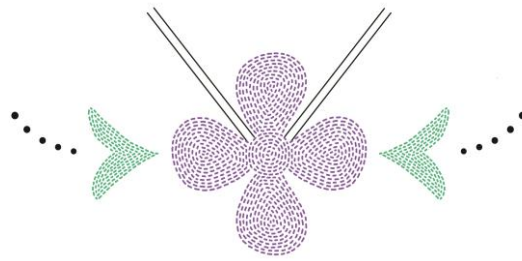


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Statement Gathering
Richmond, British Columbia**



PUBLIC

Friday April 6, 2018

Statement - Volume 354

**Telquaa Helen Michell & Frank Martin, In Relation
to Telquaa's Sister & Mother**

Statement gathered by Frank Hope

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II
ORDER

Pursuant to Rule 7 of *Legal Path: Rules of Respectful Practice*, Chief Commissioner Marion Buller ordered that all names, except those of the witnesses, be made anonymous in this transcript and any related documents. The order for anonymity was made June 11, 2019.

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Statement - Public
Telquaa Helen Michell
& Frank Martin

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Richmond, British Columbia

2 --- Upon commencing Friday, April 6, 2018

3 at 1:12 p.m.

4 MR. FRANK HOPE: My name is Frank Hope,
5 statement gatherer. Today is April the 6th. We're at the
6 Sheraton in Richmond, BC. The time is 1:12 p.m., and your
7 name is?

8 MS. HELEN MICHELL: My Indian name is
9 Telquaa, and that's what I grew up with until I was about
10 six, seven years old and went into the Catholic residential
11 school. At eight -- seven, eight years old after that,
12 then I became Helen Michell with their new name system for
13 us.

14 MR. FRANK HOPE: Okay. Thank you. Your
15 name is?

16 MR. FRANK MARTIN: My name is Adoni (ph) -
17 - my real name. My name is Frank Martin that they gave me
18 in (inaudible).

19 MR. FRANK HOPE: Yeah, thank you.

20 MS. NORONHA: My name is Sanda Noronha,
21 and I'm a support.

22 MR. FRANK HOPE: Thank you. We'll start
23 with you, Helen. In regard to you coming in today, what
24 message is it that you'd like to give the commissioners and
25 any recommendations you would like to give today?

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1 MS. HELEN MICHELL: As a grandmother, a
2 clan mother, and an Indigenous human rights defender, an
3 Indigenous rights defender for -- throughout most of my
4 lifetime, I've hit so many roadblocks throughout all these
5 years and not get nothing done, I feel like, but in this
6 whole process of being a human rights defender, I found
7 that it's very hard for us as Indigenous people to be
8 standing up in the front lines to protect our rights, our
9 land rights, our children's rights, and our elders' rights,
10 and trying to protect the land that was supposedly ours to
11 begin with, and now we -- we are all homeless now, and I
12 find that I lot of the women from this band that I come
13 from on my side of the family were all evicted from the
14 band, and I was one of them that was evicted, too.

15 So I'd like to commissioners to know that
16 this province is the only unceded territory in Canada, and
17 because of all this going on, we've had so much problems in
18 this province that it's so scary to me that, without
19 anything being done, it's going to be a very hardship time
20 for my daughter, my granddaughter, and my great-
21 granddaughter, who are alive today because of my standing
22 up and fighting for our rights, our rights to live, our
23 rights to stay out of poverty, our rights to have homes,
24 our rights to have grandparents, our rights to have our own
25 parents, and our rights to have our own land back, and yet,

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1 it's been so hard for us, and there's nowhere to turn for
2 any of us, and when we do try to find ways to make things
3 right for us, we are always being attacked by the system,
4 whether it's welfare system, social service system, band
5 chief and council system, the justice system, and the worst
6 part of that -- all that is that we have always had to be
7 run-in with the RCMP of BC.

8 And our records go way back when we were
9 five -- when I was five years old that we had our own land
10 at Maxan Lake. We had our own places to live. We had
11 everything all our own, and as soon as the government
12 chiefs came in, we started losing everything. People were
13 getting murdered for their Indigenous names through their
14 territory and whole families were being slaughtered by
15 them, and I think that this -- all this needs to come out
16 to the forefront to make things right in this province,
17 because so far, we've lived through so many police
18 brutality meetings in this province, so many encounters
19 with the RCMP in this province. Like, they act as judge,
20 jury, and executioner with us as Indigenous people of the
21 land, and we don't have no recourse to get into the
22 courtrooms to say our say, and we all -- I've been --
23 always been charged for assaulting a police officer when,
24 in fact, it was the other way around. I get badly beaten
25 up by an officer for standing up for either my rights, my

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1 children's rights, or my elders' rights. Any human person
2 that needs my help, I help them, and this is how I make my
3 way.

4 Because in all the years that I'm -- I'll
5 be 65 this year. All those years, I couldn't find nothing
6 or no one to help us with our situation, and to this very
7 day, I still don't find -- still haven't found anybody to
8 help me with our rights, what is ours, what is -- why are
9 we here, why are we in the city, why are so many girls in
10 the city and lost in the city, too, and lots have gone
11 missing and murdered, and I've seen so many young girls
12 from my home, which is part of the Highway of Tears area,
13 lots of them get murdered, missing, a lot of sexual
14 assaults going on in that territory, and I...

15 Because I seen all this happen after the
16 residential school era, guys all started coming back from
17 residential schools, they started coming into our house
18 where we had three girls and a lot of young kids all under
19 age ten -- my sister's kids. Everyone was being attacked
20 by a residential school person, and there was a whole
21 family [*one line redacted - identifying information*]. Her
22 family is the one that was going around raping the girls,
23 and I got so fed up, because they took my dad away, and put
24 him into a sanitorium where they said he had TB. I never
25 saw him again.

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1 And my mom and my older sister were taken
2 away, too, because an RCMP officer said that they tore --
3 my mom and sister tore his clothes off at Burns Lake. So
4 they took my mom and my older sister away, too. So we were
5 left to fend for ourselves as kids, but because my mom
6 taught me how to use a .22 rifle, I used that gun many
7 times on a lot of those men that were coming to our place
8 and trying to rape the girls. I'd shoot over their heads,
9 shoot around them, but I never shot any of them.

10 And all that had -- there was no one there
11 left for us, and I survived that day because my sisters
12 were all there, and we grabbed three babies -- there was
13 three babies. My sisters' -- two of my older sisters' and
14 my brother were all the same age. So we had to run and
15 hide from the rapos (ph), I called them. Like, he'd come
16 into our territory, and it was just such a big fight for
17 us, and I never -- to this day, I still stand up and fight
18 for anyone that needs my help, whether it's child
19 apprehension, water rights, land rights, Indigenous rights.
20 The story goes so far, man.

21 And it got worse after the -- what they
22 call the famous Delgamuukw court case in Smithers, BC.
23 After that started happening, it got worse. I got charged
24 for assaulting [a band member]. So I was charged in the
25 next room of the same courthouse in Smithers, BC, where

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1 they were doing the land claims court case on the other
2 side, and that courtroom I was in was just filled with all
3 the traditional people of the Wet'suwet'en territory, which
4 is also part of the Dene Nation, and I was, like, a
5 witness, but I was also being charged for assaulting
6 [members] of my band, and in doing all that, I got so
7 beaten up by them.

8 To this day, it just makes me wonder. I
9 shouldn't be alive today with what I went through the
10 [certain band members], with the justice system, with the
11 RCMP in this province. So many police brutalities, not
12 only against me, but my husband was so beaten up at times,
13 I couldn't recognize him. He was beaten up with the police
14 baton because he was -- I've never seen a family so
15 brutally beaten as him and I in our whole lifetime in this
16 province.

17 We died a few times. I died twice. He
18 died about three times in his lifetime, but somehow, the --
19 I find myself in heaven at the last time, and I was told
20 that when I was there that -- my grandmother said to me,
21 she says,

22 "You can't stay here,"

23 and I was -- I wasn't in pain. I had no
24 pain. I had no sorrows or nothing. I was happy to be in
25 heaven. My grandmother told me, she said -- who had passed

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1 away 40 years before, she said,

2 "It's not your time. It's -- you
3 have to go back,"

4 because I got run off the road by an RCMP
5 car between Clinton and Cache Creek back in 2000.

