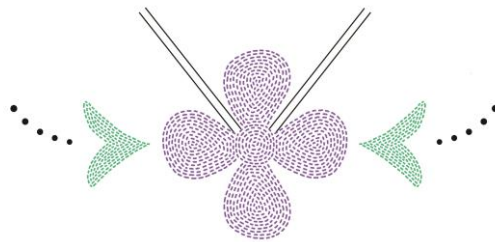


National Inquiry into  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls



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  
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia**



**PUBLIC**

**Monday August 13, 2018**

**Statement - Volume 466  
Mary Jane Sanipass,  
In relation to Joseph Michael & Kate Michael**

**Statement gathered by Daria Boyarchuk**

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## II

### NOTE

The use of square brackets [ ] in this transcript indicates that amendments have been made to the certified transcript in order to replace information deemed inaudible or indecipherable by the original transcriptionist. The use of a strikethrough mark indicates where an error was found in the original transcription. Amendments to this transcript were made by Susan Grant, Legal Assistant with National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQ on September 27-28, 2018 at Vancouver, British Columbia. Ms. Grant listened back to the source audio recording of the proceeding to make the amendments.

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Documents submitted with testimony: none.

Statement - Public 1  
Mary Jane Sanipass  
(Joseph Michael & Kate Michael)

Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

--- Upon commencing on Monday, August 13, 2018 at 9:49 a.m.  
via teleconference.

**MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Hello.

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Hi, Mary -- Mary Jane.  
This is Daria speaking.

**MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yes.

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah. I'm the  
statement gatherer with the Inquiry for the Missing and  
Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. And we're going to be  
recording your conference -- your evidence today by the  
conference call. So I'm doing it for the first time with  
the conference call, so please bear with me, and I will  
help you as much as I can. Also, if you have any questions  
or anything, please feel free to let me know, okay? So  
that both you and everyone else who is sitting in the room,  
we are all comfortable. Okay.

**MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yeah. It's just me  
sitting in the room right now, on my dining room table.

**MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay. Perfect. So  
make yourself comfortable, and I'm just going to record the  
time. It is 9:49 in the morning, and we are in Dartmouth  
on August the 13th. And this call is recorded on the audio  
recorder, and by means of a -- of a phone.

So, Mary Jane, before we start, I

Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael & Kate Michael)

1 wanted to ask you, do you have any idea whether you would  
2 like to have your evidence -- your story released to the  
3 public?

4 *(Off-the-record informed consent discussion)*

5 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** So, Mary Jane, if you  
6 feel like you're ready to share your story, please go  
7 ahead. And I'm going to go at your own pace. If you want  
8 to take a break, let me know. We also have --

9 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yeah.

10 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** -- a health support  
11 person. Would you please --

12 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yes.

13 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** -- identify yourself.

14 **MS. KIA GLOADE (PHONETIC):** My name is Kia  
15 (phonetic) Gloade. I am the resolution health support  
16 worker for the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq.

17 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yes.

18 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** So Kia is going to be  
19 here, just if -- if you ever need the -- any help or if  
20 you -- you want to rely on Kia's expertise.

21 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** I probably -- I  
22 will later.

23 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay.

24 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** You know,  
25 with -- with what she's going to ask me.

Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael &amp; Kate Michael)

1                   **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay. So we're here  
2                   for -- we're both here for you, and so feel free to -- to  
3                   let us know. But if you want to start the story right at  
4                   this very moment, please go ahead.

5                   **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Okay. You know,  
6                   I'm 72 now, going on 73 in December.

7                   **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M-hm.

8                   **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** And my  
9                   mother -- you know, when I got married, I was 22 when I got  
10                  married, and I moved out from my parents' house. But for  
11                  all this time, you know, like I said, my mother was kind of  
12                  a private person. But she would tell the story when  
13                  some -- she'd never tell the story about, you know,  
14                  about -- she won't tell the story if -- if I'm there or  
15                  with my mother (~~indiscernible~~) [other siblings]. But when  
16                  somebody came in to visit, that's the only time she'd talk  
17                  about her parents. You know, when they went -- they were  
18                  selling baskets. They went across the boat.

19                  That time, it was some time in March, and  
20                  two families, her sister and her husband and her and her  
21                  husband. And my aunt, she was eight months along,  
22                  pregnant, when they went across the boat. And -- and I  
23                  heard that the road was -- the highway men, they were the  
24                  ones -- you know, they were -- you know, we heard just  
25                  rumors and everything what's -- what happened to the -- to

Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael & Kate Michael)

1 my grandparents and my aunt. You know, they were making  
2 their road that time, Big Pond. Big Pond, they call it  
3 today. It's Big Pond. They were making a road through  
4 there.

5 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M-hm.

6 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** And -- and  
7 they -- my mother was only ten, nine or ten at that time.  
8 And the baby was only six months old. But she got three  
9 brothers, the oldest one, and my another uncle, and the  
10 baby, six months old, and my mom. She's the only girl  
11 there. And her aunt was looking after them for a while  
12 because they were supposed to return for the -- wait, wait.  
13 Wait a second.

14 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah, sure.

