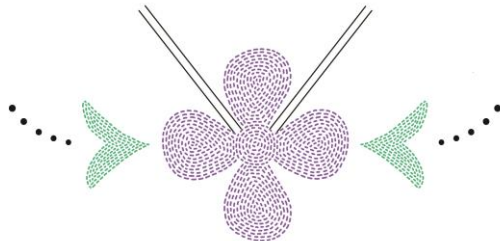


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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 Statement Gathering
Regina, Saskatchewan
The Gathering Place**



PUBLIC

August 28, 2018

Statement - Volume 476

**Ezekial Bigknife,
In relation to Kelly Goforth**

**Statement gathered by Francine Merasty,
Commission Counsel**

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II
NOTE

Where not required by other statute, redactions to this public transcript have been made pursuant to Rule 55 of the Commission's *Legal Path: Rules of Respectful Practice*, which provides for "the discretion to redact private information of a sensitive nature where it is not material to the evidence to be given before distributing the information to the Parties. The National Inquiry will consider the public interest in releasing this type of information against the potential harmful impact on the individual whose personal information is at issue."

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Statement gatherer: Francine Merasty, Commission Counsel

Documents submitted with testimony: none.

1 Regina, Saskatchewan

2 --- Upon commencing on Tuesday, August 28, 2018

3 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** All right. This is
4 Francine Merasty with the National Inquiry Into Missing and
5 Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls speaking on the record
6 with Ezekial Bigknife of Star Blanket Cree -- is it Cree
7 Nation?

8 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Yeah.

9 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** And he lives here in
10 Regina. We're in Regina, Saskatchewan. The date is
11 August 28, 2018. Ezekial Bigknife, you are here to
12 voluntarily give your statement in the matter of your
13 sister -- your sister Kelly Goforth, and present with us in
14 the room is Bethany Rope, and he -- she's providing support
15 for Ezekial. Your statement will be audio-recorded today,
16 and you've also allowed us to video-tape your statement.
17 Can you please confirm that you agree with this?

18 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Yes.

19 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Okay. So what do you
20 want to share with the Inquiry, Ezekial?

21 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Just my truth,
22 statement, how I feel and how it made me feel when Kelly
23 was murdered.

24 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** So do you want to
25 talk about what happened?

1 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Well, around
2 September of 2013, about mid-September, Kelly went missing,
3 and she was missing for about a week, and she didn't come
4 home, and everybody was wondering where she was, and it
5 wasn't like Kelly to not come home, so, you know, everyone
6 thought the worst, and after about five days or so, we put
7 a missing report on Kelly and continued to look through
8 Regina for her and all the places Kelly was known to go,
9 and some people said they seen her, and some said they
10 never did see her, and for the people that said they did
11 see her, we'd look around for her.

12 And she was -- didn't -- didn't find her,
13 and I remember that day was September 22nd. I was at
14 my -- I was at my cousin's house, and we didn't -- still
15 didn't hear anything about Kelly, and it was about
16 midnight, and we were just sitting there, and my sister
17 [Sister 1] was sleeping in her room, and my niece came over
18 and she was crying, and so I answered the door and I asked
19 her, what's wrong? And she -- she was crying and she told
20 me they had found Kelly, and so I was happy because I
21 thought she was alive, and she told me -- told me she was
22 dead.

23 And where we live there was downtown, so I
24 ran home. I ran all the way home, and I didn't stop till I
25 got to my house, and I seen a bunch of my family members

1 sitting outside crying, and I met my mom down the block.
2 Then she told me the police came to see her and they found
3 Kelly, and I remember that day -- or that night. She told
4 me the police told me they'd found her. They didn't say
5 where, and it wasn't about -- for about a week after that,
6 we didn't find out that she was -- she was found in a
7 dumpster, and it wasn't even by the police that we found
8 out. It was through the newspapers, that these men that
9 would go there all the time looking in garbage bins found
10 her in a hockey bag, and then in the newspaper it said it
11 was a sick or injured persons. We thought she was -- could
12 have been still alive, but she was already passed away
13 before they put her in that hockey bag, and it wasn't until
14 New Year's going into 2013 that the police told us they
15 arrested somebody for -- for murdering Kelly, and I
16 remember that because I didn't know how to take that.

17 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Before your sister
18 went missing, was she going out somewhere?

19 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** She said she was
20 going to the store, going to the store to get smokes, to
21 get some pop and chips and that she'd be right back.

22 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** She didn't come back.

23 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** No.

24 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** And then after the
25 police were called, what -- how did they do the

1 investigation? Did they -- like, who was the person that
2 they talked to? Your mom?

