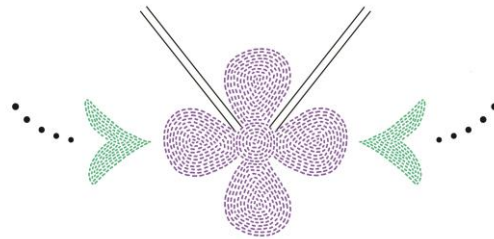


National Inquiry into  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls



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  
Sheraton Cavalier Hotel  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan**



**PUBLIC**

**Thursday November 23, 2017**

**Statement - Volume 127**

**Gloria Oakes, Jones Oakes & Leona Wesaquate,  
In relation to Janine Wesaquate Oakes  
& Brandy Wesaquate**

**Statement gathered by Kerrie Reay**

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## II

### NOTE

*The use of square brackets [ ] in this transcript indicates that amendments have been made to the certified transcript in order to replace information deemed inaudible or indecipherable by the original transcriptionist. Amendments were completed by listening to the source audio recording of the proceeding; amendments to this official transcript were made by Bryana Bouchir, Public Inquiry Clerk with the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQ, May 10<sup>th</sup> 2018 at Vancouver, BC.*

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Statement Gatherer: Kerrie Reay

1 Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

2 --- Upon commencing on Thursday, November 23, 2017, at 11:00

3 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** We're recording now. And  
4 we're recording on the video. Okay. We're ready. Good  
5 morning. And I'm going to make a statement for the record.  
6 And this is Kerrie Reay. I am a statement taker with the  
7 National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women  
8 and Girls, and we are at Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, on  
9 November the 23rd, 2017, and the time is 11:00 a.m.

10 And, today, I am speaking with the family of  
11 the young lady, Janine Rene Wesaquate Oakes who was taken  
12 on December the 8th, 2004 in Regina. We have Gloria  
13 Wesaquate Oakes who is the mother to Janine and is sitting  
14 in the middle of the three. Jones Wesaquate Oakes is  
15 Janine's father and he's to the right of Gloria. And we  
16 have Leona Oakes on the ---

17 **MS. LEONA WESAQUATE:** No, Leona Wesaquate.

18 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Sorry. Leona Wesaquate  
19 who is an auntie to Janine and is on the left of the couch.  
20 And off camera is Janine's son, Landen Oakes. The family  
21 is from the Piapot Nation and is residing in Regina, other  
22 than Leona Wesaquate, who continues to reside on the Piapot  
23 reserve. And Jones Oakes, you are from the Nekaneet First  
24 Nation.

25 **MR. JONES OAKES:** Nekaneet, yeah.

1                   **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay. All right. So, as  
2 I explained before we started, this is your story, this is  
3 your truth, this is your time and your space. And I leave  
4 it to you to begin your story.

5                   **MR. JONES OAKES:** Hi. Do I say my name? My  
6 name's Jones Oakes. I'm from the Nekaneet First Nations.  
7 I kind of grew up in Maple Creek area and went to Regina,  
8 went to Lebret residential school, and from Lebret, I've  
9 been in Regina since after I went to residential school.  
10 But I do go back once and awhile to go visit my relatives  
11 on the Nekaneet reserve.

12                   But I feel more comfortable in Regina. It's  
13 been my home, that's where I, you know, have my family now,  
14 my wife and my kids, my grandkids. And that's their home,  
15 my home. And speaking of my daughter, I guess it's been a  
16 long time since December 8th, 2004. Long time waiting for  
17 answers, waiting for the police to come, tell me, "Well,  
18 this is what happened to your daughter." And I haven't  
19 seen that happen yet. No answers, don't know what  
20 happened.

21                   You know, it's been hard for myself. I  
22 guess when this happened to my daughter, kind what happened  
23 to her and she was in a house fire and that's how it --  
24 what happened is she burnt in the fire, and the police have  
25 ruled it a homicide, but nobody's ever been charged for the

1 murder. And I guess I feel fortunate right now that people  
2 are -- somebody's going to listen and hear what I have to  
3 say. It's been an emotional rollercoaster, a big ride  
4 since 2004. I more or less dealt with the alcohol and the  
5 drugs, you know. I dealt with turning to the alcohol,  
6 turning to the drugs and [then trying to quit]  
7 (indiscernible).

8 So, it's been up and down, but I think the  
9 thing that's made me pulled me through it was probably pray  
10 and the sweetgrass, hoping that someday that, you know,  
11 we'll find out what happened to her. You know, I just keep  
12 praying and that's the thing that keeps me going I guess,  
13 praying. Praying to the Creator, praying to God, because  
14 that's the way I was brought up saying, you know, the  
15 Creator understands all of us, all languages, all the race  
16 people, all of us here on earth and he understands all the  
17 language.

18 But it's been hard, you know, when I lost my  
19 daughter I held my tears in. I never cried. I never cried  
20 at the funeral because I was more in shock and, you know, I  
21 did not deal with it or didn't know who to talk to. But  
22 the main thing that pulled me through was probably just  
23 smudging with sweetgrass and praying. And it's been back  
24 and forth for myself, but I had to turn to drugs because  
25 that's how my daughter -- I took it hard on the way she

1           went missing and how we found out she was burnt in the fire  
2           and I took that all hard.

3                       And to this day I still hurt and -- but I  
4           never cry and I was just told I was -- told by some other  
5           friends that told me that, you know, Jones you need to go  
6           out and go cry, and I haven't did that. You know, to go  
7           out somewhere, pray somewhere in the bush, go cry, and I  
8           haven't did that. Like, I said, I've taken this hard and I  
9           don't know how to deal with it.

10                      But I guess the way I was brought up to try  
11           to be tough and don't cry, just the way I was brought up.  
12           I just take it pretty hard and -- but I'm glad that  
13           somebody's going to listen and from there that I hope and  
14           pray that we will seek the answers we've been seeking,  
15           through justice, through somebody to be charged, to be  
16           accounted for. And still, you know, that person's probably  
17           still out there walking around. Like, how can they live  
18           with themselves, you know, if they've taken a life? A life  
19           and -- it's pretty hard on my part because that's my only  
20           daughter and daughter -- yeah, it's been hard for me.

21                      **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Would you like to raise  
22           the picture that you've got with you?

23                      **MR. JONES OAKES:** Yes. This is a picture  
24           that we had for a memorial for my daughter. We've have it  
25           for four years at the Piapot reserve. They did a good way

1 in honour. We give friends from -- all of us, our family,  
2 we gave them blankets and gifts, I guess in memory of my  
3 daughter. And it made me feel good, show my picture off.

4 [(Crying)]

5 [Try praying that someday we will get  
6 answers.]

7 I was told by the city police not to say  
8 anything and not go to media and stuff like that, but it's  
9 something like the way I was brought up, we don't say this,  
10 don't say that. I guess that's silly. I was brought up  
11 not to say this, be respectful towards people, elders, you  
12 know. I was brought up like that, but that's been  
13 emotional for myself, and I take it hard.

14 But the thing is, my daughter has a son and  
15 I guess that's where I get my strength and I keep praying  
16 and someday I hope to get some answers. And hopefully  
17 things will change and, you know, that everybody will --  
18 even for other missing Aboriginal women, hopefully they'll  
19 get answers, what their seeking for, for this -- probably  
20 what they're going through, they don't know what happened  
21 after their daughters.

22 It's hard not knowing because you don't know  
23 what happened. And, yeah, it's been hard for myself. And  
24 I remember when my daughter was born, I held her in my  
25 arms, telling her, "Daddy's here and I'll take care of



1           you." But then I get hurt because I don't know what  
2           happened to her. I guess, maybe it finally feels like I  
3           let her down. At the same time, I still try to pray and  
4           keep going.

5                         So, hopefully, one day we'll get our  
6           answers. Because I don't think -- it's not right for  
7           people to go missing, get killed, it's not right. People  
8           have to get accounted for and brought to justice. And, you  
9           know, go to jail because when I break the law, I go to jail  
10          for my crimes, for my crimes that I did. I went to prison  
11          for my crimes. I paid for my crimes. And, yeah, I hope to  
12          get answers one day for my daughter.

13                        But I keep praying and that's what's keeping  
14          me alive today is my prayer in the Creator, to keep praying  
15          and never give up. Because that's the way we were brought  
16          up, to never give up on ourselves. We don't take our lives  
17          because it's not our time. It's not up to ourselves to  
18          decide when to end our lives. It's up to the Creator  
19          upstairs to come for us. And that's the way I was brought  
20          up, so -- and not to say too much.

21                        But that's -- like, I mentioned the police  
22          they'd say that, in the beginning say -- they rule it a  
23          homicide, but not to say too much. CBC news wanted to  
24          interview us back in 2004, but we didn't want to say  
25          anything to maybe -- because they were investigating and

1           then we don't want to say too much in regards to that  
2           matter and what happened. It's been an emotional  
3           rollercoaster ride for me.