15 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yeah. You know,  
16 (indiscernible).

17 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Indiscernible.)

18 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Okay. That was my  
19 son. He's getting the gas for me for the ride-on lawn  
20 mower.

21 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay.

22 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yeah. And then  
23 what happened, because she always tell somebody -- or she'd  
24 tell us sometime, you know, that she was hoping to -- her  
25 parents to come back from -- from selling baskets because

Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael &amp; Kate Michael)

1           it was about the Easter time. And they were -- they were,  
2           you know -- they were well-looked after. They were well  
3           looked-after. And about a week -- about a week, and they  
4           didn't came back.

5                        So -- and the Mounties, the RCMPs, on the  
6           reserve, we had the RCMPs at that time. And, you know,  
7           they were searching, I guess, or something, anyway. I  
8           don't know. She never hardly talked about them. But as  
9           long as I know, she said they were only investigating five  
10          days, and they closed the -- they closed up the case. Five  
11          days. Imagine that, for two families, and my aunt was  
12          pregnant for eight months along. But the Natives, from  
13          here in Eskasoni, they were raking the lake. They took  
14          them almost a week. But they couldn't find anybody, not  
15          them, not even then.

16                       But they got -- it was in the Easter Sunday,  
17          and I heard about this from this elder. She's white. And  
18          she was only a young girl, her, and her -- and her brother.  
19          They were playing -- they -- this is at East Bay, East Bay  
20          Beach. They were playing there on Easter Sunday, and they  
21          found a basket, Easter basket. And she was about to grab a  
22          few of them, and her father holler at them, "Don't you  
23          touch them, they were bad luck." Those -- they throw them  
24          back on the water.

25                       And -- and this guy, this old man, he's 94



Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael &amp; Kate Michael)

1 now, he seen a big fire. It was calm. It was really calm  
2 a couple days later. You could even see the fire on  
3 the -- on the water, the reflection. And they seen that,  
4 and he was standing -- he was 14 then, he said. And he was  
5 standing on the shore because he lives right across  
6 from -- from the Big Pond at that time, and he seen the big  
7 fire over there. My God. He was surprised, you know. And  
8 he even said today, "They were burned to death." And they,  
9 my grandparents, my aunt, my -- my grandmother, and my  
10 aunt, they were raped because one of the men, the highway  
11 men, he -- he couldn't stand it, I guess.

12 He (~~indiscernible~~) [lost his mind] and he  
13 was at the Nova Scotia Hospital until he passed out  
14 sometime in the '50s or '60s. But my -- my aunt,  
15 their -- their sister, she used to go there and ask  
16 questions, what happened to the -- to -- to them. But he'd  
17 still remember everything. He told them -- he told them  
18 what happened to the -- to the women. She -- they were  
19 raped. And my aunt, the one that she was carrying the  
20 baby, they raped her, and they opened her up -- they cut  
21 her up, opened up on the -- on the stomach. They killed  
22 the baby, also.

23 And my father, my grandfather, he was around  
24 six-foot four. He was a strong man, and they shoot him.  
25 They shoot him because he was helping his wife and his

Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael &amp; Kate Michael)

1 sister-in-law. But my uncle, my aunt's brother -- husband,  
2 he was only -- he was not -- you know, he was around  
3 six -- five-foot, I think. He doesn't have any strength.  
4 So he -- he was killed instantly.

5 This was my aunt that used to come to my  
6 house, my mother's house, and told my mother about what  
7 happened here because she always come from the  
8 (indiscernible) [Dartmouth] to talk to these men, the  
9 highway men, and the ones that were supposed to make the  
10 road there. And he knew everything what happened. He knew  
11 everything what happened then, eh?

12 And this -- this all -- I remember, and then  
13 she was sent to residential school when she was around  
14 nine, because she was all by herself, and her brother  
15 joined the army, and the other one, I think he got a job  
16 somewhere, and my -- my uncle, he was only six months old.  
17 He was given away for another people. And she was sent to  
18 residential school.

19 But she never complained about the  
20 residential school was hard that time. She always praised  
21 for it because she said that I'm the only girl, and in  
22 my -- when I was with my mother, you know, she was doing  
23 all the cleaning and cooking for us. I never done anything  
24 like that in my life. But then when I was sent to  
25 residential school that time, they teach me how to sew,

Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael & Kate Michael)

1 knit, cleaning, cooking, that kind.

2 So she said, I never -- you know, I -- it  
3 was a really hard time for me, she said, but, you know, I  
4 couldn't blame on them. And I'm really, really glad that I  
5 was sended over there. She always tell me that. Because I  
6 learned now that stuff, because I never had a mother on the  
7 grow-up days.

8 But, you know, she -- when she'd talk about  
9 her mother, she always seems to cry. And before she passed  
10 on, before she passed on -- she passed away 12 years ago.  
11 And she called me one morning and told me, "I had a good  
12 dream last night." She said, "Do you want to come over?"  
13 Because I live right below there. And she said, "Do you  
14 want to come over? I want to tell you this story."

