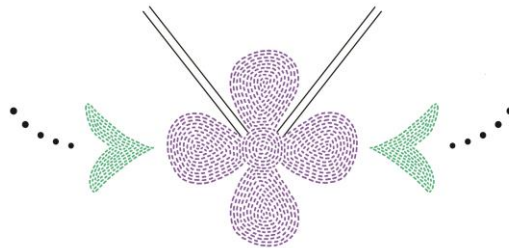


National Inquiry into  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls



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 1 Statement Gathering  
Snowshoe Inn  
Fort Providence, Northwest Territories**



**PUBLIC**

**Wednesday October 24, 2018**

**Statement - Volume 606  
Nancy Bonnetrouge  
In relation to Delmer Bonnetrouge  
Statement gathered by Frank Hope**

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Statement Gatherer: Frank Hope

Documents submitted with testimony: none.

1 Fort Providence, Northwest Territories  
2 --- Upon commencing on Wednesday, October 24, 2018 at 12:24 p.m.

3 **MR. FRANK HOPE:** My name is Frank Hope,  
4 statement gatherer. Today is October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018. We're in  
5 the Snowshoe Inn in Fort Providence, Northwest Territories.  
6 The time is 12:24 p.m. And your name is?

7 **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** Nancy Bonnetrouge.

8 **MR. FRANK HOPE:** Thank you. Mahsi. Thank  
9 you for coming in, Nancy.

10 I just finished explaining the informed  
11 consent to Nancy. And you understood the consent form, and  
12 you can go ahead and fill out the form.

13 **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** Just one for now?

14 **MR. FRANK HOPE:** You might as well do them  
15 both and then it's done. I have to sign on both -- sign  
16 off on both of them.

17 Okay. Marsi.

18 Okay. Thank you, Nancy, for coming in  
19 today. So we'll just start with -- you mentioned on your  
20 information that you're in today to talk about your son,  
21 Delmer. So what is it that you'd like the Commissioners to  
22 know about your son and his case?

23 **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** Like what little I  
24 know. This is only after the fact that my son went missing  
25 that he never disclosed to me that he had court dates and

1 stuff like that. You know, like he never mentioned  
2 anything, or anything like that. And I think he was mostly  
3 trying to protect me from knowing any kind of information.

4 And at that time he went missing, like I  
5 just came out of pneumonia. I was two days home when he  
6 just abruptly walked out and never came back. You know,  
7 and until today, like we've been going through follow ups,  
8 following every lead we could get, you know, informing the  
9 RCMP and stuff like that, but to date, we don't know  
10 anything.

11 Some people are saying that somebody may  
12 know, but they're not telling us. Because we've informed  
13 all his friends, we personally went and seen them and told  
14 them have you seen or do you know of whereabouts Delmer  
15 might be, and to date, nothing.

16 And the police is still -- my husband is  
17 still informing the police once in a while about if his  
18 case is still open. So to date, as I'm speaking to you, I  
19 know it's still open because he knows that we have no  
20 closure, there's nothing to go by.

21 And we're very fortunate to have Elders and  
22 Elders in my life that have been talking to me. And also,  
23 my mother, you know, like she always tells me that you have  
24 to have hope. You know, like there's -- you can't give up  
25 on hoping and on praying. So a lot of my friends from

1 different communities too also phone me to see where I'm at  
2 with -- even just come to here today.

3 Like this morning I got up, I felt a lot of  
4 fear playing me because like I'm wondering how come, like  
5 you know, I can't seem to cry. I think it's because I  
6 wasted it all, you know, like thinking. Just once in a  
7 while when I'm driving down some place or I'm listening to  
8 a song that he sings, like I will cry, you know, like I  
9 will just ball my eyes out. And thinking and talking to  
10 him, sometimes I sit there and look at -- you know, when  
11 I'm walking outside and I see the moon, I look at the moon  
12 and I wonder if he's seeing the moon the same I'm seeing.  
13 So those are the things I go through.

14 And for when I was coming here, I had a lot  
15 of fear playing in me, like I said before. My allergies  
16 started kicking in. I had to take my allergy pills. And I  
17 was thinking what am I scared of. It just brings me back  
18 to, you know, you don't talk, but I know I have to voice my  
19 voice openly and not be ashamed of anything because I had  
20 nothing to do with him. So those are the things that I --  
21 that shame within me.

22 And as for the community that we're living  
23 in, you know, like even the people are still saying that  
24 we're hiding our son, you know. And that's really  
25 heartbreaking because for them to say something like that,

1 it's really disheartening, you know, like who are our own  
2 people and we need them to stand by us, you know. Like  
3 it's -- the community support is just not there, you know,  
4 like for some, but some of them are really understanding.

