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Statement – Volume 567
June Black,
In relation to Mary Alice Diamond

Statement gathered by Chanel Blouin

INTERNATIONAL REPORTING INC.
41-5450 Canotek Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K1J 9G2
E-mail: info@irri.net – Phone: 613-748-6043 – Fax: 613-748-8246
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**June Black**  
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Statement Gatherer: Chanel Blouin

Documents submitted with testimony: none.
Statement – Public
June Black
(Mary Alice Diamond)

--- Upon commencing on Saturday, November 17, 2018 at 1:01 p.m.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: This is Chanel Blouin, a statement taker with the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. We're currently in Timmins, Ontario. It's November 17th, 2018 and the time is 1:01. Today I'm speaking with June Black of the Wahgoshig Nation and she resides in Wahgoshig. June is here to tell her truth for her niece, Mary Alice Diamond who died in winter 1976 in Cochrane, Ontario. June is also here to share her truth as her -- as a survivor. Also present in the room is Sam Kabbara and Christine Simard Chicago.

You're here voluntarily to provide your truth and you agree to the videotaping and audio taping of your truth. You also understand that at the end of your truth you'll be able to determine whether you'd like your truth to be public or private at that time.

MS. JUNE BLACK: Okay. So I just begin where ---

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: Yeah.

MS. JUNE BLACK: --- wherever. Well, I guess how this all started for me was I -- I was driving, this is with my partner, and it occurred to me that, you know, I had a family member who -- who was killed in
Cochrane. I -- I always knew but I -- I didn't realize how -- how much it affected me and how much -- how much I was actually involved in that that night. You know, being as young as I was, I was only 12, you know, just a kid basically, a youth. And life just goes on, you know. Growing up as an Aboriginal woman, hardships and trauma was just part of that. And this incident was no different, you know, with all the other stuff that -- that I survived.

So it -- yeah, like I said, I was in the vehicle and I started to break down. And I just -- I just allowed myself to feel those feelings and I realized that I needed to be making a call to the Murdered and Missing Women -- Women Inquiry and sharing -- sharing my -- my truth, mostly for my healing but also to help others, others that are -- you know, have experienced what I've experienced and like me may have forgotten, you know, about -- about their -- their situation or their -- their -- their loved one.

I'm June Black. I grew up in -- I'm originally from Abitibi which is -- it was formally Abitibi No. 70 reserve. Abitibi Lake is pretty well our traditional own land. Our people are -- our community was actually Lovish (ph.) River which was 45 miles east of Cochrane, Ontario and the only way to get there was by train. That's where we lived before we moved to the
_reserve before the Treaty was signed and everybody was -- everybody had their -- their reserve base.

Our people didn't move. We stayed in Lovish. We stayed in our traditional homelands. This is where my parents were married. My father was [Father], which was Mary Alice's godfather. My mother was [Mother]. They married on Abitibi Lake. There was a -- there was a trading post there that -- this is where they had all their weddings and the priest would come there and -- and do all the wedding ceremonies.

It was my dad's second marriage. He -- he married -- he was married before. His first wife passed away and my mom was his second marriage. I had a sister -- he had children from the first marriage. He had three girls and -- and a boy. One of the girls was -- was Mary Alice's mom, which is my sister. My dad -- because they were married, he was married twice, my sister was older than me, much older than me. So I'm the last of the -- of -- from the second marriage. We had a big family. We had 12 in our family, in my mom's family. And I'm the youngest of everyone. I have deceased brothers and sisters as well.

Most of my siblings are residential school survivors. Mary Alice was a residential school survivor. From what I understand she was. I really -- because I was younger I didn't really know my -- my nieces and nephews
from my -- my dad's first marriage, his -- my sister. I knew of the brother and I knew of -- of Mary Alice's uncle and Mary Alice's other aunt. She had two aunts. So I knew of the one aunt and the one brother that I had -- or the uncle, which was my brother and my sister. I knew of two of them but I didn't know Mary Alice's mom as she -- she passed very early in life.

Yeah, we -- we were, like, you know, grew up in an alcoholic home. So yeah, it was an alcoholic home, which was very common for parents that lost all their kids to residential school. And my home was no different. And so one day, my brother and I, we were in school and we were going to school in Cochrane. After -- after we left -- all left Lovish my mom brought us into town so that we could go to school. And we attended the Catholic schools in town. My brother and I. And we lived four miles out of Cochrane. We had several -- we had lived in Iroquois Falls and Kirkland Lake and finally in Cochrane. And we would go to school and we would take the bus in the morning and then come home after school.

