National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Statement Gathering
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Saskatoon Inn

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Jeanette Gamble, In relation to Marie Norma Mike

Statement gathered by Bonnie George

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Statement Gatherer: Bonnie George

Documents submitted with testimony: none.
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

--- Upon commencing on Saturday, October 20, 2018 at 4:12 p.m.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Okay, we're at the
Saskatoon Inn in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, it's October 19th
-- October 20th, 2018, and it's 4:12 right now. My name is
Bonnie George and I'm with the Inquiry.

MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: My name is Jeanette
Gamble.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And you're here to?
MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: And I'm here to share
my story of the little that I know about my mom's missing,
and that's been 55 years.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Okay, and your name?
MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Irene Wake, I'm just
here as support for Jeanette.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Thank you. Okay.
MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Do I start now?
MS. BONNIE GEORGE: M'hmm.

MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Okay, I didn't get
prepared for this, it was last minute. I was
contacted yesterday by a Committee member, if I'd be
willing to share my story about my mom. I have shared
my story a couple of times I guess, with -- with
people, with an audience. And it's not easy, it's not
easy because I've never had closure. I haven't had
closure, we have never found my mom's remains, and
that's still hard for me today.

My mom disappeared, disappeared in 1964,
February 22nd. I don't know what time it was at
night. We were at a relative's place and the story I
was told -- one of the stories I was told is that my
mom -- my mom and dad had come home to that place, and
my -- my late dad was not feeling good. And at that
time they only outhouses, and they say that she went
out to use the washroom, but we -- and that was the
last of it. The was the last of it according to the
police files.

I had, I had a chance to look at them, there
wasn't very much in there. They said that they --
that my late dad had, had reported her missing after a
week. And the night she went missing there was a
blizzard, there was a blizzard that night. So after
my dad reported her missing they, they went searching
for her, because apparently my mom would leave him and
she would go to other community members that she, that
she knew. My mother was not from Beardy's, my mother
was from Siksika, she was a Blackfoot. And she knew
a few people.

I just found out as an adult that she knew a
few people that she adopted, she adopted as friends, I
guess sisters, that welcomed her and accepted her.
And just recently I found out that just a couple of
years ago. At work I found out -- one of the ladies
approached me and she told me -- did you know she
said, that your mom was our sister? I said no, I said
no one ever told me. And she said yeah, my mom and
dad adopted her. And she said my mom loved your mom
and my dad. She would come and visit us she said, and
my mom would get so happy. My mom would get so happy
when she's here coming down the road. She'd be
telling us girls, here comes your sister. They were
very excited. But I didn't know this throughout my
childhood.

Not having a mother all my life has made
life difficult. I was not ever able to put anyone
else in her shoes. My late dad, my late dad didn't
find anyone until the year that he passed away. He
had met another Blackfoot woman. I was sad to say
that he died, he died before that relationship could
continue. He left behind a little brother that was
born a few months later. I had a younger sister, and
when she died I really felt alone. And I still do.

But going back, going back to that day, that
night, I was too young to remember. Too young to
remember anything going on. I was just a child that
Jeanette Gamble  
(Marie Norma Mike)

was very lonely. I was looking out for her, always looking out to see, you know, come and pick us up. I was raised in a home, raised in a home with no love, no nurturing, a lot of sexual abuse, physical abuse, for many years. I was abused from age five when my mom disappeared until age 11.

I never felt -- I didn't ever feel, I didn't ever feel welcome, I didn't ever feel accepted from my dad's, my dad's family. But I found out later that he wasn't my dad, that he was my stepdad. And that's something that I had to work through too. Because that kind of gave me an understanding I guess, as to the reason why I was just kept, I was just kept. It was just like a dog to keep close by, just to feed. Sometimes I felt like a slave.

When I think back on my life there's a lot of hurts and pains. I've tried, I've tried to better my life. But what I, what I -- you know when I used to -- when I'd look at other families I'd ask God why, why, why don't I have that, why didn't I have that? I didn't get an answer for a long time, until I became an adult I guess. I started trying to put the pieces, the puzzle together of my life. And I know it's still not complete, but I try -- I've tried many things. I've tried -- oh, I should say I've done many things
in my life to try and help myself.

I got married at a very young age, I had children, I had five children, I have 15 grandchildren. Because of the raising that I got, you know I didn't know how to, how to love, I didn't know how to nurture my kids. When they were small, when they were small I could hold them and hug them. But it seems when they became a certain age, I don't know, maybe I was scared, I was scared to show that affection. I think it kind of stems from the sexual abuse. I really don't know.

But now, you know, I'm trying, I'm trying. It's so hard when you -- you're just flying by whim here. What I can say you know, is through all my life's lessons it got me here. I didn't think my mom's story was important. But I've said it myself, you know everybody's story's important. Everybody, no matter, no matter who you are, you know, your story is important.

