

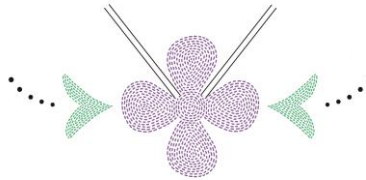
National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-gathering process – Part I Public Hearings
Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel**

Metro Vancouver, British Columbia



Public

Wednesday April 4, 2018

**Public Volume 80:
Anni Phillips & Kim Russel,
In Relation to Stella Ballantyne**

**Heard by Chief Commissioner Marion Buller
Commission Counsel: Meredith Porter**

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APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations	Julie McGregor (Legal counsel)
Government of British Columbia	Jean Walters (Legal counsel)
Government of Canada	Anne Turley (Legal counsel)
Heiltsuk First Nation	No Appearance
Northwest Indigenous Council Society	No Appearance
Our Place - Ray Cam Co- operative Centre	No Appearance
Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada	No Appearance
Vancouver Sex Workers' Rights Collective	No Appearance
Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak / Women of the Métis Nation	No Appearance

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1 Metro Vancouver, British Columbia

2 --- Upon commencing on Wednesday, April 4, 2018 at 14:50

3 **MS. MEREDITH PORTER:** Anni and Kim are here
4 to speak about Anni's mother, Stella Ballantyne. Stella
5 Ballantyne was found dead in December of 1978, and Kim and
6 Anni are going to be sharing a bit more detail with respect
7 to Stella Ballantyne and her death. But, prior to that,
8 I'll ask that they introduce themselves, and following
9 that, be promised in by the Registrar.

10 **MS. ANNI PHILLIPS:** Is this on? Okay.
11 Thank you. I'll just introduce my name, I'll start with
12 that, my name is Anni Margaret Louise Phillips, and I am
13 the daughter of the most beautiful Cree woman, Stella
14 Angeline Ballantyne, from Little Red River reserve in
15 Saskatchewan. Did you want to introduce yourself?

16 **MS. KIM RUSSEL:** Yes. Okay. I am Kim
17 Russel, I am Anni's partner, and with us is my mom, Darlene
18 Jones, and my stepfather, Dick Jones.

19 **MS. MEREDITH PORTER:** Thank you very much.
20 And, I'll ask the Registrar to promise in the witnesses.

21 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Good afternoon. Anni,
22 do you promise to tell the truth in a good way today?

23 **MS. ANNI PHILLIPS:** Yes, I do.

24 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Okay. Thank you, Anni.
25 Kim, do you promise to tell the truth in a good way this

1 afternoon? Okay. Thank you.

2 **MS. MEREDITH PORTER:** Thank you very much.

3 Anni, I'll start by asking you if you could just tell us a
4 little bit about your mom, Stella, and what you remember
5 about her ---

6 **MS. ANNI PHILLIPS:** Sure.

7 **MS. MEREDITH PORTER:** --- growing up.

8 **MS. ANNI PHILLIPS:** Can I hold an eagle
9 feather; would that be all right?

10 **MS. MEREDITH PORTER:** Absolutely.

11 **MS. ANNI PHILLIPS:** Thank you so much.

12 Thank you. Okay. Thank you. It's my hope today that I
13 can give justice to my mother and her story, and that I can
14 speak from my heart. I'm here because I want her name to
15 be known and our family to be known.

16 So, as I said before, my mother is Stella
17 Angeline Ballantyne. And, the other day when I was looking
18 at her name and I was looking at her middle name, and it's
19 Angeline, and the thought came to me, she came from a line
20 of angels, and it meant so much to me because I feel that
21 she has been with me for a very long time.

22 I've been with people who can see the spirit
23 world and they have said to me, Anni, your mother is here;
24 Anni, your mother is here. And, all along, when I think
25 about the unfoldment of how I got here today, my mother has

1 been with me, these little steps, these little feathers,
2 these little things along the way that brought me here, so
3 I know she's here today also.

4 My father, his name is Charles Phillips, and
5 he's Scottish, and it's -- I hear it's quite common for
6 Scottish men to love Cree women. I have five brothers;
7 Edward is the oldest, Brian, Noah, Steve, and then me, and
8 then my little brother, Lou. I also want to extend -- I
9 want to acknowledge my aunties and my uncles, my nieces and
10 nephews, and my mom's grandchildren and great
11 grandchildren.

12 I'm sorry, there's just so much that I've
13 been -- I've been carrying this story. I was 14 when I
14 first heard about my -- when my mom died. I'm probably
15 going to jump all over the place, I hope you can stay with
16 me. Me and my brothers have been carrying this story a
17 long, long time, and the thing I've learned through all of
18 this, how this all happened, how I got here today is
19 because I read the TRC summary. I read it three years ago
20 and I was astounded that I did not know our Indian history.
21 I didn't hear any of it. There was little whispers about
22 residential school. But, when I read that, I couldn't
23 believe it. And, it took me a week to read that and I
24 cried. I just cried and cried. But, I also healed.

25 Now, I've been on my healing journey about

1 25, 26 years, but when I read that, it was a big piece that
2 I needed to hear. It made so much sense to me. I could
3 not believe why -- why didn't I know that, why didn't our
4 family know that? I was just astounded by that. So, that
5 was step number one. And, also, that document, I call it a
6 healing document, also helped me to start finding my voice
7 because I never -- I never spoke very much about my life,
8 my story. Kim knew my whole story growing up, she's the
9 only one that knew the whole story. So, I've shared a
10 little bit, but that -- that summary was a pivotal moment
11 in my life in reading that and I've started to reclaim more
12 of my Indigenous self because of that.

13 So, I'll just backtrack a little bit. My
14 four older brothers -- so me and my little brother, Lou, we
15 have the same father and mother, and my four older brothers
16 have different -- there's my family up there. They have
17 different fathers. So, me and Lou lived with my dad and
18 mom, and I figure I was about maybe 3 or 4 when I remember
19 there being a fight. This is my earliest memory. There
20 was a fight between my mom and dad, and I remember the door
21 slamming, and I remember my mom going through that door,
22 and that's the only memory I have of her. And, that would
23 be the last time I would see her.