It was one of those times where my mom was drinking and -- well, we would get ourselves to school. You know, I would get us to school. Me and my brother would go to school. And we'd still get up even while people were drinking or whatever. We'd still get up and
we'd go to school. We came home -- we went to school as usual and we came home and we had just a little house on -- on the side of -- outside of Cochrane. Four miles outside of Cochrane on the south highway. And we walked in the door and as I entered the house you would walk into the kitchen and then over to the left was my grandmother's room, and my grandmother lived with us. And she was a survivor of a stroke so she couldn't walk, but she could walk with a cane but she had difficulty walking if she drank and -- and they were drinking. And there was a -- a young woman in there with her drinking. And we walked in and I looked in the room and I seen, you know, a woman in -- young woman in there with long hair. She had long, black hair. And she was talking with my grandma. And when people were drinking in the house we really didn't pay attention to them, you know. It was just how we were, my brother and I. So we really didn't pay -- of course we noticed but, you know, we didn't say anything. You know, we were still good -- pretty good kids when adults were drinking, whatever, we just kind of, you know, stayed away and did what we needed to do in the house.

So that day she was drinking in the room with -- with my grandma and nobody told us who she was. We didn't know who she was. And my mom wasn't -- my mom wasn't home. I don't know where my mom was. But we came -
we got home. There was only the two of them in that room
and they were sitting on the bed and -- side by side and
they were drinking. And I really didn't pay attention too
much to who she was. To me she was just another person
drinking, you know, with my grandma. That was it.

And so we were just in the house, my brother
and I, doing what we always do after school. Just, you
know, getting ready to make ourselves something to eat and
look what we're going to have for supper for ourselves.
And then it started to -- they were in there for a few
hours in the room just sitting on the edge of the bed and --
and they, you know, were getting -- they were getting
drunk. They were getting very drunk. And finally my
grandma was -- was, you know, too intoxicated now that she
was just kind of -- because she couldn't walk around or she
would just -- with her legs over the edge of the bed, she
would just kind of go backwards like that and just lay back
in the bed with her -- her feet on the ground -- on the
floor. And she would lay back. She was too drunk. And
the same with -- with the young woman that was with her.
It was the same thing. They were just laying there, you
know, just intoxicated.

And she was crying, this -- this young woman
was crying. And she was saying, "My baby. My baby." And
her -- and you could see her stomach because I -- because I
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-- the -- the crying got my attention so I wanted to check. And her top was kind of up here because she -- it's just the way she was laying, right, her -- her top is kind of lifted up from laying like that. And she was so drunk and my grandma was drunk. And she was saying, "My baby" and my grandmother was telling her to shut up, "Just shut up", you know, just -- whatever they were talking about. They were drunk.

And she kept saying, "My baby." So I think she was pregnant. I think. So she was crying hysterically. Like, hysterically crying. Couldn't stop crying. And I just stood there. I didn't know what was wrong with her. I didn't know what was wrong with her. So then she -- she got up and I was -- was trying to help her. I was trying to help her. And she got up and she ran to the door because the -- the door was right beside the room door and she ran. And she ran outside. And I told my brother we got to get her. I said, "She's too drunk." She was very, very drunk and she was falling and she was crying. And she was trying and she was running down the driveway and she was falling in the snow everywhere. I told my brother, "We got to stop her." So we grabbed her arm and I tried to stop her to stay. Told her to stay, not to go. And she was strong. I couldn't -- she was stronger than me. She was stronger than both of us. And she just
ripped -- ripped out of our arms. And I was trying to stop
her. I was so scared for some reason. I was so scared for
her.

And she was running towards the highway and
I was scared that a car would hit her. I was terrified.
And she ran on the highway and she started going towards
town. And I told my brother, "We -- we got to do something
for her. We have to help her." And the -- the bus came,
the Ontario Northland bus came and stopped. It had all its
flashers going on and I just stood there and watched and
she -- she got on that bus. She got on that bus. So I was
relieved. Suddenly she was going to be safe. I couldn't
stop watching her. For some reason I couldn't stop
watching her. She had my attention from the moment she
started crying.

So that night there was a huge storm. Like,
it was really bad outside. The -- the wind was blowing and
the snow was going all over the place. And the wind was
just blowing the snow everywhere on the driveway. And it
was cold. So she went to town. And then we got a call, at
the store which was just up the road from us, in the
morning. They said she died.

And what happened to her was three men
picked her up in the bar and they took her to the dump and
they raped her. And she died there. And I understood why
I was trying to stop her. I think my spirit knew something was wrong and I tried to stop her.

