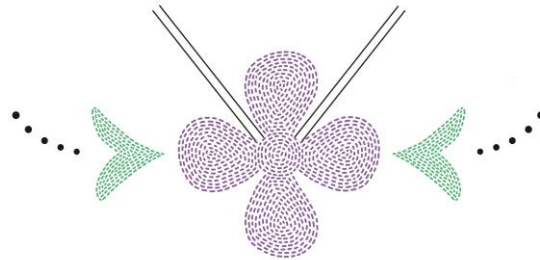


National Inquiry into  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls



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

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls  
Truth-Gathering Process – Part 1 Public Hearings  
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories  
Chateau Nova Hotel – Main Ballroom**



**PUBLIC**

**Thursday January 25, 2018**

**Public Volume 43:**

**Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina Cardinal;**

**Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor;**

**Gail Cyr**

## II

### APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations            Julie McGregor (Legal counsel)  
Government of Northwest Territories            No Appearance  
Government of Canada            Anne McConville (Legal counsel)

Pauktuutit Inuit Women of            Beth Symes (Legal counsel)  
Canada, Saturvit Inuit  
Women's Association of  
Nunavik, AnânuKatiget  
Tumingit Regional Inuit  
Women's Association Inc.,  
Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre,  
Manitoba Inuit Association

Native Women's Association of            No appearances  
The Northwest Territories

**Note:** For the purpose of establishing this record of attendance, counsels are considered present whether they attended one or all of the public hearings held over the course of the day at the Chateau Nova Hotel- Main Ballroom (Public #1).

III

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
OPENING CEREMONIES.....	1
<b>Hearing #1</b>	
<b>Witness: Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina Cardinal</b>	
Heard by Commissioner Brian Eyolfson	
Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe	
Grandmothers, Elders and Knowledge-keepers: Laureen "Blu" Waters Gaudio, Violet Mandeville and Curtis Mandeville	
Clerk: Trudy Mckinnon	
Registrar: Bryan Zandberg.....	6
<b>Hearing # 2</b>	
<b>Witness: Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor</b>	
Heard by Commissioner Qajaq Robinson	
Commission Counsel: Wendy van Tongeren	
Grandmothers, Elders and Knowledge-keepers: Laureen "Blu" Waters Gaudio and Lila Eramus	
Clerk: Trudy Mckinnon	
Registrar: Bryan Zandberg.....	56
<b>Hearing #3</b>	
<b>Witness: Gail Cyr</b>	
Heard by Commissioner Qajaq Robinson	
Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe	
Grandmothers, Elders and Knowledge-keepers: Therese Villeneuve, Cecilia Boyd, Kathy Meyer and Lila Eramus	
Clerk: Trudy McKinnon	
Registrar: Bryan Zandberg.....	89

IV

LIST OF EXHIBITS

NO.	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
<b>Hearing #1</b>		
<b>Exhibits (code: P01P09P0301)</b>		
	Exhibit 1: PDF copy of transcript, Inquest into the Death of Stella Virginia Cardinal, held at Fort Resolution N.W.T. between November 24-26, 1970 (197 pages divided into seven PDF files). . . . .	56
<b>Hearing #2</b>		
<b>Exhibits (Code: P01P09P0302)</b>		
	Exhibit 1: Audio recording of story played during the public testimony of Cindy Allen, playing time 9 minutes 8 seconds/ 17,2 MB M4A(MPEG4) audio file. . . . .	88
<b>Hearing #3</b>		
<b>Exhibits (code: P01P09P0303)</b>		
	Exhibit 1: Social Services document . . . . .	178

**V**

**Note**

The use of square brackets [ ] indicates that amendments have been made to the certified transcript in order to replace information deemed inaudible or indecipherable by the original transcriptionist. Amendments were completed by listening to the source audio recording of the proceeding. Proper spellings of Dene words were provided by Cindy Allen with respect to her testimony. All amendments were made by Bryan Zandberg, Registrar for the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018 in Vancouver, British Columbia.

## OPENING CEREMONIES

1                   Yellowknife, Northwest Territories  
2     --- Upon commencing on Saturday, February 24, 2018,  
3           at 9:00 a.m.

## 4     OPENING CEREMONIES

5                   MR. GEORGE TUCCARO: Good morning,  
6     ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the final day of  
7     the inquiry here in Yellowknife into the missing  
8     and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Yesterday  
9     we had Therese Villeneuve say the opening prayer.  
10    We would like to say a special thank you to her.

11                   Today, we will have two ladies  
12    come forward to say the prayer. And before they  
13    say the prayer, I would just like to acknowledge  
14    that the sacred Kulik (ph) has already been lit.  
15    We like to say a special thank you to Barb Sevigny  
16    who lit the sacred Kulik. And I would like to call  
17    on Elders Mabel Brown and Lillian Elias to come  
18    forward, too, to say the prayer in their own  
19    language. And Mabel is on her way. I'll get you  
20    to decide who goes first.

21                   MS. MABEL BROWN: Please, stand.  
22    Thank you. Good morning, everyone. It is going to  
23    be a good day, today. Let's pray. Our Lord and  
24    heavenly Father, we thank you for today, this day  
25    that you have given us. We are so grateful oh,

## OPENING CEREMONIES

1 Lord, God that you have given us this gift of this  
2 day. You set aside this day for us. And this is  
3 the day the Lord has made.

4 Let us rejoice and be glad in it.  
5 Father, God, I thank you for everyone who is  
6 represented here today. Everyone who stands in  
7 your presence today will be blessed. Everyone who  
8 stands father, God, and come forth, Lord, God. You  
9 are going to help them, and you are going to bring  
10 out the light in them. Thank you for your blessing  
11 today. In Jesus's name. Amen.

12 MS. THERESE VILLENEUVE: Good  
13 morning, everyone. I am going to say my prayer in  
14 my language because it means a lot more to me than  
15 trying to say it in other dialects. So I will say  
16 it in my language. (Indigenous language spoken).

17 MR. GEORGE TUCCARO: Thank you  
18 very much (Indigenous language spoken). Good  
19 morning. (Indigenous language spoken). I want to  
20 acknowledge, again, the elders who get up and pray  
21 and give us that spiritual blessing for each day.

22 Just some announcements that we  
23 should know about. Today lunch will be at 12:30 to  
24 1:30 here in the main ballroom and also at the  
25 Explorer Hotel in Room (indiscernible) A. Elders'

## OPENING CEREMONIES

1 room 132. And Health support, once again, the  
2 purple shirts are here to offer us assistance if we  
3 may need throughout the day. Do not be afraid to  
4 call upon them. They are more than happy to help.  
5 One-to-one counseling is also available, and you  
6 can sign up at the registration desk. And shuttle  
7 service is also available from 8:00 in the morning  
8 until 9:00 in the evening.

9 Closing ceremony today is expected  
10 at 4:00 o'clock or 4:00 o'clock-ish. Metis  
11 cultural night starts at 6:00 o'clock at the  
12 Explorer Hotel in (indiscernible) rooms B and C.  
13 And just a reminder to keep the noise level down to  
14 a minimum while families and survivors are  
15 testifying.

16 And as you may notice, all around  
17 there are tear bags. They are there for a specific  
18 reason. If you shed tears of happiness, tears of  
19 healing, tears of joy, we ask that you put them  
20 there because at the conclusion of the ceremony  
21 here, there will be a special burning ceremony that  
22 will take care of those tears.

23 Cell phones, we would like very  
24 much if you could put them on airplane mode. Just  
25 go to settings, and you'll see the airplane mode



## OPENING CEREMONIES

1 there. Some people have been trying to put it with  
2 the sound off, but the sound doesn't respond, and  
3 some of the cell phones have been going off. So if  
4 you have airplane mode on your phone, and if you  
5 need assistance, someone will help you, as well.  
6 Just ask people in the purple shirts. Somebody  
7 will be able to help you to turn it on airplane  
8 mode, because it's very important that the cell  
9 phones are not distracting anyone during their  
10 testimony.

11                                   As this is going to be my final  
12 time at the Inquiry, I just want to say a special  
13 thank you to our people from the Inquiry, National  
14 Inquiry for giving me this opportunity to work with  
15 you over the last three days. And I will turn the  
16 microphone over now to -- the other two  
17 Commissioners are in a special meeting that is  
18 going on with the National Commissioner, I think.  
19 They had mentioned that they are not here. But we  
20 do have a Commissioner of the Inquiry here, and we  
21 would like to welcome to the microphone  
22 Commissioner Brian Eyolfson. Thank you. I will  
23 turn it over to you.

24 --- OPENING REMARKS BY COMMISSIONER EYOLFSON

25                                   COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:

## OPENING CEREMONIES

1 Thank you. Good morning, everybody. Welcome to  
2 our third day, our last day of community hearings  
3 here in Yellowknife. I want to acknowledge and  
4 thank the elders for starting us in a good way with  
5 their prayer this morning, with their prayers. I  
6 would like to thank Barb (ph) for lighting the  
7 Kulik that's been lit with us here this week.

8                   And again, I want to just  
9 acknowledge and thank the survivors and family  
10 members who have attended here this week and who  
11 are here today, those who have shared their truths  
12 with us here this week and those that are still  
13 going to share today. We have heard some difficult  
14 things. It's not always easy to share these  
15 truths, but it's very important. So I want to  
16 thank you for contributing to the work of the  
17 Inquiry.

18                   But I think it's important not  
19 just for the inquiry, but for all Canadians to hear  
20 these truths. So thank you very much for that.  
21 And I just want to also acknowledge the strength  
22 and resilience of the survivors and families that  
23 I've seen this week in coming here and sharing  
24 their truths. So I look forward to this final day  
25 and continuing to work with you. And I thank

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 everybody that is joining us remotely, as well, for  
2 following what people are sharing and the work of  
3 the National Inquiry. Thank you.

4 **Hearing #1**

5 **Witness: Freda Cardinal**

6 **In relation to Stella Regina Cardinal**

7 **Heard by Commissioner Brian Eyolfson**

8 **Commission Counsel: Ms. Christa Big Canoe.**

9 **Grandmothers, Elders and Knowledge-keepers: Laureen**  
10 **"Blu" Waters Gaudio, Violet Mandeville and Curtis**  
11 **Mandeville**

12 **Clerk: Trudy Mckinnon**

13 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

14 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Good  
15 morning, Commissioner Eyolfson. I would like to  
16 introduce you to Freda Cardinal. Freda will be  
17 sharing the story of her sister Stella. Stella  
18 disappeared in the summer of 1970. Before Freda  
19 actually begins to share her story, I would ask  
20 that she be promised in.

21 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Good  
22 morning, Freda. Do you promise to tell your truth  
23 in a good way today?

24 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes, I  
25 promise.

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 FREDA CARDINAL, PROMISED

2 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:

3 Thank you.

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So with  
5 Freda today, is Violet Mandeville and Curtis  
6 Mandeville. And as we get started, I just wanted  
7 Freda to get a chance to introduce herself, tell  
8 you who her support people here are and a little  
9 big about her background.

10 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: I'm Freda  
11 Cardinal from Fort Resolution, originally. But I  
12 live in Hay River. I work there as a nurse. My  
13 support people are -- directly behind me is Violet  
14 Mandeville also, from Fort Resolution, and Curtis  
15 Mandeville, support person, as well. And he  
16 supported me along this journey with gathering  
17 information.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Can you  
19 tell us a little bit about Fort Resolution? So the  
20 community you are from and the background.

21 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: It's one of  
22 the oldest communities in the Northwest  
23 Territories, I believe. It's a very small  
24 community, close-knit. We're just about all  
25 related. From the Boileau clan (ph). I don't

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 know. I grew up there, moved away, like everybody  
2 else. Most people, anyway, move away after they  
3 grow up to be big people. Yes.

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And you  
5 mentioned you are a nurse. How long have you been  
6 nursing for?

7 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: I first  
8 started -- graduated in 1985, and left it for about  
9 ten years, had children, married life and all this,  
10 and then I decided that it was my first love. So I  
11 decided to go back. So yes. Still nursing today.

12 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I know the  
13 reason that you are really here today is to talk  
14 about your sister Stella. And what I was hoping  
15 you would be able to do is share some fond memories  
16 or tell us about some of Stella's strengths.

17 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: I remember  
18 the seven years -- like, this picture here is when  
19 I was three or four, and she's nine years older  
20 than me. And we were close. We were always  
21 together. We shared a lot of time together because  
22 she was my older sister, took care of us. At  
23 times, when mom wasn't home, she took care of the  
24 three of us, because three of us were left at home,  
25 and the rest of my brothers were in school,

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 residential school.

2                                   And she was a very strong person,  
3 good hearted, kind, but at times, very stern. She  
4 was very powerful, physically and in her mind.  
5 Living at home with her, at times, was hard because  
6 she would leave. And every time she left, I didn't  
7 know why, until I got older and realized that the  
8 reason she would leave is because she was going to  
9 the hospital all the time. She was ill a lot with  
10 her epilepsy. And she was on a lot of medication,  
11 and it kind of held her back a little bit.

12                                   A lot of people thought she was  
13 not with it at times, but if you were really close  
14 to her, you would know that she was. It's just  
15 that the medication had slowed her down a lot.  
16 Yes. And I remember times when -- this one time  
17 anyway, when she had left. And she was in the  
18 hospital, and I remember I fell off this garbage  
19 can kids were playing around, and I busted open my  
20 forehead. I had 14 stitches, and I cried for her  
21 because she wasn't there.

22                                   So mom said, "Well, why don't you  
23 write her a letter?" So I wrote her a letter. And  
24 in it, I didn't know how to spell garbage, so I  
25 spelled it, g-a-r-b-i-t-c-h. And when she -- she

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 wrote back.

2                                   And she said in the letter,  
3 "Freda, the next time you write to me, don't  
4 swear." And I didn't realize that. I asked my  
5 mom, and mom didn't say anything. She just laughed  
6 it off. We used to do a lot of traveling around  
7 our house in the bushes, and we used to call it  
8 exploring. We would go pick berries, make little  
9 huts out in a bush. We would always -- our whole  
10 family used to walk to -- it's called "across the  
11 portage" because we were poor. We didn't have  
12 much, so mom would make bannock, carry tea, and we  
13 would go out there, and there was plenty of berries  
14 back then. Now there's nothing.

15                                   And we would stay out there all  
16 day and pick berries, eat the berries, bannock, and  
17 drink tea, and bring some berries home. And I was  
18 the youngest, of course, and cranky as hell.  
19 That's too far to walk for me. "So pick me up.  
20 Somebody carry me." No, no, nobody wanted to.

21                                   "Walk, walk, Freda. Come on." So  
22 she would always carry me on her shoulders, on her  
23 back. And I remember those times. Every time I go  
24 to across the portage I think of her and the times  
25 we spent out there. We would go swimming. We did

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 a lot of things together in those seven years that  
2 I remember her.

3                               There were times when mom wasn't  
4 home, and things got rough with my dad who came to  
5 visit once in a blue moon. And there was always  
6 alcohol in his system. So she would take us --  
7 nearby friends, family, wherever, they would let us  
8 in. She would bring us there. She was like our  
9 mother. And caring for us, making sure that we  
10 were okay and not hurt.

11                              And those times I remember her at  
12 home when her friends and family would come over.  
13 And they were, like, teenagers. And they would  
14 have a dance. Boy, I was so happy because I would  
15 get to stay out late and watch them because I was  
16 the only one who could play the gramophone. You  
17 got to rank it up and then put the records on and  
18 play it.

19                              I was the person playing the  
20 music, and I would watch them all dance in bobby  
21 socks and skirts, and it was fun. And I remember  
22 when she always used to take care of my hair. I  
23 had long hair, way down past my back. And she  
24 would gently comb my hair, put it in braids or  
25 whatever she wanted to do, ponytails. You name it.



Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 And she told me that one time, "Freda your hair is  
2 so beautiful and curly, wavy. Don't ever cut your  
3 hair."

4 I remember that. I kept my hair  
5 for a long, long time until -- I don't remember.  
6 My daughter was four years old, I think. And then  
7 I finally cut it. And I kept that braid. And I  
8 always thought of her telling me, "Freda don't cut  
9 your hair," in a loving way.

10 Yes, she was very there for us all  
11 the time. Every time we would play music and  
12 stuff, I always hear the song in my head and when  
13 it played, I cried for her. Everything is  
14 Beautiful by Ray Stevens was our song. I heard it  
15 for years. I listened to it for years. And it  
16 came to a point where I had to stop listening to it  
17 because it hurt so much, and it brought back so  
18 many memories and hurt.

19 And I always think, she would tell  
20 me, "Freda don't cry. Don't cry." She was always  
21 there for me, going to school, she'd carry me to  
22 school. When I was bullied, she was there. She  
23 was there for me and she would always tell me,  
24 "Don't cry. Don't cry. It's okay. I'm here."  
25 And all these years, every time I think of her.

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 And I cry. And I hurt. And I miss her. I  
2 remember those words, "Freda don't cry."

3 It was amazing how such a young  
4 person had to take care of us as we grew up when  
5 mom wasn't home. We weren't a perfect family, but  
6 I remember her strength. You know, she would be  
7 bullied because everyone thought that she wasn't  
8 with it so much, and she fought back and she was  
9 powerful. And I remember she would fight with my  
10 brothers. And she would beat them up, too. Or any  
11 other boy around or teenager that was there that  
12 would bully her. She would fight right back, right  
13 now.

14 And I remember her fighting a man,  
15 my dad, when he was trying to bully us. And he  
16 only came to visit whenever he pleased. And she  
17 fought with him. And she showed him that hey,  
18 we're strong now. We're not children anymore. I'm  
19 not a child anymore. You can't bully me or my  
20 siblings. And he left again. She scared him off.  
21 That's how strong she was. And I remember when she  
22 would go away at times, "Did you go to the hospital  
23 yet?"

24 "No I was at school." She went to  
25 residential school, too. And she was, I guess,

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 abused at residential school, as well. And she  
2 used to talk about those things, and I didn't  
3 understand because I was just a child. And I never  
4 went to residential school. So I didn't know what  
5 that was all about. And there were times, I  
6 remember, we used to do crazy things. And she  
7 would sit us -- I remember we used to make toffee.  
8 She made toffee for us because we weren't allowed  
9 to.

10 She would get out the big cast  
11 iron frying pan and put the brown sugar in it and  
12 cook it on the stove. And of course, she always  
13 had seizures. So this one time she was making the  
14 toffee, and she slipped and had a seizure at the  
15 same time. And when she dumped the frying pan  
16 outside, it fell on the porch, on the floor and she  
17 put her hand in there when she had her seizure and  
18 burned her hand.

19 And I remember when she went to  
20 the hospital and they had to give her a skin graft,  
21 and it was in the shape of a heart. The shape of a  
22 heart on her hand, the scar. And I'll never forget  
23 that. She showed me where on her leg that they got  
24 the skin from. She explained everything to me so I  
25 could understand because I thought it was just

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 something she drew on her hand, you know.

2                   And I remember for Christmas, her  
3 and I got -- and she gave it to me. And it was a  
4 little cross. You look inside and you can see our  
5 Father in there, the prayer, in little, tiny  
6 letters. I don't know how they made it, but it was  
7 a cross, and you look inside, and you can see our  
8 Father in there. That was so cool, so neat. I  
9 kept it for years and then lost it. I don't know  
10 what happened to it.

11                   Like, there are so many memories  
12 that I have of her that, you know, her as a human  
13 being, very beautiful person. And for her life to  
14 be so short and gone. I know for a fact that she  
15 would have loved to have been a mother, as she was  
16 pregnant, six months pregnant. I'm sure she would  
17 have been the best mother that she could be. But  
18 that didn't come to light at all.

19                   When I was 19, I had my first  
20 child. And then, again, all these memories come  
21 out again. And I think of my sister, and she would  
22 have had her child when she was 19. You know, just  
23 about everything that you do in life comes up again  
24 and again and again. And my daughter had her first  
25 child, my granddaughter, when she was 19. And

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 again, you know, it brings out -- it's not bad.  
2 It's good. It's good thoughts and memories and you  
3 know, I often think she would have been happy to be  
4 an aunt, a great aunt.

5 Like, I'm a great grandmother now  
6 and my great granddaughter -- my granddaughter had  
7 her when she was 18. And it brings it out again.  
8 And there's five generations of us -- or four  
9 generations of us. And had she been here, I'm sure  
10 she would have enjoyed sharing with me and us  
11 sharing together how many nieces and nephews I  
12 might have had. Who knows? Great nieces and  
13 nephews, as well.

14 It sticks in your mind forever,  
15 and it will never go away. There will never be  
16 closure. I will miss her forever. Not only me,  
17 but my family, her friends, the community.  
18 Everybody knows what she was like.

19 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So before  
20 we actually start talking about when Stella  
21 disappeared, can I just ask a couple questions in  
22 relation to your sister's epilepsy? Because you  
23 had mentioned to the Commissioner that she was on a  
24 lot of medications and had to go to the hospital.

25 I know you were a kid, but when

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 you say she was on a lot of medicines, what did she  
2 have to take in order to not have seizures or to  
3 have life without too many seizures?

4 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: She to have -  
5 - you mean you want the names of them? I don't  
6 know. I forgot, but they were old-timer meds.  
7 Like, not up-to-date, if I can remember now. But  
8 at least one for her seizures she had to take  
9 Dilantin. And she took these medications every  
10 eight hours. And even if she didn't miss, she  
11 would still have seizures.

12 And there were times, I remember,  
13 before she goes into a seizure, she would either  
14 have this little yell, a little voice that would  
15 come out, a high pitched sound, or she would sit in  
16 one place and stare. And sometimes if you were  
17 paying attention, and this was happening, there was  
18 always a sign before she would have a seizure. And  
19 you would say, "Stella, Stella," you know? And she  
20 would, like, come out of it. It was like she would  
21 come to, just like she was in a trance. She would  
22 come out of it, and it would be fine.

23 But if you didn't, she would go  
24 into a seizure. And if she missed her medication,  
25 she would seize even more. And when she goes into

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 a seizure, she had grand mal seizures, she would  
2 sleep for at least two to four hours, depending.  
3 And without that medication, she would not last too  
4 long because she would be sleeping. She gets up,  
5 and she's so tired from this. And it would take a  
6 long time for her to kind of get back into her  
7 healthy, jolly self again.

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And we  
9 know that the time that she disappeared, you were  
10 telling the Commissioner, she was pregnant. So in  
11 terms of having the medication while she was  
12 pregnant or trying to minimize that, I imagine that  
13 was pretty important for her, right, to make sure  
14 she was on a fairly regular schedule with her  
15 medicines?

16 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes.

