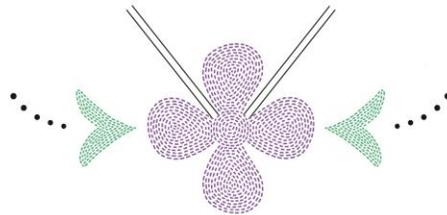


National Inquiry into  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls



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 1 Public Hearings  
Chateau Nova Hotel – Main Ballroom  
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories**



**PUBLIC**

**Wednesday January 24, 2018**

**Public Volume 41:  
Jaclyn (Jayda) Andre, In relation to Joni Andre-Itsi;**

**Geraldine Sharpe, In relation to her Grandmother;**

**James Norman Jenka, In relation to Helene Louisa Ratfat (nee  
Leyden) & Marina Ratfat;**

**Sandra Faye Lockhart**

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**APPEARANCES**

Assembly of First Nations	Julie McGregor (Legal counsel)
Government of Northwest Territories	Jana Shoemaker (Legal counsel)
Government of Canada	Anne McConville (Legal counsel)
	Donna Keats (Legal counsel)
	Jennifer Clarke (Paralegal)
Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, Saturvit Inuit Women's Association of Nunavik, AnânuKatiget Tumingit Regional Inuit Women's Association Inc., Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre, Manitoba Inuit Association	Beth Symes (Legal counsel)
Native Women's Association of The Northwest Territories	No appearances

**Note:** For the purpose of establishing this record of attendance, Counsel and Representatives are considered present whether they attended one or all of the hearings held over the course of the day at the Chateau Nova Hotel.

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**Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe**

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1                                   Anyway, I always start out with a  
2 nice little story because I've got thousands and  
3 thousands of stories. I should write a book one of  
4 these times. But this story goes to the late Abe  
5 Ooptik (ph), and some of you here are related to  
6 him. He was such a good storyteller. I used to  
7 just love sitting down having a meal with him or  
8 just visiting.

9                                   He told me a long time ago he was  
10 in Iqaluit and he was over at The Legion.  
11 Everybody back in those days used to go to The  
12 Legion and listen to a little bit of music and have  
13 a drink or two, then go home. And he was walking  
14 home, as he came outside, the wind was blowing. It  
15 was dark and almost blizzard. The only thing you  
16 could see is the very few street lights that  
17 Iqaluit had back in those days. And I remembered  
18 the story about his grandma telling him never -- as  
19 a kid, never to wander out at night because that's  
20 where the bad spirits are.

21                                   And he got out and he was walking,  
22 and he looked back and he could see a black --  
23 something black by the street light. It was coming  
24 at him, and, oh, no, his mind harking back to us.  
25 Grandmother said, "That spirit is coming," and he

1 started running and the spirit was coming back, and  
2 he tripped and he fell down and he was, "Ahh," and  
3 it was a black garbage bag come floating by.

4 Oh, my goodness. Those are such  
5 good stories. I mean, they make you so real. I  
6 was just kind of really anticipating something  
7 really dangerous to happen.

8 But anyway, good morning,  
9 everyone, and we're very, very pleased to be here.  
10 It's a brand-new day, and it's my opportunity  
11 right now to call upon a lady to come and say the  
12 morning prayer before we start anything else.

13 So, ladies and gentlemen, we're  
14 very pleased to have with us, Elder Teresa  
15 Villeneuve to say the morning prayer.

16 --- OPENING PRAYER

17 MS. TERESA VILLENEUVE: (Speaking  
18 in native language). God, our Creator, we thank  
19 you for this day, for this gathering of missing and  
20 murdered Indigenous women. We pray for the  
21 families who are going to be telling their stories,  
22 that they will be consoled and healed so that they  
23 can go forward in their life. This we ask through  
24 Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

25 MR. GEORGE TUCCARO: Merci Cho.

1 Teresa Villeneuve from Fort Resolution -- or in  
2 their own community, they call it, Deninu Kue. And  
3 right now, we're going to turn our attention over  
4 to the lighting of the sacred kudlik. And we're  
5 always so pleased to see the smiling face of Rassi  
6 Nashalik, who is going to lead us through this.  
7 Rassi.

8 MS. RASSI NASHALIK: (Speaking in  
9 native language). Good morning, everyone. What  
10 I'm going to do this morning, there's some of you -  
11 - you can hear me on first day when it was opening,  
12 and I was explaining about kudlik, how significant  
13 it is for Inuit culture. I'm going to talk a  
14 little about it this morning so that anyone could  
15 kind of understand why this is so important for  
16 Inuit.

17 What I'm going to start out with  
18 is that I learned how to do this just by looking at  
19 my mom, watching my mom when I was a little girl.  
20 I used to ask her why I couldn't attend the kudlik,  
21 and her response was, "You have to become an adult  
22 with a husband, and you would have your dwelling or  
23 your kamak (ph) in order to do these."

24 So, I never learned how to do this  
25 in front of her since I went away at a very early

1 age for residential school, and I was kind of  
2 nervous about doing these when I was asked to do  
3 this first time here in Yellowknife, and I never  
4 get to light this in my country in Nunavut Region.

5 And since I became a Yellowknifer, I've been here  
6 so many years, close to over 40 years, I get to  
7 acquire a kudlik for me in order to practice my  
8 culture even though we in the Dene country, and I'm  
9 so grateful that I've been adopted in a way to do  
10 my kudlik lighting in Yellowknife area.

11 What I use is -- we don't have  
12 seals, so I use the canola oil, No Name brand,  
13 burns the best, and I get to collect my willows,  
14 cotton willows. I live down in Old Town. There's  
15 so many willow trees beside my house in the fall  
16 time when they sprouted, like all those white stuff  
17 that goes everywhere. That's best time for me to  
18 collect them, so I got a bag full of this, and I  
19 keep it in a very nice bags, air -- with the holes,  
20 where they use rice in the big bags. I keep them  
21 in there so that they could dry nicely.

22 But anyway, this kudlik, I call it  
23 traditional for me even though I got so attachment  
24 to it because I caught on to this lifestyle. I was  
25 brought up in a camp. Like I said, I learned it --

1 learned this by watching my mom, and it kept me  
2 alive and the whole family because it give us heat,  
3 it give us light, it give us a tool to cook with,  
4 melt snow or ice for drinking water, and it's like  
5 a furnace. I always compare it to furnace. You  
6 can dim it down when you go to bed at night, but  
7 you have to keep waking up middle of the night to  
8 see it still going because otherwise, during the  
9 wintertime, it could get pretty cold.

10                   So, my mom was the one who was the  
11 keeper of the kudliks, and there would be maybe  
12 three or four. If not, there will be more than one  
13 kudlik, and they will be bigger than this one. It  
14 keeps you warm, really nice and warm. I remember  
15 that coming out because we were told to play  
16 outside no matter what whether it's cold out or  
17 not. Traditionally, when they get visitors, elders  
18 visit or the adults visit, we're not allowed to  
19 listen to their stories, what they're talking  
20 about, so we were told to go out.

21                   Anyway, this kudlik had a lot  
22 attachment to me because I always say I survive on  
23 this because of my family. There's so many of us -  
24 - so many of us in my family. I'm the seventh  
25 girl. And there's nine girls and three boys. Boys



1 could have a peace and share my food and talk in  
2 our language. And I was so grateful to share my  
3 traditional kudlik because it got attachment to me  
4 in my heart. It goes way, way out.

5 I'm over 60 year old now, and I  
6 like to be able to teach about kudlik even though  
7 I'm not in my territory, but I have a culture and  
8 tradition, so I like to do it more and more now  
9 that I'm getting older so that I could pass it on  
10 to people; my family, my grandchildren. Lastly,  
11 (Speaking in native language). And have a great  
12 day, everyone, and peace be with you.

13 MR. GEORGE TUCCARO: (Speaking in  
14 native language). We have a couple of items that  
15 have been recovered. One is a beautiful little  
16 earring and it has an ulu. Someone is missing an  
17 earring, a little ulu. I will take it and I will  
18 put it at the registration desk. And I also have  
19 reading glasses. Someone who may have left reading  
20 glasses. They were left in the men's washroom.  
21 Boy, we get right down to details here. Anyway, I  
22 will put those at the registration desk. I think  
23 they belong to Gail. What were you doing in the  
24 men's washroom? Okay, we won't go there.

25 We'll just have a few other



1 to a minimum while families and survivors are  
2 testifying throughout the today here today.

3 Okay. And my final note. For  
4 those people that are going to tell their stories  
5 today, we wish you well and we wish you much  
6 success, and we'll call on the Creator to come and  
7 help you with your story.

8 You have a cell phone? Turn off  
9 your cell phones, yes. Good idea. Billy is -- he  
10 came up with a good line the other night. He said  
11 -- when they had the meals, he was walking around  
12 saying to everybody, "Go ahead and eat. Eat as  
13 much as you want. I've already signed the bill."  
14 That was very, very nice, Billy. That was so nice.  
15 Anyway, I'm going to -- I'm starting to wander all  
16 over the place. Take care and God bless today.  
17 Thank you.

18 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Just  
19 like to say good morning to everybody and welcome.

20 I just want to acknowledge all the  
21 survivors and families who are in the room and  
22 thank everybody who shared with us yesterday.

23 And for those of you who are going  
24 to share your truths with us today and tomorrow, we  
25 look forward to hearing your truths and what you



1 beautiful hunk of fun. I love him but also because  
2 we give life as mother, as woman. So, it's sacred.  
3 It's very sacred. And last night, I was able to  
4 awake my five sense of your culture, the DNA  
5 culture. I was so touched, and my God, your men  
6 are beautiful. Sorry, Serge. And the women;  
7 gorgeous, powerful, amazing. So, for me, it's  
8 hope. It's hope that it's there for today, but for  
9 tomorrow, also, and for the next seven generation,  
10 so it's amazing what we're doing.

11                   People are saying maybe we're not  
12 doing enough or we're not doing this and that. But  
13 let's remember, let's remember that when you're  
14 inside of this important journey or walking beside  
15 with the families and the survivors, who are we to  
16 say we're doing it wrong or right? But instead, we  
17 should make sure that the families are in a safe  
18 place, the survivors are in a safe place, that we  
19 follow the protocols that the people are welcoming  
20 us, like here, and if we go to another place, their  
21 own protocol and so on. And sometimes, it's a mix  
22 of protocol.

23                   And I just want to send a message  
24 to one of a journalist I saw on La Presse, a Quebec  
25 oy journalist -- in the Journal de Montreal, sorry

1 -- that was criticizing a woman who was doing an  
2 opening prayer when somebody came from Ottawa to  
3 talk about something, and he was making fun of that  
4 woman. And being a commissioner, I cannot make any  
5 statement anymore, but you can. So what I wrote on  
6 my Facebook, I just reminded how important it is  
7 for us people from the land, the men and the women,  
8 the elders and the youth, that for the welcome,  
9 it's one of our laws. It's a protocol and it's so  
10 alive.

11                   And I saw that last night. I saw  
12 that the culture is alive. And I was proud to be  
13 part of that. And tonight, Mike's speaking  
14 Inuktituk, who knows. I hope so. And I'm proud.

15                   So with this beautiful, beautiful  
16 work of many, many, many people, we have the  
17 interim report in English and in French. I know  
18 we're supposed to translate also a summary in  
19 Inuktituk, am I right? Mm-hmm, she said. Oui.  
20 And in Cree, also, and maybe other Indigenous  
21 language.

22                   So, this is your report; you can  
23 read it, but what I would like you to do if you can  
24 -- people are saying, "What can we do to help the  
25 family and survivors?" Then you can say to the

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1 federal government, to the provincial government,  
2 les Territoires du Nord-Ouest government, and our  
3 own Indigenous government, there is recommendation  
4 here that you can act on. Now. So, I wish you a  
5 beautiful day and merci beaucoup.

6 **Hearing #1**

7 **Witness: Jaclyn (Jayda) Andre**

8 **In relation to Joni Andre-Itsi**

9 **Heard by Commissioners Michèle Audette and Brian**  
10 **Eyolfson**

11 **Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe**

12 **Grandmothers, Elders and Knowledge-keepers:**

13 **Laureen "Blu" Waters Gaudio; Bernie Poitras**

14 **Williams**

15 **Clerk: Trudy Mckinnon**

16 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

17 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Good  
18 morning, commissioners. I have been asked by a  
19 couple of the local folks to introduce myself, so  
20 it seems funny that I'm introducing myself to you  
21 because you know me, but it's been brought to my  
22 attention all day yesterday and that we should in  
23 these moments actually -- as part of the laws or  
24 traditions in this area, introduce ourselves in  
25 what we are, so I'm Christa Big Canoe. I am one of

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1 the commission counsel. I am Anishinaabekwe from  
2 Southern Ontario, but I have actually spent time in  
3 Inuvik in the North.

4 And so, it's a great honour to be  
5 back up here, and I would like to present the first  
6 family member that will be sharing her story with  
7 you today. And so, before me, I have Jaclyn Andre,  
8 but she goes by Jayda, so, her friends and family  
9 call her Jayda, and she'll be sharing the story of  
10 her sister, Joni Andre.

11 And before we begin, I would like  
12 to ask the clerk to please promise Jayda in.

13 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Good  
14 morning, Jayda. Do you promise to tell your truth  
15 to the commissioners in a good way today?

16 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yes.

17 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:  
18 Thank you.

19 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you  
20 for coming today, Jayda. We want to start with you  
21 kind of introducing yourself to the commissioners  
22 and telling them which community you came from and  
23 the background of the community if you could,  
24 please.

25 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Thank you. Good

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1 morning, everyone. Good morning. My name is  
2 Jaclyn known as Jayda. I'm from Fort McPherson,  
3 Northwest Territories. It's further up north. If  
4 you know where Inuvik is, it's two hours away from  
5 there, so you have to drive from McPherson over to  
6 Inuvik and jump on a plane to come here. I'm  
7 Tetlit Gwich'in, and our population of McPherson is  
8 -- almost 8 to 900. It's a small community; two  
9 stores, a co-op, northern and very small. We don't  
10 have a restaurant or anything like that, and yeah.

11 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: You have a  
12 school in McPherson?

13 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yes, we actually  
14 have a -- Chief Julius School. It's up to grade  
15 12. It's a really nice school, and it's --  
16 beautiful place. You got to go there sometime if  
17 you have the chance.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, thank  
19 you for sharing a bit about where you're from. You  
20 had mentioned that the community is Gwich'in. Is  
21 there like a band council or is it like a mayor?  
22 Like, what is it? It's a hamlet? It's a town?  
23 Just for other people in Canada who don't  
24 understand the North. It would be helpful if you  
25 could explain a little bit about that.

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in relation to Joni Andre-Itsi

1 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: It's a tricky  
2 question because we do have a hamlet. It's a  
3 Hamlet of Fort McPherson. We have a band council  
4 and something I'm learning as we go. It's kind of  
5 funny. We have a band and a Tetlit Gwich'in  
6 council and a DGO, so a mixture of everything, I  
7 guess.

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And would  
9 you mind sharing with us what you currently do and  
10 a little bit more about yourself and your family?

11 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yes. So, I'm  
12 the youngest. My parents are James and May Andre,  
13 and I have had an older sister and older brother.  
14 I actually did a lot of stuff growing up working  
15 numerous jobs here and there. Right now, I'm  
16 actually a personal support worker and love my job  
17 and love what I do and can't wait to go back to  
18 school and go further with my education. Yeah,  
19 that's it.

20 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Are you a  
21 mom as well?

22 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yes. How could  
23 I forget? I'm a mother to two beautiful children,  
24 my girlfriend, and -- yes, my children are -- just  
25 turned 7 and one is 3 going on 30.

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in relation to Joni Andre-Itsi

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Excellent.

2 Well, thank you for sharing that background. The  
3 main reason you're here today is to talk about your  
4 sister, Joni. So, I was wondering if you could  
5 share a little bit about Joni, maybe some fond  
6 memories or tell us about her strengths.

7 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yeah. It's  
8 funny, like I was talking yesterday and talking to  
9 my friends and family, and -- you know, my sister,  
10 her name is Joni Andre, and she was really young,  
11 and I don't think I realized it up until this past  
12 week how young she actually was when she was taken  
13 from us, and I was young at the time and I  
14 mentioned it's amazing how you could trick your  
15 mind to do.

16 We're pretty powerful people, and  
17 I blocked out a lot of stuff in my child years  
18 because I was 15 at the time, and I'm really glad  
19 to be here because I'm slowly opening up now and  
20 trying to bring back those memories slowly and  
21 letting memories come in and blocking out some  
22 other ones, but I guess what I didn't do is try to  
23 remind myself each and every day of who my sister  
24 was and who she is. She was so beautiful. I was  
25 so jealous of her all my life.

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1                   She's a mother and she's a sister,  
2 and she was my only sister and -- yeah, she was  
3 very outgoing. And she was amazing, like I think  
4 back because I lived with her for a while too, and  
5 she's one not to -- she doesn't care what people  
6 think and that's a big thing nowadays, and -- I  
7 guess it was always a big thing -- and she opened  
8 her door for anybody, like literally anyone. She  
9 had so many friends, and she's just so amazing.  
10 Such a nice, nice girl, and I'm so proud to call  
11 her my sister.

12                   MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Did you  
13 have an opportunity recently to speak with any of  
14 her friends or talk with family that you wanted to  
15 share with us?

16                   MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yeah. I guess  
17 now in this day and age, there's so much  
18 technology. And it could be a bad thing; it could  
19 be a good thing, and I feel like I'm really  
20 thankful to be here now -- now that I'm here  
21 because at first, I was like, I'm going to go to  
22 this? And I don't even know why I'm going to it  
23 then, but I know for me being here is, like, not  
24 only helping myself and my family and my little  
25 brother, but it's kind of like for everyone. It's

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1 a lot of my sister's friends, a lot of our family.

2 And yesterday, I used my Facebook,  
3 and I wrote on there that I was coming here and I  
4 was a bit nervous, and I asked my sister's friends  
5 to send me a message and give me your favourite  
6 memory of my sister, and not knowing, that was a  
7 really good thing I did because a lot of people  
8 messaged. It was unbelievable how much messages I  
9 got then.

10 Who knows, that might be their  
11 start to opening up and sharing their stories about  
12 my sister and anything of their lives, like, who  
13 knows what they're going through, and this could be  
14 the beginning of their healing journey as it's the  
15 beginning of mine.

16 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And how  
17 did it feel to get so much response back when  
18 people shared their good memories for you? How did  
19 that feel?

20 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: I felt so good  
21 because -- you know, growing up -- like I  
22 mentioned, I blocked out a lot of stuff, and you  
23 know when you lose someone or you go through  
24 trauma, it's -- I don't know. You begin to think  
25 you don't want to talk about anything. You don't

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1 want to feel like you're asking for anything, and  
2 you don't want pity, and you don't -- you're kind  
3 of like embarrassed and ashamed to ask for help.

4 So, putting that out there  
5 yesterday was -- it made me feel really good, and I  
6 get to thank all the friends of mine and all my  
7 sister's friends personally and how it made me  
8 feel, and I definitely know it made them feel good  
9 too because she will not be forgotten.

10 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Now I  
11 understand that you lost your sister because she  
12 was murdered back in 2004, and she was actually  
13 killed by her husband. Can you tell us a little  
14 bit about the family dynamics and what was  
15 happening in Joni's life within her marriage?

16 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: My sister was  
17 madly in love I guess, and she had a husband, and  
18 there was a lot of abuse. And just last night, I  
19 was thinking about it and how I was 15 at the time,  
20 but little earlier on, how I think back and think,  
21 like, it was really abusive. It was really bad and  
22 to the point where I have many memories of me just  
23 being the younger sister and being a little brat, I  
24 guess, I used to -- maybe it was my way of trying  
25 to stick up for my sister, and you know, get smart

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1 here and there and kind of take off and kind of be  
2 like little tough girl and yet, deep down, I was  
3 kind of scared. And then, I had a moment of I  
4 wonder if me being smart got my sister in trouble.

5 But who knows, and if that happened, then shame on  
6 him.

7 But, yes, I had a good memory like  
8 -- I'll skip that part and tell it after, but she  
9 was -- like everybody knew and that's the sad  
10 thing, and we all knew what was go on, and I don't  
11 know why, like we'll all have to live with that the  
12 rest of my lives, but it's that regret, like we  
13 should have done something, we should have done  
14 more, we should have spoke up. And it's like she  
15 knew it wasn't okay, but maybe just being so much -  
16 - she loved the guy so much that maybe she thought  
17 he could change or maybe he won't do anything  
18 again. It's so sad because you see a lot of it now  
19 still with other people and other families and  
20 women and men. It's really sad.

21 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And I want  
22 -- maybe go back -- and your community's like 8 or  
23 900 people, so it's a small community. And in  
24 terms of resource or places to build houses or do  
25 things, is there a lot of room or wealth to do that

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1 type of thing, to put more houses up or to have  
2 resources like shelters in McPherson?

3 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Not that I know  
4 of, like, we don't have a shelter or anything like  
5 that, but McPherson is -- it's such a beautiful  
6 place. Sometimes, you don't realize, like, how  
7 good a place is until you're leaving, until you  
8 actually start talking about it. And McPherson,  
9 it's like -- it's a small place, so you know  
10 everybody and everybody knows everything about you  
11 and -- could be a good thing, could be a bad thing.

12 But everyone's so friendly and you have your  
13 friends and you have your family, and I guess if  
14 you really need it, a place to go. There's always  
15 places to go. I don't think very much people lock  
16 their door.

17 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Do you  
18 mind telling us who your sister's husband was?

19 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: His name was --  
20 is Stanley Itsi from Fort McPherson.

21 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so,  
22 Stanley was from Fort McPherson, and your sister  
23 and him were together for a few years, right,  
24 before he killed her. And you said she was madly  
25 in love with him, but he did have a bit of a

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1 criminal past. He had problems with courts and was  
2 in and out of court numerous times if you recall?

3 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Definitely.

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so, do  
5 you recall him not going to court for things like -  
6 - not necessarily to your sister, but assault or  
7 break and enter --

8 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Oh, yes,  
9 definitely.

10 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, he was  
11 often before the court. In 2004, you had said you  
12 knew the beating was going on, but was it something  
13 that happened over a long time or was it just  
14 before the end?

15 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: I think it was  
16 always. It's -- jealousy played a big role of it,  
17 like, I remember one time, the phone was ringing  
18 all night and I was young, and I remember someone  
19 called and said that she was really beaten up and I  
20 tried to take off with my Ski-Doo that time, and I  
21 think back last night, I was giggling to my  
22 boyfriend, I was like What was I thinking when I  
23 was trying to take by myself and I wanted revenge  
24 and probably thought I was just the toughest girl  
25 or something and I know my dad ended up picking me

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1 up and we went out looking, and I don't know what  
2 we were going to do or what was our thoughts or I  
3 don't know why -- maybe we called the police. I  
4 really can't remember, but I remember eventually  
5 bumping into him and me spinning out and it was  
6 crazy. But he ran off, and like a coward, ran and  
7 went behind the houses and he ran into the bushes  
8 beside a lake and the police eventually found him,  
9 and I don't know how long he was in jail after that  
10 or probably not very long. It was bad.

11 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And was  
12 there times -- and I'm not saying this in any  
13 judgmental way -- but were there times that he was  
14 charged with assault but she wouldn't come to court  
15 to testify?

16 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Mm-hmm. Yeah.  
17 Like I don't know if she was scared or maybe she  
18 just thought that he will change and that would be  
19 the last time she would be assaulted. I guess that  
20 was just her, like, had so much hope in everyone  
21 and believed in everybody that they could do the  
22 best they could and it's probably why she never  
23 gave up on him, I guess.

24 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Can you  
25 please tell the commissioners what you recall from

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1 what happened the night that Stanley killed your  
2 sister?

3 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: That night --  
4 it's funny because I was out with my friends and I  
5 guess like I never ever really spoke about it  
6 because I was scared, scared to get in trouble,  
7 ashamed and blamed myself because that night when  
8 it happened, I left home and she was there and my  
9 little brother -- or my nephew, I guess at the  
10 time, was there and said I was going to go uptown,  
11 and I was going to hang out with my friends and we  
12 had a little cooler, so we were being brave and  
13 teenagers and we thought we were going to try to  
14 drink that cooler.

15 And it wasn't the best cooler  
16 ever, but it was -- we went into -- it was kind of  
17 warm out. I remember that it was kind of snowing  
18 and it was beautiful out and we were playing in the  
19 open area I guess, and I always remember how we  
20 noticed all these trucks driving around, and I kept  
21 saying "Let's just go down to my house," and my  
22 friends were saying, "Well, let's just do this and  
23 let's just do that," and we were -- we just kept  
24 playing, and it was funny because we were -- like,  
25 I was 15.

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1                   And we just started playing on the  
2 snowbank and we had so much fun, and had a little  
3 snowball fight and whatnot. We kept noticing all  
4 these vehicles and it was kind of weird, like even  
5 though we were okay, like we weren't drunk or  
6 anything. I think we all shared like one cooler  
7 and maybe we were scared and we just took off  
8 running, and then we were -- we just had so much  
9 fun, but there was always something pulling me  
10 away. I think I told my friends maybe three times  
11 at that time like "Let's go down to my house," and  
12 one of them were like, "Let's just go down for a  
13 walk instead."

14                   And it was so funny the way it  
15 turned out because one of our stores is like the  
16 Tetlit co-op, and there was a big hill there like a  
17 big snowdrift, big snowbank, and we were playing on  
18 that, and I guess no one really seen us, and we  
19 went behind the co-op and then we went to this --  
20 it's called an open area. It's kind of in the  
21 middle of the town and there's no roads, and  
22 there's this little trail there, so we walk through  
23 that open area and we kept noticing these other  
24 vehicles like Oh, goodness, whatever, what are  
25 these people doing and whatnot, not knowing they

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1 were looking for us.

2                   And I think back now, like how  
3 crazy it was because I was with Stanley's younger  
4 sister and she was my best friend, she's still my  
5 best friend, and we were picked up and we were  
6 asked to go over to his mom's house, and I was told  
7 that my sister was stabbed, but my sister was like  
8 a really strong girl, like physically tough, and I  
9 was like, "Okay. I'll go see her," and I know  
10 she's fine.

11                   And we were taken -- like I even  
12 kind of think that we were driven around town for a  
13 bit, and we finally went to the health centre, and  
14 I'll never forget it because my sister had lots of  
15 friends and we had like one of the police officers  
16 at the time. He was a family friend of ours, and I  
17 always remember seeing him, and when I walked  
18 through that door, I seen him and just the way he  
19 looked at me, I knew something was wrong.

20                   And I didn't want it to be true or  
21 anything, but to see this police officer standing  
22 there crying, I knew for sure that I took running  
23 and he grabbed me because I was -- I don't know  
24 what I was going to do or what was happening, but  
25 he held onto me and he told me I'll be okay, and it

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1 took a little while for me to actually to go into  
2 the emergency room to see her, and she wasn't  
3 breathing then. And she was gone.

4 I never got to see her take her  
5 last breath. I never got to tell her how much I  
6 loved her. She was my only sister and she was  
7 taken away from us, and -- I'm sorry, I just never  
8 spoke about this for a long time. I probably never  
9 really ever told that story, but I'm slowly letting  
10 it back into my head and it's tough, you know.  
11 Like, you grow up and you're the youngest child,  
12 and you're a teenager now and you have -- I was so  
13 lucky to have her because -- if you guys have  
14 siblings, then you know it's -- you could have your  
15 -- they're your best friends.

16 And me being a girl, you have all  
17 these questions you want to talk to your sister  
18 about. You have personal questions and everything.  
19 Like, I looked up to her and she took care of me,  
20 and she was a cool sister. She let me smoke when I  
21 was 15. Thank goodness I don't do that anymore,  
22 but you know, stuff like that. Like, she was my  
23 sister and she was a mom.

24 But I don't recall much that  
25 happened after that. Like, when I left, I know I

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1 was taken to a family's home, and it was bad  
2 because, you know, my home was now blocked off and  
3 I couldn't go in. I couldn't get clothes. I  
4 couldn't get nothing out of my house. And I think  
5 maybe eventually they allowed us to get sets of  
6 clothing. I really can't remember had happened  
7 after that and somebody I know I will when I'm  
8 ready, but right now, I can't recall that, and --  
9 yeah.

10 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so,  
11 Stanley's picked up by the police and taken away;  
12 is that true, that you recall?

13 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: I know he ran  
14 off after that and I don't know how much longer  
15 they found him or if he turned himself in. I don't  
16 even really need to know that, but.

17 And the sad thing is, when it  
18 happened, there was something going on with the  
19 phones and I don't know if it was the power lines  
20 or if we were like turning into -- like turning --  
21 I wouldn't say turning, but something was going on  
22 with the phones, then. We don't have cell phones -  
23 - or didn't have cell phones then, but our land  
24 lines, I know it was messed up, and the sad thing  
25 about it is, I guess I don't know, but before then

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1 or after then -- but we have a health centre, and  
2 usually they're always short of staff, and I don't  
3 know if it was allowed then, but I know definitely  
4 now it's not allowed -- but nurses can't respond.  
5 We don't have paramedics. So, the nurses couldn't  
6 respond to the phone calls they were getting from  
7 the witnesses who were there. And I can't  
8 remember, but there was something wrong with the  
9 phone lines or if it was having to call the  
10 Yellowknife dispatch. Like, I really can't recall  
11 what was going on, but she stayed in the home on  
12 the floor for -- I think it was over an hour with  
13 no help. Nothing. Nothing.

14 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And just  
15 to clarify, when she was in the home, she was  
16 alive.

17 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yup.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And when  
19 she passed, it was actually at the health centre?

20 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Mm-hmm. So, I  
21 missed all that and I know I keep telling myself  
22 there was a reason why I didn't see that.

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: You had  
24 mentioned earlier to the commissioners there were  
25 people in the house, like friends, and Stanley, and

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1 your sister, and your nephew, Frazer, and he was  
2 just little. So, he was in the house when that  
3 happened, and he saw his mom, right? Did you want  
4 to stay something about that?

5 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: My brother --  
6 he's adopted, so he's my brother now -- my nephew,  
7 Frazer -- he was 2 at the time, and that is my  
8 sister's only child, and there was two other people  
9 who were there. But I guess what I've read that  
10 happened or what I know that happened -- and they  
11 started fighting. I don't really know what they  
12 were fighting for, but he was probably jealous and  
13 accusing her of somebody, I guess.

14 It was always something like that,  
15 and I'll always remember that. It was just  
16 jealousy. She can't talk to nobody. And even her  
17 friends like girls, like relatives, friends, it's  
18 like she had to distance herself away from them  
19 because he didn't like them, and so, if he didn't  
20 like them, she's not allowed to talk to them, but  
21 she still did.

22 There was his younger brother  
23 there and a cousin of ours there, and I guess they  
24 said that when they started fighting -- like, it  
25 was bad because he chipped her tooth. She had a

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1 scratch on her face, like it was open already. By  
2 that time, they went outside because I think they  
3 saw the knife already. I can't remember but -- and  
4 he ran out and he ran past them. He left the home  
5 and he took off running. So, they went in and they  
6 found her. He did that to her and he left her.  
7 That's his wife and he left her. He never came  
8 back to check on her. He never called to try to  
9 get help. But he just left her. Left her there.

10 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: We're  
11 going to maybe talk about the court and what  
12 happened at the court, but before I do that, I want  
13 to talk about that document that comes out of the  
14 court, the transcript that's available for the oral  
15 reasons for the decision in that case because  
16 you've seen that, right?

17 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yup.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And that  
19 was just recently you read that. So, the  
20 transcript of the oral reasons for sentence  
21 delivered by the Honourable Justice V. A. Schuler,  
22 sitting at Fort McPherson in the Northwest  
23 Territories on November 3rd, 2005. And so, the  
24 court actually came to McPherson. It was held in  
25 McPherson. And you have seen this?

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1 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yes.

2 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I will be  
3 providing a copy to the commissioners. This is  
4 publicly available on the Northwest Territories  
5 courts site as a public transcript of the  
6 proceeding.

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so,  
8 Stanley was charged originally with second-degree  
9 murder; is that right?

10 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Mm-hmm.

11 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And  
12 charged under Section 236(b) of the Criminal Code,  
13 but do you remember what he got convicted of?

14 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Manslaughter.

15 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, he was  
16 convicted of manslaughter. There are details in  
17 the transcript of the incident. Justice Schuler  
18 actually details what was found in evidence. And  
19 so, this is why we're asking for it to be  
20 submitted, but I just want to turn to -- sort of  
21 talk about the sentence for a minute because I know  
22 that's something you want to address. It's okay if  
23 I read it then?

24 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Mm-hmm.

25 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And I

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1 won't read all of the additional orders after but  
2 just sort of the first part. So, Justice Schuler  
3 had said:

4 "So I leave that with the  
5 people of the community,  
6 hoping that if anything  
7 positive can come out of this  
8 case, it is that they reflect  
9 on these issues."

10 And so, the judge had talked about  
11 a number of issues such as the fact the phone  
12 system wasn't working, it took an hour to respond,  
13 a number of things that could have been potentially  
14 addressed.

15 "The sentence that I impose  
16 on Mr. Itsi today must be  
17 proportionate to the gravity  
18 of the offence and the degree  
19 of responsibility or moral  
20 blameworthiness of the  
21 offender. The offence in  
22 this case is very serious  
23 indeed, and Mr. Itsi bears a  
24 high degree of became  
25 worthiness because as I said,

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1 he clearly intended to cause  
2 serious harm to Ms. Andre."

3 It continues to say

4 "Counsel are very far apart  
5 in their submissions as to  
6 what the appropriate sentence  
7 is in this case. Crown  
8 counsel seeks a term of 12 to  
9 15 years while defence  
10 counsel seeks the term of  
11 approximately 4 to 6. Both  
12 agree that some credit should  
13 be applied to the sentence  
14 for the remand time. In my  
15 view for the reasons given,  
16 12 to 15 years is outside the  
17 usual range in this  
18 jurisdiction. On the other  
19 hand, a term of 4 to 6 years,  
20 I do not think would  
21 adequately reflect the  
22 aggravating factors in this  
23 case."

24 He asks the now-convicted offender  
25 to stand and says

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1 "In my view, in all the  
2 circumstances of this case  
3 and having given the matter  
4 much anxious consideration,  
5 the appropriate sentence for  
6 what you have done is eight  
7 years in jail. After  
8 crediting the remand time of  
9 three years, I sentence you  
10 today to serve five years in  
11 jail."

12 And then there's other additional  
13 orders such as DNA orders and certain prohibitions  
14 under the Criminal Code that won't go into the  
15 record, but I won't read it now. And I know that  
16 you kind of want to address the fact that -- that  
17 day, you remember him getting five years, and how  
18 did that feel?

19 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: You know, my  
20 sister was -- she was my sister; she was a friend;  
21 she was a mother -- she was a young mother; and she  
22 was supposedly a wife. You know, when you get  
23 married, you're supposed to promise your promises  
24 that you're going to take care of each other and  
25 protect each other. But she was stabbed, she was

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1 beaten, and she was left. She wasn't protected at  
2 that time.

3 She wasn't loved at those last  
4 moments of her life from her supposedly husband,  
5 but I know she knew she was loved from all of us.  
6 She never got to meet my kids. I never got to  
7 proudly hand over my newborn children to meet their  
8 auntie. She'll never watch her son graduate.  
9 She'll never watch any of us get married one day.  
10 She won't be there to see it physically. She was  
11 taken away from us. She was taken away from her  
12 son and her baby, who was only two, from her  
13 husband. Like, what kind of husband is that?

