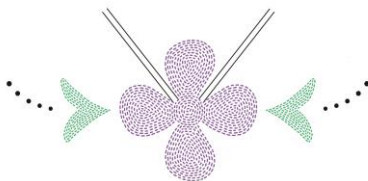


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-gathering process – Part I Public Hearings
Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel
Minoru C
Metro Vancouver, British Columbia**



Public

Wednesday April 4, 2018

**Public Volume 86:
Minnie Kenoras, Johanne Buffalo & Chief Judy Wilson
In Relation to Julia Kenoras**

**Heard by Commissioner Brian Eyolfson
Commission Counsel: Thomas Barnett**

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APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations	No Appearance
Government of British Columbia	Sara Pye (Legal counsel)
Government of Canada	Donna Keats (Legal counsel)
Heiltsuk First Nation	No Appearance
Northwest Indigenous Council Society	No Appearance
Our Place - Ray Cam Co- operative Centre	No Appearance
Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada	Beth Symes (Legal Counsel)
Vancouver Sex Workers' Rights Collective	No Appearance
Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak / Women of the Métis Nation	No Appearance

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Commission Counsel: Thomas Barnett	
Clerk: Christian Rock	
Registrar: Bryan Zandberg	

1 Metro Vancouver, British Columbia

2 --- Upon commencing on Wednesday, April 4, 2018, at 10:08

3 **MR. THOMAS BARNETT:** Good morning,
4 Commissioner. My name is Thomas Barnett. I'm from the Lac
5 La Ronge, Cree Nation. My community is Sucker River. It's
6 just north of -- or, sorry, just west of La Ronge. I'm a
7 lawyer with the National Inquiry, and we are here today to
8 hear the story of Minnie Kenoras.

9 Before we get started, I'm just going to
10 introduce everyone from left to right. To my left, we have
11 Jody Leon. She is here as a support for Minnie. To my
12 right, we have the daughter of Minnie, Johanne Buffalo.
13 And then to her right, we have Minnie Kenoras. And then
14 directly beside her is Chief Judy Wilson who is Secwépemc
15 Nation, also the daughter of Minnie. She is here to share
16 some recommendations and also provide support for her
17 mother. To her right, we have Doreen Manuel -- sorry,
18 Emily Manuel, my apologies. She is here to support Minnie.
19 And then to her right, we have Doreen Manuel. She is here
20 in support of Minnie as well.

21 So, who we will be hearing from today, of
22 course, is Minnie Kenoras in the middle, Red Star. I
23 understand that she would like to swear on both the Bible
24 and the eagle feather. Johanne Buffalo, who is seated to

1 my right, Red Star, I understand would like to swear on a
2 Bible and the eagle feather on top as well. And, Red Star,
3 Chief Judy Wilson, would like to swear on an eagle feather.

4 **MR. CHRISTIAN ROCK:** Johanne, do you promise
5 to tell the truth of your story in a good way today?

6 **MS. JOHANNE BUFFALO:** Yes, I do.

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

8 Minnie, do you promise to tell the truth of
9 your story in a good way today?

10 **MS. MINNIE KENORAS:** Yes, I do.

11 **MR. CHRISTIAN ROCK:** Thank you. Judy, do
12 you promise to tell the truth of your story ---

13 **CHIEF JUDY WILSON:** Yes, I do.

14 **MR. CHRISTIAN ROCK:** --- in a good way
15 today? Thank you.

16 **MR. THOMAS BENNETT:** Commissioner, I
17 understand that Chief Judy Wilson has some recommendations
18 for the Commission. She does have a flight that she needs
19 to be on. (*Technical difficulties*) Commissioner, I
20 understand that Chief Judy Wilson has some recommendations
21 for the inquiry. I understand that you have a flight that
22 you need to catch at 10:30. And so, we're actually going
23 to begin by Chief Judy Wilson reading those recommendations
24 into the record.

1 high rates of apprehensions of our children in the state
2 welfare system, poor health and education and incarceration
3 of our men, women and youth, especially the missing
4 murdered women and girls, including our men and boys.

5 The statement from our family today and our
6 experience of how our sister was murdered at a young age is
7 one of many thousands and thousands of stories across
8 Canada. The National Inquiry is a hearing, is only a
9 fraction of these survivor and family stories. There are
10 many voices that will remain unheard, sadly.

11 Our family will continue to advocate and
12 support the many issues our women and girls continue to
13 experience. Regrettably, change will only come by lifting
14 the veil of colonialism and our recognition of our people's
15 title and rights, so that we can reaffirm our identities
16 and our way of life.

17 Our key recommendations to the Commissioners
18 for the National Inquiry of the Missing and Murdered
19 Indigenous Women and Girls are we need more than just
20 programs and services. What is needed is systemic change
21 for violence against our women and girls from the level
22 right from the police to the high levels of government.

23 We don't believe the National Inquiry alone
24 will change what's happening to the lives of our Indigenous

1 women and girls. The hope is that at least more awareness
2 to what is happening is gained and for the recommendations
3 not -- to be implemented, not to sit on a shelf in Ottawa.

4 Each day, our women and girls are preyed
5 upon across Canada. They live in fear and they cannot walk
6 alone. Women and girls can continually go missing and
7 murdered each day. Safe places within our families and the
8 community is needed.

9 Our children should not grow up being
10 afraid. Grief and loss impacts to survivors and families
11 are important and on-the-ground healing in community is
12 needed in our communities. And, my cousin Doreen added
13 that we needed healthy boundaries and also self-worth is
14 really important and training on the ground.

15 Women's shelters and support Downtown
16 Eastside resulted through direct action. Many programs are
17 shut down or cut back. These funds need to be reinstated
18 and must involve these frontline organizations to work on
19 solutions.

20 Sister Watch in Vancouver meets regularly
21 with RCMP for safety of our women and girls about racial
22 profiling, but they need more support. The National
23 Inquiry needs to network or connect more effectively with
24 these Vancouver Downtown Eastside organizations.

1 What can we do about the gaps on the ground?
2 Some organizations and frontline workers are being told to
3 scale back, that they couldn't even come to the Inquiry for
4 all of the full days. This impacts our survivors and
5 families. They need to be participating more fully.

6 The National Inquiry is an opportunity to be
7 heard, but what key recommendations are expected at the
8 outcome of the Inquiry? Recommendations from the Oppal
9 Inquiry, many were made, but not implemented. The
10 implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the
11 Rights of Indigenous People, especially Article 3 about
12 self-determination, needs to be implemented, including the
13 recognition of our title and rights.

14 Post-residential school recommendations,
15 Indian residential school recommendations has not been
16 fully implemented and needs to ensure resulting programs
17 and resources as residential survivors are impacted for
18 many generations.

19 Indian residential school services, a
20 society needs to be recognized to become its own entity to
21 properly serve our people. Right now, they're under a
22 First Nations Health Authority and even though they have
23 their own board, they're not able to be fully operating,
24 which is a detriment to us.

1 More support for caregivers supporting those
2 on the front line, many experiencing internal racism. This
3 creates divisions and hardship for many and resulting to
4 our families. Poverty and affordable housing solutions for
5 urban and rural communities is critical. We need to
6 involve the communities for solutions. Advocacy for our
7 people on front line at various levels of government needs
8 to raise awareness about issues to find solutions.

9 The concerns and frustrations about those
10 participating in the Inquiry will be re-traumatized, and
11 they'll go home and will be concerned about their safety.
12 Support for communities for survivors and families are
13 needed right in the community.

14 Part 1 of the hearing is about survivors and
15 families. Part 2 is about organizations and 3 is
16 institutions. How will the statements and stories of our
17 survivors and families be given adequate review time and
18 assessment for key recommendations put forward? Those are
19 the concerns because it's a fragmented process.

20 Recommendations to reconnect our people to
21 their identity, the culture, language, way of life and
22 their traditional territories, is critical. This needs to
23 be done to be fully accepted by government and to be
24 providing resources to our survivors, families and our

1 communities.

2 Those are just some of the recommendations
3 our family had heard over the time we've been supporting
4 the Walk for Justice, the Missing and Murdered Women. Any
5 events my mom goes to and she brings us with her, and we
6 also attend, and Jody is always with her, too, and my
7 cousins.

