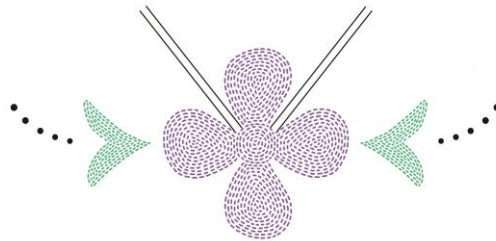


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan**



PUBLIC

Wednesday March 28, 2018

Statement - Volume 417

**Carson Poitras & Regina Poitras,
In relation to Happy Charles & Eva Charles**

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

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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 and were made by Maryiam Khoury, Public Inquiry Clerk with the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQ, August 2nd, 2018 at Ottawa, Ontario.

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Documents submitted with oral statement: none.

1 Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

2 --- Upon commencing on Wednesday, March 28, 2018.

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: This is Francine
4 Merasty with the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered
5 Indigenous Women and Girls, speaking on the record with
6 Carson Poitras and Regina Poitras. Um, Regina is from the
7 Lac La Ronge Indian Band, and Carson is Métis. And they've
8 traveled here from La Ronge, Saskatchewan. We're here in
9 Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. The date is March 28th, 2018.
10 Regina Poitras, you are here to voluntarily give your
11 statement in the matter of Happy Charles and Eva Charles.
12 And present with us in the room -- well, there's only three
13 of us in the room here. Your statement will be audio
14 recorded today and you've also allowed us to videotape your
15 statement. Could you please confirm that you agree with
16 this?

17 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yes, I agree.

18 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Okay. And Carson,
19 your statement will be audio recorded today, and you've
20 willingly allowed us to videotape your statement. Can you
21 please confirm that you agree with this?

22 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yes, I agree.

23 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Okay. Um, Regina,
24 you, you wanted to share first, and who are you going to
25 speak about first?

1 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um, I'll speak about
2 my sister Eva.

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Okay. What do you
4 want tell us about Eva?

5 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um, just that I don't
6 have much memories of her. She was, um, very, um, gypsy-
7 like. She was always moving around. She couldn't settle
8 down in one area. She couldn't, um, I guess put her roots
9 down anywhere. She was always on the move. She had to go
10 to work in different areas, like, a long time ago, there
11 used to be sugar beets in Alberta. She used to go there,
12 travel there, and seasonal work. She liked seasonal work,
13 you know, working out in the bush. And, um, she wasn't
14 really a wild person. She was pretty quiet, but very
15 (inaudible). And very energetic, high energy. She didn't
16 have any kids. She mostly helped me and my sister Mabel
17 (ph), with the two kids that we had, Happy and Tonie (ph).

18 And she'd help us with them, and later on,
19 because, um, she was in an abusive relationship she had
20 been with for years, her friend had come in from Vancouver
21 and gave her the opportunity to go move with her to, to
22 Vancouver, to work at the post office there. There was a
23 job opening and she recommended her. So they ended up
24 moving over there, and also to escape from her abusive
25 boyfriend. And they moved and, um, they kept writing us

1 letters, like, and phoning, and then she ended up passing
2 away over there after she got out on the streets. She went
3 out drinking, made it out on the streets somehow, and her
4 friend, um, told her not to come back because she lost her
5 job. And we had no way of (~~inaudible~~) [bringing] her back,
6 like, right away. We were working on sending her money,
7 but we didn't have much. So then she ended up coming home
8 (~~inaudible~~) [in a different way]. And, um, that, that's a
9 lot out of my (~~inaudible~~) [mouth].

10 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: How old was your
11 sister?

12 MS. REGINA POITRAS: She was 25, I think.
13 Somewhere around there.

14 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And when did this
15 happen?

16 MS. REGINA POITRAS: This was in '79 I
17 think.

18 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And what were the
19 circumstances? What happened to her?

20 MS. REGINA POITRAS: She got killed in a,
21 um, in what was called a discothèque at that time, a big
22 noisy dance building and they thought that she was passed
23 out on the table. (~~inaudible~~) [At that time --] they got
24 time to close the place down. She was found slumped over
25 and there was 41 stab marks on her back.

1 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: 41. Wow. So did
2 anybody get charged for --

3 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah. But I didn't
4 know about it 'til way later. My sister Mabel told me
5 that. Because back then, it was all hush hush, don't tell
6 (~~inaudible~~) [nobody, don't talk about it]. But later on,
7 Mabel told me that there was a man that was charged
8 (~~inaudible~~) years, and I guess that was her boyfriend at
9 the time. A different guy that she met that was over
10 there. She always seemed to get into abusive relationships
11 for some reason.

12 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So how old were you
13 at the time your sister passed away?

14 MS. REGINA POITRAS: 20.

15 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: 20? So you were,
16 like --

17 MS. REGINA POITRAS: I have.

18 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Just a little
19 younger than her, eh?

20 MS. REGINA POITRAS: No, I wasn't. My
21 memory is gone. Seventeen. I was 17.

22 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay. Okay.

23 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah.

24 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um, so how was it
25 for her growing up in your family? What was that like?

1 MS. REGINA POITRAS: She was, um, always
2 taking us out because she wanted to clean up. She had to
3 make everything perfect so she'd always kick us out and
4 clean. And growing up, she was, um, she was always busy
5 working, doing something. Like if she wasn't got a job,
6 she was at home bothering us so we wouldn't sit at home.
7 And my mom, um, made stuff for her, like, jackets, jackets,
8 leather ones, and head bands, and things like that. She
9 had lots of friends.

10 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

11 MS. REGINA POITRAS: But she didn't
12 really, um, you know, um, stay with one group of friends.
13 She'd always be moving around.

14 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

15 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Her and my sister
16 Marriane (ph) were together a lot.

17 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah. Close?

18 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah, very close.
19 When Marriane passed away, she pretty much followed.

20 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Followed in what
21 way?

22 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Like, she didn't
23 survive very long after that.

24 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh. So, like a
25 year or two?

1 MS. REGINA POITRAS: About two years, she
2 was in a car accident.

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay.

4 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah, my sister
5 passed away.

6 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So it affected a
7 lot of people?

8 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah.

9 MR. CARSON POITRAS: And your mom.

10 MS. REGINA POITRAS: No, she didn't pass
11 away 'til --

12 MR. CARSON POITRAS: No, no. It affected
13 your mom.

14 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Oh, yeah. It did.

15 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: How was your mom
16 after that?

17 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um, more sad.

18 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

19 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Where did she end up?

20 MS. REGINA POITRAS: (Inaudible).

21 MR. CARSON POITRAS: (Inaudible).

22 MS. REGINA POITRAS: No, that was for my
23 little sister.

24 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Oh.

