National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Truth-Gathering Process

Part I Statement Gathering

Key-oh Lodge

Burns Lake, British Columbia

PUBLIC

Tuesday November 6, 2018

Statement - Volume 572

Margie Abou & Steven Abou, In relation to Joey Hamilton Tom, Tony Tom, Jr. & Destiny Rae Tom

Statement gathered by Bonnie George

INTERNATIONAL REPORTING INC.

41-5450 Canotek Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K1J 9G2

E-mail: info@irri.net – Phone: 613-748-6043 – Fax: 613-748-8246
II
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Statement Volume 572
November 6, 2018
Witnesses: Margie Abou & Steven Abou

Testimony of Margie Abou & Steven Abou .................. 1
Reporter’s certification ................................. 44
Statement gatherer: Bonnie George

Documents submitted with testimony: none.
Statement - Public
Margie Abou & Steven Abou
(Joey Hamilton Tom, Tony
Tom, Jr. & Destiny Rae Tom)

Burns Lake, British Columbia
--- Upon commencing on Tuesday, November 6, 2018 at 9:04 a.m.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: This is Margie and
Steven Abou. Margie's maiden name is Tom. And I'm the
statement taker, Bonnie George, with the National Inquiry
into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls.
We're presently in Burns Lake in the Province of British
Columbia on November 6th, 2018, and it's approximately 9:04
p.m. And today I'm speaking with Margie and her husband
Steven Abou, of the -- what First Nations do you come from?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: I'm from Wet'suwet'en
First Nation.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Can you spell that?


MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Okay, and you reside at?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: The Wet'suwet'en Reserve.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And Wet'suwet'en is also
spelled W-E-T apostrophe, S-U-W-E-T, apostrophe, E-N?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: First Nation, yes.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: First Nation Reserve?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Okay, this is their
truth about the family member. They've been affected by
the case of possible murdered and missing individuals in
the family. So you can start with your story.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: I have three members of my family of Wet'suwet'en First Nation that have been murdered, and the first one was my brother Joey Hamilton Tom.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Joey Hamilton, can you spell Hamilton?


MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And approximately old was he?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: He was 21.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Do you know what year?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: I believe it was in the 80s.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: The 80s?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes. And it was by two young white men, Ronald Larabie and Ronald, Ron, Ronnie --

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Their both names are Ronald?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Ronnie and Ronald. Ronald Larabie and Ron Clooney, or something like that.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Were they sentenced?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Were they prosecuted?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes. And he -- they
didn't -- when he went missing, he went missing in Prince
George, and he was residing with my sister Elsie in Prince
George. And I guess he went to Bingo and he -- to what I
heard, that he won Bingo so he went out drinking, and he
went -- just before heading home I believe he went to the
7/11 on Queensway to get snacks or whatever, and that's
when those three young boys met up with him.

And they asked him if he wanted to party
because they saw that he had booze with him. And they took
him back to his place and they tortured him. They tortured
him so bad. They used hot oil, they put knife and fork on
the burners and heated up and burned him, and they used a
lot of other stuff.

I didn't hear too much of the rest of the
stuff because it was just way too hard for me, to hear what
they were doing to him. But I know that they did torture
him a lot.

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** And how old were you at
this time, when this happened?

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** I'm 46 right now, so back
in the 80s, because I know my sister graduated in '88, so
it must have been '87, '88.

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** Can you talk a little
bit more about how this has affected you since this
happened.
Statement – Public
Margie Abou & Steven Abou
(Joey Hamilton Tom, Tony Tom, Jr. & Destiny Rae Tom)

MS. MARGIE ABOU: I was, I was in high school at that time, and I couldn't even concentrate, nothing. I couldn't you know -- I couldn't be in town. Because we lived 10 kilometres west of Burns Lake here. And it was just really hard to concentrate in school. And back then they didn't have too much help for our community.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Can you talk a bit more about what you mean by not too much help? Is it not too much help in regards to the investigation, or support by Victim Services, or RCMP?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: It wasn't very much support like counselling and through Victim Services. I don't --

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: You guys were never contacted by Victim Services?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Nothing.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And you never had a chance to provide a victim impact statement when --

MS. MARGIE ABOU: I believe my older siblings and my mother did. It took them a year to find out where, where they found him. And they found him at the Heather Landfill site in Prince George.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And how -- a year later?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: M'hmm.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And that was in the 80s
MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes. And once they found out that they may have located his body, I guess one of the RCMP took my mom up there to the site, and she had to identify him through there or something like that. And she was by herself, and that really took a toll on her life too. She wasn't herself for the whole year. It took a lot to, you know, help her get over that. She shouldn't have seen her son.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: So she had been a year later?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: M' hmm.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And with your -- what your brother had endured leading up to that.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: And finally the -- one of the boys, they had got caught because he talked about it, of what he did to my brother. So they -- I guess he told his girlfriend, and his girlfriend told her mother. From there, that's how he got caught. And the other one ran back -- he was from Ottawa or something, or Toronto, and that's where they picked him up, in jail too. Once we were going into trial for court, they would say everything, what they were doing. And I guess there must have been a reporter there at the --