3 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Yeah. They just said
4 that they were going to look for her and go to all the
5 addresses that she was known to go to all the time and let
6 us know if they found her.

7 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Yeah. And how many
8 days after she went missing did they find her?

9 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** I think it was, like,
10 almost a week, almost a week after she went missing.

11 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** So after she was
12 reported missing, did they have missing posters up or
13 anything?

14 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** No, we -- we put
15 posters up, social media and at places like here, at the
16 Gathering Place, but --

17 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** And --

18 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** -- but I don't
19 remember them putting up any posters.

20 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** So then after they
21 found her and -- it was a year later that they found
22 somebody to arrest?

23 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** It was about three
24 months after the -- after she was found that they found
25 somebody. Yeah.

1 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** And was there a trial
2 for this person?

3 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** During the trial, he
4 just admitted that he did it, and they charged him for
5 second-degree murder because he didn't want to get charged
6 for first-degree murder for another missing woman he...

7 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** What -- what was this
8 person's name?

9 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Clayton Bo Eichler.

10 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** And so he was taken
11 to court and he got second-degree murder for your sister's
12 death?

13 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Yeah.

14 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** And was he charged
15 with another person's death?

16 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Yeah.

17 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** And who was that one?

18 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Richele Bear.

19 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** So he murdered two
20 women?

21 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Yes.

22 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Yeah. And what did
23 he get through the court?

24 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** I think he got
25 20 years with no chance of parole for 18 years.

1 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Yeah. And how do you
2 feel about that?

3 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** I don't like it. I
4 think he could have got more time for that.

5 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Yeah.

6 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Especially for
7 throwing somebody away in the garbage like they
8 didn't -- like they didn't matter.

9 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Yeah. How old was
10 your sister?

11 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** I think she just
12 turned 22.

13 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** How old were you at
14 the time?

15 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** I was 14 years old.

16 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Can you tell me about
17 your sister?

18 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** She was a -- a loving
19 and caring person. She really cared about family. She
20 really loved family gatherings. We were the both youngest
21 in our family of all our siblings. We used to always
22 go -- she used to take me to stores and take me places with
23 her and her spouse, and she really loved her son KC because
24 I remember she always wanted a child, and KC wasn't even 1
25 years old before his mom got killed, and he wasn't even 1

1 when his dad died too. So Kelly took that pretty hard
2 because I remember I was there for Kelly when her partner
3 died.

4 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** What happened to her
5 partner?

6 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** He committed suicide.

7 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** How many siblings do
8 you and Kelly have?

9 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** We had five siblings.
10 There was six in total with Kelly, but now we have five.

11 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** So your mom had seven
12 children?

13 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Six.

14 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Six?

15 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Sorry. Yeah. She
16 had three daughters and three sons.

17 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** And where did you
18 guys grow up?

19 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** We grew up on
20 Star Blanket reserve.

21 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** And then you guys
22 moved to Regina?

23 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Yeah. We moved to
24 Regina in 2011, but we moved -- we tried to live in Regina
25 around 2006 or '7, but my mom and dad got divorced, and me

1 and my brothers moved back to live with my grandmother.

2 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** How come your parents
3 got divorced?

4 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** I think it was just
5 insecurities with my mom and dad, and my mom started
6 drinking again, and she started using drugs and just didn't
7 want to be with my dad anymore, so we lived with him for a
8 couple months, and then we -- me and my brothers were
9 placed into foster care.

10 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** How long were you in
11 foster care?

12 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** About -- about a
13 year, year and a half.

14 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** On the reserve?

15 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** First we were placed
16 in Piapot First Nation with two foster parents, but -- and
17 Kelly was with us there, too, because she didn't want us
18 boys to be separated and not be alone, so she came with us
19 for about two months, but those people we were living with,
20 they were -- they mistreated us all the time, and -- so
21 Kelly flipped out because there was a -- there was a guy
22 there that would -- would always try and get around Kelly,
23 but she didn't like that so she flipped out, and she got
24 transferred to a group home, and then it was about, like, a
25 month or two after she left that I flipped out. We got

1 transferred back to Regina, and my grandmother took us into
2 her care, and Kelly wasn't even her biological grandchild
3 but she brought Kelly with us because she knew how
4 much -- how close we were with our siblings.

5 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** And when you say
6 mistreated, how were you treated at the foster care?