8 Whenever we have to go out on the front
9 lines, we are there, because we need to raise that
10 awareness about protecting our women and girls and ending
11 the violence, and the systemic change that's needed not
12 only within the government, but all of Canada, because the
13 colonial notions have to stop, because that's where the
14 violence starts from. (*Speaks in Secwepemctsin language*).
15 Thank you.

16 **MR. THOMAS BARNETT:** Thank you, Judy. So,
17 Minnie, we are here today to listen to your story and from
18 what you have to share. With that, where does the story
19 begin for you?

20 **MS. MINNIE KENORAS:** Actually, the story
21 begins, I guess, I was born in Ashcroft BC Hospital. And,
22 I lived out in Big Bar where it's really isolated. And, my
23 dad was Dutch. My mom was Native. He had a ranch, and we
24 lived by the Fraser.

1 Growing up as a child, we were never short
2 of nothing. We helped people. My dad taught himself how
3 to read and write. My mom couldn't speak full English, so
4 she was learning from us. My dad was very quiet and a
5 helpful man all the time. He was always watching what we
6 did. He helped my mom with a lot of things. I was
7 watching the things that happened as a child.

8 He had a big family. I had nine brothers,
9 three sisters. And as today I sit here, they're all gone,
10 and I'm the only one in the Grander (ph) family holding up
11 the fort right now. But, I think, life has to go on. And,
12 that's where I learned all my -- I have to be proud of who
13 I am. My dad said I have to -- "I gave you one body, girl.
14 You have to respect that body. You've got to look after
15 it, because there's going to be a time when I can't help
16 you. You're going to be on our own."

17 And, from that time on, I have to be --
18 like, if I don't understand, I have to ask questions. If I
19 don't understand, I have to ask somebody. And, this is my
20 dad taught me respect, "If you hurt your body, if you make
21 a fool of yourself and hurt yourself, you're going to carry
22 that the rest of your life."

23 And so, I respected that because my dad, he
24 read the Bible. He went to the Bible. We prayed a lot.

1 My mother prayed in her Native ways. We were a strong
2 family. We had a home that we grew every kind of things.
3 We had banana apples, and that is rare. We made our own
4 sugar. We had our own flour. We had everything.

5 We supplied the town, Clinton. We gave
6 people things when they came to our home. I remember part
7 of the hunger thirties. I remember the stamps, and we gave
8 the stamps away. And so, nothing bothered us. So, that's
9 the kind of life I lived, and then it made me stronger. I
10 know that's why I can be here today.

11 But, the thing is, when I was 17, there was
12 a big ranch way up in Treo where you had to go via cars for
13 days or airplane. So, my dad and my mom let me go to work
14 there, and my brothers were already working there. That's
15 why I could go to work there.

16 And then I was a nanny, but already I knew
17 how to look after babies and wash clothes and make bread.
18 And, I knew all the things they do already. So, I looked
19 after three children there. Now, the whole thing is now, I
20 had my own room. I never had a room to myself before.

21 So, now, the boss and his wife watched me
22 doing what I was doing and they saw me. I said, "I
23 don't..." They had sent food from the cook house. So, I
24 just fixed a table and served it to the children and I.

1 And so, one day, I said, "Why are you
2 sending food from the cook house, when I can cook it
3 myself?" They had a store. They had everything there.
4 So, they said, "Are you sure?" and I said, "Yes." So, they
5 gave me keys to the store. They gave me the keys to the
6 meat house. They gave me -- and also, I cooked for the
7 kids, and pretty soon the boss and his wife started eating
8 with us.

9 So, from there on, I just went, left them
10 there years later. And, I went to work again from
11 different places. Ended up working in a café. I never
12 took training. I worked in big cafés. I was a cook there.

13 And, I never went to school. I had hardly
14 any schooling at all, and it never -- it was never a burden
15 to me, never, because I remember my dad. He said, "What
16 you want, you will work for. What you see and what you can
17 change, you have to speak up. And, what you think you can
18 do and cannot do, you have to ask questions."

19 So, this is what got me a long way. Now, I
20 have a cookbook, which is called Living Off the Land, and
21 I'm doing a movie this summer called Living Off the Land.
22 It documentary movie. And so, I'm not, like, hesitating
23 one bit. I know I can do it. It's a thing that I had a
24 vision. It's needed. It's needed to for our children and

1 our grandparents and people to come to the camps, to show
2 them we still are survivors. We still are going to live
3 off this land.

4 And so, this is why I have to do this
5 documentary movie, and it starts on around the end of May
6 and June. It'll go right through until the end of October,
7 November, then we have our feasts. Then, after the book
8 will be written, the movie will be done. Then it's going
9 to be put in our Native language.

10 So, this is why I'm here today. I'm
11 reaching out to each of the families, the grandmothers, the
12 grandfathers, the ones that are at home, wherever they are,
13 to start thinking about how your life is at your home and
14 what can you do, because you cannot blame the government
15 all for what's happening. You cannot blame the system,
16 what is happening. You cannot blame your social workers or
17 your band offices.

18 You, yourself, at your home, which is your
19 castle, have to stand up. You have to take that control,
20 and you have to look at yourself and love yourself and then
21 start reaching out to loving your children. "These are
22 part of my body. I'll love them." So, I don't want
23 nothing to happen to my children, my grandchildren. That
24 is your responsibility. This is why I'm here today. And,

1 I hope this will reach some of them.

2 And, my daughter, Julia, my youngest baby --
3 actually, my last two children weren't supposed to be born.
4 My doctor said I shouldn't -- I wasn't supposed to have
5 them. But, it so happened, I had them. But, they're all
6 from the same father.

7 And so, there's a boy a little bit older
8 than her, a year older. And so, Julia, my baby, was like
9 growing up as my right arm or right -- or whatever. She
10 was with me from day one all the time. She stayed with me
11 until the last, in my home, where she went with me when the
12 accident happened. She was with me at the time.

13 And, she had a boyfriend, which they grew up
14 together at the school. They had all come to the house.
15 They grew up together. The boyfriend was a friend of my --
16 her brother, her next brother, Joey, and they would all be
17 at the house. I had children come at the house. Like, I'd
18 have to get up, the parents would be phoning me, "Is my son
19 there? Is my daughter there?" I always had a houseful.

20 And, I fed them all. I cooked for them all.
21 And, when they went on a party or somewhere, I talked to
22 them before they went. And, sometimes they would phone me,
23 "Come and get us, Mom," wherever they were.

24 So, that's how close I was to my family and

1 my children and the community. And, the thing was, is just
2 like saying, like, "When you're hurting, I'll be there for
3 you." I was really close to her.

4 And so, like, now, it's been 23 years since
5 she's left, she's gone. And, her boy with her there is 27
6 now, so he was just turning four. And, at the time, they
7 were getting along so good.

8 And, with coming in May, Mother's Day, and
9 she was going to go to Vancouver. She was going to take
10 training down in Vancouver for child care work. She went
11 down there with my daughter Joan, and they found a place.
12 And, she had a program that she was going to start. She
13 actually even got the money to go down there, a cheque from
14 the band office for her travel and for her room.

15 Now, she was home. Her and Joannie came
16 home. And, I was going to keep the little boy until she
17 got settled. Her and the boyfriend had an argument long
18 before that, and he was supposed to be moving out of the
19 house. He did pack his things, and he had them in a corner
20 downstairs.

21 And then when Julia came home and Joannie,
22 it was a few days before Mother's Day. And, they came on
23 the bus, so I picked them up and came home. So, we were
24 sitting in her bedroom. And, her boyfriend wasn't there

1 yet, with Joannie and her.

2 And, it was near Mother's Day. And, Julia
3 said, "Mom, I never brought you a flower this time. I
4 usually buy a rose." And, I said, "I know." And, Joannie
5 said, "Oh, we got this sweater though with a rose on it and
6 we could give this to you."

7 And, Julia said, "No. I've got something
8 more precious I'm giving to my mom. I'm giving my mom my
9 son for Mother's Day." And, I said to her, "Julia, you're
10 not supposed to be giving your son away." And, she said,
11 "But, Mom, I have to. Who does he go to every time he's
12 hurt? Where do I find him? He's in your room all the
13 time. He's sleeping with you."

14 Joannie is a witness. There were tears shed
15 between us. The little boy was there with us at the time.
16 He was standing right beside Grandma. From there on, even
17 at the time, she said, "I have to -- when I go to
18 Vancouver, he'll be staying with you." And, I said,
19 "Fine." And, somehow another, I don't know, that was all
20 taking place.