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And this was in Prince
Statement - Public
Margie Abou & Steven Abou
(Joey Hamilton Tom, Tony
Tom, Jr. & Destiny Rae Tom)

George?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: The courthouse, yes.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: In Prince George?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: M'hm.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Were you present in
court at the time?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes, I was. And it was just way too hard for me when I was there, because were not allowed to scream, or swear, or curse, or you know get up and -- you know we weren't supposed to do anything.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Just had to sit there and listen to all those gruesome things.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Sit there and listen. And that was the hardest thing to do, so I have to leave from there. Like there's just -- there was reporters there that wrote down everything, step by step of what they did to my brother. And that got out in a newsletter, and people were just looking at our family, and you know, just kind of saying -- and the RCMP had to take all, take the newspaper off the stands because they didn't have no -- they didn't ask us, our family, for permission if they could put this in the newspaper. So a lot of things were said on there, how he was tortured and everything, and that just really --

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: That was another thing that traumatized the family --
MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: -- another time, let
alone to listen to all the details of what your brother
went through and what your mom had to go through,
identifying him a year later.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: M'hmm.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: That's pretty traumatic.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes it was, especially the
part where you had to sit there and listen to what these
two young boys -- they were 18 and 19 I believe at the time
they did that to my brother. And finally counselling came
and, and processed for the family. And we all did
individual counselling, or we did group counselling. We
did a lot of -- we had a lot of people that were in
prayers, that prayed for our family, prayed over us, and
especially prayed over my mom.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: That was pretty helpful,
to have that support during that time?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: M'hmm. And when they
found him he was unrecognizable because they put hot oil
all over him, so that he would not be recognized. And they
just did so much to him that -- I can't even speak about it
because it's just, it's just like -- it does bring memories
back.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: M'hmm. I really
appreciate you sharing how this has affected you, and
you're sharing your story which will open the doors and
help the Inquiry look at our system, and to make
appropriate recommendations, especially when it comes to
the First Nations people of Canada.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: What made me feel bad, and
sometimes I blame myself for Joey missing, because when he
was living in Prince Charles, it was an SA day that time,
and he wanted me and my brother to stay behind so that he
could bring us shopping, or bring us to the movies, or you
know just kind of spoil us. And we had school so we
weren't allowed to stay. And that's when, that's when -- a
few days we found out that he was missing. So that just --
I hated myself for a long time. And I never told anybody
about this, that I blame myself for his disappearance. You
know if me and my brother stayed as he wanted us to, I
believe he probably would have still been alive.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: That's a pretty heavy
burden to carry most of your life, since the 80s.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yeah.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And I also want to
encourage you to not take the blame on yourself as well.
We tend to live with could have, should have and would
have.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes. I pray about it and
just ask God to help me just take that away. Because every
time, every time you know they talk about missing and
murdered Indigenous people, that's when it comes up. It's
stuff like this that comes up, and that where it just hits
me in the heart.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Because it's such a
personal, personal thing. It's just like opening up your
wounds all over again.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: M'hmm.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Over and over and over
and over again.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: M'hmm.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: For all of these years.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes. But I know that he's
in the arms of God, I know he's happy and he's safe.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And that gives of
comfort. That gives us comfort, thinking about loved ones
that have passed on before us. So this has affected -- a
lot of shame, a lot of blame, and self-respect on yourself?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: M'hmm.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Blaming you -- taking
the toll of blaming this incident, and gave you the could
have, should have and would have guilt that you've carried
most of your life. Can you tell me how that affected you
throughout your life?
MS. MARGIE ABOU: I couldn't go back to school after the news reporters put it on the newsletter -- newspapers about what happened to my brother. Because students in school would come up and ask questions, and say did this really happen, you know did they find these murders, or you know who are their names and whatnot. And just like -- I'd just break right down and just cry and say I can't answer anything right now and I'd just walk out of the school. So it affected my education in high school.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: So the effect is long term?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: M'hmm. Because I know that people in town at Burns Lake, because this is a small town, they would you know look at our people, look at me or my family, like with pity, with I don't know, with sorrow. It's like they want to hug but they were too scared.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: They didn't know how to react towards you I guess.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yeah, they were -- I guess everybody in this town was in shock because everything they have heard of what my brother was tortured.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: M'hmm. You mentioned that you had several members in your family?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes, the next murder was my cousin Tony, Tony Tom, Jr. His nickname was Too Tall,
Jr.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Tony Tom, Jr.?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And his nickname?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Too Tall, Jr.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Two as in T-W-O, or like the number two? Or too, too tall?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yeah.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Like very tall?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yeah, he was tall.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Two Tall, Jr.?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Do you want to speak about him?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: He was living in Edmonton. Like the last time I seen him was at my cousin's wedding in Prince George. And I guess he went back because he was living in Edmonton. And I guess he was trying to come back home to Prince George, so he was waiting for the bus.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: M'hmm.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: And he got, he got murdered at the bus stop by --