25 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So what do you

1 think might have helped your sister Eva?

2 MS. REGINA POITRAS: If she was able to
3 get out of that, um, relationship.

4 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

5 MS. REGINA POITRAS: And, I don't know,
6 maybe some hope so that she wasn't constantly looking for
7 the abusive boyfriend that she'd hook up with.

8 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

9 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Because she was
10 always trying to fix these guys. I don't know why. I
11 wouldn't want to fix them. They're abusive, they always
12 stay abusive. But she was just like a mother hen. She
13 wanted to help them.

14 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Was she the oldest?

15 MS. REGINA POITRAS: No. My sister Susan
16 (ph) was the oldest.

17 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

18 MS. REGINA POITRAS: So what happened to
19 her friend?

20 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um, she was still
21 alive. She's, um, she ended up coming home, and then she
22 got into a car accident -- I mean a ski-doo accident.

23 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh. She was also
24 from La Ronge?

25 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah.

1 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

2 MS. REGINA POITRAS: And she got into a
3 ski-doo accident, and then she lost sight of one eye, and a
4 bunch of brain damage. So she was in the hospital for
5 (~~inaudible~~) [a while] after partying.

6 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

7 MS. REGINA POITRAS: But she didn't know
8 the city life, and she didn't know about where to turn when
9 she got kicked out of her friend's place.

10 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, your sister?

11 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah.

12 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So she basically
13 just went out onto the street?

14 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um-hum.

15 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um, do you have
16 anything else to share about your sister before we move on?

17 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um, not really, no.

18 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Well, if you want
19 to say anything else, then you can just add it while we're
20 recorded. Um, so there's also Happy Charles, and that's
21 your --

22 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Daughter.

23 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Your daughter?
24 Okay. So what do you want to share about your daughter?
25 Maybe you can tell us happened to her.

1 MS. REGINA POITRAS: I don't know what
2 happened.

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Or what -- she went
4 missing?

5 MS. REGINA POITRAS: She came to P.A. to,
6 um, to do some banking and also to see if she could get
7 into detox, because La Ronge detox, they wouldn't, they're
8 not (~~inaudible~~) [very good]. It seems like they're always
9 full, or they're always red tape to go through. And, um,
10 she came to P.A. on the 1st, and then she was missing on
11 the 3rd.

12 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: April 1st?

13 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah. And that was
14 last year?

15 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah.

16 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah. So who
17 reported her missing?

18 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um, I think it was
19 the 7th of April, we reported her missing.

20 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

21 MS. REGINA POITRAS: And the day before
22 that, we were shopping the co-op, and I got a message from
23 my granddaughter [Daughter 4], that [R.] - Happy's
24 boyfriend's mom --

25 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

1 MS. REGINA POITRAS: -- had contacted
2 [A.], I guess her sister-in-law --

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

4 MS. REGINA POITRAS: -- to contact me to
5 send a message to the police that she was missing, which I
6 found very strange because all the time our kids were
7 dating - like ten years - she's never contacted me, never
8 even talked to me. She was against the relationship. And
9 because they had a son together, she didn't have a choice.
10 But she never liked Happy and because of their
11 relationship, she ended up not liking us either, so she
12 never talked to us. And Happy, I reported her missing once
13 about four years ago, five years ago. But then she showed
14 up right away. She said,

15 "Mom don't, don't report me missing
16 again. It's very embarrassing. I'll
17 always contact you."

18 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah. So what was
19 the police response in regards to this report of a missing
20 person?

21 MR. CARSON POITRAS: That was a fight all
22 the way. They didn't believe us. She's gone, they always
23 came up with some other excuse, she's doing this or that,
24 or whatever --

25 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Who, who?

1 MR. CARSON POITRAS: The police.

2 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Is there anybody in
3 particular, like, a name?

4 MR. CARSON POITRAS: I'm not sure who we
5 were talking to in the beginning.

6 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah. Missing
7 persons --

8 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah.

9 MS. REGINA POITRAS: -- um, department in
10 the --

11 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: City of Prince
12 Albert?

13 MR. CARSON POITRAS: So then we had to go
14 through all the different challenges of contacting about
15 every agency to see if she was there or not; the hospitals,
16 the detoxes, the shelters, not only in Prince Albert,
17 across Saskatchewan, before they would take us seriously.

18 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Like, you guys had
19 to do that?

20 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah. So we did all
21 that, and we had help from, um, (inaudible) in doing that.

22 MS. REGINA POITRAS: (Inaudible).

23 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah. Because there
24 were, you know, the other women's shelters, right?

25 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

1 MS. REGINA POITRAS: And they also know
2 about the hidden places that we wouldn't know about.

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

4 MR. CARSON POITRAS: And then the
5 hospitals and the --

6 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Morgues.

7 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah.

8 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So how long did
9 that take.

10 MS. REGINA POITRAS: I think it was about
11 two weeks until, until --

12 MR. CARSON POITRAS: It was two weeks
13 after the 7th.

14 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So you reported it,
15 and you guys worked for two weeks phoning all these
16 agencies?

17 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah. And then we
18 also came to P.A. on that first weekend.

19 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah, we came on, on
20 the 7th --

21 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um-hum. And I put up
22 posters, and we talked to everybody we could find on the
23 street.

24 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah. We hit the
25 streets first and did our own investigation because the

1 police weren't.

2 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

3 MR. CARSON POITRAS: So we tried to get
4 the police more involved, but they just said they didn't
5 have the resources or whatever, or didn't really, or
6 thought she would just show up somewhere.

7 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

8 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Um --

9 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So when did they
10 finally, like, put up a missing poster for her?

11 MR. CARSON POITRAS: I think that was,
12 like, May something.

13 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So, like, over a
14 month after she went missing?

15 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah. And we had put
16 recommendations in to the police --

17 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum

18 MR. CARSON POITRAS: As, as we were doing
19 our investigation --

20 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

21 MR. CARSON POITRAS: (~~Inaudible~~) [We were
22 doing] all this kind of stuff, but they waited and waited
23 and then finally they sent out the dogs along the tracks
24 and around (inaudible) under the viaduct and what not. And
25 they followed the tracks all the way, but that was --

1 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Like, a month after.

