

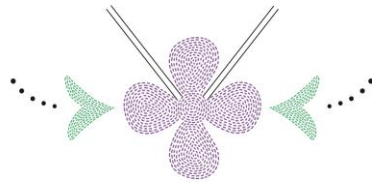
National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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
Minoru C Room**

Metro Vancouver, British Columbia



Public

Wednesday April 4, 2018

**Public Volume 88:
Verna Wallace & Mary Ann Wallace,
In Relation to Selina Violet Wallace**

**Heard by Commissioner Brian Eyolfson
Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe**

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APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations	No Appearance
Government of British Columbia	Sara Pye (Legal counsel)
Government of Canada	Donna Keats (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	Beth Symes (Legal Counsel)
Vancouver Sex Workers' Rights Collective	No Appearance
Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak/Women of the Métis Nation	No Appearance

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Registrar: Bryan Zandberg	

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LIST OF EXHIBITS

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1	Folder containing six digital images, including maps, displayed during the public testimony of Verna Wallace and Mary Ann Wallace.	38

1 Metro Vancouver, British Columbia

2 --- Upon commencing on Wednesday, April 4, 2018 at 15:46

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Good afternoon,
4 Commissioner Eyolfson. I'd like to introduce you to the
5 next family. Sitting furthest away from me is Verna
6 Wallace, and right beside me is Mary Ann Wallace. Before
7 we begin today, I'd ask that the law clerk and Registrar
8 please promise in both Verna and Mary Ann.

9 **MR. CHRISTIAN ROCK:** Verna, do you promise
10 to tell your truth, the truth in a good -- do you promise
11 to tell your truth in a good way today?

12 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Yes.

13 **MR. CHRISTIAN ROCK:** Thank you, ma'am.
14 Mary.

15 **MS. MARY ANN WALLACE:** Yes.

16 **MR. CHRISTIAN ROCK:** Do you promise to tell
17 your truth in a good way today?

18 **MS. MARY ANN WALLACE:** Yes.

19 **MR. CHRISTIAN ROCK:** Thank you.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, Verna and Mary
21 Ann will be sharing the story of their sister, Stella *[sic]*
22 Violet ---

23 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Selina.

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Selina, sorry.
25 Selina Violet Wallace and how she went missing back in

1 February 1971. Before we get into Selina and when she went
2 missing, I'm just going to see if I could ask you two a
3 little bit about your background in the community where
4 you're from. And, I'm going to ask that we just pull up a
5 map of B.C. and obviously this is a map of the province of
6 B.C. When we're looking at that map though, where would we
7 find Campbell River or Cape Mudge, would it be on the lower
8 half, the upper half, whereabouts on that map would it be?

9 **MS. MARY ANN WALLACE:** Around the middle.

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay. And, I'm
11 going to actually ask if we can also see a map of Campbell
12 River. And, when we look at this map, you can obviously
13 see Campbell River is pointed out, it's the big one, what's
14 across the bay from Campbell River?

15 **MS. MARY ANN WALLACE:** Quadra Island.

16 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And, where would
17 Cape Mudge be?

18 **MS. MARY ANN WALLACE:** Right across from
19 Campbell River.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay. So, I
21 understand that Cape Mudge is actually an Indian
22 reserve ---

23 **MS. MARY ANN WALLACE:** Yes. Yes.

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** --- but Campbell
25 River is a town.

1 MS. MARY ANN WALLACE: It is a town, but
2 they do have a reserve on there too.

3 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: They have a reserve
4 on there too. So, where are you guys from originally?

5 MS. VERNA WALLACE: Cape Mudge.

6 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Cape Mudge. But,
7 where did you grow up or spend most of your time as kids?

8 MS. VERNA WALLACE: Well, I was about 7
9 years old and Mary was younger than me...

10 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, you guys
11 actually also -- I know you'll be talking about this more,
12 but you attended residential school. I understand that was
13 St. Michael's?

14 MS. VERNA WALLACE: Yes.

15 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Where is that
16 located?

17 MS. VERNA WALLACE: In Alert Bay.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Is Alert Bay on this
19 map?

20 MS. VERNA WALLACE: Should be there
21 somewhere. I don't see it.

22 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: About how far away
23 is Alert Bay? How did you guys have to travel there?

24 MS. VERNA WALLACE: We had to -- when we
25 went, we went up by boat because they didn't have the

1 highway going through to Port McNeill. So, we went on
2 ferry boat ---

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Right.

4 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** --- from Campbell River.

5 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And so, you'd go on
6 a ferry boat and you'd head up to Alert Bay because there
7 was no roadways.

8 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** No.

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And, Alert Bay
10 though was a good little distance away from home, it's not
11 like you could travel there quickly?

12 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** No.

13 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** No.

14 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** No.

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And so, I know that
16 we're going to talk a little bit more about St. Michael's,
17 but maybe you can just tell me a little bit more about your
18 family. So, who all lived with you when you were in
19 Campbell River or Cape Mudge?