4                       **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Can I ask then, you were  
5           asked in 2004 not to say anything, but you've stayed silent  
6           since?

7                       **MR. JONES OAKES:** Yes.

8                       **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay. And maybe once  
9           we've talked, we can talk about how that's -- how you felt  
10          about keeping such a burden to yourself. So, if you want  
11          to talk about how it's felt all these years to have the  
12          police ask you not to say anything.

13                      **MR. JONES OAKES:** Yeah. Well, they say that  
14          and I just, you know, taken their word, wait for it and I  
15          just pray -- keep praying that someday that they'll, you  
16          know, get answers and someday they'll come knock on the  
17          door and say, "Look, we charged this person, we've charged  
18          this person, this person for what happened to her."

19                      So, that's what I keep praying for and  
20          hopefully one day we'll get justice and I -- my heart goes  
21          out to the other families that are (indiscernible) missing.  
22          I see it on the news and the media, and I can relate to  
23          them because my daughter was in the same -- I guess, in the  
24          same thing, but I still found out how she -- you know, she  
25          was murdered in a fire. But for them, they don't know and

1 it's hard to carry that pain everyday.

2 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** And it sounds like you  
3 don't have all of the answers ---

4 **MR. JONES OAKES:** No.

5 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** --- in terms of ---

6 **MR. JONES OAKES:** No.

7 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** --- what happened  
8 either ---

9 **MR. JONES OAKES:** Yeah. Yeah.

10 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** --- all these years later.

11 **MR. JONES OAKES:** Just that I'm being  
12 hopeful that one day it'll come.

13 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay. And -- okay. I  
14 want to acknowledge the incredible courage that you've had  
15 to come in here today and sharing your story.

16 **MR. JONES OAKES:** Yeah.

17 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** And it is emotional. All  
18 that pain has been bottled up for so long.

19 **MR. JONES OAKES:** Yeah.

20 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Yeah.

21 **MR. JONES OAKES:** Yeah.

22 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Gloria?

23 **MS. GLORIA OAKES:** I'm Gloria Oakes. And  
24 this was my daughter, Janine Rene Wesaquate Oakes. I lost  
25 her 13 years ago now, December 8th. I was with her the

1 night she was murdered. We were both shopping at the  
2 Cornwall. She was getting her stuff prepared for her day  
3 the next day to be going to Cilas (ph) because she was  
4 taking a program to be special -- how do I say that? Yeah,  
5 special homecare, she was going to be -- yeah, that's what  
6 she was proceeding to do before she got murdered.

7 And we were shopping that evening and she  
8 was getting herself prepared, what she needed for the class  
9 next day. And we were bussing it and we even walked from  
10 the Cornwall to the bus stop. And I remember she made a  
11 call and -- because it was a cold night and I remember,  
12 like, we had our stuff, right, to -- what we had to take  
13 home on the bus.

14 And then sometimes I blame myself because  
15 why didn't I tap her on the shoulder and say, "Janine the  
16 bus is coming, let's get on it." But because she was on  
17 the phone with someone, I don't know who she was talking  
18 to, I just assumed she would know that I got on the bus  
19 while she was still talking to whoever she was talking to  
20 and that she would get home.

21 So, I get home and she doesn't show up.  
22 And, it's not like my daughter not to show up because,  
23 like, she has her son here, Landen, her only son. And he  
24 was only two years old and she was still breast feeding.  
25 So, it was getting concerning to me that, how come my

1 daughter's not getting home and it's not like her not to  
2 phone. And she was breast feeding and, you know -- like I  
3 want to blame myself sometimes thinking, "You could have  
4 just tapped her on her shoulder and say, 'Come catch the  
5 bus, let's just get on the bus.'"

6 I do really blame myself lots because, like,  
7 I don't know who she was on the phone with, but anyways I  
8 get home, she doesn't get home. And then I start getting  
9 worried. And then we're all waiting in the living room,  
10 the next following day, still no word.

11 And then all of a sudden, we're all laying  
12 on our couches watching the evening news and this is my  
13 testimony that God is very powerful to show you something  
14 that is meant for you to see, which he showed me that --  
15 when the news came on and we're all in the living room and  
16 I look at the news and see this fire and this house on fire  
17 and I look at it and there's Janine in -- like, you know,  
18 when you're looking at your news TV, she's right there  
19 saying, "Mom, come it's me in the fire." Like, that was my  
20 experience through God to tell me, go find your daughter,  
21 that's her. She's -- that's what she was telling me. She  
22 said, "Mom, come, it's me. I'm in the fire." Like, she's  
23 talking to me through the TV, watching the news. And I  
24 scared my family. I said, "That's Janine. She's in that  
25 fire." And they said, "Don't, don't say that. You're, you

1 know, you're going crazy, that's not her." And I had no  
2 vehicle and I can admit that I'm poor, like, I'm not a rich  
3 person.

4 And so, when I knew this was her because  
5 God's telling me and she's saying, "Come, this is me, Mom."  
6 I tell my family that and I leave my house and I have to  
7 walk because, like I said, I had no means to get around and  
8 I live in Glen Cairn, and to go find my daughter. And I  
9 find her and then it made me feel -- I was like, uneasy  
10 because like, all the police, everything was there at that  
11 house, the ambulance. And I felt like a criminal, the way  
12 I felt by the cops, the way they treated me because I said,  
13 "No, that's my daughter in there." And they were saying,  
14 "Well, how do you know?" And I just said, "Well, because  
15 God's telling me." Or, you know, I'm trying to explain it  
16 to them. And they said -- like, they didn't believe me or  
17 they maybe thought I must be the one or something.

18 I don't know what they thought of me, but I  
19 was put in the car and then took me down to the police  
20 station. And then I had to tell them stuff and then they  
21 -- how do you say? The only way they could really identify  
22 my daughter is through dental records, that's how bad it  
23 was. And then they must have believed me finally because  
24 it was her. And that's why I say I blame myself because I  
25 wish I could have just tapped her and said, "Let's get on

1 the bus," so that didn't happen.

2 And for me, for a mother, I would like to  
3 have justice too because I know at that time, 2004, and  
4 then after that I knew in Regina there was lots of murders.  
5 I mean, like lots of things happening in the media where  
6 other people also were getting murdered. And I feel sorry  
7 for everybody else too that's in my situation because I  
8 found -- I hate to say that about anybody, but I feel like  
9 sometimes the police let me down.

10 I felt like I was let down because every  
11 time I tried to phone about my daughter's case with them,  
12 it's like they would say something like, "Phone me back.  
13 It's still being investigated." I think once I was put on  
14 the backburner, is that how I say that? I didn't feel I  
15 was -- I didn't feel that they realize -- like, that's my  
16 daughter and sometimes I wish I could have told them, if  
17 that was your daughter wouldn't you want the police to help  
18 you too the way I wanted help at that moment and those  
19 times after?

20 And then the thing that gets me is, they  
21 would also say, "We have to keep our cards close to our  
22 chest," which I don't really understand what that meant at  
23 the time. And I thought to myself -- because now to this  
24 day, when you want to go talk to them, I think everybody is  
25 retired or something's happening with the police that the

1           ones that investigated, they're not there anymore, even  
2           though there's other ones that will take over.

3                         But, I always find I wish I could have just  
4           dealt with the ones that were there and the ones that did  
5           investigate. And that they truly one hundred percent  
6           completely investigated, because I think sometimes when I  
7           did say what I needed to say to the police -- they even  
8           told me one time, you go talk to those people that you  
9           think that have something to say, that they could come  
10          forward and help with the investigation. But, then, how do  
11          I -- as a parent, when you don't know who they are? You  
12          know, like maybe the police, them, they could have went and  
13          did that.

14                        But, for me to do that, I didn't even know  
15          where to begin. And it hurts me because she had her whole  
16          life ahead of her. She was only 20 years old when this  
17          happened. And, like I said, she has her only son here,  
18          Landen. And it breaks my heart and their hearts also. And  
19          I can never be, how do you say, fixed up again because my  
20          heart's broken.

21                        And, I know, like what Leona was telling --  
22          my sister here was telling the other lady that we have to  
23          try and carry on. And I find it so hard since that time,  
24          that I can't even celebrate special occasions, Christmas, I  
25          can't seem to celebrate to get into the celebration of



1 Christmas because it happened just around that time. And I  
2 think for me, my heaviness is to this because you have no  
3 answers to the questions like, who murdered you? Like,  
4 why? She was such a nice person. Like, who wants to take  
5 your life? Why did this have to happen to her?

6 And like what my husband said, we want  
7 someone to be accountable for what they have caused, her  
8 death. And we need justice. We need peace. And I think  
9 because this is our first time really speaking out truly,  
10 that peoples that are out there and if this ever does get  
11 to air, that the ones that do -- like, what I said, know  
12 something, that they should come forward and try and help  
13 even though sometimes even maybe they're scared to come  
14 forward because who knows?

