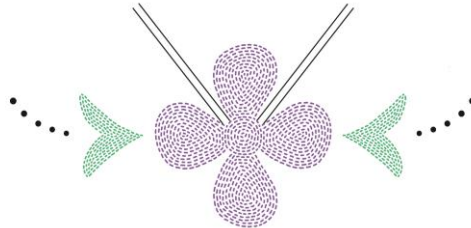


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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 Public Hearings
Chateau Nova Hotel – Main Ballroom
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories**



PUBLIC

Wednesday January 24, 2018

**Public Volume 41
Jaclyn (Jayda) Andre,
In relation to Joni Andre-Itsi;**

Geraldine Sharpe, In relation to her Grandmother;

**James Norman Jenka, In relation to Helene Louisa
Ratfat (nee Leyden) & Marina Ratfat;**

Sandra Faye Lockhart

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II
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The Northwest Territories

Note: For the purpose of establishing this record of attendance, Counsel and Representatives are considered present whether they attended one or all of the hearings held over the course of the day at the Chateau Nova Hotel.

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1 Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

2 --- Upon commencing on Wednesday, January 24, 201

3 at 9:30 a.m.

4 --- OPENING CEREMONIES

5 MR. GEORGE TUCCARO: Good morning, good
6 morning. Welcome to a brand-new day. For those of you who
7 don't know me, my name is George Tuccaro still, and still
8 happy to be here.

9 We had a wonderful night last night. We
10 got to tell you a little bit about last night. I know some
11 of you are very tired and drawn out and couldn't make it to
12 the entertainment. For those of you who didn't make it, we
13 were there in your honour and we had a great time.

14 There was 12 drummers from all up and down
15 the Mackenzie Valley, and, of course, the host drum from
16 the Yellowknife Dene First Nation. And we had such a great
17 time. There was so much energy coming out of those 12
18 drums. Some people even got shocked. Yeah. It was a
19 shocking experience. Here too? Yeah, there was one over
20 there, too. I think it's static electricity. You know
21 when you go press the key to your room and you get a shock
22 -- you get a zapper about that along -- static electricity.

23 Anyway, I always start out with a nice
24 little story because I've got thousands and thousands of
25 stories. I should write a book one of these times. But

1 this story goes to the late Abe Ooptik (ph), and some of
2 you here are related to him. He was such a good
3 storyteller. I used to just love sitting down having a
4 meal with him or just visiting.

5 He told me a long time ago he was in
6 Iqaluit and he was over at The Legion. Everybody back in
7 those days used to go to The Legion and listen to a little
8 bit of music and have a drink or two, then go home. And he
9 was walking home, as he came outside, the wind was blowing.
10 It was dark and almost blizzard. The only thing you could
11 see is the very few street lights that Iqaluit had back in
12 those days. And I remembered the story about his grandma
13 telling him never -- as a kid, never to wander out at night
14 because that's where the bad spirits are.

15 And he got out and he was walking, and he
16 looked back and he could see a black -- something black by
17 the street light. It was coming at him, and, oh, no, his
18 mind harking back to us. Grandmother said, "That spirit is
19 coming," and he started running and the spirit was coming
20 back, and he tripped and he fell down and he was, "Ahh,"
21 and it was a black garbage bag come floating by.

22 Oh, my goodness. Those are such good
23 stories. I mean, they make you so real. I was just kind
24 of really anticipating something really dangerous to
25 happen.

1 But anyway, good morning, everyone, and
2 we're very, very pleased to be here. It's a brand-new day,
3 and it's my opportunity right now to call upon a lady to
4 come and say the morning prayer before we start anything
5 else.

6 So, ladies and gentlemen, we're very
7 pleased to have with us, Elder Teresa Villeneuve to say the
8 morning prayer.

9 --- OPENING PRAYER

10 MS. TERESA VILLENEUVE: (Speaking in
11 native language). God, our Creator, we thank you for this
12 day, for this gathering of missing and murdered Indigenous
13 women. We pray for the families who are going to be
14 telling their stories, that they will be consoled and
15 healed so that they can go forward in their life. This we
16 ask through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

17 MR. GEORGE TUCCARO: Merci Cho. Teresa
18 Villeneuve from Fort Resolution -- or in their own
19 community, they call it, Deninu Kue. And right now, we're
20 going to turn our attention over to the lighting of the
21 sacred kudlik. And we're always so pleased to see the
22 smiling face of Rassi Nashalik, who is going to lead us
23 through this. Rassi.

24 MS. RASSI NASHALIK: (Speaking in native
25 language). Good morning, everyone. What I'm going to do

1 this morning, there's some of you -- you can hear me on
2 first day when it was opening, and I was explaining about
3 kudlik, how significant it is for Inuit culture. I'm going
4 to talk a little about it this morning so that anyone could
5 kind of understand why this is so important for Inuit.

6 What I'm going to start out with is that I
7 learned how to do this just by looking at my mom, watching
8 my mom when I was a little girl. I used to ask her why I
9 couldn't attend the kudlik, and her response was, "You have
10 to become an adult with a husband, and you would have your
11 dwelling or your kamak (ph) in order to do these."

12 So, I never learned how to do this in
13 front of her since I went away at a very early age for
14 residential school, and I was kind of nervous about doing
15 these when I was asked to do this first time here in
16 Yellowknife, and I never get to light this in my country in
17 Nunavut Region. And since I became a Yellowknifer, I've
18 been here so many years, close to over 40 years, I get to
19 acquire a kudlik for me in order to practice my culture
20 even though we in the Dene country, and I'm so grateful
21 that I've been adopted in a way to do my kudlik lighting in
22 Yellowknife area.

23 What I use is -- we don't have seals, so I
24 use the canola oil, No Name brand, burns the best, and I
25 get to collect my willows, cotton willows. I live down in

1 Old Town. There's so many willow trees beside my house in
2 the fall time when they sprouted, like all those white
3 stuff that goes everywhere. That's best time for me to
4 collect them, so I got a bag full of this, and I keep it in
5 a very nice bags, air -- with the holes, where they use
6 rice in the big bags. I keep them in there so that they
7 could dry nicely.

8 But anyway, this kudlik, I call it
9 traditional for me even though I got so attachment to it
10 because I caught on to this lifestyle. I was brought up in
11 a camp. Like I said, I learned it -- learned this by
12 watching my mom, and it kept me alive and the whole family
13 because it give us heat, it give us light, it give us a
14 tool to cook with, melt snow or ice for drinking water, and
15 it's like a furnace. I always compare it to furnace. You
16 can dim it down when you go to bed at night, but you have
17 to keep waking up middle of the night to see it still going
18 because otherwise, during the wintertime, it could get
19 pretty cold.

20 So, my mom was the one who was the keeper
21 of the kudliks, and there would be maybe three or four. If
22 not, there will be more than one kudlik, and they will be
23 bigger than this one. It keeps you warm, really nice and
24 warm. I remember that coming out because we were told to
25 play outside no matter what whether it's cold out or not.

1 Traditionally, when they get visitors, elders visit or the
2 adults visit, we're not allowed to listen to their stories,
3 what they're talking about, so we were told to go out.

4 Anyway, this kudlik had a lot attachment
5 to me because I always say I survive on this because of my
6 family. There's so many of us -- so many of us in my
7 family. I'm the seventh girl. And there's nine girls and
8 three boys. Boys came last. They keep trying for boys.
9 Finally they came. But I always like to share this with
10 people that doesn't know, and the flint is -- like I said,
11 it's Arctic cotton, and this one is from the willow tree,
12 and it's hard and it keeps well. And I got these doing my
13 walks along the trail, but this one is from my friend who
14 is from my hometown too, who lives here. She got me --
15 this is called tukluk (ph), to make the flame or just to
16 keep it going.

17 And I like to tell you that sometimes I
18 don't talk very well in English. I rather -- I'm very,
19 very comfortable in my Inuktitut language, which was --
20 because it was my professional life, professional job, that
21 I always use it as a job, as a professional.

22 I used this once in a while at home, like,
23 I complained a lot about being cold at the house -- at our
24 house. We heat a lot with the wood stove. So, I get to
25 light this in my TV room, and it keeps me warm. And also,

1 I like to light it when I have my Inuit fellows come over
2 to have traditional food, and this keeps my house in peace
3 and also, my friends around my house. Then whenever they
4 visit, I try to light it so that I could have a peace and
5 share my food and talk in our language. And I was so
6 grateful to share my traditional kudlik because it got
7 attachment to me in my heart. It goes way, way out.

8 I'm over 60 year old now, and I like to be
9 able to teach about kudlik even though I'm not in my
10 territory, but I have a culture and tradition, so I like to
11 do it more and more now that I'm getting older so that I
12 could pass it on to people; my family, my grandchildren.
13 Lastly, (Speaking in native language). And have a great
14 day, everyone, and peace be with you.

15 MR. GEORGE TUCCARO: (Speaking in native
16 language). We have a couple of items that have been
17 recovered. One is a beautiful little earring and it has an
18 ulu. Someone is missing an earring, a little ulu. I will
19 take it and I will put it at the registration desk. And I
20 also have reading glasses. Someone who may have left
21 reading glasses. They were left in the men's washroom.
22 Boy, we get right down to details here. Anyway, I will put
23 those at the registration desk. I think they belong to
24 Gail. What were you doing in the men's washroom? Okay, we
25 won't go there.

1 people that are going to tell their stories today, we wish
2 you well and we wish you much success, and we'll call on
3 the Creator to come and help you with your story.

4 You have a cell phone? Turn off your cell
5 phones, yes. Good idea. Billy is -- he came up with a
6 good line the other night. He said -- when they had the
7 meals, he was walking around saying to everybody, "Go ahead
8 and eat. Eat as much as you want. I've already signed the
9 bill." That was very, very nice, Billy. That was so nice.
10 Anyway, I'm going to -- I'm starting to wander all over the
11 place. Take care and God bless today. Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Just like to
13 say good morning to everybody and welcome.

14 I just want to acknowledge all the
15 survivors and families who are in the room and thank
16 everybody who shared with us yesterday.

17 And for those of you who are going to
18 share your truths with us today and tomorrow, we look
19 forward to hearing your truths and what you have to share,
20 so thank you very much.

21 And I also want to acknowledge and thank
22 our elder, Teresa Villeneuve, for starting us in a good way
23 with a prayer, and Rassi for lighting the kudlik for us and
24 telling us about the kudlik. Thank you.

25 And for everybody who put together the

1 wonderful night last night at The Explorer, thank you.
2 That was such a great way to end the day. So again, thank
3 you everybody for being here. Those of you who are here in
4 support, thank you for that as well.

5 And I also welcome and thank everybody
6 who's joining us remotely. Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Merci
8 beaucoup, Brian -- le commissaire, Brian. I felt love
9 yesterday and last night and very humble to be sitting
10 there and receiving the truth from families and survivors.
11 It's something that we -- we do it very seriously and with
12 love and passion. And for me, for Brian, Qajaq, and
13 Marion, and all the people that work with the National
14 Inquiry.

15 Our women and girls are sacred, first of
16 all, because we are children of a beautiful mother and a
17 dad. My dad is the most beautiful hunk of fun. I love him
18 but also because we give life as mother, as woman. So,
19 it's sacred. It's very sacred. And last night, I was able
20 to awake my five sense of your culture, the DNA culture. I
21 was so touched, and my God, your men are beautiful. Sorry,
22 Serge. And the women; gorgeous, powerful, amazing. So,
23 for me, it's hope. It's hope that it's there for today,
24 but for tomorrow, also, and for the next seven generation,
25 so it's amazing what we're doing.

1 People are saying maybe we're not doing
2 enough or we're not doing this and that. But let's
3 remember, let's remember that when you're inside of this
4 important journey or walking beside with the families and
5 the survivors, who are we to say we're doing it wrong or
6 right? But instead, we should make sure that the families
7 are in a safe place, the survivors are in a safe place,
8 that we follow the protocols that the people are welcoming
9 us, like here, and if we go to another place, their own
10 protocol and so on. And sometimes, it's a mix of protocol.

11 And I just want to send a message to one
12 of a journalist I saw on La Presse, a Quebec oy journalist
13 -- in the Journal de Montreal, sorry -- that was
14 criticizing a woman who was doing an opening prayer when
15 somebody came from Ottawa to talk about something, and he
16 was making fun of that woman. And being a commissioner, I
17 cannot make any statement anymore, but you can. So what I
18 wrote on my Facebook, I just reminded how important it is
19 for us people from the land, the men and the women, the
20 elders and the youth, that for the welcome, it's one of our
21 laws. It's a protocol and it's so alive.

22 And I saw that last night. I saw that the
23 culture is alive. And I was proud to be part of that. And
24 tonight, Mike's speaking Inuktituk, who knows. I hope so.
25 And I'm proud.

1 So with this beautiful, beautiful work of
2 many, many, many people, we have the interim report in
3 English and in French. I know we're supposed to translate
4 also a summary in Inuktituk, am I right? Mm-hmm, she said.
5 Oui. And in Cree, also, and maybe other Indigenous
6 language.

7 So, this is your report; you can read it,
8 but what I would like you to do if you can -- people are
9 saying, "What can we do to help the family and survivors?"
10 Then you can say to the
11 federal government, to the provincial government, les
12 Territoires du Nord-Ouest government, and our own
13 Indigenous government, there is recommendation here that
14 you can act on. Now. So, I wish you a beautiful day and
15 merci beaucoup.

16 **Hearing #1**

17 **Witness: Jaclyn (Jayda) Andre**

18 **In relation to Joni Andre-Itsi**

19 **Heard by Commissioners Michèle Audette and Brian Eyolfson**

20 **Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe**

21 **Grandmothers, Elders and Knowledge-keepers: Laureen "Blu"**

22 **Waters Gaudio; Bernie Poitras Williams**

23 **Clerk: Trudy Mckinnon**

24 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

25 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Good morning,

1 commissioners. I have been asked by a couple of the local
2 folks to introduce myself, so it seems funny that I'm
3 introducing myself to you because you know me, but it's
4 been brought to my attention all day yesterday and that we
5 should in these moments actually -- as part of the laws or
6 traditions in this area, introduce ourselves in what we
7 are, so I'm Christa Big Canoe. I am one of the commission
8 counsel. I am Anishinaabekwe from Southern Ontario, but I
9 have actually spent time in Inuvik in the North.

10 And so, it's a great honour to be back up
11 here, and I would like to present the first family member
12 that will be sharing her story with you today. And so,
13 before me, I have Jaclyn Andre, but she goes by Jayda, so,
14 her friends and family call her Jayda, and she'll be
15 sharing the story of her sister, Joni Andre.

16 And before we begin, I would like to ask
17 the clerk to please promise Jayda in.

18 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Good
19 morning, Jayda. Do you promise to tell your truth to the
20 commissioners in a good way today?

21 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Thank you.

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you for
24 coming today, Jayda. We want to start with you kind of
25 introducing yourself to the commissioners and telling them

1 which community you came from and the background of the
2 community if you could, please.

3 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Thank you. Good
4 morning, everyone. Good morning. My name is Jaclyn known
5 as Jayda. I'm from Fort McPherson, Northwest Territories.
6 It's further up north. If you know where Inuvik is, it's
7 two hours away from there, so you have to drive from
8 McPherson over to Inuvik and jump on a plane to come here.
9 I'm Tetlit Gwich'in, and our population of McPherson is --
10 almost 8 to 900. It's a small community; two stores, a co-
11 op, northern and very small. We don't have a restaurant or
12 anything like that, and yeah.

13 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: You have a school
14 in McPherson?

15 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yes, we actually have a
16 -- Chief Julius School. It's up to grade 12. It's a
17 really nice school, and it's -- beautiful place. You got
18 to go there sometime if you have the chance.

19 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, thank you for
20 sharing a bit about where you're from. You had mentioned
21 that the community is Gwich'in. Is there like a band
22 council or is it like a mayor? Like, what is it? It's a
23 hamlet? It's a town? Just for other people in Canada who
24 don't understand the North. It would be helpful if you
25 could explain a little bit about that.

1 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: It's a tricky question
2 because we do have a hamlet. It's a Hamlet of Fort
3 McPherson. We have a band council and something I'm
4 learning as we go. It's kind of funny. We have a band and
5 a Tetlit Gwich'in council and a DGO, so a mixture of
6 everything, I guess.

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And would you mind
8 sharing with us what you currently do and a little bit more
9 about yourself and your family?

10 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yes. So, I'm the
11 youngest. My parents are James and May Andre, and I have
12 had an older sister and older brother. I actually did a
13 lot of stuff growing up working numerous jobs here and
14 there. Right now, I'm actually a personal support worker
15 and love my job and love what I do and can't wait to go
16 back to school and go further with my education. Yeah,
17 that's it.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Are you a mom as
19 well?

20 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yes. How could I
21 forget? I'm a mother to two beautiful children, my
22 girlfriend, and -- yes, my children are -- just turned 7
23 and one is 3 going on 30.

24 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Excellent. Well,
25 thank you for sharing that background. The main reason

1 you're here today is to talk about your sister, Joni. So,
2 I was wondering if you could share a little bit about Joni,
3 maybe some fond memories or tell us about her strengths.

4 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yeah. It's funny, like
5 I was talking yesterday and talking to my friends and
6 family, and -- you know, my sister, her name is Joni Andre,
7 and she was really young, and I don't think I realized it
8 up until this past week how young she actually was when she
9 was taken from us, and I was young at the time and I
10 mentioned it's amazing how you could trick your mind to do.

11 We're pretty powerful people, and I
12 blocked out a lot of stuff in my child years because I was
13 15 at the time, and I'm really glad to be here because I'm
14 slowly opening up now and trying to bring back those
15 memories slowly and letting memories come in and blocking
16 out some other ones, but I guess what I didn't do is try to
17 remind myself each and every day of who my sister was and
18 who she is. She was so beautiful. I was so jealous of her
19 all my life.

20 She's a mother and she's a sister, and she
21 was my only sister and -- yeah, she was very outgoing. And
22 she was amazing, like I think back because I lived with her
23 for a while too, and she's one not to -- she doesn't care
24 what people think and that's a big thing nowadays, and -- I
25 guess it was always a big thing -- and she opened her door

1 for anybody, like literally anyone. She had so many
2 friends, and she's just so amazing. Such a nice, nice
3 girl, and I'm so proud to call her my sister.

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Did you have an
5 opportunity recently to speak with any of her friends or
6 talk with family that you wanted to share with us?

7 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yeah. I guess now in
8 this day and age, there's so much technology. And it could
9 be a bad thing; it could be a good thing, and I feel like
10 I'm really thankful to be here now -- now that I'm here
11 because at first, I was like, I'm going to go to this? And
12 I don't even know why I'm going to it then, but I know for
13 me being here is, like, not only helping myself and my
14 family and my little brother, but it's kind of like for
15 everyone. It's a lot of my sister's friends, a lot of our
16 family.

17 And yesterday, I used my Facebook, and I
18 wrote on there that I was coming here and I was a bit
19 nervous, and I asked my sister's friends to send me a
20 message and give me your favourite memory of my sister, and
21 not knowing, that was a really good thing I did because a
22 lot of people messaged. It was unbelievable how much
23 messages I got then.

24 Who knows, that might be their start to
25 opening up and sharing their stories about my sister and

1 anything of their lives, like, who knows what they're going
2 through, and this could be the beginning of their healing
3 journey as it's the beginning of mine.

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And how did it
5 feel to get so much response back when people shared their
6 good memories for you? How did that feel?

7 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: I felt so good because -
8 - you know, growing up -- like I mentioned, I blocked out a
9 lot of stuff, and you know when you lose someone or you go
10 through trauma, it's -- I don't know. You begin to think
11 you don't want to talk about anything. You don't want to
12 feel like you're asking for anything, and you don't want
13 pity, and you don't -- you're kind of like embarrassed and
14 ashamed to ask for help.

15 So, putting that out there yesterday was -
16 - it made me feel really good, and I get to thank all the
17 friends of mine and all my sister's friends personally and
18 how it made me feel, and I definitely know it made them
19 feel good too because she will not be forgotten.

20 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Now I understand
21 that you lost your sister because she was murdered back in
22 2004, and she was actually killed by her husband. Can you
23 tell us a little bit about the family dynamics and what was
24 happening in Joni's life within her marriage?

25 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: My sister was madly in

1 love I guess, and she had a husband, and there was a lot of
2 abuse. And just last night, I was thinking about it and
3 how I was 15 at the time, but little earlier on, how I
4 think back and think, like, it was really abusive. It was
5 really bad and to the point where I have many memories of
6 me just being the younger sister and being a little brat, I
7 guess, I used to -- maybe it was my way of trying to stick
8 up for my sister, and you know, get smart here and there
9 and kind of take off and kind of be like little tough girl
10 and yet, deep down, I was kind of scared. And then, I had
11 a moment of I wonder if me being smart got my sister in
12 trouble. But who knows, and if that happened, then shame
13 on him.

14 But, yes, I had a good memory like -- I'll
15 skip that part and tell it after, but she was -- like
16 everybody knew and that's the sad thing, and we all knew
17 what was go on, and I don't know why, like we'll all have
18 to live with that the rest of my lives, but it's that
19 regret, like we should have done something, we should have
20 done more, we should have spoke up. And it's like she knew
21 it wasn't okay, but maybe just being so much -- she loved
22 the guy so much that maybe she thought he could change or
23 maybe he won't do anything again. It's so sad because you
24 see a lot of it now still with other people and other
25 families and women and men. It's really sad.

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And I want --
2 maybe go back -- and your community's like 8 or 900 people,
3 so it's a small community. And in terms of resource or
4 places to build houses or do things, is there a lot of room
5 or wealth to do that type of thing, to put more houses up
6 or to have resources like shelters in McPherson?

7 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Not that I know of,
8 like, we don't have a shelter or anything like that, but
9 McPherson is -- it's such a beautiful place. Sometimes,
10 you don't realize, like, how good a place is until you're
11 leaving, until you actually start talking about it. And
12 McPherson, it's like -- it's a small place, so you know
13 everybody and everybody knows everything about you and --
14 could be a good thing, could be a bad thing. But
15 everyone's so friendly and you have your friends and you
16 have your family, and I guess if you really need it, a
17 place to go. There's always places to go. I don't think
18 very much people lock their door.

19 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Do you mind
20 telling us who your sister's husband was?

21 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: His name was -- is
22 Stanley Itsi from Fort McPherson.

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so, Stanley
24 was from Fort McPherson, and your sister and him were
25 together for a few years, right, before he killed her. And

1 you said she was madly in love with him, but he did have a
2 bit of a criminal past. He had problems with courts and
3 was in and out of court numerous times if you recall?

4 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Definitely.

5 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so, do you
6 recall him not going to court for things like -- not
7 necessarily to your sister, but assault or break and enter
8 --

9 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Oh, yes, definitely.

10 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, he was often
11 before the court. In 2004, you had said you knew the
12 beating was going on, but was it something that happened
13 over a long time or was it just before the end?

14 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: I think it was always.
15 It's -- jealousy played a big role of it, like, I remember
16 one time, the phone was ringing all night and I was young,
17 and I remember someone called and said that she was really
18 beaten up and I tried to take off with my Ski-Doo that
19 time, and I think back last night, I was giggling to my
20 boyfriend, I was like What was I thinking when I was trying
21 to take by myself and I wanted revenge and probably thought
22 I was just the toughest girl or something and I know my dad
23 ended up picking me up and we went out looking, and I don't
24 know what we were going to do or what was our thoughts or I
25 don't know why -- maybe we called the police. I really

1 can't remember, but I remember eventually bumping into him
2 and me spinning out and it was crazy. But he ran off, and
3 like a coward, ran and went behind the houses and he ran
4 into the bushes beside a lake and the police eventually
5 found him, and I don't know how long he was in jail after
6 that or probably not very long. It was bad.

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And was there
8 times -- and I'm not saying this in any judgmental way --
9 but were there times that he was charged with assault but
10 she wouldn't come to court to testify?

11 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Like I
12 don't know if she was scared or maybe she just thought that
13 he will change and that would be the last time she would be
14 assaulted. I guess that was just her, like, had so much
15 hope in everyone and believed in everybody that they could
16 do the best they could and it's probably why she never gave
17 up on him, I guess.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Can you please
19 tell the commissioners what you recall from what happened
20 the night that Stanley killed your sister?

