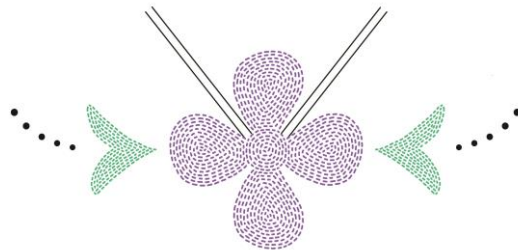


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part I Statement Gathering
Burnaby / Metro Vancouver
British Columbia**



PUBLIC

Wednesday November 14, 2018

Statement – Volume 551

**Sharon Jinkerson-Brass,
In relation to Alvina Brass**

Statement gathered by Terriea Wadud

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Statement Gatherer: Terriea Wadud

Documents submitted with testimony: none.

1 Vancouver, British Columbia

2 --- Upon commencing on Wednesday, November 14, 2018 at 2:53
3 p.m.

4
5 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** My name is Terriea Wadud
6 and I am a statement gatherer with the National Inquiry
7 into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls.
8 Today's date is Wednesday, November the 14th and the
9 current time is 2:53 p.m. We are in Vancouver, B.C. and I
10 have the honour and privilege of sitting with Sharon
11 Jinkerson-Brass who was also an elder supporting the
12 Vancouver public hearings.

13 If you would go ahead and introduce
14 yourself.

15 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Sure. I am
16 Sharon Jinkerson-Brass here at my residence in Burnaby.
17 And I'm a member of Key First Nations and I also have
18 Ukrainian ancestry through my dad. I am a Sixties Scooper,
19 a mother, a grandmother, a survivor, a family member.

20 My traditional name is [speaking in
21 Indigenous language] which means White Thunder Bird Woman.
22 That name was given to me by my Kokum Rebecca Brass. And
23 what I've learned about thunder medicine is that thunder is
24 what our people believed historically the thunder beings
25 brought the ideas of the creator from heaven to earth. And

1 so that when a flash goes off in your mind or the flash
2 that is -- happens when we orgasm, those are the forces
3 that are creating new life and new energy and new being.
4 And that's just one aspect of my name but it's the one that
5 I really have taken about how do we bring the forces from
6 the universe to this earth to create change. So I would
7 say that's what I've taken on in terms of my name.

8 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** That's very powerful.
9 Thank you. So anywhere you would like to start today.

10 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Well, I want to
11 -- I have a few -- a poem I want to share about finding
12 myself but I want to talk about the beginning of figuring
13 out my identity because I was an at-risk youth and tried to
14 commit suicide twice when I was 13. And was miserable.
15 And I never -- I had -- was punished and shamed for forces
16 that were bigger than me. I was such a child of trauma.
17 And the typical story when I came into puberty, all of
18 these feelings, being the good girl just wasn't in the
19 works for me and I couldn't even understand myself. I
20 loved to step out and create havoc. But even at the time,
21 my mind would go, "This isn't good for you."

22 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

23 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** "You're just
24 going to create a whole bunch of trouble." But I couldn't
25 stop myself. The force was bigger than me. And so I was -

1 - what I would describe at the end of the day was lonely.
2 I had people around me but I was one of the loneliest
3 people deep inside myself.

4 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

5 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And so that
6 loneliness was a big part of my life. And in 1985 I met my
7 partner in life and he said your grandmother will remember
8 you. And so I wrote this little piece which is sort of a
9 new beginning for me and who I am today, before I get more
10 into my past. So ---

11 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

12 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- I'm just
13 going to read this piece and -- and I wrote it in 2010
14 because I used to write a column in an art magazine but
15 it's -- it really expresses what happened when I reached
16 out for my culture for the first time.

17 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

18 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** So this is
19 called, "I See You." And you can hear that it's dated
20 because it's a cultural referencing that it -- it talks
21 about Avatar which was -- is so old now but...

22 Witnessing is an important part of
23 Anishnaabe culture. The tradition can be described as
24 beholding a person's essence and telling them exactly what
25 you see and feel. And the reason Blockbuster film Avatar,

1 the hero is finally and totally accepted by the Na'vi
2 people when Princess Neytiri says to Jake, the foreigner, I
3 see you and she gently touches the center of his chest.
4 This is what my people would call witnessing.

5 When I was young I was placed in foster care
6 and later adopted, so when I met my grandmother 27 years
7 later I was completely ignorant of my ancestral traditions.
8 I was a little leery, even afraid, of meeting my people, so
9 once I received information about my birth family, I put
10 off contacting them for many months.

11 The first time I met my partner, Victor Rees
12 (ph.), he said something that really struck me. "Your
13 grandmother will remember you." I never thought about my
14 granny before and this -- before this and the possibility
15 intrigued me. Even comforted me enough to make the first
16 call to my reserve.

17 I spoke briefly to my Chief who promised to
18 make inquiries around the community to see if he could find
19 my family. The next day the phone rang and I heard an
20 elderly woman's voice on the line saying, "Is that you,
21 Sharon?" My grandmother got straight to the point. She
22 wasn't one for chit chat. She said, "I'm going to come and
23 see you." My heart raced at the thought of meeting a blood
24 relative for the first time. I felt terror and curiosity
25 as I fumbled around trying to find my calendar to select an

1 agreeable date for her to visit.

2 "I'm leaving on the bus tonight at 5:00",
3 she said. I stopped looking for my calendar. Several
4 times I rearranged everything in my apartment while I
5 waited for her bus to arrive. Her journey took nearly a
6 day. The moment I embraced my grandmother, I knew
7 everything was going to be all right because she had a
8 natural warmth and gentleness about her.

9 We spent the evening getting to know each
10 other and I found conversation flowed easily as we shared
11 stories about our lives. The moment came for us to settle
12 for the night and I politely asked my grandmother if she
13 would prefer the couch or my bed for the night. My
14 grandmother looked at me and she said she'd been a midwife
15 for nearly 50 years. "I brought most of your relatives
16 into this world and I always slept with those babies on
17 their first night on this earth." I was emotionally spent
18 and tired and I had no idea why she was telling me this
19 story or where she was going with it. "I'm going to sleep
20 with you tonight because you were born far away from your
21 people." And that was that.

22 When I crawled into bed I was a little
23 apprehensive because we were never very intimate in my
24 adoptive family. This closeness was something I longed for
25 my whole life and now here it was. The connection with my

1 grandmother was so strong that it only took a few moments
2 for me to settle in. My grandmother began to caress my
3 face and she softly chanted in my ear, "You are so wise, so
4 smart, so loving and kind." For the first time ever, I
5 exist. I am truly alive and someone can see me. I weep.

6 My grandmother had a phrase for her
7 impromptu witnessing ceremonies. She would say, "Come
8 here. I want to love you up." This meant that she was
9 going to praise you to the high heaven so your spirit would
10 dance inside. My people understood the importance of
11 seeing people for who they truly are and taking time to
12 really behold the glory of every human being.

13 So that was my first awakening.

14 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Wow. Wow.

15 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Yeah.

16 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Thank you for sharing
17 that.

18 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Yeah.

19 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Amazing.

20 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And this is
21 about the personal, spiritual transformation that occurred
22 maybe over -- I knew my granny for seven years, and
23 afterwards it probably take about 20 years for the
24 knowledge to go from here to here.

25 And this is called Silenced. I feel

1 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** There is
2 another one.

3 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** You wrote that too?

4 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Yeah.

5 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Wow. You are gifted.
6 Thank you.

7 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** So that --
8 essentially, that transformation of realizing I was in a
9 cage ---

10 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yeah.