15 Maybe they're still scared that they think  
16 something will happen to them too. I don't know. You  
17 know, like, we need to heal and we can't seem to heal  
18 because, like Leona said to the other lady, my husband  
19 turned to alcohol, used drugs.

20 My other two sons are in the same situation.  
21 They turned to alcohol and drugs. And our life, ever since  
22 this happened, is all very dysfunctional. It's not the  
23 happiness that we once knew. And I've been trying to carry  
24 on because of Landen. But sometimes I just feel like I  
25 want to go so crazy and just lose it and I think, "No, I

1       can't." Janine wouldn't want me to because we have Landen  
2       to care for and I have my other -- I take her as my  
3       daughter and she was only two years old too and her name is  
4       [M]. (ph). She told my husband here -- she was a little  
5       girl, she said, at that age for a two-year-old to say that  
6       to him was like, "I know you lost your daughter, but I will  
7       be there for you to be like, his daughter, take me as your  
8       daughter because I know you lost your daughter." And she  
9       was just two and a half years old. She was saying that to  
10      him. I thought that was so -- a nice thing to say.

11                   And like I said, I cried lots at home, and  
12      then Landen, he was only two and he was just a little baby  
13      learning to talk, and I would cry. He must have knew I was  
14      crying. And my grandson, he put his little hand on my face  
15      here like this, and he said, "Grandma, everything's going  
16      to be okay." And that's just a little two-year-old baby  
17      telling me, "Grandma, everything's going to be okay." And  
18      he had his little hand upon his face and as he touched my  
19      face, I'm seeing such a beautiful place where -- when he  
20      put his hand there, some voice said, "This is where your  
21      daughter is in this beautiful place." And that was such a  
22      beautiful place where they showed me that she is, not to  
23      worry, that she's gone to a good place. And I think I have  
24      to carry on for all our family members.

25                   But I would like justice if it can be,

1           because I know we're all getting old in our lifetimes. And  
2           I know my grandson would like answers too, because that's  
3           his mom and he has to live everyday of his life without his  
4           mother. And I have to live without my daughter, and it's  
5           very hard because I'm sure Landen too feels the same way as  
6           someone or some peoples took a life. And like my husband  
7           said, they need to be accountable for what they did and who  
8           knows who they are. They're still out there. I don't  
9           know. It's difficult, I find it. But I try my best to  
10          keep going even though I have my moments. And, again, I  
11          find that it's hard because for me -- I still never got the  
12          autopsy report.

13                        So, it's just something like when the police  
14          told him like not to say nothing, me too. And I'd phone  
15          and they say, "Oh no, we can't get that yet." And now, I'm  
16          thinking, "Oh, 13 years, when will we ever get to get it?"  
17          Yeah. And then I think I'd like to say something for my  
18          grandson Landen because he told me to speak up and say what  
19          he wanted me to say for him on -- in his own words here.  
20          And that's her son, poor Landen Wesaquate and this is his  
21          mother, Janine Wesaquate. And Landen says in his thoughts  
22          and in his own words, he says, "I think that the people  
23          that murdered my mom, Janine Wesaquate, should be in jail  
24          because she was murdered. It seems like nobody's doing  
25          anything about it and no one's helping our family with

1           this. I, Landen Wesaquate, grew up without my mother  
2           because someone murdered her, and we need justice for our  
3           family. So, whoever can help us, please do help us because  
4           we need to heal. And it's hard to heal when you still have  
5           fresh feelings that someone's out there and we don't know  
6           who you are, but we need help." So, please help us to  
7           solve this murder of our daughter, Janine Rene Wesaquate  
8           Oakes.

9                           **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Would you like a break?  
10           Would you like to break for a moment?

11           --- BREAK

12                           **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay, so that is  
13           recording. So, it's 11:35 and we will commence again. And  
14           for the record, health support worker [Health Support  
15           Worker] is in the room as well and has been since we  
16           started. I'd just like to acknowledge that Landen has had  
17           his grandmother give his statement and he would prefer not  
18           to speak at this time. But if Landen does feel like  
19           speaking at some point, he is more than welcome, Landen, so  
20           that you know that, okay? And so, we will now go, Leona  
21           will now speak, Janine's auntie.

22                           **MS. LEONA WESAQUATE:** My name's Leona  
23           Wesaquate and I'm Piapot First Nation. Janine was my  
24           niece, and I loved her dearly. From the time her mom  
25           brought her into the world, she was a little light, full of

1 energy and had a big heart. And I was blessed because  
2 that's the thing that we believe is that our kids are  
3 unknown to us, our kids are gifts and that the Creator  
4 loans them to us for however long their journey is here on  
5 earth. We're taught that they're -- that we share them and  
6 I thought we would have had this girl for a lot longer.  
7 You don't think that as parents that you're going to  
8 outlive your child. It's not a natural course in our  
9 thinking. And so, for us to lose our -- a child is a very  
10 hard thing, but yet we're supposed to trust in our Creator.

11 Now, that's one thing, but in the case of  
12 missing and murdered Indigenous women, in this case with  
13 Janine, her being murdered, her life was stolen from us.  
14 We never had a chance to say goodbye to her or to be able  
15 to make peace with it when, like I said, stolen. For us to  
16 be able to heal, we need to have answers, we need to know  
17 why, we need to know truths, what really happened to her,  
18 the full story.

19 For her mom and her to be shopping, we all  
20 say there's a little bit of blame in us, in our -- in  
21 everything. I know her son, like when he was just a tiny  
22 little guy, I was even doing child development and school  
23 activities with her because of where I worked. And we  
24 would -- wanting him to grow and to be a healthy baby and  
25 then I remember her telling me, "I want to be a nurse. I

1 want to go to school -- back to school." And then I helped  
2 her and I encouraged her and she went back to school. She,  
3 you know -- this picture of her. I was telling her mom.  
4 Already went and got her her gloves because she had to have  
5 the gloves and everything, and how beautiful she is and  
6 that time and she's giving us a hard time. And then I told  
7 her, when she's smiling, I said, "You're just like a little  
8 model. It's graduation day. Auntie's so proud of you.  
9 I'm so happy you're going to have a good life. You're  
10 going to go to school, and you're going to have a good  
11 life, and you're going to become a nurse, and you're going  
12 to make a good way for you and Landen."

13 I paid for her that time. I told her we  
14 needed her transcripts for her to go to -- so I asked and  
15 and we needed to her to go into that nursing program, we  
16 needed to pay for the fees and everything and she was, "I  
17 can't. I don't have money." I said, "No, Auntie's paying  
18 for it, that's for graduating. So, you're going to be able  
19 to go. We're going to register you." Then she went on.  
20 She was taking her classes. She was just happy and  
21 excited, making friends, being happy.

22 She got a student loan. I helped her,  
23 because she couldn't get funding that time from our  
24 reserve. And then that's what she had. She had her  
25 student loan, why she was able to shop. And, I still think

1           like, that's part of it, that they somehow knew she had  
2           money and they stole her life because of it.

3                         We all have little things that bother us.  
4           It's not fair that she didn't to get to be able to have  
5           that goal completed. It's not fair that she had to be a  
6           mother that wasn't able to raise her child, only for a  
7           short time. Some things you come to understand after.  
8           Because I remember whenever her boy was just a tiny little  
9           baby and how he'd look at her like she was an angel. You'd  
10          just see such true love. And maybe already her path was  
11          being set for her to be back with the Creator. Why he  
12          would look at her like that, like she was like a pure  
13          angel. It's hard to lose children.

14                        In the Indian way, we take on, we share our  
15          kids, we raise them together, we guide them, we do  
16          different things. It's hard to watch the pain and the  
17          agony and the suffering. I raised her brother's son. Her  
18          two brothers, one older, one younger, they suffer. I've  
19          watched her dad, I've seen these two be torn apart and be  
20          back together. I've seen the hardship on their family.  
21          Turn to addictions, turn to other things because of trying  
22          to cope, trying to deal with it. But to release it when  
23          people can't talk.

24                        My sister, she's like a Christian woman,  
25          believed in her faith and God showed her, even in a burning

1 fire, her daughter that was burnt alive. No matter who you  
2 are in this country, no matter what person, to listen to  
3 it, to realize that inhumanity for anyone so cruel to be  
4 able to do that to another human being, we need answers, we  
5 need justice for this girl's death. We need people to  
6 understand that -- how hard it is.

7 How would you feel to not be able to look in  
8 your daughter's casket to see her face? What they did,  
9 what they took from us, life cannot be replaced. Life does  
10 not have a dollar sign; it's priceless. The time that you  
11 get, the love, there's nothing, no price with that.

12 There's no nothing with it. We can't say, but what we can  
13 say is we're raised to believe that was the gift of life  
14 that we had. And to have it stolen from you is not fair.