2 MR. CARSON POITRAS: -- yeah. Over a
3 month after, yeah.

4 MS. REGINA POITRAS: And we wanted a
5 plane.

6 Yeah, we wanted a plane to check before
7 the foliage came up because we're -- I think it was the
8 second weekend we came down and we requested a plane to do
9 an aerial search because the leaves weren't up yet, right?
10 And, um, they didn't. And finally, in July they sent the
11 plane up. Obviously, they're not going to see anything
12 because of full foliage and everything. All these, all the
13 grass is all grown up and stuff. And we, um, couldn't get
14 the support from any of the search teams that were out
15 there. And we're not searchers, right? We never did it.
16 And then --

17 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Where, where are
18 searchers located? Like, who are they?

19 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Well, there's
20 different ones all over Saskatchewan. Like, we have the
21 rangers and the -- just about every community there's
22 rangers to go out. Like, La Ronge has the rangers that go
23 out and (inaudible) P.A.'s got, um, a couple of search
24 teams here. The R.M.'s got a search team.

25 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So they're kind of,

1 like, professional searchers, and they have, like, training
2 and things like that?

3 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah.

4 MS. REGINA POITRAS: And they have dogs
5 and um --

6 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Access to helicopters
7 and boats and --

8 MS. REGINA POITRAS: -- underwater
9 searching.

10 MR. CARSON POITRAS: -- yeah. All access
11 to all these resources where we don't.

12 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So how does, how
13 does one go about, you know, getting --

14 MR. CARSON POITRAS: We still don't know
15 because we still haven't been able to access it.

16 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah.

17 MR. CARSON POITRAS: We were told that,
18 um, an agency has to refer.

19 MS. REGINA POITRAS: An agency has to.

20 MR. CARSON POITRAS: -- we can't as, as
21 individuals or (~~inaudible~~) [family members] request a
22 search team --

23 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: What kind of
24 agency?

25 MR. CARSON POITRAS: The Chief of the

1 reserve or the Police Chief.

2 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So did you guys go
3 see your Chief?

4 MS. REGINA POITRAS: We had a meeting
5 here.

6 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And what...

7 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Um, we didn't have,
8 they said we didn't have a concrete search area, so they
9 didn't do it. And by the time, you know, any evidence that
10 may or may not have been where she was at the last place
11 with her, might of -- because we were already four months,
12 I think, in, by the time we had that meeting.

13 So, um, and it's not -- we found out we
14 went down to Regina for a meeting, um, with other families
15 and all their stories are pretty much similar to -- we all
16 had to search from scratch as brand new searchers to figure
17 out how to do a search, figure out how to find resources,
18 figure out how to, um, get everything in place in order to
19 do a search; because they need, you know, radios was a big
20 thing, where you can contact each other, find out how
21 everybody is, how to, um, what to do when we came upon, um,
22 possibly evidence, and how to deal with that. And when or
23 when not to call the police to come in and check out the
24 evidence. Um, the different types of bones that we found
25 and how to report that, and how to try to distinguish the

1 bones from human to animal bones. And approximate how old
2 they were and what not. Again, this was all further down
3 along our search.

4 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum. And who is
5 the police? Like, who is responsible for this file?

6 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Right now, it is
7 [B.M.] at the police, the P.A. police.

8 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And what's, like,
9 does he contact you all the time or, like, how does that
10 go?

11 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah. He keeps in
12 contact with us.

13 MR. CARSON POITRAS: We're trying to use
14 him (~~inaudible~~) [mostly]. We just saw him today again just
15 before we came here.

16 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So what, what does
17 he do? Like, what has he been doing? Like, talking to
18 people or?

19 MR. CARSON POITRAS: A lot of it we can't
20 really say at this point because we're, like, still an open
21 investigation. Um, we do know, like, after today's meeting
22 what they're actually going to do, which we didn't have
23 before today. Because a lot of it we didn't know, and they
24 didn't know because they didn't have anything for us,
25 right?

1 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

2 MR. CARSON POITRAS: A lot of the things,
3 like, I'm surprised to hear today some of the leads that we
4 found out and forwarded to the police still have not been
5 followed up on. Because we get some sort of, some tips
6 through the public, and so we forward that on to the
7 police. Again, that -- it's frustrating to know today that
8 those aren't followed. And that's, like, been quite a
9 while. And I assumed that they were done.

10 I know that, um, we initially went to the
11 graveyard here in Prince Albert, just by Prince Albert in
12 there --

13 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

14 MR. CARSON POITRAS: -- and we found a
15 pile of dirt that - early on in the spring that we never
16 paid much attention to - but at that time, it looked like
17 fresh, you know, freshly dug-up dirt and what not. And so,
18 we asked to police after we bought some probes to try and
19 probe it. We couldn't because it was packed already, um,
20 by the fall. And we asked the police if they could, you
21 know, help us and get that dug up, but they didn't get that
22 dug up for another three months or so. They finally got a
23 tractor to dig it up and search through it all.
24 (Inaudible).

25 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um-hum. And also

1 (inaudible).

2 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah. And all that
3 (~~inaudible~~) [took] two weeks for them to close that off,
4 too, because, um, um, they were -- her and her boyfriend
5 were going through dumpsters and one particular dumpster -
6 which I can't mention right now, yet, either -- and they
7 did send dogs to that dumpster and they did close off the
8 landfill here in P.A. -- where they dump those dumpsters
9 for two months, eh? Until they could get the dogs to do a
10 search around it.

11 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um-hum. Cadaver
12 dogs.

13 MR. CARSON POITRAS: But, you never know
14 if that, all that garbage was actually still there from
15 when, like, the first two weeks it was on there, the first
16 four weeks, I guess, before they cordoned that off. You
17 know, so where did that month of garbage go?

18 So we don't -- you know, but there's
19 things like that that were not taken seriously because,
20 like, she's Aboriginal young lady, and we're Aboriginal,
21 right? It's frustrating, it's so frustrating the
22 challenges that we see not only between an Aboriginal
23 woman, um, but the Aboriginal male and a white woman was
24 dealt with a lot faster than our daughter was. We've seen
25 that, like, even for our, our, search efforts up north and

1 how much money's been expended in that search. Um, um,
2 doing, doing --

3 MS. REGINA POITRAS: And manpower.

4 MR. CARSON POITRAS: -- yeah, and the
5 manpower and the resources they have available to them.
6 Like, it's hundreds of thousands of dollars, and then we
7 struggle to, like, we got volunteers to come in and we do
8 it all our own, pay their gas and stuff and food. Um, then
9 we have, um, recently we saw a, a white woman go missing
10 like, reported missing, and right away they got - within
11 three days - what we, what took us three to four months
12 they had in, like, three day. Like, they put the poster
13 out, they put the call out that she's missing, they put the
14 video surveillance out, and we -- Regina phoned the
15 detective and said,

16 "What gives? What is this happening
17 when it took us three or four months
18 to get that far, and it's only been
19 three days?"