5 So sometimes me and my husband sit down and  
6 we talk a lot about, you know, like how we grew up our son.  
7 He knows that we've groomed him well, and if he's done  
8 something wrong maybe he was ashamed of, I wouldn't know.

9 Because usually once in a while I would have  
10 a sit down with him and he would -- as a grown man, to cry  
11 to his mother, he would do that to me. You know, he would  
12 tell me all his hurts and the relationship breakups, you  
13 know, like how the woman treated him. You know, like it  
14 was so unfortunate and unfair for the personality and the  
15 guy he was. And for me, it was really heartbreaking.

16 Sometimes I would think, you know, like what  
17 if he took off from all that. And thinking that  
18 (indiscernible) would be okay. But in the long run, it's  
19 not okay because I'm still hurting. I don't have no  
20 closure, I don't have -- I'm always wondering, you know,  
21 like where he is, what he's doing, is he eating, you know.

22 My son also had a skin problem, and I always  
23 wondered, you know, is he taking care of it. Because once  
24 in a while he would phone me and tell me that, you know,  
25 "Mom", this is like this, "how do I treat it". I taught

1 him so well that he knew how to take care of himself.

2 Well, if he is out there, I'm really hoping he's taking  
3 care of himself. Because I think he was telling me that he  
4 was also borderline diabetic. So I don't know, there was  
5 too much going on for him.

6 **MR. FRANK HOPE:** How old was he when he went  
7 missing?

8 **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** He was born in 1979.  
9 I have such a hard time with dates and birthdates.

10 **MR. FRANK HOPE:** M'hm. So tell me a little  
11 -- you mentioned how you and your husband raised Delmer.  
12 And so just -- for our Commissioners to kind of understand  
13 more of the family history and dynamic, just give us a  
14 little -- how it was when your children were growing up and  
15 the family dynamic when you guys were younger and they were  
16 younger and growing up in Fort Providence. How was Fort  
17 Providence in regards to that time, era?

18 **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** Well, we grew up --  
19 I mean, I grew up -- my children, they -- at first -- my  
20 son was born in 1979. I had a daughter prior to that. We  
21 used to drink and we used to party but it never used to be  
22 at home, it always used to be outside the home. Because I  
23 grew up with family violence, violence in the home, like my  
24 mom and dad literally fought and -- fought like cats and  
25 dogs, running on the street chasing each other around. And

1 I never wanted my children to experience stuff like that.

2 Just periodically, maybe on a Christmas or  
3 occasionally we would have a party at the house, but I  
4 always diverted the party away. I protected my kids so  
5 much that I never let my own parents babysit them, you  
6 know, because of what happened for me when I was growing  
7 up. I didn't want my children to be brought up like that.

8 And in my home, education was priority. I  
9 didn't care what anybody said. My husband told me, "Why do  
10 you send them to school everyday?" I said, "Because you  
11 went to residential school". I said, "You know, for the  
12 future", I said, "I can't see anything else but them  
13 getting an education, because I can't see them going back  
14 in the bush, you know, to live". And I said, "for the  
15 future", I said, "what I see for them is they need their  
16 education". I, myself, only went to Grade 9, but I found  
17 ways and means to get them all to Grade 12 and to further  
18 on their education.

19 My son finished Grade 12. He wanted to be a  
20 doctor, and then he said, "Mom", he said, "if I become a  
21 doctor" -- this is the one I'm talking about, Delmer -- he  
22 said that, "I'm going to have to go to school for another  
23 seven years to get my doctor's license", or whatever. So  
24 he said that, "I'm going to try a different avenue. I want  
25 to become an electrician".



1                   So he went into the apprenticeship program  
2           after he finished Grade 12 to get his red seal, and he did  
3           accomplish that. So he had things going for him, except  
4           for what the women were doing to him in his life. And I  
5           think he was really torn, you know, like he was a really  
6           broken down young man. That's how I see him.

7                   So maybe that's why he did what he did, or  
8           somebody took him, you know. Those are the questions that  
9           I still search for, wonder, you know, like did somebody  
10          come here and take him.

11                  Like I was sick, my husband was gone. He  
12          left -- he cooked me a really good dinner. He cooked me  
13          fish, broccoli, mashed potatoes, gravy, the whole works,  
14          you know, the fillet fishes that we get. After he done  
15          that, he said, "Mom", he said, "you need to sleep". He  
16          said, "You're still coming out of your sickness", like the  
17          pneumonia that I was going -- having. And then I went to  
18          sleep and I never saw him again, you know.

