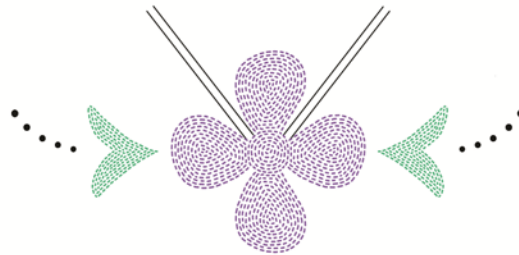


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1: Truth-Gathering Sessions
Maison de la famille
Maliotenam/Uashat mak Mani-Utenam, Quebec**



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William Fontaine

Testimony heard by Marie-Audrey Girard

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Heard by:
Marie-Audrey Girard

List of exhibits: none

Maliotenam, Quebec

1
2 --- Upon commencing on Friday, December 1, 2017,
3 2:21 p.m.

4 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** William Fontaine,
5 member of the Uashat Maliotenam community, and I'm part of
6 the Innu Takuaikain Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam organization,
7 which is the Band Council.

8 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** William, thank you
9 very much for being here today, thank you for sharing your
10 testimony. So, like I said when we were getting ready, I'll
11 start with a first question. My first question for you is:
12 What do you want to share with the commissioners and the
13 Commission today?

14 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** I want to talk about
15 the violence that women have experienced and currently
16 experience. And first I'd like to start by addressing the
17 colonial policies regarding the residential school system.
18 I'd like this; it's important that I talk about this.

19 Second, I'd like to talk about my work
20 experience and the abuse toward women that I've witnessed.
21 I'd also like to talk about my family life, where I grew
22 up.

23 And I'd like to quickly touch upon the
24 media.

25 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** Do you want us to

1 start with the first topic you mentioned?

2 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** Yes, yes. This is what
3 I'll start with. To begin with, I'm sitting here, and the
4 Commission is coming to an end, and as we listen to the
5 stories, we're becoming more aware. Yesterday I realized
6 that I had to make a statement, share my observations. That
7 it was important that I share my observations on life in
8 general, on my work and on community life.

9 I'll start with the effects of colonial
10 policies. When I listened to... the women's stories were
11 very touching and very painful at the same time.

12 I'm kind of drawing a parallel here, between
13 the uprooting of children who were forcibly taken... when
14 the residential school system began, and went on for
15 several decades, and I think that's an important topic...
16 It must've been so painful for women to have their children
17 taken from them by the governments, in collaboration with
18 the Church, and now we can understand more and more as men
19 what the women went through. I think it's just natural
20 that... that I highlight that event in our history.

21 And that's all I'll say about that. I don't
22 want to say more; there's already been so much work on the
23 subject, several commissions, and I don't want to...

24 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** Did any of your
25 family or close friends go to these residential schools?

1 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** I haven't really asked
2 my family, but I think my mother told me she went to the
3 Rivière-du-Loup residential school. She didn't stay long,
4 maybe just a week or two, but she was mistreated during her
5 time there. And that's what I've heard on my mother's side,
6 but I haven't asked my uncles and aunts.

7 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** In your community,
8 have you noticed the effects that the residential schools
9 have had on Indigenous people who attended them?

10 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** Yes, I still notice
11 it, always, and the more we become aware, the more... we
12 don't suffer in... the more we become aware, the more we're
13 aware of the suffering. Before, without realizing it, I
14 didn't really know where the suffering was coming from,
15 mine and that of the community.

16 And it's by learning about the history, the
17 colonial policies and the systems imposed on Indigenous
18 people across Canada, that I've gained a better
19 understanding of why there was so much pain here. So many
20 things have been imposed on us, and we've lost so much of
21 our culture.

22 Look, I often feel sad, on a daily basis,
23 about having been robbed of my cultural knowledge, of my...
24 When you talk about cultures. But there is such a vast
25 array when it comes to stories; animal stories, forest

1 stories, all that. Sometimes I still feel the pain, but
2 I've become aware of these effects.