24 And, I'm so thankful that I had three or
25 four years with her, because my previous brothers didn't.

1 There is many different -- I'm sorry, my older brothers
2 didn't have time with her. Two of my brothers, Edward and
3 Noah, were raised by my mom's mom, Grandma Rosie. And, the
4 story -- so I've been collecting information before coming
5 here and getting the blessing of my brothers to tell our
6 story. So, it's interesting, all of this wonderful story
7 is coming out and I'm so glad to be carrying it with me
8 here today and telling.

9 So, Edward and Noah were raised by Grandma
10 Rosie, and she was a medicine woman, and -- I'll get more
11 to that other stuff. And, I was told that Grandma Rosie
12 got TB and then that's when they were sent to residential
13 school because she couldn't look after them, and then there
14 was no other family around at that time. Brian was raised
15 by his grandparents on his dad's side. So, they didn't --
16 you know, mom was not in their life at the early part of
17 their life. Now, Steve on the other hand, Steve found us
18 three years ago. We didn't know we had another brother and
19 he's a Sixties Scoop baby we find out. So, it was so
20 great, you know, to find another brother. I was hoping
21 there would be another sister. So, that's a little bit
22 about my brothers.

23 So, I was saying that I was about 4 when mom
24 left or when there was a fight, and I don't know the
25 details around that. My father sent me and Lou to live

1 with the white side of our family, so I lived in three
2 different homes. And, that's when I started to hear racist
3 comments from my white side of the family about how bad
4 Indians were. And then my father, he found another Cree
5 woman, partner -- as I say, he like Cree women. And so, I
6 went to go live with him and his partner -- and I'll call
7 her Eve, I won't say her name. And, I was about 9 when I
8 went to go live with dad and her family, and I -- that
9 would be the most traumatic part of my life.

10 Eve, I'm not sure if she went to residential
11 school, but I know that some of her children did because
12 that's when I heard whisperings of residential school, and
13 so I know some of them went. And, they were about five
14 years older than me and up, so Eve had a very extended,
15 large family and people would come and go out of that
16 house.

17 So, I experienced a lot of abuse living with
18 that stepfamily. Emotional, physical, sexual abuse. Eve
19 shut down any affection that my father showed me. The last
20 time I remember -- when I shortly went to go live with that
21 family, and dad was actually holding me, and Eve -- they
22 were drinking -- sorry, there was lots of alcohol and
23 violence and fighting also, in that home. And so, I
24 remember dad holding me and Eve just shutting that down,
25 like she was, yelling and screaming at him and putting me

1 down, and that was the last time he ever showed me any
2 affection. That was the last time he stopped protecting me
3 with all of the abuse that was happening in that house.

4 Eve hated me. My brothers tell me stories,
5 do you remember when Eve threw a stereo at you? And, I
6 can't remember that. She would humiliate me in front of
7 everyone. And, when her sons were sexually abusing me,
8 everyone turned a blind eye to that, and we all knew it was
9 happening in the house. And, I remember a memory and one
10 of Eve's sons -- I tell you, I must have been so protected
11 because it could have been so much worse.

12 And, one of Eve's sons, I'll call him Joe,
13 knew I was home alone. I was getting ready to go to high
14 school. And, I can hear him running in the house, running
15 straight to my bedroom. It was early morning. Everyone
16 was out drinking the night before, I was the only one home.
17 And, I remember him coming up the stairs, and I could feel
18 what was about to happen. I was changing, quickly trying
19 to get my clothes on, and -- and I won't go into detail,
20 but he threw me on the bed and I remember -- I just
21 remembered to scream. And, I screamed at the top of my
22 lungs for my father, and by some miracle, he got off me. I
23 cannot -- I don't know. I had help and protection. He got
24 off me and I got ready for school. My friends came and
25 pick me up, and I shut down my emotion. And, already my

1 emotion was -- all my emotions and feelings were shut down
2 because I had experienced so much trauma and violence. So,
3 I put my clothes on and I went to school, my friends came
4 and picked me up and asked me how I was doing, and I just
5 put on a face and went to school.

6 So, the reason why I tell you that story
7 about Joe -- I will come back to Joe. So, things were
8 getting pretty bad. The older I got, the more I felt like
9 I was being hunted in my house. There were lots of men.
10 Eve had many sons in that house, and so I felt like I was
11 just trying to fight everyone off.

12 So, after that incident with Joe, I don't
13 know how it happened, but I remember telling one of Eve's
14 daughters that this is what had happened -- they were
15 living in a separate house -- and they said to me, oh, yes,
16 he tried that on me too, and I just kicked him. And, there
17 was just no -- oh, yes, you know, common -- whatever. Just
18 deal with it. And, I remember I couldn't go back to that
19 house because we all lived there. Joe lived there.

20 So, I stayed with my stepsisters. I felt so
21 unsafe. And, I remember sleeping in the front closet
22 because I needed a small place where I -- all the -- there
23 were protection around me. And, I remember staying there
24 for four days and waiting for my father to come -- come and
25 save me, come and protect me. And so, the day that he came

1 -- he wanted to know where I was, him and Eve came, and he
2 opened up the closet door and I pretended I was sleeping.
3 I thought, oh, good, he's going to come and he's going to
4 hug me, and he's going to hold me and tell me, I'll protect
5 you, let's go home, my girl. And, all he did was, he just
6 opened up the closet and Eve said, oh, she's sleeping, and
7 then they closed the door. I never got any protection.
8 And, I knew at that time that I had to do this all on my
9 own. There was nobody there for me.

10 After that incident, dad took me and my
11 brother -- and we actually got a separate place away from
12 that family, so something must have been talked about.
13 But, then slowly, that family, those members started to
14 come to that house. Joe was allowed in that house. After
15 what he just tried to do to me, dad let him in. It made no
16 sense to me. I had locks in my doors, butter knives in the
17 door jam to sleep at night.

