

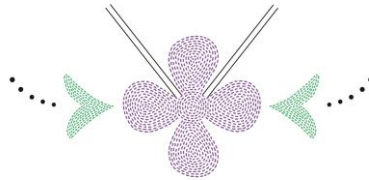
National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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
Elmbridge Room**

Metro Vancouver, British Columbia



Public

Friday April 6, 2018

**Public Volume 98:
Mona Shaw, Anthony Shaw & Danielle Shaw,
In relation to Michelle Caroline Shaw**

**Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette
Commission Counsel: Wendy van Tongeren**

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APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations	Julie McGregor (Legal counsel)
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Government of British Columbia	Leah Greathead (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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Clerk: Bryana Bouchir	
Registrar: Bryan Zandberg	

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1 Metro Vancouver, British Columbia

2 --- Upon commencing on Friday, April 6, 2018 at 9:11

3 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Oh there we go.

4 Okay.

5 Good morning, Madam Commissioner, and all
6 your supports, and good morning, everybody. My name is
7 Wendy van Tongeren. I'm one of the Commission lawyers and
8 I'll be assisting the family with the story that they will
9 be telling today.

10 This is the Shaw family from Port Hardy.
11 And I'd like to start by just having them introduce
12 themselves. And then, Mr. Registrar, each member here, and
13 there's Mona and Anthony and Danielle Shaw, they will be
14 asking to affirm with the eagle feather.

15 Okay. So just introduce yourselves so that
16 the camera sees which name goes with which person.

17 **MS. DANIELLE SHAW:** Hello. Okay. Hi, I'm
18 Danielle Shaw and of the Wuikinuxv Nation.

19 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Hi, I'm Mona Shaw. I'm the
20 mother of Danielle, Tony and Michelle and the
21 Wuikinuxv Nation.

22 **MR. ANTHONY SHAW:** Hi, I'm Anthony Shaw, the
23 Wuikinuxv Nation. Thank you for having us.

24 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Yeah, so it'll be

1 Mona who will be speaking first. So, Mr. Registrar?

2 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Good morning,
3 everybody.

4 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Good morning.

5 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** I'll start with
6 Danielle this morning.

7 And, Danielle, do you solemnly affirm that
8 the evidence you will share today will be the truth, the
9 whole truth and nothing but the truth?

10 **MS. DANIELLE SHAW:** Yes.

11 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** You do? Thank you.

12 Morning, Mona. Same question for you. Do
13 you solemnly affirm that the evidence you will share --
14 that you will share today will be the truth, the whole
15 truth and nothing but the truth?

16 **MS. MONA SHAW:** I swear.

17 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Thank you.

18 And good morning -- and I've already
19 forgotten your name. Anthony. Waking up. Good morning,
20 Anthony. Do you solemnly affirm that the evidence you will
21 share today will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing
22 but the truth?

23 **MR. ANTHONY SHAW:** Yes.

24 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** You do? Thank you.

1 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Thank you.

2 MS. MONA SHAW: Do I start now?

3 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Yes.

4 MS. MONA SHAW: Oh.

5 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: So, Mona, I'll just
6 say a few things. First of all, it's just -- it's about 12
7 minute after 9:00, so we've got lots of time here. So I
8 want you to feel relaxed and it's my job to assist you. So
9 if you don't want to hear from me again until you're done,
10 that's fine. Otherwise, if you want me to ask you some
11 questions I can do that as well.

12 MS. MONA SHAW: I welcome that.

13 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay.

14 MS. MONA SHAW: Yeah.

15 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Thank you. So take
16 care. I know you'll do very well. Okay.

17 MS. MONA SHAW: Thank you.

18 My name is Mona Shaw. I was born in Bella
19 Bella and I come from the Wuikinuxv Nation, that's Rivers
20 Inlet. I'm a product of the residential school, St. Mikes.
21 I lived in Wuikinuxv Village all my young life. Or my --
22 both my parents died when I was four years old. And but
23 then a few days after my mom's passing I was sent to St.
24 Mike's Residential school where I stayed for nine years.

1 So I wasn't -- there wasn't a lot of
2 guidance there. It was just basically you were a number.
3 You did what you were told. So I didn't -- there wasn't a
4 lot of preparation for me becoming an adult.

5 I was there until I was 13 and they closed
6 the place down. And after that it was a number of foster
7 homes. Never really settling, and if I did stay with a
8 family, there was a lot of alcoholism. Like, again,
9 nothing very stable.

10 So I spent my young years just basically
11 floating around. And I met my husband when I was 17. And
12 he -- in my mind he offered me stability. So I went with -
13 - I stayed with him and had three beautiful children with
14 him. But how do I put -- it wasn't a stable relationship.
15 He was very violent and there was -- there's times when it
16 was -- relationship was calm. Like, having the children I
17 tried my best to offer them a calmness and to -- I tried my
18 best to provide them with a stable home. But when you have
19 a husband who is very abusive, it's very easy to lose
20 yourself.

21 Anyways, so Michelle, as she was growing up
22 and Danielle and Anthony, they both seen, as children, a
23 lot of the violence with their father. And we would -- I
24 would leave him off and on, trying to get out of the

1 relationship.

2 Anyways, I started becoming in -- started
3 getting into drugs when I was in my 20s. And, again, I
4 didn't know anything about drugs. I was very naive. And
5 so I didn't have a clue what I was getting into until I was
6 already in it. And it kind of -- it took over all the
7 goodness inside of me I felt. As much as I wanted to be --
8 and I tried to be a good parent. At times I wasn't. I
9 wasn't there for my children.

10 When they were -- as they were growing up in
11 I think the year 2000, the drugs just got too much of me
12 and I chose drugs over my children at that time, thinking
13 that -- in my mind, thinking that they didn't deserve to
14 have a drug-addicted mother looking after them.

15 Anyways, Michelle kind of got lost in the
16 works but I walked away. Danielle and Tony were looked
17 after but Michelle wasn't because she was older. She was
18 almost -- she was 18, over 18. So she kind of got lost,
19 very lost. And she -- eventually she found me on the
20 streets and she didn't want to be alone and she didn't want
21 me to be alone. And it's not the ideal situation of a
22 family unit but that was ours.

23 And so her and I were both on the streets
24 using drugs. And during the time, Michelle and I were

1 trying to plan to come home because she was pregnant at the
2 time. And we thought we wanted to try and make a
3 difference, so we were trying to find a way to get home but
4 our brains weren't working too good because we were both
5 not in the right mind. And the last time I talked with
6 her, we were talking on the phone -- I gave her a hug and
7 then we both went our separate ways living on the streets.
8 And we said we'd meet up in about an hour. And we both
9 said we loved you and then she hung up. And that was the
10 last time I ever talked with my daughter.

11 That's kind of the gist of -- the quick gist
12 of where Michelle went missing. I didn't -- we didn't know
13 where she was. I kept looking for her on the streets. And
14 it wasn't until, like, a few days later that a friend
15 talked me into going in to the police and reporting her
16 missing but that's one thing I didn't want to do because I
17 didn't want to face the fact that my daughter was missing.

18 That just -- she was supposed to turn up.
19 You know, she was supposed to be there and I was supposed
20 to hug her and say, you know, "Don't do that to me. Don't
21 scare me like that, you know." But she never did. You
22 know, she was missing for, like, two-and-a-half years. And
23 I spent a lot of that time looking for her on the streets,
24 trying to find her, but she wasn't there.

1 And before she was found, my children
2 started making contact with me on the streets and they
3 started reminding me that I wasn't alone, that I was --
4 that I had family, because I felt I didn't have anything,
5 that I wasn't worth anything, you know. But as much as I
6 put these two through, they came and they found me on the
7 streets and they started to let me know I wasn't alone.
8 And they built a little foundation so that when my
9 daughter's remains were found I was in a safe place. I was
10 with them. And I didn't find out when I was on the
11 streets, you know, and I wasn't told by a random person.

12 Anyways, after they found my daughter's
13 remains, part of you can't believe that that's actually
14 happened. You're still supposed to be waiting, you know,
15 but that finalises it so much.

16 I'm probably jumping over a bunch of pieces
17 but I'm just trying to keep track in my mind.

18 But I remember trying to go to -- okay.
19 Anyways, I've been over eight years clean now off of
20 heroine and the drugs. I have my own home in Port Hardy,
21 bought with my residential school money. I have a
22 beautiful granddaughter that's in my life now that I'm
23 fortunate to be a part of her life. And my children here,
24 we're here to -- I guess my daughter, Michelle, she was 24

1 when she went missing and she was a beautiful child. Like,
2 from when she was a baby, she was just always smiling. And
3 then when she got used to being a big sister she just --
4 she loved Dani to pieces and same with Tony. She was like
5 the second mom when I wasn't there, you know.

6 And I just don't -- you know, like, she
7 deserved better, you know. And you can't question fate. I
8 know that. I guess I'm just -- I'm here also just to --
9 remind my daughter wasn't just a working girl. She wasn't
10 just a prostitute, you know. She wasn't just a junkie.
11 She was loved, you know. She has a lot of people that
12 still cry for her, you know.

