National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Truth-Gathering Process

Part 1 Statement Gathering

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Monica Jones, Helen Joe, Bradley Joe & Sylvia Alphonse,
In relation to Catherine Joe, Tyeshia Jones, Desmond Peter, Ian Henry & Everett Jones

Statement gathered by Courtney Norris Jones

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Documents submitted with testimony: none.
Upon commencing on Sunday, October 21, 2018 at 10:40 a.m.

COURTNEY NORRIS JONES: This is Courtney Norris Jones, statement taker with the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Duncan, BC on October 21st, 2018 and the time is 10:40 A.M. Today I am speaking with Monica Jones, Bradley Joe, Helen Joe and Sylvia Alphonse of the Cowichan Tribes. They are here to tell their truth for their sister, auntie and mother, Catherine Joe, who was murdered. She was missing for six months and was found June 19th, 1977. Also present in the room is Jackie Brown (ph) health support.

Also, for the record, Monica Jones, Bradley Joe, Helen Joe and Sylvia Alphonse, you are here voluntarily to provide your truth and you agree to the videotaping and audiotaping of your truth. You also understand that at the end of your truth you'll be able to determine whether you would like your truth to be public or private at that time.

So, Helen, whenever you are ready ---

HELEN JOE: Okay.

COURTNEY NORRIS JONES: --- you can start.

HELEN JOE: I called my nephew Dwayne (ph) this morning and told him we were doing this and -- and he
was crying. He remembers laying with his mom and she was
crying and all he said, "They're watching over us. Mom,
dad," and he remembers her getting beat up. He's still
hurting every day. He cried and told him what this was
going to do, it's opening wounds. And that's all he said.
He couldn't say anything else.

June 1977, Cathy went -- was only 27 and she
found -- my sister six months missing turned our lives
upside down, shattered, no clue. We received calls every
day, January, February, March, April, May, June. My
father, Benedict Peter, and uncle were in the States when
Larry Joe came and asked my mom to go identify her.

I asked to go with my mom and he said, "No."
And she went by herself and it shattered her life forever.
And year after she passed away, '78. She was drinking and
she choked on smoked fish. She had heart trouble. She
wouldn't stop crying. We'd try to comfort her, nothing we
said, you know, helped her.

Me and my [D.] we were drinking too and, you
know, we turned to alcohol. And then she said, "We can't
do this anymore. We have to do something, you know, keep
our dad alive with us." So we started canoe pulling. And
our daughters -- and my dad supported us, he travelled with
us to all the canoe races. And we were coming first for a
long time. We trained hard, we ran down the bay, heavy
coats on with rocks in our hand. They trained us hard. We were out there for three hours. We came first, we -- we were -- they couldn't catch us. My dad was really proud.

And she was a good canoe puller too. She'd go on a single and she didn't know how to turn and she'd make a wide turn but she still came first. That's how much power my sister had. And she'd clam dig and she'd pack the sacks up the hill, Juno Bay (ph). My parents taught us how to clam dig and live on the sea with my grandfather, William Joe. We'd go on two boats down Cowichan Bay. We'd camp down there because the water was rough. So it was a lot of fun then.

In '78 my dad -- my mom passed away and his life was shattered. That's why we had to pick him up to stay with us. And everyday I hated the phone ringing late at night. To this day, I'm still like that. The -- the investigators came to the house, no clues. It affected my parents this happened to our sister. She had a broken neck and back.

Me and my [D.] went down to the police station after a while because they weren't coming around and that lady at the desk said, "No," right away and she slammed that glass window in our face. And the cops were saying that they had him but I didn't think it was true because he was never arrested. And he killed himself and
we heard all kind of stories.

My sister knitted Cowichan sweaters too. And socks and hats and real beautiful work with she had -- she'd argue with Bruce, the buyer from Victoria, saying she wanted more money but he never gave no more money. He paid low. 1970's, they pay -- he didn't -- they just gave -- they didn't make any profit. But she kept knitting and selling to him. And called him a Chinaman because she wouldn't raise the prices. She travelled to the States to work too. She picked strawberries, cherries and apple. We watched the kids while she was gone.

So it was a hard life going through this. But I don't talk about it, you know, because I don't, you know, put stuff on the children. And my sister [D.] has some information too but she doesn't want to say it. I just try to block it out, you know, I want to forget it but I couldn't.

They went to the police station a few times, I didn't go. I didn't want to hear what they're going to say. To this day, I think the cops are prejudiced to -- to us yet. That's all I have to say right now.