20 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Even called out to
21 the people of Prince Albert and everywhere they owned land
22 to look around.

23 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

24 MR. CARSON POITRAS: They put that out for
25 this white woman that gone missing, and we still don't

1 really have that from -- they can't do that now with our
2 daughter.

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So did they find
4 that lady?

5 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah.

6 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Um-hum.

7 MR. CARSON POITRAS: What happened to her?

8 MS. REGINA POITRAS: She -- I don't know
9 what actually happened to her, but surprisingly, they found
10 her inside her own house (~~inaudible~~) [that they already --
11].

12 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh.

13 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Closed off.

14 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

15 MR. CARSON POITRAS: But there's those
16 double standard-type things that we keep running into --

17 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

18 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Which is frustrating.

19 Um --

20 MS. REGINA POITRAS: And it's hard to
21 search some areas.

22 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yes. We've, um, for
23 the most part for us, like, personally, we've had a lot of
24 cooperation from the farmers and all. We've identified
25 ourselves and what we're doing. And they give us full

1 support and let us go on to their property and do the
2 search. And, um, but some of our other searchers weren't
3 so lucky. And they got chased off a property. So, but, so
4 then we sent the police over there afterwards and they
5 checked it out. So --

6 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Maybe they didn't
7 want you finding what they're doing.

8 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah. (Laughter)
9 Like I said, most of them, most of them that we do run
10 into, like, they're pretty good.

11 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay.

12 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Like, we've searched,
13 like, we've began our search at her last known location.

14 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um-hum.

15 MR. CARSON POITRAS: And sort of circled
16 out from there. You see, the first couple of weekends we
17 came down, we spent most of it down, um, on the street,
18 downtown, um, talking to the street people because they all
19 knew her because she had lived here prior to coming back
20 home. Like, then she moved back home for about six months
21 and cleaned herself up and was going to try to get her son
22 back and what not and got mixed up a little again in the
23 drugs because that's why she wanted to get into detox and
24 get cleaned up again.

25 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

1 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Um, she does know her
2 -- or did know -- or does know, I guess, um, our life
3 style, and she has come for help in ceremony because we do
4 a lot of ceremonies at our place. But a lot of it is -- we
5 can't do all of the ceremonies for her because we're too
6 close. She has to go to other places, and then it's hard
7 up there. It's hard for finding other, other traditional
8 people doing those types of ceremonies.

9 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

10 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Only because of, um -
11 - they want to stay in because of the colonialism that's
12 happened up there. And so people don't know about them,
13 right? Like, even us, we get, like, now with Facebook,
14 with that being out there, everybody says whatever the heck
15 they want about anything, eh? So we even, when we do a
16 ceremony we often get a backlash about why we're doing it,
17 and how come it's so close to town or in town? But we're
18 on reserve.

19 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: What, what do you
20 guys do?

21 MR. CARSON POITRAS: We do sweat lodges
22 out there, and I have, like, a sweat lodge in our backyard
23 in our building.

24 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And what do people
25 say?

1 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Satanism.

2 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Satanism and stuff
3 and what do they do?

4 MS. REGINA POITRAS: We should, we shall
5 have them, we shall write a petition --

6 MR. CARSON POITRAS: To have it banned,
7 like, from the reserve.

8 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Wow.

9 MR. CARSON POITRAS: So. But they say,
10 like, it's tough, and a lot of people don't want to face
11 that. And --

12 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So what's the
13 religion over there.

14 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Anglican.

15 MS. REGINA POITRAS: On reserve it's
16 Anglican and off reserve. Those three communities.

17 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Um-hum.

18 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So but they're
19 majority Christian?

20 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah.

21 MR. CARSON POITRAS: But they don't go to
22 church.

23 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum. So and
24 then you guys openly express your spirituality?

25 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Um-hum.

1 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: But not, like, the
2 people that practice the way you do. They don't really,
3 like, do it out in the open?

4 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Not too much, no.
5 The guys all pretty much hide it. Like, we know who all,
6 who all does it.

7 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

8 MR. CARSON POITRAS: But it's not as out
9 as --

10 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Almost like a secret
11 society --

12 MR. CARSON POITRAS: -- it's not an open.

13 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Because they don't
14 want to get the backlash.

15 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah.

16 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

17 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Like, we're pretty
18 visual. Like, they weren't happy because we're on, like, a
19 busy corner street.

20 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

21 MR. CARSON POITRAS: And when we have a
22 ceremony, everybody's (~~inaudible~~) [parked] on our street,
23 right?

24 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

25 MR. CARSON POITRAS: And, and, um, so then

1 when we're doing something, and they'll see the big fire
2 outside, too.

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

4 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Like, they don't know
5 what we're actually doing, I guess, because everything
6 happens inside the building, right?

7 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

8 MR. CARSON POITRAS: All they see is the
9 big fire. They don't see the sweat lodge, they don't even
10 know.

11 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So, how long have
12 you guys been doing this? Like, years?

13 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah. 18 years.

14 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah. Like,
15 (~~inaudible~~) [Happy's] come into ceremony for a number of
16 different things, like, different ailments and stuff and
17 she's been helped.

18 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

19 MR. CARSON POITRAS: And she always said
20 that she would commit herself to - once she got cleaned up
21 again - to start walking that path again.

22 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

23 MR. CARSON POITRAS: It's a good, it's a
24 good grounding, I guess. Like, our grandchildren are the
25 same. They grew up with that because we had three of them

1 at our place. And they all strayed away for a bit after
2 they became young adults. And, you know, young adults do
3 with experimenting stuff, but they all came back, back to
4 the sweat lodge. So that's good. So long as they've got
5 that grounding I think is -- because then where to go -- I
6 know where to go.

7 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Happy's daughters?

8 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah, yeah.

9 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah. So that's the
10 biggest frustrating part is the lack of support. And, like
11 I say, it's, it's not just us; it's across the province.

12 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

13 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Or even across
14 Canada. Um, every one of our families we've had to
15 (~~inaudible~~) [-- well that ones we] talked to had to start
16 right from scratch by finding radios --

17 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Vests.

18 MR. CARSON POITRAS: -- vests, um --

19 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Flashlights.

20 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Flashlights -- maps.
21 Like, we still haven't got maps, like, we've been told one
22 of the agency will get us some maps for this search that
23 we're going to do (~~inaudible~~). We haven't seen them yet.
24 Because it would be easier if we had maps, and be able to
25 figure out, um, where we've covered. Because, like, we've

1 covered a lot of areas and we've covered it more than once.
2 Because, well, a couple things: One, we don't want to
3 think that we've missed something, eh? So if we get
4 another tip in saying, well, maybe you should check this
5 area, even though we've checked it already, we'll go back
6 and check it again.