15 And then not only for these ones who did  
16 this to her, to, yes, to live with it, but me, I think,  
17 speak to it, have them realize how can you live with  
18 yourself and not come forward and have the truth told? At  
19 least face the truth and give the truth to the family of  
20 who you hurt. And to the police that said, "Don't say  
21 anything because it'll jeopardize the investigation,  
22 don't..." that's wrong too. And then to not have the  
23 answers and to be years and years and years later and  
24 always to be waiting and wanting to know what's happened.  
25 And yes, we say we're poor people. We don't have a problem



1 to say that.

2 But even like with this hearing, like,  
3 yesterday I was at a chief-in-counsel meeting and then  
4 during the break on of the counsellors brought up about  
5 missing, murdered inquiry, and I said, you know, I said, "I  
6 would be there right now, this minute I would be there, but  
7 I have no means. I have no way. I have an eight-year-old  
8 son I raise. It would have been her nephew. And I would  
9 take my sister and her family to go up there to Saskatoon.  
10 It's not here in Regina. It's at Saskatoon. And I said,  
11 "But I don't have gas to be able to get there." And then  
12 the one other counsellor went and spoke up to the chief,  
13 went and told him of my circumstances and he took that time  
14 to be able to give me gas so I can come. That's how we  
15 made it here.

16 But that's the whole thing. Like, no one  
17 told us about this, no one told us. I don't have cable. I  
18 don't have -- like, we -- you hear things from other ways  
19 and meanwhile this is -- we have her and we had one missing  
20 in our family. And we need to speak. I phoned her right  
21 as soon as I had the means and said, "We got to go. We  
22 have to have our voices heard. This is like our last  
23 chance to speak to her life. Her life is more important.  
24 Let's just go. We don't even have to worry about having  
25 clothes and things and different kinds of stuff to get

1 ready to go on a trip, just get in the car and go."

2 And where we going to stay? That other girl  
3 that was coming, she said, "I'll give up my room," she  
4 said. "Me, I'll stay with Kokum. You can go and stay -- if  
5 you go with your sister and your family and you can stay in  
6 that room." We stayed in a borrowed room to come here.  
7 That's the whole thing, the injustice is that it happened  
8 to Aboriginal people from day one in this country.

9 The fact that is that we're misplaced  
10 people. We were given reserves to stay on from the time of  
11 contact all the way over the years has -- there have been  
12 misjustices. All the way there's been sufferings. There's  
13 now these blanket exercises that are going around and that  
14 are showing people to understand in a different way all the  
15 loss, all the things taken, all the things stolen from us.

16 In the same way, I know, yes, I'm a  
17 residential school survivor. I'll say, yeah, trying to  
18 survive maybe, not quite. I can't say, I'm already  
19 survived because we're still feeling the repercussions of  
20 it. So, is there truly such thing as a survivor? Or more  
21 that it's still weighing us down and that we're still  
22 carrying those heavy burdens on our backs.

23 That's what we're given is a heavy burden to  
24 carry and the dysfunction. The dysfunction of being put in  
25 a separate place and then not raised by your family and

1 then not able to show -- to know how to show love to your  
2 child. Not able to know how to be openly bonding and  
3 loving and all the things that come with it, all the  
4 hardship and all the ones committing suicide, the ones -- I  
5 have friends, I know those people.

6 When -- this one time, I went to university,  
7 this one girl, we were talking -- they were talking about  
8 stereotypes and things and the girl says, "Oh I don't like  
9 that you're talking about Indian people like this." She  
10 said, "You're making, like, it sounds like it's -- everyone  
11 has these problems."

12 So, I jumped up and I spoke up and I said,  
13 "You know what? I'm so happy that you're a First Nation  
14 person and your life has never been touched by it. But me,  
15 I can't say that because me, yeah, residential school  
16 person; yeah, my dad was an alcoholic; yeah, my family  
17 there's been addiction issues; yeah, I have other relatives  
18 on the other side too that have had -- been affected by  
19 street life and the drug abuse, by prostitution, by deaths  
20 and murders, by violence; yeah, that -- boy, you're so  
21 lucky," I said. "How many of the rest of you guys in this  
22 room that are First Nation people, Aboriginal people, how  
23 many can you say the same thing that there's not one family  
24 member that that's not true?" I said, "Stand up if you're  
25 one person that hasn't been touched by it." And that girl,

1 she said, "I'm wrong, I'm wrong, I take back what I said."

2 And I said, "Yeah, because the truth of things is in my  
3 life I can tell you what the psychologist said about me.  
4 Like an onion, layers and layers of trauma, that's our  
5 life." We were talking in my reserve about putting on a  
6 grief and loss workshop, December 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> in Piapot.

7 And we said we don't have money to get  
8 keynote speakers or guest speakers to come to our  
9 community. It costs a lot of money, hundreds and hundreds  
10 of dollars to get people to come and talk. But yet, we've  
11 all experienced it. We said we'll -- a few of us said  
12 we'll volunteer and talk, because the one thing we know is  
13 that during the holidays, it's hard.

14 For us, I was telling my sister on the way  
15 to come, "Let's try to make a Christmas again. We never  
16 had it the way it was before." I said, "Gloria, you I  
17 know." I said, "I got a little bit further, but you,  
18 you've been not putting up the decorations, not trying to  
19 have Christmas, not trying to do the stuff. We can still  
20 apply for hampers and we can still try to have a holidays  
21 and make it, let the kids live. We got to live again.  
22 Now, we'll have a voice we can say our things. Now, we can  
23 finally have a tear and say and speak to it."

24 Now, the same thing with her son. He can  
25 now have his words say, "Give us justice. Listen to us.

1 Her life counted. Her life meant something to us." He has  
2 -- that time I was going to school when I was at school and  
3 I heard from her, and she said, "You going to come?" That  
4 was Janine. They put her on fire. Who? What? I was  
5 saying. And then from that moment on, I stood by her and I  
6 said, "Now we need to do what we can do."

7 Before I come here today, one of the things  
8 I told her, I said is, "We'll have a prayer." I'm glad I  
9 told her too, it was -- that there was a paper at that  
10 hotel and how it said that there was a sacred fire in there  
11 and that we would be able to put tobacco there. This means  
12 this is a ceremony.

13 So, you, Commissioners and different people  
14 who are going to listen to this taping, this makes this a  
15 ceremony. This makes this -- don't leave us unanswered no  
16 more. When treaties were made long time ago, they smoked  
17 the pipe and why? Because that lifts up those prayers for  
18 the Creator and you have to speak truth. Us to smudge, I  
19 asked that we have a smudge before we started here. We  
20 speak truth and we are saying, "Hear our prayers." We want  
21 that to burn so that that goes up and our prayers are  
22 answered. That there's justice. That her life means more,  
23 and that the people of Canada, not just one person, not  
24 just the legal system, but everyone in Canada hears our  
25 missing and murdered Indigenous women, our lives count, us

1           too, we count. It doesn't matter if they were single, if  
2           they're married, if they're a child, in any way, they  
3           count. They are human beings and they belong to this  
4           country.

5                         We are the first peoples that have shared  
6           our country, so listen to us and have there be a true way  
7           and that the police really do the work and find the  
8           answers. And that they don't close the file. Oh, but it's  
9           been sitting there 13 years. Oh, the people are now  
10          retiring and going on and the file is gathering dust. No,  
11          shake the dust off and make them look for the answers.  
12          Give the answers to this family. That's what we're asking.  
13          Don't stop with this. Some of us never got the supports.

14                        We were saying -- no, we tried to pray, we  
15          tried to support each other. We had -- when we lost her  
16          and like I said, we are poor, we had other people -- I  
17          remember going and asking people to come and pray to lift  
18          the pipe, the drum, the men, they come to sing and lift her  
19          up to send her home in a good way. And then four years, we  
20          did giveaway back. We tried to collect little blankets all  
21          year long and different little, nice things to give back to  
22          the people who helped us.

23                        And our home community, Piapot, they gave us  
24          the place to do that by having pow wow and that's a  
25          ceremony and that's a way. And we did that to try to --

1           because it was such a tragic thing. I remember Gloria, she  
2           said, "How come we can't just do this once? How come we  
3           have to do it four years?" Four years we're going to do it  
4           because it's such a tragic thing that -- the whole thing of  
5           how much -- how we lost her.

6                               And I remember because I went around that  
7           arbour, and I took and gave away sweetgrass. And I gave  
8           sweetgrass saying -- each person I handed that sweetgrass  
9           to I said, "Why I'm giving you this sweetgrass is because  
10          every time you burn this braid now, you pray for our  
11          family, you pray for us." All you people that will be  
12          doing -- being part of this ceremony, to dance and to be  
13          gifted, we're asking also you still pray for us and take a  
14          little bit of that away. That's how much pain we have.  
15          So, these are things we need.