15 So I went over there. And she told me that  
16 I dream of Cadry (phonetic), saying "Cadry," she said. And  
17 she was combing -- combing my hair, and she gave me a big  
18 hug. But when I looked at her, it's -- you know, I  
19 remember the -- the face of my mother. She looks like my  
20 mother at that time, she said, in my dreams. And I woke  
21 up. And I -- and I told her, that's the good dream because  
22 she was hoping all the time that their parents, you know,  
23 she might come back.

24 And -- and they -- the stories, the story  
25 they heard that when you go on the lake, you could hear the

Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael &amp; Kate Michael)

1 boat coming through, like the waves are banging on the  
2 boat, something like that. And they're there, she said.  
3 They want to come home. So around a couple years ago, to  
4 five years ago, I guess, I'm related -- I'm related to the  
5 RCMP from Shanagody (phonetic). He was retired then, but  
6 he was the RCMP for 28 years, Joe Michael. And  
7 Georgina -- Georgina Doucette, her and my mother, and Joe  
8 Michael, they are first cousins.

9 So they came to me first because I'm the  
10 oldest today on my mother's side. And they came to me, and  
11 they asked a question, if they want me to open the case and  
12 start searching for them. And, you know -- and I said to  
13 them, it's been a long time. And my mother is not around  
14 today. Our parents, they're gone. Their -- their sisters,  
15 they're all gone. So it left -- I want, you know, to get  
16 peace for them. Let's do that. Let's do that, because  
17 they never -- they're here in -- in Eskasoni. Let's talk  
18 about this one, first, before we do anything else.

19 So we were all sitting around the table.  
20 And I was interviewed by the -- this Native from Truro. I  
21 don't know what her name was, but she was interviewing me  
22 then, eh? So I asked for the closure, then. And  
23 then -- and they listened. And the monument that we got it  
24 on the -- on the graveyard, it says everything what -- what  
25 happened that time. Their names were on there. The

Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael &amp; Kate Michael)

1 baskets are on there. The baby and everything is there.  
2 There's evidence that is on the -- is on the graveyard  
3 today, the monument.

4 And we had a -- I was looking after the  
5 problem. They met -- the men, Joe Michael's, I think, his  
6 uncle, or his -- his brother, they made the crosses and  
7 their names around it, so I was looking after them. And  
8 last October, two years ago, we went across the -- we were  
9 supposed to go across the -- the lake here from Eskasoni to  
10 Big Pond, but the water was really, like -- it was kind of  
11 windy. So I told him no, I'd rather my son will take me  
12 over there.

13 So everybody went. Nobody used the boat  
14 that time. We went around where the -- where they were  
15 last seen. Even the chief here in Eskasoni, he walked me  
16 out. He was all dressed up. And we were saying the  
17 prayer, and we threw a few things in there, like moccasins  
18 and baskets. Yeah, it was kind of a -- very emotional,  
19 anyway. My God. And APTN was there with us at that time.

20 And after it was all done, oh, Jesus, there  
21 were a lot of people showing up anyway. Around two or  
22 three hundred, anyway. ~~The (indiscernible)~~ [To witness  
23 this thing]. We came back, and we went to that place they  
24 were -- went -- first when they went across the -- the  
25 lake, that same area. And we did the same thing there

Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael &amp; Kate Michael)

1 around. They were saying the prayers and everything, and  
2 we -- and after that, we placed five crosses near the  
3 shoreline. They are there today with their names on it.

4 And we went to the church, and the -- the  
5 other ones, the crosses for the -- for the graveyard, we  
6 had them up because he made around ten crosses at that  
7 time. And their relatives, they brought them into the  
8 church and line -- lined up up on the altar, and we had the  
9 mass over there. The first time, it was, you know, a  
10 burial and a rest in peace for them.

11 And we ordered a monument for them. It was  
12 around six months later, we got the monument. It's at the  
13 graveyard today as we speak. And it was me who asked for  
14 the rest in peace because they need it. You know, what  
15 happened, there was no searching for them. The -- you  
16 know, they were investigated only five days, and they  
17 closed -- they closed the -- everything. And even the  
18 Natives from Eskasoni, they were raking the lake. They  
19 couldn't find nothing. So this why this -- this old man,  
20 [L.D.], he said they were burned to death. And they  
21 probably buried the -- the bones somewhere.

22 And my cousin, he's -- he's -- he's not the  
23 Mountie anymore. He's retired. He went to this house, and  
24 he was chased out of there. This guy got even -- used the,  
25 you know, cursing words, you know, he doesn't like Natives.

Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael &amp; Kate Michael)

1           So he chased him over there, even though he's Mountie.  
2           He's a born Mountie, but they don't -- they don't -- you  
3           know, they don't care for it today. He was chased over  
4           there because I don't know if they buried the bones there  
5           or I don't know what's going on.

6                         But we placed -- we placed the ribbons,  
7           like, every now and then, when they -- when somebody goes  
8           through there, they place the ribbons on the tree.

9                         **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** And you -- Mary Jane,  
10          you said that the ribbons that you place, it's in  
11          the -- it's in the house by the lake, right?

12                        **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yeah. Near the  
13          lake, yeah.

14                        **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah. Well, can you  
15          tell me more about the house? What do you know about this  
16          house? Why -- how -- why is it important to this story?  
17          What happened there?