7 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

8 MR. CARSON POITRAS: So, and we've gone,
9 like, all over parts of the province. We've gone into
10 Saskatoon, we've gone in to, into the countryside between
11 Saskatoon and Prince Albert.

12 MS. REGINA POITRAS: And Prince Albert to
13 La Ronge.

14 MR. CARSON POITRAS: And Prince Albert to
15 La Ronge. It's a wide, wide swath that we've covered,
16 like, going through the back roads all the way from
17 Saskatoon, um, trying to find one of the leads tipsters
18 have given us, you know.

19 MS. REGINA POITRAS: And the girls helped
20 in the beginning a little bit, and then we pulled them off
21 the search.

22 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

23 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Because we, if we
24 ended up finding our daughter, um, and they're with us, we
25 don't want (~~inaudible~~) [them to see that]. So we both

1 don't want them searching with us.

2 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

3 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Sometimes there would
4 only be six of us.

5 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah. Like, even
6 this upcoming search, how many people -- (~~inaudible~~) [we
7 have or even] how much support we've had.

8 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

9 MR. CARSON POITRAS: So that, um, it would
10 be different if we were from the area, but because we're
11 from La Ronge, it's so far away, it costs us so much to
12 bring people in -- and usually it's the people from up
13 there that will help us, eh?

14 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

15 MR. CARSON POITRAS: We don't -- because
16 we don't know anybody, really, locally to help us with the
17 search. So it's expensive. Like, we got to get hotel
18 rooms, got to get gas, um, cover gas for not only
19 ourselves, but also the other searchers coming. And meals,
20 we have meals and water.

21 MS. REGINA POITRAS: And also they don't
22 know where to search. They're not used to the city.

23 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So where was she
24 last seen.

25 MR. CARSON POITRAS: P.A.C.

1 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: P.A.C.

2 MR. CARSON POITRAS: That's where they got
3 the last video.

4 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: At school?

5 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah. So -- and we
6 searched that area and we searched the viaduct because one
7 of our searchers kept bringing us back to the viaduct, and
8 we kept going back that. And finally, it's just, okay,
9 we've done this, we've done it over and over again. It's
10 time to move on. Let's go somewhere else.

11 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

12 MR. CARSON POITRAS: And we still, like,
13 even every time we come down to visit or come down to P.A.,
14 we'll ask one of the street people and ask them if they've
15 heard anything on the street about her or anything. So --
16 and nobody has. I don't know why it's so quiet. And even
17 the police, too, they don't know why it's so quiet. The
18 police tip line, I think they've had one.

19 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah.

20 MR. CARSON POITRAS: So we we've, um,
21 we've done --

22 MS. REGINA POITRAS: I've had more tips on
23 my phone.

24 MR. CARSON POITRAS: We've done some,
25 like, spiritual advisements. We've also had some mediums

1 contact us, and we've got to, like, check out those things
2 too. So we've spent, um, a few times in Saskatoon, like,
3 looking. And Saskatoon is a tougher one because - I don't
4 know - cities are hard to look in. You know, because you
5 can't find a trace of anything because of the concrete
6 pavement. You know, it's not like the bush. At least you
7 can see something, you know, where a twig has been broken
8 or whatever. We found, we found nothing. So it's, it's
9 tough. But they say with all the different, um, people
10 echoing the same thing, like, we were looking at, um -- and
11 we did, we discussed this more than once with the inquiry,
12 because not her -- not the inquiry, but the deputy -- or
13 the Minister, Carol Bennett --

14 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

15 MR. CARSON POITRAS: -- that there should
16 be, um, organizations within each major city, um, doing the
17 same thing, like, set up to conduct searches, conduct
18 investigations, conduct (~~inaudible~~) type. The [--or take
19 the] Aboriginal woman or male who's gone missing, the
20 families inquire seriously, because the police don't.

21 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum. Yeah.

22 MR. CARSON POITRAS: At least we got boots
23 on the ground right away where, um, I believe if we had
24 boots on the ground right away from the authorities, we
25 probably would have found her already.

1 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

2 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Like, so -- and even,
3 like, say the tips that we send to police and they don't
4 act on is just, um, so, so frustrating.

5 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

6 MR. CARSON POITRAS: You know, and they
7 say that we can't do some of the things that we want 'em to
8 do because they say that they can't do it. So we say,

9 "Well, we'll do it then."

10 And they said,

11 "No, you guys can't." So --

12 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Like, what kind of
13 things?

14 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Questioning specific
15 people.

16 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um.

17 MR. CARSON POITRAS: And, and...

18 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So, um, you've
19 indicated that, um, your daughter --

20 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um-hum.

21 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um, she, um, used
22 drugs, and she was trying to get clean, you know,
23 (~~inaudible~~) [every now and then], and she was homeless at
24 times?

25 MR. CARSON POITRAS: At times, yeah.

1 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: At times.

2 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah, but the time
3 she came here, she (inaudible).

4 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: To do her banking.

5 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah.

6 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

7 MS. REGINA POITRAS: She's at home then
8 she was okay. And then she came here, and that's when she
9 became homeless for two days, I think.

10 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And then she had a
11 violent boyfriend as well?

12 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Oh, yes.

13 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And she was with
14 this man for how long?

15 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Ten years, I'd say.

16 MR. CARSON POITRAS: About ten years I
17 think. He'd beaten her up to close to death many times.
18 He's been charged --

19 MS. REGINA POITRAS: But not for -- yeah,
20 but not for the actual violent ones. The really violent
21 where his mom would hide. Maybe for assault --

22 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

23 MS. REGINA POITRAS: -- not assault
24 causing bodily harm. Minor assault.

25 MR. CARSON POITRAS: So it's, it's kind of

1 funny, too, though, because Happy was in another
2 relationship with another abusive person --

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

4 MR. CARSON POITRAS: -- but she got out
5 that one. But then she ended up going back into another
6 relationship with another abusive person. So it's just,
7 it's frustrating. And she knew that she had to get out of
8 that relationship --

9 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Like, very smart
10 person -- she told, she told us that she was going to get
11 away from him. She always seemed to get --

12 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So she tended to
13 get into abusive relationships?

14 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um-hum.

15 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah. Did she, did
16 she seek out, like, counselling and things like that?
17 Like, I know you said she went to (~~inaudible~~) [sweats].

18 MR. CARSON POITRAS: We went to the
19 counselling and she went to -- she's been through the, um,
20 like the Calder House, the, like, places like that. And
21 then she's gone through detox a couple times, gone though -
22 -

23 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Women's shelter.