14 And for him to get -- like, he was  
15 in jail for a few years, but then to only get five  
16 years after that, that's stupid. It's like -- the  
17 way I see it, it's like you take a life, you owe  
18 the life.

19 And the justice system of North, I  
20 think it's bullshit. You can do anything to  
21 someone and be like, Oh, you'll just get eight  
22 years in jail and you'll be out by the time you're  
23 30, and you can go on and live your life and have  
24 kids and do what you want.

25 But I have to keep reminding

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1 myself, like, he has to live with that, too, and I  
2 don't know how he deals with it or if he deals with  
3 it. I don't know and I don't need to know. He'll  
4 be reminded for that the rest of his life, but he  
5 lost. He lost out. He just lost out.

6                                   It's now that I'm getting a little  
7 older and I'm reminded in many, many ways, like,  
8 not only by looking at Frazer, but there's other  
9 things, like the way she had her hair and the way  
10 she moves her hair. My daughter does that and it's  
11 so cute. So, my daughter is always fixing her  
12 hair, so I'm reminded all day of my sister and --  
13 like, little scents here and there, the way you  
14 could see somebody walking uptown sometimes, you  
15 know, like a black jacket and their hair down, you  
16 could see them from behind and you're like, Oh, my  
17 gosh, that looks like Joni. I'm reminded every  
18 day.

19                                   Sometimes, I'm mistakenly called  
20 Joni, and it's funny because sometimes, you see the  
21 look on the person who called me and like, Oh, my  
22 gosh, sorry, and I'm like no, it's an honour  
23 because I guess it's been 15 years, and, like, I  
24 haven't spoken much of her, but this is the  
25 starting to my healing journey, and this is the

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1 start to remember her, to honour her, and bring her  
2 -- like, she needs to be remembered a lot more. I  
3 know she never was forgotten, but it's time. It's  
4 time that everybody gets to know who she was, and  
5 she'll always be --

6 He got five years of jail after  
7 serving three -- it didn't seem like three at the  
8 time. To me, that's ridiculous. I didn't take it  
9 very good. I know I did some things after that. I  
10 had like a little flashback last night -- and I  
11 used to think about it a few years ago, off and on,  
12 and then I just kind of block it off again.

13 I remember after the sentencing  
14 was done, the police or the security, whatever, was  
15 taking him out of the complex, and I attacked him.  
16 And sometimes, I wish I was older because I could  
17 have been a little more bigger, a little more  
18 stronger. And I was taken away, I know I was told  
19 that I could be charged, and you know, your 15, so  
20 now I could kind of smile about it because it would  
21 be different if I was older. Maybe it's a good  
22 thing I was younger.

23 But that was the last time I seen  
24 him and who knows what -- right now, I hope I never  
25 see him again. Maybe that will change, I'm not

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1 sure. I really don't know what the future holds or  
2 anything, but right now, I'm glad the last time I  
3 seen him was the way I seen him, and that was my  
4 last words and my last -- that will just be the  
5 picture that I know and that's how I'll remember it  
6 forever.

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I  
8 understand your father originally wanted to come  
9 but was unable to attend. And when he tells the  
10 story, he said he warned the police that enough of  
11 the family was angry that they should make sure  
12 that Mr. Itsi comes in protected and is delivered  
13 right to the door.

14 And then, interestingly, it was  
15 you, a 15 year old, who was the one who actually  
16 ran into him. You know, in hindsight, you shared  
17 with us -- that's a memory you're going to remember  
18 because -- and why is that, is it because you felt  
19 like you were standing up for your sister?

20 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: When you're 14,  
21 you know you're just a teenager. She wasn't there,  
22 but I know she's here. I know she'll always be  
23 here and I know she's always with me forever, but  
24 she was taken from us, and there was, like, no --  
25 he didn't show nothing. I don't even think a tear

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1 was shed as he walked out that complex, like, I  
2 think it was all building up.

3 And I also think that there wasn't  
4 enough support for myself because I know I stood in  
5 the hallway, I stood inside, and most of the time,  
6 I was by myself, and I had that little opportunity  
7 for then was my little revenge, I guess. I don't  
8 regret it.

9 But it's so messed up, like how  
10 things were. In a way, I wish it was different,  
11 but in a way, it just goes to show how much freedom  
12 I guess you could have. I don't even know.

13 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Maybe just  
14 to help people who are not from this region or from  
15 the Northwest Territories. When you say you have  
16 court in your community, you're not going to the  
17 courthouse, are you?

18 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: No.

19 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, where  
20 are they holding court when they come to the  
21 community even for something like a murder trial or  
22 manslaughter trial?

23 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: It's in our  
24 complex. We call it a complex. So, it's like the  
25 arena. One side is the arena and one side is the

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1 complex, so there's usually, like, feast and  
2 community dances and that being held in there. So,  
3 whenever there's court, that's where court is.

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so,  
5 the courtroom is set up sort of makeshift with  
6 tables and chairs.

7 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yeah.

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Does the  
9 community all come out and watch court when it's in  
10 town usually?

11 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Usually, yeah.  
12 There's lots of people out there.

13 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: In one  
14 way, it's really good because the court comes to  
15 you, so you don't have to go to it. How is that  
16 for family tensions in terms of people coming to  
17 court for something like this? And there's family  
18 members supporting both families.

19 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yeah.

20 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: How does  
21 that work? What happens?

22 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Like, I don't  
23 recall much of the court because like I said, I was  
24 outside in the hallway. But it's messed up because  
25 you have a building that's like half the size of

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1 here, and usually, it's probably -- who knows,  
2 maybe like six rows of seats for public to sit at.  
3 So, you can imagine having a community of 800.  
4 And I can't remember, I think it was really packed  
5 in there, but his family is a really big family.  
6 So, you have my sister, like -- we have a small  
7 family ourselves, I mean, like my mom and dad, my  
8 sister, brother, and then there was me and Frazer,  
9 but we have lots of relatives. So, it was probably  
10 very hard because you come from a small family, I  
11 mean, you come from a small community and you all  
12 know each other, and it's like you want to be  
13 friends with everyone and you want to be nice to  
14 people, but at the same time, it's beginning to  
15 know -- like, it's not everybody's fault. It's,  
16 you know, the person who's in trial, who's standing  
17 there with no shame. It's their fault.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: You  
19 mentioned earlier that one of your best friends is  
20 Stanley's sister.

21 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yes.

22 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I also  
23 understand that your late brother and Stanley were  
24 pretty good friends, too.

25 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Mm-hmm.

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1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I'm not  
2 going to dig a bunch of mischief of their own.

3 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: So, you can  
4 imagine coming from a small community, and my best  
5 friends -- we're all still friends, and I'm really  
6 thankful for that and I'm really proud of us  
7 because Stanley's sister, one of his sisters is one  
8 of my friends, and we're still friends, and we're  
9 both moms now, and, you know, we don't speak about  
10 it, but it'll always be there. It never stopped us  
11 from being friends. Like, it's not what you call  
12 real friends.

13 And I had a brother. He's older,  
14 too, and in his younger days, he was crazy. He was  
15 -- you know, he was fun and whatnot. He got into a  
16 lot of trouble. He was good friends with Stanley.  
17 Stanley had other brothers and he was friends with  
18 them. There was always two of the brothers and  
19 there was my brother, and they were always into  
20 mischief together. My brother was in jail at the  
21 time and he took it bad, and maybe it was a good  
22 thing he was in jail because who knows what would  
23 have happened after that. Maybe he could have been  
24 there to stop it, but I'm not sure. My brother got  
25 out, and he went on to do other things. My brother

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1 got saved. He moved to Edmonton. He became a  
2 professional boxer. He attended church.

3                   And one day, I hope to be as  
4 strong as him because there's -- it will always  
5 replay in my head about how he said one night, he  
6 was sleeping and he had a dream of Stanley, and he  
7 said he got up and got off his bed and got on his  
8 knees and he started praying. He's praying to God  
9 about Stanley, and that's something really powerful  
10 because for me, like, my brother was always in  
11 trouble, always in jail, then to see him change, it  
12 was amazing. Now, my brother's not with us  
13 anymore. Him, too, was taken too soon.

14                   MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Just so  
15 the commissioners know, you can actually tell us  
16 what happened with your brother.

17                   MS. JAYDA ANDRE: My brother was  
18 living in Edmonton, and he was a professional  
19 boxer. He got struck and hit by a car, a racing  
20 car from -- I was going to say it because sometimes  
21 you feel like -- as Aboriginals, we're not -- I  
22 always think like we're not good enough because --  
23 like, our justice system and that. I always think  
24 -- I wondered if he was white, would it have made a  
25 difference in the court?

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1                   He was hit by a car. He died on  
2 scene. And for him, when the court came, the girl  
3 got off and she got a \$2,000 fine. And I'm just  
4 going to say, it cost me \$2,500 to go to Edmonton  
5 one way and \$500 to come back. So, it cost me  
6 \$3,000 to go to Edmonton to go to my brother's  
7 court, and she got off with a \$2,000 fine, and she  
8 can't drive for -- I think it was a couple years,  
9 and that's it. There, too. Like, it makes me  
10 wonder if Jonathan was non-Aboriginal, I wonder if  
11 this girl would have got a longer sentence or if  
12 this girl was Aboriginal, would she got a longer  
13 sentence other than, Here's a \$2,000 fine, and you  
14 have a year to pay it. It's fucking sickening.  
15 Sorry.

16                   MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: At that  
17 time, you actually -- how did she react to the  
18 family and how did the family react to her?

19                   MS. JAYDA ANDRE: It's crazy  
20 because I had, like, no intentions then. It's kind  
21 of like, now, don't know what you're getting  
22 yourself into. And I went to the court for my  
23 brother and to meet my mom there, and it was  
24 different. I don't know if it was difference  
25 because we were in Edmonton and in a courtroom.

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1 There was definitely more support from people we  
2 don't even know and that we just met. I don't know  
3 if it was -- maybe because there was less people.

4 But in that case, I didn't think I  
5 was going to be leaving there the way I did because  
6 this time, I was older and knew a lot more. I was  
7 able to do an impact statement, but I was able to  
8 face this lady who did that to my brother. And  
9 I've only ever really been to two courts, I guess.

10 For my brother, it was different  
11 because this lady who did it -- maybe because she's  
12 a woman, who knows, but she cried and she showed  
13 sympathy. She said she was sorry. And it was real  
14 and you felt it. And when it was -- when the court  
15 was over, and even though, like, now, I think back,  
16 like -- of course, I'm mad and I have those mixed  
17 feelings, and I'm allowed to have those mixed  
18 feelings, but then I went to her and I gave her a  
19 hug and I told her thank you, and I told her it was  
20 okay because I know that's what Jonathan would have  
21 done, but she showed sympathy and -- like, I knew  
22 it was real.

23 You know when people are real.  
24 You know things are true and people show it, and  
25 you saw it and I saw it, and even though I'm mad,

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1 and even though that I have mixed feelings and  
2 think I should have handled it different. I should  
3 have never forgave her, but I did at that time, and  
4 I know I'd be proud of myself.

5 But with my sister's case, it was  
6 different. This guy blamed others. He blamed our  
7 cousin. He ran away. He never said sorry. He  
8 denied it. Like, who does that? I mean, you do  
9 something, you own up for yourself. Especially if  
10 you call yourself a man, that you be a man and own  
11 up and be there. Be there for your wife. I guess  
12 that's what happened and nothing will change that.

13 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you  
14 for sharing that part of the story too, and the  
15 striking differences between the court and your  
16 experience, I think, were important for the  
17 commissioners to hear.

18 A couple things if I may ask,  
19 further questions around that, you talked about the  
20 difference in resources and supports from when you  
21 were in court in Edmonton and when you were in  
22 court in McPherson. Do you think it would be more  
23 helpful for families going through these court  
24 processes if there were more services available to  
25 you in your communities? I'm not criticizing the

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1 ones that exist. I'm asking what would be helpful?

2 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: I'm sure there  
3 was, like, lots of support then, and, you know, me  
4 probably just being a teenager and not wanting  
5 nobody's help maybe -- but there's a few  
6 counsellors in our community -- but the counsellors  
7 themselves was Stanley's mom and his auntie, so  
8 like my friend and my cousin. So then, even though  
9 I have nothing against them or never did, never  
10 will, I wasn't going to go and talk to them. I  
11 don't recall anything else. Maybe there was, and I  
12 just don't remember, but I don't recall any other  
13 support. I think there was other people that came  
14 in after that, but I could be thinking of a sing  
15 along or something like that that happened.

16 But now that you think back, it's  
17 crazy how there was really no professionals there.  
18 Maybe things would have been different, like maybe  
19 we all could have got help sooner. But I know,  
20 like when you need help and you want help, it's  
21 like you work both ways. People are not going to  
22 know that you need help, that you need to ask for  
23 it, and that's a hard thing to do, but you think  
24 with trauma that bad, it will be -- it should be  
25 there from the beginning, but it wasn't. It wasn't

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1 there. Maybe it was, but if it was, it definitely  
2 wasn't good enough.

3 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: It's  
4 interesting because we heard from other witnesses  
5 that we need to make sure we're training -- like,  
6 the territory needs to be training local people or  
7 people that can stay in the community, and that is  
8 very important. But when you have small  
9 communities, there's this interesting conundrum  
10 that you have local people, but then, sometimes  
11 there's conflicts, like the one you're describing.

12 And so, on one hand, I think -- if I'm  
13 understanding you correctly, it's good to have  
14 those local resources.

15 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yeah.

16 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: But, is it  
17 fair to say you would recommend to the  
18 commissioners that sometimes outside help or other  
19 professionals needs to be brought in when there's  
20 special types of circumstances?

21 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Definitely.  
22 Like I said, I wasn't going to go and talk to  
23 Stanley's mom or Stanley's auntie because that will  
24 just be too weird for me, like I probably won't  
25 talk about what I need to talk about because I

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1 might think -- I'll just hold back because I might  
2 make them feel funny or -- it's different.

3 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: In terms  
4 of the support, you talked about -- maybe you would  
5 heal sooner. The support from the time you lose  
6 Joni moving forward, what you were able to access -  
7 - and I understand you were a teenager, so maybe --  
8 and you were too busy being smart to want to  
9 actually get the help, but what were the things in  
10 place or what could you do or what could your  
11 brother/nephew do that would help him and what has  
12 this family experience been?

13 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: To me -- like I  
14 said, I don't recall very much help and support,  
15 like, even to me as a teenager back then. I know  
16 at the time we were promised a lot, "I know you're  
17 going to get professional help. There's going to  
18 be people there for Frazer all the way," and maybe  
19 there was professional -- call it a doctor now, I  
20 guess, but I don't know what she was. She sure  
21 made a lot of promises then. Maybe she saw our  
22 family once or twice after that and that was maybe  
23 within a month and never again.

24 I'm thankful I have a lot of  
25 courage, and I don't know why I'm like that, but I

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1 guess I am and I'm thankful, like, for me, I went  
2 out of my way to actually come here and it was  
3 through -- I want to say Health Canada, and it has  
4 to go back to residential school survivors because  
5 I'm a victim, like I'm a survivor, and --  
6 obviously, never went to residential school myself,  
7 but, you know, my parents and their grandparents,  
8 so I know there's funding out there for  
9 counselling, and it was me hearing from my dad and  
10 other friends in McPherson about, "You could  
11 actually go and get counselling in Yellowknife," so  
12 I found out the number and contacted them.  
13 Somebody here in Yellowknife and I was able to come  
14 out a few times.

15 I think it was three times I came  
16 out for counselling. And then I got pregnant and  
17 then I tried to come after that, but I was  
18 breastfeeding, and my daughter was two at the time,  
19 so I couldn't bring her, and I couldn't afford to  
20 buy a ticket for her to come with me, and I wasn't  
21 going to leave her. There's always something,  
22 like, there's always something holding you back,  
23 but I had to do that on my own. And I'm not  
24 blaming anybody for it, and I'm happy I did it and  
25 I can't wait to -- like, I know I'm going to do it

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1 more. And I'm not looking for sympathy or  
2 anything, but I just think, like, people can't do  
3 that.

4 Like, there's other survivors out  
5 there who doesn't have -- maybe they're not  
6 capable, maybe they're not ready, but they  
7 shouldn't have to be going and looking for  
8 different phone numbers and finding out you could  
9 go other places to go and get counselled. It  
10 should be given to them. It should be out there  
11 public all the time that there's help. I mean,  
12 like, don't get me wrong, we have a local radio  
13 station and stuff like that in McPherson, and you  
14 know where people work, you know what they do, and  
15 you know what's available, but sometimes you don't  
16 want to be speaking to someone who's family or  
17 someone who's friends with them. Small town  
18 problems, I guess.

19 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Now, I did  
20 want to ask you -- and we're not trying to jump  
21 back and forth -- but we're going to take a step  
22 back in time, so before your sister's killed by  
23 Stanley, you actually brought this to my attention,  
24 this particular case.

25 And I just want to be really clear

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1 that when we put this transcript for reasons of  
2 judgment, oral delivery by the Honourable Justice  
3 J. Z. Vertes in Fort McPherson in the Northwest  
4 Territories on the second day of October 1999.

5 At the time in '99, the charge was  
6 under Section 234 of the Criminal Code, but it was  
7 also a manslaughter charge that Stanley went to  
8 court for, but I want it to be clear on the record  
9 that he was not convicted of this, that the verdict  
10 came back not guilty, but that he had previously  
11 been charged and went through a trial for a  
12 manslaughter of an individual, and the judge could  
13 not find the evidence beyond a reasonable doubt to  
14 convict Stanley.

15 But I know that you just wanted to  
16 touch base on this for a couple of reasons. So, do  
17 you want to tell us why you think it was important?

18 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Like, going back  
19 to the court -- this guy has been charged numerous  
20 times, in and out of jail, a lot to do with  
21 mischief, assaults, and even went on manslaughter,  
22 but there wasn't enough evidence.

23 And I always think to myself, how  
24 could someone have such a bad criminal record get  
25 away with something so easy? It's funny. No

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1 offence to any -- if there's any judges or  
2 anything, but things nowadays is just backwards.  
3 It's unbelievable how people could get away with  
4 things. And the sad thing about it is, what are we  
5 passing on to our younger generations?

6 This is a little off-topic, but it  
7 always bugs me that last year, my kids have a small  
8 little Ski-Doo and it was stolen off our property.

9 It was brand new, maybe three months old, and  
10 there's two kids -- teenagers like 17 years old, I  
11 think, stole it, and I don't know how they stole  
12 such a small Ski-Doo when we have a bigger Ski-Doo  
13 there, like if you want to go for a joyride, you  
14 could have stole the big one. But they stole our  
15 kid's little Ski-Doo, and when I found it, it was -  
16 - like the springs were off, and it was upside  
17 down, they put fuel in it. They just trashed the  
18 little Ski-Doo.

19 I found it and later on, I called  
20 the cops, and I told them -- I guess we  
21 accidentally left the key in the Ski-Doo so that's  
22 how they had it, but we still didn't have that key.  
23 You know, I was fuming. Like, I was so mad, and I  
24 called the cops, I'm like, "Can you help find this  
25 key?" And I told them who I knew had it. And sure

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1 enough they went and they found these two young  
2 boys -- not young, they're 17. 16 and 17 maybe --  
3 the police officer got the key off one of the boys.  
4 So I thought I'm to go and lay charges, but there  
5 wasn't enough evidence, which I think is just  
6 crazy. Anywho.

7 Later on, my boyfriend ended up  
8 getting charged because he told this boy to stay  
9 off our property. He got mad and stole off our  
10 kids and they ruined the Ski-Doo. Cops couldn't do  
11 nothing about it. We're still fixing little parts.  
12 They cut all the wires to it. They just damaged  
13 it. And one of the lawyers called me and asked me  
14 -- they were just talking to me and asking  
15 questions and whatnot. I just told them I wanted  
16 to lay charges, but there -- not enough evidence.

17 But the moral of the story is that  
18 the auntie said, "Well, if you were a judge or if  
19 you were to be in the courtroom, what would you  
20 do?" Like, say to these kids. I said, "Well, what  
21 would I say to them is like they are teenagers, and  
22 I know, like, I had a crazy teenage life and  
23 whatnot, but even though my kids are young, they  
24 are going to know for the rest of their lives, Oh,  
25 we could go and steal off someone and nothing will



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1 like that. My kids never got a sorry. We had to  
2 pay the damages for the Ski-Doo. It's backwards.

3                               So unbelievable how things -- how  
4 you could -- it's like sending a message out there  
5 saying you could do anything. You could go steal  
6 off someone. You can go and ruin things. You  
7 could go on people's property. You can go and kill  
8 someone, and you'll get away with it. Maybe you'll  
9 get -- in my case -- for my sister, maybe you'll  
10 get eight years in jail. And for a lot of people,  
11 that's -- maybe that's their home because you're  
12 warm, you have access to food, you have access to -  
13 - like you're protected kind of thing. I don't  
14 know. I just have those mixed feelings sometimes,  
15 and at the same time, don't want to hurt anybody's  
16 feelings.

17                               MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Trying to  
18 be nice to make your point. I do just to want  
19 return to this, so we don't leave it hanging. So,  
20 again, so it's clear in our records, Stanley Itsi  
21 was never convicted of this manslaughter because  
22 they didn't have enough evidence to prove the case.  
23 And if I may, I just want to read that one part.  
24 And actually, can you please tell the commissioners  
25 without getting into great detail, like what the

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1 nature of that manslaughter was, like what was  
2 happening, like how did it happen or what was it  
3 about?

4 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: This one? A  
5 drunken brawl, I guess, maybe like people drinking  
6 and got out of hand, no witnesses, yeah.

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And it was  
8 a member of the community who in this drunken brawl  
9 died as a result. Do you remember who that person  
10 was?

11 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yes. He's my  
12 cousin, and I have very fond memories of him. But  
13 I know I remember how nice he was and how he always  
14 used to say I was always going to be his flower  
15 girl when he got married. He was my cousin. His  
16 name is Clifford and that's my mom's nephew.

17 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, he  
18 dies as a result of a drunken brawl and none of the  
19 witnesses -- there were more than one witness there  
20 -- provide enough evidence, and there's two  
21 potentially accused, one of them is Stanley Itsi,  
22 and either one or both have the opportunity, both  
23 were acting in a drunken, volatile manner, both  
24 were aggressive since both apparently served time  
25 for assault.

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1 "Either one of them or in  
2 combination could have assaulted Clifford Francis.  
3 The conclusion that Stanley Itsi struck the blow  
4 that resulted in the death of Clifford Francis (ph)  
5 is not the only rational and reasonable conclusion  
6 to draw from the proven facts. Too many questions  
7 have been left unanswered.

8 Let me say that I am not at all  
9 convinced that these young men were so drunk that  
10 they cannot remember what really happened. Getting  
11 drunk or blacking out is no defence. A member of  
12 this community died as a result of a drunken,  
13 uncontrollable behaviour on the part of someone or  
14 other young men.

15 Whoever did this knows it and will  
16 have to live with that knowledge for the rest of  
17 their lives, but I cannot act as a detective to  
18 ascertain the absolute truth. All I can do is  
19 decide whether the evidence presented in this trial  
20 approves the guilt of the accused. I may have my  
21 suspicions, but that is not proof. For these  
22 reasons, I find the accused not guilty and the  
23 charges dismissed." So, is it common when there's  
24 even assaults in communities and stuff, if no  
25 witnesses come forward, the courts can't actually

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1 make a finding of guilt?

2 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yes. And I  
3 think that happened with my sister. Like I said,  
4 she loved this guy, and I know there was charges,  
5 and I know she -- few times didn't appear to court,  
6 so the charges will be dropped. And I just think  
7 back now -- like I said, someone who has such  
8 criminal record and even convicted of manslaughter  
9 once before, how could you get away with eight  
10 years? Like eight years.

11 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And sorry,  
12 just to clarify. He didn't get convicted on this  
13 one, but he did have a number of other assault  
14 charges for which he was convicted and served time.

15 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Mm-hmm. It's  
16 unbelievable.

17 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So,  
18 actually, I want to thank you because you've given  
19 us some insight into sort of the justice system up  
20 here and how it might differ. Is there anything  
21 else you want to add on that before we turn to  
22 recommendations and ideas for the commissioners?

23 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: No. I'll always  
24 have, like, my thoughts and others will have  
25 theirs. It's just sad. I mean, I'm not -- it's

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1 been 15 years. I don't expect anything to happen  
2 now, but hearing other people's stories, I know I'm  
3 not alone. My family's not alone of how things  
4 happened and how we wish things could have been  
5 different.

6                                   But I also need to keep reminding  
7 myself that someone could serve 50 years, and I  
8 have -- for the rest of my life, I'll have my good  
9 memories and I'm going to live with that. As I  
10 slowly work with myself and allow stuff to come  
11 back, I know eventually it's going to get easier as  
12 I start my healing journey. But if someone was to  
13 get one year, if someone else could get 50 years --  
14 I can't imagine what he has to live with that in  
15 the back of their mind, so that -- I hate to say  
16 it, but I'm thankful for because I know we're two  
17 different people and we have -- I don't know.

18                                   My sister will be remembered for  
19 who she is and who she was. Could I go back to --  
20 I know when I leave here, I'm going to be thinking  
21 about all this stuff I wish I said and had that  
22 opportunity, but like I mentioned before, I wrote  
23 on my Facebook yesterday, and I asked if friends  
24 could send me a little message and there was one  
25 that I'm going to read. I asked for permission;

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1 I'm not going to name names, but it made me feel so  
2 good because this lady -- it's like she just took  
3 the words out of my mouth, and I'm going to read a  
4 little part of it. It says:

5 "Joni was a beautiful person.  
6 You are drawn to her quiet  
7 nature. Her beautiful smile,  
8 you will forever see. I talk  
9 to her each and every day,  
10 and I think it was just to  
11 check in on her and see if  
12 she was okay. Even just to  
13 hear her voice was a  
14 pleasure. She was always  
15 there to listen to you. She  
16 loved the people near and  
17 dear to her. She wanted to  
18 see the good in people."

19 And honestly, it's so true because  
20 I mentioned before, she always had her door open  
21 and she had so much visitors all the time, like,  
22 she could have \$0 and still find a way to help  
23 someone, like just give them help in any way. I  
24 remember when her daughter was born, and back home  
25 you have to leave McPherson to have children. You

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1 have to drive over to Inuvik, so this is --

2                               They're in Inuvik now and this is  
3 my friend's memory. She had her daughter. And the  
4 next day, she didn't have time to shower, but my  
5 sister went there and she held her daughter that  
6 whole time. She held her daughter while this girl  
7 had a shower -- and if you're a mother, you know  
8 how difficult that could be when you're a new mom.

9                               But my sister was in the hospital  
10 at that time, and she was there because he beat her  
11 up so badly that her eyes were bloodshot. So, they  
12 had to send her to Inuvik. They couldn't deal with  
13 her in McPherson because you get -- I guess there's  
14 doctors in Inuvik and little better care.

15                              So that was the reason she was  
16 Inuvik. And she told her she doesn't have to live  
17 like that. Frazer is small. Who would look after  
18 him? And all she said was, "I know." In the back  
19 of my mind, I didn't think this would be true. And  
20 six months later, I was given the news, and I beat  
21 myself up every day because I didn't answer the  
22 phone that night, and that was my sister calling  
23 her. She was my best friend and I couldn't believe  
24 this happened to her.

25                              And I was so proud of this girl,



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1 how she just had hope for everybody and how she  
2 never gave up and she fought till the end.

3                                   And I don't know if she was scared  
4 to leave or -- I know she was scared to leave I  
5 should say because I was her sister and we told  
6 each other stuff. But from me, it's -- you know,  
7 you grew up having a sister and brother, and you  
8 grew up having best friends, and sometimes, little  
9 worst enemies, and now it's -- I watch my kids play  
10 and then I watch them fight. And it's so funny  
11 because sometimes I sit there and I could just cry  
12 because that was me and I miss it.

13                                   And my sister used to wear certain  
14 kind of makeup and when I think back now, like, we  
15 go on trips or drive to Hichers (ph) or something  
16 like that, and you buy stuff, and I saw this "buy  
17 this blue makeup," and I'd say it's for me, and  
18 deep down I knew it was for my sister and then  
19 she'll take it and I'll be mad at her and that's  
20 just what we do. And I think back now, and it's  
21 something I could laugh at -- but I'll never get to  
22 share that stuff again.

23                                   I know that we say they're always  
24 with us, but I just wish she could have been here.  
25 I really miss my sister and she was my best friend

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1 growing up and that was taken from me and it's so  
2 sad. I know I'm not the only one. I hear people's  
3 stories, and it's funny how you can relate to  
4 people, but the sad thing is, why do we have to  
5 meet like this or why do we relate in this shitty  
6 way. She didn't have to leave us so soon. I'm  
7 sorry.

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: You shared  
9 a lot with us today in terms of your experience and  
10 Joni's strengths, the loss of your brother, and so,  
11 I think we're very grateful and I really don't have  
12 many more questions for you, but I did want to give  
13 you the opportunity. If you have any ideas that  
14 you want to share with the commissioners about  
15 moving forward in a good way, anything that would  
16 help, any of your ideas for families going through  
17 what you have. They would welcome those  
18 recommendations to hear, based on your experience,  
19 what could help.

20 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: I'm not really  
21 sure how to answer those questions because I'm sure  
22 you heard a lot of those answers in the last --  
23 however long we've been sitting here. I know  
24 there's resources out there. I know some -- we  
25 have some in our community and I'm thankful for the

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1 resources outside of the community. And I know  
2 even being in my community now, like, I'm not  
3 trying too diss anyone or anything, like, back then  
4 I mentioned how I refused to go to different  
5 counsellors and stuff like that because of  
6 conflict. It's not because they're bad people or  
7 anything. It's just, you know, you don't want to  
8 speak to people who are related to you and stuff  
9 like that.

10                   McPherson is growing. We have  
11 different stuff happening now, and I'm really proud  
12 of our community because when you actually sit back  
13 and look at the things that's happening and the way  
14 people are trying to work and trying to build each  
15 other up now, it's amazing. They brought in  
16 somebody from the Yukon and I never got to meet him  
17 or attend his grieving workshops, but I heard  
18 amazing things about it and -- like, I'm thankful  
19 to be here because I'm sharing my story about my  
20 life with my sister and my brother because who  
21 knows, there might be somebody who's listening from  
22 back home, across Canada, wherever, that they might  
23 be going through this, too.

24                   And maybe they're lost like me,  
25 like ashamed, embarrassed to look for -- seek help

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1 or to say that you need help or to speak because I  
2 held this in for 15 years, and I was getting to the  
3 point where I was kind of embarrassed, I guess, but  
4 yesterday, I heard someone speak, and it really  
5 made me feel good because it took her over 30 years  
6 to start talking about it, and right then and  
7 there, I knew this is normal. This is life. And  
8 it may take someone, like, right away for someone  
9 to start building up strength or it could take 50  
10 years.

11 And I'm glad I'm starting my  
12 healing process because like I said, it's amazing  
13 what you could trick your mind to do. And I  
14 blocked out a lot of this stuff and I guess what  
15 I've been doing is -- I've just kind of been  
16 blocking everything out, but I'm not letting myself  
17 relive all these good memories I have and that's  
18 something Stanley could never take away from me my  
19 family, my memories of my sister, and Frazer will  
20 grow and up he's already growing up, and you think  
21 of all the possibilities, all the what-ifs,  
22 whatnots, how things could have been different.

23 But he will grow up knowing he has  
24 us and he comes from very strong people and a good  
25 supporting community because by all means -- like,

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in relation to Joni Andre-Itsi

1 I'm really thankful of where I came from because  
2 it's like when something happens, everyone comes  
3 together even if you don't get along as families or  
4 people, they're still there if it's helping donate.

5 If it's just anything, it's pretty powerful. I'm  
6 just going to share something on McPherson. I  
7 thought it was so cool that happened just recently.

8 At our New Year's, like,  
9 traditional dance, we have two people from the  
10 community who have to travel out to Edmonton for  
11 chemo, and we all know and, you know, when people  
12 are sick, we know what happens and we know how  
13 tough financially it is to be away from home. But  
14 real quick during the dance, they said, "We're  
15 going to -- if you have a loonie to spare or  
16 something like that, just to help out the family  
17 who's gone." There's two ladies who away right  
18 now, and they just passed around a bag and a feast  
19 are in the tents, and like not even five minutes,  
20 literally, not even five minutes, there was I think  
21 almost 800 bucks in that bag, and it was just to be  
22 transferred, just to help family.

23 So, like, it just goes to show how  
24 quick when something happens, like how the  
25 community comes together. And for me, although

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1 there wasn't really no professional help to help  
2 me, I always knew there was people out there, and  
3 maybe that's what kept me sane all these years,  
4 like, of the times I did open up, like I always  
5 knew there was my sister's friends, and to me,  
6 they're like my older sisters now, and sometimes,  
7 you know, even I don't share what I wish to share  
8 sometimes because I still talk to my sister, and I  
9 still talk to my brother through prayer.

10 But there's always people out  
11 there, and for anybody that's listening now, that  
12 you're going through something or something happens  
13 similar, there is help and it's just finding that  
14 strength and telling yourself, like, okay, it's  
15 time. It's time to start talking and it's time to  
16 start your healing journey.

17 And like me, it's 15 years now,  
18 and at first, I was kind of shy and ashamed maybe  
19 to think, It's 15 years, maybe it's something I  
20 could block out for another 15 years, but no, you  
21 need to talk, and you need to find that help and if  
22 you don't feel comfortable with someone, you know  
23 there's help out there in some other place. Even  
24 if it's to travel to some other place for that  
25 help, it's there and I'm really thankful for that.

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1 I'm not sure what else to say, yeah.

2 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you  
3 very much for sharing. I just want to make sure I  
4 didn't miss -- I want to close off the loop. When  
5 I passed up the first transcript on the conviction,  
6 I also want to hand up the warrant of committal  
7 upon conviction. It's the actual document that  
8 puts Mr. Itsi into custody for the murder of your  
9 sister, and I will pass that.

10 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Again, I  
11 want to thank you. And what I'd like to do now is  
12 ask the commissioner if they have any questions or  
13 comments that they would like to have for you.

14 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:  
15 Jayda, I just really want to thank you for coming  
16 here this morning and sharing with us about your  
17 sister and your brother, and what you went through,  
18 but also, thank you for sharing the good memories  
19 that you have as well. I just have one sort of  
20 follow-up question if you don't mind.

21 When you were first telling us  
22 about your sister being in an abusive relationship,  
23 Christa asked you about what resources there might  
24 have been in the community and you said that you  
25 don't have a shelter. I'm just wondering if you

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1 can comment any further on what resources might  
2 have been available for women in abusive  
3 relationships either back then around 2004 or now,  
4 everything's changed.

5 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Like we have --  
6 I don't know how to explain it, but there's this  
7 building and it has, you know, social services, and  
8 what's the other one called -- it's like community  
9 service, I guess. I can't think of what they're  
10 actually called, but there is resources out there.

11 There is the police. There is the nurses.  
12 Community wellness. That's what it's called,  
13 sorry.

14 There's resources in McPherson,  
15 but like I said, my sister was so madly in love  
16 that she just had lots of faith in people and hope  
17 for the best. And those resources are still there,  
18 and I hope it'll always be there. I think it'll  
19 always be there, but we come from a small community  
20 and we have a lot of amazing people, a lot of  
21 amazing elders who -- by all means, those were our  
22 resources.