18                        **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** You know, we think  
19          that the -- they were buried over there. And  
20          they -- we -- there are houses today. At that time,  
21          there -- there was no houses at Big Pond, just a church,  
22          St. Mary's, just a church there. But there -- there's  
23          only, like, five houses at that time, around 90 years ago,  
24          anyway.

25                        **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M-hm.

Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael &amp; Kate Michael)

1                   **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** And -- but today,  
2                   you know, they got their own land, their lands around,  
3                   fenced it up, and they got nice houses over there. And  
4                   that's why I guess they don't want nobody to touch  
5                   the -- you know, the land block. That's when I figured,  
6                   anyway. And I even told my cousin about that.

7                   **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M-hm.

8                   **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yeah, that's why I  
9                   know -- you know, we don't know what happened, you know, if  
10                  they buried the bones somewhere anyway, because they never  
11                  found nothing. They never found a body, and they never  
12                  found the -- the bones --

13                  **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Right.

14                  **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** -- for all this  
15                  time.

16                  **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay. And --

17                  **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** I don't know --

18                  **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** -- when Joe Michael,  
19                  your cousin, when he wanted to do investigation, did  
20                  he -- did he pursue investigation? Did he find any  
21                  evidence of what happened?

22                  **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** No. No, the one  
23                  who closed the -- this one. No, I told him  
24                  let -- let's -- his grandparents, also -- his grandmother  
25                  was eight months' pregnant at that time when she was



Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael &amp; Kate Michael)

1 murdered. And my -- my grandmother and their grandmother,  
2 they were sisters. So I told Joe, Joe Michael, that, you  
3 know, let's -- give them the rest in peace. You know, it's  
4 been over all these years, and nobody found anything. You  
5 know, it's just distress for your family and my family.  
6 Let's just give them their rest in peace, and we did that.  
7 We -- we buried them in -- in our graveyard.

8 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M-hm. And do you find  
9 that with the ceremony that you have done by the lake and  
10 both in the church where the community came, did you find  
11 that you -- you and your family found peace and closure?

12 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** That's right.  
13 That's right.

14 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** You did.

15 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** That's what we feel  
16 because we don't know what's going on, even as we speak  
17 now. I couldn't tell you, you know, what happened to them,  
18 were they buried or they were burned. And -- but this  
19 elder, this 94 -- he's alive today, and he's got a good  
20 memory.

21 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M-hm.

22 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** And he's the  
23 oldest -- he's the oldest one on the reserve today as we  
24 speak, [L.D.]. And I think I believe him mostly because he  
25 said that they made the big fire over there, even the

Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael &amp; Kate Michael)

1 reflection was on the -- on the water. And if they buried  
2 that somewheres, you know, sometimes when they -- when they  
3 start building their houses, they probably dig up the  
4 bones. But nobody mentioned about the bones were digging  
5 up or anything like that. So for -- we figure that they  
6 were burned, really. They were burned. And they -- I  
7 don't know what happened to the bones, anyway.

8 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay.

9 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** So that's why Joe  
10 Michael was -- he had a gut feeling they were buried under  
11 these -- one of those houses. There's -- but nobody will  
12 want nobody to ruin the earth, you know.

13 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Right.

14 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Even  
15 (indiscernible) there's nobody to touch my yard.

16 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Right.

17 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** But this is -- you  
18 know, this -- this has been a long time. And, you know,  
19 justice, almost everywhere, there was no justice for the  
20 Natives, even today. My husband was a Mountie, too. He  
21 was working with the justice. And my son is working with  
22 the justice, (indiscernible). And -- but I believe that  
23 there was no -- there was no justice for the Natives, at  
24 that time, even today. But I don't know. I don't know.

25 In ways, you know, like me, I want my kids

Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael &amp; Kate Michael)

1 to be -- have a good life like my husband was. So -- and  
2 me, I'm descended from the grand chiefs, two Dennis', two  
3 grand chiefs in the family, and we're always on the -- on  
4 the news. And, you know, this event, April 12th, we had a  
5 big gathering at the Gabriel Centre in the church basement.  
6 And on the July 19, we had it at the powwow grounds, three  
7 days, even, for the side gathering. My -- I was a  
8 (~~indiscernible~~) [Dennis] until I got married.

9 And my mother, she got married after when  
10 she came home from the residential school. And she had her  
11 firstborn, before me, and she died of whooping cough. She  
12 was nine months old, and she was really, really hurt, my  
13 mom. She sent my father to the church to light the candle  
14 and ask for the more kids. When after 18th one was born,  
15 she send there -- she sent him back to the church. "Blow  
16 out that goddamned candle, we got too much." And they  
17 listened to it, anyway. We went to the church.

18 (~~Indiscernible~~) [He] blow out the candles out, and there  
19 were 18 of us altogether. I'm the oldest today. I lost  
20 five siblings -- six siblings altogether.

21 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Wow. Big family.

