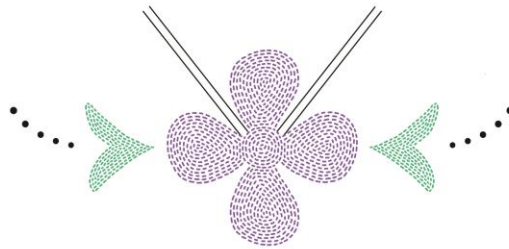


National Inquiry into  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls



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

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls  
Truth-Gathering Process  
Part I Statement Gathering  
Holiday Inn Express  
Terrace, British Columbia**



**PUBLIC**

**Friday October 26, 2018**

**Statement - Volume 540  
Thomas Samuels,  
In relation to Rosita Cora Samuels, Carol Davis  
& Sarah Jean de Vries**

**Statement gathered by Kerrie Reay**

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## II

### NOTE

Where not required by other statute, redactions to this public transcript have been made pursuant to Rule 55 of the Commission's *Legal Path: Rules of Respectful Practice*, which provides for "the discretion to redact private information of a sensitive nature where it is not material to the evidence to be given before distributing the information to the Parties. The National Inquiry will consider the public interest in releasing this type of information against the potential harmful impact on the individual whose personal information is at issue."

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**Documents submitted with testimony: none.**

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1

2

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4 Terrace, British Columbia

5 --- Upon commencing on Friday, October 26, 2018 at 10:53 a.m.

6 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** So this is Kerrie Reay,  
7 I'm a statement taker with the National Inquiry into  
8 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. And today  
9 we are in Terrace, B.C., it is October 26th, 2018, and the  
10 time is 10:53. Today I am speaking with Tom Samuels,  
11 that's S-A-M-U-E-L-S, of the Haida First Nation, and Tom  
12 resides here in Terrace, B.C. Tom is here to tell his  
13 truth for his sister, Rosita Cora Samuels, and that's R-O-  
14 S-I-T-A, Cora C-O-R-A, Samuels S-A-M-U-E-L-S, who was  
15 murdered in 1980 on the Islands of Haida Gwaii. Also  
16 present in the room is Tom's niece, Audrey Parnell, P-A-R-  
17 N-E-L-L. And Tom has also invited Joy Moravec, M-O-R-A-V-  
18 E-C; Claude Savard, C-L-A-U-D-E, last name S-A-V-A-R-D;  
19 Gary Schuss, G-A-R-Y --

20 **MR. SCHUSS:** Two Rs.

21 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Two Rs. G-A-R-R-Y, last  
22 name Schuss, S-C-H-U-S-S.

23 **MR. SCHUSS:** Dr. Schuss, yeah.

24 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** David Try, T-R-Y; Dennis  
25 Lissimore, that's L-I-S-S-I-M-O-R-E; and Claude Barton, B-

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1           A-R-T-O-N. And for the record Tom, you are here  
2           voluntarily and you understand that we are audio taping you  
3           and videotaping, and that at the end we will ask you  
4           whether you would like your truth, what you share today, to  
5           be public or to be private. So Tom, I'm going to ask you  
6           to start where you feel comfortable, it is your space, it's  
7           your time. So when you're ready.

8                           **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Yeah, my name Thomas, I  
9           don't like my middle name, but it's D-E-W-E-Y. God knows  
10          why they named me Dewey, but -- you know I was born on  
11          Haida Gwaii 70 years ago, [birthdate], 1948. I'm the last  
12          of the family clan. My late sister just passed away two  
13          years ago. That left me the last of the Samuels clan. And  
14          my sister was murdered under a cannery 38 years ago, and I  
15          very, very -- I had really mixed emotions about what was  
16          happening to her. We never did get any reports of her  
17          murder, and we were constantly being told by the RCMP every  
18          year that this was still an ongoing investigation, so there  
19          was nothing they could tell us.

20                           But it got to a point where we just got  
21          tired of them phoning us every year and telling us the same  
22          thing over, and over, and over again. So my niece and I,  
23          we got together and we -- you know we said phone them and  
24          tell them not to keep phoning us about this, because it  
25          just brought back way too many memories about my late

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 sister. And so as of now we don't, we don't get any phone  
2 calls from the RCMP regarding, regarding Rosita. And we  
3 tried numerous times to get the case re-opened, but the  
4 Judge ruled against it, saying it's not -- we don't have  
5 sufficient evidence to bring it to court.

6 And we couldn't understand that because  
7 when, when they went down to pick, pick her up on the Base  
8 there was blood all over her. And they found the two by  
9 four that this guy or people used on her. And we asked  
10 them quite a few times to, to get it sent out to have a DNA  
11 test -- have it DNA tested, but they said the evidence was  
12 long gone and that they couldn't do that.

13 But to us she was a very, very lovely  
14 mother, she was -- she had quite a few children and -- but  
15 first of all, I just want to say that she was born to --  
16 Lillian Julia Samuels was her mother. She's now deceased.  
17 And her father was Rufus Samuels, also deceased. And was  
18 brought up in a -- we were brought up in a two room shack  
19 in the Haida Village. And she was a Residential School  
20 survivor, just like I was. And, you know, she had three or  
21 four sisters: Gladys Delvina Samuels, who is deceased;  
22 Audrey Jennifer Samuels, named after, after her; and  
23 (indiscrible), who is also deceased.

24 And she had Archie Abrahams, he's deceased;  
25 Eugene Ormer Samuels, who's also deceased; [R.S.]. I don't

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 know why he named himself that, but he was adopted quite a  
2 few times. And Jonathan Adams Samuels, he's deceased; and  
3 myself, I'm the last of the Samuels clan.

4 And to be a part of that family was, was --  
5 you know was something that I really had a hard time with  
6 because, you know, there was a lot of mistrust amongst the  
7 brothers and sisters. And we really tried to work it out  
8 because, you know, we weren't growing as a family, we were  
9 growing as a family that fought together all the time  
10 because of our living conditions.

11 And she had -- like I said, she had quite a  
12 few kids. She had [W.S.]; [S.S.]; [M.S.]; [I.S.], [G.] who  
13 was named after my late brother; and [D.H.] we just found  
14 up here in Terrace a few years ago. She was adopted out  
15 when she was six months old to a family here in Terrace.  
16 And she was born with a mental disability. She's a really,  
17 really lovely person.

18 And she was -- the father of all these kids  
19 except for [G.] and [D.H.] was [P.W.], who was a  
20 fisherman/logger. He tried to bring up his kids the best  
21 way he could, but because of the alcoholism that was too  
22 rampant in the family they couldn't, they couldn't work  
23 things out together so they eventually split up and my  
24 sister was set to move back in with the family.

25 And, you know, staying in that two bedroom

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 house with 13 people was really a tough thing to live with  
2 because we were always so short of food, we were always  
3 fighting over the last scraps of food that we had in our  
4 house. But, you know, my mom always made it work. My dad  
5 worked in a logging camp, he worked in a cannery, he worked  
6 in construction. And they finally got together and they  
7 said we can't live this way anymore. So my dad built a,  
8 built a two-storey house which we all moved into, which  
9 made it a lot more comfortable. And all of them pitched in  
10 together to make this house really work, and it did.

11 There was one thing I forgot. I wanted to,  
12 I wanted to honour two women in Vancouver. One was Carol  
13 Davis, she was the daughter of -- I forgot her name.

14 **MS. AUDREY PARNELL:** Ginger Davis.

15 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Ginger, Ginger Davis,  
16 and her father was Donald Davis. She went missing in  
17 Vancouver in the early 70s. And her body was found in the  
18 mid-80s, out on Burnaby Mountain. And her grandmother was  
19 so strong, she always said that my granddaughter is going  
20 to return home to me. So we brought her -- they brought her  
21 remains home and, you know, we had some kind of closure  
22 with her, but we still haven't found out who, who murdered  
23 her. And she was a really, really lovely woman.