And it hurt after because some of the men -- the one man that I knew of, because he was around Cochrane, but I don't know who the other two were. And nobody -- and nobody told me that she was my niece because there was nobody there to tell me. And we didn't have a telephone so I couldn't call the police. I was just helpless.

I don't know -- I don't know where her brothers were. She had two brothers. And I can't even remember the funeral. I think I just shut it all down after that until -- until all this started, it came back to me. I think a part of me tried to save -- I think I tried to save her. And it was very cold that night. It was a bad, bad storm. It must have been minus 40 outside. It was so cold. So -- and I think she was pregnant.

I need to know. I need to know what exactly happened to her on that night. I want to know what the investigation brings to me. I need to know how they took care of that and if they took care of it. Now that I'm an adult I want to know what happened. I want to know who those men are.

She didn't have much of a chance in life, you know. She didn't have a chance at all. She went from residential school and she came up, she was young. She was
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just young. She didn't get a chance to know all of us, to
meet all of us. I don't even think she knew that I was her
young aunt. I don't think she knew that.

And I think, you know, it's so vivid in my
mind that night. It's so vivid. Like, I remember
everything that night. I remember her face too. And I
think there's a reason why I remember all this, you know.
There's a reason why I had to remember all of it. And I
think probably this is why. And even coming in here alone,
you know, without -- nobody knows that I'm doing this.
Because I just -- it's just to honour her, you know.

And I don't know where this is going to take
me after this, how much more I'm going to talk about it.
Because this is the first step of healing for me. I didn't
realize how deep it was. I didn't realize how -- how much
it affected me.

One of those men that did that, I -- and I'm
not sure, he was from Iroquois Falls they said. That's all
I know. That's why I want to know. Because there is a man
in there, in Iroquois Falls that actually was -- there were
some men in Iroquois Falls that were actually raping women
and I want to know if it's the same person from the same
family. There were some men in Iroquois Falls. And if it
is, then that man needs to be -- he's still out there.
Because that's not going to be the first time for that man.
That's why I need to know the name of those people. Because I think that man is alive and I think he is still in Iroquois Falls.

**MS. CHANEL BLOUIN:** Can you share a little bit about -- I know that you don't know a lot about the investigation and that that's something that -- that you've been waiting a long time to -- to have answers and that that's something that you're seeking. Can you share what you do know about the investigation? Like, how -- how -- was there a police report that was filed? How do they know that there ---

**MS. JUNE BLACK:** I don't ---

**MS. CHANEL BLOUIN:** --- were three -- that there were three men?

**MS. JUNE BLACK:** Because they went to court.

**MS. CHANEL BLOUIN:** They didn't go to court.

Okay.

**MS. JUNE BLACK:** Yeah, three guys went to court. And it was only -- and I didn't see it myself. It was just what I heard. I don't even know who I heard it from. It may have been my mom. I don't know who said it. I didn't follow it very much. It did -- yeah, I guess I did follow it a little bit but not -- because it affected me, right, so I was paying attention. And we wanted to know when the call came in, I believe it was my mom that
took the call and then that's what she told me that they --
there were three men that -- that raped her and left her there.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: Did they receive jail time or a sentence?

MS. JUNE BLACK: I -- they went to court. I think -- I'm not sure -- I -- I'm not positive how much jail time. They may have got sentenced. I remember hearing, and I don't know from whom, that there -- three and a half years is what -- I don't know if all of them got it. I know one for sure. I think -- I -- I -- I have to see proof. I don't know really. I don't know. That's all I heard.

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD CHICAGO: How old was she at that time?

MS. JUNE BLACK: She probably was 18 or 19. Yeah. And I don't know where she was living.

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD CHICAGO: No.

MS. JUNE BLACK: Or if she was even living anywhere. Because I think she was just drinking. I -- I don't even know because she'd been gone for so long from the whole family.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: Was she close with your grandmother?

MS. JUNE BLACK: Maybe. I don't know. I'd
never seen her. I never seen her before. And like I said, she was in residential school so nobody seen her, right.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: Right. Do you know how long she had been out of residential school?

MS. JUNE BLACK: No.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: Okay.

MS. JUNE BLACK: No. I don't know.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: All right.

MS. JUNE BLACK: And my mom's deceased now so -- so are both of her brothers. Mary Alice's brothers were residential school survivors. They're deceased. And so was her father. He's deceased. Yeah. They all passed. Like, her brother just passed about -- last year. Last year. Yeah.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: What about Mary Alice's mother?

MS. JUNE BLACK: She -- she passed years and years and years ago. I ---

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: But she was still alive when Mary Alice passed?

