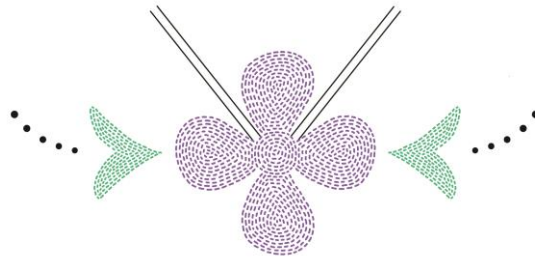


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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
Edmonton Inn & Conference Centre
Edmonton, Alberta**



PUBLIC

November 7, 2017

Statement - Volume 81

**Harold Robinson,
In relation to Julie Cardinal**

Statement gathered by Alana Lee

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Edmonton, Alberta

1
2 --- Upon commencing on Tuesday, November 7, 2017 at 12:15
3 p.m.

4 **MS. ALANA LEE:** So this is Alana Lee,
5 statement gatherer with the National Inquiry into Missing
6 and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. I am here with
7 Harold Robinson. Harold is originally from Edmonton.

8 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** M'hm.

9 **MS. ALANA LEE:** And you're Metis?

10 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yes. Yes.

11 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah. Born and raised
12 right?

13 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yes.

14 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay. It's November 7th,
15 2017. We are currently at the Edmonton Inn in Edmonton.
16 And you're here on a voluntary basis?

17 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yes.

18 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay. And I understand
19 you're here to talk about the death of Julie Cardinal?

20 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yes.

21 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay.

22 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And also about my
23 uncle who I am named after.

24 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay.

25 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Can I just start

1 anywhere? Or --

2 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah. So what would -- what
3 would you like --

4 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Okay. Well, I think,
5 a couple of things. I -- I'm happy that this Inquiry is --
6 is taking place. I think it's an important step in
7 reconciliation and hopefully will be a good opportunity for
8 healing as we move forward. What I'm hoping the
9 commissioners will take away from my statement is just a
10 little bit of insight into the life and death of my uncle
11 and the life and death of my aunt and how that impacted my
12 family and me a little bit. So I'm -- I'm named after my
13 uncle Harold, Harold Emile and he --

14 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Could you spell -- sorry,
15 don't mean to interrupt but can you spell his last name for
16 me.

17 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** That's his middle
18 name.

19 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay.

20 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Harold Emile,
21 E-M-I-L-E. And his last name was Pleuz (phonetic).

22 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay.

23 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** He was a teamster and
24 he died in the -- in the spring of 1965 and I was born in
25 June of 1965. And I was named after him and so I actually

1 have a nickname in part because it was a little too
2 difficult for my granny to call me by her recently dead
3 son's name. And so I'm known as Buzz, which is also a --
4 sort of a Metis thing as well though. So -- but this is
5 somebody who I never got to know and you know, there's --
6 there's an absence there.

7 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

8 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And it was a -- a
9 story that simply didn't get told in my family. I was told
10 he died and then found out later how he died which was he
11 was hit on the head at night and left out in the winter and
12 froze to death. So, you know, that's -- that's a thing I
13 think that greatly impacted my family, certainly my granny
14 and my mom and sisters. So that was just a area of silence
15 in terms of, you know, who was my uncle and what was he
16 about. It simply wasn't discussed --

17 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

18 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- which I think is a
19 shame. And I brought down and I'm hoping that you guys can
20 see this. It's Harold's official due book. His
21 International Brotherhood of Teamsters. So he was a
22 teamster. And this is David (phonetic), March 1965 in Fort
23 McMurray. So just part of, you know, the opportunity for
24 me is to commemorate that I had an uncle, his name was
25 Harold --

1 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

2 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- and that he was
3 loved. The other person I'm hoping to talk about is my
4 Aunt Julie. And she's here in the -- the middle. I think
5 this is around 1948, 1950 or so in Conklin, Alberta. And
6 this is my mom, June (phonetic) who has also passed. But I
7 remember Julie from -- from my youth growing up. She was
8 beautiful and high cheek bones and full of life and really
9 an important part of our family. And I could tell that
10 just by the way that my mom would interact with her. And
11 there was just always joking and there was always real
12 happiness whenever Julie came over.