16                              Last night, like I said, we would have loved  
17          to have been at that round dance, but we weren't there  
18          because we couldn't get here in time because there wasn't  
19          money to be able to do that. And we never had a way. We  
20          never knew enough in time. But part of it is like, the  
21          people that work with these families, they need to -- there  
22          should have been like recognition and there should have  
23          been someone to have made phone calls to these families at  
24          least.

25                              **MS. GLORIA WESAQUATE OAKES:** You have to

1 keep in touch.

2 **MS. LEONA WESAQUATE:** Somehow a longer thing,  
3 because until her case is closed, there should be someone  
4 that's reaching out and saying, "You know, we hear you and  
5 that case is still there." Never has my niece called my  
6 brother in-law, never has he had that police officer come  
7 to tell him what happened to his daughter. She hasn't had  
8 the answers to the autopsy. She hasn't had the answers to  
9 what's happened. He hasn't had the justice to have justice  
10 for his mother, to live and to grow up without a mother  
11 because someone stole her life. It's a hard, hard thing.

12 Yeah, I have Facebook too. I had said on  
13 Facebook, "All of my friends and family, pray for us.  
14 We're headed to the missing, murdered Indigenous women.  
15 It's going to be hard. Asking for prayers because we don't  
16 know how hard this is going to be to release some of this."  
17 This is traumatic. It's hard to think back, and we were  
18 like lost, I think. When a death occurs and it's like a  
19 storm, like when you go through a blizzard and you're in a  
20 blizzard and you can't see. And that's what it's like when  
21 you lose someone and there's not answers.

22 We're still stuck in that storm and no one's  
23 leading us out and no one's giving us light. That's what  
24 we need. Someone turn a light on and lead us out. Let  
25 there be answers. I know I was told once by old people,



1 I've been lucky to have had a lot of old people, elders,  
2 that have given me lessons and guided me in different ways.  
3 And that time, I told them about how things were so hard.  
4 And this old lady she told me, she said, "My girl," she  
5 held onto my hand and she said, "My girl, there's one thing  
6 though that I have to tell you but it's going to be hard."  
7 I said, "What, Kokum?" "Pray for these ones that did this  
8 even though this is one of the hardest things for you.  
9 Pray for these ones that somehow they give those answers  
10 that they answer to their sins and to what they've stolen  
11 from you. Try to find a way to forgive." She said maybe  
12 that'll take a long time, maybe it'll never happen, but she  
13 said, "I hope you try." She said, "Because maybe in that  
14 way, maybe at that point, maybe then you'll be able to find  
15 a way to be able to get past it." I don't think we're yet  
16 there because we haven't had the chance to tell our story.  
17 And the only way you can heal is really if you release it.  
18 So, I say thanks to be able to have the  
19 chance to be able to talk. But, again, this trauma to our  
20 family, it was a stolen life. And it was one thing to be  
21 victimized by the people that took her life from us, but it  
22 happened again in another way. To not have justice and to  
23 not have the answers to her death again victimized us.  
24 Again, for us to have to hang our heads. For us to be --  
25 for us to try to say about how her life mattered and that

1 her life was priceless to us, we needed to be able to say  
2 that.

3 The world has been going on all around us  
4 and yet we've sat and waited in a storm because we've  
5 needed and wanted to have the truths of her murder be  
6 acknowledged and not have all -- whatever little bit of  
7 answers you have, not to have it shared with us. We ask  
8 for help, because in order for us to be able to heal, we  
9 need our voices heard and our story told.

10 Yesterday was Landen's birthday. This is  
11 the way we're bringing him to come to have his mother's  
12 story told. How fair is that? I don't see that as fair at  
13 all. There's so many women. It's sad when you see the  
14 women, the people all lost. I went to Treaty foregrounds  
15 when there was the -- they had had a giveaway there. And I  
16 remember the -- all of us, we were all, me and my  
17 grandchildren were all lined up and we were shaking hands  
18 with them and us too, we were taking part.

19 My wee, little tiny granddaughters, I had  
20 just walked away to make sure to acknowledge all of the  
21 people that I was thankful that there was people talking up  
22 for missing and murdered women. I remember my tiniest,  
23 little granddaughter, her too, she was walking, she was  
24 coming, she was shaking hands with them and I remember  
25 thinking, wow I forgot all about her. And then when we

1           made it around the harbour, and I was weak by the time we  
2           got her on the harbour and I sat down.

3                         "Grandma," she said. I said, "Why you were  
4           in there? You see me shaking hands." "Yeah, me too,  
5           Grandma, because I know my grandma's hurting so much. I  
6           don't know why anyone would do that," she said. And I  
7           said, "Yeah, baby, I don't know anyone would do that."  
8           This has led to all kinds of hardships for our family.

9                         Our family changed. When there used to be a  
10          time when at the holidays on Christmas I'll be getting to  
11          her house and handing out presents and us having dinner and  
12          being happy and me seeing her decorated house. That's not  
13          what's happened in these past years. And now this girl,  
14          we're finally trying to speak up and say, "Answer us for  
15          her life."

16                        To the police officers that have worked on  
17          her case and the Regina police service, bring them answers,  
18          give them answers. I know it's not going to bring her  
19          back, it's not. Unfortunately, I know even with this  
20          inquiry and everything else, we're not going to get her  
21          back. And it's true what my sister said, there's a part in  
22          all of us that broke, that's not going to come back. And  
23          she said, when the one woman asked her, "Well, you know,  
24          what can we do to heal that?" And she said, "When I'm gone  
25          and I'm with my daughter again maybe, but nobody's going to

1           be able to fix it because she was stolen from us and that  
2           -- we weren't able to say any kind of goodbye to her or any  
3           kind of thing."

4                       We just have to trust that God is taking  
5           care of her and we trust that. Our family is there and  
6           they're loving her and they're -- there's more. I pray  
7           that there's people though that like, like I said when us,  
8           we have our little gathering of our grief and loss  
9           workshop, I hope that we come. And I hope that we try to  
10          find ways. Because there isn't anybody that's been  
11          reaching out unfortunately. I'll say, I know that my  
12          family hasn't had support services, haven't accessed the  
13          services that are out there. And maybe it wasn't their  
14          time, but I pray that somehow more supports come and that  
15          there's more answers for all of these missing and murdered  
16          women across the country and that people stop taking lives.

17                      But I also think -- I believe in prevention  
18          services and I believe in the fact that the government can  
19          help to be able to make a more affordable society. Why  
20          should our children be sent in classes on the reserve? We  
21          don't get the same funding for our education as the ones in  
22          the city and yet we're the ones that are the most  
23          dysfunctional now because of a result of all of the way the  
24          world has become.

25                      This is a rich country. Right now, I know

1 I'm not against immigrants, but one of the things I know  
2 there is lots and lots of immigrants that are being brought  
3 to this country and more money is being paid to help them.  
4 But yet, look at the conditions on our reserve when there's  
5 having to boil water advisories, even with things how we  
6 struggle to be able to -- we don't have the infrastructure.

7 We were laughing last night telling this  
8 boy, we don't remember --us, we were melting snow; us, we  
9 never had toilets when we were kids. And that's a newer  
10 technology and -- for us. And I said, and us, we lived it  
11 hard, and those houses are all wrecked in lots of places.  
12 It's not that much really good housing. And it's -- in  
13 terms of looking at unemployment rates and you see it's not  
14 our people that are easy to get employed, especially the  
15 ones that end up having records because as kids they're  
16 trying to steal to be able to have food in their mouths.

17 Our kids are stolen from us, had been in the  
18 '60s too. I know day school. I was in day school. I know  
19 residential school. I remember when I got my dollars from  
20 the residential school, I was telling my kids, no, we'll --  
21 you guys -- I'm going to pay these few things, but I said I  
22 don't even want that money. I said because, me, I think of  
23 the abuse that I had to go through for it.

24 And then I remember that time, four times I  
25 had phoned that line. There was supposed to be a reach-out

1 line, and I was getting put on hold. One time it just rang  
2 and rang and then one time when I got through to someone  
3 and they said, "We'll get someone to phone you back." I  
4 was like, "You're going to get someone to phone me back  
5 when I'm telling you right now this has all brought up all  
6 of the hardship and all of the pain and you're going to  
7 have someone phone me back? Thank you. That's really  
8 good, because right now, like, I'm really in a lot of  
9 pain." And then, in the meantime, I'm going to funerals  
10 because my friends were committing suicide, and why?  
11 Because they had to live with it.

12 And as men, some of them too, were ashamed  
13 of that to have happened to them, and they ended up --  
14 yeah, they got some money. Yeah, addictions took control  
15 of their -- of them, and then they hung themselves. Yeah.  
16 (Indiscernible). All of this, how come it ended up to  
17 missing and murdered women? How come it got to this point?  
18 Is because yes, systemic racism.