20 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** There was 10 of us in
21 the family besides mom and dad. We had one brother living
22 there then, and the rest were my sisters.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** That's a lot of
24 girls in one house.

25 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** With one brother, yes.

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Can you tell me a
2 little bit about your brother?

3 MS. VERNA WALLACE: (Indiscernible), my
4 older brother, can we start with him ---

5 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes, please.

6 MS. VERNA WALLACE: --- and how we ended up
7 where we are?

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Absolutely.

9 MS. VERNA WALLACE: My brother was murdered,
10 but I won't tell the story before I get there, how my life
11 was before tragedy touched us. We were a very happy
12 family. We were a very happy family of 10 kids, and my mom
13 and dad. Mom would take us picking berries in the summer,
14 and dad would take us out fishing (indiscernible). When we
15 finished picking berries, we would help mom wash the
16 berries and she would show us how to can them. My sister
17 Lorna and I, because my other sisters were too young, but
18 -- we were young too, but we had to learn at a young age.
19 When my dad went out fishing for food, we had to give to
20 the Elders first, but my dad would always make sure
21 everyone got enough for the winter. This all stopped when
22 my brother got murdered, March 1957.

23 My mom was pregnant with our baby sister,
24 May, and our mom couldn't go to my brother's funeral
25 because the doctor wouldn't let her out of the hospital for

1 almost a month. Our sister, May, was born April 1st, 1957.
2 One day, mom and dad weren't home when strangers were at
3 our door and took us away to St. Michael's school in Alert
4 Bay. Lots of horrific things happened to us when we were
5 in that dirty school, like being raped, physical and mental
6 abuse. My brother, Rubin (ph), Lorna, Selina, Mary Ann and
7 Betsy, who was only 5 years old were all in that rotten
8 school.

9 We were in that school for four -- I was in
10 that school for four years at this point. Anyway, when we
11 went home for the summer, to which my sister Betsy wasn't
12 allowed to come home with us. So, when the summer was
13 over, it was time to go back to that f'ing school. I hid
14 on the people who came to come pick us up. When they
15 couldn't find me, they finally gave up because they had to
16 catch a boat to Alert Bay.

17 Anyways, after a few years, when I turned 13
18 years old, someone told me that a family in Powell River
19 was looking for a babysitter. Since I was underage, I lied
20 about my age to get the job, stayed there for a few years
21 and finally decided to go back to school to get my
22 upgrading to 10, thinking I was going to get my 11 and 12,
23 but after the summer, I met a guy and that was the end of
24 my schooling.

25 He took me to Portland for a while where we

1 worked, then moved to Los Angeles where I got a job doing
2 security for a while. After that, we went to Las Vegas and
3 Reno to which we stayed for a short while, and my boyfriend
4 at the time put me on the plane to Vancouver, Canada, and I
5 stayed in Vancouver for a month. So, when he finally came,
6 we were on our way to his hometown in Québec City. I just
7 hated being in Québec City, so far away from home.

8 Anyway, about March or April, I got a letter
9 from my sister, Mary Ann, about our sister, Selina. She
10 said she couldn't be found, she's been missing since
11 February 5th, 1971. So, when I went to the Québec
12 government for assistance and told them what was happening
13 at home in Cape Mudge, they refused to help me.

14 Finally, about a month or two, they finally
15 decided to help us so long as -- I said I wouldn't be back
16 to Québec City, assholes. So, I phoned my sister, Minnie,
17 who lives in Alert Bay to let my other sisters know that I
18 was coming home. When I finally got home, my sister and
19 everyone else gave up looking for Selina, I was just heart
20 broken; so pissed off with the Band Chief and council and
21 the fucking cops for not helping my family. Sorry.

22 So, instead of staying home any longer, I
23 went to Alert Bay for a while, then decided to move to
24 Courtenay, where my sister Mary Ann lived in July '71.
25 Been in Courtenay ever since. One day, a cop came and told

1 me that Walking With Our Sisters was coming to the Comox
2 territory. Since going to the meeting for the WWOS, I
3 talked to this young lady, Christie Bell (ph), asking why
4 can't we do a walk for our murdered and missing women in
5 the Comox Valley, and she asked me why, so I told her my
6 sister, Selina, has been missing since February 1971. We
7 did our walk for her. My (indiscernible) honour that
8 Christie listened to me and grateful to have her in my
9 life. I believe the RCMP should be held accountable for
10 not helping my family. I have no respect for the Band
11 Council and Band Chief or the cops at that time.

12 So, I don't know what this hearing's going
13 to do for our murdered and missing women and girls, but I
14 hope something comes out good for this, and this is just
15 not a bloody study.

16 The way I feel is I think they should build
17 safe houses for them so they can have a place to go. And,
18 this shouldn't be end of the murdered and missing because
19 the people -- there's people on Vancouver Island that need
20 to let their voices be heard too. They didn't have enough
21 time to make arrangements to come here because they have
22 families too. We all need to be there for them like you
23 guys are here for us today. We need that. I hope the
24 government's listening, somebody's listening anyhow,
25 because I'm sick and tired of the studies and all the talk

1 that's coming out of their ass and nothing's been done.
2 Thank you for listening.