11 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- happened
12 with my granny. And the scenario that unfolded was I was
13 trying without realizing it to contain my granny who would
14 send me out with medicines and say, "Go make a ceremony."
15 And I'd be, like, "Well, what should I do? What do you
16 want me to do? What time -- how long should it go on?
17 What's the proper prayer?" And she silently would just
18 look at me and just nod her head and not answer. And I'd
19 be, like, "Okay." And I would storm out to the woods with
20 an attitude thinking, "That old lady, she is going to tell
21 me and I'm going to figure out the right way to ask her
22 next time so that I get all the information."

23 And when my granny was still alive I sort of
24 gravitated towards people that had rules and it was -- sort
25 of made me feel belonged to kind of, like, understand which

1 hand to hold my tobacco in or all the rules of the red road
2 while my granny was doing the opposite with me. She was
3 trying to get me to fly and listen to my intuition. And
4 she was -- but where she would teach is in the laws of
5 nature.

6 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

7 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And I realized
8 over a long period of time in my own journeying as an
9 artist that I was actually trying to have my granny meet my
10 comfort zone to have a container with rules and that I
11 actually, even though I had the ultimate master teacher I
12 still wanted to have rules to follow so I could be safe and
13 not have to be vulnerable and put myself out there.

14 And so over the years, that poem just is
15 where I suddenly started to be able to release time and
16 just be in the moment and not be so driven by a need, my --
17 my ache to fit in and belong somewhere is what drew me into
18 circles that were not very healthy and almost cult like on
19 the red road. And the more I'm in my power and the more
20 I'm compassionately doing what's good for me so that it
21 doesn't mean judging or being righteous about it but being
22 compassionate towards others and realizing they're just
23 like me. They need -- that want the rules and somebody has
24 run up to me and said, "Don't step there or touch that."
25 Or you know, an owl feather, oh my God, you know, I realize

1 that stuff is all so ridiculous. I've never seen anybody
2 evaporate or somebody harsh to the ends of the earth or a
3 limb drop off because they've made a mistake.

4 Like, and I realize, oh this is all so
5 foolish. It's like the emperor has no clothes. What are
6 we doing? And that was when, through again my artistry
7 practice, that the real -- what my granny was really -- her
8 message was to be sovereign within yourself and don't give
9 your power away to needing approval or necessarily fitting
10 in. And it -- but do it compassionately so that it's not
11 like you're judging others but you're welcoming people
12 around your fire but it's kind of like a -- it's putting
13 yourself out there to be available which is very different
14 from putting yourself out there to be another kind of
15 bossy, art type that is righteous and knows the right way
16 to go.

17 So that's what over these 20 years I think
18 that poem speaks to, like, just being able to not manage
19 and just be the past, the present and the future all at
20 once. I said but when -- the greatest act of sovereignty
21 for me is being in the moment and not sitting there going,
22 "Oh, what's she think of me?" You know, "Oh, I'm going to
23 hide that hat because I can see nobody's got hats on like
24 that today." So -- and you know, when we're unbelonged
25 children through colonization, we are so vulnerable to that

1 ---

2 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yeah.

3 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- insecurity,
4 so I totally get it today. And -- and mindful. I've
5 learned how to nurture myself so that I -- I'm grounding my
6 insecurity in goodness and in healing and light so that
7 that's not my mode -- my mode anymore. So that poem I
8 think is what decolonization is all about. Yeah.

9 So when I was -- the whole reason why I
10 wanted to speak though before I talk more about my own
11 journey is that I was in Standing Rock.

12 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

13 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And the cell
14 phone went off and it was a CBC reporter wanting to talk to
15 me because somebody had told her who I was.

16 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

17 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And she wanted
18 to know if I was aware of Alvina Brass who was a 12 year
19 old girl that was given alcohol by two farmers and the next
20 day she was found dead in a ditch. And it's not said so
21 much in the report of the day but if you read the subtext
22 there was a real minimalization and not a smoking gun, "She
23 was murdered." It's really weird how it was written in the
24 50s. It was like she was found dead the next day and then
25 these young boys were hauled in but they don't call a spade

1 a spade. It's written in sort of this neutral language
2 even though the young boys were sort of called in for
3 questioning, it's -- it's such a -- just the article itself
4 is traumatizing because it's so -- that neutral language
5 just about killed me.

6 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

7 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And I Googled
8 it today before you came and I see now that there's been
9 some more gaps filled in than what I knew up until today.
10 But I really wanted to -- I asked my aunties and none of
11 them knew about it. And my aunties who are alive today
12 were born about that time period. This took place in 1953.

13 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

14 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And how -- it's
15 just another ghost that is unacknowledged. Because I know
16 how deeply our people care and love each other. We're
17 really wounded and we act out a lot but, boy, I know if I
18 was hurt I would have every clan member coming through the
19 woodwork to be helpful. So I know this to be true of my
20 people, as damaged as they are, so...

21 I remember my grandmother telling me a story
22 about her first day of residential school and speaking the
23 language. And her best friend from the rez talked her
24 language and the priest hit her with a two-by-four and she
25 died. My granny figured it fractured her skull. And

1 that's -- you know, from death there's light, not that I
2 want to romanticize that but the point -- reason why I'm
3 telling it is that my grandmother lived with this young
4 girl. I used to feel like I knew her. I knew that this
5 ghost of this little girl was travelling around with my
6 grandmother. For the -- she was nearly 80 and she didn't -
7 - in -- with words but just in her energy painted such a
8 picture of the relationship that they had and my granny's
9 feelings for her and how she never got over that.

10 So why was there so much silence? All I can
11 think of is that maybe in the community there was a lot of
12 Christian judgement that she -- even though she was 12 and
13 raped that she shouldn't have been doing something. And I
14 know that mentality is really -- the blaming the women and
15 kind of if you're caught there's a lot of shaming
16 behaviour. And so that is so tragic because she was -- and
17 her last moments were traumatic. And her dignity was
18 taken. And my people were so afraid and so damaged that --
19 and so challenged with feeling ashamed and not feeling
20 their own dignity that I think it was just too painful to
21 remember. It was easier just to pretend, you know, because
22 she was sort of like a fallen angel or something and that
23 was a bad thing because of all the twisted teachings in
24 residential school.

25 So I just -- I just wanted to make sure that

1 we -- my aunt and I talked about it. And since that time
2 when we've had [inaudible response] her because I want to
3 bring her out of that dark place.

4 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

5 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Because I think
6 that that dignity and the woundedness of our people is --
7 it's time. And when I do that I feel -- I can't describe
8 it. I feel something pass through me that's really, like,
9 gratitude as if there is a force out there that's receiving
10 that intention. And that's really beautiful.

11 Yeah, I think it's important for my
12 community to move forward and heal.

13 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** May I ask your
14 grandmother's name?

15 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Rebecca Brass.

16 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Rebecca Brass.

17 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Yeah.

18 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** And the residential
19 school that she went to? If you know it. If you don't,
20 that's fine.

21 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** I don't because
22 there were three.

23 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Right.

24 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** There were
25 three schools that my reserve went to.

1 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

2 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** It's funny, I
3 probably did know it. Like, I'm getting old enough now
4 that my son was remembering a big birthday bash that I
5 threw for his dad and it's really fuzzy today, so I
6 probably ---

7 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Fair enough.

8 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- did know it
9 but I'm not sure. It might have been Gordon's (ph.) --
10 there was Gordon's, Phillip's (ph.) and the other one in
11 St. Albert's ---

12 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

13 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- that --
14 that various family members went to. Yeah. So but in
15 terms of family violence, when I was young I was acting
16 out. I had started to talk about that as a 13 year old.
17 And I -- one of the things I was doing was running away
18 from home. And so my mom and dad, in their middle class
19 dysfunction, decided that I should go to private school as
20 their solution. And prior to that, even when I was young I
21 was so traumatized physically and I was already sexualized
22 as a baby that I used to hold my breath until I passed out
23 until I was six years old because the trauma had been so
24 deep way back when.