21 And, anyways, my daughter here, Johanne,
22 came. And, I had to go to Alberta. Johanne can talk about
23 a little bit when she has -- but, I had to go to Alberta
24 with her, because one of her in-laws or her sister-in-law

1 was having something. She had lost her mother a couple of
2 years before, and she wanted me to stand up as a
3 grandmother, so I said I'd go there.

4 And then, Julia says, "Well, we're having a
5 party. It's a farewell party. My brothers are here. My
6 two brothers are here." And, Darryl came, the boyfriend.
7 And, I watched him outside.

8 And, my son, oldest son, brought some trees
9 I called the weeping willow trees -- not weeping willow --
10 the hedges, pruning hedges. He bought six of them for his
11 mother-in-law. He brought six for me. So, out on the
12 lawn, Darryl and her were planting these trees. They were
13 digging holes. I went out there, and they asked me where
14 they wanted the trees. So, I showed them where they wanted
15 to put the trees. I was watching them.

16 And then I came back in the house, and I was
17 watching them out the picture window. They were playing
18 around outside, and they were fighting with the water hose
19 and getting soaking wet. And, Darryl was piggybacking her
20 on his back. And, I'm watching and I'm saying to myself,
21 "I thought you guys weren't going to be together anymore.
22 I thought this was it. I thought you guys were..." -- had
23 an argument. I thought this was gone, and I was watching
24 them.

1 And then that so happened after that. They
2 planted all the trees. Then Johanne comes to get me.
3 We're ready to go. I always took food to Alberta when I --
4 so, I had all these blueberries and strawberries if there
5 was milk cartons. We put them on the counter.

6 Julia and everybody was happy. My sons were
7 happy. They were all happy at the time, but I had to
8 leave. And, they're having a party. They were going out
9 dancing. They were going to go play pool. They were going
10 to -- and it's to me Julia's farewell to her boyfriend.
11 This is what she said. They were -- then she was going to
12 get on the bus.

13 If I took her little boy with me to Alberta
14 -- I didn't want to take him. She said, "No, Mom, you've
15 got to take him with you." I said, "Well, on the condition
16 that you come to Alberta with me." She said, "Okay, Mom,
17 I'll catch a bus in the morning. I'll come to Alberta."
18 So that was the conditions. I took the little boy.

19 And so, with that, we went down the road.
20 And, I said to Johanne, "Hey, I forgot my strawberries and
21 my blueberries. I've got to go back and pick them up."
22 So, we turned around and went back to the house.

23 And, here comes Julia down the porch, the
24 stairs, carrying both in her hands, coming down with a big

1 smile. "I knew it. You guys had to come back and see me
2 once more and give me a hug before you go." That was --
3 she brought the blueberries down to us. So, we hugged
4 again and told her how much we loved her, and those were
5 the last words to her, how much we loved her.

6 So, from there on, I was able to go to
7 Alberta. And, it kind of bothered me that why the party
8 was happening and why this was happening. But, somehow, I
9 had to leave. And then before I walked out the door -- I
10 never locked my door, because the little boy used to come
11 in my room and go whenever.

12 And, I had my rifles, my hunting rifles. I
13 said to them, "You boys have no permission to go in my room
14 to touch my rifles at all." So, I'm closing the door. So,
15 those -- I already told them that when I walked out.

16 So, anyways, like, when this happened, they
17 did have the party. They went out. And then Julia was
18 supposed to phone me 9:00 in the morning. The next
19 morning, she was supposed to phone me. She told me she
20 would phone me, and I was waiting for that phone call.

21 Johanne here had to go to work. I was at
22 the house by myself, and I was looking for something to do.
23 So, I run downstairs, and I was doing the laundry. She's
24 got a lot of stairs down there where her home was.

1 And, the phone rang. Started running up, I
2 left Colby sitting on the couch. I gave him some food to
3 eat, and he was sitting on the couch. The phone rang. So,
4 I picked up the phone. There was nothing, nobody. And, I
5 thought, "Oh, God, I missed her call. I missed her call."

6 So, I thought, well, I'm going to make a cup
7 of tea and just wait around here and she'll call back in a
8 few seconds. So, I sat down with Colby and a cup of tea.
9 And, the phone rang. It was my daughter-in-law, telling me
10 the accident, what happened in the home, and she was
11 screaming and crying, my daughter-in-law.

12 She told me exactly what happened. And what
13 had happened there was he went into my room. He took my
14 hunting rifle, one of my best hunting rifles. And, this is
15 what he used on her and himself. And, he had a note in his
16 pocket saying, "If I can't have her, nobody else will."
17 And so, she must have been running out of the room, because
18 she got shot in the back.

19 And, I don't know why it is, but I still
20 have a bullet hole in my door. And, I was thinking, well,
21 this is why she told me to take the little boy and leave.
22 I had to go. And, this is why Johanne came to me, I had to
23 leave, because if we would have been there, we would have
24 been victims, too, because I had told him off at the porch.

1 I had told him that I had enough of him
2 coming home drunk and on drugs and abusing my daughter.
3 So, we might have been those victims, too, if I didn't --
4 if we didn't leave at the time.

5 And, my daughter being so close to me all
6 the time, give me the courage, give me the strength to who
7 I am today to stand up, not to be a weakling. I shed those
8 tears already. They're gone. I already placed those
9 tears, all of that love. I will always hurt, but I did
10 those cries already. I put them away.

11 And, I'm ready to help the family and my
12 other people. I'm ready to speak on behalf of all this
13 hurting, all this violence against children and people in
14 their homes, and to be watching each other, and carrying on
15 that love of strength in each other, the strength every
16 day. It's not just once in a while. It should be every
17 day, "I love you."

18 My family and I keep a close call on each
19 other by phone always. If it's not by phone, it's by
20 visiting each other, Christmas, holidays, whenever they're
21 invited to come. And, this is how I keep my family strong.

22 I was abused really badly by the two
23 husbands I had. I was victims, like, from the residential
24 school. I used to never fight back. I would never stand

1 up for myself. I had to learn it the hard way.

2 So, this is -- the thing is, when you have
3 to teach your children, you have to teach them to be --
4 like, it's tough out there. You have to provide. You
5 have to stand up. You have to ask somebody if you can't
6 help yourself, ask somebody.

7 And, you know, I'm a grandma to a lot, a lot
8 of people. I'm a mother to a lot, a lot of people. People
9 come and ask me if they can -- be their grandma or their
10 mother. I'm very proud.

11 And the court system in the Aboriginal
12 Justice of Court, I work there in Kamloops now. We have
13 our own court case there all the time. And, as an elder
14 sitting there, I have a voice the same as a judge.

15 The system that we're working there is
16 trying -- like, our own laws which we had before. Our own
17 systems we had before are strictly as of our people. We
18 had our own ways before. That's what I'm trying to put out
19 there as to people. We were a strong people. We stood up.
20 We're tolerant people, what was right and wrong. We
21 hunted. We fished. We fed our people. We had our own
22 ceremonies which was our own laws.

23 And, this is what I told the judge, "You
24 took our laws, put them in big names. You put them in big

1 things, so we don't understand them anymore. And, our
2 people are suffering. And, you don't look at us as people.
3 You look at us as an un-people. Well, I'm sorry to say, I
4 want this changed. I want a big change. I want to change
5 that you understand us, where we come from and who we
6 really are. We are people just like you. We have our ways
7 of living, which is on our Mother Earth, our land, which
8 has been destroyed, but we're still survivors. We're still
9 here. I would like to see us go back to our ways, but I
10 know we can't always go back to all our ways, but we can go
11 back a long margin and be that healthy people again. So,
12 that's why, Your Honour, I'm sitting here today, the
13 righteous of my people."

14 And, young people are -- I am -- like, right
15 now, I have -- I'm looking after two people that I talk to
16 them and they sit down and I phone them, like, out of
17 court. I counsel them. And, I'm working another program
18 right now is young girls. I counsel these young girls to
19 become -- when they become mothers, when they become --
20 when they get their periods, when they become women, when
21 they become -- how to respect their body, how to look after
22 themselves. So, these kind of programs, I will go out and
23 I will help.