24 And what got us angry was that the RCMP --  
25 or the Vancouver police put her down as a Native woman who



**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 had alcohol problems, drug problems and was a prostitute.  
2 And we never could really understand why we had to listen  
3 to that kind of story about one of our family members. To  
4 us she was a Haida woman, and the Haida women are always,  
5 always respected back home no matter what they were, what  
6 they did, and who they were. So having her home to be with  
7 us for the last few days was one of the best feelings we  
8 ever had because we knew that she was home with us.

9 So I guess most of you have heard about  
10 Sarah de Vries. She was one of Picton's victims I guess.  
11 They found her DNA up on his farm. And the reason why I  
12 bring up Sarah de Vries was because she was a very, very  
13 caring woman. She cared about people that were working on  
14 the street. She was a full blown addict, but she always  
15 gave whatever she had. She called them her sisters just to  
16 make them feel good. And when, when she passed the women  
17 on the street, they really -- it's like -- you know there  
18 was 1,000 street women at her funeral. And it was really  
19 an honour for me to sing a prayer song for her.

20 Getting back to my sister, I -- to be able  
21 to have her in my life -- that's my oldest sister. She  
22 really tried her best to make us comfortable. Everything  
23 we needed, she made sure we had it. We really depended on  
24 her when my mom and dad were gone, and she made us feel  
25 comfortable, she made sure we never went hungry, and she

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1           made sure we were always clean. She always made sure that  
2           our household was a place to live in, not a place just to  
3           sleep and eat.

4                         She worked in the cannery. And you know she  
5           -- you know out of every paycheque she made sure that, you  
6           know, we were all well dressed to go to school. And she  
7           was still going with [P.W.] at the time, and he always made  
8           sure that his kids were looked after.

9                         But things started to fall apart when, you  
10          know, we got into that, that alcohol really bad. And then  
11          you know the relationship. The relationship started to fall  
12          apart and, you know, there were days that she cried in the  
13          bedroom because she was so -- he started to beat her really  
14          bad and that really scared us because we didn't know what  
15          was going to happen to her. Because we loved her so much  
16          we always stood by her. We always -- we were always there  
17          for strength for her. We always made sure that she was  
18          never alone. My brother Eugene and my brother Archie  
19          always made sure that she was being protected, and they  
20          were always there for her. And I really loved them for  
21          that, because you know there was days -- she always talked  
22          about just ending it all, not wanting to live anymore. But  
23          they always reminded her that her kids really needed her,  
24          they wanted to be a part of her life.

25                         You know she moved to Prince Rupert in her

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 early 20s, and she started working there in the cannery and  
2 she ran into, she ran into a guy named [J.H.]. And out of  
3 that relationship they bore two children. One was [G.], he  
4 was named after my first brother who died, and [D.H.], she  
5 was eventually adopted out up here in Terrace. And my late  
6 sister, she looked all over B.C. for this [D.H.], just to  
7 let her know that, you know, she was part of our family.  
8 And she wanted to let her know that her mother had passed  
9 away quite a few years before that.

10 We took her home for her headstone moving.  
11 And that became a really -- it became really controversial  
12 for her kids because they didn't want us to have a  
13 headstone moving because they wanted closure for their  
14 mother, but we couldn't -- we told them that we couldn't do  
15 this any longer, we couldn't go without having this  
16 headstone moving because we wanted her spirit to rest.

17 It's like -- you know my sister told --  
18 Audrey told me one time that she heard her sister saying,  
19 "Let me go, I want to go home". And she knew that she was  
20 talking about going home to our mom and dad. So we had the  
21 headstone moving and, you know, we had trouble with the  
22 face too, because not too many people remembered her. They  
23 just remember her being found under the cannery.

24 You know and that part of her story was, was  
25 -- it was really troubling for us because when she was with

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 [J.H.], they got into an argument and [J.H.] took a hammer  
2 and hit her over the head quite a few times, and that put  
3 her in a coma for a whole year. And my mom and I, we went  
4 down to sit with her. For a whole year we watched her  
5 suffer. She was in so much pain, you know she just  
6 screamed out at times. My mother said why don't you people  
7 just let her go, why don't you just end her suffering, you  
8 know? And my mother, she prayed every day for her, and we  
9 held her hands and we asked her, you know, if you can hear  
10 us just squeeze our hands. And there was times that, you  
11 know, she squeezed both our hands so tight that we weren't  
12 able to get away from her. And we knew that one day she  
13 was going to come out of this coma and be with us.

14 And that time the doctor came in and he said  
15 you know, your daughter, your sister, is never going to be  
16 the same. We don't have any idea of when she will come out  
17 of this coma, but just be prepared for what you see, what  
18 you hear. And that day she came out of the coma we knew  
19 right away that she was never, ever going to be the same.  
20 We had to teach her how to talk, we had to teach her how to  
21 walk all over again, and we had to tell her that, you know,  
22 she had a few kids that really cared for her, that really  
23 loved her. And she looked at us and she said you know, I  
24 don't remember ever having kids. So mom flew home and then  
25 she brought a whole bunch of pictures down to the hospital,

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 and she showed her the pictures of all her kids. And she  
2 started to cry because she said you know, I never realized  
3 that, you know, these kids would -- you know she thought  
4 that these kids never, ever came out of her body. She  
5 thought we were lying about them and we really had to  
6 convince her that these kids were yours, and they really  
7 wanted her home. But she was scared to go home because of  
8 the way she was. She thought that, you know, nobody was  
9 going to love her for the way she was. Can we stop there  
10 for a minute?

11 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Yes, it's 11:21.

12

13 -- A BRIEF RECESS

14

15 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay, so we're back, we're  
16 back on the record at 11:33. Okay?

17 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Okay.

18 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** So deep breath again,  
19 right? And whenever you're ready Tom.

20 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Okay, like I said. I  
21 want to thank my sponsor Dave T. for being here, supporting  
22 me. I was kind of leery about coming, but you know I'm  
23 really happy inside that you made time and that you're not  
24 able to talk and go on. My friend Dennis, I -- you know I  
25 couldn't have made it sometimes without you, you know? I

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 know that you and I had a lot of talks together, and you  
2 know that one day I still remember is when you brought me  
3 out in your RV to sort of do a fifth step with me. I  
4 related my brother's story to you and when, when I could  
5 have threw -- when we were still young kids, and I really  
6 respect you for that, for giving me that opportunity to  
7 talk about it, my late brother Johnny. And yeah, so I  
8 respect your stories when you talk. Yeah, sometimes you go  
9 on and on but there's always that niceness I could give,  
10 especially when you're talking about spirituality because  
11 there are days I don't feel any spiritual. It's because of  
12 what's been happening in my family.

13 And Claude the hamburger man, I also have a  
14 lot of respect for you too, because you -- you really  
15 reached out to our families, especially to Missy. Missy  
16 always depended on you when she came up here. For that --  
17 I really respect you for that.

18 For Garry, God knows what I think about you.  
19 But we know you're always there, and even though we go out  
20 and buy Indian gas and Indian cigarettes, there's always  
21 that hour that, you know, we spend together because -- you  
22 know you asked me to be your sponsor one time and I  
23 couldn't figure out why. And I really enjoy your company  
24 even though you have to -- even though I have to play  
25 second fiddle to your dog Buddy. You know it's the first

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 time I ever had to sit in the back when the dog sits in the  
2 front. And I feel really sorry when you have to put him in  
3 the back of the truck. I thank you for being with my  
4 niece. I really enjoy seeing her when she's happy with  
5 you. I really appreciate you for being with her here this  
6 morning to help me go through this and helping her drive.  
7 I was really scared for her, you know, when she told me she  
8 was going to be here. My niece, my little niece Audrey,  
9 you know your dream car will be coming pretty soon.

10 **MS. PARNELL:** Yeah.

11 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** I remember you always  
12 asking me if I was going to buy you a car.

13 **MS. AUDREY PARNELL:** Yeah, yeah.

14 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** And I always said I'll  
15 write you a cheque for it tomorrow. But I really  
16 appreciate you being here, it really helps a lot.