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: If it  
24 would be helpful, where is the closest women  
25 shelter to McPherson, like if a women wanted to --

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1 not just -- I understand where you're saying  
2 everyone opens their doors and the community takes  
3 care of each other, but if a woman wanted to get  
4 away and actually stay in a shelter for one night  
5 or more, where would she have to go?

6 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: You know what, I  
7 don't really know. I don't know if Inuvik has one.  
8 And that's actually a really good question.

9 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, if  
10 there was one in Inuvik, because I can't provide  
11 the testimony, but if there was one in Inuvik, it  
12 would take at least 2 hours to drive to, right?

13 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yeah.

14 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:  
15 Thank you.

16 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you.

17 MS. BERNIE WILLIAMS: My name is  
18 Bernie Williams. I've been asked by my  
19 commissioner. I'm one of the grandmothers here to  
20 speak on Michèle Audette's behalf. She's not  
21 feeling well right now. She would like me to say  
22 to you how proud she is that it's taken you 15  
23 years, that this journey you have taken is a really  
24 huge leap of faith hereto, and that your memory of  
25 your sister is here with you. I think one of the

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1 questions along with Commissioner Brian is about  
2 the transition houses, you know, if there is any  
3 communities when a mom or a single dad, you now,  
4 with children would have a place to go to.

5 I think you had just asked this  
6 question to Christa's -- you know, how far away --  
7 you know, if Nicole comes in, and I think that that  
8 was along the same line thereto at the transition  
9 houses, the shelters and that, too. I think that  
10 that is what it was.

11 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And I  
12 think I heard -- I may have heard -- Commissioner  
13 Audette, if I may -- say, if you have a car. So,  
14 does everyone up in the community have the means to  
15 drive a distance to get to those places? People  
16 would help out, I'm guessing will be your answer.

17 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yeah,  
18 definitely. It's a small community, and we kind of  
19 all know what happens sometimes, I guess, and yeah.

20 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I believe  
21 the commissioners have a gift for you for sharing  
22 your story. And the grandmothers will help give  
23 that to you.

24 GRANDMOTHER BLU WATERS: So, my  
25 name is Blu Waters, and I'm one of the grandmothers

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1 for Commissioner Brian, and we want to offer you  
2 these small tokens of appreciation. One is a scarf  
3 made by the Women's Association, and that is to  
4 help you with your journey, to help you as you  
5 continue on and you become stronger and stronger --  
6 not that your not strong already because you  
7 certainly are -- to thank you for your bravery, for  
8 your courage to come forward.

9                   And the second is a eagle father,  
10 and these feathers have come from all across  
11 Canada, from Haida Gwaii straight to Labrador. So,  
12 the grandmothers, the matriarchs, the communities,  
13 have come together to supply feathers for our  
14 witnesses to help them with their healing journey  
15 as we know that eagle flies very high, close to the  
16 one who makes everyone. So, this is to help you as  
17 you carry on.

18                   As well as a little red dress, a  
19 symbol of the murdered and missing Indigenous  
20 women, and some Labrador tea to help you with your  
21 journey.

22                   So, we'd like to offer this to you  
23 for your bravery and your courage, for telling us  
24 in a humble way with truth your story of your  
25 sister and your brother, so thank you very much.

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1 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Thank you so  
2 much.

3 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I would  
4 like to request a 15-minute adjournment prior to  
5 our next witness, please, our next participant,  
6 please. So, if we could return actually at 11:30,  
7 please and thank you.

8 --- Recess at 11:13 a.m.

9 --- Upon resuming at 11:42 a.m.

10 --- **Exhibits (code: P01P09P0201)**

11 EXHIBIT 1: R v. Itsi, 2005  
12 NWTSC 92, S-1-CR-2004000090,  
13 Transcript of the Oral  
14 reasons for sentence, 22  
15 pages.

16 EXHIBIT 2: R v. Itsi, 2005  
17 NWTSC 5, CR 03730, Transcript  
18 of the Oral reasons for  
19 judgment, six pages.

20 EXHIBIT 3: Warrant of  
21 Committal Upon Conviction for  
22 Stanley James Itsi, dated  
23 November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2005 at Fort  
24 McPherson, single page.

25 EXHIBIT 4: Folder containing

Geraldine Sharpe,  
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1                               seven digital images provided  
2                               by the family and displayed  
3                               during their testimony.

4   **Hearing #2**

5   **Witness: Geraldine Sharpe**

6   **In relation to her Grandmother**

7   **Heard by Commissioner: Qajaq Robinson**

8   **Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe**

9   **Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Therese**  
10 **Villeneuve, Gail Cyr, Rassi Nashalik, Violet**

11 **Dolittle and Emelda King**

12 **Clerk: Trudy Mckinnon**

13 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

14                               MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Hello.  
15 We'd like to resume, please, so if everyone could  
16 grab a seat. We'll give you a moment. Thank you.

17                               Commissioner Robinson, I would  
18 like to introduce you to our next participant that  
19 will be sharing her knowledge and some stories.

20                               But first, as for local tradition  
21 and request, I'm just going to introduce myself  
22 briefly. I'm Christa Big Canoe. I'm what's called  
23 commission counsel, and what that means is: I'm a  
24 lawyer for the National Inquiry, and I work with  
25 the families to help them share their stories, so

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1 you could have evidence before you.

2 Today, we have Gerry Sharpe, who  
3 will be -- she's a known knowledge-keeper, an  
4 advocate for others. She's involved in various  
5 projects in support of her community including  
6 holding the Chair of the Women's Centre through  
7 1997 and 1998, and assisting with the Walk With Our  
8 Sisters project, developed to bring attention to  
9 violence against Indigenous women and girls.

10 Ms. Sharpe will speak of personal  
11 experience of violence against women and girls that  
12 have touched her and her family historically and in  
13 the more recent past. Gerry actually would like to  
14 make a promise or an oath of her own.

15 MS. GERRY SHARPE: First off,  
16 kweenime (ph) for being here. My oath to you is  
17 that I will speak the truth and that you will  
18 receive that truth. Thank you for hearing my  
19 words, and I will speak only the truth.

20 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:  
21 Thank you, and I will receive it with open ears and  
22 an open heart. Kweenime (ph).

23 MS. GERRY SHARPE: Kweenimetow  
24 (ph)

25 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Gerry, to

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1 start, can you tell us a little bit about you and  
2 where you're from, and what you're currently doing?

3 MS. GERRY SHARPE: Before I do  
4 that, I'd like to actually thank you for allowing  
5 me to be here. I'd also like to thank the elders  
6 behind me, Rassi, Emelda, and Violet. They  
7 participated in Walking With Our Sisters with me.  
8 They were my elders. Hupup (ph) gave me direction,  
9 joined Walking With Our Sisters, and then I've  
10 asked Gail to sit with me as well. And I really  
11 appreciate all four of you being here for me.  
12 Thank you. It really means a lot.

13 My name, I go by Gerry. My  
14 friends know me as Gerry. My birth name is  
15 Geraldine Sharpe. My mother is Moitwika Twelik  
16 (ph). My father is David Sharpe. My mother was  
17 the eldest daughter of Giddinggicholik (ph), and  
18 just for the sake of letting everybody know, he's  
19 the individual that's last on this \$2 bill.

20 Beside him was his father-in-law,  
21 Idlo (ph), my grandfather. This picture was taken  
22 in 1952. My father was the oldest of Margaret and  
23 Walter Sharpe. My grandfather was the oldest of --  
24 in his family as well. His family, his parents,  
25 died at an early age when he was early -- young,

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1 and he was raised by his sister -- by family  
2 member, I'm sorry. I'm getting my -- I need to  
3 breathe.

4 Kachwelik (ph) was known right  
5 across the territories, all the way from Igloolik  
6 over to Aklavik. He would travel by dog sled back  
7 and forth. My mother was his firstborn by his  
8 first wife -- his only child by his first wife.

9 So, I need to tell the story of  
10 five generations in order for you to know where I  
11 am and why I have the knowledge that I have. So,  
12 it needs to go back that far. His first wife gave  
13 birth to my mother, Moiety (ph). This was in the  
14 mid-1940s, and they were still very nomadic. He  
15 was not tied to a community. In order to be tied  
16 to a community, you would need to live there and  
17 accept food and trade.

18 And my grandfather was still very  
19 nomadic. He lived off the land, he hunted off the  
20 land. He was a midwife. He was also the person  
21 that they would go to when they needed medicine.  
22 He also would see the future, and he was a leader  
23 in his community. When colonization happened and  
24 he came forward, he became a minister of the  
25 Anglican church, and he was asked to give up living



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1 the blood and she had killed them because she was  
2 eating them. It was the next day that the men came  
3 back and they had a bounty of seal. My mother was  
4 still quite young, so my grandfather had to marry  
5 again and that's how he met his second wife, Idlo's  
6 daughter, Rebecca Idlo, (ph) who became Rebecca  
7 Kachwelik (ph).

8 My grandfather fathered an  
9 additional 12 children with her. Later on, and of  
10 course, all in the meantime, he was a minister for  
11 the Anglican church. He was told that his ways  
12 that he'd be brought up were evil. He could no  
13 longer administer medicine because that was evil.  
14 He was supposed to communicate that the women were  
15 no longer supposed to be tattooed because that was  
16 evil. The drumming was not allowed to happen  
17 because that was evil. Anything referring to  
18 shamanistic ways was evil. And my grandfather  
19 bought -- I don't want to say brought into this,  
20 but my grandfather went according to the Anglican  
21 church, and he administered for the Anglican  
22 church.

23 Soon, his wife, Rebecca -- she  
24 became an alcoholic and she was very abusive to her  
25 children and my mother. But at the same time, my

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1 mother had been going back and forth to residential  
2 school because my grandfather was supposed to be a  
3 leader for the community. He was told that he had  
4 to send his children whether he wanted to or not,  
5 so my mother, at the age of 4, went to school. She  
6 went to Inuvik, she went to Aklavik, she came here  
7 to Yellowknife. So, she was gone -- my mother was  
8 gone most of the time, but when she would return,  
9 there was a lot of violence. Not only towards her,  
10 but towards her siblings, and soon, my grandfather  
11 said he decided to divorce Rebecca. And his exact  
12 words were:

13 "How can I believe in a God  
14 that will not allow me to  
15 divorce my wife when my wife  
16 is treating my children like  
17 this?"

18 So he left the church. And when  
19 he left the church, that's when he divorced  
20 Rebecca. He then in turn married Salome (ph), who  
21 was his wife until he died. He fathered two other  
22 children with her and adopted two others. Those  
23 children are all younger than my children.

24 During all of this, he was trying  
25 to live two ways because he was very active in the

Geraldine Sharpe,  
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1 Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. He was very firm of  
2 the belief that in order for Inuit to move forward,  
3 we need to get educated. And he believed that  
4 sending the children to school was a way for that  
5 to happen, not knowing what was going on at school.

6 Back then -- and this was when I was going to  
7 school because I did go to Akaitcho Hall, I went to  
8 residential school as well. Now, I'm getting off  
9 track again. I'm sorry.

10 So, going back to my mother, my  
11 mother was going back and forth between school in  
12 Inuvik, Aklavik, and here in Yellowknife. I know  
13 her abuse started in Inuvik when she was very  
14 young. I know this because others told me. My  
15 mother didn't tell me in so many words. I hear the  
16 stories from people that she went to school with.  
17 I hear how she offered herself up when she saw  
18 predators going after younger children, and she  
19 would distract them by offering herself.

20 By the time she was going to  
21 school here in Yellowknife, she -- that my father  
22 because my father had come here, he himself had  
23 come from a very abusive family up to -- and just  
24 to tell you a little bit about my father's family -  
25 - give my uncles more reason to hate me -- their

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1 father was from Russia. He had escaped the second  
2 or first -- the First World War and the Second  
3 World War. His mother had been vastly abused many  
4 times over in Russia and China. So, by the time my  
5 grandfather, my father's father came over to  
6 Canada, he was -- I don't want to say typical  
7 racist, but he was probably the biggest racist that  
8 you can think of. Anybody that was not Caucasian,  
9 of a different nationality that was  
10 Aboriginal/Indigenous was less than human, less  
11 than an animal. Animals were worth more. My  
12 grandmother, his wife -- she suffered through a lot  
13 of violence with him.

14 By the time my father was 17, he  
15 decided that he wanted to leave. And at the time,  
16 they were living in Ontario, and my father made his  
17 way up here to Yellowknife to work at Con Mine.  
18 When he was working at Con Mine, that's where he  
19 met my mother, when she was going to school at  
20 Akaitcho Hall, and when she graduated, they  
21 married. During the same time that my father left,  
22 his younger brother, Vince, also left and came to  
23 work at Con Mine as well.

24 So, now we have my mother, and my  
25 father here in Yellowknife, married. My father

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1 working at Con Mine, and my father having grown up  
2 under a very violent family as well. Racist  
3 violent family. He's now married to an Inuk woman  
4 and disowned by his father. My grandfather at that  
5 point had already divorced my grandmother, and they  
6 had moved to Nova Scotia. I'm not sure when it  
7 happened, I was two and a half when my -- I know  
8 the story is that I was two and a half when I left  
9 Yellowknife. My brother was six months old, and we  
10 drove from Yellowknife to Nova Scotia.

11 I don't know all the details of  
12 this story and I don't know where it happened, but  
13 somewhere between here in Yellowknife and Nova  
14 Scotia, my father robbed two banks. Why he chose  
15 to leave a job, why he chose to leave Con Mine, why  
16 he decided to return to Nova Scotia, I don't know.  
17 I've never asked the question because if I did, I  
18 would not get the answer. He brought with him my  
19 mother, me, and my brother, and presented all of us  
20 to his mother and siblings in Nova Scotia.

21 I've heard different versions of  
22 this story from different family members. The one  
23 that I choose to believe is the one that's not lied  
24 to me. And that is one of my mother's sisters,  
25 Tapityah (ph), and I don't know if Tapityah is here

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1 at all. I didn't see it.

2 As the story goes, when he arrived  
3 in Nova Scotia, he turned himself into the RCMP and  
4 was sentenced to three years in penitentiary. Why  
5 this happened, I don't know. Why he did this, I  
6 don't know. He turned himself in. Perhaps he was  
7 of the mind-set that his wife and two children  
8 would be cared for by his family.

9 From what my aunt tells me, my  
10 mother discovered that she was pregnant with a  
11 third child while my father was in jail. And for  
12 whatever reason, decided that she wanted to get an  
13 abortion. And for whatever reason, I don't know  
14 the reason, but I never asked her and I couldn't  
15 ask her because I didn't have that relationship  
16 with her. She decided that she would leave me and  
17 my brother alone. Perhaps she didn't know that she  
18 would be in the hospital for five days. Perhaps  
19 she thought she'd be back later in the day.

20 All I know is that on the second  
21 day, that's when I'm told that Children's Aid came  
22 to get us. Bear in mind just down the street, my  
23 father's sister and his mother lived. His aunt  
24 across the street from there. I was told that I  
25 was alone for two days with my brother when they

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1 opened the door to come in. They said that  
2 anything that I could reach was down. I'd somehow  
3 got on a chair up onto the counter and was trying  
4 to get food, and I'd actually tried to change my  
5 brother's diaper as well. He was six months old.  
6 I was two and a half. Needless to say, we ended up  
7 in foster care.

8 Piecing that together, I can only  
9 jump to the conclusion that my mother had not been  
10 informed about the ways of the court because after  
11 my father got out of jail, he got sole custody of  
12 us. And I know that was not for the lack of my  
13 mother wanting us. I can only assume that she had  
14 no idea how the court systems worked. She had  
15 absolutely no support system and where she was  
16 looked at her as if she was less than human.

17 I'm told during the time that I  
18 was in foster care, my mother kidnapped me a few  
19 times. She used to tell me these stories. My  
20 papacha (ph) used to tell me these stories of the  
21 times that she would come and take me. But she  
22 wouldn't take my brother. We were not in the same  
23 place. He was in a different foster home from me.

24 So now, my father's now out of  
25 jail, we're living in Nova Scotia, and I'm

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1 maintaining a relationship with my father's  
2 grandmother, and I'm getting to know my aunt and  
3 one of my uncles, and my cousins. I would hear  
4 stories about my mother but, like, never meet her.

5 When my father would drink, he would tell me how  
6 much I looked like my mother. But he wouldn't say  
7 it in a nice way. There were times that my father  
8 would send us, my brother and I, to stay with my  
9 grandmother or with an aunt or back to that foster  
10 home where I was at for periods at a time. I never  
11 why. He never told us.

12 When I was nine -- actually I  
13 should back up there. By the time I was six years  
14 old, because of all of that moving, this place and  
15 that place, the first sexual assaults started. Who  
16 they were by, I don't remember. When I was 9, I  
17 can remember that it was April. My father decided  
18 that it was time to be moved back north, so he  
19 packed up the vehicle, sold everything. My brother  
20 and I in the vehicle along with two of my cousins  
21 whose father was already up north, and he took us  
22 on a trip across Canada. That was my first trip  
23 that I remember travelling across Canada.

24 I remember coming to Yellowknife,  
25 and before actually getting to Yellowknife, seeing



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1 lived off the land. So, the typical view that I  
2 had at the time was this man wearing a hat, you  
3 know, they go fishing with this and this lure.

4                   And people pointed to where my  
5 grandfather's house was, which was locked at the  
6 time, and my father broke into the house to which  
7 nobody said anything. And we lived there, and  
8 somehow, the message got to my grandfather because  
9 he was out on the land. And he came back and I  
10 remember being woken up. It was still light out,  
11 so it wasn't completely dark yet, and my father  
12 telling me that my grandfather was here. And in  
13 comes this family. There was many uncles, many  
14 aunts, some of who were younger than I was. Ida,  
15 at the time was 2, and I'm looking at her going,  
16 "That's my aunt?" And I remember being really shy.

17                   Their house was a three-bedroom  
18 house, and there was Sean -- well, Ida, Sean, Sue,  
19 Daniel, James, Aaron, his wife -- or my  
20 grandfather's wife, Salome, my grandfather, my  
21 father, my brother, and myself. All in that little  
22 house. I remember going to school; I was in grade  
23 3. Up to this point, bear in mind that I've been  
24 told I was the Eskimo. I was the raw meat eater  
25 down in Nova Scotia, that I was this enigma, that I

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1 was different, and I was going to school and I was  
2 being called this "kabloonak."

3                                   And initially, the first time I  
4 heard that word, I felt really proud. I'm being  
5 included. I didn't know what that word meant. I'm  
6 a kabloonak. Yay. And my uncle, Daniel, came up  
7 behind me. Daniel at the time was three or four  
8 years older than I am. "She is not a kabloonak.  
9 She is Inuk." And I turned and I looked at him,  
10 and he explained to me what that meant, and I was  
11 heartbroken because I come from a place where I was  
12 not accepted for who I was, that I had come from a  
13 place where I've been called a half-breed, that  
14 I've been called an Eskimo, that I've been called a  
15 raw meat eater, that I was less than -- what I was.  
16 And I didn't know how to feel about that.

17                                   It was shortly after that, that my  
18 grandfather decided to take -- he asked my father  
19 if he could take me and my brother out on the land  
20 with him that summer. I got out into the land. At  
21 the time -- I need to back up on there. My  
22 grandmother -- my mother, when she was raising me  
23 and my brother, would speak Inuktituk to us quite a  
24 bit. My brother, of course, at the time, is six  
25 months old, and I was two and a half, so I had a

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1 very good grasp -- but at the time, I was nine and  
2 a half, and I couldn't remember all of the words,  
3 so I couldn't communicate with my grandfather. And  
4 my grandfather asked if he could take us -- asked  
5 my father if he could take us to the land. And I  
6 thought it was for a week or so. Well, a week  
7 later, we're out and my grandfather looked at my  
8 aunts and uncles and said these ones need to learn  
9 Inuktituk. (Speaking in native language). He  
10 said:

11 "No more speaking English.  
12 You're only going to speak  
13 Inuktituk to these ones.  
14 They need to learn to speak  
15 Inuktituk."

16 And I blossomed. I blossomed  
17 because my mother's teachings were with me, and I  
18 braced everything Inuk. If my grandfather told me  
19 to do something, I did it. When we were hunting  
20 and I saw them eating a kidney. I would ask about  
21 it. "What is that?" "Well, here, eat it. Try  
22 it." And I would gladly eat it and decide for  
23 myself if I liked it. The liver, the fat, the  
24 patik (ph), the tongue.

25 I made my grandfather proud

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1 because I was so immersed and wanting to learn the  
2 Inuit ways. My brother did not blossom. My  
3 brother did not learn as easily as I did. I became  
4 my grandfather's favourite, even over his own  
5 children, and he had 17 children. And he would  
6 communicate this to everybody. I was his  
7 favourite. I was his favourite. And he treated me  
8 that way. He treated me as his favourite. That  
9 first Christmas that I spent in Gjoa Haven, I  
10 started sewing at that point and I sold little  
11 ookpiks (ph). By the time I was 10, I sold my  
12 first one for \$3 at the craft store. I was so  
13 proud. So proud. Three dollars. It bought me, I  
14 think, three bags of chips.

15 My grandfather saw what I was  
16 doing and told his wife to buy me a sewing basket  
17 for Christmas. I was so happy to get this sewing  
18 basket, and I opened it up and inside the sewing  
19 basket was half a bag of candy. And my brother  
20 opened up his gift from my grandfather, and it was  
21 the other half of the bag of candy. And I felt so  
22 bad for my brother. I felt so bad. My father  
23 forbid me to go back to my grandfather's house for  
24 months. I wasn't allowed to go and see his  
25 grandfather, but I was still his favourite.

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1                                   So, my aunt, Tapityah, and her  
2 brother would call me over to their house because  
3 you got to bear in mind, my father was six-foot-six  
4 in this Inuit community where the majority of them  
5 weren't 5 feet tall. My father was not overly  
6 happy. He was a very violent man. He was very  
7 violent to us. I grew up knowing violence. I can  
8 sense it. I could smell it. I could see it. I  
9 could look at you and know if violence was there.  
10 This was how I was raised.

11                                   So, when sexual assault started  
12 happening from different family members, different  
13 family friends, the first -- okay. There was one  
14 time that -- I think I was 11 or 12. There was  
15 another distant cousin, his name was Michael. He'd  
16 have this crush on me, and my uncle, James, who's  
17 only a year or two older than I am, two years, and  
18 my brother would see and they would tease me about  
19 this and not in a good way.

20                                   And I remember it was spring and  
21 we were in a sea can. And I have no idea what they  
22 were thinking. James said, "Hey, I'm going to hold  
23 you down for Michael to give you a kiss. Larry,  
24 hold her other arm down." My brother, Larry, my  
25 Uncle James. So, they did that and Michael went to

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1 kiss me, but then he started going too far. He  
2 started trying to take my pants off. And James saw  
3 what happened -- what was happening, pushed Michael  
4 off, and he was cursing at Michael, saying, "Get  
5 off of her. What are you doing?" He thought it  
6 was all in fun, initially. And then protected me  
7 after that, my brother just went along with James  
8 because that's what they did. They were close and  
9 they -- one just brought the other one on, so.

10 I was so afraid. I was so afraid.

11 And I didn't know who to talk to, but it was  
12 keeping me up at night. So, I told my principal.  
13 I don't know why I told the principal and not the  
14 RCMP, probably because I didn't want to get my  
15 uncle in trouble or my brother. And I also thought  
16 the principal would not tell my father. The  
17 principal, after I left outside his office,  
18 immediately called my father.

19 Like I said, my father was six-  
20 foot-six, 250 pounds in his community where  
21 majority were about 5 feet. He went and found  
22 Michael. No word of a lie, he literally kicked him  
23 in the rear all around town. Kicking him, kicking  
24 him behind his butt. Kicking him, kicking him,  
25 kicking him, I remember him scolding James. I

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1 remember him punishing my brother. Then, my Uncle  
2 Aaron, who I always called my protector -- he  
3 caught wind of what had happened. So, he found  
4 Michael, he tied Michael up in a chair and was  
5 scolding him for hours and hours and hours.

6                   Apparently, Michael had some  
7 mental issues, obviously, and it was after Aaron  
8 did that that Michael went above them, the post  
9 office which was right beside the craft store, and  
10 hid up on the -- I don't know what it's called --  
11 in the ceiling, he had a gun with him and hid there  
12 for two weeks. Nobody knew where he was because he  
13 was afraid that my father was going to kill him.  
14 And he probably would have.

15                   So, the other sexual assaults that  
16 happened after that and the rapes, I knew better  
17 than to tell anybody because my father would kill  
18 them. So, my father could be sleeping in the next  
19 room because he used to play cards, so lots of  
20 people would pass out at our place when they're  
21 playing cards, and some of these men would come  
22 into my room. Not all of them succeeded. Old men,  
23 young men, some my age, some older.

24                   I remember one specifically. I  
25 was 13 when he raped me, and he told his friends.

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1 They teased me. I remember going to watch  
2 volleyball, and they're yelling, "I heard what --  
3 did to you last night. Now, what about me? My  
4 turn now." I was horrified. I was horrified. My  
5 immediate thought was embarrassment, but then, my  
6 next thought was anger. So, I yelled, "I didn't do  
7 that. He raped me."

8 I didn't hear anything else about  
9 it anymore. That was a gym full of people,  
10 probably the amount of people that are in here.  
11 Nobody asked me anything about it. Nobody said a  
12 word. Nobody said anything. It wasn't the last  
13 rape, and it wasn't my first rape. Everybody knew  
14 what my father was like. I also thought everybody  
15 knew how much my father beat us.

16 In between age 9 and 14, we moved  
17 back and forth between Nova Scotia and Gjoa Haven,  
18 and I remember a time I was 14 in Nova Scotia. He  
19 broken up with one of his girlfriends. He was  
20 really depressed. Very angry. And he was  
21 drinking. And I'd stepped on a -- stepped on  
22 something that had been broken, and I had a piece  
23 of -- what I felt was a piece of glass in my foot,  
24 so I was complaining about this.

25 And my father was very insistent.

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1 "Lie down on the couch and let me look at that."  
2 I laid down and then looked at my foot, and he had  
3 something -- bobby pin or a needle or something,  
4 he's digging around in there, trying to get this  
5 glass out, and I'm screaming, "No, that hurts, that  
6 hurts," so I get up. "I don't want you doing  
7 that," I'm screaming at him.

8 I was 14. I had three other  
9 friends there at the time. They were between 14,  
10 16 years old. My brother was downstairs, so he had  
11 friends. One was a black woman, another one was  
12 Portuguese, and another one was Caucasian. Very  
13 good friends of mine.

14 And I get up and I guess my father  
15 at that point didn't like the fact that I was being  
16 so assertive. "I don't want you doing that." And  
17 the next thing I know, he's on top of me and he's  
18 got my arms pinned with knees, and he's punching,  
19 punching, punching, slapping, punching, and I'm  
20 screaming at my friends for help. They're not  
21 doing nothing.

22 All of a sudden, I see one of them  
23 run out. She dipped next door and she went to go  
24 call the police. And at that point, my father --  
25 because he had his knees, I was able to bring up my

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1 knees and then hit him between the legs. And the  
2 police arrived and they took me to the emergency.  
3 I had hand-and-printed bruises on my face, both my  
4 ears were poof red, and my jaw was crooked.

5                   And two hours later, they sent me  
6 home with my father. They said that they would  
7 send a social worker. And my father didn't talk to  
8 me for a few days, but he also didn't let me go to  
9 school because how I looked. That was probably the  
10 worst beating that he'd given me with the worst  
11 amount of bruising. Definitely wasn't the only  
12 one.

13                   The social workers did come and  
14 they asked me if I wanted to stay or they could  
15 take me someplace else. So, I said, "Well, what  
16 about my siblings?" Because by that point, I'd had  
17 a half-sister and a half-brother with -- well, my  
18 half-brother was with his mother -- but my half-  
19 sister was there and my brother, and they said,  
20 "Well, no, just you." So, of course, I lied. "No.  
21 Daddy loves me. I'm going to stay. I have to  
22 stay here for them." That should not have been  
23 allowed. I was 14 years old making decision to  
24 stay and save my siblings.

25                   So, at that point, it was shortly

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1 after that, probably six months or so after that,  
2 that dad decided that once again, we were going to  
3 go drive from Nova Scotia to Yellowknife to Gjoa  
4 Haven. But we were doing a detour. We drove from  
5 Nova Scotia, down to Florida, over to Texas, into  
6 Mexico, up to California, into B.C., to  
7 Yellowknife. It was a four-month trip and I  
8 navigated the whole thing because that's -- he said  
9 that was my schooling, that I would learn how to  
10 read the maps and direct us.

11                   During that trip, I had a dream,  
12 actually when we were in B.C., and this was  
13 probably three weeks before we arrived back in Gjoa  
14 Haven. I had a dream and I -- in this dream, I  
15 felt my body only through my eyes, and through my  
16 eyes, I could see water, and then over there, I  
17 could see -- it was the water, the body of water  
18 from Gjoa Haven. I could see a coat in the water,  
19 and I could see a boot, and then I saw an upside-  
20 down boat, and I saw other boats around this boat,  
21 and people in these boats. And I didn't think  
22 anything of this dream, although I told my brother  
23 about it.

24                   And we get back to Gjoa Haven, and  
25 at this point, my father was a very successful

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1 contractor. He won some contracts with the do-  
2 lines (ph) and had a lot of equipment in Gjoa  
3 Haven. And he just got another big contract, so he  
4 had a lot of money coming in, and he wanted a big  
5 boat, but there was none in Gjoa Haven to buy. So,  
6 he had a 75-horsepower -- 75 horsepower kicker and  
7 this 18-foot aluminum boat. So, of course, this  
8 kicker is far too strong for this boat. And this  
9 was probably two months after we got back to Gjoa  
10 Haven. And he was waiting for the bigger boat to  
11 come, but my father liked speed. He liked to go do  
12 things fast.

13 This was happening last week in  
14 August. I was supposed to go to Yellowknife. I  
15 had to fight my father to go to Yellowknife here  
16 for school because at that point, he said that I  
17 was not going to go to that place my mother went,  
18 and he said that with spit in his mouth. I never  
19 understood why he never told me. I do know that  
20 the principal met with my father about it because  
21 my father was wanting to send me down to a private  
22 school in Manitoba because he did not want me  
23 coming here to Yellowknife, but he wouldn't tell me  
24 the reasoning. The principal convinced my father  
25 to let me come, and I was supposed to be home

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1 boarding. I was not going to be staying in  
2 Akaitcho Hall, which broke my heart, but I was  
3 supposed to leave on September 2nd, 1985.

4                   The morning of September 1st,  
5 1985, we woke, and it was okswerktuk (ph),  
6 completely okswerktuk (ph). There was no wind. It  
7 was the sea, you could see your reflection on it.  
8 Really okswerktuk (ph). And my father wanted to go  
9 for a ride, so we went on the boat, four of us, me,  
10 my brother, my sister, my father, and he was going  
11 really fast. And this was about eleven o'clock in  
12 the morning. And I had to finish packing, so when  
13 we got back to the land, I said to my father, "I  
14 have to go finish packing." Where he parked the  
15 boat, it wasn't very far from where my sister's  
16 grandparents were. So, he was going to bring my  
17 sister to her grandparents for a while, and he  
18 said, "Meet me back here at five o'clock." And the  
19 hotel was just there. The hotel was right across  
20 from the nursing station, and beside the hotel was  
21 the game hall where kids hang out and play games at  
22 the arcade.

23                   And I went home and I finished  
24 trying to pack. And I looked at the time, and it  
25 was, like, almost five o'clock, so I thought, Okay,

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1 I have to go meet him again at five o'clock. So, I  
2 went down and I remember being, I can't be late, my  
3 father will be angry. I can't be late. And I came  
4 round the corner at game hall before five o'clock,  
5 and I could see my father on the boat with my  
6 sister leaving. So, I'm yelling after him, "Wait,  
7 wait, I'm right here." And my heart sunk because I  
8 knew he was going to be angry and my father angry  
9 was not good. So I thought, Okay, he's gone. He's  
10 not hearing me.

11 So, I decided to walk back over to  
12 my grandfather's and my friend, Patsy's, but across  
13 from my grandfather's house was Ululik's (ph)  
14 house. Now, Ululik (ph) is a renowned carver at  
15 the time, and his daughter was a really good friend  
16 of mine. He liked to make home brew. And when he  
17 made his home brew, he would speak Inuktituk, and  
18 he would speak so fast you couldn't understand him  
19 and he'd be so loud that you couldn't understand  
20 what he was saying.

21 So, I was coming around the road,  
22 and he's on his steps from probably here to the end  
23 of this place away from me, and he's saying -- he's  
24 waving his arms at me, and I could tell he had been  
25 drinking, so I brushed him off. I thought he was

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1 just saying good-bye because I was leaving the next  
2 day, and I continued on. But then I started  
3 noticing all these Hondas going down towards the  
4 water, and one of them stopped, and I said, "What's  
5 going on?" And they said there was an accident,  
6 and I said what kind of accident? "Well, your  
7 father's boat is upside down."

8                   So I jumped on the Honda with him  
9 and we went down to the water and I got on this  
10 boat and -- the cove of Gjoa Haven. If anybody  
11 knows the history of Gjoa Haven, Gjoa Haven is  
12 named after the ship, "Gjoa," after Roald Amundsen,  
13 and he said it was the finest little harbour in the  
14 world, therefore the name, Gjoa Haven because the  
15 water is really deep. It just -- you go out a foot  
16 or two and it just drops. And that's the harbour,  
17 and then it comes around this way. We got on the  
18 boat there and we came round that cove, and I could  
19 see the boat upside down, and I could see the cove  
20 and I could see the boat. That was the day before  
21 I was supposed to go to school.

22                   I went to a friend's place that  
23 night, and I spent the night with the friend  
24 because my grandfather was out of town. My sister  
25 went with her grandparents. I don't know where my

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1 brother went. I saw him the next day. We were  
2 arguing at the game hall, and he started throwing  
3 pool cubes at me. And the phone rang, and it was  
4 my mother. I'd never spoken to my mother. Never  
5 have I spoken to my mother to a point. I didn't  
6 even know that she knew where I was. Obviously,  
7 somebody had been in contact with her and told her  
8 what happened.

9                               So, I get on the phone and all I  
10 hear on the other end is this happy woman. "Bunik,  
11 I love you. Now you can come live with me. Bunik,  
12 I love you." Okay. And it was a few days of that  
13 before I could actually tell her, "You know what?  
14 I don't know you. I'm not going to come live with  
15 you. I'm going to school in Gjoa Haven." Anyway,  
16 so this -- I'm getting far too detailed now.

17                               So this tells you, up to that  
18 point, what my childhood had been before high  
19 school. I've lived at this point. My devil was  
20 dead and I was happy. I was heartbroken that I no  
21 longer have a father, but I was happy that I would  
22 not have to worry about being hit anymore, that I  
23 would not be yelled at anymore, that I would not be  
24 belittled anymore. I was happy. And I promised  
25 myself that day, that I would not let any man do

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1 that to me or my children. Then I came to school  
2 here in Yellowknife at Akaitcho Hall.

3 It was a different sense of going  
4 to school and belonging. I wanted to belong. I  
5 wanted to be wanted. So, when the boys would come  
6 around and tell me, "You need to do this for me  
7 because you don't want me to go see the town girls.  
8 You want us to stay with those from home, so you  
9 need to do this for me." And they would find the  
10 secret places at Akaitcho Hall, and at the time, in  
11 my mind, it wasn't rape because at the time, in my  
12 mind, it was consensual, but yet, it was not  
13 acknowledged in public. These men said:

14 "It's a secret. Don't tell  
15 anybody because it's just  
16 between you and me. So-and-  
17 so might not like that. So-  
18 and-so might not like that,  
19 but this is what you have to  
20 do for all the boys."

