National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Truth-Gathering Process
Part I Statement Gathering
Western University
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Wednesday October 31, 2018

Statement Volume 563

Marilou Smoke & Sue Contant,
In relation to Deborah Anne Sloss Clark

Statement gathered by Debbie Bodkin

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NOTE

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**Statement Gatherer:** Debbie Bodkin

**Documents submitted with testimony:** none.
--- Upon commencing on Wednesday, October 31, 2018 at 9:25 a.m.

DEBBIE BODKIN: And that one's on. So, again, today is Wednesday, October 31st, 2018. And it is 24 minutes after 12. We are at the Western University, First Nations Studies building. And I have Marilou Smoke and Sue Contant here to give your statements, share your story. I know I've went over this before but you're here voluntarily and you're comfortable with both recording devices, is that correct? And I think other than that, as I said, you two are in charge now. I will try and be quiet. If I'm taking notes, it's to remember to ask you questions at the end. So I will try not to interrupt at all.

And, Marilou, I'll get you to start. And if you introduce yourself, and, actually, Sue, if you'll introduce yourself too, both of you do that at the beginning. And then, Marilou, you ahead with the story wherever you want to begin.

MARILOU SMOKE: Okay.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

MARILOU SMOKE: The way I was taught by my elders is that when -- when we introduce ourselves, we say our spirit name, our clan and where we come from. So
Statement - Public
Marilou Smoke & Sue Contant
(Deborah Anne Sloss Clark)

[Speaking in Indigenous language] My spirit name is Shidoo (Ph.) Star woman, I'm Bear Clan and I originally come from Batchawana Bay, Ontario. I am very honoured to be here with my sister Sue.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Sue, can you just -- and, Marilou, I'll go back to you. Could you do your date of birth and your address? And then Sue.

MARILOU SMOKE: Oh.

DEBBIE BODKIN: That's okay.

MARILOU SMOKE: [Birthdate]. And I live in London, Ontario at [address].

DEBBIE BODKIN: Perfect.

MARILOU SMOKE: [Address].

DEBBIE BODKIN: And, Sue, can I get you to just introduce yourself as well, please?


DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay. Great. And, Marilou, you can start wherever you want.

MARILOU SMOKE: Okay. All right. I'll start from the beginning, far back -- as far back as I can remember Debbie and I used to play together because we were just two little girls and a brother. And so we played together a lot. My brother was often in the hospital because he had -- when -- in 1954, my mom drove him to
Toronto. It was during Hurricane Hazel. He had to have surgery because the doctors had diagnosed him with this spinal ailment where if they didn't do an operation right away that he would have grown up as a hump -- with a humpback. So they took a piece of his hip bone out and put it in his spine to correct the -- the problem. So my brother [Brother 1] spent a lot of time in the hospital because of that. And he also had ear trouble. So he spent a lot of time at Sick Kids Hospital in the ear, nose and throat department because he had -- I think it was called a mastoid, or something like that, but it's not important. But it just explains why he wasn't always present in the house.

So I ended up having the role as the oldest because my brother was away a lot. And so Debbie and I, we'd play together all the time and David -- people thought we were twins up until even high school, people would stop and ask if we were twins even though Debbie's hair was short and mine was long. We still looked alike. And when Debbie and I would play together and we spent all our time together.

And I remember as far back as I can remember, we used to go to my Auntie Marlene's place in Batchawana. She had a extra house and so when it wasn't rented out to somebody, we would sit inside there and we
would sew doll clothes because we couldn't afford to buy stuff for the Barbie dolls or other dolls. So we would sew those things and we would have a lot of fun. We played together on the beach and we went swimming. And we always -- like, when we were two years old, we used to go on the toilet together and pee at the same time. You know, so we would always hold it until the other one was ready. And then we would do that.

And then we would have a laugh if my mom -- my mom didn't know that she was lactose intolerant so she would have milk in her tea, so she would be a little gassy so when she went to the bathroom, me and my sister Debbie were just -- it was a riot. So we just laughed and laughed. And my mom would say, "What are you two girls up to?"

So we were really close and then all my other brothers and sisters came along. Three other sisters and a brother. And so Debbie and I grew up taking care of the kids because my mom was sick. She had -- she had rheumatic fever when she was a child and she also had this disease called Primary Biliary Cirrhosis. So when I was 15 years old, I remember my mom came home from the doctor's. By this time we were living in Toronto, we moved there when I was 15 years old. And I went -- Debbie and I went to high school at Northern Secondary. Well, one day my mom
come home from the doctor's and she says, "Marilou, I don't understand this. The doctor says I have cirrhosis of the liver and I don't drink. So I -- I don't understand this."

So I said, "Well, it must mean something else."

So we found out that cirrhosis means scarring of the liver and so it turned out that my mom had this disease where her white blood cells would attack her liver. So that also put her in bed when those attacks happened.

So Debbie and I practically raised Susie, Roxie (Ph.), Timmy and Cathy (Ph.). And so we took turns. By the time Cathy was old enough to participate, we rotated chores. I would do the cooking mostly because that meant I didn't have to wash the dishes. And then Debbie would decide if she was going to do the dishes or clean up the dining room and living room. And then Cathy, most often, would get stuck with washing the dishes. But that's what happens when you're lower on the totem pole, right.

So we -- you know, we had a great growing up. My mom taught me and Debbie how to crochet, so when I was 11 and Debbie was 10, we stayed inside and we crocheted blankets, and I knitted a long, full-length dress, and I knitted a -- crocheted a -- another dress and made vests, and sweaters and lots of blankets.