17 Getting back to why we're here. My sister  
18 had quite a, quite a hard life when she came out of the  
19 hospital because she couldn't understand why people were  
20 looking on her so much. She couldn't stand the attention  
21 and she couldn't stand people always helping her out of  
22 bed, always helping to feed her, always helping to dress  
23 her, you know always taking her places. And she said --  
24 she always said I'm old enough to look after myself, leave  
25 me alone. But you know the people would always say you

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 know, we're doing this because we love you, because we want  
2 you to be who you were before this happened to you.

3 You know my, my grandmother always told her  
4 that, you know, just because you're different doesn't mean  
5 you're not part of our family anymore. You know you eat  
6 with us, you talk with us, you walk with us, you laugh, you  
7 cry with us, and that means you're part of our family.  
8 They really tried to make her feel at home. And there were  
9 times that, you know, her medication really didn't work  
10 because she got really violent sometimes. There was times  
11 we had to phone the RCMP to get them to come down and help  
12 us calm her down because, you know, when she was hit on the  
13 head with the hammer the doctors had said she was never,  
14 ever going to be the same. She's going to get to a point  
15 where she's going to become really violent, she's going to  
16 become really obnoxious. She's going to scream and she's  
17 going to holler, she's going to kick and bite, but you know  
18 we had to accept her the way she was.

19 And she often asked us why we weren't scared  
20 of her, why we didn't run when she was getting violent like  
21 that, you know. Because, you know, my mom would always go  
22 up to her and ask her if she was feeling okay. And she  
23 would hug my mother and she would always say I don't know  
24 who you are, but I love you. And I'd hear that, you know  
25 part of that memory was coming back.



**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1                   She started calling her, she started calling  
2                   her kids her own even though she didn't know that at that  
3                   time. You know she always knew that her kids were going to  
4                   be there for her, that they were going to give her the love  
5                   that she needed. They were going to help her whenever she  
6                   needed help. You know and one of the -- one of her boys,  
7                   [W.S.], became really close to her because, you know, she  
8                   always cared about him even though she didn't know him at  
9                   that time. [W.S.] was always there you know, because he  
10                  always told her whatever you need I'll be there for you.  
11                  So he became a really important part of her life. [S.S.]  
12                  was the oldest, eh?

13                               **MS. AUDREY PARNELL:** Yeah.

14                               **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** [S.S.] was the oldest  
15                   girl in the family, and she really tried. But it got to a  
16                   point where she just couldn't handle it anymore. But we  
17                   knew, we knew deep down in our hearts that she loved her  
18                   the only way a daughter could love her.

19                               And [M.S.], [M.S.] was her [personal  
20                   information redacted] baby, she was born [birthdate]. And  
21                   she looked just like her dad. She had a really pug nose,  
22                   and you know she, she became a really important part of our  
23                   life because she was -- not only was she a [personal  
24                   information redacted], but she was a woman that really  
25                   cared for all the family. And she really looked after her

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 mom. Like she wouldn't let her go anywhere without her.  
2 She was either holding her hands when she was going for a  
3 walk, or she was pushing her on the wheelchair. And she  
4 always took her shopping, always buying her the right  
5 clothes that she needed.

6 And you know [I.] was, was kind of the  
7 rebellious person, the rebellious one. He started drinking  
8 at an early age and that -- and he never really ever paid  
9 attention to his mother because he was so angry at, at  
10 [J.H.] for doing this for her. And the only way he could  
11 show that anger was taking it out on his mother. And it  
12 was really hard for us to understand why he was doing this  
13 to her all the time.

14 So one day we -- my brother Eugene, [R.S.]  
15 and I, we sat him down and we said, you know, we can't live  
16 with you this way anymore. You have to talk to us about  
17 why you react to your mother this way all the time. You  
18 know we always remembered one thing he said. You know he  
19 said I never, I never hated my mother, I never wanted to  
20 scream and holler at her. Every time I see you act the way  
21 you do, it's always a reminder of what [J.H.] did to you  
22 before you became this way.

23 And I remember my brother Eugene asking him  
24 one time, he said you know if you really love your mother  
25 why don't you just go up and hug her? Go up and hug her

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 the best way you know how. Just tell her that you love  
2 her, tell her that you're sorry for doing what you're doing  
3 to her, because she can't -- she couldn't understand why he  
4 was the only one saying these things to her.

5 So we sat there for an hour just holding  
6 [I.] hand and asking him please, you know do this for us,  
7 do this for the family. Just let her know that she is part  
8 of our family and whatever happened to her is not her  
9 fault. He finally gave in and he went up and he hugged  
10 her, and you know for the first time we seen tears coming  
11 out of Rosita's eyes. She hugged him and then she wouldn't  
12 let him go. And right then and there we made a connection  
13 between the two of them.

14 And that was one of the happiest moments  
15 that we, you know we ever had with her, is that we were  
16 able to make that connection between the two of them. It  
17 made them bond together. And you know [I.] acted like  
18 [W.S.], he couldn't stop doing things for her. He was like  
19 [S.S.], he took her all over the place, made sure she was  
20 never alone. Whenever he came home drunk, he came home for  
21 the weekend, my sister always made sure that, you know, he  
22 went to bed and that he never went out because she was  
23 always so protective of her kids. She never, ever wanted  
24 anything to happen to them.

25 You know she always told them that she's not

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 a very religious person, but you know she always said a  
2 prayer for each and every one of them. It's like she was,  
3 she was taking them back as her own family. And at that  
4 time she really didn't know them because of the head injury  
5 she suffered, but she started to recognize each and every  
6 one of them. It's like she was taking back that strength  
7 that she lost, that love that she didn't know she had for  
8 them before she got hurt that way.

9 You know and I remember her always talking  
10 about the mom and dad she never knew, the parents that  
11 sacrificed all that time to go down to Vancouver to stay  
12 with her for the full year, and just to sit there and hold  
13 her hands. She always remembered the times that, you know,  
14 the three of us sat beside her, and you know we prayed for  
15 her, held her hands and made sure she was comfortable, made  
16 sure she ate, made sure she was clean. She started to  
17 remember all of these things. She still couldn't  
18 understand why we were doing that. But we loved her so  
19 much that, you know, we had to make sacrifices.

20 You know when she started to drink and carry  
21 on the way she did it really, it really hurt the family  
22 because we knew that we were losing her. She wanted to go  
23 and she wanted to do things on her own. She wanted to be  
24 who she wanted to be. And you know -- and at that time she  
25 started to get criminal compensation because of what [J.H.]

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 did to her. She started to get \$1,500 cheques from the  
2 government. That's when they called it criminal  
3 compensation, she was being paid for her injuries. And  
4 that really changed her life, because you know she started  
5 to go out on her own and she'd never come back all weekend.  
6 And there was times we had to go out and we had to look for  
7 her. At that time I was still carrying on too, I was still  
8 drinking. But you know she became such an important part  
9 of my life that, you know, whenever I see my nephew walking  
10 around downtown looking for her, I just -- I'd say I'm  
11 going to help you.

12 We found her -- we always found her under  
13 the cannery with some of the boys. And you know she'd  
14 always, she's always be sorry that you know -- you know she  
15 was a very caring woman, you know even in the way she was.  
16 She always made sure that, you know, the street people ate  
17 before they went on the beach to drink. And to hear that  
18 was really important because we knew that, you know, she  
19 started to love other people other than her family. She'd,  
20 she'd spend quite a bit of money on those friends of hers,  
21 and you know they returned that, that love she was showing  
22 them by just looking after her, making sure she was okay.

23 Then we found out later that whenever she  
24 passed out down on the beach, two of the guys always stayed  
25 with her. You know they made sure that nobody would come

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 down to bother her. And one thing that they did was they  
2 always made sure that they took the money she had in her  
3 pocket and gave it back to her when she woke up. For us  
4 that was really, really respecting, really respecting her.

5 You know we'd bring her home, and you know  
6 we'd clean her up, we'd feed her, we made sure she slept,  
7 and we made sure all the family was there when she came  
8 home. And she used to always say why are you doing this  
9 for me, why do you care so much, why do you even take time  
10 out to bother looking for me? You know the only thing that  
11 -[W.S.] had to say was, it's because we love you, it's  
12 because we care for you, it's because we need you in the  
13 house. And [I.] was the one that really, really didn't  
14 like the way she was acting. He would always go up and hug  
15 her and say, you know, mom we love you, we need you at  
16 home, we need you to look after us the only way you looked  
17 after us when you were -- when you weren't hurt.