17 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And then  
18 the only other question is, you talked about how  
19 people -- so this was back in the late '60s, and I  
20 don't think people understood as much about  
21 epilepsy or what was happening.

22 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Exactly.

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Was there  
24 a lot of stigma around it?

25 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes. That's

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 why she was, kind of, bullied. And the kids in  
2 school would bully me and say, "Your sister has  
3 fits," and stuff like this. And I would tell her,  
4 and I would cry. It would hurt. And I would tell  
5 her.

6 And, "That's okay. Don't cry.  
7 Never mind." And sooner or later, she would get  
8 back at them. But yes. These were life sustaining  
9 drugs she was on for these grand mal seizures.

10 If she missed more than a day of  
11 medication, more than 24 hours, she would continue  
12 to seize. Then she would seize up because seizure,  
13 sleep, seizure, sleep, more seizure, seizure,  
14 seizure. And she would automatically have a heart  
15 attack because all your muscles tense up. And a  
16 lot of times she would be blue around the mouth  
17 because she wasn't breathing, no oxygen. So it  
18 wouldn't take long for her to succumb to her death  
19 if she was without the drugs.

20 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I want to  
21 turn your attention to when she actually  
22 disappears. Can you give us a little bit of the  
23 background leading up to what happens or before she  
24 actually disappears? And you do this with as much  
25 detail as you recall or how you are comfortable



Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 talking about it.

2 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Well, she  
3 came back from Council (ph) hospital and went to  
4 St. Anne's Hospital in Fort Smith. That's where  
5 she was. And met up with our cousin who she went  
6 to visit with her at Long Island (ph). That's near  
7 Fort Smith, 50, 60 clicks south of Fort Resolution.  
8 Her husband was out there manning the tower, so my  
9 sister went out there to visit with her. She  
10 invited her over there. So they went.

11 From there, from all the research  
12 I've done into it, found out that she went missing  
13 -- where she just went missing. And there was  
14 almost no rhyme or reason. They did searches and  
15 stuff, but I don't think they did enough. They  
16 said in the coroner's report that all these  
17 witnesses and stuff spoke out and what not. And  
18 the RCMP didn't do a good enough job, I think, at  
19 communicating.

20 Communication is a big, big  
21 important issue when it comes down to anything,  
22 anything. Because they did not communicate to our  
23 family that this had happened. And apparently my  
24 dad was living in Fort Smith at the time, and he  
25 heard it off the street. That's how he got to

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 know. And my mother had to hear it from Father  
2 Menez (ph) in Fort Resolution.

3 Where were the RCMP at this time?  
4 Why did they not communicate to us? And why did  
5 the doctors not communicate to anyone that my  
6 sister has seizures, needs medication. You know,  
7 the welfare of this young lady was not taken care  
8 of properly. That was not communicated, as well,  
9 to anyone until this coroner's report. Only then,  
10 a lot of these things came out.

11 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And I will  
12 actually pass the copy to the Commissioner here.  
13 But just so we're clear, the coroner's office -- no  
14 one ever found Stella.

15 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: No.

16 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: There was  
17 never a body that the coroner's officer actually  
18 examined, was there?

19 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: No. So when I  
20 heard there was a coroner's inquest, I thought to  
21 myself, "Hey there is no body. Why are they having  
22 a coroner's inquest?" They should have gone  
23 another route, I feel. But that never happened.  
24 Instead, they had a coroner's inquest.

25 And immediately after -- because

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 it was in, like, November, and this incident with  
2 my sister was in June. So, like, they didn't have  
3 time to investigate. Like, there was no proper  
4 investigation as well. And who is heading this?  
5 Who is involved? Like, Renewable Resources. I  
6 mean, there was so many inconsistencies in this  
7 whole thing that I found it to be just so not  
8 right. Not right to be dealing with a person's  
9 life like this. And not only the person, but the  
10 family, the community as a whole.

11 Everyone needs to be on board  
12 here, you know? All the government programs that  
13 they have out there -- that they had or they should  
14 have had, that I hope they have now.

15 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So I am  
16 looking at this very large, heavy package. And it  
17 is dated, so we are going to pass it to the  
18 Commissioner. But it will go into exhibit in a PDF  
19 format because the paper is fairly delicate. But  
20 before I hand it to him, I just want to point out a  
21 couple of things. You have seen this; right?

22 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: You have  
24 been looking at this, and you had assistance  
25 locating this? And was it Curtis who helped you

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 get this?

2 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: No.

3 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: No. So  
4 this was -- how did you come to this document?

5 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Well, I came  
6 to Yellowknife -- I don't remember the officer's  
7 name or the -- the RCMP called me up one day and  
8 said they wanted DNA testing done. And I asked,  
9 "Why. Is there something I should know?" And they  
10 said for future reference concerning your sister  
11 Stella. I said, "Okay."

12 So I came here, and I did the  
13 testing, and this is when I came across this. The  
14 RCMP told me that -- because I said how can I get  
15 some information? It's called ATIP. I guess you  
16 can get it on the computer, off the Internet. And  
17 he said also some more information you can get, he  
18 said, "The coroner's office and that is where you  
19 can get some information. It's public review and  
20 I'll set up a time when you come here and you go  
21 over there, and you get your copy." So I did.

22 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So you are  
23 correct. The inquiry was public. And so if it was  
24 public, you were able to access the document  
25 because it was public. And I notice, and you have

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 seen this, but I have noticed that the index to  
2 witness lists 40 witnesses.

3 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So at the  
5 time of the inquest, which you have explained to  
6 the Commissioner, was in November, so about six  
7 months after you sister went missing. About 40  
8 people were interviewed to find out what possibly  
9 happened.

10 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

11 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And this  
12 was all without there ever being a body or your  
13 sister found?

14 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right. Not  
15 even a piece of item that belonged to her.  
16 Nothing.

17 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So having  
18 reviewed the document and learning more, kind of,  
19 you have learned more about the events that  
20 happened when she disappeared because of your own  
21 advocacy, because of going out and trying to find  
22 information; right?

23 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

24 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so you  
25 have explained to the Commissioner your sister was

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 visiting family out at a lake, out at a tower. Can  
2 you explain what you mean by "tower" just so --

3 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: It's a fire  
4 watch tower where they hire someone. And they go  
5 out there for Renewable Resources, and they radio  
6 in fires, there's a tower. You go up there and  
7 you're looking around and you spot a fire. Then  
8 you radio it in to Renewable Resources, wherever  
9 you are closest to, that would be Forth Smith.

10 And you would always have to have  
11 batteries. It was all battery-operated radios, so  
12 Fort Smith should know that all these places need  
13 to have all their batteries, everything that you  
14 need to live out there. And you can't just walk  
15 off. There's no roads off of there. There's no  
16 bridge.

17 It's an island in the middle of a  
18 river. So you have to have a lot of -- what do you  
19 call it? They have to provide you with everything  
20 that you need in order to run it properly, in order  
21 for them to know. So batteries was a big issue  
22 there because they couldn't radio back to Forth  
23 Smith because the batteries had gone dead.

24 But apparently Fort Smith, it said  
25 in there that they knew that the batteries were low

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 but did not bring any until this event happened.

2 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I know we  
3 are kind of piecing it all together, but so your  
4 sister is visiting family. And one of the family  
5 members' husband is the person responsible for the  
6 fire tower. This was the person hired. And so,  
7 you know, there is an assumption that if you are at  
8 the fire tower, you have an ability to communicate.  
9 So your sister is out there, and then she runs out  
10 of medication at some point?

11 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes. She  
12 runs out of medication. And then apparently the  
13 pilots came there, never brought any batteries, but  
14 dropped them off. And they were given a letter to  
15 give to the doctor to write a prescription. And he  
16 was to bring the medication back because he was  
17 coming back the next day, supposedly. But that  
18 never happened either. And the doctor didn't  
19 communicate to anyone that she needed this  
20 medication immediately. So she was without.

21 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So she is  
22 out on the land, she doesn't have access, but at  
23 one point, the pilot comes in, they have a  
24 conservation, and they are supposed to be bringing  
25 batteries, too. So batteries and medications?

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

2 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And they  
3 do not come the next day, and we do not know why.  
4 I could be wrong, but I do not think it is known  
5 exactly why they did not come back the next day.  
6 It was not a weather issue?

7 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: No. It  
8 wasn't a weather issue. I think they felt a fire  
9 somewhere -- I don't think it was too close. But  
10 that was the number one priority.

11 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So in the  
12 interviews, people talk about what they recall or  
13 how your sister was starting to act or react as she  
14 did not have medication.

15 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

16 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: She was  
17 having some --

18 MS. FREDA CARDINAL:  
19 Hallucinations.

20 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes. So  
21 she was having some different symptoms. What were  
22 those?

23 MS. FREDA CARDINAL:  
24 Hallucinations, deliriums, didn't sound like her  
25 when she's without medication, that I know.



Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And at one  
2 point they figured that the helicopter is coming  
3 back and going to land that day. What happens?  
4 Like, when is she last seen? What is she doing  
5 when she is last seen?

6 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Well,  
7 apparently she had some seizures -- a seizure,  
8 whatever, and started to develop them more and more  
9 throughout these nine days that she was without  
10 medication. And hallucinating and what not and  
11 playing hide and seek behind the trees. And she  
12 went down to a water hole with the couple to go get  
13 water to bring back to the cabin. And she never  
14 returned.

15 They said she had a paper shopping  
16 bag with items in it and all her clothing. And it  
17 rained that evening. Now, don't you think someone  
18 would have found something because the paper bag  
19 would break? It would be strewn out somewhere --  
20 like, I mean who is going to be carrying all this  
21 stuff in their arms in the rain or whatever.

22 Like, I mean, is she going to know  
23 if this is what's happening with her? Is she going  
24 to know enough to pick up the items and whatever  
25 and carry on wherever she was going; right? No.

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 But they never found not a trace. Not a trace of  
2 her. She just disappeared.

3 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And in  
4 terms of -- like, what were the things they did  
5 find in terms of -- I know a number of witnesses --  
6 a lot of similar questions were asked of different  
7 witnesses. But a lot of witnesses -- like, there  
8 are conversations throughout whether there was some  
9 blood on trees or in places.

10 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes. Like,  
11 when they had searched, these witnesses said when  
12 they were on the search, one had seen -- some had  
13 seen blood on a wooden bed. Some had seen bloody  
14 towels in the garbage nearby. Some had seen blood  
15 on trees that were nearby, as well, and I don't  
16 know. They never really knew what -- they never  
17 investigated that.

18 They just said that these  
19 witnesses said these things, but there was no  
20 follow-up on it, I don't think, ever. And I don't  
21 know. And they said where she was last, there was  
22 a fire within 15 minutes of them leaving her there.  
23 Because they figured she was going to come back, as  
24 well. But there was a fire in that area where she  
25 last was, within 15 minutes of her being there. So

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 an area was burned where she was. But still no  
2 sign of her or any items or any cans. Cans won't  
3 burn. Bones won't burn in such a light fire.

4 Yes. They searched. They dug.  
5 They dug up holes. They dug a few places and stuff  
6 but they never did -- they checked that water pond  
7 and whatever. I guess it wasn't very deep and  
8 whatever. They looked for tracks. And at some  
9 point someone said that there was tracks on the  
10 moss. I don't think you can make tracks on moss.  
11 But you definitely can on the mud that was around  
12 the little pond, but they never ever did  
13 investigate those tracks, as well. They never said  
14 whose it was.

15 They just said there were tracks  
16 there and there were only three people there. So  
17 whose tracks were they? They didn't investigate  
18 that. They didn't say which direction it went or  
19 anything like that. And they had helicopters come  
20 around searching this way and that way. And the  
21 only reason the helicopter came that day was  
22 because he saw that fire, the smoke from that fire.  
23 So he came there and found out that this was  
24 burning, and that's how they started getting people  
25 there to fight that fire in that area.

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1                                   And they also got dogs out there -  
2 - a dog and his master. But the funny thing is,  
3 when I read all these witnesses' statements that  
4 when they brought the dog out there, they did not  
5 search the immediate area with the dog. The  
6 helicopter dropped the dog and his master off over  
7 there, searched an area, they picked him up,  
8 brought him to another area over there.

9                                   Why was he not searching the  
10 immediate area where she was? If they are looking  
11 for a person, they're going to need some item or  
12 whatever to find this certain scent. But there was  
13 no, nothing. No items left around. But she was in  
14 that cabin, so the dog is going to find her scent  
15 there, and from there go. And I'm sure he would  
16 have smelled her tracks if those were her tracks  
17 over there and followed and so on and so forth.  
18 But that never happened, as well.

19                                   MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: In terms  
20 of the cabin, in the inquest, there is mention of  
21 the fact the door was being locked and that it was  
22 being nailed shut because the family members were  
23 concerned she was going to wander out in the night  
24 as her hallucinations and stuff got worse. So they  
25 nailed the doors shut so people could not come and

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 go. Do you recall that or can you share a little  
2 bit about that?

3 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes. Well,  
4 my cousin was afraid of bears and stuff that might  
5 wander and enter the house. So her husband, Joe  
6 (ph), spiked the doors shut. I don't know how many  
7 spikes they had in there or how long they were, how  
8 far in they were, or anything. None of that was  
9 released, none of that information. But  
10 apparently, he nailed the doors shut or spiked it  
11 shut. And then they played cards until 4:00  
12 o'clock in the morning. They went to bed.

13 At 5:00 o'clock, at one point,  
14 they said she woke them up at 6:00 o'clock -- or  
15 5:00 o'clock and asked to go outside because she  
16 saw some people outside and wanted to go out there  
17 and see these people, these men that were out  
18 there. And she wanted to go home with them.

19 And before that, in a statement,  
20 they said that they had all sharp instruments,  
21 everything, knives and anything that you can hurt  
22 yourself with, because they were afraid that she  
23 might hurt herself. So everything was hidden under  
24 their bed, apparently. And at 6:00 o'clock in the  
25 morning, she was asking to open the door. So she

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 was given a hammer and very shortly after that, she  
2 had the door open.

3 Well, if they were afraid of her  
4 hurting herself or anybody else or anything, like,  
5 why did they give her a hammer after they hid  
6 everything else? That was never investigated. I  
7 don't understand that. And yet, she opened the  
8 door, and she was outside. She peeked outside,  
9 came back in. They had breakfast. She didn't have  
10 any, and then from there, she went out. And she  
11 asked them to come with her, and they said, "No.  
12 This is too far."

13 And they said she said she was at  
14 Mission Island which is close to Rez (ph), and we  
15 go there for picnics all the time. And they tried  
16 to explain to her where she was, and she wouldn't  
17 comprehend that, apparently. And then she had a  
18 seizure. She hurt her head. She had a cut on her  
19 head. And then they decided to go out for water at  
20 10:00 o'clock in the morning. And then about a  
21 quarter after -- after they went to the pond, got  
22 the water, my sister was out there. She was never  
23 to be seen again.

24 There was that fire there which  
25 brought the helicopter, apparently, at 1:00 o'clock

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 in the afternoon. And he brought the medication  
2 and the batteries, I guess, I think. But it was  
3 too late. She didn't have a chance to take the  
4 medication. So they said they brought it back to  
5 Fort Smith.

6 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And you  
7 have learned all that mostly from what is in this  
8 public inquest?

9 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

10 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: You,  
11 obviously, like, you have expressed that you think  
12 there are some inconsistencies, and you have a lot  
13 more questions than what was answered in that  
14 process.

15 But one of the things I want to  
16 ask you is, what is the finding? What does the  
17 inquest -- so there are jurors that listen. They  
18 hear these witnesses. There is some medical  
19 evidence. What is the decision, at the end of the  
20 day, in this inquest of what happened to your  
21 sister?

22 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Misadventure.  
23 Death by misadventure. How do they know she is  
24 dead if there is no body? I don't understand that.  
25 I don't even understand why they had a coroner's

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 inquest in the first place. But yes. Death by  
2 misadventure, which I totally find hard to believe.

3 I have also read the police  
4 report, which was available to me at one point.  
5 And I read, and that too was about this thick. And  
6 I read about this much. I got sick to my stomach.  
7 I had a new baby. I didn't have any support with  
8 me. And my understanding was, I just had that one  
9 sitting and once I left that seat, it wasn't  
10 available to me anymore. It had to go back to  
11 Ottawa, which is what I was told.

12 And once I went home, I felt sorry  
13 for years after, like, I should have read the whole  
14 thing, you know? But I read only so far. And that  
15 information in there that I read a lot of it is in  
16 this inquest and a lot more, which is why I find a  
17 lot of inconsistencies and stuff in the inquiry.  
18 And after that, I tried to --

19 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: When was  
20 that, that you saw the file? That might help.

21 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: 1990, in  
22 November. And then later on -- I don't remember  
23 when that was. And I tried to get ahold of the  
24 file again and they said, "No. You can't have it."

25 And I asked, "why?" I said, "I



Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 was allowed to read it once. Why can't I again?"

2 And they said, "well, that's  
3 because of confidentiality." What confidentiality?  
4 I could blab my mouth off if I wanted to now  
5 because --

6 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Because of  
7 the first time you saw it. But did they also  
8 explain to you that there had been, maybe, some  
9 changes in law, privacy law?

10 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes. I said,  
11 "Well, how come I can read everything, names and  
12 everything in the coroner's inquest and the same  
13 names are in the police report. What is the  
14 difference?" Well, apparently there are different  
15 privacy legal issues there with the RCMP, the  
16 federal government, and everyone has their own  
17 privacy laws.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes. And  
19 some jurisdictions, when there has been a finding  
20 by the coroner's office or a chief examiner of  
21 death, it will often result in the police file  
22 being closed. But is the police file closed now,  
23 that you are aware of?

24 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: No. I still  
25 kept on bugging them with the help of Curtis here,

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 my information guy. And we questioned, and they  
2 gave us a little summary, like a four-page summary  
3 of a police report. And I know the police report  
4 is bigger than that, you know? And it's almost  
5 like he gave us the same information that's in the  
6 coroner's inquest, but I know there's more to it  
7 than that.

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so is  
9 it open? Is it closed? Have they explained to you  
10 where it is at since there has been a finding of  
11 her death?

12 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: It's open,  
13 but it's just sitting there. I don't know what the  
14 word he used but --

15 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Are they  
16 actively investigating it right now?

17 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Oh, it's  
18 inactive. It is just sitting there collecting  
19 dust, kind of thing.

20 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So it  
21 remains as an unresolved police file, but in the  
22 Northwest Territories there is a coroner's inquest  
23 that makes a finding of death by misadventure?

24 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

25 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So,

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 obviously, you have more questions than what the  
2 investigation or the inquest had and more questions  
3 about what is known in terms of what happened to  
4 your sister or some of the details.

5 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes. I still  
6 have a lot of unanswered questions that I know can  
7 be answered, but it has just not happened.

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: In terms  
9 of -- and again, I know you were young when your  
10 sister Stella went missing --

11 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

12 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: But you  
13 had said -- and I just really want to go back to  
14 this point because you have said there were  
15 searches, they looked in the pond, there was a  
16 number of things that were done to, actually, at  
17 least, initially look for your sister.

18 But you were talking about  
19 communications. The fact that nobody was actually  
20 communicating to the family about what they were  
21 doing. Can you tell us a little bit more? Like,  
22 you said your dad found out on the street. You mom  
23 found out from the priest.

24 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes.

25 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: What were

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 the next steps after you first found out Stella was  
2 missing? Who was in communication with you, sort  
3 of, moving forward or up to the inquest?

4 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Nobody.  
5 There was just no communications whatsoever.  
6 Apparently, police told whoever, the priest, and I  
7 don't know. There was just a lot of hearsay and  
8 stuff.

9 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Did the  
10 family actually participate? Did your mom or  
11 daughter, are they a witness in this?

12 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: My mother is.

13 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so she  
14 got to, actually, provide a little information?

15 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: A little bit,  
16 yes.

17 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Now, you  
18 are a nurse, and you have been a nurse for years.  
19 So much like you have come to the information about  
20 your sister's disappearance, you have come to a  
21 better understanding of epilepsy and medications  
22 and really, I think --

23 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right. Back  
24 then I just knew when she had a seizure, we knew  
25 what to do because it was so frequent that it was

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 nothing. We weren't scared. The first time I used  
2 to be scared a bit. But after that, I grew into  
3 it. I knew what to do and how to react to help her  
4 and, you know, just so that she would recover  
5 faster and whatever. Although, we had nothing, you  
6 know. But just to watch and you had to be there.

7                   And now I know. I know all the  
8 ins and outs of it. Like, I mean, I never knew  
9 back then that she could die from it because as a  
10 child, you don't know about death and stuff. Well,  
11 she never died before, so how am I supposed to know  
12 that, that could happen? But now I do. And that  
13 was never looked into, investigated into that she  
14 will succumb to her death in epileptic fits, it's  
15 called, where you keep on having seizures over and  
16 over and over and over.

17                   MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: There were  
18 some findings or recommendations -- I'm sorry --  
19 out of the inquest?

20                   MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes.

21                   MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: In  
22 relation to a couple things. Do you recall what  
23 those were?

24                   MS. FREDA CARDINAL: That the RCMP  
25 should communicate with families immediately before

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 word gets out on the street. Because that always  
2 happens. And the first responders are usually the  
3 RCMP, but they never communicated that. There was  
4 no, nothing else.

5                                   There was no other -- the  
6 Renewable Resources should be up-to-date with  
7 everything. They should communicate better. They  
8 should have sufficient needs at these towers. I  
9 don't know. But now we have a lot more, a lot more  
10 groups and organizations and more help these days  
11 that I hope today, and in the future, that this  
12 doesn't happen anymore.

13                                   MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: On the  
14 very last page, Commissioner Eyolfson, there is the  
15 decision of the jury and the coroner. And there is  
16 a list of recommendations. Just so everyone knows  
17 what I am doing, he has the copy there. I am just  
18 giving you that same last page.

19                                   MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Okay. There  
20 is a lot of information to remember.

21                                   MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: It is.  
22 But when you were just talking about that the next  
23 of kin be notified first, that is one of the  
24 recommendations?

25                                   MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes.

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 "Hospital and medical authorities take more  
2 interest in people in such a case of Stella  
3 Cardinal. That Forestry have spare batteries and  
4 radio on hand at isolated towers. RCMP should have  
5 had more experienced men for ground search" (as  
6 read).

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So  
8 interestingly, this is an inquiry -- inquest.  
9 Sorry. Back in the '70s. But a couple of the  
10 things -- so you know, you may have concerns and a  
11 lot of questions, but a couple of the things they  
12 actually recommend back in 1970 make a lot of  
13 sense. Like, the next of kin should be notified  
14 sooner.

15 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: It makes a  
16 lot of sense today, too.

