Statement gathered by Daria Boyarchuk & Debbie Bodkin
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NOTE

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Linda Deibel
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Statement Gatherers:  Daria Boyarchuk & Debbie Bodkin

Documents submitted with testimony: none.
Upon commencing on Thursday, October 18, 2018 at 11:32 a.m.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay Linda, thank you for inviting myself and Daria into your home to hear your story. Today is Thursday, October 18, 2018, and right now it's 11:32 in the morning. I'm Debbie Bodkin, I'm a statement gatherer with the National Inquiry. This is Daria Boyarchuk, also a statement gatherer with the National Inquiry. And we know that you are Linda Deibel. Am I saying your surname right? Yeah? We are at your house at [address], Bracebridge, Unit [number] or Apartment [number]. I'm honoured to be here to meet you and to listen to your story, and to hear what you want to share with us. You said you're all comfortable and you mentioned to us that you're comfortable with the audio and video taping.

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: M'Hmm.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: And we went over the consent form with you. We all have our cell phones turned off.

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Well no.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Double check that.

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Yeah.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Are we good? Okay. And you're here voluntarily. I called you and you invited us
to come here and to hear your statement here, that's correct. So I think -- did I miss anything there?

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** I think you're good to go.

**MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** I've got the date, time, location. So I'm going to turn it over to you. And as I said, if you wouldn't mind starting out with your name, your full name, your birth date, and maybe tell us a little bit about the history of your family, and then tell us -- share with us what you want to share.

**MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** Okay.

**MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** And we may not have mentioned, we know it may be difficult and emotional, if you need a break just tell us, we can take a break and start up again. But you're in charge now, okay?

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yes, and if you ever want to stop and say look I've had enough, I don't want to do this anymore, it's too much for me, we can stop as well.

**MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** That's fine as well. You're in charge.

**MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** Yeah.

**MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Okay?

**MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** Okay. So my name is Linda Deibel. My daughter's name is, or was, Tasha Marie Smith. She was missing when she was 28, and she was found
dead, actually floated up from the Grand River, four years later and a fisherman found her. I had power of attorney for personal care for my daughter because although she was older, she was slow from head trauma. And the neurosurgeon, one of them that operated on her brain in Ottawa, said that she wouldn't grow up past 14, she'd be 14 forever. And so I took care of her.

Now what happened was, I was moving from Toronto -- or from North Bay I'm sorry, to Toronto. When my daughter came up for a visit from Haileybury, she was staying with somebody there, and because my daughter had dual diagnosis with her -- because of the head trauma and that, she had a hard time. Because of that -- like I said, I used to take care of her. But I asked her father to please watch her while I moved from a small town to the big city. I was afraid of her getting overwhelmed and excited, and maybe wandering and getting lost because I didn't know anybody there.

So he of course was upset because he always was, and he sees it as taking care of -- babysitting for me. He just didn't get it right, that he was a parent. So he done that, but I guess what happened was to Tasha, was that -- sort of like I guess he kidnapped her because he wouldn't give her back. And I had no vehicle, and of course all my money got spent, I just moved to Toronto and
paid first and last, hookup charges, all this. I'm broke, I have no money for gas, nothing. So I couldn't pick her up, and I kept asking him to bring her and he wouldn't.

Then I got mad one day and I said to him bring Tasha to me -- I was mad. I said bring her to me and let me take care of my own daughter like I'm supposed to. I was told as he spoke in his, what I call his evil voice, that will never happen. The phone hung up and she disappeared.

Then I -- when I didn't hear from the police after a couple of days after she was found by a fisherman in the Grand River, she had floated up, I waited for the policeman to call me in and interview me. There was no call. And so after whatever period of time I called, because I got the number from my ex, and I called and I asked like how come -- like am I getting interviewed, how come I haven't heard from anybody? And I was told no, no I'm not going to be interviewed. And I asked why. I said what do you mean why? I said I'm the mom, you're not going to interview me? Well I was told that you don't know anything.

That was very, very disheartening and I asked, I said, or maybe stated, do you take orders from the public now, what do you mean somebody told you that I don't know anything? I didn't know you took orders from the
public, like I thought you worked for the people. I don't understand, what are you saying to me, how come I'm not being interviewed? How do you know, or how does this other person know what I know? Maybe I do know something, maybe I don't, but that's not the point. Aren't you supposed to talk to the people directly or you take somebody else's word?