24 MR. CARSON POITRAS: -- the women's
25 shelter. She's gone though, um, the addiction counsellors

1 --

2 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

3 MR. CARSON POITRAS: -- they all know her
4 in La Ronge.

5 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

6 MS. REGINA POITRAS: (~~Inaudible~~) [She
7 even] taught stuff on -- or done workshops or violence
8 against women. She was so knowledgeable from hearing it
9 all the time.

10 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Well, even when she
11 got cleaned up a couple of times, they wanted her to be a
12 counsellor --

13 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah. Just to talk
14 about it.

15 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh. In La Ronge?

16 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah. Because she's
17 gone lived through it and cleaned herself up, and they
18 wanted her to, you know, to help other people.

19 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Help other people.

20 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah. And she was
21 always close to getting to that point, and then something
22 would happen. Her boyfriend would show up again.

23 MS. REGINA POITRAS: And also, there was
24 no support for her to have a place to live, her own place.

25 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: In La Ronge?

1 MS. REGINA POITRAS: She lived with us or
2 with her daughters.

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So what's the
4 situation there with housing?

5 MS. REGINA POITRAS: There's no housing on
6 reserve unless you're related.

7 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

8 MS. REGINA POITRAS: And if you're living
9 off reserve, you have to have --

10 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: (~~Inaudible~~) [Pay
11 rent].

12 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah.

13 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Is there a lot of
14 housing available for, like, even just to rent?

15 MR. CARSON POITRAS: No.

16 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: No?

17 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Housing is tough.
18 Like, even now, we got two of our granddaughters back at
19 our place.

20 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Living with us.

21 MR. CARSON POITRAS: (~~Inaudible~~) [Living
22 with us].

23 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So do you now find
24 your place overcrowded?

25 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah.

1 MS. REGINA POITRAS: It's a really small
2 place.

3 MR. CARSON POITRAS: It always seems like
4 when we finally got some breathing space, it only lasts for
5 a day or two. Because we've had, like, nine people living
6 in our house.

7 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And, like, how big
8 is it? Like, two-bedrooms?

9 MR. CARSON POITRAS: We got a three-
10 bedroom house.

11 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: With a downstairs
12 in or just --

13 MR. CARSON POITRAS: One level.

14 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Just one level.

15 MS. REGINA POITRAS: It's an old house
16 that we've fixed up because they wouldn't give us any
17 house.

18 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And it's on
19 reserve?

20 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah.

21 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And the most people
22 you've had in there was nine people?

23 MS. REGINA POITRAS: No.

24 MR. CARSON POITRAS: We've had more than
25 that.

1 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Like, 14 or 15.

2 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: At one time living
3 there, like, day-to-day? Like, they weren't even visiting,
4 they were living there?

5 MR. CARSON POITRAS: They were living
6 there, yeah.

7 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Wow. Eh?

8 MR. CARSON POITRAS: (Inaudible) people in
9 that (inaudible).

10 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah, yeah. So I
11 guess that could be one thing as well, like, the housing --

12 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah.

13 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: -- when people
14 don't have their own house, like.

15 MS. REGINA POITRAS: They can't be
16 independent.

17 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

18 MS. REGINA POITRAS: And also, the, um,
19 the foster care system was really, um, destructive towards
20 her, I guess. And she wanted to get her son back. She
21 needed to have a place to live, she needed to have an
22 income, she needed to have this and that. (Inaudible)
23 [There was nothing] for her.

24 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

25 MR. CARSON POITRAS: It was hard for her

1 to get all those things in place.

2 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

3 MS. REGINA POITRAS: But she wanted her
4 son out of there, but he's still in there.

5 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So who does -- does
6 he live in La Ronge?

7 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um-hum.

8 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, okay.

9 MS. REGINA POITRAS: But even then, um,
10 she couldn't see him as much as she wanted to. Even though
11 he's with family, the family kept her away from him. And
12 that's the reason why they put her in that -- put him in
13 that home to begin with, was to be close the family.

14 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

15 MS. REGINA POITRAS: But if you go to --

16 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Like, why did they
17 do that? Like, why did they separate or didn't want her
18 around?

19 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Probably because
20 that's his family. Boyfriend's family.

21 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Oh, I see. Yeah.

22 MS. REGINA POITRAS: But, um --

23 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And how old is your
24 grandson now?

25 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Ten.

1 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Ten?

2 MS. REGINA POITRAS: But, I know that one
3 time when the girls were small and, um, me and Happy both
4 suspected abuse. They were on a visit with their mom.
5 (~~Inaudible~~) [I went over to visit] with them too. And, um,
6 we were visiting at a visitation unit where she could stay
7 overnight and stuff --

8 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

9 MS. REGINA POITRAS: -- and, um, we
10 noticed, um, bruising on one of the girls' backs. Like, a
11 footprint. We asked her what happened, she said that that
12 guy kicked her.

13 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um.

14 MS. REGINA POITRAS: And then (~~inaudible~~)
15 that house. So then she was only about seven or eight.
16 And, um, when we reported it to the social worker, he went
17 back there and he told the foster family (~~inaudible~~) [what
18 they're going to do]. Um, an investigation (~~inaudible~~) [on
19 the case] because one of the girls said you abused them.
20 So then they straightened everything out, and when they
21 came, the other girl said nothing happened. And that's the
22 way it is all time when they're reporting, reporting
23 abusive cases. So then the kids get, I guess, in more
24 danger --

25 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

1 MS. REGINA POITRAS: -- because they're
2 told not to say anything. Whereas I think it would have
3 been better if they had been pulled out and then the
4 investigation done fast --

5 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

6 MS. REGINA POITRAS: -- instead of telling
7 them,

8 "Two days' time we're going to go an
9 investigation."

10 MR. CARSON POITRAS: And meanwhile, the
11 girls are still there.

12 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah, being told what
13 to say, what to do. And then we had that happen again at
14 that other house --

15 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Well, who was --
16 would does foster care around there?

17 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um --

18 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: The band?

19 MS. REGINA POITRAS: The CFS, yeah.

20 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Maybe now, but at
21 that time the girls were in --

22 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Social services.

23 MR. CARSON POITRAS: -- social services.

24 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: With the province?
25 Well that's strange because usually when you report a child

1 is in danger, like, you want them out of there immediately,
2 not, like, taken back.