21 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: That night -- it's funny
22 because I was out with my friends and I guess like I never
23 ever really spoke about it because I was scared, scared to
24 get in trouble, ashamed and blamed myself because that
25 night when it happened, I left home and she was there and

1 my little brother -- or my nephew, I guess at the time, was
2 there and said I was going to go uptown, and I was going to
3 hang out with my friends and we had a little cooler, so we
4 were being brave and teenagers and we thought we were going
5 to try to drink that cooler.

6 And it wasn't the best cooler ever, but it
7 was -- we went into -- it was kind of warm out. I remember
8 that it was kind of snowing and it was beautiful out and we
9 were playing in the open area I guess, and I always
10 remember how we noticed all these trucks driving around,
11 and I kept saying "Let's just go down to my house," and my
12 friends were saying, "Well, let's just do this and let's
13 just do that," and we were -- we just kept playing, and it
14 was funny because we were -- like, I was 15.

15 And we just started playing on the
16 snowbank and we had so much fun, and had a little snowball
17 fight and whatnot. We kept noticing all these vehicles and
18 it was kind of weird, like even though we were okay, like
19 we weren't drunk or anything. I think we all shared like
20 one cooler and maybe we were scared and we just took off
21 running, and then we were -- we just had so much fun, but
22 there was always something pulling me away. I think I told
23 my friends maybe three times at that time like "Let's go
24 down to my house," and one of them were like, "Let's just
25 go down for a walk instead."

1 And it was so funny the way it turned out
2 because one of our stores is like the Tetlit co-op, and
3 there was a big hill there like a big snowdrift, big
4 snowbank, and we were playing on that, and I guess no one
5 really seen us, and we went behind the co-op and then we
6 went to this -- it's called an open area. It's kind of in
7 the middle of the town and there's no roads, and there's
8 this little trail there, so we walk through that open area
9 and we kept noticing these other vehicles like Oh,
10 goodness, whatever, what are these people doing and
11 whatnot, not knowing they were looking for us.

12 And I think back now, like how crazy it
13 was because I was with Stanley's younger sister and she was
14 my best friend, she's still my best friend, and we were
15 picked up and we were asked to go over to his mom's house,
16 and I was told that my sister was stabbed, but my sister
17 was like a really strong girl, like physically tough, and I
18 was like, "Okay. I'll go see her," and I know she's fine.

19 And we were taken -- like I even kind of
20 think that we were driven around town for a bit, and we
21 finally went to the health centre, and I'll never forget it
22 because my sister had lots of friends and we had like one
23 of the police officers at the time. He was a family friend
24 of ours, and I always remember seeing him, and when I
25 walked through that door, I seen him and just the way he

1 looked at me, I knew something was wrong.

2 And I didn't want it to be true or
3 anything, but to see this police officer standing there
4 crying, I knew for sure that I took running and he grabbed
5 me because I was -- I don't know what I was going to do or
6 what was happening, but he held onto me and he told me I'll
7 be okay, and it took a little while for me to actually to
8 go into the emergency room to see her, and she wasn't
9 breathing then. And she was gone.

10 I never got to see her take her last
11 breath. I never got to tell her how much I loved her. She
12 was my only sister and she was taken away from us, and --
13 I'm sorry, I just never spoke about this for a long time.
14 I probably never really ever told that story, but I'm
15 slowly letting it back into my head and it's tough, you
16 know. Like, you grow up and you're the youngest child, and
17 you're a teenager now and you have -- I was so lucky to
18 have her because -- if you guys have siblings, then you
19 know it's -- you could have your -- they're your best
20 friends.

21 And me being a girl, you have all these
22 questions you want to talk to your sister about. You have
23 personal questions and everything. Like, I looked up to
24 her and she took care of me, and she was a cool sister.
25 She let me smoke when I was 15. Thank goodness I don't do

1 that anymore, but you know, stuff like that. Like, she was
2 my sister and she was a mom.

3 But I don't recall much that happened
4 after that. Like, when I left, I know I was taken to a
5 family's home, and it was bad because, you know, my home
6 was now blocked off and I couldn't go in. I couldn't get
7 clothes. I couldn't get nothing out of my house. And I
8 think maybe eventually they allowed us to get sets of
9 clothing. I really can't remember had happened after that
10 and somebody I know I will when I'm ready, but right now, I
11 can't recall that, and -- yeah.

12 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so, Stanley's
13 picked up by the police and taken away; is that true, that
14 you recall?

15 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: I know he ran off after
16 that and I don't know how much longer they found him or if
17 he turned himself in. I don't even really need to know
18 that, but.

19 And the sad thing is, when it happened,
20 there was something going on with the phones and I don't
21 know if it was the power lines or if we were like turning
22 into -- like turning -- I wouldn't say turning, but
23 something was going on with the phones, then. We don't
24 have cell phones -- or didn't have cell phones then, but
25 our land lines, I know it was messed up, and the sad thing

1 about it is, I guess I don't know, but before then or after
2 then -- but we have a health centre, and usually they're
3 always short of staff, and I don't know if it was allowed
4 then, but I know definitely now it's not allowed -- but
5 nurses can't respond. We don't have paramedics. So, the
6 nurses couldn't respond to the phone calls they were
7 getting from the witnesses who were there. And I can't
8 remember, but there was something wrong with the phone
9 lines or if it was having to call the Yellowknife dispatch.
10 Like, I really can't recall what was going on, but she
11 stayed in the home on the floor for -- I think it was over
12 an hour with no help. Nothing. Nothing.

13 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And just to
14 clarify, when she was in the home, she was alive.

15 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yup.

16 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And when she
17 passed, it was actually at the health centre?

18 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Mm-hmm. So, I missed
19 all that and I know I keep telling myself there was a
20 reason why I didn't see that.

21 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: You had mentioned
22 earlier to the commissioners there were people in the
23 house, like friends, and Stanley, and your sister, and your
24 nephew, Frazer, and he was just little. So, he was in the
25 house when that happened, and he saw his mom, right? Did

1 you want to stay something about that?

2 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: My brother -- he's
3 adopted, so he's my brother now -- my nephew, Frazer -- he
4 was 2 at the time, and that is my sister's only child, and
5 there was two other people who were there. But I guess
6 what I've read that happened or what I know that happened -
7 - and they started fighting. I don't really know what they
8 were fighting for, but he was probably jealous and accusing
9 her of somebody, I guess.

10 It was always something like that, and
11 I'll always remember that. It was just jealousy. She
12 can't talk to nobody. And even her friends like girls,
13 like relatives, friends, it's like she had to distance
14 herself away from them because he didn't like them, and so,
15 if he didn't like them, she's not allowed to talk to them,
16 but she still did.

17 There was his younger brother there and a
18 cousin of ours there, and I guess they said that when they
19 started fighting -- like, it was bad because he chipped her
20 tooth. She had a scratch on her face, like it was open
21 already. By that time, they went outside because I think
22 they saw the knife already. I can't remember but -- and he
23 ran out and he ran past them. He left the home and he took
24 off running. So, they went in and they found her. He did
25 that to her and he left her. That's his wife and he left

1 her. He never came back to check on her. He never called
2 to try to get help. But he just left her. Left her there.

3 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: We're going to
4 maybe talk about the court and what happened at the court,
5 but before I do that, I want to talk about that document
6 that comes out of the court, the transcript that's
7 available for the oral reasons for the decision in that
8 case because you've seen that, right?

9 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yup.

10 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And that was just
11 recently you read that. So, the transcript of the oral
12 reasons for sentence delivered by the Honourable Justice V.
13 A. Schuler, sitting at Fort McPherson in the Northwest
14 Territories on November 3rd, 2005. And so, the court
15 actually came to McPherson. It was held in McPherson. And
16 you have seen this?

17 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yes.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I will be
19 providing a copy to the commissioners. This is publicly
20 available on the Northwest Territories courts site as a
21 public transcript of the proceeding.

22 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so, Stanley
23 was charged originally with second-degree murder; is that
24 right?

25 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Mm-hmm.

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And charged under
2 Section 236(b) of the Criminal Code, but do you remember
3 what he got convicted of?

4 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Manslaughter.

5 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, he was
6 convicted of manslaughter. There are details in the
7 transcript of the incident. Justice Schuler actually
8 details what was found in evidence. And so, this is why
9 we're asking for it to be submitted, but I just want to
10 turn to -- sort of talk about the sentence for a minute
11 because I know that's something you want to address. It's
12 okay if I read it then?

13 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Mm-hmm.

14 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And I won't read
15 all of the additional orders after but just sort of the
16 first part. So, Justice Schuler had said:

17 "So I leave that with the people of
18 the community, hoping that if
19 anything positive can come out of
20 this case, it is that they reflect on
21 these issues."

22 And so, the judge had talked about a
23 number of issues such as the fact the phone system wasn't
24 working, it took an hour to respond, a number of things
25 that could have been potentially addressed.

1 "The sentence that I impose on Mr.
2 Itsi today must be proportionate to
3 the gravity of the offence and the
4 degree of responsibility or moral
5 blameworthiness of the offender. The
6 offence in this case is very serious
7 indeed, and Mr. Itsi bears a high
8 degree of became worthiness because
9 as I said, he clearly intended to
10 cause serious harm to Ms. Andre."

11 It continues to say

12 "Counsel are very far apart in their
13 submissions as to what the
14 appropriate sentence is in this case.
15 Crown counsel seeks a term of 12 to
16 15 years while defence counsel seeks
17 the term of approximately 4 to 6.
18 Both agree that some credit should be
19 applied to the sentence for the
20 remand time. In my view for the
21 reasons given, 12 to 15 years is
22 outside the usual range in this
23 jurisdiction. On the other hand, a
24 term of 4 to 6 years, I do not think
25 would adequately reflect the

1 her life from her supposedly husband, but I know she knew
2 she was loved from all of us. She never got to meet my
3 kids. I never got to proudly hand over my newborn children
4 to meet their auntie. She'll never watch her son graduate.
5 She'll never watch any of us get married one day. She
6 won't be there to see it physically. She was taken away
7 from us. She was taken away from her son and her baby, who
8 was only two, from her husband. Like, what kind of husband
9 is that?

10 And for him to get -- like, he was in jail
11 for a few years, but then to only get five years after
12 that, that's stupid. It's like -- the way I see it, it's
13 like you take a life, you owe the life.

14 And the justice system of North, I think
15 it's bullshit. You can do anything to someone and be like,
16 Oh, you'll just get eight years in jail and you'll be out
17 by the time you're 30, and you can go on and live your life
18 and have kids and do what you want.

19 But I have to keep reminding myself, like,
20 he has to live with that, too, and I don't know how he
21 deals with it or if he deals with it. I don't know and I
22 don't need to know. He'll be reminded for that the rest of
23 his life, but he lost. He lost out. He just lost out.

24 It's now that I'm getting a little older
25 and I'm reminded in many, many ways, like, not only by

1 looking at Frazer, but there's other things, like the way
2 she had her hair and the way she moves her hair. My
3 daughter does that and it's so cute. So, my daughter is
4 always fixing her hair, so I'm reminded all day of my
5 sister and -- like, little scents here and there, the way
6 you could see somebody walking uptown sometimes, you know,
7 like a black jacket and their hair down, you could see them
8 from behind and you're like, Oh, my gosh, that looks like
9 Joni. I'm reminded every day.

10 Sometimes, I'm mistakenly called Joni, and
11 it's funny because sometimes, you see the look on the
12 person who called me and like, Oh, my gosh, sorry, and I'm
13 like no, it's an honour because I guess it's been 15 years,
14 and, like, I haven't spoken much of her, but this is the
15 starting to my healing journey, and this is the start to
16 remember her, to honour her, and bring her -- like, she
17 needs to be remembered a lot more. I know she never was
18 forgotten, but it's time. It's time that everybody gets to
19 know who she was, and she'll always be --

20 He got five years of jail after serving
21 three -- it didn't seem like three at the time. To me,
22 that's ridiculous. I didn't take it very good. I know I
23 did some things after that. I had like a little flashback
24 last night -- and I used to think about it a few years ago,
25 off and on, and then I just kind of block it off again.

1 I remember after the sentencing was done,
2 the police or the security, whatever, was taking him out of
3 the complex, and I attacked him. And sometimes, I wish I
4 was older because I could have been a little more bigger, a
5 little more stronger. And I was taken away, I know I was
6 told that I could be charged, and you know, your 15, so now
7 I could kind of smile about it because it would be
8 different if I was older. Maybe it's a good thing I was
9 younger.

10 But that was the last time I seen him and
11 who knows what -- right now, I hope I never see him again.
12 Maybe that will change, I'm not sure. I really don't know
13 what the future holds or anything, but right now, I'm glad
14 the last time I seen him was the way I seen him, and that
15 was my last words and my last -- that will just be the
16 picture that I know and that's how I'll remember it
17 forever.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I understand your
19 father originally wanted to come but was unable to attend.
20 And when he tells the story, he said he warned the police
21 that enough of the family was angry that they should make
22 sure that Mr. Itsi comes in protected and is delivered
23 right to the door.

24 And then, interestingly, it was you, a 15
25 year old, who was the one who actually ran into him. You

1 know, in hindsight, you shared with us -- that's a memory
2 you're going to remember because -- and why is that, is it
3 because you felt like you were standing up for your sister?

4 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: When you're 14, you know
5 you're just a teenager. She wasn't there, but I know she's
6 here. I know she'll always be here and I know she's always
7 with me forever, but she was taken from us, and there was,
8 like, no -- he didn't show nothing. I don't even think a
9 tear was shed as he walked out that complex, like, I think
10 it was all building up.

11 And I also think that there wasn't enough
12 support for myself because I know I stood in the hallway, I
13 stood inside, and most of the time, I was by myself, and I
14 had that little opportunity for then was my little revenge,
15 I guess. I don't regret it.

16 But it's so messed up, like how things
17 were. In a way, I wish it was different, but in a way, it
18 just goes to show how much freedom I guess you could have.
19 I don't even know.

20 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Maybe just to help
21 people who are not from this region or from the Northwest
22 Territories. When you say you have court in your
23 community, you're not going to the courthouse, are you?

24 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: No.

25 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, where are they

1 holding court when they come to the community even for
2 something like a murder trial or manslaughter trial?

3 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: It's in our complex. We
4 call it a complex. So, it's like the arena. One side is
5 the arena and one side is the complex, so there's usually,
6 like, feast and community dances and that being held in
7 there. So, whenever there's court, that's where court is.

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so, the
9 courtroom is set up sort of makeshift with tables and
10 chairs.

11 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yeah.

12 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Does the community
13 all come out and watch court when it's in town usually?

14 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Usually, yeah. There's
15 lots of people out there.

16 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: In one way, it's
17 really good because the court comes to you, so you don't
18 have to go to it. How is that for family tensions in terms
19 of people coming to court for something like this? And
20 there's family members supporting both families.

21 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yeah.

22 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: How does that
23 work? What happens?

24 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Like, I don't recall
25 much of the court because like I said, I was outside in the

1 hallway. But it's messed up because you have a building
2 that's like half the size of here, and usually, it's
3 probably -- who knows, maybe like six rows of seats for
4 public to sit at. So, you can imagine having a community
5 of 800. And I can't remember, I think it was really packed
6 in there, but his family is a really big family. So, you
7 have my sister, like -- we have a small family ourselves, I
8 mean, like my mom and dad, my sister, brother, and then
9 there was me and Frazer, but we have lots of relatives.
10 So, it was probably very hard because you come from a small
11 family, I mean, you come from a small community and you all
12 know each other, and it's like you want to be friends with
13 everyone and you want to be nice to people, but at the same
14 time, it's beginning to know -- like, it's not everybody's
15 fault. It's, you know, the person who's in trial, who's
16 standing there with no shame. It's their fault.

17 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: You mentioned
18 earlier that one of your best friends is Stanley's sister.

19 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yes.

20 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I also understand
21 that your late brother and Stanley were pretty good
22 friends, too.

23 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Mm-hmm.

24 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I'm not going to
25 dig a bunch of mischief of their own.

1 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: So, you can imagine
2 coming from a small community, and my best friends -- we're
3 all still friends, and I'm really thankful for that and I'm
4 really proud of us because Stanley's sister, one of his
5 sisters is one of my friends, and we're still friends, and
6 we're both moms now, and, you know, we don't speak about
7 it, but it'll always be there. It never stopped us from
8 being friends. Like, it's not what you call real friends.

9 And I had a brother. He's older, too, and
10 in his younger days, he was crazy. He was -- you know, he
11 was fun and whatnot. He got into a lot of trouble. He was
12 good friends with Stanley. Stanley had other brothers and
13 he was friends with them. There was always two of the
14 brothers and there was my brother, and they were always
15 into mischief together. My brother was in jail at the time
16 and he took it bad, and maybe it was a good thing he was in
17 jail because who knows what would have happened after that.
18 Maybe he could have been there to stop it, but I'm not
19 sure. My brother got out, and he went on to do other
20 things. My brother got saved. He moved to Edmonton. He
21 became a professional boxer. He attended church.

22 And one day, I hope to be as strong as him
23 because there's -- it will always replay in my head about
24 how he said one night, he was sleeping and he had a dream
25 of Stanley, and he said he got up and got off his bed and

1 got on his knees and he started praying. He's praying to
2 God about Stanley, and that's something really powerful
3 because for me, like, my brother was always in trouble,
4 always in jail, then to see him change, it was amazing.
5 Now, my brother's not with us anymore. Him, too, was taken
6 too soon.

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Just so the
8 commissioners know, you can actually tell us what happened
9 with your brother.

10 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: My brother was living in
11 Edmonton, and he was a professional boxer. He got struck
12 and hit by a car, a racing car from -- I was going to say
13 it because sometimes you feel like -- as Aboriginals, we're
14 not -- I always think like we're not good enough because --
15 like, our justice system and that. I always think -- I
16 wondered if he was white, would it have made a difference
17 in the court?

18 He was hit by a car. He died on scene.
19 And for him, when the court came, the girl got off and she
20 got a \$2,000 fine. And I'm just going to say, it cost me
21 \$2,500 to go to Edmonton one way and \$500 to come back.
22 So, it cost me \$3,000 to go to Edmonton to go to my
23 brother's court, and she got off with a \$2,000 fine, and
24 she can't drive for -- I think it was a couple years, and
25 that's it. There, too. Like, it makes me wonder if

1 Jonathan was non-Aboriginal, I wonder if this girl would
2 have got a longer sentence or if this girl was Aboriginal,
3 would she got a longer sentence other than, Here's a \$2,000
4 fine, and you have a year to pay it. It's fucking
5 sickening. Sorry.

6 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: At that time, you
7 actually -- how did she react to the family and how did the
8 family react to her?

9 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: It's crazy because I
10 had, like, no intentions then. It's kind of like, now,
11 don't know what you're getting yourself into. And I went
12 to the court for my brother and to meet my mom there, and
13 it was different. I don't know if it was difference
14 because we were in Edmonton and in a courtroom. There was
15 definitely more support from people we don't even know and
16 that we just met. I don't know if it was -- maybe because
17 there was less people.

18 But in that case, I didn't think I was
19 going to be leaving there the way I did because this time,
20 I was older and knew a lot more. I was able to do an
21 impact statement, but I was able to face this lady who did
22 that to my brother. And I've only ever really been to two
23 courts, I guess.

24 For my brother, it was different because
25 this lady who did it -- maybe because she's a woman, who

1 knows, but she cried and she showed sympathy. She said she
2 was sorry. And it was real and you felt it. And when it
3 was -- when the court was over, and even though, like, now,
4 I think back, like -- of course, I'm mad and I have those
5 mixed feelings, and I'm allowed to have those mixed
6 feelings, but then I went to her and I gave her a hug and I
7 told her thank you, and I told her it was okay because I
8 know that's what Jonathan would have done, but she showed
9 sympathy and -- like, I knew it was real.

10 You know when people are real. You know
11 things are true and people show it, and you saw it and I
12 saw it, and even though I'm mad, and even though that I
13 have mixed feelings and think I should have handled it
14 different. I should have never forgave her, but I did at
15 that time, and I know I'd be proud of myself.

16 But with my sister's case, it was
17 different. This guy blamed others. He blamed our cousin.
18 He ran away. He never said sorry. He denied it. Like,
19 who does that? I mean, you do something, you own up for
20 yourself. Especially if you call yourself a man, that you
21 be a man and own up and be there. Be there for your wife.
22 I guess that's what happened and nothing will change that.

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you for
24 sharing that part of the story too, and the striking
25 differences between the court and your experience, I think,

1 were important for the commissioners to hear.

2 A couple things if I may ask, further
3 questions around that, you talked about the difference in
4 resources and supports from when you were in court in
5 Edmonton and when you were in court in McPherson. Do you
6 think it would be more helpful for families going through
7 these court processes if there were more services available
8 to you in your communities? I'm not criticizing the ones
9 that exist. I'm asking what would be helpful?

10 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: I'm sure there was,
11 like, lots of support then, and, you know, me probably just
12 being a teenager and not wanting nobody's help maybe -- but
13 there's a few counsellors in our community -- but the
14 counsellors themselves was Stanley's mom and his auntie, so
15 like my friend and my cousin. So then, even though I have
16 nothing against them or never did, never will, I wasn't
17 going to go and talk to them. I don't recall anything
18 else. Maybe there was, and I just don't remember, but I
19 don't recall any other support. I think there was other
20 people that came in after that, but I could be thinking of
21 a sing along or something like that that happened.

22 But now that you think back, it's crazy
23 how there was really no professionals there. Maybe things
24 would have been different, like maybe we all could have got
25 help sooner. But I know, like when you need help and you

1 want help, it's like you work both ways. People are not
2 going to know that you need help, that you need to ask for
3 it, and that's a hard thing to do, but you think with
4 trauma that bad, it will be -- it should be there from the
5 beginning, but it wasn't. It wasn't there. Maybe it was,
6 but if it was, it definitely wasn't good enough.

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: It's interesting
8 because we heard from other witnesses that we need to make
9 sure we're training -- like, the territory needs to be
10 training local people or people that can stay in the
11 community, and that is very important. But when you have
12 small communities, there's this interesting conundrum that
13 you have local people, but then, sometimes there's
14 conflicts, like the one you're describing. And so, on one
15 hand, I think -- if I'm understanding you correctly, it's
16 good to have those local resources.

17 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yeah.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: But, is it fair to
19 say you would recommend to the commissioners that sometimes
20 outside help or other professionals needs to be brought in
21 when there's special types of circumstances?

22 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Definitely. Like I
23 said, I wasn't going to go and talk to Stanley's mom or
24 Stanley's auntie because that will just be too weird for
25 me, like I probably won't talk about what I need to talk

1 about because I might think -- I'll just hold back because
2 I might make them feel funny or -- it's different.

3 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: In terms of the
4 support, you talked about -- maybe you would heal sooner.
5 The support from the time you lose Joni moving forward,
6 what you were able to access -- and I understand you were a
7 teenager, so maybe -- and you were too busy being smart to
8 want to actually get the help, but what were the things in
9 place or what could you do or what could your
10 brother/nephew do that would help him and what has this
11 family experience been?

12 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: To me -- like I said, I
13 don't recall very much help and support, like, even to me
14 as a teenager back then. I know at the time we were
15 promised a lot, "I know you're going to get professional
16 help. There's going to be people there for Frazer all the
17 way," and maybe there was professional -- call it a doctor
18 now, I guess, but I don't know what she was. She sure made
19 a lot of promises then. Maybe she saw our family once or
20 twice after that and that was maybe within a month and
21 never again.

22 I'm thankful I have a lot of courage, and
23 I don't know why I'm like that, but I guess I am and I'm
24 thankful, like, for me, I went out of my way to actually
25 come here and it was through -- I want to say Health

1 Canada, and it has to go back to residential school
2 survivors because I'm a victim, like I'm a survivor, and --
3 obviously, never went to residential school myself, but,
4 you know, my parents and their grandparents, so I know
5 there's funding out there for counselling, and it was me
6 hearing from my dad and other friends in McPherson about,
7 "You could actually go and get counselling in Yellowknife,"
8 so I found out the number and contacted them. Somebody
9 here in Yellowknife and I was able to come out a few times.