13 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

14 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I know that Julie, in
15 the '70s, was homeless for a period of time and that was
16 tough on my mom to see that. And Julie would sort of drop
17 in and out and be in various states of sobriety and that
18 was tough on my mother to see that. And it was tough to
19 see my mother and how that affected her whenever Julie left
20 because there was this great concern, you know, where are
21 you going, how are you going to live and survive?

22 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

23 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** But I remember in
24 1980, I was 15 and the phone rang at about two in the
25 morning. And we lived in a -- a two bedroom place in

1 Westmount. And there was four of us sharing one room and
2 my mom was in the other. But we all came out and Mom
3 answered the phone and I remember her answering the phone
4 and then sinking to the floor being told that her sister
5 had died and then being told that not only had she died but
6 she had, in fact, been beaten to death, you know, by her
7 partner of -- of the day. And so that loss, seeing the
8 immediate impact of that on my mother and then later on my
9 granny and my other aunt Martha (phonetic) was something
10 that stayed with me. To see how in a phone call that part
11 of my mother was just stripped away.

12 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

13 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And the silence that
14 followed her loss. I mean, she -- you know, we were robbed
15 of her laughter, we were robbed of her, you know, great
16 zeal for life. And my mom was robbed of a friend and a
17 sister. And so that stuck with me and the rest of our
18 family because we were all there and we saw --

19 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

20 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- you know, the
21 impact of -- of the call. And it just -- it literally
22 pulled the rug out from -- from my mom. I also remember, I
23 mean, selfishly, I had been working part time while I was
24 in school and had -- had a big cheque coming to me --

25 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

1 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- for work that I did
2 over the winter. And I -- we had no money to pay for her
3 funeral. And so, you know, what money I'd made went
4 towards paying for a casket for my aunt. And it was years
5 -- it was years before we could even afford a grave stone
6 for her. And we finally got around to doing that. It was
7 15 almost 20 years after the fact. It was nice to be able
8 to do that later. But for a long time, you know, she was
9 buried without a headstone. And we knew, you know, the
10 spot but there was no plaque there to say she was here.
11 She was daughter of and sister of and mother of. And so,
12 you know, for me the -- the impact of -- of that was
13 personal, it was -- it made me feel powerless but it also,
14 in a way, you know, as a 15 year old, you're having to grow
15 up pretty quick to deal with these sorts of things. And
16 so, you know, I'm -- I'm not sure that, as a whole, you
17 know, what other impacts, you know -- my mom went to went
18 to residential school. She went with -- with Julie.

19 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

20 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** She didn't talk about
21 it. And so, you know, these are things that are there but
22 unspoken.

23 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

24 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And so what I'm hoping
25 is that the commissioners will catalogue and help provide a

1 narrative around some of the impacts. And I know they have
2 a job to do --

3 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

4 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- to connect some of
5 the dots around some of the, you know, the institutional
6 failings. But if part of what they do includes impacts on
7 families --

8 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

9 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- and ties that into
10 some reconciliation, creating an understanding amongst
11 other Canadians --

12 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

13 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- as well of this
14 circumstance. And I'm, you know, I've -- I've also -- I'm
15 a lawyer now and I'm, you know, a lawyer in part because I
16 had the love of my mom, who died too young as well, but of
17 cancer. And with that I was able to, sort of, move forward
18 and know that there was always somebody in my corner
19 backing me and providing me that strength and -- and
20 support --

21 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

22 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- which was good.
23 But, you know, Julie's kids didn't have that.

24 **MS. ALANA LEE:** How many children did Julie
25 have?

1 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Two as far as I -- I
2 know. And -- and, you know, they were robbed of that. But
3 they had other supports including my -- my granny who
4 basically raised them.

5 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

6 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So, I mean, they're
7 actually pretty successful now and doing their -- their
8 thing. But I, you know, have to think that they would
9 trade in, you know, the love of Granny for the love of
10 their mother. And -- and to have both, wouldn't trade it
11 in but --

12 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah.

13 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So one of the things
14 that I've also done over the last 12 years or so as -- as a
15 lawyer I've been adjudicating Indian residential school
16 claims. And so have sat where you are sitting and have
17 invited people to tell me their story and have learned from
18 that experience that residential schools has done an
19 incredible number on our families and our -- and on our
20 communities.