13 And there's too many young girls out there.
14 I knew two other ones while I was on the street, two other
15 Native Aboriginal women that were murdered. And it's just
16 -- it's a sad state that we have to be here just to remind
17 people that our children, our sisters, our daughters, you
18 know, they were all loved, you know.

19 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Thank you very
20 much, Mona. I'd like to ask you some questions if that's
21 okay.

22 You did a wonderful job but there might be
23 some details that would help people understand the story.

24 So you were born in Bella Bella. And you

1 also lived in Alert Bay; did you not?

2 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Yes.

3 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And so how long did
4 you live in Alert Bay?

5 **MS. MONA SHAW:** I was in St. Mike's
6 Residential School from 1964 to 1973 when they were finally
7 closing it down. That's the only way that I was -- got out
8 of there was when they were closing it down finally.

9 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And what year were
10 you actually born in?

11 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Pardon me?

12 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** What year were you
13 born in? What's your birthday?

14 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Oh, I'm sorry. I was born
15 January 8, 1960. Yeah, so I was, like four-and-a-half when
16 I finally got put in the residential school. I was too
17 young to go to school and I had no understanding of where I
18 was or where my mom was, you know.

19 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And you said that
20 your -- both your parents died before you were five. And
21 both -- in both cases it was accidents; is that right?

22 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Yeah. Yeah, my dad owned a
23 little putt putt boat and the boat sank, so he -- and he
24 drowned. And then six months later my mom was going to a

1 funeral or going I think to Alert Bay and the plane crashed
2 and everybody on it perished. So, like I said, within days
3 of my mom's passing I found myself in St. Mike's with no
4 understanding of what really had happened to me or where I
5 was.

6 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And both Bella
7 Bella and Alert Bay, they're fairly isolated communities;
8 are they?

9 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Yeah. Yeah, Wuikinuxv
10 Village you can only get in there through boat or plane.
11 There's no roads that get -- to go there. And it's a very
12 small community. Maybe in the village there's maybe like
13 80 people that live there.

14 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Did you actually
15 live at the residential school or did you live with foster
16 parents or family members?

17 **MS. MONA SHAW:** No, I lived in the
18 residential school. They had dormitories. You start --
19 when you first get there you're, like, on the junior
20 dormitory with all the younger girls and then the
21 intermediate and senior. There's, like, maybe -- I'm not
22 sure if it's, like, 60 on each side of the dormitory, but
23 there's a lot of us children and our beds were, like,
24 within 3 feet of each other and we all lived there 10

1 months out of the year. And they -- all the other kids
2 were a family, you know.

3 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And what about the
4 adults who looked after you? What can you say about the
5 caring that you received?

6 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Sometimes during holidays
7 we're allowed to go stay with family. At times -- so
8 because I was very blond, I felt I wasn't really accepted.
9 I was, like, a (speaking in Oowekyala language). You know,
10 that's what everybody used to call me. (Speaking in
11 Oowekyala), you know. So I was -- I used to pray that I'd
12 get darker skin so I'd be like my brothers and sisters but.

13 Depending on the relative that I was staying
14 with, sometimes it was alcoholism, but there's a lot of
15 children, my cousins, that we played with in Rivers Inlet.
16 A lot of times the children, we were very independent, you
17 know. You just ran around and did whatever we did. And if
18 there's drinking we tried to stay away from there. You
19 know, we learned self-preservation as children, you know.

20 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Tell us about your
21 siblings. Who were they?

22 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Okay. I have two other
23 sisters and I had five brothers. One of my brothers,
24 Robert, passed away when I was eight years old, and that

1 was one year that I got forgotten about in the residential
2 school. Over the summer I was eight years old and nobody
3 remembered to take me, so I was stuck in Alert Bay and that
4 was the summer that he drowned.

5 But my family, like, my brothers and
6 sisters, as much as we didn't see each other, like we all -
7 - we were all we had, as we were young -- when we were
8 younger, like, I love my brothers. My sisters too, you
9 know.

10 And, like I say, as children, sometimes I
11 didn't see my brothers for, like, four years because they
12 were in different residential schools or they were in
13 foster homes or I didn't know where they were. And then
14 when I was nine my older sister, Valerie, was asked to take
15 me because nobody else wanted me. That's what she was
16 told. She goes, "You have to take Mona because nobody else
17 wants her." So and she was only 17, you know. She was a
18 new mom and she had -- just like myself, she didn't know
19 how to be a mom. She didn't know how to be involved with
20 family, you know.

21 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** M'hm.

22 **MS. MONA SHAW:** And so she tried to -- did
23 her best to look after me but she had her own demons that
24 she was fighting.

1 And then I kind of stayed off and on between
2 her and foster homes. And then finally -- I think I was --
3 I was fairly young when I got lost in the system. I didn't
4 know where to turn. I didn't know what help was out there.
5 I was thrown out by my sister. I got -- we were too much
6 for her. And so I was kind of like one of the -- I would
7 just go to where all the Natives were in Vancouver. I
8 didn't know any -- there's no support. I just kind of hung
9 out with family and slept on couches, couch surfed for a
10 few years until I met my husband and then I thought, "Oh,
11 this is what I'm supposed to do. This is what family's
12 about." You know, and that, you know.

13 And I didn't realize when I first met him,
14 like, that he was very prejudiced. He thought that I was a
15 white girl. And then he found out that I was Native and he
16 was very vocal as far as sometimes his displeasure, you
17 know. Yeah.

18 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And your children,
19 Michelle was the eldest and she was born on August 11,
20 1981?

21 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Yes, she was. I was 21 when
22 I had her. And I remember -- like, again, I thought I was
23 going to have to -- I couldn't go into labour. They had to
24 have a C-section and I remember being more upset about the

1 little scar that I had because I was 21 and -- but I just -
2 - I took one look at her and she's, like, just this
3 perfectly little round head and she was totally dependent
4 on me and you couldn't pry her out of my arms. It was,
5 like, that was -- I finally knew love, you know. I finally
6 knew what it was to absolutely love another human being,
7 you know. It was my daughter, Michelle, you know. And
8 then I did my best.

9 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Yes. And five
10 years later Danielle was born.

11 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Yes.

12 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** The young woman to
13 your left.

14 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Yeah. Yeah, May 5th, 1986 I
15 had Danielle and Michelle was quite excited but not quite,
16 you know -- like, she wanted to be a big sister and it was
17 like my family was growing, you know. Like, again, it's
18 like I was making my own little pack. My -- I have my
19 daughter -- my two daughters and then four years later I
20 had my son Tony.

21 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And he was born
22 January 12th, 1990?

23 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Yes. Yeah. And, yeah, that
24 was ---

1 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And where were you
2 living when the children -- where were you living when the
3 children were born?

4 **MS. MONA SHAW:** In Burnaby.

5 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** In Burnaby.

6 **MS. MONA SHAW:** It was off and on with my
7 husband. Throughout those years it was, like, back and
8 forth. We'd be together and then due to violence, you
9 know, I would leave, you know. There's a lot of blank
10 spots in my mind but we lived in Burnaby for a good part of
11 the younger years, you know.

12 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And you told me of
13 one event with your husband which was kind of the final
14 straw. And what happened there?

15 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Oh yeah. He used to come in
16 with a bottle when he got paid, 24-pack of beer and a 26er
17 of scotch or whatever he drank. And as soon as we seen
18 that, like, Tony was only I think two months old. Danielle
19 was four and Michelle was only 8 or 9. But as soon as we
20 would see him walking in like that, Dani would run and grab
21 the bottles and they would skit around, grab toys. So we
22 would go into the bedroom and we would barricade ourselves
23 in there and push a dresser against the door so that when
24 he got drunk he couldn't come and hurt us, you know.

1 And I remember him screaming in the door.
2 He goes how he was going to -- how nobody would have me or
3 my children, how he was going to take us and he was going
4 to kill all my kids and let me live for two weeks just so I
5 could think about how they had all died. And then he said
6 he would -- then he would kill me. And having somebody say
7 that to you about your children and then we would -- kind
8 of had to go into hiding. And it was a little bit chaotic
9 there for a while, trying to stay a step ahead of him,
10 because sometimes I would think I was going to be safe and
11 then I'd get a phone call from him.

12 And at the time I had somebody that worked
13 with BC Hydro and I'd say, like, "Where is he living?" And
14 I'd find out he was only two blocks from me, you know.

15 He used to walk by our house in the middle
16 of the night. And I remember Danielle telling me once, she
17 goes, "I was waving at daddy last night" when she got up to
18 go to the washroom and he apparently was standing right
19 outside our house just staring at where we were living.
20 And that was terrifying to me because he could be very
21 charming but he could also be very violent, you know. And
22 the possibility of him making good on what he promised when
23 he was in a drunken rage kind of spurred me on but it was
24 really hard to live in those conditions, you know. I don't

1 think I ever really told my kids how violent he -- it was
2 because that was mine to bear, you know.

3 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And do you know
4 where he is today?

5 **MS. MONA SHAW:** No. He -- we haven't had
6 any contact with him since about '92. Is that about -- you
7 were about -- you were just all children, but it was about
8 '92. And he's -- hasn't been around, has never paid a dime
9 in child support. Family maintenance could not collect
10 money off him because he was so violent and he made the
11 worker feel very threatened. So they told me, they said,
12 "Sorry, we can't garnishee his wages. We can't get any
13 money from him to pay child support because there is fear
14 of the worker, of retaliation."