So of course that didn't go good, and he was very pissed off. And then so the next thing that happened to me was I moved from -- because I started to look for my own daughter myself. Oh, and I should say because I was in North York, I did call the North York police and asked if they would assist me with a case so that I could be informed and whatnot. And they showed up, two police officers, pissed off again at me. And I was told about the statement, that he's mad because he has to put it in the file now because I called the station.

And I said okay, so are you going to look for my daughter, like what happens from here, like whatever, normal questions. And no, we're not looking. Well what do you mean you're not looking for my daughter? No, we don't have time, do you know how many people live in Toronto, how many people go missing? In other words, making me look like I'm being a problem, and yet that's their job.
So then I was very disheartened again and I wondered how I'm going to find my beautiful daughter by myself in a city and I don't know even one person. So then that's what I did, I went and I went on the street and I looked for my daughter like that. I slept at Nathan Phillips Square. I found another lady that was homeless, and we teamed together and slept in a tent. And we went out looking every day because I am not going to find my daughter in my house. She's on the street, going to homeless shelters and trying to find a place to live and food to eat, so that's where I wanted to be if I'm going to find her.

So there was several times I did find my daughter, but I wasn't able to access because I'm only a person. I can't go into people's houses and I can't do anything, I'm just a person. I'm just a mom like all the other moms that have missing children, and all the other fathers that care about their children and grieve also. Just parents, that's it. That's all we want is our children.

So I talked to people on the street of course, I showed them many pictures, people saw my daughter. My daughter told them that she was being molested, and I guess that's maybe why it went the way it went. I don't know, I don't understand any of it because I
took care of my daughter. I don't understand, but anyway.

There was another time when I was still in North York and these people came in to fix something because I was right beside the garbage room, and there was problems with whatever kind of bugs you get from garbage. So I told them to seal it all around, these two men that came. And I was talking about my daughter and I showed them the picture.

Well before I showed them the picture they looked at me, and they looked at each other, and then they said does she look like you? And I said well many people say she does and I showed them the picture, and they did the same thing again. They looked at each other, and they looked like very kind of surprised or shocked, and they saw my daughter and they knew where my daughter was. And they gave me an idea, they didn't have the exact address, but they had worked there. And of course I don't know Toronto, I'm just one person, I'm not a police force.

And so he described it and I wrote it down, but I couldn't find it. And he said that he went in there to do whatever work, and the girl that was my daughter came and looked down the stairs, and looked really terrified and started to scream and went into the cupboard or the -- what do you call it? Not the cupboard the closet. Went into the closet and was rocking back and forth, and screaming
and screaming and holding a teddy bear. And that there was
a mattress on the floor and blanket, and that's all,
nothing else really in the room.

And it's the same vision like I had of my
daughter when I was doing some dream walking to look for
her. I see her on the floor and she kept getting filled
with needles every time she'd wake up. And she'd get upset
and scream and try to get away. She would -- there were
constant -- that was just in my dream though. I don't know
if that part is reality, but that's what happened and it
sounded like the same thing.

So then that -- I couldn't -- every time I
tried to call the police, all they did was not call me back
first of all, that was the big thing. If they did call me
back because I reported them to the -- whoever internal
police that they're not talking to me and they won't give
me information. He called me back on a private line and he
gave me -- was giving me a very hard time, was very upset
with me. And I have the missing daughter, and
he's mad at me because I'm telling on him that he's not
helping my beautiful daughter. So there's been lots of
abuse against me as a human being and a mother, a parent.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Take your time.

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: I want people to know,
this is the kind of thing that goes on all the time, and
it's not right. It has to change. We are people. So then that was the second time I could have for sure found my daughter. The next time was my friend and I, we went to London.

We got a tip about London and we went there. And I went to the Salvation Army Food Bank and I asked the girl, which I wouldn't have really needed to anyway, but I asked the girl, I showed her my daughter's picture, I showed her my daughter's ID, and she looked really surprised. And she said I have to go to the back for a minute. I won't get anybody in trouble, but they're not supposed to legally -- they're supposed to protect people that come in. And she turned it around -- I had to sign it anyways, my daughter's name was right there. She was there that day.

So I went to the police and I asked them, the local police -- because I had called the detective and he said he would call the police and let them know that I was on my way. But he lied again. And there must have been somebody in the room because normally he doesn't lie, he just was abusive to me.