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Actually, Verna, can
4 I ask you a couple of questions?

5 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Yes.

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Perfect. And then
7 I'm going to ask you some questions too. Thank you so much
8 for sharing with us, I know that you have covered a lot of
9 topics and I don't want to go back to any of those ones
10 that I know were very harmful for you or your loved ones,
11 but I do want to ask you a couple of questions.

12 When you were travelling -- so you had
13 explained that you left home at one point and you were in
14 different places, Portland, Los Angeles, back to Vancouver,
15 and then to Québec City. I was wondering if I could ask
16 you a couple more questions about the time when Mary Ann
17 sent you the letter.

18 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** That was when I was in
19 Québec City.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** That was when you
21 were in Québec City. And, you had just said to the
22 Commissioner, you know, you were trying to get their help
23 and assistance just to fly home?

24 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Yes.

25 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can I ask you a few

1 questions around that?

2 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Yes.

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay. So -- I mean,
4 one of the things -- first, in 1971, there was no quick way
5 to contact each other necessarily. There's no internet.
6 So, by the time Mary Ann sent you a letter, Selina had
7 already been missing for a little while; right?

8 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Yes.

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And so, when you
10 first get that letter, you know, what's the first thing
11 that happens? What are you trying to do immediately as
12 soon as you get the letter?

13 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** I didn't know what to
14 do, I was lost because I was by myself. Nobody was with
15 me. By the time I got that, I wasn't with my son's father,
16 we had split up already.

17 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Mm-hmm.

18 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** I was the only provider
19 in the house.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** But, you had your
21 son?

22 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Yes.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And, he was quite
24 small then?

25 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Yes, he was just a baby.

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay. So, you
2 couldn't afford to go home?

3 MS. VERNA WALLACE: No.

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: No. And so, what
5 did -- what were the steps you took to try to find a way to
6 get home?

7 MS. VERNA WALLACE: I went to the Québec
8 government and then I went to the -- the welfare, and they
9 both said no to me. I was so pissed off when they did that
10 to me.

11 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So -- but you were
12 working at the time?

13 MS. VERNA WALLACE: Yes.

14 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: But -- and so, what
15 you were asking for was just enough assistance to get home?

16 MS. VERNA WALLACE: Yes.

17 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And, were you able
18 to eventually convince them to get you home or to help you
19 out?

20 MS. VERNA WALLACE: Yes, they -- I don't
21 know, they finally changed their mind and said they would
22 help me, providing that I never come back to Québec City.

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Well, what did they
24 mean never come back?

25 MS. VERNA WALLACE: Never go back to Québec

1 City.

2 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, how did you
3 promise to do that?

4 MS. VERNA WALLACE: I just said yes, because
5 I wanted to come home.

6 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And, did that ---

7 MS. VERNA WALLACE: And, I said I'd never
8 been back to Québec City anyhow, I hate you guys.

9 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, did they make
10 you sign something in order ---

11 MS. VERNA WALLACE: Yes.

12 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: --- to receive the
13 money?

14 MS. VERNA WALLACE: Yes.

15 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, back in 1971,
16 they decided to agree to fund you to come home ---

17 MS. VERNA WALLACE: Yes.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: --- but only if you
19 promised never to return?

20 MS. VERNA WALLACE: Yes.

21 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay. So, tell me a
22 little bit about that journey across the country. You're
23 now with your young son and you're trying to get home to
24 find your sister, what was that like?

25 MS. VERNA WALLACE: It was hard being on the

1 plane because it seemed like forever to get to Victoria.
2 It's such a long ride. But, you know what I found when I
3 was on the plane, the stewardesses were absolutely awesome,
4 because they took my son for a while so I could have a
5 sleep.

6 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Mm-hmm.

7 MS. VERNA WALLACE: But, I didn't sleep, but
8 I just laid back and relaxed. So, you know, the people
9 were nice on the plane.

10 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Mm-hmm.

11 MS. VERNA WALLACE: Yes.

12 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: What happened once
13 you landed in Victoria?

14 MS. VERNA WALLACE: I had to catch a bus.

15 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And, how long is the
16 bus from, like, Victoria ---

17 MS. VERNA WALLACE: Victoria to here,
18 probably -- they don't go around the big lake there,
19 probably took three and a half hours.

20 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay.

21 MS. VERNA WALLACE: That's a long trip for a
22 baby.

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes. And, when you
24 got home, you had just said to the Commissioner that -- you
25 know, by the time you got home that they had stopped

1 searching.

2 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Yes.

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, I'm going to ask
4 Mary Ann about that, but before I do that, when you say
5 they stopped searching, was there ever an active or a big
6 search that you're aware of?

7 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** No, not from the cops,
8 or the Band Council or the Band Chief. Nobody. Nobody.
9 Just -- my sister will tell you how there wasn't many that
10 helped look for my sister when she went missing.