3 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** You're talking
4 about... Let me go back. You mentioned pain, personal pain.
5 Can you tell us a bit more about your feelings about what
6 you just told us?

7 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** Yes, yes. I feel very,
8 very... I still feel very trapped on the reserve... It
9 feels like a prison. I don't always talk openly, because I
10 work in politics, and you have to be careful about what you
11 say. But in my heart, I feel like I'm in a prison here,
12 with all the effects that I see. I see how people behave in
13 the community, the social problems, and I already feel like
14 I'm in a prison.

15 I see the effects on the community, what the
16 effects have been. It's like people imprison themselves in
17 their houses more and more. It's like people confine
18 themselves to their homes, more than thirty years ago, when
19 there was less technology. So our old addictions, like
20 drugs and alcohol, have become virtual. The virtual world
21 is replacing alcoholism; it's a different type of addiction
22 to forget the pain we experience daily, individually, in
23 our spirits, our souls. And that's what I have to say about
24 the effects. There have been a lot of effects.

25 I'm 39, and I've been working in politics

1 for seven years, since 2010. I wasn't a politicized person,
2 but through a political career, you attend events, meet
3 inspiring people, you become aware, you start questioning a
4 lot of things, all that to say that you grow a lot because
5 you rub shoulders with inspiring people. That's what has
6 allowed me to get so far.

7 I'd compare it to stress management. You
8 can't make political history quickly, like I did, you need
9 to learn, like I mentioned earlier, about the history of
10 colonial policies. Before I got interested in politics, in
11 2010, it wasn't my parents who passed that interest down to
12 me... I had to get into politics, attend events,
13 commissions, anything, to become aware that it's important
14 to know the history, to go further in life, be it the
15 collective story or the individual one. That's what I can
16 say...

17 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** At the beginning of
18 the interview, you mentioned that you wanted to talk about
19 your work experiences.

20 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** Yes.

21 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** Can you tell us
22 more about that?

23 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** Yes, I'll give you
24 more details. These incidents happened in the past year and
25 the most recent happened a few weeks ago, around three or

1 four weeks ago. It was during an administrative meeting
2 with the Chief, and there were councillors there too, as
3 well as the clerk, general management and I don't think I'm
4 forgetting anyone, but in general there were some elected
5 representatives. And we were discussing... I can't quite
6 remember... Oh yes, we were having a debate about one of my
7 male colleagues who had made a statement, who had told the
8 Council elder... that he had filed a report against us, you
9 could say.

10 His complaint was that we were at fault
11 about... our contribution to the Indigenous benefits plan.
12 And that was the issue, and we asked our colleague, who was
13 questioned by a female colleague, to find out where, and
14 how it's going to be handled, you know, to get more
15 information about that. It escalated quickly... It even got
16 violent and the reaction of my colleague, who was sitting
17 right next to me, was to raise his tone of voice and, I'd
18 say, to use contempt to put a stop to the debate. It kept
19 escalating, he was talking louder and maybe a little more
20 aggressively and I had to intervene. I intervened because I
21 couldn't prevent myself from, tolerating that type of
22 violence, to confront my work colleague who had raised his
23 voice at my female colleague. I couldn't help stepping in
24 and not wanting to tolerate that type of violence.

25 And like I said, as you become more aware,

1 sometimes you say no, that's enough. You can't tolerate
2 that type of violence and it's like I let myself... I
3 stepped in and that caused some friction... Things
4 escalated between the person, the woman, the Chief and
5 myself. At some point, the person who was being confronted
6 by the majority decided to leave because he said he was
7 feeling angry and things might go downhill, so he decided
8 to leave the meeting to avoid...

9 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** Do you often
10 witness that type of stuff, especially toward your female
11 colleagues?

12 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** Really, I've witnessed
13 some stuff over the last few years, and maybe I've even
14 said stuff to colleagues, but I think I found it important
15 because we've been becoming more aware, we've realized
16 that... I mentioned that event, which happened only
17 recently.