25 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yes.

1 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** So I -- they're
2 not conscious memories that I have. I don't even remember
3 actually doing that but my family used to talk about it.

4 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

5 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And my mom told
6 me that the psychiatrist that I was -- whose care I was
7 under said that I just wanted attention and to ignore me
8 when I would hold my breath and pass out. And my mom said
9 it was always at loud noises. So if an ambulance suddenly
10 went off, a siren, or a bang or even music, she said, "You
11 would just go blue and pass out." And I can't imagine --
12 it was so bad that I was doing that until I was six.

13 And I was so regressed in school. I was
14 diagnosed as mentally retarded in Grade 1. And so I had
15 all the things around not being good enough, not being
16 smart. And I'll just -- I'll read you -- I just -- I'll
17 read you one more little poem about ---

18 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Absolutely. Yes,
19 please.

20 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** "My First Day
21 of School" this is called. And that's a picture of me when
22 I was young. So when I was little ---

23 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Can I bring it up to the
24 camera?

25 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- it was so

1 obvious -- yeah.

2 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

3 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** It was obvious
4 that I was mixed heritage. That was me in Grade 1.

5 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Aw, gorgeous.
6 Beautiful. You're like a doll.

7 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** My first day of
8 school she called me up to the front of the class. It was
9 my first day of school. I was six years old. I'm special
10 I thought. She must be noticing my new shoes, my red
11 dress, the bow my mother lovingling placed in my hair. My
12 heart beat like a drum as I walked passed all the other
13 kids who looked at me with ravenous eyes. I smiled shyly.
14 What did Mrs. Harter (ph.) have to say to me? Little old
15 me. Confident because my dad always called me cuties, I
16 waited for her to speak. "Why are you so dark and your
17 brothers and sisters so blond?" I answered honestly, "I
18 don't know." "Well, I'll tell you why", she snarled
19 through twisted teeth. "You are not really a Jinkerson.
20 You're an Indian in foster care." What was she talking
21 about? I felt the red, hot blush of shame. My deepest
22 pain exposed. Indian. Indian. Indian. Indian echoed in
23 my head. Ghosts danced around me. Their shadows dark and
24 cold. War cries howling. Thunder. I turned from fire to
25 ice. Silence. I walked a trail of tears to my desk. At

1 the very back kids snickered. September 1964. My first
2 day of school.

3 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** So powerful. Thank you.

4 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** So I lived a
5 duality where I was -- my parents both were powerful
6 people. And my mother an artist and my dad an executive
7 for the phone company. So at home I was part of this
8 powerful family and at school I was, like, the low squaw.

9 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yeah.

10 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** In an
11 elementary school where there were only white kids.

12 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

13 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And so what
14 that Grade 1 teacher did was to set me up to be picked on.
15 So I know that I used to hold my breath until I passed out
16 from trauma and then I must have just been getting over
17 that and then I was in Grade 1. So needless to say, I had
18 this duality of the girl at home and then the mirroring at
19 school were so opposite.

20 And my family also had its struggles. My
21 dad was a terrible rager and violent temper. And my mom
22 was kind of -- stood up to him. She was kind of like a
23 women's burning your bra kind of mom of the 60s. So at
24 least I had that going on, it was sort of an empowered mom
25 in certain ways.

1 But -- so when I was 13 and my hormones
2 started to become a life giver, you start I think sub-
3 consciously wondering about your mom. And I think when I
4 was running away I was actually trying to find her. It was
5 my way of -- misguided but I was really looking and
6 searching for someone. And maybe even myself. So you
7 start to run away because you just have very complicated
8 needs all of a sudden as a teenager.

9 And so of course I was shamed and it was
10 treated like a behaviour problem when it was actually going
11 to happen. And I know that from my work with fostered an
12 adopted people that -- that it's -- those hormones start as
13 teens you start questioning your life givers.

14 So that set in motion -- I went to private
15 school. And the good news was is that I met a friend there
16 who is still my friend today. We don't share each other's
17 worlds but thank goodness I always had Elaine. And so when
18 I went to -- my mom and dad made me go to private school
19 for two years so I went from Grade 8 to Grade -- I finished
20 Grade 9 and then I begged to go to public school in Grade
21 10.

22 So then when I was in Grade 10 I was so
23 insecure and afraid because I didn't -- all of a sudden I
24 went from, like, 200 kids in a private school to, like,
25 2,000 kids in a public school and I was totally lost. I so

1 didn't know what I was begging myself to get into and so
2 unprepared ---

3 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yeah.

4 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- for the big
5 overwhelming high school. And so I guess, you know, to
6 predators they recognize a vulnerable kid right away. So
7 that's what happened to me. A girl befriended me and I was
8 just so grateful to go on -- onto somebody. And her older
9 brother was a predator. And so within two weeks of school,
10 so this would be September 1972, she invited me to the bush
11 ---

12 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

13 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- to get --
14 to have a glass of wine. And you're -- you're always --
15 you're just too -- you're stupidly just too cool at 15 so I
16 acted casual and yet I'd never ever had a drink or done
17 anything at that stage because private school was this tiny
18 little cocoon which my mom and dad's goal was just to keep
19 me safe but you are also -- are kept in this naive little
20 world.

21 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

22 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** So -- and I
23 loved to still act out even though I was in that cocoon. I
24 still caused a couple of riots at that private school and
25 totally was mischievous and climbing out of windows and I

1 was precocious. They were so glad to see me go from the
2 private school because I've always had leadership
3 tendencies and I created quite a bit of a ruckus.

4 But -- so anyway, in public school my
5 vulnerability was showing and this girl befriended me and
6 invited me to the bush for a glass of wine. I basically
7 slept for two days. So what -- it must have been one of
8 the early use of sedatives because there's no way that that
9 was normal.

10 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** No.

11 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And I was gang
12 raped. And it was her older brother, [R], who I know
13 masterminded it. And [D], now that I know so much about
14 sexual abuse she's probably getting some of the energy off
15 herself by bringing -- bringing a -- bringing a ---

16 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yeah.

17 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- sacrifice
18 to [R]. And so there were -- I'm not sure but I -- I was
19 so blacked out I have fleeting memories. So there were
20 maybe six boys there I think, about that. And what
21 happened was I went -- came staggering out of the woods and
22 a teacher or somebody saw me and reported it and the
23 principal ended up calling my mom who picked me up. And I
24 slept for two days. There was blood in my panties. My bra
25 was undone. Like, it was so obvious something had

1 happened.

2 And my -- when I awoke -- I mean, I guess
3 maybe even in those days they just wouldn't even think
4 about sedatives but when I finally woke up, of course I was
5 severely punished as if I had been bad. And when -- I did
6 some personal healing and about 19 I called my mom to
7 confront her and I know she just hung up the phone. She --
8 I just said to her, "Mom, do you realize what happened to
9 me?" And she just -- she just was so terrified and she
10 just hung up. And so that was sort of like trying to talk
11 about it. Because for years I even presented it like this
12 funny, light-hearted adventure where we got really drunk
13 and the principal threw me -- like, I was myself in denial.

14 And about 19 was when I started -- when --
15 when I really was awake sexually, and in my power sexually
16 I went, "What the fuck was that?"

17 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yeah.

18 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And what did --
19 "What was going on? What was up with that?" And so I
20 never ever charged them.

21 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

22 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** I think the --
23 and even today, as strong a leader as I am, I just don't
24 know if I can face them. I just don't know if I can. And
25 the other thing I know is, I don't think it's a -- there's

1 [D] who was there as a witness but I don't know if she
2 would be honest and real. But I know that I was so
3 compromised because I don't -- I just have these fleeting
4 memories and things are evolving and changing.

5 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yeah.