7 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** They would just treat
8 all their -- their actual biological grandchildren better
9 than us, and they just didn't like us, I think, and then
10 they would let their grandchildren play their
11 games -- (indiscernible) -- but not -- not me, I think,
12 because I -- because I had threw tantrums sometimes when
13 they'd get mad -- get mad at us, and so I finally threw
14 that one big temper tantrum to go home because I was
15 talking to my mom on the phone, and after that the foster
16 parent, the guy, he came upstairs and hung up the phone
17 while I was talking to my mom, and -- so I got mad and I
18 threw the phone at him. Then he tried to fight me because
19 I kicked a hole in their wall, and then they took us to
20 Regina to mobile crisis centre to drop us off.

21 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** How far is Piapot
22 from where you lived?

23 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** It was about a
24 half-hour to 45-minute drive from Regina.

25 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** And how far is

1 Star Blanket from Regina here?

2 MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE: About an hour and
3 20 minutes.

4 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So they're all fairly
5 close, hey?

6 MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE: Yeah.

7 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah. So you and
8 Kelly were there, and who else was there?

9 MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE: My brother [Brother
10 1] and my brother [Brother 2].

11 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And they're a little
12 bit older than you?

13 MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE: Yeah.

14 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah. So before you
15 got -- you guys got taken by foster care, what happened?
16 Like, why were you guys taken? What was happening in the
17 home?

18 MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE: Because -- my mom was
19 always gone drinking, and I remember my two older sisters,
20 [Sister 1] and [Sister 2], we were with them at my -- my
21 relatives' house, but his girlfriend didn't like us or like
22 my mom, and then so she phoned the welfare on us, the
23 police, so they were coming to take us out of her house, so
24 me and my siblings, we started running in the alleys, and I
25 remember my sisters told me and my brothers to hide behind

1 this trailer because the cops were in front looking for us,
2 so we were hiding, and we went running to a nearby 7-Eleven
3 because my -- my late uncle was staying there, and he
4 always said to come over if anything ever happened, so we
5 were making our way there, and the police seen us on the
6 corner crossing the street and they stopped us and -- and
7 asked us where we were coming from, and they knew who we
8 were, so they took us to my uncle's house, and the next
9 morning when we woke up, our mom was there saying sorry and
10 that she wasn't going to let the welfare take us, but
11 the -- the police and the welfare came back to make sure we
12 were in a stable environment, but they were -- the girl in
13 that home there was caught -- found using drugs in the
14 bathroom, so we got apprehended.

15 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** So you were in foster
16 care for one year before you guys went back to your mom?

17 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Yeah. Yeah. We
18 stayed with our grandmother for a while.

19 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** How was it going to
20 school in Piapot?

21 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** It was -- I didn't
22 like it.

23 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** How come?

24 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Just didn't feel like
25 home, and there was kids at that school that knew we

1 weren't even from there and would try to bully me, so I'd
2 always get into fights at that school.

3 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** What grade were you
4 in?

5 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** I think I was Grade 2
6 or 3.

7 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** And during this time
8 when you got apprehended here, was that in Regina?

9 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Yes.

10 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** And your mom and your
11 dad, where was he?

12 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** He was in
13 Regina -- in Regina.

14 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Oh, your -- they were
15 still living together?

16 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** No.

17 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** No.

18 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** They were separated
19 already.

20 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Oh, okay. And where
21 did your mother grow up?

22 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** She grew up on
23 Peepeekisis.

24 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** And do you know
25 anything about her background, like, where -- how she grew

1 up?

2 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** She grew up in
3 residential school, her and all her siblings.

4 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Which one -- which
5 residential school?

6 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** I think --

7 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Lebret?

8 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** I think it was Lebret
9 or Gordon. It was one of the two.

10 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** And did she stay
11 there for a long time?

12 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** I think she stayed
13 there for two years.

14 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Oh, okay. Does she
15 ever talk about her time there?

16 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** She rarely talks
17 about it. She just mentions it when -- when I ask about it
18 or -- but I haven't asked about it for a couple years.

19 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Yeah. What about
20 your dad?

21 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** He grew up on
22 Star Blanket, and the -- I don't even know if he was in
23 residential school. I don't think so because he never said
24 anything about it.

25 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** And your

1 grandparents?

2 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** On my mom's side,
3 they were in residential school. On my dad's side, they
4 weren't.

5 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** So your grandparents
6 also went to residential school?

7 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Yeah.

8 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Where -- where did
9 they go?

10 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** I think my late
11 grandfather went to Lebret, he said.

12 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** And is your grandma
13 still alive?

14 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Yeah.

15 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Where does she live?

16 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** She lives on
17 Star Blanket.

18 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Oh, that's the one on
19 your dad's side?

20 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Yeah.

21 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Yeah. And your mom's
22 side?

23 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** My grandfather passed
24 away, and his wife's still alive. She lives up here.

25 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Are you close to her?