18 And that's, you know, when we started to  
19 hear stories about certain people who wanted to hurt her.  
20 That really concerned us because we didn't want to ever  
21 leave her alone, we didn't want her walking around uptown  
22 by herself. So we always made sure that one of us were  
23 with her. And I remember one night we were sitting at a  
24 bar and she decided she wanted to go for a walk, she had  
25 enough to drink. And she was walking down the street and

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1           there was this -- these guys from the Armed Force Base  
2           drove by and they threw what we, we -- what the RCMP called  
3           was Agent Orange. They drove by and they threw that on her  
4           and that burned her entire left side. And she was in the  
5           hospital for six months recovering from that.

6                         And we really pushed the Armed Force Bases,  
7           like they -- to make sure that, you know, the people that  
8           did this to her were brought to justice, were brought to  
9           court, were charged with assault with a deadly weapon. But  
10          you know three days after this happened these two guys got  
11          transferred out to, to a different base back east, and  
12          nothing ever happened. And my sister still had those scars  
13          when she came home. She couldn't understand why people did  
14          this to her.

15                        That's because racism was so bad at that  
16          time, you know. There were a lot of people from the Base  
17          that really didn't like Native people as -- you know they  
18          made sure that we heard how they felt. But we had to  
19          accept that because, you know, we knew that no justice was  
20          going to be done. We just had to make sure that she was  
21          going to be safe.

22                        So you know we became her, we became her  
23          right hand man. You know we walked with her everywhere she  
24          went. Then you know she, she really didn't like that  
25          because she didn't like being babied she used to call it.

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 Don't baby me, you know. I'm almost 38 years old and  
2 you're walking around with me, like you know I'm a baby.  
3 It was really hard to let her know that we weren't doing  
4 this because, you know, we wanted to treat you like a baby,  
5 we wanted to make sure that you were safe.

6 You know and every month she changed. You  
7 know she became this woman with \$1,500 in her pocket, you  
8 know she became an entirely different woman, her demeanor  
9 changed. You know she wanted to go out and have a good  
10 time every time she got that cheque. And you know that's  
11 when we had to be really, really -- be aware of where she  
12 was, what she was doing, who she was with, how she was  
13 being treated, who was doing what, you know where they  
14 were.

15 And you know we were constantly picking her  
16 up from under the cannery. That's because that became like  
17 a home away from home for her. It was where she felt  
18 comfortable with her friends. It was where people looked  
19 after her. It was where people were constantly giving her  
20 the things she needed she said, you know? It was the men  
21 that loved me for, loved me for who I was and not for what  
22 I was. You know they treated her with a lot of respect.

23 You know she dreaded the day that, you know,  
24 we would come down under the cannery to look for her. And  
25 every time we found her she said I'm okay, don't worry



**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1           about me, I'll be home soon. You know she'd always say I'm  
2           almost broke so I know I have to go home. You know two days  
3           later she'd be home and then, you know, she wouldn't let us  
4           run the bathwater for her, she always did it by herself.  
5           She said I know I have to clean up, I know I have to  
6           change, I know I have to quit doing what I'm doing.

7                                 And she was always so happy, you know, when  
8           she seen her kids all waiting for her. You know as soon as  
9           she walked into the door she'd always say, "Your baby is  
10          home". You know she liked to call herself baby because  
11          they knew, you know -- she knew that's how they were  
12          treating her. She'd always say, "Your baby is home". And  
13          everybody would jump up and you know they'd all hug her,  
14          just let her know that they were happy that she was home  
15          and she was safe. And she'd stay home for that entire  
16          month until the next cheque came, and we knew she was going  
17          to go out and do the same thing over again.

18                                It's because I was still carrying on out  
19          there, I always made sure that, you know, she didn't buy  
20          more than she needed, she didn't spend more than she  
21          needed. But she'd always say just because you're my baby  
22          brother -- she'd say I'm always more than willing to give  
23          you money. And every month she'd give me \$50, and she'd  
24          always say don't spend it all in one place.

25                                You know she always had to nip me for being

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 -- she always used to call me God's gift to women, and I  
2 couldn't understand why she called me that. She says well  
3 just because you married one woman, you know that's why I  
4 love to call you God's gift to women. And you know she  
5 always made sure she called me that. Every month you know  
6 she'd give me that \$50 and, you know like I said, she  
7 always said don't spend it all in one place. But being an  
8 alcoholic I always knew where I was going to spend it.

9 And her and I would sit behind a shoe store  
10 for hours, just carrying on you know like brother and  
11 sister that party together, you know. We always had the  
12 saying the family that partied together stayed together.  
13 You know we'd sit there for eight hours, just sitting there  
14 like family. And I really had that bond you know, that  
15 bond that family had together, you know? We loved each  
16 other so much that we didn't want anything to happen to  
17 either one of us.

18 Every time I went to sleep behind the  
19 building she'd always go to the RCMP and tell them that I  
20 was passed out behind this shoe store, and they'd come over  
21 and they'd pick me up and throw me in the drunk tank. And  
22 every morning she'd always say, "I hope you enjoyed your  
23 stay". You know when you're coming out of the drunk tank  
24 the last thing you want to hear is somebody saying I hope  
25 you enjoyed your stay, you know. But you know she always



**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 different, I know I'm different, I know I'll never be the  
2 same with you. I'm still Rosita Cora Samuels, and nobody's  
3 ever going to say it's -- she always had to reassure  
4 herself that her name was Rosita Cora Samuels. She  
5 belonged to the best family on Haida Gwaii. And that's  
6 what we loved about her.

7           You know she made sure that everybody knew  
8 that she was part of a family that started to love each  
9 other again, rather than being apart. It's like she knew  
10 that she was bringing us together because of what happened  
11 to her. She was giving us back that strength that we  
12 needed to be a family. She was bringing back that love  
13 that we started to -- you know it started to, it started to  
14 -- we started to drift away because, you know, we started  
15 falling out of love with each other. We didn't consider  
16 ourselves a family with -- you know she brought that back.  
17 She gave us the strength to tell each other that we loved  
18 each other.

19           And she always came back to that part where  
20 she says I know I'm different, but I'm always going to be  
21 Rosita Cora Samuels, and I'm always going to be a part of  
22 this family. And she'd always say group hug, group hug,  
23 and we all get together in a circle and she'd say let's  
24 just be a family, let's enjoy each other's company, let's  
25 be strong, let's love each other the way my mom and dad

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 always told us, let's hold hands, let's hug each other.  
2 She'd always say I love you people so much from the bottom  
3 of my heart that it really hurts sometimes that I'm  
4 different.

5 She couldn't understand that, you know, we  
6 always accepted her the way she was. Because of that  
7 change she went through she always thought I'm different,  
8 I'll never be the same. You people are still changing me,  
9 you people are still watching me, you people are still  
10 feeding me. She'd always ask us that one question, why do  
11 you love me so much, why do you do things that hurt me so  
12 much? And we always said we're just doing what our mom and  
13 dad told us to do, was to love you just the way you are.

14 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Would you like a break?

15 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** I'm great.

16 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay.

17 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Can we stop for lunch?

18 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Yes, we can, it's 12:14.

19

20 --- LUNCH RECESS

21

22 **MS. KERRY REAY:** Okay, so we are back on the  
23 record, it is 1:38. And for the record David Try has had  
24 to -- had another commitment and is no longer with us in  
25 the room today. And so Tom, please when you're comfortable

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1       you can take up from where we left off -- where you left  
2       off.

3                   **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Okay, three years after  
4       Rosita got home I decided that I had enough trauma in my  
5       life. So I decided to do a, a move to Vancouver to be with  
6       my family down there. So I moved to Vancouver, and I think  
7       I was there for five years. I was staying in Coquitlam  
8       with my niece [S.S.] and her boyfriend. But we didn't want  
9       to leave home without letting the family know that we  
10      wanted to get them to phone us every second or third week  
11      about Rosita's condition, was it improving or was it  
12      getting worse?