18 And, my dad was angry. I think he blamed me
19 because he loved Eve. I would see them holding each other
20 in bed, so I knew they loved each other. And, he was mad
21 at me. I think he blamed me, that we had to live
22 separately from this family. And, one night in an
23 argument, he was yelling at me and he -- my dad never hit
24 me, but this one night, he tried to hit me. And, I stopped
25 him with my hand and -- he's over top of me and I stopped

1 him, and he -- it's like he snapped out of it and he
2 stopped. And, that was the night that I ran away, I was 14
3 or 15, and I never went back. I got a social work -- the
4 guidance counsellor at school helped me. I got a social
5 worker who came with me to tell my dad I would not be going
6 back home. My best friend, her father became my guardian.
7 My best friend also became my partner, my lover, so I was
8 also discovering I was a two-spirit person on top of all of
9 the other stuff that was going on.

10 So, I finished high school -- there is this
11 -- there must have been these angels, my grandmother and my
12 mother, helpers with me, because how I escaped this, I have
13 no idea. I finished school, I got a job, I bought a truck.
14 Like, where did this strength come from? So, that's how my
15 high school was.

16 I want to go back and weave in how my mother
17 tied into all of this, and my brothers. So, 14, I'm -- one
18 of Eve's daughters actually told me that -- she came to me
19 and she said in such a matter of fact, no empathy and no
20 compassion, just said, your mother is dead. And, I was
21 shocked and also numb. Like, looking for a sense of -- how
22 do I deal with this? But, I understand now, why it was
23 done that way and I'll explain that.

24 And then when I was either 17 or 18, I had
25 met a couple of my brothers. So, I met Brian previously at

1 a powwow at Mistawasis, my first powwow. And, I didn't
2 even know I had other brothers, and he said, yes, we -- you
3 have two more brothers. And so, when I was 17 or 18, Brian
4 brought another brother to me, and I believe it was Noah at
5 the time. And, that's when I first found out how my mother
6 died.

7 And, they had said to me that she was found
8 in a hotel room and she was -- she looked pretty beat up.
9 And, again, there was no emotion from me or my brothers, we
10 were void of emotion. And, I've come to understand -- I've
11 been angry for a long, long time. Like, if my brothers and
12 my family knew this, and I find out later that it was my
13 Uncle Wilson that had to go and claim the body.

14 And, as time went on, I'm finding out more
15 details, more details about this. And, I remember feeling
16 really angry. Like, why didn't anyone do anything? Why
17 didn't they go and find out, get a -- like, what happened
18 to her? This is all we knew. I was so young. Like, I
19 just -- I had already knew to be afraid of the police by
20 living with Eve's family. The police would come to the
21 door and everyone would scatter and hide.

22 So, as I became older, I began to understand
23 that now I know, after -- you know, that's why they
24 couldn't go and find out more, because the police do not
25 serve and protect Indians. They only re-traumatize us and

1 look at us like we're sub-human. And, I had a -- so I'll
2 come back to Joe.

3 After I ran away, I would still go and visit
4 my father, but I stay away from Eve's family. Even though
5 they called me "little sister" -- you know, that's the
6 Indigenous way; right? Stepfamilies, they're your brothers
7 and sisters. Yet I couldn't understand that, they would
8 call me "little sister" and yet they would abuse me, and so
9 I became afraid of them. And, as a result of that, I
10 became afraid of Indigenous people in general because that
11 was my experience.

12 So, back to my father. I would still go
13 visit him and I was trying to keep a relationship with him
14 and -- come and see me, he would say. And, I would say,
15 stop drinking and I will come and see you, because I don't
16 want to see you when you're drunk. He said, yes, if you
17 come home -- come home, I'll stop drinking, and I wanted to
18 believe him, but I've heard so many promises before. I
19 would still go visit him.

20 And, we had a Tuesday -- I remember the day,
21 it was a Tuesday visit schedule at 11:00, something like
22 that. So, I went to go see him, he knew I was coming, and
23 he was drinking, and I felt so betrayed by him. He wanted
24 me to come home, but you keep drinking. And, I remember
25 leaving him. I was so mad at him and I slammed the door.

1 And, that was the last time I saw him. Joe went to go
2 visit my dad, he heard that dad was drinking and there was
3 alcohol there. So, Joe broke into the house, they got into
4 a fight, and Joe -- Joe choked my father to death. I was
5 18.

6 I was already afraid of the police. There
7 was -- I can't -- I was in shock, I was terrified -- I was
8 already terrified of that family. I was afraid they were
9 going to come after me. I couldn't go and find out what
10 happened to my father. To this day, I don't know. I know
11 who was in that house at that time. No one went to jail
12 for that.

13 And, I want to say that because I've read
14 the TRC and I know what has been done to Indigenous people
15 in this country, and that I know that Eve and her family --
16 and I know the effects of colonialism, and residential
17 school, and Sixties Scoop would have destroyed that family
18 also, because I lived with them, I lived with that family.

19 I protected their names here today because I
20 don't want to hurt them. I know why those things happened.
21 And, I have forgiven them. I love them. Because I know
22 how they got there, I know what had happened to them. So,
23 I don't know if they'll hear this and if they'll recognize
24 my name, but I want them to know it's okay, I love you and
25 I forgive you, and I wish you great healing. Thank you.

1 So, with my mother -- you know, after
2 reading the TRC and having this huge piece of the puzzle
3 come together for me, and starting to find my voice, I
4 wanted to find out more about my mom. I wanted to start
5 putting pieces together, who was she. From one little
6 piece of this too, because it's all a part of it, it's like
7 from the age of 18, after my father died, I left Saskatoon
8 and I moved to Edmonton because -- you know, finding my
9 two-spiritedness, I needed to find more two-spirited people
10 and I knew there were some in Edmonton. So, I went to
11 Edmonton to find another part of my tribe. You know, I was
12 just searching for pieces of me and -- but during that time
13 -- this is a sad part, you know? I go back, and I think
14 about it and -- I was 18, I didn't start my healing journey
15 until I was 25. I started the year before Kim and I met,
16 and we have been together for 27 years. Thank you.