24 And, I do go out in the public and I public

1 speak. And, all of this just comes from my heart. It's
2 not written down. There's nobody asking me to do this.
3 It's natural. It's natural and it has to be heard, for
4 people to understand it. I'm not the only one. I'm sure
5 there's grandmothers that are out there, too, who stand up
6 to who they are and carry on.

7 And, Julia, my baby girl, I love you. I
8 love you, and you know that I'm taking care of your little
9 boy. He's my son. I'm looking after him. I talked to him
10 this morning, and I felt your presence there with me this
11 morning. I felt a presence. I said my prayers 5:00 this
12 morning. I felt the presence of my daughter Julia there,
13 too, this morning. And, I felt the presence of her son
14 being with me this morning, of my other grandsons that
15 passed on, my brother Hector that was close to me. And,
16 the room that I'm in was 127, but that was my brother's
17 birthday. I felt their presence with me this morning,
18 saying my prayers. I can see things. I can hear things.
19 And, I hear them giving me the love that -- why I'm
20 speaking today and how I speak today, they're with me at
21 the moment.

22 And, with my daughter, she used to play with
23 her little boy when he was only -- when she was only three,
24 going on four, she would lay over the top of me. She would

1 play with him. And, I could tell you what she was wearing.
2 I put my arm over top of her. I could feel what kind of a
3 jacket she's wearing, what she was wearing.

4 So, I wanted that house burned, the one
5 where they -- my daughter was murdered in and the boy was
6 murdered. I wanted it burned. I said to my little boy
7 there who was sitting beside me, "Colby, we don't have to
8 stay in this house anymore. Grandma doesn't like this
9 house anymore. Grandma wants to burn the house. We can
10 go. We can stay with Auntie Johanne. We can stay with
11 Auntie Judy. We can stay with Uncle Jerry, any of them
12 which you prefer. We can just go." And, he said, "No,
13 Grandma. This is my mommy's house."

14 So, that was a burden, hard burden for me,
15 because I had walked down that hallway where it happened
16 every day. I had to be tough in my heart with all this,
17 for that little boy.

18 So, I put him through school. Now, I had to
19 be a mommy again. I put him through school, put him
20 through hockey. He's a very good hockey player who was
21 well loved by the teachers, by everybody. He had good
22 manners. He has got good manners, very quiet, but he's a
23 very nice person. He's a very special boy.

24 And so, I talked to him this morning, and

1 Johanne talked to him this morning. He knows exactly why
2 I'm here and what I'm doing. And, when I go back, I'll
3 meet with him again and tell him exactly what we did and
4 done.

5 I know it's -- like I said, I did my crying
6 time. I put my tears away. Once in a while, I have tears.
7 I talk to the water. I talk to the Creator. I talk to
8 Mother Earth. I talk to them and they're with me always.
9 I pray always.

10 And so, you know, with those tools I have, I
11 say all that -- I feel good. I feel really good as a
12 grandma. A great-grandma, I am also. I feel good.
13 Because my daughter wouldn't want me to go this way, she
14 would want me to go that way and do as many things as I
15 can. So, that's what I'm doing today.

16 And, my life is so full of happiness and
17 hope. I can sing. I can dance. I can do -- I could build
18 a mountain. I'm building a cabin in a mountain actually at
19 Harper Lake. I have a cabin. I'm living on the land
20 again. It doesn't matter. I have a home in Salmon Arm.
21 I'm giving that away to one of my daughters, and I'm
22 building a home for Colby.

23 I make plans. I foresee things that has to
24 be done, and I do it. And, these plans that I make are

1 usually -- I don't, like, talk to my family about should we
2 do this, should we do this, no. It comes from here. It
3 comes from the heart.

4 Then I ask them. Then I say, "Guess what?
5 I'm building a cabin in mountains. It's going to be the
6 home of a sasquatchette (ph). You know, I do my own
7 hunting, my own fishing, that book I have that's called
8 *Living Off the Land*, and I stand behind my book. That's
9 why I'm doing that movie this time. So, I will stop at the
10 moment here and if anybody has any question to ask me feel
11 free.

12 *(Dealing with technical difficulties)*

13 **MR. THOMAS BARNETT:** So, you had mentioned
14 that when the incident happened, there were some boys at
15 the house. Do you know who they were?

16 **MS. MINNIE KENORAS:** Yes. Actually, like I
17 said, they had a party. And, the boys at the house, my two
18 sons, and there was other people there, but I know my two
19 sons were home at the time.

20 **MR. THOMAS BARNETT:** And, do you know where
21 they were? Did they know what was happening?

22 **MS. MINNIE KENORAS:** Well, they went on
23 their party, which was in Thomas Ameron (ph). And, they
24 came back from the party, I guess, and they were playing

1 pool, dancing and drinking. They came back to the house
2 and, yes, and son Jerry is the one who told me this.

3 Joey was downstairs, but Jerry was upstairs,
4 and he was sleeping on the couch. I guess they all came
5 home, and then they figured they'd go to sleep, so
6 whatever. So, the party quieted down and the boys went to
7 -- he went to sleep on the couch, and Joey went downstairs.

8 But then, I guess, and what happened was
9 Darryl and Julia must have got in an argument, I guess.
10 And, they were in their bedroom. And then she went to run
11 out the door, but he must have went in my room and got that
12 gun out. He must have loaded it and put it in his room
13 before that, had to be.

14 And then she went to run out, and that's
15 when he shot her behind the head. And so, that's why she
16 was standing up, and that's why the bullet hole is in my
17 door. And then she fell there. And then he turned around.
18 Their door was opened, I guess. And, he turned around and
19 he must have put that gun to himself.

20 And, that was the scene, but Jerry said he
21 didn't hear nothing. The boys said they didn't hear
22 anything. And, that rifle is a 32 special, and it's a loud
23 rifle. So, the boys, Jerry said they -- he had to put
24 something in their drinks. That's why they both went to

1 sleep.

2 So, Jerry was the one who saw her laying
3 there. And then he just picked her up and hugged her, but
4 then -- and then from there on, he just saw Darryl there
5 with the gun, I guess, and then he started kicking him.
6 But, that's what the scene that Jerry seen.

7 And, because his runners were all full of
8 blood and stuff, and he didn't know what to do. They put
9 them in a paper bag and he put them somewhere. I had to
10 throw those runners into the furnace when I got home. But,
11 you know, that was the scene.

12 **MR. THOMAS BARNETT:** And, at that time, you
13 mentioned that perhaps you might have been in Alberta.
14 Were you in Alberta with Colby, Julia's son?

15 **MS. MINNIE KENORAS:** Yes. At the time, I
16 was in Alberta with Colby, waiting for that phone call the
17 next morning at Joanne's. I was here.

18 **MR. THOMAS BARNETT:** And, you mentioned that
19 it was our daughter-in-law that contacted you?

20 **MS. MINNIE KENORAS:** Yes. That was Jerry's
21 wife. Dory was the one who called me and told me what
22 happened at home.

23 **MR. THOMAS BARNETT:** Were you contacted by
24 the police or anybody after that happened?

1 **MS. MINNIE KENORAS:** Well, actually right
2 then, and so it was kind of a blur for me, but I don't know
3 -- even know how I got back to the house. But, I got back
4 right away somehow or another, yeah.

5 **MR. THOMAS BARNETT:** You had mentioned that
6 you knew the boyfriend while he was growing up, Darryl?

7 **MS. MINNIE KENORAS:** Darryl, yes.

8 **MR. THOMAS BARNETT:** Yes.

9 **MS. MINNIE KENORAS:** Well, Darryl, again,
10 was -- he was a -- his family, they lived just down two or
11 three miles, down the road. And, he was always there with
12 the whole family, and my son Joey and him grew, like,
13 together in school. So, Julia, that was her boyfriend
14 then, yes.

15 **MR. THOMAS BARNETT:** Can you tell us any
16 more perhaps about his background or have you had some
17 thoughts as to how something like that could have happened?

18 **MS. MINNIE KENORAS:** From Darryl's family?
19 Yes, yes. Him and his brother, Rick, used to always be at
20 the house all the time, like. And, actually, his family,
21 well, had real bad problems and they -- his uncle had taken
22 these two boys to the mountains and abused them, Darryl and
23 his brother.

24 And so, he spent a lot of time at our house.

1 And then he still had a mother. His dad was somewhere in
2 Vancouver, so he wasn't close to his dad. He was, I would
3 say, almost like a lost boy. So, they're -- we accepted
4 them in our family even then.