6 That was the worst time of my life,
7 because I thought I was going to die back then. I did die
8 for a half-hour, and I was in a coma for six weeks, and I
9 was paralyzed from the head down. I was on life support,
10 and when I came to, the -- I couldn't speak. I couldn't
11 move. I thought I was -- why did I come back to Earth?
12 Because the way I am, the way I feel right now, I can't do
13 nothing anymore, where I used to be a singer, a talker. I
14 stood up for people's rights. I did a lot of things that
15 should have put me six feet under by now, but because of
16 what my grandma said back in heaven, she said,

17 "Your time is -- it's not your time
18 yet. You ought to go back. You got
19 work to do."

20 And throughout all of this, I've suffered
21 so much. Man, I've never thought I would live to this day
22 or see this day where I can speak to someone about what's
23 happened to us as Indigenous people of this only unceded
24 territory of Canada, and from what I see is that I hope
25 that things could be set right for us, Indigenous women,

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1 especially the women of this province.

2 And I was told by my auntie who died last
3 year, and she was 80 years old, and she told me, and she
4 said -- because they used to laugh at my Indian name,
5 Telquaa, and then she said,

6 "Your -- don't laugh. That name come
7 from a grand chief from the 1800s,"

8 and I was a grand chief, and I didn't
9 know this, but in between finding out that I am a grand
10 chief at 40, 50 years old -- from the time that I was
11 small, I didn't know I was a grand chief until I was in my
12 50s and 60s, and they said that because the government
13 chief was pointing out to the government in their territory
14 who the traditional people are and who isn't, and because
15 they were relocated to our territory, a guy called [Person
16 A] and his daughter [Person B] and now [Person C], all the
17 [members of their family], they were relocated into our
18 territory, and in that whole process, they signed all the
19 trapline property, everything, over to themselves, and we
20 ended up with nothing.

21 They got rid of my dad, lied to my mom,
22 telling, saying to her that they would look after her 100
23 percent if she moved on the reservation, and after she
24 moved on the reservation, they started apprehending all our
25 kids. [A number of] my brothers' and sisters' kids were

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1 all apprehended, and to this day, I'm still fighting for my
2 nieces' kids, my brother's daughter's children, that are
3 still in foster home and foster care, and the worst part of
4 all of this was my mother.

5 Because my mom and my grandmother had the
6 highest Indigenous names to the territory that we come from
7 in Moricetown and Smithers, they were being under attack by
8 the treaty process people, with the land claims people at
9 the Delgamuukw court case, who wanted the Indigenous names
10 to the territory so that they could claim it as their own.

11 Through this Delgamuukw court course in
12 Smithers, BC, they started killing everyone, and they
13 killed -- they started with my sister, [Sister 1], who was
14 killed in a car accident close to our home at Rose Lake
15 before we moved on reservation. Then they took my dad away
16 and said that he had to be in a sanitorium in Prince Rupert
17 called Miller Bay because he was contaminated with TB.
18 They took him away. I never saw him again, and then they
19 took my mom away, and my grandmother was not looked after,
20 so she died on her own, but my mom was murdered in the
21 Burns Lake hospital, not by the hospital itself, but by [a
22 number of] Aboriginal women who were in the Delgamuukw
23 court case proceedings, and they're fighting for Indigenous
24 names to the territory.

25 My mom and my grandmother had big names,

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1 so they got rid of them. Granny first, but my mom, they --
2 I phoned the hospital that morning, and I asked -- I said,
3 "I just said I -- I felt something
4 last night. I want to know for sure
5 what's going on,"

6 because I just seen my mom a week ago
7 before in Burns Lake hospital, and my grandmother -- the
8 nurse at that hospital said that my mom passed away last
9 night. I said,

10 "How could she pass away? She was
11 healthy. She was doing really good
12 in the hospital,"

13 and she said,

14 "Well, [a number of] women came into
15 the hospital and went to her room at
16 3:00 o'clock in the morning last
17 night, and they put her on one of the
18 springer -- spring-up chairs, and
19 they started pushing towards the
20 washroom, and when they got her to
21 the washroom, they pushed her hard
22 off her chair so she went flying and
23 went -- hit her head -- cracked her
24 head open in the hospital that day --
25 that night."

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1 MR. FRANK HOPE: Just take a nice breath,
2 Helen. Helen, just take a nice breath. Take a breath,
3 yeah. You're fine.

4 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Do you want a drink?

5 MS. HELEN MICHELL: My mom and I were
6 close all the time. She took me hunting, and most of the
7 times, I went hunting for her and camped with her and
8 everything, and I was -- besides trying to be with my mom
9 and go through with this, I was being processed through the
10 court system down here. I was always under attack by this
11 -- by the police, the social services, and a policewoman by
12 the name of [Police Officer 1], she was the one that was
13 threatening me. She said,

14 "You can't go home to your mom's
15 funeral. I'm not letting you go."

16 I said,

17 "I'm going anyway,"

18 and she said,

19 "If you leave the city, I'm going to
20 be at the edge of the city waiting
21 for you to pick you up and throw you
22 back in jail."

23 But I went, talked to a lawyer to let me
24 go home to my mom's funeral that time, and when I got to my
25 mom's funeral, the coffin was shut tight, and I couldn't

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1 figure out why. Why is it like that? And no one knew.
2 Even my family didn't know all this, of what happened to my
3 mom, and then, when that lady -- the young lady nurse told
4 me what happened that morning, the next morning after my
5 mom died, she said,

6 "Those ladies went in there and
7 killed her that night."

8 When we had the funeral and the coffin was
9 shut tight, I said,

10 "Why is that coffin like that?"

11 All the funerals I ever went to, not one
12 coffin was shut tight. We always have our rights to see
13 our parents, and no one -- everybody kept their mouth shut.
14 No one said nothing, and I knew there was something wrong
15 here. It's not right.

16 And then, later on, 30 years later down
17 the line, because the computer era came in after that, I
18 started checking how my family all died, because I already
19 had buried my three -- two nephews and a brother. They all
20 died because of my actions, for speaking out and speaking
21 up. They started taking out my whole family members one
22 after the other because of me.

23 I found out my mom didn't die from what --
24 they said she had respiratory problems. My mom never had
25 respiratory problems in her whole life, and that's what was

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1 written on her death certificate I found on the computer,
2 and then, later on, I found out that other people knew all
3 about this, but no one would tell me that my mom was killed
4 in the hospital in Burns Lake, and when the Delgamuukw
5 court case went on, [a number of] Indigenous people that
6 were in that Delgamuukw court case stole Indigenous names
7 of all the people, traditional people, including my mom and
8 my grandmother and a whole line of other people from that
9 territory were all -- names were stolen. People were sent
10 to jail. Other people were murdered. Young girls were
11 gone missing. Some my friends -- close friends were being
12 murdered.

13 One girl, who -- my best friend that was
14 so close to me, her and I were like sisters -- she was
15 shot. Then my friend across the highway from where we
16 lived, [Friend 1], she was murdered, and all this went on
17 when they wanted land of our -- wanted our territory as the
18 Indigenous people of our territory. And I thought why my
19 mom and dad and everyone kept my Indigenous name a secret
20 was no one wanted to let people know that we had Indigenous
21 names to our territory, that we are the grand chiefs to our
22 territory, and I didn't know this until my aunt told me.
23 She said you're holding a name that belongs to a grand
24 chief from the Carrier nation from my dad's side, and I
25 thought,

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1 "Wow, I never knew this."

2 So there was a secret -- sort of a secret
3 society that was holding us, people like us, secretly under
4 so that the government chiefs won't come around and kill us
5 or take us away and put us in a place that -- they
6 threatened us a lot of times with called Essondale, and
7 Essondale was a threat over a lot of Indigenous people's
8 head, not only from the band chief and councils, but from
9 the RCMP and the justice system.

10 "If you don't listen to me, we're
11 going to send you to Essondale,"

12 and a lot of us -- lot of us went through
13 a lot of that, those places. Only my family went through
14 Oakalla Prison for Women, Oakalla Prison for Men, BC
15 Penitentiary. All those places were built for our people
16 so that they could get rid of us, the true traditional
17 people off the lands of BC -- and the hospitals.