18 And I'd like to mention another event
19 involving the same person, an elected representative, my
20 colleague, but I didn't witness this in person, except that
21 he... he denounced (indiscernible) or on the community
22 radio, the media, to CKAU. I didn't hear the interview, but
23 I heard through the Band that he denounced one of the
24 women. He denounced her because he was turning a blind eye
25 to... he had witnessed bad administrative practices, and he

1 denounced her publicly.

2 At the time, I thought it was... I didn't
3 react, but a few hours, a few days later, I realized how
4 serious it was to make public allegations like that, to
5 talk about someone, you know. I think that it's a very
6 confidential topic and those types of things should be
7 handled amongst ourselves, around the table. That was an
8 incident that really affected the person who was named
9 publicly. We saw her in the following days, and she was
10 really affected.

11 And I know that after that episode,
12 something else happened at an administrative meeting. I
13 wasn't there at the time, but I heard that the woman was
14 chairing the meeting with all the elected representatives
15 and she was doing like the... she was replacing the general
16 manager, and there was another member there, a manager from
17 another organization that was one of the Band's babies, on
18 economic development. And the woman who was replacing the
19 general manager questioned the economic development manager
20 and that ruffled my colleague's feathers. When I say my
21 colleague, I mean the same person who made a statement on
22 the radio and... I don't really know what happened, but he
23 started raising his voice, and maybe insulting her and that
24 led to the real general manager, who wasn't at that
25 meeting, to suggest bringing in an investigator to get

1 everyone's testimonies.

2 I think we still don't really have the
3 report on what really happened, the content of the report.
4 We haven't really examined that, and so those are two
5 incidents.

6 And this woman who was a victim of violence,
7 [*two lines redacted - personal information*]. I commend her,
8 good on her... I took the time to call her. [*One line*
9 *redacted - personal information*], but I nonetheless took
10 the time to say bravo for her courage, and at the same
11 time, sorry for not having the reflex to say no, that's
12 enough, we can't tolerate that kind of violence that...
13 that women experience. And even us men shouldn't tolerate
14 that kind of violence. And I took the time to say thank
15 you, bravo for what she did.

16 So those are two recent incidents that I was
17 talking about that happened to one of my elected
18 colleagues, and two incidents that happened to that woman,
19 a manager and a victim of violence in her workplace.

20 I could even talk about another incident
21 that happened two years ago. The same person again, my male
22 work colleague, who has already had two incidents of bad
23 behaviour toward an actual manager, but he had already, if
24 you go back even further, three years ago, he had also
25 publicly denounced on the radio that there were like... He

1 made allegations of fraud in the Band Council's housing,
2 capital asset, infrastructure sector.

3 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** Just to clarify,
4 this person is the same as the first person you mentioned.
5 So it's not the elected representative that you said went
6 to the community radio, it's one of the first people you
7 mentioned.

8 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** No, that's someone
9 else.

10 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** That's someone
11 else. OK, perfect.

12 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** Yes. If I think about
13 it, I was talking about a housing officer, a team of
14 housing officers, and they were publicly denounced by the
15 elected representative.

16 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** I understand, yes.

17 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** And I remember how I
18 felt about it at the time. It was like, OK, that's normal,
19 he's admitting to the community what really happened. But
20 I've come to realize what the right way to denounce
21 something is, to solve issues in an organization. And I
22 know that it was women who were denounced, and one of the
23 women was so affected by it that she became suicidal and...
24 a few months later, almost a year later, she came to make a
25 statement about how she felt, but she wanted to make the

1 statement to heal. She wanted to say, look at what I went
2 through, what this person made me go through, and also to
3 make us realize at a political level, to tell us you said
4 that openly, but we tolerated this bad behaviour. I think
5 that woman is going through a healing process. She was
6 badly affected.

7 And that's what I see in my workplace. It's
8 unhealthy and generally men are the majority around the
9 table and... However, it's all ten elected representatives
10 who are responsible for what happens there, and I'm
11 including myself and everyone. We can't tolerate that type
12 of violence. It has to stop. We have to go through a
13 healing process, reconciliation with humility and without
14 violence. I think we have to be able to admit that we
15 didn't... that we tolerated it, you know. That would
16 promote and facilitate the community's healing. And that's
17 all I can say. I don't want too much... I can't really
18 remember the details of those incidents, because that's how
19 I am; I don't have a great memory.