5 And so, when they were being abused that
6 way, he was drinking and on drugs. And the time then, they
7 had Colby. Then he still was drinking and being on drugs,
8 which my daughter was trying to tell him that he had to
9 quit. He had to, whatever. She was going to go out to
10 work. She was going to do things with her life.

11 So, I remember him walking down the road,
12 and I was watching him. I was watching him run down the
13 road and, like, I could see him, and he just looked like a
14 shell. He wasn't looking like Darryl at all. He was
15 walking away from the house, walking down the road. And, I
16 pitied him. I said, "Oh, my God, you look so lost. Where
17 are you going?"

18 Anyways, like, yes, his family has done a
19 lot of damage to other people, other children, and they're
20 still walking around today. They're still living today.
21 And, I feel so sorry for them, because they're hurting
22 right now. I see them.

23 And in my dream, I had a dream that Darryl
24 came to me and asked me to forgive him. He said, "I'm so

1 sorry for what I did." And, my dreams are not all, like,
2 real. I see things. I can see visions.

3 And, I just said, "Darryl, I will forgive
4 you, because I know it wasn't all your fault. You were
5 that little boy that somebody abused. You're that little
6 boy. You're lost. So, I forgive you, Darryl." And, he
7 said, "I'm with her. I'm with Julia." And, I said,
8 "Okay."

9 And, my sonny boy there, Colby, used to see
10 black clouds and white clouds. He would look at the white
11 clouds. He said, "That's my mommy up there. See, she's a
12 feather. She's a white clouds. And look over there, those
13 black clouds, that's my dad. He's a bad clouds."

14 And, I just told him, "Colby." I said,
15 "That's fine, but your dad loved you, too." "How was my
16 dad?" I said, "Your dad loved you, Colby. We have
17 pictures. I'm going to show them pictures." "What was my
18 dad like? What was my mom like?" I talked to him about
19 those things. "They loved you, both of them."

20 And, I think that's what made him a strong
21 boy today, too, because he drinks a little bit, but not
22 very much, and he's working all the time. He's been in
23 contact with me always, asking me how I am, what I'm doing,
24 always.

1 And, with Darryl, he never -- his mother
2 never ever will be Colby's grandmother. He doesn't have
3 contact with them at all hardly, at all. They don't
4 recognize him, the family. Darryl has got half-sisters.
5 They don't recognize him. He cried about that one day.

6 And, I said, "Colby." I said, " You've got
7 Grandma. You've got the love. You've got your aunties.
8 You've got your uncles. That's fine. Leave it be." So,
9 that's how it stands today is they don't call him to their
10 homes. They don't give him presents. They didn't give him
11 presents when he was little or anything. They don't. So,
12 that's fine. So, he grew up that way.

13 And, I have that picture of him, that I have
14 some more beautiful pictures together with Colby at home.
15 And, you know, he's a very smart boy, very intelligent,
16 yes. And, he's a singer also. Grandma taught him how to
17 sing. He knows how to sing. And, his favourite song is,
18 "If you love me, let me know; if you don't, let me go; I
19 can't stand another minute with your love with nothing in
20 it." Colby, he can sing, because he is a happy boy.

21 And, I'm glad that I was there. I had to go
22 back and raise him. I had lots of hate for the man that
23 abused the boys, so much hate, I wanted to do away with
24 him. I planned it.

1 And, one of my daughters and the other boy,
2 they beat up the same man and put him in a hospital, hoping
3 that he would come forward and say that he beat up -- that
4 he got beat up by my daughter and this other boy. He
5 wouldn't come forward, because they wanted him to come
6 forward, because they would have told why they beat him up.

7 And, I planned on doing away with him. And,
8 I had my one daughter, Joannie, and another girl to help
9 me, and they wouldn't do it at the end. They wouldn't help
10 me. So, they cried, and we cried together and talked about
11 it.

12 And, they said, "Look, who is going to look
13 after Colby? Of course, they are going to charge you. If
14 you do what you're going to do, they're going to charge
15 you." Yes, so I couldn't do what I wanted to do. So, I
16 said, "Okay, I'll have to let it go." I want to look at
17 raising this little boy. I want him. He's my boy." So,
18 that's why I had to step aside.

19 So, it hurts me today, he's still walking
20 around. They still have bad things with their families
21 happening. They're suffering today. I can see it. And, I
22 have a hard time to talk too. I have a hard time to
23 forgive him for what he has done to Darryl. I haven't
24 really forgiven him yet. But, one day, I have to meet him

1 on those grounds. I know I have to meet him on those
2 grounds.

3 I met the grandmother, the grandmother on
4 the grounds which he really -- I don't know why she didn't
5 really care for me, and we had words. We had bad words.
6 We had bad words against each other. And, she was getting
7 up in age. And, one day -- and she was in a wheelchair.
8 And, one day, I went right beside her, and I talked to her.

9 I said, "Mary, I've come to talk to you. I
10 want to apologize to you. I want to say sorry to you if I
11 hurt you in all kinds of ways. I'm sorry." So, I held her
12 hand. She just put her head down and she cried.

13 So, that forgiveness has to be done for our
14 people. We have to learn to forgive ourselves. We have to
15 learn to open our heart. We have to learn. Life has to go
16 on. And so, this is a chore I have to do yet when I get
17 home and -- but, I know where and when the time will be
18 ready for me to do this. Okay.

19 **MR. THOMAS BARNETT:** Thank you, Minnie. The
20 Commissioner might have some questions for you after. But,
21 I understand that at this time that Johanne wants to -- or,
22 would like to read some poems that your daughter Julia
23 wrote.

24 **MS. MINNIE KENORAS:** Johanne here is my --

1 one of my oldest daughters, and she's a nurse, and I'm very
2 proud of my whole family. My whole family, I reach out to
3 my whole family. I have family like you wouldn't believe.
4 And, this girl here is my hunter. She hunted with me.
5 And, Darlene here is close to me, like a daughter. All of
6 them are just like -- and Jody, sitting over there.

7 And, you know, I'm very blessed. I'm very
8 blessed everywhere I go. And, I have a hard time to deal
9 with this because, like, I like to do it myself, and they
10 pamper me too much. Okay, Johanne.

11 **MS. JOHANNE BUFFALO:** I'll just read the
12 poem. I have a few things to say myself. But, she had
13 written a lot of poems. She was a teenager. And, I didn't
14 really read them until after she was gone. This one is
15 called "Dying." It says: *When you are falling, falling so*
16 *hard, you hold on that last feeling, feeling of being*
17 *loved. You see enemies digging, digging six feet deep,*
18 *your friends crying, crying in deep sorrow. Then you see*
19 *nothing, nothing but darkness. You suddenly realize you're*
20 *dying. Dying is so scary. Hold on, you're slipping,*
21 *slipping away from life. You're letting go leaving,*
22 *leaving this world. You feel so cold, freezing, freezing*
23 *your body. Your life, it's ended. No more thinking,*
24 *thinking how you'll die someday. You just never thought*

1 *today. By Julia Manuel.*

2 When we read her poetry later on, she was
3 always kind of a deep thinker girl, and she was strong,
4 strong-willed. Being the oldest daughter, I've seen a lot
5 in my life, which children shouldn't see. I was always my
6 mom's fighter at the time, but she taught us to care no
7 matter what.

8 My kids used to say, "Mom, we don't know if
9 it's a gift or a curse what you taught us to feel." People
10 come to us. There's a lot of hurting people out there. I
11 know my girl. I know my sons.

12 Anyways, I'm here. I always feel kind of
13 like telepathic messages, you know, when my mom needs me by
14 her side. I only came up for Easter holidays and here I am
15 sitting here. It was not planned, but I guess it was
16 planned. Time for healing for me, because I suppressed it
17 for so long, also for my brothers and sisters that aren't
18 here today, because they're the ones that Julia affected
19 also. Because what I feel, you know, that sickness that
20 carried on even way before residential school and, you
21 know, the genocide.

22 And, now what we see is, you know, families
23 aren't families. And, a lot of our people are to be on
24 their own, and they're wandering lost souls. So, they come

1 to the cities or they go somewhere that is not really them.
2 And, they're searching for something. But, that sickness
3 in our medicine wheel affects our emotions, our spiritual.
4 Sometimes it kills it. Our physical, it turns into some
5 kind of cancer that eats us up inside.