15 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. So that's
16 one agency that you might get help from and you didn't ---

17 **MS. MONA SHAW:** No.

18 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** --- because they
19 were afraid of your husband. And what about other
20 agencies? Did you go for help about the fact that you were
21 with a violent man?

22 **MS. MONA SHAW:** No, I didn't. I didn't know
23 any agencies and I had nobody there to tell me, to say, you
24 know, "Did you know that there is -- there were these

1 agencies available for me?" So, no, I didn't have any
2 support at all, none, because I did not know who to turn
3 to. I just -- basically just tried my best to be a strong
4 mother and tried to do my best for my children.

5 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And I might need to
6 say a few words so you understand this question, but around
7 that time when your husband was being violent, how did you
8 use the police? What was your perspective of the police?

9 **MS. MONA SHAW:** I remember once when I did
10 try to charge him and then when the police got there they
11 were laughing and smiling with him like they were all
12 buddies; right? And right there, like, you're supposed to
13 be here to help me, you know. But he's explaining to them,
14 "Oh, I got a wife, you know. She's a little bit, you
15 know." I don't know what he said, but by the end of it I
16 think he was to stay away from me for 24 hours at that
17 time.

18 But he -- there was a few other incidences
19 where I had to charge him and I did end up getting
20 restraining order against him. But a lot of the times I
21 felt -- like I said, he could be very charming, could be
22 very charming. And I -- he used to be friends with the
23 lawyers in the courtroom, you know. And I've always felt I
24 sat there by myself separate from everything that was

1 happening around me and just let everybody do whatever they
2 were doing. And I had no say. You know, I had no
3 strength, had no inner strength either.

4 And by this time I had already started
5 dabbling in drug use, you know, but I just -- I felt I was
6 just being pushed whichever way the wind blew, you know.
7 There was -- I had no control.

8 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And so was this all
9 still around, like, the early and mid '90s that you're
10 talking about?

11 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Early about '90s to '92. I
12 think I finally left him when Tony was not even six months
13 old because it was during that time that he threatened, you
14 know, to kill all of them, you know.

15 Like one time when I was pregnant with Tony,
16 he had me by my throat about two feet off the ground and he
17 had his knees to my stomach and he kept saying he was going
18 to make me abort. He goes, "I'm going to make you abort,
19 bitch."

20 You know, and Danielle jumped from her top
21 bunk and she ran up and she's looking at her dad holding
22 her mom by the throat and saying, "Daddy, what does abort
23 mean?" You know, and he dropped me there. But to have a
24 four-year-old run up and say, you know, "Daddy, what are

1 you doing?" You know, "What are you trying to do?"

2 You know, and I'm thankful that maybe they
3 were too young to remember some of the things that we went
4 through, but Michelle didn't. She was older. She seen and
5 she remembered a lot of the times where she had to be the
6 little mother and entertain her baby brother and baby
7 sister, make sure Tony had his bottle, you know, while we
8 were together in that room or just sometimes she seen the
9 stress. She would just kind of, like, usher them away and
10 play with them because she knew to keep everybody quiet
11 because didn't want to get her dad upset.

12 You know, so she lived with that stress for
13 -- as a child too. And she bear -- she bore that burden
14 right along with me, you know, and she was just a child.
15 She shouldn't have had to, you know.

16 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And what about
17 finances when you left him? How did you look after
18 yourselves?

19 **MS. MONA SHAW:** For a while there I worked
20 with BC Tel and BC Hydro, but I slipped on some ice at one
21 point when Danielle was a baby and then I -- there was
22 chronic problem, pain. So a lot of it was just welfare.
23 We had no extra support. It was just welfare and child
24 bonus, you know. I didn't get support from family, you

1 know. They were -- had their own families to deal with,
2 you know.

3 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And did you still
4 live in the lower mainland at that time?

5 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Yeah. Again, we were moving
6 a lot around in south Burnaby. I kind of called that place
7 my home. And as my children are growing up, they remember
8 a lot more of the moves than I do. I seem to -- I have
9 blank spots in my memory, like, even as a child. But there
10 was a lot of chaos. And, like I said, my children, they'll
11 remember a lot of the moves. I know we moved a lot but I
12 probably don't remember all of them. But it was basically
13 Vancouver, south Burnaby mainly, you know.

14 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** The police agency
15 that you're dealing with, the one you reported your
16 husband's abuse, was that the Burnaby RCMP?

17 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Yes, yeah.

18 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And the -- I think
19 there were probably Burnaby courts at that time. They have
20 since closed.

21 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Yeah. And, like I said,
22 again, there was no support. There was nobody there to sit
23 with me even or, like, when you have a young mother that's
24 dealing with a very violent husband, sometimes -- nowadays,

1 I mean, there would be somebody sitting with that person.
2 But at that time in the '80s they didn't have that. They
3 didn't offer -- or at least it was offered to me, you know.

4 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Yeah, I know. I
5 was a Crown around that time in the Burnaby courts and I
6 know that Victim Services didn't come until about the '80s.
7 Let's see, in '86 there was the start but it grew slowly
8 and then eventually now, fortunately, we find them in many
9 places in the lower mainland with -- offering the type of
10 assistance that sounds like you're recommending.

11 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Yes.

12 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. So when did
13 you get to the point then that your drugs started to kind
14 of control you?

15 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Pardon me?

16 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** When did -- when in
17 your life did you get to the point that the drugs started
18 to control you and your activity and what happened?

19 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Oh my goodness. There's a
20 few times where it got the best of me and my children were
21 taken away. And then I would try to get my life back
22 together and get them back but it was -- there was a
23 pattern that I started to follow, you know. I would get
24 clean for a period of time and then I would just kind of

1 lose myself in drug use. Or sometimes it was,
2 unfortunately for me, a family member that you (inaudible)
3 that used to come over and bring it and put it right in
4 front of my face, you know, family or friends, you know.
5 Because I never really went out and started seeking it
6 until I was, like, maybe in the '90s. But before that I
7 was -- a lot of times it was just around. And I -- like I
8 said, my kids got taken away from me a few times because of
9 drug use, you know.

10 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And in those early
11 years particularly, what was it about drugs that sort of
12 was telling you that it was a good idea to take them?

13 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Oh, okay. I just -- I
14 remember reading in the newspaper going crack is an
15 epidemic. And I thought -- and I got scared. I go, "I'll
16 never do that." Right? But they never said crack was
17 cocaine.

18 And I remember asking the dealer one time,
19 I'm going, "I won't touch crack." And he goes, "Oh, this
20 isn't crack. Don't worry." You know, and I was very
21 naive. And he goes, "It's just cocaine. That's not too
22 bad, you know."

23 And I used to just snort it until my nose
24 got plugged up so I couldn't even ingest any of the drugs.

1 And I had a family member who said, "Here, try it this
2 way." And as soon as I took that first hoot of crack, that
3 was it. It was, like, it -- the addiction is instantaneous
4 almost. And I went from a level of occasionally using to
5 constantly using whenever I could, you know.

6 And then I got into a relationship for a
7 while in the '90s where I kind of tapered off. And I was
8 trying to, like, be the family person. I had a boyfriend.
9 We were together a few years. And, again, I didn't know
10 how to maintain a relationship. I didn't know how to have
11 the other half. I didn't know how to talk with a partner,
12 you know. I just went through the motions of trying to be
13 a mother and but everything in my mind was like a picture
14 but I didn't have the tools to be a good partner to
15 anybody, you know.

16 I was young. I was naive. And when I tried
17 to do my best, I -- you know, I was there like for my kids,
18 with my kids, but as soon as like a crisis hit, like when
19 we split up, I think that was -- when me and my boyfriend
20 in the '90s, when we split up, then it was a very quick
21 decline for myself, like, in the drug world and having
22 drugs overtake me to the point where I didn't think I was -
23 - my kids deserved a mother like I was. And I thought the
24 best thing I could do was walk away because what child

1 deserves to watch a parent use drugs, you know? That's not
2 the ideal situation, you know.

3 So and it was the drugs also. They were
4 just taking too heavy a toll on me. And I walked away. To
5 this day I can't believe I actually did that. But I
6 damaged my kids when I did that, you know. Everything they
7 had was gone because their mom chose drugs and didn't think
8 she was worth anything, you know.

9 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And how old were
10 the kids at that time?

11 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Tony was -- Michelle was
12 about just 19, 20. Dani, how old was everybody? I think
13 you were 11?

14 **MS. DANIELLE SHAW:** At the point that we --
15 you moved away for good?

16 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Yeah.

17 **MS. DANIELLE SHAW:** Oh, I was 15.

18 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Eleven (11), 15 and Michelle
19 was 19 going on 20. And, like I say, Tony got put in
20 foster home, Dani foster home in the beginning also, but
21 Michelle was -- had no -- nothing. She kind of had to try
22 to make a go of it by herself. And that spirit of hers I'm
23 sure started dwindling, you know, because she -- I was
24 gone, you know. And ---

1 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** When did you start
2 seeing Michelle on the street with you?