20 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** But that's perfect.
21 You've provided some really valuable and valid information.
22 So even if you don't remember everything, it still gives us
23 insight into what happens at work and you've mentioned
24 incidents that happened to women. It's interesting to hear
25 what's happening and how... and you're saying that there's

1 this awareness happening regarding that so... in my
2 opinion, you've shared some important things.

3 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** Yesterday, I was on
4 the phone with a colleague and I was telling him how I
5 thought I had been crazy, you know you let yourself say
6 things, we're crazy to have tolerated that, since we
7 adopted a psychological harassment policy. We adopted it to
8 implement it, and we still tolerated psychological
9 harassment, and we did it ourselves. We witnessed it and we
10 didn't do anything, it's crazy.

11 Just to let you know, I'm aware of it, and
12 we have to realize that it needs to stop now. And you have
13 to be able to intervene in a healthy way, to say that's
14 enough. And not use violence against violence. But to use
15 wisdom and say, look, that's enough, without violence,
16 without contributing to the... escalation. And like I was
17 telling my colleague yesterday, I feel kind of stupid for
18 having tolerated that. So you wake up, you become aware
19 of... everything you heard this week from the Commission.
20 And I think the Commission helps with the healing process.
21 It's important for people to testify, to share their life
22 experiences, because it will help them release their pain
23 and maybe encourage them to continue their healing process.
24 That's what I can share about my seven years in politics
25 with the Band Council.

1 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** You also mentioned
2 that you wanted to talk about your family life. Would you
3 like to talk about that some more this afternoon?

4 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** Yes. I don't want
5 to... I don't want to talk too much about what I've already
6 started doing to heal personally, before coming here. I'll
7 be brief about my life, my childhood. Sometimes I can see
8 that we've grown up in unhealthy family environments, that
9 we were... our education was... in painful environments,
10 where our parents have also suffered a lot in childhood,
11 and then they became parents in turn. I have a child too...
12 From what I've seen... I grew up with domestic violence,
13 and it makes me sad, it's a shame that... that a woman
14 could tolerate that. Maybe it was because of ignorance or,
15 I don't know, lack of awareness, I'm not sure, I'm not a
16 psychology expert, but I grew up in that. My father, my
17 mother, domestic violence, I often... There have been a lot
18 of incidents I could talk about, like the time I was
19 abandoned for a night. I was traumatized. At one point, I
20 got a sister, and I became a teen, and you, there was
21 constant domestic violence.

22 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** When you talk about
23 domestic violence, was it both your parents being violent
24 or was it one parent being violent toward the other?

25 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** It was both parents,

1 especially when we were children we... our mother was the
2 protector. And now, even when I was growing up, I've always
3 been against my father. He was the guilty one. But now I've
4 realized that my mother was responsible for that too. She
5 was responsible for her pain, because she tolerated being
6 treated that way. That's what I've realized now, and that's
7 it. It's sad to see your mother tolerate all that, and at
8 the same time, at my age now, I see that it was both of
9 them, the man and the woman, who needed to take
10 responsibility and say, let's admit our wrongs and sit
11 down. We haven't met our children's needs.

12 And I was traumatized at a young age, I grew
13 up in that, you know, I didn't have support, there was no
14 stability. I had a good routine, but sometimes the lack of
15 stability... The man, the father tends to leave the house
16 sometimes when things get bad and the mother usually stays
17 behind. And I often witnessed violence when my father came
18 home because he'd be drunk (indiscernible) more than... My
19 testimony should be more about witnessing your father's
20 drunkenness and him coming home... The mother is angry and
21 we witness it all. And that summarizes a lot of my
22 childhood and teen years, and I often looked after my
23 sister.

24 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** Are you the oldest?

25 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** I'm the oldest. I have

1 a younger sister who's seven or eight years younger.

2 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** OK.

