Saturday November 24, 2018

Statement - Volume 599

Maria Siegl & Audrey Siegl,
In relation to Adelene August & Genevier Sullivan

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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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Statement Volume 599**  
**Witnesses: Maria & Audrey Siegl**  
**November 24, 2018**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Testimony of Maria &amp; Audrey Siegl</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporter’s Certification</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Statement Gatherer:** Chanel Blouin  

**Documents submitted with testimony:** none.
Upon commencing on Wednesday, November 24, 2018 at 5:52 p.m.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: Okay. This is Chanel Blouin a statement taker with the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. We’re currently in Vancouver, B.C. It is November 24, 2018, and the time is 5:52.

Today, I am speaking with Maria Siegl of the Musqueam Nation, who resides in Vancouver, B.C. Maria’s here to tell her truth for her mother, Adelene August, and her friend, Genevier –

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Sullivan.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: Sullivan. Maria’s also here to share her truth as a survivor. Also present in the room is Audrey Siegl, Maria’s sister. She’ll be here as support and will also be sharing. Also for the record, Maria, you’re here voluntary to provide your truth and you agree to the video taping and audio taping of your truth. You also understand that at the end of your truth you’ll be able to determine whether you would like your truth to be public or private at that time.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Yes.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: Okay.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Thank you.
MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: I’ll just turn this down a little.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Want me to turn it down?

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: Yeah.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Okay.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: Thank you.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Is that better?

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: Yeah. Can you still hear it though?

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Yeah, I can hear a little bit. Is it too loud?

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: No.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Okay. Okay. So what do I first remember? I think being as a First Nations, even child, men always looked at us different and hyper-sexualized as even in elementary school. ‘Cause my -- when we would play in the playground then there would be men there and they would, like, show themselves to us and try and interact with us but we always went away. And then by -- like, and even other boys in the class would always, like, bug us and call us, like -- like, salmon-crotch, or something. And then I’d learn how to do self-defence, and stuff, earlier so I could always protect myself.

So I think by grade 6 or 7 I’d judo flipped a few boys who had tried to do inappropriate things and
stabbed a few guy with pencils by that time. And then
finished grade 7 and my grade 7 teacher asked me out on a
date, I was 12 turning 13. And then starting high school
-- 12 turning 13, so then that’s when, I think, the most
stuff started happening. My girlfriend said she was going
to have a birthday party for me and I went to her house --
I was still playing with Barbie dolls, and -- very
innocent, I think. I wasn’t thinking about dating anybody
or anything, I was still playing with Barbie dolls. So I
go to the house with the party, and she’s there with her
boyfriend and her boyfriend’s brother, and they got me to
try booze for the first time. And then they got me drunk
and then the two brothers took me and took turns raping me,
so that was, like, my birthday. And then after that was
done, I went back and, I guess, retaliated. And then I got
pregnant from that and I got gonorrhea from that. Sorry,
that makes me, like, really laugh.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: M’hm.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: And my dad didn’t know
what happened, he just knew that I was pregnant. So he
said if I didn’t keep the baby then I couldn’t -- that I
couldn’t live at home anymore. So then -- then I was
living on the streets, like, Main and Hastings with my
cousin, [Cousin 1] and she was a prostitute and we’re both
only, like, 13, 14, on Main and Hastings. We used to stay
at the Rainbow Hotel (ph).

There would be, like, a group of us that would -- we hung out with the transvestites and stuff because then we were more protected, but if the cops would come around and gather you then you would always have to -- like, you get taken away to Stanley Park, and either have to pay -- give them money or pay in sex so that they wouldn’t take you away. But they would always take all -- we weren’t doing drugs or anything, we were just drinking and smoking pot, but whatever you had they would take, and they would threaten you with going in -- into the system or going away, right? So that was a normal thing. Like, that’s what they did all the time. The police were, like, so shady. When we got caught with stolen cars or being on the street because we were not allowed to be in the downtown area -- I don’t know what you would call that but --

**MS. AUDREY SIEGL:** Red zoned.

**MS. MARIA SIEGL:** We were red zoned. We weren’t allowed to be down there and every time they caught us then -- then they took us for a ride. So be -- she was the prostitute and I would collect license plates and go along for the ride to make sure that she was okay.

**MS. CHANEL BLOUIN:** M’hm. Like for her safety?
MS. MARIA SIEGL: Yeah, and -- yeah, just for her safety and just -- yeah, just to make sure she was okay. I didn’t have to do that but we didn’t have any -- we didn’t know what else to do or what other options were. That was, like, the safest thing because then there was a group of us, who were all really young, who they wouldn’t make money and we would all chip in to have a hotel to sleep in. And -- and sometimes, like really, one customer would come along and say it’s only going to be one person and you get in the car, then they take you for a ride, and then there’d be like, you know, like ten guys or something. Sorry.