(Short recess)

BRADLEY JOE: I'm Bradley Joe. I'm going to read about my late auntie. This is a story from my auntie [D.]. She lives in the States. I'm just going to read
what -- what she gave me.

"Cathy was a young, strong, hard -- hard working and full of life. She had provided for her two children, two and four at the time, by harvesting clams, knitting. Cathy had also dedicated her -- her time to training and canoe pulling.

One day Cathy went out partying and never came back. Cathy had been missing for months. Her mother went to the news in Vancouver and Victoria and for missing person. Call -- Calls came in from everywhere saying that they spotted her in different places. June 1997 (sic) Benedict father Peter, Uncle Peter, Uncle Dojo (ph.)," -- or Grandpa Dojo, my grandpa -- "Followed a call down to the Neah Bay (ph). Some said she might been seen there on this day.

The Joe families have -- had been turned upside down. [Police Service 1] knocked on the door, they told Evelyn (ph)," -- my grandma, my auntie's mom, "That they needed to come to the police station. She went alone to identify her clothes. Cathy's body has been too far decomposed for evidence. Her family, her mother and children would never be the same again.

Cathy was raped and murdered. Her remains had been brought home. Her parents were left to raise girl Sylvia, boy Dwayne, and we had known it would been too much
for mom. Her daughter went missing for a month, she had to
identify her clothes. No one should have to bury their
child. That mom die this -- on December 25th 1978, Cathy's
mom had sadly been taken her own life. She couldn't take
it. She died of a broken heart. Benedict raised
grandbabies as his own. The detectives came over less and
less.

Cathy was cold case. The law didn't do
anything when Cathy was taken away from our family. She
became one of many who missing and murdered. It would have
helped her family to have closure if her -- if her murderer
was brought to justice. Maybe it'll never happen. People
didn't like to talk about these things that make them
uncomfortable. Cathy's skin was never wrinkled, her hair
never got to go grey. She didn't get to watch her children
grow. She's immortalized now by stories we will tell.

Cathy will never -- will not be forgotten.
Her story will be told in the hopes that it will never
happen again."

COURTNEY NORRIS JONES: We are stopping for
a break at 10:55.

(Short recess)

COURTNEY NORRIS JONES: We are restarting at
11:02 A.M. Okay. Sylvia, whenever you're ready.

SYLVIA ALPHONSE: Hi, my name is Sylvia
Alphonse. I'm Cathy's daughter. I don't know where to begin. Being raised without a mom was the hardest. There were questions that I had but I knew that I couldn't -- it was never talked about, what happened to my mom. Just hear stories about her. You know, she was a caring and loving, happy-go-woman all the time. Always had a smile on her face. She was always a fisherwoman, really good canoe puller. And that she really loved her family.

She had three children. Her oldest brother, Timothy, my brother Dwayne and myself. I never got to know my older brother as well. He drowned in the river. There was so much tragedy happened when I was young and it was never talked about with our family. And still, to this day, it's hard to ask questions because nobody wanted to do anything while my grandfather was alive because they knew it would be too hard on him.

And my grandfather is the one that raised myself and my brother. You know, he lived a long life to raise us. I can't imagine the pain that my grandfather had to go through, my aunties, my uncles. You know, being a mother myself, I wouldn't know what to do if I lost one of my children and have them missing for that amount of time before they're even found.

And to find out how my mother died was hard because nobody told me when I was young. I always called
my grandfather dad so I believed, when I was younger, that he was really my dad. The closest thing I had to a mother was my aunties and my uncles. You know, they did the best that they could to raise my brother and I.

I don't even remember how old I was when I first found out what really happened to my mom being brutally murdered. I know it took a long time just to even talk about her, you know. Most of my life -- younger life, I just cried and cried and cried. Wondered what it would be like to have a mom. And then I became a mother so I had to quit crying.

But I had a really good talk with my Uncle Peter. He -- it's still hard for him today, to talk about it because he did a lot -- a lot of searching for her -- for my mom when she was missing. You know, those six months he drove everywhere. He drove up and down the Island. Somebody would say that she was seen down Victoria so he'd jump on his truck and go riding down there trying to find her and still didn't find her. You know, it was really emotional for him.

You know, they don't have the technology today that, you know, I believe they would have found something more if they did have the technology that they do today. I know this is the very first time that I ever, ever really talk about my mom to anybody. It's -- it was a
hard life without her. You know, just hearing stories and there was always a missing piece to my life because I always wondered what it would be like to have a mom. I just don't want this to happen to anybody else.

