architect, yeah.

14 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** And, somebody else
15 needs to be able to work with me, okay, this is what I'm
16 seeing, this is what I would like to see, this is what
17 could become, and then, okay, and making it into the
18 visual, into the whatever.

19 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** You're the artist, you
20 need a builder.

21 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Yeah. I need
22 somebody else to build it. Well, not really -- as long as
23 the understanding ---

24 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** But, using your material.

25 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Yeah, as long as

1 the understanding is that this isn't about them, but also
2 taking that, but also using that model, bringing it to the
3 community. This is what -- and, that's the thing I find
4 is, instead of saying this is what we're going to do for
5 you, what do you need from us?

6 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yes.

7 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** And, switching
8 that paradigm from band-aid solution to something that the
9 community is saying, we did this, we created this, this is
10 ours.

11 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah.

12 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** So, me, or
13 whoever, coming in there and saying, what do you see as you
14 need, and us helping them to build that, because then when
15 we leave it's theirs, and they own it. And, that's how you
16 empower the community.

17 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Beautiful. Well, that's
18 really exciting.

19 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** I just need people
20 to help me with it.

21 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** For sure, we all need
22 help.

23 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Or, the right
24 people who are willing to step in. But, the right people
25 to come into it and say, yes, because I think the model

1 that the Walking with Our Sisters used works.

2 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Okay, good.

3 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** It makes sense,
4 because it's the elders who are the knowledge keepers, and
5 that.

6 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yes.

7 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** But, it's also
8 using how the family structure, how the tribe structure,
9 every person, regardless of their gender, or whoever, youth
10 and that, we're all involved in it. So, it's not just
11 putting the youth aside, as we have, it is bringing them
12 here to say, hey, this is your role, this is what we --
13 this is what your role is within this community and how it
14 interacts, because everything is integrated.

15 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yes.

16 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** Everything is
17 interconnected like a spiderweb, and that's how it needs to
18 come back.

19 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah. Wow. I hope you
20 find the right team to help you bring your vision to where
21 it's needed.

22 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** It will sometime
23 soon, yes.

24 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Yeah. Sometime soon,
25 yes. So, I'm just wondering, it feels like we're ending

1 here, and we're coming to a close, but I don't want to rush
2 you. This is really your time here. So, I just want to
3 check in again to see is there anything more that you would
4 like to share?

5 **MS. JENNIFER TOURANGEAU:** I think we're
6 good.

7 **MS. KATE LANGHAM:** Okay. So, it is 3:20,
8 and that concludes our formal statement.
9 --- Upon adjourning 15:20 p.m.

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LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

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

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Shirley Chang

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September 7, 2018