21 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

22 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And in my view, I
23 think, the work of this Inquiry will expose even more the
24 impact of the residential school experience and what it
25 means to a community, what it means to a family to take

1 kids away from parents --

2 MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

3 MR. HAROLD ROBINSON: -- and how that
4 destabilization, you know, leads to other horrible things.

5 MS. ALANA LEE: Yeah.

6 MR. HAROLD ROBINSON: So what I'm hoping
7 is, you know -- one of the things that I -- I learned
8 through -- through doing that experience is when people are
9 given the opportunity to reach out, to connect and to have
10 somebody listen to them that what I've seen is there's
11 positive things that come out of it. As hard as it is,
12 that -- that dialogue can be the underpinning of
13 progressive healing --

14 MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

15 MR. HAROLD ROBINSON: -- as we move forward.
16 So I've suggested that Alberta take up some
17 responsibility --

18 MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

19 MR. HAROLD ROBINSON: -- and establish a
20 secretariat to catalogue, provide best practices, to give
21 Albertans and -- whether it's First Nation, Metis, Inuit
22 or, you know, non-Aboriginal --

23 MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

24 MR. HAROLD ROBINSON: -- Albertans a place
25 to call or a door to knock on to ask what is going on out

1 there. How can I get involved? What, you know, what --
2 what can you tell me that, you know, will help me be a
3 better neighbour.

4 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

5 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So I've -- I've put a
6 proposal out there to the minister, Minister Feehan, to
7 establish a secretariat. And it doesn't have to be
8 anything huge, I'm thinking two or three people with a
9 computer and a phone.

10 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

11 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And they can already
12 be working in government, whose job it is to, sort of, pull
13 this stuff together and make it available.

14 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

15 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And so far it's --
16 it's, you know, he's saying, "Well, I've got a lot of other
17 things on the go." But I think this little thing could
18 yield major positive impacts and maybe be something that
19 compliments the work of the Inquiry as well.

20 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

21 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And I'll --

22 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Do you want to say a little
23 more about that?

24 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Okay. Well, I've
25 actually, I've got a proposal that I've written down and

1 that I've forwarded to government and I'll leave it with
2 you.

3 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay.

4 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So the -- the basic
5 gist of my proposal is that residential schools was built
6 on a breach of human rights.

7 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

8 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And Section 16(3) of
9 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United
10 Nations says the state has one positive duty. There's a
11 lot of things the states shouldn't do. But there's one
12 thing the state should do, which is to protect the family
13 unit.

14 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

15 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Because the family
16 unit is the fundamental building block of society. So you
17 contrast that with what John A. MacDonald said in
18 Parliament in the late 1800's which is documented in the
19 TRC report. He got up and I don't know if he was drunk or
20 not. But it doesn't matter, he was in Parliament and he
21 said, "If you teach a savage how to read and write, he's
22 still a savage. You have to take the child away from his
23 parents and to assimilate them into the ways of white
24 society." And that's -- I've read it recently so that's
25 almost word for word what he said.

1 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

2 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And of course the
3 program was built on that dictate of his in Parliament.
4 And so we have a program, right, that ran for 100 years or
5 so that took kids away from parents. And what I learned in
6 adjudicating the residential school claims is there were
7 three basic questions that people sitting where I'm sitting
8 now had at me as the listener. The first one was, "What
9 gave Canada the right to take me away?"

10 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

11 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And of course we know
12 there was no right. That was a breach of their right not
13 to be taken away. The second thing they would ask is, "Are
14 you listening?" And they were talking to me --

15 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

16 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- but they were also
17 talking to the representative from Canada or the church or
18 even their health support person. Are you listening?
19 There's a good word in Cree that I recently learned. It's
20 nistohtamowin. And nisto is three in -- in Cree. So it's
21 a part of three part component to listening which is
22 listening with your whole being, being present. Two is
23 participating. And three is understanding. So reflecting
24 back and moving --

25 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

1 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- which I think is a
2 good word. And maybe, you know, the word for
3 reconciliation ought to be nistohtamowin if we're going to
4 use, you know, our words. And so maybe this could be the
5 secretariat for, you know, for nistohtamowin or --

6 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

7 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So it's those -- so
8 the second one was, "Are you listening?" And -- and the
9 third is, you know, "Is someone going to say sorry?" I
10 think we're still needing to recognize, you know, our --
11 our -- our lack of presence. And whether it's government
12 or today, you know, hearing about things but not doing that
13 thing that we as Canadians usually do well which is to ask
14 the question, "Are you okay?"