And I didn’t remember all this stuff until this year because this year -- last year for Christmas one of my friends drugged me for three days and raped me and then it brought everything up. And, I guess, I created an alternate personality for all this stuff. So I kept it, like, a story that wasn’t me, but it was me. And I’m just realizing this because I was talking to Audrey about stuff. And this one time these guys had gotten us and took us out to Surrey and, you know, like, raped us and stuff and were keeping us in this room. And we were naked and then they -- they closed the door for a little bit and I jumped -- I think it was the second or third floor apartment, and I jumped out of the window naked and started running. And that’s all I remember about that. But I -- in my head that
wasn’t me that was somebody else, and I guess Audrey -- through all of these experiences, my poor sister, even though I wasn’t -- I wasn’t living at home I would still go home when stuff would happen, to my dad’s house. Or show up after, like, severe things had happened and my poor sister, Audrey, would have to take care of me, which I totally forgot about and didn’t realize. And, I guess, I was running naked down the highway for a long time until somebody tried to help me, and that was only -- like, I was only 14. All that stuff had been happening.

So then out of that there’s more stuff. Like, guys would always be in groups and whenever they think -- ‘cause -- Davie Street and Richards Street, and Hastings and Powell were, like, areas for prostitutes, so guys would always troll for you and then they’d always -- they liked to go in packs and like hunt you down, basically. It was like a game to them. I don’t remember anyone really being nice or respectable. If they -- if you were standing on the corner on the street, and it didn’t matter how old you were, you were just a piece of meat. And it was a really gross feeling and it made me very animalistic, I think, and very violent and -- yeah. And from that, you know, that I would -- I would mug people or assess people really quickly and learn how to deal with them, wasn’t a very nice person but I wanted to survive.
And I never sold myself. I never became a prostitute, but I became very persuasive and learnt that I was very good looking and that I could get what I wanted by being charming with people. And never did drugs or anything until I was 35, but -- which is kind of insane, especially for where we were living.

And I thought I was getting saved because the first boyfriend I met I was 14 and he was 28, [C.]. He’s, like -- that’s too old now that I realize it, but he was better. He wasn’t abusive or anything. It was just he was suicidal too. He tried to kill himself. And we lived together, and it was just sex, and it somewhere safe. But, I mean, now when I think about it, it’s really weird for him to be that old and for me to be that young. And then he broke up with me so then I -- then I was walking down Granville Street and I met this -- these two other guys from Sweden. I guess because I looked older and they asked me out. And then I ended up going with [Partner 1], who I was with until I was almost 28, and he was about 14 years older, and wealthy, and physiologically and physically abusive, but it was better than being on the street and I got back into school. And then I got discovered for modelling, but I didn’t -- I didn’t realize, like, until now how abusive it was because he was older. Like, whatever sexually he wanted to do -- he’s like the first
person. I was like 14 or 15 and he and put me in the bathtub and shaved everything off of me because he didn’t like -- he, like, groomed me to be who he wanted and do whatever he wanted sexually. And then if he wanted to, he would give me away to his friends for, you know, sex, and -- yeah. I was just an object I wasn’t a real thing, and I didn’t realize that until after ‘cause I was really messed up. And I stayed with him for a long time and I didn’t -- yeah.

What else, I don’t what else to think -- so basically all the rapes, like, there were multiple rapes. Like, I remember with the police or one time with this nurse that had taken care of me at St. Paul’s. Then he lived in the same building as my auntie and he invited me over for tea but that turned out to be rape. It was just lots of people who you would think you would trust, and I kept trusting people -- like, I still trust people, and believing people. And I just turned off because it’s just physical, it didn’t matter, just let them get what they want and then it will be over. I mean, like, there’s lots of people who have it worse or, you know, like, at least I wasn’t prostituted out. So that’s how I survived, I think. I can’t think of anything else right now. Can you?

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: M’hm. That -- a timeline alongside of what Maria shared that -- that was around her
14th birthday that her friend set her up to be raped by the
brothers, and an idea of how -- how innocent we were. We
bathed together until -- we say we, we -- we’re a year
apart but we’ll say when we were 12, and I didn’t realize
that was confusing for people because we’re sisters, you
know, “not twins”. But -- so at 12 we weren’t -- we were
too (indiscernible) by the time Maria was in grade 7 she
was already 6 feet tall and I was not far behind in -- in
height. And we cried because we couldn’t be in the bath
together because we’d always bathed.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Yeah, we were really
innocent. Our dad didn’t really -- yeah.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: We were so innocent and
intelligent. By the time we were three, our dad had taught
us -- we were raised by a single -- single dad in east Van
in the 70s. By the time we were three, we could read and
write, do all of our math, and play chess and backgammon.
And we were still these beautiful, innocent, little girls
and Maria didn’t know what it was that those boys, those
teenagers, had done to her. And it was in P.E. class, not
-- a few months later she was doing sit ups and lactating.
And one of her friends had said, Are you pregnant? Oh, my
God. And they were freaking out and they took her to the
bathroom and were talking to her. They said, Are you
pregnant? And she didn’t know what that meant. And she
said, Is this from what those boys did to me? And then we went to our mom to talk to her about what had happened, because we weren’t sure how our dad would react because I think most men’s reaction is to shut down or to literally want to go and kill. So doesn’t really give women a good place to go when these are the options that -- that men go to. So our dad then told Maria that he wouldn’t have a murderer in his house and that if she was going to have an abortion she couldn’t live there, so she went to stay with our mom and out on the streets. And our mom was really messed up and would -- if the police came to look for Maria, excuse me, at our mom’s then our mom would let the police into the room with her knowing what they were going to do to her. She would drug her and try to sell her to men, but Maria got really good at getting fast -- getting out the window really fast between the two skinny houses in the west end, and -- and this was all in -- in that one year of, like, 14 years --