I just keep praying you know, that we'll find her remains. And the sad thing is -- you know rumours have it that her life was taken on my reserve. People were involved, people were involved, but I had no proof. They were just rumours, I had no proof. Family knew, that's the hard part. Family knew. And
I think today still some people know, and that's what hurts. That's what hurts me, is the secrets. The secrets that people have held onto, and not allowing me -- not allowing me or my sister to be able to bury my mother by my dad, my stepdad.

Whatever's found out, whatever's found out, that my mother wouldn't be coming home physically, I cried. I think I cried for about a year. In 1994, '95 is when I started following my traditional way. It was my later mother-in-law that told me bring a picture, bring a picture of your mom. I have two pictures of my mom. She said bring a picture to your uncle, see what he'll say, see if he'll share with you anything. So I did. And I was told in a sweat that, that her life was taken.

And that was one of the hardest things to hear, because in my heart, in my heart, I would have forgiven her, you know. I would have forgiven her all those years of abandonment. I just wanted my mom, but I was denied that. I was denied that because to this day I don't know where she's at. I pray that she's in heaven, I pray that she's in heaven, she's doing well. I want to believe that, I have to believe that. That she's not a wandering spirit. But an elder made me understand that she didn't take her life, her life was
It's just, it's just so hard to go back, you know, to go back and remember. And that's the hardest part, is you know the grieving, the grieving for her, you know on special occasions. Mother's Day is the hardest for me. I keep praying. I try and follow my tradition, I try and follow -- because I believe that is the way for me. I don't, I don't put down any other ways of her. I believe that each and every one of us have our own line to God, Creator, however you may call.

But you know I remember when they opened the cold case files. There was two, two guys that came and seen me. They would come and see me often, asking me if I heard anything. And there was a man, everybody said he knew something, everybody said he knew something. And I asked, I asked them about that. They said yeah, we have him, we have him. We are going to question him. And they're going to find -- they were going to find a way, they were going to find a way. But then something happened, something happened. I don't know, they just quit coming. It was like we fell through the cracks once again, you know? And then that man passed away. So now what, you know?
I still believe, I still believe though that there's people on my res that know. Because how can you hold something like that? How can you hold something like that, that was so damaging to me and my little sister, that made or orphans, you know? It's sad to say, my little sister died as a result of alcohol. She passed away five years ago.

I made a choice, I made a choice when I had my daughter. She's my baby. I just about lost her as a result of alcohol. She was in the neonatal ward. But before she was born, before she was born I had asked the Creator to -- for my baby to be okay. I got into a car accident because of alcohol. Back then we didn't know anything about FAD, you know. Didn't know that we could harm our child.

It was that day that I chose that I wouldn't take another drop of alcohol, and I haven't. I haven't. I've had sobriety now. September 30th I had 34 years sobriety. My late husband, my late husband also quit that day. I lost him 12 years ago. And when I lost him, you know I lost my rock. Because I was sure he'd be standing with me when we find her. Because I set all my hopes. I don't know, you know, if they would find anything in 55 years, you know. I really don't know.
My late grandmother, she told me she had her wedding band on, she didn't ever take it off. She had rubber boots on. So I'm thinking okay, you know, those won't disintegrate, that'll take a long time. Even if they find that, then I know. Then I know that we -- I can have some peace. Because I know she has her peace. She's over there with my ancestors, my little brother and my little sister. It's down here on Earth that it's so difficult at times.

I try my best, I've been trying my best to be a mom, a dad, grandfather, grandmother, dealing with my community. I try my best to be that better person. But it's so hard, the world is so ugly. And I think it's only been in the past couple of years that I realized that, you know, and more so now with Facebook, you know you see all those missing people. Every day, every day, and I can do is sharing, hoping and praying that these people find, you know, their loved ones, and happy when they do, you know. Because in my situation I have not gotten that prayer answered of finding her, and I don't know if I ever will.

But like I said, I've got to keep up that hope in my heart, you know, to have that. This is, this is so difficult not to have the I guess support, because people don't understand. People don't
understand what you're going through, you know.
People don't -- a lot of people that know, you know.
A lot of people put it aside.

I remember they had a powwow to -- on my
reserve they had a powwow a couple of years ago, and
they had something on the murdered and missing women.
And this young lady, she's from my reserve, she was
handing out these things. And I said can I have one?
Oh, these aren't -- this is just for people that lost
their loved ones. And I looked at her, I looked at
her, and I kind of got angry at her. And I told her
I'd like to have one please. And she just looked at
me. She didn't know I guess, that my mom was one of
the missing persons.