3 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Oh my goodness. At least a
4 year-and-a-half before she went missing. I remember I
5 opened the door and I was in a hotel room and there's a
6 knock on the door and somebody came and they go, "It's your
7 daughter Michelle." And -- anyways, that was about 2002 I
8 believe. She said she came to find me. She didn't want me
9 to be by myself and she didn't want to be by herself
10 either. And so the only way she knew to be with me was the
11 drugs. And she'd already started dabbling in drugs
12 herself.

13 And so on the street, again, it's not an
14 ideal situation, but we tried to look out for each other as
15 best we could. And we tried to make sure we were always
16 taken care of, you know. And, again, it's not ideal. But
17 she didn't want to be alone. She didn't want me to be
18 alone. And she wanted to be with me any way she could.

19 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And what can you
20 say about either you or Michelle at that point seeking help
21 from any agency that could actually help you with your
22 addiction, your finances, getting back with your children?
23 What was going on in that area?

24 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Again, I didn't know who to

1 call. Phones weren't readily available. But a few weeks
2 before she went missing she came and told me that she was
3 pregnant. So, like, okay, let's -- and she said, "Let's go
4 home to Wuikinuxv. And so I remember phoning -- I'd lost a
5 whole bunch of phone numbers by then. But somehow I
6 remembered the band office. And I remember phoning there
7 going, "Can you please help me and my daughter get home?"
8 And being told, "No, we can't help you." You know, and
9 then I would try to tell them, "I'm going talk to my
10 family, you know. Michelle and I want to come home, you
11 know." And the answer was always no. And I couldn't
12 remember other people's phone number to ask for help.

13 And I remember her telling me, she goes,
14 "Mom, don't leave me here. Don't leave me here." Because
15 I was seriously wanting to go and Michelle was so terrified
16 that I would leave her on the street and just -- and go
17 home without her.

18 But, again, I didn't know any resources. I
19 didn't know who to reach out to. I didn't even -- I'd
20 forgotten my children's phone numbers. I didn't know how
21 to get a hold of them. I was just -- I felt like I was
22 shooting in the dark trying to get help for my daughter and
23 myself.

24 And oh, excuse me. And it was just within a

1 few weeks after that we were still talking about going
2 home. And then she said, "I'll see you in an hour, mom."
3 And then phoned me just to make sure I was still there
4 waiting for her. And we always said we loved you -- loved
5 each other. And that was the last I talked to her. She
6 goes, "I'll see you in an hour, Mom." And she was really
7 quite happy, you know, and because we were moving forward.

8 There was excitement, you know. We were
9 going to go home. We were going to get off drugs. She was
10 going to have her baby, you know. It was all these plans
11 that we had. And they're not there anymore, you know,
12 because somebody took her life and dumped her on the side
13 of the road like garbage, you know, and she was lucky
14 enough to be found.

15 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And thank you very
16 much. You brought pictures today actually with you of
17 Michelle. And I noticed one that was up and expect that
18 they'll come up again in a moment. So how old was Michelle
19 when she went missing?

20 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Pardon me?

21 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** How old was
22 Michelle when she went missing?

23 **MS. MONA SHAW:** She was 24. She was 24 and

24 ---

1 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** There she is.

2 **MS. MONA SHAW:** --- she was beautiful,
3 always smiling. She liked her nice clothes. She loved her
4 makeup, you know. And she had such a tender heart, you
5 know, such a tender heart. And I miss her every day.
6 Like, even when she went missing I had a hard time -- I
7 wouldn't -- it's like I wouldn't leave the streets. I
8 didn't want to leave without her.

9 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** M'hm.

10 **MS. MONA SHAW:** For the longest time I would
11 go looking for her, you know, and not knowing that she was
12 already taken from me, you know. I would go looking for
13 her, you know.

14 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And to whom did you
15 report the fact that she was missing?

16 **MS. MONA SHAW:** The Surrey RCMP.

17 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And what was their
18 response?

19 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Basically, she's just
20 another junkie, another working girl. She'll turn up.
21 She'll turn up, you know. There's a small attempt of the
22 cops questioning people, but it wasn't anything serious.
23 And then sometimes I would try to tell them information.
24 I'm, like, the -- you know, like, anything that I knew that

1 I was hearing on the street. And their response was,
2 "You're just a junkie. What do you know?" So they were
3 already looking down at me and looking down at the fact
4 that my daughter was just a junkie. She was just another
5 working girl, but she wasn't, you know. She wasn't.

6 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Now eventually when
7 her remains were found -- and how much later was that?

8 **MS. MONA SHAW:** I believe two-and-a-half
9 years. She was found just in December 7th I believe in
10 2007.

11 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And did you at that
12 stage have any dealings with the homicide investigators?

13 **MS. MONA SHAW:** After her remains were
14 found, again, their response was they didn't -- they had
15 nothing to say to me because, again, I was just a junkie.
16 I didn't know anything. So I believe they were expecting
17 somebody else to come that was more in their line of who
18 they visualised. I wasn't the ideal person in their mind
19 of somebody that could give them information, you know.

20 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** M'hm.

21 **MS. MONA SHAW:** So I felt very unheard and
22 very shamed that this is my daughter we're talking about
23 and the cops are saying to her mom, you know -- and that
24 was a fact. I was a junkie, you know. I was homeless, you

1 know. But I still felt. I still -- you know, she was my
2 daughter. I loved her, you know. And she was -- yeah, the
3 homicide -- they were very snobby.

4 Even the beat cops, sometimes they would
5 have information and they told me they're trying to tell
6 homicide what they had heard on the street but -- to them.
7 I guess they have hierarchies even in the police
8 departments, you know. And they were like, "Oh, you know,
9 like, you're just beat cops. What do you know", you know?
10 So they weren't even listening in them -- to themselves,
11 you know, to the cops that were on the street, the ones
12 that I did know, the ones that did know Michelle, you know.

13 There was a few cops that knew her and they
14 came to me and expressed their sorrow. They go, "She
15 didn't deserve that, Mona." You know, and they would tell
16 me little stories about their encounters with my daughter,
17 you know. Again, it's not ideal that you'd have your
18 daughter -- have the cops know your daughter quite well,
19 but they did and they really liked her and they were very
20 sorry. But there was -- there's not a lot of help as far
21 as with the homicide directly.

22 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So your experience
23 with the police was varied, depending on the person that
24 you were speaking with and the ---

1 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Yeah.

2 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** --- position they
3 held? Yeah.

4 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Yeah.

5 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And so did -- was
6 there ever a suspect identified?

7 **MS. MONA SHAW:** I had a suspect for -- or I
8 had a person of interest I wanted the police to talk with.
9 And there was even a phone number where my daughter phoned
10 -- the last phone number she phoned from. I got the person
11 to okay that the police trace the call. But I never heard
12 any more regarding that and they said that they did talk
13 with somebody but I don't know who they talked with. I
14 tried to ask them questions about the person that I believe
15 that she was with but there is no information coming. They
16 just said, "It's ongoing investigation and we can't tell
17 you anything."

18 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. And it
19 wasn't much later that you reconnected with Anthony and
20 Danielle; is that right?

21 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Yeah. When Michelle came
22 back into my life she -- I remember she would phone Dani
23 sometimes or phone Tony and I would talk to them. And then
24 when Michelle was missing, all of a sudden he was in foster

1 home. And he was only 16, 17 years old and he would come
2 and find me, you know. And he would make a point of we
3 would get together. He would bring me to Dani's work or we
4 would arrange to go for something to eat, you know. And
5 just -- it was that little contact here and there in such a
6 dark world that I started realizing I am loved, you know.
7 I have two more children that need me, you know.

8 And they started -- it was just, like,
9 little contact and I had a few little, like, trial runs at
10 getting clean, you know, but the last few times I would
11 kind of run back to the streets. But in November 11th, 2008
12 I walked away from Surrey and I told everybody, I says,
13 "I'm not coming back." Because I was going up to see Dani
14 and Tony, I was going to go get clean. I was going to --
15 had all these plans. And they didn't tell me at that time
16 that my daughter's remains had been found. They --
17 smartly, they got me up to Wuikinuxv Village -- pardon me?

18 **MS. DANIELLE SHAW:** Her remains were found a
19 year prior.

20 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Oh. No, but 2007 but this
21 is January -- or okay.

22 **MS. DANIELLE SHAW:** (Inaudible).

23 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Yeah, sorry. Yeah.

24 **MS. DANIELLE SHAW:** (Inaudible).

1 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Yeah, sorry. In the January
2 right after my daughter's remains were found was when I
3 first went home and that's when Dani and Tony told me my
4 daughter's remains were found. And at the same time, I'd
5 also lost one of my brothers, so that was, like, a double
6 whammy. But that was one of my first attempts at getting
7 clean.

8 And then I spent, like, from that January
9 until the November trying really hard but not quite
10 succeeding in leaving the street life. I guess now in
11 November that's when I finally went back home to Wuikinuxv
12 and I haven't been back to Surrey since. And I've brought
13 Michelle home with me. Like, she's with me.

14 Dani took care of everything as far as my
15 daughter's remains, everything. I wasn't in any shape to
16 be there. And my children are very strong, very strong.
17 And I'm here today because of it.

18 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Thank you, Mona.
19 Your home, be -- would you spell that for
20 the record, just so that people know?

21 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Oh, okay. Wuikinuxv is W-U-
22 I-K-I-N-U-X-V. Wuikinuxv Village.