6 And, our people have got to look at
7 themselves in that balance of life, because you'll see
8 where, which part of it is affecting you most, maybe the
9 whole circle. You have to reach out to somebody, tell that
10 story. Tell your stories. Each one of us -- every one of
11 us is precious beings. And, the ones we lost are what I
12 feel are fighting our spiritual warfare. I truly believe
13 that.

14 I lost my oldest son to suicide. He was
15 depressed. I lost my husband. I lost a half-brother. He
16 killed himself right on my dad's land. My brother next to
17 me cut him down. So, when I say that sickness, they call
18 -- it has a name. It's a dark spirit. Sometimes it crawls
19 up on people's shoulders and whispers in their ears.

20 This is where we've got to find our
21 protection. We've got to find that shield that protects
22 our hearts and our minds. That's why I'm here to speak.
23 I've been suppressing my feelings for so long. I am a home
24 care nurse. I proudly work for the Maskwacis Health

1 Services, formerly known as Hobbema. We have 17,000 people
2 there, and we fight this every day. There's so many
3 people.

4 It has become where we can't even pay our
5 own respects to the elders there. We're dealing with
6 another one the next day or next week. Some people reach
7 out and some don't, and that's the scary part. They still
8 dwell in their darkness and figure they're all alone.

9 So, if this message gets out to anybody to
10 reach the youth, to reach the lonely, to reach the hurting,
11 please find somebody. There's somebody to connect to out
12 there. I say this because, well, my son was a great young
13 man. He composed music, just like my sister, composed
14 poetry. He composed songs, and he would come sing by my
15 bedside and we would sing songs together. That was my
16 sister's story.

17 Now, I moved away when I was in my early
18 twenties, and I got married to a Cree. So, my children are
19 Sioux-Cree or Cree-Sioux. I don't know which one you want
20 to pick, but they're from both nations, very proud of their
21 nations.

22 My daughter moved back here to Chase. Me
23 and my youngest son, we still living in Alberta. And, I
24 have my chichum (ph) Tyrell, who is named after my son that

1 passed away. And, my grandson Calvin, he's named after my
2 late husband. My oldest granddaughter, Jelise (ph). So,
3 I'm a kokum kia (ph). I'm a grandmother. And mom is the
4 great-grandmother, great Mama Bear.

5 So, hence, though we hurt, though we have to
6 cry, we have to carry on in life, like my family said.
7 There are still so many people that need that help, need
8 that support, whether it be financially, whether it be just
9 listening to them, whether it be guiding them through their
10 spiritual path to find themselves again, because a lot of
11 it is lost identity of who they really are. They don't
12 know who they are or where they come from.

13 Some of the families I've met, they got lost
14 with gangs or whatever, so-called families that said they
15 would look after them. But when things hit the fan, so to
16 speak, they're not there for them.

17 With my sister, I picked up my mom. I had
18 to hire some friends to bring us back to Hobbema. At the
19 time, that's what it was called. So, there wasn't enough
20 room for her to come to be at my home for a while. So, my
21 mom called me and there was just enough room for her. And,
22 she said, "Well, I'll catch the bus tomorrow, and I'll
23 catch you guys up. I'll phone Mom at 9:00 and let you know
24 that I'm coming." "Okay. You be safe. You take care

1 tonight. Don't let nothing happen." "Yes, Annie, I'll be
2 okay."

3 Anyway, so we made it back home. And, my
4 mom always has to keep busy doing something. So, she was
5 doing my laundry, and I went to work that morning. And, at
6 the time, I was receptionist at the health centre. That's
7 how I started out there.

8 And, I got this call, and I couldn't
9 understand who was on the phone. All I could hear was that
10 screaming. And then I kind of recognized the voice, and,
11 "Mom?" And, she said, "Julia is dead." "Mom, why do you
12 say that?" "I got a phone call. They said, 'She's dead.'" I
13 said, "Mom, no, don't say that. Mom, I'll phone the
14 police. I'll phone somebody. Please don't say that. I'll
15 be right there, Mom." And, she was sobbing, and she hung
16 up the phone.

17 And, I started my phone calls, phoned the
18 hospital and I phoned the police. And, they wouldn't give
19 me answers right away. They wanted to know who I was and
20 how I'm related and where my mom was. So, I gave them all
21 the information. "I just need to know how my sister is.
22 Where is she?" And, they just said, "I'm sorry, Mrs.
23 Buffalo. She's not with us no longer." And, I just
24 dropped the phone. I said, "Well, I've got to go up to my

1 mom." And, I just told my co-workers. I said, "I have to
2 go."

3 Anyways, my husband and my family, we packed
4 up all our stuff. And, there wasn't a word said all the
5 eight hours of travelling from there to back home. We were
6 just all in shock.

7 And then what I found out is I guess he kind
8 of had everything premeditated, and had the gun ready, and
9 had the note ready, and had drugged my brothers so they
10 couldn't wake up, put it in their drinks, because my other
11 brother, he was a fighter. He would not let nothing happen
12 to him, neither would Joey. Joey was soft-spoken, kind-
13 hearted, would talk things out, but Jerry was the other
14 way. You do him wrong, he'll let you know.

15 Anyways, they woke up and they said there
16 was stillness in the house, and they got up, said Julia was
17 lying face down in the hallway, and he talked to me that it
18 was like execution style, that her knees were imprinted
19 where she was. Her face was blown off. So, he shot her in
20 the back of the head.

21 And then he, himself, went back to their
22 room. And, he was on his knees. It looked like as if he
23 was sobbing or praying. But, the gun was up underneath his
24 chin. He blew his brains out. His brains were on the

1 ceiling. And then my brother didn't know that, and he was
2 kicking him, "What the hell did you do to my sister?" Both
3 gone.

4 And, it was just so hard to bring my mom
5 back to her home, and she was almost collapsing, going back
6 into that house. But it had been and it still is a house
7 of love and family.

8 And, it took a while to, you know -- because
9 they said something usually with people that do wrong, our
10 so-called enemies, I was taught you have to pray for them,
11 because something so devastating usually happened to them
12 for them to be like that.

13 So, it took every ounce of being, too, for
14 my brothers not to go after that man, too. They hated.
15 They wanted to string him up. They wanted to take it out
16 on somebody for losing our loved one, for taking that
17 little boy's parents, because, deep down, we knew Darryl
18 was good, but he went to a place where he couldn't come
19 back.

20 And then he thought -- because he only in
21 confidence told my sister what he was going through. And,
22 he thought if he let her go, she's going to tell the world
23 and all those bad secrets would come out. So, we didn't
24 learn a lot of this until after or else we would have done

1 something before. But, in hence, we're doing something
2 now. It's a long time coming.

3 And, my other sister, Joannie, she was, you
4 know -- I mean, we're all big sisters, and she was trying
5 to help Julia to get onto an educational path and to be a
6 strong woman for herself and get her and her son a life.
7 And, Darryl didn't like that because he figured Joannie was
8 interfering and taking her away from him.

9 And, he put in that letter that, "Joannie,
10 it's all your fault." Joannie, that's not your fault, not
11 my brother's fault, not my fault, nobody's fault. And, she
12 knew, like according -- like with some of her poetries
13 here, she knew. She didn't know when.

14 Anyways, that's -- it's like I was told by
15 an elder, like, "Sometimes the shortest distance is the
16 hardest distance, and that's between our heart and our
17 mind." Because sometimes you listen to your emotions and
18 you're not listening to the logic of life, so those two
19 have to work in harmony to be in sync with life.

20 I just want to read one more poem. This one
21 is called "Spring." *Listen to the birds singing. Watch*
22 *the flowers blossom. The bees are buzzing, flying in the*
23 *sunning sun. The grass is turning green. The trees*
24 *changing colour. The spring makes such a beautiful scene,*

1 *makes your stomach flutter. Can't you feel the warm*
2 *breeze, the winds blowing through our hair, listening to it*
3 *go through the trees, the trees no longer bare. Remember,*
4 *spring only comes once a year. Enjoy as much as you can.*
5 *But when it is gone, wipe that tear, just watch the*
6 *changing land.* By Julia Manuel.

7 And, that's how my sister was. That's her
8 heart. That's her soul speaking to us. I think that's all
9 I have for now. Thank you. All my elations.