MS. JUNE BLACK: No. No.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: She ---

MS. JUNE BLACK: She was already gone.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: Okay.

MS. JUNE BLACK: Yeah. Yeah. She had to
have died just -- not long after she was born. Yeah. I was born in '63 so I was very young.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: It must have -- you must have felt very powerless when you were trying to keep her.

MS. JUNE BLACK: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: And that you weren't able to, you know ---

MS. JUNE BLACK: Hold her.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: --- call the police or hold her.

MS. JUNE BLACK: Yeah, because I didn't even have a telephone. Well, it just -- all right there, that bus stops so-- and she didn't get very far, like, on the highway when that bus stopped to pick her up. And I don't even know if the -- they know in the report that the bus picked her up. I don't even know. I was too young.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: So the Commissioners will be -- at least one Commissioner will be watching your testimony. Our Commissioners watch the testimony of every family member who shares their truth. Do you have recommendations that you'd like to -- to share or things that you've thought about in terms of either services that could have been of -- you know, helped you or -- you know, like, for instance, like, more serious sentencing and -- you know, and so you're saying that -- this is just an
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example but ---

MS. JUNE BLACK: I -- well, yes, I just -- I want my thoughts on -- I want to see all -- I want to see the -- the investigation report. I want to know if she was pregnant so that we can do a ceremony for her and a ceremony for the baby. Because this is a very really spirit if she was pregnant and then it was two lives lost if the simple fact she was pregnant, but she kept saying, "My baby. My baby." And she was holding her stomach and she was saying, "My baby. My baby." So I'm suspecting she was just by remember that.

Once I see the investigation report then I'll know where it will go from then -- from there, I mean. It will give me a better idea of what I need to do next for me and for my niece. The fact that she's gone and, you know, this gave me the opportunity to let that go, I guess. You know, remembering all that, like I said, was for a reason. And at least now, you know, she's honoured. She's not forgotten.

Because I -- I don't know how many people realized, you know, what happened to her. Because nobody talked about it. My -- I had a relative who this was his -- this was -- he said -- he talked to me and he talked about her to me. And this is not -- he's passed on though since but he told me, he said that -- we talked about her
and he said, "I was -- she was just like my sister", he told me. And he said that him and his two brothers, oddly enough three men, him and his two -- him and his brother and his -- his cousin were in the town and they were drinking.

And this -- this -- okay, this is what happened. This -- now I know how it came about. He went to jail. So did his brother and so did his cousin for six months. And I asked him because the rumour was that they had raped someone. And so I asked him the -- I wanted to know the truth. I said, "I really respect you but I need to know, you know, the truth here. Did you do that?" And he said, "I'll tell you what happened", he said. He said, "You know Mary Alice Diamond?" And I said, "Yes." And he said, "Well, you know what happened to her?" And I said, "Yes." He said, "I was very, very angry that that happened to her." He said, "Because she was just like my sister in school." And he said, "I loved her very, very much like my sister. We were very close." And he said, "When she died and -- and I found out how she died", he said, "I was very, very upset."

And he said that this woman that was hitchhiking, actually hitchhiking or somewhere near the cab where they were. And they went to the liquor store and they went to get some beer and stuff and they were going
back to their reserve which was just three miles out of the
-- out of -- out of the town where they were. And they
picked up a white woman and asked her if she wanted to go
party and -- and she said yeah. So they took her to -- to
the house and they drank. And he said, "Nobody knew what
happened", he said, "in -- in that house." He said, "Only
I do." He said, "I took that woman." He said, "I grabbed
her, you know, just really sternly", and he said, "And I
took my hand and I touched her -- her vagina. Just touched
it", he said, "I didn't want to do anything." And he said,
"And I looked at her straight in the eye", and he said,
"Now go call the police." So she did. She ran out, she
left the place and she went to call the police.

So the police came and they -- they got all
arrested based on whatever she said. And he said that's
all that happened. And when he went to court the judge --
"When the judge asked me if I had anything to say", he said
-- and he said, "Yes, I do." He said, "There were three
men that took Mary Alice Diamond down a road and they raped
her and they killed her", he said. He said, "I wanted to
show you guys how easy it is to do that but I also wanted
to show you that we're not like you. Could have killed her
and could have raped her but we didn't." And the judge
told him, "Well, you can't take the law into your own hands
like that." And he said, "Well, whatever. At least now
you know."

So he was someone that, you know, I connected with on this whole -- of her losing her life. He was the only one that felt like I did, you know. And even then I didn't say too much. You know, I don't even remember if I told him -- I don't even think I talked about what happened that night because I wasn't ready to talk about that.