23 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. And is that
24 the same -- where the same band office is that couldn't

1 help you at a time when you called?

2 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Yeah, yes.

3 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And so has your
4 relationship with the band office changed?

5 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Yeah, the person that I was
6 talking to is no longer there. And so I didn't ever get
7 the chance to confront her because they said -- I asked for
8 her and they said that she wasn't there anymore. And so I
9 haven't -- and they say they would have been there if I
10 would have asked the right people. But when you're in that
11 kind of shape and you're trying to ask for help you'd think
12 that somebody would -- it's such a small community, that
13 somebody would tell somebody and give them direction
14 because I called quite a few times, you know, just trying
15 to ask for help, you know.

16 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So congratulations
17 on being eight years sober and clean. What do you think --
18 what is the key to that? What would you say to somebody in
19 a similar position about the key that opened the door to
20 being clean and sober?

21 **MS. MONA SHAW:** It's -- I couldn't go down
22 any farther. I was -- I had hit, like, rock bottom. The
23 next step would have been -- like, when I was on the
24 street, I seen lifers down there and I didn't want to be

1 that. I'd seen people that were there for 25, 30 years and
2 they were in their 70s. And I'm going -- I didn't want
3 that for myself. I was lucky I had support between Dani
4 and Tony. Like, Tony was very persistent with me and Dani
5 too; right? And they were, like, an anchor I was able to
6 hold onto. And, again, I was fortunate. And they were
7 very strong in their asking of me. "Please, Mom", you
8 know.

9 And then I also had my daughter's memory
10 too. I was able to bring her home and that helped my
11 spirit. I still -- I made a promise to her and I have two
12 children that I just hang onto for dear life in -- if
13 there's any temptation in front of me, all I have to do is
14 think about Dani and Tony and my granddaughter, Ariel (ph).
15 And the answer's very easy for me, is no. And I've said
16 that quite a few times in the last few years to people.

17 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Now when we talked
18 on the phone I told you a little bit about what the
19 Commissioner's -- what the task is in front of them. And
20 I'm wondering if you have any recommendations for
21 Commissioner Audette that you could communicate at this
22 point.

23 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Oh my goodness. I guess
24 better communication, like, as far as the RCMP offices so

1 they listen to each other. Like, they're all supposed to
2 be one unit. They're not supposed to be hierarchies and
3 different -- like, just have a communication. Listen to
4 parts of the department that actually know what they're
5 talking about. In homicide they just see something on a
6 piece of paper. They don't know the people. But there
7 were police officers that did know what was happening.

8 And stop the prejudism [*sic*] regarding what
9 status or what -- you know, where the person stands in
10 their lifeline, or whether they're homeless or whether
11 they're an addict or whether they're a single parent or,
12 you know, they're all these things. Just treat them like
13 human beings and just be caring with them in their loss,
14 you know.

15 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Thank you. And I
16 just see a note here that I don't think I should miss
17 because you also spoke quite glowingly of the Port Hardy
18 Police in terms of helping you with your addiction and
19 getting back on the road.

20 **MS. MONA SHAW:** Yeah, the Port Hardy Mental
21 Health. When I was in the hospital detoxing, I think for
22 the second time, one of the workers, Shane Thomas (ph), he
23 came to me and he was just very genuine. I thought he was
24 just -- you know, I kind of, like, dismissed anybody that

1 was trying to help me. They're just all bureaucratic, you
2 know. And I said, "Well, if you're listening," I says, "I
3 really like fruit." And the next day he walks in with a
4 big bag of fruit. And that was, like, okay. And then --
5 but it was a slow process. But he pointed me in different
6 directions within Port Hardy to help me in those times,
7 made sure I got to my appointments, made sure I had enough
8 food in my fridge, checked up on how I was, you know.

9 And things -- I had a good support system in
10 the very, very beginning that was very valuable, you know.
11 And I started to find myself and be able to accept the
12 help. And that was a big thing was accepting the help.

13 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Thank you, Mona.
14 I'm going to ask that you hand the microphone to Anthony,
15 your son, unless you have anything else you want to say.
16 Okay. Thank you very much.

17 **MR. ANTHONY SHAW:** Hello?

18 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Go ahead. You go
19 ahead. You go ahead.

20 **MR. ANTHONY SHAW:** Yeah, I've prepared a
21 speech.

22 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Thank you for doing
23 that.

24 **MR. ANTHONY SHAW:** So, again, thank you for

1 having my family here and allowing us to speak about my
2 sister and our lives.

3 So first off, I want everyone here to know
4 that I'm not here to ask for sympathy, seek charity or lay
5 blame. I want only for others to understand some of my
6 family's life, my sister Michelle's life and the
7 unfortunate events that led to her death. I'll also
8 discuss the aftermath, supports I was offered, as well as
9 supports I could have used so.

10 For the longest time it was just me, my two
11 sisters, Dani and Michelle, and my mom. We moved around a
12 lot from apartment to apartment, living in poverty with
13 support from welfare and the local food bank. My mother,
14 being a single parent of three children, did the best she
15 could. She's a fantastic mother. She's loving and caring
16 and would do anything for her children.

17 My sister, Danielle, was one of my best
18 friends. She's tenacious and tough. My oldest sister,
19 Michelle, it's hard to put into words what she was and what
20 she meant to my family and I. She was intelligent, caring,
21 persistent, resilient, beautiful, kind and extremely soft-
22 hearted. She was also so much more than that. She was my
23 second mother. She was the one who gave me haircuts, the
24 one who made me dinner when I was hungry, the one who I

1 looked up to, the one who made my birthday special, the one
2 who loved and looked after me when no one else was around
3 to. She loved butterflies and The Little Mermaid. She
4 wanted to be a stylist. She wanted to be somebody.

5 Around my 10th birthday my mother succumbed
6 to the pull of addiction once more. She was not around
7 much during this time and it was up to Michelle to take
8 care of me. She did the best she could. She did a
9 fantastic job.

10 Soon after this I was placed in the foster
11 care. I did not see much of her after this. I would
12 periodically visit her apartment in Surrey. Soon the
13 visits stopped happening. I was too caught up in my life
14 to see what was going on. She got caught up in drugs and
15 prostitution. She got lost in the world or swallowed up by
16 it.

17 On my 12th birthday she came to my foster
18 home to join the celebrations. I was so happy to see her.
19 Although she didn't look well, I didn't care because she
20 was there. This was one of the last times I'll ever see
21 her.

22 I came home from school years later to be
23 told she had gone missing. My mother would tell me she
24 just left one night after saying she'd be back soon. Two

1 years after that her remains were discovered by a jogger.
2 At this point there's no loss of that last little bit of
3 hope for my sister. I had already known. She never would
4 have gone this long without reaching out.

5 My sister Danielle handled much of the
6 funeral arrangements and I carried her ashes back home to
7 Rivers Inlet, the Wuikinuxv Village. To the best of my
8 knowledge, the police were never able to find out exactly
9 what happened and I do not blame them.

10 I was offered some supports to help me deal
11 with and process these events. The foster system found me
12 a counsellor. I believe this helped a lot. I cannot think
13 of many other supports that could have been offered.
14 Perhaps a support group or being able to speak with someone
15 who went through something similar would have helped. It
16 might have allowed me to feel less alone with what I went
17 through.

18 As for my sister, more supports definitely
19 could have been offered to her. She was a young lady that
20 wanted to make something of herself. Perhaps funding for
21 her education could have been approved. Perhaps she could
22 have been treated with the same concern given to my sister
23 and I when we were forced to leave my mother's care.
24 Perhaps she could have been offered more guidance and

1 support in navigating this harsh and scary world.

2 Michelle Shaw (inaudible) was my sister. I
3 miss her every day.

4 I want to thank the Inquiry for having my
5 mother, my sister and I here, giving us a forum to tell the
6 world about Michelle (inaudible) and for treating the
7 absence of beautiful young women across the nation with the
8 seriousness and concern they deserve.

9 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Thank you, Anthony.

10 Now I'm just going to ask you a couple
11 questions from -- if you don't mind.

12 **MR. ANTHONY SHAW:** M'hm.

13 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. So this is -
14 - this was an important time where you and Danielle end up
15 going into foster care and Michelle didn't have that
16 because she was 19 years old. Do you remember that time?

17 **MR. ANTHONY SHAW:** Yes.

18 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And describe it to
19 us.

20 **MR. ANTHONY SHAW:** Well, yeah, at the time,
21 my mom got caught up in drugs once more and she wasn't
22 around for weeks at a time. I remember social workers
23 visiting the house and seeing that nobody was there to take
24 care of me when my sister was at work. And I remember one

1 of the social workers actually making me ravioli because I
2 didn't have dinner that night.

3 And, yes, at the time I was -- I had a big
4 brother through the Big Brother program. And he decided to
5 take me into his house and become a foster home. And
6 around that time the environment was judged unfit and at
7 first -- I was the first one forced to leave. And then my
8 sister went to stay with my uncle. And, yeah, I don't
9 remember much else.

10 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So -- and so where
11 did Michelle live?

12 **MR. ANTHONY SHAW:** During the time Michelle
13 lived with us. I don't remember where she went afterwards.
14 We all lived in a townhouse in Surrey together. And, yeah,
15 I -- we left that behind, all our furniture, everything. A
16 lot of stuff was lost.