17 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Exactly.  
18 That the hospital and medical authorities -- and  
19 they say in case, "more interesting people such as  
20 the case of Stella Cardinal," (as read) because  
21 back then that whole stigma --

22 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: But even  
24 in the '70s, they recognize the need to address the  
25 types of issues she was having and the lack of

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 medication. And I mean, it seems pretty obvious  
2 that the spare batteries in a tower that is  
3 designed to be a communication centre for fires  
4 have batteries. So do you feel -- like, whatever  
5 your other concerns are with the fact that an  
6 inquest was held, although there was no body, do  
7 you think that some of the recommendations they  
8 made, made sense and should have been helpful?

9 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Exactly.  
10 Yes. The RCMP never notified us. They never  
11 notified the next of kin right away. The doctors  
12 didn't communicate the health needs of my sister.  
13 And RWED (ph) didn't have the batteries at the  
14 tower.

15 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Just for  
16 anybody who is not from here, what does RWED stand  
17 for? Do you know?

18 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: I forgot.

19 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: It is  
20 okay. It is the renewable resources. And  
21 wildlife.

22 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Wildlife  
23 something or other.

24 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: They were  
25 the folks that were in charge of the fire towers



Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 and, like, sending out messages to deal with --

2 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: And hiring  
3 the people to work up there. Yes.

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so we  
5 know you still have a lot of questions, and you  
6 have provided us a lot of information, but I want  
7 to actually provide you an opportunity to share  
8 with us some ideas and recommendations and,  
9 specifically, about how you came to information.

10 I'm so struck by how much work you  
11 have had to do to find out as much information  
12 about you sister and that not everybody has the  
13 time or has the tenacity to keep going after  
14 information. So I am wondering if you can even  
15 share some tips with other families about how you  
16 got things or what you had to do in order to make  
17 sure you were finding out information and where you  
18 got help from?

19 Because there is a good part of  
20 this story about how you can lean on others to get  
21 help. And that might help other families know what  
22 they can do, too.

23 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes. Well,  
24 on my journey, I just hounded and hounded and  
25 hounded the people. I asked questions everywhere I

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 went. And trying to find out where to get  
2 information, where to get files from and all this.  
3 And then all of a sudden this guardian angel popped  
4 up: Curtis Mandeville. He helped me with a lot of  
5 this last part of the journey to today, to help me  
6 get all of this information and stuff. And yes. A  
7 lot of telephone calls.

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And Curtis  
9 is here in a support capacity, but I understand his  
10 current job is actually to help families find  
11 information?

12 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

13 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So do you  
14 know what his title is? Besides that information  
15 guy? Is he the family information liaison  
16 coordinator?

17 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So when  
19 the inquiry came out and announced different  
20 provinces and jurisdictions would have additional  
21 money dedicated to family liaison units that would  
22 help families find information, you found  
23 assistance. But I think you guys probably knew  
24 each other even before that; right?

25 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: We never did

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 speak about my sister's case at all. Never.

2 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: But the  
3 help you are getting now from Curtis, is, actually,  
4 something other families can access, too; right?

5 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Exactly.

6 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So you  
7 come in with all this tenacity and all this  
8 information, but now you have someone else who can  
9 help you get some information.

10 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

11 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And has  
12 that been helpful?

13 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Very, very,  
14 very helpful. We need more. We need more out  
15 there to help all the families who are in need and  
16 don't know what avenue to take and where to go.  
17 But I was already on the road trip so, you know.  
18 He just pointed me in the right direction, as well.

19 Like, I was going all over the  
20 place. He just said, "Hey. Let's go this way."  
21 And we got there, and we got a lot more information  
22 than what I would have done by myself.

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: No. And  
24 that is great because I think sometimes we are  
25 always focusing on what is not happening, so when

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 we can recognize what is happening well or how we  
2 can make it better, this might be one of those  
3 examples.

4                                 Would you agree with me that  
5 having the type of resources that actually are  
6 dedicated to helping families get the information  
7 they need, so it is kind of being test driven here  
8 when they announced the Inquiry and special  
9 funding. But would you, as a recommendation, say  
10 now we need to do this moving forward? It can't  
11 just be short-term that provinces and territories  
12 actually have to continue to provide these  
13 resources.

14                                 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes.  
15 Exactly. We need these resources and other  
16 resources. Like, I mean, that can help us  
17 communicate properly in every aspect. Like, I  
18 mean, there are a lot of resources out there:  
19 Different group of people, different societies,  
20 councils. Like, we all need to work together in  
21 order to get things done or to get information to  
22 like -- communication is a big, big thing. And I  
23 know there are groups out there, but we all have to  
24 communicate and come together.

25                                 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: In that

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 same way, are there ideas and recommendations for  
2 the Commissioner or the Commission, in general,  
3 that you have that you think would be helpful? I  
4 know it is a big question.

5 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: I'm stumped.  
6 I had it, but it passed in my head. I had it  
7 written down there somewhere.

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Maybe let  
9 me help you out a little in terms of asking more  
10 specific questions, if you are okay with that?

11 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Okay.

12 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: You were  
13 just talking about how if organizations and  
14 everyone was working together better, so we now  
15 have this (indiscernible) office. But are there  
16 other ways that different services could  
17 communicate with each other so that when you are  
18 communicating together, there is a better way for  
19 everyone to know what is happening? Like, if there  
20 was some type of coordinator or someone that, at  
21 least, in the Northwest Territories --

22 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: I don't know,  
23 but I was thinking about investigative services,  
24 like, I mean, I hope we have a society of some sort  
25 of investigators that would help some cases that

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 are still open. You know, maybe there is hope out  
2 there. Who knows. And I think a lot of times,  
3 too, that when you are looking for a person, they  
4 should invite the rangers in as well. I would like  
5 to recommend that.

6 I have been a ranger since 1996  
7 because I thought, you know, if anybody ever went  
8 missing, I would advocate and get the government to  
9 get the rangers involved because they know the  
10 land. They are experienced people. They can live  
11 out on the land no matter what the weather may be,  
12 and they can be out there and be of a lot of help.

13 So I have been a ranger since  
14 1996. I haven't been active in the past few years  
15 since I moved back to Hay River, but yes. That is  
16 one of my -- because they are everywhere. They're  
17 all over Canada. And they know their areas more  
18 than anybody else does.

19 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: In terms  
20 of the rangers recommendation, just so if people do  
21 not know who the rangers are, can you tell me a  
22 little bit about who the rangers are?

23 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: The rangers  
24 are a group of people who are to protect Canada.  
25 We are the frontline people and so if there is

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 anything that happened, we are, kind of, like the  
2 scouts to the foreign people who are going to come  
3 to our land and help us keep sovereignty; right?

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: The  
5 rangers are trained, though; right?

6 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Oh, yes. We  
7 are trained.

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: They are  
9 trained in the geographies or other geographies  
10 with wilderness skills, with first aid skills, with  
11 a number of skills to help people. And just so we  
12 understand your recommendation properly, because it  
13 is a great one, and it is nationwide. You are  
14 right. If rangers were called in on certain types  
15 of searches, it would increase the people who are  
16 actually looking, but also a group of people with a  
17 higher skill set.

18 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

19 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so --

20 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: And it is  
21 probably cheaper for the government, too.

22 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:  
23 Efficiency, on top of everything. Okay, no. That  
24 is a great recommendation. Are there other  
25 recommendations either in relation to the search or

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 the process after that you can think of?

2 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: I can't think  
3 of it right now, but can these recommendations be  
4 handwritten and handed in, as well?

5 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes.  
6 Absolutely. Anything in terms of -- you are  
7 testifying now, but if you wanted to make further  
8 submissions in writing, and I should not speak on  
9 behalf of the Commissioner, but I am sure he would  
10 agree with me, we would be more than happy to  
11 accept those. And sometimes you need to think a  
12 little deeper.

13 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: I know. It's  
14 kind of hard to be put on the hot seat. I mean,  
15 you are used to it, but I mean, you know someone  
16 who is not used to it. It's kind of overwhelming.

17 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: You know,  
18 I just want to make sure that we are not missing  
19 anything. Like, you have shared a lot and the  
20 evidence that you are providing today, I think, has  
21 been very helpful.

22 What are some of the big things  
23 you would not want to miss? I know, you know, you  
24 had told me and you have said today you still  
25 cannot understand the fact that there is a finding



Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 of death when there is no body. Is there any  
2 recommendation around that? Like, when inquests  
3 happen or occur, how can they make findings in  
4 absence of evidence or --

5 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Well, there  
6 are a lot of people out there who know, usually,  
7 more than what is written in these things, in these  
8 books, ledgers, whatever. Because there are always  
9 people out there who know. And there are always  
10 people out there who talk. You know, it would be  
11 awesome if at least one person would come out. It  
12 doesn't matter what case it is, and just help us.  
13 Give a little tip, a little answer, a little  
14 something. You can be anonymous. You can help so  
15 many people.

16 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And is it  
17 fair to say that now that you have collected all  
18 this information, you have some more knowledge, you  
19 are still suspicious? You still feel like there  
20 was potentially some wrongdoing, but you do not  
21 have those answers? Is that fair to say that your  
22 sister could have somehow been done wrong by, or  
23 that she did not have the right care -- at minimum,  
24 she did not have the right care?

25 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: At minimum,

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 she did not have the right care. And I am  
2 suspicious. I have feelings that had everything  
3 been put in place properly, and you know, all these  
4 proceedings, testimony, and all this were done  
5 right, I guess. I don't know. Maybe there would  
6 have been a different outcome.

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: In the  
8 possibilities of the world -- like, in the inquest,  
9 the medical opinions, and you said yourself that  
10 your sister would not have lasted without  
11 medication. So there is always a likely  
12 presumption that she has passed. But one of the  
13 things that is important is, that when people have  
14 information that they do not share, so are you  
15 interested in pleading or compelling people to  
16 share information?

17 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: To come  
19 forward -- after all these years to come forward if  
20 they had any more information?

21 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Exactly.  
22 Like, I said, people talk. And a lot of people  
23 know more information than anything that was said  
24 in these testimonies and what not. And yes. If  
25 anyone out there knows something, come forward. It

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 doesn't matter. You can always remain anonymous.  
2 But to help the families go through this, and maybe  
3 there will be closure for a family, and they will  
4 be on their healing journey.

5 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I only  
6 have one more question before I am going to ask  
7 Commissioner Eyolfson if he has comments or  
8 questions. And that would be, what if anything  
9 would you want to do to share the legacy of your  
10 sister? What is a good way to memorialize her, to  
11 make sure everyone knows who she was or if there  
12 was a way to honour her, what would it be?

13 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: I don't know.  
14 Just to get her story out. Let everybody know.  
15 But I'm not -- I don't know. It is just that she  
16 will always in my heart, and that is enough for me  
17 that she will always be there. There will never be  
18 closure.

19 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: You have  
20 done a really good job, actually, though, in terms  
21 of sharing her story today. So part of that has  
22 happened because of your courage.

23 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Thank you.

24 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So thank  
25 you. Commissioner Eyolfson, did you have any

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 questions or comments for Freda?

2 --- STATEMENTS FROM COMMISSIONER EYOLFSON

3 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: I do  
4 not have any questions to ask, Freda. I think you  
5 have shared a lot, and I think Christa has asked  
6 you a number of questions, so I do not have any  
7 additional questions to ask at this point. I just  
8 want to thank you for sharing about Stella and  
9 telling us some of the good memories that you had,  
10 but telling us her story. So I appreciate that.  
11 Thank you for all your recommendations, as well,  
12 and for coming and participating and contributing  
13 to the work of the National Inquiry. I really want  
14 to thank you for that.

15 And before you leave, I have a  
16 small gift of appreciation for you for sharing your  
17 truth today. I am going to as if Grandmother Blu  
18 will help me with that.

19 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: So  
20 Commissioner Eyolfson is going to bring this over  
21 to you. One is the scarf from the Native Women's  
22 Association here that will help you with your  
23 healing journey as you go forward.

24 And the other is an eagle feather.  
25 And these feathers have been collected right from

Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina  
Cardinal

1 the west coast to the east coast. And they have  
2 been collected by matriarchs and grandmothers and  
3 community members to help the family members who  
4 come to testify and share their stories with they  
5 healing journey and to honour you and to thank you  
6 for this information that you have given so that  
7 others can learn from you and others can know that  
8 they are not alone. And neither are you. We are  
9 here to support each and every family and survivor  
10 and to hear their stories to make differences and  
11 to make recommendations. So thank you very much  
12 for this hard work that you have done today.

13 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Thank you.

14 --- Exhibits (code: P01P09P0301)

15 Exhibit 1: PDF copy of  
16 transcript, Inquest into  
17 the Death of Stella Virginia  
18 Cardinal, held at Fort  
19 Resolution N.W.T. between  
20 November 24-26, 1970 (197  
21 pages divided into seven PDF  
22 files).

23 **Hearing # 2**

24 **Witness: Cindy Allen**

25 **In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor**

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 **Heard by Commissioner Qajaq Robinson**  
 2 **Commission Counsel: Wendy van Tongeren.**  
 3 **Grandmothers, Elders and Knowledge-keepers: Laureen**  
 4 **"Blu" Waters Gaudio and Lila Eramus**  
 5 **Clerk: Trudy Mckinnon**  
 6 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

7 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:  
 8 Cindy Allen is going to come -- is sharing with us  
 9 this morning. I'm wearing a bunch of hats right  
 10 now, so I'd ask everyone to kindly make sure your  
 11 cell phones are off, ringers are off. For the  
 12 record, because this is being recorded, Cindy,  
 13 you've come with some supports. Could you introduce  
 14 yourself and your supports?

15 MS. CINDY ALLEN: [Speaking in  
 16 Dene]. My name is Cindy Allen. I'm Yellowknives  
 17 Dene [Tlicho] person from [N'dilo] in this area.  
 18 I'm grateful to be here in my traditional  
 19 territory. Chief [Drygeese's] territory. And also  
 20 grateful to be here in [Denendeh]. I'm here to tell  
 21 some truths about what happened to my grandmother,  
 22 my granny, Mary-Adele Martin Doctor, a very  
 23 respected elder within Yellowknives Dene [Tlicho]  
 24 person. I have my, one of my elders, [Muriel]  
 25 Betsina (ph), who lives in [N'dilo], supporting me.

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 Grateful for her to be here. And I also have my  
2 good friend, Lila Erasmus, she's also from  
3 [N'dilo]. Lives there. [Nacho Nyak Dun] person  
4 from the Yukon that lives here. And then I have Roy  
5 Erasmus, Sr., also from the area supporting -- from  
6 this area supporting me as well. And I'm grateful  
7 for their support. So mahsi.

8 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:  
9 Mahsi. It's customary that there's an oath  
10 administered, and an oath is basically a  
11 recognition of the importance of a place, a  
12 process, and the importance of exchanging. You've  
13 come to share about your grandmother, about the  
14 loss of your people, and these are sacred things,  
15 and I accept that as oath in itself. So we're ready  
16 to begin when you are.

17 MS. CINDY ALLEN: Mahsi. I'm  
18 grateful to be here to further talk about my  
19 grandmother and her story, but also her story is  
20 that which is faced by many Indigenous women, Dene  
21 women, in the north and in the Northwest  
22 Territories. I'm here to honour her because I want  
23 things to improve, not only for people in my  
24 community in [N'dilo] and in Dettah, but also for  
25 all Indigenous women and girls. Things need to

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 change and I'm here to advocate for change in a  
2 good way. It's not about laying blame, but it's  
3 about moving forward in a good direction. So that's  
4 my intention.

5                               So I presented at the inquiry in  
6 Whitehorse in the first session they had there. My  
7 auntie, Catherine Doctor, was also there with my  
8 daughter, [Kuan Sha Jack]. So we were there to  
9 speak about what happened to Mary-Adele; [Maade] is  
10 her traditional name. In 2009 she was assaulted in  
11 her own home in [N'dilo] and she died a few weeks  
12 later. And it was very tragic and upsetting to the  
13 family and to me because we lost the traditional  
14 knowledge holder. I lost my mom a few years ago, so  
15 I had really depended and thought my grandmother  
16 would be there to give me some teachings, and she  
17 was taken away from me through violence. And I  
18 questioned and the reason I brought her story  
19 forward was, she was injured and harmed in her own  
20 community, and through the court system -- and we  
21 know who did this -- it was another Dene woman. The  
22 charges were downgraded and it seemed to me, how  
23 could that happen? My granny is gone. So part of  
24 my journey is to uncover the truth of what happened  
25 to her in the hospital, and what happened with how



Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 the police handled things. So that's what I have  
2 been trying to do in the last -- in the months  
3 since appearing here in front of the inquiry in  
4 May.

5 So I understand that I'm breaking  
6 trail, a new trail in the north for women to get  
7 the right information. And it's been a challenge.  
8 The RCMP have said that they don't release records  
9 for 20 years. Well, that's a problem. I'm hoping  
10 that will change.

11 I have had to do an ATIP request  
12 to get that information. I have also had to do an  
13 ATIP request to GNWT health and social services to  
14 get the records about my grandmother's health care.  
15 And that isn't easy, as well. But I'm doing that.  
16 And people are cooperating and I appreciate that.  
17 The RCMP are cooperating and I have other supports  
18 that are also helping me along my journey, and I  
19 really appreciate that.

20 So I'm continuing that. And this  
21 is another part of that story. So there -- things  
22 aren't very good here in the Northwest Territories  
23 for women, and it's likely the same across the  
24 country for our Indigenous women and girls. I would  
25 like to see more supports in the community for

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 women and girls. I want to mention, because I have  
2 also been given permission by [Cecelia] Kell to  
3 tell her story. So there was a CEDAW ruling in 2012  
4 that found the government of Northwest Territories  
5 and Canada, they've -- the U.N. found that they had  
6 discriminated against [Cecelia] Kell, a Tli Cho  
7 woman. And the remedies they suggested were that  
8 she be given a house and that she be compensated  
9 for the trauma and loss and hardship that she  
10 faced. And then the third ruling was that Canada,  
11 the GNWT, hire Indigenous women to provide  
12 information, legal information to Indigenous about  
13 their court challenges and help them.

14                   The system is failing our women  
15 and girls. For [Cecelia] Kell, she's homeless in  
16 Toronto. She could not get the supports in the  
17 Northwest Territories. She had to leave the  
18 Northwest Territories to get her supports. And  
19 that's sad. And I understand that they are not  
20 Indigenous women in the legal symptom helping, that  
21 are getting trained by Canada or hired by them to  
22 help Indigenous women. So that has not happened and  
23 is that needs to happen. And so part of my story  
24 here is to talk about Indigenous law, because that  
25 also has to come forward, and that's what I want to

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 speak mostly about, is that we have our Indigenous  
2 laws, and we need to revive those, talk about them,  
3 teach them to our children and our families.  
4 Through colonization we have lost a lot of those  
5 teachings. People don't understand what they mean,  
6 our Dene laws. And I think that needs to happen.

7                               So I want to speak about -- about  
8 -- about that some more. So in the north and in the  
9 Northwest Territories, Yamoria is widely known --  
10 that's the name of our law maker, our Dene law  
11 maker. He gave us our sacred laws. He's also known  
12 as Yamozha, but he's -- his teachings and his laws  
13 are our -- what people -- Dene people should know.  
14 But we also need to be critical about that. So the  
15 Yamozha -- the importance of the Dene laws are so  
16 important that the Dene nation logo, our flag,  
17 which I have presented right here, is about one of  
18 the more widely known stories of Yamoria. So  
19 Yamoria was here when the world was new. And he  
20 walked around the world and he went around teaching  
21 Dene people our laws. And he also went around, he  
22 shaped the landscape and he shaped [the laws], and  
23 he gave stories to us through his travels of where  
24 he went. So we have sacred places in our landscape  
25 where Yamozha, Yamoria traveled. The more widely

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 story is that Yamoria traveled around and he went  
2 to kill the marauding giant animals. So you can  
3 tell that the story is very old because the -- when  
4 you think about giant animals and monsters, well,  
5 when was that? When did we have giant animals?  
6 That was when the world was new. At the time of the  
7 dinosaurs. The stories are thousands of years old.

8                               So the one that's more widely  
9 known about Yamoria, he traveled around and he went  
10 chasing after the beavers that were killing people,  
11 and so he chased the beavers up and around  
12 [Denendeh] and up the McKenzie River. And at the  
13 fork of the McKenzie River and the Bear River, I  
14 believe -- no the confluence of the two rivers, he  
15 killed one of the beavers and he had a fire and he  
16 cooked the beaver and he ate it, and that's a  
17 sacred fire, because the grease dripped down and  
18 we're supposed to remember the sacredness of that.  
19 And then after he ate the beaver, he took the skin  
20 of the beaver and he placed it on Bear Mountain.  
21 And you can see the three hides of the beavers on  
22 the Bear Mountain. And that you can see today. You  
23 go out on the land and the [Sahtu] and you can look  
24 at Bear Rock and you can see those hides there. And  
25 so people know that.

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1                               And so he was traveling around  
2 teaching people about the Dene laws and cleaning  
3 the land and making it safe for everyone. So that  
4 is the most widely known -- and it's the general  
5 story about Yamoria and it's so important that  
6 we've recognized that in our flag and who we are as  
7 people. But we don't -- we need to unpack more  
8 stories and more truths about what do the  
9 Indigenous laws actually mean? I think we've lost  
10 them through colonization, and we need to uncover  
11 that. And we need to uncover women's stories and  
12 our Indigenous stories.

13                               Most of the stories in the  
14 Northwest Territories and Dene, a lot of them are  
15 men, men's stories. They've been recorded by  
16 anthropologists and others but that's the male  
17 perspective. And this will become very evident when  
18 I tell one version of the story. Because if you  
19 look at it with a critical eye, an Indigenous woman  
20 perspective, a Dene woman perspective, you'll see  
21 that the stories condone violence, death, murder.  
22 They speak about that. And these are the stories  
23 that are taught to our kids and to our families.  
24 Well, we need to hear other stories beyond  
25 violence, death, murder, cannibalism. And we need

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 to hear Indigenous Dene interpretations of our  
2 laws. And I'm just going to speak generally just  
3 what our Dene laws are. Because they themselves  
4 also need to be further examined. And I just want  
5 to acknowledge all those wonderful Dene women and  
6 men who have supported me and taught me about Dene  
7 laws. And I also want to acknowledge my Indigenous  
8 law teachers that I have had over the years,  
9 because I have a law degree. I went to UBC and I  
10 studied Indigenous laws. And I know about the  
11 failings of the justice system to aboriginal  
12 people. So I have some understanding of our  
13 Indigenous laws, our Dene laws, but I'm learning.  
14 So I just want to put that out there, that I'm on  
15 my learning journey and what I speak about here is  
16 my interpretation as an Indigenous Dene woman about  
17 one story that we have, but I know there must be a  
18 lot of other stories out there and we need to  
19 revive those.