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: In Edmonton?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: M'hmm, by a gang of people. They don't even know -- I don't think they
continued the investigation or anything like that. He was age 21.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: What year was that?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: I don't know.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: You can't remember?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: No.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Like in the 80s, or before the 80s, or after the 80s?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: I think it was after the 80s, I think it was in the 90s.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Did they ever find out what happened to him?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: No, that's all they found, they found his body in the dumpster beside the bus depot.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And you guys were able to bring him home and have a funeral for him?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yeah, but I believe it was a closed casket.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: M'hmm.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Same with my brother Joey, it was a closed casket.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: So there wasn't really any closure there because you weren't able to see him, right?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: M'hmm.
MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And that has long term affects on families, when they're not able to have closure, especially when it's something we're not used to.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: I didn't know my cousin too much, but I knew -- but like I knew him enough to know that he was my relative, and he was a really funny person. My brother Joey was a really quiet person.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Can you tell me a little bit more about Joey?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Joey, he would -- he was a hard worker. He always made sure that us kids were fed.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Was he older than you?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Did he have a family?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: No kids nor spouse. He was a single person.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: So having these two incidents early in your life, in your adult life, and not being able to have closure with, with able to be with him, and also not being able to feel that you've been supported by the system, especially with Joey. You stated earlier that there was no support from Victim Services. How do you feel that the RCMP handled the situation? Do you want to speak a little bit about that if you recall anything?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: I believe that then they
did a good job in, you know, locating him. Because usually if a person goes missing they will never be found. So we did a lot of prayers around Prince George and everything. And I believe that back then they did a good job compared to nowadays. Nowadays it's just like they just sit in their office and diddle with their fingers, and you know just sit there and get paid. And that's just how I feel.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: M'hmm.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: But I believe they did a good job when they were searching for my brother, because we had to fundraise or get you know donations and stuff like that, just for the family to search for my brother around Prince.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: So there was a lot of efforts that went into looking for your brother?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: M'hmm.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: So the support by the community and people that supported your family throughout that was -- it sounds like it was quite tremendous?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: M'hmm.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Because that was a big, big job, especially for it being a year.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: M'hmm.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Is there any more you want to share about your cousin and Joey, Joey your
brother?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: I don't know -- I don't recall if Tony had any kids or a wife, I don't recall.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: What was your brother's birth date.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: April 19th, and I can't remember the year, sorry.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Is he older or younger than you?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Younger -- I mean sorry, he's older than me.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Okay. Do you have -- you said at the beginning of our, of our statement of our truth, that you had three family members?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: We've covered two, and you have another one?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: My niece, Destiny Rae Tom.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Can you spell Destiny for me?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: D-E-S-T-I-N-Y.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Rae as in R-A-E?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes, age 21.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Do you know what her birth date was?
Statement – Public
Margie Abou & Steven Abou
(Joey Hamilton Tom, Tony
Tom, Jr. & Destiny Rae Tom)

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Her birth date was -- oh
sor{y, I can't remember. I have too much niece and
nephews.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Okay, that's fine,
that's fine. Destiny Rae Tom, and she was your niece?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes. And she got murdered
in -- I can't remember what year. My mind's just --

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: It was about two years
ago?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: No.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Four years?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Her baby --

MR. STEVEN ABOU: Four or five years.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Her baby was three years
old, and now her baby is eight.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: So five years?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Five years ago.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: So about 2015, about
there?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: M'hmm.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And the person that
murdered her --

MS. MARGIE ABOU: They found him. It was
her, it was her spouse, the father of her child.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Can you tell me how that
affected your family?

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** The family huge time because how, how he hid it for so long, and how he lied about it. And I guess where her body was found beside -- not too far from her car and how she was found. How she was found by her car, we had to stay like 10 feet away or something, and they had the police line and we couldn't pass that line. And we -- us, us family, we wanted to go kind of wake her up, say Destiny get up.

Like when I first -- I was in Prince George when I first about Destiny's death. I was there with the kids and we went there on Friday night. And -- can I start all over again?

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** M'hmm.

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** First of all, I was working at the Band office and Destiny and Angel, they came by to visit me. And they had -- Destiny, Garrett and baby, she was three years old, they came by. I was living with my mom. And me, Destiny and Angel went out for a smoke. And just out of the blue I said you girls, if I ever get married you're going to be in my wedding, and they said sure. And Destiny, she seemed scared because she could hear Garrett come down the stairs.