15 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

16 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And to care about the
17 response. And to educate ourselves to know that when we're
18 asking the question, "Are you okay?" sometimes what you're
19 asking is, "Did you go to residential school?" Sometimes
20 what you're asking is, "Did your aunt get killed?"

21 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

22 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** "Did your uncle get
23 killed? Did you lose a family member before their time?"
24 And so educating ourselves and -- and taking the
25 opportunity to -- to step up. Because I think it's

1 actually in our nature. But if we do, again, you know,
2 seeing the few times when survivors were asked, "Did you go
3 to residential school?" And it was only recently that they
4 were asked the question by social workers, parole officers,
5 doctors, lawyers, teachers, anybody.

6 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

7 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** The amount of times
8 that a professional actually asked somebody who was in care
9 or in custody or in the emergency room for the 15th time
10 that year, "Did you go to residential school?" I could
11 count on two hands in the hundreds of appeals that I -- I
12 dealt with. But the times that they were asked I -- the
13 next bit of conversation that I usually had was, you know,
14 the person would say and you look on my employment record
15 and, you know, after I talked to whoever they talked to
16 it's about the time I kept the job and got the job and kept
17 it. It's about the same time when I started going back for
18 Thanksgiving with my family. It's about the same time that
19 other good things started happening. So I believe that
20 this reconciliation opportunity, it's bigger than Canada,
21 it's bigger than Alberta, it's bigger than any one
22 institution. It's got to be all of us. And so that's the
23 opportunity is to get all of us involved, those of us who
24 want to be involved. And the secretariat, as little as it
25 might be, could have this profound impact.

1 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

2 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And so it's a little
3 thing I'm asking for with, I think, a really great upside
4 to it. It's not easy but I think it'll be profound. And
5 one of the things I researched was the AFM did a -- a study
6 in 2012. And they said, "If you combine healing with
7 education the economic returns could be upwards of 450
8 billion over a generation. The reduction in -- in social
9 services and other health supports could be a reduction of
10 150 billion over 25 years." And I looked at that report I
11 thought, "Okay, you know, what if that's only ten percent
12 right?" Still good --

13 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah.

14 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** There's still 45
15 billion to the good and 15 billion to the good. So why
16 wouldn't, you know, the folks out there who have their --
17 the ability to say yes to certain things say yes to this.
18 So I'm hoping that the commissioners might see this, and I
19 apologize for blathering on, but maybe look at this
20 proposal that I'll -- I'll give to you.

21 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Absolutely.

22 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And if they think
23 there's anything to it to, you know, maybe picking up the
24 phone and calling Minister Feehan or whoever. Because it's
25 one thing to say no to me. It'll be a little tougher

1 saying no to the Inquiry, I think.

2 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Absolutely. Thank you.

3 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So that is, for me,
4 you know, the opportunity was to come here and mention
5 Harold to -- to mention Julie and, you know, to say they
6 were an important part of my family.

7 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

8 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** We lost them too
9 early. But if we can take that loss and turn it into
10 something positive then, you know, it won't be a loss for
11 nothing.

12 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm. Absolutely. You
13 mentioned that Julie and your mother both went to
14 residential school.

15 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** M'hm.

16 **MS. ALANA LEE:** What residential school did
17 they attend?

18 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Blue Quills.

19 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Blue Quills. Okay.

20 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yeah. And again, you
21 know, we didn't hear much about it. I -- I heard that she,
22 my mom, ran away. She stole a horse even. But -- and at
23 the time I thought, "Oh wow, what an outlaw", you know,
24 when I was young and heard the story.

25 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

1 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** But I now know that
2 you didn't run away from residential school unless you had
3 a goddamn good reason to do that. Because, tell you what,
4 when she was brought back it probably wasn't pretty.

5 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

6 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So, again, I mean,
7 there's just parts of my mom's childhood that we don't know
8 about. And, you know, she passed away in -- in '91. So we
9 won't know about it.

10 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

11 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And again, that's, you
12 know, that's a loss. But I love that picture of the two
13 sisters.

14 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Both very beautiful.

15 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** M'hm.

16 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Like, stunningly beautiful.
17 Yeah.

18 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yeah. And so, you
19 know, it was those two together going to take on whatever
20 life had in store for them. And I, you know --

21 **MS. ALANA LEE:** That's absolutely what it
22 looks like --

23 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yeah.

24 **MS. ALANA LEE:** -- in the picture. Yeah.