6 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And there might
7 be something to it but that's only been happening today
8 when victims are more or less believed and then -- because
9 I just always knew. But I've always felt so guilty because
10 I don't know what [R] has done to other girls.

11 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yeah.

12 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And that's just
13 always killed me because I -- from what I know in the
14 system, I realize that he'd already, in Grade 12, he was in
15 Grade 12, he'd already had a practice, a chilling
16 methodology and a practice. And I know it didn't end
17 there. And that's the part that really gets to me.

18 And I know that [D] moved on. She had two
19 kids. I knew that -- I don't even remember anymore how I
20 knew this but she got married and she had two kids, living
21 in Victoria. And I still to this day, that's the only one
22 I would love to talk to her and say, "You -- what were you
23 thinking" ---

24 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yeah.

25 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- "that you

1 could just set me up like that?"

2 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** How old were you?

3 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Fifteen.

4 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** You were 15.

5 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Yeah. Just
6 such a baby.

7 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yes. A child. You were
8 a child. Yeah.

9 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Yeah, and it
10 was September and so for that whole year those boys bullied
11 me.

12 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yeah.

13 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And made lewd,
14 like, gestures at me to keep me and I lived in -- I don't
15 know how I did it, went to school every day ---

16 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yeah.

17 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- with that
18 kind of bullying going on that was so shaming and deeply
19 just at the heart of who you are and together with that --
20 those experiences in elementary school, it was -- I was
21 just -- I was just so traumatized. And so when I was in
22 elementary school in Prince George, I was just the pariah.

23 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

24 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Kids physically
25 attacked me and made fun of me. And so when we moved to

1 Vancouver when I was 11 I thought, "I've escaped it.
2 Nobody knows who I was." By then I was wearing makeup and
3 I could hide my Indigeneity. And then as puberty set it
4 got less and less obvious and people started saying, "Are
5 you Italian? Are you Egyptian?" Like, it wasn't -- I
6 could disclose if I wanted to.

7 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

8 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And so suddenly
9 to find myself back at square one was mortally wounding.
10 And so I was extremely suicidal, extremely fragile.

11 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Of course.

12 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And thank
13 goodness for my friend from private school, Elaine, who was
14 from a different world. I could live a fantasy weekend
15 with Elaine because she didn't know what was going on and I
16 think we were so shut down I don't even know if I told her.
17 I'm sure I didn't. And so I had that escape on the
18 weekend, thank God.

19 And then in the summer of '73 I remember
20 thinking, "I can't go back to that school." I just was
21 deciding all summer either I kill myself, but I can't go
22 back. And then in that year it was sort of the glam rock
23 era and David Bowie and Alice Cooper, there were all these
24 shape shifting icons out there. Lou Reed who was wearing
25 an earring and lipstick and all these kind of gender

1 bending people that were taking on personas. And so I
2 figured it out. I think I sort of became an unofficial
3 performance artist and I kind of got my shit together.

4 I rolled up my jeans and got some striped
5 socks and found myself platform shoes and I kind of came
6 back to school with this big scarf and people bought it.
7 Like, I went from being this pariah to just somebody, like,
8 being invited to parties and people -- it became another
9 power for me. But a power that I kind of got lost in for a
10 lot of years too ---

11 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

12 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- because
13 then I -- I didn't know where my identity began. It wasn't
14 an authentic self. It was a survival mask. And I became
15 this big kind of trendsetting performance artist in real
16 life with no authentic Sharon shining through, but it got
17 me through that year and I actually even had clout and
18 power because I was so good at become -- becoming this sort
19 of I guess mystical, funny entity at school.

20 So that got me through and I actually can
21 honestly say that I had some really amazing times in that
22 persona. I -- it wasn't really me but it was amazing as a
23 teenager and my -- my son and kids would ask me to tell
24 them one more story about pranks we pulled or parties we
25 had or things that we did. And thank goodness, but I guess

1 that that was my -- all I can think of is it was just as
2 stroke, a moment of genius where part of my -- I believe my
3 Indigenous spiritedness reached out and saved my life
4 because I took myself into another -- into a vision and
5 that saved me as a teenager.

6 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

7 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And I think
8 there's something really empowering and healthy about that
9 too. And that's another one of the medicines when I've
10 worked with young people. I teach them the magic of
11 allowing forces and creative muses to become part of your
12 survival mechanism in a really creative and empowering way,
13 so...

14 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

15 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And that --
16 that just happened to me. So again, it -- there's always
17 light and darkness. My granny held onto her culture
18 because she what a monster the priest was right away by
19 killing that -- her friend.

20 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yeah.

21 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And I began to
22 perform and understand. It was a ritual. I didn't call it
23 that but it was a ritual, a readiness of me putting on not
24 quite a -- a plastic nose, a clown face and big shoes but I
25 was putting on a -- a persona to get me through. And that

1 was -- that was something -- yeah, those avenues of
2 empowerment I think are -- it's amazing. And when I know
3 my cultures how we had sacred clowning and how being out in
4 a vision quest not eating and drinking you have to almost
5 find a persona to cope. Like, it forces you into some kind
6 of superhero, "I can do this." And so imagine that I was
7 so desperate it was, like, a vision quest. That rape was
8 like a vision quest where I had to turn inward to -- to --
9 to live. And look -- and it gave -- something amazing
10 happened.

11 And I always wanted to make a film because
12 those performance artists were always playing with images
13 of life and death. Like, David Bowie killed Ziggy Stardust
14 and Alice Cooper talked about dead babies when he was
15 really talking about child abuse and ---

16 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

17 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- only women
18 bleed. And he would hang at the end of his performances
19 but I always knew that what he was doing was killing the
20 evil so that the good could be born again.

21 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Wow.

22 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And there was
23 something really powerful about and I just drank that stuff
24 up. Like, I loved -- and I always as a film maker wanted
25 to talk to them at that level because I get -- you know,

1 most of the films about those artists are just, like, "Oh,
2 when did you get the idea for this and that?" It's like a
3 linear exploration of their creativity instead of, "Did you
4 realize that you were playing with these big, powerful,
5 shamanic medicines? And what do you make of it?" So thank
6 goodness that those kind of shamans were around. We --
7 they were rock stars but they're shamans to help me to set
8 myself free. Yeah.

9 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Wow.

10 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** So yeah, I just
11 think that that is -- is -- even just saying this, you
12 know, part of the commission, I've never ever in any sort
13 of official setting other than in healing circles and one
14 on one therapy owned my story. And I can just feel that
15 I'm really being my own best friend right now. And that's
16 a really good feeling that I'm actually getting behind that
17 15 year old ---

18 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yeah.

19 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- in a way
20 that I haven't before.

21 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yeah.

22 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Yeah.

23 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** It's very powerful. I
24 have one question. Were the police ever involved?

25 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** No. No. I was

1 never involved. It was like I packed it away.

2 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

3 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And when I --
4 at 19 I started to do healing and at various times I had
5 confrontations with my mother. I don't think I ever talked
6 to my dad about it but it talked to my mom about it. And
7 she did get to a place of being able to not react and shut
8 me down but kind of listen to me. But she didn't have any
9 skills to -- and I didn't either. I didn't know how to
10 shift that. But I do know that my mom -- it used to feel
11 like she was almost getting sick.

12 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

13 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Like, the
14 energy from her that, "Oh, here Sharon goes again with this
15 story. Oh my God. I'm just going to weather myself
16 through it and just not see anything." So that's as far as
17 it ever went that I -- I felt that in my mom and I knew
18 that she was hearing me even though she couldn't -- still
19 always ran away. I knew that she was getting it ---

20 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

21 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- eventually.
22 And that's all I ever did.

23 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay. Okay.

24 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Yeah. So yeah,
25 I think that that's mainly it. And I don't know if the

1 statute -- I remember one time looking up the statute of
2 limitations and thinking it had probably run out but I
3 don't know if that's changed today.