22 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yeah. We had this  
23 happy family. My mother was good provider. I'm telling  
24 you that. She was good provider. You know, she went  
25 through -- she went through a lot. You know, she doesn't

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1           have any parents around, and she doesn't know where -- when  
2           they went. Sometimes she said she gets cross -- you know,  
3           she gets mad at them. And -- but I think, you know,  
4           she -- she knows what happened to them, and she's lucky  
5           that we -- she's got us, I think. Probably -- she even  
6           tell me that one day, and she was -- she was teaching me  
7           how to make bread.

8                           **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M-hm.

9                           **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** ~~(Indiscernible)~~

10           [Bread]. Yeah. She -- she was teaching me how to use that  
11           because she said, "Some day, you know -- what happened to  
12           my mother," she said, "I was relying on her cooking all the  
13           time, and I was only nine. She never teach me nothing. I  
14           was a spoiley." And she said, "Before something happen to  
15           me, I better teach you how to cook this, how to make this,  
16           so you won't be stuck when -- when I'm not around." But I  
17           had my mother. She died only -- she died August 9th, 12  
18           years ago.

19                           And she was a good provider, I'm telling  
20           you. She could make anything. You know, she'd grow her  
21           garden, and she'd make a jam, and she was a good hunter and  
22           fisherman, too. She do the fishing. She teach my -- my  
23           other siblings how to fish, but I never -- I'm not like  
24           that, you know, fishing or hunting. I was doing up the  
25           cooking for them. When they go out for the hunt, you know,

Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael &amp; Kate Michael)

1 or fishing, I was doing all the cooking. But -- and she  
2 teach me how to clean up the house. But she never teach me  
3 how to sew or -- and knit, but she teach another sisters.  
4 I'm the oldest, I guess, and I'm kind of spoiley, too, like  
5 she was, when her mother was alive.

6 She missed -- she told me sometimes she  
7 missed them, and the dream that she had, she was really  
8 happy for it because she said I could hardly remember her  
9 face, but that -- that dream she had is that my mother  
10 looks like -- saying, "Cadry." She was about the -- she  
11 had the long hair, too, like Cadry. That's why she called  
12 me over. She said before I woke up, anyway, she gave me a  
13 big hug. She smiled, and I woke up then. And within  
14 two -- about a month later, she passed on. I guess they  
15 came together. You know, the funny things happen that --

16 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah.

17 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** -- you know, I -- I  
18 don't know about -- I -- I know my grandparents on my -- my  
19 father's side, Dennis, Simon Dennis, and Grant Kestner on  
20 the reserve, Simon Dennis, and my grandmother, she was  
21 half-Irish. And I know them. They're passed on, 1969, '64  
22 and '69, so I was old enough -- you know, I loved them  
23 dearly. And -- but my mother's parents, I just -- just the  
24 memory of remembering that, because she doesn't even -- she  
25 had her memories, too.

1                   But the youngest uncle, he was only six  
2                   months old when her parents disappeared. He was brought up  
3                   by another house, another couple. But they were related.  
4                   They were related. And my another uncle got married a  
5                   couple of years later, and the other one joined the army.  
6                   They weren't that close, because my mother was sent to  
7                   residential school after that. But they -- they'd come  
8                   down and visit her. You know, they were only -- with them,  
9                   anyway. At the time, they weren't -- they didn't have any  
10                  parents. They'd come to visit my mother, and if she needed  
11                  help, they were there for her.

12                  It's really a rough time for all -- for the  
13                  Natives, anyway, about the justice today. Even though my  
14                  husband was a Mountie, even though, you know, when I listen  
15                  to the news, you know, these missing women. You know,  
16                  that's really hard. Every time when I listen to the -- the  
17                  news, listen to Aboriginal women, you know, the memories  
18                  back to me. You know, the same thing happened to my  
19                  family, and there was no justice for us.

20                  They just -- I closed the closure for this  
21                  one, anyway, because I know it's going to take for another  
22                  thousand years to open the case again, and  
23                  nobody -- nobody -- my -- my cousin, he's the Mountie, he's  
24                  a former Mountie, he was trying to open the case, but, you  
25                  know, lucky that I was there.



Mary Jane Sanipass

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1                   **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yes. That was  
2 something I wanted to ask you. How does your -- how do you  
3 think your mom have felt if this is what she would have  
4 also wanted, had she been alive at the time when Joe  
5 Michael came to -- to ask you?

6                   **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yeah.

7                   **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah.

8                   **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Probably she will,  
9 because it was happened three -- three years ago, three to  
10 four years ago, and she died 12 years ago.

11                   **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Right.

12                   **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** But I think she  
13 made -- she'd always tell the story that when you go to the  
14 lake at night, you could hear the boat, you know, the waves  
15 are slamming on the -- on the boat. They weren't -- they  
16 were -- you know, I think it's just -- she always  
17 tells -- tell me a story about that. And I told her I  
18 never go to the lake at night. She said we could go over  
19 there when we visit, but I don't think so. She'd hear the  
20 boat sometimes when her and my father go there, too. Even  
21 in the daytime, she said, I heard the boat, the waves are  
22 slamming on the side. But -- and the -- you could even  
23 hear them talking, but you don't understand what you're  
24 saying, and you don't see them. And after, you know,  
25 my -- my niece, she's (~~indiscernible~~) [lives right across



Mary Jane Sanipass

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1 from me]. They go camping. They go camping at the lake.  
2 We're living not -- not far from the lake. And -- excuse  
3 me.