25 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yeah. So it's -- it's

1 -- it's a loss for us. But, you know, they also gave
2 everything they had while they were here. So --

3 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm. And you said you were
4 15 --

5 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** M'hm.

6 **MS. ALANA LEE:** -- when Julie's life was
7 taken. What -- was there any conviction around that? So
8 it was her partner at the time?

9 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** You know, I -- I don't
10 know. And it wasn't something that our family was --
11 was -- was focused on.

12 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

13 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** You know, it really
14 was the loss. And I think the assumption, and maybe there
15 was a discussion of that, but it wasn't something that was
16 discussed with me.

17 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

18 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** The assumption, I
19 think, is that because they got the call, it was the
20 police, and we knew that it was her partner [Julie's
21 partner] who beat her to death that all that was going to
22 be taken care of. With my uncle I don't know, you know, if
23 they ever caught the person who hit him on the head and
24 left him outside.

25 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

1 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I don't know that, you
2 know, my granny would have insisted on -- on knowing that
3 or just grieving her -- her son.

4 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm. Did your uncle attend
5 residential school as well?

6 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I don't know.

7 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay.

8 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yeah. That's --
9 that's a big blank in our -- in my understanding.

10 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm. Okay. You said
11 because your uncle has since been laid to rest does he
12 have, like, a headstone?

13 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I don't think so.

14 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay.

15 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I honestly don't know.
16 I mean, if he does we've never visited it. Yeah. What
17 little I know is he played guitar and was the life of the
18 party.

19 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm. Okay. Is there
20 anything that you would like from -- I mean, we -- we can't
21 make any -- any promises. But is there any kind of
22 requests that you'd like around information around your
23 uncle?

24 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** It -- it never
25 occurred to me. It just -- it seemed like it was one of

1 those things that happened and --

2 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

3 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I don't think so. I
4 think at this point I would just as well have it lie un --
5 sort of, touched any -- any further. I don't -- I don't
6 see much positive coming out of that. Although I
7 appreciate that if -- if you had the resources or you have
8 the resources this could be one of those things that
9 potentially is looked at. Bu I don't think that from where
10 my family is at and where we're at now that that will help.

11 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm. Well it seems, you
12 know, it seems like -- I mean, this is fanatastic. I mean,
13 you've come with a proposal so it's, you know, correct me
14 if I'm wrong but it sounds like, you know, even with --
15 with all of this loss you've come to terms with it. And
16 you've put together some really great recommendations for
17 moving forward so, you know, in -- in helping, you know,
18 the rest of -- the rest of us and the rest of Alberta,
19 Canadians, to kind of help deal with these things as well.
20 So --

21 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I've been fortunate in
22 the time that I've -- I've finished doing that -- that work
23 and been working on this proposal is to see how interested
24 others are.

25 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

1 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And so there's letters
2 of support that I've gotten from church groups and from
3 social groups from the City of Edmonton, even from Chief
4 Commissioner Wilton Littlechild on this, which bugs me
5 then. I'm a little frustrated that even with all that the
6 minister still, you know, told me to talk to the hand
7 because the face doesn't care.

8 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah.

9 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So again, but it's --
10 it's, you know, you can say, "You know" to Harold but maybe
11 it'll be a bit more difficult if the Commission thinks, you
12 know, the opportunity here is to leverage the best, sort
13 of, the best tendencies and then -- and the best intentions
14 not just of institutions but of individuals.

15 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

16 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** That I think is the
17 great opportunity. And if we are able leverage that, and
18 that's what's this proposal is about, is we don't have to
19 wait 100 years, you know, to see that turn around.

20 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

21 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I think 25 years and
22 we're going to see an incredible turn around. But it's
23 bigger than any one government.

24 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Without leaving this right
25 now is there, kind of -- is there anything that you would

1 like to -- would like to explain --

2 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** M'hm.

3 **MS. ALANA LEE:** -- about your proposal.

4 Just -- you know, I mean they're definitely going to get
5 this paper copy. But maybe just, kind of, you know -- what
6 -- what are some of the questions that you've gotten asked
7 in the past about this, you know, after somebody has sat
8 down and reviewed it. Maybe we can kind of --

9 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** M'hm.

10 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah.

11 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Well I was
12 surprised -- and I've met with the Minister a couple of
13 times. His first response on this -- his first sort of
14 question and comment was, "I don't want to turn this into
15 Alberta's problem."