4 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

5 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** But the
6 agonizing thing with my work and the system is knowing that
7 [R] had to be -- is a highly skilled predator and people
8 like that don't stop.

9 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Is that something you
10 would like to find out, if the statute of limitation is up?

11 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Yeah.

12 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

13 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** I know -- I
14 thought -- I've obviously thought about it a lot because I
15 know my school records, if they still exist, will have that
16 incident in there. Because I was banned from school for a
17 couple of weeks. Kind of like the bad girl -- isn't that
18 horrible?

19 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** That is.

20 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** That ---

21 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** And were you -- did your
22 mother ever take you to receive medical attention?

23 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** No.

24 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** No. Okay.

25 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** No. And yet

1 there were bruises and I was really hurt and creeping
2 around the house and things like that.

3 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yeah.

4 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And it was sort
5 of like out of sight, out of mind. Like, stay, retreat.
6 And then the way my family would deal with things was
7 eventually it'd sort of be forgotten. But I do know yeah,
8 that I was -- there's so many even pieces now about the
9 family dynamics that I'm really realizing now as a 61 years
10 old ---

11 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yeah.

12 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- I'm really
13 realizing how many -- there were so many strange dynamics.
14 But the biggest vibe that was around me was that I was a
15 fallen woman. Even similar to that -- why I suspect nobody
16 talked about Alvina because part of the lure around her was
17 that she was fallen, even though everybody knew she was 12
18 and given alcohol.

19 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

20 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** I believe that
21 because -- yeah, everybody else gets a fond recall and
22 their precious -- especially trauma. I could -- there's so
23 many children who died in my family from trauma.

24 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

25 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And they're

1 remembered in a treasured way, so why is there this big
2 invisibility. Why doesn't she exist? It's because she was
3 the fallen woman. So at some level they were actively
4 engaging in blaming her. And that's what happened to me.

5 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yeah.

6 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Yeah.

7 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

8 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** It's weird. I
9 never put the parallels until just now between -- I was 15
10 and she was 12 but it's the same -- that's chilling. I
11 just only now realized why her and I are so connected.

12 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** And you -- and you
13 shared her today and -- and given life, you know. She's --
14 she's not a fallen girl. She was just a child.

15 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** No. Absolutely
16 not. And neither was I.

17 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Exactly.

18 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And so thank
19 goodness I did some healing work. Starting at a really
20 young age I -- I've done a lot of work on myself. And I
21 was already starting to speak my truth at 19 to my mom as
22 she's hanging up on the phone. But I started to really
23 look at things. And kind of turn it around a bit because
24 everybody -- because I've always been a bit of a maverick
25 and kind of the notion that I am kind of the messed up one

1 in my family.

2 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

3 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** I know that I'm
4 actually the most authentic one of my family. And that
5 when you have that much trauma as a little kid and they
6 plunk you with a middle class family that has high
7 functioning expectations and rules and you're damaged, it's
8 not going to work out. And that's another thing from
9 working with kids that I know that. You can't put kids
10 through a meat grinder and then -- and then expect that
11 they're going to just adjust to normal life.

12 But you know what -- where I'm at today too,
13 I am so grateful that I'm a coyote and that I was inspired
14 by people like Lou Reed and Alice Cooper and I could see
15 the bigger themes working in their art. And could
16 understand how what I was doing and made the choice that
17 that art was going to save me.

18 And so that is -- I'm so glad I'm not --
19 like, my sister in my adoptive family is so shut down and
20 so righteous and so good all the time. To me her life is
21 like a beige wall. I would never want to be that person.
22 Not that I'm saying I think everybody needs drama and
23 crisis and hurt, but as far as my family goes I'm just so
24 glad that I'm not one of those shut down scaredy cats
25 afraid to have passion and fire and to, you know -- and in

1 terms of public, I've made a point of talking about all of
2 these issues.

3 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

4 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Because I
5 realized part of the privilege I had too was having access
6 to resources and learning enough about life to have --
7 being well paid and being able to manage. And so I feel
8 like the greatest legacy I could leave is investing some of
9 the resources back into my community and with my people.
10 And actually, I get such richness. So I started -- I've
11 just done a lot of things to advocate for changes in the
12 laws so that all kids could get access to their records.
13 All of these things I've been a part of and the big secret
14 is it's hard to tell who benefits the most because I've
15 loved so much passing the light along to -- and the fire
16 and in saying to kids, "You're not bad. You're not wrong.
17 You've been given this hell hole to grow up in but there
18 really is magic just over the mountain. There really --
19 that's true."

20 And so it's been -- I've been so fortunate.
21 And today I have kind of like a little -- I have people
22 going back to the 80s that still track me down and say, you
23 know, I want you to meet my child or -- and Victor was
24 like that too. We were like these two forces that met.
25 And one -- one of the greatest stories I -- I have some of

1 them too, but Victor was down at the LAX airport, he'd been
2 doing some storytelling for some tribes south of L.A. And
3 in the -- in the early 80s Victor was living up in Prince
4 Rupert and he rescued this kid that was living in a little
5 Volkswagen. He was 13. And Victor -- Victor -- his name
6 was J.T. and Victor brought him home and gave him a roof
7 over his head. And Victor's best friend was a psychologist
8 and got him help on multiple levels.

9 So Victor was down at the LAX and, I don't
10 know, 25 years later, and he looks up the hallway and he
11 sees this figure with a baby stroller coming towards him
12 and he said, "That looks like J.T." And sure enough he got
13 closer and it -- it was him. And here they were at the
14 L.A. airport meeting each other and -- and J.T. introduced
15 his wife to Victor and said, "This is Victor Rees . He's
16 the one that found me in that Volkswagen when I was young
17 and gave me a home and looked after." Because Victor --
18 although he was placed in care, Victor always was there.
19 He was his go-to person until he graduated.

20 And then he join -- and Victor said, "So
21 what are you doing now?" And he said, "Well, I joined the
22 U.S. military."

23 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

24 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** "And I'm an
25 aeronautical engineer." And ---

1 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Wow.

2 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- he was
3 telling his wife and then he said, "Victor, I'm so honoured
4 to meet you because my wife has heard all about you." And
5 then he said, "Victor, meet Victor." And he said, "I named
6 my son after you." And so yeah, I love that story because
7 it's just so ---

8 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Powerful.

9 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- beautiful.
10 But -- but I have people in my life like that too that they
11 track me down and come to see me because yeah, whenever
12 you're able to say is jumping jack flash is alive and well
13 in you too, then it's amazing what happens to people.

14 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Can you share more -- so
15 you spoke a bit about, you know, all of the wonderful work
16 you've done with kids in the foster care system. And off
17 camera we spoke a little bit about some of the wonderful
18 things that you've been involved with. And part of the
19 intention of this process is also to identify and hear from
20 family members and survivors what is working. You know,
21 what -- what can you identify through your vast experience
22 as -- as working and helpful to Indigenous people?

23 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Well, I think
24 the hunger and the journey is towards authenticity and
25 identity. And drumming and beadwork are part of -- like, a

1 physical manifestation of identity.

2 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

3 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** But where I see
4 that identity even goes to the core of our being is through
5 rite of passage. And rituals that reach down into the very
6 genesis of our being. And because they're dramatic moments
7 that are filled with all the joy, all the what happened and
8 what might have happened and what could happen when those
9 forces come together.

10 And I'll just share a little bit about a
11 ceremony that I -- so more and more I have been getting
12 braver and more saying what it is that I'm doing even
13 though I've been creating rituals like that for camps and
14 encounters with people for years ---

15 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

16 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- but one of
17 the things -- I was a speaker at the Truth and
18 Reconciliation Commission in a tent. And there was about
19 700 women.