10 I think it was three times I came out for
11 counselling. And then I got pregnant and then I tried to
12 come after that, but I was breastfeeding, and my daughter
13 was two at the time, so I couldn't bring her, and I
14 couldn't afford to buy a ticket for her to come with me,
15 and I wasn't going to leave her. There's always something,
16 like, there's always something holding you back, but I had
17 to do that on my own. And I'm not blaming anybody for it,
18 and I'm happy I did it and I can't wait to -- like, I know
19 I'm going to do it more. And I'm not looking for sympathy
20 or anything, but I just think, like, people can't do that.

21 Like, there's other survivors out there
22 who doesn't have -- maybe they're not capable, maybe
23 they're not ready, but they shouldn't have to be going and
24 looking for different phone numbers and finding out you
25 could go other places to go and get counselled. It should

1 be given to them. It should be out there public all the
2 time that there's help. I mean, like, don't get me wrong,
3 we have a local radio station and stuff like that in
4 McPherson, and you know where people work, you know what
5 they do, and you know what's available, but sometimes you
6 don't want to be speaking to someone who's family or
7 someone who's friends with them. Small town problems, I
8 guess.

9 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Now, I did want to
10 ask you -- and we're not trying to jump back and forth --
11 but we're going to take a step back in time, so before your
12 sister's killed by Stanley, you actually brought this to my
13 attention, this particular case.

14 And I just want to be really clear that
15 when we put this transcript for reasons of judgment, oral
16 delivery by the Honourable Justice J. Z. Vertes in Fort
17 McPherson in the Northwest Territories on the second day of
18 October 1999.

19 At the time in '99, the charge was under
20 Section 234 of the Criminal Code, but it was also a
21 manslaughter charge that Stanley went to court for, but I
22 want it to be clear on the record that he was not convicted
23 of this, that the verdict came back not guilty, but that he
24 had previously been charged and went through a trial for a
25 manslaughter of an individual, and the judge could not find

1 the evidence beyond a reasonable doubt to convict Stanley.

2 But I know that you just wanted to touch
3 base on this for a couple of reasons. So, do you want to
4 tell us why you think it was important?

5 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Like, going back to the
6 court -- this guy has been charged numerous times, in and
7 out of jail, a lot to do with mischief, assaults, and even
8 went on manslaughter, but there wasn't enough evidence.

9 And I always think to myself, how could
10 someone have such a bad criminal record get away with
11 something so easy? It's funny. No offence to any -- if
12 there's any judges or anything, but things nowadays is just
13 backwards. It's unbelievable how people could get away
14 with things. And the sad thing about it is, what are we
15 passing on to our younger generations?

16 This is a little off-topic, but it always
17 bugs me that last year, my kids have a small little Ski-Doo
18 and it was stolen off our property. It was brand new,
19 maybe three months old, and there's two kids -- teenagers
20 like 17 years old, I think, stole it, and I don't know how
21 they stole such a small Ski-Doo when we have a bigger Ski-
22 Doo there, like if you want to go for a joyride, you could
23 have stole the big one. But they stole our kid's little
24 Ski-Doo, and when I found it, it was -- like the springs
25 were off, and it was upside down, they put fuel in it.

1 They just trashed the little Ski-Doo.

2 I found it and later on, I called the
3 cops, and I told them -- I guess we accidentally left the
4 key in the Ski-Doo so that's how they had it, but we still
5 didn't have that key. You know, I was fuming. Like, I was
6 so mad, and I called the cops, I'm like, "Can you help find
7 this key?" And I told them who I knew had it. And sure
8 enough they went and they found these two young boys -- not
9 young, they're 17. 16 and 17 maybe -- the police officer
10 got the key off one of the boys. So I thought I'm to go
11 and lay charges, but there wasn't enough evidence, which I
12 think is just crazy. Anywho.

13 Later on, my boyfriend ended up getting
14 charged because he told this boy to stay off our property.
15 He got mad and stole off our kids and they ruined the Ski-
16 Doo. Cops couldn't do nothing about it. We're still
17 fixing little parts. They cut all the wires to it. They
18 just damaged it. And one of the lawyers called me and
19 asked me -- they were just talking to me and asking
20 questions and whatnot. I just told them I wanted to lay
21 charges, but there -- not enough evidence.

22 But the moral of the story is that the
23 auntie said, "Well, if you were a judge or if you were to
24 be in the courtroom, what would you do?" Like, say to
25 these kids. I said, "Well, what would I say to them is

1 like they are teenagers, and I know, like, I had a crazy
2 teenage life and whatnot, but even though my kids are
3 young, they are going to know for the rest of their lives,
4 Oh, we could go and steal off someone and nothing will
5 happen or someone could come and steal us off again and
6 nothing will happen. We called the police and nothing
7 happened, but my parents are the one who might have got in
8 trouble. You know, something like that, there was -- it's
9 just wrong.

10 And at the end, it was like the police is
11 always kind of looking out at my boyfriend, scared that he
12 might do something to the kids and stuff like that. I'm
13 like, this is going backwards. It's like he was getting
14 the blame for it. But just seeing how fast the police
15 could get involved -- but for me, it was like they stuck up
16 for these kids, and it's sad because when they asked like
17 what would I do, I said, "Well, first, I want my kids to
18 have an apology, and I don't care if they were 6 and 2
19 years old at the time. They are human. They have memory.
20 They are building that memory. And from the ages 2 to 5,
21 that's the best time they'll never forget.

22 And I know this is like way off-topic, but
23 I also think it's so important and it's just another way to
24 really understand how the justice system works now, and how
25 I think of it -- no hard feelings to anybody else, but it's

1 so backwards. The kids weren't charged or nothing like
2 that. My kids never got a sorry. We had to pay the
3 damages for the Ski-Doo. It's backwards.

4 So unbelievable how things -- how you
5 could -- it's like sending a message out there saying you
6 could do anything. You could go steal off someone. You
7 can go and ruin things. You could go on people's property.
8 You can go and kill someone, and you'll get away with it.
9 Maybe you'll get -- in my case -- for my sister, maybe
10 you'll get eight years in jail. And for a lot of people,
11 that's -- maybe that's their home because you're warm, you
12 have access to food, you have access to -- like you're
13 protected kind of thing. I don't know. I just have those
14 mixed feelings sometimes, and at the same time, don't want
15 to hurt anybody's feelings.

16 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Trying to be nice
17 to make your point. I do just to want return to this, so
18 we don't leave it hanging. So, again, so it's clear in our
19 records, Stanley Itsi was never convicted of this
20 manslaughter because they didn't have enough evidence to
21 prove the case. And if I may, I just want to read that one
22 part. And actually, can you please tell the commissioners
23 without getting into great detail, like what the nature of
24 that manslaughter was, like what was happening, like how
25 did it happen or what was it about?

1 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: This one? A drunken
2 brawl, I guess, maybe like people drinking and got out of
3 hand, no witnesses, yeah.

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And it was a
5 member of the community who in this drunken brawl died as a
6 result. Do you remember who that person was?

7 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yes. He's my cousin,
8 and I have very fond memories of him. But I know I
9 remember how nice he was and how he always used to say I
10 was always going to be his flower girl when he got married.
11 He was my cousin. His name is Clifford and that's my mom's
12 nephew.

13 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, he dies as a
14 result of a drunken brawl and none of the witnesses --
15 there were more than one witness there -- provide enough
16 evidence, and there's two potentially accused, one of them
17 is Stanley Itsi, and either one or both have the
18 opportunity, both were acting in a drunken, volatile
19 manner, both were aggressive since both apparently served
20 time for assault.

21 "Either one of them or in combination
22 could have assaulted Clifford Francis. The conclusion that
23 Stanley Itsi struck the blow that resulted in the death of
24 Clifford Francis (ph) is not the only rational and
25 reasonable conclusion to draw from the proven facts. Too

1 many questions have been left unanswered.

2 Let me say that I am not at all convinced
3 that these young men were so drunk that they cannot
4 remember what really happened. Getting drunk or blacking
5 out is no defence. A member of this community died as a
6 result of a drunken, uncontrollable behaviour on the part
7 of someone or other young men.

8 Whoever did this knows it and will have to
9 live with that knowledge for the rest of their lives, but I
10 cannot act as a detective to ascertain the absolute truth.
11 All I can do is decide whether the evidence presented in
12 this trial approves the guilt of the accused. I may have
13 my suspicions, but that is not proof. For these reasons, I
14 find the accused not guilty and the charges dismissed."
15 So, is it common when there's even assaults in communities
16 and stuff, if no witnesses come forward, the courts can't
17 actually make a finding of guilt?

18 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yes. And I think that
19 happened with my sister. Like I said, she loved this guy,
20 and I know there was charges, and I know she -- few times
21 didn't appear to court, so the charges will be dropped.
22 And I just think back now -- like I said, someone who has
23 such criminal record and even convicted of manslaughter
24 once before, how could you get away with eight years? Like
25 eight years.

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And sorry, just to
2 clarify. He didn't get convicted on this one, but he did
3 have a number of other assault charges for which he was
4 convicted and served time.

5 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Mm-hmm. It's
6 unbelievable.

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, actually, I
8 want to thank you because you've given us some insight into
9 sort of the justice system up here and how it might differ.
10 Is there anything else you want to add on that before we
11 turn to recommendations and ideas for the commissioners?

12 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: No. I'll always have,
13 like, my thoughts and others will have theirs. It's just
14 sad. I mean, I'm not -- it's been 15 years. I don't
15 expect anything to happen now, but hearing other people's
16 stories, I know I'm not alone. My family's not alone of
17 how things happened and how we wish things could have been
18 different.

19 But I also need to keep reminding myself
20 that someone could serve 50 years, and I have -- for the
21 rest of my life, I'll have my good memories and I'm going
22 to live with that. As I slowly work with myself and allow
23 stuff to come back, I know eventually it's going to get
24 easier as I start my healing journey. But if someone was
25 to get one year, if someone else could get 50 years -- I

1 can't imagine what he has to live with that in the back of
2 their mind, so that -- I hate to say it, but I'm thankful
3 for because I know we're two different people and we have -
4 - I don't know.

5 My sister will be remembered for who she
6 is and who she was. Could I go back to -- I know when I
7 leave here, I'm going to be thinking about all this stuff I
8 wish I said and had that opportunity, but like I mentioned
9 before, I wrote on my Facebook yesterday, and I asked if
10 friends could send me a little message and there was one
11 that I'm going to read. I asked for permission; I'm not
12 going to name names, but it made me feel so good because
13 this lady -- it's like she just took the words out of my
14 mouth, and I'm going to read a little part of it. It says:

15 "Joni was a beautiful person. You
16 are drawn to her quiet nature. Her
17 beautiful smile, you will forever
18 see. I talk to her each and every
19 day, and I think it was just to check
20 in on her and see if she was okay.
21 Even just to hear her voice was a
22 pleasure. She was always there to
23 listen to you. She loved the people
24 near and dear to her. She wanted to
25 see the good in people."

1 And honestly, it's so true because I
2 mentioned before, she always had her door open and she had
3 so much visitors all the time, like, she could have \$0 and
4 still find a way to help someone, like just give them help
5 in any way. I remember when her daughter was born, and
6 back home you have to leave McPherson to have children.
7 You have to drive over to Inuvik, so this is --

8 They're in Inuvik now and this is my
9 friend's memory. She had her daughter. And the next day,
10 she didn't have time to shower, but my sister went there
11 and she held her daughter that whole time. She held her
12 daughter while this girl had a shower -- and if you're a
13 mother, you know how difficult that could be when you're a
14 new mom.

15 But my sister was in the hospital at that
16 time, and she was there because he beat her up so badly
17 that her eyes were bloodshot. So, they had to send her to
18 Inuvik. They couldn't deal with her in McPherson because
19 you get -- I guess there's doctors in Inuvik and little
20 better care.

21 So that was the reason she was Inuvik.
22 And she told her she doesn't have to live like that.
23 Frazer is small. Who would look after him? And all she
24 said was, "I know." In the back of my mind, I didn't think
25 this would be true. And six months later, I was given the

1 news, and I beat myself up every day because I didn't
2 answer the phone that night, and that was my sister calling
3 her. She was my best friend and I couldn't believe this
4 happened to her.

5 And I was so proud of this girl, too,
6 because she promised herself that she won't live with
7 violence, and she refuses, like a lot of us ladies who are
8 just getting there, to be a victim. She was strong enough
9 to do it on her own, but she loved him too much. She
10 refused to see the bad in him. And she thinks about her --
11 she would have been today, if she would have eventually
12 move on. Or would he let her?

13 And just those words itself means a lot
14 because now you have a little better understanding of how
15 she lived and how controlling this was. And she said many
16 times she met them on the road -- and you could tell she
17 was beaten, and there was many times where she wanted to
18 tell this guy something but she bit her lip because she was
19 scared that if she say something, that he would do
20 something to her. And that's -- you know, a lot of
21 regrets. And that's like me, I should have done more and
22 that's just a part of grieving, a part of blaming yourself,
23 a part of trying to --

24 I guess that's just how we work because --
25 but that stood out for me and that is so important that I

1 thank this lady because what she said is so true about my
2 sister and you get to know a little about how loving and
3 caring she was and how she just had hope for everybody and
4 how she never gave up and she fought till the end.

5 And I don't know if she was scared to
6 leave or -- I know she was scared to leave I should say
7 because I was her sister and we told each other stuff. But
8 from me, it's -- you know, you grew up having a sister and
9 brother, and you grew up having best friends, and
10 sometimes, little worst enemies, and now it's -- I watch my
11 kids play and then I watch them fight. And it's so funny
12 because sometimes I sit there and I could just cry because
13 that was me and I miss it.

14 And my sister used to wear certain kind of
15 makeup and when I think back now, like, we go on trips or
16 drive to Hichers (ph) or something like that, and you buy
17 stuff, and I saw this "buy this blue makeup," and I'd say
18 it's for me, and deep down I knew it was for my sister and
19 then she'll take it and I'll be mad at her and that's just
20 what we do. And I think back now, and it's something I
21 could laugh at -- but I'll never get to share that stuff
22 again.

23 I know that we say they're always with us,
24 but I just wish she could have been here. I really miss my
25 sister and she was my best friend growing up and that was

1 taken from me and it's so sad. I know I'm not the only
2 one. I hear people's stories, and it's funny how you can
3 relate to people, but the sad thing is, why do we have to
4 meet like this or why do we relate in this shitty way. She
5 didn't have to leave us so soon. I'm sorry.

6 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: You shared a lot
7 with us today in terms of your experience and Joni's
8 strengths, the loss of your brother, and so, I think we're
9 very grateful and I really don't have many more questions
10 for you, but I did want to give you the opportunity. If
11 you have any ideas that you want to share with the
12 commissioners about moving forward in a good way, anything
13 that would help, any of your ideas for families going
14 through what you have. They would welcome those
15 recommendations to hear, based on your experience, what
16 could help.

17 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: I'm not really sure how
18 to answer those questions because I'm sure you heard a lot
19 of those answers in the last -- however long we've been
20 sitting here. I know there's resources out there. I know
21 some -- we have some in our community and I'm thankful for
22 the resources outside of the community. And I know even
23 being in my community now, like, I'm not trying too diss
24 anyone or anything, like, back then I mentioned how I
25 refused to go to different counsellors and stuff like that

1 because of conflict. It's not because they're bad people
2 or anything. It's just, you know, you don't want to speak
3 to people who are related to you and stuff like that.

4 McPherson is growing. We have different
5 stuff happening now, and I'm really proud of our community
6 because when you actually sit back and look at the things
7 that's happening and the way people are trying to work and
8 trying to build each other up now, it's amazing. They
9 brought in somebody from the Yukon and I never got to meet
10 him or attend his grieving workshops, but I heard amazing
11 things about it and -- like, I'm thankful to be here
12 because I'm sharing my story about my life with my sister
13 and my brother because who knows, there might be somebody
14 who's listening from back home, across Canada, wherever,
15 that they might be going through this, too.

16 And maybe they're lost like me, like
17 ashamed, embarrassed to look for -- seek help or to say
18 that you need help or to speak because I held this in for
19 15 years, and I was getting to the point where I was kind
20 of embarrassed, I guess, but yesterday, I heard someone
21 speak, and it really made me feel good because it took her
22 over 30 years to start talking about it, and right then and
23 there, I knew this is normal. This is life. And it may
24 take someone, like, right away for someone to start
25 building up strength or it could take 50 years.

1 And I'm glad I'm starting my healing
2 process because like I said, it's amazing what you could
3 trick your mind to do. And I blocked out a lot of this
4 stuff and I guess what I've been doing is -- I've just kind
5 of been blocking everything out, but I'm not letting myself
6 relive all these good memories I have and that's something
7 Stanley could never take away from me my family, my
8 memories of my sister, and Frazer will grow and up he's
9 already growing up, and you think of all the possibilities,
10 all the what-ifs, whatnots, how things could have been
11 different.

12 But he will grow up knowing he has us and
13 he comes from very strong people and a good supporting
14 community because by all means -- like, I'm really thankful
15 of where I came from because it's like when something
16 happens, everyone comes together even if you don't get
17 along as families or people, they're still there if it's
18 helping donate. If it's just anything, it's pretty
19 powerful. I'm just going to share something on McPherson.
20 I thought it was so cool that happened just recently.

21 At our New Year's, like, traditional
22 dance, we have two people from the community who have to
23 travel out to Edmonton for chemo, and we all know and, you
24 know, when people are sick, we know what happens and we
25 know how tough financially it is to be away from home. But

1 real quick during the dance, they said, "We're going to --
2 if you have a loonie to spare or something like that, just
3 to help out the family who's gone." There's two ladies who
4 away right now, and they just passed around a bag and a
5 feast are in the tents, and like not even five minutes,
6 literally, not even five minutes, there was I think almost
7 800 bucks in that bag, and it was just to be transferred,
8 just to help family.

9 So, like, it just goes to show how quick
10 when something happens, like how the community comes
11 together. And for me, although there wasn't really no
12 professional help to help me, I always knew there was
13 people out there, and maybe that's what kept me sane all
14 these years, like, of the times I did open up, like I
15 always knew there was my sister's friends, and to me,
16 they're like my older sisters now, and sometimes, you know,
17 even I don't share what I wish to share sometimes because I
18 still talk to my sister, and I still talk to my brother
19 through prayer.

20 But there's always people out there, and
21 for anybody that's listening now, that you're going through
22 something or something happens similar, there is help and
23 it's just finding that strength and telling yourself, like,
24 okay, it's time. It's time to start talking and it's time
25 to start your healing journey.

1 And like me, it's 15 years now, and at
2 first, I was kind of shy and ashamed maybe to think, It's
3 15 years, maybe it's something I could block out for
4 another 15 years, but no, you need to talk, and you need to
5 find that help and if you don't feel comfortable with
6 someone, you know there's help out there in some other
7 place. Even if it's to travel to some other place for that
8 help, it's there and I'm really thankful for that. I'm not
9 sure what else to say, yeah.

10 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you very
11 much for sharing. I just want to make sure I didn't miss -
12 - I want to close off the loop. When I passed up the first
13 transcript on the conviction, I also want to hand up the
14 warrant of committal upon conviction. It's the actual
15 document that puts Mr. Itsi into custody for the murder of
16 your sister, and I will pass that.

17 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Again, I want to
18 thank you. And what I'd like to do now is ask the
19 commissioner if they have any questions or comments that
20 they would like to have for you.

21 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Jayda, I
22 just really want to thank you for coming here this morning
23 and sharing with us about your sister and your brother, and
24 what you went through, but also, thank you for sharing the
25 good memories that you have as well. I just have one sort

1 of follow-up question if you don't mind.

2 When you were first telling us about your
3 sister being in an abusive relationship, Christa asked you
4 about what resources there might have been in the community
5 and you said that you don't have a shelter. I'm just
6 wondering if you can comment any further on what resources
7 might have been available for women in abusive
8 relationships either back then around 2004 or now,
9 everything's changed.

10 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Like we have -- I don't
11 know how to explain it, but there's this building and it
12 has, you know, social services, and what's the other one
13 called -- it's like community service, I guess. I can't
14 think of what they're actually called, but there is
15 resources out there. There is the police. There is the
16 nurses. Community wellness. That's what it's called,
17 sorry.

18 There's resources in McPherson, but like I
19 said, my sister was so madly in love that she just had lots
20 of faith in people and hope for the best. And those
21 resources are still there, and I hope it'll always be
22 there. I think it'll always be there, but we come from a
23 small community and we have a lot of amazing people, a lot
24 of amazing elders who -- by all means, those were our
25 resources.

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: If it would be
2 helpful, where is the closest women shelter to McPherson,
3 like if a women wanted to -- not just -- I understand where
4 you're saying everyone opens their doors and the community
5 takes care of each other, but if a woman wanted to get away
6 and actually stay in a shelter for one night or more, where
7 would she have to go?

8 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: You know what, I don't
9 really know. I don't know if Inuvik has one. And that's
10 actually a really good question.

11 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, if there was
12 one in Inuvik, because I can't provide the testimony, but
13 if there was one in Inuvik, it would take at least 2 hours
14 to drive to, right?

15 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yeah.

16 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Thank you.

17 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you.

18 MS. BERNIE WILLIAMS: My name is Bernie
19 Williams. I've been asked by my commissioner. I'm one of
20 the grandmothers here to speak on Michèle Audette's behalf.
21 She's not feeling well right now. She would like me to say
22 to you how proud she is that it's taken you 15 years, that
23 this journey you have taken is a really huge leap of faith
24 hereto, and that your memory of your sister is here with
25 you. I think one of the questions along with Commissioner

1 Brian is about the transition houses, you know, if there is
2 any communities when a mom or a single dad, you now, with
3 children would have a place to go to.

4 I think you had just asked this question
5 to Christa's -- you know, how far away -- you know, if
6 Nicole comes in, and I think that that was along the same
7 line thereto at the transition houses, the shelters and
8 that, too. I think that that is what it was.

9 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And I think I
10 heard -- I may have heard -- Commissioner Audette, if I may
11 -- say, if you have a car. So, does everyone up in the
12 community have the means to drive a distance to get to
13 those places? People would help out, I'm guessing will be
14 your answer.

15 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Yeah, definitely. It's
16 a small community, and we kind of all know what happens
17 sometimes, I guess, and yeah.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I believe the
19 commissioners have a gift for you for sharing your story.
20 And the grandmothers will help give that to you.

21 GRANDMOTHER BLU WATERS: So, my name is
22 Blu Waters, and I'm one of the grandmothers for
23 Commissioner Brian, and we want to offer you these small
24 tokens of appreciation. One is a scarf made by the Women's
25 Association, and that is to help you with your journey, to

1 help you as you continue on and you become stronger and
2 stronger -- not that your not strong already because you
3 certainly are -- to thank you for your bravery, for your
4 courage to come forward.

5 And the second is a eagle father, and
6 these feathers have come from all across Canada, from Haida
7 Gwaii straight to Labrador. So, the grandmothers, the
8 matriarchs, the communities, have come together to supply
9 feathers for our witnesses to help them with their healing
10 journey as we know that eagle flies very high, close to the
11 one who makes everyone. So, this is to help you as you
12 carry on.

13 As well as a little red dress, a symbol of
14 the murdered and missing Indigenous women, and some
15 Labrador tea to help you with your journey.

16 So, we'd like to offer this to you for
17 your bravery and your courage, for telling us in a humble
18 way with truth your story of your sister and your brother,
19 so thank you very much.

20 MS. JAYDA ANDRE: Thank you so much.

21 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I would like to
22 request a 15-minute adjournment prior to our next witness,
23 please, our next participant, please. So, if we could
24 return actually at 11:30, please and thank you.

25 --- Recess at 11:13 a.m.

1 --- Upon resuming at 11:42 a.m.

2 --- Exhibits (code: P01P09P0201)

3 EXHIBIT 1: R v. Itsi, 2005 NWTSC 92,
4 S-1-CR-2004000090, Transcript of the
5 Oral reasons for sentence, 22 pages.

6 EXHIBIT 2: R v. Itsi, 2005 NWTSC 5,
7 CR 03730, Transcript of the Oral
8 reasons for judgment, six pages.

9 EXHIBIT 3: Warrant of Committal Upon
10 Conviction for Stanley James Itsi,
11 dated November 3rd, 2005 at Fort
12 McPherson, single page.

13 EXHIBIT 4: Folder containing
14 seven digital images provided by the
15 family and displayed during their
16 testimony.