21 I found out later that's what they  
22 told all the women. All the girls. But it was a  
23 different type of rape. It wasn't a violent one,  
24 although there was one in high school. I gave  
25 birth to my first son while I was going in grade

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1 12. The father who I thought was the father is not  
2 the father and I don't know how to tell that  
3 father, the father of him, that he's the father.  
4 He's never asked. He's not cared. And I can only  
5 -- the only reason why I know that is because when  
6 I see his pictures, I see that person. He's  
7 married and he has his own children. My children  
8 asked me why, when I told my daughter that. "Why  
9 would I destroy his life now for something that we  
10 did when we were teenagers? I can't do that."

11 So, in grade 12, I faced a new  
12 type of racism. See, I was neither a home boarder  
13 nor a medical boarder. When I first came down in  
14 Gjoa Haven, I was a medical boarder who became a  
15 home boarder because of the technicalities. I was  
16 insistent that I was going to get grade 12 and  
17 being pregnant was just a side effect and not going  
18 to get in my way.

19 And yes, I was raising my baby as  
20 mine. Nobody was going to take my baby because I  
21 was keeping my baby, who I breastfed. I missed two  
22 weeks of school only because I was needed back down  
23 to Edmonton where -- due to complications and the  
24 baby came back -- I caught up with my schoolwork.  
25 I kept on top of my schoolwork, and I graduated

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1 with my son. I had my graduation pictures taken  
2 with my son. I breastfed him up until that point.

3 And I had a boyfriend. His name  
4 was Grant. A few months after living with Grant  
5 because I couldn't find my own place to live, I  
6 didn't make enough money. And when after I  
7 graduated, social services told me they could no  
8 longer help me because I was on my own.

9 So even though I had no place to  
10 live, I had no way to pay for a babysitter, and I  
11 had no job. I was on my own. So I went and lived  
12 with this man and my son got sick. And as babies  
13 do, eight or nine months old, he's crying, crying  
14 toward the night. Grant got up and started shaking  
15 him. "Stop crying, stop," and put him back in the  
16 bed while I pushed Grant aside and said, "Don't you  
17 ever touch him again."

18 The very next day I gave the baby  
19 up for voluntary custody with social services. I  
20 was 17. I fought so hard up to that point to stay  
21 where I was and I could not get help from social  
22 services. I could not find a job. I could not pay  
23 for a babysitter, and I was now faced with violence  
24 that I'd swore that I'd not let happen. So baby  
25 was placed in two months voluntary custody. They

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1 would not allow me to see him. They wouldn't tell  
2 me where he was.

3 So, the person that I'd home  
4 boarded with in grade 12, Nancy Harrison, she had  
5 quite a few foster children, and I went to her and  
6 I asked if she would adopt him because I couldn't  
7 send him home to Gjoa Haven because if I sent him  
8 home to Gjoa Haven, I would chose to send him to  
9 Helen and Ellen Kaloo (ph), but my grandfather  
10 would have been insulted that I'd not given him to  
11 him, but I could not allow Salome to raise my son,  
12 so I chose to ask Nancy.

13 Nancy had a brother. Nancy said  
14 that she could not adopt him. Many different  
15 reasons at the time. She had a long-term foster  
16 child, Caroline, who had half a heart. So, she  
17 said that her brother was interested. Dave and  
18 Deb. They have my son now, but they did name him  
19 Sammy.

20 The night that I signed those  
21 papers, I left town for six months because I could  
22 not stay in the same town and not have access to  
23 him. The only promise that I ask Debbie to make me  
24 is that he would always know where I was, and when  
25 he was ready to ask me questions, that he would ask

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1 those questions of me, and I'd be more than happy  
2 to answer them. Debbie's been in contact with me.

3 She still comes to see me -- I shouldn't say see  
4 me. She sends me Facebook messages.

5 So, by the age -- I'm now 18 years  
6 old living down in Ontario with this man, who's  
7 already shown me violence toward my son, and I've  
8 given my son up as a result because I didn't want  
9 my son to grow up in that life. And Grant turned  
10 his bad violence towards me. And again, rape  
11 happened. And it wasn't until about five years  
12 later that I realized even though I was living with  
13 him, that was still rape. I said no. And he still  
14 took what he wanted. That is rape.

15 At the time, my only thought was,  
16 I'm living with him. How could it be rape? And I  
17 did not report it, but I came home. I came home to  
18 Yellowknife. I lived with friends in Yellowknife  
19 for a short while, couple years, and moved on to  
20 Norman Wells and ended up to Inuvik in 1991. That  
21 was the year I met my ex-husband, and I was living  
22 with my Uncle Vince at the time.

23 So by that point, I moved in with  
24 my ex in January 1992 and became pregnant by March.  
25 I remember telling him, when I was pregnant, "I'm

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1 pregnant. This apartment's mine. There's the door  
2 if you don't want anything to do with it. I'm  
3 keeping the apartment. You're free to go." Well,  
4 he stayed much to my shock. He did. He stayed.  
5 And Joshua was born the following year -- or the  
6 following December.

7                   And again, my mother shocked me by  
8 finding out where I lived. After I've given birth,  
9 and she called it -- the house and my ex answered.  
10 I was at the hospital because I've just given  
11 birth, and my mother says to my ex, "Were you there  
12 when the baby was born?" "Yes," he says. Bear in  
13 mind that my ex is the only male in his family.  
14 He's got three sisters and he's also Caucasian.  
15 So, he's, "Yes, I was there." My mother says, "Did  
16 you watch the baby come out?" And I could see  
17 George pooping up. "Yes." And her next question,  
18 "Are you going to stick your cock in that cunt  
19 again?" He was speechless.

20                   But this was the language my  
21 mother had become accustomed too. That's what she  
22 grew up with in school because that's what the  
23 priests had told her. That was the terminology  
24 that she was used to. The phone rang up at the  
25 hospital, and of course, I worked at the hospital



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1 she would release and she released through alcohol.

2 And that was the only time that I got to see her.

3 You see medicines down here in front of me, these

4 medicine are what keep me from bringing because I

5 don't want to become what I saw with my mother.

6 So, I live my life with my

7 husband. We raised our children. My son is now 25

8 and my daughter is now 23. I have a grandson. I

9 also have a granddaughter, but that marriage fell

10 apart 2012 for many reasons. We were probably both

11 together because we wanted to make the family work.

12 He was not a violent man towards me. He wasn't

13 probably the most understanding, and he didn't

14 always allow me to be who I wanted to be. But it

15 was after I left him that I was able to be all that

16 I am.

17 During my life with him, I did

18 share the Inuvik Transition House for seven years.

19 I saw the violence that other women went through.

20 You asked earlier about the Inuvik Transition

21 House and its services that are available. In the

22 Northwest Territories, there are five transition

23 houses. Five out of our 33 communities. 1, 2, 3,

24 4, 5. The Inuvik Transition House at the time was

25 the only one that owned its house. It operated on

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1 a annual budget of \$300,000 a year. 24 hours a  
2 day, seven days a week. Three staff per shift.  
3 And I heard those stories. Health became involved.  
4 In order to get admission into the Inuvik  
5 Transition House, you have to have approval through  
6 Health because they can pay for women to come from  
7 Sachs, from Paulatuk, from McPherson, if need be on  
8 medical travel. It's considered medical travel to  
9 go into the transition house.

10 I left the Inuvik Transition House  
11 Board because of some of the complications that  
12 would come with the government policy that they  
13 wanted to start. Some of that government policy  
14 included allowing drug and alcohol rehabilitation  
15 boarders to stay there instead of women and  
16 children, so detox became involved. They had on a  
17 actual order in which acceptance was allowed in  
18 admission into the transition house and that was no  
19 longer acceptable to me. Do you know how many  
20 Bingos we have to run in order to maintain the  
21 Inuvik Transition House, the insurance alone?  
22 Christa used to sit on that board with me.

23 I became involved with the Inuvik  
24 Transition House because in 2000, I was appointed  
25 to the Status of Women Council for the NWT and I

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1 became president, and I thought that I should know  
2 what's going on with women's issues, so I became  
3 involved. And I'm the type that when I become  
4 involved, I want to know what the ground level --  
5 what's going on.

6 I don't want a report. I want to  
7 go and help. I want to help in the community. And  
8 I felt that that was what I needed to do. I've  
9 seen the women having to start over. That would be  
10 -- choose to go to Inuvik from even the Sahtu, and  
11 it was the women who had to leave the homes. The  
12 stories about not wanting to speak to counsellors  
13 because of family members and conflict, yes, that  
14 is alive and well in every community. If my sister  
15 is the end nursing charge in the community, I'm not  
16 going to want to be treated by my sister. If my  
17 brother was the RCMP officer, am I going to go  
18 report a crime to him if I don't want him to know  
19 about it?

20 This is the reality. And if I  
21 have to call someplace else, a 1-800 number, then  
22 I'm told, "We'll get back to you." These struggles  
23 are real. They're every day stories. It's not  
24 something that's made up. I heard stories about  
25 women even down in -- while I was president for the

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1 Status Women vote. Women being taken away from the  
2 community and their friends keeping her in a teepee  
3 just to keep her safe so that she will not be  
4 beaten anymore because the community puts up with  
5 it.

6 I've spoken on a national level  
7 about issues that have affected northern women.  
8 Down in Parliament Hill, I've had MPs sit there and  
9 tell me, "No, everything's perfect. Everything's  
10 rosy. There's no issues." And I've sat there and  
11 I've looked at them and said, "Are you on glue? I  
12 don't know where you're looking, but it's not where  
13 my reality is at home." Are they not hearing the  
14 stories?

15 Their reality is not the reality I  
16 know was going on, on the ground level. They  
17 didn't see those children beaten. The little boys  
18 who had shoe prints of Nike on their belly. Their  
19 whole intestines and colon having been taken out  
20 because a broomstick had been used on them. And  
21 the violence continues and everybody knew about it,  
22 and nobody did anything because nobody wanted to  
23 break the silence.

24 I've seen women disfigured and  
25 horrified by a man simply entering a room. I've

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1 seen coworkers under the same condition. I've gone  
2 and I've given the -- what's that poem called that  
3 they read on -- I can't even think of it right now.

4 "I've got flowers today." That poem, "I've got  
5 flowers today. It wasn't my birthday or any other  
6 day." It ends with her dying. "I got flowers  
7 today. Today was a very special day. Today was  
8 the day that I died."

9 I gave that poem to her spouse in  
10 hopes that he would stop, and she refused to -- she  
11 kept saying, "He's sorry for what he did. He's  
12 sorry." "I'm glad that he's sorry and I'm glad  
13 that you love him, but it needs help. I'm not  
14 saying leave him. I'm saying it needs help. If  
15 you love him that much, help him that much."

16 We need to raise our children, our  
17 boys and our girls in the ways that we want to see  
18 our children in relationships with. We need to get  
19 back to the basics and when I say we need to get  
20 back to the basics, we need to get back to the way  
21 things were. Women and children were respected.  
22 Elders were sought off after for their advice.  
23 They stood behind us and held us. Men protected  
24 us. We would not pray. In my world, the community  
25 is strong. In my world, we work together. It's



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1 when he gave up when -- he says:

2 "Power knows no time. When  
3 you give up power, it stays  
4 out there, but it knows no  
5 time and it'll attach itself  
6 to those that are close to  
7 you."

8 And I was his favourite. He said  
9 that "power has found you." His advice at the time  
10 was:

11 "Don't acknowledge it. Don't  
12 dwell on it. Dreams are  
13 possibilities. Past may  
14 happen, little glimpses, and  
15 you don't know when it  
16 happens. It could be 20  
17 years from now; it could be 2  
18 minutes from now."

19 He also told me during that same  
20 talk that while he was alive, he would protect me  
21 from anybody that was alive or dead. And after he  
22 died, he would protect me from all of those that  
23 have died. And for a very long time, I didn't do  
24 anything about these dreams, but medicine and power  
25 have a different way of working. And it makes you

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1 do what it needs to do whether that's for good or  
2 bad. And those dreams come back.

3 And working with the medicine, I  
4 started praying a lot more, and I do not pray in  
5 the Catholic church or the Anglican church or the  
6 Pentecostal church. Those are institutes,  
7 institutes that outlawed what I believe in, which  
8 is tradition, culture, land, animals, air. I will  
9 not put down the church, but the church has done a  
10 lot of damage that it has not accepted  
11 responsibility for. It has not acknowledged it's  
12 role in residential school or in the cultural  
13 genocide of what I hold dear. So, I practice a  
14 spirituality that holds the land, the animals, the  
15 air, the four elements close.

16 So when a friend of mine asked in  
17 2014 if I would work with something about walking  
18 with her sisters, Della, I was happy to become  
19 involved, and I started attending the meetings.  
20 That's how I became involved with all of these  
21 women behind me with the exception of Violet, who I  
22 knew a long time before that, and Gail, of course,  
23 as well. We spent five months working together,  
24 hours a week, to plan for Walking With Our Sisters.  
25 I was a keeper for Walking With Our Sisters. I



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1 very emotional ceremonies. Emelda was also a pipe  
2 keeper for this. Violet was a pipe keeper. Rassi  
3 was a kudlik keeper for that.

4                               There was one particular two  
5 sisters, third sister had died 35, 37 years  
6 earlier. They brought big hearts with feather down  
7 the middle and uppers alongside, and the release  
8 that they had just from presenting that, and they  
9 said that it never been acknowledged that pain that  
10 they felt had never been acknowledged, and it was  
11 like an open floodgate.

12                              During Walking With Our Sisters in  
13 Yellowknife, we chose to -- during these  
14 ceremonies, they were not public ceremonies, so we  
15 would need to close the exhibition for that, for  
16 all of these ceremonies. The one that hit home the  
17 most was Brandy Vittrekwa. Brandy was living in  
18 Whitehorse at the time, but she was from McPherson.

19       She was the same age as my daughter, grew up in  
20 the same area, had the same friends. And when  
21 Walking With Our Sisters opened, those uppers were  
22 presented by her mother. It was six weeks after  
23 her murder. She'd been murdered on my daughter's  
24 birthday, and I'll never forget the look on  
25 Marlene's face of not knowing what to do. What do



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1 were along there, representing all those that have  
2 been died. So I said, "Yes, these babies are not  
3 here anymore." This little girl's question was  
4 next, "How do we make it stop?" And I couldn't lie  
5 to her, so I said:

6 "Well, we start by talking  
7 about it. We start by  
8 acknowledging it. We start  
9 by telling the stories.  
10 You're going to go and tell  
11 your friends what you've seen  
12 and their going to go and  
13 tell their friends."

14 And then she asked me if it was  
15 still going on. These little ones all know the  
16 answers, but they're being stifled. Yesterday, we  
17 had a drum dance, hand games, dancing, and things  
18 were the way that they were supposed to be with  
19 family, the babies included. The little ones  
20 running around. The elders sitting with us. That  
21 is the way that it's supposed to be, but that is  
22 not how we operate in today's world.

23 In today's world, they don't want  
24 the children in the meeting rooms. They don't want  
25 the babies with the mothers. That's not how it was



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1 for what is right.

2 I have since the time I was -- I  
3 remember going to school down in Nova Scotia and  
4 they were trying to make me take French classes. I  
5 didn't want to take French classes. I didn't. I  
6 said, "If you make me take French classes --" At  
7 the time, my train of thought was, "I'll forget how  
8 to speak in Inuktituk." I was 13. So I fought  
9 them and I won. They couldn't -- I won because my  
10 attitude was, "You can't make me take it. You  
11 can't make me --" "Well," they said, "you have to  
12 take another French class," "Well, give me an  
13 Inuktituk class instead." And they said, "Well,  
14 that's not possible." "Well, I'm not taking  
15 French, and you can't make me." And literally, my  
16 father was in the room there and the principal in  
17 there looking at me, and my father going -- he knew  
18 better than to argue with me at that point.

19 While my father felt that he owned  
20 me, that I was alive because he allowed me to live,  
21 he saw that I was strong-willed and he could not  
22 control that. So I'd been strong for a very long  
23 time. I have felt that I'm not the bright person  
24 to speak here, but I needed to speak here.

25 The smudge that you see in this



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1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you,  
2 Gerry. Wow. Just amazing to have you share the  
3 generational history. I only have a few questions  
4 and it's only because I want to clarify some of the  
5 points you made, and then Commissioner Robinson  
6 might also have a couple.

7 You were talking about -- you  
8 know, you come from Gjoa Haven, and you were  
9 talking about different parts of the North, and you  
10 were also talking about resources, so I wanted to  
11 ask you a question about the resources and how --  
12 if you're from one of those regions, but you live  
13 somewhere like Inuvik, so you're originally from  
14 Gjoa Haven, that's your family's from, are you a  
15 member of that land?

16 MS. GERRY SHARPE: Wait a minute.  
17 I am a Nunavut beneficiary. Accessing funds  
18 through Nunavut is a near impossibility for me. I  
19 am a resident of Northwest Territories, so I do  
20 need to follow what's in place for the Northwest  
21 Territories. Health now looks after all of the  
22 shelters.

23 The shelters, when it comes to  
24 resources -- there's only five. They're  
25 drastically underfunded. The training isn't there,

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1 so if they need staff development, it's not going  
2 to happen. If they want to send staff out to bring  
3 more information back, that's not going to happen  
4 because there's no place for funding. People  
5 applying from the Beaufort Delta Region are sent to  
6 Inuvik. Tuk does have an emergency shelter, but  
7 Inuvik has the transition house, that they can stay  
8 up there for up to six weeks. Of course, there's  
9 also resources here in Yellowknife. If a woman in  
10 one of the communities wanted to leave her spouse,  
11 it's not easy. It's not easy.

12 They have to get approval from the  
13 health board in order for medical travel to be  
14 approved. And if whoever's picking up the phone on  
15 that day decides, "Well, no, you did this last  
16 month, so you're not getting it again," they just  
17 say no. And of course, that is the reality. And  
18 they can simply say, "Well, no, we brought you down  
19 here last time, so we're not going to bring you  
20 again." Who are they to make that decision? Who  
21 are they to speak for somebody else's heart?

22 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I know  
23 we're here so most people will know and sees me --

24 MS. GERRY SHARPE: Nurse in  
25 charge.

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1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yeah, the  
2 nurse in charge. And also, thank you for  
3 explaining the shelter system. I want to take it  
4 back even a little further. So, if you're from  
5 Gjoa Haven and you are a resident here, can you  
6 access, as a beneficiary of Nunavut, access funding  
7 for education and services because you're here or  
8 you don't have to be there or -- how does that  
9 work?

10 MS. GERRY SHARPE: With NTI, NTI  
11 is compromised of three different bodies. You have  
12 the Kitikmeot, the Kivalliq, and the Baffin. Those  
13 three bodies are -- NTI is comprised of those.  
14 They each have a board. The money that is  
15 distributed to each of those boards stays there.  
16 That is not distributed to the beneficiaries. Just  
17 because I live here, doesn't mean that I get to  
18 benefit from something in the Kitikmeot Region.  
19 That stays only in the community. They will do a  
20 raffle for a boat or a Ski-Doo. I'm not eligible  
21 for that because I'm not in Gjoa Haven. I'm not  
22 eligible for resources to apply to go to school.  
23 My children are not eligible for that, and this is  
24 something else that I actually didn't touch on that  
25 I did also want touch on.

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1                                   When you hear the numbers -- I'm  
2     assuming from the RCMP when you get a report from  
3     them -- they'll say that in the Northwest  
4     Territories, there was 48 or 49 of the 52 murders -  
5     - or missing and murdered for the Northwest  
6     Territories were Aboriginal. That's not counting  
7     the ones in other provinces or territories that  
8     belong in the Northwest Territories, for instance,  
9     Brandy Vittrekwa, happened in the Yukon. That'll  
10    be in the Yukon's numbers. There was a friend of a  
11    family friend whose daughter was murdered down in  
12    Edmonton. That's counted in Alberta. These women  
13    are displaced and they're removed from the support  
14    system and we wonder why they are vulnerable. The  
15    impact to being vulnerable are compounded that much  
16    more when you are removed from your community, from  
17    what you know.

18                                So, when it comes to -- for  
19    instance, even my daughter moving here to  
20    Yellowknife, she's removed from her resources and  
21    what she knows although I'm here to support her.  
22    If I wasn't here -- she's used to knowing everybody  
23    that she walks by in the community of 3,000. She's  
24    accustomed to knowing the news of the region, not  
25    just the community. If there's a death in

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1 McPherson, she knows about it. If there's a fire  
2 up in Paulatuk, she knows about it. That doesn't  
3 happen here in Yellowknife.

4 So, as a result, that tight  
5 connection of being in a community isn't the same.

6 So, if it's not the same here in Yellowknife,  
7 where we are a tight community, what's it like down  
8 in Edmonton or in Ottawa, where you're not reaching  
9 all of those, or those people that are displaced  
10 from -- even from Nunavut, when they're sent down  
11 to Edmonton and miss an appointment on her --  
12 displaced in Edmonton? So, those impacts aren't  
13 counted and how are those tracked? And it's the  
14 government that is making -- displaced.

15 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: You've  
16 kind of actually -- I was going to ask you a second  
17 part of the question, and you've kind of actually  
18 got around to it because just understanding sort of  
19 some of those differences and how does that work  
20 when -- for example, a woman or a family is trying  
21 to exit violence or because they're hospitalized  
22 due to serious injury. They find themselves in  
23 Edmonton, and if they have to stay over, they get  
24 displaced and they're relying on medical flights  
25 and stuff like that. How do they get back or

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1 what's the next centre and how can they access  
2 things if they're in different places or displaced.

3 And so, you've kind of answered  
4 that, but if you have anything more you want to  
5 add, please do.

6 MS. GERRY SHARPE: The only thing  
7 that I can add to that is that -- that point, if  
8 they are medic de facto, they're told what the next  
9 steps are. They're not given the option. So,  
10 somebody's cared -- if they're injured, they're  
11 told what happens next. They're not asked.

12 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So I guess  
13 part of the thing I'm trying to get at to you,  
14 because I know you'll probably have the knowledge  
15 in this, is the connection between not having  
16 autonomy to actually leave. So if you have to go  
17 somewhere, it's a medical decision.

18 MS. GERRY SHARPE: Yes.

19 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: It's not  
20 the decision of the woman.

21 MS. GERRY SHARPE: Yes.

22 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And if she  
23 has to back to where she came from on a medical  
24 leave, she might be going back into the community  
25 where she experiences more harm.

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1 MS. GERRY SHARPE: Yes.

2 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: But if she  
3 leaves on her own self to another region, she might  
4 not have the support. Am I understanding that  
5 properly?

6 MS. GERRY SHARPE: You are  
7 understanding that entirely right because that is  
8 part of the problem. If you didn't come down to  
9 medical travel, we're not sending you back and  
10 you're not covered. You can't access that if you  
11 didn't tell us why you're coming, so you just can't  
12 show up on the doorstep. That's a problem.

13 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Those are  
14 my questions. Commissioner Robinson may have some  
15 questions or comments for you as well.

16 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:  
17 Iidiyak (ph), I've got questions. Building on that  
18 -- accessing the services. We've heard from some  
19 family yesterday about accessing help for issues  
20 with mental health issues, then also, accessing  
21 training and education. We've heard from other  
22 communities and in urban centres from Inuit women  
23 and women from more northern regions that -- it's  
24 not even to flee violence that you have to go  
25 south. It's for employment opportunities; it's for

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1 education opportunities; it's for accessing the  
2 services. Is this something that you've observed?

3 Well, is this an issue you're seeing in the NWT?

4 MS. GERRY SHARPE: Yes, it is. A  
5 lot of the opportunities -- in order to make --  
6 allow yourself to move forward, you need to further  
7 your education or to gain that experience. In  
8 order to do that, you have to go south. And the  
9 areas where you can gain employment have more  
10 money. In my mind, this is where I see that  
11 there's a huge issue with an imbalance between the  
12 government's decisions when it comes to corporate  
13 mining, oil, and gas versus the social needs of its  
14 people. It puts mining, oil, and gas first because  
15 it brings in money. But if you're bringing in  
16 corporate money, then are you not seeing that  
17 direct correlation between the violence, the  
18 increased violence, that's going to happen to  
19 crimes that take place? So, there has to be that  
20 balance. If there is no balance then there's no  
21 success.

22 My daughter went to school to get  
23 her early child development certificate in Inuvik.  
24 She chose to do that in Inuvik. She could have  
25 done that here. My son wanted to access education.

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1 Now, he has particular needs when it comes to the  
2 way that he -- he's educated, so he's now accessing  
3 that. They're both Nunavut beneficiaries. They  
4 should have access to funds and they don't.

5 My son came down here to work, to  
6 gain more money, but he's now thinking about going  
7 down to the oil fields. My daughter's -- she took  
8 a pay cut to work here, but -- now she's \$19 an  
9 hour, but her daycare is subsidized. So, she could  
10 make more money in Inuvik, but she felt the  
11 education for her son wasn't there, which is why  
12 she decided to come here.

13 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:  
14 (Speaking in native language). Because you've  
15 answered a lot of sort of the questions I've had  
16 from what you've talked about and I hope we can  
17 speak again about these issues and outside of this  
18 forum. (Speaking in native language).

19 MS. GERRY SHARPE: (Speaking in  
20 native language). One thing I will add, the women  
21 sitting behind me have helped mektan (ph). This is  
22 an example of what the women of Northwest  
23 Territories can do. So, the Native Women's  
24 Association put out the call for the beaded hearts,  
25 and the beaded hearts came to Native women. The

Geraldine Sharpe,  
in relation to her Grandmother

1 women behind me as well as Gail, we all worked on  
2 this along with a lot of other women of the  
3 Northwest Territories. We came together with a  
4 common purpose to do this. And we can all come  
5 together with the common purpose of overcoming this  
6 issue and we will all help. We all just need to  
7 focus back on that one issue resolving this and  
8 moving forward together because together, we are  
9 strong. Together, we'll embrace and protect our  
10 young and move forward.

11 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I  
12 want your words to be the last words heard, so I'm  
13 not going to talk anymore.

14 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So,  
15 Commissioner Robinson is actually going to provide  
16 you with a gift. It's a gift, a reciprocal gift.  
17 You've shared truth with us and your story, and it  
18 wasn't an easy story to share, and we appreciate  
19 that. So, there are a couple gifts that the  
20 commissioner will be handing to you. First, one of  
21 the gifts is actually from the Native Women's  
22 Association from the Northwest Territories, but  
23 there is also feathers, and actually, Audrey might  
24 say a word on the feathers because she can explain  
25 it better than I can.

Geraldine Sharpe,  
in relation to her Grandmother

1 MS. AUDREY SIEGL: These feathers  
2 today in red are from Sechelt. They're from Haida  
3 Gwaii and they're the first feathers from my  
4 Musqueam community and we bring them forward as  
5 gifts of healing, as gifts of honour, and to  
6 recognize who you are. I have the phrase I would  
7 like to share with you in my ancestral language.  
8 It makes me so happy to hear you speaking the  
9 language of your people on your -- on the land that  
10 knows those languages. (Speaking in native  
11 language). She is sacred, this woman. (Speaking  
12 in native language). You're sacred, all of these  
13 women. You bring that forward in a very beautiful  
14 and powerful and humble way. You are you honour  
15 all of the women that you come from. And the work  
16 that you do connecting what happens to the land and  
17 what happens to the women, we need people to really  
18 see that. I thank you not just for being strong,  
19 but for holding steady and for loving and healing  
20 yourself, for finding your medicines and helping  
21 others to be able to do the same so that we can  
22 each find our strength and we can each heal and  
23 that we can each rise. That's what we need. And  
24 these feathers are gifts that started from our  
25 Haida matriarchs, and it's carried on from Smithers

Geraldine Sharpe,  
in relation to her Grandmother

1 till here, and we'll keep taking care of each other  
2 and not just with the feathers, but with everything  
3 that the feathers represent. So, I say aitchka  
4 (ph) and I raise my hands.

5 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: At this  
6 point, I would ask for an adjournment in this room.  
7 Lunch has already started and I noticed it has  
8 been served. It will be served out in the hallway.  
9 For this room, I'm asking for an adjournment until  
10 two o'clock so that anyone in this room has at  
11 least a half hour before the next proceeding.  
12 Thank you.

13 --- Recess at 1:25 p.m.

14 --- Upon resuming at 2:23 p.m.

15 **Hearing #3**

16 **Witness: James Norman Jenka**

17 **In relation to Helene Louisa Ratfat (nee Leyden)**  
18 **and Marina Ratfat**

19 **Heard by Commissioner Brian Eyolfson**

20 **Commission Counsel: Wendy van Tongeren**

21 **Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Therese**  
22 **Villeneuve, Laureen "Blu" Waters Gaudio, Ray**

23 **Tuccaro, Jean Erasmus, Caroline Lafontaine and Tori**  
24 **Jarvis**

25 **Clerk: Trudy Mckinnon**

James Norman Jenka,  
in relation to Helene Louisa Ratfat (nee Leyden)  
and Marina Ratfat

1 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

2 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Good  
3 afternoon, everyone. My name is Wendy van  
4 Tongeren, V-A-N T-O-N-G-E-R-E-N, and I'm one of the  
5 commission counsel for the National Inquiry and  
6 we're about to start with the afternoon session.  
7 The time is 25 minutes after one and today is  
8 January 24th, and we're in Yellowknife at the Nova  
9 Hotel in the ballroom. And I'm honoured to  
10 introduce the next family that I've been working  
11 with and we'll start by introducing the family.  
12 They'll just introduce themselves giving their name  
13 and then we'll proceed with the procession  
14 thereafter. Okay. So, you have my name, James,  
15 what's yours?

16 MR. JAMES JENKA: You already said  
17 it. Good afternoon. My name is James Jenka.

18 MS. ALYSHA HANKINSON: My name is  
19 Alysha, and I'm the daughter of James.

20 MS. TONI JARVIS: My name is  
21 Toni, and I am the niece of James.

22 MR. RAY TUCCARO: Hi, my name is  
23 Ray. I'm here to support my friend James and his  
24 daughter.

25 MS. CAROLINE LAFONTAINE: My name

James Norman Jenka,  
in relation to Helene Louisa Ratfat (nee Leyden)  
and Marina Ratfat

1 is Caroline Lafontaine. I'm here to support the  
2 family as well. We're friends.

3 MS. JEAN ERASMUS: Hi, I'm Jean  
4 Erasmus, and I'm also here to support James and his  
5 daughter.

6 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And I  
7 believe next there will be a prayer.

8 MR. RAY TUCCARO: Can you all  
9 stand. A great honour to say a prayer.

10 And I ask you, Creator, to help  
11 all of us here, to understand what you're going  
12 through. We ask you to help us to say a prayer in  
13 your own way, in your own beliefs. We ask our  
14 Creator to help us to activate our heart, our mind,  
15 our body, and our spirit. We ask you to help us,  
16 the family, and our ancestors in the spirit world  
17 or ones that gone before us. We ask you to listen  
18 to us and to give my friend James the support and  
19 strength to carry on with this. We ask each and  
20 every one of us to say a prayer for James and the  
21 family and the daughter. We thank you, Creator,  
22 for this beautiful day. We thank you for giving us  
23 life today, giving us to understand. That is, your  
24 Creator. And we need your help on this certain  
25 day. Thank you. All my relations. Hey. Hey.

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and Marina Ratfat

1 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: So,  
2 James, before you tell us the poem, copies of which  
3 people have, let's just have the affirmation  
4 process so that we can forget about that part,  
5 okay? And so, Mr. Registrar, if we could have  
6 affirmation here, please, and it would be for  
7 Alysha Hankinson and James Norman Jenka. And the  
8 request has been for a pipe, right? You're going  
9 to affirm on your pipe and an eagle feather as  
10 well. Okay. And I believe they brought their own  
11 fan and pipe with them. And you can do it together  
12 actually.

13 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: It's  
14 up to you. I'll start with you, James. Do you  
15 solemnly affirm that -- actually, I'm going to do  
16 it a little bit differently. Do you promise to  
17 tell your truth to the commissioner in a good way  
18 today?

19 MR. JAMES JENKA: Yes, I do. I'll  
20 speak my truth that are best of my memory, and I  
21 just want to honour our pipe here. And all of my  
22 words will go into this pipe, and I'll smoke it  
23 after -- till we're done here, so there will be no  
24 lies spoken here. Thank you.

25 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:

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and Marina Ratfat

1 Great. Thanks, James. And Alysha, I'll ask you  
2 the same question then. Just wait for a microphone  
3 to go to Alicia. Okay. Welcome Alicia. Do you  
4 promise to tell your truth to the commissioner in a  
5 good way today, too?

6 MS. ALYSHA HANKINSON: Yes, I do.

7 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:

8 Okay. Thank you.

9 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Yeah.

10 You're on. Do you need to stand? We could get you  
11 a stand that will hold the mic.

12 MR. JAMES JENKA: That's okay.

13 I'm not that crippled yet. I will stand. First  
14 and foremost, thank you to Ray, and my family here  
15 that's supporting. Thank you so much for -- you  
16 got my back. I feel better. Just first of all, I  
17 just want to honour my ancestors. My relatives  
18 that have gone on before me. As I sit here -- I'm  
19 hot right now. I don't know.

20 But, anyway, as I sit here to  
21 speak about my family, I don't speak about them in  
22 a bad way. I honour each and every one of them and  
23 I love each and every one of them. I'm here to  
24 speak more or less for my mother, and I just wanted  
25 to share stuff about how her loss affected me in my

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and Marina Ratfat

1 life, and I'll speak a little bit about my  
2 childhood, and I just want to honour my grandmother  
3 and my grandfather and I'll speak more about my  
4 grandmother, Mary Ann. All I can say is -- well,  
5 what an amazing woman.

6                               But before I get carried on about  
7 family, I just want to -- about a half and a and a  
8 month ago, I believe, there was a poetry thing  
9 happening here in Yellowknife, and the seventh  
10 parliamentary poet laureate, George Elliott Clarke,  
11 read this poem there, and I said wow. So I post  
12 him and -- I have a friend and I want to say thank  
13 you to Robin for getting the poem to us from George  
14 himself. So, I just want to read this to you  
15 folks. If you have copies, just follow along. I  
16 can do George Elliot Clarke justice here. That guy  
17 sure knows how to write/read poems, my God.  
18 Anyway. And of course, I will submit this to the  
19 Commission, that they can carry with them.

20                               The title is: "For the Murdered  
21 and the Missing: A Spiritual."

22                                       "Someone's guilty of a  
23                                       million crimes. Blood on his  
24                                       hands, Death on his mind. To  
25                                       send my sister away, away; to

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and Marina Ratfat

1 put my mama in a distant  
2 grave.  
3 Why she got to be murdered?  
4 Why she got to go missing?  
5 This land is hers, so I  
6 heard. All the saints are  
7 insisting.  
8 Someone's got a sink in Hell  
9 and rot. Dump bones in bush  
10 or parking lot. Disappeared  
11 my auntie, saw her die;  
12 exiled my daughter, served  
13 her Misery.  
14 Why she got to be missing?  
15 Why she got to be murdered?  
16 Why I hear Justice hissing  
17 like a viper in a graveyard?  
18 Someone's papa mapped a Trail  
19 of Tears. Someone's son  
20 paved a Highway of Tears.  
21 Why my sister got to stumble  
22 down? Why my mama got to  
23 tumble down?  
24 Why she got to go missing?  
25 Why she got to be martyred?