4 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yes. Sure.

5 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Indiscernible).

6 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Well, that was my  
7 son Tom who came in.

8 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Oh, good.

9 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yeah. And my  
10 daughter just went home. Yeah. So and -- you could hear  
11 them. But after this -- and as for the closure --

12 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah.

13 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** -- you don't hear  
14 nothing at the lake. That's what my niece said, anyway.  
15 They were spending the -- on the lake sometimes, and I  
16 think that's what they need, rest at peace.

17 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Right.

18 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Because I told them  
19 the story what my mother used to tell me, so they have to  
20 prove it if it's really true. And they spent the night at  
21 the lake on the tent right nearby, and they said they never  
22 heard nothing. So I told them, it's just the closure they  
23 need. They're rest in peace today. I was happy for that.  
24 I was really happy for that.

25 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Well, that's very good

Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael &amp; Kate Michael)

1 to hear. Is there --

2 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yeah.

3 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** -- anything else that  
4 you would like to share with us?

5 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** My God. To sound  
6 like "No," I guess. There is no -- my mother -- no, she'd  
7 never tell me the story, but I listened when the -- she  
8 doesn't want us to -- to be upset. You know, she was a  
9 good mother, I'm telling you that. She was a good mother,  
10 even though she wasn't brought up by her mom, but she was a  
11 really, really good mom to me. I'm a spoiled brat, in a  
12 way. Like, I'm the oldest. Like, I'm the oldest in the  
13 family. And I'm -- even though I'm 72, if she's alive  
14 today, I would just go over there and ask her what I need  
15 and, you know, what to put on the stew that I make or -- it  
16 was like that, eh? Yeah. But she was something.  
17 Holy-moly, she was something, anyway.

18 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah. Mary Jane --

19 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** (Indiscernible) [a  
20 big family --]

21 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Oops. Sorry.

22 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** (Indiscernible) ~~I~~  
23 ~~just got~~ [A big family she's got.]

24 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Sorry? Can you repeat  
25 that again? I didn't hear it well.

Mary Jane Sanipass

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1                   **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** A big family she's  
2                   got.

3                   **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Oh, a big family.  
4                   Yes.

5                   **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yeah. Just us.  
6                   Just us. You know, just one family, my mother. I figured  
7                   there was around 300 of us altogether, with  
8                   great-great-great-grandkids today. But we had -- we had a  
9                   life together, you know. We were happy. And my -- you  
10                  know, my grandkids, their mother, she's white. And they  
11                  called my mother *Giju'*, *Giju'*. Like, we called my mother  
12                  *Giju'*. I never called her Mom. My kids are calling me  
13                  Mom, but my mother, I called her *Giju'*. Even my grandkids,  
14                  they called her *Giju'*, too, eh, even though they speak only  
15                  one language, English. They don't understand Mi'kmaq.

16                  They shoot -- I learned that a couple times.  
17                  They understand me when I speak to them in my language,  
18                  but, you know, they are now -- their father speak in  
19                  English, and their mother speak in English because she's  
20                  white and being married for 24 years. But she understand  
21                  me sometime because when she walks in the house sometime,  
22                  I'm (indiscernible) something else, I would speak to her in  
23                  my language, and she will understand me, because for all  
24                  this time that she -- she's with me, anyway. And she must  
25                  be a nice woman, too. If she's stuck with me for all these

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1 years, she's nice.

2 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah. Mary Jane, I  
3 wanted to ask you something that you mentioned earlier.  
4 One thing that you said is that, you know, the -- you watch  
5 the news today, and you are reminded of the injustice that  
6 Aboriginal girls and women continue to suffer, even today.  
7 Are there any recommendations that you would like to make  
8 for the National Inquiry, perhaps, something that you  
9 would --

10 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yes. And I --

11 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** -- like to see happen?

12 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** -- (indiscernible)  
13 like -- like, my (indiscernible). It was so long ago. And  
14 it would happen, like, a couple years ago, that 98 years  
15 ago, that I would have probably told them to, you know, get  
16 a lawyer, a good one, and tell them to search in -- you  
17 know, searching, even tear down those buildings at the Big  
18 Pond to look for the body. But for -- if they happened  
19 around 10 years ago or 15 years ago, but for all this time,  
20 you know, so it was too long ago. That's why, you  
21 know -- but still. Hopefully that -- that we went through  
22 for the -- to the grandparents that we lost, I hope to God  
23 that nobody, nobody in this is going to happen to the  
24 family like we went through, because it's really, really  
25 hard for the family. Like, my mother went through it,

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1            anyway, but we had a good life, you know, in our lives.

2            And that's why I brought my kids like that, like I was

3            brought up by them.

4                            **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Right.

5                            **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** M-hm.

6                            **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay. Okay. So do  
7            you think if it happened today and, you know, the  
8            investigation, would you have liked that the RCMP continue  
9            to search and find --

10                           **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yes.

11                           **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** -- actually the truth?