20 So the Dene laws, they've been  
21 mostly recorded and are known by George Blondin,  
22 who is -- my elders here, [Muriel Betsina's]  
23 brother. So I'm grateful she's sitting here.

24 So our laws are -- share what you  
25 have. That's our umbrella law. Under it all other

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 laws, Dene laws fall. Help each other as much as  
2 possible is another law. Love each other as much as  
3 possible. Don't harm anyone. Be respectful of  
4 elders and everything around you. Be polite and  
5 don't argue with anyone. Young girls and boys  
6 should behave respectfully. Pass on the teaching.  
7 Elders should tell stories about the past every  
8 day. And through that you distinguish between good  
9 and bad. And then our other law -- one of our other  
10 laws is be happy at all times.

11 I also want to speak that another  
12 law is the law of coexistence. And I think that  
13 this is alongside share what you have. The law of  
14 coexistence speaks about respect and paying the  
15 land and the animals for the things that they  
16 provide to you. And that if you don't pay the land,  
17 pay the animals, pay the spirits, you could face  
18 serious hardship. You could starve. You could have  
19 bad things happen to you because you're not paying  
20 them respect, the animals. And the spirits will  
21 leave you. So the law of coexistence is really  
22 important as well.

23 So Yamozha, these are the laws  
24 that he gave us as Dene people. And he -- and so I  
25 would say that Dene people -- some Dene people,

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 they just implicitly practice our Indigenous laws,  
 2 our Dene laws. They do share, they do care for  
 3 other peoples, they do help, and they are  
 4 respectful. But then as we know this inquiry is  
 5 here to tell the story of Indigenous women and  
 6 girls. There's a break in the laws. There's a break  
 7 in the traditions. Things are unbalanced, because  
 8 if people followed these laws from Yamozha, then  
 9 we'd not need to be here speaking about it, because  
 10 we'd all be around the camp fire. We would be in  
 11 the circle. You'd have men and women together,  
 12 standing together. So I'm very grateful to have my  
 13 supports, men and women here, as it's very  
 14 important.

15 So I'm going to speak about one  
 16 version of Yamozha story, and that's Yamozha and  
 17 His Beaver Wife. And this story is told by -- it's  
 18 a [Vital Thomas story, a Tlicho] person. Archie  
 19 [Beaulieu], a respected artist who recently passed  
 20 away, he did the beautiful illustrations of the  
 21 story. And it's translated by Mary [Siemens]. So  
 22 I'm going to ask that we go through the story and  
 23 Francis [Zoe] also narrates part of the story, and  
 24 he's [Tlicho] person. So that I'm going to ask that  
 25 the audio tech people prime that up and you'll hear



Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 the story, and then I'll give you my interpretation  
2 and critique of that, and the reason why I think we  
3 need to talk more about our women stories, because  
4 as I mentioned I think it's the men's stories that  
5 are being told, but we need now to tell our women  
6 stories, and there needs to be more work done in  
7 that area. That would be a recommendation that the  
8 inquiry can bring forward, is that they can  
9 recommend the documentation of these stories and  
10 helping provide the means to make that happen.  
11 Because right now that's sporadic at best. And I  
12 see that difference between the Northwest  
13 Territories and the Yukon. Because I give in the  
14 Yukon right now. The Yukon is a matriarchal society  
15 for most Indigenous people, and there's many  
16 stories and books of Indigenous women. Yukon First  
17 Nation women's stories. I haven't seen that in the  
18 Northwest Territories. I don't see an Indigenous  
19 women's story book. And I would like to see that  
20 because they -- our stories have our laws and our  
21 teachings in them, and we need to revive that. So  
22 if we -- I'm going to ask the tech people to start  
23 the audio and I will flip the pages of the prompts  
24 and we'll carry on. And then after that I'll give  
25 my interpretation. Mahsi.

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 *Audio recording begins.*

2 [FRANCIS ZOE - English

3 introduction to Yamozha and His Beaver Wife]: [This  
4 is a magnificent story. It's supposed to be a very  
5 romantic story. It's supposed to be very touching  
6 the way some people told the story. There's  
7 various peoples that told the story, especially the  
8 elders. Many elders told us the stories.] In those  
9 days we didn't tell stories, we didn't have TV,  
10 telephones, videos, such things. So it was really  
11 unique to hear stories like this. Some of these  
12 stories were very touching. Tells a lot of things  
13 about [Dogrib] life, [Tlicho] life. But basically  
14 what -- who is telling this story right now is,  
15 [Vital] Thomas. He's a unique person. People would,  
16 especially young people my age took a lot of their  
17 time just to listen to what he has to say. He's a  
18 very unique person. He's a very good story teller.  
19 Even my brothers and his grandchildren would just  
20 sit there quietly listening to what he has to say.  
21 Very super story-teller. I know this fellow.

22 [Before he passed away]. Always took time to visit  
23 him at his home in Ray prior to him dying.

24 [MS. DIANNE LAFFERTY]: "Thank you  
25 for

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 choosing to read Yamozha and  
2 His Beaver Wife. When you  
3 hear the soft drum beat, it's  
4 time to turn the page. We  
5 hope you enjoy the story.

6 Yamozha and His Beaver Wife.  
7 Yamozha and His Beaver Wife. A long time ago before  
8 [Dogrib] country looked as it does today, there  
9 lived two brothers. Sazea, little bear, and  
10 Yamozha, walks around the world. In childhood the  
11 two brothers played many superhuman but cruel  
12 tricks on their fellows. Eventually Sazea went down  
13 to the Arctic coast. Yamozha remained in the bush  
14 country of the McKenzie River drainage, created  
15 many of the natural features of the region. After  
16 Sazea left, Yamozha was very lonely. To take his  
17 mind off his brother, he walked for many days. As  
18 he was walking, he came to a girl who was all  
19 alone. She had lost all of her family and was now  
20 alone. Yamozha asked her to marry him. The young  
21 woman agreed but only if Yamozha could keep one  
22 promise, that she would never get her feet wet. She  
23 said, don't ever step in grassy water or go over a  
24 little creek, just keep on the dry places. Yamozha  
25 laughed. That's an easy promise to keep, you don't

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 need to worry about getting wet, I will take very  
2 good care of you. In the beginning Yamoza kept his  
3 promise. The two walked for many years all across  
4 the country. Yamoza took good care of his wife,  
5 when she was tired, they rested. When they came to  
6 rivers and streams, Yamoza cut down trees and  
7 bridged them so his wife could cross. One day in  
8 late summer they came to a tiny creek with only a  
9 small trickle of water. Yamoza thought that his  
10 wife would be all right, so he did not cut down a  
11 tree. She can step over it without any problem, he  
12 said to himself. In one stride he crossed the water  
13 and kept on going. But Yamoza had a lot on his  
14 mind and walked a long way before he realized that  
15 his wife was not behind him. When he turned around,  
16 she was gone. Now, what has happened to that girl,  
17 he wondered. I'd better wait for her to catch up.  
18 Yamoza waited for a long time, but still his wife  
19 did not appear. At last he began to feel uneasy and  
20 he began retracing his steps through the forest.  
21 When he reached the place where he'd last seen his  
22 wife, he was astonished to find that the small  
23 trickle of water had turned into a big lake. In the  
24 middle of the lake was a big beaver house. A beaver  
25 swam out of the lodge. Yamoza asked it, have you

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 seen my wife? The beaver answered, I was your wife  
2 until you forgot your promise and let me feet get  
3 wet. Because you did not take good care of me, I  
4 changed into a beaver. I can't follow you anymore.  
5 Yamozha became furious. My magic is powerful, he  
6 answered the beaver. I will catch you and turn you  
7 into a woman again. He began to chase the beaver.  
8 When they came to Marion River, he lost her. He  
9 looked for her everywhere, digging into the bush.  
10 Around [Shotti] Lake today there are all kinds of  
11 little creeks made when Yamozha hopelessly dug in  
12 the earth. He did not find his beaver wife. Yamozha  
13 was tired from all of this work, but he kept on  
14 looking until he got to Marion Lake. Still, there  
15 was no sign of beaver. Yamozha needed to rest, so  
16 he sat down on [, a mountain on Murphy's Point. On  
17 top of this mountain is a flat rock, where Yamozha  
18 sat when he looked for his wife. As he sat on top  
19 of the mountain, Yamozha listened carefully. He  
20 heard the sound of a beaver chewing, somewhere  
21 around [Neeshi] or [Old Fort], which is on the  
22 north arm of Great Slave Lake. Old fort is on a  
23 long, long point. That point is the dam beaver was  
24 trying to make. Just before Yamozha got there,  
25 beaver saw him, so she dove and hid. Yamozha

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 followed her around the south shore of Great Slave  
2 Lake, right around the west side. Finally he came  
3 to the end of a point which is called [Tsaken],  
4 ["Beaver House"], where beaver had made a house and  
5 had a baby. Yamozha dug into the top of the beaver  
6 house. You could see the hill where he dug his  
7 hole. He took the baby and killed it. The mother  
8 fled down the McKenzie River and Yamozha followed  
9 her, carrying the baby's body. There is a burning  
10 place down the McKenzie, the smoldering beds of  
11 lignite above Fort Norman. That's where Yamozha  
12 cooked the young beaver. As he was cooking, the  
13 beaver grease melted down and started to burn. And  
14 Yamozha said, this smoke will last forever. You can  
15 see smoke there today, in the winter and in the  
16 summer. When Yamozha finished eating, he walked  
17 further inland to stretch the hide on the ground.  
18 He carried large boulders and set them around the  
19 edge of it. In the barren lands before Norman  
20 Wells, there's flat land in the shape of a beaver  
21 pelt. Yamozha was still angry at beaver. He went  
22 back to her lodge, but she saw him coming, so she  
23 swam down the big river. When she reached the  
24 Arctic Ocean, she kept on going without looking  
25 back. Yamozha knew he would never catch her. He

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 used his medicine power and turned her into an  
2 island. The end."

3 *End audio recording.*

4 MS. CINDY ALLEN: Mahsi.

5 I'm grateful to speak about this  
6 story, this [Tlicho] story. This story from when  
7 the world was new, from my ancestors, [Tlicho]  
8 elder story, [Vital] Thomas. And I honour those  
9 stories that have been recorded and those teachings  
10 that have been recorded. And so what I say now is  
11 my interpretation of the story, and how we need to  
12 widen our gaze and uncover the stories of women,  
13 our Indigenous stories, so we can hear the women's  
14 perspective on this. So I offer my interpretation  
15 of this story to help in that process.

16 So if you look, this story here,  
17 Yamoza and His Beaver Wife, is another version of  
18 the story that's more widely known, that's  
19 associated with the Dene nation flag. And our laws,  
20 our Dene flag, the [story] of Yamoria. But in the  
21 Yamoria story, the legend that's more widely known,  
22 you do not know that the beavers that he's chasing  
23 are his wife and his child. They do not tell you  
24 that, so he's chasing his wife and his child in  
25 this version by [Vital] Thomas. And if you look

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 critically at it, Yamoria had a marriage contract,  
2 a marriage promise to his beaver wife. He broke  
3 that. He did not put the branches down for her. One  
4 of the roles that I understand Dene men have  
5 actually is for breaking trail. And to take care  
6 and protect your wife. He did not do that. He broke  
7 his marriage contract with her. So she had a right  
8 to leave. But when she stood up and said, no, you  
9 broke my promise, he became violent. He stalked  
10 her, chased her all over the country, all over  
11 [Denendeh]. She had a baby. Whose baby do you think  
12 that is? It was his baby. So he killed his own  
13 child and ate his own child. And then when his wife  
14 escaped, and he couldn't get her anymore, he  
15 transformed her into an island, essentially killing  
16 her.

17 That's through my Indigenous  
18 woman's eyes, I'm looking critically at the story.  
19 And I would like to hear women's stories come  
20 forward. At the intro you heard Francis [Zoe] speak  
21 about how touching the story was, a romantic  
22 touching story. Well, just by reading the English  
23 words, you missed that. You don't hear or see about  
24 the love and care that Yamoza would have for his  
25 wife, and that should be between a man and a woman



Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 that are husband and wife.

2 So he's chasing her. He kills his  
3 child, he eats his child. This is not a nice bed  
4 time story, per se, but what is missing is the  
5 Indigenous and Dene teachings that go along with  
6 this, that would give context to the story and  
7 would inform about the teachings that -- and the  
8 importance of the Dene laws. My view on this is in  
9 part about this story is that Yamozha, besides  
10 being our law maker for Dene people, he also was a  
11 man, a human man with failings. He had medicine  
12 powers, he had great medicine powers. He could  
13 transform himself into anything. He could transform  
14 himself into another animal or another creature.  
15 Why did he not, if he loved his wife, why did he  
16 not transform himself into a beaver and live with  
17 her like that? Because there are stories about  
18 that, about Yamozha living like the animals.

19 So this story is -- this story is  
20 a man's story, but it's a woman's story. And as I  
21 mentioned earlier, a lot of the stories in the  
22 Northwest Territories that are recorded and  
23 published like this, are men's stories. And I would  
24 really like for our Indigenous women's stories, our  
25 Indigenous laws as women come forward and be

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 taught. And that those teachings, those teachings  
2 [will] help us live in the future.

3                                 We survived for thousands of years  
4 here in the Northwest Territories [as] Dene and  
5 across the country with our Indigenous teachings.  
6 And in the Northwest Territories -- I just think  
7 about my own family, my grandmother and my  
8 grandfather, they were one of the [First People] in  
9 Yellowknife and in the region here. They moved into  
10 town in the 50s, but they were still living a bush  
11 life and had a camp out of town into the 70s, 80s,  
12 and 90s. We still have a family camp off the  
13 highway close to town. So whereas other Indigenous  
14 folks may have 500 years of colonization, here it's  
15 literally been only one or two generations. And so  
16 the rapid change into the modern world has been  
17 accelerated here in the north. And so people are  
18 trying to adapt but it's not working. They're  
19 having trouble. They don't know our laws or don't  
20 really understand our laws. Our laws are about  
21 respect, love, caring, sharing, and be happy. But  
22 what does that mean? So I would strongly encourage  
23 that we start telling our stories as women and  
24 girls. I'm very grateful to be here, and the  
25 inquiry starting that process. We are telling our



Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 and the rights of passage and our Dene laws. So I  
2 was very encouraged about that. I know that at the  
3 local community level First Nation level it's hard  
4 to do things at times, but I acknowledge their  
5 efforts and I say mahsi cho and you're on the right  
6 path, and we need to get more people around the  
7 circle and we need to do more to tell our women's  
8 stories. Mahsi cho.

9 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:

10 Thank you so much for sharing with us some more  
11 about your grandma. And it's nice to speak her name  
12 and talk about her here in her territory.

13 We had -- the inquiry had an  
14 expert panel in August on Indigenous laws and  
15 decolonization and we acknowledge that it was  
16 really a tip of the iceberg. But there were some  
17 interesting things that I learned there that I  
18 wanted to get your thoughts on.

19 I'll acknowledge first that we  
20 heard from a number of people, but it was -- we  
21 heard about [Anishinabe] law. We heard about some  
22 Cree laws. Ilnu (ph) laws, Inuit laws. What I  
23 heard and what we learnt was two things that stuck  
24 out to me. That the displacement -- I mean a lot of  
25 these laws -- you spoke about how laws are shared

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 and practiced and taught every day, and then that's  
2 one of the laws. And a lot of colonial policies and  
3 government interference made those practices  
4 illegal. Whether it was -- and the church, the  
5 mission work that took place across the country.  
6 But that displacing of the laws, making Indigenous  
7 laws illegal, it was part of the impact of  
8 residential school, ripping it from the children,  
9 stopping that process of sharing it and  
10 transferring it. We heard one expert talk about how  
11 that has resulted in a state of lawlessness. And  
12 that struck me, that by imposing a new legal system  
13 that's not of the land and of the people, it's  
14 never fully effective. And by pushing a way the  
15 laws of the people and the land, there's this state  
16 of lawlessness. And it's in where Indigenous women  
17 and girls and trans spirited are marginalized and  
18 then are preyed on. I don't want to use vulnerable  
19 because it's not their state, it's what we've  
20 created around them.

21 What do you think of that?

22 MS. CINDY ALLEN: I think that has  
23 been the case -- I mean, if we look at our Dene  
24 laws, be respectful of elders and everything around  
25 you, if people would follow that, respect

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 everything around you, and elders, does not mean  
2 that you can go in and break into their house,  
3 assault them, and they die. That does mean that you  
4 treat people badly. Respect and caring of  
5 everything around you means you honour everything  
6 and you hold them up, and you support them. And I  
7 think through colonization, residential school in  
8 particular, there's been a serious impact on our  
9 laws, our Indigenous teachings, because people are  
10 trying to fit in the modern world, and the justice  
11 system right now is failing, failing us, failing  
12 Indigenous people, Dene people, and it's profound  
13 in the violence and the harm that's going on in our  
14 communities, that people turned a blind eye to  
15 because they don't want to speak badly about  
16 others, and they don't want to say anything.  
17 There's a code of silence that goes on in our  
18 communities, and we have to break that code of  
19 silence and speak our truth and bring our teachings  
20 back.

21                   The system, as I understand it --  
22 so in the case of family violence and, you know,  
23 harm that would be against a woman and -- because  
24 of that violence is criminalized, it would not go  
25 to a talking circle, and our Indigenous teachings,

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 our Dene teachings, we would bring those conflicts  
2 to talking circles with elders and that the couple  
3 and the parties would be given traditional  
4 teachings to bring them back into harmony and  
5 balance. We've lost that. We can't bring those  
6 harmful, violent interactions to a talking circle  
7 because the Criminal Code won't allow us to do  
8 that. I say that's wrong, especially if those  
9 talking circles can help bring people back into  
10 balance. It's maybe by talking to an elder and  
11 grandmothers and grandfathers that you learn the  
12 teachings that you're supposed to know, and then  
13 you'll realize the error of your ways and go on a  
14 right path.

15                                       Indigenous people are very  
16 forgiving at times if you take responsibility for  
17 your actions. It seems things now people are not  
18 taking responsibility. They are relying on the  
19 modern world to help them, but the modern world is  
20 failing us, and we have to find a new path forward.  
21 And I say that we should embrace our Indigenous  
22 laws, as we are nations, and we have our own laws  
23 as Indigenous people. We were here first. This is  
24 our country, this is my land, and we should have  
25 that recognition. As we move towards self-

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 government in land claims, Indigenous governments  
2 will have the right to pass their own laws. I'd  
3 like those laws to be informed by Indigenous  
4 teachings, our Dene laws. Because that will help  
5 guide us in a good way in the future. So Mahsi.

6 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:

7 Thank you. And you touched on -- I think the last  
8 point, one of the last questions I had was the  
9 importance of having that place. I don't want to  
10 use the word power because that's -- the power to  
11 make laws, that term, jurisdiction. So the  
12 importance of self-government in the revitalization  
13 and the using of these laws was something I was  
14 going to ask you about. You've answered it, unless  
15 you want to add more. Good, okay.

16 The final thing, I am very  
17 saddened to hear that [Cecelia] is homeless in  
18 Toronto. I'm familiar with that decision, the  
19 [CEDAW] decision. And some of her experiences, and  
20 I'm grateful that she's given you permission to  
21 speak of her.

22 I wanted your thoughts on the  
23 [CEDAW] decision in the recommendations. And what  
24 your thoughts are on their -- I guess --  
25 effectiveness. Are these things that need to be



Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 pushed more?

2 MS. CINDY ALLEN: Things need to  
3 change. The systems here are dominated by men, and  
4 I'm -- it's no disrespect to our men. I honour you,  
5 but some of that -- what has happened, there's a  
6 power imbalance and the women are marginalized. In  
7 [Cecelia] Kell's case, with the [CEDAW] ruling, she  
8 has not received justice. She lost her home through  
9 intersectional discrimination and violence, because  
10 she was an Indigenous woman. The U.N. found that.  
11 That was the case. There's a ruling in her favour  
12 against the Northwest Territories and what happened  
13 to her. She does not have a home. She's homeless.  
14 She's not even in the territory anymore. She  
15 doesn't feel supported. She did not get  
16 compensated. And, in fact, when she did have a job,  
17 that money was garnished from her wages to pay for  
18 the court costs where she was trying to fight for  
19 her rights for her home. So that's wrong as well.  
20 So they penalized her for speaking out and made her  
21 pay double, you know, for that harm that was given  
22 to her. And as I understand it, as well, the third  
23 -- and it's important in this case because we're  
24 talking about trauma and women that need help and  
25 legal advice -- Canada should hire Indigenous women

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 to be legal counsel to help inform our Indigenous  
2 women, our Dene women about their legal rights. And  
3 that has not happened as well. And there's systemic  
4 barriers for Indigenous women moving forward. And I  
5 have faced them myself. I have not got to the bar  
6 yet. I got my law degree in 2014. I have not found  
7 an articling position yet. And I have tried for  
8 years, and it's a challenge. As an Indigenous  
9 woman, I have other responsibilities, not only to  
10 myself, but to my kids and my family and my  
11 community. I'm very active in my community, even  
12 though I live in another place. I'm very supportive  
13 of my kids, and I want to continue to do that. So I  
14 have those responsibilities. And so I'm willing to  
15 work hard, but not at the sacrifice of my family  
16 and my community. So a lot of law firms and a lot  
17 of governments, they don't recognize that, that  
18 they don't -- they want someone in there who can  
19 work 70 hours no problem, no questions asked. 70  
20 hours a week, you know? And I'm willing to work  
21 hard, but not at the sacrificing of my family and  
22 my community and the people I support. I would like  
23 to see more Indigenous lawyers to help Indigenous  
24 people with their legal challenges. I think it's  
25 really important to have an Indigenous perspective

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 to bring to light some of the challenges that  
2 Indigenous people face. Bringing it back to my  
3 grandmother's situation, I looked at the court  
4 records, what I was able to look at. There was no  
5 [Gladue] written about this woman who harmed my  
6 grandmother. But that's the Supreme Court ruled on  
7 that, the [Gladue] case, and it's written into the  
8 Criminal Code, that [Gladue] reporting should  
9 happen. It's not. It's not supported generally in  
10 the legal system in Canada. But those reports would  
11 give background into the traumas that Indigenous  
12 people face. Mahsi.

13 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I  
14 don't have any questions. Commission counsel --  
15 sorry, we started without you, but I want to make  
16 sure -- Cindy and I just continued a conversation.  
17 We started it in Whitehorse, so we figured we could  
18 just continue. But you've joined us and thank you.  
19 I wanted to make sure that there aren't any  
20 questions that you were hoping to raise or get  
21 touched on.