17 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** You said that
18 Michelle was at work one time when the social worker came.
19 Where -- do you know where she was working?

20 **MR. ANTHONY SHAW:** I believe some
21 restaurant. I don't remember where.

22 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. So she was
23 probably working as a waitress or something.

24 **MR. ANTHONY SHAW:** Yeah.

1 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. Now you said
2 something about she had an idea about what she wanted to
3 do. She knew what kind of training that she wanted.

4 **MR. ANTHONY SHAW:** Yeah.

5 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** What did you know
6 about that?

7 **MR. ANTHONY SHAW:** She, I believe, tried to
8 apply to beauty school three years in a row, requested
9 funding from our band, the Wuikinuxv Nation, and was
10 refused those three years. And, yeah, nothing ever came of
11 it.

12 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. So she
13 applied to the same band office ---

14 **MR. ANTHONY SHAW:** Yeah.

15 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** --- and she was
16 refused. Okay. And so she never went to beauty school.

17 **MR. ANTHONY SHAW:** No.

18 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. Thank you.
19 Is there anything else you'd like to say? Do you have any
20 recommendations to make? Because I should add, because you
21 have actually pursued an education in psychology; is that
22 right?

23 **MR. ANTHONY SHAW:** Yes.

24 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And can you tell us

1 a little bit about that?

2 **MR. ANTHONY SHAW:** Yeah, I attended Kwantlen
3 Polytechnic University and obtained a bachelor's of applied
4 psychology. And I used funding that was made available
5 because I was part of the foster system and the Wuikinuxv
6 Nation funded my education as well. And I'm currently
7 using that education to work in Port Hardy on the mental
8 health team as a rehab worker. Yeah.

9 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Right.
10 Congratulations. That's ---

11 **MR. ANTHONY SHAW:** Thank you.

12 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** --- wonderful that
13 you've pursued that and been successful.

14 Anything else you'd like to say? Any
15 recommendations?

16 **MR. ANTHONY SHAW:** Just perhaps when the
17 system looks at families and kind of tears them apart,
18 perhaps look at the whole thing, see what supports
19 everybody could use, whether or not they're under the age
20 of 18. Yeah, because my sister and I were offered a lot of
21 support and they were concerned more about us and she was
22 just kind of -- she fell through the cracks and, yeah.

23 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Thank you, Anthony.
24 So let's bring that mic down here. Hi,

1 Danielle.

2 **MS. DANIELLE SHAW:** Hello. So as I
3 introduced myself before, Danielle Shaw.

4 Excuse me. I didn't think I'd be so
5 emotional.

6 I guess to start, to kind of go back to when
7 we were kids, I remember a little more than my mom thinks I
8 did but I was a little bit older. But my mom -- my sister
9 definitely remembered more than we did. She was older.

10 From the moment that we were -- that, you
11 know -- from -- for as long as I can remember, she was like
12 another mom. She was -- like my mom said, she'd usher us
13 away and take us into her room and play and there was times
14 -- like, I remember times when we were, like, four -- when
15 I was, like, four and -- like, four or five, six years old
16 and we'd take Tony, like, six months old, and we'd somehow
17 carry him onto our top bunk and, like, sit in a corner of
18 our top bunk and play with him while there was fighting
19 going on and violence and everything, and just anything to
20 preoccupy us and get us out of the way and keep us quiet
21 and keep us happy.

22 And then at a certain point we left my dad.
23 And anything that we could do to get by it was done. And
24 funny enough, I kind of look back and I think, like, we

1 were together and it wasn't that bad. And we had each
2 other. And, to me, I felt like we were happy and we were
3 away from that environment. And I don't look back on that
4 time and think it was traumatic. I look back on that time
5 and kind of think it was adventurous and fun but I was
6 four, so, of course, I would.

7 And Michelle always seemed older than she
8 was. Even when she was a teenager she seemed like she was
9 an adult. And then she finally got a little bit of relief
10 from that when my mom had her boyfriend, who is our
11 stepdad.

12 Finally we kind of had a family unit. We
13 had some stability. Michelle could, you know, go to school
14 and focus on being with friends and get into some trouble
15 and do what teenagers are supposed to do. And, you know,
16 and she did all those things and things were okay.

17 But, you know, as my mom mentioned, when
18 they split up things kind of unravelled. And that's when -
19 - I think I was in Grade 5 and that's when things really
20 started to go. And my stepdad, his name was Key (ph). He
21 was gone and my mom had spiralled into drug addiction and
22 we were -- Michelle had to work. She was -- so if I was in
23 Grade 5 I was -- she was only 16 or 17 and she worked in a
24 restaurant. She was a waitress in a restaurant and she had

1 to work her butt off to feed us, to feed Tony and I. And
2 she didn't have her own life. She didn't have anything
3 outside of that. There was no option for her to do
4 anything that a 17-year-old should be doing. She didn't
5 have that option.

6 And there wasn't a lot of support. Although
7 we were on the Ministry's radar and we were kind of -- you
8 know, there was always, like, in and out of foster homes
9 and stuff, as far as I know, there was no support for her
10 during that time. There was no help for her during that
11 time because she was older. But she was still a child.
12 Like, she still wasn't an adult and she didn't get a chance
13 to learn the skills it takes to become an adult. And she
14 still was our -- you know, our caretaker, because we were -
15 - although we were in foster, we were also out of foster
16 home. Like, she didn't have a chance.

17 She worked her butt off in adult basic
18 education trying to get -- trying to graduate high school
19 and work and feed us. And during the times when my mom
20 wasn't around, also try to hide from the social worker that
21 my mom wasn't around, try to make it kind of normal for us.

22 I remember there was some nights where she
23 would just pop kernels of popcorn over the stove for us for
24 dinner because there was no other food but bag of kernels

1 for us to eat. And it was just whatever was there was what
2 we had. And she made sure that, you know, we went to
3 school and she knew where we were.

4 And when I was a teenager, I was like 14,
5 and when I was going out with friends and stuff she always
6 knew where I was and she took care of us. And she
7 shouldn't have had to do that. But there wasn't a lot of
8 other support.

9 So it got to a point where she couldn't hide
10 it any longer and she couldn't do this any longer. And
11 there was times when her and I would go out and try to find
12 my mom. And there were times we did find my mom and drag
13 her home and she'd be gone the next day. And I don't --
14 I'm just trying to be honest. I don't want to hurt my mom
15 but she didn't -- when my mom was there, she was the best
16 mom in the world. But, unfortunately, substance abuse
17 alters your whole reality. And so Michelle had to
18 supplement. She had to be the parent.

19 And during that time, like, I remember
20 during that time we're living in Surrey and, you know, it
21 was -- I was in high school and my teenage sister is
22 looking after us and there was no support, even when there
23 was social workers coming in and out there was no support.
24 There was -- our biggest support was the food bank. The

1 only way that we ate was the food bank. That was the
2 biggest -- that was like a lifesaver to us, but there was
3 nothing else offered. Even when people knew what was going
4 on there was nothing else offered.

5 So when it came time that we had to be put
6 into homes that were more stable to us, the only reason --
7 and I look back or I tell my story to people who haven't
8 lived this life -- and, to me, it's a reality and it is
9 what it is. But to other people they think, like, oh my
10 gosh. Or I just kind of go, well, I don't really think of
11 it that way because I got lucky. I got very, very lucky
12 and I've lived a very good life.

13 I got lucky because at 15 years old when a
14 social worker said that we had to leave, the social worker
15 agreed, because I was 15, to allow me to go move in with my
16 uncle. She had never met him. She had no clue who he was.
17 He wasn't even a blood uncle of ours. He was my stepdad's
18 brother. And he was willing to take me in. He wasn't in a
19 place where he could legally adopt us or become a foster
20 home because of a criminal record. But the social worker,
21 without any screening, said -- she said -- she basically
22 said to me one day, she said, "Tony's going to be taken
23 away. He's going to be put in a foster home. He's going
24 to go live with Ken. And you're going to be put in a

1 foster home too but there are zero chances of you guys
2 being put in a foster home together." Because he was 10 or
3 11 and I was 15. We weren't -- there was zero chance.
4 Like, that never happens. Siblings don't get put in homes
5 together. You will not be together.

6 And she said, "I'm going to leave and I'm
7 going to come back in a week. And if I come back and
8 you're not here, I'm not going to come looking for you."
9 So I packed all my stuff into a garbage bag and my uncle
10 picked me up and I went to live with him. And I'm
11 extremely fortunate that this was a home that provided care
12 and support and love and, you know, I was financially
13 stable and had a life that I could only imagine. But
14 that's not guaranteed.

15 I mean, this social worker had no clue where
16 I was going and she had every knowledge -- and I -- on one
17 hand, I thank everything under the sun that she did not
18 come looking, that nobody came looking. But there are
19 people out there, there are kids out there that nobody's
20 looking for that aren't so lucky, that aren't in a stable
21 home and that aren't looked after and nobody's looking for
22 them because they're almost out of the system. And that
23 was the rationale. Had I been younger, I would never, ever
24 have been able to just go live with my uncle. But because

1 I was 15 and she said in a couple of years you're just
2 going to be thrown out anyways.

3 And to her credit, she was -- she knew -- I
4 think Michelle vouched for my uncle because she knew that I
5 was better off where I was going. But I can't help but
6 think of all the kids that aren't going to a safe place and
7 that nobody's looking for. And so I was extremely lucky
8 and not many people are.