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And, I think I'll
12 have some more questions for you after, but I'm hoping that
13 Mary Ann can actually help us understand some of the story
14 too. Is it okay if I ask you some questions, Mary Ann?

15 **MS. MARY ANN WALLACE:** Mm-hmm.

16 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Oh, sorry.

17 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** No worries. So, I'm
18 going to go back to the letter again, okay? So, at what
19 point do you actually send Verna a letter? How long has
20 Selina already been missing?

21 **MS. MARY ANN WALLACE:** Probably a week. A
22 week after she went missing, I wrote her.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And so, you send --
24 you send her a letter. And then when do you find out that
25 Verna's coming home?

1 MS. MARY ANN WALLACE: I don't remember.

2 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Mm-hmm.

3 MS. MARY ANN WALLACE: I don't think my
4 sister told (indiscernible).

5 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay. So, what
6 happens in that time that she's waiting to get funding to
7 come out, because we hear time passes, what are you and
8 your family doing to look for Selina?

9 MS. MARY ANN WALLACE: We looked around the
10 beach both ways from our reserve. There was just my Uncle
11 Norman and his sons help my mom and dad.

12 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, it's just a
13 small family cluster. We heard Verna tell the Commissioner
14 that the band wouldn't help.

15 MS. MARY ANN WALLACE: No, they wouldn't.

16 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And, why wouldn't
17 they help? Did your family reach out and ask to help set
18 up a search or to help do things?

19 MS. MARY ANN WALLACE: I'm not sure what my
20 mom and dad did after, if they talked to anybody, but every
21 day I was wondering where she was. I went to the police
22 station -- my sister Betsy and her man went there and they
23 told them about my sister missing. And, they asked how old
24 she was, and when they were told her age, they just told
25 her that, well, she's old enough to leave home, and that

1 was it.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, as far you're
3 aware, there was no further follow up with the police?

4 **MS. MARY ANN WALLACE:** No.

5 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And so, you and your
6 family, your uncles, and cousins and parents, that you
7 continued to look for Selina, but you had no luck finding
8 her?

9 **MS. MARY ANN WALLACE:** No.

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I understand that,
11 at one point, you guys had to ask to get a death
12 certificate. Could you tell me a little bit about that?

13 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Remember when they
14 wanted a death certificate for her?

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Right.

16 **MS. MARY ANN WALLACE:** Oh, yes. Well, we
17 couldn't get a death certificate. So, we had to have a
18 certificate of death, whatever that means, but I tried -- I
19 got several numbers to call and they told me the only way I
20 could get a death certificate or have my sister declared
21 dead was to go to the Supreme Court, but I didn't know how
22 to go about that.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can I ask if you
24 recall why you were trying to get that documentation? What
25 is it you guys were trying to do or that you needed the

1 documentation for?

2 **MS. MARY ANN WALLACE:** I can't remember.

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Verna, if you know,
4 you can answer.

5 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Well, there would be the
6 closure. We needed a little bit of closure, you know,
7 because it's been such a long time. And, why would they
8 say they wanted proof that she was gone. What the hell
9 were they thinking? Do they do that with all the murdered
10 and missing? Because I never hear anybody say anything
11 about that, and they made us -- they want us to go to
12 Supreme Court to declare my sister dead. Why would they
13 make us suffer all over again? Don't they think we
14 suffered enough?

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I know that you
16 found that frustrating. Was there anything else in terms
17 of -- because you guys have never been able to find Selina,
18 you haven't been able to have a place or a memorial for
19 her, is that something that you guys would like to do, is
20 somehow recognize...?

21 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Yes, that's what we want
22 to do and that's what our reserve wanted us to do. And,
23 when we decided to do that, they told us the same thing
24 when we wanted to get a death certificate for her, that we
25 couldn't do it, because they were harassing us for months

1 to do that for my sister.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Mm-hmm.

3 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** They'd phone me at least
4 once or twice a month.

5 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Was that tied to the
6 fact, like, were -- was the family going to be allowed to
7 bury her in the community or in the Band cemetery if you
8 could prove ---

9 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** If we could prove it, we
10 could put a plot there, but we have nothing to prove. How
11 are we going to prove it? We don't know what happened to
12 her. How much more can we do? They want us to do this and
13 they wouldn't help us when we needed their help. When my
14 sister and them were looking for her, they just sat on
15 their ass and did nothing, just like the cops. How much
16 more can we do? How much more can anybody do?

17 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I know it hasn't
18 been easy sharing a lot of this with us. Is it okay if I
19 ask you a bit about -- both, if you can answer these
20 questions too please? I know you talked about St.
21 Michael's and I know it wasn't a good time there for you.

22 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** No.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I know that there
24 was a lot of abuse, but I also know that you tried to take
25 some healing journey from that. Can you tell us a little

1 bit about your participation in the TRC or the IRS
2 settlement ---

3 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** I had nothing to do with
4 the TRC when I started my healing journey, because I don't
5 believe in the truth and reconciliation because the truth
6 hasn't been told so what the hell do we have to reconcile
7 for?