20 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

21 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Mostly
22 Indigenous. And that was after that big TRC walk from
23 Georgia Street all the way to the PNE and they asked me --
24 and I was an afterthought by the way too because they
25 realized they didn't have any women speakers.

1 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

2 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** So this is 2013
3 and it was overlooked to invite a matriarchal presence. So
4 myself and three other people were invited to speak. And
5 they had to put up a tent because all the venues were
6 taken. But needless to say, there was about 700 women.
7 And before I shared about matriarchal wisdom and teachings
8 I asked them, "How many of you had a rite of passage
9 ceremony when you were born?" And of the 700, maybe 13, 13
10 women ---

11 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

12 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- put up
13 their hand. So maybe there were some more that were
14 somewhere shy, who knows, but that's appalling. Then I
15 asked, "How many of you had a rite of passage when you got
16 your first cycle?" Maybe seven hands went up. So half of
17 from being born. And then I asked, "And how many of you
18 here had a ceremony when you were -- became a crone or a
19 teacher or a wisdom keeper? You were no longer able to
20 give life but now you were a keeper of the ceremonies and a
21 teacher and a mentor." Nobody. None of that was
22 celebrated.

23 So I went home and thought about it and what
24 manifested was the idea of -- it came to me in a flash. I
25 put tobacco down and asked what to do about this and I

1 realized the only way we could have reconciliation for
2 grandmothers is to repatriate their umbilical cords.

3 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

4 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And how would
5 we do that I'm thinking? And I've been -- I've done a big
6 -- a lot of work with cedar bark so I got a friend's of
7 mine, Avis O'Brien (ph.), and we figured out a way to twist
8 cedar bark to make a coil like an umbilical cord naturally.

9 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Wow.

10 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And then we got
11 crystal beads to put on the end to symbolize the water in a
12 mother's womb. And then we wrapped a little copper wire
13 around that for the blood of mother earth. And so Avis and
14 I developed a template and then I went to Britannia
15 Outreach School. And I worked there with the youth other
16 years and the teacher said to me, "Sharon, these kids are
17 not like the kids the other years." Like, she said,
18 "There's the panic button if you get into trouble", and
19 then she left me with these kids. And I am just, like,
20 "Okay, kids, we're going to create some medicine for your
21 grandmother."

22 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

23 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And the minute
24 I said that these kids melted. They worked so hard.
25 Because I just showed you it was a very simple technique.

1 And you could hear a pin drop because these kids were being
2 asked to do -- to create some medicine for their
3 grandmothers. I didn't have to worry. I could have had a
4 nap and they would have been finishing -- finishing their
5 work because that resonated with them. They were being
6 asked to help.

7 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yeah.

8 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** They were being
9 cast as the -- the shamas making the medicine for grandma
10 and I didn't -- like, when the teacher came back she almost
11 passed out because she couldn't believe these were the same
12 kids. They just loved it. And I brought a friend of mine
13 and she drummed and sang to them and they were just purring
14 like kittens.

15 And they made this big basket and then I had
16 a feast at the Friendship Centre and I got some of those
17 very kids and I put a veil over them to represent the
18 spirit world and they brought these baskets into -- I
19 darkened all the Simon Baker (ph.) room, which is a
20 circular room, I darkened it and just had it lit by
21 candles. And then in walked these glorious teenage girls
22 carrying these baskets with the umbilical cords on and I
23 put them in a veil to get them -- help them get into
24 character and be spirits bringing in these umbilical cords.
25 And I said to the women, "For some of your mother might be

1 really painful and so you might think of this as your
2 connection to the -- your first holy mother, the earth. Or
3 it could be a connection to the universe. Or it could be
4 anything you want it to mean if mother is too painful."

5 But that was our first holy connection to
6 beingness. And those cords go back and back and back all
7 the way to the first one. "So some of you might want to
8 bury them, some might want to put them in trees. Some of
9 you might want to keep it in your bundles. Some might want
10 to throw it in the water. It's up to you. And take this
11 as your medicine and your connection."

12 And I just did a big ceremony, another one,
13 out at the log house this past weekend and now in Kwantlen
14 First Nation.

15 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

16 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And now they
17 want me to come and do -- do two -- they said, "Can you
18 come back in -- in the spring and in the fall and do two
19 ceremonies?" And one fellow there just wept and said he
20 felt his mother right there with him. Because we have --
21 since that first ceremony we've evolved a bit, even more of
22 a -- a ritual ---

23 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

24 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- around
25 gifting people. They're really making it a big moment

1 whereas the first time the girls took around the baskets
2 but now we've evolved the process even more. And another
3 time in another time in another group on the downtown east
4 side there was this big biker chick and she had those kind
5 of glasses that tint in the dark, so for all the times
6 she'd be coming to the groups that I was running I could
7 never see her eyes.

8 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

9 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And we did a
10 healing retreat out at Chehalis reserve in the summer and I
11 repatriated the umbilical cords there and we created this
12 whole river, like, with rocks to this blanket where they
13 stood to receive their umbilical cord and each woman that I
14 gave them to, I looked into them and I said, "You're so
15 creative and amazing and I can see that you love your
16 people and that your beauty is inside and out. And I can
17 feel what a good listener you are." And so I honoured
18 their essence just like my granny did when I first met her.
19 And this biker chick, that sounds so derogatory but I don't
20 mean it like that but that describes ---

21 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yes.

22 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- her persona
23 to ---

24 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Yeah.

25 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- you, when

1 she hit that blanket she took off those glasses so I could
2 look her right in the eye because she wanted all of that
3 medicine for herself.

4 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

5 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And that
6 absolutely took my breath away that she trusted that much
7 and wanted -- her little kid wanted to just be seen and
8 that she would take down the barrier between herself and
9 the world for the -- a moment. And so that just describes
10 the -- I think that we need to do this rite of passage for
11 everybody.

12 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

13 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** But I think for
14 women who have been so under sieged and been so given the -
15 - the slut/bitch labels, that we need to replace that with
16 empowered matriarch that's filled with the fires of a
17 thousand dances before we came to be here. And to have
18 that acknowledged that you are the result of thousands of
19 prayers over Turtle Island and thousands of rituals, you
20 carry that in each part of your being. And when it's --
21 when there's something really sacred and connecting like
22 that umbilical cord, there's a magic and that's what I
23 think -- where I know that the work that I've done has been
24 so compelling and helped me every step of the way and then
25 I know it's really working because I know I am learning

1 about my vulnerabilities and my shortcomings and owning
2 more of my dark at my light as a result of doing this work.
3 And so that tells me it's in balance.

4 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay. Do you -- what
5 would you need? Are there any needs that you could
6 identify so that we could have more of these rites of
7 passage ceremonies?

8 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Just the
9 resources to ---

10 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

11 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- for the --
12 for the time it takes and the running it because I feel
13 like I'm just getting started. That there's lots of
14 variations and opportunities to develop sacred rituals.
15 And those primary times -- because right now, I mean, we're
16 so colonized that a lot of programs that are healing give
17 people certificates.

18 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** That's right.

19 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And what -- a
20 certificate is -- like, communication skills or post-
21 traumatic stress, all these tools that we use don't take
22 root because there's no identity. Like, we're dealing with
23 people that have been under siege and so it's our identity
24 and our sense of self and -- and separateness and
25 sovereignty that things like communication skills or post-

1 traumatic stress can anchor themselves in.

2 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

3 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** So here we are
4 with people under siege learning tools but they just kind
5 of slip through you because -- because there's no grounding
6 there. Or little is challenged I would say. Not -- not
7 none but it's really challenged and easily -- it's fragile.
8 There's a fragility around identity and most of us are
9 filled with doubts about what Indigeneity is. And so I
10 really believe that people who know who they are don't have
11 to be taught communication skills or how to do post-
12 traumatic stress like the colonizer's models. I think it
13 comes naturally.