22 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Thank  
23 you, Madam Commissioner, and I apologize, I was in  
24 the other building, another hearing that went  
25 beyond the scheduled time. And but you know, I have

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 a sense that it was probably better I wasn't here,  
2 and there was a magic that happened, and I thank  
3 all of you for contributing to that. But  
4 particularly, those who were involved in the  
5 dialogue. So Cindy, thank you so much. Madam  
6 Commissioner, thank you so much for carrying on and  
7 allowing this narrative to be told in the free and  
8 very loving way.

9 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:

10 Thank you. I don't have any more questions. I  
11 wanted to thank you again for building on and  
12 enriching what you shared with us in Whitehorse,  
13 and also for bringing into the inquiry the Dene  
14 laws and teachings that we weren't able to have as  
15 part of our expert hearings in Winnipeg. This term  
16 expert, I really don't like it. I have to find  
17 another one. It's people who have information that  
18 is -- that you can't anywhere else. So this  
19 richness, for bringing it and highlighting it.  
20 We've heard from a lot of places and a lot of  
21 people that it's these laws that are part of the  
22 solution. And some people may listen to a story and  
23 think, why did they just read a children's story?  
24 And that be relevant to all of this. And I just --  
25 how is it not relevant? So I just want to thank

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 you so much, and for your supports. Mahsicho.

2 Moving into the final before we  
3 adjourn, we have some gifts. The gifts have evolved  
4 since I saw you in Whitehorse. We've -- everywhere  
5 we've gone there's gifts and love that each  
6 community wants to bring to the next, and each  
7 family, survivors want to bring to the next who are  
8 coming forward. So from the Native Women's  
9 Association here in the Northwest Territories is a  
10 scarf for you. We also have from the inquiry some  
11 arctic cotton. And from the matriarchs of Haida  
12 Gwaii, an eagle feather that they have gathered and  
13 brought. I just get to be the gift giver. I'm  
14 really just the conduit, so I'm going to pass this  
15 on.

16 Cindy, we just want to thank you  
17 for sharing your words, sharing your information  
18 sharing your knowledge that you've accumulated to  
19 give others that hope that you have and to remind  
20 us that traditional laws were here long before any  
21 other law. So we want to thank you for that. And  
22 thank you for your being brave.

23 --- Exhibit (code: P01P09P0302)

24 Exhibit 1: Audio recording of  
25 story played during the

Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor

1 public testimony of Cindy  
2 Allen, playing time 9 minutes  
3 8 seconds/ 17,2 MB M4A(MPEG4)  
4 audio file.

5 **Hearing #3**

6 **Witness: Gail Cyr**

7 **Heard by Commissioner Qajaq Robinson**

8 **Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe**

9 **Grandmothers, Elders and Knowledge-keepers: Therese**  
10 **Villeneuve, Cecilia Boyd, Kathy Meyer and Lila**

11 **Eramus**

12 **Clerk: Trudy McKinnon**

13 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

14 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Good  
15 afternoon.

16 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Good  
17 afternoon, Commissioner Robinson. I'd like to  
18 introduce you to our next participant, Gail. Gail  
19 will be sharing her story as a survivor of the  
20 foster care system in the 1950s and violence  
21 suffered as a child and as an adult. I would ask  
22 that before we get started, that Gail be promised  
23 in.

24 AFFIRMED: GAIL CYR.

25 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And just

1 to get us started, I would like to have Gail  
2 introduce herself and her supports.

3 MS. GAIL CYR: My name is Gail  
4 Cyr. I am a resident of the City of Yellowknife. I  
5 originally come from Winnipeg in Manitoba and I  
6 have been here in the city for 44 years. So I have  
7 seen a few changes and a few things come and go in  
8 Yellowknife. But I'm glad to be here and I'm glad  
9 the Commission is here on Chief Dragee's territory.  
10 Thank you. And I'll introduce my support group.  
11 Therese Villeneuve, Lila Erasmus, Cecilia Boyd,  
12 Kathy Meyer.

13 I think you'll recognize some of  
14 the people that were here. They've either been  
15 support or elders. And Cathy, of course, told her  
16 story earlier. Therese and Cecilia worked with me  
17 with the native court workers when we started it up  
18 in '75, a long time ago, and they are long time  
19 court workers and worked with the service. And, of  
20 course, Kathy -- Lila is a good friend. We worked  
21 together on a number of projects. And also we're  
22 part and parcel of women's drum group.

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay,  
24 excellent. And so Gail, you've already told us  
25 you're from Manitoba originally, but you've been

1 here for a number of years. Did you just want to  
2 start by sharing some of the background of your  
3 childhood with us? Is that a good starting point?

4 MS. GAIL CYR: All right, thank  
5 you very much. I want to just sort of give a part  
6 of my childhood just in terms of how the foster  
7 system has formed part of the perfect storm in what  
8 affects Indigenous people across Canada and in the  
9 States and in South America and just about anywhere  
10 in the world. There's been severe colonization,  
11 traditions, beliefs, cultural practices and  
12 everything has been outlawed in many places, and  
13 there's incredible violence in some of the places.  
14 And sometimes committed by Canadian companies. So  
15 what I want to do is basically sort of start off --  
16 I'll give you a bit of the indication of the foster  
17 family situation that I lived with.

18 There are presently in one  
19 province about 11,000 kids in care right now. In  
20 another province there's 10,000 kids in care.  
21 That's only two out of 12 jurisdictions -- or 13  
22 jurisdictions in Canada. So we're dealing with,  
23 again, another portion, another tidal wave of  
24 trauma to another generation of kids. And so I want  
25 to kind of talk about that.



1 I was put into permanent ward care  
2 in 1953 shortly -- I was born in December of '52. I  
3 was kind of a sickly kid, so part and parcel of the  
4 issues that I was dealing with -- did I say '52?  
5 It's a little bit later than that, pardon me.

6 So I was a sickly kid. I was in  
7 and out of the hospital all the time with severe  
8 lung issues. I was eventually put into care. My  
9 family, my mother comes from the Gordon reserve in  
10 Saskatoon. Her and her husband, who was born in  
11 Nelson House reserve, came from that reserve, left  
12 Gordon, I believe, to start a better life and find  
13 something where they can have some money, some  
14 home, something to work on. They both were  
15 apparently good workers, housekeeping. He in small  
16 mechanics. They left. They fell into trouble in  
17 Winnipeg. And they fell into exactly the same kind  
18 of trouble that I had when I was trying to live in  
19 Winnipeg, and that is, we don't rent to you, we  
20 don't rent to people like you, and we do not hire  
21 people like you. And those were the kinds of things  
22 that I had 20 years later.

23 So when I got this 9-page document  
24 from social services, and I requested it because I  
25 finally met another natural sister. I got this, and

1 I was kind of really bummed out for a while because  
2 I recognize exactly the same things that they were  
3 going through because I had personally experienced  
4 it. One of the -- okay -- so I got this amazing  
5 record. And somebody just asked me at lunch hour  
6 today, well, how did you manage to do that?

7 I said, well, I wrote social  
8 services because I have a sister, I call her a  
9 sister, she's formerly my sister-in-law. She said,  
10 Gail, Gail, Gail, I think I met a sister of yours.  
11 She looks like you, she talks like you, she laughs  
12 like you.

13 And I go, okay, before I get all  
14 excited, we've gone through this about five years  
15 ago, and I'm not going to get all hyped up again in  
16 case -- it takes a lot of work to get prepared to  
17 meet somebody that you have not -- you have never  
18 met before, and you just don't know what the future  
19 is going to hold.

20 Eventually we did meet and she did  
21 look like me, she did talk like me. Poor woman. But  
22 her name was Sarah, and Carol noted her because of  
23 appearance, but she did ask her, does the name Cyr  
24 mean anything to you?

25 And Sarah said, that's my maiden

1 name.

2                                 So we did make arrangements to  
3 meet, and we did meet. We also went down to the  
4 Gordon reserve. And we talked to one of the  
5 people, Frank Cyr, who actually was doing a fair  
6 amount of genealogical records in Gordon reserve.  
7 What had happened with mum when she went to  
8 Winnipeg is that they pronounced her name as Eva  
9 Jane, so two separate words. And what her real  
10 name, and this is what Frank thought it was, in  
11 that he thought that the person that was on the  
12 records was this person. When Winnipeg authorities  
13 wrote to Gordon reserve, they said, we have no  
14 record of an Eva Jane. And so therefore she's never  
15 been a band member and she has no eligibility to  
16 any rights on this reserve.

17                                 So what happened is that so many  
18 years later, finding these records, it turns out  
19 that Frank's belief was that she, in fact, was a  
20 member of the reserve, and her name was Geneva, not  
21 Jean Eva. Like, two separate words. So when the  
22 province of Manitoba wrote to Saskatchewan reserve,  
23 they misspelled her name and just generally -- how  
24 would you say -- mis-introduced her to the reserve.  
25 So she in the end -- she thought all this time that

1 she was status number 207 on reserve. And it was  
2 denied. So she and her husband, John, were -- he  
3 wasn't going to his reserve at the time, although  
4 we did go back, because that's where I was born. I  
5 was born on Nelson House reserve. They did actually  
6 migrate back and forth to several places, growing  
7 up.

8                                   Things kind of fell apart in  
9 Winnipeg and that's where social services first  
10 came into account. And because I was sick with lung  
11 issues and everything, I was taken into care. I did  
12 spend some time with a lady who was in Winnipeg who  
13 looked after me during medical care, and the only  
14 issue I had with her is that she made me eat  
15 oatmeal, and no matter how long I waited. So I  
16 would sit at that table trying to outwait her, and  
17 no, I still had to eat it, lumpy and cold as it  
18 was, you know, several hours early -- later. And  
19 the only thing I remember about her husband is that  
20 he must have been city police because he had a red  
21 stripe down his pants.

22                                   After that, after I was kind of  
23 cleared medically, I was put into at least one  
24 foster home that I can remember. And it was brutal.  
25 It was brutal. I -- I was with another young boy

1 who was smaller than I was. I don't know what  
2 happened to him and I don't know if he's still  
3 alive. But this home was brutal. And as a five-year  
4 old you should never, ever have to feel and get to  
5 that realization that you're going to get killed.  
6 You should never -- no kid should ever have to do  
7 that, and I implore everybody who is here is that  
8 you look after your kids, your grandkids, and keep  
9 an eye open for some other kids that may be on  
10 their own and may be in trouble, and help out when  
11 you can.

12                                 John ended up -- John was kind of  
13 a bit of a fighter, so he ended up sort of being in  
14 jails a lot during the war, and -- but after the  
15 war what he did was that he traveled to Germany,  
16 Belgium, and Holland as a sharp shooter, so he  
17 ended up -- yeah, that was my natural father. So it  
18 was kind of interesting. So I can be a member of  
19 the legion after that.

20                                 After -- the reason why this one  
21 particular beating was so bad is because I was  
22 going with my little brother and we were going to  
23 neighbours asking for food. We were hungry, we  
24 weren't being fed. And that's why the beating was  
25 so bad, and I still remember it, and I still

1 remember that little boy crying.

2                               So after -- we were apprehended.

3 We went -- the province decided it was really a  
4 good idea to sort of retrain us Indians and make  
5 sure that we learn some proper skills, and so they  
6 put us on a farm. So I went to a farm, and with the  
7 little boy -- I don't know what ever happened to  
8 him because we were separated at that point. I went  
9 into a farm. They had two of their boys and after  
10 that they had -- they fostered two more boys, both  
11 from different reserves. And of interest, with the  
12 foster system at that point, it was only the family  
13 that stopped them bringing in babies as young as  
14 eight years old -- eight days old, pardon me -- to  
15 a 59-year old woman. 59. Eight days. And she was  
16 59, and they were still trying to get her to foster  
17 kids. And the family finally put their foot down  
18 and said enough, enough.

19                               After that she started -- they  
20 started taking in other people who came from  
21 Selkirk. There was a mental institution in Selkirk,  
22 it's been closed down a long time since then. But  
23 we did have a number of people that lived with us  
24 that came from the Selkirk Institute with all kinds  
25 of various problems, or either addictions or of



1 very sneaky. He'd try and follow me home on the  
2 trucks, like, on my way home. So he was quite the  
3 predator. He also made it very clear that I was the  
4 fault, I was at fault. Talking to an eight-year old  
5 girl who has been also told that she was pretty  
6 stupid all her life. You're stupid, you're stupid,  
7 you're stupid. And so this guy tells me that it's  
8 all my fault that I'm the one that's causing him to  
9 sin. And he also used the line that my foster  
10 mother used to use all the time, is that if you  
11 tell, I'll make -- you'll go back to where you came  
12 from. I was interpreting that as being going to the  
13 former home that I had come from, not to the  
14 department.

15                                   So -- and also the foster father  
16 was a fighter. He used to be paid for fights, and  
17 he was a drinker at the time. Well, no, he had quit  
18 drinking at that point, but he was a very angry  
19 person. Huge hands, shovels for hands. And man,  
20 when he gave you a side cuff because you were  
21 getting saucy or whatever, you really felt it. Plus  
22 the barber strap, a big old wide barber strap like  
23 that, really thick hide and everything. So we got a  
24 lot of that. It was very serious discipline. When  
25 he was drinking, he caused his own sons a fair



1 amount of grief and a fair amount of problems that  
2 they'd suffer later on after they'd left.

3                   So during the time that I'm a  
4 teenager, because of all of this stuff and stress  
5 and sort of, like, having a hard time in school, I  
6 didn't have anybody in school. I was the only  
7 Indian kid growing up, as a little kid. There were  
8 two residential homes. One for boys and girls.  
9 However, they were all high school. And so  
10 basically we never really met. We crossed paths the  
11 odd time, but really we didn't -- there was no  
12 relationship that I had, a chance to develop there.  
13 So I had sort of, like, one girlfriend, but she  
14 lived far away, and I was not able to attend  
15 evening functions such as going to play -- you  
16 know, playing baseball or playing things like that  
17 that, you know, really would help develop some  
18 supports or athletic skills.

19                   Because I was alone so much, and  
20 everything was so much inside, I developed eating  
21 disorders, of which I have to say is that in the  
22 50s and early 60s, like, that's pretty advanced.  
23 Nobody had heard of them before. I knew them well.  
24 I did eventually leave the home. I did stay with  
25 them all the way through, and so I left the home.

1                   My dad and I, we actually got  
2 along really well because he did finally get some  
3 help for his anger issues, and I ended up working  
4 with him in the summertime haying. So bailing hay  
5 and stoking hay and doing this and that, loading up  
6 barns full of hay and straw for the animals. So  
7 that's what I did. He was a good story teller. He  
8 ended up being a really kind man, and I ended up --  
9 I loved him, and I miss him.

10                   My mom, on the other hand, ended  
11 up being sort of -- whether she had some of my  
12 issues that she might have suffered when she was  
13 young -- we never got that close to ever being --  
14 for ever understanding what had happened. And so we  
15 drifted apart. And when it came to gender equality  
16 or equity in the house, there was no such thing.  
17 The boys got everything and I got -- you know, I  
18 got the peanuts, I got the little scraps in the  
19 end. So there's a lot of inequity in what was  
20 happening. It didn't matter how old or how young. I  
21 was right in the middle. I did not -- not the  
22 bikes, not this, second hand clothes, clothes so  
23 big that when she sewed them in at the waist to try  
24 and sort of just pass by, I had a ballooning, all  
25 this ballooning material on a pair of pants over my



1 Manitoba's textbooks. And interestingly enough, our  
2 former premier, Joe Hanley, was the Deputy Minister  
3 at the time. And he came to see us, as a student  
4 group working on this. This book is called the  
5 Shocking Truth about Indians in Textbooks. There  
6 was a crew of about six of us working on this. And  
7 we evaluated all of the books for things like  
8 omission, obliteration, disparagement, and issues  
9 like that with the textbooks. 44 years ago they  
10 were severely wanting in terms of any, any  
11 information about Indigenous people in Canada. One  
12 of the things that -- just for a few things that we  
13 came up, here's one:

14                               "       Heavily armed whiskey  
15 smugglers from the U.S. are crossing the border and  
16 trading a terrible kind of whiskey to Indians for  
17 buffalo skins, for ponies and even for squaws. Half  
18 crazed with this alcohol, which they gulp down at  
19 traders' wagons, drunken Indians having no regard  
20 for life or property, they go wild and murder each  
21 other in brawls."

22                               This is a textbook, for god's  
23 sakes. And then here's another one:

24                               "       Years of bitter competition  
25 and training with savages, numbed their finer

1 sensibilities, so did sleeping with the only women  
2 in thousands of miles and begetting bits of brown."

3 This is the kind of textbooks that  
4 I knew up growing up.

5 Now, there has been some change in  
6 the last little while with the Truth and  
7 Reconciliation Commission recommending that some  
8 proper history of Canada's Indigenous people be put  
9 into textbooks. So moreover, the kind of things  
10 that I'm interested in is that I believe, like,  
11 this kind of thing has -- this and earlier  
12 information like this from John A. McDonald and his  
13 civil service. They had this kind of prejudice.  
14 This is the kind of stuff that made up the Indian  
15 Act. This is the kind of stuff that allowed  
16 provinces and townships to ignore land transfers  
17 that were signed by the Federal Government for the  
18 Metis. This is the kind of background that allowed  
19 the Federal Government to try and pretend there's  
20 no such thing and that an Inuit Inuvialuit (ph) are  
21 not Indigenous, do not have title or rights to  
22 Indigenous land. Of course, we know they are wrong  
23 but that's the framework and that's the historical  
24 perspective that people are led to believe. Hence,  
25 from there what you do is that you have and build a

1 prejudice in terms of feeling and attitudes and  
2 racism in terms of political and legislative  
3 policy. And that is what we've been enduring. So --  
4 and then, aside from that, James Dashcheck (ph)  
5 wrote in his book Clearing the Plains how the  
6 Federal Government policies allowed for the  
7 extinction, of course, and the slaughter of the  
8 buffalo, the extinction, the near extinction of  
9 beaver and other animals because the trapping and  
10 the acquisition of furs was so widespread, the  
11 competition was so great that whole areas, whole  
12 communities were being, like, whole areas of land  
13 were being depleted of wildlife, of course, which  
14 is Indigenous food.

15                                 So and on top of that, then  
16 causing, with the near extinction of the beaver,  
17 causing all the ecological damage of not having  
18 proper still water and passages for the -- just for  
19 safety so that you have ponds of water available  
20 for their dam building. And so therefore the  
21 prairies suffered extensive wild fires.

22                                 So between starvation, between  
23 laws and policies, between attitudes, between as  
24 what Sandra called yesterday was the open-air  
25 prisons, between the residential school and the

1 foster system, you have whole populations suffering  
2 from traumatic stress -- PTSD. You have a whole  
3 bunch of people that are -- you know, people have  
4 been ambushed and they're suffering. And they're  
5 having a hard time. And this is the kinds of things  
6 that -- this is also the kinds of things that leads  
7 to the violence against Indigenous women. When you  
8 can call, you know, sleeping with squaws and  
9 sleeping with -- you know, you don't have -- you  
10 lost your sensibilities so that you only sleep with  
11 -- only women in thousands of miles begetting bits  
12 of brown. When you have that kind of information in  
13 terms of how your women are looked at, your women  
14 become targets. And so I'm speaking more to the  
15 issue of stranger, acquaintance-type violence  
16 against Indigenous women. There's certainly times  
17 when I have felt that and I when I was in Winnipeg,  
18 I was down close to around the bay. So that would  
19 be Colony and Portage Avenue, in and around there.  
20 I'm dressed up, it's a beautiful September day. I  
21 have got long hair. I'm a lot thinner than I am  
22 now. And I looked pretty damned good, I thought.  
23 Anyway, I'm walking down the street and in the  
24 stoop in front of one of the stores this guy says  
25 to me, Hey, squaw, you want to go for a -- for an F

1 starting word. And I walked past him like this. And  
2 the next thing I know is that I'm flat on my back  
3 on the sidewalk, because what he'd done is he'd  
4 yanked my head backwards so forcefully that I went  
5 down so hard on the ground, I was flat on my back.

6                   Then another issue that I had gone  
7 through was, I had met what I thought was a very  
8 nice gentleman in the legislative park on Colony.  
9 We spent the full afternoon together, we had a lot  
10 of fun. We laughed, we talked to stories, we did  
11 this. We kind of shared information of what we knew  
12 and things. We eventually, we were going to go for  
13 supper, and then we kind of went, well, okay -- he  
14 says, I have got food, let's go to my place, it's  
15 not that far, it's a nice walk.

16                   Well, it was a bit of a walk, it  
17 was like twelve blocks. All right, okay. So, of  
18 course, after that, sort of the issue, you know,  
19 well, I have served you dinner kind of thing, so  
20 you know, what's in it for me, kind of thing?

21                   And I said, well, no, let's be  
22 friends, let's sort of do this. You know, I have  
23 had all my private space invaded all my life, and I  
24 wanted to have some control. And so I said, no,  
25 let's see each other a couple of more times before





1 Nations, Metis, or Inuit. The thing is is that  
2 there's another class of people there, and anybody,  
3 any woman who is dealing with children know exactly  
4 what that's all about. And that's that fourth class  
5 of person, which is having no status, and losing  
6 any rights or benefits that you may have for your  
7 children. And that's because you married a non-  
8 Indian or you don't identify, or that you have --  
9 this is a grandson, as opposed to -- so there's a  
10 lot of reasons. There's a lot of ways of how people  
11 lose their status. For example, and again  
12 historically, Sharon Venne writes a book. She has a  
13 book on the comparatives of the Indian Acts, and  
14 it's really interesting reading, if you like  
15 reading legislation, of course. But part of it is  
16 that -- there's some really interesting situations,  
17 and these are -- Federal Government treated status  
18 as if it was a welfare system. So whatever -- any  
19 time you used it, then they were easily -- they  
20 would always try and take it away. But one of the  
21 things that they did is, if you got any kind of  
22 professional accreditation, you graduated, you  
23 became a lawyer, a priest, a minister, a surveyor,  
24 an engineer, any kind of -- a physician -- they  
25 automatically took away people's status because

1 they said, we enfranchised you, we set you free.

2                               So they took -- so if you got --  
3 if you graduated, you lost your status because  
4 you're good, you're as good as any white man now.  
5 Except that you're brown, but that's all right,  
6 we'll try and overlook that.