3 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um-hum. And then
4 that other time, we reported -- well, somebody else
5 reported it because we couldn't, we didn't want to report
6 it --

7 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

8 MS. REGINA POITRAS: -- again, because we
9 could end up the same, and the girls would get more in
10 danger. So we had a friend of ours report it who was, um,
11 a white lady. She went, she went over there and just
12 visited with them --

13 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

14 MS. REGINA POITRAS: -- because it was one
15 of their old friends -- or they were acquainted. So she
16 drops in for a coffee and she seen how she was mistreating
17 all these kids under her care. So she went back and, you
18 know - didn't make a scene or anything - went back and
19 reported it. Those kids were, like, swoosh, right out of
20 there. Really fast, and they shut down that foster home.

21 MR. CARSON POITRAS: (~~Inaudible~~) [And then
22 we --].

23 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: You know what to do
24 next time (laughter).

25 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah.

1 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah, you got to have
2 your white privilege, too, to speak on your behalf. Can we
3 have one of those, too, when we do our searches? Can we
4 have a person to help us?

5 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah, yeah.

6 MR. CARSON POITRAS: (~~Inaudible~~) [We send
7 her --].

8 MS. REGINA POITRAS: (~~Inaudible~~) [We send
9 her] up ahead to talk to the people who own land there, and
10 then we're okay.

11 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um, so what
12 strength, strengths did Happy have?

13 MS. REGINA POITRAS: She was very --

14 MR. CARSON POITRAS: She was very
15 outgoing.

16 MS. REGINA POITRAS: She had lots and lots
17 of friends, and when she'd set her mind to something, she'd
18 do it. And she could, um, come up with something out of
19 nothing. Like, every time she had (~~inaudible~~) [her kids
20 with her, she would do all] kinds of (~~inaudible~~) [crafts]
21 not have very much to (~~inaudible~~) [work with].

22 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

23 MS. REGINA POITRAS: And she learned
24 really fast, eh? She could make (~~inaudible~~) and stuff.

25 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: She liked doing

1 traditional things?

2 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Oh, yeah.

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

4 MS. REGINA POITRAS: And she was
5 physically strong.

6 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

7 MS. REGINA POITRAS: She could walk all
8 over town (inaudible).

9 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: What might have
10 helped Happy?

11 MS. REGINA POITRAS: I think if she had
12 her -- give a chance to have her own home.

13 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

14 MS. REGINA POITRAS: And a place would be,
15 like, let's say, a group home or something wouldn't do for
16 her because she doesn't like all those, all those rules she
17 has to follow: be in by 7:00, do your chores, like -- it
18 just wouldn't work with her. She wanted to be independent
19 and found (inaudible) I'll do my chores at this time if I
20 want to do them. And she was that kind of a person,
21 strong-willed, but if she was put in a place like a shelter
22 or, um, a place where detox, then, she'd sit there and
23 listen, and then she'd be like, okay, I'll do it. Then she
24 would go ahead and do it and not really pay attention.
25 She'd rather get the things on her own. Like a lot of

1 (inaudible). Like, I want to be able to do it myself, not
2 (inaudible) mean more to me.

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

4 MS. REGINA POITRAS: So, I don't know.

5 Probably a home where she would actually have a home
6 without all the rules and stuff, eh?

7 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Like, we're talking
8 just to, like, like a treatment center type of a home, but
9 it's not a center. Where they're put into a home, not just
10 by themselves, like, because they got their kids taken
11 away, but a home where they're with their kids, and they --

12 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Healing of the
13 family.

14 MR. CARSON POITRAS: -- yeah. Heal the
15 whole family, not just the individual. Don't torture her,
16 don't punish the kids just because the parents were, um,
17 messing up.

18 MS. REGINA POITRAS: We also found that
19 whenever her kids were taken away and placed somewhere
20 else, and then she'd be taken away and put in that, um, in
21 the treatment center, and then she'd come back with the
22 kids and then she'd feel guilty, and then she'd over-spoil
23 them, and then those kids are being little monsters. But
24 them, um, she'd try and make it up to them for leaving them
25 because she had those guilty feelings. And then right away

1 the kids of course are going to soak that up and become
2 worse.

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

4 MS. REGINA POITRAS: So I say in a way, it
5 was kind of, like, residential school where parents were
6 trying to make up to their kids for them going away. And
7 the kids would take advantage of it completely. Lack of
8 parenting skills because they were constantly being taken
9 away. So they didn't have very much of that connection.

10 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

11 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Whereas if they were
12 all put together in a treatment center, they'd all get
13 together, all be, all get better.

14 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

15 MS. REGINA POITRAS: And (~~inaudible~~) [do
16 it as] families instead of individuals. I think those
17 family-oriented places is what needs to be done in
18 treatment centers and stuff.

19 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

20 MR. CARSON POITRAS: I think you got to
21 break away from the center type.

22 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um-hum.

23 MR. CARSON POITRAS: The concept, like,
24 we'd have a concept, like, years ago. Or having little
25 cottages, right? Sort of institutionalized, but not

1 institutionalized, right?

2 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

3 MR. CARSON POITRAS: So you got little
4 cottages where you put the family units in there, and they
5 stay within this comfortable, confined space in a
6 neighborhood. And then deal with, treat the whole family,
7 and keep them safe, right?

8 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Whereas there's
9 always a safety, a person there that they can all turn to.

10 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah. They're not,
11 they're not there alone, really.

12 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

13 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Like, they're in
14 their little cottage alone, but there's always going to be
15 somebody there to maintain the supports.

16 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um hum.

17 MR. CARSON POITRAS: So.

18 MS. REGINA POITRAS: That was our dream at
19 one time.

20 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: You guys want to
21 take a break or?

22 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Sure, I'd love to
23 have a smoke. Oops, did I say that on camera?

24 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: That's fine.

25 MR. CARSON POITRAS: I'd love to have a

1 health break.

2 (Short recess)

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: We are back on the
4 record here. We took a 15-minute break, and Regina would
5 like to share more. Um, what would you like to share?

6 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um, on the
7 recommendations part?

8 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

9 MS. REGINA POITRAS: I'm like to, um, add
10 that, um, I think the best way for families to heal would
11 be, um, to put them all together. To fix them together as
12 a family unit, not, not bringing people to take kids away.
13 And not to take advantage of them, but to heal them as a
14 unit. Because it's almost like, um, another form of
15 residential school where the kids are taken away and the
16 kids have, I guess, higher expectations of the parents.
17 Because when they get into ICFS care and stuff like that,
18 they get all brand-new clothes, they get trips, they get
19 all kinds of different stuff happening, and they go back to
20 their parents and they expect the same thing. And most
21 times parents can't live up to those high standards.

22 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

23 MS. REGINA POITRAS: And in doing so,
24 parents do feel, I guess, guilt because they can't afford
25 these things for their kids because of lack of education

1 and also lack of resources.