17 So, when I went to Edmonton, the sad part of
18 this is, in order to heal, I had to leave my Indigenous
19 family; right? It was too hard. So, I severed ties with
20 Eve's family. I had to. There was too much pain there.
21 And, my Ballantyne family, my brothers were trying to, you
22 know, make connection, but I was afraid of them. I was
23 afraid of them because I had no trust for Indigenous
24 people. My brothers, if you're listening to me, I'm sorry.
25 I'm sorry to say this. I don't want to hurt you with that,

1 but I was afraid of you. So, you would come around and you
2 would try to get to know me, but I was afraid of you, I had
3 to keep you at arms-length.

4 So, I met Kim in Edmonton. We were friends
5 for three years before we started dating because we were
6 with other people. And, you know, there's this saying
7 that, even though I didn't go to residential school,
8 residential school came to me, it came to our communities.
9 It doesn't matter if we didn't go, we all experienced what
10 it was like. It affects all of us.

11 And so, I had two emotions, depression and
12 anger. I was either dead with depression, with no hope,
13 not wanting to be here, not wanting to be alive, or I had
14 anger. Something would trigger me, and I would just -- I
15 would be in rage. And, that started to show up in my
16 relationship -- my relationships. So, when I met Kim, I
17 wanted her to love me so bad, but I didn't trust her, and I
18 tested her. I tested her over and over again, and she
19 passed because she's still here.

20 I brought violence into our relationship and
21 it's hard to admit that. There's a lot of shame. All that
22 violence that happened to me, I had been carrying that and
23 I didn't know how to deal with it. So, I just started my
24 healing journey just a year before meeting her, and all of
25 this stuff started coming up and it came out, all that

1 anger, all that rage, all that deep, deep sadness, all that
2 loss. We had a rocky go. We almost separated many times,
3 but we stuck it out because Kim -- in my previous
4 relationship, when that came out, I was shamed. I was
5 told, you're sick, you need to go get help, and that only
6 made me feel worse about myself. I only buried myself
7 deeper. But, when Kim came to me -- Kim knew my whole life
8 story, so she knew -- I had felt enough trust in her to
9 tell her everything. So, she knew where I had come from.
10 And, I remember the first time I told her, she could not
11 believe that something like that would happen to another
12 human being, all that trauma, all that abuse and violence.
13 And, the sad part is, this is a common story for many, man,
14 many Indigenous people. I'm not the only one. So, when
15 she heard my story and I would burst into rage, she would
16 remember that, and she would give me grace. She would
17 remember, I know this is not who you are. She -- it wasn't
18 easy for her.

19 There was a pivotal moment when I wanted to
20 do myself in. She stayed with me, she would not let me
21 leave the house, because if I got out of the house, I would
22 -- that was it. Because she's bigger and stronger than me,
23 thank God, she didn't let me out. When I woke up in the
24 morning, Kim was laying in front of the door because she
25 didn't want to let me out of the bedroom. She was

1 protecting me like a sentinel waiting, like you're not
2 getting out of here. And, in that moment, it was pivotal
3 for me, someone loved me with everything they had.

4 And, Kim also said to me, Anni -- with my
5 anger and my rage, she came to me with the biggest love and
6 the biggest heart. She didn't say, you're sick and you
7 need to get help. She said, Anni, with the greatest love
8 in her voice, I love you, but this can't happen anymore,
9 and that helped me to keep walking on my healing journey
10 and I'm so glad, every step. So, I keep telling Kim I owe
11 a great deal -- her strength and her love have helped me.

12 So, on the healing journey, I wanted to know
13 more. I'm in Edmonton and I'm a province away from my
14 family and they want to be around me, and I'm still holding
15 them back, but I want to know who are we, who are Cree
16 people, Indigenous people? And, in Edmonton, there were
17 people around that were doing talking circles and there was
18 a Mother Earth Healing Society in Edmonton, and so I
19 started going, and oh, my God, it was like coming home.
20 Talking about the eagle feather and the smudge, and hearing
21 some Cree and -- Eve's family spoke Cree, you know? And,
22 it was -- it's just like music to my ears to hear Cree
23 being spoken. It's so soft and beautiful and gentle.

24 So, I began to seek out Indigenous people
25 and attended ceremonies. And, my first sweat lodge was

1 with a powerful Cree woman, her name is Rose Oshe (ph) from
2 Driftpile, Alberta. Oh, was she so powerful. She has
3 since passed on. She gave me a Cree name, and I want to
4 learn it in -- how to say it in Cree, but she gave me
5 Prairie Flower Woman in that sweat lodge. I will never
6 forget her. Man, she's -- wow. And so, I started seeking
7 out more and more ceremony. I started to go home a little
8 bit more.

9 So, I brought -- the Ballantyne family
10 reunion, this was another pivotal moment. My brothers
11 organized to have a family reunion and we had a ceremony.
12 I got to meet my Uncle Wilson for the very first time, and
13 many, many, many Ballantyne relatives and cousins. And, to
14 hear the word, "Auntie, auntie", you know? And, it's so
15 funny going home and seeing all these people, meeting them
16 for the first time, and looking at you, like their faces
17 light up. I felt like a rock star, like I was somebody
18 famous, you know? Just so welcomed, so loved and -- so
19 that started my, you know, healing, to not be so afraid of
20 my family and my brothers. And then I met another
21 beautiful Cree man just outside of Edmonton, again who took
22 me to ceremony. So, you know, all these helpers along the
23 way, all along the way, just beautiful.

24 I moved to B.C. and I lost touch with
25 ceremony and I lost touch with those things that meant

1 something to me, and I just dove into my work and my job,
2 and -- you know what I did? I started on the colonial --
3 the wheel, you know, the hamster wheel, because I'm hearing
4 -- which you're supposed to do. You're supposed to get an
5 education, and then a job, and then a house, and a white
6 picket fence and all that stuff, and so I started doing
7 those things because that's what you're supposed to do and
8 I -- thank God, I think it was three, four years ago, I
9 realized the insanity of it. Like, oh, my God, like
10 really, this is what is valued in this world, and stopped.