3 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** It's just the two of
4 us. I was around 11 when we had our house in Uashat, and
5 that's when we really had some stability, and ability, no
6 wait, it was stability in the house. We had a home for the
7 rest of our lives. Compared to before, we... we would move
8 places, but the stability and the instability followed us
9 in... in my home life and it affected us... and I'm fully
10 aware that it's a lifestyle that's been imposed.

11 It's not... for them too, a lifestyle was
12 suddenly imposed on their parents, and having something
13 imposed, it's a type of violence. And things were imposed
14 on us, and our culture and land were taken away and... they
15 even admitted it recently, with the apologies about the
16 residential schools. The whole government of Canada
17 admitted its wrongdoings.

18 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** And for the
19 domestic violence between your parents, did any
20 institutions ever get involved? I mean, did the police...
21 did anyone file any reports? Did you interact with the
22 police or it's the SQ here, I believe, or did it stay
23 within your family?

24 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** Just once, I remember
25 when I was young, the first time I was abandoned for a

1 night, the SQ saw me leave... I was near the... I was near
2 the reserve and near the town, and the SQ saw me. I'd left
3 the house, and they must have seen I was traumatized and...
4 The other times... Sometimes now I'm surprised child
5 services didn't step in, that no one reported us.

6 I think my development must have been... it
7 must've been compromised often, at times, but I'm happy I
8 didn't have to deal with them because... I might have been
9 even more affected today if I'd gone into the youth
10 protection program, and I thank God that no one reported
11 us, I'm glad they didn't.

12 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** Did you get help
13 because... those are difficult things to live through. Did
14 you get help from, for example, institutions or...

15 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** No.

16 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** ... (Indiscernible)
17 community or family?

18 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** No. My parents and I
19 never really asked for help. I also didn't get any... It's
20 like it was very tolerated in the community. I guess people
21 around us witnessed our family situation, my parents, and
22 it's like it was tolerated.

23 And like I said... I still thank God for not
24 letting youth protection get involved, because I might be
25 even more traumatized. They might've placed me with a

1 foster family and I'd be even more traumatized today. At
2 the same time, it's not good if... The kind of environment
3 I grew up in... I thank... I can't say... It's like I got
4 here today, and I understand more, and I'm glad that that's
5 how my story went.

6 So that's it. That's what happened. There
7 was violence, I don't know... It had a lot of
8 repercussions... I'm talking about the Indian act
9 (indiscernible) under the residential school system, how
10 the children were forcibly uprooted. The reserve system
11 too, you know, they forced us to become sedentary. That
12 must've caused a lot of pain too, being trapped here for
13 years, being scorned by that colonization.

14 And today, in 2017, the government has
15 already held several recognition events, but like I already
16 said, the healing process will be quicker if it comes
17 organically from us. You can't expect the government to
18 invest and... I see there are natural healers in our
19 communities, and that helps with the healing. And there is
20 a lot of... The effects were that we became... violent
21 people. We were abused and abusive at the same time...
22 Politically, I'm also talking at my level, community
23 politics, we were abusing and being abused sometimes... I
24 share that thought. We are political abusers and we are
25 abused politically. We abuse our administration, we

1 mistreat it, we tolerate violence, we abuse our citizens
2 too, just like we get abused by our administration, and we
3 get abused by our citizens too. It's like a vicious cycle
4 and we're all being affected. And everyone is affected by
5 colonization, everyone, except... everyone is injured,
6 everyone expects the Council to... heal all the pain.

7 We formed habits through the effects of
8 paternalism, because paternalism, the effect is "don't
9 move, I'll take care of you. Don't move, I'll pay for your
10 education and I'll pay for your healthcare, no problem."
11 And now the habit we naturally have, still to this day, is
12 to go to the Indigenous government, which is the Band
13 Council, when we need something. And so it's that whole
14 concept, the idea of a family, you know, all the family
15 values have been disrupted by that because it's the
16 Council, it's the government that's going to take care of
17 us when we could turn to our families first when we need
18 help.