17 **Hearing #2**

18 **Witness: Geraldine Sharpe**

19 **In relation to her Grandmother**

20 **Heard by Commissioner: Qajaq Robinson**

21 **Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe**

22 **Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Therese**

23 **Villeneuve, Gail Cyr, Rassi Nashalik, Violet Dolittle and**

24 **Emelda King**

25 **Clerk: Trudy Mckinnon**

1 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

2 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Hello. We'd like
3 to resume, please, so if everyone could grab a seat. We'll
4 give you a moment. Thank you.

5 Commissioner Robinson, I would like to
6 introduce you to our next participant that will be sharing
7 her knowledge and some stories.

8 But first, as for local tradition and
9 request, I'm just going to introduce myself briefly. I'm
10 Christa Big Canoe. I'm what's called commission counsel,
11 and what that means is: I'm a lawyer for the National
12 Inquiry, and I work with the families to help them share
13 their stories, so you could have evidence before you.

14 Today, we have Gerry Sharpe, who will be -
15 - she's a known knowledge-keeper, an advocate for others.
16 She's involved in various projects in support of her
17 community including holding the Chair of the Women's Centre
18 through 1997 and 1998, and assisting with the Walk With Our
19 Sisters project, developed to bring attention to violence
20 against Indigenous women and girls.

21 Ms. Sharpe will speak of personal
22 experience of violence against women and girls that have
23 touched her and her family historically and in the more
24 recent past. Gerry actually would like to make a promise
25 or an oath of her own.

26 MS. GERRY SHARPE: First off, kweenime

1 (ph) for being here. My oath to you is that I will speak
2 the truth and that you will receive that truth. Thank you
3 for hearing my words, and I will speak only the truth.

4 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you,
5 and I will receive it with open ears and an open heart.
6 Kweenime (ph).

7 MS. GERRY SHARPE: Kweenimetow (ph)

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Gerry, to start,
9 can you tell us a little bit about you and where you're
10 from, and what you're currently doing?

11 MS. GERRY SHARPE: Before I do that, I'd
12 like to actually thank you for allowing me to be here. I'd
13 also like to thank the elders behind me, Rassi, Emelda, and
14 Violet. They participated in Walking With Our Sisters with
15 me. They were my elders. Hupup (ph) gave me direction,
16 joined Walking With Our Sisters, and then I've asked Gail
17 to sit with me as well. And I really appreciate all four
18 of you being here for me. Thank you. It really means a
19 lot.

20 My name, I go by Gerry. My friends know
21 me as Gerry. My birth name is Geraldine Sharpe. My mother
22 is Moitwika Twelik (ph). My father is David Sharpe. My
23 mother was the eldest daughter of Giddinggicholik (ph), and
24 just for the sake of letting everybody know, he's the
25 individual that's last on this \$2 bill.

26 Beside him was his father-in-law, Idlo

1 (ph), my grandfather. This picture was taken in 1952. My
2 father was the oldest of Margaret and Walter Sharpe. My
3 grandfather was the oldest of -- in his family as well.
4 His family, his parents, died at an early age when he was
5 early -- young, and he was raised by his sister -- by
6 family member, I'm sorry. I'm getting my -- I need to
7 breathe.

8 Kachwelik (ph) was known right across the
9 territories, all the way from Igloolik over to Aklavik. He
10 would travel by dog sled back and forth. My mother was his
11 firstborn by his first wife -- his only child by his first
12 wife.

13 So, I need to tell the story of five
14 generations in order for you to know where I am and why I
15 have the knowledge that I have. So, it needs to go back
16 that far. His first wife gave birth to my mother, Moiety
17 (ph). This was in the mid-1940s, and they were still very
18 nomadic. He was not tied to a community. In order to be
19 tied to a community, you would need to live there and
20 accept food and trade.

21 And my grandfather was still very nomadic.
22 He lived off the land, he hunted off the land. He was a
23 midwife. He was also the person that they would go to when
24 they needed medicine. He also would see the future, and he
25 was a leader in his community. When colonization happened
26 and he came forward, he became a minister of the Anglican

1 church, and he was asked to give up living on the land. He
2 was asked to teach about the Anglican church to colonize
3 people. But he was still nomadic.

4 When he was travelling from Inuvik in the
5 spring to Gjoa Haven, it was springtime and caribou were
6 scarce, and it was still very early for seal. And one day,
7 all of the men and young older men went out hunting. It
8 was a small community of nomadic people that were
9 travelling, and all of the men were gone. There was an
10 elder woman in the community, and she had -- famine had
11 struck, of course -- and she started -- it was pining in
12 her mind, and she went around in the community murdering
13 everybody in the community. She killed them and my
14 mother's mother saw what was happening, so she took my
15 mother away from the community and built a small igloo and
16 put my mother in there. And she went back in the community
17 to gather other children. She managed to get another girl,
18 to put her in the igloo, but my mother's mother did not
19 return because she was murdered. And the old woman had
20 murdered everybody in the community that was there.

21 The men, when they came back, discovered
22 that the old woman had cleaned up all of the blood and she
23 had killed them because she was eating them. It was the
24 next day that the men came back and they had a bounty of
25 seal. My mother was still quite young, so my grandfather
26 had to marry again and that's how he met his second wife,

1 Idlo's daughter, Rebecca Idlo, (ph) who became Rebecca
2 Kachwelik (ph).

3 My grandfather fathered an additional 12
4 children with her. Later on, and of course, all in the
5 meantime, he was a minister for the Anglican church. He
6 was told that his ways that he'd be brought up were evil.
7 He could no longer administer medicine because that was
8 evil. He was supposed to communicate that the women were
9 no longer supposed to be tattooed because that was evil.
10 The drumming was not allowed to happen because that was
11 evil. Anything referring to shamanistic ways was evil.
12 And my grandfather bought -- I don't want to say brought
13 into this, but my grandfather went according to the
14 Anglican church, and he administered for the Anglican
15 church.

16 Soon, his wife, Rebecca -- she became an
17 alcoholic and she was very abusive to her children and my
18 mother. But at the same time, my mother had been going
19 back and forth to residential school because my grandfather
20 was supposed to be a leader for the community. He was told
21 that he had to send his children whether he wanted to or
22 not, so my mother, at the age of 4, went to school. She
23 went to Inuvik, she went to Aklavik, she came here to
24 Yellowknife. So, she was gone -- my mother was gone most
25 of the time, but when she would return, there was a lot of
26 violence. Not only towards her, but towards her siblings,

1 and soon, my grandfather said he decided to divorce
2 Rebecca. And his exact words were:

3 "How can I believe in a God that will
4 not allow me to divorce my wife when
5 my wife is treating my children like
6 this?"

7 So he left the church. And when he left
8 the church, that's when he divorced Rebecca. He then in
9 turn married Salome (ph), who was his wife until he died.
10 He fathered two other children with her and adopted two
11 others. Those children are all younger than my children.

12 During all of this, he was trying to live
13 two ways because he was very active in the Nunavut Land
14 Claims Agreement. He was very firm of the belief that in
15 order for Inuit to move forward, we need to get educated.
16 And he believed that sending the children to school was a
17 way for that to happen, not knowing what was going on at
18 school. Back then -- and this was when I was going to
19 school because I did go to Akaitcho Hall, I went to
20 residential school as well. Now, I'm getting off track
21 again. I'm sorry.

22 So, going back to my mother, my mother was
23 going back and forth between school in Inuvik, Aklavik, and
24 here in Yellowknife. I know her abuse started in Inuvik
25 when she was very young. I know this because others told
26 me. My mother didn't tell me in so many words. I hear the

1 stories from people that she went to school with. I hear
2 how she offered herself up when she saw predators going
3 after younger children, and she would distract them by
4 offering herself.

5 By the time she was going to school here
6 in Yellowknife, she -- that my father because my father had
7 come here, he himself had come from a very abusive family
8 up to -- and just to tell you a little bit about my
9 father's family -- give my uncles more reason to hate me --
10 their father was from Russia. He had escaped the second or
11 first -- the First World War and the Second World War. His
12 mother had been vastly abused many times over in Russia and
13 China. So, by the time my grandfather, my father's father
14 came over to Canada, he was -- I don't want to say typical
15 racist, but he was probably the biggest racist that you can
16 think of. Anybody that was not Caucasian, of a different
17 nationality that was Aboriginal/Indigenous was less than
18 human, less than an animal. Animals were worth more. My
19 grandmother, his wife -- she suffered through a lot of
20 violence with him.

21 By the time my father was 17, he decided
22 that he wanted to leave. And at the time, they were living
23 in Ontario, and my father made his way up here to
24 Yellowknife to work at Con Mine. When he was working at
25 Con Mine, that's where he met my mother, when she was going
26 to school at Akaitcho Hall, and when she graduated, they

1 married. During the same time that my father left, his
2 younger brother, Vince, also left and came to work at Con
3 Mine as well.

4 So, now we have my mother, and my father
5 here in Yellowknife, married. My father working at Con
6 Mine, and my father having grown up under a very violent
7 family as well. Racist violent family. He's now married
8 to an Inuk woman and disowned by his father. My
9 grandfather at that point had already divorced my
10 grandmother, and they had moved to Nova Scotia. I'm not
11 sure when it happened, I was two and a half when my -- I
12 know the story is that I was two and a half when I left
13 Yellowknife. My brother was six months old, and we drove
14 from Yellowknife to Nova Scotia.

15 I don't know all the details of this story
16 and I don't know where it happened, but somewhere between
17 here in Yellowknife and Nova Scotia, my father robbed two
18 banks. Why he chose to leave a job, why he chose to leave
19 Con Mine, why he decided to return to Nova Scotia, I don't
20 know. I've never asked the question because if I did, I
21 would not get the answer. He brought with him my mother,
22 me, and my brother, and presented all of us to his mother
23 and siblings in Nova Scotia.

24 I've heard different versions of this
25 story from different family members. The one that I choose
26 to believe is the one that's not lied to me. And that is

1 one of my mother's sisters, Tapityah (ph), and I don't know
2 if Tapityah is here at all. I didn't see it.

3 As the story goes, when he arrived in Nova
4 Scotia, he turned himself into the RCMP and was sentenced
5 to three years in penitentiary. Why this happened, I don't
6 know. Why he did this, I don't know. He turned himself
7 in. Perhaps he was of the mind-set that his wife and two
8 children would be cared for by his family.

9 From what my aunt tells me, my mother
10 discovered that she was pregnant with a third child while
11 my father was in jail. And for whatever reason, decided
12 that she wanted to get an abortion. And for whatever
13 reason, I don't know the reason, but I never asked her and
14 I couldn't ask her because I didn't have that relationship
15 with her. She decided that she would leave me and my
16 brother alone. Perhaps she didn't know that she would be
17 in the hospital for five days. Perhaps she thought she'd
18 be back later in the day.

19 All I know is that on the second day,
20 that's when I'm told that Children's Aid came to get us.
21 Bear in mind just down the street, my father's sister and
22 his mother lived. His aunt across the street from there.
23 I was told that I was alone for two days with my brother
24 when they opened the door to come in. They said that
25 anything that I could reach was down. I'd somehow got on a
26 chair up onto the counter and was trying to get food, and

1 I'd actually tried to change my brother's diaper as well.
2 He was six months old. I was two and a half. Needless to
3 say, we ended up in foster care.

4 Piecing that together, I can only jump to
5 the conclusion that my mother had not been informed about
6 the ways of the court because after my father got out of
7 jail, he got sole custody of us. And I know that was not
8 for the lack of my mother wanting us. I can only assume
9 that she had no idea how the court systems worked. She had
10 absolutely no support system and where she was looked at
11 her as if she was less than human.

12 I'm told during the time that I was in
13 foster care, my mother kidnapped me a few times. She used
14 to tell me these stories. My papacha (ph) used to tell me
15 these stories of the times that she would come and take me.
16 But she wouldn't take my brother. We were not in the same
17 place. He was in a different foster home from me.

18 So now, my father's now out of jail, we're
19 living in Nova Scotia, and I'm maintaining a relationship
20 with my father's grandmother, and I'm getting to know my
21 aunt and one of my uncles, and my cousins. I would hear
22 stories about my mother but, like, never meet her. When my
23 father would drink, he would tell me how much I looked like
24 my mother. But he wouldn't say it in a nice way. There
25 were times that my father would send us, my brother and I,
26 to stay with my grandmother or with an aunt or back to that

1 foster home where I was at for periods at a time. I never
2 why. He never told us.

3 When I was nine -- actually I should back
4 up there. By the time I was six years old, because of all
5 of that moving, this place and that place, the first sexual
6 assaults started. Who they were by, I don't remember.
7 When I was 9, I can remember that it was April. My father
8 decided that it was time to be moved back north, so he
9 packed up the vehicle, sold everything. My brother and I
10 in the vehicle along with two of my cousins whose father
11 was already up north, and he took us on a trip across
12 Canada. That was my first trip that I remember travelling
13 across Canada.

14 I remember coming to Yellowknife, and
15 before actually getting to Yellowknife, seeing all the
16 trees, they've been burnt. And I remember thinking and
17 asking him about the trees, what had happened to these
18 trees, because I had not seen that across Canada, all these
19 burnt trees. And he said, "Well, there was a forest fire."
20 It was devastating to me to see the land as burnt as it was
21 for miles and miles and miles. It was still smoking in
22 areas. I was 9.

23 And I remembered meeting Rebecca here in
24 Yellowknife, and again, my father left us with her for a
25 few hours, and my brother had did something and she started
26 being quite abusive with my brother to which my father

1 intervened at some point and that was the only time that I
2 ever met Rebecca, and we continued -- we actually were
3 staying at Willy Lazarus' (ph) house because Wily Lazarus
4 was a friend. And we then moved on to Gjoa Haven.

5 When we got to Gjoa Haven, it was May --
6 middle of May, and my father asked where my grandfather's
7 house was. And the stories that I told -- heard about my
8 grandfather, I envisioned this -- because the last seven
9 years, I've lived in Nova Scotia, so I had these pictures
10 of a fisherman, who owned a boat, who was a hunter, and
11 lived off the land. So, the typical view that I had at the
12 time was this man wearing a hat, you know, they go fishing
13 with this and this lure.

14 And people pointed to where my
15 grandfather's house was, which was locked at the time, and
16 my father broke into the house to which nobody said
17 anything. And we lived there, and somehow, the message got
18 to my grandfather because he was out on the land. And he
19 came back and I remember being woken up. It was still
20 light out, so it wasn't completely dark yet, and my father
21 telling me that my grandfather was here. And in comes this
22 family. There was many uncles, many aunts, some of who
23 were younger than I was. Ida, at the time was 2, and I'm
24 looking at her going, "That's my aunt?" And I remember
25 being really shy.

26 Their house was a three-bedroom house, and

1 there was Sean -- well, Ida, Sean, Sue, Daniel, James,
2 Aaron, his wife -- or my grandfather's wife, Salome, my
3 grandfather, my father, my brother, and myself. All in
4 that little house. I remember going to school; I was in
5 grade 3. Up to this point, bear in mind that I've been
6 told I was the Eskimo. I was the raw meat eater down in
7 Nova Scotia, that I was this enigma, that I was different,
8 and I was going to school and I was being called this
9 "kabloonak."

10 And initially, the first time I heard that
11 word, I felt really proud. I'm being included. I didn't
12 know what that word meant. I'm a kabloonak. Yay. And my
13 uncle, Daniel, came up behind me. Daniel at the time was
14 three or four years older than I am. "She is not a
15 kabloonak. She is Inuk." And I turned and I looked at
16 him, and he explained to me what that meant, and I was
17 heartbroken because I come from a place where I was not
18 accepted for who I was, that I had come from a place where
19 I've been called a half-breed, that I've been called an
20 Eskimo, that I've been called a raw meat eater, that I was
21 less than -- what I was. And I didn't know how to feel
22 about that.

23 It was shortly after that, that my
24 grandfather decided to take -- he asked my father if he
25 could take me and my brother out on the land with him that
26 summer. I got out into the land. At the time -- I need to

1 back up on there. My grandmother -- my mother, when she
2 was raising me and my brother, would speak Inuktituk to us
3 quite a bit. By brother, of course, at the time, is six
4 months old, and I was two and a half, so I had a very good
5 grasp -- but at the time, I was nine and a half, and I
6 couldn't remember all of the words, so I couldn't
7 communicate with my grandfather. And my grandfather asked
8 if he could take us -- asked my father if he could take us
9 to the land. And I thought it was for a week or so. Well,
10 a week later, we're out and my grandfather looked at my
11 aunts and uncles and said these ones need to learn
12 Inuktituk. (Speaking in native language). He said:

13 "No more speaking English. You're
14 only going to speak Inuktituk to
15 these ones. They need to learn to
16 speak Inuktituk."

17 And I blossomed. I blossomed because my
18 mother's teachings were with me, and I braced everything
19 Inuk. If my grandfather told me to do something, I did it.
20 When we were hunting and I saw them eating a kidney. I
21 would ask about it. "What is that?" "Well, here, eat it.
22 Try it." And I would gladly eat it and decide for myself
23 if I liked it. The liver, the fat, the patik (ph), the
24 tongue.

25 I made my grandfather proud because I was
26 so immersed and wanting to learn the Inuit ways. My

1 brother did not blossom. My brother did not learn as
2 easily as I did. I became my grandfather's favourite, even
3 over his own children, and he had 17 children. And he
4 would communicate this to everybody. I was his favourite.
5 I was his favourite. And he treated me that way. He
6 treated me as his favourite. That first Christmas that I
7 spent in Gjoa Haven, I started sewing at that point and I
8 sold little ookpiks (ph). By the time I was 10, I sold my
9 first one for \$3 at the craft store. I was so proud. So
10 proud. Three dollars. It bought me, I think, three bags
11 of chips.

12 My grandfather saw what I was doing and
13 told his wife to buy me a sewing basket for Christmas. I
14 was so happy to get this sewing basket, and I opened it up
15 and inside the sewing basket was half a bag of candy. And
16 my brother opened up his gift from my grandfather, and it
17 was the other half of the bag of candy. And I felt so bad
18 for my brother. I felt so bad. My father forbid me to go
19 back to my grandfather's house for months. I wasn't
20 allowed to go and see his grandfather, but I was still his
21 favourite.

22 So, my aunt, Tapityah, and her brother
23 would call me over to their house because you got to bear
24 in mind, my father was six-foot-six in this Inuit community
25 where the majority of them weren't 5 feet tall. My father
26 was not overly happy. He was a very violent man. He was

1 very violent to us. I grew up knowing violence. I can
2 sense it. I could smell it. I could see it. I could look
3 at you and know if violence was there. This was how I was
4 raised.

5 So, when sexual assault started happening
6 from different family members, different family friends,
7 the first -- okay. There was one time that -- I think I
8 was 11 or 12. There was another distant cousin, his name
9 was Michael. He'd have this crush on me, and my uncle,
10 James, who's only a year or two older than I am, two years,
11 and my brother would see and they would tease me about this
12 and not in a good way.

13 And I remember it was spring and we were
14 in a sea can. And I have no idea what they were thinking.
15 James said, "Hey, I'm going to hold you down for Michael to
16 give you a kiss. Larry, hold her other arm down." My
17 brother, Larry, my Uncle James. So, they did that and
18 Michael went to kiss me, but then he started going too far.
19 He started trying to take my pants off. And James saw what
20 happened -- what was happening, pushed Michael off, and he
21 was cursing at Michael, saying, "Get off of her. What are
22 you doing?" He thought it was all in fun, initially. And
23 then protected me after that, my brother just went along
24 with James because that's what they did. They were close
25 and they -- one just brought the other one on, so.

26 I was so afraid. I was so afraid. And I

1 didn't know who to talk to, but it was keeping me up at
2 night. So, I told my principal. I don't know why I told
3 the principal and not the RCMP, probably because I didn't
4 want to get my uncle in trouble or my brother. And I also
5 thought the principal would not tell my father. The
6 principal, after I left outside his office, immediately
7 called my father.

8 Like I said, my father was six-foot-six,
9 250 pounds in his community where majority were about 5
10 feet. He went and found Michael. No word of a lie, he
11 literally kicked him in the rear all around town. Kicking
12 him, kicking him behind his butt. Kicking him, kicking
13 him, kicking him, I remember him scolding James. I
14 remember him punishing my brother. Then, my Uncle Aaron,
15 who I always called my protector -- he caught wind of what
16 had happened. So, he found Michael, he tied Michael up in
17 a chair and was scolding him for hours and hours and hours.

18 Apparently, Michael had some mental
19 issues, obviously, and it was after Aaron did that that
20 Michael went above them, the post office which was right
21 beside the craft store, and hid up on the -- I don't know
22 what it's called -- in the ceiling, he had a gun with him
23 and hid there for two weeks. Nobody knew where he was
24 because he was afraid that my father was going to kill him.
25 And he probably would have.

26 So, the other sexual assaults that

1 happened after that and the rapes, I knew better than to
2 tell anybody because my father would kill them. So, my
3 father could be sleeping in the next room because he used
4 to play cards, so lots of people would pass out at our
5 place when they're playing cards, and some of these men
6 would come into my room. Not all of them succeeded. Old
7 men, young men, some my age, some older.

8 I remember one specifically. I was 13
9 when he raped me, and he told his friends. They teased me.
10 I remember going to watch volleyball, and they're yelling,
11 "I heard what -- did to you last night. Now, what about
12 me? My turn now." I was horrified. I was horrified. My
13 immediate thought was embarrassment, but then, my next
14 thought was anger. So, I yelled, "I didn't do that. He
15 raped me."

16 I didn't hear anything else about it
17 anymore. That was a gym full of people, probably the
18 amount of people that are in here. Nobody asked me
19 anything about it. Nobody said a word. Nobody said
20 anything. It wasn't the last rape, and it wasn't my first
21 rape. Everybody knew what my father was like. I also
22 thought everybody knew how much my father beat us.

23 In between age 9 and 14, we moved back and
24 forth between Nova Scotia and Gjoa Haven, and I remember a
25 time I was 14 in Nova Scotia. He broken up with one of his
26 girlfriends. He was really depressed. Very angry. And he

1 was drinking. And I'd stepped on a -- stepped on something
2 that had been broken, and I had a piece of -- what I felt
3 was a piece of glass in my foot, so I was complaining about
4 this.

5 And my father was very insistent. "Lie
6 down on the couch and let me look at that." I laid down
7 and then looked at my foot, and he had something -- bobby
8 pin or a needle or something, he's digging around in there,
9 trying to get this glass out, and I'm screaming, "No, that
10 hurts, that hurts," so I get up. "I don't want you doing
11 that," I'm screaming at him.

12 I was 14. I had three other friends there
13 at the time. They were between 14, 16 years old. My
14 brother was downstairs, so he had friends. One was a black
15 woman, another one was Portuguese, and another one was
16 Caucasian. Very good friends of mine.

17 And I get up and I guess my father at that
18 point didn't like the fact that I was being so assertive.
19 "I don't want you doing that." And the next thing I know,
20 he's on top of me and he's got my arms pinned with knees,
21 and he's punching, punching, punching, slapping, punching,
22 and I'm screaming at my friends for help. They're not
23 doing nothing.

24 All of a sudden, I see one of them run
25 out. She dipped next door and she went to go call the
26 police. And at that point, my father -- because he had his

1 knees, I was able to bring up my knees and then hit him
2 between the legs. And the police arrived and they took me
3 to the emergency. I had hand-and-printed bruises on my
4 face, both my ears were poof red, and my jaw was crooked.

5 And two hours later, they sent me home
6 with my father. They said that they would send a social
7 worker. And my father didn't talk to me for a few days,
8 but he also didn't let me go to school because how I
9 looked. That was probably the worst beating that he'd
10 given me with the worst amount of bruising. Definitely
11 wasn't the only one.

12 The social workers did come and they asked
13 me if I wanted to stay or they could take me someplace
14 else. So, I said, "Well, what about my siblings?" Because
15 by that point, I'd had a half-sister and a half-brother
16 with -- well, my half-brother was with his mother -- but my
17 half-sister was there and my brother, and they said, "Well,
18 no, just you." So, of course, I lied. "No. Daddy loves
19 me. I'm going to stay. I have to stay here for them."
20 That should not have been allowed. I was 14 years old
21 making decision to stay and save my siblings.