18 Then they started building the schools for
19 people -- like, they said that we're mentally -- or kids
20 that we were in mental -- not mentally there or what. So
21 they start sending kids to a place called LeDac School
22 (ph). It was not a residential school before. It was a
23 day school where they were sending my older sister and my
24 [nephew]. They were saying that they were going to help
25 them -- make them feel better from their mental state, and

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1 yet, they used shock treatments and all the bad things that
2 they use in those hospitals against my family to make them
3 mental cases.

4 And all that -- all this went on in this
5 province in my lifetime, and I think it -- this story
6 should not be hidden. It should be heard. It should be
7 well-exposed, and I think that I'm not the culprit here.
8 I'm the -- I'm the human person that is trying to make
9 things right in this province for my family, for people
10 that can't speak out, for people that are scared to speak
11 out, and I think it's time that things have to be told the
12 way it should be, not held back, not hidden, and I think --
13 so many people died for what they believed, and the worst
14 part of it all was that the trapline territories from
15 especially my home was one of the main reasons why my side
16 of the family was getting killed.

17 I have a brother alive right now, and he's
18 -- one of his legs was gone, and he got shot. His leg got
19 shot off by [Person D], and I never knew to this day why
20 his leg was shot off, and yesterday, [another brother] came
21 to me from Burns Lake, and he told me, he said,

22 "You know what? [Person D], [Person
23 D], shot [Brother 1] in the leg when
24 they were at their place partying,"

25 and I said,

1 "Why did he do that?"

2 He said,

3 "They wanted the trapline."

4 So that trapline fight has been going on
5 for three generations now, and now I'm the -- the third
6 generation is trying to get that trapline back from them,
7 because they all forged ten names under that trapline [a
8 period of time ago] and without our consent, without
9 telling us.

10 And this goes on with a whole pile of
11 other Indigenous people from the Wet'suwet'en Carrier
12 nation that have been fighting for their traplines also,
13 because I met a lot of other people from the Carrier, my
14 dad's side, his relatives, who had traplines in their
15 territory, and we all went to the trapline conservation
16 place in Burns Lake one day, and we -- well, we told the
17 conversation officers that,

18 "This trapline is ours, this trapline
19 is theirs, and this trapline"

20 -- and this is all the traditional people
21 of the territory, and after we done that, those very guys
22 all got shot, too. They all got killed. They got
23 murdered. Even some of them are still missing today in the
24 Carrier side, my dad's side of the family.

25 MR. FRANK MARTIN: The south side.

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1 MS. [HELEN MICHELL]: South side of Burns
2 Lake called Francis Lake. It hurts to see it. I lived --
3 I outlived all of this -- all of them, but I know so much
4 about them and the territory where we all come from that --
5 why is this all going on? All for the resource of the land
6 and that the tribal chief and councils don't care about us,
7 as long as they get the names to the territories and the
8 traplines of the territories, and they -- to begin with,
9 they start taking all our kids away.

10 I lost my first kid when I was 16 years
11 old, and the [band member] back then was [Person B] again,
12 and she turned around and gave my kid away -- he was only
13 six months old -- without telling me. I told the hospital
14 I was going to go back there to pick up my son because I
15 had to place to live, and I was on the street. I went back
16 to the hospital, and they told me, they said,

17 "Oh, your kid got adopted out."

18 That was a devastating time.

19 To this day, I had never seen that kid
20 again until they started doing the Facebook stuff on
21 computer again, and then that young fellow found me after
22 40 years. He's now 49 years old.

23 MR. FRANK MARTIN: (Inaudible)

24 MS. HELEN MICHELL: He was adopted into a
25 white home. He was not only adopted into a white home, but

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1 he was also shipped out of the country. He said he spent
2 most of his lifetime in [Country], and I said,

3 "Wow, how could they send kids out
4 that far away?"

5 And he said, because the family that they
6 put him in, they were -- not Catholic, Christian, some kind
7 of Christian priest and wife. So the kid was sent -- got
8 raised in [Country], and he came back here, and he found my
9 sister, [Sister 2], and [Sister 2] told him that I was
10 still alive and that I'm over here, and I didn't know what
11 to do, and to this day, I don't want to see -- I'm scared
12 to see him. It hurts so much, because I was so beaten up
13 back then.

14 There was so much alcohol involved in that
15 kind of life. There was so much sex abuse going on, and
16 women couldn't protect themselves. When I had that baby,
17 [Person E], took a bottle, a broken bottle, tried to slash
18 my face. When he did that, I quickly turned my head like
19 this, but because he missed my face, he still got me here,
20 and that -- I couldn't get the doctors to help me to fix
21 it, so my whole face just swelled right up. So I couldn't
22 look after my baby, and the baby had to go to the hospital.
23 And then [Person B] told me that -

24 "Somebody's going to look after your
25 baby for a while,"

1 and I thought,

2 "Oh, man, maybe I could just let him
3 go for a little while, but I'll get
4 him back." I never did see him
5 again.

6 There's others in my family, too, other
7 nieces and nephews who got their babies ripped right out of
8 their -- out of their womb. Right from the day they were
9 born, they never saw their baby to this day, and that still
10 goes on with our Indigenous family. I call this genocide
11 and ethnocide of us as the original Bear Clan families of
12 Maxan Lake, BC. We have to survive, and in order to us --
13 to survive, I have to speak on their behalf all the time.
14 I won't let nothing slip after they took that baby away
15 from me, and I told Mom, because Mom was still there, and
16 she said,

17 "I can't help you, because I'm only
18 on a small pension,"

19 and the band was so good at starving my
20 family, my mom. Now my brother is the last one living on
21 their reserve. They're starving him, too. They won't help
22 us one bit with anything.

23 My family -- some of my family live on the
24 streets in Edmonton, Vancouver, Prince George. Many are
25 homeless. We wouldn't get our education. I tried to go

1 for a law degree in Blue Quills University in Alberta, and
2 I was trying really hard. My marks were up in the
3 nineties, and I wanted to be a lawyer so I can fight these
4 guys in the courtroom, but the band chief and council,
5 [Person B], again, told me, she says,

6 "I'm cutting your funding off.

7 You're getting too smart for us."

8 And that's when my law degree went
9 downhill, and I just ignored it, and I decided, if I can't
10 go to law school, then I'm going to fight for my rights
11 anyway. I'm going to be in the opposite end of every one
12 of them in that courtroom, and that's what I've been doing
13 to this very day is I'm still in the courts right now.

14 And in Burns Lake, because the RCMP
15 officer, [Police Officer 2], is related to [identifying
16 information redacted]. He was the one that threatened to
17 kill my husband on the side of the road when we went home.
18 I heard him tell Frank once, because he's -- he pulled us
19 over on the highway, and he told us, he says,

20 "I could just put you -- take you
21 right out here on the road,"

22 he told Frank. He says,

23 "I could kill you right here,"

24 and I stuck my head out the window, and I
25 told him,

1 "I heard that, and I'm a witness to
2 it if you do that."

3 And every day, since then, he kept after
4 us in Burns Lake, pulling us over, attacking us. It never
5 ended there. He's...

6 And then I hear from the young girls in
7 the town that he's sexually abusing the girls in a sweat
8 lodge, because he was a cop, and he was -- he owned a sweat
9 lodge in Burns Lake, and he worked with the social service
10 system of Burns Lake, and a lot of the young girls were
11 being -- getting pregnant by not only him but by another
12 social worker in that -- in that Burns Lake social services
13 office, and I remember his first name is [Person F]. And
14 he was raping a lot of these young girls that he had under
15 his care in Burns Lake, and because I was exposing all of
16 this to the justice system in Burns Lake, I was -- I was
17 told by the court there that they -- one day, they said,

18 "You got to leave this town. If you
19 want to live, you got to leave this
20 town and never come back again."

21 We managed to get rid of that social
22 worker, and we heard that he moved to [City 1 in British
23 Columbia], but I was evicted, so we had to leave everything
24 behind, and we had to leave Burns Lake again to start all
25 over again.

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1 We went -- I just tried so hard to live,
2 to make life of -- make a life for all of us as hurting
3 people. It was so -- such a life that we should never have
4 to live. I buried everyone in my family -- half my family
5 who all got murdered.

6 And in 2000 -- we went to New York in
7 1994, Frank and I and a couple of my nephews and my niece,
8 my daughter and my son, all went to New York, took our case
9 to the United Nations in '94, came back here, and things
10 settled down a little bit, and then it got worse again
11 after.