12                           **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** I used to tell my  
13            husband about this one, but he couldn't do too much about  
14            it because there was no case, he said. He was searching  
15            for a while, you know, investigating. He said there was no  
16            case for that. It's been too long, and there was no  
17            evidence. They told me that, because he was the Mountie.

18                           **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay.

19                           **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yeah. There was no  
20            case, he said, because if we know there's a case, you know,  
21            and we don't know what happened to them. Probably he said  
22            they were burned or they were buried somewhere, and he said  
23            there are too many houses over there. And, you know -- but  
24            if I had the power -- if it happens today, like, 15 years  
25            ago, 15 years or 10 years ago, I'd probably tell the lawyer

1 to, you know, buy all those lands and those houses and  
2 start digging up there looking for the bodies.

3 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M-hm.

4 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yeah. Because  
5 there are five of them, including the baby. You know, she  
6 was eight months along when she disappeared.

7 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Right.

8 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yeah.

9 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay. So, Mary Jane,  
10 as we are nearing the -- the end of the -- of your story,  
11 the end of your statement, remember earlier I asked you if  
12 you wanted to -- to have it public. Do you think that  
13 the -- still, today --

14 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** You --

15 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** -- you would like to  
16 keep it public at this point?

17 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yeah, public  
18 because I want -- I want the people to see it and hear it.  
19 And, you know, what happened at that time, there was no  
20 justice for our Natives at that time. There were Mounties  
21 there, just like the Mounties here from I don't know where  
22 the hell they got them. But we had -- we had always got  
23 the RCMP on the reserve. The RCMP, GRC.

24 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Right.

25 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yeah. We got -- we

Mary Jane Sanipass

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1 got one on the reserve every time.

2 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay. So what -- once  
3 we hang up the phone, Mary Jane, then Michelle will call  
4 you back for the after-care, and we will send you the form  
5 that you will sign that was a consent to have the -- your  
6 statement released to the public. Okay.

7 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** That's public.  
8 Yeah, I want that.

9 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yes. Okay.

10 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** I want the people  
11 to hear it --

12 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yes.

13 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** -- because nobody  
14 knows the story except us.

15 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Exactly.

16 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Like  
17 (~~indiscernible~~) [to] know that. Yeah, I don't know that  
18 much, either, but I'm the oldest in the family, and  
19 the -- and my mother never tell me -- you know, she never  
20 sat me down and tell me the story, what happened. All I  
21 heard that was when somebody comes, like her  
22 sisters -- like her aunts, like her aunts, when they come  
23 or the uncles, you know, they'll be talking about it. And  
24 she'll be, you know, telling them what -- you know, what  
25 happened, and their relations or the family. I'll be

Mary Jane Sanipass

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1 sitting there, listening to what happened.

2 And she told me it sometime, but she never  
3 tell the whole story because she's always busy doing  
4 something like that. And she -- she doesn't want me to get  
5 involved, like, because I was a teenager then, huh? And  
6 she doesn't want to get me too involved in this kind. She  
7 won't -- I was brought up like -- a good life. I was  
8 brought up by a good life.

9 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Right.

10 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Because my  
11 grandparents on the Dennis side, they were grand chiefs,  
12 and the (indiscernible). So we never had a hard time  
13 except her. Except her. And the grand chief at that time,  
14 they were helping her. They were helping the family.  
15 Grand chief John Dennis. But they couldn't do too much  
16 about that. That's sad, eh?

17 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** It is sad. And it  
18 sounds like, you know, when you say that you were brought  
19 up in a very good way and you were the spoiled little brat,  
20 it sounds like your mom wanted to -- you and the other  
21 children have everything that she didn't have.

22 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yeah. That's  
23 right. That's right. She used to make me clothes, and she  
24 was -- she used a sewing machine. Yeah. And she'd make me  
25 those pedal pushers, they call it, yeah. And the shirt to



Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael & Kate Michael)

1 go with it. She always do that to me. In the wintertime,  
2 you know, she cut up the sweaters on the -- on the sleeves.  
3 She'd make a sock or she'd make gloves for us or mittens.

4 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M-hm.

5 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yeah. She  
6 was -- she was a good provider, holy Lord's sakes.

7 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah.

8 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** And she did grow a  
9 garden good.

10 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Oh.

11 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** (Indiscernible).

12 And she was -- like I said, she was a good fisherman and a  
13 hunter, too, eh.

14 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah.

15 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** But she  
16 never -- never hunt the moose as long as I remember.  
17 Nobody hunt the moose on the reserve at that time, just the  
18 deer, the rabbit, and -- and partridge. Nobody -- we  
19 didn't even know where the moose come from until around 30  
20 years ago, and we started to pump, you know, the money.  
21 They were setting the moose for \$500. You know,  
22 for -- that was just the money. I was interviewed by that,  
23 too, around 20 years ago.

24 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay.

25 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Because we never

Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael &amp; Kate Michael)

1 had a moose -- I never had tasted a moose in my life, just  
2 a deer only, eh? And the fish. Nobody was hunting the  
3 moose at that time. You know, the reason they're doing it  
4 today, they hunt the moose, is because they're setting the  
5 mooses for the white people. That's where they get the  
6 money from. They're still doing it today.