22 So, at that point, it was shortly after
23 that, probably six months or so after that, that dad
24 decided that once again, we were going to go drive from
25 Nova Scotia to Yellowknife to Gjoa Haven. But we were
26 doing a detour. We drove from Nova Scotia, down to

1 Florida, over to Texas, into Mexico, up to California, into
2 B.C., to Yellowknife. It was a four-month trip and I
3 navigated the whole thing because that's -- he said that
4 was my schooling, that I would learn how to read the maps
5 and direct us.

6 During that trip, I had a dream, actually
7 when we were in B.C., and this was probably three weeks
8 before we arrived back in Gjoa Haven. I had a dream and I
9 -- in this dream, I felt my body only through my eyes, and
10 through my eyes, I could see water, and then over there, I
11 could see -- it was the water, the body of water from Gjoa
12 Haven. I could see a coat in the water, and I could see a
13 boot, and then I saw an upside-down boat, and I saw other
14 boats around this boat, and people in these boats. And I
15 didn't think anything of this dream, although I told my
16 brother about it.

17 And we get back to Gjoa Haven, and at this
18 point, my father was a very successful contractor. He won
19 some contracts with the do-lines (ph) and had a lot of
20 equipment in Gjoa Haven. And he just got another big
21 contract, so he had a lot of money coming in, and he wanted
22 a big boat, but there was none in Gjoa Haven to buy. So,
23 he had a 75-power horse -- 75 horsepower kicker and this
24 18-foot aluminum boat. So, of course, this kicker is far
25 too strong for this boat. And this was probably two months
26 after we got back to Gjoa Haven. And he was waiting for

1 the bigger boat to come, but my father liked speed. He
2 liked to go do things fast.

3 This was happening last week in August. I
4 was supposed to go to Yellowknife. I had to fight my
5 father to go to Yellowknife here for school because at that
6 point, he said that I was not going to go to that place my
7 mother went, and he said that with spit in his mouth. I
8 never understood why he never told me. I do know that the
9 principal met with my father about it because my father was
10 wanting to send me down to a private school in Manitoba
11 because he did not want me coming here to Yellowknife, but
12 he wouldn't tell me the reasoning. The principal convinced
13 my father to let me come, and I was supposed to be home
14 boarding. I was not going to be staying in Akaitcho Hall,
15 which broke my heart, but I was supposed to leave on
16 September 2nd, 1985.

17 The morning of September 1st, 1985, we
18 woke, and it was okswerktuk (ph), completely okswerktuk
19 (ph). There was no wind. It was the sea, you could see
20 your reflection on it. Really okswerktuk (ph). And my
21 father wanted to go for a ride, so we went on the boat,
22 four of us, me, my brother, my sister, my father, and he
23 was going really fast. And this was about eleven o'clock
24 in the morning. And I had to finish packing, so when we
25 got back to the land, I said to my father, "I have to go
26 finish packing." Where he parked the boat, it wasn't very

1 far from where my sister's grandparents were. So, he was
2 going to bring my sister to her grandparents for a while,
3 and he said, "Meet me back here at five o'clock." And the
4 hotel was just there. The hotel was right across from the
5 nursing station, and beside the hotel was the game hall
6 where kids hang out and play games at the arcade.

7 And I went home and I finished trying to
8 pack. And I looked at the time, and it was, like, almost
9 five o'clock, so I thought, Okay, I have to go meet him
10 again at five o'clock. So, I went down and I remember
11 being, I can't be late, my father will be angry. I can't
12 be late. And I came round the corner at game hall before
13 five o'clock, and I could see my father on the boat with my
14 sister leaving. So, I'm yelling after him, "Wait, wait,
15 I'm right here." And my heart sunk because I knew he was
16 going to be angry and my father angry was not good. So I
17 thought, Okay, he's gone. He's not hearing me.

18 So, I decided to walk back over to my
19 grandfather's and my friend, Patsy's, but across from my
20 grandfather's house was Ululik's (ph) house. Now, Ululik
21 (ph) is a renowned carver at the time, and his daughter was
22 a really good friend of mine. He liked to make home brew.
23 And when he made his home brew, he would speak Inuktituk,
24 and he would speak so fast you couldn't understand him and
25 he'd be so loud that you couldn't understand what he was
26 saying.

1 So, I was coming around the road, and he's
2 on his steps from probably here to the end of this place
3 away from me, and he's saying -- he's waving his arms at
4 me, and I could tell he had been drinking, so I brushed him
5 off. I thought he was just saying good-bye because I was
6 leaving the next day, and I continued on. But then I
7 started noticing all these Hondas going down towards the
8 water, and one of them stopped, and I said, "What's going
9 on?" And they said there was an accident, and I said what
10 kind of accident? "Well, your father's boat is upside
11 down."

12 So I jumped on the Honda with him and we
13 went down to the water and I got on this boat and -- the
14 cove of Gjoa Haven. If anybody knows the history of Gjoa
15 Haven, Gjoa Haven is named after the ship, "Gjoa," after
16 Roald Amundsen, and he said it was the finest little
17 harbour in the world, therefore the name, Gjoa Haven
18 because the water is really deep. It just -- you go out a
19 foot or two and it just drops. And that's the harbour, and
20 then it comes around this way. We got on the boat there
21 and we came round that cove, and I could see the boat
22 upside down, and I could see the cove and I could see the
23 boat. That was the day before I was supposed to go to
24 school.

25 I went to a friend's place that night, and
26 I spent the night with the friend because my grandfather

1 was out of town. My sister went with her grandparents. I
2 don't know where my brother went. I saw him the next day.
3 We were arguing at the game hall, and he started throwing
4 pool cubes at me. And the phone rang, and it was my
5 mother. I'd never spoken to my mother. Never have I
6 spoken to my mother to a point. I didn't even know that
7 she knew where I was. Obviously, somebody had been in
8 contact with her and told her what happened.

9 So, I get on the phone and all I hear on
10 the other end is this happy woman. "Bunik, I love you.
11 Now you can come live with me. Bunik, I love you." Okay.
12 And it was a few days of that before I could actually tell
13 her, "You know what? I don't know you. I'm not going to
14 come live with you. I'm going to school in Gjoa Haven."
15 Anyway, so this -- I'm getting far too detailed now.

16 So this tells you, up to that point, what
17 my childhood had been before high school. I've lived at
18 this point. My devil was dead and I was happy. I was
19 heartbroken that I no longer have a father, but I was happy
20 that I would not have to worry about being hit anymore,
21 that I would not be yelled at anymore, that I would not be
22 belittled anymore. I was happy. And I promised myself
23 that day, that I would not let any man do that to me or my
24 children. Then I came to school here in Yellowknife at
25 Akaitcho Hall.

26 It was a different sense of going to

1 school and belonging. I wanted to belong. I wanted to be
2 wanted. So, when the boys would come around and tell me,
3 "You need to do this for me because you don't want me to go
4 see the town girls. You want us to stay with those from
5 home, so you need to do this for me." And they would find
6 the secret places at Akaitcho Hall, and at the time, in my
7 mind, it wasn't rape because at the time, in my mind, it
8 was consensual, but yet, it was not acknowledged in public.
9 These men said:

10 "It's a secret. Don't tell anybody
11 because it's just between you and me.
12 So-and-so might not like that. So-
13 and-so might not like that, but this
14 is what you have to do for all the
15 boys."

16 I found out later that's what they told
17 all the women. All the girls. But it was a different type
18 of rape. It wasn't a violent one, although there was one
19 in high school. I gave birth to my first son while I was
20 going in grade 12. The father who I thought was the father
21 is not the father and I don't know how to tell that father,
22 the father of him, that he's the father. He's never asked.
23 He's not cared. And I can only -- the only reason why I
24 know that is because when I see his pictures, I see that
25 person. He's married and he has his own children. My
26 children asked me why, when I told my daughter that. "Why

1 would I destroy his life now for something that we did when
2 we were teenagers? I can't do that."

3 So, in grade 12, I faced a new type of
4 racism. See, I was neither a home boarder nor a medical
5 boarder. When I first came down in Gjoa Haven, I was a
6 medical boarder who became a home boarder because of the
7 technicalities. I was insistent that I was going to get
8 grade 12 and being pregnant was just a side effect and not
9 going to get in my way.

10 And yes, I was raising my baby as mine.
11 Nobody was going to take my baby because I was keeping my
12 baby, who I breastfed. I missed two weeks of school only
13 because I was needed back down to Edmonton where -- due to
14 complications and the baby came back -- I caught up with my
15 schoolwork. I kept on top of my schoolwork, and I
16 graduated with my son. I had my graduation pictures taken
17 with my son. I breastfed him up until that point.

18 And I had a boyfriend. His name was
19 Grant. A few months after living with Grant because I
20 couldn't find my own place to live, I didn't make enough
21 money. And when after I graduated, social services told me
22 they could no longer help me because I was on my own.

23 So even though I had no place to live, I
24 had no way to pay for a babysitter, and I had no job. I
25 was on my own. So I went and lived with this man and my
26 son got sick. And as babies do, eight or nine months old,

1 he's crying, crying toward the night. Grant got up and
2 started shaking him. "Stop crying, stop," and put him back
3 in the bed while I pushed Grant aside and said, "Don't you
4 ever touch him again."

5 The very next day I gave the baby up for
6 voluntary custody with social services. I was 17. I
7 fought so hard up to that point to stay where I was and I
8 could not get help from social services. I could not find
9 a job. I could not pay for a babysitter, and I was now
10 faced with violence that I'd swore that I'd not let happen.
11 So baby was placed in two months voluntary custody. They
12 would not allow me to see him. They wouldn't tell me where
13 he was.

14 So, the person that I'd home boarded with
15 in grade 12, Nancy Harrison, she had quite a few foster
16 children, and I went to her and I asked if she would adopt
17 him because I couldn't send him home to Gjoa Haven because
18 if I sent him home to Gjoa Haven, I would chose to send him
19 to Helen and Ellen Kaloo (ph), but my grandfather would
20 have been insulted that I'd not given him to him, but I
21 could not allow Salome to raise my son, so I chose to ask
22 Nancy.

23 Nancy had a brother. Nancy said that she
24 could not adopt him. Many different reasons at the time.
25 She had a long-term foster child, Caroline, who had half a
26 heart. So, she said that her brother was interested. Dave

1 and Deb. They have my son now, but they did name him
2 Sammy.

3 The night that I signed those papers, I
4 left town for six months because I could not stay in the
5 same town and not have access to him. The only promise
6 that I ask Debbie to make me is that he would always know
7 where I was, and when he was ready to ask me questions,
8 that he would ask those questions of me, and I'd be more
9 than happy to answer them. Debbie's been in contact with
10 me. She still comes to see me -- I shouldn't say see me.
11 She sends me Facebook messages.

12 So, by the age -- I'm now 18 years old
13 living down in Ontario with this man, who's already shown
14 me violence toward my son, and I've given my son up as a
15 result because I didn't want my son to grow up in that
16 life. And Grant turned his bad violence towards me. And
17 again, rape happened. And it wasn't until about five years
18 later that I realized even though I was living with him,
19 that was still rape. I said no. And he still took what he
20 wanted. That is rape.

21 At the time, my only thought was, I'm
22 living with him. How could it be rape? And I did not
23 report it, but I came home. I came home to Yellowknife. I
24 lived with friends in Yellowknife for a short while, couple
25 years, and moved on to Norman Wells and ended up to Inuvik
26 in 1991. That was the year I met my ex-husband, and I was

1 living with my Uncle Vince at the time.

2 So by that point, I moved in with my ex in
3 January 1992 and became pregnant by March. I remember
4 telling him, when I was pregnant, "I'm pregnant. This
5 apartment's mine. There's the door if you don't want
6 anything to do with it. I'm keeping the apartment. You're
7 free to go." Well, he stayed much to my shock. He did.
8 He stayed. And Joshua was born the following year -- or
9 the following December.

10 And again, my mother shocked me by finding
11 out where I lived. After I've given birth, and she called
12 it -- the house and my ex answered. I was at the hospital
13 because I've just given birth, and my mother says to my ex,
14 "Were you there when the baby was born?" "Yes," he says.
15 Bear in mind that my ex is the only male in his family.
16 He's got three sisters and he's also Caucasian. So, he's,
17 "Yes, I was there." My mother says, "Did you watch the
18 baby come out?" And I could see George pooping up. "Yes."
19 And her next question, "Are you going to stick your cock in
20 that cunt again?" He was speechless.

21 But this was the language my mother had
22 become accustomed too. That's what she grew up with in
23 school because that's was what the priests had told her.
24 That was the terminology that she was used to. The phone
25 rang up at the hospital, and of course, I worked at the
26 hospital at the time. And the nurses came to get me from

1 So, I live my life with my husband. We
2 raised our children. My son is now 25 and my daughter is
3 now 23. I have a grandson. I also have a granddaughter,
4 but that marriage fell apart 2012 for many reasons. We
5 were probably both together because we wanted to make the
6 family work. He was not a violent man towards me. He
7 wasn't probably the most understanding, and he didn't
8 always allow me to be who I wanted to be. But it was after
9 I left him that I was able to be all that I am.

10 During my life with him, I did share the
11 Inuvik Transition House for seven years. I saw the
12 violence that other women went through. You asked earlier
13 about the Inuvik Transition House and its services that are
14 available. In the Northwest Territories, there are five
15 transition houses. Five out of our 33 communities. 1, 2,
16 3, 4, 5. The Inuvik Transition House at the time was the
17 only one that owned its house. It operated on a annual
18 budget of \$300,000 a year. 24 hours a day, seven days a
19 week. Three staff per shift. And I heard those stories.
20 Health became involved. In order to get admission into the
21 Inuvik Transition House, you have to have approval through
22 Health because they can pay for women to come from Sachs,
23 from Paulatuk, from McPherson, if need be on medical
24 travel. It's considered medical travel to go into the
25 transition house.

26 I left the Inuvik Transition House Board

1 because of some of the complications that would come with
2 the government policy that they wanted to start. Some of
3 that government policy included allowing drug and alcohol
4 rehabilitation boarders to stay there instead of women and
5 children, so detox became involved. They had on a actual
6 order in which acceptance was allowed in admission into the
7 transition house and that was no longer acceptable to me.
8 Do you know how many Bingos we have to run in order to
9 maintain the Inuvik Transition House, the insurance alone?
10 Christa used to sit on that board with me.

11 I became involved with the Inuvik
12 Transition House because in 2000, I was appointed to the
13 Status of Women Council for the NWT and I became president,
14 and I thought that I should know what's going on with
15 women's issues, so I became involved. And I'm the type
16 that when I become involved, I want to know what the ground
17 level -- what's going on.

18 I don't want a report. I want to go and
19 help. I want to help in the community. And I felt that
20 that was what I needed to do. I've seen the women having
21 to start over. That would be -- choose to go to Inuvik
22 from even the Sahtu, and it was the women who had to leave
23 the homes. The stories about not wanting to speak to
24 counsellors because of family members and conflict, yes,
25 that is alive and well in every community. If my sister is
26 the end nursing charge in the community, I'm not going to

1 want to be treated by my sister. If my brother was the
2 RCMP officer, am I going to go report a crime to him if I
3 don't want him to know about it?

4 This is the reality. And if I have to
5 call someplace else, a 1-800 number, then I'm told, "We'll
6 get back to you." These struggles are real. They're every
7 day stories. It's not something that's made up. I heard
8 stories about women even down in -- while I was president
9 for the Status Women vote. Women being taken away from the
10 community and their friends keeping her in a teepee just to
11 keep her safe so that she will not be beaten anymore
12 because the community puts up with it.

13 I've spoken on a national level about
14 issues that have affected northern women. Down in
15 Parliament Hill, I've had MPs sit there and tell me, "No,
16 everything's perfect. Everything's rosy. There's no
17 issues." And I've sat there and I've looked at them and
18 said, "Are you on glue? I don't know where you're looking,
19 but it's not where my reality is at home." Are they not
20 hearing the stories?

21 Their reality is not the reality I know
22 was going on, on the ground level. They didn't see those
23 children beaten. The little boys who had shoe prints of
24 Nike on their belly. Their whole intestines and colon
25 having been taken out because a broomstick had been used on
26 them. And the violence continues and everybody knew about

1 it, and nobody did anything because nobody wanted to break
2 the silence.

3 I've seen women disfigured and horrified
4 by a man simply entering a room. I've seen coworkers under
5 the same condition. I've gone and I've given the -- what's
6 that poem called that they read on -- I can't even think of
7 it right now. "I've got flowers today." That poem, "I've
8 got flowers today. It wasn't my birthday or any other
9 day." It ends with her dying. "I got flowers today.
10 Today was a very special day. Today was the day that I
11 died."

12 I gave that poem to her spouse in hopes
13 that he would stop, and she refused to -- she kept saying,
14 "He's sorry for what he did. He's sorry." "I'm glad that
15 he's sorry and I'm glad that you love him, but it needs
16 help. I'm not saying leave him. I'm saying it needs help.
17 If you love him that much, help him that much."

18 We need to raise our children, our boys
19 and our girls in the ways that we want to see our children
20 in relationships with. We need to get back to the basics
21 and when I say we need to get back to the basics, we need
22 to get back to the way things were. Women and children
23 were respected. Elders were sought off after for their
24 advice. They stood behind us and held us. Men protected
25 us. We would not pray. In my world, the community is
26 strong. In my world, we work together. It's not one

1 person. It's an entire community standing behind me,
2 overcoming these issues, and this is -- the only way that
3 we can do this is by working together. Women are the voice
4 of the family. Women are the givers of life. This has
5 been forgotten.

6 When I lived with my husband in 2012, I
7 moved to Rankin Inlet. I lived in Rankin Inlet for 14
8 months. I called that my healing place because that's
9 where I healed myself and that hurt. I was with my husband
10 for 23 years and to be told "I do not love you" hurt to the
11 core. So I healed while I was in Rankin. But I missed my
12 children, and they couldn't come to Rankin to visit. So I
13 moved back here to Yellowknife in 2013. In the meantime, I
14 started attending sweats and I learned more about medicine
15 that you see down here. I'd already known about the four
16 sacred medicines: Sage, cedar, tobacco, sweetgrass.

17 You see, when I was 15, after my father
18 died, I'd had other dreams. And I wanted to know about
19 these, so I went to my grandfather and I made sure my uncle
20 was with me, and I wanted to know. I said, "I'm having
21 dreams and these dreams are coming true." And my
22 grandfather told me that when he gave up when -- he says:

23 "Power knows no time. When you give
24 up power, it stays out there, but it
25 knows no time and it'll attach itself
26 to those that are close to you."

1 And I was his favourite. He said that
2 "power has found you." His advice at the time was:
3 "Don't acknowledge it. Don't dwell
4 on it. Dreams are possibilities.
5 Past may happen, little glimpses, and
6 you don't know when it happens. It
7 could be 20 years from now; it could
8 be 2 minutes from now."

9 He also told me during that same talk that
10 while he was alive, he would protect me from anybody that
11 was alive or dead. And after he died, he would protect me
12 from all of those that have died. And for a very long
13 time, I didn't do anything about these dreams, but medicine
14 and power have a different way of working. And it makes
15 you do what it needs to do whether that's for good or bad.
16 And those dreams come back.

17 And working with the medicine, I started
18 praying a lot more, and I do not pray in the Catholic
19 church or the Anglican church or the Pentecostal church.
20 Those are institutes, institutes that outlawed what I
21 believe in, which is tradition, culture, land, animals,
22 air. I will not put down the church, but the church has
23 done a lot of damage that it has not accepted
24 responsibility for. It has not acknowledged it's role in
25 residential school or in the cultural genocide of what I
26 hold dear. So, I practice a spirituality that holds the

1 land, the animals, the air, the four elements close.

2 So when a friend of mine asked in 2014 if
3 I would work with something about walking with her sisters,
4 Della, I was happy to become involved, and I started
5 attending the meetings. That's how I became involved with
6 all of these women behind me with the exception of Violet,
7 who I knew a long time before that, and Gail, of course, as
8 well. We spent five months working together, hours a week,
9 to plan for Walking With Our Sisters. I was a keeper for
10 Walking With Our Sisters. I was keeper of the sacred
11 bundle. That role meant that I got direction from the
12 elders as to how everything would work with Walking With
13 Our Sisters and made it happen, made sure that it followed
14 through.

15 During the preparation of that, I had a
16 pipe ceremony with Pat Young, and Pat was at the sweat and
17 he was doing a pipe ceremony. It was a very hard pipe
18 ceremony for him to do, he said. And while he was doing
19 this pipe ceremony, all I saw were these lights because I
20 was praying hard and I saw these lights. And as he's
21 praying harder, the outside was starting to glow and almost
22 like pulsing. And that's when I realized that it's going
23 to take all of those prayers that so many people -- for
24 this to be resolved and Walking With Our Sisters.

25 During Walking With Our Sisters, I heard
26 all of the stories of the stories that you're hearing, the

1 violence, the last days with those women, the aftereffects.
2 Because joining Walking With Our Sisters here in
3 Yellowknife, we accepted gifts from affected family
4 members, and we would feast those new uppers into Walking
5 With Our Sisters, and they would join them, and they were
6 very emotional ceremonies. Emelda was also a pipe keeper
7 for this. Violet was a pipe keeper. Rassi was a kudlik
8 keeper for that.

9 There was one particular two sisters,
10 third sister had died 35, 37 years earlier. They brought
11 big hearts with feather down the middle and uppers
12 alongside, and the release that they had just from
13 presenting that, and they said that it never been
14 acknowledged that pain that they felt had never been
15 acknowledged, and it was like an open floodgate.

16 During Walking With Our Sisters in
17 Yellowknife, we chose to -- during these ceremonies, they
18 were not public ceremonies, so we would need to close the
19 exhibition for that, for all of these ceremonies. The one
20 that hit home the most was Brandy Vittrekwa. Brandy was
21 living in Whitehorse at the time, but she was from
22 McPherson. She was the same age as my daughter, grew up in
23 the same area, had the same friends. And when Walking With
24 Our Sisters opened, those uppers were presented by her
25 mother. It was six weeks after her murder. She'd been
26 murdered on my daughter's birthday, and I'll never forget

1 the look on Marlene's face of not knowing what to do. What
2 do I do next?

3 And having to coach to this ceremony
4 presenting these uppers to Walking With Our Sisters so that
5 they can be part of that. And then, when the ceremony was
6 done, the hundreds -- the people outside stammering to get
7 in. Complete disregard for what we just done. Do you
8 remember that Emelda? I didn't expect that ceremony to hit
9 me that hard. They completely didn't care that such a
10 sacred ceremony was happening. All they wanted, "Let me
11 get in and see those. I want to see those." The spirit
12 had just been accepted into Walking With Our Sisters.

13 There was one little girl. I think she
14 was 9. Her mother -- part of being a keeper was that you
15 have to be around to see if anybody has questions and to
16 help them. And this little girl was about 9 years old, I
17 think; I'm guessing. She's fiddling her thumbs and she's
18 standing in front of the baby uppers, which were right in
19 front of the eagle staff, and she's fiddling, and I could
20 see her asking her mother questions. So I went over and I
21 said, "You look like you have questions. She goes, "Mommy
22 said they killed the babies," because the 300 uppers were
23 along there, representing all those that have been died.
24 So I said, "Yes, these babies are not here anymore." This
25 little girl's question was next, "How do we make it stop?"
26 And I couldn't lie to her, so I said:

1 "Well, we start by talking about it.
2 We start by acknowledging it. We
3 start by telling the stories. You're
4 going to go and tell your friends
5 what you've seen and their going to
6 go and tell their friends."

7 And then she asked me if it was still
8 going on. These little ones all know the answers, but
9 they're being stifled. Yesterday, we had a drum dance,
10 hand games, dancing, and things were the way that they were
11 supposed to be with family, the babies included. The
12 little ones running around. The elders sitting with us.
13 That is the way that it's supposed to be, but that is not
14 how we operate in today's world.

15 In today's world, they don't want the
16 children in the meeting rooms. They don't want the babies
17 with the mothers. That's not how it was a hundred years
18 ago. Why is that the way that it is now? A healthy
19 community has the babies around and the elders around. If
20 it's a place for a person, it is a place for a family. How
21 are our children expected to learn if they're not there to
22 observe the behaviours? If we refuse to teach our
23 children, who will? If we refuse to teach them the right
24 ways, they'll make their own ways and that may not be the
25 right way.