19                  So trying to think about how I grew him up,  
20          like I always tried to protect them the best way I know  
21          how. Like -- you know, like I never stepped in when  
22          somebody was bullying them. I would, you know, tell them,  
23          you know, "You have to sort this out yourself. If you want  
24          me to, we'll go the parents' house and talk to them". So  
25          that's how I grew them up, you know, for them to stand up

1 for themselves and not for me to, you know to take their  
2 sides.

3 I always questioned them, you know, like  
4 "Why did it happen?", you know. "If we can fix it, we'll  
5 fix it", you know. "Everything is do-able. You guys are  
6 young". You know, all my children were young at that time.  
7 So that's the way I grew them up, you know.

8 Like mind you, my husband did a lot of  
9 drinking and like sometimes he would come home drunk, but  
10 he was -- like he never got mad at the children. He was  
11 just sitting, you know, doing his own thing.

12 So some of them seen that, but while he was  
13 still fairly young, he must have been about 10 when I quit  
14 that alcohol out of my life. So today, I'm over almost  
15 30 years. So when I think about stuff like that...

16 One time, during a Christmas -- during  
17 Christmas, the year, that year he was going to, you know,  
18 he was going to be gone, I guess him and my younger  
19 daughter, they were at the same party together. And he  
20 mentioned to my younger daughter that, you know, he said  
21 "[Daughter]", he said, "if I was ever -- if something was  
22 ever to happen to me", he was telling my baby daughter  
23 that. He said, "I'll never worry about my mom and dad", he  
24 said. And so my youngest one said, "Why?" He said,  
25 "Because mom and dad know how to take care of themselves".

1           That's what he said. And I guess she felt so distraught,  
2           she was just crying. She didn't want to be there with him  
3           anymore.

4                         She came home and she told me that, and this  
5           is about 2 o'clock in the morning. She came home and she  
6           was crying. She said, "Mom, Delmer is talking funny,  
7           Delmer is talking funny", she says. And I said, "What do  
8           you mean he's talking funny?" "This is what he said, Mom".  
9           He said, "If anything was to ever to happen to me", he  
10          said, "I'll never worry about Mom and Dad". He said, "Mom  
11          and Dad know how to take care of themselves".

12                        You know, so those are the things that think  
13          about, and I get really sad, you know, like that my son  
14          knows full well, you know, because -- the way we function  
15          around him. He should -- like for me, like I've never ever  
16          had this happen to me in my life. That's why sometimes  
17          when I'm by myself I just cry. But I can't cry -- like I  
18          can feel it now, but I'm stopping it. But when I do get by  
19          myself, I just let it out because I know I have to be sane  
20          for my job and my homelife.

21                        I still have an older daughter too that  
22          still drinks heavily, and she hasn't really talked to us  
23          about it. The younger -- my younger -- my youngest son too  
24          when we approach him and we talk about his brother to him,  
25          you know, like he still cries.

1                   I just got a little -- a young little  
2 grandson that will never know his Uncle Delmer, so my  
3 youngest daughter is teaching him by pictures, you know,  
4 this is your Uncle Delmer, you know, she's teaching him  
5 that. And once in a while, he walks around just like a  
6 little man, he says, "Where's Delmer?", you know.

7                   **MR. FRANK HOPE:** M'hm.

8                   **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** He says that, yeah,  
9 I heard him say that. You know, like he's never seen him  
10 physically, but my youngest daughter doesn't want for her  
11 son not to know her uncle. If he can't know him  
12 physically, at least she'll [sic] know him by seeing his  
13 pictures.

14                   It makes me really sad because she cries  
15 about it. And I try to make the time to sit with them and  
16 tell them, you know, we have to go through this as a  
17 family. And it's good that they cry.

18                   **MR. FRANK HOPE:** M'hm.

19                   **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** There's a lot of  
20 times I miss him, but I can't really do anything to change  
21 what happened. I just have to -- I just hope and pray  
22 that, you know, like some things physical didn't really  
23 happen to him.

24                   When some people tell us that, you know,  
25 we're hiding him, it really hurts me because when he went

1 missing nobody knew where he was. And it was in the  
2 springtime and the snow was melting, and I had all kinds of  
3 crazy thoughts that like maybe, you know, he died out  
4 there, and the animals ate him. But I try not to think  
5 like that and try to think about the positive things, but  
6 sometimes it's just too hard.

7 Sometimes I'm so grateful for the Elders,  
8 you know, they keep on coming. I said, you know, maybe  
9 it's something that he had to do, or I keep on talking as  
10 if he's alive. But that, again, you know, like I still  
11 question that because I don't know.