19 Yes, all of the other things that come with  
20 it, and all the dysfunction. When are we going to have  
21 people that are going to all -- when are we going to have  
22 communities that -- where our kids are getting educated?  
23 When are we going to have people -- us knowing that there's  
24 jobs? Us knowing that there's not the racism that exists?  
25 When are the Canadian people going to see us as valuable

1 enough to be able to invest in us too and in the futures?

2 I speak to that and I hope that whoever  
3 hears this also understands, this is a forever journey with  
4 pain. And until there's going to be more healing things  
5 happening and more resources available, more people to  
6 heal, more counselling happening, will people be able to  
7 move past all of this? And until there's answers.

8 Again, this is a ceremony. I'll be putting  
9 this in the fire and saying a prayer and asking that my  
10 niece knows today we spoke to her life and that she looks  
11 over her family and in some way her life is not gone for  
12 nothing. But that somehow, some kinds of changes happen  
13 and are a result of this, of her life being lost, that  
14 people realize that the violence that happens, it shouldn't  
15 happen anymore.

16 I remember just reading the other day about  
17 how there's such a low incidence, I think it's Japan, that  
18 where they hardly have any gun use. And that there's  
19 really low incidences of anything with guns. And that  
20 there's low incidences of crime to the way there is here in  
21 Canada and in North America. And when we will have that  
22 day? That our kids can be safe? Why is it now there's  
23 shootings in our city schools? Why is it that there's  
24 things that are happening that there's gangs the way they  
25 are? Why is it our children are getting murdered and

1 missing? Creator, hear our prayer, please, please hear our  
2 prayer. Many thanks for this day and for us to be able to  
3 share our words. Many thanks for getting us here. All my  
4 relations, *hay-hay*.

5 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Thank you. Incredible.  
6 Incredible courage. Janine sounds like she was just a  
7 beautiful person. I want to say that.

8 **[MS. LEONA WESAQUATE:** Yes, she was]  
9 (~~indiscernible~~).

10 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** One of the things that the  
11 Inquiry is also looking at is, how can the Inquiry honour  
12 Janine and her life and the loss? And isn't the family.  
13 You may not have something thought of right now, but we  
14 certainly invite you to let us know.

15 Now, when we spoke before we started that we  
16 would ask you to bring -- to stand and have Janine's  
17 picture more prominent for the video camera and for the  
18 Commissioners. And it has taken a phenomenal amount of  
19 courage to speak today to the life of Janine. And you have  
20 lots of questions and I certainly hear and the Commission  
21 hears that you need answers. And I understand from what  
22 you've said, that the reasoning that those answers have  
23 been difficult to get is because it's an open case. But at  
24 the same time, the family needs some information.

25 **MS. LEONA WESAQUATE:** I don't even know if it



1 is an open case or if it -- you know, if they had closed it  
2 in anyway because nobody's come to talk to us about it.

3 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** I will -- we believe that  
4 it's still open. I will make notes on the paperwork for  
5 the Commissioners for them to inquire and to notify them,  
6 please. That this has been coming 13 years. And the  
7 family needs to have that follow-up and it needs to be more  
8 than what it's been, because from what I've heard today, it  
9 hasn't been much of anything for you.

10 So, in terms of what we were talking about  
11 before, before we went on the record, you also wanted to  
12 speak to the missing family, Brandy Wesaquate. And so, the  
13 other -- and Leona, you've spoken a little bit to it today  
14 and how -- that some of the systemic factors that have  
15 impacted you. I don't know if now is a time that Jones may  
16 want to speak. You talked quite a bit about the impact of  
17 what it's been like for you with your addictions and  
18 struggles that you've had since losing Janine and the  
19 relationship.

20 So, it sounds to me that there is still  
21 matters to be discussed. If that's the case, we can take a  
22 break. I said to you earlier, this is your time and your  
23 space. So, if I can invite you to stand then I will --  
24 then if I can just sort of stand together with Janine's  
25 picture, and I don't know if Landen would like to be part

1 of sharing this moment. And I'll just move this so that --  
2 would you like to be part of this, Landen?

3 **MR. LANDEN WESAQUATE:** Okay.

4 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay. So, I'll just have  
5 you raise it and -- why don't you come -- come stand beside  
6 your grandmother. Just bear with me as I move the camera.  
7 Any words you'd like to say to the camera with her picture?

8 **MS. GLORIA WESAQUATE OAKES:** We want  
9 justice. We want answers for Janine. Janine's life was  
10 stolen from us. And we need to find a way to be able to  
11 heal and to be able to bring answers for her son and our  
12 family. And now we finally had a chance to be able to  
13 speak out about her life and her -- the loss of her --  
14 because of her murder. But please don't just leave our  
15 story in a box or on a shelf or in a file. Instead, bring  
16 answers, don't just leave it there. Find a way to be able  
17 to help the missing and murdered Indigenous women, to be  
18 able to have healing and peace.

19 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Thank you. So, I'll just  
20 put it on pause and give everybody a chance to -- would  
21 anybody like some more water or -- I've got more bottled  
22 water here.

23 --- BREAK

24 And we are now recording. And for the  
25 record it is now 12:37. And while we were off the record,

1           there was a discussion by family and they would like to  
2           have that go back on the record. So, Leona you were going  
3           to speak?

4                           **MS. LEONA WESAQUATE:** Coming here was really  
5           rather fast, that there really wasn't time to actually  
6           figure out how we could bring Janine's brothers to be able  
7           to participate in the hearing and have their voices heard.  
8           And she had a older brother and a younger brother. And  
9           both of them had been very impacted by the loss of their  
10          sister's life, and both of them when Gloria had before been  
11          able to talk to the police, they were there. And then when  
12          there was this for us yesterday and we -- I'm driving a  
13          Hyundai, a little tiny car, and we could only fit the four  
14          of us in the car. And so, her brother wasn't able to come  
15          with us and we didn't even know where the other brother  
16          was.

17                           But they both since, like, her younger  
18          brother he was involved with the church and had been  
19          working at an Indian restaurant in the inner city in Regina  
20          before. And, you know, at a time he had been on a better  
21          path and then, you know, all of this had changed so  
22          dramatically his life and he turned to addictions as did  
23          his older brother. And that -- now, drugs and alcohol take  
24          -- have a big role in their lives. And that -- yeah, crime  
25          has come there too like where there's been, you know, so

1 many other things, not only being hurt by other people,  
2 because, you know, like, someone attacks you and you're not  
3 safe when you're not in your right, normal frame of mind.  
4 Different things that have happened and impacted them and  
5 the fact of that we didn't know where they would be at  
6 different times to be able to tell them so they could  
7 participate, and them saying to their mom, "I wish I would  
8 have been there. I wish I could have said something." And  
9 we want them to have a say.

10 This is the last day of the hearing and we  
11 only got here like late last night. It was like, you know,  
12 I think just about 10:00 and then we just checked into the  
13 hotel we had and went to Wal-Mart and grabbed a couple  
14 things to eat, and we're eating late and then coming here  
15 in the morning and being lost and not knowing Saskatoon,  
16 that was a hardship for us too because we drove right close  
17 to this hotel but then we went all the way back down 22nd  
18 and all of this.

19 And then now, today, like, I -- like, I had  
20 seen the -- a thing telling how there's other stuff going  
21 on in the city and how it was too late for us to try to go  
22 to a round dance and yet that was healing. And it was -- I  
23 seen that there's different kinds of things set up and nice  
24 stuff.

25 But there's no time for us to take part in

1       it. Our role here, we wanted to come and to have our words  
2       on record and to have our say, to testify to what our story  
3       for Janine's life and for our other niece that is missing.  
4       And we wanted that to happen. But we wanted those boys to  
5       be a part of it and for them to be able to say and -- how  
6       it impacted their lives. And two healthy guys that had  
7       families and their families torn apart by it all and to  
8       turn to drugs and alcohol and to be at a messed-up place in  
9       their lives now, we want their voices heard.

10               We ask that you hear them too and that they  
11       get recorded and that their words -- because this is the  
12       way that it's also affecting the men in the communities,  
13       that, like, it's affecting them in ways of addictions and  
14       them ending up in jails. The high incarceration rates and  
15       how there's just not a good future for them when this is  
16       what it does and it tears families apart and destroys the  
17       strength. And people break down and then they don't talk  
18       and they don't share and they don't have just a normal  
19       life.

20               I want the normal lives again for this  
21       family. I want them to be able to be heard and that them,  
22       too, they don't get missed, because I think you're not  
23       going to be able to record for all the different people,  
24       but yet there's still more voices that need to be heard.  
25       And the fact is the Inquiry is going to end today and

1           there's still voices not heard, still parts of the story  
2           not heard and parts of the impact not -- that message not  
3           carried completely across. Because I bet you if you took  
4           the camera up to the jails, you could hear a lot of stories  
5           there even as well. Like -- and if you -- and if some of  
6           these cameras go to the places where these men also are  
7           impacted, and I know her two brothers they need a voice,  
8           they need to tell their story.