12 In 2000, we were coming back from my home
13 in Burns Lake and Moricetown. [Person G] called the cops
14 on us, told them that we had a gun in our van, and we
15 didn't even have a gun in the van, and it was just his
16 talking stick that they thought was a gun, and the [Person
17 G] was also the uncle to [band members] of my reserve, and
18 he was the one that called the cops and told them to evict
19 us off of our own fishing grounds which was in Moricetown
20 where my grandmother caught salmon, where my grandma is
21 buried.

22 We were told to leave that territory, too,
23 and on the way back here, between Clinton and Cache Creek,
24 we were ran off the road by an RCMP car on our way back to
25 Vancouver that time, and that was when I was -- I died for

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1 half an hour, and the ambulance and the RCMP covered my
2 body up, told Frank that I was dead, and my body was over
3 there and covered up.

4 And when I came to -- I didn't come to for
5 a long time, but Frank said that I was -- he came over and
6 grabbed my hand, and somehow my breath came back for a
7 while, then I went -- they took me to the hospital, but the
8 ambulance told Frank that I was dead for a half-hour.

9 When he took me to the hospital, they had
10 to take me to the Kamloops hospital to put me into a --
11 where I was in a coma for six weeks, and after the six
12 weeks, I came to, and I woke up, and I thought -- I
13 couldn't move. My body was dead, but my eyes were rolling
14 around, and that's when I knew that I'm -- I died that day,
15 that night, and it was just so hard. I thought I'd never
16 be able to talk or speak or dance or walk or sing again.

17 And the doctors tried to tell Frank, put
18 me into a home, a care home, because I won't be -- he won't
19 be able to look after me anymore. He'll have to feed me
20 and have to teach me how to walk and talk and everything.
21 I was like a baby again back then, but when I laid in that
22 bed for -- after the six-week coma, for two months after
23 that, and I went to G.F. Strong in Vancouver, worked hard
24 to get myself going, and this is how far I've come with
25 myself, and I'm very proud, and I'm so proud of Frank for

1 being beside me. If he wasn't beside with all this, all
2 these years, I could never want to live.

3 We both have so many scars on our bodies
4 from the RCMP of this province. Frank died in their hands
5 two or three times. I died in their hands twice, and then,
6 *[one line redacted - ongoing litigation]*, I was brutally
7 beaten by -- first by RCMP officer by the name of Emond in
8 Chilliwack, and he -- he just about killed me on that
9 highway, even though I was on an electric scooter, and then
10 they put a -- took him away. I thought they killed him,
11 because they dragged his body into the back of the car in
12 Chilliwack, in Abbotsford, and I thought he was dead.

13 MR. FRANK MARTIN: It was down in...

14 MS. HELEN MICHELL: And then they didn't
15 tell me if he was okay. They took him away and said they
16 were going to take him to Chilliwack, and when they finally
17 got me home, they used a special car to bring me home with
18 my electric scooter, took my van away that night, too.

19 I phoned everywhere to see where he was,
20 because I knew that two cops had took him away in a car.
21 They used the sleeper on him and put him out, and then,
22 when they got him to the police station later, I found out
23 that he was -- he never came out of that sleeper state. So
24 they had to call the ambulance in to come and try and
25 revive Frank, and they never told me all this, and I phoned

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1 there. And then they -- they released him after they
2 revived him in Vancouver, farther away from me, and I never
3 -- I phoned every hospital. It took me four or five days
4 to find Frank finally, but that officer charged me for
5 assaulting him, and I went to court, and I won that case
6 against him. And he -- that case set precedence in that
7 court for me to charge him, and I charged him.

8 MR. FRANK MARTIN: We couldn't get a
9 lawyer to...

10 MS. HELEN MICHELL: I couldn't get a
11 lawyer to help me to go -- take it through a distance more
12 than what was going on. [A number of] years later, I got
13 beat up by [City 4] officer, the name of [Officer 5].

14 MR. FRANK MARTIN: (Inaudible)

15 MS. HELEN MICHELL: And he was under --
16 the under cop of Emond, who is now the sergeant or the
17 corporal of --

18 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Commanding.

19 MS. HELEN MICHELL: Commanding officer.
20 Emond is now the commanding officer in [a city in British
21 Columbia], and somehow or another, he sent that [Officer 5]
22 after me because of the court case before. Now I am in
23 court now in [City 4] against [Officer 5] for badly beating
24 me up, and I ended up in the hospital, and in the whole
25 process, [a number of] policemen from [City 4] area were

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1 all surrounded me at the hospital trying to take me to jail
2 for assaulting a police officer in that case -- the police
3 officer that I supposedly assaulted.

4 [Nine lines redacted - matter currently in
5 litigation]. I was hurt, and my butt was just all black
6 and blue. My finger is still broken to this day from his
7 abuse toward me, and he -- it's been -- that happened on
8 [date].

9 I was charged for assaulting him, and then
10 after that, they couldn't come up with the assault charge,
11 so now I am -- I turned it around. Now I'm charging him
12 for assault, and that case has never gone to the court yet,
13 and they've promised me -- because he's been investigating
14 himself. He's been very abusive toward me -- not only him,
15 but the other policemen -- RCMP officers in Agassiz and in
16 Chilliwack, because I live in Harrison Hot Springs.

17 I was always attacked, and I mark it on my
18 calendar, and for two or three -- for three, maybe four
19 years in the whole process, I was -- marked every time that
20 I got pulled over, and they were pulling me over, the RCMP,
21 and they're laughing at us, both of us, just laughing their
22 heads off and saying things that were making us mad, and
23 then, one time, three, four cop cars pulled us over on our
24 back road to the main highway on one side of the bridge,
25 and they said,

1 "Oh, we can just tell -- call these
2 guys, and they'll pull you over on
3 the other side, too."

4 So they let us go and then, on the other
5 side of that big bridge in Agassiz, another set of cop cars
6 were sitting on there, and then they pulled us over and
7 pulled us out of the car and started looking through our
8 car and everything and attacking us, and yet they were just
9 playing cat and mouse with us all this -- all those years,
10 and I'm still waiting for my court case to happen for this
11 police brutality against [Officer 5].

12 Because how much they attack Indigenous
13 women in this province, man, if I wasn't a strong woman, if
14 I wasn't a healthy woman, I would be dead in their arms a
15 long, long time ago, and because I believe -- I believe in
16 the Creator, I believe there's a stronger power out there
17 that'll help me through this all, I could win one day. We
18 have many body injuries, broken bones, brain injuries,
19 spinal injuries. He's got so many broken bones in his
20 body, too, he shouldn't be alive and walking today. He got
21 beat up by ten policemen in Vancouver in 1993, and that was
22 a time when a lot of the women were going missing on the
23 east end of Vancouver, and we knew lots of those women. A
24 lot of them came to us and told us that they were being
25 attacked by the city police.

1 There was two men and two women, white
2 police of Vancouver, that was really under -- attacking our
3 Indigenous people, and the two men were -- we nicknamed
4 them [Police Officer 3] and [Police Officer 4]. I'm sure a
5 lot of Indigenous people know about these two guys. They
6 killed my brother, too -- [Brother 2], my younger brother,
7 in Brandiz Hotel in Vancouver, and then they let me know
8 why they killed him.

9 A lot of the women told us that there's
10 two women in the police system, too, two blonde women, and
11 these were my cousins. [Cousin 1] and [Cousin 2] were
12 sitting there one day and telling me this, and they said,
13 these two women cops just came, broke into our room, and
14 started beating us up and throwing all our stuff around in
15 our room. Now that -- now we're on the street and we're --
16 these women were all scared of these four policemen.

17 I knew that there's something bad going on
18 in Vancouver regarding women and the police. There was no
19 way that we could go to the police to complain or get any
20 kind of charges done, because it was them that was
21 attacking the people they didn't -- Indigenous people on
22 the street.

23 I don't see how many other people put up
24 with what we put up with, that could live what we lived
25 through. My stand is to bring my family back to my

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1 homeland at Maxan Lake by Burns Lake where my grandfathers
2 put that land aside with Indian Affairs back in 1928. They
3 promised to care for us and look after us under their
4 fiduciary responsibility, but in the end, we only became a
5 number on their paper, and they kept all the monies that --
6 trust fund that's supposed to come to us from our land and
7 our resources, we've never seen nothing of. One day, I
8 would like to see them all go to jail for what they did to
9 us, my family.