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and Marina Ratfat

1 Indigenious insisting, Justice  
2 for our massacred.  
3 Someone's flag looks like  
4 blood on snow. Someone's  
5 History, a damn crime show.  
6 To hurt my daughter so she  
7 weep. To wound my auntie  
8 while she sleep.  
9 Why she got to be murdered?  
10 Why she got to go missing?  
11 Martyred in mud, slush, merde  
12 -- from The Pas to Nipissing.  
13 Someone's guilty of a million  
14 crimes -- from five centuries  
15 back, down to next time.  
16 Ain't sorry to little sister  
17 rape -- or put my mama in her  
18 too soon grave.  
19 Why she got to be murdered.  
20 Why she got to go missing?  
21 Ain't all government alert to  
22 crimes of commission?  
23 Why don't Parliament just  
24 wail? How can this  
25 Parliament fail? Got to have

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and Marina Ratfat

1 Justice insisting, no more  
2 murdered, no more missing.  
3 No more homicide, suicide,  
4 genocide. Those screaming  
5 words that none can hide. No  
6 more Trails and Highways of  
7 Tears. No more families  
8 cramming each a hearse.  
9 Time to put the guilty where  
10 they belong -- on trial, in  
11 jail, by the end of this  
12 song." (As read)

13 I just want to say thank you to  
14 George Elliott Clarke for writing that poem. Thank  
15 you, George.

16 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay, so,  
17 the way this is going to work James, is that you're  
18 going to do all the talking, and I'm here to help  
19 if you need it. So, I know that we have some  
20 paragraphs, so here they are in hard copy, which  
21 might guide you. And here's a family tree in case  
22 you need something to use as a guide.

23 We've met before and I have  
24 absolute trust that you will inspire everybody in  
25 this room and beyond. So, take care and do your

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and Marina Ratfat

1 best.

2 MR. JAMES JENKA: Okay. I'm  
3 sweating already, so. I just finished eating, so  
4 when I talk sometimes some food get caught up in my  
5 dentures, so if some fly out, don't worry about it,  
6 okay?

7 This is all about my mother. This  
8 is also about my sisters. This is all about my  
9 grandmother. And this is all about my daughters  
10 and my granddaughter. I forgot to put up a picture  
11 of my granddaughter. This is about her.

12 So, I'm just going to go into a  
13 little bit of family history. But just to give you  
14 -- my mother's name is Helene Louise Ratfat Leyden.  
15 She went missing in the early seventies, and she's  
16 never been found to this day. I was born in a  
17 little town called Fort Chipewyan, Alberta, and I  
18 have some Fort Chipewyan connection here. I didn't  
19 know my mother at all. Barely. I just have faint  
20 memories of her, but I do know her being gone, how  
21 it has affected me.

22 After I was born, I was  
23 immediately given up. My grandmother took me in.  
24 Why she gave me up, I don't know. All I know is I  
25 had these resentments towards her at a very young

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and Marina Ratfat

1 age. I felt like I was unwanted. The sad thing  
2 about it -- I knew at a young age that she was a  
3 mother. My grandmother told me. I think I may  
4 have seen her a couple of times, and the sad thing  
5 about it is she just lived across the river from  
6 us. I was born in March, and by November, she was  
7 married to my sister's father. That's only what,  
8 seven, eight months? And nobody talked about me.  
9 She didn't talk about me. Nobody talked about it.  
10 I was a secret. I was a bastard child.

11 At a very young age, that anger  
12 started happening within me. The love of my life  
13 is my grandmother. She's my mother. She took care  
14 of me. I want to speak a little bit about my  
15 grandmother. I would talk about the strength of a  
16 woman. My grandmother died when I was 12 years  
17 old. The love of my life. But I found out  
18 recently, well, three years ago, that before I was  
19 born, she had lost a daughter and five boys, and  
20 she never talked about it. No one talked about it.  
21 No one even shared anything about it with me. And  
22 to top it off, she died knowing that my mother was  
23 missing. So, I don't know, like, how she managed  
24 to carry on with life with all this trauma and this  
25 loss. And each of her children were thrown into

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and Marina Ratfat

1 residential school. Every one of them, my mother  
2 included, thrown in residential school.  
3 Eventually, I ended up there as well.

4 I knew I had a sister and a  
5 brother before they moved away. I used to sit  
6 there, play by the shoreline with little homemade  
7 boats out of driftwood. I'd be playing there and  
8 sometimes I'll look across the river to see if I  
9 could catch a glimpse of them. Nothing, but they  
10 were too far down that way. And the next thing I  
11 knew, they're gone. Everybody was gone. I didn't  
12 know where they went.

13 So I'd stand by the river as a  
14 young boy. I still remember this. Hoping that --  
15 we used to hear, like, these people from Fort Chip  
16 used to come and visit, come looking for fish --  
17 come and visit, looking for dry meat or whatever.  
18 And they'd come and visit. We were about seven  
19 miles from Fort Chip. It's called Four Forks, and  
20 it's where there was good fishing because four  
21 rivers met at that place. It used to be a  
22 government dog camp or whatever one time.

23 But the river is towards Fort Chip  
24 and you can hear motors coming quite a ways. You  
25 could hear them. And every time I hear a motor, I

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and Marina Ratfat

1 was sick of them. Oh, it may be them. My family  
2 will come and pick me up and take me with them. I  
3 stood there for several times. Nobody ever came.  
4 So they were gone. I never heard of them for a  
5 while. People used to ask where I was born and all  
6 that. And I used to joke with them. I dont know,  
7 maybe to cover my pain or my shame. I just tell  
8 them maybe I was a result of a one-night stand.  
9 But she gave me up early.

10 Back -- and I saw this and I was  
11 part of it growing up -- the Catholic, the church,  
12 very strong in my community. Everything revolved  
13 around the church. And we never questioned -- and  
14 I saw them, they never questioned the church or the  
15 police or anything like -- they never question it,  
16 right? So I often think about my mother and wonder  
17 what she went through. What she saw. What  
18 happened.

19 And I want to share a little bit  
20 of that with you from what I saw in my family. And  
21 that's not to knock down my family. That was just  
22 the reality. I saw things growing up with my  
23 family that no child should see. Right from a  
24 young age. But there was lots of alcohol and  
25 violence all around me.

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and Marina Ratfat

1                   And I'm going to share that one  
2 dream I had as a young boy, and I believe that was  
3 a vision given to me by Creator and the messengers  
4 at a young age all ready to watch over me. And  
5 that dream, I happened to be on the other side of  
6 the river where my mom lived. But across the river  
7 there was also -- and this is reality, there were  
8 two red horses and one black horse, and they were  
9 wild. I used to watch them across the river, just  
10 marvel at them running over there.

11                   But in my dream, I was over there  
12 and I saw those horses. All of a sudden that black  
13 one started chasing me, and I just got freaked out,  
14 so I -- right behind, there were fishermen as well,  
15 and we used to have these little -- what do you  
16 call them sheds by the river, where we hang out  
17 nets? Anyway. So the horse chased me and so I  
18 climbed. I climbed on one of those little  
19 buildings, and I could tell he was angry at me, you  
20 know. And he kept circling around me, kept  
21 circling. I woke up that way.

22                   Ever since I was a young boy, I've  
23 always dreamt about horses and I'll speak more  
24 about it a little later, but I knew it -- like,  
25 that really freaked me out. But that dream was to

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1 show me of all the chaos that was around me; what I  
2 was seeing, the violence, the incest that was going  
3 on around me. I saw my grandmother drunk,  
4 fighting, being dragged on the floor by her hair,  
5 being pulled. I saw her being beaten. And I saw  
6 something that no child should see.

7 I woke up in the middle of the  
8 night. They had a party or drinking. My  
9 grandmother was passed out on the floor. My  
10 grandfather, my mushroom, was sitting there. He  
11 threw the blankets off. My grandmother was naked.  
12 I was only 4 or 5 years old and they were drunk.  
13 And he wanted me to touch my grandmother's  
14 privates. I didn't but I saw her. No child should  
15 see stuff like that. I also saw my sister getting  
16 raped by a relative. I was so scared that I had  
17 blocked that part out, but the memory came back  
18 later. But I saw that. But I saw the violence. I  
19 don't know if this is a blessing or -- anyway, I  
20 got thrown into residential school.

21 So, I didn't see much of what  
22 happened back home. But I saw, you know, in  
23 residential school. I was sexually abused in  
24 there. I spoke about it when they had the  
25 residential thing all came out and the inquiry and

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and Marina Ratfat

1 all that, where we tell our story, so I told that.

2 So, I had fear in me right from -- as a young boy,

3 darkness in my soul. It's just dark. I wasn't a

4 happy boy. I'd learn to hide. I learned to run.

5 On my records, you'll see my name on there. But

6 you see my parents, it says my mother, Helen. On

7 the other side, no father. So, question mark. So

8 I teased people, "Yeah, I'm immaculate conception,"

9 whatever. I don't know who's my real father.

10 My grandmother shared a little bit

11 of stories about who my father was, and she

12 mentioned a Burke family, and she remembers this.

13 She says they wanted me. Then she says they wanted

14 to adopt me. She said, "But I told them no, I'll

15 take care of him." Well, it's good to know someone

16 wanted me. In residential school, like I shared

17 earlier, I was sexually molested by a boy. The

18 shameful part of it -- as a young boy, I got

19 excited too. So, for a while there, I thought I

20 was gay, but I wasn't really, you know. But it was

21 kind of confusing for me. I've done a lot of work

22 over the years to deal with that. A lot of

23 forgiveness. A lot of letting go. So, I will show

24 pictures of my mother.

25 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Peter,

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in relation to Helene Louisa Ratfat (nee Leyden)  
and Marina Ratfat

1 we're ready for the pictures. You take the lead.

2 MR. JAMES JENKA: That's my  
3 mother, Helen Louise Ratfat, and that's when they  
4 were in the trapline. I wasn't there. Those  
5 pictures are mainly from my sister Dorothy Tachikep  
6 (ph), and Dorothy is the older one. And there's my  
7 brother Donald, my half-brother Donald and my half-  
8 sister Diane Sequin (ph). And the one is my half-  
9 sister Dorothy. We're all same mothers. There  
10 they are in trapline and that's probably that house  
11 across the river from where we were living.

12 I was never in that house, but my  
13 sister -- and they'll probably talk more about this  
14 in B.C. They're the ones my sister Sequin, Dorothy  
15 -- not Dorothy, Diane -- for three years ago, there  
16 was a missing thing happening in Edmonton. And all  
17 this time, here we thought that she was reported  
18 missing all these years. We thought there was a  
19 search that happened but nothing happened. Just  
20 three years ago, it was the first time she was  
21 reported missing. And I still remember my  
22 grandfather Peter receiving a call. I still  
23 remember that when I was in Chip. But my  
24 grandfather doesn't understand English. So whoever  
25 talked to him, we believe, was probably about my

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1 mother.

2                               Once again, those are in the  
3 trapline. I'm not too sure who was that. I think  
4 that might be Donald because he's a little older.  
5 Beautiful woman. Beautiful woman, my mother.  
6 Anyway, my sister finally reported her missing in  
7 Edmonton. And before I get there, let me backtrack  
8 a little bit. Sorry about that.

9                               After Fort Chip, my grandmother  
10 passed away in 1973, the love of my life, and  
11 that's when my world came to an end. After she  
12 died, I felt all alone in Fort Chip. I even begged  
13 my nieces and my sister Marina to take me with her.  
14 I still remember as a young boy standing in the  
15 cold winter going out of Fort Chip going north. I  
16 was standing there begging my sister to take me  
17 with her. And I still remember her looking back  
18 just sad. She couldn't take me. I guess she lived  
19 up here in Yellowknife at that time.

20                              But after my grandmother passed  
21 away, I felt abandoned. Everybody just left. I  
22 felt all alone. Next thing I knew, I started going  
23 to foster homes. Thank God it was in Fort Chip.  
24 They didn't take me, you know -- there were some  
25 families, three families that took me in. But even

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and Marina Ratfat

1 though I was in those families, I never felt like I  
2 belonged. I just think from a young age, I felt  
3 like I didn't belong anywhere. I felt like I was  
4 searching, forever searching, for a place to feel  
5 at home.

6 Anyways. So, I went through my  
7 high school. I'm the first one in my family to  
8 graduate. You know, proud of myself and all that.

9 Two weeks after graduation I went to work in Fort  
10 McMurray in the mine. I was making a lot of money.

11 Then I met my wife, my first wife. That was my  
12 dream as a young boy growing up in Fort Chip. I  
13 was ashamed to be an Indian. I was ashamed to be  
14 who I am or who I was. My dream was to go find me  
15 a nice beautiful white woman. Go build a house  
16 like in the books, right? In school, you read  
17 everything is all white, with a house and a -- what  
18 do you call it? A green lawn and all that. Oh,  
19 yeah. Have a family.

20 Well guess what, I got it. I got  
21 my beautiful white wife. I'm making lots of money.

22 I got my house. I got my children. But something  
23 was missing. Something was missing. I couldn't --  
24 I was an angry young man lost in that world out  
25 there. And I want to apologize to my older

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1 children right here, right this very moment. And I  
2 also want to apologize to my first wife Heather.  
3 That woman was strong.

4 As a result, I mean, I'm not  
5 blaming anything. I'm not blaming anyone. As a  
6 result of how I was raised as a young boy, as a  
7 result of what I saw, as a result of not being  
8 taught or being shown how to be a man; how to be a  
9 boy, how to be a man. I followed what I saw. I,  
10 too, became abusive. I, too, was physically  
11 abusive towards my first wife. Emotionally  
12 abusive. For lack of a better word, I was an  
13 asshole. A real asshole. If I knew me back then,  
14 I, too, would have left me.

15 I was an angry young man and thank  
16 God for Heather, she stuck with me as long as she  
17 could because she said she loved me. She tried to  
18 love me, this broken man. I didn't know any  
19 better. Finally she left. Finally she had enough.  
20 And I honour her today. I honour her for having  
21 the courage, the strength to leave. Yeah, I was  
22 devastated. I was lost, you know, but I couldn't  
23 blame her. I would have left me too. My ex-wife  
24 passed away two years ago. She was still angry at  
25 me for not being there as a father to my children.

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1 For being an asshole husband.

2 But I honour her spirit each and  
3 every day and I say thank you for bringing three  
4 beautiful children into this world. They're all  
5 grown now, my children. They all have children of  
6 their own. And like the rest of us, we struggle  
7 and all that, try to make a living. I wasn't there  
8 for them when they were young, but I'm there for  
9 them today. So I want to honour my ex-wife  
10 Heather, say thank you to her and I apologize to my  
11 oldest children. If I had to do it all over again,  
12 I would do it right in a moment right now. My  
13 children didn't want to talk to me for a long time.  
14 They thought I abandoned them. And in a way, I  
15 did, but I believe I didn't.

16 After my wife left, took the kids,  
17 my world crashed. I started drinking again. I  
18 didn't know how to deal with the pain. So I drank.  
19 I didn't care, wanted to die. Then one day I woke  
20 up after six years of self-abuse, and it was the  
21 best thing that happened to me. That's almost 25  
22 years ago. A lot of healing has happened since  
23 then.

24 Anyway, while I was married to  
25 Heather and I was working, my late uncle Wilford

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1 called me one day suddenly. Said, "There's a girl  
2 there just called. Her name is Diane. So, she's  
3 looking for her mother, Helen, but I didn't tell  
4 her who you were, so I just gave her your number."  
5 So, shortly thereafter, I got a call from my  
6 sister, Diane. Never known her in my life. Never  
7 saw her. First thing she says, "Hi, I heard that  
8 your my uncle," she says, "I'm looking for my  
9 mother, Helen." I said, "That's my mother." She  
10 said, "Really? Oh, my God. Wait. I'll call you  
11 right back." Next thing you know, my other sister,  
12 Dorothy, was also on the other end. They're all  
13 excited. We're all excited. My little daughter,  
14 Jennifer, was only eight months old. I was in my  
15 what -- 22, 23, maybe, something like that.  
16 Anyway, they invited me to go and see them. And  
17 they were living in Red Deer at that time.  
18 So, my ex-wife Heather and I and  
19 my daughter, we drove down. On the farmhouse and  
20 we saw them for the first time. They came up to me  
21 as if -- and they're all just looking at me,  
22 touching me and all that, it felt weird, like, get  
23 the hell out of here. They were touching me.  
24 "You're our brother, oh, same eyes and everything."  
25 I was, "Shut up." No, I'm just teasing. But I

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1 was happy. I was excited. Then I met Doug for the  
2 first time, their father. That guy that mom left  
3 me for, right? Eight months after I was born, she  
4 marries this guy and kept me a secret. Doug didn't  
5 even know I existed. That's how a secret of it  
6 was. They didn't even know I existed. They always  
7 thought I was an uncle or whatever, right? Anyway.  
8 So, anyway, basically, I started getting to know  
9 my family, and we were never close. We're never  
10 close like if you grew up with someone, you know.  
11 So, we're never close.

12 Where am I -- oh, yeah, they did  
13 cook the best vegetable soup. I'm a meat eater,  
14 all right, but they cooked anyway. I ate it.  
15 There's no meat in this. Anyways, so -- actually,  
16 Doug was more interested in meat than my sisters  
17 were at that time. He kept asking me questions  
18 about Fort Chip and all this stuff. It's  
19 hilarious. If you want to know about Fort Chip, go  
20 over there, right, because Doug kept my six  
21 siblings away from Fort Chip and the Ratfat family.

22 We never -- anyway, shortly I was  
23 with my daughter, Ally's mom at that time, Brenda.  
24 All of a sudden, I get a call -- this was years  
25 later no -- from my cousin, Dennis. He says,

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1 "There's somebody in Fort Chip, a girl. She says  
2 she's in Fort Chip looking for her mother, so I  
3 gave her your number because I think she's your  
4 sister." I said really? Sure enough, I got a call  
5 from my youngest sister, Carolyn. She was living  
6 in LA. She was looking for her family. So,  
7 finally, the whole family, I knew them all now,  
8 right? Now we're not close either, but I knew who  
9 my siblings are.

10 So, over time during my drinking  
11 stupor, I was trying to kill myself; I was being  
12 negligent; I was being irresponsible; my child  
13 maintenance was way up there. \$60,000, I owed by  
14 the time I sobered up plus about 10, \$15,000 of  
15 other bills. How in the hell was I going to pay  
16 all that off? But before I met my daughter's  
17 mother, I managed to sober up.

18 I managed to sober up. Started  
19 going to AA. I started going to sweat lodges. But  
20 three or four days sober, I was just still  
21 hungover, shaking, and stuff like that. I felt  
22 broken and lost. My cousin Helen gave sweetgrass,  
23 came and visit me. We had a nice little chat, and  
24 she said, "You ever pray? I said, "No, I don't  
25 pray. Pray to what? What they taught me in



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1                   But when I sobered up, then I  
2 started training. I wanted to be a helper. I  
3 always wanted to be a helper, but I wanted to be  
4 able to help out best I could. Because I was a  
5 broken man, and to all my experiences and stuff  
6 like that, I think I could be a good helper. So I  
7 started training in alcohol and drug addictions,  
8 tried out university, tried out in these different  
9 programs. But some of my greatest teachings,  
10 greatest teachers were from our elders, these  
11 gifted elders, and hard work. I've come a long  
12 way. Today, I carry a pipe. Today, I carry a  
13 lodge as well. Teachings. Never ever thought I'd  
14 carry a pipe, let alone a sweat lodge. Me? This  
15 little asshole carrying a pipe? When I received  
16 the pipe, grandfathers said:

17                   "This man, mini-me, is a good  
18 helper. He's been coming  
19 down here every year, never  
20 complaining, helping out any  
21 way he can. That's why we're  
22 going to give him that pipe.  
23 To help him and to help  
24 others. Same thing with that  
25 sweat lodge."

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1                   Me, broken man. So I carry that.  
2     Now, it's up to me, as my responsibility, to walk  
3     on the right side of that pipe. Do my best not to  
4     harm people. Remember, I still have that anger  
5     within me. I still have these old behaviours that  
6     I try my best to keep at bay. If you talk about  
7     missing and murdered women, this is what this is  
8     all about. But we're part of you too, isn't it?  
9     We're broken. This is as you are, and we're  
10    healing, but without you, we're nothing.

11                   Back in the day, I saw women as  
12    sexual objects, beautiful little sexual objects.  
13    That's, you know, because that's what I was taught.  
14    But these elders, these teachers, they taught me -  
15    - and I heard somebody say here, backbone of our  
16    nation taught me to respect the feminine energy  
17    again. Ladies are more than sexual objects. My  
18    elders taught me, and I share it right here, women  
19    are more powerful than men. That's the way the  
20    whole scheme of life is. Women are here. Men are  
21    here. Women give life. The best comfort I could  
22    find as a man, as a human being, was in the arms of  
23    a woman. When they embrace you, "I love you,  
24    James," took me a long time to embrace that, but I  
25    kept pushing it away. Look what the women did to

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1 me, that's that I thought in my life. They were  
2 never there for me. They were drunks. Sexual  
3 objects. They were never there.

4                   So it took me a long time to trust  
5 again, but that's what I was longing for, was for  
6 that feminine energy, that love to be embraced once  
7 again as my real mother would hold me. I may never  
8 get that opportunity. And so, we're broken as  
9 well. And I just wanted to apologize to every  
10 mother, every sister, every daughter, every woman,  
11 sorry for hurting you. Very sorry. From this very  
12 moment on till the day I die, I'll do everything  
13 that I can in my power, not only as a pipe carrier,  
14 as a helper, to help our women heal, boost them up  
15 again -- to lift them up again where they belong.  
16 So, it's like that poem said. Quit killing our  
17 women. Enough.

18                   So, I could sit here and talk  
19 forever. I'm a good bullshitter, right? Anyways.  
20    So let me just move on a little bit here. I try  
21 not to focus away like with my mother and stuff  
22 like that. That's what it's all about. And my  
23 dream is: I hope we find her someday. They took  
24 our DNAs, like my sister's DNA, so hopefully  
25 there's bones out there or something like that that

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1 might, you know, match to find my mother.

2 I've went to ceremonies; I've  
3 asked about her; I've made offerings; but for the  
4 first ones, I've asked Poundmaker's Lodge. There  
5 was an elder there who was doing a UAP ceremony  
6 where they tie up the elder and people are getting  
7 an opportunity to ask questions or request  
8 something and it came to me, and I said -- before I  
9 started, I said, "I just wanted to see if we could  
10 find my mother." So as that ceremony started and  
11 it came to me to talk to me, somebody else piped up  
12 over there, so they never answered my question or  
13 my request. But the elder came up to me after. He  
14 says -- he apologized to me saying, "Sorry on  
15 behalf of my grandfathers. They were going to talk  
16 to you and somebody just asked a question and they  
17 just shifted, but this is what they showed me," he  
18 said. All he showed me was a skull with a mouth  
19 wide open. That's it. That's all he showed me.  
20 At that point, she must be gone, dead somewhere.

21 So, a few years later, I asked  
22 again. I asked the grandfathers for help, and all  
23 they told me was, "We'll open the way for you, for  
24 your family to find her. We will open a way."  
25 That's all they said. They didn't say when. So, I

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1 talked to my teacher, Joe, about different things -  
2 - we talk about different things, and we talk about  
3 this, and we talk about requesting of elders. And  
4 so, this is one of my recommendations.

5 I know in the past, going to  
6 medicine people for help, requesting to find lost  
7 people as far as the police and the government are  
8 concerned, it's all hokey-pokey to them. So, one  
9 of my recommendations is for the government and  
10 police to please have an open mind. Some of these  
11 elders, these teachers, are very gifted, and they  
12 have -- and they're close to the Creator and the  
13 messengers. The messengers are really close to  
14 them. But these elders are reluctant. When people  
15 come to them to look for someone, they are  
16 reluctant to do anything because next thing you  
17 know, the police are going to be poking their head  
18 around, saying, "Well, how do you know that? How  
19 do you know this? How do you know that person  
20 there?" Well, grandfathers know where they are,  
21 you know. But it's all hokey-pokey, right? I've  
22 seen these medicine people make liars out of  
23 doctors. I've seen people with cancers, right?  
24 Cancers healed. I've seen it happen. So, with our  
25 Creator and the messengers, nothing is impossible,

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1 even finding our loved ones, okay?

2 I also got scammed too. What do  
3 you call those? Popcorn elders, right? I got  
4 scammed right in Edmonton. "Oh, your mother's  
5 still alive down in Toronto. You call this  
6 Friendship Centre down there. They know who she is  
7 and all that." Well, I got all excited and I went,  
8 and I end up nothing. All this time, we found out  
9 these two guys were scammers. Taking money. So,  
10 we have to watch out for those, too. So I do know  
11 gifted people, really gifted people, whether they  
12 want me want to their names forward to help the  
13 cause is up to them. But I think that's where we  
14 need to go as well -- is to try a winner when we  
15 can. Try a winner where we can. Should I talk  
16 about -- no, that's hearsay -- about Trail of  
17 Tears?

18 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: It's  
19 hearsay, but hearsay is admissible. There have  
20 been things that people have been providing  
21 throughout, which is hearsay, and we are looking  
22 for patterns. And so, as long as you believe that  
23 there's a possibility of reliability with the  
24 hearsay, feel free to provide it to the  
25 commissioner.

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1 MR. JAMES JENKA: Couple years ago  
2 -- maybe not a couple of years ago -- a year ago,  
3 we all heard of a Trail of Tears, and one of my  
4 friends in Whitehorse, they did ceremony, and the  
5 grandfather said, "There's two white guys." And  
6 all they said, "They live on the edge of the city  
7 that are causing all these murders in the Trail of  
8 Tears lately." And they said they will be found,  
9 these two white guys. Anyways.

10 So, we're going to talk about the  
11 impact a little bit here, right? Growing up  
12 without my mother, knowing that she's my mother,  
13 and not knowing her -- like I said, like a chapter  
14 missing in my life. There's no closure. Just  
15 always wondering, you know. Back in the day, in my  
16 community, I believe it was a sin to have a child  
17 out of wedlock, and that was huge, right, you know,  
18 back in the day. So, she wasn't married, she was  
19 pregnant, and she fell in love with Doug, but she  
20 gave me away, right? So, I never had that mother-  
21 child bond at a very early age, and through my  
22 studies and stuff like that, it was very important  
23 that a child feels safe, has that bond with her  
24 mother. Well, that was torn away from me, so I  
25 spent most of my life looking for a mother. It was

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1 hard for me to get close to fully open up, you  
2 know. It was hard.

3 I've already talked about  
4 residential school, how it's a cold environment,  
5 and I don't remember anybody ever giving me a hug  
6 in residential school, you know. But I spend most  
7 of my life trying to find a place to belong and  
8 when you're in pain and you're always looking in  
9 the past, it's hard to see what's in front of you.  
10 That's what I've been doing most of my life. And  
11 sometimes I miss what's here. Not anymore. I know  
12 it's here. I have a daughter here. I have a  
13 granddaughter. I don't know if I'll ever find my  
14 mother. I don't know if it'll happen. I hope we  
15 do, to bring closure to that. I pray for it.

16 I also have a sister that was  
17 found in Victoria, in a back alley in Victoria.  
18 That's her daughter here, Toni, and she'll speak  
19 more on that tomorrow in a private -- so there's  
20 that. Last time I spoke to my sister was in 1988,  
21 and she passed away a couple of years later. Her  
22 name is Marina. And I think my sister Marina was  
23 in Toronto at the time. All she said to me was,  
24 "Sorry, I can't make the funeral -- or the wake and  
25 a funeral for her brother. "I miss home," she

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1 said. Well, she came home two years later in a  
2 casket.

3 So, my family, my birth family,  
4 has been torn apart, scattered all over, through  
5 residential school, through the alcohol, the drugs.  
6 Scattered. My dream is: I hope someday our  
7 descendants will be able to come together and heal  
8 as a family. They're slowly reconnecting today.  
9 So, I think that's it, right?

10 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: You're  
11 the boss on knowing whether that is it.

12 MR. JAMES JENKA: Oh, yes.  
13 Through all this missing and murdered women, I  
14 found my great-great-grandparents, my daughter's  
15 great-great-great-grandparents. Thank you to Jim  
16 Lin (ph). Thank you so much for helping out to  
17 find all this. Thank you.

18 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: The only  
19 thing that I would ask is: You still work as a  
20 counsellor?

21 MR. JAMES JENKA: Oh, yeah.

22 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And so,  
23 there may be some things that you can offer to the  
24 commissioner in terms of recommendations, and I  
25 know we can find recommendations in much of what

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1 you said, but have you put your mind to some things  
2 you'd like to provide to the commissioners in the  
3 way of recommendations to deal with the systemic  
4 causes of violence against women and girls and the  
5 LGBT, to spirited people?

6 And also, are there some things  
7 you've seen in the current environment perhaps --  
8 or even in the past that you feel are working to  
9 empower Indigenous women and girls?

10 And I guess another part of the  
11 terms or reference is the commemoration of all the  
12 women and girls who are lost and those who have  
13 suffered violence. What must we do as human beings  
14 to ensure we remember to prevent further loss and  
15 suffering in the future?

16 MR. JAMES JENKA: Wow. That's a  
17 loaded question. First and foremost, my people,  
18 our Native people, have suffered a lot over 500  
19 plus years. Our families have been torn apart.  
20 Just imagine just over a hundred years ago, they  
21 were shooting our people and throwing them in mass  
22 graves. Do I have the answers? Probably not. Can  
23 I think of things that might work? Yeah.

24 First and foremost, with the help  
25 of the Creator and the messengers, we need to help

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1 the women rise, rise up. Now, if you go to  
2 different communities and stuff like that, there  
3 needs to be more money thrown in towards programs  
4 where families can heal. You know, start a  
5 makeshift -- I've heard people talk here already  
6 about it. I'm not going to -- you know, start  
7 little makeshift programs, like little Band-Aid  
8 solutions.

9                   The medical moral they have here  
10 for healing is not worth a shit. The job I'm  
11 doing, I only could do so much. There's more I  
12 want to do, but I can't because of restrictions as  
13 to what I can do. I see when those clients come  
14 into the office, the pain and the voice in their  
15 eyes stems right back from the community where  
16 women are torn apart, where their families are torn  
17 apart. So, we need to do more than just providing  
18 these little makeshift programs.

19                   I heard someone talking about  
20 going to the land. Give money to the communities.  
21 They know what to do. They know how to heal.  
22 Give them directly their money. They don't go  
23 through social services or whatever. "We'll give  
24 you guys a little of this." All they care about is  
25 statistics, numbers. The more numbers, the more

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1 money you get, right? That's what we are. I heard  
2 somebody talking about earlier. We're more than  
3 numbers. So, give the communities the money. They  
4 know what to do with it. Let them create what you  
5 need. Let the mothers. They know what to do.  
6 They got the power, the mothers; to heal, to heal  
7 their children, to heal the communities.

8                   The men -- yeah, we need to heal  
9 as well. We need to become warriors again and  
10 protectors instead of drunk and being abusers and  
11 rapists and molesters. There needs to be programs  
12 for the men. How to be warriors again. Till the  
13 day I die -- my children, I'll protect them as best  
14 I could. And I hope they find a good man in their  
15 life to protect them. Because if they don't, I'll  
16 kick their ass. Sorry. But I will, right? I love  
17 my girls. I love my granddaughter.

18                   So, give the power back to the  
19 people. That's what I'm saying. Give it back to  
20 the people instead of some bureaucrat sitting over  
21 there saying, "Oh, yeah, we should send them to  
22 treatment. 42 days or whatever." To me, that's  
23 like a little holiday. If you want a really good  
24 healing, go back to the land. Go back to the  
25 elders, those teachers. Go back to the basics. We

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1 have a code like someone is talking. We need  
2 people. First and foremost, Creator, and the  
3 messengers. Give the power back to the people.

4 Families need to be heard.  
5 Families need to be heard. No more secrets. We  
6 need to talk about those secrets for families to  
7 heal. And we cannot heal through punishment. We  
8 cannot heal that way. We cannot heal through  
9 shaming. Those secrets to need come out. And I  
10 heard people mentioned here -- men mentioned --  
11 couple of people have mentioned, it's tough to  
12 hear, but we need to hear stuff like that. The  
13 truth come out.

14 We need to talk about the truth  
15 and our families. And no one is higher or lower  
16 than anybody else. We're all equal. We have  
17 future generations to think about. They're the  
18 ones that are going to be taking over, just like we  
19 took over from our ancestors. I'm not angry with  
20 them. I don't hold resentments towards them.  
21 Matter of fact, I love them with all my heart.  
22 They had rough times too in their life. They did  
23 the best that they could. They were broken, too,  
24 and it carries on from generation to generation.  
25 Hopefully at some point in time, though, government

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1 bureaucrats, the white people over there, they'll  
2 finally open their eyes and they'll listen, "Oh, we  
3 got to stop abusing these people." Hopefully, you  
4 know. What's his name? Trudeau and all those  
5 kinds. Quit abusing the Native people.

6 I heard an elder say one time, and  
7 I had better repeat it here, I think it's a good  
8 one, "They're still scared of us. They're still  
9 scared of us ever since Columbus landed." I  
10 believe that. They're still scared of us because  
11 we're waking up our women -- our women are waking  
12 up and our elders are coming out of the woodwork,  
13 and like I said, you can break us physically, but  
14 you'll never break us spiritually. And that's  
15 what's kept us going through all these years, is  
16 the strength of our spirit. Not only as a single,  
17 but as a whole. So, should bring all your weapons.  
18 Bring all your lies. Bring all your deceit. Our  
19 ancestors are from this land and we will heal. I'm  
20 healing. My family's healing. One at a time. So  
21 no more secrets. Sound like a poet?

22 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And have  
23 you finished with the photos? Are there any more  
24 you want to show?

25 MR. JAMES JENKA: We're going to

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1 just quickly go through them if you want. Yeah,  
2 that's still in a bush.

3 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And who's  
4 in this photo?

5 MR. JAMES JENKA: I think that's  
6 her aunt or sister-in-law. Something like that.  
7 Her husband's aunt or something like that. Dorothy  
8 would be know. Yeah. She's way out there in the  
9 mountains.

10 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: That's  
11 Helene?

12 MR. JAMES JENKA: That's Helene.  
13 That's my mother, yeah.

14 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: With the  
15 mountains, she's wearing glasses in this picture?

16 MR. JAMES JENKA: Yeah, she used  
17 to go down to B.C. and stuff like that.

18 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And this  
19 is with a car, again, apparently in the mountains,  
20 so it's your mom beside?

21 MR. JAMES JENKA: Yeah. I don't  
22 know if they were moving to B.C. at that time. I  
23 think they moved to around Quesnel and Prince  
24 George, that area.

25 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: So, we're

James Norman Jenka,  
in relation to Helene Louisa Ratfat (nee Leyden)  
and Marina Ratfat

1 on the next photo and there's a child with a --

2 MR. JAMES JENKA: That's probably  
3 Dorothy, I think.

4 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay.

5 MR. JAMES JENKA: And there they  
6 are in the park. And that's Marina.

7 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: So this  
8 is a black and white picture.

9 MR. JAMES JENKA: This is the  
10 first photo that she saw of her mother. That's  
11 Toni's mother. That's my sister, Marina. That's  
12 when they found the back alley in Victoria. My  
13 sister again. My sister and my mother. It looks  
14 like Fish Camp. Residential school. That's Toni's  
15 mother, Helen -- I mean Marina.

16 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: So this  
17 is when Marina was at residential school.