11 Kim and I had a -- we actually had two art
12 businesses together, and that second one, I remember having
13 -- after such a busy Christmas season, I remember sitting
14 in the bathroom and crying, and going, this is insane. Why
15 am I living this way? What kind of life is this? We can't
16 do this anymore.

17 So, we sold our house and we stopped our
18 business, and I took that time to heal. I gave myself to
19 time to heal, and then that's when the TRC appeared. I had
20 been divinely guided, I cannot tell you. I read the TRC --
21 I just want to make sure, before I get into that part of
22 the story, if there's anything else I want to say about --
23 I had lost touch with, you know, like -- because I'm two
24 provinces away, I would still keep in touch with my family
25 even not seeing them as much, and still yearning, yearning

1 for Indigenous connection.

2 And, I live in the beautiful Syilx territory
3 in the Okanagan, and it was so great because I would --
4 Indigenous people are a little more visible there. The
5 reserve, it's just across the channel, and so I -- Joanne
6 (ph) is from that territory and I'm so glad you're here.

7 And, it started to warm my heart, look at
8 all these beautiful people, but you know, I'm Cree and, you
9 know, I was hesitant and a little shy to -- like, I didn't
10 know, can I just go to their reserve and start to make
11 friends, you know, and all that stuff. So, still staying a
12 little in touch with my family, not as much. Longing for
13 connection with Indigenous people. Feeling that gaping
14 hole in my heart where -- back to my mother, gaping hole in
15 my heart. Always thinking of her. Always wondering about
16 her death.

17 It was only a year ago -- because I read the
18 TRC, because I started hearing about the Missing and
19 Murdered Inquiry, because I was starting to get my voice
20 and my strength, it was only a year ago that I called the
21 Inquiry and said I want -- I want my mother on that.
22 That's 38 years of carrying that knowledge, that there was
23 something wrong about the way she died. It wasn't right.
24 I finally got the courage. And, I'll tell you what
25 happened, my heart was beating when I called that phone

1 number, I didn't know what to -- what would I say. I
2 called that number and spoke to a very kind woman and told
3 me how things would happen.

4 And, I remember I burst into tears after I
5 got off the phone, it was a relief, and I knew I did the
6 right thing. I was so terrified to do that, to make that
7 phone call. When I walked outside, and we have gravel on
8 the outside of the yard, and I walked this trail, how many
9 years have I walked this trail, and I was walking along it
10 to go get into my vehicle, and I heard a ping. I go, hm,
11 that sounds like metal, and I look down, and it was a
12 copper penny. Now, we haven't had copper pennies in Canada
13 for how long? Now, when I looked down, I knew that was
14 from my mother, and so I picked it up and I put it in this
15 pouch.

16 And then I went to go Google what -- I knew
17 that copper meant something. I Googled, and it stands for
18 truth and justice, and that's what my mother was telling
19 me, Anni, you did the right thing. It was a message from
20 her. And then today, when I heard -- when copper was given
21 as a gift, and it's the highest offering, it just means
22 that much more to me, so I wanted to share that.

23 So, I want to talk a little bit about my
24 mother. And, I only received the coroner's report, I
25 think, maybe three weeks ago, four weeks ago, something

1 like that. It was really hard to read. FILU. I just want
2 to thank FILU for helping me because they helped me get
3 that report. There is no police report -- they cannot find
4 a police report. Yes.

5 So, on the report, it says that mom had a
6 high level of alcohol and darvon in her system, and that it
7 was quite -- a sufficient amount to cause her death.
8 However, there were bruises all over every part of her
9 body; there were bruises on either side of her neck; there
10 were bruises on her chest; there were four little circular
11 bruises on the inside of her arm, like someone had grabbed
12 her; bruises all over her arms and her legs. There were
13 older bruises on her face, and it appeared that her lips
14 were bruised and a healing laceration on the inside of her
15 mouth. Huge bruise on the back of her head. But, the
16 biggest part that stands out to me is that she had a broken
17 jaw. My mom would have been in extreme pain with that
18 broken jaw. And, I think she was self medicating that
19 evening.

20 And, what makes me -- this coroner's report
21 makes me ask more questions than giving me answers, but it
22 at least gives me a little peace. Why did my mom feel like
23 she couldn't have sought medical help? Was she afraid of
24 -- to go to the doctor, to go get help? Did she feel shame
25 and unworthiness? I know I have felt great shame and

1 unworthiness just being an Indigenous woman. Maybe she
2 didn't feel she was worthy or maybe she wasn't allowed to
3 go. Maybe the person -- to me, she looks like she was
4 beaten up. I don't know who did that to her. Maybe she
5 wasn't allowed to go seek help.

6 The story I hear is that mom was trying to
7 get home, back to the reserve. It was December 22nd, it's
8 Christmas time. And, apparently, she was married. On her
9 coroner's report, it's Stella Angeline Coup (ph). I don't
10 know who this Coup person is. Why was it my Uncle Wilson
11 that had to go claim the body? My Uncle Wilson told my
12 brother that when he went to go get the body, the way the
13 police treated him was, come and get this piece of trash.
14 And, that was the same for me when I had to go claim the
15 personal effects of my father at the police station.

16 I'm 18 years old and I go in, and this
17 officer across from the desk slides over the package,
18 doesn't say a damn thing to me, and looks at me with such
19 disgust. I felt so dirty. Like, I was sub-human in that
20 moment. No compassion, no nothing, just take this shit out
21 of here. And, I imagine that that's how my uncle felt.

22 And, I understand why none of the family
23 could go and investigate further, for fear -- well, what
24 would happen to them if they went? They would probably be
25 re-traumatized again and they would face racism. I

1 understand now -- for the longest time, I was angry. Why,
2 why did no one go and find out? And, I understand now.