7                               There was several ways. Another  
8 way is that -- another think that really impacted  
9 sort of both Metis and all of us, all of the  
10 groups, because the Inuit were moved all over the  
11 place. Supposedly for national security. They were  
12 moved from their home lands. The Metis were never  
13 recognized for having their scrip or their land  
14 papers, so they were forced and chased out of all  
15 kinds of communities and ended up living along  
16 railway strips on federal lands. That's the only  
17 federal land they were allowed to go to because  
18 they couldn't go to the reserve. Reserve people  
19 would end up -- they -- lots of times the acres  
20 they were promised were never delivered, and so  
21 they were ending up on smaller and smaller pieces  
22 of land, and the lands that were never delivered  
23 sometimes went for other federal purposes. And one  
24 of them was the rewarding of veterans that came  
25 back from the Second World War.

1                   And in another area, another thing  
2 was that if you were a township of 8,000 people,  
3 you could demand by asking the Indian agents, who  
4 would also forward it on behalf of -- for Metis, is  
5 that you could demand the removal of any Indigenous  
6 settlement that was near you. So you didn't like  
7 these pesky Indians around? Just ask Indian  
8 Affairs and they will up and move them for you. Or  
9 they'll set up a reserve here. And some communities  
10 were removed several times.

11                   The reason why I ended up moving  
12 to Yellowknife was because of -- my older foster  
13 brother ended up actually coming up here and  
14 working with the reverend and Ruth and Gordon  
15 Bailey -- Reverend Gordon and Ruth Bailey, pardon  
16 me -- out of the Pentecostal church. He became a  
17 Pentecostal minister. So he was up here and he  
18 actually sent information and ladders about  
19 Yellowknife. So Yellowknife was very small when he  
20 came up here. I decided to come up here because I  
21 had a friend up here. She took me on a little tour.  
22 Now, she was a German girl. She had this edginess  
23 around her that everybody -- I noted her before. We  
24 had to be roommates but I kind of kept my mouth  
25 shut because we're roommates and the residence it

1 full. It could mean that I don't have a place to  
2 stay when I'm going to school. When she came here,  
3 we had a tour. She didn't take me down to Old Town.  
4 And I'm walking around the next day, I'm going,  
5 what's down the hill? You never took me down  
6 there.

7                                   And she goes, just a bunch of dogs  
8 and Indians.

9                                   To which I immediately sort of put  
10 on my coat, walked down the hill and met Herbie  
11 Polio (ph). So I had this lady -- didn't stay very  
12 long because she thought Yellowknife was a place of  
13 losers. I did stay, I worked in the gold range. I  
14 had a great time. It was in its heyday. I ended up  
15 working with the Indian Brotherhood, it was called  
16 at the time, and my second flight was coming into  
17 Yellowknife, and it was only the first one only  
18 within the six months. I came in May. By July I'm  
19 chartering 737s and every kind of twin otter that  
20 we can have in order to bring people between Inuvik  
21 and Yellowknife into Norman Wells and get them into  
22 Fort Good Hope for the first joint general Dene  
23 Metis assembly, which was to me an incredibly  
24 exciting thing, having seen what was going on with  
25 the people and how split things were in a place

1 like Winnipeg. So it was incredibly exciting. I met  
2 all kinds of people that through the years I have  
3 still seen them. It was incredibly exciting. I  
4 think there was -- it was a joint claim that  
5 eventually didn't go through and people did  
6 negotiate separate claims, and there are still some  
7 areas that need to finalize their claims and their  
8 issue for self-government. We also have land claims  
9 and self-government. It was unheard of. And, of  
10 course, the government thought that the American  
11 Indian movement had infiltrated all of these people  
12 or it was those white consultants, because surely  
13 these Indians aren't smart enough to do this by  
14 themselves, but they were. They were. They were the  
15 ones that were directing the white consultants and  
16 telling them exactly, check this out, check this  
17 out.

18 By that time law was -- it was  
19 interesting because until about 1962 Indian groups  
20 could not hire legal counsel to deal with any issue  
21 of Indian rights or Indigenous rights. So lawyers  
22 could not work. You could ask somebody and they'd  
23 have to say, I can't, I'm forbidden by the Canadian  
24 Bar Association or whatever it was called at the  
25 time. And by law they were not permitted to work

1 with any Indigenous group when it came down to  
2 their legal rights as a collective group.

3                   Legal Aid did come for individuals  
4 that were charged with offences, but that wasn't  
5 political, that was something else.

6                   So it was interesting to see how -  
7 - you saw law starting to change. I found that when  
8 I was working later on, I was going through these  
9 aboriginal law reports and different things, one of  
10 the things was that one of the big cases that ended  
11 up happening was that foster kids, you could be --  
12 there's two states of being in the child welfare  
13 system. One is the temporary ward, whereas there is  
14 a chance you may go back to your original family.  
15 There's a permanent ward where you'll never go back  
16 to your family. At the time, the people that were  
17 making these decisions decided that all temporary  
18 and permanent kids would lose their Indigenous  
19 status if they had First Nation status. So those  
20 things -- you know, they eventually started  
21 changing.

22                   Part of the reason that they did,  
23 I guess, is again, the website on aboriginal -- the  
24 military site -- there's a historical website on  
25 Indigenous people involved in the first and second

1 world wars. One of things that -- I have kind of  
2 lost my train of thought here.

3 All right, let's move into another  
4 story here. Of course -- that was certainly another  
5 reason how people would lose their status, if they  
6 were treaty status, is if they went for their  
7 veteran's benefits after fighting in the wars,  
8 they'd lose their status.

9 So again, the whole thing of how  
10 this government treats treaty international  
11 sovereign status is to treat it like it's a welfare  
12 status. So this is the kind of information that the  
13 public really needs to know. And they'll go, it's  
14 not our fault.

15 And you can go, yeah, but you --  
16 those things have changed. Those are ancient, they  
17 have changed. The attitude and the prejudice  
18 remain. And those are the kinds of things that it's  
19 important for us to be strong and to be able to  
20 talk to people without sort of -- you're not going  
21 after the individual. You are saying, change it.

22 And it's also important that we  
23 actually deal with sort of the rise in more racist,  
24 more racism. It's higher. And we certainly see it  
25 with Islam, we also have to make sure that -- you



1 know what? You can't trade one form of racism for  
2 another and have that being this is the apple pie  
3 of the day. Like, it's pervasive, it's Canadian,  
4 and while people don't want to believe it. That's  
5 the worst thing, is that most people who are having  
6 problems with living and getting through and who  
7 are considering suicide and self-harm, is because  
8 they are not being believed. So you can go into a  
9 place and say this is what happened, and people  
10 will just kind of go, no, no, that didn't happen.

11                   Because they just simply do not  
12 believe that that attitude is there when you go  
13 into a counseling office or a doctor's office or a  
14 law office or a tax office or a finance office and  
15 things. Or banking and asking for a loan, you  
16 don't, that misbelief of what has happened is there  
17 all the time. You are constantly arguing, yes, this  
18 did happen. This is the case.

19                   All right, and so I think one of  
20 the -- I just had my first pension cheque this last  
21 -- you know, old age pension. So but I can tell you  
22 that that is 40 years, what I thought was my best -  
23 - my best before date. I really did not believe I  
24 was going to make 25. And that's just because of  
25 sort of what I was going through. It was in my

1 head, things kept on happening. I mean, I  
2 contributed to some of it because I think in the  
3 end I think I was looking for Mr. Goodbar, and I  
4 don't know if you know that movie, but if you ever  
5 see it, you'll understand what looking for Mr.  
6 Goodbar is.

7 I was basically either suicidal or  
8 wanting somebody to kill me. Coming up to  
9 Yellowknife, basically it saved my life. Because I  
10 mean, the concept, the interest, everything was  
11 there. The traveling. We started up the native  
12 court workers, Therese here and Cecilia here were  
13 one of the first court workers that ever worked  
14 with us. We traveled around, we camped, we visited  
15 people, we camped at their camp sites, we did this  
16 and that. It was like a big eye wide opening  
17 experience for me, and it gave me hope, and I did  
18 feel certainly in the end, after, that I was  
19 generally adopted. So I did get permanent care. I  
20 found really good permanent care to which I really  
21 thank everybody. And just even being here at the  
22 session and knowing so many people throughout the  
23 years, people remember me from being at different  
24 events, and I'm just really thankful and I have  
25 always -- I can say that I have really enjoyed

1 myself and that those day, and that feeling of, you  
2 know, not making 25 and all of that kind of stuff,  
3 that rage, I have really been able to sort of put  
4 it away and put behind. And every once in a while  
5 it wants to well up and you just got to be careful  
6 and just make sure it doesn't.

7                               But I have worked a lot of time  
8 dealing with sort of, like, advocacy and helping  
9 out people. I still get people phoning me up, I  
10 still have some people from the 70s and early 80s  
11 saying, there's my lawyer.

12                              Like little Tommy the other day,  
13 there's my lawyer.

14                             So I have always -- that's  
15 something I have always enjoyed and it was because  
16 I think I started off being so young in a home that  
17 was pretty violent and, of course, dealing with  
18 unfairness to people that came from Selkirk and  
19 some of their treatment. And I felt that I had to  
20 stand up and be in between some of the rage in  
21 terms of verbal or physical. Things that were  
22 happening between them.

23                             So that's -- I guess that's where  
24 I come from. So some bad things can come some good  
25 stuff. And I think in the end I did all right.

1                                   But -- and then -- you have some  
2 questions? Okay. Perfect.

3                                   MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I love it.  
4 I think you've covered so many topics, and at the  
5 start you had said to Commissioner Robinson, you  
6 start with foster care and you said it was a  
7 perfect storm. And then you start listing all these  
8 different issues, issues that the Commission is  
9 hearing about every time they have a hearing, every  
10 time they hear a story it ties back to a whole  
11 bunch of the things you've covered. And in that  
12 perfect storm, and it's come back around because  
13 you explained how being up here has helped you, but  
14 that perfect storm has created the problems that  
15 Indigenous women are facing right now.

16                                   So I wanted to ask if you could  
17 help us define that a little more so we know the  
18 perfect storm, we know all the issues you've  
19 listed. But what has it left? Like, what has it  
20 created, that perfect storm?

21                                   MS. GAIL CYR: Well, I think --  
22 you know, we had an interesting think. It creates  
23 beautiful art like this with -- on top of a whole  
24 bunch of tears and heart ache and pain and  
25 suffering by families, that's what it's created,

1 that perfect storm. You know, it's created people -  
2 - it's created where situations where they have  
3 students, young male students that come in from  
4 (inaudible) and they're looking at this. They bring  
5 in their hearts for this, and they have young  
6 brothers who are basically going, I have young  
7 sisters. I have sisters younger than I am, and all  
8 I want them is to be able to grow and see and  
9 become their dreams. I want them to have their  
10 dreams. They have every capability. You know, so  
11 what we want -- we want people to be able to live  
12 to their potential. And this is what -- this is a  
13 beautiful thing of incredible amount of torment and  
14 pain, and that is what the perfect storm has  
15 brought for families in terms of both the  
16 residential school system and the foster system.  
17 Desperate families trying to find each other,  
18 trying to learn from each other, trying to heal,  
19 trying to get help. And that's one of the issues.

20 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And in the  
21 same way you talk about the healing journey, it's  
22 taken you years, it sounds like, in terms of the  
23 loved experience, but also coming to terms and  
24 being able to go to a place of taking the harm and  
25 creating beauty. And so I think some of the wisdom

1 you'd probably be able to share with women who have  
2 gone through the same thing, when you speak, you're  
3 speaking strongly. Throughout this hearing we've  
4 heard over and over again, I just need to -- like,  
5 we need to break the silence. And when you're  
6 talking, I don't hear that silence, I hear  
7 strength. But what about all those people that are  
8 still being silent? What advice do you have from  
9 your lived experience for them?

10 MS. GAIL CYR: Well, I think  
11 there's different kinds of -- I certainly do think  
12 that families certainly have to talk, and  
13 communities have to talk. They have to talk about  
14 issues that have been maybe taboo, but for some  
15 reason. We're not sure where the taboo comes from.  
16 Is it the church that says you can't say things?  
17 Is it this, is it that? Are you not supposed to  
18 speak badly, and that's as simple as that? But the  
19 thing is is that you have to talk about pain and  
20 some of the suffering and how it manifests itself  
21 against each other. And I really do want to see  
22 some ways of which some people can get some help.  
23 You've got communities in full blown PTSD, post-  
24 traumatic stress disorder. And it's one of the  
25 things is the misbelief that people will have when

1 they go and try and get some help. The lack of help  
2 in the communities, the difficulty of getting help  
3 in larger communities. It's -- so that's certainly  
4 an issue, is not being able to talk. Not being able  
5 to get help. Or the accessibility of it. Or there's  
6 just not enough help when it's there. But the  
7 belief thing, by the -- the gate keepers, as they  
8 are called, and these are the people who decide  
9 whether you are eligible to receive any assistance,  
10 the gate keepers. That term came from about the  
11 70s, and I was the director of the native court  
12 workers, and apparently they decided that the court  
13 workers could be gate keepers. And that's the  
14 purveyor of information, help, assistance, and  
15 access to assistance. They sent this gate keeper  
16 questionnaire to me, and it was all about all the  
17 negative things that are ever happening in  
18 communities. And it was all bad. It was all  
19 sexually bad. STDs, alcoholism, this, that, like,  
20 homelessness, battered house, violence in the  
21 family, child welfare issues. There was not one  
22 good thing that was in there. And so I responded to  
23 the minister saying that this has got to be the  
24 most foul and racist thing that I have ever seen.  
25 We are not participating in this survey, how dare

1 you even talk about this because you don't talk  
2 about culture, you don't talk about this, you don't  
3 talk about how communities and how cohesive they  
4 can be when it comes down to it. You don't talk  
5 about their independence and how they can actually  
6 work and problem solve and should be able to do  
7 that. You don't talk about how they can lead their  
8 communities. You've left all of that out. I refuse  
9 to be your gate keeper. Thank you.

10 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So the  
11 missed opportunities, right? So it sounds like  
12 there's been a few missed opportunities. You talk  
13 about the perfect storm and how things have changed  
14 in progressed, sometimes for the better. But that  
15 racism is still pervasive, and there's issues that  
16 particularly women, because we're created this  
17 context in which Indigenous woman are viewed, and  
18 how do we change that? Like, I do hear the hope in  
19 your voice, but what are the things we can change?  
20 How can we make sure those opportunities are being  
21 taken up?

22 MS. GAIL CYR: Well, I think  
23 certainly gatherings like this -- I know -- I know  
24 the native women, for example, has had some  
25 significant difficulty trying to get groups of



1 women together so they can talk and they can deal  
2 with issues. And they can -- this is the kind of  
3 help we want, government, this is where we want the  
4 money. I think -- policy makers always come up, as  
5 Sandra said, the contribution agreements, and  
6 federal governments are very strict. They are  
7 really horrible to work with. Terra control  
8 government are a little bit better but they still  
9 might be working under -- they are working under  
10 federal auspices as well.

11                   So you have sort of like -- you  
12 have people that say this is how the money is going  
13 to be spent. But when it comes down to the people  
14 that are actually in the field, in the grass roots,  
15 it's nowhere near what they need. It's not housing,  
16 it's not this, it's not counseling, it's not  
17 keeping your family together. So I think -- we're  
18 hoping for organizations, commission -- different  
19 groups like that to be able to really voice that  
20 loud and clear, is that when we say this is what we  
21 are looking for, this is how we want the help for  
22 our communities, we want you to start changing your  
23 contribution agreements and make them more  
24 realistic and reflective of the region that you're  
25 working with. And please don't make it on a per

1 capita basis because that's absolutely ridiculous.

2 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Just to  
3 tie up a couple of quick things before we turn our  
4 attention to maybe more specific recommendations,  
5 you had referred to, like, a 9-page document  
6 earlier that sort of laid out your family's foster  
7 history, and you explained to the Commissioner how  
8 you received that. I just want to put this document  
9 before her. Do you mind if I share that?

10 MS. GAIL CYR: No.

11 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And you  
12 had explained to us that you sought that document  
13 when you had met a sister, but -- and then you  
14 wrote and asked for it. So --

15 MS. GAIL CYR: Yeah, I had written  
16 to the department of social services in Manitoba,  
17 and I asked them, I said, I think I have met a  
18 sister, and I'd really like to know anything you  
19 can send me.

20 And I didn't expect much. I didn't  
21 -- I expected, due to privacy issues and things  
22 like that we can't send this information out to  
23 you.

24 Which is one of the bars to  
25 actually people getting help, is some of the

1 limitations for privacy things. However, they did.  
2 They sent this. I was totally amazed the extent of  
3 information that was included in it, and all the  
4 background of my family, I was amazed.

5 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so,  
6 sorry, I'm going to have to actually sound a little  
7 bit lawyerly here for a moment and ask the  
8 Commissioner that we do receive this as an exhibit,  
9 but that we redact any third-party names, so any of  
10 your siblings.

11 COMMISSIONER QAFAQ ROBINSON: Of  
12 course, yes.

13 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So that  
14 it's not on the public record. So I'd ask that you  
15 order a redaction of any third-party names on this  
16 exhibit.

17 COMMISSIONER QAFAQ ROBINSON: I  
18 will grant that order.

19 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you.  
20 There was just a couple of other documents and I  
21 just wanted to put them, too, quickly before, that  
22 you held up. One was just simply the title of a  
23 book. But the other document where you got these  
24 quotations. That was right from inside this book.

25 MS. GAIL CYR: That comes from

1 that, yes.

2 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: From the  
3 textbook?

4 MS. GAIL CYR: Yes. The bits of  
5 brown quote comes from the Shocking Truth. It was a  
6 quote from one of the textbooks.

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So I'd  
8 just to submit that as well, please.

9 And if we can new turn our  
10 attention -- I know you're going to speak broadly  
11 about recommendations, but the document I'm handing  
12 you right now, it's forsaken, the report of missing  
13 women commission of inquiry. In particular it's  
14 part 13, the summary of recommendations and the  
15 conclusions. And I notice that you've highlighted  
16 some portions, and I would just like to put this  
17 before the Commissioner so that as you're going  
18 over these, she has a point of reference.

19 MS. GAIL CYR: Okay. Well, as  
20 Commission members and as you will appreciate that  
21 the Wally Opel (ph) commission actually did have  
22 severe difficulties and limitations in terms of  
23 their mandate, authorities, their ability to  
24 subpoena, all kinds of issues like that. Inability  
25 to provide legal counsel, inability to open police

1 records and such, so notwithstanding that, I still  
2 think that what he did, because of his background  
3 in criminal law, is that he was able to write a  
4 pretty decent report. When it came down to  
5 recommendations in terms of working with police,  
6 courts, Crown offices, and work on issues that  
7 ended up impeding investigation into the Robert  
8 Picton murders. Some of the recommendations, it's  
9 interesting because I read the report on the Olsten  
10 (ph) commission in the 80s, and that one was where  
11 he was abducting young boys, mostly boys, deemed  
12 runaways, so not of much importance apparently, and  
13 so he killed many kids. And one of the things that  
14 that recommendation came up with is that there's --  
15 well, maybe not at that time -- 250 police agencies  
16 in Canada exist now, between RCMP, city police,  
17 regional police, district police areas. So 250,  
18 none of who are really actually talking to each  
19 other. The Olson commission, because most of these  
20 murders were taking place with kids taken in  
21 Vancouver, but perhaps taken outside in RCMP  
22 jurisdiction, they were not talking to each other.  
23 They have two different operating computer systems  
24 and information systems and separate systems of  
25 declaring who is missing and why are they missing

1 and how long do they have to be missing before a  
2 report is made. So certainly one of the  
3 recommendations is that -- and I agree with this,  
4 is that we have 250 police jurisdictions in Canada,  
5 and what we do need to do, I think, is have a  
6 national focus point on how to deal with missing  
7 persons so that you have consistency throughout all  
8 of the jurisdictions, and that you have some ways -  
9 - I mean, RCMP should be RCMP. It shouldn't stop at  
10 the end of the G division and begin a whole new  
11 thing in K division. You know? We should be able  
12 to -- or is K division Alberta? I think K division  
13 is Alberta, sorry. I can't remember now.

14                               But, like, you know, it shouldn't  
15 be that if you're calling for somebody that you  
16 think is missing and they possibly might have gone  
17 across the border, that you have to start all over  
18 again with another RCMP division. You should be  
19 able -- that information should be able -- you  
20 should be able to say, talk to your local member,  
21 that member phones it to Yellowknife, that goes --  
22 and then goes into -- through official channels,  
23 goes into the next division. Because that's one of  
24 the things that people have a heck of a time  
25 having, is that you phone the Vancouver police

1 department, which is what was happening during the  
2 Picton thing, and then they're told, well, we don't  
3 deal with it. That's out here, you have to go talk  
4 to the RCMP, start all over again.

5                   So I do think that -- I'm not  
6 going to go through all of these because it's just  
7 going to be way too long and I know people had a  
8 long day. So -- but I do think that a fair portion  
9 of these are good when it comes down to police  
10 Crown, and such.

11                   One of the other recommendations  
12 that was mentioned earlier today -- and this is the  
13 opportunity for community involvement, and that is  
14 with community search. That is -- I think all  
15 community governments could do -- how would you say  
16 -- a repertoire of all skills. Who has got skills  
17 and who is interested in doing something? If we  
18 have a community emergency and it could be any  
19 emergency, such as a flood or anything like that,  
20 who is willing to stand up and help your neighbors?  
21 Okay? And then when it comes down to community  
22 search, who can do this? Who has got first aid?  
23 Who has got this, who is willing to make coffee?  
24 All kinds of stuff like that. Because we actually  
25 do need that as communities on a broader sense, and

1 you know, so not particularly to a missing person,  
2 but a broader sense, is that if the power goes out  
3 and you have long power outages, you have a huge  
4 blizzard and you need some help, one of the  
5 recommendations I heard this morning, and I  
6 actually was talking about it yesterday, was using  
7 the Canadian Rangers. Because I was talking to  
8 Dolly, and I was saying, Dolly, like, what do you  
9 think about this? Because these are really skilled  
10 people. They would do incredible things as  
11 resources in communities to be able to help out in  
12 times of need and well-skilled outdoors people,  
13 marksmen, everything. They have all of those kinds  
14 of skills.

15                               So my thoughts were that use any  
16 kind of a thing that you have in your communities  
17 to help out and help deal with sort of the issues  
18 when it comes down to emergencies. And that's  
19 anybody. It could be your dogcatcher, if they have  
20 -- even if they have their vehicle, use them. Your  
21 fire department. I'd like to see the call centre  
22 decentralized. We have one call centre, all the  
23 calls for the RCMP after -- what is it? Ten?  
24 Nine? They go to Yellowknife. Then you have people  
25 that -- sometimes the residency of people that are



1 working in the call centre in Yellowknife isn't  
2 very long. They don't know the communities. Okay?