14 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

15 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And that we'll
16 -- we know what to do. And also, in the area of offenders,
17 I think -- I've heard many -- you know, having worked with
18 very powerful people, they've said to me, you know, "We
19 really couldn't do much in certain villages. All the
20 adults would go to jail."

21 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

22 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** That's the
23 reality. And -- because of where we're at. So clearly the
24 reconciliation and building up -- loving people up so that
25 their default way of coping or having power begins to shift

1 and change. Because I do know too that in sexual
2 exploitative relationships there's more going on than just
3 the sexual abuse. There's real love. There's real
4 relationships. There's even real goodness. And 20 years
5 ago they would have marched me in front of a firing squad
6 for suggesting that that might be true.

7 And so we need to really use these medicines
8 to -- in those -- for the darker things that are going on
9 in our community. But I really think by celebrating
10 people's existence and where they're at in life, when your
11 spirit knows where you are, it has a place inside itself
12 and that's what rite of passage does. It gives -- it opens
13 up the room for our spirit to be a more prominent part of
14 our essence.

15 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

16 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Yeah. So boy,
17 if I have -- you know, I also think too that on an -- even
18 what we were preparing to do with Big Sky with the mass
19 dance and dances that actually have some relevancy, because
20 you can see colonization, and this is one of the beliefs
21 Vic and I had that the mass dance had become almost
22 stagnant and lost if you will, the power of it, because so
23 many of the dances were minimal. And Victor really felt
24 that some of the charisma and natural movement had been
25 volume way turned down because of the overwhelming forces

1 that were -- were against it.

2 And so I would love to see our full on
3 creativity with those things. And there's a lot of
4 traditionalists that balk at those notions but I think it's
5 really important. What's more important, saving
6 grandchildren or honouring things that may not have even
7 been true anyhow? And that's where -- where I am totally
8 all for finding a -- a cultural container that is relevant
9 that addresses urbanization and drug abuse and -- and
10 sexual abuse and the diseases, AIDS and mental illness that
11 we're faced with today.

12 And so that's where if we're practicing
13 something just because that's the way it's been done, like,
14 it's just, like, are you -- you know, like, I have no
15 interest in a stagnant static reality because I know
16 already on my -- like, on my own reserve I -- I have a
17 bunch of friends that clowns with Cirque de Soleil and one
18 of them a very talented clown had an anatomically correct
19 buffalo built by brothers in the institution.

20 That's another thing, we used to volunteer
21 to go in the institutions. So it was 18 feet long, which
22 would be, I don't know, at -- from this wall to that wall
23 and that much high. And it was this big, white buffalo and
24 we brought a flatbed truck trailer to my reserve for the
25 culture camp and inside was this glorious buffalo. And

1 when you put the -- her -- her outside coat and you light
2 it from the inside it looks like a giant, white buffalo
3 moon. It glows like moon -- like a moon.

4 And we brought it home and started to -- the
5 first thing that always happened at our culture camp is the
6 elders would start to talk about residential school and all
7 the kids would take off and go into the bush and get
8 mischief. And I thought, "I can't stand it." So that's
9 why I brought these clowns with this thing and I knew
10 better than to put up posters. What I did was one of my
11 friends had a bear regalia and we -- like, a full on bear
12 outfit with a mask, a bear mask that my husband had
13 actually helped carve, and she just jumped in and out of
14 the bushes when cars went by because we knew that getting
15 everybody's curiosity and excitement and starting rumours
16 on the reserve -- and the funny thing is that everybody
17 sort of knew that I was probably behind it, this bear that
18 was jumping out.

19 Anyway -- what was I going to say? So then
20 we had these kids walking stilts and learning some circus
21 skills.

22 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Wow.

23 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And pretty soon
24 in the -- what to me had become a very kind of -- not --
25 self indulgent sounds too harsh and too judgemental, but

1 people lost in their pain. The elders gradually started to
2 come to our camp because we were -- and my uncle -- and
3 this is where my uncle tried to say that it wasn't -- it
4 wasn't good medicine, that what I was doing, it needed to
5 stay traditional in the camp, so he was exerting his kind
6 of red road powers to make what I was doing all bad and
7 wrong.

8 But it didn't stop me one little bit. Like,
9 I just kept going with the stilt walkers. And then another
10 time my friend and I, we went around Calgary and got tickle
11 trunks full of Elvis Presley paraphernalia and so we
12 dressed -- one night we dressed all the kids up, their
13 grandkids up in different, like, Elvis, the leather Elvis
14 and the Las Vegas Elvis and they were going around the
15 camps as these Elvis Presleys and that just got big laughs.

16 And I could see my people becoming in the
17 moment. They were present. They wanted to share and all
18 of a sudden when their grandchild was representing a
19 direction with the regalia that we had for the stilt
20 walking, the grandfather would start to share about the
21 medicines and the self direction. So it -- it even sort of
22 had this organic culture sharing where -- whereas normally
23 because of residential schools, like, "Okay, shut the
24 door", you know, and, "Don't tell anybody but here's some
25 of the cultural teachings", but they just seemed to be

1 coming out and flowing as opposed to that other energy.

2 And so my uncle and I, the sad thing is we
3 had a big falling out and he was kind of the spiritual
4 leader of the camp and -- but that's how much I believe and
5 had to find my own sovereignty separate from those red road
6 warrior mentality type thing that want to keep everything
7 how it was and -- and you know, and I know too, people --
8 when I go home, "Oh, you're the one that brought that big
9 buffalo." You know, like -- like, you get remembered for
10 being a bit of a maverick too.

11 So I'm really glad because I know some of my
12 cousins who are good little red roaders, they -- nobody
13 ever remembers anything because they're just so good. So I
14 think of myself sort of as a bit of a sacred clown.

15 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

16 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** So I'm not
17 holy, always serious. But in those moments of needing to
18 hold holy light for people, to witness them, the essence of
19 my granny I feel just comes through me. Like, her energy.
20 But that's what -- that's where I would take our
21 programming because I think too when you create ceremonies
22 and you start to build community bundles, those bundles
23 represent our lives and our identity.

24 But those bundles can't be pipes that other
25 people can't touch or that you're made to feel ashamed.

1 They've got to be something that really you can embrace.
2 They're ours. We've made this magic. This is our bundle.
3 Like, that's the kind of empowering energy I think is
4 missing. We -- I'm not saying throw away our pipes, but I
5 remember my granny telling me about pipes being buried with
6 people and I really rejected it and thought that that is a
7 kind of colonizer idea but now I'm learning more about
8 being in the moment, I totally understand why they did
9 that, so we didn't have things that we coveted more than
10 feelings and spirit. You had to be in the moment, you had
11 to make your own bundles, which today makes sense to me.

12 So now that's what I'm saying, my granny
13 said things to me but that at the time I was, like, "Oh,
14 you're hurting my ears. Don't talk about burying bundles
15 with people." But today I go, "Yeah, that makes sense."
16 So that yeah, we have to be in the moment then. We can't
17 be trying to emulate something that doesn't exist anymore.

18 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

19 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** So anyway,
20 that's -- I feel like I've said a lot and what I'd like to
21 -- unless you have other questions.

22 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** No, go ahead.

23 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Because what
24 I'd like to do is just close my session with a last bit of
25 writing.

1 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay. Of course.

2 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** I'll read you
3 this one poem first. This one's called "Lateral Violence."

4 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

5 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** "Somewhere deep
6 inside a truth bloomed that her hurt became my betrayal and
7 my betrayal became her hurt. And so goes the story of
8 mothers, daughters and granddaughters." Yeah, that one's
9 called "Lateral Violence."