13                   And you know we did that faithfully for a  
14      long time. You know they really let us know that, you  
15      know, she was getting a little better. But she was still  
16      going uptown every end of the month to spend some time with  
17      the street people, and that she was still carrying on for  
18      three or four days after her cheque came in. And that's  
19      when she started to run into trouble with three of the  
20      people that we suspected of having a part in her going  
21      missing.

22                   And I think one of the suspects that we  
23      really thought did this to her was a young kid named  
24      [D.D.]. And the reason why I mention [D.D.] is because he  
25      came up from the beach, he had blood all over the place, on

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 his hands, his face, his throat, his shoes. And he told my  
2 nephew Archie that he just got into a fight under the  
3 cannery, and that's where they found my sister Rosita.

4 So they went to the RCMP and they told them  
5 that [D.D.] was bragging about getting into a fight down  
6 there. And [D.D.] was known to be a person that wasn't all  
7 there, he was -- he was missing a few screws I guess you  
8 could say. And his brother [J.D.] was with him. So my  
9 nephew Archie and another friend of his went to the RCMP  
10 and they told them that, you know, [D.D.] and his brother  
11 [J.D.] came up from the beach and they told, told them that  
12 they got into a fight under the cannery, and that they left  
13 the person under there. They said they were beaten up  
14 pretty bad.

15 But the RCMP just missed that time, because  
16 you know they never really -- they knew these two boys, and  
17 they knew they were, they were trouble. But you know they  
18 really didn't go underneath the cannery to check what they  
19 were talking about. And then they concentrated on another  
20 person, [S.S. 2], who was a person of interest. They  
21 questioned him for an hour and they let him go, and he  
22 moved to Vancouver where he eventually died. And that was  
23 three people that were suspects but never did anything  
24 about it.

25 And then this young kid from the Base, he

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1           was, he was a really troubled kid. The RCMP told us that  
2           his, his mother died from cancer three weeks before Rosita  
3           was found under the cannery. And we knew from past  
4           experience that this, this young guy didn't get along with  
5           natives at all because he was always fighting them outside  
6           the bar.

7                                But like I said earlier, he was transferred  
8           out of the Haida Gwaii Base three days after they found her  
9           under the cannery. So they let him go. And you know it  
10          was really hard for us to try to get home from Vancouver,  
11          but you know we knew we had to get home as quickly as we  
12          could because [W.S.], [I.] and [M.S.] were all there, and  
13          they were just wondering what you know, they had to do.  
14          And when we got home my, my brother Eugene, and Archie and  
15          [R.S.] were all down at the house and they were -- it was  
16          really hard to get them under control because they were so  
17          angry at the RCMP for not doing things that they were  
18          supposed to be doing up there.

19                               I mean you know they were constantly in the  
20          RCMP's faces, saying that, you know, you have to  
21          concentrate on [D.D.], [J.D.], [S.S. 2] and that young guy  
22          at the Base. And they said well, we just don't have any  
23          evidence, and then they'd say to charge these guys with.  
24          And you know they brought Archie back up to the RCMP office  
25          and they said you know -- this is my nephew Archie, he was



**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 sitting at the Co-op when [D.D.] and [J.D.] came up and  
2 told him they got into a fight under the cannery with  
3 somebody he didn't know. And a day later the, the RCMP  
4 finally decided well, they were going to go down and check  
5 under the cannery. And you know they found her, they found  
6 her laying on a log, and they said her entire left side of  
7 her face was pushed all the way over to the right. I know  
8 it's really unrecognizable they said now. And they  
9 couldn't believe that somebody in their right mind would do  
10 such a thing to a person. And they wouldn't let my  
11 brothers down there to see her, you know they wouldn't let  
12 him near her because she was beaten so badly that, you  
13 know, they said we just don't want you anywhere near the  
14 body.

15 You know the detectives from Rupert come  
16 over and you know they checked her over, and you know it  
17 was really disappointing when they said oh, we don't have  
18 any evidence to convict anybody, you know. So they brought  
19 her to the hospital. And in the Haida tradition, when a  
20 person passes like that, the women of the village have to  
21 go up and they have to dress the body, you know. And the  
22 women went up there and they said we can't touch it, we  
23 can't dress her. She said her face was so badly beaten  
24 that they said they just didn't want to be near her,  
25 something like that.

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1                   So when they asked us what we wanted to do,  
2           and you know we got together and we said all we can do is  
3           just to wrap her up into a -- in a sheet. Just wrap her up  
4           in a sheet and let's just cover her face, and just put her  
5           in a casket the way she was. And for the first time in a  
6           long time we weren't able to say goodbye to her face to  
7           face. For the first time in my life I watched my nephews  
8           and nieces fall apart. Going around from [W.S.] to Earl to  
9           [S.S.] to [M.S.]. To try to control them was just  
10          impossible because they were so traumatized by what  
11          happened to her.

12                   My brother, he quit working, my other  
13          brother, he quit fishing. And they said we're not going  
14          anywhere, we're not going to do anything until we find out  
15          what really happened to her. We got a hold of the coroner  
16          in Rupert and we said we really want to know, we really  
17          want to know what killed her. What made such a person like  
18          these suspects do something like that to another person and  
19          laugh about it?

20                   As an alcoholic you know I, I went around  
21          blaming anybody and anything. You know you looked at me  
22          the wrong way I always said you were the person that did  
23          this to my sister, and I said you're going to pay for it  
24          for the rest of your life. And I actually got thrown into  
25          jail one night. The RCMP said you can't go around

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1           threatening people like that. And the first thing that  
2           came to my mind was why aren't they doing anything about  
3           Rosita's killers, you know the people that murdered her  
4           like that are walking away laughing at you. They're  
5           laughing at our family because they know they got away with  
6           something.

7                            You know we didn't even have a picture put  
8           up on the wall, put up on the wall for her. We couldn't  
9           even remember how she looked. All we could hear was, "I'm  
10          not a baby". But you know for three years after that we  
11          never gave up, we kept fighting for her. The right to face  
12          her -- the people that we thought that did that. You know  
13          we, we picked up [D.D.], we picked up [J.D.], we picked up  
14          everybody that we suspected of doing this. And you know  
15          they went to the court and they got a restraining order  
16          against our family, we couldn't even talk to anybody about  
17          what happened to her.

18                           You know for 38 years I've been living with  
19          this, I've been thinking about it, I've been feeling it,  
20          I've been, I've been feeling really sick because you know  
21          she's, she's no longer with us. And the people that all --  
22          the people that we suspected, they all passed away.

23                           And you know my nieces and nephews were  
24          fighting really hard against us because we wanted to get a  
25          headstone. We wanted her spirit to rest in peace, we

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1           wanted to, to send her back up to where mom and dad were.  
2           And they told us at the feast that what we did was wrong,  
3           we shouldn't have done that without asking their  
4           permission.

5                           But like I said earlier, Audrey got this --  
6           had this dream about her saying that she wanted us to let  
7           her go. She wanted us to free her spirit, she wanted us to  
8           let her go because she was tired or wandering around in the  
9           spirit world crying for peace.

10                           So her and I, we got together and we went to  
11           get a headstone for her. You know I sat there and I cried,  
12           and I held onto that headstone like you know, she was still  
13           with me. And looking at this headstone with her name on  
14           the top, Rosita Cora Samuels, brought back so many hurtful  
15           memories. It's like she never left, you know? Whenever I  
16           go home I always make sure I go under the cannery, and I  
17           just pray over that spot where they found her. I bring her  
18           flowers. She used to go behind the store and she'd pick up  
19           little flowers, and she'd always put them in her hair. And  
20           I'd go behind that store and I'd pick that little flower,  
21           and I'd bring it down to the beach and just put it where  
22           they found her. You know I always remember that.