So instead of, like, being outside and
running around, "Running the roads," was the term used out
in Batchawana, we stayed indoors and we did that. And I
also did beadwork. And Debbie was trying her hand at
beadwork too but she didn't -- she didn't have as much
patience as I did. She was a -- a Taurus.

And I knew -- my husband Dan, he's also a
Taurus, and I knew when I met him that I would be able to
have a relationship and a long life with him because of
[inaudible response] my sister Debbie was a Taurus. So I
knew that Dan and I, you know, would be good together. So
we're -- we're still together. We've been together for
about 45 years and we celebrated our 41st wedding
anniversary this past August.

So Debbie eventually met this man and they
fell in love. And then she moved out with him. And they
stayed at his mom's place in Toronto. And then they
eventually moved up to Glue River (Ph.) And so they lived
in a trailer park where our father also had a home. My mom
and dad had separated by that time, and I think they were
divorced actually.

So Debbie had a new life up there and she
really loved the north so that's why she went back. And so
Debbie called me a couple times because [Deborah’s husband]
was -- started beating her up. And so she was very upset
about this. She didn't know why he was doing that because
he hadn't displayed any violence towards her before. So eventually she couldn't take it, and she wouldn't take it. So she left him and she ended up moving to a place that's close to the border of Quebec but I can't remember the name of it.

And then from there she moved to Toronto where our mom was living. So our mom, by this time, her health was getting poor and she lived in community housing in Toronto at Sherbourne and Wellesley. So Debbie ended up getting a place around Sherbourne and Wellesley down at Dundas and Sherbourne actually. And it was, like, a low rental housing. And she was very helpful to people, like, she loved people and she was always giving.

And these -- there was two guys who were homeless so she and her boyfriend decided that Debbie would go and live with her boyfriend for a little -- for a little while, let these guys stay there for a month so they could get on their feet. And so they did that and then, you know, when the deal was over, Debbie came back home. Everything was really good until she got her phone bill and her phone bill was $900. So she was just devastated by that. And, you know, she was just being kind-hearted and that's -- the people just did that to her and it was really awful. The feelings that she had, that she shared with that, me and Dan.
Debbie used to drink and do drugs. I don't remember seeing her high but I remember seeing her drinking. And towards the end of her life, she had been planning on quitting drinking. My husband and I, we used to be the talk of the town in the 70's and we were always everywhere. If there was something happening, we were there. And so eventually, we left that lifestyle and we chose a more ceremonial life.

So Debbie would meet up with us in Toronto and she saw how we changed. And we would go to traditional elders' gatherings and we would interview people for our radio show that we have here at Western University. The show is called Smoke Signals and we've been on the air for 29 years. So back then in 1990, we had a little cassette recorder and we would go where the elders were, or the entertainers were, and we would travel around, and we would -- we would interview the people, bring it back to our show and then that would be our show for the week, plus we would play music. At that time we had two cassettes. So we played Joanne Shenandoah and Paul Ortega a lot because that's all we had.

And so, anyway, whenever we went to Toronto, Debbie wanted to meet up with us. And so when she first started meeting up with us, she would have a drink or two when we went out for lunch. And then after that, she
stopped drinking and she told me that she was going to
Elizabeth Fry, and I didn't know what Elizabeth Fry was.
And so I found out that it -- you know, it was a place to
go where she could receive counselling and -- and things
like that.

So Debbie would -- she wanted to come to
where we were at the elders' gathering so she liked the
feeling -- she liked -- she could feel the -- the healing
from the good medicine that was there. And the medicine
that the elders used, you know, when they're doing their
smudging, and the drumming and the singing. So she wanted
to be a part of it.

So she eventually had quit drinking. And so
I remember this one time, we were interviewing an elder by
the name of Dave Courchene, and he comes from Manitoba, and
he's a well respected elder all around the world. And he
has a -- a lodge called the Turtle Lodge, which you can
Google. But he was speaking in Toronto, and this was in
the early 90's and he's very nice looking so Debbie kept
wanting to go where he was. "We're supposed to go over
there," she said, "Let's go over there." So I thought that
was kind of cute of her.

But later that day Dan and I had to go and
interview somebody else and so she wanted to meet us at the
social that was going to take place at one of the hotels.
So the social gathering was where they were going to have a feast. And it was all in sobriety, there was no alcohol at all, or drugs. And so the women dress as we do in ceremony wearing skirts, long skirts. So I told Debbie, I said, "When you come, you -- you have to wear a skirt, okay?"

She goes, "Okay. I'll meet you over there."

So we get over there and Debbie's wearing this micro-mini-skirt. So she's pulling it down and she's going, "Marilou, you could have told me to wear a long skirt." And it didn't dawn on me, I just thought she -- she knew that if wear a skirt, wear a long skirt. So, you know, we had a -- a tremendous relationship. And, you know, I -- then one day I got this phone call from my sister.

DEBBIE BODKIN: And what -- I'll interrupt, just, sorry. What years are we at?

MARILOU SMOKE: That's -- that's in the early nineties.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

SUE CONTANT: Yeah.

DEBBIE BODKIN: And I'm just going to mention Sue is taking over speaking for the -- the dictatypist.

SUE CONTANT: And for the -- the phone call,
I had gotten a call from my sister Cathy. Our cousin Susie lived in Regent Park and she had told our cousin Chickie's (Ph.) daughter Tricia (Ph.) that our sister Debbie was in -- in the morgue as a Jane Doe. And so Cathy called me and -- because Tricia got in touch with Cathy. Is that how it went?