9                       **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay. Thank you. I will  
10           record that on the document to highlight the need to have  
11           statement takers make arrangements to speak with Janine's  
12           brothers and if there's any family -- and Jones, and that  
13           can arranged.

14                      **MR. JONES OAKES:** Yeah.

15                      **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay. Jones, did you --  
16           is there anything for the Commissioners that you would like  
17           to express? You don't ---

18                      **MR. JONES OAKES:** No. Just thankful to be  
19           here. Thankful to express myself, I guess, and let them  
20           know how it affected me. And it affected me in a bad way,  
21           I guess, for myself. Been in residential schools, been in  
22           jails, seen a lot of fights, seen a lot of violence, pretty  
23           much all that I know now life is violence. Protect  
24           yourself. You know, try to protect yourself. Even with my  
25           daughter being murdered and, you know, now that's back at

1 me, I get upset and angry.

2 You know, I wish I could find these people  
3 that burned her and did stuff, but I just let it go and say  
4 that I'll leave it in God's hands and, you know, they can  
5 deal with it on the other side of -- when they face their  
6 judgement day when it comes. So, a lot of that weighs on  
7 that, the way I try to pray to keep going and a lot of  
8 times, you know, I pray, sometimes I say, "Well, why don't  
9 you take me? Why don't you burn me? Let me burn, you  
10 know?" But I guess that's not my way. I'm not going to go  
11 like that. So, we don't all know how we're going to pass  
12 away or -- and stuff like that, but it affected me in a bad  
13 way for myself.

14 For the Commissioners and stuff, like, I  
15 turned to alcohol and drugs because that's all I knew. I  
16 grew up with that on my reserve. I grew up at every house,  
17 people like to drink wine and, you know, I grew up with it.  
18 That's pretty much all that I've known since I was a little  
19 baby, little kid. I used to see houses on the reserve with  
20 smoke all over and I used to walk along the floor  
21 (indiscernible) I seen this cloud of smoke. And yeah,  
22 that's pretty much how I dealt with it. I covered my pain  
23 with alcohol, through drugs, even turned to intravenous  
24 needles to cover the pain, wanted to forget for a little  
25 while, just to be out of it.

1                   So, that's what I had to do -- but since,  
2                   you know, since July/June, I went to jail for impaired and  
3                   I've been pretty much straight since. I've been -- got out  
4                   of jail and I like the feeling now that I'm not on drugs,  
5                   I'm not messed up no more.

6                   **MS. KERRIE REAY:** So, a new journey?

7                   **MR. JONES OAKES:** Yes, a new journey. And I  
8                   just pray that, you know, some day people get all their  
9                   justice that they want and are seeking, you know. And I  
10                  have feelings for the other people like myself. It's my  
11                  only daughter. I don't have no other daughter and that's  
12                  the only daughter that was taken away from me.

13                  **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Well, this will part of  
14                  her legacy, your story, your truth for the Commissioners,  
15                  this will be part of the legacy of Janine.

16                  **MR. JONES OAKES:** Yeah.

17                  **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Is there a way that you  
18                  would like to see her memory honoured, commemorated?

19                  **MR. JONES OAKES:** I don't know, just -- lot  
20                  of times I wish I would get the justice, but I somehow feel  
21                  that I won't get that, so. I guess it doesn't really  
22                  matter to me.

23                  **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Maybe the answers?

24                  **MR. JONES OAKES:** Yeah, the answers.

25                  **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Gloria?



1                   **MS. GLORIA WESAQUATE OAKES:** For myself, I  
2           would like to see justice, but again like what Leona said,  
3           people are afraid to come forward that do know stuff.  
4           Because we really don't know really what happened and then  
5           we have all these questions, but who's truly going to be  
6           there to answer them? And like, I said we're all getting  
7           old. We're not -- and when our health isn't good. Like  
8           Leona said, it takes a toll on a family where, for me, I'm  
9           broken and I don't think I could ever be fixed from this  
10          happening to me. Like, I -- she tells the truth when she  
11          says, you have to live again, but I find it so hard.

12                   Like, I have a home, but I feel from whoever  
13          did this, you sure took my life. Even though you took my  
14          daughter's life, you took my life too, because I find it  
15          hard to live even though I have Landen and other children.  
16          They say, "Grandma, we love you. Please..." like, when she  
17          said, "Carry on, keep going." And at times I have a hard  
18          time, but I try my best.

19                   But I just wish that there could be answers  
20          for our questions and hold people accountable but --  
21          there's that's but again. Hopefully, somebody will hear  
22          our story and come forward and say something to help us to  
23          heal because we do need healing. I find we suffer with not  
24          healing and then for seeking. Like, there is agencies out  
25          there like the bereavement. It's just that us, we need to

1 go take ourselves there and say, "Help me. Please be  
2 there, support me."

3 And I find it's hard for my sons to do that.  
4 I think even for my husband, he said this is his first time  
5 he cried and that's 13 years. This is the first time he  
6 let himself be heard and let his tears fall. And I believe  
7 my grandson too, like in his statement, he wants justice  
8 for his mother because he has to live without his mother  
9 for the rest of his life like we do. And then something is  
10 taken that cannot ever be replaced. And that our family  
11 was torn apart because of whoever took her away.

12 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** And what I'll ask, for  
13 Gloria, for Jones, and for Landen and Leona is health  
14 support will help you with an aftercare plan so that you  
15 don't go home -- because today has been a very intense day  
16 emotionally. And we don't want you going home with more  
17 trauma than you came with. And so, I will, you know, when  
18 we're done Judy will take some time here in the room with  
19 you and start to make those connections for you.

20 **MS. LEONA WESAQUATE:** Like, maybe there  
21 should be, like, how us, like, when I said how we had to do  
22 giveaway to -- for our -- (indiscernible) her life  
23 afterwards, like for the four years. But maybe there  
24 should be like something, like some kind of summer  
25 gathering that where you bring people together and people

1 can actually have the support people to come back and to  
2 meet with people and where people can talk and share and  
3 just talk about their families.

4 And maybe there should be the round dance  
5 like scenario and pow wow where things, like, where it's  
6 healing things and activities and stuff for kids and  
7 families to all be able to come, and not just a few people,  
8 to have words, but something like that. And maybe there  
9 should be, you know, trees planted to show or a place -- a  
10 sacred place that's going to be to -- with monuments that  
11 acknowledge all of these missing and murdered women and  
12 that their lives aren't forgotten. And that where their  
13 names can all be, and where people could go to try and have  
14 peace with it, and a place that where it's clean, it's  
15 taken care of. And that maybe this should be even put in  
16 our Canadian history books, that this is what's happened,  
17 you know, all the different things that it's led to this.

18 That -- for this not to happen again to  
19 Indian women and across the country. But that there be,  
20 you know, some kind of place and that some kind of trees  
21 and some kind of newness and some kind of growth to happen  
22 that, you know, is treated with a sacred respect that now  
23 we acknowledge you. And that permanently we'll have that  
24 left. The way they leave for -- you know, to honour people  
25 when they do that, I remember her dad was a veteran and we

1 -- when the one funeral home had told us they had -- did a  
2 tree at this one place for us if we ever wanted to go back  
3 there and acknowledge his life. And, you know, like, maybe  
4 there should be something like that or -- and -- but I  
5 think for sure the supports because, like, we're only now  
6 having -- being able to speak to it, 13 years later. Like,  
7 and there's the same thing with lots of families that lots  
8 of time is passing and yet only now it's being that they're  
9 finally getting stories told and things acknowledged, but  
10 then it's true. How do you just leave it here?

11 **MS. GLORIA WESAQUATE OAKES:** And with that  
12 because of men, they're different from women where they  
13 can't really show their emotions with us. You know what I  
14 mean? Like, there's a togetherness. They find it harder,  
15 I think, men. I find that with my grandson too, I tell him  
16 it's okay to cry. It's okay to show your emotion and I  
17 find it's harder, hard for the men. Like, I think even my  
18 sons, I think that's why they tell me they want to, but  
19 then it seems one I couldn't find and then the other one,  
20 there was no room anyways, like -- kind of a thing.

21 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** It's like an internal  
22 struggle, you know, sitting here and watching Landen and  
23 Jones struggle. I could see the struggling trying to  
24 contain the emotion. With men, it is different. And it  
25 doesn't matter what that I say that this is a room for you

1 to share your emotions, it may be. But the ability to let  
2 go when you've had a lifetime of keeping everything bottled  
3 up and everything so tight, it is difficult, there's no  
4 question. But Leona, I think you've offered some great  
5 insights. I really think the idea of bringing people back  
6 together, you know, in the summer or something like that,  
7 where people can come back, families are connecting here,  
8 families are feeling part of a greater purpose on this  
9 journey.