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Yeah.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: -- old. And one thing that I know about our grandmother, our mother, our auntie, my sister, my auntie, I believe my nieces, they have all been raped so many times that they don’t even know how many times. Raped --

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: (Indiscernible)
MS. AUDREY SIEGL: -- again, raped, beaten.
The police were some of the worst predators taking with
them to Stanley Park and forcing them to have whatever kind
of sex they wanted, including oral sex.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Yeah.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: And then still charging
them or threatening them, bringing them back to the police
station then making -- letting -- taking them to rooms
where there were no cameras and videos and letting any
other officer who was available come in and violate them
sexually all over again. Hold them hostage there and then
let them free with a threat that if you say anything -- as
far as I know, we don’t remember any of the police
officer’s names.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: I don’t -- yeah, no.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: But there were regulars.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Yeah.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: There were regular
officers. There were officers who did this on -- in a
recurring fashion and other officers knew. There was no
way that other officers didn’t know, separate from the ones
who participated in the sexual assaults. That the impact
that I saw, the emotional, spiritual impact was that a
beautiful, innocent girl was spiritually mutilated. That
-- my sister has always been tough and a protector and how
Maria had to learn to live, to survive, that there was violence and abuse amongst even the groups of -- in -- in Boys Town and with the transvestites that --

**MS. MARIA SIEGL:** Yeah.

**MS. AUDREY SIEGL:** -- Maria and our cousin were. There was violence, abuse, sexual assaults, and they’re everywhere Maria went. She was being violated. She was being abused, and she got tough and tougher, and even smarter, and even more capable of surviving in really extreme circumstances that --

**MS. MARIA SIEGL:** That I just thought were normal.

**MS. AUDREY SIEGL:** -- that it -- it became so normalized that there was no -- there was no expectation or belief that anyone -- that anything would change, or anyone would come and save them, or that they could trust anybody. There were -- from the first rape, I will say it has been 30 years of huge amounts of time of Maria being suicidal.

**MS. MARIA SIEGL:** Yeah.

**MS. AUDREY SIEGL:** And that comes out in different ways with self-destructive behaviour, alcohol, drugs, hyper-sexual behaviour that is never for any satisfying, healing, connecting purposes. But because I think the temporary shut off with it that -- there were
times that Maria would come back to our dad’s, and usually, even though you had a key --

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Yeah.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: -- you would knock on the door, and I would -- I would answer the door and she was beaten or dirty clothes, you -- you knew what had happened. And she just would want to go and yet -- most of the time couldn’t talk so we would go in the shower and stand in the shower, and then get rid of all of the clothes and just sit and wash and just -- just have to be so gentle, you have to be so gentle. And then ironically, because our dad said she couldn’t live there, he still kept her room, but she would sit in the closet for sometimes weeks and wouldn’t come out. And it would be hard to leave and go to school and worry and come back and know if she was going to be there. If she was going to be alive.

One of the recurring themes is that, from maybe 16, Maria would always say, When I decide to kill myself, you’ll never find a body. I know what to do so you’ll never find me. So in the times that Maria would disappear for months and our relationship was that -- we come from a family of three people, our dad and the two of us, and it’s always been Maria and I. When we were little, we would go to the bathroom together. If one had to pee, we’d wake up the other one and we were so little that, you
know, when you -- you have to balance sitting on the seat? We would sit back to back and have our little -- our little night pee together. And everything we did was together so this huge, devasting impact on our relationship, on seeing how -- for Maria, to see how things affected me, for me to see how things affected her. That it created massive division between our dad and Maria. We never really had our mom so for all intents and purposes Maria was on her own. From --

MS. MARIA SIEGL: I was never in a group home.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: Nope.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Or anything. And with the -- the first rape and pregnancy, it wasn’t until probably five or six years ago that I stopped counting the age of that baby because I -- I had created a separate reality for that baby, that that was a son that I had lost. And all the stuff that I’m just realizing now and -- yeah. That I created an alternate ego and personality for all the really bad things and I didn’t even realize it until recently. And that -- I don’t know, my mind is going blank.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: That, like, disassociation we see so much with survivors of extreme sexual trauma. In order -- in order to survive, it -- it has to have happened to someone else. We saw this with our
mom our whole life, she had these alternate realities and we were always puzzled. What is mom talking about?