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

SUE CONTANT: And so Cathy called me and then I called the morgue -- the coroner, and he said, "Yeah, we do have a Jane Doe." And Debbie had a tattoo, and I mentioned the tattoo, and he said, "Yeah." And I said, "Well, I believe it's my sister Debbie." And then Cathy went down and identified her.

MARILOU SMOKE: So Susie -- Sue called up my place and said on a message on my answering machine, she said, "Marilou, something happened to Debbie. Can you call me right away?" She was whispering it. And I had dinner guests over and I had just gone down to the basement to get a can of tomatoes, which I used to can about 120 a year but I don't do that anymore. But anyway, I just saw the light was blinking on the machine. So I didn't know what to do because I could see the importance of the when Susie was speaking -- I mean, when Sue was speaking that there was urgency.

So I ended up feeding our guests and then I
told them about the phone call and they said, "Well, you better call right now. So I did call. And then Susie told me what she had just shared about Debbie being a Jane Doe in the morgue and that we didn't know what to do. My sister Cathy didn't know what to do and Susie didn't know what to do. My sister Roxanne didn't know what to do. And so we decided that since Cathy lived in Toronto, that she should take charge of trying to investigate what was going on because the police wouldn't give us a -- a report.

SUE CONTANT: No.

MARILOU SMOKE: We weren't able to get an autopsy report. We just went about to bury my sister. We went to the [inaudible response] Morrison Funeral Parlour, same place where we buried my mom the year before. And we had the ceremony for her, we got our elder Glen Harper (Ph.) who just passed away a couple months ago, he came in and he was a part of our sweat lodge family. And so all our sweat lodge people came and our relatives came, and we gave Debbie a really beautiful traditional ceremony to send her home. And then we got -- she was cremated and then Sue and Roxanne took care of her ashes and put them up north in Batchawana but left some beside our mom in Spanish.

So nobody knew what killed Debbie or how she died. So Cathy called up the police and she goes, "Well, I don't understand. How did my sister die?" And the police
said, "Well, your sister liked to party too much." And
that was what they said. That was the excuse. That was
the reason why she did because she liked to party too much.

We didn't get an autopsy report. My husband
was talking to this woman by the name of Beverly Jacobs
(Ph.) and she was working for the Native Women's
Association but she was also doing a report for Amnesty
International about the Stolen Sisters. And so she was
emailing Dan talking about her work there. And so Dan
said, "Well, you need to talk to Marilou." So eventually,
I did talk to her but it took me a long time to do that. At
least a month. I had to, like, really psych myself up to
talk to her about what happened.

And she said -- she was a lawyer at that --
you know, at that time. Now she has her PhD in Law and
she's teaching at Windsor. But she said, "Okay, if you can
sign some release papers, I'll get you and your sisters to
sign the release papers, I can get that autopsy report for
you and I can get the police report." So we signed the
paper and then I got this brown envelope in the mail, which
I put on the table in the dining room.

And I didn't want to open it, and I didn't
want to look at it. I put stuff on top of it, I buried it.
I went by, you could still see little brown on there, you
know, so I put something else on top of it. And so after a
while, I just forced myself to go and look.

So the first thing I did was I saw the toxicology report, that's what I went rifling through to look for that. And so it said that she did not have any alcohol in her system. That probably about three or four hours before she died, she had had a cough drop and they found that in her system.

She was badly decomposed when the landlord found her. The smell, I guess, drew him to her room because she -- at -- by this time, she lived in a boarding house. She had left that -- the low rental community housing of Toronto and got -- went into this boarding house. And so he called the police. [One sentence redacted - Rule 55]. And so they couldn't see how she died because of that -- because the decomposure (Sic.) and that.

So the police took Debbie and they put her in the coroner's vehicle and took her to the coroner's office. And the police put a sign up around her room saying, you know, "Please do not disturb." And so as soon as they left, the landlord went there, cut the tape down and he threw all my sister Debbie's stuff into a dumpster --

**SUE CONTANT:** Yeah.

**MARILOU SMOKE:** --- and rented the room out that very day. You went to the dumpster.
SUE CONTANT: Yeah. Yeah, I went and retrieved -- I went to the -- where Debbie lived and the room -- the guy that knew Debbie, on the first floor, I'm talking to him and I'm, like, "Isn't that my sister's dresser?" "Oh, yeah," he said. "[Landlord] threw everything out so anybody could take anything." He said, "Everybody in here was taking her stuff." I said, "Debbie has children and now they have nothing. They lost their mom. Now all their stuff is gone?" And it wasn't even a month. By law they had 30 days to hold on to that. And as soon as -- and it was two weeks she was in the morgue?

MARILOU SMOKE: M'hmm.

SUE CONTANT: And so as soon as we found out, I go down to Toronto, talk to Susie who showed me where Debbie lived and meet the people in the building and ---

MARILOU SMOKE: So the police didn't do anything to this guy?

SUE CONTANT: Nothing. I did more investigating than ---

MARILOU SMOKE: And they didn't do any fingerprinting or anything ---

SUE CONTANT: Right.

MARILOU SMOKE: --- because the room was taken over. Now, we knew this lady by the name of Amber
O'Hara (Ph.) who has passed on now. She had met Debbie at a park around Allan's Gardens in Toronto. And Amber had a dog that Debbie was stricken by the sight of the dog because it looked like a wolf to her. So she befriended Amber because Debbie loved animals, you know. And so her and Amber became really good friends. And Amber had said, like, there was a guy a few years ago who -- who had murdered some women around Bellville. And they got -- he worked -- he was, like, a professional army person. And his name was [Person X] (Ph.). So she had found out that [Person X] lived in the apartment building on Carlton by Sherbourne around the same time as Debbie was murdered. But because Amber died, she never went forward to tell any more people about this.