18 MR. JAMES JENKA: Yeah.

19 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And so,  
20 there's a gentleman on the left --

21 MR. JAMES JENKA: She's the one on  
22 the right in the bottom. Hilda's holding here.  
23 Her shoulders. Her little scarf on. The smile on  
24 her face.

25 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay.

James Norman Jenka,  
in relation to Helene Louisa Ratfat (nee Leyden)  
and Marina Ratfat

1 And there's about ten people in that picture. I'm  
2 just kind of trying to recognize them for  
3 identifying them for the record.

4 MR. JAMES JENKA: Those are the  
5 people there.

6 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Yeah, we  
7 don't to need identify all the people.

8 MR. JAMES JENKA: No.

9 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay.

10 MR. JAMES JENKA: And this is the  
11 youngest picture I found of my mother. She's up in  
12 the top-left corner. You can enhance it a little  
13 bit if you want -- or zoom in or whatever -- but  
14 there's another picture of her anyway. Maybe you  
15 can see it clear. Nope. Anyway, that's my mother  
16 in the top. She was the youngest. I don't know  
17 who those other ladies are. Maybe Ray knows. I'm  
18 just kidding. Anyway.

19 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And then,  
20 I know you brought a binder and I just want to make  
21 sure we've dealt with everything because I know  
22 this white binder -- oh, there's another picture.  
23 I see. Okay.

24 MR. JAMES JENKA: You can zoom in  
25 on that. To me, this is a very powerful picture.

James Norman Jenka,  
in relation to Helene Louisa Ratfat (nee Leyden)  
and Marina Ratfat

1 Can you see it? You want to take it out of the  
2 plastic? Anyway. And there's my grandmother  
3 that's on the far right in the middle of my aunt  
4 Louise (ph). On the left is another girl, Helene,  
5 my mother, and Toni's mother is the little girl.  
6 So it's a pretty old picture. Backbone of our  
7 family.

8 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: That  
9 would not be part of the commission, but I just  
10 wanted to make sure there was nothing in there that  
11 you wanted to refer to.

12 MR. JAMES JENKA: No, it's  
13 supposedly family pictures and stuff like that.  
14 Yeah, that's pretty well -- we got some records,  
15 like I said, from Jim Lin, baptism records,  
16 marriage certificates or whatever, death -- funeral  
17 stuff I gave you.

18 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay.  
19 Thank you, James. And now, I'm going to ask Alysha  
20 whether or not she wants to say something.

21 MS. ALYSHA HANKINSON: No.

22 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay.  
23 So, Mr. Commissioner, do you have any questions for  
24 James?

25 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:

James Norman Jenka,  
in relation to Helene Louisa Ratfat (nee Leyden)  
and Marina Ratfat

1 Thank you. I don't think I have any additional  
2 questions. So, James, I just want to thank you  
3 very much for coming and telling us about your  
4 mother and the impact that that's had on your life  
5 and sharing that with us and thank you for sharing  
6 all the lovely photos as well.

7 On behalf of the inquiry, I also  
8 appreciate your recommendations and your insights  
9 that you brought forward for us this afternoon, so  
10 thank you very much. And we do have a small gift  
11 as appreciation for you coming and participating  
12 and sharing, and I'm going to ask Grandmother Blu  
13 if she'll assist with.

14 GRANDMOTHER BLU WATERS: So, on  
15 behalf of the commission, we would like to offer  
16 you this eagle feather to help you to continue with  
17 your journey and to help you with your seeking so  
18 that the answers can come to you from those ones  
19 that fly the highest and to appreciate your words  
20 and your story that you've given so that your  
21 mother's information can be carried and  
22 recommendations can be made. So we want to offer  
23 this to you and also this package of Labrador tea,  
24 so that you can make yourself a nice cup of tea  
25 afterwards. Thank you. (Speaking in native

James Norman Jenka,  
in relation to Helene Louisa Ratfat (nee Leyden)  
and Marina Ratfat

1 language).

2 MR. JAMES JENKA: Thank you.

3 (Speaking in native language).

4 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And now -  
5 - what would you like now?

6 MR. JAMES JENKA: Are we done?

7 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Yes,  
8 well, we're done the formal piece. And normally,  
9 we would adjourn at this point, but I understand  
10 there's something else you want to do.

11 MR. JAMES JENKA: Just a couple of  
12 things. One, I'm going to honour the feminine --  
13 the female side of life with this song that was  
14 gifted to me by my elder and teachers. I got a  
15 friend back here that knows it too. So, I'm going  
16 to sing this song, and I'll pass this song on to --  
17 one of the ladies from the group -- commission.  
18 So, she's going to learn that song and hopefully  
19 she'll sing it.

20 And this belongs to the feminine  
21 energy. And the story behind the song -- long time  
22 ago, there was this kind grandmother. Beautiful  
23 woman. And a medicine woman. Passed away. Now  
24 she's one of the star people, and she gifted us  
25 with this song to honour the female side of life.

James Norman Jenka,  
in relation to Helene Louisa Ratfat (nee Leyden)  
and Marina Ratfat

1 So I just want to honour all our murdered and  
2 missing women and girls and to all you ladies in  
3 here.

4                   So I'll sing the song for you if  
5 you want stand with me. And after we're done the  
6 song, I did fill the pipe if anybody -- we can  
7 smoke the pipe up here, right? If anybody wants to  
8 smoke pipe with me, they can. The only thing I ask  
9 is not that I'm being discriminatory, it's just  
10 protocol that women on their time -- not to touch  
11 the pipe. We'll still honour you. It's not to  
12 exclude you or anything, but when women -- what I  
13 was taught -- when women are on their time, it's a  
14 powerful time for them. It's a very sacred time  
15 for them, and we don't want -- there's a  
16 preparation for new life there happening, and we  
17 don't want to mess anything up with our sacred  
18 instruments, so we just ask for ladies that are on  
19 their time not to touch the pipe. But both male  
20 and female can touch this pipe. Okay.

21                   So I'll sing this song, for lack  
22 of a better word, the sacred feminine. I hope I  
23 don't start choking. Little bits of food flying  
24 out of my teeth. (Speaking in native language).  
25 It's called "Angel Woman Song."

James Norman Jenka,  
in relation to Helene Louisa Ratfat (nee Leyden)  
and Marina Ratfat

1 --- (Song performed by James Jenka)

2 MR. JAMES JENKA: Thank you,  
3 everyone. So, if anybody wants to come join me  
4 with the pipe, can.

5 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: So the  
6 session is completed now and adjourned and there is  
7 a break. What time do you recommend that we come  
8 back. Did somebody have -- 15 minutes? Yes. So,  
9 we'll readjourn in 15 minutes. Thank you very  
10 much. And James is inviting you again to come  
11 forward if you'd like to join him in smoking the  
12 pipe.

13 --- Recess at 3:59 p.m.

14 --- Upon resuming at 4:52 p.m.

15 --- **Exhibits (code: P01P09P0202)**

16 EXHIBIT 1: George Elliott  
17 Clarke poem entitled "For the  
18 Murdered and the Missing: A  
19 Spiritual" (one page).

20 EXHIBIT 2: Folder containing  
21 eleven digital images and one  
22 Powerpoint presentation  
23 provided by the family and  
24 displayed during their public  
25 testimony.

Sandra Faye Lockhart

1 **Hearing #4**

2 **Witness: Sandra Faye Lockhart**

3 **Heard by Commissioner Qajaq Robinson**

4 **Commission Counsel: Meredith Porter**

5 **Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Arlene**

6 **Hachey, Joanne Erasmus and Maggie Mercredi**

7 **Clerk: Trudy Mckinnon**

8 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

9 MR. MEREDITH PORTER: Okay. I  
10 think we're going to get started. And just before  
11 we do get started, I know that previously there's  
12 been a reminder for everyone to turn their cell  
13 phones off. So, I'll echo that once again if  
14 everybody could ensure their ringers are off while  
15 we're proceeding. That would be greatly  
16 appreciated. Thank you. Okay.

17 Well, I'm Meredith Porter, and I'm  
18 commission counsel here, and we are here with  
19 Sandra Lockhart. And before we get started, I  
20 understand that Commissioner Robinson, you will be  
21 exchanging tobacco as a promising with the witness.

22 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:  
23 (Speaking in native language). I'd like to offer  
24 you some tobacco, and in doing so, my intentions  
25 are to receive your truth if you wish to give it to

Sandra Faye Lockhart

1 me, to hear of your experiences and your  
2 recommendations.

3 MS. SANDRA LOCKHART: Merci. I  
4 will accept the tobacco.

5 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:  
6 Thank you.

7 MR. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you.  
8 And now, I'll pass the mic for introductions of the  
9 individuals that you brought with you here today.

10 MS. ARLENE HACHEY: My name is  
11 Arlene Hachey, and I'm here as a support person for  
12 Sandra Lockhart.

13 MS. JOANNE ERASMUS: Hi, my name  
14 is Joanne Erasmus, and I'm here to support Sandra  
15 Lockhart. Merci.

16 MS. MAGGIE MERCREDI: Hi, my name  
17 is Maggie Mercredi, and I'm also here to support  
18 Sandra. Merci.

19 MS. BEV BAGMOLHOL: Hi, my name is  
20 Bev Bagmolhol (ph), I'm here for emotional and  
21 spiritual support. Merci.

22 MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you.  
23 And so, now, Sandra I'm going to pass you the mic  
24 and invite you to share what it is you have come  
25 here to tell us today.

1 MS. SANDRA LOCKHART: I'm trying  
2 to pull myself together because I spent so much  
3 time looking at the past from who I am today that  
4 I'm finding that it's very emotionally crippling to  
5 do that, so I want to bring my past into who I am  
6 today because my strength is here today. So, I'd  
7 like to acknowledge someone in here. It's a woman  
8 I've watched over the years. She's got a lot of  
9 strength. I was very, very pleased to see her.  
10 It's Marie Wilson. She's here  
11 with us today, and it really filled my heart  
12 because I know that doing the work you're doing --  
13 I know how hard it is for me. I can't imagine --  
14 because we're all related. We all feel each other,  
15 you know. And to hear it day in, day out, day in,  
16 day out. And we need to tell our stories. So, I'm  
17 going to share what you shared with me. She gave  
18 me her mother's lipstick to hold and she said to  
19 me, "You know, my mother passed ten years ago," and  
20 she said that when she goes through things like  
21 this, she puts on her mother's lipstick on her lips  
22 because it's like her mother has kissed her, and I  
23 just -- I could feel that, so I just want to honour  
24 your mother and yourself as well because that's the  
25 heart of women.

Sandra Faye Lockhart

1                   So, to kind of ground me, I have  
2 some pictures, and I'd like to start with them  
3 because they kind of bring who I am. So, you know,  
4 there's traditional ways of introducing ourselves,  
5 but the pictures will help me stay grounded to do  
6 that, so if we could start it with them. You know  
7 my Christian name, it's Sandra Lockhart, and I'm --  
8 my birth home is Mistawasis First Nation in  
9 Saskatchewan. I'm Cree Dakota.

10                   When I got married -- we have  
11 mobility right, just like Canadians do. Under the  
12 treaty, I can be transferred to my husband's band.

13       So, I'm saying things to sort of educate, too,  
14 like -- I didn't cost -- when we transferred  
15 between bands, we don't cost the band anything  
16 because everything that I need to be part of the  
17 band comes with me; my education, my health care.  
18 That all comes, so I don't cost anybody -- I'm not  
19 a burden, right? And I'm not a burden to Canada  
20 society either. And it took me a long time to  
21 figure that out.

22                   So when I transferred, I'm now a  
23 citizen of Lutsel K'e First Nations, so it's my  
24 home. But I know where my birth home is. But this  
25 is my chappon (ph), and that's like my great-

1 grandfather. It's Henry Two Bears (ph). All my  
2 pictures are in Lutsel K'e. Otherwise, I would  
3 have my grandmother whose name was Mary Good Voice.

4 I have a picture of the two of them. They're  
5 Dakota. They actually came across with my great-  
6 grandparents. There is no differentiation between  
7 -- I'm using Cree although they were Dakota --  
8 between male and female, they're both chappons.  
9 They're greats.

10 My chappon, she was carrying my  
11 kookum when they came in the Trail of Tears. And  
12 so, they stopped and they travelled I think up to  
13 Manitoba way, an elder had told me several years  
14 ago, that Manitoba was the centre of North America,  
15 and that my people, Dakota -- his understanding of  
16 history is: We used to come up this way, and we  
17 would travel along rivers. And the rivers were  
18 always in places of no war because it was so  
19 sacred. Because water was something that every  
20 human being and everything on the planet needed, so  
21 you didn't -- you couldn't own that in any frame.

22 And that reminded me that, you  
23 know, a lot of things -- there are people that have  
24 acculturated -- it's like ownership of the land,  
25 and there's no language for that when you go back

1 to the old language. So that's why we made  
2 treaties for coexistence. But we had to  
3 acculturate ideologies, you know, that are very  
4 foreign to our languages and our life experience.  
5 And when I try to talk with my grandchildren today,  
6 I'm like, "You don't own the earth." They get  
7 confused and it's hard to remember that. And  
8 that's why it's about coexistence, right?

9                   So they came and where they first  
10 settled was in Prince Albert, I don't know if  
11 anybody here knows where Prince Albert is, but they  
12 have a penitentiary. And my grandmother says that  
13 the Saskatchewan government decided they wanted to  
14 put a prison there, so they had to move on. You  
15 have to remember, people used to call Dakota  
16 "Lakota Sioux," so -- and I'm going to kind of use  
17 that language to just go back an era. But the  
18 Sioux had no rights in Canada because he were  
19 Canada already, right?

20                   But the people understood all my  
21 relations and sharing the land so what happened was  
22 -- according to my -- okay. In Dakota, there's no  
23 such thing as first cousins, so I have lots of  
24 sisters although I'm the only one in the family.  
25 Okay. So my sisters told me last night that

1 Sturgeon Lake First Nations, what is now called  
2 Wahpeton, is -- they gave up some of their land so  
3 that the Dakota could live there. Or the Sioux,  
4 for my grandfather.

5                   So they moved and lived in  
6 Wahpeton A and Wahpeton B, and what had happened  
7 with a lot of their -- because my chappon had the  
8 ability to see. And I know the Canada government  
9 was very afraid because they fought the Americans  
10 for their existence and for what they believed for  
11 their right to live. And we hear about custard,  
12 and you hear all this stuff, it's pretty Hollywood,  
13 but there's a lot of truth in it.

14                   So, they gave birth to -- and I  
15 got to show you the next picture. That's my  
16 youngest brother. He's a lawyer today. He's dean.  
17 Him and his wife now do histories for Indigenous  
18 people because many of us didn't have our histories  
19 because they didn't keep archives of is. So when  
20 you want to go and -- you know when they -- I think  
21 you can do these things today like look up your  
22 ancestry, it was very difficult for many of us and  
23 I'm very aware and very fortune that this got  
24 passed down early. But that's my kookum. She  
25 passed away I think in 2 -- I was going to school -



1 and that's the Jesuit's name of it because the  
2 water used to rise and fall where they were with  
3 the moon, which is very powerful, because, you  
4 know, the women are connected to the moon. But the  
5 Jesuit saw it as the devil's place.

6                   So my roots are there and my  
7 grandmother's spirit and her mother -- like that  
8 flows through my blood. So I was asked by someone,  
9 "How did you get where I am today," and I said,  
10 "What a good question. I really don't know." But  
11 when I was putting together the pictures, she came  
12 to me and now I know it was prayer. You know, I  
13 pray. I don't apologize for my faith anymore,  
14 right, it's confusing at times, but I still know  
15 that I exist. I'm a recovered addict. I'm not a  
16 recovering one. I've recovered. My mind has been  
17 restored. I now have respect for alcohol because  
18 it has its own nature, and I respect it today. I  
19 don't mess around with it, right? And I know that  
20 I need to keep growing and I need to be responsible  
21 for my behaviours.

22                   But I wanted you to meet her  
23 because she was a strong woman. She taught -- they  
24 named a school after my grandmother had another  
25 grandfather. The only one I knew, which was Joe

1 Duquette, and they named a school after him in  
2 Saskatoon. She taught him everything. And when he  
3 left to go to the spirit world, it was like she  
4 didn't mean anything, right, and I understood that  
5 she developed dementia. Some people, like my  
6 cousin, Judy, who was watching her, people were  
7 losing her before she was gone, and I, as a nurse,  
8 had to work with dementia patients. I know I don't  
9 have to apologize because it's my loss, but I think  
10 I was very fortunate. That even though I went  
11 through internalizing all that colonization stuff -  
12 - and I'll get into that later -- my grandma still  
13 loved me and wanted to pray for me, and when she  
14 passed away that Christmas Day, I was in Lutsel  
15 K'e, and I was -- I would have not seen it anyway  
16 by the time I flied out of the community into  
17 Yellowknife to back home, so she came to me in a  
18 vision.

19 So she left me something, that we  
20 have our own teachings about all that, right, but  
21 this is not the place for it. So I talk to my  
22 sisters who follow a lot of those teachings, and I  
23 was always, Oh, you're making that up. You know,  
24 that twisted sister stuff, but it was true. So  
25 that was my grandmother. So I have a lot of strong



1                   So I wasn't -- Saskatchewan was  
2 very racist. And they could talk to us like that.  
3 I go to school and they could talk to me like  
4 that. And I was normal. So at one level, don't  
5 apologize. I look back at myself and I feel for  
6 myself, and I feel for anybody that can admit to  
7 themselves that they hated being Indian. They  
8 wanted to be white. And I've been fortunate enough  
9 to have books come my way. And Albert, maybe he  
10 talks in his book, he talks about the and the  
11 colonizer and the colonized. And he said -- he  
12 wanted to be the same because he saw the power. He  
13 saw the privilege. He saw it all. And we can  
14 behave like them but we're never really invited to  
15 their homes because we're not one of them. And  
16 that's not all of them. Let's be clear, and I'll  
17 talk a little a little more about that, but my  
18 mother, when she finally came, and got us, she got  
19 me out of the orphanage. She was already an  
20 alcoholic. She had all the best intentions.

21                   But my mother -- I don't believe  
22 ever really knew love, and I'm talking about a  
23 loving relationship. Both my parents grew up in  
24 residential school, so they had very little to  
25 offer. My mom tried because she ran for her life.

1 And I don't want what you to think bad of my dad  
2 because my dad's been running from his life too. A  
3 lot of people suffered greater things so that it  
4 got easier for the next generation, but they were  
5 brought up to think that was normal, so my mother  
6 never heard the apology. My father heard the  
7 apology, not my mother.

8 So she drank herself to death, and  
9 that's a suicide. She committed suicide. But she  
10 gifted me because she said to me one day, "When I  
11 first found out I was pregnant --" she cried  
12 because I was 16. Every mother wants something  
13 better for their kids. But I was so messed up by  
14 the time I met her already. By the time I was that  
15 age, I was messed right up. But she had no way of  
16 knowing that, right? And sometimes I often wonder  
17 if she had a way to identify it because her life  
18 was not much different, right? But she said to me,  
19 "You know, my girl, I've been scared of you for a  
20 long time," and I said I know because I have a  
21 quick temper. I know it's not as bad now, but boy,  
22 it was bad, right? And she said no.

23 She said it's -- and this is the  
24 gift she left me. And I'm not going to use that  
25 word, okay. Here's the responsibility she left me

1 because really -- for me, I can only talk for  
2 myself here. When I say gifts, it doesn't feel  
3 right because when I'm given whatever I'm given  
4 from Creator, from God, however you understand it,  
5 right, it sure don't feel like a gift. So I just  
6 call it what it is. It's a responsibility. So she  
7 said that when she was giving birth to me, they  
8 actually -- Mr. Wass (ph) is actually a one-time  
9 head of hospital, his own hospital. It was  
10 originally called Snake Plains. But dad was out  
11 drinking, so mom was going to see the midwife, what  
12 we call midwife today, right, to give birth to me.  
13 And I decided, "No, you're not, I'm coming now."  
14 So she gave birth to me, she said that you're the  
15 first mother to ever held me because she was in a  
16 lot of pain, she felt paralyzed because I was a big  
17 baby, and she said, "Waseras (ph)" and you'll hear  
18 that throughout my life as I share. It was  
19 important for me to have that to get where I am  
20 today and even today it sustains me because -- okay  
21 I'm getting ahead of myself.

22 So she said she passed out from  
23 the pain. And then somebody shook her awake. And  
24 they said, "Look at your baby," and she did and my  
25 cord was undone. She had to chew my cord. I mean,

1 I didn't come with a pair of scissors, right. And  
2 it was fixed. So anyways, she went to Turin to get  
3 help. And she said there was nobody there. So I  
4 frightened her because you remember that generation  
5 was already removed from my grandma's generation.  
6 My grandma's generation when she got her name, that  
7 told everybody what she was here for, right? So my  
8 name is Wabaska Piasosko (ph), which is White  
9 Thunderbird Woman and my clan is a bald eagle clan.  
10 I haven't got my song yet, but I've gotten my  
11 helpers. I have ten helpers. And this elder said  
12 to me, "You had a hard life," but you know, when  
13 people say that to you, and you go, I didn't know  
14 that when I was going through it because that's all  
15 I had, and you just responded to it, right? Then I  
16 go, yeah, as the more I sent her back and I left  
17 all that stuff that's on top of me off and the  
18 truth shows out more and more, I cried for myself.  
19 It's a miracle I'm here, right? But the spirit  
20 world showed me later on in life they were very  
21 happy I was here. So that gift keeps me going.

22 But what eventually happened with  
23 my mother is -- she cut her hair. That picture's  
24 short but then she started -- in my family, there's  
25 something about our women, we're very traditional



1 nothing stronger than a mother's love. You know,  
2 and I have the -- I'm fortunate today, the ability  
3 to love.

4                               So, next picture, please. Nope.  
5 That's -- you have to go back. I think you're  
6 going to wrong way -- let me talk about that.  
7 We'll do that right now. I'm here to talk about  
8 the violence that I went through, and I want to  
9 start with this because we never pay attention to  
10 the language. And it was actually a gay feminist,  
11 and I can't remember her name, so it doesn't come  
12 from me, but she was a linguistic and she said, "In  
13 the woman's movement, we have to pay attention to  
14 what we do when people share their stories." Hey,  
15 this is appropriate because I'm going to share my  
16 story right away and be mindful because we get  
17 educated and we get socialized in how to look at  
18 this.

19                               And if anybody here's name is  
20 John, it was not on purpose. I just couldn't think  
21 of a -- so, it says John beats Sandra. That's  
22 when, you know, people find out I'm getting beaten  
23 up, right? Then it says, "Sandra was beaten by  
24 John," but you notice John is starting to fall off  
25 the paper? And it says, "Sandra was beaten." So



1 I go, "Oh, no, no, no. This is a 13 year old girl.  
2 It's the responsibility upon the men for their  
3 thinking and the elderly men for how they think.  
4 It's not for her to wear their responsibilities, so  
5 we all have responsibility in this, right?" But  
6 it's hard for me when my girl's sitting there, and  
7 they go, "But these are the teachings if you want  
8 to be a young, Indigenous, cultural girl," and they  
9 are not my teachings. This is not what I pass onto  
10 my daughter, right? People are responsible for  
11 their own thinking and it reminds me of White  
12 Buffalo Calf Woman the teaching.

13 So these things -- when I -- my  
14 parents came out of residential school, my dad had  
15 immense rage, and, you know, they got married, they  
16 were young. My dad was really, really violent, and  
17 my mom ran for herself and her life. My dad's  
18 mother, my kookum, had leukemia, so she was going  
19 to help raise us. And on the reserve -- because we  
20 learnt and we didn't get proper help. And you have  
21 to remember, you're coming out of a time of -- you  
22 can't have ceremony and if you had, it went  
23 underground, but we had two or three churches and  
24 people accepting the faith, and I'm not here to  
25 question anybody's spirituality, but it had impacts

1 and the way they taught it. So it was wrong to  
2 follow because it was evil, you know, and it was to  
3 -- whoever had that faith, like I won't get into  
4 it. I'm not here to do a bunch of blame gaming  
5 stuff because I already did that.

6                   So my parents couldn't get  
7 anything that could help them because they couldn't  
8 talk about sex in the church. They couldn't admit  
9 that they're beating even though everybody would  
10 see my mother beaten to a pulp. My dad couldn't go  
11 to anybody because when he was sober, he was  
12 ashamed. So there was no way to rectify this,  
13 right? So now my grandmother was dying, so dad put  
14 us in a home because he didn't want anything to  
15 happen to me.

16                   I'm 4 years old, and he made an  
17 agreement. An Indian agent just left the reserve  
18 when he did that. So there's a saying that back in  
19 the day, they were called "open-air prisons," and  
20 Canada called them "reserves." And I think  
21 Canadians think -- a lot of the Canadians think  
22 that the Treaty Act was the treaty. No, that was  
23 the government's response to the treaty because we  
24 never asked to be shoved off our lands and given a  
25 pass system much like the Jews had to wear the



1 for a while. And I was at my aunt's funeral two  
2 years ago, and I never had anybody confirm to me  
3 because for whatever reason, the Department of  
4 Inuit Affairs would just keep moving me, and I  
5 don't know why I never had a medical or if I had a  
6 medical, then they hid it, that you wouldn't see  
7 this little 4 year old is not a virgin anymore.  
8 What happened to my trauma? Because I remember me  
9 looking down at me. I have so many years that are  
10 gone from my life from the time I was four till the  
11 time I was 34 -- no, 32. I have all these patches  
12 that are gone. And some I wish that never came  
13 back, right? So when I don't remember something, I  
14 don't push it because I trust.

15 To me, that is the gift. That's  
16 what a gift is. I got no control. I got no  
17 responsibility to it, but something is given to us  
18 so that we could go through -- when somebody else  
19 works their stuff and I call it "leaves their dirt  
20 in me." I don't have to remember it, right? And  
21 another person told me one time, "You know, Sandra,  
22 you're not responsible for what happened to you,  
23 but you are 100 per cent responsible for the  
24 healing." And I was so angry, but I knew it was  
25 the truth because as much as this happened to me, I

1 have a responsibility to not pass it on and I've  
2 not always fulfilled it, I've always wanted to, but  
3 I'm getting closer and closer, right?

4                   So this girl came up to me at my  
5 aunt's funeral and told me that -- she was told  
6 that her grandmother, who was at the home I was at,  
7 said that they couldn't find me one day. And I  
8 guess she had men living in the place, and this guy  
9 brought me in the house and put me in front of her,  
10 and she took one look at me and she knew something  
11 had happened to me. I'm in the shock. I'm in  
12 shock from this. I'm at a funeral. I couldn't  
13 deal with it because it was the first time somebody  
14 came back confirming my reality.

15                   And that's why I was so grateful  
16 that you gave me tobacco because I was spent my  
17 whole life trying to get people to believe me, and  
18 to say I promise or I swear to tell the truth, it's  
19 very different than you asking me to share it with  
20 you, and to hear me, right? And that's what I love  
21 about this inquiry. I finally get to say it my way  
22 and I don't have organizations. I don't have  
23 counsellors. I don't have service providers. I  
24 get to tell my story my own way because I lived it,  
25 right? And the state is complicit in this. They

1 failed me with child welfare. Somebody didn't get  
2 me a medical or somebody did and did nothing with  
3 it.

4 I was moved to several different  
5 homes and I was moved into this one home, and this  
6 is my brother Derek. He's gone now. My poor  
7 brother. He -- what do you call it? Vicarious  
8 trauma? This guy. I remember him coming down the  
9 stairs. I remember him in the fields. I remember  
10 him in the barn. But it was always my brother that  
11 would take care of me and clean me up because that  
12 man left everything all over me. I have a memory  
13 and I heard one of the people sharing of -- I have  
14 some memories that come from in here and then I  
15 have some memories that are some places over here.  
16 And these are one of them that -- and I think it's  
17 not true because it doesn't come from in here and  
18 in my language and in my own heart. And I  
19 understand therapists.

20 I get all that stuff about being  
21 disconnected, but it's crazy making stuff, okay,  
22 because I remember telling someone "your husband is  
23 hurting me." I didn't say it that way, but I  
24 remember saying "he's hurting me," and I'm sure  
25 it's a little girl. It's the only way I could say

1 it. But this voice saying to me, "You're just an  
2 Indian anyway." So what does a little girl do with  
3 that? So, of course I want to be white, then I  
4 don't get hurt.

5                                 Then I grew up as a teenager and  
6 nobody wants to go out with an Indian. Kay didn't  
7 want to be a white girl, right? So for whatever  
8 reason, it just seems like a lot of homes I was  
9 going to. It was okay to do that to me. And then  
10 my mom came and got me and by then, you know, in  
11 English, you call it being "promiscuous."

12                                 I was leaving the orphanage and  
13 one of the things that I appreciated about St.  
14 Patrick's Orphanage was we were all the same. In  
15 my mind, I thought we were all coming from the same  
16 places. I didn't know that some parents had made  
17 arrangements like schooling. I wasn't one of them,  
18 so when we went through the TRC, the state picked  
19 where they put me. But then the state got to  
20 decide, "No, we're not going to recognize that  
21 school because that started with the Knight of  
22 Columbus. And I said, "No, the state was paying  
23 the church." So I never got recognized. And I  
24 hope nobody sees this as petty, but it's really  
25 difficult for me sometimes when my husband is

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1 processing his residential school or sitting around  
2 other people when they are. And I can't be part of  
3 the group because I didn't get recognized. So when  
4 they came here, you remember, Marie, I went and  
5 gave my testimony anyways. The state doesn't  
6 recognize it, but I sure do and here's my story,  
7 right?

8                               So I've always -- that's why I say  
9 the spirit runs through me. So my mom got me out  
10 of the orphanage, but I witnessed Sister Robichaud  
11 (ph) beating -- I watched her beat on one of the  
12 girls and there was blood all over that. It was a  
13 schoolroom and she locked her in there. And I've  
14 seen acts of defiance. I was being taught very  
15 young. I mean, I had another friend, she hated  
16 castor oil. So she cut a hole in the doll and  
17 would stick them in the doll until the nun picked  
18 it up when it ended -- fell out the other end.

19                               They all had -- there was an act  
20 of resistance and this one particular girl --  
21 because you got to remember I was what, 11? And  
22 she just would refuse. So the sister took her in  
23 the classroom and beat her. And they had a glass  
24 and it should -- we understand vicarious trauma. I  
25 watched it and I was trying to pull the door open.

1 The rest were frozen and all I could see was this  
2 face and this blood and these scissors. She was  
3 slicing all her hair off. And I don't know if  
4 she's ever gotten compensated, apologized to,  
5 whatever, but somebody's got to do something for  
6 that because that school was not recognized and  
7 there are people in there who were seriously  
8 damaged.

9 And nobody ever told me that what  
10 I was doing from the time I was 4, what I learned  
11 to do -- because I was sexually active very, very  
12 young, and I thought that that was what love was  
13 because you see, when they would abuse me at night  
14 -- as every child, we want to belong and we want to  
15 be touched. Babies need that. We need that as  
16 human beings. They wouldn't come near me. The  
17 wife wouldn't. And the man wouldn't because that  
18 isn't what I was about for him. So I had to find a  
19 way, and I only knew one way of touching. It  
20 happened way too young.

21 So I had behaviour and as soon as  
22 I had a boyfriend, that's what I wanted to do.  
23 That didn't mean -- I mean, I've been called all  
24 kinds of stuff in my life because I was seen as  
25 "oh, she just wants to have sex. That's all she's

1 about." And then, you know, we were at the bottom  
2 of the barrel in our community, so I was just the  
3 kind of girl that you could do anything to because  
4 that's what she's for. I've been raped a lot when  
5 I was younger. And it was expected that I would be  
6 because isn't that what I'm all about? They never,  
7 ever questioned the husband or the boyfriend. It  
8 was always her. Nobody ever questioned, "Why was  
9 she behaving like that, you know?" And it's  
10 tougher in small communities, right, when you're  
11 interrelated. It just brings a whole bag of stuff  
12 up. So it was just easier to get rid of people  
13 like me. So they just kept moving me.

14 I went to live with my mom when I  
15 was -- she came and got us. So by that time, I met  
16 my bothers for the first time, and I was reunited  
17 because they separated me from my other two  
18 brothers, right, because I was alone when I went  
19 through a lot. When I came to Edmonton, my mom  
20 would get her cheque and you wouldn't see her for a  
21 couple of weeks, but she tried. And of course, my  
22 models were women that -- they were Indigenous  
23 women from Edmonton Drag. And a lot of them were  
24 prostitutes. That's what you call them, but that's  
25 not really what it is. It's survival sex. And a

1 lot of us are corralled into that, and you know,  
2 for those who have never done that, you know, thank  
3 your Creator because there's nothing pretty about  
4 it. I have a lot of -- I mean, I saw a lot, but I  
5 remember the day that I said I wanted to be like  
6 them because I saw something and to this day, I  
7 think it might have been -- I saw it. I don't  
8 know. I'm going to lie if I say -- I don't know  
9 what I saw, but I wanted whatever I thought I saw.  
10 You got to be careful because you're going to get  
11 what you ask for. I'm a kind of quantum physics  
12 girl, too.

13                               So I ended up -- tried to go to  
14 school. Didn't work out. Grew up too fast. And  
15 then I tasted -- I never, ever liked the taste of  
16 booze, but I liked the way it felt. And our house  
17 became a party place. And I've seen some awful  
18 things happen to my mom. I had awful things happen  
19 to me. I watched some really shitty things happen  
20 to other women, but that was what it was all about.

21                               I was supposed to go to school,  
22 but I couldn't learn. It wasn't that I was smart,  
23 I mean, how are you supposed to learn when you're  
24 in a racist society when it was okay to criticize  
25 you because you were indigenous and you were

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1 thought of as dumb to begin with, right? I mean,  
2 it was 1960 when the Indian agent left this to  
3 lawsuits, so the tax system must have been still  
4 alive and well.

5                   And I used to hate my people, like  
6 how come we were supposed to be these bums, but I  
7 didn't know. I thought the Indian Act was the  
8 treaty. I thought these people who were telling me  
9 about who we were as a people was the truth. It  
10 wasn't the truth, right? So the thing about  
11 learning the truth is it'll set you free, but it's  
12 painful as hell going through the process.

13                   So I paid my dime for where I am  
14 today because I have searched and searched for  
15 truth. And I've always looked -- I've balanced it  
16 out with what doesn't work for us, what are we  
17 doing, and it's been really painful and I do my  
18 share of that, you could say. And I've been on  
19 radio and I know people get tired of hearing me,  
20 but there's something about the truth, it's just a  
21 lot of people don't want to hear it, right, because  
22 it's uncomfortable even if it's going to be for a  
23 better health. It's an uncomfortable thing to go  
24 through. It's very painful. But I ended up -- I  
25 want to get -- you know what's happening to me

1 right now, I think I'm taking too much time.

2                                   It's like -- but I know it's  
3 inbred. I've said to my friends, "You need to sit  
4 with me because I know sure as shit. I'm going to  
5 want to stop because I'm taking up your time,  
6 right? Just born by the clock." And I said, "I  
7 don't know where this oral journey is going to take  
8 me." So I'm trying to think of these guys because  
9 I know -- I keep thinking people want to go home,  
10 people want to do things, right? But I also  
11 recognize that this is important because I get to  
12 tell my truth, right?