16 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

17 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I've heard from others
18 that, in part, they don't want to make a mistake of, you
19 know, the old saying is, "The road to hell is paved with
20 good -- good intentions." So giving the Minister the
21 benefit of the doubt that what he wants to avoid is the
22 mistake of hurting instead of helping --

23 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

24 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- by, you know,
25 charging ahead without having the tools to -- to work with.

1 What I am -- what -- my response to that is well, first of
2 all, I don't think you can make things much worse. I mean,
3 you've got, you know, 72 percent of the kids in care are
4 Aboriginal. Five years ago that was 70 percent. And so
5 the numbers are -- are still going the wrong way. You
6 know, I did some work with Homeward Trust. You know, the
7 number of, in Edmonton, of -- of homeless, of those who are
8 continually homeless, not just homeless sometime, it's --
9 it's upwards of 60 percent are Aboriginal.

10 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

11 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And we're, what, seven
12 percent of Edmonton's population. And, you know, in -- in
13 those who are incarcerated is, what, 30 some percent
14 Aboriginal. We're four percent of the population. So my
15 initial response always is, if you're going to make a
16 mistake, don't make the mistake of doing nothing.

17 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

18 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Don't make the mistake
19 of thinking the status quo is in any way acceptable or
20 tolerable. You know, if you're going to make the mistake
21 make the mistake of trying to help. Make the mistake of
22 getting involved. Make the mistake of having a discussion
23 that may be uncomfortable. So my response is, be prepared
24 to be uncomfortable but be prepared to also be part of --
25 of -- of a positive change.

1 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

2 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And your -- and as --
3 as a citizen or as a minister able to, by respecting
4 somebody long enough to listen to them and show you care
5 and develop a bit of trust, can be a profound agent. So
6 that's my, sort of, response to the, "Gee, I don't want to
7 make things worse."

8 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

9 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And so, you know,
10 that's one of the bits of advice if the, you know,
11 commissioners asked about this proposal --

12 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

13 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- that I would give.
14 I also think it doesn't have to be big. Simply
15 identifying, recognizing good intentions, good work, good
16 practices. And maybe in some of the things that have been
17 tried and have failed miserable --

18 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

19 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- to say, "Well, you
20 know, you know, be careful of the language you use." My
21 pet peeve is when people talk about our Aboriginal
22 community. Like I -- fucking own me.

23 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

24 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** You know.

25 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Absolutely.

1 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** You can talk about
2 Aboriginal people in Canada, that's fine. The same way you
3 talk about Ukrainians in Canada, the Germans in Canada.
4 So, you know, just language.

5 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Very distinct language
6 (inaudible).

7 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yeah. Yeah. But it's
8 -- but again, I'd prefer that the discussion happened.

9 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

10 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And if there's
11 breaches of protocol then there's usually, like -- a good,
12 "I'm sorry" goes a long way.

13 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

14 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And, "I want to do
15 better" goes a long way to mending any rifts.

16 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

17 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And so just be genuine
18 would be, you know, my other bit of advice and trusting and
19 be optimistic.

20 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

21 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** You know.

22 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

23 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Albertans in general,
24 I think, can help, want to help. If we can help them get
25 there then, you know, we're all going to be better off on

1 the go forward.

2 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

3 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And there's also -- I
4 mean, there's a lot of stuff that happens -- has to happen
5 internally in our communities as well, you know, between
6 brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles. And, you know,
7 how we have those discussion, I don't know. I don't know
8 if we ever really do, other than know that there's always
9 going to be a place at the table.

10 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

11 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And maybe that is what
12 we -- the best we can hope for, just having a place at the
13 table. And, you know, I think this proposal suggests that
14 Albertans can have room at their table --

15 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

16 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- but within our
17 families as well --

18 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

19 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- is that there's
20 value in that even if there isn't a lot that's said.

21 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

22 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So that could be one
23 of the things that's recognized. And again, this doesn't
24 have to cost a half million dollars. They already have
25 people who I'm sure would be delighted to take this on.

1 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

2 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** You know, they don't
3 have to spend anything more.

4 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Structurally, how do you --
5 how would you envision this, like, the structure. Like,
6 you even said that just having a few people. You know,
7 start out with a few employees phone, kind of answering
8 that (inaudible) organizations that are already doing some
9 of this work.