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Right.

9 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** My healing started when
10 we started doing healing circles. If we stop doing healing
11 circles with any of our people, I don't think any of us are
12 going to get healed and we will not come to terms to what
13 happened to us, because we need to talk about it. If we
14 don't have our voice heard we're never going to heal. So,
15 those healing circles are very important.

16 And, with this, what we're doing today,
17 I hope they're going to have a healing circle, so we can
18 talk about what happened here because on -- you can't just
19 send us home. You can't just send us home because, you
20 know, when I went to the TRC with the bloody government, a
21 couple of my friends committed suicide after that. A
22 couple of friends that I made. And, I'm afraid this is
23 what's going to happen here too, because we need to be
24 heard and nobody's there to listen to us because the
25 government doesn't give a shit. That's how I feel. We

1 need these healing circles and I hope somebody's listening.

2 Like, on our reserves or off reserves. I
3 know it can be done because I've been to many, many and I
4 don't think I'll ever be healed with all this stuff that
5 happened in our short life, Mary Ann and I. She didn't
6 even go through the -- through her story with the Indian
7 residential school because she's still pissed off about it,
8 her and my other sister. And, my brother and my sister,
9 Selina, they couldn't do it, they're not here to do it, but
10 I'm pretty damn sure they went through the same thing I did
11 and she did.

12 This life wasn't easy for any of us. But,
13 you know, I don't know if it made me stronger or made me
14 more pissed off with the people today because they're still
15 not doing it -- doing anything right for us, any of us, and
16 that's right across Canada. I am still angry because I got
17 nothing to reconcile with anybody for.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** No, that's
19 absolutely understandable. You talked about healing
20 circles, are there other things -- because you said TRC or
21 other processes that haven't helped you, but circles have.
22 Are there other things that you lean towards or look
23 towards to find some healing or to find some care?

24 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** I like the healing
25 circles. I like the healing circles because that's what we

1 do on the island. I don't know what anybody else does.
2 Whatever helps them, it has to be done.

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, I was just going
4 to ask you the same question if I can, Mary Ann. I know we
5 just heard from Verna that you didn't participate in the
6 Indian Residential School settlement or TRC, but have you
7 had the opportunity -- are there any resources that you've
8 been able to tap into to try to do some healing as a result
9 of your experience at school or the loss of your brother
10 and sister?

11 **MS. MARY ANN WALLACE:** No, I haven't done
12 anything regarding the residential school or for my
13 siblings.

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** If there was
15 something available or there were more resources available,
16 is it something that you'd want to pursue?

17 **MS. MARY ANN WALLACE:** I might.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Verna, when you were
19 talking earlier about Walking With Our Sisters ---

20 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Yes.

21 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** --- you talked about
22 how they came up to Comox and that that was something they
23 did good. Can you tell us a little bit more about that,
24 about how something ---

25 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** How they approached us?

1 They came right to us. They came to the source instead of
2 just doing it. They came to ask us what we wanted to do.
3 We went to many, many meetings with the sisters that
4 started this.

5 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Mm-hmm.

6 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** And, they did an awesome
7 job. An awesome job. And, when I was there they asked me
8 if I wanted to do a vamp (ph) for my sister, Selina. I was
9 so honoured when they asked me, and I said yes, I'll make
10 one. But, I couldn't finish it, it's too hard. But, I did
11 make that vamp and they do have it.

12 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yes.

13 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Yes.

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, I just want to
15 return to a thought, this "they came to us" thought. Do
16 you think that it's a good idea that if any type of
17 resources, healing, any of the processes that might
18 actually address the issues that you've talked about today,
19 particularly as it relates to your sister, would it be
20 easier if things were coming to you?

21 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** If they came to ask us
22 instead of just doing.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay.

24 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Because the TRC did it
25 all wrong. They did it all wrong. They never asked us.

1 They didn't care to ask us, they just went ahead and did
2 it. Then, they want us to do the truth and reconciliation,
3 how the hell are we supposed to trust them? You know,
4 trust goes a long way for all of us and I have a hell of a
5 time trusting people. I do.

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And, what about
7 other ideas of coming to us? Is it helpful when things are
8 available where you are? I know in a separate
9 conversation, we were talking about not coming to the
10 island, and if enough programs or enough processes -- if
11 anything that's happening that's actually supposed to be
12 addressing these issues doesn't come to the island, then
13 too many people are missed.

14 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Yes.

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can you tell us a
16 little bit about that?

17 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** There's going to be a
18 lot of people missed on Vancouver Island. They can't stop
19 this. They did not get enough heads up about you guys
20 being here in Vancouver, in Richmond. And, I heard a lot
21 about it and they were getting angry, but I listened to
22 them, I'm sorry I can't help you that way, I don't know
23 what to do but I will mention it when I'm there, and I did
24 mention it. So, I hope that they don't just think about
25 it, that they go over there and help these people that need

1 help. They need some kind of closure too, or have a voice.
2 Everybody needs their voice to be heard.