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Yeah.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: What is she talking about. She would say how she raised us, and she taught us this, and she taught us that.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: And she didn’t.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: She actually wasn’t there. She was gone for most of our life. She would come back for a day, a week, she -- a month. Maybe she lived in the west end a lot of the time. And from when we were babies -- because Maria had a whole year of having our mom and dad, just the three of them, and Maria and our mom were very close. And then knowing that what happened to our mom. Our mom was residential school, but she was taken at 4 before she was even taken from this Musqueam community in 1957, ’58, I think that would have been. Men in the community and our family had already been messing around with her and they were also residential school. We’re two or three generations residential school, so the impact’s not just a residential school and colonization, but the normalization of rape, sexual violence, alienation, exclusion, policies created by governments, enforced by systems of laws and police forces that, as Maria said, we -- we have no value unless it’s to serve or police any of
those entities. So seeing what that did to our mom had an impact on us that she was drunk a lot of the time. She was always in abusive relationships. She would get herself steady and then -- and then she would just disappear again.

**MS. MARIA SIEGL:** And when -- when I lived with my mom, the guy that she was dating, [Mom’s boyfriend], used to beat us both up but then I got tired of it so then I stabbed him with a fork and a knife because he kept trying to, like -- like, he was an asshole. And then all the neighbours finally found out all the stuff that was going on, and they were, like, really surprised and upset about it. And I was like, Oh, that’s just how it is. Yeah, I used to have a quick escape route out of the bedroom. I kept a garbage can by the window so that I could jump out because that’s when -- yeah, the police would -- they knew where I lived so then they would -- with my mom when I was living there, then they would just come to the door and ask for me. I was really messed up.

And then -- I’m trying to think of what else. Sorry, my mind just went blank. But basically, it’s a lot of abuse. And all of us, like even my girlfriend, Geneviera Sullivan [Note: the following thirty-three lines of testimony about Ms. Sullivan, who passed away on March 30, 2018, were removed pursuant to Rule 55].

**MS. CHANEL BLOUIN:** Cause how old was she?
MS. MARIA SIEGL: She was doing -- she’s a straight ‘A’ student studying to be a nurse and she was about 32 now. I met her when she was 19. Then she travelled, like, the world, like, a hobo, hopping trains and was very strong and -- and feisty. [Two further lines about Ms. Sullivan removed pursuant to Rule 33].

But, yeah, with the sex stuff for me. I go through stages where -- so basically through all of this it has made me super competent, but I peak to survive -- like, survival living only and then I crash and then I’m suicidal. It wasn’t until the last year that I’ve stopped thinking of, like, my plan for suicide. I always had a plan. This is the first year, ever, that I’ve been able to live in -- in a place consistently, not been moving, not been homeless, and feel safe, unpack stuff, like, my teddy bear from when I was 1. And to, like, to feel safe in a place. But -- but there’s lots of weird little habits from all the survival living, like always hiding, like, weapons around the house or always being ready at -- in an instant to, like, fight. That’s the biggest, hardest thing for me is to stop being like that. I don’t have to stop being like that but I don’t have to think everyone’s a threat all the time, and that’s the hardest thing is that I’m very angry and I’m always on edge and I’m ready to fight at any moment. Like if someone knocks on my door that’s
unannounced, I have three doors I can go out of to come and see who they are. Like, all that kind of stuff. Thinking that way. It’s only been one year not thinking like a survivor, reactionary or that people are out to get me. But there’s always been problems with, like, stalkers and men and just -- it’s gross. But that’s why I wanted to talk about it was for my girlfriend, Genevier, and for mom, and for everybody else, so that people know that -- there’s lots of people who knew what was going on and there’s lots of opportunists and perverts and pigs that take advantage of that, and it’s -- it needs to stop.

That’s all I can think about right now.

**MS. AUDREY SIEGL**: And now in the last year or so, so it’s been --

**MS. MARIA SIEGL**: Oh, the physical illnesses out of admitting and realizing. Like, when I told my sister -- she didn’t know what had happened because it was Christmas day -- see it’s always on big days that this -- these wonderful rapes happen. Christmas eve, Christmas day and Boxing day, this person had drugged me for three days and --

**MS. CHANEL BLOUIN**: This was a year ago?

**MS. MARIA SIEGL**: Yeah. And raped me. And then everything else started coming out. And I was living with Audrey and I was really partying hard, and -- and,
like, doing lots of cocaine. Like, that’s how I just used
to stay numb ‘cause that’s how you -- I became, like, a
hustler because I just always wanted to be drunk and always
wanted to be high, and there’s -- and I never had to sleep
with anybody or anything, if you just ask enough of these
pig men they will make sure you’re fucked up forever ‘cause
that’s how they like you. Never have to pay for anything,
we can always get a free ride. But -- yeah, I don’t know
what I was going to say.