12 **MR. FRANK HOPE:** So at the time of his  
13 disappearance, how was Delmer coping? Did he use alcohol?  
14 Did he use drugs? Was there ever any issues with mental  
15 health issues?

16 **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** Only after the fact  
17 that I've been listening and having an open mind and trying  
18 to figure out why he would do something like this. Some  
19 people were telling us that my son occasionally used  
20 cocaine to cope with like the -- these women problems I was  
21 telling you about. And he had court dates I didn't know  
22 about, you know, like stuff like that.

23 And I never, ever saw my son drunk, so like  
24 if I went to the dance and he wanted to, you know, to have  
25 a few beers with the boys he used to come up to me and tell

1 me, he said, "Mom, I think (indiscernible) go home now".  
2 So I just used to listen to him, because he listens to me  
3 so I listen to him. So if he tells me to go home, I would  
4 go home and that was it.

5 And so when they said that, you know -- like  
6 I taught him to be a really good cook, that's why I never  
7 had to worry about him going hungry. Like even if I was  
8 away sometimes, we would be someplace, and he said, "Mom,  
9 I'm cooking chicken, how much do I put in there, you know,  
10 how much chili powder do I put in there?" So I just tell  
11 him. Then he would phone me back and tell me that -- he  
12 said, "Mom", he said, "that's the best chili I had". He  
13 said, "I made it", and he said, "it's just like you, you  
14 know, just like the way you make it". So stuff like that I  
15 never had to worry about him.

16 But apparently these charges really affected  
17 him. I don't know what the charges are. I think it's got  
18 something to do with a sexual assault for what I know, but  
19 here again I never taught him to be like that. So maybe if  
20 that was true and that happened, he was a guy that, you  
21 know, like was really proud to be who he was, maybe he  
22 didn't want to shame us. I don't know, because these are  
23 all -- we talk about all this kind of stuff at home, you  
24 know.

25 And a lot of times his dad just misses him,

1       you know. He wants -- he says, "You know, I miss my  
2       partner". He said, "If I want to go someplace", he said,  
3       "I just tell him once". He said, "Get packed, let's go".  
4       He never had to worry about, you know, second-guessing, oh,  
5       I've got to do this, I've got to do that. He always made  
6       the time to do stuff with his father, and I think that's  
7       why he misses him a lot.

8                   And for me, that's my oldest son, and in my  
9       family, my oldest son is the boss. It's like my boss is  
10      gone.

11                   **MR. FRANK HOPE:** M'hm. Let's bring  
12      (indiscernible). Yeah, Nancy, it's okay. It's okay to  
13      feel that. It hurts.

14                   **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** Just like  
15      (indiscernible) my own family when my brother got killed,  
16      you know. My mom's boss died too.

17                   **MR. FRANK HOPE:** M'hm. You mentioned  
18      earlier that there was a lack of community support here in  
19      Fort Providence in regards to what you and your husband are  
20      going through. How has the relationship been with the RCMP  
21      since?

22                   **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** Like my husband has  
23      really pushed system, like he's always bothering them. And  
24      sometimes they say they pick up on some leads, they  
25      followed up on it, but it always comes to a dead end. When

1       somebody contacts us or says stuff to us, by the time the  
2       RCMP get there, their story changes. You know, this is  
3       what they told us, but when they -- when the actual cops  
4       went there to talk to them, their story changed compared to  
5       what they told us. So those are the things we're still  
6       going through.

7                Like people have been phoning us, telling us  
8       that if we paid them, they could do things for us, and --  
9       you know, like they said that people are going to stop  
10      bothering you like that. And people were doing that to us  
11      at the beginning and we just never paid any attention to  
12      them, you know, we just went on our merry way and did what  
13      we had to do.

14               Like we went South a lot of times, and we  
15      put posters all along the Mackenzie Highway going to  
16      Edmonton. Putting posters up and his pictures up and  
17      contacting people, letting people know that we're coming  
18      down. If they see anything to let us know. And it's just  
19      like we're always looking every time we go South, you know.  
20      We're looking at different people, and even sometimes, you  
21      know, a guy could walk by me and I'll just turn around and  
22      look, you know, and it's not him.

23               So it's still like that today, you know.  
24      Sometimes I would think oh, I'm just going to go someplace  
25      and just relax. Next thing you know, I'm longing to look,



1       you know, just like that searching is always there.

2                   **MR. FRANK HOPE:** M'hm.