3 So, through the series of reading the TRC,
4 finding my voice, healing, healing, healing, calling the
5 Inquiry, and other many magical things that have happened
6 that brought me here today is truly amazing. I know I was
7 supposed to be here. And, at first, when I was asked if I
8 wanted to testify, I said no, I didn't want to come. I was
9 afraid. I didn't know what would happen. I didn't know
10 how I would feel. But, some other wonderful magical things
11 happened that brought me here, and I knew I was supposed to
12 be here and tell mom's story.

13 So, I want to say -- I called all of my
14 brothers, what would you like me to say, when I come, about
15 our mother? She was dearly loved. Dearly loved, dearly
16 missed, thought of all the time. My brother, Brian, tells
17 me that his children and his grandchildren ask about her,
18 who is this woman, and it breaks his heart. We didn't get
19 a chance to know her. There's that gaping hole, the
20 matriarch.

21 My brother, Steve, the Sixties Scoop baby,
22 texted me this morning -- I texted him last night and I
23 said, Steve, is there anything you want me to say? And, he
24 said, same thing, how much she's loved and that -- but the
25 other really -- thing that he said was, tell them that I

1 was a Sixties Scoop baby, and then he says, nah, you don't
2 have to say that. That's irrelevant. That broke my heart
3 to read that. We've all felt irrelevant for so long, like
4 we don't matter. I said, Steve, it's so relevant. It's a
5 part of the big picture.

6 I think for the longest time I didn't
7 realize I couldn't touch that, that part of me that misses
8 my mom so much, and I never got that chance. I didn't get
9 that chance. And, one of the things, you know, when I --
10 when I look at Kim and the beautiful relationship she has
11 with her mom, it's so beautiful to watch. It fills me up,
12 but it also reminds me of what I don't have. If mom was
13 still alive today, I would know -- like, we would have lots
14 to heal. It took a long time to get to that place because
15 of what has been done to us.

16 The previous person that told the truth
17 beforehand had said, they came for the matriarch; right?
18 She called it the root, that it was done on purpose. Go
19 for the women and their children.

20 Now, on the other side, a lot has happened
21 to us. But, it's interesting, last night, as we were doing
22 the opening ceremony, and I'm looking around the room and
23 seeing all of this happening, and all I could see was
24 beautiful, strong, resilient women, two-spirited -- I
25 forget all the acronyms that go with that. Non-binary,

1 trans -- all I just saw was our beauty. And, I don't
2 understand, in this society, when I see our beauty and our
3 strength, how there can be so much hate in the psyche of
4 some people in Canada. The one thing that really stood --
5 is the young 18-year-old man that threw a trailer hitch at
6 an Indigenous woman. When we're so beautiful, I don't
7 understand that, that there's so much hate in their heart.

8 So, what I want to say -- there has been so
9 many beautiful recommendations that have been said and what
10 would I recommend? There's still so much healing that has
11 to be done in our communities. Coming here has been so
12 healing for me, so healing. Being around all these
13 beautiful Indigenous people has filled me up, has given me
14 even more strength.

15 So, part of my -- when I think about how we
16 can heal, like I just see how we love and support each
17 other here, and within our communities, you know, we're
18 still dealing with lateral violence and internalized
19 racism, and I think, man, if we could ever just come
20 together and start supporting each other, start lifting
21 each other up like we do here. If we could bring this home
22 to our reserves, we would be even more unstoppable than we
23 are now. This Canada would change real quick. Here is
24 something I wrote. What did I say? Maybe that will be my
25 last point that I will say around that.

1 So, we've all talked about colonialism, and
2 residential school and Sixties Scoop, and how that was
3 designed on purpose to eliminate or assimilate us. And, I
4 love it -- I love it, every time someone says, we're still
5 here, we are still here, that -- I'll never get tired of
6 hearing that. We're still here. We're still strong.
7 We're still resilient and getting even stronger. Wow.
8 Like, the things I see and the change, it's just -- yes,
9 it's slow, but man, it is happening and that gives me so
10 much hope.

11 So, what is happening back home in -- I live
12 outside of Penticton, because of the TRC, someone started
13 -- a non-Indigenous person started a TRC reading challenge.
14 And, non-Indigenous people started reading that in our
15 little community. They put it out to our little community.
16 So, it was read over a few months and then, well, let's get
17 together and talk about how we feel about what we just
18 read. And so, almost 30 people got together. I was the
19 only Indigenous person at that meeting. I was terrified to
20 be there. I've never -- as an Indigenous person and
21 hearing all the racism and all that growing up, I've never
22 actually talked about -- well, actually, on purpose, I
23 denied for the longest time that I was Indigenous. I hid
24 that from people in order to survive. You know, I was
25 ashamed. I have that shame.

1 And so, part of -- the TRC and reclaiming
2 myself, and sitting with all those non-Indigenous people --
3 I was shaking because I wasn't sure, is this going to break
4 out into an Indigenous bashing again? Am I going to be the
5 only Indigenous person here, sitting and listening to this?
6 And, I was amazed. All these non-Indigenous people were
7 livid with anger. Livid. They couldn't believe that they
8 didn't know the real history of Canada and they were damn
9 mad about it, and they wanted to do something about it.

10 Now, the interesting thing is, they're going
11 around saying how angry they are. When it came to me to
12 speak, I said, I've been angry my whole life and I just
13 want peace. I don't want to live in anger anymore. I want
14 to live in love. So, you be angry.

15 So, that started to give me hope. So, that
16 TRC group has been going for a couple of years. So, what's
17 happening there is non-Indigenous people are learning the
18 truth, and not only are they learning it, they want to know
19 more. They want to know what is racism, what does it look
20 like, what causes racism, how do we interrupt racism,
21 what's white privilege? What's -- they're just looking at
22 everything. And, we've had some tough conversations, like
23 I -- when I sit with that group in the first few meetings,
24 I was still shaking, you know, because I still wasn't sure
25 what would happen. But, they're learning. They're really

1 learning. They're willing. And, the hope is that as they
2 learn and -- they undo colonialism. Because I think if we
3 look at the truth, colonialism doesn't serve any of us.
4 Colonialism, to me, is individualism. Colonialism brought
5 sexism, it brought homophobia, it brought a lot of things
6 that aren't healthy. And, I wonder sometimes, does it
7 serve any of us?