So I hope to, one day, get to Toronto and talk to this man who I've seen on TV who works for City TV. He's a police officer, his last name is Ryan (Ph.) And I want to talk to him about this. If they can investigate to see if that man was there around that time. If there could be any possible connection because, to this day, we still do not know who murdered our sister and why. And so this is very unsettling for us because we have no closure on this. You know, every time we see that somebody's been murdered on the news, you know, it just brings up our -- our feelings again. And, you know, the -- our nerves are
very raw, you know, and it's been, like, 21 years since my sister passed. And, you know, we still -- we still have answers that we need to have answered.

We -- one time, the Native Women's Association had a healing weekend for us. They got the native -- the Native Centre in Hamilton let us use their facilities for a whole weekend and so my husband Dan and I brought our medicines in, and we were smudging the family down, and were having a circle so we could talk all about it, you know, so all -- the rest of my living brothers and sisters came to that. And so that really helped us a lot.

And then Bev Jacobs (Ph.), she was involved with the -- with the Missing and Murdered Women, especially the ones out in Vancouver. And so we became the elders for the program that they had -- the Missing -- Missing and Murdered Women, the Sisters of Spirit. And so we travelled all -- all out west and my husband and I helped the families heal from the trauma that they had.

So we used a traditional condolence ceremony and we would use some white buckskin deer hide to wipe away their tears. And we would use the nib of the eagle feather to clean their ears out again so they could hear again. And we would comb their hair with -- with combs that we got from the dollar store. You can get, like -- you can get, like, ten combs there for a dollar. So we would just comb
their hair and take away the tangles in their life. And then we would give them strawberry juice to drink so that they could heal again.

But people need more than that. You know, there has to be more done. There has to be -- there has to be follow up to -- like, our case is so small compared to cases that I've heard. You know, we met this one family where their little girl was chopped up into little pieces and thrown into the river in Manitoba. And it happened at the same time that this little girl in Toronto, a White girl, she was chopped up and put in a suitcase, and they found her on Centre Island. And the little girl in Manitoba didn't get any news time at all. But the little White girl was -- it was all over the world what happened to her, you know?

And there's so many horror stories that we've heard. Dan and I helped the -- the girls -- the ladies from Vancouver. Her -- their sister died at the pig farm. All they found was a portion of her thumb and they had DNA tests on her. So the pigs had eaten her. And we took them to where the pig farm was. By the time we got there, it had all been knocked down and there was piles of dirt because the -- the army -- not the army, the police had probed it and sifted through all the dirt and all that looking for any specimens and whatever that was left over.
And so we helped them, you know, by doing ceremonies for them. And to this day, they're very appreciative of that. You know, so we need to have that kind of healing for the people have been affected by this because they're never going to heal. It's always going to be raw pain unless we can help them more. So there has to be -- more work has to be done. There's got to be more -- more solutions, more -- more money so people could be hired to do this.

SUE CONTANT: I agree.

MARILOU SMOKE: M'hmm.

SUE CONTANT: I think your work too has helped with your healing.

MARILOU SMOKE: It has. You know, because my -- it was, like, when I was helping those people, they were helping me.

SUE CONTANT: M'hmm.

MARILOU SMOKE: You know. So I was really grateful for that. Plus, I got to fly around a lot so I liked that too.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Maybe let's -- if you've ---

MARILOU SMOKE: M'hmm. Yeah.

DEBBIE BODKIN: --- finished there. How about we make sure that that picture there ---

MARILOU SMOKE: Okay.
DEBBIE BODKIN: --- or start with -- with
whatever you want and ---

MARILOU SMOKE: Okay. All right.

DEBBIE BODKIN: --- tell us ---

MARILOU SMOKE: This is ---

DEBBIE BODKIN: --- who -- who's in the
picture because ---

MARILOU SMOKE: This is ---

DEBBIE BODKIN: --- we haven't got the name
of all your siblings.

MARILOU SMOKE: This is the earliest picture
that I have. And this is my brother [Brother 1], he's the
oldest. And this is me, I'm the second eldest. Debbie,
she's the third eldest, Cathy, she's the fourth eldest.

DEBBIE BODKIN: And is everyone in that
picture alive except for Debbie?

MARILOU SMOKE: Yes.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

SUE CONTANT: Yeah.

MARILOU SMOKE: And this picture here, this
picture was taken about 1971. This is Sue. See the
resemblance?

DEBBIE BODKIN: M'hmm, if you could hold it
up ---

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.
DEBBIE BODKIN: --- that way. There. Okay.

MARILOU SMOKE: This is Sue. And this is Roxanne, Timmy, Debbie, Cathy, me and [Brother 1]. So this is all seven of us together. All seven of my mom ---

DEBBIE BODKIN: Just bring it in ---

MARILOU SMOKE: --- of my mom's kids.

DEBBIE BODKIN: --- a little closer. Okay.

MARILOU SMOKE: And this is the very last picture that was taken of Debbie, my mom and myself before my mom passed.

DEBBIE BODKIN: And what year would that be?

MARILOU SMOKE: She passed in 1995.

SUE CONTANT: Yeah.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Your mom or ---

SUE CONTANT: Yeah.

DEBBIE BODKIN: --- Debbie?

MARILOU SMOKE: Debbie passed in '97.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay. Do you know the exact date of Debbie's death?

SUE CONTANT: No.

MARILOU SMOKE: Laurie (Ph.) says the date in July but it's hard to say because they couldn't tell.


SUE CONTANT: When she passed away.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah. The exact time.
SUE CONTANT: Yeah.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

DEBBIE BODKIN: And when you were notified, what month was it did you say?