So then I went there and there was this lovely lady working there that was more than happy to help me. She was very compassionate and very kind. And she said she never got no phone call from no police. And so
she couldn't help me. So again my beautiful daughter, she didn't get found because the police officer, the detective, his neglect killed my daughter. That's what killed my daughter. She could have been found.

Now that's three times I know of for sure. There was other incidents too, but we won't go into it. Because I had -- I was down on the ground with the people. So that's why I almost found her those times. They didn't do their job, I had to do their job for them, and still they dismissed me.

Then when I moved from North York to Downtown Toronto, which was for the purpose of spending more time looking for Tasha. Because I was spending an hour and a half each way, every day, on the TTC. Three hours of not looking for my daughter, just travelling.

That was no good.

So then I lived right downtown, it was earlier for me. Because I would get up in the morning -- this is how it went every day for four years. I would get up, I would go right away with my little doggie that I had. I had a little Pomeranian. And we would go from the time that I would get up until the time I fell asleep every day. Every day I looked for Tasha.

So then one day I tried to change my address and I went to Toronto to say my name, my daughter's name,
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blah, blah, blah. They looked it up, okay here it is. Oh no. I go what do you mean no? No, no, no, we can't take your information. And I go what do you mean, I'm the mother. Like I moved now. My number's the same but I moved, so how are they going to get a hold of me if they find Tasha? Well I'm sorry, no, no no, no. And they like close everything and they're just like stonewalling me.

And this is what happened. So I wasn't able -- I was blocked from everything. Blocked from getting information, blocked from changing my information, blocked from the media. When I tried to get my story into the media every time they were good. And then all of a sudden, well we have to verify the story and we have to talk to the police, and no more. That's it, no don't talk to me no more.

I don't understand. I only love my child. And all the mothers love their children too and the fathers. Why, why does this happen? It has to change, it must. We are the people, they -- the police officers are not the people. What happened to we are the people? What happened to the tribe, where's the tribe? I don't get it. What is wrong with me wanting to take care of my beautiful daughter?

So my daughter, she turned up dead. She floated up from the Grand River and a fisherman found her
with no hands I'm told. Everything is hearsay because the police don't tell me. And apparently also she had a big thing on the back of head, but in the paper it was put no foul play. And the police did not call me when my beautiful daughter was found. They did not call me and let me know. My son had to call me and tell me that his sister was dead, so that I could bury her. That's not right.

And that's about the end of it. She died and I buried her. And then a week later my son and I, he was driving me home and we died in a car accident. He never came back. He stayed in like a coma. He just died, he died about a year and a half after that. And now I have no children, and I have no grandchildren, and I'm 61 years old.

I have to start my life over. My life was my children. And now I have to start over. How do I do that? Because of one man and he doesn't want to do his job. My daughter's dead, my son is dead. He wouldn't have been dead if he wouldn't have been travelling on the road because we buried Tasha. And I was dead but I came back because God asked me. And I said I have to come back for my son, because he didn't die. He was in like the coma.

So that's what I did, and now both my children are with the Creator and they're safe. And that's all I want is change. That's it. I want respect for our
children and all of the parents who care. That's it. That's the change that we all need. We need to be a tribe again. We have to stand together and we have to face the dark and bring the light. We have to bring the light back to the earth. This is no good. I think that's about all I have to say.

**MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Well thank you for sharing a very difficult story for you to talk about.

**MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** It's so important. I want people to know people didn't care. I really appreciate you taking the time to listen because nobody cared before. It's very important to me that you do care.

**MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** We do.

**MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** I know. You're very -- being very kind. Thank you.

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Thank you.

**MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Take a minute and just gather. There's a couple of little questions I want to ask you, but I want to give you a minute to just --

**MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** Okay, I'll just get some Kleenex.

**MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Sure. I was looking for some but couldn't see any. You're a very strong woman to be able --

**MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** Creator.
MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: -- to keep pushing on.

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Creator. What else are you going to do?.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Yeah. Are you okay with just a couple of little questions?

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Yes.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Very easy ones.

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Yeah.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: What year was it that Tasha was found, do you remember?


MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: And you said the Grand River, but in what city, what police service was initially involved?

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Well it's Cambridge, and they called themselves I think the Waterloo.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Waterloo, okay.

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Yeah.


MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: But initially when she went missing she had been living in Toronto, so it was Toronto Police you were -- no, she went missing from Cambridge area?