26 During Walking With Our Sisters, the other

1 thing that I learned -- because there was so much turmoil
2 in trying to organize things, trying to get things to
3 happen. Up and down, up and down. It was stressful,
4 wasn't it? It was stressful. But we learned that the
5 environment in which we're planning these events for women
6 such as Walking With Our Sisters, such as this inquiry,
7 that is the true atmosphere that women are facing today. I
8 have so much to say, so much more to say. I am actually --
9 I am now currently -- my full-time job is a human resource
10 officer for the WFCC, but I'm also a human rights
11 commissioner, appointed by the Government of Northwest
12 Territories. So, my voice is still a national voice, a
13 territorial voice, but a voice at home. I will always
14 advocate for what is right.

15 I have since the time I was -- I remember
16 going to school down in Nova Scotia and they were trying to
17 make me take French classes. I didn't want to take French
18 classes. I didn't. I said, "If you make me take French
19 classes --" At the time, my train of thought was, "I'll
20 forget how to speak in Inuktituk." I was 13. So I fought
21 them and I won. They couldn't -- I won because my attitude
22 was, "You can't make me take it. You can't make me --"
23 "Well," they said, "you have to take another French class,"
24 "Well, give me an Inuktituk class instead." And they said,
25 "Well, that's not possible." "Well, I'm not taking French,
26 and you can't make me." And literally, my father was in

1 the room there and the principal in there looking at me,
2 and my father going -- he knew better than to argue with me
3 at that point.

4 While my father felt that he owned me,
5 that I was alive because he allowed me to live, he saw that
6 I was strong-willed and he could not control that. So I'd
7 been strong for a very long time. I have felt that I'm not
8 the bright person to speak here, but I needed to speak
9 here.

10 The smudge that you see in this glass
11 container is the last smudge that I have from Walking With
12 Our Sisters. It's ground sweetgrass, cedar, tobacco, and
13 sage. Inside that, the container itself is glass. I made
14 this at Christmastime. It was glass etching. The designs
15 that are on it are stencils that I had, that I used at
16 Robbie Craig's to tap glassworks, so there's a musk ox on
17 the front there and there's wind.

18 Musk ox is a huge animal. The shawl that
19 I'm wearing is made from musk ox. Musk ox give us meat.
20 Musk ox give us strength, but it's also a docile animal
21 unless it's provoked. By itself, it can be quite
22 intimidating. But if you attack its young, it forms a
23 circle, the babies, the young, in the middle so that the
24 predators on the outside cannot get in. I don't know why I
25 made this in December because I don't use vases and the
26 medicine containers that I have at home are birch bark. I

1 didn't know why I made this until last night when I decided
2 that this needed to follow the inquiry with the rest of the
3 smudge that I have from Walking With Our Sisters, so I'll
4 be leaving this with you guys. I'm sure I have lots more
5 to say, but I'm not sure where to begin or if you have
6 questions.

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you, Gerry.
8 Wow. Just amazing to have you share the generational
9 history. I only have a few questions and it's only because
10 I want to clarify some of the points you made, and then
11 Commissioner Robinson might also have a couple.

12 You were talking about -- you know, you
13 come from Gjoa Haven, and you were talking about different
14 parts of the North, and you were also talking about
15 resources, so I wanted to ask you a question about the
16 resources and how -- if you're from one of those regions,
17 but you live somewhere like Inuvik, so you're originally
18 from Gjoa Haven, that's your family's from, are you a
19 member of that land?

20 MS. GERRY SHARPE: Wait a minute. I am a
21 Nunavut beneficiary. Accessing funds through Nunavut is a
22 near impossibility for me. I am a resident of Northwest
23 Territories, so I do need to follow what's in place for the
24 Northwest Territories. Health now looks after all of the
25 shelters.

26 The shelters, when it comes to resources -

1 - there's only five. They're drastically underfunded. The
2 training isn't there, so if they need staff development,
3 it's not going to happen. If they want to send staff out
4 to bring more information back, that's not going to happen
5 because there's no place for funding. People applying from
6 the Beaufort Delta Region are sent to Inuvik. Tuk does
7 have an emergency shelter, but Inuvik has the transition
8 house, that they can stay up there for up to six weeks. Of
9 course, there's also resources here in Yellowknife. If a
10 woman in one of the communities wanted to leave her spouse,
11 it's not easy. It's not easy.

12 They have to get approval from the health
13 board in order for medical travel to be approved. And if
14 whoever's picking up the phone on that day decides, "Well,
15 no, you did this last month, so you're not getting it
16 again," they just say no. And of course, that is the
17 reality. And they can simply say, "Well, no, we brought
18 you down here last time, so we're not going to bring you
19 again." Who are they to make that decision? Who are they
20 to speak for somebody else's heart?

21 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I know we're here
22 so most people will know and sees me --

23 MS. GERRY SHARPE: Nurse in charge.

24 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yeah, the nurse in
25 charge. And also, thank you for explaining the shelter
26 system. I want to take it back even a little further. So,

1 if you're from Gjoa Haven and you are a resident here, can
2 you access, as a beneficiary of Nunavut, access funding for
3 education and services because you're here or you don't
4 have to be there or -- how does that work?

5 MS. GERRY SHARPE: With NTI, NTI is
6 compromised of three different bodies. You have the
7 Kitikmeot, the Kivalliq, and the Baffin. Those three
8 bodies are -- NTI is comprised of those. They each have a
9 board. The money that is distributed to each of those
10 boards stays there. That is not distributed to the
11 beneficiaries. Just because I live here, doesn't mean that
12 I get to benefit from something in the Kitikmeot Region.
13 That stays only in the community. They will do a raffle
14 for a boat or a Ski-Doo. I'm not eligible for that because
15 I'm not in Gjoa Haven. I'm not eligible for resources to
16 apply to go to school. My children are not eligible for
17 that, and this is something else that I actually didn't
18 touch on that I did also want touch on.

19 When you hear the numbers -- I'm assuming
20 from the RCMP when you get a report from them -- they'll
21 say that in the Northwest Territories, there was 48 or 49
22 of the 52 murders -- or missing and murdered for the
23 Northwest Territories were Aboriginal. That's not counting
24 the ones in other provinces or territories that belong in
25 the Northwest Territories, for instance, Brandy Vittrekwa,
26 happened in the Yukon. That'll be in the Yukon's numbers.

1 There was a friend of a family friend whose daughter was
2 murdered down in Edmonton. That's counted in Alberta.
3 These women are displaced and they're removed from the
4 support system and we wonder why they are vulnerable. The
5 impact to being vulnerable are compounded that much more
6 when you are removed from your community, from what you
7 know.

8 So, when it comes to -- for instance, even
9 my daughter moving here to Yellowknife, she's removed from
10 her resources and what she knows although I'm here to
11 support her. If I wasn't here -- she's used to knowing
12 everybody that she walks by in the community of 3,000.
13 She's accustomed to knowing the news of the region, not
14 just the community. If there's a death in McPherson, she
15 knows about it. If there's a fire up in Paulatuk, she
16 knows about it. That doesn't happen here in Yellowknife.

17 So, as a result, that tight connection of
18 being in a community isn't the same. So, if it's not the
19 same here in Yellowknife, where we are a tight community,
20 what's it like down in Edmonton or in Ottawa, where you're
21 not reaching all of those, or those people that are
22 displaced from -- even from Nunavut, when they're sent down
23 to Edmonton and miss an appointment on her -- displaced in
24 Edmonton? So, those impacts aren't counted and how are
25 those tracked? And it's the government that is making --
26 displaced.

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: You've kind of
2 actually -- I was going to ask you a second part of the
3 question, and you've kind of actually got around to it
4 because just understanding sort of some of those
5 differences and how does that work when -- for example, a
6 woman or a family is trying to exit violence or because
7 they're hospitalized due to serious injury. They find
8 themselves in Edmonton, and if they have to stay over, they
9 get displaced and they're relying on medical flights and
10 stuff like that. How do they get back or what's the next
11 centre and how can they access things if they're in
12 different places or displaced.

13 And so, you've kind of answered that, but
14 if you have anything more you want to add, please do.

15 MS. GERRY SHARPE: The only thing that I
16 can add to that is that -- that point, if they are medic de
17 facto, they're told what the next steps are. They're not
18 given the option. So, somebody's cared -- if they're
19 injured, they're told what happens next. They're not
20 asked.

21 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So I guess part of
22 the thing I'm trying to get at to you, because I know
23 you'll probably have the knowledge in this, is the
24 connection between not having autonomy to actually leave.
25 So if you have to go somewhere, it's a medical decision.

26 MS. GERRY SHARPE: Yes.

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: It's not the
2 decision of the woman.

3 MS. GERRY SHARPE: Yes.

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And if she has to
5 back to where she came from on a medical leave, she might
6 be going back into the community where she experiences more
7 harm.

8 MS. GERRY SHARPE: Yes.

9 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: But if she leaves
10 on her own self to another region, she might not have the
11 support. Am I understanding that properly?

12 MS. GERRY SHARPE: You are understanding
13 that entirely right because that is part of the problem.
14 If you didn't come down to medical travel, we're not
15 sending you back and you're not covered. You can't access
16 that if you didn't tell us why you're coming, so you just
17 can't show up on the doorstep. That's a problem.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Those are my
19 questions. Commissioner Robinson may have some questions
20 or comments for you as well.

21 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Iidiyak (ph),
22 I've got questions. Building on that -- accessing the
23 services. We've heard from some family yesterday about
24 accessing help for issues with mental health issues, then
25 also, accessing training and education. We've heard from
26 other communities and in urban centres from Inuit women and

1 women from more northern regions that -- it's not even to
2 flee violence that you have to go south. It's for
3 employment opportunities; it's for education opportunities;
4 it's for accessing the services. Is this something that
5 you've observed? Well, is this an issue you're seeing in
6 the NWT?

7 MS. GERRY SHARPE: Yes, it is. A lot of
8 the opportunities -- in order to make -- allow yourself to
9 move forward, you need to further your education or to gain
10 that experience. In order to do that, you have to go
11 south. And the areas where you can gain employment have
12 more money. In my mind, this is where I see that there's a
13 huge issue with an imbalance between the government's
14 decisions when it comes to corporate mining, oil, and gas
15 versus the social needs of its people. It puts mining,
16 oil, and gas first because it brings in money. But if
17 you're bringing in corporate money, then are you not seeing
18 that direct correlation between the violence, the increased
19 violence, that's going to happen to crimes that take place?
20 So, there has to be that balance. If there is no balance
21 then there's no success.

22 My daughter went to school to get her
23 early child development certificate in Inuvik. She chose
24 to do that in Inuvik. She could have done that here. My
25 son wanted to access education. Now, he has particular
26 needs when it comes to the way that he -- he's educated, so

1 he's now accessing that. They're both Nunavut
2 beneficiaries. They should have access to funds and they
3 don't.

4 My son came down here to work, to gain
5 more money, but he's now thinking about going down to the
6 oil fields. My daughter's -- she took a pay cut to work
7 here, but -- now she's \$19 an hour, but her daycare is
8 subsidized. So, she could make more money in Inuvik, but
9 she felt the education for her son wasn't there, which is
10 why she decided to come here.

11 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: (Speaking in
12 native language). Because you've answered a lot of sort of
13 the questions I've had from what you've talked about and I
14 hope we can speak again about these issues and outside of
15 this forum. (Speaking in native language).

16 MS. GERRY SHARPE: (Speaking in native
17 language). One thing I will add, the women sitting behind
18 me have helped mektan (ph). This is an example of what the
19 women of Northwest Territories can do. So, the Native
20 Women's Association put out the call for the beaded hearts,
21 and the beaded hearts came to Native women. The women
22 behind me as well as Gail, we all worked on this along with
23 a lot of other women of the Northwest Territories. We came
24 together with a common purpose to do this. And we can all
25 come together with the common purpose of overcoming this
26 issue and we will all help. We all just need to focus back

1 on that one issue resolving this and moving forward
2 together because together, we are strong. Together, we'll
3 embrace and protect our young and move forward.

4 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I want your
5 words to be the last words heard, so I'm not going to talk
6 anymore.

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, Commissioner
8 Robinson is actually going to provide you with a gift.
9 It's a gift, a reciprocal gift. You've shared truth with
10 us and your story, and it wasn't an easy story to share,
11 and we appreciate that. So, there are a couple gifts that
12 the commissioner will be handing to you. First, one of the
13 gifts is actually from the Native Women's Association from
14 the Northwest Territories, but there is also feathers, and
15 actually, Audrey might say a word on the feathers because
16 she can explain it better than I can.

17 MS. AUDREY SIEGL: These feathers today in
18 red are from Sechelt. They're from Haida Gwaii and they're
19 the first feathers from my Musqueam community and we bring
20 them forward as gifts of healing, as gifts of honour, and
21 to recognize who you are. I have the phrase I would like
22 to share with you in my ancestral language. It makes me so
23 happy to hear you speaking the language of your people on
24 your -- on the land that knows those languages. (Speaking
25 in native language). She is sacred, this woman. (Speaking
26 in native language). You're sacred, all of these women.

1 You bring that forward in a very beautiful and powerful and
2 humble way. You are you honour all of the women that you
3 come from. And the work that you do connecting what
4 happens to the land and what happens to the women, we need
5 people to really see that. I thank you not just for being
6 strong, but for holding steady and for loving and healing
7 yourself, for finding your medicines and helping others to
8 be able to do the same so that we can each find our
9 strength and we can each heal and that we can each rise.
10 That's what we need. And these feathers are gifts that
11 started from our Haida matriarchs, and it's carried on from
12 Smithers till here, and we'll keep taking care of each
13 other and not just with the feathers, but with everything
14 that the feathers represent. So, I say aitchka (ph) and I
15 raise my hands.

16 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: At this point, I
17 would ask for an adjournment in this room. Lunch has
18 already started and I noticed it has been served. It will
19 be served out in the hallway. For this room, I'm asking for
20 an adjournment until two o'clock so that anyone in this
21 room has at least a half hour before the next proceeding.
22 Thank you.

23 --- Recess at 1:25 p.m.

24 --- Upon resuming at 2:23 p.m.

25 **Hearing #3**

26 **Witness: James Norman Jenka**

1 In relation to Helene Louisa Ratfat (nee Leyden) and Marina
2 Ratfat

3 Heard by Commissioner Brian Eyolfson

4 Commission Counsel: Wendy van Tongeren

5 Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Therese

6 Villeneuve, Laureen "Blu" Waters Gaudio, Ray Tuccaro, Jean

7 Erasmus, Caroline Lafontaine and Tori Jarvis

8 Clerk: Trudy Mckinnon

9 Registrar: Bryan Zandberg

10 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Good afternoon,
11 everyone. My name is Wendy van Tongeren, V-A-N T-O-N-G-E-
12 R-E-N, and I'm one of the commission counsel for the
13 National Inquiry and we're about to start with the
14 afternoon session. The time is 25 minutes after one and
15 today is January 24th, and we're in Yellowknife at the Nova
16 Hotel in the ballroom. And I'm honoured to introduce the
17 next family that I've been working with and we'll start by
18 introducing the family. They'll just introduce themselves
19 giving their name and then we'll proceed with the
20 procession thereafter. Okay. So, you have my name, James,
21 what's yours?

22 MR. JAMES JENKA: You already said it.
23 Good afternoon. My name is James Jenka.

24 MS. ALYSHA HANKINSON: My name is Alysha,
25 and I'm the daughter of James.

26 MS. TONI JARVIS: My name is Toni, and I

1 am the niece of James.

2 MR. RAY TUCCARO: Hi, my name is Ray. I'm
3 here to support my friend James and his daughter.

4 MS. CAROLINE LAFONTAINE: My name is
5 Caroline Lafontaine. I'm here to support the family as
6 well. We're friends.

7 MS. JEAN ERASMUS: Hi, I'm Jean Erasmus,
8 and I'm also here to support James and his daughter.

9 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And I believe
10 next there will be a prayer.

11 MR. RAY TUCCARO: Can you all stand. A
12 great honour to say a prayer.

13 And I ask you, Creator, to help all of us
14 here, to understand what you're going through. We ask you
15 to help us to say a prayer in your own way, in your own
16 beliefs. We ask our Creator to help us to activate our
17 heart, our mind, our body, and our spirit. We ask you to
18 help us, the family, and our ancestors in the spirit world
19 or ones that gone before us. We ask you to listen to us
20 and to give my friend James the support and strength to
21 carry on with this. We ask each and every one of us to say
22 a prayer for James and the family and the daughter. We
23 thank you, Creator, for this beautiful day. We thank you
24 for giving us life today, giving us to understand. That
25 is, your Creator. And we need your help on this certain

1 day. Thank you. All my relations. Hey. Hey.

2 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: So, James, before
3 you tell us the poem, copies of which people have, let's
4 just have the affirmation process so that we can forget
5 about that part, okay? And so, Mr. Registrar, if we could
6 have affirmation here, please, and it would be for Alysha
7 Hankinson and James Norman Jenka. And the request has been
8 for a pipe, right? You're going to affirm on your pipe and
9 an eagle feather as well. Okay. And I believe they
10 brought their own fan and pipe with them. And you can do
11 it together actually.

12 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: It's up to
13 you. I'll start with you, James. Do you solemnly affirm
14 that -- actually, I'm going to do it a little bit
15 differently. Do you promise to tell your truth to the
16 commissioner in a good way today?

17 MR. JAMES JENKA: Yes, I do. I'll speak
18 my truth that are best of my memory, and I just want to
19 honour our pipe here. And all of my words will go into
20 this pipe, and I'll smoke it after -- till we're done here,
21 so there will be no lies spoken here. Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Great.
23 Thanks, James. And Alysha, I'll ask you the same question
24 then. Just wait for a microphone to go to Alicia. Okay.
25 Welcome Alicia. Do you promise to tell your truth to the

1 commissioner in a good way today, too?

2 MS. ALYSHA HANKINSON: Yes, I do.

3 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Okay. Thank
4 you.

5 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Yeah. You're on.
6 Do you need to stand? We could get you a stand that will
7 hold the mic.

8 MR. JAMES JENKA: That's okay. I'm not
9 that crippled yet. I will stand. First and foremost,
10 thank you to Ray, and my family here that's supporting.
11 Thank you so much for -- you got my back. I feel better.
12 Just first of all, I just want to honour my ancestors. My
13 relatives that have gone on before me. As I sit here --
14 I'm hot right now. I don't know.

15 But, anyway, as I sit here to speak about
16 my family, I don't speak about them in a bad way. I honour
17 each and every one of them and I love each and every one of
18 them. I'm here to speak more or less for my mother, and I
19 just wanted to share stuff about how her loss affected me
20 in my life, and I'll speak a little bit about my childhood,
21 and I just want to honour my grandmother and my grandfather
22 and I'll speak more about my grandmother, Mary Ann. All I
23 can say is -- well, what an amazing woman.

24 But before I get carried on about family,
25 I just want to -- about a half and a and a month ago, I

1 believe, there was a poetry thing happening here in
2 Yellowknife, and the seventh parliamentary poet laureate,
3 George Elliott Clarke, read this poem there, and I said
4 wow. So I post him and -- I have a friend and I want to
5 say thank you to Robin for getting the poem to us from
6 George himself. So, I just want to read this to you folks.
7 If you have copies, just follow along. I can do George
8 Elliot Clarke justice here. That guy sure knows how to
9 write/read poems, my God. Anyway. And of course, I will
10 submit this to the Commission, that they can carry with
11 them.

12 The title is: "For the Murdered and the
13 Missing: A Spiritual."

14 "Someone's guilty of a million
15 crimes. Blood on his hands, Death on
16 his mind. To send my sister away,
17 away; to put my mama in a distant
18 grave.

19 Why she got to be murdered? Why she
20 got to go missing? This land is
21 hers, so I heard. All the saints are
22 insisting.

23 Someone's got a sink in Hell and rot.
24 Dump bones in bush or parking lot.
25 Disappeared my auntie, saw her die;

1 exiled my daughter, served her
2 Misery.
3 Why she got to be missing? Why she
4 got to be murdered? Why I hear
5 Justice hissing like a viper in a
6 graveyard?
7 Someone's papa mapped a Trail of
8 Tears. Someone's son paved a Highway
9 of Tears. Why my sister got to
10 stumble down? Why my mama got to
11 tumble down?
12 Why she got to go missing? Why she
13 got to be martyred? Indigenous
14 insisting, Justice for our massacred.
15 Someone's flag looks like blood on
16 snow. Someone's History, a damn
17 crime show. To hurt my daughter so
18 she weep. To wound my auntie while
19 she sleep.
20 Why she got to be murdered? Why she
21 got to go missing? Martyred in mud,
22 slush, merde -- from The Pas to
23 Nipissing.
24 Someone's guilty of a million crimes
25 -- from five centuries back, down to

1 next time. Ain't sorry to little
2 sister rape -- or put my mama in her
3 too soon grave.
4 Why she got to be murdered. Why she
5 got to go missing? Ain't all
6 government alert to crimes of
7 commission?
8 Why don't Parliament just wail? How
9 can this Parliament fail? Got to
10 have Justice insisting, no more
11 murdered, no more missing.
12 No more homicide, suicide, genocide.
13 Those screaming words that none can
14 hide. No more Trails and Highways of
15 Tears. No more families cramming
16 each a hearse.
17 Time to put the guilty where they
18 belong -- on trial, in jail, by the
19 end of this song." (As read)

20 I just want to say thank you to George
21 Elliott Clarke for writing that poem. Thank you, George.

22 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay, so, the way
23 this is going to work James, is that you're going to do all
24 the talking, and I'm here to help if you need it. So, I
25 know that we have some paragraphs, so here they are in hard

1 copy, which might guide you. And here's a family tree in
2 case you need something to use as a guide.

3 We've met before and I have absolute trust
4 that you will inspire everybody in this room and beyond.
5 So, take care and do your best.

6 MR. JAMES JENKA: Okay. I'm sweating
7 already, so. I just finished eating, so when I talk
8 sometimes some food get caught up in my dentures, so if
9 some fly out, don't worry about it, okay?

10 This is all about my mother. This is also
11 about my sisters. This is all about my grandmother. And
12 this is all about my daughters and my granddaughter. I
13 forgot to put up a picture of my granddaughter. This is
14 about her.

15 So, I'm just going to go into a little bit
16 of family history. But just to give you -- my mother's
17 name is Helene Louise Ratfat Leyden. She went missing in
18 the early seventies, and she's never been found to this
19 day. I was born in a little town called Fort Chipewyan,
20 Alberta, and I have some Fort Chipewyan connection here. I
21 didn't know my mother at all. Barely. I just have faint
22 memories of her, but I do know her being gone, how it has
23 affected me.

24 After I was born, I was immediately given
25 up. My grandmother took me in. Why she gave me up, I

1 don't know. All I know is I had these resentments towards
2 her at a very young age. I felt like I was unwanted. The
3 sad thing about it -- I knew at a young age that she was a
4 mother. My grandmother told me. I think I may have seen
5 her a couple of times, and the sad thing about it is she
6 just lived across the river from us. I was born in March,
7 and by November, she was married to my sister's father.
8 That's only what, seven, eight months? And nobody talked
9 about me. She didn't talk about me. Nobody talked about
10 it. I was a secret. I was a bastard child.

11 At a very young age, that anger started
12 happening within me. The love of my life is my
13 grandmother. She's my mother. She took care of me. I
14 want to speak a little bit about my grandmother. I would
15 talk about the strength of a woman. My grandmother died
16 when I was 12 years old. The love of my life. But I found
17 out recently, well, three years ago, that before I was
18 born, she had lost a daughter and five boys, and she never
19 talked about it. No one talked about it. No one even
20 shared anything about it with me. And to top it off, she
21 died knowing that my mother was missing. So, I don't know,
22 like, how she managed to carry on with life with all this
23 trauma and this loss. And each of her children were thrown
24 into residential school. Every one of them, my mother
25 included, thrown in residential school. Eventually, I

1 ended up there as well.

2 I knew I had a sister and a brother before
3 they moved away. I used to sit there, play by the
4 shoreline with little homemade boats out of driftwood. I'd
5 be playing there and sometimes I'll look across the river
6 to see if I could catch a glimpse of them. Nothing, but
7 they were too far down that way. And the next thing I
8 knew, they're gone. Everybody was gone. I didn't know
9 where they went.