SUE CONTANT: The end of July.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah. Beginning of August, yeah.

SUE CONTANT: Yeah.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Do you know, was there any police investigation?

MARILOU SMOKE: Not ---

DEBBIE BODKIN: Like, of ---

MARILOU SMOKE: No.

DEBBIE BODKIN: --- previous -- the boyfriends you mentioned or anything like that?

SUE CONTANT: No.

MARILOU SMOKE: No.

SUE CONTANT: No.

DEBBIE BODKIN: What about, you said she lived with a boyfriend in Toronto.

MARILOU SMOKE: She did but at the time that she was passed, he was away, he was out of town.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

MARILOU SMOKE: When he came back to Toronto, he said, "What happened to Debbie?" He heard on
the street. When, you know, like, when we had her funeral, the Council Fire, which is the Native organization at Dundas and Parliament, they told us that they would have a feast for Debbie. So they went around and they put signs up on all the lamp posts all in the area, you know, saying that there's a feast for Debbie who is recently departed and all that because Debbie was really friendly with the homeless people, she liked to hang around with them. And so they all came to the feast that was taking place that day, you know. So we were very happy about that.

But when [Deborah’s boyfriend], his name was -- that's her boyfriend.

DEBBIE BODKIN: That was -- okay, I was going to ask that.

MARILOU SMOKE: When he -- when he came back, he -- somebody must have told him and then he -- he couldn't figure out what happened and he called me. And I -- I told him what I knew. And I didn't know very much. Because by that time, I hadn't gotten any information from the police report or the toxicology report. It wasn't until I got in touch with Bev Jacobs ---

DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

MARILOU SMOKE: --- you know, that I got that information.

DEBBIE BODKIN: And did you know [Deborah’s
boyfriend]'s last name?

MARILOU SMOKE: [Deborah’s boyfriend] (Ph.).

SUE CONTANT: So, yeah, I think ---

MARILOU SMOKE: [Deborah’s boyfriend] I think.

DEBBIE BODKIN: And what about the landlord's name? Did you know that at all?

MARILOU SMOKE: No, I don't -- I don't even ---

SUE CONTANT: No.

MARILOU SMOKE: --- know what he looks like.

SUE CONTANT: No.

MARILOU SMOKE: You would remember the house if you saw it though, eh?

SUE CONTANT: Oh, yeah ---

MARILOU SMOKE: M'hmm.

SUE CONTANT: --- the layout. It was just right across from Allan Park. She had a window that faced the park ---

DEBBIE BODKIN: Where ---

SUE CONTANT: --- Allan Park.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Where her room was?

SUE CONTANT: Yeah. If I went to Allan Park, I'd be able to -- right there.

MARILOU SMOKE: M'hmm.
DEBBIE BODKIN: And the boyfriend, the abusive boyfriend that she left, he didn't follow her to Toronto ---

MARILOU SMOKE: No.

DEBBIE BODKIN: --- that you know of or anything?

MARILOU SMOKE: No.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

MARILOU SMOKE: Like, my niece Laurie knows his name. Kirkland Lake is where she went.

SUE CONTANT: Yes.

DEBBIE BODKIN: That's where -- sorry, that's where Debbie went before she came to Toronto?

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

SUE CONTANT: Yes.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

SUE CONTANT: I was trying to remember ---

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah, I couldn't remember ---

SUE CONTANT: --- I could remember mines.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

SUE CONTANT: Where the mines were.

MARILOU SMOKE: Have to remember that Costco sells a lot of goods called Kirkland.
DEBBIE BODKIN: Do you know any police names who were involved in the investigation at all?

MARILOU SMOKE: No.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

SUE CONTANT: We should have brought the paperwork.

MARILOU SMOKE: Do you still have yours?

SUE CONTANT: I do somewhere.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah. Maybe you could fax it to you.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Sure. Yeah, I'll get you a number. You can send anything that you didn't bring with you.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

DEBBIE BODKIN: I'll get you ---

SUE CONTANT: Okay.

DEBBIE BODKIN: --- an -- an address or whatever. You can make -- if there's -- if you want to make copies of the coroner's report or anything ---

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah, I would because my ---

DEBBIE BODKIN: --- like that. If you want to send that in, yeah.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

SUE CONTANT: Yeah.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.
DEBBIE BODKIN: That would definitely ---
MARILOU SMOKE: Mine got ---
DEBBIE BODKIN: --- be helpful.
MARILOU SMOKE: --- buried. I don't know if it's lost.
SUE CONTANT: I ---
MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.
SUE CONTANT: --- I'm pretty sure I can dig my up ---
MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.
SUE CONTANT: --- pretty quick.
MARILOU SMOKE: Okay.
DEBBIE BODKIN: Yeah, any paperwork ---
SUE CONTANT: Yeah.
DEBBIE BODKIN: --- you can send in to the Inquiry would help.
SUE CONTANT: Yeah. And you can ---
DEBBIE BODKIN: For sure.
SUE CONTANT: --- email me a copy or something.
DEBBIE BODKIN: Yeah.
SUE CONTANT: Or mail, yeah.
DEBBIE BODKIN: Yeah.
MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.
DEBBIE BODKIN: Or you can photocopy and
send them a copy.

    MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

    DEBBIE BODKIN: I'll -- I'll get back to you

---

    SUE CONTANT: Yeah, okay.

    DEBBIE BODKIN: --- where to send it or

whatever.

    SUE CONTANT: Yeah.

    DEBBIE BODKIN: Debbie's birthdate, did we
talk about that? I don't ---

    MARILOU SMOKE: March 3rd, 1955,

    DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

    MARILOU SMOKE: I mean, May. May.