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: North Bay is where I
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live.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: And asked her father to take care of her while I moved and got organized.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Because I was moving like in a week. And then I wasn't like set up for two people, I just got the one place like, you know, for me.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Yeah.

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: So I had to get a bigger place.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: So you had Tasha with you in North Bay, and then you --

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: She was just getting out of the psych and she went to live -- she asked me can I live with a person and I said is that what you want? Yeah. Oh well, okay then. But then because Tasha has dual diagnosis, sometimes she would have little storylines that would go on in her head. You know like I wasn't her mom, and she was from the States and her dad was a biker and died in an accident, blah, blah, blah. Just different storylines. I never knew if they were true or if they weren't.

She said some things disconcerting, so I said well you stay -- you're going to stay with me. But I
had to still move -- there was no room, like how are you going to stay there, I'm in a bachelor pad. And I only had a walkway to the bathroom and to my bed, and I had the mattresses and stuff all piled up around me. And it was just like a maze. But there was no room. I had a single bed and she -- Tasha was a bigger girl. There's no room for her to sleep. And so that's why she -- I asked her father to let me get organized.

**MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Right.

**MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** And then of course she was moved from here, moved to there, moved -- and I said what are you doing? You're putting her places, you're the dad. Why are you doing that? She's coming to live with me, she doesn't need a place, she doesn't need an apartment. Or why are you putting her in a group home, I take care of her, like it's just temporary. None of it made sense to me, you know.

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** But what year did she go missing in North Bay?

**MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** In Cambridge?

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Or in --

**MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Cambridge.

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** She was found in Cambridge you said?

**MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** She floated up from the
Grand River.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: In Cambridge in 2004. But because you did -- you did say she was found four years later after she went missing, right?

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Missing out of North York? Is that where her father was?

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: She went missing from Cambridge.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Oh okay, Cambridge.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Oh, her father --

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Where her father had placed her.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay. Oh from a home in Cambridge, not with her father? She was in like -- when you say placed her in a --

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: He put her in a group home.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: A group home, okay.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: And so that was in 2000 -- 2000 then, right?

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Two thousand.

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Yes.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Okay.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: And how old was Tasha when she was found dead, and how old would she have been?
MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Well anywhere after 28 to 32. She could have been any of those ages. But when she was found she was only -- I was told, hearsay, that she was only bones with the no hands. That's all I know.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: And that wasn't from a police report, that was just from someone --

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: No, my sister grilled my ex for some information.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: And were there any police officer names that you wanted to name?

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: [Detective 1] was the detective that was on my daughter's -- supposed to be on my daughter's case.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay. And he was with Waterloo Police?

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Yes.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Do you have his name Debbie, full name? Okay, perfect.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: [Detective 1].

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: [Detective 1].

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Did that make you think of anything else, just those few questions? Anything else specific, did you want to show any pictures?

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Yes.
MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: You brought out that picture.

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Yes.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: If you can just hold it up kind of in front of the camera? You don't have to go real close but a little --

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: This is my beautiful daughter here, Tasha. Can you see?

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Yes.

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Okay.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: And that was your son there too?

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: And this was my son.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Thank you.

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Here is something they can see too. This is my daughter now, because of people not doing their job. And there was no need for my daughter to die. Or any women because of that.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: And during the police investigation was your ex involved, like in trying to get the police to do more too, or was he not really involved in it like you were searching?

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: They did different things on him and his wife. They did interviews like on TV and in the paper, and they gave -- they communicated back and
forth with them. But I had sent the power of attorney form to the detective so that he would keep me in the loop.

  MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: M'hm.

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: That's the legal piece of paper, but still nothing. And I don't even have that paper now because when my daughter died I threw out all that stuff.

  MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Right.

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: All the flyers, everything. What am I going to do with them?

  MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Well thank you again for being so strong and sharing your truth with us. We wanted to be able to be here to, to listen to you and have it shared to the Commissioners.

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Well if it helps even one parent not to suffer, that's all that matters.

  MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: You would have done huge then, yeah.

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Yes, yes, yes. Nobody should suffer like that.

  MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: No.

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: It's not right.

  MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay, thank you very much.

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: You're welcome.
MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: So it is now eight minutes after 12. Thank you again Linda, it was an honour to meet you and hear your story. And we will shut the equipment and go from there.

MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Thank you for coming.

MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: You're welcome.

--- Upon adjourning at 12:08 p.m.
LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST’S CERTIFICATE

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

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Sherry Hobe

January 10, 2019