**MS. AUDREY SIEGL:** Then how --

**MS. MARIA SIEGL:** Oh, that -- now that I’ve
been dealing with all this rape stuff. I’ve had -- I’ve
been, like, insanely sick. I’ve been asking for help with
a trauma therapist, holistic therapist, drug and alcohol
therapist. Trying to get on disabilities so that I can go
to treatment, and all of these physical things are coming
out, like cysts and tumors, and my vagina and uterus.
Like, I had the entire summer of going into hospital every
day for two days for surgeries and they never froze me.
Like, is that normal to not freeze somebody when you’re
going in for an operation every two days and they’re
cutting you open and taking stuff out of you? Like, that’s
not normal I don’t think, but it’s just every time I tried
to deal with things properly, I never get the help that I
want. It seems like it’s, like, a never-ending battle and
all of these physical symptoms are coming out. All of
these psychological symptoms are coming out and I’m happy
to deal with it now but it’s tiring and I’m tired of not
being treated -- I don’t feel like I’m being treated fairly
for that amount of help that I think I need to deal with
all that because it’s a lot.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: M’hm.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: That’s how I feel, and I
want other people -- like, I want First Nations women to be
treated fairly. Like, just to think that our mom was
forced to have a hysterectomy because she was Native. You
know, like, all those things. It’s just like little things
inside your head. But that was normal for us to be treat
-- treated bad but I’m tired of it. I’m tired of asking
for help and not getting help. I think it has to change.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: Or -- I want to say, the
better part of two decades Maria has been looking for a
doctor, a simple GP, and a therapist to talk to, to deal
with what is real post-traumatic stress. And not just
PTSD, the brand new defined CPTSD, the complex.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: M’hm.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: Because this isn’t just
inter-generational, it is, you know, 200 years of the same
things happening to our women that it becomes normalized.
And it becomes normalized for us because the way the
doctors, the way the police -- all of the people who --

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Are supposed to help you.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: -- we’re told are

supposed to help are some of the worst violators and
predators or the worst turn a blind eye, turn the other
cheek, I’m not going to do anything to help. And where it
leaves people is exactly where my sister ended up and this
last year of not have to worry so much about suicide and
about spinning out and -- what -- what people call
relapsing. Do you know Maria has this home because our mom
died of a fentanyl overdose.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: In her own

(indiscernible).

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: Before this Maria was
floating around from 14 years old for 30 years. Now, for
30 years, my sister has had to find ways to survive, not
just violence, sexual trauma and abuse, but neglect and
endangering already the most endangered and targeted
population in Canada.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: M’hmm.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: That’s not just inhumane,
it’s evil. That -- I look at my sister and I still see the
beautiful little girl. It took forever for her to be able
to -- to see -- to actually look in the mirror and see
herself again. To -- the process of learning to trust
again. The process of learning to -- something simple, like just unpack. Something simple, like here’s a nice set of dishes, and Maria has a hard time accepting the nice things that go in -- nice gifts or -- because, I mean, we have our own healing to do in our relationship.

**MS. MARIA SIEGL:** And the fact that my mom was in that abusive relationship with so many, that -- for the last couple years I was taking care of her because she had a broken knee, so I was bathing her, taking her to the toilet and everything. And the entire time, while trying to help her and telling her how much I love her and how much I want to know her, she’s getting fucked up on crack, and drinking, and there’s people here all the time. And I have to, like, board my door up so that people don’t walk in on me all the time. When she’s just messed up, and she can’t hear me. She never -- I just wanted to know her, and she never heard me, like, she never listened. She couldn’t listen. She was so far gone and so messed up and so lost that she couldn’t accept love and then -- then I started doing drugs with her and drinking with her. And then I was like I can’t fucking do this, like, this is just the worst. And then I go and did the same thing that I started being the biggest coke head ever, like, high every day. And it led to me having -- my mom dies and then I had a -- a crazy seizure for a really long time.
That’s another thing that we’re trying to deal with, is that I had a seizure last year and it was longer than ten minutes, and I don’t remember, like, people that I met in the last two years. Like, I am going to job sites and introducing myself to people and they’re just like, Oh, we worked together. And I’m like, I don’t know who you are. My short term memory is -- is really fucked up, but they’re just trying to tell me that it was just a grand mal seizure, it wasn’t that. And if I look at my entire history of everything, thinking about stuff, I’ve always had seizures, absence seizures. There’s all these things, see? And then now I got to fight for this, like, try and ask for help for that. Because they’re just like -- they just poo-pooed it and, Well it just -- it was a one off seizure and it’s just because you did drugs and alcohol. And I’m like, Well, normal seizures you don’t lose your memory to that extent.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: And your motor skills.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: And -- and I -- yeah, I had to -- my motor skills and speaking, I stuttered for a long time and -- yeah, my body was really beat up from that. Like this last year has been the worst physical year ever, it’s just tiring and I’d like to be healthier but I need to -- I want this stuff gone.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: M’hm.
MS. AUDREY SIEGL: For --