2 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

3 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Because, us, when we
4 were raising our kids, we didn't have anything. We'd make
5 things happen for our kids on our own.

6 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

7 MS. REGINA POITRAS: They never expected
8 to go on trips because they knew that we couldn't afford
9 it. We'd go on small trips, but that was together as a
10 family unit. They knew what to expect from us and we could
11 afford.

12 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

13 MR. CARSON POITRAS: We didn't take them
14 on a big trip until just a few years ago.

15 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um-hum.

16 MR. CARSON POITRAS: We went down to
17 Vancouver. So --

18 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

19 MR. CARSON POITRAS: -- and it wasn't even
20 us that paid for most of it; it was one of our sons. Yeah.
21 That's tough.

22 MS. REGINA POITRAS: But the everyday
23 struggles, kids don't see and expect their parent to come
24 up with magical amounts of money, because their friends are
25 going on these trips. I think if ICFS or any agency like

1 that - social services agencies - want to spend money to
2 make lives better for the kids, make it better for them as
3 a whole unit, instead of just make sure it is better just
4 for the kids.

5 MR. CARSON POITRAS: They're creating
6 another problem further down the road is what they're
7 doing, and putting a wedge between the family, or between
8 the kids and the parents. You know, creating that gap
9 again similar to what she said was the residential school.
10 So --

11 MS. REGINA POITRAS: I think that's where
12 it needs to start. If the family's suffering then they
13 should all be together to, um, get better.

14 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum. Yeah.

15 MS. REGINA POITRAS: I know it wouldn't,
16 it would be the best thing for our family to go through.
17 Maybe not the best thing for, for society because then what
18 will they work on if there's a cure for --

19 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah, if everything's
20 fixed.

21 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um-hum.

22 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah.

23 MS. REGINA POITRAS: It's like finding a
24 cure for cancer. If they found a cure for cancer, where
25 would all those people work at? Work at fixing it.

1 MR. CARSON POITRAS: (Inaudible).

2 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um-hum. So it's big
3 money. Foster children are big money, and so are cancer
4 patients. Fixing both of those would, would do a world of
5 good fixing the problems that are out there.

6 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

7 MS. REGINA POITRAS: And I think even
8 families would make less missing people.

9 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

10 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Not only that less
11 missing people, less abuses, less child tragedies.

12 MS. REGINA POITRAS: You always hear about
13 them getting hurt in foster care and stuff.

14 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Even suicides.

15 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um-hum.

16 MR. CARSON POITRAS: I think if something
17 was like that for Happy when she was -- lost her kids, we
18 wouldn't be in this situation we're in today.

19 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: How old was she
20 when she lost her children?

21 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Um, what would she
22 have been?

23 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Because she had
24 four children, right?

25 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah.

1 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And she had, like,
2 a younger one?

3 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah, she had five.

4 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Five?

5 MR. CARSON POITRAS: But the other one
6 passed away.

7 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum. And the
8 one is ten years old and the other ones seemed older.

9 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Um-hum. So we got
10 [Daughter 1] was ten, and then there's [Daughter 2], right?

11 MS. REGINA POITRAS: 18.

12 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Be the next,
13 [Daughter 2]. Um --

14 MS. REGINA POITRAS: [Daughter 3].

15 MR. CARSON POITRAS: [Daughter 3],
16 [Daughter 4] and [Daughter 5].

17 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Those ones are 21,
18 22, 23. The three oldest ones.

19 MR. CARSON POITRAS: She had lost one
20 between, um, [Daughter 2], and [Son 1].

21 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: And were they all
22 in foster care at some point?

23 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yes.

24 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um-hum.

25 MR. CARSON POITRAS: I can't remember how

1 old she would have been when she first lost them.

2 [Daughter 3] was just little.

3 MS. REGINA POITRAS: She's 20 now. Maybe
4 3, 4 years old.

5 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: So it was always a
6 struggle, then, for her to --

7 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Um-hum.

8 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: -- maintain the
9 family unit?

10 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah. Because their
11 dad was also not, not very helpful.

12 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

13 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah. It was another
14 abusive relationship. But, like I say, she got out of that
15 one. So that was good.

16 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

17 MR. CARSON POITRAS: So. I think that's
18 about it, eh?

19 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Um-hum. Like, right
20 now, there should be places like Carson was talking about,
21 places in the major centers where it's just, just for
22 missing people.

23 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

24 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Not just missing
25 people, but missing Aboriginal people.

1 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah, and they could
2 go there, the, the families, and they could have everything
3 on hand right there.

4 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

5 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Like, the girls
6 needed support, we needed support --

7 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Um-hum.

8 MS. REGINA POITRAS: -- and we needed
9 searchers. We needed lots of of them. But, um --

10 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Still do.

11 MS. REGINA POITRAS: -- but, um, if, if
12 that was there in place then we would have gotten somewhere
13 faster.

14 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah. Cut out so
15 much work and time.

16 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

17 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Because, you know,
18 like with any missing person case, time is a factor, right?

19 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

20 MR. CARSON POITRAS: So we're sort of at
21 that point right now where it's going to be very, very
22 difficult, I guess --

23 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

24 MR. CARSON POITRAS: -- if we found
25 something. And it's not - like say we - some people think,

1 well, she's still out there. Some expect Happy would
2 never, ever take very long to not contact us.

3 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Um-hum.

4 MR. CARSON POITRAS: It didn't matter what
5 shape she was in, she would always contact us. And it was
6 one of the, sort of the rules we laid down. And we said if
7 she takes off somewhere, like three days --

8 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Three days, four
9 days.

10 MR. CARSON POITRAS: -- like P.A. or
11 Saskatoon, let us know where you are and you're okay. She
12 always did --

13 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: Yeah.

14 MR. CARSON POITRAS: -- so... that's it.

15 MS. REGINA POITRAS: Yeah.

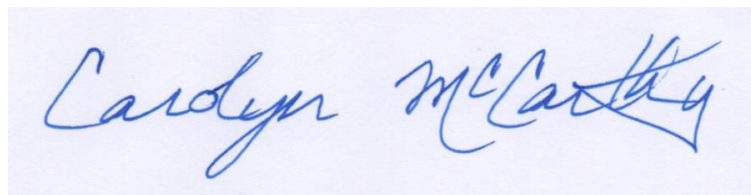
16 MS. FRANCINE MERASTY: All right. Um, so
17 we're done.

18 MR. CARSON POITRAS: Yeah.

19 --- Whereupon the proceeding concluded.

Reporter's certification

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



Carolyn McCarthy,
Stenographer and Authorized Court Transcriptionist