10 I know we are the last province in Canada,
11 the last province to -- they're still doing illegal
12 treaties here, making illegal treaties. The last province
13 where everybody comes to die. There's a place down by
14 Stanley Park where they call Siwash Rock. That rock -- I
15 know we put so many people's dead ashes there, because that
16 was where they wanted to rest. Many of them were murdered
17 in this province in the downtown east end. Many came here
18 because they lost their land all throughout Canada, lost
19 their rights to their kids, lost their rights to their
20 grandchildren. It's like we are a fourth-world country
21 here as Indigenous people living in a rich country called
22 Canada.

23 Before the government made the government
24 chiefs, we had our own land, our own territory, our own
25 homes, our own way of life which was called a potlatch

1 system, the true potlatch system. After the government
2 chiefs came in, they made their own rules, their own laws,
3 and they got rid of everyone that owned names to the
4 territories from their territory -- our territory.

5 I don't know what you call reconciliation
6 today, but I think that reconciliation should be true to
7 the word of what that means. What does reconciliation
8 mean? To make things right in this province, you have to
9 start from the grassroots people, which is us, and get rid
10 of the treaty chiefs, the government chiefs, and all the
11 names that they've taken from us as the true traditional
12 hereditary people of the land that -- that names come back
13 to us so we can have our true potlatching system back. As
14 it is now, everyone is making money off the land, resources
15 in the potlatch system, but we see nothing coming to us as
16 the true Indigenous people of the lands.

17 There shouldn't be no more treaties made
18 in this province because of what I know, what I feel, what
19 I see, what I hear. We are the youngest province in this
20 country, yet it's still going on today.

21 Yesterday, I picked up a young hitchhiking
22 girl from Chilliwack from Agassiz side, and she was
23 standing on the side of the road just freezing. She was
24 only about 12, 13 years old, but with all her makeup on and
25 everything, she looked like she was 18, but she was so

1 skinny, like, and hungry. She was so filthy and dirty.
2 She said --when we picked her up, she said,
3 "Everyone just drives by me and
4 points at me and laughs at me and
5 throws things at me,"
6 and I said,
7 "That's the kind of system we have
8 today, uncaring one,"
9 and that's how I see the young kids of
10 today, and I fight to keep my daughter and my grandkids and
11 my great-granddaughter out of that kind of system so that
12 they'll have a better life, a better future, a strong
13 future.

14 I feel bad for the girls that have no
15 voice. I feel bad for the girls that really want to work
16 and really want to live, really want to do better, but
17 there's no one on that other end to help them. It seems
18 like the more money they get for their treaty -- illegal
19 treaty thing in BC, the more harder the stone, their heart,
20 becomes. They have no care after that money gets into
21 their hands. How long is that money going to last?

22 That land lived for generations and
23 generations and generations until the last 100 years. Now
24 the land is being so destroyed now to this day. Our
25 water's being contaminated. Everything has gone downhill

1 because they took it all away from us. Now it's trickled
2 down to the European people, the settlers, who really don't
3 care about the land either.

4 I've seen settlers in my home who've felt
5 for us, who know of us, and tell my brother while he -

6 "I knew your grandfather. We used to
7 sneak up there and give your
8 grandfather food because the
9 government chiefs were after them."

10 So many of them got -- had to hide back
11 then so that we could live today, especially me. There's
12 too many of -- land-thieving, too many lies, too many bad
13 things happening, too many sexual assaults.

14 Some of the young girls think it's the
15 norm. I don't think it's the norm. I took my kids out of
16 that system that way because the drugs and alcohol,
17 cocaine, was really devastating that society up there in
18 Burns Lake area, and they're treating my kids bad. So I
19 took the kids away from their original dad, and I told
20 Frank, I said,

21 "I want my kids out of there,"
22 and to this day, because I did that, my
23 kids are now doing really good. One's a welder, and my
24 oldest daughter is taking good care of herself in [City 2
25 in British Columbia], where she had a life of her teeth

1 being knocked out and her life being turned upside down,
2 and she couldn't go to the police for help. The police in
3 Prince Rupert where she was beaten up, they just really
4 don't care about Indigenous people at all.

5 When the policemen first came to this
6 country, they were put here because they were here --
7 supposed to be here to protect us as Indigenous people.
8 When did that all turn around? They're protecting the
9 chief and council, the government chief and council,
10 instead of protecting the people like us. We are the
11 criminals. We are the ones that have to fight for
12 everything that we have today. We have to fight for our
13 breath to live. We have to give breath to our children and
14 our grandchildren so they can live.

15 Where do we go from here as Indigenous
16 people? I know this is the end of the road here in
17 Vancouver. I've seen people come from other countries and
18 other provinces across Canada, and I've met lots of them,
19 and lots of them come here to die because this is the only
20 beautiful province left. They think this is the only place
21 where they could live. I've seen whole families die here
22 in Vancouver, and lots of them are buried in that
23 Fraserview graveyard.

24 Back in the '60s and '70s and '80s, we
25 were just teenagers back then, but we were really the true

1 hereditary people of this province. We were chiefs. We
2 were true hereditary chiefs of this province. Some knew
3 that they were, but some of us didn't know we were. I
4 didn't know I was a hereditary chief until later on. A lot
5 of them started standing up and fighting for their rights
6 in Vancouver, and that's how Bonaparte Standoff started,
7 and the things started getting worse because the RCMP
8 started turning on all of us. A lot of the people that
9 were walking down the road would get killed on the highway
10 somewhere between Victoria and Cache Creek.

11 Our stories need to be told. Our stories
12 need to go out there. We can't be silenced anymore, and I
13 hope there are more stories like mine out there that has a
14 chance to be heard, and I really hope that there is a
15 chance for us as Indigenous people, especially the women.
16 There has to be a change. There has to be a way. We
17 cannot live in poverty anymore. We cannot live landless
18 anymore. We cannot live.

19 To this very day, we live to fight. We
20 fight to live. Fight for our next breath, even though
21 we're in our sixties now. If I didn't understand English
22 very well, I wouldn't be here. I'd be six feet under a
23 long time ago, but because I'm a fighter, I want to keep
24 going and keep fighting and making things right for my
25 daughters, my granddaughter, my great-granddaughter, and

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1 children yet unborn, to save what we have here.

2 In all the 60 years I've lived, I've seen
3 my animals disappear. I've seen the river go bad, the
4 waters go bad. I never seen it like this. The elders
5 never let another person homeless, never let another person
6 starve. Today, with all the money they have, they have
7 more starving people, more landless people, more voiceless
8 people, and the one family is the only leader for
9 generation and generation. People that don't own the land
10 are living on that land. They should all go back to their
11 own territories so we can live and look after our own
12 territory again.

13 I buried too many people. It hurts so
14 much. When I look behind me and I look around me, who is
15 going to carry this on after we're gone? Who is going to
16 look after all of that? Nobody.

17 Until I met Frank, I never found myself.
18 I tried to be a white woman going through school and
19 wanting to be a lawyer and everything. When I met Frank, I
20 thought, there's no way I'm going to make it in that world.
21 They won't let me. So let's do it this way, and we went --
22 made a plan. We called it Plan A, Plan B, right to Plan Z.
23 We're going to start fighting and standing up for our
24 people and our rights, our land rights, animals. This
25 province needs a voice, and we are going to be their voice.

1 So we had planned our routes in every
2 courtroom in this province. Our names are in every court,
3 whether it's fishing rights, hunting rights, children's
4 rights, Indigenous rights to our territories. I'm still
5 standing and fighting for our trapline at Maxan Lake, which
6 rightfully belongs to us under their system, too, and at
7 Smithers Court -- Supreme Courthouse, I told the -- the
8 judge specifically asked [Person C], [*five words redacted -*
9 *identifying information*]. She said -

10 "This case is about Maxan Lake and
11 trapline, isn't it?"

12 The judge asked [Person C], and she
13 said,

14 "Yeah."

15 She said -- the judge asked her,

16 "Who is that -- who belongs -- who
17 does that land belong to? Who does
18 that trapline belong to?"

19 And [Person C] told her -- told the
20 judge,

21 "It belongs to them. It's going to
22 me."

23 So that was the first round, and now the
24 second round, they all forged their name under our land.
25 There's [a number of] names to our trapline territories who

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1 they added on themselves, forged their name on our paper
2 without our permission, without our consent. They
3 amalgamated our Maxan Lake Band into their band without us
4 knowing, without asking us. Everything was done in
5 silence.