10 **MS. LEONA WESAQUATE:** Like, we're not alone,  
11 like we're all suffering the same thing. That we're there  
12 as ---

13 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** And strength does come in  
14 numbers and your idea about, you know, trying to put  
15 something together, maybe in the summer, that brings people  
16 back, that the Inquiry and its visit to Saskatoon is not  
17 forgotten. All right. So, the other thing -- the other  
18 matter was Brandy Wesaquate.

19 **MS. LEONA WESAQUATE:** Brandy was, like, our  
20 niece too. And it's been, we think, around 11 years that  
21 she's been missing. And what we know about it is, like,  
22 this confusion. I remember how, you know, the -- ones were  
23 reached out on Facebook and that they had went to -- and  
24 reported her missing and then that -- like how, how our  
25 understanding was really that she participated in the sex

1 trade and that was a street walker and that may have been  
2 picked up in that way. And then that -- and likely  
3 murdered is what we believe. And there's -- there was no  
4 answers to anything. It's just that she just vanished.

5 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Can you tell us ---

6 **MS. LEONA WESAQUATE:** Brandy was born, like  
7 her birth name had been Charlie Wesaquate and was born a  
8 male, but then lived her life as a girl. And right from  
9 when he was tiny, he would play with dolls and live the  
10 life as a girl. And as he grew up, like he -- we always  
11 accepted that he was, like, with the girls. Like, I  
12 remember once even, like, telling all the girls to do  
13 something and he laughed and said, "Yeah, but auntie I'm,  
14 you know." And then I laughed and said, "It's okay, like,  
15 it's okay." And it was just the way it was.

16 And the one thing that we know is, he  
17 presented himself the way he wanted to be, with the way he  
18 was choosing to live as a girl, as a woman. And we don't  
19 know if that, you know, how it played a factor in it. And  
20 we don't know other than to say that, like, we knew she was  
21 kind and caring and funny and wanted to be called Brandy as  
22 opposed to Charlie and then that she too was taken and that  
23 her life mattered too. Nobody is really speaking about her  
24 because her mom died. Her mom was [Brandy's Mother]. And  
25 we know that she had brothers too, [Brother 1] and [Brother

1           2] and [Brother 3], and they all loved Brandy too. And  
2           that had many cousins that cared and wanted answers and  
3           wanted at least, you know, to find her body and not to give  
4           up and so that she could at least be buried in a decent  
5           way, if that's really what happened. Or to find her and to  
6           know. And the one thing, like I said, we have to speak to  
7           it because that's her life. And ---

8                           **MS. GLORIA WESAQUATE OAKES:** But also  
9           because of everything, losing everything, them too, they  
10          turn to addictions.

11                          **MS. LEONA WESAQUATE:** Yes. And  
12          (indiscernible) 11 years ago, so about, like 2006, yeah.

13                          **MS. KERRIE REAY:** And where was Brandy from?

14                          **MS. LEONA WESAQUATE:** Regina.

15                          **MS. KERRIE REAY:** So, she was last seen in  
16          Regina.

17                          **MS. LEONA WESAQUATE:** In Regina.

18                          **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Okay.

19                          **MS. LEONA WESAQUATE:** And lived all her life  
20          in Regina. And then, like, yeah, the grandmother had  
21          passed away and their family living street lives. And,  
22          like, it's highly unlikely that anyone spoke from her  
23          family. And we don't know because we weren't in touch with  
24          any of them, if anyone, you know, made it to come into the  
25          Inquiry to speak. We hope so, but we highly doubt it. And

1           then -- and the same thing, them too, like ending up  
2           incarcerated, ending up in hard ways and -- but, yeah,  
3           like, them too, a life that's lost and a tragedy that  
4           turned even more tragic and even more traumatic when you  
5           lose someone and then it ends up multiplying the effect  
6           because of how much pain and how people can't -- don't know  
7           how to handle things and people don't have the family and  
8           don't have the love and don't have the support.

9                         And we're raised, you know, to have those  
10           things as a normal thing. And then when everything falls  
11           apart, they turn to closing themselves off to isolating, to  
12           depression and to addictions to mask all of the pain and  
13           the hardship and then it just ends up pushing and  
14           multiplying even more into more violence and into more  
15           effects. And that's what we see and what we see happening.  
16           And, like, more needs to be done for Aboriginal people.  
17           Like, it shouldn't be that -- it's like we're on the bottom  
18           of the pole and our life aren't mattering but everyone  
19           else's lives are mattering and are up here and our lives  
20           are like, the street and the hardness and the reserves and  
21           jails and all of that. That's how it seems. And it seems  
22           that -- where do we go from here?

23                         How do we make this stop? Who's going to  
24           help to make this stop? Who's going to help families to be  
25           true families and not to have all of these problems and



1           these kind of lives? Because when is it going to change?  
2           Will it change and how can it change? And, like, pressure  
3           the government to make changes, to make supported  
4           communities, put the funding there to help families have  
5           literacy and families be able to read and write and  
6           families to be able to be educated and let that education  
7           be a buffalo and let it -- let that buffalo also come in  
8           health and help our families heal from these addictions and  
9           help these families deal with trauma so the violence can  
10          stop. Help us have decent lives so people aren't stealing  
11          and living in crime and living in other ways, but having  
12          the means to be able to support their families and having  
13          homes and having more.

14                        We're bringing so much more people to our  
15          country, are we going to make this even worse? And now,  
16          like, I know I feel like we're even getting lower than  
17          that. And, you know, things are being given to help these  
18          families come, and I'm not against that because I care  
19          about families, but, at the same time, it's hard not to  
20          feel like a little bit envious and wanting there to be a  
21          better life here for us too. And for it to stop and for at  
22          the least that we don't have our girls going missing and  
23          being murdered and no one caring.

24                        **MS. KERRIE REAY:** If I can -- truly that is  
25          the mandate, that the scope is very large and that is the

1 mandate of the Commission, of the Inquiry, into making  
2 recommendations and hearing all of the stories because  
3 there are themes. The same message is being said and many  
4 different messages. And so, the Commissioners will put  
5 that together and the recommendations to the Government of  
6 Canada, that is their mandate.

7 **MS. GLORIA OAKES:** Because like -- I'd like  
8 to say something. I have a granddaughter, [J.], she went  
9 to school at Glen Cairn there and she came home and she was  
10 upset and she said, "Grandma." And I said, "What?" She  
11 said, "How come my skin has to be this colour?" And I  
12 said, "What do you mean?" She said, "Because the kids at  
13 school..." -- and that's a high school -- she said,  
14 "...they're making fun of her skin colour." She goes, "Why  
15 do I have to be this colour?" I said, "You just love what  
16 God put you in." I said, "That's you, just love it." But  
17 like what we say pray when someone hurts you that way to  
18 make you feel like you're worthless because you're born  
19 Indian. Like, I think sometimes the people have to realize  
20 just don't look at my skin colour, I'm worth something.

21 **MS. KERRIE REAY:** And I think that's a very  
22 important message that Canada has to hear. So, thank you  
23 for saying it.

24 **MS. GLORIA OAKES:** Yeah, because I thought  
25 she -- like, it's still going on, like ---

1                   **MS. KERRIE REAY:** Yes.

2                   **MS. GLORIA OAKES:** --- in this year of 2017.

3                   **MS. KERRIE REAY:** No, that was an important  
4 message to say today. And I thank you. It takes courage  
5 to say those comments and it took so much courage coming  
6 here. And we want to recognize that courage.

7                   **MS. LEONA WESAQUATE:** Well, so many of our  
8 kids are going into foster care and so many of the kids are  
9 getting even more lost in the system and like, there's --  
10 like, there was that one case that I know had went -- I  
11 don't know if he was tribunal and then it went to the  
12 international courts. And it was about how like the  
13 funding is different for children in care. And, you know,  
14 and yet the decision was shown -- it was shown that this is  
15 what -- you know, there's a difference between the funding  
16 for kids and yet it's still happening. They didn't change  
17 it and give funding to be able to make it equal even.

18                   Like, we're not even equal and yet the  
19 craziness is we're the first peoples. We share the land.  
20 When I tell my little guy on Treaty Day, I tell him, "We're  
21 sharing the land. That's why we get five dollars." And I  
22 said it's a commitment that was made with a pipe in a  
23 sacred way that we share the land and we share the  
24 resources and we share this country. And yet, our people  
25 are falling in the poorest of circumstances with the most

1           disparity, with the hardest times. And how do we change  
2           that? I know, like, I have an education, and yet also I'm  
3           struggling, like, I'm really struggling. And why? Like,  
4           why is it like this?

5                           **MS. KERRIE REAY:** And maybe on that  
6           question, that really closes our time. I think that's a  
7           good question to leave with the Commissioners, if you're  
8           ready. Okay. Well, thank you.

9           --- Upon adjourning

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LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

14

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

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shirley Chang', written over a horizontal line.

22

Shirley Chang

23

March 14, 2018

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