10 So I'd stand by the river as a young boy.
11 I still remember this. Hoping that -- we used to hear,
12 like, these people from Fort Chip used to come and visit,
13 come looking for fish -- come and visit, looking for dry
14 meat or whatever. And they'd come and visit. We were
15 about seven miles from Fort Chip. It's called Four Forks,
16 and it's where there was good fishing because four rivers
17 met at that place. It used to be a government dog camp or
18 whatever one time.

19 But the river is towards Fort Chip and you
20 can hear motors coming quite a ways. You could hear them.
21 And every time I hear a motor, I was sick of them. Oh, it
22 may be them. My family will come and pick me up and take
23 me with them. I stood there for several times. Nobody
24 ever came. So they were gone. I never heard of them for a
25 while. People used to ask where I was born and all that.

1 And I used to joke with them. I dont know, maybe to cover
2 my pain or my shame. I just tell them maybe I was a result
3 of a one-night stand. But she gave me up early.

4 Back -- and I saw this and I was part of
5 it growing up -- the Catholic, the church, very strong in
6 my community. Everything revolved around the church. And
7 we never questioned -- and I saw them, they never
8 questioned the church or the police or anything like --
9 they never question it, right? So I often think about my
10 mother and wonder what she went through. What she saw.
11 What happened.

12 And I want to share a little bit of that
13 with you from what I saw in my family. And that's not to
14 knock down my family. That was just the reality. I saw
15 things growing up with my family that no child should see.
16 Right from a young age. But there was lots of alcohol and
17 violence all around me.

18 And I'm going to share that one dream I
19 had as a young boy, and I believe that was a vision given
20 to me by Creator and the messengers at a young age all
21 ready to watch over me. And that dream, I happened to be
22 on the other side of the river where my mom lived. But
23 across the river there was also -- and this is reality,
24 there were two red horses and one black horse, and they
25 were wild. I used to watch them across the river, just

1 marvel at them running over there.

2 But in my dream, I was over there and I
3 saw those horses. All of a sudden that black one started
4 chasing me, and I just got freaked out, so I -- right
5 behind, there were fishermen as well, and we used to have
6 these little -- what do you call them sheds by the river,
7 where we hang out nets? Anyway. So the horse chased me
8 and so I climbed. I climbed on one of those little
9 buildings, and I could tell he was angry at me, you know.
10 And he kept circling around me, kept circling. I woke up
11 that way.

12 Ever since I was a young boy, I've always
13 dreamt about horses and I'll speak more about it a little
14 later, but I knew it -- like, that really freaked me out.
15 But that dream was to show me of all the chaos that was
16 around me; what I was seeing, the violence, the incest that
17 was going on around me. I saw my grandmother drunk,
18 fighting, being dragged on the floor by her hair, being
19 pulled. I saw her being beaten. And I saw something that
20 no child should see.

21 I woke up in the middle of the night.
22 They had a party or drinking. My grandmother was passed
23 out on the floor. My grandfather, my mushroom, was sitting
24 there. He threw the blankets off. My grandmother was
25 naked. I was only 4 or 5 years old and they were drunk.

1 And he wanted me to touch my grandmother's privates. I
2 didn't but I saw her. No child should see stuff like that.
3 I also saw my sister getting raped by a relative. I was so
4 scared that I had blocked that part out, but the memory
5 came back later. But I saw that. But I saw the violence.
6 I don't know if this is a blessing or -- anyway, I got
7 thrown into residential school.

8 So, I didn't see much of what happened
9 back home. But I saw, you know, in residential school. I
10 was sexually abused in there. I spoke about it when they
11 had the residential thing all came out and the inquiry and
12 all that, where we tell our story, so I told that. So, I
13 had fear in me right from -- as a young boy, darkness in my
14 soul. It's just dark. I wasn't a happy boy. I'd learn to
15 hide. I learned to run. On my records, you'll see my name
16 on there. But you see my parents, it says my mother,
17 Helen. On the other side, no father. So, question mark.
18 So I teased people, "Yeah, I'm immaculate conception,"
19 whatever. I don't know who's my real father.

20 My grandmother shared a little bit of
21 stories about who my father was, and she mentioned a Burke
22 family, and she remembers this. She says they wanted me.
23 Then she says they wanted to adopt me. She said, "But I
24 told them no, I'll take care of him." Well, it's good to
25 know someone wanted me. In residential school, like I

1 shared earlier, I was sexually molested by a boy. The
2 shameful part of it -- as a young boy, I got excited too.
3 So, for a while there, I thought I was gay, but I wasn't
4 really, you know. But it was kind of confusing for me.
5 I've done a lot of work over the years to deal with that.
6 A lot of forgiveness. A lot of letting go. So, I will
7 show pictures of my mother.

8 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Peter, we're
9 ready for the pictures. You take the lead.

10 MR. JAMES JENKA: That's my mother, Helen
11 Louise Ratfat, and that's when they were in the trapline.
12 I wasn't there. Those pictures are mainly from my sister
13 Dorothy Tachikep (ph), and Dorothy is the older one. And
14 there's my brother Donald, my half-brother Donald and my
15 half-sister Diane Sequin (ph). And the one is my half-
16 sister Dorothy. We're all same mothers. There they are in
17 trapline and that's probably that house across the river
18 from where we were living.

19 I was never in that house, but my sister -
20 - and they'll probably talk more about this in B.C.
21 They're the ones my sister Sequin, Dorothy -- not Dorothy,
22 Diane -- for three years ago, there was a missing thing
23 happening in Edmonton. And all this time, here we thought
24 that she was reported missing all these years. We thought
25 there was a search that happened but nothing happened.

1 Just three years ago, it was the first time she was
2 reported missing. And I still remember my grandfather
3 Peter receiving a call. I still remember that when I was
4 in Chip. But my grandfather doesn't understand English.
5 So whoever talked to him, we believe, was probably about my
6 mother.

7 Once again, those are in the trapline.
8 I'm not too sure who was that. I think that might be
9 Donald because he's a little older. Beautiful woman.
10 Beautiful woman, my mother. Anyway, my sister finally
11 reported her missing in Edmonton. And before I get there,
12 let me backtrack a little bit. Sorry about that.

13 After Fort Chip, my grandmother passed
14 away in 1973, the love of my life, and that's when my world
15 came to an end. After she died, I felt all alone in Fort
16 Chip. I even begged my nieces and my sister Marina to take
17 me with her. I still remember as a young boy standing in
18 the cold winter going out of Fort Chip going north. I was
19 standing there begging my sister to take me with her. And
20 I still remember her looking back just sad. She couldn't
21 take me. I guess she lived up here in Yellowknife at that
22 time.

23 But after my grandmother passed away, I
24 felt abandoned. Everybody just left. I felt all alone.
25 Next thing I knew, I started going to foster homes. Thank

1 God it was in Fort Chip. They didn't take me, you know --
2 there were some families, three families that took me in.
3 But even though I was in those families, I never felt like
4 I belonged. I just think from a young age, I felt like I
5 didn't belong anywhere. I felt like I was searching,
6 forever searching, for a place to feel at home.

7 Anyways. So, I went through my high
8 school. I'm the first one in my family to graduate. You
9 know, proud of myself and all that. Two weeks after
10 graduation I went to work in Fort McMurray in the mine. I
11 was making a lot of money. Then I met my wife, my first
12 wife. That was my dream as a young boy growing up in Fort
13 Chip. I was ashamed to be an Indian. I was ashamed to be
14 who I am or who I was. My dream was to go find me a nice
15 beautiful white woman. Go build a house like in the books,
16 right? In school, you read everything is all white, with a
17 house and a -- what do you call it? A green lawn and all
18 that. Oh, yeah. Have a family.

19 Well guess what, I got it. I got my
20 beautiful white wife. I'm making lots of money. I got my
21 house. I got my children. But something was missing.
22 Something was missing. I couldn't -- I was an angry young
23 man lost in that world out there. And I want to apologize
24 to my older children right here, right this very moment.
25 And I also want to apologize to my first wife Heather.

1 That woman was strong.

2 As a result, I mean, I'm not blaming
3 anything. I'm not blaming anyone. As a result of how I
4 was raised as a young boy, as a result of what I saw, as a
5 result of not being taught or being shown how to be a man;
6 how to be a boy, how to be a man. I followed what I saw.
7 I, too, became abusive. I, too, was physically abusive
8 towards my first wife. Emotionally abusive. For lack of a
9 better word, I was an asshole. A real asshole. If I knew
10 me back then, I, too, would have left me.

11 I was an angry young man and thank God for
12 Heather, she stuck with me as long as she could because she
13 said she loved me. She tried to love me, this broken man.
14 I didn't know any better. Finally she left. Finally she
15 had enough. And I honour her today. I honour her for
16 having the courage, the strength to leave. Yeah, I was
17 devastated. I was lost, you know, but I couldn't blame
18 her. I would have left me too. My ex-wife passed away two
19 years ago. She was still angry at me for not being there
20 as a father to my children. For being an asshole husband.

21 But I honour her spirit each and every day
22 and I say thank you for bringing three beautiful children
23 into this world. They're all grown now, my children. They
24 all have children of their own. And like the rest of us,
25 we struggle and all that, try to make a living. I wasn't

1 there for them when they were young, but I'm there for them
2 today. So I want to honour my ex-wife Heather, say thank
3 you to her and I apologize to my oldest children. If I had
4 to do it all over again, I would do it right in a moment
5 right now. My children didn't want to talk to me for a
6 long time. They thought I abandoned them. And in a way, I
7 did, but I believe I didn't.

8 After my wife left, took the kids, my
9 world crashed. I started drinking again. I didn't know
10 how to deal with the pain. So I drank. I didn't care,
11 wanted to die. Then one day I woke up after six years of
12 self-abuse, and it was the best thing that happened to me.
13 That's almost 25 years ago. A lot of healing has happened
14 since then.

15 Anyway, while I was married to Heather and
16 I was working, my late uncle Wilford called me one day
17 suddenly. Said, "There's a girl there just called. Her
18 name is Diane. So, she's looking for her mother, Helen,
19 but I didn't tell her who you were, so I just gave her your
20 number." So, shortly thereafter, I got a call from my
21 sister, Diane. Never known her in my life. Never saw her.
22 First thing she says, "Hi, I heard that your my uncle," she
23 says, "I'm looking for my mother, Helen." I said, "That's
24 my mother." She said, "Really? Oh, my God. Wait. I'll
25 call you right back." Next thing you know, my other

1 sister, Dorothy, was also on the other end. They're all
2 excited. We're all excited. My little daughter, Jennifer,
3 was only eight months old. I was in my what -- 22, 23,
4 maybe, something like that. Anyway, they invited me to go
5 and see them. And they were living in Red Deer at that
6 time.

7 So, my ex-wife Heather and I and my
8 daughter, we drove down. On the farmhouse and we saw them
9 for the first time. They came up to me as if -- and
10 they're all just looking at me, touching me and all that,
11 it felt weird, like, get the hell out of here. They were
12 touching me. "You're our brother, oh, same eyes and
13 everything." I was, "Shut up." No, I'm just teasing. But
14 I was happy. I was excited. Then I met Doug for the first
15 time, their father. That guy that mom left me for, right?
16 Eight months after I was born, she marries this guy and
17 kept me a secret. Doug didn't even know I existed. That's
18 how a secret of it was. They didn't even know I existed.
19 They always thought I was an uncle or whatever, right?
20 Anyway. So, anyway, basically, I started getting to know
21 my family, and we were never close. We're never close like
22 if you grew up with someone, you know. So, we're never
23 close.

24 Where am I -- oh, yeah, they did cook the
25 best vegetable soup. I'm a meat eater, all right, but they

1 cooked anyway. I ate it. There's no meat in this.
2 Anyways, so -- actually, Doug was more interested in meat
3 than my sisters were at that time. He kept asking me
4 questions about Fort Chip and all this stuff. It's
5 hilarious. If you want to know about Fort Chip, go over
6 there, right, because Doug kept my six siblings away from
7 Fort Chip and the Ratfat family.

8 We never -- anyway, shortly I was with my
9 daughter, Ally's mom at that time, Brenda. All of a
10 sudden, I get a call -- this was years later no -- from my
11 cousin, Dennis. He says, "There's somebody in Fort Chip, a
12 girl. She says she's in Fort Chip looking for her mother,
13 so I gave her your number because I think she's your
14 sister." I said really? Sure enough, I got a call from my
15 youngest sister, Carolyn. She was living in LA. She was
16 looking for her family. So, finally, the whole family, I
17 knew them all now, right? Now we're not close either, but
18 I knew who my siblings are.

19 So, over time during my drinking stupor, I
20 was trying to kill myself; I was being negligent; I was
21 being irresponsible; my child maintenance was way up there.
22 \$60,000, I owed by the time I sobered up plus about 10,
23 \$15,000 of other bills. How in the hell was I going to pay
24 all that off? But before I met my daughter's mother, I
25 managed to sober up.

1 I managed to sober up. Started going to
2 AA. I started going to sweat lodges. But three or four
3 days sober, I was just still hungover, shaking, and stuff
4 like that. I felt broken and lost. My cousin Helen gave
5 sweetgrass, came and visit me. We had a nice little chat,
6 and she said, "You ever pray? I said, "No, I don't pray.
7 Pray to what? What they taught me in church? I don't
8 believe in that. Pray to something I don't see?" Anyway.
9 You know, I was just hungover. I was like, Get away from
10 me. Anyways, she says, "Try it." I said okay. Anyway, I
11 grab that sweetgrass and I held it. Start thinking. But
12 soon I pray like I never prayed in my life.

13 Somebody heard me. Somebody heard me
14 because a lot of gifted elders came on my path. Teachers,
15 both male and female, showed me how to be a better human
16 being. One thing I could never do for the longest time was
17 to forgive me. I had a hard time forgiving me. I had two
18 beautiful daughters after I sobered up. I met their
19 mother, my daughter's mother, in a bar of all places. I
20 wasn't drinking. I just wanted -- I loved two stepping. I
21 just wanted to go to a bar, right. And her mother doesn't
22 even two step, right, she doesn't even like grungy music.
23 What she doing in a bar? That's where I met her. And I
24 asked her if she two stepped. She said, "No, I don't know
25 how." "But I'll try," she said. She tried. Anyways, she

1 caught my heart. Yeah. Through her, I got two beautiful
2 daughters. And now, I have a young beautiful
3 granddaughter.

4 But when I sobered up, then I started
5 training. I wanted to be a helper. I always wanted to be
6 a helper, but I wanted to be able to help out best I could.
7 Because I was a broken man, and to all my experiences and
8 stuff like that, I think I could be a good helper. So I
9 started training in alcohol and drug addictions, tried out
10 university, tried out in these different programs. But
11 some of my greatest teachings, greatest teachers were from
12 our elders, these gifted elders, and hard work. I've come
13 a long way. Today, I carry a pipe. Today, I carry a lodge
14 as well. Teachings. Never ever thought I'd carry a pipe,
15 let alone a sweat lodge. Me? This little asshole carrying
16 a pipe? When I received the pipe, grandfathers said:

17 "This man, mini-me, is a good helper.
18 He's been coming down here every
19 year, never complaining, helping out
20 any way he can. That's why we're
21 going to give him that pipe. To help
22 him and to help others. Same thing
23 with that sweat lodge."

24 Me, broken man. So I carry that. Now,
25 it's up to me, as my responsibility, to walk on the right

1 side of that pipe. Do my best not to harm people.
2 Remember, I still have that anger within me. I still have
3 these old behaviours that I try my best to keep at bay. If
4 you talk about missing and murdered women, this is what
5 this is all about. But we're part of you too, isn't it?
6 We're broken. This is as you are, and we're healing, but
7 without you, we're nothing.

8 Back in the day, I saw women as sexual
9 objects, beautiful little sexual objects. That's, you
10 know, because that's what I was taught. But these elders,
11 these teachers, they taught me -- and I heard somebody say
12 here, backbone of our nation taught me to respect the
13 feminine energy again. Ladies are more than sexual
14 objects. My elders taught me, and I share it right here,
15 women are more powerful than men. That's the way the whole
16 scheme of life is. Women are here. Men are here. Women
17 give life. The best comfort I could find as a man, as a
18 human being, was in the arms of a woman. When they embrace
19 you, "I love you, James," took me a long time to embrace
20 that, but I kept pushing it away. Look what the women did
21 to me, that's that I thought in my life. They were never
22 there for me. They were drunks. Sexual objects. They
23 were never there.

24 So it took me a long time to trust again,
25 but that's what I was longing for, was for that feminine

1 energy, that love to be embraced once again as my real
2 mother would hold me. I may never get that opportunity.
3 And so, we're broken as well. And I just wanted to
4 apologize to every mother, every sister, every daughter,
5 every woman, sorry for hurting you. Very sorry. From this
6 very moment on till the day I die, I'll do everything that
7 I can in my power, not only as a pipe carrier, as a helper,
8 to help our women heal, boost them up again -- to lift them
9 up again where they belong. So, it's like that poem said.
10 Quit killing our women. Enough.

11 So, I could sit here and talk forever.
12 I'm a good bullshitter, right? Anyways. So let me just
13 move on a little bit here. I try not to focus away like
14 with my mother and stuff like that. That's what it's all
15 about. And my dream is: I hope we find her someday. They
16 took our DNAs, like my sister's DNA, so hopefully there's
17 bones out there or something like that that might, you
18 know, match to find my mother.

19 I've went to ceremonies; I've asked about
20 her; I've made offerings; but for the first ones, I've
21 asked Poundmaker's Lodge. There was an elder there who was
22 doing a UAP ceremony where they tie up the elder and people
23 are getting an opportunity to ask questions or request
24 something and it came to me, and I said -- before I
25 started, I said, "I just wanted to see if we could find my

1 mother." So as that ceremony started and it came to me to
2 talk to me, somebody else piped up over there, so they
3 never answered my question or my request. But the elder
4 came up to me after. He says -- he apologized to me
5 saying, "Sorry on behalf of my grandfathers. They were
6 going to talk to you and somebody just asked a question and
7 they just shifted, but this is what they showed me," he
8 said. All he showed me was a skull with a mouth wide open.
9 That's it. That's all he showed me. At that point, she
10 must be gone, dead somewhere.

11 So, a few years later, I asked again. I
12 asked the grandfathers for help, and all they told me was,
13 "We'll open the way for you, for your family to find her.
14 We will open a way." That's all they said. They didn't
15 say when. So, I talked to my teacher, Joe, about different
16 things -- we talk about different things, and we talk about
17 this, and we talk about requesting of elders. And so, this
18 is one of my recommendations.

19 I know in the past, going to medicine
20 people for help, requesting to find lost people as far as
21 the police and the government are concerned, it's all
22 hokey-pokey to them. So, one of my recommendations is for
23 the government and police to please have an open mind.
24 Some of these elders, these teachers, are very gifted, and
25 they have -- and they're close to the Creator and the

1 messengers. The messengers are really close to them. But
2 these elders are reluctant. When people come to them to
3 look for someone, they are reluctant to do anything because
4 next thing you know, the police are going to be poking
5 their head around, saying, "Well, how do you know that?
6 How do you know this? How do you know that person there?"
7 Well, grandfathers know where they are, you know. But it's
8 all hokey-pokey, right? I've seen these medicine people
9 make liars out of doctors. I've seen people with cancers,
10 right? Cancers healed. I've seen it happen. So, with our
11 Creator and the messengers, nothing is impossible, even
12 finding our loved ones, okay?

13 I also got scammed too. What do you call
14 those? Popcorn elders, right? I got scammed right in
15 Edmonton. "Oh, your mother's still alive down in Toronto.
16 You call this Friendship Centre down there. They know who
17 she is and all that." Well, I got all excited and I went,
18 and I end up nothing. All this time, we found out these
19 two guys were scammers. Taking money. So, we have to
20 watch out for those, too. So I do know gifted people,
21 really gifted people, whether they want me want to their
22 names forward to help the cause is up to them. But I think
23 that's where we need to go as well -- is to try a winner
24 when we can. Try a winner where we can. Should I talk
25 about -- no, that's hearsay -- about Trail of Tears?

1 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: It's hearsay, but
2 hearsay is admissible. There have been things that people
3 have been providing throughout, which is hearsay, and we
4 are looking for patterns. And so, as long as you believe
5 that there's a possibility of reliability with the hearsay,
6 feel free to provide it to the commissioner.

7 MR. JAMES JENKA: Couple years ago --
8 maybe not a couple of years ago -- a year ago, we all heard
9 of a Trail of Tears, and one of my friends in Whitehorse,
10 they did ceremony, and the grandfather said, "There's two
11 white guys." And all they said, "They live on the edge of
12 the city that are causing all these murders in the Trail of
13 Tears lately." And they said they will be found, these two
14 white guys. Anyways.

15 So, we're going to talk about the impact a
16 little bit here, right? Growing up without my mother,
17 knowing that she's my mother, and not knowing her -- like I
18 said, like a chapter missing in my life. There's no
19 closure. Just always wondering, you know. Back in the
20 day, in my community, I believe it was a sin to have a
21 child out of wedlock, and that was huge, right, you know,
22 back in the day. So, she wasn't married, she was pregnant,
23 and she fell in love with Doug, but she gave me away,
24 right? So, I never had that mother-child bond at a very
25 early age, and through my studies and stuff like that, it

1 was very important that a child feels safe, has that bond
2 with her mother. Well, that was torn away from me, so I
3 spent most of my life looking for a mother. It was hard
4 for me to get close to fully open up, you know. It was
5 hard.

6 I've already talked about residential
7 school, how it's a cold environment, and I don't remember
8 anybody ever giving me a hug in residential school, you
9 know. But I spend most of my life trying to find a place
10 to belong and when you're in pain and you're always looking
11 in the past, it's hard to see what's in front of you.
12 That's what I've been doing most of my life. And sometimes
13 I miss what's here. Not anymore. I know it's here. I
14 have a daughter here. I have a granddaughter. I don't
15 know if I'll ever find my mother. I don't know if it'll
16 happen. I hope we do, to bring closure to that. I pray
17 for it.

18 I also have a sister that was found in
19 Victoria, in a back alley in Victoria. That's her daughter
20 here, Toni, and she'll speak more on that tomorrow in a
21 private -- so there's that. Last time I spoke to my sister
22 was in 1988, and she passed away a couple of years later.
23 Her name is Marina. And I think my sister Marina was in
24 Toronto at the time. All she said to me was, "Sorry, I
25 can't make the funeral -- or the wake and a funeral for her

1 brother. "I miss home," she said. Well, she came home two
2 years later in a casket.

3 So, my family, my birth family, has been
4 torn apart, scattered all over, through residential school,
5 through the alcohol, the drugs. Scattered. My dream is:
6 I hope someday our descendants will be able to come
7 together and heal as a family. They're slowly reconnecting
8 today. So, I think that's it, right?

9 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: You're the boss
10 on knowing whether that is it.

11 MR. JAMES JENKA: Oh, yes. Through all
12 this missing and murdered women, I found my great-great-
13 grandparents, my daughter's great-great-great-grandparents.
14 Thank you to Jim Lin (ph). Thank you so much for helping
15 out to find all this. Thank you.

16 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: The only thing
17 that I would ask is: You still work as a counsellor?

18 MR. JAMES JENKA: Oh, yeah.

19 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And so, there may
20 be some things that you can offer to the commissioner in
21 terms of recommendations, and I know we can find
22 recommendations in much of what you said, but have you put
23 your mind to some things you'd like to provide to the
24 commissioners in the way of recommendations to deal with
25 the systemic causes of violence against women and girls and

1 the LGBT, to spirited people?

2 And also, are there some things you've
3 seen in the current environment perhaps -- or even in the
4 past that you feel are working to empower Indigenous women
5 and girls?

6 And I guess another part of the terms or
7 reference is the commemoration of all the women and girls
8 who are lost and those who have suffered violence. What
9 must we do as human beings to ensure we remember to prevent
10 further loss and suffering in the future?

11 MR. JAMES JENKA: Wow. That's a loaded
12 question. First and foremost, my people, our Native
13 people, have suffered a lot over 500 plus years. Our
14 families have been torn apart. Just imagine just over a
15 hundred years ago, they were shooting our people and
16 throwing them in mass graves. Do I have the answers?
17 Probably not. Can I think of things that might work?
18 Yeah.