3                   **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** Just last weekend  
4       too I -- when I see his friends, I feel so happy because,  
5       you know, like I can share stuff with them openly, you  
6       know, and tell them how they're doing. You know, like if  
7       they -- you know, how have they been coping since Delmer's  
8       been gone. And one of them told me that every time he goes  
9       South, he always drives right downtown, you know, just  
10      trying to not deal with the traffic but still looking, you  
11      know ---

12                   **MR. FRANK HOPE:** Yeah.

13                   **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** --- hoping to see  
14      him. So that's what's still happening for us.

15                   But the RCMP lately my husband went to go  
16      see them. They just got a new corporal in, and the  
17      corporal knows that, you know, all families should get  
18      closure; right. So they said that they're -- he's going to  
19      try everything in his power to try to continue to follow up  
20      on some of the leads that were there before. So he said  
21      that not to worry, you know, like if he comes across  
22      anything, he'll let us know. So my husband's not getting  
23      (indiscernible).

24                   **MR. FRANK HOPE:** So if I could just go back  
25      to the -- when Delmer went first missing. How long after

1       it was -- what -- was it officially reported by your  
2       family, to the RCMP?

3                   **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** Yeah.

4                   **MR. FRANK HOPE:** Was there an official  
5       report?

6                   **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** Okay. What happened  
7       was when my son went missing, Tuesday night was the last  
8       time I saw him in April the 18<sup>th</sup> or the 19<sup>th</sup>. I was sick at  
9       that time, still sick. And then he left Tuesday night, and  
10      then Wednesday morning I dragged myself to work, even  
11      though I'm not supposed to be working. I went to work. I  
12      came home at lunchtime. There was still nothing. This was  
13      Wednesday, and then Wednesday night I came home from work.  
14      Still nothing. And I thought I'm not going to phone my  
15      husband because he was travelling.

16                                So my younger sister from Yellowknife phoned  
17      me. She said, "How are you doing?" She said, "Now you're  
18      coming out of an pneumonia". I said, "Even though I am  
19      feeling like this", I said, "I'm strong enough to work, and  
20      at work I'm not doing that much anyway", so I said, "I'm  
21      just taking my time doing my stuff". And I told her, I  
22      said that, "You know", I said that "Delmer took off Tuesday  
23      night", I said, "I don't know where he went. Usually  
24      sometimes if he go someplace, he'll phone me", and I said,  
25      "but he left the house Tuesday night. Wednesday", I said,

1       you know, like I'm talking to you now, I said,  
2       (indiscernible) where he is", I said.

3               So she told me, she said, "You should phone  
4       his friends, see where he's at". So I'm phoning some of  
5       them, and they said, "No, we didn't see Delmer".

6               And then it came to Thursday, so my sister  
7       phoned me again. She said, "Is he home yet?", and I said  
8       "No". And she said -- I said, "I don't know where he is".  
9       And so she told me, she said, "You better phone the RCMP".  
10       I said, "How am I supposed to phone the RCMP?", I said. "I  
11       don't even know if he's missing, or if somebody took him,  
12       or maybe he went for a ride with somebody".

13               So when my husband phoned, I told him, I  
14       said that "Delmer left Tuesday, I never seen him all day  
15       Wednesday, this is Thursday". I said "What do we do?" I  
16       said, "He can't be gone". I said, "Where would he go?" I  
17       said, "All his stuff is still at home except for that  
18       little gray backpack that he had. Everything was left  
19       there, his IDs, everything. Just that gray backpack was  
20       gone".

21               And then some people started saying that  
22       they seen Delmer walking away from the house with a  
23       backpack and a gun. You know, like a gun. And until  
24       today, like my husband said that, you know, one of his guns  
25       was gone, his .22 was gone around that time too, see. And

1 we don't know if he went in the bush, we don't know if  
2 somebody came there and took him. Because you know like  
3 how stories go. Everybody's saying this, everybody's  
4 saying that, and us all trying to piece it together for  
5 ourselves, telling the cops (indiscernible).

6 The cops, they even came to the house and  
7 they interviewed us. And it was just like -- that first  
8 time they interviewed Joachim, they were really rude, you  
9 know, just -- it was just like -- my husband said that when  
10 they interviewed him outside our house, he said it was just  
11 like he felt so guilty. It's like, you know, like they  
12 made it sound as if he did -- just like he was in on it.  
13 But it wasn't like that.

14 And I kept on telling him that, like "How do  
15 we know where he went?" You know, like just by other  
16 people saying that Delmer was carrying a gun walking away  
17 from our house, with a packsack. And until today we don't  
18 know if that's true because there's so many different  
19 stories about that.