9 Tony wasn't so lucky because he was younger
10 and because he couldn't just run away. I mean, essentially
11 I ran away. I couldn't get my license until I was 19. I
12 couldn't travel until I was 19. I didn't have a legal
13 guardian and I didn't have a parent, but I had everything
14 else that I needed.

15 Tony was in a foster home and he bounced
16 around from foster home to foster home and didn't have the
17 same support system that I did growing up. And I guess it
18 was a different support system because he had a support
19 system through the foster care system.

20 I -- once I was deemed ran away and nobody
21 knew where I was -- for all they knew, I was on the street.
22 For all they knew, I was succumbed to drug use as well and
23 nobody was going to come looking. And the social worker
24 knew that. She said, "Nobody will look for you because

1 you're 15." My support system came from this family. And
2 then Michelle was left behind.

3 I went to go live with my uncle. Tony went
4 into the foster system and my sister was left in this house
5 alone with all of our stuff, trying to make rent and trying
6 to live. And at this point, you know, she had -- like we
7 said, she had applied -- she had been accepted into, like,
8 this prestigious school for aesthetics and she wanted to be
9 an aesthetician. She was going to go to Blanche Macdonald
10 and she was accepted in but she couldn't get the funding
11 for it and there was no support. And the rationale for it
12 was that that career wasn't worth funding and that career
13 choice wasn't -- you're not going to be a doctor or a
14 lawyer. Why would we fund that?

15 But that funding -- the program was, like,
16 was a tenth of what a university degree would be. And that
17 would have -- I know it would have made all the difference
18 in the world. It was her dream. It was what she worked so
19 hard in adult basic education. Like, she didn't have to
20 get her Grade 12 but she worked her butt off whenever she
21 could to finish up Grade 12 and to work her butt off and to
22 be there for us so that she could become an aesthetician.
23 And three years in a row those dreams were crushed. And
24 she kept applying and kept applying and kept applying. So

1 she had drive. Like, she wanted to have a life and she had
2 dreams and she was working for those dreams and she was
3 doing everything she could for those dreams under
4 impossible, impossible conditions. And nobody would hold
5 her hand and say, "I'll help you along this way. I'll
6 support you."

7 I mean, I think back and our band -- my band
8 supported me when I went to -- I went to Capilano
9 University in their School of Business for a degree in
10 business administration and they supported Tony in his
11 psychology degree because those were worthy careers to
12 have, but an aesthetician's not and there was no support
13 for that kind of a career path. And I fully believe it
14 would have made all the difference in the world. I fully
15 believe that somebody that could have been there for my
16 sister would have made all the difference in the world.

17 And she tried. She held on. Like, I
18 remember I would -- because I was older and so I could
19 still, like, take the bus out to Surrey and I would still
20 come out and see her for a little while and come visit her
21 and stuff. And she tried and she tried to keep up
22 normalcy. And she tried to kind of build this life so that
23 at some point there was something for us to go back to.
24 Like, she wanted to be able to have a home so that wherever

1 we were there was always somewhere for us to come back to,
2 so that we can come visit her, so that she could still
3 pursue her dreams, so that she could have a life. But, I
4 mean, with everything mounted on her plate, she couldn't do
5 it.

6 And there was nobody there to pick her up
7 when she needed to be picked up. And there was nobody
8 there to support her when she needed support. And if there
9 was, it wasn't forthcoming. Like, nobody went to her and
10 said, "You can go here. You can go here. Like, these are
11 -- this is what's in place for you." It was just not --
12 there was just nothing there. It was just us. There was
13 nothing there.

14 And then, you know, she fell into that life.
15 I remember going to Surrey once and going to the house and
16 there was nobody there and the door was open and the place
17 was trashed and all our stuff was all over the place. And
18 I didn't know where my sister was and my mom was gone. And
19 I didn't know where anybody was. And our house and
20 everything that we owned was done. And it was just kind of
21 like this huge -- I don't know, just this huge loss of,
22 like, she held on for as long as she could.

23 And then, you know, the last I heard she was
24 -- she had met with my mom and she was on the street and

1 she was living that lifestyle. And I'll admit, I have
2 always -- I've taken the -- my brother was always the
3 extremely unconditional loving supportive person who just
4 wanted everybody to be okay. And it didn't matter what
5 anybody did. It didn't matter where they were. It didn't
6 matter anything. He would be right there. And I wasn't as
7 loving and supportive. I was that tough love that just
8 kind of said, if you're high, I don't want to talk to you.
9 If you're asking me for money, don't even get in touch with
10 me. I can't -- I protected myself and just said I can't do
11 this while you're doing this.

12 There were times when my uncle told me that
13 he would -- he didn't tell me until I was an adult but he
14 tried to protect me a lot. So he would reach out to my
15 sister. And one time he paid for a bus trip to Port Hardy
16 because she wanted to go to Port Hardy, and picked her up
17 and drove her there. And she got on the bus and then he,
18 like, walked her to the bus. Got her on the bus and I
19 guess at some point she got off the bus. She -- you never
20 know what's going through somebody's head when they're in
21 the throws of substance abuse. And I guess she just wasn't
22 ready.

23 There was a time when she did go to Port
24 Hardy and she worked up there for a little while and she

1 lived up there for a little while. And I'm not sure if
2 this was before or after she had found my mom on the
3 street. I think it was before. I assume that this was
4 when she had given up the house and when I didn't know
5 where she was, before she had found my mom on the street.
6 And she tried her hardest to work up there too and I don't
7 know what exactly happened because I have never got a
8 chance to talk to her about it. But she found herself back
9 in Vancouver and went and found my mom and got into some
10 heavier drugs.

11 And I saw her a couple times and every time
12 I saw her she'd ask for money and want something from me.
13 And that drove me crazy. That drove me absolutely crazy.
14 But there was nothing there for her, including me.

15 And I saw her about -- I saw her in February
16 2005 right before she went missing. She went missing in
17 September of 2005. And she was excited and she wanted, you
18 know, to move forward and she wanted to get out of the life
19 and she just kept saying, "But I have to get mom." Like,
20 she didn't want to leave my mom behind. And it was just,
21 "I have to get mom. I have to -- you know, mom and I,
22 we're going to get out of here and we're going to be okay
23 and everything."

24 And we kind of had a good visit. There was

1 lots of laughs and stuff but it was -- we didn't talk about
2 the serious stuff. And I never, ever would have imagined
3 in a million years that she'd go missing. And then when
4 she went missing, I -- you know, you still hold on hope.
5 And, to me, I kind of thought, like, she's missing but
6 she's been missing before. Like, not missing, missing but
7 I didn't know where she was before and she's always turned
8 up. She's always taken care of herself. She's got to turn
9 up.

10 And when her remains were found it was --
11 but just to back up, like, when she went missing, the thing
12 that drove me crazy was the fact that in the headlines --
13 you see in the media and if you talk to the cops, the
14 media, like, the headlines, all the headlines said
15 "Prostitute Goes Missing." She was -- that was what she
16 was called. It was never anything else. They didn't even
17 say her name. It was just, you know, some prostitute's
18 missing. Who -- you frame it like that, you know. You
19 wrap it up like that and put a bow on it. Nobody's going
20 to open that up. Nobody's looking at that.

21 And the media plays a huge role in how
22 things are perceived and the biases that we live with. And
23 I just was, like, but nobody thought to ask -- nobody said,
24 you know, this young woman is missing. This young woman

1 has dropped off the face of the earth. Where is she? It
2 was some prostitute, some junkie prostitute. The headline
3 literally said, "Prostitute Goes Missing." Like, and it
4 was just, like, holy crap, because, to me, she wasn't a
5 prostitute. You can't -- you're not going to look at
6 somebody and just label them that way. Like, and how many
7 other women are just labelled for what's going to, you
8 know, be sensationalized and what's going to fit the
9 storyline that the media wants to tell. And how many
10 people read these newspapers and watch the news and see
11 these faces and read the headline and then disregard these
12 lives because of what the media chooses to tell.

13 And it's -- that's a huge, huge portion of
14 where we are today and how there's all these families and
15 all these women because people don't want to listen to the
16 families because these women are just prostitutes or drug
17 addicts or anything like that. And, I mean, like I see on
18 the news all the time you see things about women going
19 missing or people being murdered.

20 I mean, there was just recently a young girl
21 who was murdered. And the headline was all about whether
22 she had drugs and alcohol in her system. And it's, like,
23 so because she drank alcohol she deserved to die? That's
24 what we're going to talk about? Are you kidding me? And

1 then you think about it, like, if she looked different
2 would that headline say the same? And it's the world that
3 we live in and it's ridiculous.

4 And the police are the same way. They just
5 weren't really -- they didn't want to hear anything from
6 anybody. I mean, I also couldn't help much because I
7 didn't -- hadn't talked to her in a while. I didn't have
8 any leads. I didn't know anybody within that, you know. I
9 had family members who did try to find out what happened
10 and find out where she was and there was a huge -- there's
11 something being done to cover it up because there was
12 stories floating around that she was all -- like, there was
13 all these stories floating around that people were telling
14 about her. Oh, she's fine. You know, she moved away. She
15 had her baby and all this stuff. And I don't know who was
16 going to great lengths to cover this up but it was --
17 everywhere we went it was a dead end.