3                   So some of the community  
4 governments actually do have to sort of -- they  
5 have do some work. And that is sort of either  
6 updating their community names -- street names,  
7 numberings, and mapping. MACA (ph) will help with  
8 all of that. MACA does that kind of stuff. But  
9 make sure that that, in fact, gets to community  
10 call centre. So when you phone in from Tuktoyaktuk,  
11 you can say, this is the address, this is where  
12 this incident is happening, we need the help now.

13                   Because that call does not go to  
14 the detachment, it goes to Yellowknife, then the  
15 detachment. And if you can, phone the fire  
16 department. If it's really bad, phone them because  
17 at least they have local help.

18                   So those are kind of things that -  
19 - again, I don't want to -- I don't think that  
20 people want to sort of sit through -- yeah.

21                   MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: For my  
22 purposes, though, you've highlighted -- can I  
23 assume that the highlighted recommendations are the  
24 ones that you are endorsing?

25                   MS. GAIL CYR: Yes.

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay.

2 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: And  
3 if I may, I know that there's just a couple -- just  
4 on a more of a thematic level, if I could ask a  
5 couple of questions in terms of the recommendations  
6 on a thematic level instead of drilling down to  
7 each highlight.

8 I notice that you have highlighted  
9 some of the equality promoting measures. And you  
10 gave an example of your lived experience, being  
11 with the boys and the girl never getting the things  
12 she needed. And in particular, though, there's ways  
13 that we could -- whether it's through governments -  
14 - ensure that there's equality promoting measures  
15 put into place. What would be a good example of  
16 that? Besides something like pay equity.

17 MS. GAIL CYR: Well, okay, when it  
18 comes down to equity, certainly -- I mean, money is  
19 everything, I think, right? I mean, money -- I was  
20 reading one report where basically the guy says if  
21 you're not young, blond, blue-eyed and rich, don't  
22 expect a lot of help if you're a missing person.  
23 Like, that's a sad thing. That's a former police  
24 officer saying that. So we do know that money and  
25 youth and appearances make a difference when it



1 says, well, I used to change your diapers, don't  
2 talk to me like that. You know?

3 Sometimes you have to leave for a  
4 little bit, but maybe you don't have to go too far.  
5 And learn all your skills, learn your  
6 professionalism, and so that when you go back to  
7 your community, people know that they can trust  
8 you. So --

9 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: That  
10 speaks to the gender but also to -- what about to  
11 the Indigenous issues, like in terms of increasing  
12 training or diversity? I think you'd agree that's  
13 one of the important recommendations?

14 MS. GAIL CYR: I think there's a  
15 lot of -- certainly when it came down to the legal  
16 system, the native court workers, was definitely  
17 that we trained people very well. We had what was  
18 an eight-week training session with one of our most  
19 favorite lawyers. His name was John Bailey at the  
20 time. And eight weeks -- he actually gave us a  
21 modified bar entrance exam to write. It was  
22 intensive, it was incredible. And we had -- we had  
23 practices, we had true life practices where people  
24 would argue, you know, in front of a judge. And  
25 Crown and defence lawyers and such. We had one time

1 where -- we had these mock trials. We had one guy  
2 where he brought in a stage pistol and he went and  
3 he went -- he made the wrong direction, he went  
4 towards the clerk's office of where you --  
5 Registrar's office. He went that way, and it scared  
6 the hell out of everybody. They ran into the safe,  
7 and then he finally found out where we were. Oh,  
8 did we get in trouble. The judge was really mad at  
9 us. But it was, like -- it was a prop. Because what  
10 -- the exercise was for witness skills, what do you  
11 remember? So he came in, did this, went out, and  
12 then the exercise was what do you remember? What  
13 was he wearing? How tall was he? What was this  
14 and that? And it was really a good exercise. But  
15 yeah, got us into a little bit trouble.

16 Another story about that was that  
17 when the new courthouse opened -- do you know the  
18 new courthouse? It's that silver building that's  
19 sort of squarish. And we had the minister from  
20 Ottawa come in, Ron Bashford (ph) at the time, and  
21 he -- so he's opening up the building with the  
22 ribbon cutting and everything, and we're telling  
23 our new clients who are now -- the courthouse is  
24 where the Native Women's is now -- and so we're  
25 telling our clients is that you know -- you go to

1 the new courthouse on Monday. Do you know where it  
2 is? No. Do you know that building that looks like  
3 a bunch of sardine cans stacked on top of each  
4 other? Yeah. That's where you go.

5 We had lots of fun. So again, what  
6 I'll do -- what I'll offer to do is I'll offer to  
7 actually -- I have meant -- I have been trying to  
8 get some stuff on paper, and what I'll do is I'll  
9 offer to make sure that I do spend more time doing  
10 that. Within -- I'd say a little bit longer than  
11 within the next couple of weeks, because I have got  
12 some busy time coming up.

13 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And this  
14 is something we've been saying throughout the week  
15 is, you know, this is not your last opportunity. If  
16 you had more things you want to write, the  
17 Commission would be happy to accept them in  
18 addition to --

19 MS. GAIL CYR: Yeah.

20 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I just  
21 wanted to forge the opportunity, if you had any  
22 further ideas or suggestions, I do understand that  
23 you were going to -- that you want to sing for us  
24 as well before the Commissioner -- would you like  
25 to do that after the Commissioner asks you

1 questions or before?

2 MS. GAIL CYR: You can ask  
3 questions first.

4 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:  
5 Awesome. I have some questions about the court  
6 worker program and I'll tell you, when I was in law  
7 school, and then after law school, because the  
8 court worker program is Nunavut as well. And as a  
9 prosecutor, as a young prosecutor, going up against  
10 a court worker with way scarier than against  
11 lawyers. Because you know -- you know the  
12 community. Like a bail hearing. You know what the  
13 options are, you know what the resources are, you  
14 know who is who, what's there. And I'll go in and a  
15 court worker -- I'm going to lose this, so I'm --  
16 yeah, so it's really important work that the court  
17 worker program does.

18 And I have some questions about it  
19 as it stands now. Is this an ongoing program? Are  
20 there more court workers being trained?

21 MS. GAIL CYR: They --  
22 unfortunately what happened with the court worker  
23 program is that they went over to the civil  
24 service. Unfortunately we started off salary a  
25 little bit too low and it didn't increase, and so

1 we -- salaries started falling behind. So the  
2 person who came after me in terms of a director --  
3 staff really lobbied to be part of the civil  
4 service and get taken in under justice. And they  
5 did. So the salaries and all of that stuff  
6 increased, they got offices, but their duties got  
7 squeezed down to practically only filling forms.  
8 Very sad. Really, really sad.

9 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: And  
10 it was an initiative that was really linked to  
11 access to justice.

12 MS. GAIL CYR: Yes, yes.

13 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:  
14 Because of the lack of lawyers, the lack of  
15 Indigenous lawyers --

16 MS. GAIL CYR: Exactly.

17 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: --  
18 the lack of lawyers that spoke --

19 MS. GAIL CYR: Risk management  
20 again. That's last time I was talking to the head  
21 of legal services board, that's one of the things  
22 we were saying. Risk management. You know, what if  
23 they make a mistake? We could get sued. You know  
24 that kind of -- yeah.

25 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Are



1 there any other training programs -- I'm going to  
2 give you a little bit background because we heard  
3 from Cindy Allen and a couple of other people that  
4 talked about access to justice and the need --

5 MS. GAIL CYR: The [CEDAW]  
6 decision, yes.

7 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:  
8 Exactly. And the need to have particularly  
9 Indigenous women trained, legally trained. And I  
10 see the court worker program, and the training that  
11 you received as being something that could provide  
12 that service. Do you have any thoughts on that?

13 MS. GAIL CYR: Well, one of the  
14 things that I understand is that even if a society  
15 started up again for the Northwest Territories,  
16 that federal rules now have changed so that they  
17 are only for courts, criminal court. What the  
18 territorial government did in the 70s, 80s, was  
19 that the -- there was an agreement that the  
20 territorial share could go to civil issues. So that  
21 would be divorce and separation, wills, estates,  
22 change of name, unemployment insurance, landlord  
23 and tenant disputes, things like that. Because  
24 there's a significant number of issues in those  
25 whole areas when it comes down to residential

1 tenancies. And I have even dealt with some of  
2 those, pro bono, of course, because I'm not a  
3 lawyer. And but that's helping out people sort of  
4 deal with administrative tribunal issues. And but  
5 yeah, no -- it's busy. It's busy. There could be a  
6 whole new program designed to deal with civil  
7 issues, even alone, and let the government look  
8 after the filling of Legal Aid forms. Yeah, because  
9 the civil areas are just as important.

10                                   We've had so many serious problems  
11 where women have faced -- you know, you finally get  
12 -- you get a partner, you're really happy, you've  
13 got a partner, they're moving in, and then  
14 suddenly, like, the person who seemed to be job-  
15 orientated is no longer interested in finding work,  
16 and more interested in sort of doing drugs. And  
17 we're talking with people that have spent their  
18 time getting their social work or their teacher's  
19 degree, or their nursing degree, and they're coming  
20 in and saying, I have just been -- I have got  
21 problems, I don't know what to do with this guy,  
22 and I'm going to be evicted. Or I'm being  
23 threatened with eviction.

24                                   And I'm going, yes. And at the  
25 same time we can help you out with that, but you

1 have to understand that you're going to lose your  
2 professional accreditation as well. As long as this  
3 man is under your roof doing illegal drugs, cooking  
4 up stuff, doing this and that and having all kinds  
5 of stuff in your apartment, you're going to lose  
6 your professional accreditation as well.

7 So there really does need to be  
8 some good programs developed with legal services  
9 for women because they seem to be -- at this point  
10 they seem to be suffering higher and greater needs.

11 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:  
12 There's no law school in the Northwest Territories?

13 MS. GAIL CYR: No, we don't have a  
14 law school. I wish we did. Nunavut does. I'm going  
15 to -- if Nunavut can do it, surely the Northwest  
16 Territories can do it.

17 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Are  
18 there paralegal training options in the Northwest  
19 Territories?

20 MS. GAIL CYR: No, no. It's more  
21 of less it's a lot of people that just kind of,  
22 like, band together, put together their time, and  
23 do it free and help out. They're either an agency -  
24 - an employee of an agency that does that, or  
25 people that are just interested in just sort of

1 helping people out.

2 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:

3 Okay. Thank you so much and thank you for giving  
4 some of the context in the prairies as well. You  
5 know, when I think about your mom's status being  
6 questioned and the impact that must have had on  
7 her. I don't think people really appreciate that.

8 MS. GAIL CYR: Yeah, not being  
9 able to go back home.

10 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:

11 Yeah.

12 MS. GAIL CYR: Yeah.

13 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: And  
14 then, you know, the realities and Manitoba and up  
15 here, so nice -- you know, information from all  
16 over you've shared with us. Thank you so much for  
17 that.

18 MS. GAIL CYR: Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I  
20 have all these little notes. An R with a circle  
21 means this is a recommendation.

22 MS. GAIL CYR: And I will. I'll  
23 put some of them back in. Like, we want the  
24 coroners involved a lot more than they are right  
25 now. When it comes down to death review panels,

1 proper follow-up. If we need our Coroner's Act  
2 reviewed so that you can get proper -- because as  
3 they did in Ontario, they had to amend the Act to  
4 ensure there was going to be Indigenous people on  
5 that inquest to review the deaths of all the  
6 students. And, of course, the coroners -- it was  
7 the medical examiner's office in B.C. who was the  
8 one that argued with the police and the government  
9 that all the alcohol murders that were John Paul  
10 Gilbert, I think it was, they had to argue that  
11 there's no way, absolutely no way that these women  
12 would have -- could have drank this amount of  
13 liquor by themselves. Their blood count levels were  
14 so high, they said it was absolutely impossible for  
15 somebody to voluntarily do that, ingest that much  
16 alcohol. So what they've finally -- they finally  
17 figured out is that somebody is holding them down  
18 and putting in, like, long neck bottles down their  
19 throat and forcing down all that alcohol so that  
20 they basically -- they died of alcohol poisoning.  
21 That's a medical examiner that did that. Because  
22 more or less all of these deaths -- and most of  
23 them were Indigenous women -- were attributed to  
24 too much drinking, until this medical examiner  
25 said, no bloody way, nobody can drink that much.

Gail Cyr

1 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I  
2 don't have --

3 MS. GAIL CYR: One more final  
4 thing, too. The UK has an I'm okay, 800 line, which  
5 is -- sometimes people just don't want to be with  
6 their families. Their families have caused a lot of  
7 pain, they are in a lot of pain, they don't want to  
8 talk to them directly, they don't want to phone  
9 them, they don't want to be found where they are.  
10 And so the UK put in an I'm okay line, which is a  
11 1-800 line that basically you can phone it, it's,  
12 like, you can say who your name is, you are not --  
13 you're directed to an operator, and the operator  
14 basically takes your message, and they will forward  
15 it to the information that you give them. And that  
16 basically says, I'm okay, I'm not dead, leave me  
17 alone.

18 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:  
19 That's really important because, you know, there's  
20 the rights of families that want to know, but  
21 there's that right.

22 MS. GAIL CYR: Right, you might  
23 just want to --

24 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: An  
25 agencies and freedoms too.

1 MS. GAIL CYR: Your family might  
2 have been so toxic or whatever, you know?

3 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: You  
4 just need your space.

5 MS. GAIL CYR: Or you might have  
6 been toxic. Both of you might have been toxic, but  
7 the thing is that you don't want to talk to each  
8 other. But you're trying to just let somebody know.  
9 Like, you know, no sense putting out a big  
10 community such for me, I'm still alive, I just  
11 don't want to talk to you.

12 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:  
13 Yeah. Thank you so much.

14 MS. GAIL CYR: All right, thank  
15 you. Okay, just to sort of close -- I know there's  
16 some final things that are going to happen, but I  
17 have got a little song that I have, and it's called  
18 I'm a Native Woman.

19 Some people have heard this song  
20 before.

21 --- Sings.

22 MS. GAIL CYR: Thank you very  
23 much. Thank you very much. I'm very glad I was able  
24 to attend and be a participant. Thank you,  
25 everybody, out there. I wanted to kind of leave us

1 on a lighter note. We've been dealing with some  
2 pretty heavy stuff and pretty sad. There's been  
3 lots of tears. And I did forget my poem, but I'll  
4 leave it with the Commission. Yeah, so let's try --  
5 let's not keep down there, let's sort of do  
6 whatever we can to get us all back up there again,  
7 okay?

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: On that  
9 note I believe that the Commissioner has some gifts  
10 that she'd like to give you for sharing your truth  
11 and for sharing your wisdom. Certainly, so  
12 Commissioner Robinson is going to be giving you a  
13 beautiful scarf that's from the Native Woman  
14 Association of the Northwest Territory. She's also  
15 going to be providing you Labrador tea, which I  
16 think is her favorite. And what she's giving you  
17 that's wrapped in the red cloth are -- it's an  
18 eagle feather, and it represents truth and part of  
19 the healing journey and the matriarchs of Haida  
20 Gwaii had actually directed that the Commission  
21 gift anyone who was sharing their stories an eagle  
22 feather as part of that truth telling, and part of  
23 that journey. And the original ones were collected  
24 from Haida Gwaii. And as they ran low, as we had  
25 more and more people actually testifying and



1 sharing their stories, there was a call out by the  
2 matriarch to -- throughout the country, and  
3 feathers have been gathered and given from all over  
4 the country, from, like, Labrador, from Nova  
5 Scotia, there was one moment in Thunder Bay that I  
6 found quite touching where a young man actually  
7 undid his regalia and cleaned his feather so that  
8 he could give all the feathers from his dance  
9 regalia to the women that were testifying and the  
10 families that were testifying. And so you know, the  
11 stories they're telling are touching people's  
12 hearts across the country. And they all recognize  
13 the importance of sharing that symbol of truth. And  
14 so always, as always, it's really important in  
15 terms of repository [sic] acknowledging the story  
16 that's being told as a gift, and returning a gift.

17 On that note, Commissioner  
18 Robinson, I believe we can also adjourn for the  
19 hearings. And that there will be closing ceremonies  
20 that will occur at 4:00, but in terms of adjourning  
21 the hearing, we are officially done for this  
22 courtroom. So if I may have you officially adjourn  
23 the hearings.

24 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I  
25 officially adjourn the hearings here in Yellowknife

1 and we'll be back here at 4:00 for our closing.

2 --- Recess taken at 3:09 p.m.

3 --- Upon resuming at 4:05 p.m.

4 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: We have  
5 a whole hat full of missing material. Somebody had  
6 reading glasses. They were found in the men's  
7 washroom so I hope no lady comes and picks it up.  
8 Really? Okay, they'll be back at the registration  
9 desk. Obviously no takers there.

10 We have a USB, Lexar USB. Anybody  
11 missing a USB? Okay.

12 A bank card. The PIN number is --  
13 just kidding. It's RBC. It says Lexus. RBC bank  
14 card. No takers?

15 OJ Simpson's glove. I got you  
16 smiling at least, that's good. I think it's one  
17 size fits all. And Janet, it's yours? There you  
18 go. That's your hat, too? That's not yours? Okay.

19 Okay, we did manage to find --  
20 okay -- the podium is coming up, get out of the  
21 way. Okay, thank you.

22 --- CLOSING CEREMONIES

23 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Ladies  
24 and gentlemen, welcome to the closing ceremonies of  
25 the National Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered

1 Indigenous Women and Girls Yellowknife.

2                               Before we start anything else, I  
3 just would like to inform you that the  
4 Yellowknife's Dene drummers and Bobby Drygeese will  
5 be joining us, and they are going to ask that they  
6 not be filmed when they do their prayer song, but  
7 they can just turn the cameras down, you can still  
8 hear the audio, because I understand that this is  
9 going -- live streaming on Facebook as well. So  
10 thank you very much for that.

11                              And with that, we'd like to call  
12 upon Bobby Drygeese and the Yellowknife's Dene  
13 First Nation drummers to come forward with the  
14 closing prayer song.

15                              Where's your young drummer? Here  
16 he comes. There you go.

17                              BOBBY DRYGEESE: Thank you for  
18 having us again and my little son here, because the  
19 third guy didn't show up, but drums are over there.  
20 But all the same -- outside the door. Okay, I'll  
21 talk really slow, then. But I wanted to thank you  
22 guys for having us again and when we're dealing  
23 with a lot of things in our community, especially  
24 with us, too, I'm on the First Nation council for  
25 Yellowknife's Dene and there's a lot of things that

1 we have to deal with, and a lot of issues that are  
2 hard to make decisions on because there's a lot of  
3 things we have to deal with in our communities with  
4 family, and our neighbours with people that are  
5 close to us, people that we've been hunting and  
6 gathering with, people we travel with all over our  
7 land and making sure that -- it's difficult,  
8 especially, like, we're small communities, so it's  
9 got to -- think about how we're going to do things  
10 and how we're going to make things right and make  
11 things good. And we've got to make sure that -- try  
12 to community to each other as much as possible.  
13 Share as much as possible, and just helping each  
14 other. Because, like, a lot of times you've always  
15 got to make sure you speak up openly. You've got to  
16 speak up and make sure that you don't be shy. Like,  
17 our elders and my granny always said, like, don't  
18 waste time being shy, you're going to be old soon,  
19 so -- if you're shy, you're not going to talk to  
20 people, you're not going to do things, you're not  
21 going to see things, you're not going to experience  
22 life. So that's what they said. Don't waste time  
23 because, like, she was older and she did a lot of  
24 things and she always said, like, life is just  
25 experience, that you've got to go, go, go until you

1 can't go no more. Elders are lots of fun. But  
2 you've got to communicate, you've got to talk with  
3 them, too, so -- my son here, he's overtired, so we  
4 gave him some sugar, and now he's -- he's going to  
5 drop soon. But thank you everybody for coming, and  
6 hopefully everybody is okay with everything this  
7 week and I hope you guys found what you guys were  
8 looking for and there's a lot of answers that can't  
9 be answered right now. I mean, a lot of questions  
10 that can't be answered right now, but we've got to  
11 keep searching and keep on being positive about  
12 life. It's like when we first started, we were  
13 doing that journey song. You think for the future  
14 all the time and you watch beside you, where you're  
15 stepping, the people you're with, you make sure  
16 everybody is good, safe, and you think about the  
17 past, your family history, your ancestors, the  
18 loved ones you leave at home. Make sure everybody  
19 is safe. So we'll do another prayer song right now  
20 that Joe Shalo (ph) song singing about angels in  
21 the sigh watching over us when we're taking our  
22 journey on land. So we'll do that one. So I'll say  
23 mahsi cho and everybody have a safe trip.  
24 --- Song Performed.

25 MS. CECILIA BOYD: I'm very

1 grateful that they asked me to say the prayer. As  
2 we say this prayer, we will remember all this  
3 beautiful young missing girls, women, maybe boys,  
4 too. We have to remember them. They are beautiful  
5 people, just like us. We need to know where they  
6 are.

7                   Our creator, Jesus, wouldn't you  
8 care? You're the boss of us, and you love us and  
9 anything else. Anything on earth. We thank you for  
10 your beautiful creation. Help us to take care of  
11 the earth, the land, the water, the sky and all the  
12 living things. Only take what we need. Thank you  
13 for our ancestries, grandpas, grandmas, our  
14 parents, auntie. Through hardship on the land, they  
15 love us so much. That's why they taught us to have  
16 faith, to tell the truth. And they tell us about  
17 right and wrong as a young age. They also tell us  
18 how to share and to be a good citizen. Be proud of  
19 who you are. Our forefathers also taught us to  
20 respect animals because they are our main source of  
21 food. And we know what is happening to the animals  
22 today.

23                   This week has been one of the  
24 hardest topic to observe. As many young ladies,  
25 women, men, told us a very difficult story about

1 sexual abuse, death, and loss of loved ones. We  
2 heard the story, we are the witness. Yes, we are  
3 not perfect, nobody in this room is perfect, and we  
4 make mistakes, we've got to learn from it. We are  
5 on this earth all together, on this land, so that  
6 we can make each other life better for all of us.  
7 It doesn't matter who we are, we have to believe  
8 it. This is the way god want us to live, and so is  
9 our ancestries. Thank you for all the people that  
10 came to listen to the meeting. Thank you to the  
11 Commissioners, they came to listen. One of the  
12 elders, they told me yesterday, there's answers out  
13 there, all you have to do is keep digging deeper,  
14 deeper, deeper and the answer is there. I believe  
15 it. So now what I want to do is we're all going to  
16 join hands and we're going to say our Lord's  
17 Prayer, our father, so that the justice and closure  
18 will be done. Mahsi cho.  
19 --- Lord's Prayer recited.