10 But here's the one I want to close with.
11 And I want to thank you. You've been such a beautiful
12 witness. And when I look at you and how young you are I
13 see what a powerful matriarchal presence you're going to
14 be. And you are going to change things for children and
15 grandchildren. Yeah. I know that about you.

16 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Thank you.

17 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** This one's
18 called "Turning."

19 "Into the vast plain of dark empty, my
20 spirit explodes. Motion, movement, white light spins,
21 spiral, turning around. A translucent sphere emerges.
22 Delicate. Easily injured. Green grass. Fresh, sweet
23 softness covers her ground with protective beauty. Where
24 white strawberry blossoms bloom and gentle winds dance the
25 grass. Where not need baby deer take their first steps.

1 In this place where the river flows with emancipating,
2 clear, holy water and red sparkling fire burns warm and a
3 gentle eagle feather wind lift the sparks skyward. In this
4 place where my younger self rests and my old one comes for
5 protection. Here is where I rise."

6 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Wow.

7 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Yeah.

8 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** I just want to say thank
9 you so much. For me it is such a gift to witness and hold
10 space for everything that you've shared today and I really
11 feel like this is why we are told to connect with the
12 matriarchs and with the elders and with the grandmothers,
13 you know. Because there's such an infusion of love and
14 knowledge and wisdom to be had if we open ourselves to do
15 that. So thank you very much.

16 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Well, it's been
17 an honour having you here. What a gift. And yeah,
18 hopefully we'll -- I know we'll see each other around the
19 community and I know, boy, if I had the opportunity to -- I
20 don't think it's bad to have a struggle but, boy, just
21 unleash me in a whole group of other sacred clowns that I
22 know and we would -- we would wreak havoc on the territory
23 and really shake things up because right now, what's going
24 on on the red road, although glorious in many ways, and I
25 love sweats and I love the majesty of our dances, there's a

1 real limitation to it too and not enough of our kids are
2 there or see themselves as part of it.

3 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** No.

4 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And same with
5 pot latches. And we have to realize that that's the road.
6 And it's really important if we're great democracies like
7 we say we always were, then they're voting and we better
8 realize that that's the truth and we better find a way to
9 have more of them counted in.

10 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Absolutely.

11 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** And that's
12 mostly why I'm doing what I'm doing because I see the --
13 how ridiculous it is for some of our mostly male elders but
14 female elders too that are sticking to the hardcore this is
15 the Olympics and you better get it right, and there's
16 winners and losers and people who are ashamed and all that
17 stuff that's going on right now.

18 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** And like what you're
19 were speaking to earlier about that vulnerability and
20 really wanting a sense of belonging, you know, so young
21 people seeking out that with different communities and
22 elders and ceremonies and - and are we doing it in -- in
23 the best possible way for the future generation.

24 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Totally. And
25 there's a real place -- there's needs to be confident

1 leadership. And I think in fairness, the residential
2 school and stuff has made people kind of cling to the
3 status quo as a way to keep safe. But really, spirituality
4 is about being in the moment. It isn't about reciting --
5 like, that's what's so dead about the Lord's Prayer is that
6 you're not -- you can be anywhere in your mind and recite
7 it. You don't have to be connected to spirit. And -- but
8 a lot of our ceremonies are getting to be recitations,
9 repetitive and people are clinging to it almost like an --
10 you know, when I get to run sweats and do things my own
11 way, they're creative and collaborative and anything could
12 happen. I tell people that, like, anything might happen
13 here in the sweat lodge so, you know, run out, beware.

14 And -- but they're the most magical things
15 because it's so in the moment and natural. And there's
16 enough form there that is still grounded in the ancient
17 practices. So you don't throw the forms out and --
18 completely but you allow for people to see themselves in
19 what's going on in the moment in a really collaborative
20 way. That's really important.

21 So yeah, we've lost the fun. It's supposed
22 to be fun. And that's how it was with my granny and I kept
23 ---

24 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** So true.

25 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** --- wanting her

1 to be more serious because that's what -- what my thinking
2 was then, right. But she was a lot of fun. And see, my
3 granny, she can have a glass of whisky if she wanted to.
4 Like, she just was a sovereign person. She wasn't, like,
5 "Oh, if you're this way then you got to wear skirts and
6 you've got to, you know, no alcohol and nobody can" -- you
7 know, it's almost like born again Christians or something.
8 Like, it's a real sickness. And it's not like, "Oh, let me
9 -- tell me -- let me hear who you are." It's all, "I'm
10 going to hoist all my values onto you and you're going to
11 do that." And I just -- yeah. It's really not -- not
12 healthy.

13 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay. Yeah. And just -
14 - just to close, out of my own curiosity, you've mentioned
15 sovereign and -- and it's in -- you speak to it in terms
16 of, like, in relationship to yourself, right. What -- what
17 does -- what does that mean to you to be sovereign within
18 yourself?

19 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** It's like
20 autonomy but with a greater sense of -- sovereignty to me
21 implies membership in a nation.

22 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Okay.

23 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** But also that I
24 am listening to my spirit and actualizing all of my being
25 in -- in an authentic and immediate way. And when I'm not

1 sovereign I'm afraid. I'm scared. I'm trying to fit in
2 and survive. So to me, sovereignty is being, like, I know
3 who I am and what I want in this moment. And of course it
4 means too that you're part of fitting in and making --
5 respecting everybody else's sovereignty in the room all at
6 the same time. But yeah, when I'm not sovereign I'm
7 afraid. When I'm not sovereign I'm compromising and losing
8 my voice. When I'm not sovereign I'm not sure who I am.
9 And I'm judging who I am as not being acceptable or
10 presentable so I'm going to pretend. And I grew up without
11 any sovereignty for years and years and years.

12 So that's what my granny was like, "I just
13 love you", you know. And I'd be, like, "Well, tell me how
14 to be." And she'd be, like, "Well, you tell me how you
15 want to be." And I kept, like I said, just trying to
16 cleverly trick her so she would give me the rules. Like, I
17 just wasn't ready yet because -- because I was still young.
18 But -- so sovereignty means that -- that -- yeah, and I
19 believe any girl who knows who she is and is honoured for
20 who she is is not vulnerable because you -- you're
21 listening to your intuition. And most women have been
22 taught, well, the rules are right, daddy's right, mommy's
23 right, I can't be right. And that's what gets people into
24 trouble.

25 And so now with sovereignty, when I get an

1 intuition, I really listen to it and honour that intuition
2 and I don't make light of it or think, "Oh, maybe it's just
3 me." And you know, "I'm kind of cranky today so it must be
4 me." Like, I just listen to my intuition and whenever I
5 don't I pay a price. I'll put it that way.

6 So that to me is what sovereignty is. Does
7 that resonate for you?

8 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** Absolutely. Absolutely.
9 Yeah, it makes sense with what you were sharing about the
10 rites of passage ceremonies.

11 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Yeah, those
12 things ---

13 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** To know yourself.

14 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Yeah. So how
15 can we possibly think that policy is going to change this?
16 Rite of passage I guarantee is going to for -- for better
17 or for worse, it's going to have an impact because it's
18 intimate. It's like this. Policies are like that.

19 So -- but I know it's all done with the best
20 of intentions but we have to get maybe on -- that's part of
21 some of the medical research I'm working on is trying to
22 scratch that itch that if we don't get in the moment and
23 we're thinking it through, we're immediately abandoning
24 something or someone. And it's really hard. That's a
25 really difficult concept for people. Just as it was for

1 me.

2 **MS. TERRIEA WADUD:** So planting that seed on
3 -- on that note, thank you again. And the time now is 4:26
4 p.m. and we are finishing up with Sharon's statement.

5 **MS. SHARON JINKERSON-BRASS:** Perfect.

6

7

8 --- Upon adjourning at 4:26 p.m.

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

I, Ashley Robertson, 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.



Ashley Robertson

December 18, 2018