20 And then at that same time too, they said  
21 that there was a black car running around with tinted  
22 windows. Maybe those guys took him. You know, so...

23 But I do know -- I don't know what happened.  
24 You know, like trying to think about it, going back, it's  
25 like sometimes I think it's right and sometimes I think

1       it's not true because it's just like this is my life, you  
2       know. Like "What the hell just happened here?", I was  
3       telling my husband. I said, "Why would he just leave just  
4       like that?"

5                You know, he cook really good for me, and he  
6       told me to go to sleep mom, he said, "You're still coming  
7       out of your pneumonia". I just came out of the hospital.  
8       "Go to sleep". So I went to sleep and that's the last time  
9       I seen him.

10               This was around 9 o'clock at night, and then  
11       I never seen him Wednesday, Thursday. Finally, Thursday  
12       night, I think it was my sister, [Sister], that phoned the  
13       cops. I don't know if it was my sister, [Sister], or my  
14       husband that reported him gone.

15               So that's when the searching started, you  
16       know. Started checking all over the community, checking on  
17       the outskirts of the community. Some people were saying  
18       that he was hiding in the bush. But to date, nothing.

19               I don't know how true that is because like I  
20       was too weak to go out there, so two of my sisters were  
21       always out there with my husband and them. And one of them  
22       even came down to help out just looking for him. And to  
23       date, nothing. So it's kind of sad how things happened.  
24       Because I was sick too.

25               **MR. FRANK HOPE:** How would you describe him

1 -- I mean, how would you describe your son in terms of  
2 being on the land?

3 **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** My son is a  
4 survivor. Like he went to that leadership school in Fort  
5 Smith for leadership and they took him out on the land. He  
6 was used to tell his dad, "All you need is a knife, salt,  
7 and matches, that's all you need". He said, "You don't  
8 need nothing". You know, anything you get from the land,  
9 he'll fix it and eat it. So if he did survive, you know,  
10 where he was out there, it would have been no problem for -  
11 - he knows how to make emergency shelters out of nothing.

12 **MR. FRANK HOPE:** M'hm.

13 **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** You know, like  
14 that's how good he -- like the leadership program  
15 (indiscernible) they taught him.

16 **MR. FRANK HOPE:** M'hm.

17 **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** So I wasn't worried  
18 about him, if he was going to be out there, like he could  
19 survive with nothing. He always tells his dad, he said,  
20 "What the hell are you carrying so much stuff for? You  
21 don't need all that". He said, "You -- if you're a real  
22 Dene", he said, "all" -- he says, "(indiscernible)". You  
23 know, he would just laugh at him. And his dad just said,  
24 "Oh, I just feel so guilty, I get to go hunting and I got  
25 to bring all this". Yeah.

1                   So you know, like I think that's what I miss  
2                   about him, because you know, like I talk with him a lot of  
3                   times and trying to -- so it's (indiscernible).

4                   **MR. FRANK HOPE:** M'hm. So just going back  
5                   to when you're -- you mentioned your husband was in  
6                   residential school. And how was it for your children  
7                   growing in Fort Providence? Did your children when they  
8                   were young, did they experience racism and bullying and  
9                   those type of things growing up here in the community?

10                  **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** I don't really think  
11                  so because all of them are so close. You know, like a  
12                  bunch them all stick together and, you know, like their  
13                  children or other people's children that were my friends,  
14                  my children's friends, they were just like my children.  
15                  You know, like so they always looked out for each other  
16                  that way.

17                  And they grew up where it was so much fun,  
18                  you know, like they had so much, like the kids growing up.  
19                  You know, like if their friends did things, they wanted to  
20                  do things with them, we allowed that to happen.

21                  And so bullying and stuff, I don't really  
22                  think so. I don't know if they went through that. It's  
23                  not like today, you know, like there's so much  
24                  unhealthiness happening around the community. That's why  
25                  we call those days the good 'ol days compared to now, you

1 know, where drugs are so rampant and the children are  
2 really neglected and no activities in the community, nobody  
3 wants to do anything for them. And in those days, you  
4 know, like even though we didn't have much we always did  
5 try to make do and do things with them.

6 **MR. FRANK HOPE:** M'hm.

7 **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** You know, like for  
8 us today, there is none of that, so the children are  
9 getting taken away left and right and parents don't give  
10 their children what they need. And a lot of times -- like  
11 I never let my children go without food. I made it a  
12 promise to myself when I was a really young person that if  
13 I ever had children the children would have their roof over  
14 top of their head and always food on the table. So that's  
15 what I did for them, you know. Like mind you, a lot of  
16 their friends they used to come to the house just to eat,  
17 you know, because there was always abundance of food and  
18 things that they needed.