    DEBBIE BODKIN: Oh, May.

    MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

    SUE CONTANT: I know. I -- I was just
thinking, isn't that -- you're March.

    MARILOU SMOKE: It's me -- it's all about
me.

    DEBBIE BODKIN: Anyone else you can think
of? I know you don't know -- that was in the Toronto area
or knew more about Debbie that should be mentioned?

    MARILOU SMOKE: No. Just Amber O'hara was --
-- was -- she called her her best friend. But ---

    SUE CONTANT: Yeah.
MARILOU SMOKE: --- she passed away.
DEBBIE BODKIN: But that's the one ---
MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.
DEBBIE BODKIN: --- that passed away.
MARILOU SMOKE: Dan and I did the -- the funeral ceremony for her.
DEBBIE BODKIN: What -- what's your husband's name? I should ---
MARILOU SMOKE: Dan Smoke.
DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay. Dan.
SUE CONTANT: Didn't Amber initiate the -- Debbie's death? Remember we went to Toronto. It was the first year of Murdered and Missing Women?
MARILOU SMOKE: M'hmm.
SUE CONTANT: Was that what it was?
MARILOU SMOKE: She had ---
SUE CONTANT: Amber?
MARILOU SMOKE: She had -- yeah, she had a special gathering?
SUE CONTANT: Yeah.
MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah. Yeah.
SUE CONTANT: Yeah. She was a real advocate for our sister.
DEBBIE BODKIN: Yeah.
MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah, she was.
SUE CONTANT: All the time.

MARILOU SMOKE: Unfortunately, she passed.

SUE CONTANT: Yeah.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Did you say the street of Debbie's apartment? I know you said it faced -- faced Allan Park.

SUE CONTANT: The street, I don't know. But the ---

DEBBIE BODKIN: Don't know.

SUE CONTANT: --- apartment, her window faced Allan Park.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

SUE CONTANT: Because I was, like, wow, it's a cute little room. It's, like, one room, shared bathroom.

MARILOU SMOKE: Was the bathroom in the same room? Or did you ---

SUE CONTANT: No.

MARILOU SMOKE: --- have to go down the hall?

SUE CONTANT: She had to go down the hall.

MARILOU SMOKE: Oh.

SUE CONTANT: She shared with other tenants on the floor.

DEBBIE BODKIN: You -- and you mentioned about Debbie at one -- some time, she was use -- using
drugs and alcohol. Was there a catalyst for that? Do you
know what brought that about? Or anything? Or just ---

SUE CONTANT: Well, it could've been, like,
the accident.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah. There was a time when
she was -- I think she was driving the car, was she? No,
[Deborah’s husband] was driving.

SUE CONTANT: No, [Deborah’s husband] was
driving.

MARILOU SMOKE: Her husband [Deborah’s
husband] was driving a -- I think it was a truck or a car.

SUE CONTANT: Yeah.

DEBBIE BODKIN: That's who she left back in
---

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah. And so anyway, Debbie
got badly injured and their daughter flew out the window.
And so Debbie suffered this trauma about Laurie being hurt.
And so she never had that attended to, like, she never
talked it out with anybody. So that could be a problem.
But in the 70's everybody like to party. And so we just
carried on from there, you know. And then but she was
probably trying to hide the pain that she was feeling.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Anything else? Sue,
anything else you want -- any suggestions? You've made a
few as you've gone along.
SUE CONTANT: M'hm.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Suggestions, things that -- other things, just Indigenous related that you want to make known, or want the -- think the Inquiry should be, you know, changes that need to be -- come about?

MARILOU SMOKE: Well, yeah. I think the -- the Inquiry should still continue on because the work is not done yet. I like -- I like, you know, the few times a year when there are gatherings, especially, for the Missing and Murdered Women. One year I couldn't go because I was sick in bed and I was feeling really bad because I'm usually out there speaking about Debbie because ever since this happened, I tell everybody that I am taking every opportunity to let the world know what happened to my sister Debbie.

And so I was sick in bed and I was watching City TV's City pulse because when there's nothing good on TV I just read the news. And so they showed a gathering that was taking place in Toronto. And they zeroed in on a sign, and it had Debbie Sloss-Clark. So somebody was representing for me, you know. So that made me feel so good.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Now, I've never heard the -- I knew it was Debbie Sloss but ---

MARILOU SMOKE: Clark was her married name.
DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay. That was ---

MARILOU SMOKE: And then ---

DEBBIE BODKIN: --- [Deborah’s husband]?

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah, [Deborah’s husband].

DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

SUE CONTANT: Yeah.

MARILOU SMOKE: And here in London at the Atlohsa Native Family Healing Circle, they also have a placard for her. And they have a room that they dedicated to the Missing and Murdered women. But they don't have a picture of her. So I'm getting my niece to send us one.

Or I might ---

DEBBIE BODKIN: Oh, that's good.

MARILOU SMOKE: --- just go and take -- take this picture here and get us blacked out and just have Debbie in there.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Right.

MARILOU SMOKE: So -- so she'll be represented. Her name is there but no picture.

DEBBIE BODKIN: And could you, just for the record because I -- I interviewed Laura, I know her full name but what -- what was Debbie's full name and how was it spelled?

MARILOU SMOKE: Deborah Anne.
DEBBIE BODKIN: Was it Debra or Deborah, like, how -- how did she spell it, do you know?

MARILOU SMOKE: Deborah.

DEBBIE BODKIN: So D-E-B-O-R-A-H?