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** Garrett?

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** Garrett is her -- the
father of her child.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Okay.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Garrett George.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Okay.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: And she was scared. She was scared, she said shh, don't say nothing. And just sitting there having our smoke and he comes out, grabbed a smoke from her, and I just went back in and I was just kind of playing around with the baby. Their baby's name is [C.], and she was three years old at the time. And I was just showing baby off to my mom, and mom was just holding her hand. And they came and visit for awhile, but Destiny she -- you could tell she didn't want to leave. She kept telling my mom engussi, and Garrett was getting mad at her, come on, let's go, we've got a lot of travel to go, hurry up, let's go. She tried to get her baby to say "mom", but --

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And for the record she said engussi, which is in our language, the native language, which means I love you.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes, yes.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And it's spelled -- we have to spell it for the transcript.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: E-N-G-U-S-S-I, and she always said that to my mom, engussi, which means I love you
in our language. And she kept saying that. It's like she
didn't want to leave my mom, she just kept hugging her,
just kept hugging her. *Engussi* grandma, *engussi*. And she
was just -- she ran to the washroom and when she was done
in the washroom she'd go and hug mom again. And she'd ask
if I had a water bottle. I said it's in the kitchen, so
she went to the kitchen, grabbed a water bottle, and then
she was going to -- she was just going to get ready to
leave but she ran to mom, telling mom *engussi*. And that's
the last time my -- we got to see Destiny because she made
her way to -- back to Nadleh, because that's where they
were residing.

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** With Nadleh, can you
spell Nadleh?

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** N-A-D-L-E-H, Nadleh
Reserve.

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** And that's about two
hours or one hour drive from here, from Burns Lake?

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** An hour and a half.

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** An hour and a half
drive.

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** An hour and 20 minutes,
somewhere around there. And so it was Thursday when they
came back. And then Friday Angelica, and Angelica is the
one that's best friends with Destiny. They're the same age
and they grew up together.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Can you spell Angelica?


MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And Angelica is your niece, which is Destiny's first cousin?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes. They were like sisters, they grew up together. They totally loved each other, they were inseparable. And so I took my three kids, and I took my two nieces -- no, my niece and nephew, and then I took Angelica and her two babies with me to Prince George and we got a room on the Friday. We made it on time to do a little bit of shopping. And then I received a phone call from Chenara Tom, who is sister of Destiny.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Can you spell Chenara?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: C-H-E-N-A-R-A.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: A-R-A?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Chenara Tom, which is Destiny's sister?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes. And she was just crying. I said Chenara what's wrong? She goes it's Destiny. I said what's wrong? Destiny, she's gone. I said what do you mean she's gone? And she just kept crying, she couldn't tell me. I said please, I said tell me what's wrong. And I could just hear her crying. And
she goes Destiny's gone. I said, I said how do you mean, I just kept trying to tell her to tell me, what do you mean gone, like dead? And she was just crying. And Angel, she was sleeping on the next bed over, and she just jumped up and she knew what I was saying because she could just hear me talking on the phone. And she was just -- she just started screaming. She knew. She really -- she knew that what I meant was Destiny's gone.

I said -- I asked Chenara, I said where are you? She goes I'm going to go see mom. Destiny's parents were staying at the Ramada. I said I'm going to gather up all the kids, I said we'll go up to Wayne's place. She goes okay, I'll go get them and we'll meet you guys up there. And me and Destiny -- sorry, me and Angelica just kept screaming and crying, taking turns.

And I had to keep myself calm because I was driving the vehicle. I had to really keep myself calm. And I just gathered up all our stuff, gathered up all the kids, got in the vehicle and we went to my brother Wayne's place. And that's where we met up with Andy, Vivian, Chenara and Auntie Ginger, and they had baby with them, baby [C.]. Oh no, they didn't have [C.], I just -- it was just Andy, Vivian, Chenara and Ginger because [C.] was at the Nadleh Reserve with Destiny and Garrett.

I guess party happened that night, and
that's where he beat her, beat her up so bad. I guess he kicked her so bad her ribs went through her heart. And she was internal bleeding inside, and he did her head, kicked it so bad that there was internal bleeding there. And he did a lot of stuff. And it was that too, it was so hard to hear because when we're hearing about what he did to her, it's just like it came back about what my brother went through, and just kind of imaging what my cousin Tony went through, and it was just really hard.

And everybody was just in shock. Auntie Vivian, they had to get their niece to drive. We all left Prince George and we went to Nadleh, and that's when we saw her body lying on the ground there. There's a little bit of snow.

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** Do you remember which month that you would see that?

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** Pardon?

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** Which month was that?

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** It was March.

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** March?

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** Yes.

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** Approximately March 2015, right?