10 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** M'hm. Yeah. I -- I
11 mean, there's different ways of -- of getting this done, I
12 think. I mean, I -- just off the top I thought well, why
13 doesn't the Government of Alberta step forward. Premier
14 Notley apologized in the spring of 2016, after they formed
15 a government, for Alberta's silence --

16 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

17 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- while kids were
18 being taken away. And quite frankly, there's another issue
19 with day schools and with the administration of old
20 residential schools being taken over by the Government of
21 Alberta. And now years of operation jurisdictional
22 questions that were raised because it was no longer Canada
23 calling all the shots. And what happened is in some
24 schools like Ermineskin, for example, in 1969 they changed
25 the so-called administration but they didn't change the

1 people who worked there, they didn't change the culture of
2 the people who worked there, they didn't change their
3 mandate, for crying out loud. So there's kids who were
4 abused in the spring of 1969 -- show up and are abused in
5 the fall of 1969 by the same people and sometimes in the
6 same location --

7 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

8 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- but we're told
9 because Canada made this argument towards the end of the --
10 of the assessment process that their abuse doesn't count
11 because there was a different administrative setup within
12 those institutions. Only the people on the ground who are
13 doing the abusing apparently didn't get the memo. And so
14 we've got a whole group of people now who are on the
15 outside looking in who won't, and to me this is the real
16 problem, have the ability or be given the opportunity to
17 tell their stories.

18 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

19 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And so, you know, if
20 the Inquiry is one of the calls for action from the TRC, I
21 think the Inquiry might also use its -- its mandate and its
22 authority to say, "There's still work to be done. There's
23 still stories that need to be told." Because those
24 experiences --

25 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

1 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- that happened two
2 months after led to other consequences in that individual's
3 life --

4 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

5 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- that led to other
6 consequences where somebody goes through their, you know,
7 rest of their childhood and adulthood and even into their
8 senior citizenship carrying around mistrust, carrying anger
9 with them and not having, you know, the tools that they
10 would have received at home had they been able to stay at
11 home to deal with what happened. So it's work that's left
12 undone that is still yet to be resolved that, you know, in
13 addition to the million other things that you guys have to
14 do might be beneficial to closing the loop on this and
15 could also provide the information to provincial
16 governments that if you stood up in your legislature and
17 said, "Sorry." If you stood up and you said, "We accept
18 the calls to action" then the work isn't done yet. And
19 part of that might be provincially setting up or stepping
20 up and instituting a process so that those who aren't
21 allowed to tell their story under the existing settlement
22 agreement --

23 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

24 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- can tell their
25 story and get some peace on the go forward. So, I mean,

1 that's one of the spin offs, I think, of this. But getting
2 back to your -- your question, I mean, it's just -- it's me
3 -- it's a couple people, was what I was thinking, and they
4 could already be employees of the Government of Alberta.
5 And if I was the minister what I would do is I would ask my
6 DM to put the call out, "Who here wants to be my
7 secretariat?"

8 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

9 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** "Show of hands. Who
10 thinks this is important. Who sees the opportunity? You
11 know, who was moved by the TRC? Who's moved by the Inquiry
12 on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women? And who thinks
13 that we can, you know, leverage something special here in
14 Alberta? Put up you hand. Okay. You and you, you're my
15 team. And whatever you're doing there somebody else is
16 going to take over. And for the next five years we're
17 going to have this thing, it's called a secretariat. And
18 they're doing it in B.C., they're doing it in Ontario,
19 we're going to do it here in Alberta. And, you know, with
20 you two we're going to leverage a whole new dialogue and
21 we're going to get the rest of our citizens involved, or at
22 least every citizen who wants to be involved."

23 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

24 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And that'll be, you
25 know, the best money we've spent.

1 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm. Thank you for this.

2 Thank you for this.

3 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Okay. Well, thank you
4 for listening and for this opportunity.

5 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Is there anything else you'd
6 like to add?

7 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** No. I'm probably
8 missing a bunch of stuff. I'm trying to think of, you
9 know, what my mom would have me talk about. You know, she
10 would talk about how lucky she was to have her granny. She
11 would talk about how lucky she was to have kids. I mean,
12 she raised four of us on her own.

13 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm. So she was -- you
14 said granny meaning your granny or was your mother raised
15 by her grandmother?

16 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yes, to -- to both.
17 So my granny, who was mom's mom --

18 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

19 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- and an important
20 part of our family. I mean, it's -- I think a lot of
21 Aboriginal families, you know, your granny comes and she
22 lives with you.

23 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah. Absolutely.