It's unimaginable pain that my family has gone through. My grandfather lived a long life broken-hearted, losing his wife one year after his daughter. You know, he's a really strong man to do that. I know there's a lot of other things that my grandfather went through and, you know, he was a great role model to our family for everything that he has done.

Finding out how my mom died brutally, neck broken, back broken, that's not a way for somebody to die. Can't imagine how much pain that she felt going through all of that. And I'd never wish this upon anyone. But I know that she's in a better place now. And I just hope one day that my family can have their hearts healed a little anyway to carry on in life.

There's a lot of questions that I had for my mom when I was becoming a mom myself. My aunties and my uncles were always there to help me and my brother. I really thank them for that. But just to let my mom know that she's not forgotten and she's still really loved by everybody. I know I talked about her to some of her friends and they still say the same thing, that she was a
really good fisherwoman, really good canoe puller, always
came first in the singles. Always smiling, always happy.
Never, ever sad, always had a smile for everybody.

(Short recess)

COURTNEY NORRIS JONES: Recording stop time, 11:15 A.M. Recording start time 11:16 A.M.

MONICA JONES: My name is Monica Patsy Jones. My maiden name is Joe. I'm the youngest daughter of Benedict and Evelyn Joe. I'm here to talk about my oldest sister Cathy Joe.

I used to babysit for Cathy for many years, for Dwayne and Sylvia, weekends, everywhere she went, she took me with her. In June 1977 she was found brutally murdered. Prior to that, for a long time our family was searching for her. I recall everybody, just all the aunts and uncles, and all the cousins being in the home, being supportive to my parents and my siblings. I just know I had to keep Sylvia and Dwayne in a room all the time. We were kind of told to stay out of the way while they were looking for my sister.

She resided at [Location 1] a little apartment complex. In her walk of life I do remember being with her when I used to babysit for her, we used to walk home lots from town, from the store. I recall a few times we were walking home and the [Police Officer] pulled us
over. I recall my sister being all upset and she was
crying. She kept saying, "No. No, I have my children.
No." And that guy was -- [Police Officer] kept telling her
that she had to go with him. And he kept saying, "Oh, let
me bring my kids home first."

He -- she brought us home and she was all
upset and crying, and she said, "I'll be back later." And
she kissed me on the forehead. Said, "Lock the house up."
I phoned my mom and I told my mom, "The cops took Cathy but
I don't know why." Cathy always came home. And she was a
mess. Her hair and her clothes, and she was crying and
she'd just go into the tub and cry. But when my mom and
them went to the cops, they said that she wasn't there.

And years after I brought this up to a
detective that I remember -- after I was being interviewed,
after they found my sister, he said there was bad cops.
And he said these bad cops used to bring them up to this
clubhouse that was up in [Area 1]. And through the stories
of talking about this with my uncles, my uncles also told
me that the [Police Service 1] abused our women where they
would take them and they would abuse them for hours before
they let them go.

And one lady that's passed away, I was
sitting in a (inaudible response) with her drinking. Those
cops walked in and she kind of got nervous. And I said,
"What's the matter?" And she said, "Don't let them take me." And I said, "They can't take you. We won't let them. There's enough of us around to stop them. If they take you, they're going to take all of us." That's how we were talking.

And she said that they used to take our women, bring them to this clubhouse and abuse them, or they would hurt them and drop them off way up in the mountain and let them find their own way out. And most of the time the loggers would drive them out when they found them early in the morning. I just recall this happening a few times with the [Police Service 1] and my sister.

When she went missing, our family searched continuously. I do remember the calls that came in and my older brother Peter and my late uncle Joe-Joe (ph) used to go look for her at these places they were told that she was going to be at. And she was never there. And it went on everyday. A lot of calls came in. Real lot of calls. Every lead that they got called in, there was nothing.

After she was found deceased, she was found up in the [Area 2] in June 1977 by a hiker. There was this farmer up there and he recalled that the [Police Service 1] vehicle was in that area, and he found it very odd because it was very, very late at night. And they had flashlights but he doesn't know what they were doing. And he was too
scared to report it because he knew the police back then
were not good to our people, or good to anybody.

When I was interviewed as a child, they
asked me all kinds of questions about my late sister. And
just her walk of life, who was her friends? Who was she
living with? Did she have a boyfriend? You know, all
those kinds of questions. And I remember this one
detective, and I remembered what they all looked like but I
couldn't remember their names because I was young. And I
was scared because I remembered them taking my sister away.
And we're in a small room being interviewed so I was quite
scared.