10 **MR. THOMAS BARNETT:** Thank you. The
11 Commissioner might have some questions for Minnie and
12 Johanne.

13 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Minnie,
14 Johanne, thank you very much for telling us about Julia and
15 for sharing. I have a couple of follow-up questions if you
16 don't mind.

17 Okay, Minnie, you talked about being people
18 with our own ways and about not able to go back to all the
19 ways, but you talked about the importance of that. I'm
20 just wondering if you could comment a little bit further on
21 if you had any recommendations about what people can do in
22 that way.

23 **MS. MINNIE KENORAS:** Yes. Well, I did kind
24 of look around at things like the families that are living

1 in homes today. The homes they're living in today are not
2 suitable for them. They're living in these homes that --
3 well, their homes are crowded. Their homes are built, and
4 so many families are in homes today that there's no room.
5 And, also, that they built places they shouldn't be built
6 and in rock piles and things and whatever. There's no
7 spaces for kids to play even or anything like that.

8 But, the thing is this is what I'm trying to
9 say. We have room out in the -- acres and acres of land by
10 the lakes and we have places. Well, this is why I've got
11 the cabin coming up. My image is to bring the people out
12 on the land and start living again on that land, start
13 digging in that soil and start finding out who you really
14 belong. Because once you start digging in that soil and
15 start making your own home, that is your home and this is
16 where you should be bringing your children.

17 Our people used to camp, have camps all the
18 time, underground homes. And, actually, come in the
19 spring, we're going to be building one of these underground
20 homes up in Tomtom (ph). And, we're going to put one of
21 those homes on it somewhere and another lot, building later
22 on.

23 We're trying to bring -- teach people what's
24 gone. We're teaching them, we have to move out on the

1 land. We have to start looking that we can live again in
2 spaces where we can take our children. And, we don't have
3 to build a fancy home. We can have log buildings. We can
4 have underground units to build there.

5 And, we still have Mother Earth. We still
6 have the fruits and we have the things on the land that we
7 can still use, and the medicines. We have people now that
8 together with the medicine plants and things, we have all
9 kinds. And, living off the land, my group, I have a
10 working body.

11 Some of them do the business of medicines
12 and some of them are doing the hunting, the fishing camps,
13 and some of them are doing all kinds of different things of
14 living on the land. And, young men are coming out to build
15 a cabin and all kinds of things. So, I have a working
16 body.

17 I don't have to go and advertise for a
18 working body. I have a working body. So, we can get the
19 people organized like that, the young people, again, like
20 that. So, we can go back and live, maybe not all the way
21 we wanted to go back.

22 And, our languages are getting really
23 strong. People are talking in that language. I can't talk
24 it fully, but I can understand it. And so, they teach it

1 in different schools now. And, my sons and my daughters
2 are learning it. But, we never had it in our home. Their
3 dad spoke it, but he didn't speak to them. Their
4 grandmother spoke it, and she didn't speak to them, so they
5 didn't learn it within the home.

6 So, now, they're reaching out where it can
7 be taught, and even on the -- my son has a phone like this,
8 and he's going down the road, and he's listening to his
9 Indian language. And so, "Oh, Son, you don't need me now."

10 He said, "I need you, Mom, but it's just I'm
11 listening to the -- you know, taking lessons today." He
12 has a word, and he goes by me and he says the word. And
13 then he'll tell me, like, (*speaks Secwepemctsin language*)
14 and things like that, that to me, he'll tell me words.
15 And, he says, "Is that the way I'm supposed to say it?"
16 And then I tell him, "Yes, that is good, Joey. You're
17 doing really good."

18 So, I mean, you can get those on the phone.
19 It's operated now in the schools, so it is coming out in
20 different in different kinds of phases. People are
21 teaching them in our schools, and in the schools and by
22 this nowadays. So, things are coming back. To me, not
23 fast enough though. I like to move fast, and I would like
24 it back tomorrow. So, yes.

1 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Thank you. I
2 have one other question for you as well. So, one issue
3 that comes up in the National Inquiry is, what happens to
4 -- what about the children that are left when a mother is
5 lost? And, you talked about raising Colby.

6 **MS. MINNIE KENORAS:** Yes.

7 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** So, I'm just
8 wondering if you had anything to comment on in terms of,
9 did you have the supports you needed? What were the things
10 that helped or were there things that could have helped or
11 anything like that?

12 **MS. MINNIE KENORAS:** Well, I really think
13 that depends on the unit where the child is. And, as in
14 courts right now, I do work with all clients right now.
15 But, I would rather be working with the children. But, I
16 can see, as a foster mother, I had children taken away from
17 one home and brought to my home. And then I was only
18 supposed to have her for a month, and they took her back to
19 replace her again to another home.

20 And, guess what? She ran away and came back
21 to my home. And, they took her again, and they took her to
22 another home. She ran back and come back to my home again.
23 It is where you put these children, and where the love is
24 for these children, and how they treat it.

1 And, it's not about money. It's not about
2 buying them treats. It's about the love and affection that
3 you give them, the respect when they are little. And
4 babies, even babies know when you are holding that baby,
5 how you're holding that baby, how you talk to that baby.
6 This is what I told my children when they have their baby,
7 the baby inside them knows exactly. So, you have to talk
8 to that baby.

9 And so that's the same with our children.
10 They have feelings. They have feelings. And, those
11 children that are lost, we have to look for their parents
12 first, their grandparents first. If there's no
13 grandparents or grandmother to look after them, we have to
14 look at the aunties, the relatives, the uncles.

15 I don't want them seen off to other places,
16 just taken away to another reserve or another town. They
17 have to replace those families. And, we have to look into
18 that thoroughly, because you're hurting that child. You're
19 not -- like, you're not giving them the best by giving the
20 best monies, the best care. You have to look into how you
21 can look after the love of that child. The money can't buy
22 love.

23 **MS. JOHANNE BUFFALO:** Another part of that
24 is, say, when a person is getting older to become into

1 eldership, there's protocols and things to know. They
2 enhance same parenthood, these foster parents, these
3 grandparents, whoever has taken that precious child over
4 needs that nurturing also, because if their heart and mind
5 is not well, then they're not bring up that child well.
6 So, they might have in goodwill that they want to do things
7 right, but if their patterns aren't right in the beginning,
8 that whole family needs to be blessed in protocols.

9 And, those teachings have been forgotten
10 along the road somewhere, because you automatically think,
11 oh, they were parents. They've got to know everything.
12 But, if they were brought up, say, in the cities or
13 somewhere that they had no traditional ways of teaching,
14 then you're making more of an issue than helping, more of a
15 problem than you're helping. So, those things have to be
16 researched.

17 And, if that family is willing to go through
18 the proper channels of being that foster parent in here, in
19 here, then they will be the right ones. It's not automatic
20 to think, oh, that person is right, because you can have a
21 good face here and the heart could be not right or vice
22 versa.

23 **MS. MINNIE KENORAS:** Yes, I'm sorry to say
24 but money has been buying everything that they call love.

1 And, a lot of our kids are taken into homes where they
2 don't even get to wear the clothes that the money is
3 supposed to buy or the food they're supposed to buy. I saw
4 this happen.

5 I was -- '75 as a counsellor and kicked out
6 Indian Affairs (indiscernible). And, I was the first
7 social worker. So, I had to stand up -- closed down two
8 stores, because the men were picking up the cheques, and
9 the money wasn't getting home to the children.

10 And so, you know, that's the money, the
11 cheque, and I -- if they would have given food, it would
12 have got home. But, no, they choose to give them a cheque
13 and money, it never got home.

14 So, those are the shortcuts, like, of
15 people, well, you know, we've seen. A lot of times, people
16 today, they give cheques out to them. And, I'm saying you
17 put them to work, make them work for their, you know, for
18 their cheques or give them half and half money, like half
19 cheque money, half food. Things have to be worked out
20 because that cheque, sometimes it's gone within an hour.
21 And, here they are, they don't have nothing for their
22 children. I've saw this.

23 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Thank you.

24 I'm just wondering if I could just ask Johanne a follow-up

1 question about some of the things she referred to as well.

2 **MS. JOHANNE BUFFALO:** Mm-hmm.