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** M'hmm. And we were all just kind of screaming, pacing back and forth, trying to
call her, trying to wake her up. And we could just see her
body under the tarp. And I could just see her hair, just
like she was being pulled around. I guess they didn't
cover her body -- it was like, sort of like a see through
tarp. You can tell she was badly beaten. You can tell her
hair was just so messy, and how he said where the location
he first started beating her up.

I don't believe in my heart that he did it himself, because for a fact there was a party and this
news, getting ready to pass out so I had to call Chenara
and Andy, come pick her up because we couldn't leave her,
there's an outside party. And three, three people had a
hard time packing her to the vehicle. That's how heavy she
was, even how skinny she was. She was only 120 pounds and
it took three people to carry her. And I believe in my
heart there was more people involved with Destiny's death,
because he told -- Garrett told us where he murdered her,
and then it was quite a ways to where her vehicle was. So
I don't know if there was other people that were involved,
kind of helped. And to me, I just know in my heart.

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** How do you think --
after seeing that, how do you think the RCMP handled the
investigation?

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** Not very good, because
with all the past traumatic that Destiny went through with
MS. BONNIE GEORGE: There was a history?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: A bad history of what he did to Destiny. She was seven months pregnant when she got stabbed three times by three different knives by Garrett, right in Andy and Vivian's place. There was hair all over, there was blood all over.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: So the family knows of obvious history between Garrett with Destiny?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And has it been reported to --

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Reported numerous times.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Okay.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Even one in Prince George when they had their own place I heard of Garrett beating her up so many times. He threatened -- like that's why she was scared to leave him. He threaten to kill the family, he threatened to kill the baby, he threatened to kill her and threatened to kill himself.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And you stated that there was that alcohol involvement in that party she was at that night in Nadleh?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: I'm just clarifying
everything because I'm writing the notes down, and I want
to make sure I have accurate notations here.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: M'hmm. I don't think he
was good -- it was his birthday I believe, and I heard a
story that when they went to the bar Destiny was driving
but she wasn't drinking, and he couldn't even buy her a
pop, he treated her so bad. She went outside for a smoke
and these people said that they saw how scared she looked,
and how she was treated by him, that he didn't even buy her
a pop or anything, but he was buying himself, his brother
and their friend drinks.

And I guess they went back to Nadleh to
party, and Garrett went crazy, so they were just trying to
calm him down. And Destiny got really scared, so she was
kind of hiding behind people, and they told Garrett to
leave and he wouldn't leave without her. And I guess
finally she went to go look for him, and that's when he
probably was waiting for her outside. And that's when that
stuff happened, and I believe -- somebody talked about they
heard screaming but they didn't think nothing of it. And
that's when he was murdering her at that time.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Do you know the birth
date of Destiny, did I ask you that?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: April --

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: But she was 21 years old
when it happened?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: I don't know if it was
April, sorry I can't remember.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Okay, but just so I have
an idea so I can write it down. But she was 21 years of
age?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: So with a long history
of alcohol-fuelled violence in that relationship, you made
mention that it was violent relationship.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: M'hmm.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: How do you think the
system as in Victim Services or RCMP, were they involved
with, with Destiny at all at any point that you're aware
of? Was there any supports for her?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: I believe -- I have no
idea if they had any support for her, but the first time he
beat her up so bad we couldn't even recognize her face, and
she was pregnant at the time. And I guess it was -- at
that time it was my auntie and uncle's anniversary, wedding
anniversary, the renewal of their vows.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: M'hmm.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Auntie Violet and Billy,
and I guess Destiny and Garrett were at home, and that's
when he beat her up so bad. And he made her use a long
coat so she covered her face, and they were hitchhiking back to Nadleh. And they didn't want to go to the dance, because the way he beat her up so bad.

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** To hide her from your family?

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** M'hmm. So Andy and Vivian -- or Vivian went back to the place and she called the cops, because she was calling for Destiny. No reply, nothing. And she had a cell and he took it away so she couldn't reply to it. I guess they were trying to hitchhike back so he could hide her down there until she looked better. And I guess the cops caught them on the highway hitchhiking back, and that's when he got charged for beating her up. And they had to take a picture of the knife marks and take a picture of her face.

I know there's more numerous times that he did that to her. We all kept talking to her, and talking to her. But I guess it's threat of how he -- you know how he always lures her back into his life. And it was just a repeat.

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** M'hmm. Can you tell me what you can remember about Destiny, what kind of person she was?

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** She was really outgoing, she was funny. She never had -- hardly ever had any
enemies. She always helped her mom, she really loved her
daughter. And her and her daughter stayed with me, lived
with me for a few months. And she always made sure she
tried to look -- go towards her goal. And she would find
odd jobs, you know, just find jobs here and there, just to
try to save to go back to school to be a nurse.

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** That's what she wanted
to be, a nurse?

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** M'hmm. She was very
beautiful. And her daughter looks, image like her. It's
like watching Destiny grow up all over again.