19 So -- and he also grew up telling me --  
20 Delmer used to tell me, he said, "Mom, I just used to hate  
21 you", he said. And I says, "For what?" He said, "Even  
22 though I was really sick", he said, "you made me go to  
23 school". I said, "I wanted you to get a good education".  
24 He said, "I know, Mom". He said, "Today, I'm really  
25 thankful". He said, "That (indiscernible) writing my red



1 seal ticket", he said. "When I phoned you", he had told  
2 me, he said, "talk to your grandma". That's all he said.  
3 And I talked to my grandma. And he phoned me, and he said,  
4 there is five of them taking their red seal, they are going  
5 for their red seal and he was the only child or Dene young  
6 man in there. And he said, when he phoned me back that  
7 next day, he said, "Mom", he said, "you know what", he  
8 said, "just that young Dene got in", he said, "the one that  
9 never got in". So out of five of them, only him, he  
10 passed. And his best friend was taking it also, he didn't  
11 go in so he had to do it again.

12 **MR. FRANK HOPE:** Okay.

13 **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** Yeah. So for me,  
14 bullying in those days there was -- maybe there was some,  
15 but you know, not like today. You know, today it's so sad  
16 out there. Because a lot of times I witness parents  
17 swearing at their children, you know. In my day it was a  
18 no-no. We tried to do stuff right for them, and they were  
19 so helpless, and you brought them into the human being, how  
20 can you do that to them, you know.

21 **MR. FRANK HOPE:** Did your son have children?

22 **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** My son has two  
23 daughters. One from a girl from Saskatchewan. My baby.  
24 That's my first granddaughter, she's 11 years old, but  
25 she's taller than me. And he's got another daughter in

1 Fort Smith. That one's about 8 years old now. Eight?

2 Yeah. So he leaves those two.

3 The oldest one always -- she's really close  
4 to us because we really took that one under our wings when  
5 she was smaller. So every time I go close to where she's  
6 at we make a pitstop just to see her, but lately, her mom's  
7 saying that no, "I want to see my dad, I want to see my  
8 dad". You know, she cries so, and she always wants to come  
9 home. She calls Fort Providence home because that's where  
10 her dad was from.

11 **MR. FRANK HOPE:** M'hm.

12 **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** She doesn't like it  
13 in the city, but she's got no choice. She's got to -- you  
14 know, like I would take her periodically, but not for long  
15 because I don't want her to be disconnected from the only  
16 parent that she's got left. Yeah.

17 And the one in Fort Smith, I've never, ever  
18 gone to Smith to go see her, but when she passes through,  
19 she always -- her mom makes her phone us to tell them that,  
20 you know, we're going to be passing through, if you could  
21 meet them. So we play a role in most of our  
22 grandchildren's lives, but they're not for me to grow up.  
23 The only one that I'm growing up and still having a hard  
24 time is [Granddaughter]. Yeah. But he leaves behind two  
25 girls.

1                   **MR. FRANK HOPE:** M'hm.

2                   **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** Yeah.

3                   The youngest one doesn't know that her dad  
4                   is missing. The mom can't find it in her heart to tell  
5                   her. So when she asks me where her dad is, I just say he's  
6                   working. You know, like -- so that I don't make her -- I  
7                   don't know if she told her daughter, but every time she  
8                   sees me, she said, "I never said nothing yet. So I just  
9                   say he's gone working". So she still thinks her dad's  
10                  working.

11                  **MR. FRANK HOPE:** She's here?

12                  **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** No, she lives in  
13                  Fort Smith.

14                  **MR. FRANK HOPE:** Oh, I understand.

15                  **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** Yeah.

16                  **MR. FRANK HOPE:** So just going back to the  
17                  RCMP and their support. Fort Providence has a high -- like  
18                  many small communities they have a high rate of turnover  
19                  with the RCMP coming and going. So in terms of consistent  
20                  services and services being stretched, and you know. And  
21                  this being an open case, do you think the RCMP have done  
22                  enough in regards to your son's case, or they can do more?

23                  **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** I think they've done  
24                  more, but all -- it always ends up to a dead end. You  
25                  know, like if Joachim told them about people that said they

1 saw him, and like in High Level, they would go and check  
2 those people out, and it's no, we didn't see him. So they  
3 were following up and reporting back to us. So I think  
4 that way.

5 Just before this new corporal came in, he  
6 leaves two -- the police that was there before them, and  
7 was just kind of annoyed at him, I think, because he was  
8 always bothering them. So he's learning to, you know, back  
9 off and if the police know something, they'll let us know.  
10 So he kind of backed off a little bit, you know. But they  
11 have a job to do too, and like if we know of anything or  
12 hear of anything, we usually contact them and let them  
13 know, just even if it's just hearsay. Yeah.