8 So, I'm seeing some hope. And, what's
9 happening is that, as they're learning, when they go out
10 into their non-Indigenous communities, they're learning.
11 What happens if one of my friends says something racist,
12 how am I going to interrupt that? What am I going to do to
13 stop that? And so, there's going to be this ripple effect
14 that's going to go out because they need to talk to their
15 people.

16 And, there's a second circle I sit in, the
17 circle is for reconciliation that was started in Penticton.
18 And, again, there's more non-Indigenous people wanting to
19 come and learn. And, there's a format online,
20 circlesforreconciliation.ca, so we decided to try it. What
21 does this feel like? And, we went through a few weeks of
22 -- so there's information on there and it talks about
23 residential school and MMIW and -- you know, many, many
24 different things. We were talking about these things.
25 And, I'm one Indigenous person, and then there's one other

1 Indigenous person that shows up every once in a while, but
2 it's mostly, again, non-Indigenous people that are wanting
3 this information.

4 And so, we were done at the end of our six
5 or eight or ten weeks that we were going to run -- it was
6 just a basic information, just start -- just get them
7 started and looking. And, we were going to have a final
8 meeting, and okay, that's it, we've gone through the thing.
9 And, all of them said, no, we don't want to end this. Can
10 we keep going? They want to know more. Can we stick
11 together? Can we continue to make change somehow? So,
12 again, I see more hope.

13 And, the other part of this is -- so I'm
14 building -- it's all about building relationships, you
15 know? Our family systems have been fractured, so I got to
16 learn how to build relationships again with my family.
17 Healthy relationships. And, I have to learn how to build
18 relationships with non-Indigenous people, so -- I'm sorry.
19 With Indigenous people. So, both sides. Did I get that
20 right? It's all about building relationships.

21 And so, we heal in our Indigenous community,
22 and then the non-Indigenous community is learning the
23 truth, and then how do we come together? How can we come
24 together in a healthy and safe way to start to build
25 relationships, to start to heal all those lies that all

1 sides have been told about each other? We need to heal of
2 that.

3 So, we need -- I want non-Indigenous people
4 to see how beautiful we are. We are so beautiful and
5 gracious. With all the violence that has been done to us
6 -- the Syilx people in the Okanagan, they have ceremonies
7 and invite all public to come to -- not all ceremonies, but
8 certain ceremonies. Of all the violence that has been done
9 to them, they still have the grace to invite all people to
10 their ceremonies. It's so beautiful to watch.

11 And, the other thing I've been thinking
12 about, okay, if it was up to Anni, what would my
13 recommendations be. I am so tired of watching movies that
14 perpetuate racism. I'm tired of the -- there was a recent
15 film released in Canada -- I don't even know the name of it
16 and I don't even want to know about it. Same damn story
17 about Indians and that the Indians had done something wrong
18 to the white people, and the white people were going to do
19 something about it. It doesn't tell the whole story or the
20 true story. If this was my Canada, those types of movies
21 would not be allowed to play. I am sick and tired of
22 movies that perpetuate racism.

23 I'm tired of movies and -- or TV shows, or
24 any media -- I'm tired of watching movies where women are
25 raped and murdered. What kind of society do we have that

1 has violence and rape and murder in them, and this is our
2 entertainment? What does that say? I don't understand
3 that. So, if it was my Canada, I would ban all those
4 movies. I want to start seeing more things in -- out
5 there, everywhere about how beautiful and strong we are in
6 our -- our cultures.

7 My God, our cultures. I'm just coming back
8 to learn about my culture. And, every ceremony I come to,
9 everything is done with intention, it's incredible to me.
10 Every time I lead a ceremony, I just go, God, I love our
11 cultures. Indigenous culture is so beautiful, so
12 thoughtful.

13 I think I, sort of, covered everything.
14 Maybe the last thing I wanted to say -- because I'm
15 thinking about, like, how -- how can we heal this in
16 Canada? We have to help each other find our way back to
17 our hearts, that means Indigenous and non-Indigenous. All
18 of us; right? When I sit in those circle with those non-
19 Indigenous people, I tell them the truth about what I
20 experienced growing up and it makes it real for them.
21 They're not reading it in a book.

22 They helped me find my voice. By me sitting
23 in that circle with them and talking about what happened to
24 me, little bits here and there, speaking up as an
25 Indigenous people in front of all of these non-Indigenous

1 people, in a way, they helped me find my voice. So, I'm
2 helping them and they're helping me.

3 In all of this, I see -- you know, someone
4 had said about -- we have been stripped of our humanity,
5 all of us; right? In order for a non-Indigenous person to
6 hate us, somewhere along the way, they've been stripped of
7 their humanity. They've been shut down. How can you hate
8 -- how can you throw a trailer hitch at someone if your
9 humanity hasn't been lost somewhere along the way? What
10 have you been taught? And so, I think how do we all come
11 back to our hearts and back to our humanity. So, whatever
12 -- any programs that can help us do that, can we get
13 funding for that?

14 I think that's everything. Thank you. And,
15 besides all the recommendations, those are beautiful, I
16 would say -- and everything she said. Thank you.

17 **MS. MEREDITH PORTER:** Kim, do you have any
18 comments that you wanted to share?

19 **MS. KIM RUSSEL:** Hello. I'll just make it
20 very brief. When I first met Anni, when we were friends,
21 she was very quiet and very meek, and I had to tell her
22 girlfriend at the time to just shut up for a minute so Anni
23 could speak once in a while.