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Audrey has been taking care of me.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: Happily. A lot of our women by the time they get to a point where they’re actually capable and ready to start dealing with what they -- what they have endeared, they -- because of the lack of support and because with this work that I do and watching what’s happened to my women my whole life, I’ve been lucky because -- because they protected me. I did not have as bad of things happen to me because they protected me, but I’ve seen that when the women start to try to heal, spiritually and emotionally, it comes out physically because what -- because they carried it for so long where -- where is it supposed to go when you have therapists and counsellors, when you have doctors, when you even have dentists who have such huge wait lists. When you go to hospitals and you’re not taken seriously when -- if you smell like booze or if you are honest about the fact that -- that you do drugs, automatically everything is dismissed. If you say you have an anxiety issue or depression then it’s not treated with the seriousness that it deserves, and this is another huge reason why so many of our women just don’t make it.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: It’s easier to stay drunk
and high then to try and deal with the system and deal with
everything. Like, it’s -- it’s been such a really hard
cycle for me to break, to not run and get completely drunk
and wasted because there’s lots of stuff that’s coming up,
and it’s, like, that’s my instant thing to just go. Let’s
go on a bender for, like, a week. But I’m doing good.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: And --

MS. MARIA SIEGL: But it’s -- and I don’t
want that anymore, but it’s really hard. And I didn’t
realize how much of a problem it was because for the last
year I was like, Oh, no, no, no. I can deal with it. I can
deal with it. And then I’m like actually no. Like when my
girlfriend died, then I held off for a couple months but
then I -- then I went and got crazy but I, actually, asked
Audrey for help and admitted what I was doing. Because I
was, like, I can’t be embarrassed because I feel like I’m
going to lose control to the point where I won’t stop, and
I’ll just kill myself with doing drugs. And I didn’t want
to do that. Like, finally after saying and realizing how
much I affected everybody in my family and that they did
care. Like when I actually reached out and told my dad and
my sister that day. I said, I want to die because it
happened again. And I’m -- you know, like it hasn’t
happened for a long time but every time you get drunk
there’s always some creep hanging around who thinks Native
women are easy. I hate saying that but that’s how they act and that they can watch you get drunk or give you booze and then they can take you up and do what they want with you. And I -- lots of times I fight, lots of times I don’t so I’m -- I don’t want that anymore.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: M’hm.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: I just want to be healthy and I want to help people. That’s it. I think that’s everything. Yeah. Thank you.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: I have a question.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Yeah.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: So for your healing now, what -- what do you do to --

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Well, I was seeing a therapist. I have a holistic therapist and I have (indiscernible) yoga. Like Musqueam, we have a lot of options, but I need to -- I want to go away to treatment.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: M’hm.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Like, I want to go away for, like, a couple months, and I need trauma treatment because, like, the amount of anger that I have that I just keep down and I’m polite and nice when really I just want to, like, massacre people.

And, like, there won’t be any records of anything with all the cops because they never did anything.
Like I never have any charges pressed on me. I’ve never had charges pressed on me for anything, so there is no record of anything. There is no one to, like, hold accountable. I just have to say what happened and then let it -- I just have to let it go, and, hopefully, that will stop happening to other girls because I know it still happens. And the amount of -- like, even living here on the rez, I have -- I know a whole family where this young girl that I’ve had drinks with, and she’ll message me and she’ll be drunk and then she’ll pass out and then her uncles will rape her, and she’s like it happened again. Just like that it happened again, and I’m like, What am I supposed to do with that? How can I make it stop? What can we do to make it stop?

Like, I’m -- I’m tired of this. Or how many girls I’ve found on Musqueam -- it’s like I’m a magnet for dogs and women who’ve been raped. If I walk anywhere, I usually find them. Like, there was this other girl a couple summers ago who’s running down the street in her underwear and she had just had a baby and bunch of guys raped her that year. And she told me who it was, and I went to the house with a baseball bat, but nobody was there, of course. And she wouldn’t give a statement just like I would never. Like, why am I going to call the police? They’re just as bad. Like, they don’t help. And
when I got attacked here with my mom last time by my mom’s husband, they didn’t even let me go stay in safe housing.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: The police.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: The police or anybody. I had -- I got kicked out and I was attacked in my sleep, and I’m, like, I don’t want to fight anymore. I just want to, like, be normal. I’m like 46, 45. Can I please stop fighting.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: M’hm.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Like, do I have to fight until the last day? Sure. Yeah, maybe it’s nice being a gladiator but it’s a little tiring.

(LAUGHTER)

MS. MARIA SIEGL: But I think that’s about it. Yeah.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: One last question I want to add.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Yeah.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: Do you have recommendations that you thought of? Because the Commissioners will be watching your statement.

(Indiscernible)

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Oh, for where I’m going to go?

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: No. Recommendations --
more that could help ensure that First Nations women are safe.

**MS. MARIA SIEGL:** Well --

**MS. CHANEL BLOUIN:** And just like moving forward, if -- if that’s -- if there’s something that you’ve thought of just, like --

**MS. MARIA SIEGL:** I think --

**MS. CHANEL BLOUIN:** -- something that could be put in place, like a policy or --

**MS. MARIA SIEGL:** I don’t -- I never --

**MS. CHANEL BLOUIN:** -- or safe housing for instance.

**MS. MARIA SIEGL:** Yeah. Well, they need to listen to what we’re saying and believe us, help us, and actually, like, why don’t we have -- I think everyone needs to -- the hardest thing is to break down the barriers because there’s so many generations of barriers, and secrecy, and hiding, and shame. You’d have to break that down first and then people will be able to be honest, but communities protect their -- communities we need to remove the rapists out of communities. I didn’t grow up here, but I see how it is and it’s not a joke, it’s disgusting, and it is happening consistently and it’s generational. But we need to have like a real safe house, people really listening, and opportunities to, like, heal. Like, there
are many reserves where lots of women probably couldn’t have the funding to go away to trauma treatment.