14 **MR. FRANK HOPE:** Like some cases have a  
15 consistent contact within the law enforcement where there's  
16 one person that's in charge of the case and they're working  
17 the case and they keep the family updated. In this case,  
18 because of a high turnover, there's no main contact person?

19 **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** No.

20 **MR. FRANK HOPE:** It changes with the  
21 turnover?

22 **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** With it -- for the  
23 second turnover and this one, I think the corporal was the  
24 one that was going to be in contact with us because he  
25 knows, you know, like to date we didn't hear anything, and

1 if he heard anything, like Joachim would contact him  
2 personally, or else he would contact us. Yeah. But  
3 before, there was nothing, you know, so he just went in  
4 there.

5 **MR. FRANK HOPE:** M'hm.

6 **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** You know, like I  
7 need an update, I need this. And I think that's why, you  
8 know, like sometimes in a small community you think there's  
9 nice, peace and quiet, but it's not like that. You know,  
10 there's so much things happening, like a lot of times  
11 there's (indiscernible) so they just don't have time for  
12 something like this that's been ongoing. They have too  
13 much on their plate just dealing with the crime in the  
14 community. And that's how I see it. Yeah.

15 **MR. FRANK HOPE:** Do you feel like you've  
16 come to the end of your interview? Is there anything else  
17 you want to mention to the Commissioners?

18 **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** No, I'm really happy  
19 they're doing something like this, you know, because even  
20 for me, it -- like for the murdered and missing women's  
21 *[sic]*, you know, like there's always been an outcry, you  
22 know, like something should get done, something should get  
23 done, you know. So this also opens the eyes to the RCMP,  
24 you know, have I done enough, you know. It makes people  
25 take a look at themselves to see if they've done anything,

1 or you know, like is there changes that can help the  
2 parents.

3 Because I know in the North, the -- it's so  
4 small compared to the South where -- like in larger cities,  
5 parents or mothers and fathers don't get the closure  
6 because the police agents don't have the -- they don't care  
7 or they're not doing enough to help them. We're in smaller  
8 communities. I think they try. That's how I see it.

9 You know, like maybe this would open their  
10 eyes too. Just like I just saw on the TV about the RCMP in  
11 Manitoba saying he was sorry, you know, like they should  
12 have done a better job. So stuff like that. Even for this  
13 to be happening, it's making the RCMP detachments say,  
14 well, have we done enough. Is there closure for the  
15 families, you know. And hopefully people, like other  
16 Canadians in Canada can see that too and say that hey,  
17 these people do matter, you know. And -- so it's a good  
18 thing for me.

19 **MR. FRANK HOPE:** M'hm.

20 **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** Yeah.

21 **MR. FRANK HOPE:** So (indiscernible), do you  
22 want to end right there?

23 **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** M'hm.

24 **MR. FRANK HOPE:** Okay. So I'll just wrap it  
25 up.

1                   Okay. And I just want to end with just  
2                   saying marsi, thank you for coming in and sharing your  
3                   story with the Commissioners. And the Commissioners will  
4                   review this audio -- will listen to the audio and see the  
5                   video.

6                   **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** M'hm.

7                   **MR. FRANK HOPE:** So -- and in regards to -  
8                   lastly, are there any recommendations that you'd like to  
9                   make?

10                  **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** I can't think of  
11                  anything right now.

12                  **MR. FRANK HOPE:** Okay. So you can always  
13                  follow up with ---

14                  **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** Yeah.

15                  **MR. FRANK HOPE:** --- if any recommendations  
16                  come ---

17                  **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** Yeah.

18                  **MR. FRANK HOPE:** --- you can always give us  
19                  a call ---

20                  **MS. NANCY BONNETROUGE:** Yeah.

21                  **MR. FRANK HOPE:** --- and forward that  
22                  information to us.

23                                 So that ends the interview with Nancy. The  
24                                 time out is 1:17 p.m.

25

1           --- Upon adjourning at 1:17 p.m.

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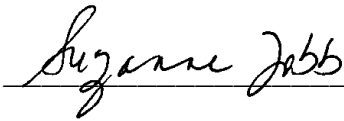
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5

6           I, Suzanne Jobb, Court Transcriber, hereby certify that I  
7           have transcribed the foregoing and it is a true and  
8           accurate transcript of the digital audio provided in this  
9           matter.

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Suzanne Jobb

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January 25, 2019

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