3 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Joanne, you
4 talked about people who were not well. You referred to a
5 dark spirit, the need to find a shield, and that some
6 people reach out and some people don't. And, you also
7 talked about having a lost identity. So I understand
8 you're a nurse, and this could be a huge conversation.
9 But, I just want to ask if you had any comments to add on
10 of anything, things that you see that could be done -- that
11 are being done that could be done to help Indigenous people
12 in these situations, in our communities.

13 **MS. JOHANNE BUFFALO:** We have all kinds of,
14 say, first responders. We have some grassroots people
15 that, say, they have, like, mental health first aid, trauma
16 informed care. Just I suppose you wouldn't say in -- back
17 home there when the crisis of suicide happens, sometimes
18 things can be volatile. The family could be really upset.

19 And, a lot of it has to do with follow-up
20 care, too. Just, say, like after a funeral, a lot of
21 people are around, and they're there to help the families
22 or the person that's in need. And then when everything is
23 kind of settled, then they're alone.

24 There has to be some way, mechanism of being

1 there for that person wholeheartedly, even if it's just to
2 sit there in silence, to check in on that person. It's, I
3 guess, the same sort of speaking of you can take the horse
4 to water, but you can't force him to drink, but if they
5 know that things are -- you can offer, and he chooses, like
6 what you've done here.

7 You gave us a choice, and we'll choose on
8 our own, and sometimes in our own time. Native people
9 don't like to be rushed. I guess as we can see by this
10 morning, things don't go perfectly on the dime or on the
11 clock, but we get it done. And, I guess, it's done in the
12 time it's supposed to be done.

13 Lost souls, that's a big one, lost
14 identities. You first have to know that you are a soul,
15 that you do have an identity, that you are worthy, that you
16 are a person. There are some people, like even back there.
17 We call them regulators. They make it to town. They
18 hitchhike. They get their drinks every day. They have a
19 little village, almost like a tent village or whatever.
20 They look after each other. They fight each other. Of
21 course, townspeople don't like that, but this is how they
22 regulate; hence, regulators.

23 Some of them are very -- one was a
24 championship boxer. He won golden gloves, but got mixed up

1 with the wrong drugs, lost his family. So, you can't just
2 -- nobody can be judged. It's just for trying to see that
3 person as a person, because they are somebody's brother.
4 They are somebody's son, sister, mother. They are
5 somebody.

6 Each one of us came into this world as a
7 precious human being. Some of us fought tooth and nail to
8 be here, because there are preemies. Now, they're able to
9 survive. Before, there was not much success. And then
10 there are ones that are born that come with addictions
11 already, children that have addictions. So, they already
12 have something to fight before they even can walk.

13 And, just saying with my mom, I was carrying
14 my youngest son when she passed away. And, I was seeing
15 all the turmoils he went through. I think I was feeling
16 those feelings because when you're carrying a child, they
17 tell you to protect your thoughts, protect your feelings,
18 protect. Because you're not just protecting yourself,
19 you're protecting the precious being beside you.

20 So, I can kind of see, you know, why we're
21 going through the things we're going through. So, it even
22 starts way, way, way back. So, in saying that, it's a lot
23 of nurturing and love. And, I know some people think, "Oh,
24 my God, that's too much." But, it's just not enough. It's

1 not enough.

2 And, when I feel a dark place or I get
3 scared in my dreams, I have a real scary dream, something
4 is not right and I see darkness in the eyes, no light, I
5 pray to the Creator. And, I say, "Bless us all, everyone."
6 And, I come back. I wake up. And, that's what I say to
7 every one of us that are in darkness right now, "Bless us
8 all, everyone." Because we are fighting a great fight,
9 whether we know it or not. It may come in the form of
10 murdered and missing women right now, but there is that
11 evilness out there and, you know.

12 But, on the physical part of it, we're here
13 to do our duties and our tasks, whether it's right now to
14 give an injection to a psych patient, to give him his
15 medication, to monitor his health, making sure his
16 delusions -- where he can go on with life.

17 And same, enhance the ones that had hurt us.
18 We could have gone the other route but no, we're here.
19 We're fighters in a different way. So, whether you're a
20 nurse, whether you're a commissioner, whether you're a
21 filmmaker, whether you're an actor, actress, medicine
22 woman, that's in Mama Bear. We are all helpers. We are
23 all fighting for the same cause in a different way. And,
24 that's what keeps me going.

1 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Thank you. I
2 don't have any other questions. If there's no other
3 questions or comments, we could draw this session to a
4 close.

5 **MR. THOMAS BARNETT:** Thank you,
6 Commissioner. If we could adjourn this session?

7 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Okay. Before
8 we adjourn, first of all, I want to thank you very much,
9 Minnie and Johanne, for coming in and sharing. And, I just
10 want to acknowledge your strength and resilience and,
11 Minnie, your fierce independence.

12 And, we just have a couple of tokens of
13 appreciation, small gifts of appreciation for you coming
14 and sharing. And, I want to thank all your supports for
15 being here as well. I'm going to ask Grandmother Blu to
16 help with these small gifts that we have before you go.
17 Thank you.

18 **MS. JOHANNE BUFFALO:** I just want to say my
19 gratification for all of you, for listening to our story
20 and invitation to be here. And, I hope our story at least
21 touches one person out there to come forward and get the
22 healing or find that right path they need to find. And,
23 I'm very thankful my cousins made it here, and Jody is
24 here. And, this circle that we have with us. Mom wants to

1 say a couple of words.

2 **MS. MINNIE KENORAS:** I'm the Bear Clan.
3 That's why they call me the bear. My mother was a bear,
4 and she gave me all her strength. She even healed my body.
5 I was in a car crash once. My whole back was broken at the
6 back. And, she came to me as a bear and healed me.
7 Powerful. So, she comes around, and she's around right
8 now.

9 And, anyways, I would really like to thank
10 you for -- I didn't even know I was going to be here. I
11 just got a call and they say, "Those are angels calling you
12 to do my job." Those angels called me. You people are
13 working out there, like my angels. You're paving a way to
14 help some other people.

15 Thomas, he has called me a lot, so he's one
16 of my angels. So, he talked to me quite a lot on the
17 phone. And, I picture him, as I told him today, that
18 Darryl was a good-looking boy, a handsome boy, and he so
19 remind me of Darryl. I forgive Darryl, so now he's back
20 with Julia and he's an angel again. So, I know that was
21 really hard to do, but I did it, and I feel really great
22 about it.

23 And, I just -- the more people I can help,
24 the better I feel. And, the thing is being here is one of

1 them. I watch APTN a lot. I've seen the people on APTN.
2 I've seen you talking there. I've watched. And, my heart
3 goes out to you. I've seen the good and the bad and the
4 ugly, so I take it that way.

5 And, I say, "Oh, my God, I wish I was there
6 sitting with them, talking right now. I wish I was there."
7 And now, my daughter Judy here, says, "Mom, you will be one
8 of these days." So maybe, yes.

9 But, anyways, thank you again from deeply
10 down in my heart from my whole family, and may meet you
11 again. Okay, thanks a lot.

12 **GRANDMOTHER LAUREN BLU WATERS:** So, these
13 gifts that we'd like to offer you, just a small token of
14 appreciation. Commissioner Brian will give each of you
15 there an eagle feather. And, these feathers have come from
16 this territory as well, from the matriarchs.

17 We put a call out and they gave us hundreds
18 and hundreds of feathers to give to each of the witnesses,
19 to help them with their journey, so that your prayers are
20 constantly heard, and you're acknowledged for the work that
21 you're doing. As well as some seeds, so that you can plant
22 them to see the beauty that is around us each and every day
23 amongst all the trauma and all of the things that are not
24 so good. But at least this way, you'll have something to

1 look forward to and to nourish and watch it flourish.

2 **MS. JOHANNE BUFFALO:** My mom wanted to also
3 give you a gift of sage from our territory, and she made
4 these pouches herself, so ---

5 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** So, at this
6 point, we'll adjourn this session. And, counsel, maybe --
7 do you have an idea as to when we should be back for the
8 next session?

9 **MR. THOMAS BARNETT:** Commissioner, perhaps
10 we should adjourn for 15 minutes. I understand that we
11 might have lunch coming up as well, but for now, if we
12 could adjourn for 15 minutes?

13 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Okay, let's
14 adjourn for 15 minutes for now. Thank you.

15 **MR. THOMAS BARNETT:** Thank you.

16 --- Upon adjourning at 12:03

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LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

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



Shirley Chang
April 16, 2018