24 And, when we got together and she told me
25 her story, she trusted me enough to tell me her story, I

1 was completely shocked and -- but there's -- thank God she
2 did, because when we went through our challenges, I felt in
3 my heart that I didn't want to be a person who let her
4 down. If she had come through this travesty of a
5 background and -- where nobody showed her love, not even
6 her father, you know, very rarely, and -- I wanted to be
7 that person.

8 And, in our most challenging time, we
9 actually read a book called Return to Love by Marianne
10 Williamson. And, in that book, it talks about a holy
11 relationship and that being where you both come together to
12 heal, and then when you've moved through your healing
13 journey, you go out into the world and you try and help
14 others to heal.

15 And, that's, kind of, been our mandate to
16 work through. And, I've seen Anni just struggle and work
17 her hardest to undo what she learned about herself and move
18 through her shame. And, one amazing thing to me was, for a
19 person who hadn't been shown much love, how loving she is.
20 And, you'll hear so many people, my family, my friends will
21 say like, what a heart -- a huge heart she has and they can
22 feel it in her. And, that's what I felt.

23 So, I feel honoured to be here, I feel
24 honoured to have witnessed your journey, to be by your
25 side. And, I also want to acknowledge Stella for bringing

1 me and my family the greatest gift. That's it.

2 And, if I would say, my recommendation is
3 that I think we need -- there is something about having the
4 history in books, but I don't think that instils empathy.
5 So, if there can somehow be some empathy education, whether
6 that's showing videos of, you know, people telling their
7 story, if they're willing to have those presented, or if
8 they would be willing to share their stories personally,
9 because I have seen how it's changed -- it changed me to
10 know the truth, and its changed people once they've heard
11 Anni's story. And, reading the TRC was one thing, but
12 having somebody there really embodying that experience was
13 moving, and life changing and inspiring. So, that's my two
14 bits. Thank you.

15 **MS. MEREDITH PORTER:** Thank you, Kim. Well,
16 I do have just a couple of questions with respect to
17 clarifying a couple of details. And, you know, I want to
18 preface my questions with just acknowledging the strength
19 and, really, the beauty that you've demonstrated in your
20 evidence today, and how you've really articulated, you
21 know, human gifts of kindness and forgiveness in your
22 evidence, and I want to thank you for sharing that.

23 My questions relate to the -- first of all,
24 you mentioned with respect to the coroner's report that you
25 got with respect to your mother's death, and you mentioned

1 that there were -- that you're not aware of any
2 investigation reports from police, RCMP. Do you know if
3 any efforts were made by the detachment in the area to
4 investigate the circumstances of her death?

5 **MS. ANNI PHILLIPS:** I don't know. Like,
6 anyone from my family hasn't said. I've kept asking them,
7 right, and no one has said that, yes, they're -- no one has
8 mentioned that any investigation has ever been done.

9 **MS. MEREDITH PORTER:** Okay.

10 **MS. ANNI PHILLIPS:** Yes.

11 **MS. MEREDITH PORTER:** Okay. Thank you. And
12 then with respect to your father's death, with Joe, were
13 there ever any charges or convictions with respect to his
14 death or the circumstances in his death?

15 **MS. ANNI PHILLIPS:** I'm not sure if there
16 were any charges. I know -- I believe that he was taken
17 down to the station because he was in the house. There
18 were two other people in the house, but they were in the
19 basement, they were related to Joe -- or one was related to
20 Joe. Yes -- no conviction, no jail time, no nothing.

21 **MS. MEREDITH PORTER:** No charges?

22 **MS. ANNI PHILLIPS:** I'm not sure. I'd have
23 to -- yes, I'm not sure about the charges, if he -- yes.

24 **MS. MEREDITH PORTER:** Okay. Okay. Thank
25 you. Chief Commissioner Buller, do you have any comments

1 or questions for the witness?

2 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** I don't
3 have any questions because what you've said has been
4 remarkable. And, before I forget, I just have to look at
5 my note here.

6 **MS. ANNI PHILLIPS:** Sure.

7 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Please
8 tell Steve that he's very relevant.

9 **MS. ANNI PHILLIPS:** I will, yes.

10 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** What
11 you've said today, both of you, is very important to our
12 work and I'm grateful that you shared your stories, your
13 truths with us. Thank you also for your support people for
14 coming as well. It's, I think, probably one of the most
15 important things for us all to remember, as you've said
16 Anni, is we're still here and I'm so glad you are here.
17 Kim, I'm so glad you're here. Thank you.

18 Because what you've told us is so important
19 to our work and important to me personally, we have gifts
20 for you. One is an eagle feather. All across Canada,
21 there are slightly different stories and beliefs about
22 eagle feathers, but I think they can be explained fairly
23 simply that eagle feathers lift you up and carry you when
24 you need to be lifted and carried. And, on those days when
25 you think you can reach just a little bit higher, the eagle

1 feather will take you up that extra notch. We also have
2 seeds for you, because out of this National Inquiry, we're
3 already seeing new life through healing. So, we're going
4 to ask you to plant the seeds, and if something grows, will
5 you please take a picture and send it to us for our
6 archives. We want to always remember about the growth that
7 comes from healing, that's the seeds.

8 So, I want to thank you, your words, your
9 thoughts, your messages today have been profound, nothing
10 less than that, and I thank you very much for the gifts
11 that you have given us. So, before we take a little bit of
12 a break, I just want to say thank you again. Thanks just
13 doesn't add up -- it doesn't seem enough.

14 **MS. ANNI PHILLIPS:** Thank you.

15 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Thank
16 you.

17 **MS. ANNI PHILLIPS:** Thank you so much.

18 **--- Exhibits (code: P01P15P0103)**

19 **Exhibit 1:** Folder containing five digital images
20 displayed during the public testimony of Anni
21 Philips and Kim Russell.

22 **--- Upon adjourning at 16:09**

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LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

I, Shirley Chang, Court Transcriber, hereby certify that I have transcribed the foregoing and it is a true and accurate transcript of the digital audio provided in this matter.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Shirley Chang', written over a horizontal line.

Shirley Chang
April 12, 2018