6 With the system you have today, why isn't
7 all this being made right? It's time to give it all back -
8 - give it back to us, give back our life, give back our
9 future.

10 Okay.

11 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Okay. She asked me to
12 finish up for her.

13 MR. FRANK HOPE: I'm just going to switch
14 the camera to you.

15 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Okay.

16 MR. FRANK HOPE: Okay. Go ahead.

17 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Okay. In all the
18 things that my wife, Telquaa, just mentioned in her
19 statement to you and to the people that need to hear it, in
20 our -- in our old ways, how we see ourselves as first
21 people to this land, all these animals, each one of these
22 animals had a big family, and each one of these animals has
23 a big piece of land that goes with it.

24 So each family has a property that goes
25 with this, marks our land -- so markers of our land before

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1 the settlers came. This was what ruled our people. This
2 was our rules that went with this, so that we could look
3 after our families and our land, our children, and our clan
4 mothers, our womenfolk.

5 After contact, they outlawed the potlatch
6 system and took everything away and changed all the rules
7 and the laws that govern our people. Since that time, we
8 have noticed all the different things that the colonial
9 system's done to us, from our childhood to now. We talk
10 about looking after our -- our folks and ourselves and our
11 family. We find that our women, some of -- her brother,
12 her sister and her brothers, all them got killed and went
13 missing, or some of them are still missing, and one of the
14 reasons that we find that all of this is going on has to do
15 with why they took away our potlatch system and our title
16 and our rights to our land. So they take all these away,
17 and they put them in the back so they're not recognized.

18 MS. HELEN MICHELL: And burn them.

19 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Now we begin to face
20 what you call the institutions that govern our people and
21 our affairs, Indian Affairs, the provincial government and
22 federal governments, and each one of them agencies and
23 government people that look after our affairs continuously
24 eroded our inherent rights that were gifted to us by the
25 Creator to hold and maintain our land and look after our

1 families.

2 My wife calls it genocide and ethnocide.
3 It's still an ongoing thing according to my wife because we
4 still have womenfolk that are being threatened by the
5 authorities that she spoke about, the welfare workers, and
6 the police, and the children's apprehension.

7 So in order to stop the missing and
8 murdered men and women in our families, we chose to stand
9 up, and we pulled our children right out of the whole
10 school system, the education system, because it wasn't --
11 it was being used against us. They were apprehending our
12 kids from the schools and picking on the mothers with the
13 social workers and the police.

14 So that's called institutional racism, and
15 when you find these institutions collaborating -- the RCMP,
16 the social workers, and the chief and councils -- to
17 eliminate the traditional landholders using the system that
18 they modified to process our families, to break them up,
19 and -- that's what she's explaining, is that the outcome --
20 the outcome of the abuse of the government agencies and the
21 authorities in relationship to the treatment of our
22 families and our family members should be changed. We
23 should have some of our inherent rights returned to us so
24 that we can better oversee the rights of our children and
25 our people be looked after, protected.

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1 And one of the things that they -- that
2 they were so afraid of was that our people believed very
3 strongly in a Creator of all good things, and every day,
4 our people had ceremonies to give thanks for everything
5 that they were gifted with on all these lands and all these
6 family clans. They all have rules of order that they
7 followed.

8 Over the years, all the nieces and nephews
9 we lost to the welfare system hasn't stopped. We have two
10 cases right now where we have -- a couple of her nieces
11 that are going to court in [City 2 in British Columbia] and
12 in [City 3 in British Columbia] for their children yet. So
13 they're still attacking the womenfolk through the
14 processes, and they're -- and when you try to go and help
15 them, they make it hard for you, even though they say
16 reconciliation means bringing your families together.

17 So the whole idea of looking and making
18 change -- making change from our point of view is that it's
19 okay to have all of these investigations and hearings like
20 this to expose and to see what we could do about it and
21 what kind of recommendations us, as families that are
22 losing all of these women and men in our families because
23 of our title and rights to our land -- not just here in BC.
24 It's happened right across this country, up north, south,
25 east, and west. It's an ongoing -- it's an ongoing fight,

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1 and it's a national -- that's why they have -- that's why
2 they call it a national inquiry, this one of murdered and
3 missing women.

4 To get to the roots of the problem, we
5 have to develop strategies to take our children, the
6 youngest generations that we have, and realign them with
7 our cultural beliefs and our cultural ways, giving them
8 back their identity that had been so far gone and so far
9 taken away from us.

10 MS. HELEN MICHELL: Generations.

11 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Many generations. In
12 the -- well, the way in which we will be able to do it is
13 called breaking the chains. Breaking because we're in a
14 bondage situation with that system. They've got us bonded
15 down.

16 Over the last couple of years, few years,
17 they still chase us around and beat us up, beat Helen up,
18 beat me up, even though they know it's wrong and that
19 they're going to have to face the consequences. They still
20 use those tactics. So they had to have somebody higher up
21 in the government agencies to oversee these kinds of things
22 that are going on with the policing of our people are way -
23 - are way in deep with why our womenfolk don't trust the
24 police.

25 If one of my nieces or nephews are having

1 problems, they're not going to call the police. They're
2 going to call me, and they're going to talk to me and tell
3 me,

4 "This is what's going on, and this is
5 where I need help."

6 My niece -- two nieces lost their
7 children to welfare, so they called us and said,

8 "What should we do?"

9 And so we put a plan together to get
10 those children back.

11 So these are the kinds of things we have
12 to rebuild as our family circles is the strategy.

13 MS. HELEN MICHELL: Trapline, too.

14 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah, and build that
15 base in the communities you come from.

16 So because our families have no homes on
17 the lands that we came from because everything was taken
18 when we were -- when the families were relocated, because
19 of the resources of the land -- so it goes back to the land
20 again and why those people are all missing.

21 Now, the parts that she's expressed about
22 the traplines being held by different government chiefs
23 now, and their families all are being used to put pipelines
24 on their land for the oil and gas extraction in Alberta to
25 go through our land up in Burns Lake area and for the

1 forestry clear-cutting practices.

2 So these are the things that we're against
3 -- not just the system, but we're against the agreements of
4 the corporations that got those contracts on those land
5 bases that we come from that were made by the provincial
6 government and the government agencies responsible for us.
7 So that's where a lot of the folks are being hurt is where
8 these kinds of conflicts are going on, and it hasn't
9 changed since the coming of the fur trade and the gold
10 rush. It's the same thing. We still don't have protection
11 from the police. As a matter of fact, we have abuse from
12 them.

13 So I believe, truly believe, that we had
14 to reactivate all our old warrior societies in our
15 communities and our healers in our communities to
16 strategize on how we can better develop protection against
17 what I just mentioned -- the corporate world and the
18 governing system that runs this country -- because they're
19 in conflict with our traditional laws and values that all
20 are only there to protect us.

21 So our plan for our children and our
22 future generations was that -- and we're still going
23 forward with -- is we do a reclamation to the land we come
24 from, which is Maxan Lake, her land, and we build our own
25 community development education system where we re-educate

1 them about our way of life, and it gives them some viable
2 educational support that would give them good economic
3 benefits, which will come from the lands that they come
4 from.

5 That's sort of our recommendation, but we
6 still have the fact that we're dealing with physical abuse
7 from the authorities, like the [Police service 1 officer]
8 who she's still going to court for because they beat her
9 up. Even though she's disabled, they still beat her up.
10 You know, they're -- I can't -- I can't see how the
11 government, police, and authorities can continue doing
12 these kinds of things to our womenfolk. I mean, it hurts
13 me deep inside as a husband and a father and grandfather to
14 see this go on with my own family when they're supposed to
15 be there to protect us and look after us since they were
16 made and brought here -- the RCMP, I'm talking about. They
17 -- so what's happened to my wife, Telquaa, and myself is
18 we've been traumatized by the system of the physical abuse
19 and of the mental abuse of all the paperwork and all the --
20 stuff around the different actions that are going on in our
21 families. So the trauma part has a lot -- a lot of harm.
22 So a lot of healing needs to be done between ourselves.

23 So the best part is to have really good
24 food all the time. So you had to have some sort of an
25 economy to have good food, and mine and hers was doing

1 artwork. We survived by doing a lot of artwork. We went
2 to -- we went to New York City doing artwork to complain to
3 the United Nations when she said we made that trip.