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** One of the things
4 you were talking about, how the IRS -- the settlement
5 wasn't working well. Can you tell us about the people that
6 you were working with ---

7 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** The people that were
8 supposed to be there for support and help, like counsellors
9 and that weren't educated enough to take care of us. I was
10 sent in too, because I was suicidal when I got out of the
11 Indian residential school. So, I went up with this young
12 guy, I wasn't going to embarrass him in front of everybody
13 else because I wanted to know how much education he had,
14 and I asked him, what do you know about suicide? How can
15 you help me? He couldn't because he didn't know what to
16 do, so I got up and I walked out.

17 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Hm.

18 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** He can't help me. They
19 -- that's what the government did to us on the island.
20 They didn't send enough educated people there. And then --
21 and then the hearings stopped. I had made more friends
22 along the way, and two of them committed suicide when the
23 hearing stopped. So, I'm glad this didn't stop because
24 that's a part that worried me too, it was that.

25 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Mm-hmm.

1 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** We don't need to lose
2 any more of our First Nations people. We need them. We
3 need them and they need us. I want to be there for them
4 because we need them. We don't have these young people
5 who's going to take care of the country. And, they are
6 good people that committed suicide and they were my
7 friends.

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** What are ways that
9 we can ensure -- you had mentioned, like, they were young
10 Native people they brought that didn't have enough
11 training. Would it help if there was more training, that
12 if there was resources and funding put into the programs
13 that First Nation people are attending so that they were
14 better trained to actually assist?

15 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Yes, more First Nations
16 people would be better than non-Native because there's a
17 trust issue. There will always be trust issues. And,
18 that's all I ever heard was trust.

19 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yes.

20 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** So, when we did our
21 healing circles, we always had a First Nations person
22 there. we never had a non-Native in there to start it off.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Mm-hmm. And, again,
24 I'm just thinking of ways or asking you if you can think of
25 ways to empower that training or to make sure -- other than

1 the trust, are there cultural issues of having non-
2 Indigenous people providing some services?

3 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Go to the schools, talk
4 to the kids, get them excited about how they can help their
5 Elders that are in -- that are hurting right now, that they
6 need them to get the education, so they can help them. I
7 wish that was told to me when I was going to school. I
8 know I would have stayed in school.

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Mm-hmm.

10 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** But, nobody ever
11 encouraged me about anything.

12 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, encouragement is
13 also a really good recommendation.

14 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Yes.

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Finding ways to
16 encourage youth, First Nation youth, to engage ---

17 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Yes.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** --- to work with
19 Elders.

20 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Yes, yes.

21 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can we talk just for
22 a minute about the concept that -- I think there's a
23 perception that all Elders are -- like, it's a stereotype
24 perception that all Elders must be people that do cultural
25 or traditional practice, but you just said something that I

1 think is really important to touch on again, is to help the
2 Elders that are in pain and that are suffering.

3 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Yes.

4 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, that -- there's
5 members in the community who have gone through these
6 systems.

7 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Yes.

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And so, how do --
9 how do we engage youth so that there's a relationship
10 between those two groups?

11 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Get the Elders and the
12 young people together. Got to encourage that, because you
13 know, when I look at our -- on our reserves today, that --
14 our youth aren't with the Elders anymore, and I feel that
15 it has a lot to do with the Indian residential school,
16 Indian day school, Sixties Scoop, that's what it all has to
17 do with. That's how I feel.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Mm-hmm.

19 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** But, before you even do
20 that, you have to have healing circles for everyone because
21 it's not going to work if you don't.

22 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, is it a good
23 recommendation to have, not just healing circles for those
24 that were impacted by these things, like residential
25 school.

1 MS. VERNA WALLACE: Mm-hmm.

2 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: What about healing
3 circles -- or maybe in other communities they do something
4 different than healing circles ---

5 MS. VERNA WALLACE: They do smudging also.

6 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes.

7 MS. VERNA WALLACE: Or sweats.

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Right.

9 MS. VERNA WALLACE: People do sweats on the
10 island now.

11 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Would you encourage
12 not just for those that have gone through that suffering,
13 but for there to be more of these types of resources for
14 those who want to participate, but that it encourages both
15 Elders and youth and the whole community to come together?

16 MS. VERNA WALLACE: Yes, because I think
17 that would work. It would work. You need people to go
18 into these communities that have been through all this crap
19 like we've been through, because we've experienced it and
20 we can talk to the young people about it. We can't lie
21 about what happened because it happened, simple as that.

22 And, you know, when the Pope was not
23 apologizing to us, I'm happy for that because I wouldn't
24 want his phony apology like we got from Harper. We don't
25 need his apology. We don't need the Pope at all. They

1 were the worst of the worst.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** There was one other
3 thing I wanted to ask you about. When you were reading and
4 talking to Commissioner Eyolfson earlier, you talked about
5 safe houses.