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** And her daughter's name
is [C.]?

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** [C].

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** Can you spell that for
me please?

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** [C].

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** And [C]'s last name is
Tom?

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** Tom yes. But we realized
-- like not to say for sure, but it seems like somebody put
a curse on our family for age 21 to be death in our family.
So what we had to do is we did prayer walk, we did a lot of
praying to rebuke that, to pray against that. Just so that
nothing else more happens to our family.
MS. BONNIE GEORGE: M'hmm.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Because Joey Tom, Tony Tom, Destiny Tom, all aged 21, all get murdered.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Has anyone gone to Residential School in your family?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: My dad and a little bit of -- my mom went for three days.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: So there's been some exposure of residential school?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: M'hmm. And the saddest thing, the saddest thing is that Garrett didn't get very much time for Destiny's murder just because it's residential school. And like to me -- I believe they should never use residential because it lessens their you know jail term. And using residential should not be used because, you know a person is person. And if they know what they're doing, if they're healthy, if they're strong, they make themself look good out there, but you know murdering a person is still murder. To me I know that they should get, you know, longer sentence.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: So you feel that the sentence that he received wasn't --

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Wasn't enough at all.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: So your family felt that the system had failed you because of your --
MS. MARGIE ABOU: Because of residential. Because he used his grandma, and how his grandma treated him, and how his mom treated him. But I don't think he was raised by his dad. I'm not sure about that, but I know that he used his mom and mostly his grandmother. And I know for a fact that his grandmother went to residential school, I'm unsure about his mom though. So that's what the system used was residential school.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: So you as the family of Destiny, the victim of a murder, you felt that the system hasn't treated your family very well?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: M'hmm. I believe in my heart because of his past history, he should have gotten life sentence. I know for my brother Joey, one of them got out after 10 years, and the other one's in for life, but he's trying to get parole now.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And that still affects your family quite terribly?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Yes. Because my sister's still attending courts for that.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: So there's a long, long, long history of the system with the Tom family, with all these deaths?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: M'hmm.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And with all that it's
fair to say that the system hasn't treated your family as members who lost loved ones due to, due to murder?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Murdered and missing Indigenous people. People say MMIW, which is missing and murdered Indigenous women, but I think they should change that to missing and murdered indigenous people because, you know, there's a lot of males that are out there that are missing too. Both of all ages. I know there's old people, kids, babies.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And that's the purpose of all this. The whole Inquiry is to look at it fails our First Nations people.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: M'hm.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And this is your opportunity to share, and if there's any recommendations -- like you shared that it should be including males and all ages. Any other recommendations that you would like to -- because this would be your change to make recommendations where people can hear your recommendations.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: Just that they should not use the residential school in court cases, because -- just how the story went of the court and everything that was written down about what Garrett did to Destiny. And then it's just like he got eight years and it's like all this got erased. Just like all this never meant -- means
nothing. And you know I think murder is murder, they should get life.

  MS. BONNIE GEORGE: M'hm.

  MS. MARGIE ABOU: Regardless of race, regardless of gender, regardless of you know religion, anything.

  MS. BONNIE GEORGE: M'hm, m'hm. So that's where the system had failed your family, and it failed you three times, and it failed Destiny's daughter who has to grow up without her mom.

  MS. MARGIE ABOU: And dad.

  MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And dad. Any other recommendations that you see, that you would like to make?

  MS. MARGIE ABOU: That the family should get kind of like -- I know it's not going to bring back the individual that got murdered, I know it's not going to bring them back, but the family should get compensated. Because I know for a fact that Andy and Vivian are not getting very much help for raising their granddaughter.

  MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Has Victim Services been involved with the family?

  MS. MARGIE ABOU: I have no idea about that, I'm not too sure. I know my -- I don't think that my mom ever got -- and I have another one that I forgot to mention. My oldest brother, he was the oldest. And to me
-- I was told that he got murdered, because him and my

cousin [Cousin], him and our cousin -- I can't remember his
name. They were racing on the highway and that's why my
brother got in an accident. And he used to work for the
railway and my mom never got compensated for that either.

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** So that's four family
members, of your family, that's been affected by --

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** There was one more, but
that was before I was born. That's when Destiny's dad,
Andy Sr., that's my brother. He was probably about five or
six. I'm assuming five or six. Like our reserve was right
here, and the mailbox was -- there was a road and the
mailbox was up here. And my brother and -- my two
brothers, they went to go check the mail, and my brother
Andy would -- Ronnie and Andy went to go check for mail and
Ronnie got scared of a butterfly so he went on the highway
and he got hit by a semi, and my mom never got compensated
for him too.

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** So that's a lot of
trauma for your family, that you guys have experienced.