When I became an adult I had my own place,
and in December they had honoured the [Police Service 1] in
the newspaper, and I was looking through it and I found
that detective. His name was [Detective]. And I called
the [Police Service 1] and I told them I would like to
speak to him. And they said, "What -- in what regards?"
And I said, "To my late sister's death, Cathy Joe." And
almost an hour after, I got a phone call from Vancouver and
it was him. And he was kind of laughing, he says, "How did
you find me?" So I told him about the newspaper. And he
was retired at the time. And he says, "You were real young
and I was talking to you. I'm surprised you remembered
me."
And when we spoke, I asked him a lot of questions. One of the things he said to me was that they had private -- undercover cops in [Area 3], and there were -- had this white guy under surveillance. He lived in a isolated area and he had a long driveway, and he had all kinds of traps around his house so the only way you could get in was by going in through that long driveway. And he had cameras. He said that they stalked him for many, many years. And as they were closing in on him, they said he eventually killed himself.

And another story that was said to me that there's this white guy who was a logger that was under surveillance. He was quite tall and they called him [Nickname]. He was a suspect for many years because he stalked our Aboriginal women. And that came from one of the main bosses of the logging company. Because my husband knows the logger. And he was surprised when he found, you know, he was asking questions of who I was so I told him. And that's what he said.

And whenever I questioned the police about these two incidents, they always kept saying that she was -- that it would probably remain cold case unsolved. I approached the police many times and asked them questions about Cathy. They were all quite rude to us. The one that stuck to me the most was I wanted answers and then that
lady said, "Do you see this filing cabinet right here?" It was a lady cop. Said, "That's full of your sister's information. You can sit there and go through with it and see what you come up with. But I don't have anyone here to supervise you so today's not a good day." And then she closed that glass on me and walked away.

And there's another time that we went into the police station and asked -- got brought into an office with this [Police Service 1 officer]. And I told him I was there to ask questions about my late sister. And as we were talking, he stated this guy's name to me. I -- I can't remember it right now. And then he says that justice was already served but they couldn't prove it because he committed suicide. And he says, "You can keep searching or you could have closure."

Over the years, I went to the police station to ask them a lot of questions, and they've always been rude to us. They've never given us any answers. They always just said the evidence deteriorated. And they would never resolve anything. That they always told us that we could take our file and go look at it and see what we can find.

Over the years, it's always bothered me where I'd become an overprotective person over my -- not just my family but my community because the crime in
Cowichan is getting -- escalating and the police are still not doing anything today.

The year 2015 I spoke to the major crime unit. I'm not sure of the year but I did speak to the major crime unit. That's when we lost our niece, Tyeshia Jones, who was brutally murdered. And I told them, "Look at my sister's file and come up and give me information because they wanted to speak to me -- ask questions about everything because we were preparing her funeral and they wanted to have detectives all over the place in the prayer meeting -- funeral.

And they came up, that lady said, "Oh, I briefly looked at the file and there's still no clues, no evidence. We don't have anything to go on because all the evidence that they kept deteriorated. It'll remain open but it'll always be slated as a cold case file."

This has been devastating to our family for many years. We all lived with broken hearts and were kept silent. We never talked about it. Our mother died of a broken heart at Christmas. For many years I hated Christmas because I lost my mother. For many years in June I never celebrated my birthday because that's when they found my sister.

For my mother, when she was here, she cried each day for my sister and it was hard to see. Throughout
all this, this has made me live in fear for our family because we don't know who done this to our family. We all walk with broken hearts and we are all really overprotective. You know my sisters and I -- they say a lot of stuff about us but we live this life of losing our oldest sister who was a strong lady. She was really tough.

    When she canoe paddled she was pregnant with Sylvia and she still became champ. Really big belly and she still beat everybody on a single canoe race. I remember that because we were laughing when she come to shore. And she was hugging -- my dad was laughing because he goes, "Look at you," because she had the canoe on the shore and those others were still going to the finish line. And dad was packing the canoe up and she says, "I got it, dad." And he says, "You're pregnant." And she just picked it up and brought it to shore. I really remember that so clearly.

    Our wounds will never heal. You know, through this, for our family, because we still have three missing nephews here in Cowichan. And we have no clues or no leads. But this we created a Missing and Murdered Walk for Men, Women and Children here in Cowichan. We did that last year, our first walk, February 10th. And it's just to keep the memory alive of our missing loved one but also for my late sister because for many years we went down to
Victoria and did the walk in February with them. And they always let my niece and my sisters walk in front with our sister's pictures. And when I created this walk last year, I had a hard time with the police for a bit. And I said, "I'm not asking you, I'm telling you what we're doing."