6 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Yes.

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can you tell me a
8 bit more, if you have recommendations or ideas around safe
9 houses and transitional houses? But, I also want you to
10 tie it to that concept earlier, where you said they got to
11 come to us. Can you explain what that would look like if
12 there were more resources on the island or in places that
13 are away from big cities?

14 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Well, you know, when
15 people run away, they do run away from small communities,
16 communities like Prince George, Prince Rupert, Cape Mudge,
17 Alert Bay, all these small communities, and then they also
18 get murdered here right in the big cities. So, I think
19 there has to be a halfway mark where we can meet and talk.
20 We can solve this because we don't need to lose any more
21 people. Not our people. We've lost enough over the years
22 because of Indian residential and all that other crap that
23 was going on, because a lot of the intergenerational kids
24 have gotten murdered and missed.

25 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, you think it's

1 important to have safe houses or transitional houses in
2 cities, but also in other places?

3 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** In small communities,
4 yes, so they can have somewhere to turn to. Make it safe
5 for them to come there. Go to them or let them come to
6 you.

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And, that's good. I
8 just want to ask both of you if there was anything else you
9 wanted to add or if there's something we forgot to discuss
10 that you wanted to share with the Commissioner before I ask
11 him if he has any questions. And, that's for both of you,
12 if you have anything you want to add, please feel free to
13 do so.

14 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Why didn't we have this
15 in Vancouver instead out in Richmond, so more people from
16 Vancouver could participate? Because it's costing them
17 money to come out here every day. Was there not any
18 discussion about that? Because I know when we had the
19 murdered and missing women downtown Vancouver, both places
20 were full and there was a lot of people telling their
21 stories. And, now I look around in here, there's hardly
22 anybody, can you explain to me why?

23 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** My
24 understanding is we have a tight time frame to work
25 with ---

1 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Oh, my God, that's all
2 -- that's all I ever hear, is the time frame. So, the time
3 frame wasn't any different when we had it down there and we
4 only had it for two days.

5 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** And, it was
6 also the cost. So, we asked our team to look at all of the
7 options that were available, and we only have so much
8 resources and money, and the best option that was presented
9 to us for this time was here. There weren't a lot of
10 options to be able to have anything in the Vancouver area,
11 so that's why we ended up here.

12 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** So, okay, if that was
13 the case, why did you not have transportation in Vancouver,
14 so people could come out here to Richmond? Because these
15 people, they're only on a limited budget which they can't
16 afford to come to, but they wanted their voices heard like
17 my sister and I.

18 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** My
19 understanding is that there is a shuttle being run between
20 downtown and here, and we're grateful that some
21 organizations have come together to provide that and work
22 with us on that, but my understanding is there is a
23 shuttle.

24 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** I didn't hear that. How
25 many times a day were they going back and forth?

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I'm not sure if
2 they ---

3 MS. VERNA WALLACE: If they had a time
4 limit, some of these people are probably working and they
5 can't come until they get off work. Part-time workers. I
6 have to ask all these questions because I need to know. We
7 can't leave anybody out. Nobody can be left out. All our
8 voices need to be heard about this. This is an important
9 issue. You can't just wash it under the rug like that.
10 And, I'm hoping when this is all done it doesn't get washed
11 under the rug, that it's going to be heard.

12 And, my other thing that I wanted to say
13 too, because when the Twin Towers went down, they had a
14 memorial put up for them. We need to put a memorial up for
15 our murdered and missing women and girls. We need to do
16 that so we can honour them. They need to be honoured.

17 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes. And, in terms
18 of the memorial, do you have ideas around -- you know, is
19 that one place somewhere in the nation? Is that multiple
20 places when you talk about a memorial needing to be built
21 to recognize the losses? We see that with lots of things,
22 not just the Twin Towers ---

23 MS. VERNA WALLACE: Yes.

24 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: --- but, you know,
25 after wars and -- to commemorate and memorialize ---

1 MS. VERNA WALLACE: Yes.

2 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: --- the women, so
3 you think that it's really important that we do
4 something ---

5 MS. VERNA WALLACE: I think it's important
6 because we need something to -- we need something to honour
7 them by.

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Mm-hmm.

9 MS. VERNA WALLACE: We need to put their
10 picture on there, not just put their name. They have a
11 face, they were a body. Can't just slap it up and put a
12 name there.

13 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Mm-hmm. No, that's
14 a really good recommendation. Thank you.

15 MS. VERNA WALLACE: Can my sister read hers?

16 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Oh, yes.

17 MS. VERNA WALLACE: Thank you.

18 MS. MARY ANN WALLACE: I remember the night
19 my sister, Selina, went missing, February 5th, 1971. My
20 family were drinking with relatives at our place. Our
21 sister, Lorna, came to wake me and tell me that our sister,
22 Selina, wanted to commit suicide. I looked out my bedroom
23 window and there she was talking to a boy I babysat. He
24 was 11 at the time. I did go out to talk to her, told her
25 she could sleep in my room with my son, Darryl, who was 7

1 months at the time. I couldn't leave my son again to go
2 out and get her. Everyone at our place was drunk.