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** My sister Patricia, late
sister Patricia, witnessed that too. So I believe there
should be compensation for, you know, even past deaths for
the family. Because I know families could never, they
could never get rid of that pain, they could never forget
it, they will always vision it when hearing, or seeing, or
even watching a movie. And I know it tears people down,
the way they hear it and see it. I know there's a lot of
other stuff that triggers the family.

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** Is there anything else
that you'd like to share or recommend?

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** No, that's --

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** Any final words that you
want to say?

**MS. MARGIE ABOU:** My heart goes out to all
those people who have endured a family member who went
missing or murdered. And my prayers go out to all of the
families affected by the missing and murdered indigenous
people.

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** Do you want to say
anything?

**MR. STEVEN ABOU:** Huh?

**MS. BONNIE GEORGE:** Do you want to say
anything?

**MR. STEVEN ABOU:** I would like to say
something. I grew up in a bad environment. I've been
raised up from my grandparents, I've been raised up by
[Grandfather], and my grandmother [Grandmother]. I can't
spell her name, [Grandmother]. But they were both in a
reservation school. My grandmother [Grandmother] was there
for seven years, and my grandfather [Grandfather] was there for four years. So I was abused when I was a kid. I was beaten, when I didn't listen I was locked in a box, I was locked in a box for hours. I was knocked out from my grandfather.

And I thought I was safe when I went with my Auntie. I thought I was safe when I was away from my grandparents when I went drinking. But my Auntie raped me when I was a kid. So I went through a lot of things in my life.

And still to this day I went -- I grew up as Catholic. I had a lady I used to really love, her name was Sister Elaine. The priest was Father Brian. And I went to them when I can, and I always got prayers, and I always believed in God with all my heart.

But my grandfather was very abusive to me as I was growing up as a childhood age. Grandfather used to hit me with a Skidoo belt when I didn't listen. But I did always listen, but if there's one thing I don't do for them they'll hurt me. But my grandmother, she didn't hurt me. She stand up for me and she was crippled. She was always there for me.

So I believe the system has failed me big time because there was nobody there to support me. My mother wasn't there, I didn't met my dad in my life. And
then when I was getting older a lot of family passed away
that I know because of drinking. Driving their Quads or
their Skidoos.

So I was very hurt as a childhood age, as a
kid. Raped, didn't know what was happening to me. And I
still forgive them for what they did to me. My Auntie who
raped me, her name was [Auntie A]. I can't remember her
last name.

But anyways my grandfather -- my
grandmother, I don't know how she passed on, but I was away
at the time when she passed on. And I -- I went there, I
wanted to see if something was wrong with her, and I seen
her the last time. I went to her bedroom and she was
coughing up some kind of brown stuff. She told me to run
and get help and ran to get help. By the time I got help
it was too late, she was passed on.

So she was the love of my life, she
supported me in everything. And I never got help from RCMP
or anything. Nobody helped me with the devastation I went
through, I never told anybody about it or nothing, until
this day.

And about four or five years ago my
grandfather passed on. And he got murdered, [Grandfather],
he got murdered from I don't know who, but he got runned
over by a vehicle. And the cops didn't do anything about
it, they're thinking it's [Man 1], but I don't really know.

So my back, it really hurts, it really pains me because of the trauma my grandfather put me through. Because he beat me, he knocked me out, and locked me in a -- it was like a -- I can't even really remember. It was a wide enough box, it was a wooden box, and there's where he locked me after he knocks me out and beat me up. He locks me in there sometimes all day, until he gets sober and take me back out. After he's sober, and I was just traumatized and scared of him.

And it really affects me today. I'm scared, I'm afraid to be out there. Even how big a person that I am, I'm still scared. That's why I couldn't trust the cops, because I'm scared. I'm afraid of people. I can't trust anyone because of the pain and trauma I went through.

But the really hard thing is losing them, even that they hurt me. Because I had nobody else to turn to. My mom, she was an alcoholic, she wasn't really there for me much. Now that she quit drinking -- I still love her, I still forgive, I believe in God with all my heart. I just wish there was support, or I wish there was support there at the time, when all this happened to me.

I've got no one to run to, to ask for help or anything. I've hardly got any family that really cares for me, except for my wife now. That's all I care about
now. Like things is way better now though.

   Just a few months ago kind of bad things
happened to me, I was trying to get help from the police
but they didn't want to help me.

   MS. BONNIE GEORGE: So again it's misconduct
and help from the RCMP, from the authorities when you need
help?

   MR. STEVEN ABOU: Help from anybody. Like I
should be getting compensation from all the trauma I went
through from my grandparents, because like what happened
like from Lejac to them went onto me.

   MS. BONNIE GEORGE: M'hm.

   MR. STEVEN ABOU: It's like all the hurt
that they went through, they put it on me and hurt me
because they've got nobody else to pick on. Like I was
really hurt, and abused, and raped. Nobody was there for
me. It really hurts me today to see all the things that's
going on, how it is. Still to this day there's no help.
Like our own native people against other, hurting one
another for no reason. We're Natives from the north, we're
supposed to stand up for one another, protect each other,
help one another.