20 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Thank  
21 you very much, Cecilia Boyd, and also I'd like to  
22 say thank you to our elders who were here over the  
23 last three mornings to help us with the daily  
24 inspirational prayers. Mabel Brown, Therese  
25 Villeneuve, and Lily Elias. Thank you so much for

1 your participation.

2 Also at the opening ceremonies on  
3 Monday afternoon we were very pleased to have Rasi  
4 Nashelik (ph) join us with the lighting of the  
5 Quiliq. And to those people who participated  
6 through testimony, and even our deepest, darkest  
7 moments, the light of the Quiliq there to help us.  
8 And for that we are grateful to the Inuit and in  
9 particular to Rasi and Barb, who helped us at the  
10 various hearing sites with the lighting of the  
11 Quiliq. Thank you so much.

12 And we'd like to call upon Rasi to  
13 extinguish the Quiliq at this time. Would you like  
14 to say a few words while you're doing that?

15 MS. RASI NASHELIK: I guess we  
16 could have Qajaq to talk first. She wants the  
17 Quiliq lit while she's talking.

18 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Ladies  
19 and gentlemen, we'll draw to the microphone one of  
20 the commissioners of the inquiry, Qajaq Robinson.

21 --- CLOSING REMARKS BY COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:

22 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:  
23 Thank you. To me -- you know, at the beginning of  
24 every hearing there's an oath, right, a promise to  
25 tell the truth. To me the light of the Quiliq, the



1 light is the ultimate oath. It is as long as it is  
2 lit, everything that we're doing has that truth,  
3 has light. So I didn't want to extinguish until  
4 everyone had spoken, because when it's done, we are  
5 done for now. So I'm sorry, it just didn't feel  
6 right. Next time we'll change the program. But I  
7 guess this is an example of -- you know, we come to  
8 a space and we have plans, we're going to do things  
9 this way and this is the schedule and this is the  
10 agenda. But in moments, that's not, one, how life  
11 works, and that's not how things are done right.  
12 It's been talked about in different ways with  
13 tradition. Doing it the traditional way, it being  
14 guided by something more than the watch or the  
15 dollar. (Speaks in native language).

16 I want to first thank you for all  
17 of you in the community. Yellowknives, Dene First  
18 Nation, all the people who call this territory and  
19 this city home for making this so welcoming. The  
20 term (speaking in native language), like, it's this  
21 state of being together and welcome together. The  
22 English words don't capture is. Your space, the  
23 space we've created together for me has been  
24 incredibly welcoming. It's home, it's safe, it's a  
25 place where we can grow and learn together and this

1 is something that we've done together. And it's  
2 something that we've -- when we received our  
3 mandate, how is this going to look, everybody wants  
4 to know, what are you rules, what is your schedule,  
5 what are you going to do, how is it going to look?  
6 And I get that, people want to know and be  
7 prepared. But more important is this ability to  
8 build spaces together, and I'm -- I want to thank  
9 all those involved in preparation coming here. I  
10 want to thank our teams that have engaged in this  
11 relationship to make this happen. I'm so grateful  
12 and humbled to be standing here with you to have  
13 received the gifts and responsibilities, you know?  
14 That have been given.

15 I want to talk a little bit about  
16 what you've taught me for two reasons. I want you  
17 to know that I'm listening. I have heard about the  
18 impact of having so little services and resources  
19 to turn to when things get hard. Knowing you're  
20 struggling with poverty, when you're struggling  
21 with the violence has been turned on you. When  
22 you're dealing with mental health issues, where do  
23 you turn? Those challenges.

24 The challenges of not having your  
25 language being part of the service that's provided

1 to you. That your understanding of family and  
2 relationships and life is not the same  
3 understanding as the people that are providing the  
4 service to you. That conflict that's created.

5 I have heard about when things go  
6 well, when there's respect, when the help that you  
7 need, people want to give it to you, when police do  
8 what they're supposed to do, when social services  
9 come and they respect your language, your culture,  
10 your ways and your rights. This is fundamental.

11 We've heard about the challenges  
12 with the turn overs in the system, not training  
13 local people so, you know, the doctor you see one  
14 day is not the one you see in two weeks or next  
15 month. Those are challenges. To get the education  
16 to be the one that provides that service, you don't  
17 get it here. You have to leave your territory.

18 We've heard the need and the  
19 acknowledgment to address racism. To confront ideas  
20 of white supremacy that basically say that what  
21 Indigenous people aren't equal. That the  
22 underpinnings of a lot of what our government and  
23 our state are built on is seeping with that idea  
24 that some people are not people, are less than. And  
25 that history since the Sir John A. McDonald days

1 and before continues in today, and that we have to  
2 confront that.

3 I heard so much, but these are  
4 some of the things that jumped out, and I wanted to  
5 share what I heard with you. I heard about how  
6 things can be done when you come together as a  
7 community, when you come together in relationships,  
8 when you do things together. And I want to quote  
9 Jerry, what she shared with us, together we are  
10 strong. And this is true.

11 I want to thank (speaking in  
12 native language) to this room, to this space and  
13 for giving us this light and this warmth this week.

14 Finally, to those listening, I'm  
15 going to quote Sandra. "Now you've heard, now you  
16 know, now you can't say you don't know. I know you  
17 know. We know you know. So what now?"

18 And like I said at the beginning,  
19 we all have a role. Look for your role. Be  
20 uncomfortable with the discomfort of discovering  
21 your role in this. Thank you, merci, (speaking in  
22 native language).

23 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: They  
24 made me the boss. What we're going to do is rather  
25 than hear from the Honorable Minister Cochrane

1 right now, we're being to continue to hear from the  
2 commissioners of the national inquiry and I'd like  
3 to call upon Brian Eyolfson to come forward with  
4 his final words.

5 --- CLOSING REMARKS BY COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:

6 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Thank  
7 you. Wow, an incredible week it's been here in  
8 Yellowknife. This week is definitely going to have  
9 a lasting impression on me. I want to thank all the  
10 survivors and families for everything that they  
11 shared, and also as my first time in this beautiful  
12 territory, I want to thank the Yellowknives Dene  
13 for welcoming us here so openly this week. Thank  
14 you so much.

15 I also just want to acknowledge  
16 the strength and resilience as shown by everyone in  
17 this territory through all the truths that were  
18 shared and the recommendations and it's that  
19 sharing of those truths and recommendations that  
20 will carry the work of the national inquiry  
21 forward. So thank you so much.

22 Just to name a few of the things  
23 that we heard about this week in terms of truths  
24 and recommendations, we heard about the need for  
25 various levels of government and jurisdiction to

1 work together cooperatively to help find solutions.  
2 We've heard about the importance of establishing  
3 appropriate memorials to honour lost loved ones.  
4 We've also heard about the importance of cultural  
5 competence in delivering services and providing  
6 services for Dene, Inuit, and Metis. We've also  
7 heard about the need for hearing support that's  
8 provided to families and survivors on a long-term  
9 basis. And also we've heard about the need for  
10 educating Canadians on Indigenous issues, including  
11 the tragedy of missing and murdered Indigenous  
12 women and girls.

13                               So those are just some of the  
14 things we've heard about and while we've heard  
15 about some of the losses and tragic impacts of  
16 violence on individuals and communities, there was  
17 also a lot of laughter this week. And there was a  
18 lot of hope, and there were a lot of friendships  
19 made.

20                               And I'm also grateful for the  
21 evening celebrations this week. So thanks for  
22 sharing your community and culture with all of us.  
23 On Tuesday we experienced the teachings and the  
24 culture of the Dene, and we had the Inuit and  
25 Inuvialuit teaching shared with us Wednesday night,

1 last night. And this evening is dedicated to the  
2 Metis of this land. So thank you very much for  
3 sharing all that with us.

4 I just want to say to all of you,  
5 all of your contributions to the national inquiry  
6 are invaluable, and thank you so much for  
7 participating or supporting or just being here and  
8 listening us. Mahsi cho, thank you.

9 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Thank  
10 you very much. Now I'd like to call upon  
11 Commissioner Michele Audette.

12 --- CLOSING REMARKS BY COMMISSIONER MICHELE  
13 AUDETTE:

14 COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE: No  
15 kiss. Oops, you heard. (Speaking in native  
16 language). A few words in French just to make sure  
17 that Canada, who speaks French, hear about you. May  
18 I?

19 Alors avant de commencer le  
20 protocole qu'on enseigne au quotidien c'est de  
21 saluer évidemment les gens qui nous accueillent sur  
22 ce magnifique territoire qu'on appelle maintenant  
23 le Territoire du Nord-Ouest. C'est un territoire  
24 qui appartient aux Denes, aux Métis et aux Inuits.

25 Merci aux aînés, Madame la

1 Ministre, merci beaucoup mes collègues les  
2 commissaires, les membres du Parlement, Herb and  
3 your caribou. Wow! Merci beaucoup de nous  
4 accueillir ici.

5 Ce que nous avons entendu cette  
6 semaine a été frappant, a été choquant, a déchiré  
7 par moments mes principes, mes valeurs comme maire,  
8 mais aussi mes valeurs comme commissaire. De voir  
9 qu'un enfant qui est donné au système mais se  
10 retrouve finalement doublement marginalisée,  
11 violée, battue, abandonnée par une situation, par  
12 un système, par des lois, et la liste est longue,  
13 sur toute sa vie. Toute sa vie.

14 Et aujourd'hui elle nous a donné  
15 le cadeau, le devoir puis la responsabilité de  
16 faire en sorte que ce cycle se termine une fois  
17 pour toute. C'est un gros mandat. C'est pas  
18 seulement quatre commissaires et une centaine  
19 d'employés qui va faire cette différence, mais par  
20 contre nous allons contribuer à faire la  
21 différence.

22 C'est aussi les gouvernements.  
23 C'est aussi les municipalités. C'est aussi les  
24 citoyens et les citoyennes qui vont faire ce  
25 changement-là à partir de maintenant.



1                   Le rapport, ce n'est pas une  
2 excuse pour retarder un changement.

3                   In English. Protocols, where I'm  
4 coming from, it's always important to acknowledge  
5 the people that are welcoming us here. And there's  
6 so many of you. So many of you very beautiful, very  
7 powerful, very alive, very, very, very strong. And  
8 I have to say thank you to the elders, to Madam la  
9 Ministre, les membres du Parliament and Herb and I  
10 was sick yesterday, and I'm still sick, I'm just  
11 pretending I'm not. And the best medicine was  
12 caribou. He gave me some caribou and now I'm back.  
13 Watch out.

14                   And also a gift that I received  
15 today. Every one of us share this responsibility.  
16 Three of us were here, we're parents, we're  
17 friends, we're partners, but we're also  
18 commissioners, and we went to different rooms and  
19 today a person, one human being, a woman gave us a  
20 gift. But also reminded us that the moment she was  
21 born the system failed her. The moment that she  
22 breathed, nobody was there for her. Nobody. And she  
23 reminded us how many of us across Canada are  
24 broken, raped, marginalized, discriminated. The  
25 list is too long. But she also reminded us that

1 things -- those realities are still exist, are  
2 unacceptable, and that needs to change. So I  
3 committed myself to this beautiful lady. I want you  
4 to stand up. People need to see how strong, how  
5 beautiful, how powerful you are. And what we're  
6 doing, it's for you and many other women across  
7 Canada. Tony, over there, with her partner.

8                                   And the same thing, if you can  
9 stand up, all the women that spoke with us, in  
10 private, statement gathering, or here in public, if  
11 you wish to stand up, so we can honour you. The  
12 people here can honour you, but also the rest of  
13 Canada, for your strength, your courage. If you can  
14 stand up. Thank you so much. Thank you.

15                                   This is the day I don't like  
16 everywhere I go, because it's for me physically our  
17 spirit physically separate. I go back. I'm a mum,  
18 I'm a partner, I'm a friend over there. I have to  
19 balance. But I want to make sure that our spirits  
20 stay connected. I want to make sure that what we're  
21 doing right now, it's worth it. It's worth it. A  
22 message to the media, come on, we need you. Forget  
23 about what's going on at the inquiry, put the  
24 family there, share their stories, talk about them,  
25 educate Canadians, educate people who don't know



1 Porgie, pudding and pie. There you go. What a guy  
2 won't do to ask for a kiss.

3                   No, ladies and gentlemen, all  
4 serious and everything put aside, thank you very  
5 much for your beautiful words, all you three  
6 commissioners. We're very pleased to have with us  
7 the minister, the territorial government  
8 responsible for the status of women, I'd like to  
9 call upon the Honorable Caroline Cochrane.

10 --- CLOSING REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE CAROLINE  
11 COCHRANE:

12                   THE HONOURABLE CAROLINE COCHRANE:  
13 Good afternoon, family members, commissioners, and  
14 everyone here supporting the families at the  
15 closing ceremonies for the Yellowknife community  
16 hearings of the national inquiry for Missing and  
17 Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. It was  
18 extremely important for me to attend the closing  
19 ceremonies and I'm honoured to be able to speak at  
20 this event.

21                   I will begin by acknowledging the  
22 family members here today. Your voices are critical  
23 for this inquiry. The strength that you've shown by  
24 coming forward will be the foundation within the  
25 final recommendations brut forward by the

1 commission. Recommendations that will set in motion  
2 real change. This inquiry is not about politics or  
3 others speaking for you. This inquiry is for you  
4 and it is about hearing your pain, your  
5 experiences, and your solutions to begin the  
6 healing. Words cannot express gratitude, empathy,  
7 and sincere respect for each of you who have come  
8 forward.

9 I want to also acknowledge the  
10 Native Women's Association, family support liaison  
11 unit, the Government of the Northwest Territories,  
12 family information liaison unit, and the counselors  
13 from the territorial health authorities. These  
14 individuals work collaborately [sic] with the  
15 inquiry staff to provide information and the  
16 critical emotional support for everyone at these  
17 hearings.

18 I take a moment to recognize the  
19 incredible dedication of the Native Women's  
20 Association of the Northwest Territories in finding  
21 so many creative and culturally respectful ways to  
22 support the inquiries and the families. Their  
23 beautiful beaded heart project is a powerful symbol  
24 of support from the people of the Northwest  
25 Territories. And the events they organized in the





1 learning what happened to our loved ones, and  
2 closure of the racism and injustice that Indigenous  
3 women and girls still face today.

4 Thank you, merci, mahsi cho.

5 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Thank  
6 you very much, the Honorable Caroline Cochrane,  
7 minister responsible for the status of women,  
8 Government of the Northwest Territories.

9 Over the last few days we've heard  
10 a lot of the survivors. Sandra Lockhart was also  
11 one who shared. I would like to ask her to come  
12 forward at this time to acknowledge all those that  
13 have shared in the Yellowknife edition of the  
14 inquiry.

15 MS. SANDRA LOCKHART: There's  
16 teachings that were given to me, and they're coming  
17 to me right, so I'm going to, with your patience,  
18 share it.

19 You know, we come to this earth  
20 through many different doorways and right now we're  
21 standing in the north door. And I came from the  
22 west door, and the teachings and the  
23 responsibilities that I have with that. And I think  
24 that everybody has come here from a different  
25 doorway and it's good that we're reminded to call



1 ourselves when we go back to wherever we're coming  
2 from, because it's not good for us to leave  
3 ourselves scattered all over. So and I'll be  
4 calling my spirit name so that it comes with me,  
5 because I spent too many years not having my spirit  
6 with me. And that's a very dark place to be.

7                   The elders also remind me that I  
8 don't speak for everyone when I share. So I'm no  
9 means up here trying to say that I'm talking for  
10 you, because I know I can't do that. It's  
11 impossible. But I do acknowledge those of us that  
12 went through our experiences, and we've carried  
13 them for a long time. And we had an opportunity now  
14 to share it, and the way of our own words, and what  
15 we've discovered from it. Because the people who  
16 heard us, you know, some of them extremely hurt,  
17 some of them extremely not well. Some of them  
18 walked amongst us after the hurt was done.

19                   But I can see that this inquiry  
20 has a spirit of its own and I was sharing with  
21 Marie, and I'm going to do it again, when Marie did  
22 her work with -- Marie Sinclair -- with the Truth  
23 and Reconciliation Commission, it gave birth to a  
24 spirit that lifted us out of another era of  
25 darkness. When the Royal Commission with George

1 Erasmus, he did his work, that lifted us out of  
2 another place. And in our society, globally it's  
3 not a Canadian problem, it's a global problem, when  
4 Indigenous women are on the bottom, there's a -- I  
5 have come to understand in the last few days that  
6 as much as we've been through, every time we got  
7 really hurt to the point of breaking, we reached  
8 out to that sacredness inside of us and around us.  
9 And it's kept us going. And it's so good to know  
10 that we're not alone, there's something about this  
11 spirit that is in this whole thing, and it comes  
12 from us. Whether we're family members, survivors,  
13 or LGBT. And that same spirit is in the world in  
14 every other person, and we have a global phenomenon  
15 going with climate change, and we're fortunate as  
16 Indigenous women to have such a strong relationship  
17 to who we call Mother Earth because she has guided  
18 us, fed us, clothed us, and will continue to do so.  
19 And she's crying out like we are, help me help  
20 myself. She has her own rhythm. She has her way of  
21 being. She has her own purpose, like each of us do.

22 I woke up this morning and I  
23 couldn't identify right away what it was, but I  
24 panicked last night because we get afraid when we  
25 share, did I say the right thing? Did I say too

1 much? My god, you know, all this head stuff,  
2 right? But I woke up this morning and I want you  
3 to know I shared how dirty I felt with so many  
4 different experiences, but I feel clean today. And  
5 I hope you do, too. But there's something more that  
6 I really feel is both a gift and a responsibility,  
7 and I got to say it. Now that I know that you know  
8 that we know, we can't unknow.

9                               So I had something sent to me  
10 today that's not right in its language. It's not  
11 giving the right spirit. And I could feel it. So I  
12 have a responsibility to share where it's off, it's  
13 off centre, right? And I did not support this  
14 inquiry, you need to know that. But creator has  
15 always been my boss, and he speaks to my intuition.  
16 And it said, get over there. So I came with all my  
17 resistance, even though I fought for this inquiry,  
18 I marched for it, because there's lots out there  
19 saying it's not this, it's not that, right? But  
20 experience teaches us in our own way and our own  
21 journey, and I have been cared for, I have been  
22 loved, and I have been honoured. And I have watched  
23 that happen with you. And I have seen the women who  
24 have got up, because you're still living. My  
25 mother's heart is there. My aunt's heart is there.

1 But our heart is still beating, and our men are  
2 with us beating, because we all need balance. And  
3 we need to come together as nations, and we need to  
4 get human again. And remember the call for  
5 humanity, that's what it's really about. We need to  
6 dismantle the lies that don't support our humanity  
7 it.

8                               So I want to thank each and every  
9 survivor that came forward. And for the families  
10 that are surviving through their grief. For the  
11 LGBT who are not here to speak for themselves, we  
12 know you're here. And for the people that are  
13 coming forward, I encourage you to come in here to  
14 hear your own voice. Because when we go to creator,  
15 or whatever you call that sacred space, it's the  
16 pain that brings us there. I have never went there  
17 when I'm feeling good. And I know it's really  
18 hollow of me, but it's my truth.

19                               And when I go to that space, I  
20 never get anything that segregates. And I always  
21 get the strength to respond what our elders say in  
22 a good way. And sometimes it may look like it's not  
23 in a good way, but from here on in, I'm going to  
24 pay attention, because we don't just physically  
25 eat, we emotionally eat, we spiritually eat. What

1 am I putting in me? I'm responsible for that.

2 And because of my nature, I need  
3 lots of ceremony because I can get really out  
4 there, I have to pay attention to what I'm putting  
5 out for you to eat. So once again, thank you for  
6 honouring me and having that space that in spite of  
7 what I thought I understood, all of you were there,  
8 and the staff. I want to thank every staff member  
9 because they listened to me, they held me. I'm only  
10 up here because I was whining away about there's  
11 nobody talking to survivors, right? But we're  
12 important. So I want to thank the elders,  
13 especially those with the traditional perspective.  
14 I want to know those old ways that allows me to  
15 see, not race, but humanity, but to be proud of my  
16 ethnicity. And white privilege is a lie. It's  
17 rooted in a lie. So is white supremacy. It doesn't  
18 benefit white people because so many of them want  
19 to run and apologize today. And somehow we've all  
20 got to move out of that. And it's going to be hard  
21 because it's hard because I'm not saying that  
22 there's not privilege. I'm not saying that. But we  
23 have to find a way to find that gender balance and  
24 that nation to nation balance again. And country to  
25 country. Because with technology, the word just

1 went flat again. And globally every Indigenous  
2 women is crying out. So mahsi cho.

3 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Thank  
4 you very much, Sandra Lockhart. I think all that  
5 needs to be said has been said. On behalf of all  
6 the bosses, I'd like to draw our attention to the  
7 extinguishment of the Quiliq. Maybe if you'd like  
8 to say a few words -- we'll have Rasi say the last  
9 words because she's going to do the last official  
10 function of this hearing.

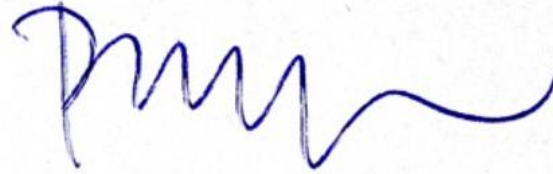
11 MS. RASI NASHELIK: Finally.  
12 (Speaking in native language). I'm just thanking  
13 my fellow Inuit, especially Commissioner Qajaq, who  
14 uses my language, which is part of me, to keep me  
15 strong. And I'm encouraging her to use it right  
16 throughout the commissioner's travels and hearings.  
17 And also I'd like to acknowledge my Inuit fellows  
18 from (speaking in native language) she's the part  
19 of the Commission, and also two counselors, Jean  
20 Imaik (ph) (speaking in native language). And also  
21 Barb. These are the people I'm acknowledging  
22 because we work together. And also Kathy Meyer  
23 (speaking in native language). Thank you so much,  
24 Kathy. And also I was here mostly I thought about  
25 Kathy because she lives here and she goes through







I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I have, to the best  
of my skill and ability,  
accurately transcribed from a pre-existing recording  
the foregoing proceeding.



---

Rubina Jan, Certified Court Reporter

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I have, to the best  
of my skill and ability,  
accurately transcribed from a pre-existing recording  
the foregoing proceeding.



Jennifer Rotstein, Court Reporter

---

***ASAP Reporting Services Inc.***

***(613) 564-2727***

***(416) 861-8720***