4 Well, so that's why I say that we can --
5 we can re-establish ourselves and our communities. It
6 doesn't matter where we're from. We have an inherent
7 right, and we have jurisdiction to do it because it's ours.
8 They can't stop us from doing it. You know, there's --
9 there's no blocks anymore after the reconciliation
10 happened. They say,

11 "Well, what do you want to do -- you
12 want to do as reconciliation?"

13 She says,

14 "Well, reconciliation, to me, is the
15 land we come from comes back to us,
16 and our rights, our inherent rights
17 and our jurisdiction comes back to
18 us, all of our lands and our
19 territory so that we may be able to
20 govern our families according to our
21 ways."

22 That's part of the thing that I believe
23 reconciliation is, and like I said, it's got to start with
24 our little ones growing up now, because it's harder to
25 change the mindset of the children that are already grown

1 up, but if we start with the younger generations -- that's
2 what we've been doing of the -- about the 35 years we've
3 been married is changing the mindset of our children and
4 the mindset of our grandchildren and our nieces and
5 nephews. And the only way we did that was by pulling our
6 own kids out of school and by being an example.

7 So we had to have examples in our
8 communities. You're an example in our community, you and
9 your wife, or actually probably on a national level now,
10 because everybody knows you. See, that's what we need. We
11 need people who have it in here -- the gifts. See, we're
12 all gifted by the Almighty Creator, and we accept those
13 gifts back again. We have a long, long walk to go, but I'm
14 pretty sure we can make it. And that's when I have to say
15 for her.

16 And, you know, all the abuse I've -- like,
17 she still hurts from being called out, the cars, and being
18 beaten up in the Fraser Valley. It isn't just the
19 beatings. In the seven years we lived in the Fraser
20 Valley, they took ten vans away from us, just pulling us
21 over and taking them and putting them in the pound so we
22 can't buy them out. So they put us in poverty.

23 So it's not just the beatings. It's the
24 poverty that comes with going to court, poverty of losing
25 your vehicles, you know, and that slows us and hinders us

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1 from continuing the work that we've been doing. See, the
2 reason why that they attack people like us is because they
3 see us making progress. A year and a half ago, the
4 international Indigenous representative James Anaya came
5 from the United Nations --

6 MS. HELEN MICHELL: To Musqueam.

7 MR. FRANK MARTIN: -- and he came to
8 Musqueam, and we went and made a presentation to him there
9 like we're doing here to you, and we made a presentation in
10 relationship to why our womenfolk are being murdered and
11 missing, and it all had to do with the same thing again,
12 about re-governing ourselves and re-straightening out our
13 real true value within our community.

14 So we didn't keep the fight in this
15 country. We take it out to the international community for
16 support. So if we don't have support, we can't get the
17 police and the government agencies to back off of us. If I
18 didn't talk to them and we didn't go to that meeting, I
19 think they would be still chasing me around.

20 So for the last two years, they haven't
21 bothered us -- maybe a year and a half -- but before we
22 went to see that Mr. Anaya and made the presentation about
23 the authorities coming down on us and abusing us because of
24 what we're doing, we didn't have a chance. Like she said,
25 we went everywhere. We went to the court workers. We went

1 to lawyers. We went to BC Civil Liberties -- you know, all
2 the agencies that they have to protect our rights as
3 people. You can't get help. You know why? Because they
4 all work together. That's why it's important to get it out
5 to the international community.

6 So that's the other recommendation besides
7 getting our children, our youth, started on a new track and
8 a new education plan.

9 MS. HELEN MICHELL: That, too, being
10 disabled, it took seven years to get that.

11 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah. So that's my --
12 that's my thing, is it boils down to the fact that we have
13 to change the institutional racism today, this day and age,
14 and the policing and the social services, the
15 administration of our people.

16 I'm finished.

17 MR. FRANK HOPE: Okay.

18 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Thank you.

19 MR. FRANK HOPE: I just need
20 clarification. The police brutality we're talking about is
21 -- which police department are we talking about?

22 MS. HELEN MICHELL: The RCMP.

23 MR. FRANK HOPE: The RCMP?

24 MS. HELEN MICHELL: Royal Canadian Mounted
25 Police.

1 MR. FRANK MARTIN: In the Fraser Valley.

2 MR. FRANK HOPE: In the Fraser Valley?

3 Okay.

4 MR. FRANK MARTIN: And in Burns Lake.

5 MS. HELEN MICHELL: Yeah.

6 MR. FRANK HOPE: And Burns Lake, too?

7 Okay. So let's see what else. There's just a couple more
8 questions I think I may have just for clarification.

9 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah, [*five lines*
10 *redacted - ongoing litigation*].

11 MR. FRANK HOPE: Okay. You mentioned you
12 were threatened with a place called Essondale. Is that a
13 correctional facility?

14 MS. HELEN MICHELL: No, that's a...

15 MR. FRANK MARTIN: It's a mental institute
16 where they use the Mental Health Act against you, and they
17 can confine you for any -- as long as they want.

18 MR. FRANK HOPE: Where is this?

19 MR. FRANK MARTIN: It's in ---

20 MS. HELEN MICHELL: Port Coquitlam.

21 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Port Coquitlam. It's
22 in the Lower Mainland.

23 MS. HELEN MICHELL: What's it called?

24 It's not called Essondale now.

25 MS. NORONHA: Is it Riverview?

1 MS. HELEN MICHELL: Riverview, yeah.

2 MR. FRANK HOPE: Riverview?

3 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah.

4 MS. HELEN MICHELL: It's called Riverview
5 now, but back then --

6 MR. FRANK HOPE: Okay.

7 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Back then, it was -- it
8 was Essondale.

9 MS. HELEN MICHELL: The RCMP used to
10 threaten Mom and Dad and [Sister 3] about it.

11 "If you don't listen to me, we're
12 going to send you to Essondale."

13 MR. FRANK HOPE: Yeah. Okay.

14 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Back in the '60s,
15 that's what they did to me. They sent me there.

16 MR. FRANK HOPE: Okay. [*Seventeen lines*
17 *redacted - ongoing litigation*].

18 MS. HELEN MICHELL: Another thing, because
19 we both became disabled from police brutality over all
20 these years -- because we're disabled, it's harder for us
21 to maintain a good life the way we should when we weren't
22 disabled, and being disabled is even much harder now, and
23 I'm sure a lot of other Indigenous people, too, were made
24 disabled by the system, made disabled by the RCMP that
25 beats them up or threatens them, made disabled by the

1 social services system.

2 Even my scooter, it took me seven years to
3 get a scooter from the welfare when they could just give it
4 to the other person the next day, but they made me fight
5 for it for seven whole years, and in the whole process,
6 because I'm fighting for my scooter, I got two -- what do
7 you call those workers at [Location]? I got two workers
8 fired, and because they got fired, they hightailed it back
9 to England where they're both from, because they didn't
10 want to get charged here, and that was in Chilliwack.

11 So all those systems that are supposed to
12 be there to help us, to assist us, are all working together
13 to keep us --

14 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Down.

15 MS. HELEN MICHELL: -- down so that we
16 can't get nothing or starve us to death or threaten us or
17 get the RCMP to beat the hell out of us.

18 You know, it's -- even -- the only reason
19 why I got a lot of things and the scooter was I went to the
20 ombudsman of BC, and the ombudsman lady just like -- just
21 like that, just like lighting a fire, took papers there.
22 They got all that sent right away, you know?

23 MR. FRANK HOPE: Okay. You mentioned that
24 there was a period where many of you were being evicted
25 from your communities and your land. What year was it that

1 you were evicted from?

2 MS. HELEN MICHELL: Before the land claims
3 court started happening in '87 or '89 -- I can't remember,
4 but I have the court papers at home.

5 MR. FRANK HOPE: In the mid-'80s?

6 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah, the late '80s.

7 MR. FRANK HOPE: About the mid-'80s?

8 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah.

9 MS. HELEN MICHELL: They were using band
10 council resolutions to evict me, and they used the RCMP --
11 was standing right behind the chief -- band chief and
12 council.