**MS. CHANEL BLOUIN:** M’hm.

**MS. MARIA SIEGL:** Or, you know, just being safe period. Like, there is no bus from here, at Musqueam, to go to the bus stop, and it’s like 2 kilometres of black walking through the bush. And there’s -- we just have to walk it, if you don’t have a car then you just have to walk it. Like, why don’t we have a -- a safe system or anything like that? It’s insane. People are just still in denial, people need to listen. And that’s what I think. And I think, all girls should learn self defence starting at age 5. It helped me, otherwise, I’m sure I’d be dead. That’s all I can think of for now.

And we need our own -- our own, like, safe house. We have a safe house, but they pick and choose who goes in there. I’m, like, How’s that possible? Like, if you get attacked that doesn’t -- and you need somewhere to stay, you don’t have a right to go there? I didn’t have anywhere to go, it was insane. But that’s all I can think of.

**MS. AUDREY SIEGL:** And for your -- so Maria does archeological work. It’s -- it’s her calling.

It’s --

**MS. MARIA SIEGL:** Yeah.
MS. AUDREY SIEGL: -- it’s her skills. And because of all of these, not just physical but emotional, side effects of -- coping mechanisms of the life -- of everything that’s -- that’s happened. Because of the anxiety, the PTSD, Maria hasn’t been able to work. And it’s not that she doesn’t want to work, she gets up and she get ready and then a crippling panic attack will take hold. And then since the seizure she’s had -- she’s had minor seizure -- she’s had other seizure symptoms since then. There actually have been little tremors and seizures happening all along.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Yeah.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: And then that’s it, she -- she can’t leave the house, so then she can’t go to work. What about the income for women? What about the emotional, physical, spiritual, and financial support? And making available resources so that actual real healing can happen, and if that means it’s on the land or if that means it’s -- someone needs to be in their home, whatever that looks like, there need to be access to whatever it takes to make that happen. Because my sister has been fighting so hard for so long and in the last year making such amazing progress, and leaps and bounds in dealing with stuff that would break most people. That we are pushing for support for her.
MS. MARIA SIEGL: And it -- like, it’s hard
to keep a normal job when you’re just trying to make sure
that you want to wake up and deal with the day. ‘Cause I
still -- all the stuff is bubbling up and percolating out.
So how do you explain that to somebody? Oh, I can’t come
to work today because I had nightmares about, like, the
rapes or whatever, like running. Like whatever trauma has
happened is coming out -- is coming out in dreams and it
makes it hard for me to function. Like sometimes I don’t
leave my house for -- unless Audrey’s here.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: Because it’s been -- it’s
been since spring, at least, that every night for hours and
hours each night, the memories are surfacing
and --

MS. MARIA SIEGL: And I -- I can’t just shut
it down. I can’t break this cycle. I just -- I keep
trying but how do you keep a job with that? You don’t tell
your employer, Oh, I can’t come to work because I’m having
rape nightmares. Like, no body wants to hear that.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: No. So a lot of the
time, like, the safe space is -- is the truck. We have
some, like, normal -- we have a normal little route we go
and do together and it --

MS. MARIA SIEGL: She takes me out.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: -- if I didn’t have my
sister when I -- if my sister hadn’t taken care of me
before, I wouldn’t be here. And now for me to be able to
use the skills and the healing that I’ve been lucky enough
to find because they protected me. Just to make sure that
she can leave the house, that she knows that somebody loves
her --

**MS. MARIA SIEGL:** Yeah.

**MS. AUDREY SIEGL:** -- that -- that she’s not
alone. Most of our women have nobody.

**MS. MARIA SIEGL:** And who do you trust?

**MS. AUDREY SIEGL:** Yeah. We’re still
learning to trust each other.

**MS. MARIA SIEGL:** Yeah. Because I didn’t
even -- yeah. I didn’t -- I didn’t even know that she knew
all that stuff about all the stuff that was happening
because I don’t remember it.

**MS. AUDREY SIEGL:** And that --

**MS. MARIA SIEGL:** Yeah.

**MS. MARIA SIEGL:** -- had a whole new level
that then Maria had spent months carrying the weight of
feeling terrible that I knew these things, and -- and then
seeing how it has affected me. So there needs to be other
people in between her and I because it -- in a lot of ways
it’s too close.