18 Everywhere we looked it was a dead end. And
19 the police weren't wanting to look. And eventually the one
20 person of interest that they had been looking at went to
21 jail for another charge and so they -- the story we got
22 was, "Well, he's in jail." Like, whether he did it or not
23 he's in jail. And it's, like, but that doesn't address the
24 issue. Whether he's in jail for something else or not,

1 that doesn't mean you stop trying to find out what
2 happened.

3 And it was kind of like, isn't it good
4 enough? Like, isn't that good enough that this person's in
5 jail already? And it just -- well, no, it's not. It's not
6 good enough.

7 And when her remains were found -- and I
8 just remember, like, through it all there wasn't a lot of
9 support. There wasn't a lot of anything. It was just kind
10 of how it was. This is how your life was.

11 And, yeah, and so now we, along with a lot
12 of other families, live every day knowing that these
13 vibrant, beautiful women who had all their lives ahead of
14 them are cut short and until now they've never been given
15 the dignity and the respect that they deserve for people to
16 actually hear so what actually happened and how can we
17 avoid this moving forward. And I guess that's kind of one
18 of the main thing. Like, you know, we can tell our story
19 all we want but the main thing is to make sure that it
20 doesn't happen to anybody else.

21 And, I mean, I have a four-year-old
22 daughter. I don't want her to grow up in a world that she
23 has to worry about this same thing. I don't want her to
24 grow up in a world where, you know, she's worried for

1 herself or her friends. And I don't -- you know, we need
2 to do better.

3 I think about my brother and I and I think
4 about the fact that we had support but we also had very
5 little support. And it struck a chord. I was recently in
6 a -- I run a department for the Wuikinuxv Nation actually.
7 I run our natural resource stewardship department there.
8 And so I was in a workshop on policy development and it was
9 about safety policies. And they said, you know, you have
10 accidents which cause harm, and you have incidents which
11 don't necessarily cause harm but could be avoidable, and
12 then you have what's called a near miss. And near misses
13 always get overlooked. And it made me think, like, so harm
14 was done to my sister and here we are talking about it.
15 And my brother and I are the near miss. We had very little
16 support and we had -- we have more support than she did
17 though. And we're doing well today and we've grown up and
18 we're still here to tell this tale.

19 But how many other families are dealing with
20 the same thing and can't cope in that way? And how many
21 other people don't have the same support? And how many
22 other people are falling through the cracks? Because in a
23 lot of ways we both have instances where we fell through
24 the cracks. And we easily, both of us easily could be

1 anywhere but where we are and nobody could blame us for
2 that, you know, for what we went through.

3 And I don't say that easily because who I
4 am, I don't like to say -- I don't need anybody to think
5 oh, poor you or anything like that. I don't -- to me, I
6 actually look back and I go, you know, it wasn't too bad.
7 Life wasn't too bad. And people have it worse. Like, we,
8 you know -- even though we're eating popcorn for dinner,
9 we're still eating food, you know. We still had a roof
10 over our head. And I never had to sleep outside on the
11 ground or anything. And, you know, and I have people
12 around me who love me and who I love. And my mom's here
13 with us and stuff.

14 So I look at this and I go, in the grand
15 scheme of things, life is pretty good and we're doing
16 pretty good. But what could have been for us is a reality
17 for a lot of other people who aren't necessarily the --
18 even the women that we're talking about with the families.
19 And I just think that we need to do better. I just think
20 we need to move forward and we need to do better. We need
21 to make sure that, you know, we're not allowing the media
22 and government agencies to hold a bias over us and to look
23 at us for our names and, you know, our -- where we come
24 from and our background and I'm -- throw us into a box that

1 other people aren't being put into.

2 And then -- and we need to look out for each
3 other too. And so we need to do better but, you know,
4 government agencies need to do better and we need to have
5 better support for one another. And we need to make sure
6 that we put an end to this epidemic. There's no other
7 options.

8 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. Thank you
9 very much.

10 All of you, thank you very much. It's clear
11 to me that, you know, each day we make decisions and we
12 don't always know what we're preventing. But after
13 listening to you, it very much clarifies which light we
14 should be following. So thank you very much.

15 And Madam Commissioner, do you have any
16 questions for this family?

17 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Merci
18 beaucoup, Maître Wendy.

19 Well, first of all, thank you for -- all of
20 you. And the gift that you're giving us today -- or to me,
21 I'll say, and the teaching is the forgiveness. I'm a mom
22 too. Five beautiful children and we want to do better
23 every day. And I see that forgiveness to your mom is a
24 beautiful teaching. And I'm very impressed by that. Very,

1 very touched.

2 Very touched also by the unity that you're
3 forming or creating. And we see that over and over across
4 Canada by listening to families and their truth and stories
5 that when the family is strong and together the healing
6 process is there.

7 But I hear something new today. Education
8 also. How important -- we know but Canada needs to hear
9 that too. You mentioned that in your testimony that the
10 world need to know who was Michelle and who she is for you
11 today. And I always say we are a tool and very honoured
12 that we were able to provide this to you.

13 But very concerned also that, like you say,
14 Danielle, what about the rest of people who don't have that
15 support, don't have that love, don't have that roof or
16 security? And the list is long. So collectively we are
17 concerned too. And we want to make sure that with this
18 inquiry and your love, your message, your words that you
19 shared to us with the amazing work with Wendy, that we can
20 create a report that will reflect your concern and your
21 recommendation.

22 But also, something that we don't hear
23 enough: media, how they present my loved one, how they
24 misrepresent my loved one or my sister or my daughter. So

1 I'm -- I think it's powerful and it's important that you
2 remind that media also play a key role and they have also
3 an exercise to do to change that.

4 I always say to media, you have that magic.
5 Use it well. But it's more strong when it comes from a
6 family member. Merci. Merci, Danielle.

7 And as human being, parents, but also very
8 dedicated to this work, my colleagues, Qayaq, Marion and
9 Bryan, the children are a part of our priorities in this
10 journey and how the system failed them and how it should
11 be. So I know my colleagues will read your testimony and
12 will learn and use to make sure that we work hard for those
13 recommendation.

14 So we do also ask every family members and
15 survivors that come here if you would like to accept a gift
16 from us because your courage, your resilience, we have to
17 honour that. I want to honour that. And everywhere we go
18 we ask the grandmother from the territory, from the land,
19 to sit with us, to guide us, to help us here. And I always
20 ask my grandmother, my spiritual grandmother to explain the
21 gift.

22 But before I pass the mic, or the talking
23 stick, I want to say that Canada was listening and if not
24 we'll make sure they do. Merci beaucoup.

1 **GRANDMOTHER BERNIE WILLIAMS:** I just want to
2 say (speaking in Haida) and to your family here. And I'm
3 very, very just honoured that you are here to share your
4 story and your truths. And you're too amazing, as daughter
5 and son here too, to carry this message all across Canada
6 because, like, you are so right.

7 I work the front lines in the downtown east
8 side along with a group of women and there are so many of
9 the youth that are still lost down there. And I think I
10 heard one of the families say yesterday is that nobody
11 cares. And I think that's part of our responsibility to go
12 out and to do this work and to make sure that they don't
13 fall through the cracks. But I just want to say haawa to
14 you for your work and that and your words, and welcome
15 home.

16 I want to share this story very briefly.
17 I'm sure you've heard it all -- from us all across Canada
18 but these eagle feathers have made somewhat of a journey.
19 We started the eagle feather drive from Haida Gwaii, my
20 home territory. The matriarchs in our village and old
21 (inaudible) started the drive to collect the eagle feathers
22 along the shorelines and the beaches there. They donated
23 over 400 of the eagle feathers. And so every place we go
24 they -- we do a call out for eagle feathers. So these we

1 are very blessed that it comes from Thompson, Manitoba.
2 And so the families across Canada, the spiritual Elders,
3 the firekeepers, everywhere have been so kind to donate
4 these eagle feathers to give to the families from the
5 families too. So I'd like to give them to the Elders.

6 If there's any of you who would like to give
7 a hug to the family or give them a little word of, you
8 know, comfort, you're very welcome to come up to share this
9 moment with them. It's very tough to come up and come out
10 here to share. So if you feel like it, just come up.

11 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** This session is
12 closed, so we're going to have a break before the next
13 session. So if you want to take a break, could you please
14 be back in 10 minutes? Thank you.

15

16 **--- Exhibits (code: P01P15P0304)**

17 **Exhibit 1:** Folder containing three digital images
18 displayed on monitors during the public
19 testimony of the witnesses.

20

21 **--- Upon adjourning at 10:58**

22

23 LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

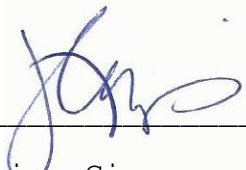
24

1 I, Janice Gingras, Court Transcriber, hereby certify that I
2 have transcribed the foregoing and it is a true and
3 accurate transcript of the digital audio provided in this
4 matter.

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8 Janice Gingras

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April 17, 2018

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