23                           She loved us in her own special way. She  
24           gave us that strength to live, you know, even though she  
25           was suffering, even though she lost everything that she

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**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1           ever worked for. In her mind -- we knew that she loved us  
2           in her own special way. I remember her trying to cook us  
3           (indiscernible). It was a simple little meal that you know  
4           was macaroni and cheese. And she said I don't know if I  
5           got the ingredients right. And I said you know, all you  
6           have to do is open the box and put it in boiling water, and  
7           stir it for about five minutes. You know and she couldn't  
8           even get that right because she couldn't tell time. You  
9           know we heard her crying in the kitchen, and she came  
10          running in and she said I burned your dinner. And we all  
11          just crowded around her and told her, you know, at least  
12          you tried. Oh, it was just unbelievable, you know.

13                       Whenever her anniversary came around, of her  
14          death, we just all stood in a circle and we, we remembered  
15          all the gifts that she gave us. She gave us the strength  
16          to carry on, she gave us life, she gave us love, she gave  
17          us understanding, she gave us the strength to care, she  
18          gave us the strength to hug one another and tell each other  
19          that we loved each other.

20                       She always said whenever you go somewhere,  
21          hug your family and tell them that you care, and that  
22          you're going to be okay. She'd always leave and she'd say  
23          it's going to be okay, you know I'm going to be alright.  
24          You know she'd sing a song that, you know, that my mother  
25          loved. You know she'd sing that with my mother every time

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 she came home. And she'd sing that song Coming Home,  
2 Coming Home. We'd sit there and we'd listen to her singing  
3 this song, "Coming home, coming home, never more to roam.  
4 Open up thine arms of love, Lord I'm coming home". And  
5 she'd sit there and she'd start to cry. You know she'd say  
6 mom, don't worry about me, I'm home. Every year I remember  
7 that song, "Coming home, coming home, never more to roam".

8 And we'd sit in the kitchen with her, you  
9 know, and we'd just hold her hands and say we're always  
10 here for you to (indiscernible) -- sister. That's all mom  
11 would say to her. You're home (indiscernible), you're  
12 going to stay home, no more roaming, no more tears, no more  
13 sadness. Only happiness she'd say.

14 And she used to love to say the Lord's  
15 Prayer. She'd sit there and we'd listen to her. And there  
16 were times she didn't say it, right? But you know we'd  
17 just listen, you know. And then she'd get into a prayer  
18 saying you know God, I want you to look after my family.  
19 Look after [I.], look after [S.S.], look after [M.S.], look  
20 after -- and at that time we knew that things were starting  
21 to change for her. She was coming back to the old sister  
22 that we knew, the sister that we knew was going to be okay.

23 [W.S.] told me the other day, he said you  
24 know before my mom even left the house, she told him that  
25 she was going to be okay. She was going to go home pretty

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1       soon. And he said he didn't realize that, you know, that  
2       that very day this was going to happen to her. You know  
3       when the RCMP came down to the house they told them about  
4       their mom. They said the whole house fell apart.

5                       We had to call my brother Eugene and my  
6       brother [R.S.] to come down and -- just to keep these kids  
7       together. Because they started to blame each other for  
8       what happened to her, they started to fight each other.  
9       And for some reason my brother Archie started to sing that  
10      song Coming Home, "Coming home never more to roam". And he  
11      told the kids this is what your mom wanted to do, this is  
12      where your mom wanted to go. He told them that, you know,  
13      she didn't know this was going to happen to her, but she  
14      knew that day that she was going to go home.

15                      She always talked about being peaceful, she  
16      always talked about getting better, she always talked about  
17      reaching out to the family and letting them know that they  
18      don't have to start fighting each other over things that  
19      are always so hurtful. You know every once in awhile she'd  
20      come over with a bible verse. You know the one she loved  
21      was, "Love one another as I have loved you", "Love one  
22      another, as I have loved you".

23                      You know being able to go down to the  
24      graveyard every year and just stand by her grave and look  
25      at a woman that, you know, we really loved, we really

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 missed, we really cared for, laying there beside her mom  
2 and dad. We always knew she was home.

3 I got them together in her daughter's house  
4 and I said let's sing this song Coming Home, "Coming home,  
5 never more to roam". And I knew right then and there, you  
6 know, she was where she wanted to be, sitting beside her  
7 mom and dad. To be able to be down at her grave and say I  
8 love you, I really miss you. She would have been 76 years  
9 old today. She was six years older than I was. She never  
10 ever hated anybody.

11 You know we go home every year, we talk to  
12 the RCMP what's happening with my sister's case, what's  
13 happening with my sister's case, what are you doing about  
14 it? They say it's still an open case. And all we want is  
15 the coroner's report, all we want is heads up on what  
16 they're doing you know, rather than sitting around on your  
17 asses, and phoning us every year and telling us it's still  
18 an open case. We don't want to hear that.

19 We talk about truth and reconciliation in  
20 this. Sometimes I get so angry when I hear that. Why  
21 don't they tell us the truth about what happened to our  
22 sister? Why don't they just open up her case and let us  
23 know what they're doing about it? We talk about  
24 reconciliation and I said I can't do that with you people  
25 when you're lying to me about her case. You know it's just



**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1       so unbelievable that, you know, things like this are always  
2       happening.

3                    You know I talked about Carol Davis, you  
4       know, and she didn't deserve to die the way she died.  
5       Sarah de Vries didn't deserve to die the way she died. We  
6       talk about the 1500 missing women and girls, and I look at  
7       somebody like my niece and I pray to God that, you know,  
8       she's with us today, she's not part of that statistic.  
9       What we need today is, we need to get the RCMP to open up  
10      their hearts and their minds and the know how to get out  
11      there and do something about these -- the women and girls.  
12      I don't want my sister's file to be put in the back and  
13      just opened up every year and saying it's still an open  
14      case.

15                   A lot of the families across Canada, they  
16      deserve a little bit of closure. They deserve to be, to be  
17      put at rest. You know they deserve to be respected. I  
18      want people in, in this country of Canada to understand  
19      that this should never have happened to any woman in  
20      Canada. It's should never be allowed to happen. The  
21      colour of my skin doesn't really matter because I am a  
22      Canadian, I am a Haida, and I shouldn't be discriminated  
23      against just because I believe in our Haida traditions. My  
24      sister didn't deserve to die the way she did. I want the  
25      government, you know, to get together and talk to the RCMP

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 and ask them why, why do they allow these things to happen.

2 There was a young girl from Rupert, she went  
3 missing. She was part of the Highway of Tears. She was  
4 only 20 years old. And I used to work at the Homeless  
5 Shelter and every month she'd come up with her box of wigs.  
6 And that's all she carried because she loved wearing wigs  
7 so much. And you know she was an addict, but you know she  
8 was always honest with us. Three months later she was  
9 hitchhiking on the road from Rupert to here and they never  
10 found her. Every time I think about her I think about my  
11 sisters, my brothers who have all gone missing. And I get  
12 so angry, I get really angry about the things that are  
13 happening to our people.

14 But you know there's always a simple little  
15 prayer that we say at every meeting, "God grant me the  
16 serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to  
17 change the things that I can and the wisdom to know the  
18 difference". You know I've got that posted up on my  
19 refrigerator and I look at that every morning and I say  
20 God, you know look after my sister, give her the courage,  
21 give her the strength to accept that place where she is  
22 now.

23 This morning I got up and I thought wow, I'm  
24 like a lamb being led to the, led to the slaughter. Then I  
25 remembered this isn't about me, this is about my sister. I

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1           was feeling so pitiful that I had to come to this place and  
2           I had to talk about somebody I love, that would really hurt  
3           my heart. And I thought, you know, that's something that I  
4           had to do to honour her, something that I had to do to give  
5           other women life in this world, something that I had to  
6           know -- let them know that, you know, they'll never ever be  
7           alone. All they have to do is reach out the way my sister  
8           used to. You know she'd say love one another.

9                        Yeah, I've written down a few things here  
10           that I'm not going to reach out, but I'm just going to  
11           leave with you. That's the things that I want this  
12           Committee to understand that, you know, we do need to be  
13           respected as native people.

14                       And my mother-in-law, God bless her soul,  
15           always used to say I can't use the word hate because it's  
16           such an ugly word, and I can't afford to do that today.  
17           That's because my sister always said, "Love one another as  
18           I have loved you". Like I said, she gave us that strength  
19           you know, that understanding, that love, to reach out and  
20           just say that, you know, I'll always be here for you.