13                                   So anyways, part of the reason I  
14 could be in school and take that is racism. But  
15 also back in the day, we negotiated for our own  
16 schools. And at the beginning at one time, we had  
17 them but then the government, the provincial --  
18 federal government said to the provincial, "if  
19 you'll take money to take these Indigenous people  
20 in your education system --" because it's funny  
21 they didn't want us -- they had the pass system for  
22 us. They put us on reserves. They didn't own as a  
23 treaty, they put us in these open-air prisons  
24 because it's a Cold War, and it's been a Cold War  
25 for a long, long time, okay. And part of the

1 reason I hate the word "survivor" is because it  
2 kind of implies it's over. It isn't. It's just  
3 gotten colder.

4 I have had some really good female  
5 friends that are Indigenous say to me, just like it  
6 shows in PSAC, like just get over it. You can't  
7 get over it till you get over it because it hasn't  
8 stopped, right? So they took us -- and they had  
9 these public schools within Saskatchewan -- the  
10 public didn't want us to be visible and they took  
11 the Act, and they had put it so that women could  
12 not sit at any of the Chief and Councils. We  
13 weren't allowed that.

14 And yet, even today, when we have  
15 election back home, and if it's okay, I'll talk to  
16 the women, "So who's going to get in?" And I'll  
17 phone back to my birth home and I'll say, "Who's  
18 going to get in?" And I'll talk to who I consider  
19 to be the matriarchs, and sure as heck, they'll  
20 tell you who's going to get in before the election,  
21 so I don't think that's changed. But, anyway -- so  
22 the state took us, didn't fulfill it's obligation.  
23 They are now with their education to a point,  
24 okay. Yeah, what is that? Feedback? I thought my  
25 inside voice is outside now. I do miracles, by the

1 way, after five.

2                                 But anyways, when I was going to  
3 school in Edmonton, I don't remember feeling any  
4 racism in this school, but what I did have was  
5 classes, and it was cruel. I think it's crueler  
6 than racism. I mean you can't change either one,  
7 but racism isn't real. It's not rooted in a real -  
8 - in a truth. Racism is born out of white  
9 supremacy, and I did my research and it was created  
10 in 1664 in Maryland in the United States, and the -  
11 - it's a construct. It's just an idea, but it was  
12 an idea to profit back in the day the plantation  
13 owner who reads today as the 1 per cent, and they  
14 wanted to punish -- a free woman would get punished  
15 if she married a black, a native, and ironically,  
16 the Irish, and then they had others, right? And  
17 the Irish's culture is a lot like ours. When you  
18 look at the Irish's history, man, do I get your  
19 history, right?

20                                 But, anyways, so what would  
21 happen, they had slavery, but it was different.  
22 They had intermarriages, but you would identify by  
23 saying I'm from Jamaica, you know, time and place  
24 and location, just like we would, or traditionally,  
25 and we didn't have the very things that separate us

1 today, like Métis, all these things that the Crown  
2 has given us to identify ourselves with, you know,  
3 you're First Nations, you're non-status. Always  
4 identifying things, right? They didn't have that  
5 back then, you know, I'm from Africa, blah, blah,  
6 blah. So they had intermarriage, but they had  
7 indentured slavery.

8                   But what happens was that that got  
9 expensive when the -- because you had to care for  
10 these people, and if you brought over people as  
11 slavery, you still had to care for them. They can  
12 work their way out of being slaves, but they ran  
13 out of funds. So the 1 per cent started to tell  
14 the male British who owned the land because there  
15 was -- they were smaller numbers -- began to tell  
16 the other British, "Man, if we could -- you know,  
17 you're white like me. If we could just -- they're  
18 costing us money. We could get better."

19                   So, all of a sudden -- and I don't  
20 know if you ever experienced it in your life  
21 because I still have to check myself. The sense of  
22 belonging, when it hasn't been met, the classes  
23 gets ahold of it and you want to fit in with the  
24 elite because I see it in my own communities. You  
25 know, if you're the Chief's daughter or if you're

1 the actor's kid or you're the store manager's kid,  
2 it's a form of classism and elitism and it gives  
3 you a warped sense of belonging.

4 Well, I could understand what  
5 happened way back in 1664 because now, they're not  
6 going to be looked down upon by the 1 per cent  
7 because it's part of it, but it's a lie because the  
8 white supremacy only applied to them, but it didn't  
9 even apply anybody. It was just a way to get free  
10 labour and make true slavery and keep the 1 per  
11 cent because if you owned land, you have  
12 everything, right? And what did Indigenous people  
13 have? We have land, but we didn't own it. We  
14 cared for it. You can't own a living entity,  
15 right.

16 So that's just -- they made it law  
17 -- then they made it law, you could not marry a  
18 black person, but race started right there. So I  
19 think the thing that hurts me about that is -- when  
20 I talk about this, although I'm looking at you, I'm  
21 actually talking Justin Trudeau because he is the  
22 head of this state, and he was recently at an  
23 Indigenous community and was appalled with the  
24 housing. And I was appalled that he was appalled,  
25 okay, because how could you be appalled when you

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1 make all the financial decisions? You inherit --  
2 my husband was Chief for many years. He'd say, "It  
3 doesn't matter what was done before, I inherit  
4 that. So passing the buck wouldn't work." So he  
5 had to work with what he got. So we didn't get  
6 into the poverty overnight, you know.

7                   And I'll tell you something really  
8 insane about me, just so we keep this balanced. I  
9 spent many years on PSAC, being an Indigenous rep  
10 in the union. And I sat at the National Aboriginal  
11 Peoples Committee, and we would talk about all the  
12 crowding, mold in the house. You know, I do my  
13 talk, but I didn't live it. I mean, I had a  
14 beautiful home. I had a place. I was working, you  
15 know, as a union. I had government salary. I was  
16 bringing home \$2,500 every two weeks.

17                   Well, I haven't been working for  
18 three years because my health has been really bad,  
19 but I went home for Christmas. My daughter  
20 fundraised to get us home because my husband has  
21 just been keeping our heads above water. And we  
22 actually had some times where our son has brought  
23 groceries for us. And I don't say that out of  
24 shame. That's just a gift that my son has given  
25 us. That's another gift, right? But that's the

1 way of all people. Indigenous or not. Sharing,  
2 right? And I know now my son's going to do well  
3 because he knows how to share and he knows how to  
4 be responsible and he has a disability, but he  
5 still steps up to the game, right?

6                   But when I went into my  
7 granddaughter's house, it's just full of mould.  
8 And I have three generations of my kids living  
9 under one roof. And I went, "Oh, my God, oh, My  
10 god." I was their voice. But because I wasn't  
11 living it, I didn't come out. Like, I'm sure I  
12 would do it very differently now, right? So it's  
13 really easy for us to sit until we're living it  
14 because we don't rush it. So I came home from  
15 Christmastime and I was sick because I got that  
16 mould and then I got the flu because my lungs are  
17 compromised. And I started to think my  
18 grandchildren are breathing that in every day.

19                   Now where in the heck -- and the  
20 state not only has a fiduciary, they have a moral  
21 responsibility and they took that under themselves.  
22 We never gave it. The Indian Act took it. And we  
23 agreed, we negotiated, "give us a house in times of  
24 hard times." Well, if it's not hard times now,  
25 then what is? They have to buy their water. They

1 get \$200 a month. Out of that has to come the  
2 water. Now, try to live without water, right? I  
3 remember I complained to one of our Elders in  
4 Lutsel K'e. I said, "My son wants to be a truck  
5 driver, a water truck driver. I want so much more  
6 for him." And I was going on and on and she turned  
7 to me and she says, "Well, I don't know. Try  
8 living without the water." Very simply said, but I  
9 got the message.

10                                   It was in my -- it's not my  
11 responsibility to get into these whatever I think  
12 higher stages are that given him the promise.  
13 That's our classism. That's why I think it's so  
14 cruel. It's much crueler than racism, right?  
15 Because the classism entitles him to privilege.  
16 I've learned that consciously or unconsciously  
17 because he's worse more if he's the Chief than he  
18 is the water truck driver. I have to admit my mind  
19 thinks like that. So I've been praying for help  
20 because it's not healthy. We call it the European  
21 disease. It's a diseased way of thinking. And  
22 it's not about rules or responsibilities anymore.

23                                   And I've seen myself over the  
24 years as being a feminist. So these are all kind  
25 of backward recommendations to you, okay, because I

1 don't believe that Justin can say that he doesn't  
2 know what's happening to us because he also has our  
3 funds from land and resources. So we're not tax  
4 dollars problems. And taxes didn't come till after  
5 the First World War, and it was promised to be a  
6 one time thing, right, then the coffers were  
7 getting full.

8                               But the state still takes our land  
9 and our resources, so we're only getting what  
10 belongs to us. I went to a recent gathering --  
11 what I'm talking about to you about is the  
12 psychological damages that have been done to me in  
13 different ways but is still being done to my  
14 granddaughter. She's Vietnamese-Cree. She's  
15 beautiful. She got her hair in braids the other  
16 day and somebody said to her, "You really look like  
17 a Native." She is, you know what I mean? You know  
18 what she said? "Don't say that." Because she's  
19 now in grade 9, and we think because we have  
20 education classes in grade 9, that's stopping the  
21 innate racism and white supremacy that our children  
22 are being taught indirectly and it's happening not  
23 so much by race, but by classism.

24                               And we don't have race studies and  
25 that's the big recommendations I'm trying to get to

1 here. I have watched many of my friends that are  
2 here. I have learned on and on about Robin  
3 DiAngelo. She does race studies and she has  
4 videotapes, and she'll say, "If race doesn't have  
5 anything, then why are we getting so upset?" And  
6 it shouldn't be burdened on women like me to  
7 educate my friend, who's not Indigenous about the  
8 white supremacy. And I'm not about her being a  
9 Caucasian woman. I mean, it was created, but it's  
10 hard to undue that, right, because I take great  
11 pride in telling you I'm Cree Dakota.

12 I don't think I'm going to let  
13 that go because race doesn't exist, you know what I  
14 mean? But the supremacy, it doesn't benefit  
15 anybody except the 1 per cent, okay? It doesn't  
16 benefit me. It doesn't benefit you because it  
17 hurts us both. Well, she gets hurt by it in a  
18 different way than I do. I spent my whole life  
19 apologizing pretty well for being Indigenous. I  
20 don't want her to apologize because she's not  
21 indigenous. That's crazy. She's here because God  
22 gave her life, right?

23 It's not by the way of our people  
24 or any people who have a heart, but this type of  
25 disease will dehumanize us when it's done its job.

1 And we need to call it out, but it takes  
2 education, so we need race studies. We also need  
3 the state in making these free studies, not just  
4 giving it to -- people say, "I took that in  
5 sociology," and I said, "Well, good for you because  
6 I have lots of people that --" when I was in  
7 Saskatchewan, the state is trying to say now --  
8 listen. This is how I hear it. "Listen Sandra,  
9 when your ancestors negotiated for education, it  
10 was only up to grade 12, and I sit back, and I go,  
11 "Yeah, we really want to be your janitor." Give  
12 your head a shake. We meant we wanted education.

13 So now the state is saying they  
14 cap out on reserves. It's a little bit different  
15 in the North, but what's happening in the North is  
16 -- and I think it was meant to be good, but it's  
17 turning out to be a bad joke. This applies to the  
18 GNWT as well. There's this idea that if you keep  
19 passing students along, that I don't know, is the  
20 education supposed to happen by osmosis? Is it  
21 going to come floating into the books and the  
22 brains, right? It's not. So when it came time to  
23 go to university, we're starting to use our own  
24 negotiated dollars or -- what's that other fund --  
25 ASETS funds or other funds that we put aside from

1 our negotiations with mines. They're supposed to  
2 go help out post-secondary. These students of ours  
3 will graduate and then the next -- they're filling  
4 out forms to go to Aurora College, but in the  
5 community, outside the community, they get their  
6 grade 12. That's ridiculous, right?

7                   So passing people along doesn't  
8 cut it. And when I took my nursing, there was 16  
9 or 17 of us and maybe two non-Indigenous nursing  
10 access because as far as my education from my life,  
11 I had grade 8 whether I needed it or not. I just  
12 couldn't learn in school. There was too much going  
13 on about who I was as a being and all the impacts  
14 of it surviving, adjusting, adapting, right? Never  
15 mind resilience. I was just too busy doing that.  
16 Today we call it resilience. I have a problem with  
17 that because I don't see it as resilience. I think  
18 we're still adapting, adjusting, you know, and I  
19 think it makes it easier for the public conscious  
20 to call us "resilient." That's my take, okay? And  
21 I see my daughter starting the cycle. I lost  
22 myself. Where was I? Yeah, there's a quality --

23                   So I want to go back to the race  
24 studies. They get offered in post-secondary, but  
25 it should be for everybody because it's so hard to



1 about segregation. We had segregation through  
2 reserves, right? Okay.

3 We don't have many reserves up  
4 here, but the reserve mentality is alive and well  
5 up here, okay, because I have mobility right as an  
6 Indigenous person, and I am in Akaitcho territory,  
7 which drives these territories as part of it, but  
8 this is Akaitcho. I live in Yellowknife. I am in  
9 my government. I'm in my territory, but there's  
10 this ideology that if I don't live in Lutsel K'e,  
11 I'm not living in my territory. That open-air  
12 reserve mentality is still there.

13 I've been in public meetings in  
14 Yellowknife, what, four, five years ago, where the  
15 solution to what was happening downtown in the  
16 streets was send us all back home. But they were  
17 talking about people from jail, but they meant --  
18 eventually, it will mean the rest of us, like we  
19 don't have mobility right, and that's the reserve  
20 mentality. And they really are open-air prisons.  
21 Those are our homes back there. You know where --  
22 people that were coming from, and there are people  
23 who think that because I wasn't born here, that I'm  
24 not from here. I grew up with that kind of  
25 ideology all my life and it has crippled me so many

1 times.

2                                   When I first came to the North --  
3 remember I told you I was born to the earth -- I  
4 stepped out at Providence, and the energy ran up my  
5 legs. Today, you call it the spirit of the land.  
6 I wish I could speak the language, but the spirit  
7 ran up my legs and I knew she was going to make me  
8 or break me. Well, I've been here for over 20  
9 years and she's broke me many times to make me.  
10 And I know she's not finished with me because I'm  
11 still arrogant, and I still got lots of stuff about  
12 me, right.

13                                   I remember when I went to a  
14 dentist once, he said, "What do you need?" And I  
15 said, "Whatever it is, it's going to buy your  
16 house." And then, you know, I started hearing  
17 you're not from here again. And that's really hard  
18 on me because, you know, I've been dispossessed. I  
19 was dispossessed because of the legacy my parents  
20 had. You know, my grandma -- if you've ever seen a  
21 picture of her when she's got her two daughters  
22 with her, one of them when my aunt was murdered,  
23 and my mother committed suicide, but you see a  
24 picture and you can see the sadness because she  
25 really doesn't -- she didn't get to raise us. And

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1 she gets to see their lives. And remember, she's a  
2 traditionalist, but somehow, she knew she had  
3 better pray for me.

4                   So when I was, you know, in the  
5 street getting my face cut up -- I have scars here,  
6 and on the street, you don't interfere with  
7 violence. And there was another girl -- you know  
8 the old saying is we're "nightwalkers." That's  
9 what we were called a long time ago. She kicked  
10 this door down, otherwise I'd have no face. It  
11 would be sliced, right, so something took care of  
12 me and gave her courage. And I hope it went back  
13 to her, and I hope she's alive.

14                   Another time, this guy had used  
15 all the dope up, and I was really sick back then,  
16 like I'd do anything because drugs could do for me  
17 what I couldn't do for myself. And I don't want go  
18 into the detail because I have a young 14 year old  
19 girl. She's already got to make her past. She  
20 doesn't need to be -- have some stuff blown on her  
21 by users -- who've been told how horrible we are.  
22 But stop and think. T's and R's were called "poor  
23 man's heroin". Talwin and Ritalin. And they're 15  
24 cents to make. And if I could, I feel so deeply  
25 for myself because it's my wellness when I look --

1 15 cents of the things that happened to me for  
2 that. It's just -- it's disgusting. Because when  
3 I say I have a lot of dirt put in me, I have had to  
4 do a lot of work to get it out. So they did stupid  
5 shows like "Pretty Woman." That's not my story.  
6 And I don't know why I wasn't stronger like other  
7 women who didn't do it, but I just wasn't one of  
8 them, right? But I wasn't one of the women that  
9 got killed from it either.

10                   So we used all the drugs and he  
11 said, "Come to Winnipeg with me." And one of the  
12 things that I had all my life is -- and I've never  
13 liked belonging to groups. I don't like people  
14 thinking for me or talking for me unless they're  
15 really going to talk for me, right? But on the  
16 street, I didn't hang with anybody. It was too  
17 crazy making -- because you could take a licking  
18 for something that had nothing to do with you.  
19 It's kind of the gang mentality or herd mentality.  
20 And I felt safer because if I was going to take a  
21 licking because it was something I did -- and  
22 believe me a lot of times I did stuff -- and I  
23 deserved it, right? Not deserved it, but I knew it  
24 was coming. It was just a street code, like they  
25 tell you if you do this, this is going to happen.

1 So you sit back and you think, Okay, I'm going to  
2 take it. You got yourself ready because you're  
3 going to take it, right?

4                                   And I met this one woman, I had  
5 ripped her off, and she had me by the throat in the  
6 York Hotel. My frigging feet are dangling. I  
7 guess it's not funny or anything, but some things  
8 in your life, you got to kind of look back at. My  
9 feet are dangling, she's got me up by the throat.  
10 She's got it like this. So she said, "You want to  
11 mess around? Now, you burnt me last night, didn't  
12 you?" And I intuitively knew, don't you ever, ever  
13 admit that because you're not going to get out of  
14 here. So I didn't.

15                                   When you talk about surviving, I  
16 survived 10, 11 years of that, that I paid, too. I  
17 paid. I wish I could sit here and say that -- you  
18 know, that department took my daughter away from  
19 me. That I got so sick that I let her go so I  
20 could live that. And I don't know how to say it  
21 any other way. I was so sick. And there's lots of  
22 other stuff in there that my girl doesn't deserve  
23 to be aired, right, but I love that little girl. I  
24 have a picture up there. That's her. That's her  
25 grandson. That is so beautiful because she has

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1 survived too, to be loved by her grandson. And you  
2 could just see -- my husband said to me the other  
3 day -- I was going to say, "Don't be so childish, I  
4 was doing something," and he said, "Please don't  
5 refer about children like that because I wish we  
6 were all children." Because we'd be like that, you  
7 now. So just show the next picture.

8                               This is my -- oh, go back to the  
9 little girl. That's the next legacy. That's  
10 Isabella. She's my great-grandchild. And that's -  
11 - you know, I kept the kids together after I  
12 straightened out. My girl went through her own  
13 journey. Her own pain. And I love that smile  
14 because she deserves that. Both of them deserve  
15 each other, you know. And my girl, they're living  
16 in a molded house right now. You get in the shower  
17 and I was afraid because I didn't know if it was  
18 going to go through the floor, but they bathe there  
19 -- they're bathing in it because you can feel it  
20 drop. It's a two-bedroom place.

21                               And the band had enough -- scraped  
22 enough money together because what Justin is  
23 telling me is a kookum, and a mother, and a  
24 chappon, that when my people negotiated for  
25 housing, it didn't mean repairs. That's not true,

1 right? And negotiations now is over with CMHC that  
2 they have to pretty well buy their houses.

3                   So my daughter went out and  
4 learned how to repair. She's an alcohol and drug  
5 counsellor today, and she's a darn good one when it  
6 comes to understanding addiction. So I pray and I  
7 hope you're praying that that little girl isn't  
8 getting baths someday and that tub goes right  
9 through the floor. And I'm hoping that you're  
10 praying with me that her goes through that mold and  
11 those pamphlets that Justin's Department of INAC  
12 about "Wash with Javex." I'd like him to live in a  
13 molded house with his kids and his wife, and I get  
14 to give him a pamphlet and a bottle of Javex and  
15 say, "Here you go. Here's your health care." So  
16 what he says to me as a grandmother -- you know,  
17 grandmother and a chappon, that he's shocked? That  
18 he's surprised? Then his departments aren't  
19 telling him the truth. And this is a truth-seeking  
20 place. I expect that whole department to be fired  
21 because that's inhumane.

22                   And the Indian Act used to see us  
23 as non-human. Well, we found out we are. Well, we  
24 always knew, but it's not okay. There's a certain  
25 place where everything gets to be -- even in the

1 way I live, I didn't sober up because I knew --  
2 woke up one day, I mean, I had spiritual awakening  
3 guiding me. But I was so sick, I couldn't get  
4 well. I didn't know how to get well. Actually, it  
5 was like the Creator had to come and get me to get  
6 well. And I think I died.

7                   And I used to criticize centres  
8 like Arlene's when she ran the Yellowknife Women's  
9 Centre. I even criticized her. I said, "All  
10 you're doing is enabling, blah, blah, blah." I  
11 forgot my own history, but blah, blah, blah. She's  
12 like one of my best -- if not my best friend,  
13 right, and I'm saying this behind her back because  
14 she's not supposed to be helping those women on the  
15 street that were like me unless they're going to  
16 behave the way that we say they behave. We can't  
17 take them the way they are, right?

18                   So what happens is: One day, my  
19 daughter, who was living her here in Yellowknife,  
20 heavily addicted. She -- you know how you can  
21 forget things? She went to the shelter, so she  
22 didn't have to do anything for a night sleep  
23 whether it was selling drugs or whatever. I  
24 remember up the drag from Edmonton there was place,  
25 and you got a bed, just like the residential

1 school, those old steel beds. My shoes would be  
2 gone in the morning or maybe my coat, right? But I  
3 didn't have to do anything that night for a place  
4 to sleep, to be left alone, for the drugs.

5                   You know, when I was out in  
6 Vancouver, that's the hardest. That's where I  
7 suffered the most because when I was in Edmonton,  
8 the bars weren't unionized. So I could go sling  
9 beer, right? They were unionized in Vancouver when  
10 I went to Hastings, and I couldn't get it together  
11 because you know when you're slinging beer, you're  
12 still in the environment and you're always  
13 hustling. You're always ripping people off, you  
14 know what I mean? I couldn't get a job, so I had  
15 to do the only thing I knew because I've been  
16 taught since I was 4. And it wasn't because I  
17 wanted too, I got groomed right into it. But I  
18 told myself something else. It's like I was  
19 sharing with Arlene -- this one guy before, he beat  
20 me. I knew he was going to do it, and I used to  
21 tell myself it's only going to hurt for the first  
22 couple of shots. And I braced myself for those  
23 ones and then I took the licking. And here's how  
24 thick I got in myself was -- I didn't think I was  
25 loved unless a guy was beating me.

1                               So when I came to the North, I  
2 remember this guy just before I got married. And  
3 nobody had ever told this to me. No man had ever  
4 told me. No woman ever told me. And he really  
5 liked me. Just imagine me with cheeks, okay. All  
6 this stuff, a lot of younger. But he said -- and  
7 he was really upset with my husband, right. You  
8 know, "What the heck." And I said to him, "I don't  
9 know how to -- I feel really, really bad," and then  
10 he said, "Why?" Because he must have caught  
11 something, you know.

12                              And I said, "Because I have no  
13 reason to break up with you. You've been so kind  
14 to me." And I meant that from the bottom of my  
15 soul, like I felt like I owed him for the rest of  
16 my life. And yet, I had these incredible feelings  
17 for my husband, right? But I didn't know he was my  
18 husband yet. He turned to me and said, "Sandra,  
19 I'm just going to shoot myself for this." And he  
20 starts crying. Big tears coming down his face. He  
21 said, "The way I'm treating you is how you  
22 should've been treated your whole life. You don't  
23 stay with somebody because they're kind to you.  
24 You should expect that." And it was like the  
25 opening you did for us yesterday. The power of

1 that almost knocked me to my feet because I had  
2 never heard that before.

3                               When I came to the North, it took  
4 Arlene -- and I was so proud of this. People used  
5 to say to me, "You're really intelligent for an  
6 Indian." And I was so proud of that. I told her  
7 that. She said, "Oh, my God Sandra." The people  
8 used to say to me, "You're so pretty for an  
9 Indian." And I didn't know that that was wrong.  
10 So it made me feel better than you or you because  
11 you're indigenous, right? So I was better than  
12 you. And that goes back to that 1 per cent, the  
13 Maryland law 1664, the other men that were lower  
14 than the 1 per cent who felt good for once.

15                               They were equal to their  
16 counterparts, so that gave me "I'm just as good as  
17 you." The only thing those -- Albert says he  
18 throws the crumbs off the table and when we buy  
19 into that, we get laughable privileges. They're  
20 laughable. And I want Justin to know that until he  
21 gets that Indian Act off of me, he's just handing  
22 me laughable privileges and I know it, and I want  
23 him to know that I know he knows that I know, so  
24 now we both know. And the reason this inquiry is  
25 happening is because there is women ahead of me who

1 have started this journey. It's not organizations.  
2 Ours or theirs.

3                                   And they other thing that Robin  
4 DiAngelo says in her YouTube thing is she told me  
5 she said, "Sandra, when do we get to vote?" Like a  
6 good little girl, I say 1921. Women, eh. We  
7 didn't get it till 1951, and we didn't want it.  
8 That's the other thing. We didn't get choices  
9 about whether or not we voted in the Canadian  
10 election, we were told we were going to vote.  
11 Anyways, she said, "So who gave it to us?" I  
12 wasn't smart enough to figure it out, right, but  
13 there was women in the group or men in the group  
14 she was talking to. She says, "Come on, you know  
15 it. Tell me." She said men. She said yes, so we  
16 got it as long as they give it to us.

17                                   So, this was fought for by women.  
18 Grassroot women. And it's grassroot women that  
19 are sitting here because it's happened to us, and  
20 that's why I asked both these women to come and sit  
21 with me because these grassroot women with  
22 organizations in that -- their own businesses, I  
23 mean, to help because they're entrepreneurs and  
24 they want to help the people. So when you go  
25 further with this, I would really encourage it

1 because they should have been the first people  
2 contacted.

3                                   You know, I don't want to throw  
4 the baby out with the bathwater, but Health Canada  
5 is an institution, and it does what it does for  
6 work, and I'm sure it does great work, but it's  
7 part of the master's house, and you can't take part  
8 of the master's house down with the master's tools,  
9 right? So there's a place for absolutely  
10 everything, but even Health Canada has to move  
11 over, so we have wonderful women like this who went  
12 through their journeys, so they could take off --  
13 and I don't believe in empowerment, and I've argued  
14 a lot with people. If you can empower me, you can  
15 disempower me, right, just like the vote, right?

16                                   I have always been strong. I've  
17 always had power in everything that happened to me  
18 on the street, like getting shot, the waking up on  
19 the reserves -- when I woke up one morning, and all  
20 I could see was feet, and I don't want to look up,  
21 and I'm completely naked. And I didn't drink  
22 myself. I just went blank. Somebody got a hold of  
23 the drug rape. Somebody did something that I  
24 passed out and somebody left me there. Another  
25 woman left me there. And I asked her, "Why did you

1 leave me there?" And she couldn't look at me.

2 We've never had that discussion.

3                               That's those times I woke up in  
4 the Hotel International in Edmonton. Doors wide  
5 open. Don't know what time I passed out. Not a  
6 stitch of clothing on me. I worked in the bar. I  
7 didn't know who did what. I went to work like  
8 nothing happened. These for those times that I've  
9 been slinging beer. Everybody says you're fixing  
10 and I said, "No, I'm not," and they said, "Well,  
11 get that blood off your arm, then, because I went  
12 in the bathroom, and there'd be all over my  
13 clothes."

14                               I had picture up here that I  
15 wanted to show, but I decided to not put it on  
16 because you see enough of that already. You can't  
17 use these veins because their shot. My lungs are  
18 going because there was a chalk I used to have. So  
19 I paid. And I have some things that I will never  
20 let know because I talk about -- how do I say this  
21 in the right way? When I'm out down south, night  
22 walking is common. And that's heartbreaking. It's  
23 so common. You come up north and it's not so  
24 common. So when I came out of the -- such a way  
25 weird to say it -- when I came out to declare my

1 past, I didn't do it any other reason than to help  
2 people and even here. I just want a little bit of  
3 patience because I don't want to cry.

4                   When I share here, I'm fully aware  
5 that I am a value and that my story is a value and  
6 this environment is set up for it. But as soon as  
7 the environment is gone, I'm back in the way we  
8 socialize each other. And I know there are people  
9 that I embarrass. I'm good to work in shelters.  
10 I'm good to work -- you know, people living like  
11 me. I'm good in different ways, but then there's  
12 places I shouldn't go because of my history. I  
13 know that. And I even had somebody who told me  
14 that because of my past I'll never be in politics,  
15 and I said, yeah, whatever. But that's your arena.  
16 I have my politics.

17                   I'm a political mother. Because  
18 when we raise our kids today, we raise them to be  
19 political. So our mother is political today. And  
20 if it isn't, it should be. It's the only way we're  
21 not going to have our kids walking in our footsteps  
22 whether we're Indigenous or not. It's a damn shame  
23 that the state has to come along and say, "Okay,  
24 you got human rights now. I've always had them.  
25 What are you talking about? Well, you just don't

1 want to acknowledge it.

2 I haven't lost my power. I have  
3 when I was writing the recommendations, and I just  
4 want to say this to Justin. I do have my power.  
5 You just need to take the state blanket off of me.  
6 And it comes through state policy, state law,  
7 state acts, and it filters into organizations, and  
8 stop making an industry out of me. And I know in  
9 the North, and Yellowknife, especially, they get  
10 really tired of me talking about how Indigenous  
11 people are in the industry, but we are. The money  
12 that is -- and there's a place -- let me say this  
13 in the right way.

14 In the old days, my kookum talked  
15 about when we broke natural law. They would work  
16 with us to restore us, right, whatever it took.  
17 But if we didn't want to do it, we would get  
18 banished until we would get right and want to find  
19 out way back. And banishment is still the worst  
20 thing because we all need to belong. But as soon  
21 as something happens, the first thing we do is we  
22 banish. We send them to jail, and then we don't  
23 let them in the community or the person in there be  
24 part of the restitution or resolution.

25 And because of mental health,

1 there are people who need to be in certain places  
2 for the safety of the community. And then we just  
3 -- when they fished serving -- and the thing is --  
4 We went to a justice thing and I said, "You know,  
5 I'm having a real hard time accepting Canadian  
6 justice because it's not about relationships. It's  
7 about making public safety, and in some ways, the  
8 irony of this is: We have fought to have our  
9 voices heard, but we're really contributing to  
10 public safety, you know.

11 If you look at the Pickton case,  
12 remember John hit Mary? Well, Pickton murdered  
13 Indigenous women. And you can go down until  
14 Indigenous women fall off. Who is notorious right  
15 now? John Pickton. Everybody becomes notorious  
16 for their horror, right? So we're so busy talking  
17 about the Indian Act that the effect of that Indian  
18 Act, the Indigenous men, women, and children fall  
19 off the conversation.

20 We're still not in the  
21 conversation when we talk about the molding. We're  
22 talking about the water. We don't have a basic  
23 right to water, give me a break, right? Income  
24 support, I was talking with a group of Indigenous  
25 women, and they said, "You know, I'm so ashamed on

1 being on income support. I'm so ashamed of it." I  
2 said, "You know what, can I just interfere please."

3 I said, "I don't know. I think treaties are all  
4 negotiated the same, but our people knew that with  
5 the changes." And you have to know they use pipe  
6 because you need spiritual intervention. We're  
7 just human, right?

8                               So they negotiated for those hard  
9 times of housing and food and shelters and the  
10 medicine chest. Someplace along that, Canada --  
11 because it's in everybody's heart to share, so they  
12 made what is called "welfare." Somebody somewhere  
13 made that dirty, the sharing, right? And then  
14 someplace along the line, they took our  
15 negotiations and traded it for welfare and said,  
16 "We're living up to your part, but we're giving you  
17 welfare." That again is part of the Indian Act.

18                               That's not what we negotiated and  
19 whoever made welfare income support dirty doesn't  
20 get it because you pay into income tax when you  
21 work, okay. You pay for those social programs, so  
22 all it is is you put money in the public coffers  
23 for the time that you need it. And if you don't  
24 work, things prevent you from that. We actually  
25 have the gift of sharing and this country has

1 forgotten what that is, but they have forgotten we  
2 negotiated for that, so we do not get welfare in  
3 any of our communities or our reserves. We got  
4 what we negotiated for. And that's the type of  
5 thing I educate for women.

6                   Now, we have people that will come  
7 and have the job to support that and they treat  
8 people as though it's coming out of their personal  
9 pockets, so Justin is going to have those monies  
10 that we paid into and what we negotiated then he  
11 better start doing criteria or education about  
12 this. There's a difference when you are fulfilling  
13 your treaty obligations to Indigenous people, and  
14 there's a difference when you're fulfilling and  
15 returning back to the people in those programs  
16 because they paid income tax, and for the ones who  
17 do is because we all get an opportunity to do the  
18 genuine spirit of sharing.

19                   They have made income support  
20 something dirty, so we really dehumanized ourselves  
21 and disconnected from our Creator because look at  
22 the way we treat the earth and it's not like I can  
23 do it too. I don't want to give up a fridge.  
24 Well, where does it come from? It comes from the  
25 earth and somewhere -- you know what I mean.



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1 knew the people to ask and gave us an opportunity,  
2 right, but then the good ol' government tried to  
3 tell me how to do it and what I couldn't do. And I  
4 said, "I'm not a good fit." They weren't wrong. I  
5 wasn't wrong, just not a good fit, okay? But to  
6 me, that's just traditionalism. It's not about the  
7 way we dress or the way we talk. It's the spirit  
8 in which we do things and every nation knows how to  
9 do that, but we've just lost touch with it, right?  
10 We have -- I just got to stop a minute. There's a  
11 memory coming up right now. I just want a picture.  
12 Did I run out of pictures? Okay.

13 I want to talk about this because  
14 we got married in Desnethé. I saw my husband seven  
15 years before I ever met him. And my husband always  
16 says, "I met you before. I met you before." He  
17 just -- whatever, he has a different way of  
18 remembering. He had a hard time with me. A very  
19 hard time. And he went through residential school  
20 and I want to talk to you about how hard it's been  
21 for us because he was brought up that he couldn't  
22 put his hands under the blanket. It just freaks my  
23 mind. Because if he put his hands under the  
24 blanket, it implied something. He couldn't talk to  
25 his sister because it implied something because she

1 was female. So that interfered with us. I went  
2 through what I went through where I never had a  
3 choice. It was just "here, take me," right? So he  
4 had a hard, hard time, but we had a tradition and  
5 it's still there and it's okay.

6                               When you get married, you got to  
7 go to every camp, and you listen to what people  
8 have to say. And we were consistently told, "Watch  
9 her for seven years. They're going to be very  
10 hard." Because two people coming together, I mean,  
11 I was 38. He was 48, right? Two different peoples  
12 -- and when he asked me to first marry him, this is  
13 how he did it. He said, "What do you think of  
14 marriage, Sandra?" I said, "It's okay." And he  
15 says, "Do you want to?" And I said, "Sure."

16                               But I was also looking for that  
17 little princess scenario, so Arlene was the one who  
18 introduced us and twice she was trying to introduce  
19 me, and I was trying to do a survey for the  
20 Yellowknife Women's Centre on sexual assault and I  
21 was telling her, "When I phoned communities, you  
22 can feel the fear. They don't want to talk about  
23 it." Right? And you could just -- it was  
24 palpable. So I was frustrated. And I used to  
25 smoke. And this man walked by and I looked. And

1 he looked down at me and I looked up at him. And  
2 then he stopped. And I intuitively knew he was  
3 going to a few tables down, but he stopped and he  
4 sat beside me. You know, I was arrogant. Even  
5 though I was wounded, I still have the arrogance  
6 about me and I said, "Relax."