So I guess that's one of the reasons why I
wanted to do this, to honour my mom. Because it seems
like everyone has forgotten about the lady that went
missing in year 1964, February 22nd. I'd like the
people to understand instead of shunning me because
I'm Blackfoot. Shunning me because they judge me.
Shunning me because they think that they're better
than I am.

I'm not saying that my life would have been
better, because I don't know that. But I do know that
when I lost her, when I lost my mother, I lost a lot.
I lost a lot. I lost my language. Because when I was young my uncle told me that I was speaking Blackfoot fluently. And I lost that. I lost my traditions, my mom's traditions, Blackfoot. I lost the love, the nurturing, I lost my protector. I lost all that. I lost my role model, you know. I'm not saying she would be the best mother because she had an alcohol problem, both her and my stepdad. But you know people don't see that.

People are so ugly. That's my new word, people are ugly. You know they, they show this one side, but on the inside they're ugly, they're phoney. And I can't stand that. I don't know, maybe because I'm older I know I don't need to deal with that. So many times I slayed myself. I have a very small circle of friends, very small. I tend to try to be with my family, I tend to try to be with my family.

Right now, right now I'm fostering my grandchildren. My late sister's to young ones. And the only reason I did it was for her son, and also for her. And so I have them right now. I don't know how long I'll have them, but I'm grateful that they're with me. I wasn't in the beginning because I had an actual room in my house for a long time, and they're teenagers, but they're settling in. I give thanks for
Jeanette Gamble
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that.

You know we talk about their *#2 0:23:15.5,

you know, every now and then it comes up, and then

their grandmother. And I try and be open, be open

with my children and grandchildren, and with people I

have in my circle. And I think one of the reasons why

I have such a small circle is I've been hurt so many
times by the community, you know. And I'm tired of

rejection, I'm tired of rejection from people. I'm
tired of the hurt, the pain. I'm tired of going home

crying, you know, because you heard this rumour, I

hear this rumour about me. How do you know, you're

not even a part of my life. If you want to know, come

and ask me, you know?

I hated the rumours that were going around

about my mom. It came up, I was going to school. I

was at a workshop and here it was in the newspaper.

What the heck? And this guy asked me is this you?

And he, he showed it to me. And they said in that, in

that newspaper, they said that remains were found, and

they were thinking it was my mom's remains. That's

what that so-called elder said at that time. I just
don't understand how come they didn't approach us

before they put it in the newspaper.

They called my husband, the newspaper, after
the fact called my husband and wanted to do an interview with me. And my husband said no.

   MS. BONNIE GEORGE: What year was this?

   MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: That --

   MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Approximately. Just so we can have it for the record.


   MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And which newspaper was that?

   MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: This one here, the Saskatoon --

   MS. BONNIE GEORGE: The Saskatoon News?

   MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: -- Phoenix, Star Phoenix. Yeah, because we were doing our workshop here in Saskatoon at the Ramada Inn. And this guy asked me, is that you? And that kind of shocked me. And then they called my late husband, and my late husband told them no. Whatever that elder said, there's no truth in that, and I don't want you talking to my wife because she goes through enough as it is. Then they wanted to know how to contact my little sister, and he stood up for her also and told her no. No, you leave them alone, you leave them alone. If you had wanted to know the truth, you would have come and
seen them first, before you put it in the newspaper, and
giving us hope, you know? No.

So yeah, there's been -- there's been a lot
that has happened.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: M'hm.

MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: About my life. I
guess I can call myself a survivor. And as I said, you
know I didn't realize the importance of telling my, telling
my mom's story of what little I know, you know? I know
they had went and seen my real father, my biological
father, they went and questioned him in Montana, thinking
that she might have went over there. My, my late dad was a
suspect, a grandfather was a suspect, they had questioned
him. Rumours was that it was a community member, and my
other grandfather was a part of it. I don't know if he was
a part of taking her life, but there's another story there
too.

My auntie said, my auntie said you know ask
him. But somehow I couldn't bring myself to do that, I
couldn't bring myself to do that. Because the story, the
story that shared with me is he walked to a place up south,
he walked to this house. And they heard a knock -- like I
said wintertime. They heard a knock, he came in. They
said he was all bloody, he was all bloody. And the sad
thing is --
MS. BONNIE GEORGE: The person you're referring to walked up to the house that was all bloody was your stepdad?

MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: No, my grandfather.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Your grandfather?

MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Yeah, yeah. And the sad thing is I don't know what he told them, I don't know what he said to them, but the man and woman told their kids, because they knew their kids were listening, this doesn't ever leave here, this doesn't ever leave here. What you heard doesn't leave here.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: But they deliberately spoke aloud so the kids could hear?

MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: I don't know, I really don't know. Because back then, like there was small houses and they were listening upstairs, over the chimney or whatever. It was my friend that was telling me this. But they got together -- their dad passed away. But their mother, their mother -- like she used to be kind of like hostile towards me, you know. And I didn't know what it was. Her and her daughter were hostile towards me.