21                       In the 35 years that I've been sober I've  
22           learned a lot in this program. And I think I've learned  
23           most of that growing up with the passing of my sister  
24           Rosita. You know when we were both in the Residential  
25           School together, and I hate talking about the Residential

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 School, but she'd always say at the start of the day things  
2 are going to be okay, things are going to be okay. But I  
3 was so ashamed of telling her that things weren't okay with  
4 me, that I was being physically, spiritually, sexually  
5 abused at this Residential School.

6 You know we weren't allowed to take a bus to  
7 school together because they wanted sisters and brothers to  
8 be apart from each other. But you know Rosita would always  
9 come over and she would talk to me, and she'd say I don't  
10 care what they do to me if it takes me apart from you.  
11 It's because I love you, and I want you to know that I'm  
12 going to be here for you regardless of what happens.

13 You know I remember one day we got caught  
14 hugging each other and holding each other's hand, that we  
15 got beaten really severely. She'd be hanging onto my hands  
16 and she'd say things are going to be okay after this.  
17 Things are going to be okay.

18 You know after that year of school my dad  
19 went up to the RCMP office and he said you're not, you're  
20 not going to send my kids back to that school. I'm willing  
21 to go to jail, I'm willing to do anything for these kids as  
22 long as you don't send them back to that school.

23 You know for the first time in my life I  
24 watched my dad hug my sister Rosita and say you're going to  
25 stay home, you're going to stay home and help us look after

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1           each other. For the first time in my life I seen my dad  
2           cry. You know my dad never, ever cried. He always said  
3           Haida men don't cry. You know when he was hugging my  
4           sister I see these tears coming out of his eyes. He said I  
5           don't want to ever let you go.

6                            You know the RCMP came down and my mom and  
7           dad, they stood at the door and they said you know you can  
8           take us wherever you want, do whatever you want to do with  
9           us, but leave our kids alone, leave our kids alone. And  
10          Rosita got in between the two of us, and she said you know  
11          what my dad is telling you is true, we don't want to go  
12          back to the Residential School. You know for the first  
13          time in our lives, you know the Indian isn't -- he stood at  
14          the door and he said you're answering this and this. You  
15          know he said we're standing our ground, we're not moving  
16          from this door, we're not letting you take our kids.

17                          You know this is about Rosita, this is about  
18          a woman that I loved with all my heart. And every time I  
19          go to a meeting, every time I go to a dance, I can hear my  
20          sister saying having a good time, enjoy your life today. I  
21          loved her with all my heart.

22                          I look at my nephew today and I see nothing  
23          but her. You know [W.S.] ended up being a quadriplegic.  
24          The first thing he cried for was for his mother. You know  
25          I had to tell him that your mother is so glad that you're

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 still alive, that you're still with us. And I told him, I  
2 said one of these days I'm going to come down there and I'm  
3 going to work with you, I'm going to try to teach you to  
4 walk all over again. But he said nothing's going to change  
5 because my mom isn't here.

6 You know I told him every day that your mom  
7 would want you to stay alive, your mom would want you to  
8 live. You know and I phoned him before I came over here  
9 this morning, and he said you know (speaking in Haida) -  
10 (speaking in Haida) means uncle in our language. He said  
11 you go there and you tell them the truth. He said I will  
12 be with you in spirit. And I guess he used to hear his  
13 mother singing that song Coming Home, Coming Home. He said  
14 make sure you sing that song. "Coming home, never more to  
15 roam. Open up thine arms of love, Lord I'm coming home".  
16 And that's how I want to remember my sister today. She's  
17 home where she belongs, she's not roaming all over the  
18 spirit world. She's sitting beside mom and dad and she's  
19 being happy.

20 I'm really, really hurting today. I'm  
21 feeling really lost. Part of my life, part of my life left  
22 when she died. When I look at my niece, I look at my  
23 nephews, and I always tell myself I have something to live  
24 for, I have people that I love today, I have people that I  
25 care for today. You know I'm so thankful that this little

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 lady decided that this is where she wanted to be today.  
2 And I was so scared, I was so afraid that -- you know  
3 Rupert is such a far place, and I really didn't want her  
4 travelling this far. But here she is. This is the  
5 strength I needed, this is the support I needed, this is  
6 the kind of love I needed today. Somebody in my family  
7 reached out and said yes, I'm going to be there, where is  
8 it going to be, what time is it going to start? But you  
9 know that (indiscernible) feeling, that uncle feeling, that  
10 (indiscernible) feeling, that grandfather feeling, is  
11 always there, be careful.

12 But you know I really want to thank you from  
13 the bottom of my heart for being here today. I mean I  
14 bitched and whined about this for about two years. I wrote  
15 nasty texts. I know I called you liars, I called you  
16 people that didn't care, I even said you should retire from  
17 doing this. And when I got that phone call you know, that  
18 you were going to be up here on Thursday and Friday, my  
19 heart started to beat really fast, because all those months  
20 of writing this down on a piece of paper was really scary.

21 It's like every time I put this pencil to  
22 paper my eyes just started to tear over. My hands started  
23 to shake, I started to cry because this was my sister on a  
24 piece of paper. This was the sister that I loved and I  
25 wanted to honour today. This was the sister that gave me

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1       life, she was the one that made me open up my eyes to say  
2       that my life wasn't worth living the way I was living it.

3                She always used to tell me things are going  
4       to change for you if you want to change. She said I don't  
5       know what that's going to be, but one of these days you're  
6       going to have friends, where people are going to love you,  
7       people that are going to need you, people that are going to  
8       respect you, if you just walk and talk with them. She was  
9       my strength, she was my rock, she was the one I loved with  
10      all my heart. She never realized it but she gave me life.

11              You know deep down in my heart I know she  
12      was talking to me when I first started to sober up. This  
13      was the part of life that she said was going to get better.  
14      This is the part of life where she said friends are going  
15      to love you for who you are, not what you are. You know I  
16      could hear her saying give them a chance.

17              People like my brother Dennis, I love him  
18      with all my heart. People like Joy who talks a little too  
19      much, but I love her, yeah. People like Claude who loves a  
20      hamburger a little too much. You know he's up here. Oh  
21      God, I love you too for looking after my niece. You know  
22      and I wouldn't be anywhere without Garry. You know every  
23      Monday he comes in, he comes to visit, you know not to buy  
24      Indian gas and Indian cigarettes.

25              But that's the part of life that my sister



**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 was talking about. Giving, giving until you can't give  
2 anymore. And there's so much in this world that I have to  
3 give. You know I'm doing that in memory of a sister that  
4 left a little too soon. You know I could still hear her  
5 calling me Baby Huey. But you know I always find out that  
6 I'm living my life for her. You know after today I'm  
7 hoping and praying that I don't have to cry anymore. I  
8 hope that this brings some kind of closure in my life  
9 today, then I can put that piece behind me and say I have  
10 to go on and live.

11 I'm 70 years old but I'm still a young  
12 puppy. I have to make Dennis' life miserable for the next  
13 20 years. I have to live for my niece here you know, to  
14 buy her a car one of these days.

15 But like I said, I really want to thank you,  
16 I really want to thank you from the bottom of my heart, for  
17 giving me this chance to get some part of closure on my  
18 life. You know I'm hoping and praying that today I don't  
19 have to cry about it anymore. It's like the Residential  
20 School, I put that behind me, and I don't think about that  
21 anymore. That's because I have so much to live for today.

22 I'm not as healthy as I want to be, but I'm  
23 as healthy as I need to be. And it's all because of one  
24 very important person in my life today that said you know,  
25 you're going to find happiness in your life. So as we say

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 in Haida, (speaking in Haida), enough to learn, which means  
2 thank you very much from here, from here.