7                   And so, she kept trying to  
8 introduce me, but I wasn't interested at that time.  
9 And then she says, "Well, you know, he's the  
10 Chief." And I went, "Really?" So my arrogance,  
11 off I went to meet the Chief, and I married him the  
12 Chief because my husband said to me one day -- I  
13 was struggling to be a chief's wife -- he said,  
14 "You married the Chief." I said, "Yeah. Yeah, I  
15 did." He said, "How's it working out for you?" So  
16 that's --

17                   But anyways, I just wanted to tell  
18 that because we brought our own stuff in different  
19 ways to the marriage, but when I met him the second  
20 date, he said to me -- out of nowhere, he looked at  
21 me. He said, "If you came to where I lived, you  
22 would find what you're looking for." And I started  
23 to cry because no other being knew that I was  
24 looking for something. Something was missing in  
25 me.



1 that you're not used to the spirit of the land.  
2 It's still working of you because you're not  
3 walking with it right."

4                   And I hung onto that because in  
5 our -- we've gotten colonized. All of us. And we  
6 think these boundaries are real. And we think that  
7 if you're not born here or you're not from here,  
8 somewhere, you're not part of it. You're  
9 separated. But you were not. And she reminded me  
10 that -- Rosanna Lockhart (ph), she's also left us.

11 When she was getting ready to leave. She called  
12 for her granddaughters and her grandsons, and I  
13 thought -- because she was a granddaughter to one  
14 of my grandchildren.

15                   Those little acts from the elders  
16 that were true traditionalists have offered me  
17 healing and that's what my husband was talking  
18 about. It wasn't the place. It was the way of  
19 being because she brought in all my grandchildren  
20 because that's how she saw them. I'm still not  
21 seeing like that. I'm still not well, but at least  
22 I know it, right? And she passed on some teachings  
23 to them in Stanton, to all her grandchildren. She  
24 didn't say oh, you're Cree, you're this. Not that  
25 it's wrong. Nobody's ever said I'm wrong for being



1 traditional culture, the spirit of the land, I was  
2 born to it. They remember these things. And  
3 that's my mother, the earth, because she was my  
4 first one. So she teaches me a lot, but when I'm  
5 wrong, because of my onus and my moons, right, when  
6 creation shows me I'm wrong, there's nowhere for me  
7 to go and it's just a fact. I don't get punished.  
8 I don't get ridiculed. I don't get shamed. It's  
9 just there, you know. Do I want to stay there?  
10 And it hurts me because it's true.

11                               So, I came to testify because I  
12 was really, really hurt. But I've recovered a lot.  
13 I've researched, I've study, and I get more hurt  
14 now from the policies, from the deceit that the  
15 state tries to deny that they don't know what's  
16 hurting us. They don't recognize our inherent  
17 self-right to self-governance. They're still  
18 treating us like wards. We're not wards, never  
19 were, and we didn't negotiate that. So I think the  
20 state has an obligation. Apology is an apology,  
21 but you ever notice that state has never asked for  
22 forgiveness? There's a big difference.

23                               When I -- I did something to my  
24 best friend. We were doing some work around  
25 cultural competency, and I was beginning to

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1 understand that she was a white woman, and I was in  
2 the harshness of it. And I said -- you know, I was  
3 making her wrong from my heart. And then we went  
4 through that and we came in through another stage.

5 And it was never what I said. What I said was the  
6 truth. What I did was the spirit in which I did  
7 it. And I had that moment where Creator showed it  
8 to me, and I asked for forgiveness because I threw  
9 it at her. So, as land and resources with, it's  
10 not about us as a people, it's what we have  
11 underneath us.

12 And it's pitiful that Indigenous  
13 women, here or any parts else of Mother Earth or  
14 any other country that we have the right to be and  
15 we have responsibilities to care for the earth,  
16 that we're putting shelters outside of our  
17 communities. And some of those shelters ask us to  
18 leave our children, our sons, because of the  
19 policies. They can't come in there with us. So  
20 not only are we trying to protect ourselves, we're  
21 asked to break our family up even some more, so we  
22 put them in child welfare. What's the message to  
23 our sons, right? If you want to get well, this is  
24 what you got to do. What the heck is that?

25 That's not -- and then the state

1 tries to tell us it's funding cultural confident  
2 programs. No, it's not. It's still more  
3 complacent organizations doing the colonial work  
4 and it's a colonial relationship and that stuff  
5 needs to stop because I want Justin to know that  
6 these women in front of me, beside me, behind me,  
7 and the ones who went on to make this possible, who  
8 may not be here, so that they know that. And we  
9 know he knows. So now that we all know, it can't  
10 be unknown.

11                               So I'm not going to make a bunch  
12 of recommendations of this justice system, that  
13 education system. It's like, get honest. Get rid  
14 of the Indian Act. Sit down and go nation to  
15 nation. And if you really can't remember what it  
16 is, let us educate you because it's in the treaty.  
17 It's in our negotiations. Our original language  
18 had no language for "he" or "she." Remember I said  
19 I was ashamed of my grandmother? Because she'd get  
20 them mixed up. So I've been saying to my white  
21 sisters. White feminism.

22                               I'm not asking you to apologize to  
23 me for any ideology, but I'm asking you to make  
24 some room because we have our own understanding  
25 from who we are, and we want gender balance. It's

1 like the pipe. The pipe has no power until you  
2 bring the bowl and the stem together, so many of us  
3 have to be like me, have to help me remember. And  
4 when you do the analysis of your data, I think it  
5 would do me an injustice if you didn't do it in  
6 this way, which is you have Indigenous scholars  
7 because they'll bring an Indigenous perspective.

8                   But you also have traditionalists  
9 who have the old language because as an Indigenous  
10 person myself, I don't have the old language and I  
11 used to work in an organization where I was to put  
12 language in, and I started to find out that I could  
13 speak Cree but have an indigenous concept of the  
14 Cree where I was Anglo-saxifying the language that  
15 the -- how you say that -- the higher the old  
16 language, the meaning, the conceptualization was  
17 getting lost over the generations. And there are  
18 still things we can't translate. So we need those  
19 traditionalists talking to the -- because I'm going  
20 for my master's soon, but I don't have a lot of the  
21 -- I can feel it in me, but I can't articulate it.

22       But when I hear it, I know it, right?

23                   And you'll have people that are  
24 very humble, like men and elder in Winnipeg. I'm  
25 going to wrap up soon, but I met an elder in



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1 was born and then had a name, the Indian agent  
2 would know they were practicing culture. And they  
3 hunt -- or whoever was doing it.

4                               So they started to add, "Don't  
5 tell anybody" but it wasn't because it was in our  
6 teachings, right? So, it's people like him that  
7 I'm trying -- and when I asked, I phoned another  
8 elder in Winnipeg -- his name is -- what is it when  
9 you say truth and he said oh, boy. He said the  
10 best way for me to say it to you in English -- and  
11 that's what's frustrated way for me he said, "Just  
12 come from and tell it. Tell whatever it is." And  
13 when I talk to a cousin, she says, "Well, don't  
14 lie. Maybe you better talk to a traditionalist  
15 because --"

16                               That's what I mean about the  
17 language, is we've taken the English concept and we  
18 say it in our language because we've forgotten what  
19 it means and the traditional. So there's old  
20 traditionalists that have that language and they  
21 very much need to be part of the data because I'm  
22 stumbling around here trying to say that those  
23 ideologies that you're ancestors, my ancestors, her  
24 ancestors, before all this treaty making happened,  
25 before 1664, they knew how to coexist. There was a

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1 time we all new how to coexist. We all knew the  
2 value. We couldn't dominate the earth. The earth  
3 took care of us. We need to find our way back  
4 there.

5                   And if Justin doesn't do it, he  
6 has to know that we know that he's refusing to, and  
7 he can stop the facade on behalf of the current  
8 government that they care because telling me you  
9 care without having asked for forgiveness -- by not  
10 asking for forgiveness, you're not taking  
11 ownership. You're just apologizing for what  
12 somebody else did. But when you ask for  
13 forgiveness, you're like my husband, you're taking  
14 the legacy and you're owning it and you're going to  
15 correct it.

16                   So Canada needs to ask for  
17 forgiveness, not just apologize because it's empty.  
18    And it's not easy to ask for forgiveness because  
19 it wasn't easy for me to ask for it and I love her  
20 because I was wrong. There's a bunch of layers to  
21 work down to get to there. Today, I understand and  
22 she finally -- it was just yesterday that she said,  
23 "I get it." It's not about her being white, it's  
24 not about her having privileges, it's about a  
25 construct and it's a diseased one we all bought

1 into, and we fight over it.

2                               So the 1 per cent is still  
3 marching along like it has for how many  
4 generations, and her people and my people and  
5 people of colour were fighting. And I see what's  
6 happening with my people now with this disease. Is  
7 we're now looking at immigrants and going, "Why are  
8 they getting this stuff and we're suffering?" So  
9 we found another group lower than us. You see how  
10 that disease work? So it's always thriving and  
11 working, right? And when I think -- I'll say this.

12       When I think about climate change and the people  
13 say it's not happening, it's happening. But it's  
14 politically cool and it justifies something.

15                               In North America, we went on and  
16 destroyed other countries, their land and their  
17 resources, and we destroyed the ozone layer because  
18 we haven't respected what we've been given. We've  
19 taken too much. Now these people, their land, they  
20 have to run. They're fleeing over here. They  
21 don't want to be here. I don't want to flee to  
22 Europe. I want to be in my own home, the earth,  
23 where I feel it, where I was born to kind of thing,  
24 right? They're coming here and the disease has got  
25 -- that we actually will see babies starving.



1 exist. We don't live like that. We think like  
2 that, but we don't move in this world like that, so  
3 how could you be taught that?" Right? It's just  
4 words.

5                               So we have a lot of healing to do  
6 together. It's not just Indigenous people. And I  
7 don't want us to be an industry anymore. There's a  
8 place for child welfare. There's a place for  
9 shelters. There's all these places. They're  
10 needed, but they're not being done in the right  
11 way, for anybody. They don't work, okay? I'm not  
12 a social worker, so I can talk, talk, talk, and I  
13 don't know if I have a role in the next phase, but  
14 I do believe there's places for women like this to  
15 help you, and I really encourage you that you reach  
16 out when you go to the next place. Where are the  
17 Indigenous entrepreneurs? And Health Canada moves  
18 over and lets these women do the work they're  
19 supposed to do.

20                               I'm going to do a band hearing  
21 because there's some really horrible stuff done to  
22 me and when it started I didn't know. It came  
23 back, and I kept saying bullshit. I'm making that  
24 up. But I don't want to wear it outside of these  
25 rooms because I know once we get out of these

1 rooms, we're going to fall into the environment we  
2 living in. And I don't want you looking at me,  
3 seeing me from that experience because I had on a  
4 experience that isn't who I am. They're totally  
5 different things. And I don't want to deal with  
6 it, but I need to talk about it.

7                   Some days I feel so dirty. Some  
8 days I feel so unimportant. And I want something  
9 done about the hiring policy here in the North. I  
10 have mobility right. If I want to transfer between  
11 bands and one band will let me go and another will  
12 take me with my citizenship. I am supposed to have  
13 equal citizenship. But here's the disease of  
14 classism. The HR policy here, because I wasn't  
15 born here, supersedes my right to full citizenship  
16 in Lutsel K'e. So they're telling me I'm not  
17 Priority One, so white male has more priority over  
18 my hiring because he was born here and I -- that's  
19 not what the whole equity or affirmative action is  
20 supposed to be about and I tried to talk to the  
21 government here, and I get it thrown back in my  
22 face. "You're not born here."

23                   The United Nations Declaration  
24 tells us Indigenous people those are false  
25 boundaries. My treaty says I have citizenship. I

1 have full citizenship. Indian Affairs didn't tell  
2 me if you transfer to Lutsel K'e, you're a second-  
3 class citizen and nowhere do I read in anywhere  
4 that a hiring policy has got more authority than my  
5 Indigenous rights.

6 Chief and Council has not told me  
7 they're endorsing that I'm second-rate citizen. My  
8 band I left never said, "We're not letting you go  
9 to be a second-rate citizen." But somehow the GNWT  
10 has the right in their hiring policy to supersede  
11 my -- and I talked to Minister Bennett. I talked  
12 to her directly to her about it. She says, "Well,  
13 write me a letter." I'm not writing her a letter.  
14 We went to court orally. Oral has just as much  
15 strength as written if not more. I have told her.  
16 I'm not going to do anymore of that and now I'm  
17 telling Justin and you.

18 How come the state is letting an  
19 HR policy supersede my inherent right to  
20 citizenship and nationhood? And you want me to buy  
21 that? I don't buy it. And I'm not going to get  
22 into a big fight with the GNWT because we'll fight  
23 it and I said, "If I fight it, it makes it true.  
24 I'm not fighting it. I'm not going to make it  
25 true. It's a lie." So now that you know that I

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1 know that they know, we all know. You can't undue  
2 what you know. So when you don't see me, that I  
3 don't fight is because I don't want to make a lie  
4 the truth.

5                   So if you don't do something about  
6 that, I'm going to have to return your tobacco  
7 because you asked me to tell you truth, right? And  
8 the truth is, I transferred -- I have mobility  
9 right. You don't deny her to health care if she  
10 moves to Alberta, but you'll allow the GNWT to deny  
11 my Indigenoussness because they decided I wasn't  
12 born here. That's wrong. And it's a lie. It's  
13 also a lie that we -- when our kids go into camps,  
14 that they don't have parents. They have parents.  
15 Those parents are struggling.

16                   My daughter was trying to raise  
17 eight kids in Lutsel K'e -- I mean four kids in  
18 Lutsel K'e. She has ten. I'm very rich. And the  
19 state gave her \$800 a month. And when she got a  
20 job, if it went over what they state had, they  
21 caught it back. She couldn't afford child care, so  
22 she had to stop working. We didn't get our treaty  
23 for housing, so she had her kids in that one little  
24 room of her in-laws.

25                   She went into voluntary agreement,

1 but instead of keeping services to go with her,  
2 they just let her loose, and of course, she just  
3 really messed up. When I took them out of care --  
4 and I'll be straight up honest here -- I took them  
5 out of care because I was really worried about what  
6 people would say to me or about me if I didn't.  
7 But I didn't know how to parent. I was vicious  
8 with my little girl and my little girl was put in  
9 care and the state took her out. Put her in a  
10 place and it got really horrible. People weren't  
11 ready.

12                               So when I took the children, I  
13 said, "I need help with them." I got a cheque the  
14 first month for over \$3,000. To me, that's  
15 discrimination against Indigenous families,  
16 Indigenous parents because she got \$800. I got --  
17 because all of a sudden, they had illnesses that  
18 they didn't have when they were with the mother.  
19 She had \$800 for all of them including herself  
20 under income support. Our negotiated treaties were  
21 hard times.

22                               I got a thousand for each of them.  
23 The state can't discriminate me if I'm against  
24 income support but they can discriminate against  
25 Indigenous people who are on income support. I get

1 child care paid for whether I'm working or not  
2 because they're the state's kids, right? And isn't  
3 every child born in Canada -- doesn't the state  
4 have a responsibility to those same -- to every  
5 family in Canada. But when they're the state's  
6 children -- so child welfare was paid -- I mean  
7 child care was paid by them. They make the  
8 decisions on how much money goes into child -- what  
9 you got to pay, right?

10                                   They also give \$1,200 for  
11 clothing. My daughter got 20 bucks a month for  
12 each of them, for the whole work for them. They  
13 give sports money which I'm grateful for. My  
14 daughter didn't get that, right? She got so much  
15 money a month a year for visiting. They didn't  
16 give her that. So I put in a formal complaint once  
17 because they have -- they also created a Foster  
18 Care Association. It's funded. Where's the parent  
19 one? Right? Then they come up with an idea lately  
20 of having these family children circles, but it's  
21 run by the state, so what are you going to say in  
22 there? As soon as you say you have a problem, like  
23 I have an anger issue. Do you run and tell the  
24 social worker that you have an apprehensive child?  
25 You know, when I said leave it with the First

1 Nations, we need a place where we can talk about  
2 our horrors and our traumas without running the  
3 risk of losing our kids, right?

4                               So I go to the Foster Care  
5 Association, I tell them how bad I feel. I'm  
6 almost ashamed. And I carried that shame for a  
7 long time, for taking the money. And my daughter  
8 was just dying, right? Out in the street using.  
9 And you know when we talk about addictions, it just  
10 drives me crazy every year it's Indigenous people  
11 that get profiled, but we're not the ones driving  
12 that to pay for the drugs. We don't own the liquor  
13 store. We don't own the hotels. And we don't  
14 drive -- how do you say it, for cocaine and crack.  
15 We do the trafficking of it, but we're not the  
16 biggest consumers. They're sitting in their  
17 houses, going to work in the ledge or the hospital  
18 or the justice because those are -- they're social  
19 drugs. They're acceptable ones especially coke,  
20 right? So there's such an irony to that, right?

21                               But I see it as discrimination not  
22 only against Indigenous people but because most of  
23 the kids in carrier are Indigenous. I really see  
24 it as discrimination against Indigenous parents  
25 when you don't give them the same thing you give

1 foster parents, but it's the same child. So don't  
2 do this best interest of the child thing for me  
3 when you don't give them the same amount of money.

4 I know that they've ruled that down south, that  
5 when they're off-reserve, they're supposed to get  
6 the same as on-reserve for child care and foster  
7 care, but I think that's just a band date. If we  
8 want to foster -- and I'm not a foster parent, and  
9 I've been saying for four or five years.

10 We need another place because  
11 that's my grandchildren. And I used to feel  
12 ashamed, you know, because I knew other people were  
13 raising their kids, but I struggled because why  
14 should my kids live in poverty when the state is  
15 giving foster care people more than they do. They  
16 should be entitled to it, but I'll tell you what  
17 the danger of that is because I've seen through the  
18 years, and I lived through it too. I didn't want  
19 to go live with my people. I wanted to live with  
20 my white people because they had the money. A lot  
21 of our kids go into care and they don't want to go  
22 back because of the income that comes. It's  
23 classism. But it's targeted in different ways so  
24 that the kid feels better being with a foster  
25 parent than back home.





1 Because they're not part of the 1 per cent and the  
2 privileges they get from the white privilege are  
3 laughable because they're left with holes in the  
4 bag for the 1 per cent because they apologize for  
5 being white now, right?

6 I have a good friend that came to  
7 sit with me today because I was trying to talk to  
8 her because she feels guilty because of what  
9 happened in Ontario. The state had the Public Land  
10 Act and gave out a lot of lands that wasn't theirs  
11 to give away, so she's inheriting land and then you  
12 leave those people that followed state law to go  
13 get the land and now you're saying, you know, you  
14 should be guilty that you have it because of the  
15 poverty over here.

16 And that's what I'm talking about.  
17 Nobody is benefitting but only the small  
18 percentages. It's not even government. So if  
19 you're really honest about ending the violence  
20 because the women -- murdered and missing  
21 Indigenous women and us survivors in LGBT, we're  
22 the bottom of the bottom. So there's nowhere else  
23 to go but the truth, and I'm not going to waste  
24 your time and mine with smaller recommendations  
25 because the root of it is that lie. And Robin

1 DiAngelo knows it's a lie. I know it's a lie. Now  
2 you know it's a lie, right? He knows it's a lie.  
3 You can't be in government that long and not know  
4 the lies. And now they all know, right?

5                   So where do we go when we know  
6 that we know? My grandma used to say to me, "You  
7 can't walk two roads." When I found out the hard  
8 way, because I've heard a lot of people on  
9 asserting my Indigenous, so when it was revealed to  
10 me, it was really just a lie and it's hurt them as  
11 much as it's hurting me even when I see them  
12 sitting in their colonial minds, right? It bugs  
13 me. But they're sicker than me because they still  
14 don't know they're living the lie. But their kids  
15 will know.

16                   And the traditionalist teaches,  
17 "You know, if you're going to be a traditionalist,  
18 be careful because you're working with truth. And  
19 if you lie, it may not come back to you, but it's  
20 going to come back to some generation of yours, so  
21 now we see it coming full circle."

22                   And my sister, my friend, my true  
23 friend, suffers yet she was the woman and her  
24 organization, still today is, that will take the  
25 very women that was me and my daughter and my

1 mother and give them shelter and there are still  
2 women in this town that are doing incredibly human  
3 debasing things just to get a ride over there so  
4 they can sleep. All they want to do is sleep and  
5 we're still there. And they're the group of women  
6 that nobody wants to deal with. That was me. That  
7 was my mom. That was my daughter. I don't want it  
8 to be my granddaughter, that little cutie you saw,  
9 and my great-granddaughter. I don't want that to  
10 happen.

11                   So, I don't want to do blessing  
12 and blaming, but the state has an obligation to go  
13 through the pain of growing into the truth. It  
14 needs to stop putting it on its citizens and having  
15 us fight it out because it's not our fight. It's  
16 not our burden. It's the state's. So when they  
17 asked me, did I want a reset for murdered and  
18 missing? I thought I did until I came here and  
19 something started moving in me which is the spirit  
20 of the truth. It's not the state, it's -- I'm glad  
21 I'm here. I need to stop.

22                   You know I said there's this  
23 speech that I want to say, there's a speech I say.  
24 And I'm going to leave and I go, "Oh, I should  
25 have been said this. I should have said that."

1 But there's lots of -- very, very more to come.  
2 Very strong women coming with their stories and  
3 we're all at different places. But I know I'm of  
4 worth, but I also know that I have to be careful  
5 what I share because we are in different places.

6                   There's a band part that I'm going  
7 to do. I don't want to carry it or have it --  
8 people looking at me. But I do need to talk about  
9 it, so I'm so grateful that you set it up the way  
10 you set it up. I'm so grateful that it's very  
11 traditional. And I'm sad for Mary and Brueller  
12 (ph) because she's actually -- we're both from the  
13 same area, same root, First Nations. Because we  
14 live in a colonial environment she's restricted by  
15 the government and until it starts setting itself  
16 free from the lies, it's going to keep hurting  
17 people, and it's going to have to keep lying to  
18 itself about itself. And Josephine Mackenzie, when  
19 I was talking to her, I said, "I don't know why I  
20 got to live and my mother didn't." And she said,  
21 "Well, it's really none of your business, anyway."  
22 And traditionally, I get that.

23                   So then I was talking about the  
24 inquiry, just like Truth and Reconciliation. We  
25 didn't know where it was going, but the people came

1 and rose to talk. And it's still growing. It's  
2 still alive. And it's the same as murdered and  
3 missing. We don't know where it's going, but the  
4 spirit has been let out. That is the main thing.  
5 The spirit is out now. So my spirit is out.  
6 Right? And it's going to feed me. And I hope that  
7 it does for every other person and I hope those  
8 that are persons this knows what's happening, that  
9 they can look at it another way. This inquiry  
10 belongs to me, for me to talk because God didn't  
11 take me. When I tried so hard for him to do that.  
12 Creator gave me back my life because I went to  
13 detox centre and I'll wrap it up with this.

14 I was really sick and I found out  
15 the detox centre -- you could go there, but you  
16 couldn't self-medicate, so I went and I knew I was  
17 really going to be junk sick because I used to -- I  
18 was having seizures. I'd be trying to sling booze  
19 and I'd have a seizure. Somebody would steal my  
20 drugs, and somebody would take my float, and we're  
21 stuck in this sick little environment that once  
22 they called the medic, they'd find out if I  
23 remembered who I was, and it'd take me a while I  
24 figure everything out, I go back to work.

25 Because we're so indispensable --

1 I mean dispensable. Then I found out about this  
2 detox. So I said one day, I can't take it anymore.

3 I just -- I can't. So I take myself there, and  
4 it's New Year's Eve. I can't get into it. I just  
5 couldn't do it anymore. And I go in and I take a  
6 Valium because I know I'm going to be sick. And  
7 the guy that was on the street with me was with me  
8 for five years, a brutal, ugly relationship.

9 I go in and I can tell you, I have  
10 a nursing background but what my experience was is  
11 I was dying. And I'd like to go back and see my  
12 records. But they couldn't put an IV in my arm  
13 because my veins kept collapsing. And I remember -  
14 - do I hurt? My body really, really hurts, and I  
15 had the same green vile coming out of me that I saw  
16 my mother, right? So they rushed me off -- what do  
17 you call that -- Alexander Hospital. That's where  
18 my mother died. And the next thing I know, the  
19 next thing I remember, was hearing, "I'm sorry. We  
20 can't do anything to help you." And then the next  
21 thing I know, I'm in this room and it's all white.

22 And it's an irony when you're at your last kind of  
23 breath what comes to you.

24 You got to know all through my  
25 life with the crazy make and relationship because I

1 had gotten to a place in my life where I would  
2 start another relationship with a guy that could  
3 beat up the guy that I was just leaving. But the  
4 part that I was missing was I was going to get  
5 worse lickings and I did and they got really bad  
6 like this guy broke my leg because I didn't come  
7 back with enough money. I took a tire edge -- and  
8 what was it called -- the jack, he broke it with --  
9 and it's all broken up and scarred here, and the  
10 other ones, he put holes in my legs. People were  
11 watching.

12                               So today, when people insinuate or  
13 say "You know, you're not from here," people are  
14 around watching. It takes me to the same place.  
15 It's not what you do. It's the spirit in which you  
16 do it. So I'm laying there and I'm sick. You ever  
17 fall and make yourself sick? You feel sick from  
18 falling you just -- but I'm in so much pain. And  
19 he says, "Let's go get some Talwin for your leg."  
20 All of a sudden, he's in love with me. And I'm  
21 twisted in my head. All I could think about was  
22 get me the drugs because I can't deal with -- he  
23 just broke my leg. And I believe today that he  
24 broke it to get the Talwin.

25                               I ended up going to jail. I got

1 caught with it. But when I was in that bed, I had  
2 said, "You know, God --" because we always pray. I  
3 always prayed. Get me out of this one, get me out  
4 of that one. But lots of times, I'd be on the  
5 street all alone, and the worst is between eight  
6 o'clock in the morning till ten. And I would cry  
7 and pray because it's an emptiness. You get no  
8 drugs. There's nobody out there. Bars not open.  
9 So you're left with yourself. What a horrible,  
10 horrible place to be when you have no spirit in  
11 you. But I say, "God, I don't know what love is.  
12 I can't die." What a saying.

13                   And in my recovery journey, my  
14 husband has been very, very patient. I'm having a  
15 sense of what love is. The youngest one that I  
16 raise. I didn't really want to raise her. It was  
17 just so many kids all at once. But when the call  
18 came because they apprehended her, I said, "I'll be  
19 right there." And that little girl has taught me  
20 love and still does. And she's a diva.

21                   And by waking that up in me and my  
22 husband, he's kind to me. He has no shame at all  
23 for being with me in spite of how I lived. He gave  
24 up, you know, political positions and high-paying  
25 jobs because he'll say, "I wasn't gifted with

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1 having children, to raise my children, to be the  
2 primary parent," and some leaders have made fun out  
3 of him for that because we hear about it. But he  
4 had an opportunity. He said, "You know, you  
5 brought them to me. You gave me what I didn't  
6 have. And that's what our daughter gave us." And  
7 we can paint her wrong and everything, but she gave  
8 us -- to me, another opportunity to get right, and  
9 a gift my husband never had. And my little diva  
10 has just got him wrapped because she calls us mom  
11 an dad. But she know knows who her parent is.

12                   So when I said to Creator, "I  
13 don't know what love is. It's been a long journey  
14 --" and I know what it is. So he's not here. And  
15 somebody asked me is he coming? I don't want him  
16 to be here not because of any story or anything  
17 because when I went home these last few days, it  
18 was separate from this. And it was a place -- like  
19 a haven. I could go home and he could just say  
20 "How was your day?" He's got gentle, gentle hands.  
21 And he's gentle, you know.

22                   And I need that. I still need  
23 that. And I need love. And I need to belong. And  
24 I need to be kind because I'm not fragile because  
25 of what happened to me. Human beings are fragile.

1 I can embrace being fragile, so when I want to  
2 cry, I'll cry because I want to cry. I'm hurt.  
3 People will say how are you today, and I'll go, "Do  
4 you really want to know because I'll tell you,"  
5 because we're an having an hour conversation, eh?  
6 But I couldn't embrace my humanity and I'm fragile  
7 and I check with my friends all the time. When I  
8 say that, what am I saying like what's that about  
9 because I don't just trust in myself. It's a "we"  
10 life.

11 So I am very honoured to be with  
12 these women because Joanne is very patient with me,  
13 right, and everything that she offers me. And I'm  
14 not as -- I'm always busy and I'm always doing  
15 something. She patiently waited for a phone call  
16 for what, two or three months? And most people  
17 would walk away from me, right? Arlene has been  
18 with me as my white friend, helping me -- and her -  
19 - both of us on that journey. Finding where she  
20 went. Oh, I get it. We both had the ha-ha.

21 It's just a lie. And the 1 per  
22 cent need us to fight over it because they get to  
23 do all the stuff they're doing and, you know, they  
24 say that they don't have land in a country, they  
25 won't even have country. Then we'll say things

1 about corporations, well, there's people that are  
2 corporations, right. So these people are very,  
3 very sick, but -- and while I don't have a close  
4 relationship with both of these women, I know from  
5 my own journey that they couldn't be doing the work  
6 till they've gone through the journey, and I know  
7 they have more journey, but my heart goes because  
8 we're not recognizing them.

9                   This inquiry didn't recognize them  
10 because they weren't important of them, but for the  
11 future, we have women like them. Health Canada  
12 just needs to move over. Everybody just needs to  
13 move over, and we just need to step up. But it's  
14 about creating that space to do it. And it's  
15 really not about making us safe because as long as  
16 the disease is there, it's not safe. But we can't  
17 let us stop it, but I think the state has an  
18 obligation to teach on race relations.

19                   They need to teach in the North,  
20 have a place where we could do research on  
21 Indigenous studies. We don't have Indigenous  
22 studies up here. There's a lot that the North is  
23 missing. The South doesn't -- one more thing, and  
24 I promise I quit. It shocked me when I moved up  
25 here that the North is different than the South

1 because there's no reserves. And that's wrong.  
2 It's another lie. And up in the communities, we  
3 don't get our money, the GNWT -- and it goes into a  
4 public pool, and I can't wrap my mind around that  
5 one, right? So the state, the ledge will say on  
6 behalf of the state, we've engaged, we've consulted  
7 -- but they've fostered dependency. And anything  
8 that fosters dependency even with our children.  
9 We're not supposed to make our children dependent.

10 We're supposed to create a  
11 framework with which they can go into life, and we  
12 have to be non-interference, like it's not my place  
13 to tell -- when you sign, you cannot be -- like  
14 right now, he's working in the mall being security  
15 because he cares about the people both ways. They  
16 need to be -- and he gets hit on, spit on,  
17 criticized in the mail, you know, when you're  
18 Indigenous, you're hurting our people. But our  
19 people hurt themselves, so he's there to try to  
20 make sure they don't hurt other people while  
21 they're hurting themselves. But that money belongs  
22 to us.

23 And I think one of the biggest  
24 things that's happening is, you know, if I need to  
25 see a neurologist, they'll send me to Edmonton, no

1 problem. I can go see a neurologist, but if I need  
2 to see somebody that has shaking tent, you better  
3 have somebody that has shaking tent because if you  
4 want to access your non-insured health benefit to  
5 see a traditionalist that has that, you don't have  
6 one, too bad, so sad. And yet, they say they want  
7 to reconcile the colonial relationship but they're  
8 restricting my access, so I can go as far as the  
9 border.

10                   Again, United Nations Declaration  
11 Rights of Indigenous Peoples says those borders are  
12 false. So that is the supremacy. It's another  
13 thing that says we're superior. And then you have  
14 people like myself and my husband trying to educate  
15 nurses and doctors of the ways of our people when  
16 they state is saying the very opposite. And we're  
17 supposed to be grateful for the little crumbs off  
18 the table. It's very hard, my friend.

19                   I'm going to wrap up. I'm not  
20 doing politics class. Because life is political  
21 and I think you've heard enough. Families, you're  
22 going to hear more survivors. I just want to make  
23 sure that Justin hears that white supremacy is a  
24 lie, and until he gets rid of it, his apology means  
25 nothing. But if he doesn't want to come right out

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1 and ask for forgiveness, act like and you do and  
2 get rid of those policies that promote the lie of  
3 white supremacy because it's hurting not just the  
4 Indigenous people, it's hurting the rest of  
5 citizens in Canada because they have to live with  
6 it and the laughable privileges they get from it.  
7 So, merci cho for hearing me out. For people being  
8 so kind to stay and listen because I can talk  
9 forever. If anybody knows me, I talk talk, talk.  
10 So, merci.

11 MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you.  
12 Commissioner Robinson, do you have any comments or  
13 questions?

14 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:  
15 Thank you so much. I'm going to keep it simple. I  
16 want to thank you for saying these words over and  
17 over. The white supremacy. It's sugarcoated.  
18 It's not identified often enough, these ideas.  
19 Given in the processes we've been through so far,  
20 it's touched on, but those words, racism, classism,  
21 white supremacy, sometimes it seems hard to say  
22 because people are scared. So I want to thank you  
23 for the words that you've used.

24 I'm not going to say much more  
25 because I want your words to be the words that will

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1 resonate. I want to give you a couple of gifts.  
2 You might have heard about the gifts that we've  
3 been giving. They're not really gifts from me. I  
4 mean, a little bit, there will be. They're gifts  
5 from other women, Indigenous women across this  
6 country who want to bring you love. That's the  
7 simplest way I can describe it. So I'm going to  
8 put the mic down because I don't like talking to  
9 you through this, so I'm going to come over there.

10 MS. SANDRA LOCKHART: Robin just  
11 gave me eagle feathers. I mentioned that I was a  
12 Thunderbird and I gave you my name, but I'm from  
13 the Bald Eagle Clan. And remember I told you that  
14 you were either going to make me or break me.  
15 Well, being from the Bald Eagle Clan -- when  
16 they're going to mature, they fly to be alone and  
17 they'll break their own beak for anyone to grow and  
18 they'll pull out their own talons because that's  
19 the only way the new one will grow as well as  
20 they'll pull off some of their feathers because  
21 that's the only way the new one will come.

22 So if you could imagine that,  
23 that's what I'm saying when I say the truth that  
24 sets you free. But it's very painful because you  
25 have to pull out the old. And one of the things

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1 I'm responsible for is not only seeing the bigger  
2 picture, but to see the fine details. I feel like  
3 -- my people, they have their hats, their feathers  
4 that they wear and those are to be earned in the  
5 staffs. I feel like I just got a blessing from my  
6 ancestors. So, merci cho.

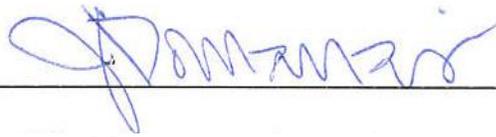
7 MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you  
8 with that. The hearing is adjourned.

9 --- **Exhibits (code: P01P09P0203)**

10 EXHIBIT 1: Folder containing  
11 two digital images brought by  
12 the family and displayed  
13 during their public hearing.

14 --- Whereupon proceeding adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I have, to the best  
of my skill and ability,  
accurately transcribed from a pre-existing  
recording  
the foregoing proceeding.



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Jovelle Domanais, Court Reporter