When people started investigating, some of my community members, especially the family whose name I will not give, would shun me or they'd give me these dirty looks, you know. They would walk past me and not even say
hi, and -- and that hurt. Because I was a daughter, I was a little girl wanting my mom. And I'd get angry and I'd say like what would you do if this was your mom, what would you do? So my friend said that they -- her siblings all sat with her and they told their mom, you tell them, you tell them what happened that day, that morning. If that was you mom, we'd be doing the same as her. Do that for her. But nothing ever came of it.

I guess it's dead end, after dead end, after dead end, like a secret, you know? Nobody cares about me, my family. That's a sad thing. I wanted to leave after my husband left. I wanted to go back to Siksika. I don't know if it would have made a difference, but I felt more love over there than I have ever felt with my community here. It's just one thing after another.

You know even job wise, even job wise. I'd lose a job because they'd lie, there was no money. The counsellor in charge wanted to put somebody else in there. I believe he wanted to put his girlfriend which wasn't from the community. I lost my job because of jealousy and vindictiveness. I didn't even get a chance to defend myself, and this is [Employer], you know?

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And [Employer] is?

MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: [Employment]. And my job was going good, my job was going good. It was just
because of that one woman, or the other maybe too, I don't know.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And this is Duck Lake?

MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Yeah Beardy's.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Okay.

MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: But there's been so much going on, like people telling me to sue [Employer]. And I'm thinking you know, I'm done with that. I don't need to do that, I have enough in my life. I have enough in my life with what's going on, you know. Trying to help my children, my grandchildren. It's not easy, especially when you get into fights with your sons, you know. And they're bickering, you know. Becoming a referee and you're standing in the middle. It's just hurt and pain. Like I said, you know I just keep trying, keep trying, that's all I can do. I can just hear my uncle's words, just do your best my girl, just do your best. That's all I do every day, I do my best.

I don't know what else to share, I just know that, you know, I keep praying, praying for --

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And by the feelings that you shared earlier -- and I was taking notes of that.

MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Yeah.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: By the feelings that you shared of the sense of abandonment, the sense of not being
able to have closure, or not even having answers of what happened with your mother that night, has caused a lot of grief throughout your entire life, no matter how hard you try to better yourself, and build your skills and coping skills. And it's all the exterior -- how can I say it? Level of violence within the community, and the favouritism and the dishonesty, and the self -- how do you say it? Self -- people looking after themselves than others, even though they're in the helping field. Because you feel the sense of being sabotaged.

MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Yes.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And your jobs.

MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Yes.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And also in the community and trying to -- because you're the five year old daughter that was left behind, of this big secret that everybody seems to know about but they don't want to share. I sense that you feel somewhat ostracized?

MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Yes.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Why?

MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Exactly, exactly. And it's -- I felt like that from the day, the day that she left. I can remember, I can remember that day, that day. It was an auntie, and she was young. I don't know how many years older than me she is, but was made to keep us, me and
my little sister. And I can remember she had washed the
floor, and not knowing any better I walked on her floor.
And I remember she gave me a licking, she give me a
licking, you know. And she must have really scared me or
hurt me, because I held that memory for a long time. I
held that memory for a long time. To this day I don't
trust her. But really I don't trust anybody, I don't trust
anybody. I trust Irene because she -- I share a lot, I
share a lot with her.

One of my aunties, my friend Rose, and my
friend Minn (ph), and I have another friend who's come into
my life. I share everything with him also, and my kids.
I'm trying to better my family by not having no secrets, no
elephants in the room. And by trying to be in a better
place of happiness, you know. I know I'm not the perfect
person, I will not ever be the perfect person, but at least
I can say I tried. And this is, this is my story, you know
throughout these years. I just keep trying, keep trying to
put that foot forward, and sometimes an obstacle, you know.

It's rough, like I used to make sweats for
my mom on the day she disappeared or her birthday. But
because of judgment and jealousy, I couldn't go into that
sweat. I didn't want to live with that negativity. But
them it seems like they turned it around on me. It seems
they're always turning it around on me, making me look like
a bad person you know, when really it's theirs, it's theirs
to deal with. But in the end I'm the one that gets hurt
you know, and things change. And it hurts, it hurts.
Walking away hurts. But I made that choice, I made that
choice, and I know I'm the only one who can make my
choices, good or bad. But I find that if I do that, there
are some good people out there. There are some people that
are loving, but not too many. And I give thanks to those
people, I'm grateful. I try to be grateful every day, and
put one foot in front of the other, right? I think that's
about all I have to say. Thank you.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Thank you for sharing
your truth. It's 4:51, I'm turning the audio and the video
off now.
--- Upon adjourning at 4:51 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
November 22, 2018