7 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M-hm.

8 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yeah. I was  
9 interviewed by the -- by the Sydney Post 20 years ago, by  
10 that, and was mentioning all that, you know, nobody was  
11 hunting the moose in our time, just the deer.

12 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** And did your mom also  
13 make baskets like her parents?

14 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Oh, geez. She was  
15 good at making baskets. Holy Lord. She was -- I think she  
16 got the trade from her parents.

17 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Right.

18 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yeah. Even my  
19 brother today, Ivan, she's -- he's really good how to make  
20 flowers, wooden flowers.

21 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay.

22 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** He's getting  
23 recognition all around in Nova Scotia. And my sister,  
24 Mildred, Ernest Johnson's wife, they -- they  
25 make -- because my mother was making wooden flowers, also.

Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael &amp; Kate Michael)

1 She could make everything that she could -- she could.

2 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M-hm.

3 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** But I never make  
4 baskets in my life. I was just doing the baking. Like,  
5 she'd teach me how to do this and that. Cleaning and  
6 baking this and that. But she never teach me how to make  
7 basket. I think my two siblings got it from her. I think  
8 they got the trade from my mother's side. So they're  
9 really -- they're really talented, and they got the record  
10 that they were sent all around down the reserves to teach  
11 the -- the students to make wooden flowers. They really  
12 moved on that.

13 But if they -- if they asked me to  
14 make -- like, me, my husband was a coach for the Sydney  
15 Kings, for the baseball. And we got only a percentage help  
16 from the reserve. And we had eight day fairs. And a few  
17 of them, their parents couldn't afford to buy the uniforms.

18 So I have to start cutting up the -- the  
19 pork in the morning, and by the -- in the afternoon, I  
20 could make 40 meat pies, 20 onions and 20 plain, and we'll  
21 sell them for the -- for the -- for the gas to the -- for  
22 the home away games, and the -- the players that couldn't  
23 afford for the uniforms.

24 And around -- I moved here in my house 1987.  
25 I was catering. I was making good money by doing that,

Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael & Kate Michael)

1 catering. Baking and that, because I got a trade from  
2 that, eh?

3 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Right. Something that  
4 your mom taught you.

5 MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS: Yeah.

6 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Yeah.

7 MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS: Yeah. My brother  
8 just walked in now, the one I was telling you about who was  
9 making good baskets -- wooden flowers.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

11 MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS: ~~(Indiscernible).~~

12 [Yeah put] Apple juice in the fridge.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

14 MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS: It was my brother.

15 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Okay.

16 MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS: Yeah.

17 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: So, Mary Jane, is  
18 there anything else you would like to share or would you  
19 like us to end the story here?

20 MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS: That's about it.

21 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: That's about it.

22 MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS: I better start  
23 thinking of my dinner.

24 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Okay.

25 MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS: I

Mary Jane Sanipass

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1 should -- (indiscernible) [put on the pot].

2 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay.

3 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** (Indiscernible)

4 [Cooking] spare ribs. Yeah. Spare ribs dinner. I put  
5 the -- turnip and carrots, and I -- and I got to put the  
6 corns, and I never peeled the potatoes yet, and doughboy.  
7 I don't eat that kind. I'm just making that for my kids.

8 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Well, it sounds  
9 delicious.

10 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Yeah. I'm on the  
11 Sacred Heart diet, myself.

12 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Well, I'm sure --

13 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Because I'll do --

14 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** -- your dinner will be  
15 delicious, and everyone is going to be very happy. But  
16 from --

17 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** I know it.

18 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** I wish I was also part  
19 of that dinner. But from my end and on behalf of the  
20 National Inquiry, I really would like to thank you. Thank  
21 you for giving --

22 **MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:** Okay.

23 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** -- us an opportunity  
24 and for me as a statement-gatherer to -- to hear your  
25 story, because it is --

Statement - Public  
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(Joseph Michael & Kate Michael)

35

1 MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS: Okay.

2 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: -- truly a story --

3 MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS: (Indiscernible).

4 Anyway.

5 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: -- yes. And I'm  
6 really looking forward to -- to having your story released  
7 to the public when the public will be -- will be able  
8 to -- to hear your firsthand experience, the -- the story  
9 that --

10 MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS: Yes.

11 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: -- your mother told  
12 you.

13 MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS:  
14 (Indiscernible) -- yeah. Like, in -- in the days coming,  
15 if you need me more, you know, I'll be around, if I'm still  
16 alive and kicking, anyway.

17 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Yeah.

18 MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS: Yeah. Just give me  
19 a call.

20 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Okay. Thank you very  
21 much, Mary Jane. You have a nice afternoon.

22 MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS: Yes. You, too.

23 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Thank you. Bye-bye.

24 MS. MARY JANE SANIPASS: All right. Bye.

25 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: It is 10:39 AM, and the statement

Mary Jane Sanipass

(Joseph Michael & Kate Michael)

1 is completed.

2 --- Upon adjourning at 10:39 a.m.

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jessica Caudron", is written over a horizontal line.

Jessica Caudron

September 14, 2018