1 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Yeah. Yeah, I -- I
2 usually take her -- take her -- we do her grocery shopping.

3 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Oh, okay. Is that
4 the lady that's here?

5 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** No. No.

6 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Oh, no. So your
7 sister was murdered in 2012 or 2013?

8 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** 2012.

9 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** 2012? Okay. And
10 then three months later, that guy was caught, I guess, and
11 then how long did it take before he went to court? Like,
12 right away?

13 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** About a year or two
14 years.

15 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Okay. And then he
16 got put in jail for 17 years?

17 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Yeah.

18 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Yeah. Did you
19 guys -- have you guys done anything for your sister, like,
20 to honour her, like feasts or round dance or anything like
21 that?

22 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** I think -- well, we
23 put on barbecues in the community every year for -- just to
24 honour her, and I think they did a special, for her, the
25 pow-wow.

1 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** What do you think
2 might have helped your sister?

3 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** I think if she just
4 had more resources she could have went to for help when she
5 was going through that rough time.

6 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Yeah.

7 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Because I remember
8 just when I was about 6 or 7, she said she was sexually
9 assaulted by a police officer, and I remember they had to
10 come to Regina for that but never really heard anything
11 about it after that.

12 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** This happened on the
13 reserve?

14 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** I'm not too sure.
15 She just said it was a -- pretty sure she said it was an
16 undercover police officer, but she never really talked
17 about it.

18 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** How -- how do you
19 think -- what do you think would make things better for
20 Indigenous women and girls?

21 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** I think if they just
22 had other resources in the community a lot of them can go
23 to so they can talk to and get help for whatever they're
24 going through.

25 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Has anybody else

1 provided a statement of inquiry regarding your sister?

2 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** I think my sister
3 [Sister 2] and my mother, and I believe my brother.

4 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Oh, okay. Is there
5 anything else you'd like to share?

6 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** I just -- I just
7 think he could have got more time for that because
8 they -- they dismissed the charge of -- and sexually
9 assaulting Richele Bear's body after she was dead. It just
10 makes me wonder if he did that to my sister too.

11 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Did they talk about,
12 like, what happened? Did that guy say what happened?

13 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** No. He just -- I
14 think he tried to harm himself the day of the court on the
15 way to the trial, and then there's -- his lawyer just
16 basically told us he was going to plead guilty to both
17 murders, but they said only if he threw out that charge
18 that he was getting charged with indignity to a body.

19 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Where did he meet
20 your sister?

21 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** I think on a street,
22 because we never met him or knew him because Kelly -- Kelly
23 struggled with addiction sometimes, and I think that's how
24 she -- how she met him, just from being on the street.

25 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Yeah. Did she do

1 drugs?

2 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Yeah.

3 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** So where's her baby
4 now?

5 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** He's in my mother's
6 care.

7 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** How old is he?

8 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** I think he just
9 turned 5. I think he turns 6 next -- in October.

10 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Yeah. So what's your
11 favorite memory of your sister?

12 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** I think just -- the
13 last memory I can remember of her was when we had a family
14 barbecue for Canada Day, and all our siblings were there,
15 and the last memory I remember of Kelly was when we were at
16 home and she just got her -- I think it was a welfare
17 cheque, and she gave me and my brother \$20 to split so we
18 could have \$10 each, and I told her I'm not going to give
19 him \$10 as she was leaving, and she came back after she
20 left. She came back, like, five minutes after, and she was
21 like, actually, here, and she gave us -- she just gave us
22 \$20 each so we wouldn't have to fight over \$10, and I
23 remember that because we were laughing over that.

24 It just hurts because the last time I seen
25 Kelly, the very last time I seen Kelly, we weren't on good

1 terms. We were fighting, and I made her cry, and it hurts
2 because what I said in that fight with her because I didn't
3 know that was going to be the last time I would see her.

4 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Do you have anything
5 else to share?

6 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** No. I think that's
7 it.

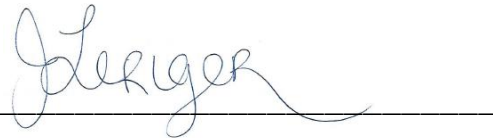
8 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** Okay. Do you feel
9 you've been heard?

10 **MR. EZEKIAL BIGKNIFE:** Yeah.

11 **MS. FRANCINE MERASTY:** All right. It's
12 12:15, Tuesday, August 28th, in Regina, and we're done.
13 --- Upon adjourning at 12:15 p.m.

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

I, Jenessa Leriger, 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.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jenessa Leriger", is written above a solid horizontal line.

Jenessa Leriger

October 3, 2018