DEBBIE BODKIN: Anne spelled A ---

MARILOU SMOKE: E with an E.

DEBBIE BODKIN: --- N-N-E?

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Sloss hyphen -- was there a hyphen or just Sloss Clark?

MARILOU SMOKE: I -- I think just Sloss Clark.

SUE CONTANT: Yeah.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay. Perfect.

SUE CONTANT: But if you Google it, her story does come up, I think -- when I went to Ottawa ---

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

SUE CONTANT: --- you weren't at that one.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah, I had -- I was ---

SUE CONTANT: Was that when you were sick?

MARILOU SMOKE: It could be or I was at another conference.
SUE CONTANT: But in Ottawa, when we sat in
the circle and we all -- families were sharing, I thought,
oh, my God, this -- I got the same story, you know? Just
the way she was labelled when I talked to the coroner and
the police and the lack of investigation, you know, more or
less.

MARILOU SMOKE: It's like the -- they had a
file and on the top of the file they make a little asterisk
and says, "Native woman," which is code for, "Do not
investigate."

SUE CONTANT: You almost think that.

MARILOU SMOKE: And that's not right.

SUE CONTANT: Yeah. You almost think that.

DEBBIE BODKIN: And it was Toronto City
Police?

MARILOU SMOKE: Yes.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

SUE CONTANT: Yeah.

DEBBIE BODKIN: And, sorry, did I already
ask the coroner's name? Whether you knew or not?

SUE CONTANT: No.

DEBBIE BODKIN: No. It would be ---

SUE CONTANT: Should have ---

DEBBIE BODKIN: --- in the paperwork.

MARILOU SMOKE: In the paperwork and you'll
---

DEBBIE BODKIN: Yeah.

MARILOU SMOKE: --- have the name of that --

DEBBIE BODKIN: Sure.

MARILOU SMOKE: --- person.

SUE CONTANT: Yeah.

MARILOU SMOKE: But we got nothing from them.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Yeah.

MARILOU SMOKE: Years later when we tried, nothing. Case closed. No investigation. Just, "You -- you know your sister liked to party." And ---

DEBBIE BODKIN: How old would Debbie have been? Sorry to interrupt you.

MARILOU SMOKE: Forty-two.

SUE CONTANT: Yeah, she was about 42.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Sorry, I interrupted you there.

SUE CONTANT: Oh, no. At the time of her death, like, Marilou said, she was trying to get well so she wasn't doing any drugs. They never found alcohol. The only alcohol they found was decomposition.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah. And alcohol caused
from a cough drop.

SUE CONTANT: Yes. Yeah. So -- and

disturbing is that she was a Jane Doe. Her ID was on the
table, her welfare cheque ---

MARILOU SMOKE: Disability cheque.

SUE CONTANT: Or was it disability?

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

SUE CONTANT: I knew it was one of her

cheques was, like, clearly on the table with her ID. So to
label her a Jane Doe and not -- like -- like I said, 
through family, all the way to Batchawana Bay where Roxanne
was working, or living.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah, she was living there

at the time.

SUE CONTANT: Yeah, because Trish ---

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

SUE CONTANT: --- Trish went back home and

she was talking about Debbie in Toronto when she heard.

MARILOU SMOKE: M'hmm.

SUE CONTANT: And that's how we found out.

We called them.

DEBBIE BODKIN: And how did the cousin find

out? That's who called you.

SUE CONTANT: Just talk on the street.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay. Not -- not an
SUE CONTANT: Toronto ---

DEBBIE BODKIN: --- police phone call or anything.

SUE CONTANT: No.

DEBBIE BODKIN: It was just somebody else.

SUE CONTANT: Yeah. How do you say that? When it's through people.

MARILOU SMOKE: Moccasin telegraph?


DEBBIE BODKIN: I like that.

SUE CONTANT: It was just ironic how, you know, Susie heard about it, told Tricia, Tricia went back home to Batchawana, and Roxanne was living up there. And Roxanne calls Cathy, Cathy called me and I called you.

MARILOU SMOKE: M'hm. And I still haven't had those people back for supper. It's not their fault but it just brings back bad memories. Sorry Pat.

DEBBIE BODKIN: And maybe I sort of asked this but do any of your other siblings know any more details than the two of you?

SUE CONTANT: No.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Everybody -- I presume ---

SUE CONTANT: Yeah.
DEBBIE BODKIN: --- everyone's shared.

MARILOU SMOKE: Pretty much the same.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Yeah. Okay.

SUE CONTANT: Like, our sister Cathy, she's the one that contacted the morgue but she would just be repeating what we said.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Right.

SUE CONTANT: She wouldn't know anything more.

MARILOU SMOKE: M'hmm.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

MARILOU SMOKE: And all they said was, "Yeah, we do have a Jane Doe."

SUE CONTANT: M'hmm.

MARILOU SMOKE: You know.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay. Anything else either of you want to say or mention?

MARILOU SMOKE: No. Just, I don't know if we got our -- our -- our figures right. So, like, she's been gone 21 years. So she would've been 42, so she'd ---

DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

MARILOU SMOKE: --- be 63 now. [Personal information]. Don't have to share that.

SUE CONTANT: Oh, I don't mind. I'm surprised how many people I tell my age.
DEBBIE BODKIN: When -- I know. When you get older it doesn't matter.

SUE CONTANT: I think it's ---

DEBBIE BODKIN: More comfortable.

SUE CONTANT: --- it's an achievement to get that far.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah. It is.

DEBBIE BODKIN: So on that note, as I mentioned, those are -- that's the consent form ---

[Registrar’s note: An off-the-record discussion about informed consent ensues].