For our first missing relative, he went missing, his name is Desmond Peter. He went missing March 12th, 2007. His mother is Liz Louie and his grandmother is Donna Louie. And throughout all this, the police have never done anything to search for him. For maybe six weeks and they've never had any tribal support or any support from anywhere until they put it online. And then the Missing Children's Society got involved. But throughout all this, his file is just being passed around from one police officer to another. And they haven't done anything else. Even the leads that are sent to them, the people who are accused of this, they say they're innocent, they got a clean record. But they've never really, thoroughly investigated his file. And that's for Desmond Peter.

And then our nephew Ian Henry, he went missing the third week of August 2015. He was last seen right near our home on Joe Road (ph) just down the road, like, a block away. And he just disappeared. Three months the police helped us search. Then after that, they lost interest and they got the main major crime unit involved.
But there's still nothing that they're doing on it. And with Everett Jones, he went missing February 10th, 2016. They had the search and rescue, they had the major crime unit, they had everybody here for six months. And with these, all the files are being just pushed aside. All of it. Like, it just, they keep telling us this police officer's looking at it, then the file's going here, the file's going to Ottawa. One's going to Victoria, one's going to Vancouver.

So to this day, right from 1977 to now, there isn't any real police help in our area for searching for our loved ones. This has been really hard on my family because we can't get any closure because of our missing relatives here. And people don't just disappear. All our hearts are broken. And the police are no help. And they -- I've called them weekly to ask them for reports and we get no answers.

And through this Missing and Murdered walk, people are coming from all over and that really helps my family in our -- our own way, it helps us heal. And we want to keep that memory alive to let the community know that we're still searching for answers for our late sister Cathy and for our three missing nephews. And that we want justice. And that one day we will have justice.

I've been told many times that this opens
wounds for people. But I believe that we've been quiet for too long. There are many murders here in Cowichan that people don't even talk about, or don't even pursue the police for answers.

**COURTNEY NORRIS JONES:** Just keep going.

**MONICA JONES:** I've been really protective over my family because of all the great loss we have of our sister Cathy. Put in many requests to Cowichan Tribes and to [Police Service 1] to protect our people but nothing has been done by the [Police Service 1] and they haven't contacted us at all.

**COURTNEY NORRIS JONES:** Sorry. Can we just stop because of the -

(Short recess)

**COURTNEY NORRIS JONES:** Stop recording time 11:35 A.M. Continue recording 11:40 A.M.

**MONICA JONES:** For many years, my sisters and I, and my brothers always wanted answers on who done this to our sister. My sister Helen and I went to the pictorial to look in -- to find out what they had written about our late sister. They had a tiny little scripture in there with her little picture. Stated that she was missing and just a small little part, we almost missed it. And it's, like, in the middle of the newspaper. Then we asked if there was anything run after that and they said, "No."
Then we went to -- like, it was brought out on a -- one of the TV shows. They did a re-enactment of my later sister's final days. And my father was still here when that happened. Hoping that someone would come forward. It was a Crime Stoppers where they did a re-enactment of her life until her death. And nothing became of that.

And it's like [Police Service 1] have never really cared. They've never really taken the time to look at our sister's file. And I've reached out to the Minister at the parliament buildings a couple times and there's no real answer that they can give me also. They said they can look into it and get back to me, and another cop will come talk to me. And they pretty well same, said that she's a cold case unsolved.

And with these other ones that are missing, it's just the same pattern. You know, she's -- they're seen here, they're seen there. Like, Victoria, Vancouver, up north Island. It's the same pattern as my late sister's. And they've never been found at all. So something that's -- I believe has been going on for a long time with our people. And I don't know why [Police Service 1] won't help us. They're always just rude and mistreat us, and don't call us back for many months.

Because no one has contacted us in many
years in regard to our late sister's case. And that's the hardest part. They say that they look at her file every month but no one has reported anything to us. I just pray one day that our family will have justice. We don't give up hope. And we rely on our prayer to make it through.

And it has opened a lot of wounds because it's been a roller coaster of a week for myself just remembering everything, remembering my sister's life while she was here, and remembering my mother cry when they found out that she was gone. Because it was the last day of school when I come home, walking up the hill and mom's standing there on the porch crying. She told me. And it wasn't what I wanted to hear at the time.

I just really wish the [Police Service 1], the major crime unit now will step up and really do something to help us in our community. I keep going because of all my grandchildren that I have and my family. That's everything.

COURTNEY NORRIS JONES: Thank you. End recording 11:45 A.M.

--- Upon adjourning at 11:45 a.m.
I, Jackie Chernoff, 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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Jackie Chernoff

November 20, 2018