   MS. BONNIE GEORGE: M'hm.

   MR. STEVEN ABOU: And I don't see that
anymore. There's people hitchhiking on the road and people
just -- Natives hitchhiking on the road and they don't get picked up when other Natives drive by them. And my other cousin, Barry Seymour, he's been missing for awhile now. I don't know really what's happening with that.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And where is this out of?

MR. STEVEN ABOU: Prince George.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Prince George?

MR. STEVEN ABOU: Yeah. I'm afraid of Prince George completely.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: How long has he been missing?

MR. STEVEN ABOU: At least six years I think, I'm pretty sure. I think he was -- I can't remember 28 or 30, around there. Around the fall time I'm pretty sure, winter, somewhere around there.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: M'hmm.

MR. STEVEN ABOU: I just heard about it in Vancouver, when I was down in Vancouver working, and I heard about my cousin went missing. I said holy cow, what's going in? It's sad for the family because they growed up him. And he was a good hockey player and everything.

And when I didn't have nowhere to go at the time, when I was a little older, I was around 14, 15, I
used to stay with him mom and dad because they were -- he used to be on welfare eh, like welfare care?

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: M'mmm.

MR. STEVEN ABOU: And I was kind of staying there when my parents -- grandparents was drinking, because I was getting beaten, eh? So I was too scared to stay home when my grandfather and grandmother was drinking because I got beat up a lot.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: So you grew up with your aunt and uncle, which is Barry's parents?

MR. STEVEN ABOU: Sometimes I stayed there, when I had the time to runaway. And his name is Jerry Seymour and Fay Seymour. Yeah, there's been a lot of things in my life I went through. And still to this day I'm still alive and I thank God for that. And I just wish our native people could really stand up for one another and support each other.

Like you know I'm still going through a lot of trauma in my life right now. Like why would our own people want to hurt each other, you know, like murder? Like my Uncle Georgie, he got murdered from his own cousin. He was sleeping in his bed and his cousin came in when he was passed out drunk and shot him the back with a .30-30 gun. And his name is [Man 2].

There's a lot of trauma went through my
family, and still to this day there's a lot of things happening. Like even my [Auntie B], she murdered her own husband, stabbed him. I just wish I could get compensation for what happened to me when I was a kid though.

My grandmother, she passed away before the Lejac compensation went through. Like she passed away two to three years before the compensation started. And she'd been there over seven years, and she was abused and brutalized. She -- because of Lejac all her hands were cripple. And even she was cripple she still beat, she still did the hide and everything. That's how tough she was. She loved me with all her heart, but it was my grandfather that was the one that abused me.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: M'hm.

MR. STEVEN ABOU: He was mean because of what happened to him. He was raped, he told me Grandpa [Grandfather], he said some priest rape him, other men rape him. That's why I think he wasn't all there, because of all of that, what he went through.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: M'hm. Is there any recommendations that you would like to --

MR. STEVEN ABOU: What's that mean?

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: What do you think would make things better for us as First Nations people, as you as First Nations people?
MR. STEVEN ABOU: Well I think the best thing is to have a program going to support and make a way for each other to have a safe world to go through, and have a safe place to be when they need help and support, for all the people that's going through hard times. And to be actual cared for and treated like a human being, and have pride for one another when we need help.

We are native people, we're supposed to stand tall, help one another, protect each other. This is what we're here for. We believe in God and Mother Nature. You're supposed to be there like thick and thin, because that's why God made us here for.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: We should never be feared upon, we should never be feared against each other. And our people should never be feared from the RCMP. You know they're supposed to protect and serve. I'm also hearing so much stories, like it's a nonstop what the RCMP do to our people.

MR. STEVEN ABOU: Yes.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: They beat, they kill, they rape.

MR. STEVEN ABOU: They treat us like animals. I was hurt, and I was alone a long time. I tried to ask for help and they didn't came and help me. Like there's no support there. Where are we going to go for
help, where are we going to go for support? How are we
going to trust the RCMP?

MS. MARGIE ABOU: How are we going to trust
each other?

MR. STEVEN ABOU: Where is the love?
Where's our freedom? Where's our beliefs? Everything's
going missing.

MS. MARGIE ABOU: And now we lost our
language, we lost our culture.

MR. STEVEN ABOU: I think the whole system
is failing us.

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Those are pretty strong
recommendations, and if you're done, I want to thank you
both for your time, and I want to thank you both for
participating with this Inquiry. And it is now 10:21.
We're in Burns Lake at the Key-oh Lodge. I'm going to turn
the equipment off now. Thank you.

--- Upon adjourning at 10:21 a.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.

___________________
Sherry Hobe

December 18, 2018