DEBBIE BODKIN: --- And then just sign above here somewhere. And if you have an email address you want to share too, Sue. And maybe one thing that we didn't mention or -- we didn't. Debbie's daughter ---

MARILOU SMOKE: Yes, Laura.

DEBBIE BODKIN: --- who I interviewed. If you want to just mention her because she's not mentioned on the -- her full name and anything you want to share about her.

MARILOU SMOKE: Okay. Debbie's daughter is a very beautiful Ojibwa woman. Her name is Laura Lee Anne --

DEBBIE BODKIN: Lacrosse.

MARILOU SMOKE: Lacrosse.
SUE CONTANT: Lacrosse.

MARILOU SMOKE: My mother was a -- a La --

Laura Lee Anne Lacrosse. She is living in -- up in the
Sioux and I'm sure she has happy memories of my mom, and of
her mom because when my son and Laurie were young children
---

SUE CONTANT: [inaudible response]

MARILOU SMOKE: --- like, little babies,

they used to spend time with my mom. And my mom would get
them to wash pots and pans, take it to the beach, use the
sand and all that, which they hated to do but ---

SUE CONTANT: Better than [inaudible response]

MARILOU SMOKE: --- when grandma says, you

know, so I know -- we had known Laurie since she was born

and, you know, she's the first born niece so we had much

love for her.

DEBBIE BODKIN: And is she an only child? I
don't ---

SUE CONTANT: No, she has a brother

[Deborah’s son].

MARILOU SMOKE: [Deborah’s son], yeah. But

he's kind of estranged from the family.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

SUE CONTANT: Yeah. He -- I think he holds
a lot inside.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

SUE CONTANT: In regards to his mom and what happened.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

SUE CONTANT: There's a lot of hurt.

MARILOU SMOKE: One year I went to Susie's for Christmas and [Deborah’s son] was there. And he came out of the bathroom and he seen me and he just stood at the door, like, leaned against the wall watching me because I look a lot like his mom, you know, and he couldn't get over it. So ---

SUE CONTANT: Yeah.

MARILOU SMOKE: --- must have been a shock.

DEBBIE BODKIN: How old would he have been when Debbie was ---

MARILOU SMOKE: Oh, he was like 15 only when Debbie ---

SUE CONTANT: He -- he was younger, wasn't he?

MARILOU SMOKE: I don't know.

DEBBIE BODKIN: And where did he and Debbie live? Or Laura, live at the time?

MARILOU SMOKE: They lived in Gully Bay (Ph.).
DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

MARILOU SMOKE: By this time -- because of that accident that we talked about ---

DEBBIE BODKIN: Yeah.

MARILOU SMOKE: --- they were advised that if Debbie sued [Deborah’s husband], that he -- they could get a settlement. And so they bought a house with that.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Debbie and ---

SUE CONTANT: [Deborah’s husband].

DEBBIE BODKIN: --- her brother -[Deborah’s husband]?

MARILOU SMOKE: Her -- her husband [Deborah’s husband].

DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah. So when Debbie left [Deborah’s husband] and then she was drinking a lot and partying. And she happened to come to town one day, called him up, you know, "How's it going?" All that. Then, I guess he had talked to a lawyer and the lawyer said, "Why don't you offer her 500 bucks to sign off on the house."

So he did that and she took the money. And so I was really upset about that because, you know, she wasn't in her right frame of mind. And especially since the accident, you know. So he took advantage of her and I'm glad he went bald but I wish more would happen.
DEBBIE BODKIN: And where were Laura and her brother -- sorry, what was his name?

MARILOU SMOKE: [Deborah’s son].

SUE CONTANT: [Deborah’s son].

DEBBIE BODKIN: [Deborah’s son].

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Where were they living?

MARILOU SMOKE: They were living in -- they stayed with ---

DEBBIE BODKIN: With ---

MARILOU SMOKE: --- [Deborah’s husband].

DEBBIE BODKIN: With [Deborah’s husband]?

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah. In Gully -- in Gully Bay, yeah.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

SUE CONTANT: Yeah.

MARILOU SMOKE: M’hmm.

SUE CONTANT: I think they suffered a lot not having their mom.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

SUE CONTANT: Laura has become a strong woman.

MARILOU SMOKE: M’hmm.

SUE CONTANT: Beautiful woman. She had to deal with many emotions.
MARILOU SMOKE: M'hmm.

SUE CONTANT: You know, not knowing what happened to her mom and she was young. She was what, mid-twenties?

MARILOU SMOKE: Younger than that.

SUE CONTANT: Yeah, she was not even a teenager.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah. That's right.

SUE CONTANT: So Laura went without her in her teenage years.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

SUE CONTANT: So she has all that hurt inside, you know.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Thank you again, both of you, for making it here today and sharing your story.

MARILOU SMOKE: [One sentence redacted – Rule 55].

SUE CONTANT: I think that's because mom's here.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Yeah.

MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah, my mom's spirit's here, yeah.

DEBBIE BODKIN: Yeah. But you're both comfortable with it being public?
MARILOU SMOKE: Yeah.
DEBBIE BODKIN: That's what you've signed.
MARILOU SMOKE: M'hmm.
DEBBIE BODKIN: If there's any other comments, otherwise I'll shut the equipment off?
MARILOU SMOKE: Okay.
SUE CONTANT: Okay.
DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay?
SUE CONTANT: Yeah.
DEBBIE BODKIN: So it is now nine minutes after one.
--- Upon adjourning at 1:09 p.m.
LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST’S CERTIFICATE

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

___________________
Jackie Chernoff

December 18, 2018