24 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Right. And she keeps
25 her hides under your bed. And, you know, her beads

1 scattered all over the place. And -- and you're lucky for
2 that. It's -- and then she moves in with your aunty for
3 any number of years. And you're lucky for that. And you
4 see each other, you know, every weekend because you're at
5 each other's houses.

6 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah.

7 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** That's -- that -- that
8 was my experience. So I was lucky to have, you know,
9 granny and aunties and my mom there.

10 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

11 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And their
12 encouragement. So, you know, I think what my mom would
13 have me say is, you know, don't forget to tell them how
14 important family is, how lucky you are as a father to be
15 able to kiss your kids goodnight --

16 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

17 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- each night.

18 **MS. ALANA LEE:** And so Julie's children, you
19 said they're doing well today.

20 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** M'hm.

21 **MS. ALANA LEE:** That they were raised by
22 granny?

23 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yes. Yeah. Yeah and
24 they -- they, I mean, they're -- like I said, they're --
25 they're -- they even may have already been involved, I'm

1 not sure.

2 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

3 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I'll have to ask them
4 next time I see them. But it's -- it's for them to come
5 out and tell -- tell their story, I think.

6 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Were they living with Julie
7 at the time?

8 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** No. Well, Julie was
9 already out and homeless by that period of time. So her
10 kids were out doing their thing.

11 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

12 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So -- yeah and it was,
13 you know, one of those things that, again, was unfortunate
14 in that -- that, you know, that -- that rupture that --
15 that occurred. One of the -- one of the best things that
16 happened though was when we able to get a headstone and we
17 all gathered again.

18 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

19 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** They could see how
20 much it meant. You know, I called them my aunt and my
21 uncle but they're actually my cousins. To be able to look
22 down and, you know, see their mother's name there and that
23 they were remembered in -- in -- in what we (inaudible).

24 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

25 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I know it's about

1 having a place to -- to go sometimes. And to, you know,
2 grieve but to also say thank you.

3 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

4 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So having that -- that
5 place, that home is, for me, you know, what -- what has
6 been taken away but could still be restored --

7 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

8 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- I think. And maybe
9 the secretariat is a place to go --

10 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

11 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- as well.

12 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

13 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Okay. Those are good
14 questions. Is there anything else? Or --

15 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Was there anything else you
16 would like to add. I mean, there's -- there's some
17 questions but you've covered most of it. And I think that,
18 you know, this is -- this is -- would be a really good
19 opportunity for the commissioners, maybe even after we're
20 done this interview I want to -- I want to look at this a
21 little more in -- in depth and read it. Because, you know,
22 I'm asking questions about it but I haven't really had the
23 opportunity, it's just kind of what you're --

24 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** M'hm.

25 **MS. ALANA LEE:** -- you know, what you're

1 speaking of, to look at this. And, you know, I think,
2 like, fantastic and, like, thank you. You've really put
3 this -- put a lot into this. And so, I mean, this is, you
4 know -- I mean, one of my questions could be, like, what do
5 you think would make it better for future generations.
6 Well, you've already handed that over here, well structured
7 proposal, it's ready to go, you know, you're doing your
8 part to make this happen. And so, you know --

9 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I need others though,
10 you know, to carry it forward.

11 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

12 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So whatever -- if you
13 think there's anything to it. If you have any questions my
14 contact information is on there. Feel free to --

15 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Right. And it's right at
16 the bottom right?

17 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yeah.

18 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Just for the record. Yeah.

19 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yeah. Then if there
20 is other better ideas than that, then I'd be happy to -- to
21 know the other better ideas.

22 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm. Thank you, I mean, is
23 -- is there anything you'd like to add?

24 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** No. No. But thank
25 you for doing this.

1 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Do you feel like you've been
2 heard today?

3 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Absolutely.

4 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay.

5 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yes. No, thank you so
6 much.

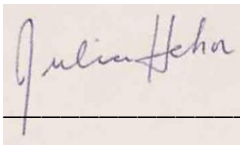
7 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Perfect. Thank you.

8 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Okay. Good luck.

9 **MS. ALANA LEE:** It is -- oh, I apologize
10 commissioners. We began the interview at 12:15 and I
11 forgot to state that. And we're concluding at 1:04.
12 --- Upon adjourning at 1:04 p.m

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

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

A rectangular area containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julia Hehn".

Julia Hehn

March 5, 2018