3 Lorna woke me up again at 5:00 or 6:00 a.m.
4 to tell me they couldn't find Selina. Our Uncle Norman and
5 his sons went and helped look for her. They checked the
6 fish boats and along the beach, they couldn't find our
7 sister. Wilhelmina (ph) told the RCs and they told her
8 when they found out her age was that she was old enough to
9 leave home and that she was seen on the last ferry to
10 Campbell River. I don't know how they knew that because
11 she was talking to Roddy (ph) at 10:30 p.m. by our place at
12 that time. The RCs told me the exact same thing.

13 I moved up to Mount Currie and kept in touch
14 with family. Verna and I talked about going to the RCs
15 again. We both went to see them in Campbell River the
16 summer of 1985. We were told they didn't have a file on
17 Selina. I told the officer of course you wouldn't have a
18 file because you guys did nothing. They told us we'd have
19 to wait another seven years before we could do anything.
20 She was already gone for 15 years.

21 A few years ago, the Quadra Island police
22 called and told me that a file was open and an
23 investigation was open about Selina being missing. Almost
24 a year ago, the officer called and said that a female body
25 was found down in the States and that I'd have to wait a

1 while before anything was confirmed. A few months later, I
2 called, I got tired of waiting for a call, I was told it
3 wasn't her. I really wish she was here with us. We miss
4 her so much. Selina, if you're around somewhere, please
5 know that you are loved.

6 Her suicidal attempts started after we were
7 able to stay home from the residential school in Alert Bay.
8 She was a fun-loving sister and very outspoken and caring.
9 We really miss you.

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I understand we have
11 a couple of pictures of Selina and I think this one was
12 taken in 1969. How old would she have been in that
13 picture?

14 **MS. MARY ANN WALLACE:** '69? 16 or 17.

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, she's probably
16 16 or 17 in that picture. I think we have one more too.
17 Can you guess when this would have been around and who is
18 she with in that picture?

19 **MS. MARY ANN WALLACE:** Probably 18.

20 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** Eighteen.

21 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And, is that just a
22 family friend or someone in the picture?

23 **MS. MARY ANN WALLACE:** It's Herman
24 (indiscernible). Her friend.

25 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** I wasn't home when any

1 of these were taken. I didn't see Selina when she was that
2 age. She was only about 13 or 14. I never got to hug her
3 and hold her and...

4 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I want to thank you
5 for sharing your story and I know it wasn't easy. I know
6 you talked about a lot of tough things and you
7 characterized your life as hard, but we do appreciate you
8 sharing it. At this point, I would like to ask
9 Commissioner Eyolfson if he has any questions or comments
10 for the family.

11 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** I don't have
12 any additional comments or questions. I think Christa
13 asked all the questions I would have asked, but I just
14 really want to thank you -- I know it's difficult for
15 coming here and telling us about your sister and sharing
16 what you've been through, some of the horrible things about
17 residential school and -- but for also sharing what has
18 helped some with healing, like you talk about the
19 importance of healing circles and your recommendations
20 about safe houses. So, I want to thank you for that. I
21 want to thank you both for sharing with us ---

22 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** And, the memorial.

23 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** The memorial
24 too, yes.

25 **MS. VERNA WALLACE:** We can't forget that.

1 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** No, I've got
2 it written down and we've got it recorded, so we're not
3 going to forget about that. But, before we close, we just
4 have small gifts of reciprocity for you sharing your gift
5 of your truths with us, and I'm going to ask if Grandmother
6 Blu can help with these gifts before we close. Okay.

7 **ELDER LAUREN BLU WATERS:** So, Verna and Mary
8 Ann, we want to -- we want to offer you these eagle
9 feathers, and these are feathers to help you with your
10 journey of your continual healing, and so that when you're
11 using these that the creator hears your prayers, and that
12 your sister and your brother, and those that this has
13 really been a hard journey for, that the creator and those
14 ancestors, all our relations, will help you do this work.
15 And, as you continue with your journey through your healing
16 circles and working with the people who have gone through
17 the same experiences as you, that you will be those
18 strengths for them. You're very, very strong women and we
19 want to honour you in this way with these eagle feathers
20 and these seeds, so that as you plant them you will see the
21 beauty that will come from them.

22 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Commissioner
23 Eyolfson, can we actually close the hearings for today? I
24 believe we commence again tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m.

25 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Yes, let's

1 adjourn and close the hearings for today.

2 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Today.

3 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Thank you.

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you.

5 --- Exhibits (code: P01P15P0108)

6 **Exhibit 1:** Folder containing six digital images,
7 including maps, displayed during the public
8 testimony of Verna Wallace and Mary Ann
9 Wallace.

10 --- Upon adjourning at 16:45

11

12

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

13

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

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21

Shirley Chang

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April 13, 2018

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