19 If I'm having problems raising my children,
20 if I can't take care of them, I tell myself that I should
21 turn to my parents or my in-laws and get them to help, as
22 was the custom (indiscernible). That's the mentality I've
23 developed, I'm developing, through my journey of the last
24 few years. I'm becoming aware of all that. I'm the one who
25 needs to take charge of myself. We talk about self-

1 determination, but self-determination will happen through
2 individuals becoming aware... By leaving the house, not
3 staying isolated. We shouldn't isolate ourselves. We've
4 already been isolated by others, we're isolating ourselves,
5 which makes isolation spread even faster.

6 We have to get out of the house, we need to
7 become aware that history is important with
8 (indiscernible). We have to stop using... I'm lucky to talk
9 like that, because I didn't... I wasn't molested or
10 sexually abused... I consider myself lucky. I'm making a
11 comparison with people who did go through that in
12 residential schools, and how traumatized they must be
13 today. However, I do realize that all types of things
14 happened, and we have to understand the context and stop,
15 you know. The healing process will start with us. So that's
16 where I am in my life journey... It's becoming aware on my
17 own. And I'll probably continue thinking that... as
18 political leaders, we just have to feed people's
19 consciousness. Today, I think we just have to feed people's
20 consciousness. We can't really say self-determination. To
21 me, self-determination... it starts today by feeding
22 people's consciousness about all the effects caused by
23 colonial policies and everything we've gone through, the
24 healing, reconciliation and to stop tolerating that.

25 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** And following that,

1 I'll lead you to the last topic you mentioned today. How do
2 you think the media is covering this? What do you think of
3 the media's participation in what you've talked about? What
4 you just shared?

5 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** Yes, I understand that
6 the media generally isn't Indigenous people, it's more
7 Radio Canada, TVA, and regional media that come see us. So
8 many things have happened in the last few years regarding
9 the Canadian government, say, the apologies, the Commission
10 came, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, there have
11 been so many Commissions before the Indigenous people.

12 And there've been so many... How can I put
13 it... times when we, as a community, or the Indigenous
14 communities, when we were twisted by all that,
15 psychologically twisted, sexually twisted, you know... It's
16 very insidious, the toxicity becomes insidious and it
17 infiltrates our communities and we don't notice how
18 insidious it is. Then people from the community start
19 behaving in a toxic manner as well. The media people come
20 see us, and sometimes they want to know how we feel about
21 this or that Commission, and sometimes it seems like... We
22 tell them it's a healing process, that we were colonized,
23 that things were taken from us, and all that, and it just
24 has a negative effect. It's like it's just an opportunity
25 to see the unhealthy behaviour that's being perpetuated.

1 Because I don't think that nomadic people
2 were innately violent, sexually or psychologically, to
3 their children in the bush... It's in your (indiscernible).
4 And it's like... I don't know, I find it abnormal.

5 I find them a little insensitive as well. I
6 understand that it's a part of their job, but I think the
7 media also plays a significant role in our healing process.
8 The media in general seems to cover mostly tragedies, not
9 just for Indigenous people, but even in the regional news.
10 Fires, murders, you know, the media generally covers that
11 type of... There aren't enough positive stories. We learned
12 some positive things in our political circle. We do a lot
13 of positive stuff that should be in the news, and lots of
14 positive things happen that should be in the news too. Some
15 of the media are of no help with the healing process,
16 regional or national.

17 So that's my comment about the media. I'm no
18 communications expert, but sometimes the media comes and
19 asks us how we feel about the Inquiry Commission. And at
20 the end of the interview they'll see an opportunity to slip
21 in a question, because at the moment we have a situation
22 with the Chief who has been charged and his... his trial
23 has been postponed. Sure, there's a connection, it's
24 unavoidable, but sometimes that's like a sneaky way of
25 bringing it up. We tell them that it's in the hands of the

1 law, but why they still dare to...

2 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** Come.