13 MR. FRANK HOPE: Evicted from which
14 community?

15 MS. HELEN MICHELL: The Wet'suwet'en First
16 Nation band, which is my band now.

17 MR. FRANK HOPE: How do you spell that
18 again?

19 MS. HELEN MICHELL: W-E-T --

20 MR. FRANK HOPE: One second. W-E-T --

21 MS. HELEN MICHELL: -- S-U --

22 MR. FRANK HOPE: -- S-U --

23 MS. HELEN MICHELL: -- W-E-T --

24 MR. FRANK HOPE: -- W-E-T --

25 MS. HELEN MICHELL: -- E-N.

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1 MR. FRANK HOPE: Okay. Officially, you're
2 still a member of that band, though, right?

3 MS. HELEN MICHELL: Yeah. They
4 amalgamated my Maxan Lake band into theirs in late -- early
5 '60s, late '50s after my dad died and said that they were
6 going to take care of us, but they never did.

7 MR. FRANK HOPE: Let's see. How long did
8 you say you'd been through that whole brutality with the
9 authorities? About how long has it been going on now?

10 MS. HELEN MICHELL: We've been together 35
11 years, and all that time was just fighting with them in the
12 court system getting beaten up.

13 MR. FRANK HOPE: That's when you've been -
14 - like, as activists since that time?

15 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah. Yeah.

16 MR. FRANK HOPE: For about 35 years now?

17 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah.

18 MR. FRANK HOPE: Okay.

19 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah, I got all kinds
20 of broken bones. I got collarbones broken, my teeth bones
21 broken. I got no teeth.

22 MS. HELEN MICHELL: His face was hanging
23 down when I found him.

24 MR. FRANK MARTIN: All -- my head's all
25 fractured in the back.

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1 MS. HELEN MICHELL: And ankles...

2 MR. FRANK HOPE: All this has been
3 documented?

4 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah.

5 MS. HELEN MICHELL: In the hospitals
6 and...

7 MR. FRANK HOPE: In the hospitals and --

8 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah.

9 MR. FRANK HOPE: Has there ever been any
10 type of charges laid or any --

11 MR. FRANK MARTIN: No.

12 MS. HELEN MICHELL: No one wants to pursue
13 it.

14 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Couldn't get any --
15 couldn't get them in the courts. Like I said, we called
16 Civil Liberties. We called Legal Aid. We called court
17 workers.

18 MR. FRANK HOPE: So you followed those
19 processes and --

20 MS. HELEN MICHELL: And because --

21 MR. FRANK HOPE: -- nothing happened?

22 MR. FRANK MARTIN: No.

23 MS. HELEN MICHELL: And because we brought
24 some of this up to some of the lawyers in the past, many of
25 those lawyers were actively fighting for people like us,

1 they got their law to be taken away for doing that.

2 MR. FRANK HOPE: Yeah. This is important
3 for the commissioners to be hearing.

4 MS. HELEN MICHELL: Mm-hmm.

5 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Mm-hmm.

6 MR. FRANK HOPE: And that's exactly why
7 we're doing this.

8 MS. HELEN MICHELL: A lot of the lawyers,
9 because of the -- that the Wet'suwet'en land claims court
10 case was going on, some of those lawyers were working with
11 us, too, and because they were working with us and coming
12 out with information that was up for us, they got attacked,
13 too, and some of them got -- one guy got put in -- lawyer
14 got put into a mental institute.

15 MR. FRANK MARTIN: [Lawyer].

16 MS. HELEN MICHELL: [Lawyer].

17 MR. FRANK MARTIN: (Inaudible) -- she was
18 a native from [Province], lost her degree in -- they made
19 her dead, too.

20 MS. HELEN MICHELL: And her husband.

21 MR. FRANK MARTIN: And her husband, yeah,
22 too.

23 MS. HELEN MICHELL: They killed her
24 husband.

25 MR. FRANK MARTIN: They ran her off the

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1 road the same way they ran us off the road, and I don't
2 know how her husband died. They said they just found him
3 dead, but we know differently.

4 MR. FRANK HOPE: You were purposely run
5 off the road --

6 MR. FRANK MARTIN: By RCMP.

7 MR. FRANK HOPE: -- because of the work
8 that you're doing?

9 MS. HELEN MICHELL: Yeah.

10 MR. FRANK MARTIN: We were -- we were
11 actually coming from her home, from her fishing grounds,
12 and we were getting our fish for the year, and the treaty
13 chief called the RCMP. The RCMP came and took our van, and
14 they didn't charge any of us. They just said,

15 "We're taking your van,"

16 and they left us on the highway. So we
17 took a cab to Smithers. That was the closest town. And
18 then we ran around looking for the cheapest car we could
19 buy, and there was one we bought. There was an old
20 convertible. It didn't have no seat belts in it, but we
21 used that car to leave that town, and on our way back home,
22 they ran us off the highway this side of Clinton.

23 MS. HELEN MICHELL: RCMP.

24 MR. FRANK MARTIN: And there was a native
25 lady driving --

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1 MS. HELEN MICHELL: Two.

2 MR. FRANK MARTIN: -- behind us, two of
3 them that were coming from the same area we were coming
4 from.

5 MS. HELEN MICHELL: Social workers.

6 MR. FRANK MARTIN: She was a social
7 worker, too, and she was a witness to that.

8 So when we were run off the highway, she
9 died on the side of the highway. I was knocked out, but
10 when I came to, I crawled up the highway, and I told them I
11 -

12 "Where's my wife?"

13 And they said,

14 "Oh, she's over there. We covered
15 her up. She's dead,"

16 and going on all this. So I crawled
17 over, and I grabbed her hand, tried to talk to her, and I
18 said,

19 "Hey, she's not dead. She's
20 breathing. Come get her."

21 And yeah, so --

22 MS. HELEN MICHELL: I was paralyzed from
23 the neck down all that time.

24 MR. FRANK MARTIN: So, yeah, so -- then,
25 you know, even when we were living there in Burns Lake

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1 area, they must have took at least ten vans away from us in
2 that area, too.

3 MS. HELEN MICHELL: Shot all our dogs.

4 MR. FRANK HOPE: For fishing on your --

5 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Not just for fishing.
6 They'd just pull us over and say there's something wrong
7 with our van and take it away.

8 MS. HELEN MICHELL: Because I moved back
9 there to live back on our land at Maxan Lake, and because
10 they all knew each other, and [band members], they all knew
11 how to attack us and where it hurt us most.

12 MR. FRANK MARTIN: But it all boiled down
13 to, again -- what it boils down to, again, is that the
14 lands that the families belong to are the lands that the
15 oil companies want to put the pipelines on and the forestry
16 companies want to timber on and the mining companies want
17 to mine on.

18 So we have all these three different big -
19 - super big money companies giving all this money to these
20 guys over here and lots of it. So that's the dilemma that
21 we were faced with. It was terrible, eh? We're still
22 faced with the same dilemma, except we seem to have the
23 upper hand now because we got to James Anaya from the
24 United Nations, and then, recently, the government signed
25 on saying that they would recognize the international

1 agreement on Indigenous people's rights and so I'm kind of
2 banking on using the international community in terms of
3 getting more changes in Canada, in Canada's agencies and
4 how they deal with our people and how they deal with our
5 youth and our women and, you know, our families in general.

6 MS. HELEN MICHELL: You know who knows all
7 about this, too, is Grand Chief Ed John. We come around to
8 him just about every chance we would get to tell him all of
9 this, what we've been telling you, and he's -- I heard he
10 went to the United Nations, too, and I don't think he
11 belongs there, because he's not the right guy. He's gone
12 through so many --

13 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Who?

14 MS. HELEN MICHELL: Eddy John.

15 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Oh, yeah.

16 MS. HELEN MICHELL: And what's his name?
17 Stuart Phillips (ph) knows about us, too, and it seems like
18 no one knows how to help us. All we can do is just tell
19 our stories and hope that someone hears us around the world
20 and opens an ear and opens an eye and opens their heart to
21 help us with what we need to do.

22 MR. FRANK HOPE: Well, you will have the
23 commissioners to hear you.

24 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah.

25 MR. FRANK HOPE: We'll end right there?

1 MR. FRANK MARTIN: Yeah.

2 MR. FRANK HOPE: If you can just sit for a
3 couple of minutes, I'm going to shut off the video, and
4 then I'll shut off the audio. And the time now -- I've
5 just got to mention the time. It's 2:54 p.m.
6 --- Whereupon the proceeding concluded at 2:54 p.m.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Ren Zacchigna". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Ren Zacchigna, Certified transcriptionist