3 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Thank you. Tom, it takes  
4 a phenomenal amount of courage and strength to come here  
5 and share what you've shared today, and it has been an  
6 honour to hear your truth. I'm just wondering if you would  
7 mind if I ask a couple of questions. One of the things  
8 that is part of the Commission's mandate, the Inquiry's  
9 mandate, the Commissioners are able to do is they are able  
10 to seek through subpoenas information, and if I can just --  
11 if you can provide a couple of details for me, I'm going to  
12 suggest files be subpoenaed for the Commissioners to read,  
13 particularly from the RCMP, about what was done and what  
14 wasn't done in the investigation.

15 There is also an organization that supports  
16 the Inquiry in B.C., and it's the Family Information  
17 Liaison Unit. And I am going to -- we can do this  
18 afterwards off the record, get some information from you in  
19 terms of contact information, and if you like I will  
20 connect you with FILU, and they are there to get those  
21 documents from the coroner's office, from the police  
22 office, that -- they're there to assist you to get some of  
23 those documents, to help with that closure. And so if  
24 that's something you would like, I will help, I will help  
25 to connect you with, with FILU.

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1                   So when you spoke of under the cannery, what  
2                   community was that in?

3                   **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** That was in Masset.

4                   **MS. KERRIE REAY:** In Masset?

5                   **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Yeah.

6                   **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay, so it was the Masset  
7                   RCMP?

8                   **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Yeah.

9                   **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay.

10                  **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Masset is the, is the  
11                  white community.

12                  **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Yes.

13                  **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** The Haida village is  
14                  three miles away.

15                  **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Old Masset?

16                  **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Yeah, Old Masset yeah.

17                  **MS. KERRIE REAY:** And so I will, I will look  
18                  to that to see if we can get the Commissioners -- the  
19                  eyewitness statements, any statements that the police took,  
20                  the status of the investigation, get the coroner's report  
21                  for the Commissioners to review. So I'll be, I'll be  
22                  seeking that out for Rosita and for yourself and your  
23                  family.

24                  **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Yeah.

25                  **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Just a couple of other

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 things. I know it's been a long morning and afternoon for  
2 you, so I want to be respectful of your time. [J.H.], who  
3 used the hammer, part of the Commission's mandate also is  
4 looking at policing and justice, and our justice system.  
5 And was [J.H.] charged and convicted for the assault?

6 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** No.

7 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** No?

8 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** No.

9 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Do you --

10 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** They talked with him  
11 about it, but they just put it down as a family dispute.

12 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay, what was [J.H.] last  
13 name?

14 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** [Last name].

15 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** [Spells last name]?

16 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** [Spells last name]

17 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** [J.H.]. Do you recall  
18 what year that was when he violently attacked her?

19 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** No, it's been so far  
20 back that --

21 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay. So do you recall  
22 when you moved to Vancouver?

23 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** That was back in -- 40  
24 years from now.

25 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** So --

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1                   **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** When [D.H.] was born.

2                   **MS. KERRIE REAY:** When [D.H.] was born?

3                   **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Yeah. [D.H.] about 40  
4                   now.

5                   **MS. AUDREY PARNELL:** Yeah.

6                   **MS. KERRIE REAY:** So that would make it  
7                   1978?

8                   **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Yeah, yeah.

9                   **MS. KERRIE REAY:** And was your sister  
10                  Rosita, was she pregnant with [D.H.] when that -- when the  
11                  attack happened?

12                  **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Ah, yes she was.

13                  **MS. KERRIE REAY:** And that was [D.H.]?

14                  **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Yeah.

15                  **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay. Because I am going  
16                  to also suggest that -- and when Rosita was attacked by  
17                  [J.H.], was that in Prince Rupert did you say?

18                  **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Yeah.

19                  **MS. KERRIE REAY:** So we will also look to  
20                  have that, that file reviewed as well.

21                  **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** M'hmm.

22                  **MS. KERRIE REAY:** A family dispute that  
23                  leaves a woman in a coma for a year is --

24                  **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Yeah, yeah.

25                  **MS. KERRIE REAY:** -- I think a reasonable

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 person would not think that's a family dispute.

2 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** M'hmm.

3 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay, I think that -- I  
4 think the other, the other thing that I had was the two  
5 fellows from the Canadian Armed Forces.

6 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** It was just the young  
7 guy.

8 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Do you recall, was that  
9 the early 70s then?

10 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Yeah, early 70s. When  
11 was the Armed Forces Base there Claude?

12 **UNKNOWN MALE SPEAKER:** They closed in '95.

13 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** In '95?

14 **UNKNOWN MALE SPEAKER:** The closed in '95.

15 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Yeah, it must have been  
16 the early 80s.

17 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** When she was-- when she  
18 was injured, that was before the accident -- or before the  
19 assault with the hammer though, right?

20 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Yeah.

21 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay, so that --

22 **MS. THOMAS SAMUELS:** She was still in Masset  
23 then.

24 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** -- will be sometime in the  
25 1970s.

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1                   **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Yeah, do you remember  
2           when --

3                   **MS. KERRIE REAY:** I think I recall you  
4           saying she was 38 at that time?

5                   **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Yeah. Do you remember  
6           when the CJN was opened?

7                   **UNKNOWN MALE SPEAKER:** It was just --

8                   **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** That was the 60s, 70s.

9                   **UNKNOWN MALE SPEAKER:** In '76 or something  
10          like that.

11                   **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Yeah, because she was  
12          just coming out of the CJN and this guy came along with  
13          that Agent Orange stuff and just sprayed it all over her.

14                   **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay, so I'm also going to  
15          see if we can get the records from -- and so where was the  
16          Canadian Armed Forces Base?

17                   **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** It was right in Masset.

18                   **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Oh, it was in Masset as  
19          well?

20                   **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Yeah, yeah.

21                   **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay.

22                   **MS. AUDREY PARNELL:** Was that the one they  
23          just tore down?

24                   **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Yeah, yeah.

25                   **MS. AUDREY PARNELL:** Yeah okay.

**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1                   **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay, it's been a long day  
2 for you and we're at that point of looking to do your  
3 consent. And we talked about it being public or private.

4                   **[Discussion regarding informed consent - off**  
5 **the record].**

6                   **MS. KERRIE REAY:** So I won't do that piece  
7 on the record, I think the Commissioners and the legal team  
8 can hear what -- the conversation that we're having. And  
9 so I will, I will do that off the record. Now I just  
10 noticed that there's two things. One, that you gave me  
11 here a schedule that you would like to speak to. So one,  
12 I'm going to invite you if you would like, to close today,  
13 in your own language if you so wish. I leave that up to  
14 you, not everybody wants to, but lots of people do.

15                   **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** I don't speak Haida.

16                   **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay. So you have a few  
17 words then that you'd like to share, okay. That's okay,  
18 but I wanted to offer --

19                   **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Yeah.

20                   **MS. KERRIE REAY:** -- that opportunity. Then  
21 I'll invite you to finish then, as you had asked, that  
22 you'd like to thank the Tsimshian Nation.

23                   **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Yeah, yeah. This is a  
24 -- it's really important in the tradition of the native  
25 people that we never leave a faith house, or a gathering



**Thomas Samuels**  
**(Rosita Cora Samuels)**

1 house, without thanking the nation whose land we're on.  
2 Because I know a few of the Chiefs and Councillors in the  
3 Tsimshian territory, I really want to thank them from the  
4 bottom of our hearts for allowing my niece and -- you know  
5 for allowing us to be on their land and to do what we had  
6 to do today, was you know to find some kind of closure,  
7 some kind of answer.

8 You know because it always strengthens us,  
9 strengthens us to know that, you know, people from other  
10 nations that are always so welcoming to other nations. And  
11 for us to be here, it's a great honour. I reached out to  
12 the Chief of the Tsimshian Nation, but he was busy today.  
13 So, you know, I just thanked him for allowing us to be  
14 here. So yeah, it's a beautiful country and like I said,  
15 I'm forever grateful for you allowing me to do this.

16 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** My privilege.

17 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Even though I was so  
18 critical not to answer, just --

19 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** No, rightfully so,  
20 rightfully so. Alright, it's 2:51 and we will close.

21 **MR. THOMAS SAMUELS:** Yeah.

22 --- Upon adjourning at 2:51 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 20, 2018