Yeah. That's it. Yeah, so you know, I -- I wanted to do this for my own healing. Also to help others, you know, if -- if there was -- if they have any history like this to -- to bring it out. You know, it's -- it's a good healing. It's a good opportunity to heal, you know.

**MS. CHANEL BLOUIN:** How do you see your healing process moving forward?

**MS. JUNE BLACK:** Well, I started it, you know. It's -- it -- it's beginning now, you know. I've -- I've let -- I've actually said the story and it's helped me tremendously to process, to bring it out. I -- I -- I really brought it out, you know.

It's a horrible history. It's a painful history for our people. I'd like to do -- I'd like to do a ceremony for you. I'd like to -- somebody to help me with that to honour her spirit. I actually went there, you know. I went there where it happened not too long ago and
I sat in my car outside of Cochrane in that road and I sat there where she died. I don't know the exact location. I wish I knew. I need to know that too. But I sat there in my car and I just offered some tobacco, talked to her. It's not very long ago that I did that. Maybe a month ago.

And my brother, he's -- he doesn't remember much. He -- I think it's just blocked because it's -- it's terrible. It's a terrible thing for her.

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD CHICAGO: How old was your brother?

MS. JUNE BLACK: He was 13.

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD CHICAGO: He was just a year older, eh.

MS. JUNE BLACK: Yeah.

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD CHICAGO: And you were both just children.

MS. JUNE BLACK: Yeah.

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD CHICAGO: Babies.

MS. JUNE BLACK: Yeah. [Speaking in Indigenous language]. You know, I need to take care of myself. I need to take that time to take care of myself. I've been trying to do that since -- since I started this whole thing, this -- since this woke up inside of me. Like, I tried to figure out what am I going to do with myself. I wanted to go somewhere. I just wanted to go and
not be alone. Just, you know, get some help with it and prayers and ceremony and -- away from everybody, you know. And when I really took open I was here.

Because it's, like, you know, it's -- it's a big thing for a 12 year old. And I think, you know, I kind of feel bad because I couldn't stop her. I was just too young. And I guess she was just meant to go over. Though I don't understand and maybe in my healing I will. But you know, I haven't even got to the point of how I feel about these men. Like, I haven't even gone there emotionally yet. Just that this -- this part, it woke me and my role and there -- that weight, you know, it was just what I wanted to do today. Because I think it -- I've been carrying it, you know, all these years. I'm -- I'm 55.
And it's very serious, you know. Because I've gone through many hardships in life. Many, many hardships. Hard, hard stuff. And this is really had an impact on me and I didn't realize that. You know, didn't realize it at all. Had no idea that it had this affect on me and that I needed to deal with it. That's all I knew is that I needed to deal with it and I needed to honour her. She's one of those, you know, murdered women.

**MS. CHANEL BLOUIN:** Is there anything else you wanted to share?

**MS. JUNE BLACK:** You got that I did want to
know about the investigation ---

  MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: Yes.

  MS. JUNE BLACK: --- and all that. Okay.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: Yes.

MS. JUNE BLACK: That's big for me. That's huge. I -- I'll need to know something about that, like, fast.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: The police reports, okay.

MS. JUNE BLACK: Yeah. It will help me as I heal from this, you know.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: Yeah. We have the family liaison units who are ---

MS. JUNE BLACK: Yeah.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: --- who are working with us and working with families to get the answers that they need to help with their healing and their closure, so ---

MS. JUNE BLACK: Okay. And I always, you know, growing up in an alcoholic home, you do things on your own. You learn to be very independent and you do things on your own. And that's how I'm dealing with this right now, on my own. I did think about supports and I did kind of reach out but I never -- I never saw it through. I just did this on my own. That's how I do things. And maybe that's where I need some healing, you know. But at
least it's a big step I just took. Yeah.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: It takes a lot of courage, you know, to ---

MS. JUNE BLACK: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: --- to go back there and to relive that.

MS. JUNE BLACK: Yeah.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: To -- these are horrible events to go through as a child and that -- to carry that sense of responsibility.

MS. JUNE BLACK: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I guess that's what it was, you know. I don't want to -- feeling like I have a lot of responsibility and it wasn't mine. That's -- that's what it is. And that's very common in an alcoholic home, you know, you take on a lot of responsibilities that are not yours because there's nobody there to do it, you know. And I did that. So her dying has really affected me.

But I think, you know, just for my further closure to see that report, you know, will help me do that. Yeah. That's it.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: Okay. Thank you for sharing today.

MS. JUNE BLACK: Thank you.

--- Upon adjourning at 1:55 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

___________________
Ashley Robertson

December 20, 2018