3 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** ... Come

4 (indiscernible). You know, he'll come ask us, "Why? What do
5 you think?" I tell them that we've been an oppressed people
6 (indiscernible), we've been oppressed and dispossessed. We
7 can't, you know, we're... We live in the scars of injuries
8 that have yet to... that we haven't gotten rid of yet. So
9 that's my comment about the media, and I don't want... I
10 don't really like talking to them.

11 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** I understand.

12 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** Honestly, I don't
13 like... I don't really like talking to them. I avoid them
14 because they'll make me say whatever. They'll make me say
15 whatever. I'd rather spend time with people from my
16 community, and be present in their journey, in their
17 healing process, and listen to their testimonies and share
18 and understand their stories. That's my priority in my
19 journey: to be present for my community and to listen to
20 them. And I think that pretty much covers what I'm going
21 through.

22 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** I may have a last
23 question for you. If you had the opportunity to make a
24 recommendation to the Commission to help stop violence
25 against Indigenous women and girls, what do you think is

1 the one thing that must change? How can we solve the
2 problem of violence against Indigenous women and girls in
3 the short and long term?

4 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** OK. I think it's
5 relevant to mention the uprooting. I think it's important
6 to examine the uprooting of the children who were put in
7 residential schools, you know, when... It's a major
8 uprooting when women get their children forcibly taken away
9 from them, it's major violence.

10 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** Absolutely.

11 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** To begin with, it's
12 the worst violence you can experience as a parent, an
13 uprooting, and meanwhile the education... that the parents
14 should give to their children... the government took charge
15 of that, and we all know how that turned out. I think it's
16 important to talk about the uprooting, to give children the
17 connection they should have with their children (sic). And
18 obviously the women have experienced a lot of violence, but
19 it's the men who are responsible for that violence.

20 I don't know... I think it would be
21 important to do something to bring awareness to the men...
22 when they become adults or even before they become adults.
23 I think it's the uprooting... Everything is... I think it's
24 relevant to talk about colonial policies, just to become
25 aware, but not to revolt. It's just a way to heal, to admit

1 that, yes, that happened and to continue our healing
2 process as men too. Look, we're on a journey, I'm on a
3 journey, I realize I haven't gone far on this journey. I
4 haven't been a very, very responsible man and the older you
5 get... you become more aware and you take responsibility.
6 And like I said, sometimes I think about what I experienced
7 as a politician and I think, geez, there must be a lot of
8 people experiencing what I'm seeing because there's still a
9 lot of positive stuff. We work in politics and we meet
10 interesting people. But for us that's... that's what I've
11 realized.

12 So that's where we're at now, we're in the
13 process of admitting our mistakes too. We have to admit
14 that we're perpetuating it, that we're victims of the
15 violence, but we have to be able to stop perpetuating it
16 because now we're the ones perpetuating the violence, and
17 we have to be humble enough to recognize that and make
18 peace with our oppressors.

19 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** Well, those are all
20 the questions I had for you today. Is there anything else
21 you didn't get chance to talk about, before we wrap up?

22 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** No.

23 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** No? (Indiscernible)

24 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** Maybe just one little
25 last thing. It's important to admit, look, I admit it, I

1 was living in ignorance, I think. And today, I've become
2 aware throughout my journey; everything I've seen as a
3 politician, everything I've participated in has led to me
4 becoming more aware. So I think it's my responsibility
5 today, to say, that's enough William, you can't tolerate
6 it, you can't... I don't take it personally now. If I get
7 attacked, I don't take it personally since I... I'm growing
8 more and more compared to some elected representatives... I
9 used to take it very personally, it really hurt me, but
10 now, I don't take it personally so that's all I...

11 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** William, thank you
12 for taking the time to talk to us today. It's much
13 appreciated. And thank you for letting us record this.

14 **MR. WILLIAM FONTAINE:** Yes.

15 **MS. MARIE-AUDREY GIRARD:** So, I'm done for
16 today, so I'll officially end the session. I'll just mark
17 the time. So, it's 3:15 p.m. and the hearing is at an end.

18 --- Upon adjourning at 3:15 p.m.

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE*

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



Cécile Denis

September 14, 2018

* This certificate refers to the original transcript in French.