**MS. MARIA SIEGL:** M’hm.
MS. AUDREY SIEGL: And there’s only so much that I can do.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Yeah. And dealing with my therapists and stuff -- well, I don’t know. It’s like the -- the labels that you put on stuff, that doesn’t mean that’s just who you are so then they put you in this little category and then that’s the only treatment you get. I don’t want to be on anti-depressants, I don’t think that’s the answer. I think the answer is dealing with the trauma.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: M’hm. Yes.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: And they always just want to stick you on -- on anti-depressants and leave you alone. And I’m, like, that isn’t working. I’ve been trying that for 30 years and it isn’t working. I need, like, real help.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: And the alcohol and drug counsellor down here hasn’t been available for six weeks.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: No, she’s sick --

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: So on -- on the reserve --

MS. MARIA SIEGL: No, there was a change over. I got a hold of her.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: So because of these -- again, a lack of funding and looking at the real trauma and abuse that -- that happens within First Nations
communities, to First Nations women, having more than one alcohol and drug counsellor available so that people aren’t waiting four --

MS. MARIA SIEGL: M’hm.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: -- weeks, six weeks, three months. Whether the reason is legitimate, if a person is in -- is in a situation where they need now, a week, three weeks, six weeks is too long to wait.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: And then they just shut down and they don’t want to leave the house. So I’m, like, well I have heat, hot water, internet, a dog, I could just stay here. Putter away. But I miss the person. Like, I miss going for hikes. I miss going for my walks and I miss -- like, I’m positive but I -- I want to go back to work. I love my job, but it’s just too hard to deal with right now, too much stuff. But I want to go back. Like, that’s part of the reason for living for me. Is -- I think that helped saved my life, definitely, archeology.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: M’hm.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: So problem doing stuff, it’s just a problem breaking the cycle and dealing with the actual shit. Yeah. Do you have any other questions?

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: How’d you like people to remember your friend and your mom?

MS. MARIA SIEGL: As two really crazy strong
First Nations women who held on as long as they could and then finally something cracked. And I don’t want -- I don’t want to crack. I want to live now. This is the first time ever in my entire life that I want to live. After her, like, what’s the point? Like, I don’t want to be another story. I want a good story for all of us to come out of this, not just tragedy. Yeah.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: Thank you for sharing.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Yeah. Thank you for your time.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: Thanks.

--- Upon recessing at 6:47 p.m.

--- Upon reconvening at 7:01 p.m.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: I’ve met this girl from Somalia and I was modeling and then she had a place in Paris and she was married to some really rich French guy. And they invited me over and when I got there it wasn’t at all how they said it was going to be. I was depressed because I was fighting with -- with [Partner 1], all we did was fight. Like, if I didn’t do what he wanted and, like, give him all of my money, basically, then he would be really mad because -- we had lots of businesses, but I was making really good money modeling. And so I took off to go to France to stay with her, and when I got there, I had this little room, they had locked me in a room where I
didn’t have a key and I was mentally broken. And they just dressed me up and took me out to this club -- to go on dates with men. And that was a friend. And I thought -- I was so defeated, like, I either have one -- two things, I’m defeated, and I just give in and do it because I don’t want to fight and I don’t want to be hurt. It’s just easier if you give in because then you don’t get hurt so much, and then you just turn off -- you think it’s just your body. Or -- or you fight, and -- yeah.

That’s one thing I wanted to add to it, was that it didn’t matter what country or where ever you are there’s always people that wanted to take advantage of your weakness but also eat -- I feel like I’ve been eaten alive consistently because I’m Native and because I’m good-looking.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: M’hm.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: And it destroyed me and that’s why I gained, like, probably, 70 to 100 pounds, so people would stop looking at me because I’m tired objectified. I’m tired of being a thing or a novelty. You know, like, when my husband used to travel around, we’d be in Sweden and it’d just be like, Oh, look at she -- she’s so pretty and she -- she has good manners, like -- like I’m a savage beast and I’m tamed. It was disgusting.

That’s what I just wanted to add, was the --
the novelty factor for First Nations women. Like look at the lies about Pocahontas and shit, right?

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: And that even now that you’ve put on weight, they still --

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Oh, yeah.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: -- it’s still -- nothing has changed.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Nothing’s changed. It doesn’t matter if I’m skinny or fat, men still are creepy.

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: And you wanted to add about --

MS. MARIA SIEGL: That’s --

MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: -- Malaysia?

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Oh, being so ashamed of being First Nations, I created a lie that I told everybody when I did -- when I was able to go back to school, ‘cause I had a little bit of stability, that I told everybody that I was a Malaysian princess’ daughter. That my father was a naval officer and my mother was Malaysian. She died giving birth to me. And until last year, my girlfriend didn’t know that that wasn’t true. I lived with -- she had lived with that lie all along and it’s pretty trippy to be that ashamed of who you are, to hide everything to not be First Nations, but -- but being something else fantastical was okay. And that’s it.
MS. CHANEL BLOUIN: Okay. Thank you.

MS. MARIA SIEGL: Thank you.

--- Upon adjourning 7:04 p.m.
LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST’S CERTIFICATE

I, Debra Diemert, 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.

__________________________
Debra Diemert

Debra Diemert

January 6, 2019