19 First and foremost, with the help of the
20 Creator and the messengers, we need to help the women rise,
21 rise up. Now, if you go to different communities and stuff
22 like that, there needs to be more money thrown in towards
23 programs where families can heal. You know, start a
24 makeshift -- I've heard people talk here already about it.
25 I'm not going to -- you know, start little makeshift

1 programs, like little Band-Aid solutions.

2 The medical moral they have here for
3 healing is not worth a shit. The job I'm doing, I only
4 could do so much. There's more I want to do, but I can't
5 because of restrictions as to what I can do. I see when
6 those clients come into the office, the pain and the voice
7 in their eyes stems right back from the community where
8 women are torn apart, where their families are torn apart.
9 So, we need to do more than just providing these little
10 makeshift programs.

11 I heard someone talking about going to the
12 land. Give money to the communities. They know what to
13 do. They know how to heal. Give them directly their
14 money. They don't go through social services or whatever.
15 "We'll give you guys a little of this." All they care
16 about is statistics, numbers. The more numbers, the more
17 money you get, right? That's what we are. I heard
18 somebody talking about earlier. We're more than numbers.
19 So, give the communities the money. They know what to do
20 with it. Let them create what you need. Let the mothers.
21 They know what to do. They got the power, the mothers; to
22 heal, to heal their children, to heal the communities.

23 The men -- yeah, we need to heal as well.
24 We need to become warriors again and protectors instead of
25 drunk and being abusers and rapists and molesters. There

1 needs to be programs for the men. How to be warriors
2 again. Till the day I die -- my children, I'll protect
3 them as best I could. And I hope they find a good man in
4 their life to protect them. Because if they don't, I'll
5 kick their ass. Sorry. But I will, right? I love my
6 girls. I love my granddaughter.

7 So, give the power back to the people.
8 That's what I'm saying. Give it back to the people instead
9 of some bureaucrat sitting over there saying, "Oh, yeah, we
10 should send them to treatment. 42 days or whatever." To
11 me, that's like a little holiday. If you want a really
12 good healing, go back to the land. Go back to the elders,
13 those teachers. Go back to the basics. We have a code
14 like someone is talking. We need people. First and
15 foremost, Creator, and the messengers. Give the power back
16 to the people.

17 Families need to be heard. Families need
18 to be heard. No more secrets. We need to talk about those
19 secrets for families to heal. And we cannot heal through
20 punishment. We cannot heal that way. We cannot heal
21 through shaming. Those secrets to need come out. And I
22 heard people mentioned here -- men mentioned -- couple of
23 people have mentioned, it's tough to hear, but we need to
24 hear stuff like that. The truth come out.

25 We need to talk about the truth and our

1 families. And no one is higher or lower than anybody else.
2 We're all equal. We have future generations to think
3 about. They're the ones that are going to be taking over,
4 just like we took over from our ancestors. I'm not angry
5 with them. I don't hold resentments towards them. Matter
6 of fact, I love them with all my heart. They had rough
7 times too in their life. They did the best that they
8 could. They were broken, too, and it carries on from
9 generation to generation. Hopefully at some point in time,
10 though, government bureaucrats, the white people over
11 there, they'll finally open their eyes and they'll listen,
12 "Oh, we got to stop abusing these people." Hopefully, you
13 know. What's his name? Trudeau and all those kinds. Quit
14 abusing the Native people.

15 I heard an elder say one time, and I had
16 better repeat it here, I think it's a good one, "They're
17 still scared of us. They're still scared of us ever since
18 Columbus landed." I believe that. They're still scared of
19 us because we're waking up our women -- our women are
20 waking up and our elders are coming out of the woodwork,
21 and like I said, you can break us physically, but you'll
22 never break us spiritually. And that's what's kept us
23 going through all these years, is the strength of our
24 spirit. Not only as a single, but as a whole. So, should
25 bring all your weapons. Bring all your lies. Bring all

1 your deceit. Our ancestors are from this land and we will
2 heal. I'm healing. My family's healing. One at a time.
3 So no more secrets. Sound like a poet?

4 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And have you
5 finished with the photos? Are there any more you want to
6 show?

7 MR. JAMES JENKA: We're going to just
8 quickly go through them if you want. Yeah, that's still in
9 a bush.

10 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And who's in this
11 photo?

12 MR. JAMES JENKA: I think that's her aunt
13 or sister-in-law. Something like that. Her husband's aunt
14 or something like that. Dorothy would be know. Yeah.
15 She's way out there in the mountains.

16 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: That's Helene?

17 MR. JAMES JENKA: That's Helene. That's
18 my mother, yeah.

19 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: With the
20 mountains, she's wearing glasses in this picture?

21 MR. JAMES JENKA: Yeah, she used to go
22 down to B.C. and stuff like that.

23 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And this is with
24 a car, again, apparently in the mountains, so it's your mom
25 beside?

1 MR. JAMES JENKA: Yeah. I don't know if
2 they were moving to B.C. at that time. I think they moved
3 to around Quesnel and Prince George, that area.

4 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: So, we're on the
5 next photo and there's a child with a --

6 MR. JAMES JENKA: That's probably Dorothy,
7 I think.

8 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay.

9 MR. JAMES JENKA: And there they are in
10 the park. And that's Marina.

11 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: So this is a
12 black and white picture.

13 MR. JAMES JENKA: This is the first photo
14 that she saw of her mother. That's Toni's mother. That's
15 my sister, Marina. That's when they found the back alley
16 in Victoria. My sister again. My sister and my mother.
17 It looks like Fish Camp. Residential school. That's
18 Toni's mother, Helen -- I mean Marina.

19 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: So this is when
20 Marina was at residential school.

21 MR. JAMES JENKA: Yeah.

22 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And so, there's a
23 gentleman on the left --

24 MR. JAMES JENKA: She's the one on the
25 right in the bottom. Hilda's holding here. Her shoulders.

1 Her little scarf on. The smile on her face.

2 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay. And
3 there's about ten people in that picture. I'm just kind of
4 trying to recognize them for identifying them for the
5 record.

6 MR. JAMES JENKA: Those are the people
7 there.

8 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Yeah, we don't to
9 need identify all the people.

10 MR. JAMES JENKA: No.

11 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay.

12 MR. JAMES JENKA: And this is the youngest
13 picture I found of my mother. She's up in the top-left
14 corner. You can enhance it a little bit if you want -- or
15 zoom in or whatever -- but there's another picture of her
16 anyway. Maybe you can see it clear. Nope. Anyway, that's
17 my mother in the top. She was the youngest. I don't know
18 who those other ladies are. Maybe Ray knows. I'm just
19 kidding. Anyway.

20 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And then, I know
21 you brought a binder and I just want to make sure we've
22 dealt with everything because I know this white binder --
23 oh, there's another picture. I see. Okay.

24 MR. JAMES JENKA: You can zoom in on that.
25 To me, this is a very powerful picture. Can you see it?

1 You want to take it out of the plastic? Anyway. And
2 there's my grandmother that's on the far right in the
3 middle of my aunt Louise (ph). On the left is another
4 girl, Helene, my mother, and Toni's mother is the little
5 girl. So it's a pretty old picture. Backbone of our
6 family.

7 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: That would not be
8 part of the commission, but I just wanted to make sure
9 there was nothing in there that you wanted to refer to.

10 MR. JAMES JENKA: No, it's supposedly
11 family pictures and stuff like that. Yeah, that's pretty
12 well -- we got some records, like I said, from Jim Lin,
13 baptism records, marriage certificates or whatever, death -
14 - funeral stuff I gave you.

15 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay. Thank you,
16 James. And now, I'm going to ask Alysha whether or not she
17 wants to say something.

18 MS. ALYSHA HANKINSON: No.

19 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay. So, Mr.
20 Commissioner, do you have any questions for James?

21 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Thank you.
22 I don't think I have any additional questions. So, James,
23 I just want to thank you very much for coming and telling
24 us about your mother and the impact that that's had on your
25 life and sharing that with us and thank you for sharing all

1 the lovely photos as well.

2 On behalf of the inquiry, I also
3 appreciate your recommendations and your insights that you
4 brought forward for us this afternoon, so thank you very
5 much. And we do have a small gift as appreciation for you
6 coming and participating and sharing, and I'm going to ask
7 Grandmother Blu if she'll assist with.

8 GRANDMOTHER BLU WATERS: So, on behalf of
9 the commission, we would like to offer you this eagle
10 feather to help you to continue with your journey and to
11 help you with your seeking so that the answers can come to
12 you from those ones that fly the highest and to appreciate
13 your words and your story that you've given so that your
14 mother's information can be carried and recommendations can
15 be made. So we want to offer this to you and also this
16 package of Labrador tea, so that you can make yourself a
17 nice cup of tea afterwards. Thank you. (Speaking in
18 native language).

19 MR. JAMES JENKA: Thank you. (Speaking in
20 native language).

21 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And now -- what
22 would you like now?

23 MR. JAMES JENKA: Are we done?

24 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Yes, well, we're
25 done the formal piece. And normally, we would adjourn at

1 this point, but I understand there's something else you
2 want to do.

3 MR. JAMES JENKA: Just a couple of things.
4 One, I'm going to honour the feminine -- the female side of
5 life with this song that was gifted to me by my elder and
6 teachers. I got a friend back here that knows it too. So,
7 I'm going to sing this song, and I'll pass this song on to
8 -- one of the ladies from the group -- commission. So,
9 she's going to learn that song and hopefully she'll sing
10 it.

11 And this belongs to the feminine energy.
12 And the story behind the song -- long time ago, there was
13 this kind grandmother. Beautiful woman. And a medicine
14 woman. Passed away. Now she's one of the star people, and
15 she gifted us with this song to honour the female side of
16 life. So I just want to honour all our murdered and
17 missing women and girls and to all you ladies in here.

18 So I'll sing the song for you if you want
19 stand with me. And after we're done the song, I did fill
20 the pipe if anybody -- we can smoke the pipe up here,
21 right? If anybody wants to smoke pipe with me, they can.
22 The only thing I ask is not that I'm being discriminatory,
23 it's just protocol that women on their time -- not to touch
24 the pipe. We'll still honour you. It's not to exclude you
25 or anything, but when women -- what I was taught -- when

1 women are on their time, it's a powerful time for them.
2 It's a very sacred time for them, and we don't want --
3 there's a preparation for new life there happening, and we
4 don't want to mess anything up with our sacred instruments,
5 so we just ask for ladies that are on their time not to
6 touch the pipe. But both male and female can touch this
7 pipe. Okay.

8 So I'll sing this song, for lack of a
9 better word, the sacred feminine. I hope I don't start
10 choking. Little bits of food flying out of my teeth.
11 (Speaking in native language). It's called "Angel Woman
12 Song."

13 --- (Song performed by James Jenka)

14 MR. JAMES JENKA: Thank you, everyone.
15 So, if anybody wants to come join me with the pipe, can.

16 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: So the session is
17 completed now and adjourned and there is a break. What
18 time do you recommend that we come back. Did somebody have
19 -- 15 minutes? Yes. So, we'll readjourn in 15 minutes.
20 Thank you very much. And James is inviting you again to
21 come forward if you'd like to join him in smoking the pipe.

22 --- Recess at 3:59 p.m.

23 --- Upon resuming at 4:52 p.m.

24 --- **Exhibits (code: P01P09P0202)**

25 EXHIBIT 1: George Elliott Clarke poem

1 entitled "For the Murdered and the
2 Missing: A Spiritual" (one page).
3 EXHIBIT 2: Folder containing eleven
4 digital images and one Powerpoint
5 presentation provided by the family
6 and displayed during their public
7 testimony.

8 **Hearing #4**

9 **Witness: Sandra Faye Lockhart**

10 **Heard by Commissioner Qajaq Robinson**

11 **Commission Counsel: Meredith Porter**

12 **Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Arlene Hachey,**

13 **Joanne Erasmus and Maggie Mercredi**

14 **Clerk: Trudy Mckinnon**

15 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

16 MR. MEREDITH PORTER: Okay. I think we're
17 going to get started. And just before we do get started, I
18 know that previously there's been a reminder for everyone
19 to turn their cell phones off. So, I'll echo that once
20 again if everybody could ensure their ringers are off while
21 we're proceeding. That would be greatly appreciated.
22 Thank you. Okay.

23 Well, I'm Meredith Porter, and I'm
24 commission counsel here, and we are here with Sandra
25 Lockhart. And before we get started, I understand that

1 Commissioner Robinson, you will be exchanging tobacco as a
2 promising with the witness.

3 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: (Speaking in
4 native language). I'd like to offer you some tobacco, and
5 in doing so, my intentions are to receive your truth if you
6 wish to give it to me, to hear of your experiences and your
7 recommendations.

8 MS. SANDRA LOCKHART: Merci. I will
9 accept the tobacco.

10 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you.

11 MR. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you. And now,
12 I'll pass the mic for introductions of the individuals that
13 you brought with you here today.

14 MS. ARLENE HACHEY: My name is Arlene
15 Hachey, and I'm here as a support person for Sandra
16 Lockhart.

17 MS. JOANNE ERASMUS: Hi, my name is Joanne
18 Erasmus, and I'm here to support Sandra Lockhart. Merci.

19 MS. MAGGIE MERCREDI: Hi, my name is
20 Maggie Mercredi, and I'm also here to support Sandra.
21 Merci.

22 MS. BEV BAGMOLHOL: Hi, my name is Bev
23 Bagmolhol (ph), I'm here for emotional and spiritual
24 support. Merci.

25 MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you. And so,

1 now, Sandra I'm going to pass you the mic and invite you to
2 share what it is you have come here to tell us today.

3 MS. SANDRA LOCKHART: I'm trying to pull
4 myself together because I spent so much time looking at the
5 past from who I am today that I'm finding that it's very
6 emotionally crippling to do that, so I want to bring my
7 past into who I am today because my strength is here today.
8 So, I'd like to acknowledge someone in here. It's a woman
9 I've watched over the years. She's got a lot of strength.
10 I was very, very pleased to see her.

11 It's Marie Wilson. She's here with us
12 today, and it really filled my heart because I know that
13 doing the work you're doing -- I know how hard it is for
14 me. I can't imagine -- because we're all related. We all
15 feel each other, you know. And to hear it day in, day out,
16 day in, day out. And we need to tell our stories. So, I'm
17 going to share what you shared with me. She gave me her
18 mother's lipstick to hold and she said to me, "You know, my
19 mother passed ten years ago," and she said that when she
20 goes through things like this, she puts on her mother's
21 lipstick on her lips because it's like her mother has
22 kissed her, and I just -- I could feel that, so I just want
23 to honour your mother and yourself as well because that's
24 the heart of women.

25 So, to kind of ground me, I have some

1 pictures, and I'd like to start with them because they kind
2 of bring who I am. So, you know, there's traditional ways
3 of introducing ourselves, but the pictures will help me
4 stay grounded to do that, so if we could start it with
5 them. You know my Christian name, it's Sandra Lockhart,
6 and I'm -- my birth home is Mistawasis First Nation in
7 Saskatchewan. I'm Cree Dakota.

8 When I got married -- we have mobility
9 right, just like Canadians do. Under the treaty, I can be
10 transferred to my husband's band. So, I'm saying things to
11 sort of educate, too, like -- I didn't cost -- when we
12 transferred between bands, we don't cost the band anything
13 because everything that I need to be part of the band comes
14 with me; my education, my health care. That all comes, so
15 I don't cost anybody -- I'm not a burden, right? And I'm
16 not a burden to Canada society either. And it took me a
17 long time to figure that out.

18 So when I transferred, I'm now a citizen
19 of Lutsel K'e First Nations, so it's my home. But I know
20 where my birth home is. But this is my chappon (ph), and
21 that's like my great-grandfather. It's Henry Two Bears
22 (ph). All my pictures are in Lutsel K'e. Otherwise, I
23 would have my grandmother whose name was Mary Good Voice.
24 I have a picture of the two of them. They're Dakota. They
25 actually came across with my great-grandparents. There is

1 no differentiation between -- I'm using Cree although they
2 were Dakota -- between male and female, they're both
3 chappons. They're greats.

4 My chappon, she was carrying my kookum
5 when they came in the Trail of Tears. And so, they stopped
6 and they travelled I think up to Manitoba way, an elder had
7 told me several years ago, that Manitoba was the centre of
8 North America, and that my people, Dakota -- his
9 understanding of history is: We used to come up this way,
10 and we would travel along rivers. And the rivers were
11 always in places of no war because it was so sacred.
12 Because water was something that every human being and
13 everything on the planet needed, so you didn't -- you
14 couldn't own that in any frame.

15 And that reminded me that, you know, a lot
16 of things -- there are people that have acculturated --
17 it's like ownership of the land, and there's no language
18 for that when you go back to the old language. So that's
19 why we made treaties for coexistence. But we had to
20 acculturate ideologies, you know, that are very foreign to
21 our languages and our life experience. And when I try to
22 talk with my grandchildren today, I'm like, "You don't own
23 the earth." They get confused and it's hard to remember
24 that. And that's why it's about coexistence, right?

25 So they came and where they first settled

1 was in Prince Albert, I don't know if anybody here knows
2 where Prince Albert is, but they have a penitentiary. And
3 my grandmother says that the Saskatchewan government
4 decided they wanted to put a prison there, so they had to
5 move on. You have to remember, people used to call Dakota
6 "Lakota Sioux," so -- and I'm going to kind of use that
7 language to just go back an era. But the Sioux had no
8 rights in Canada because he were Canada already, right?

9 But the people understood all my relations
10 and sharing the land so what happened was -- according to
11 my -- okay. In Dakota, there's no such thing as first
12 cousins, so I have lots of sisters although I'm the only
13 one in the family. Okay. So my sisters told me last night
14 that Sturgeon Lake First Nations, what is now called
15 Wahpeton, is -- they gave up some of their land so that the
16 Dakota could live there. Or the Sioux, for my grandfather.

17 So they moved and lived in Wahpeton A and
18 Wahpeton B, and what had happened with a lot of their --
19 because my chapon had the ability to see. And I know the
20 Canada government was very afraid because they fought the
21 Americans for their existence and for what they believed
22 for their right to live. And we hear about custard, and
23 you hear all this stuff, it's pretty Hollywood, but there's
24 a lot of truth in it.

25 So, they gave birth to -- and I got to

1 child. I mean, she had a half-brother, but we didn't that
2 know because my grandfather, my chappon, Henry Two Bears,
3 has married before, that woman before her mom. So when
4 they came over, he was an older, older boy. But her roots'
5 like mine, she moved to Canada -- what was called Canada --
6 but her home is Devil's Lake, and that's the Jesuit's name
7 of it because the water used to rise and fall where they
8 were with the moon, which is very powerful, because, you
9 know, the women are connected to the moon. But the Jesuit
10 saw it as the devil's place.

11 So my roots are there and my grandmother's
12 spirit and her mother -- like that flows through my blood.
13 So I was asked by someone, "How did you get where I am
14 today," and I said, "What a good question. I really don't
15 know." But when I was putting together the pictures, she
16 came to me and now I know it was prayer. You know, I pray.
17 I don't apologize for my faith anymore, right, it's
18 confusing at times, but I still know that I exist. I'm a
19 recovered addict. I'm not a recovering one. I've
20 recovered. My mind has been restored. I now have respect
21 for alcohol because it has its own nature, and I respect it
22 today. I don't mess around with it, right? And I know
23 that I need to keep growing and I need to be responsible
24 for my behaviours.

25 But I wanted you to meet her because she

1 was a strong woman. She taught -- they named a school
2 after my grandmother had another grandfather. The only one
3 I knew, which was Joe Duquette, and they named a school
4 after him in Saskatoon. She taught him everything. And
5 when he left to go to the spirit world, it was like she
6 didn't mean anything, right, and I understood that she
7 developed dementia. Some people, like my cousin, Judy, who
8 was watching her, people were losing her before she was
9 gone, and I, as a nurse, had to work with dementia
10 patients. I know I don't have to apologize because it's my
11 loss, but I think I was very fortunate. That even though I
12 went through internalizing all that colonization stuff --
13 and I'll get into that later -- my grandma still loved me
14 and wanted to pray for me, and when she passed away that
15 Christmas Day, I was in Lutsel K'e, and I was -- I would
16 have not seen it anyway by the time I fled out of the
17 community into Yellowknife to back home, so she came to me
18 in a vision.

19 So she left me something, that we have our
20 own teachings about all that, right, but this is not the
21 place for it. So I talk to my sisters who follow a lot of
22 those teachings, and I was always, Oh, you're making that
23 up. You know, that twisted sister stuff, but it was true.
24 So that was my grandmother. So I have a lot of strong
25 strength in me. That is not mine to manipulate. Thank

1 goodness.

2 And I had a lot -- what I called in
3 English. I don't know how to say it -- I used to speak as
4 a child but I, like everybody else, lost it. But I can
5 feel the languages, like I was sharing with a woman when
6 she was speaking in her language. I said I couldn't
7 understand it but boy, could I feel it. So we know the
8 truth regardless of what language it's spoken. We can feel
9 it. So that's what kept me going. And I've been shot at,
10 stabbed at, all kinds of stuff, and there's no reason I
11 should be here today in the state that I am.

12 So I phoned a good friend of mine,
13 Josephine Mackenzie (ph), and I said, "You know, they're
14 talking about suicide." Can you give the next picture,
15 please. No, next one, sorry. Nope. There. That's the
16 only picture that I have of my mother. You think that I
17 would have been different with my mother but I wasn't. I
18 met my mother when I was 11 or so. When she came to see
19 me, she was drunk and she embarrassed me. I was in this
20 foster home because she was everything they told me I was
21 and we were as a people.

22 So I wasn't -- Saskatchewan was very
23 racist. And they could talk to us like that. I go to
24 school and they could talk to me like that. And I was
25 normal. So at one level, don't apologize. I look back at

1 a suicide. She committed suicide. But she gifted me
2 because she said to me one day, "When I first found out I
3 was pregnant --" she cried because I was 16. Every mother
4 wants something better for their kids. But I was so messed
5 up by the time I met her already. By the time I was that
6 age, I was messed right up. But she had no way of knowing
7 that, right? And sometimes I often wonder if she had a way
8 to identify it because her life was not much different,
9 right? But she said to me, "You know, my girl, I've been
10 scared of you for a long time," and I said I know because I
11 have a quick temper. I know it's not as bad now, but boy,
12 it was bad, right? And she said no.

13 She said it's -- and this is the gift she
14 left me. And I'm not going to use that word, okay. Here's
15 the responsibility she left me because really -- for me, I
16 can only talk for myself here. When I say gifts, it
17 doesn't feel right because when I'm given whatever I'm
18 given from Creator, from God, however you understand it,
19 right, it sure don't feel like a gift. So I just call it
20 what it is. It's a responsibility. So she said that when
21 she was giving birth to me, they actually -- Mr. Wass (ph)
22 is actually a one-time head of hospital, his own hospital.
23 It was originally called Snake Plains. But dad was out
24 drinking, so mom was going to see the midwife, what we call
25 midwife today, right, to give birth to me. And I decided,

1 "No, you're not, I'm coming now." So she gave birth to me,
2 she said that you're the first mother to ever held me
3 because she was in a lot of pain, she felt paralyzed
4 because I was a big baby, and she said, "Waseras (ph)" and
5 you'll hear that throughout my life as I share. It was
6 important for me to have that to get where I am today and
7 even today it sustains me because -- okay I'm getting ahead
8 of myself.

9 So she said she passed out from the pain.
10 And then somebody shook her awake. And they said, "Look at
11 your baby," and she did and my cord was undone. She had to
12 chew my cord. I mean, I didn't come with a pair of
13 scissors, right. And it was fixed. So anyways, she went
14 to Turin to get help. And she said there was nobody there.
15 So I frightened her because you remember that generation
16 was already removed from my grandma's generation. My
17 grandma's generation when she got her name, that told
18 everybody what she was here for, right? So my name is
19 Wabaska Piasosko (ph), which is White Thunderbird Woman and
20 my clan is a bald eagle clan. I haven't got my song yet,
21 but I've gotten my helpers. I have ten helpers. And this
22 elder said to me, "You had a hard life," but you know, when
23 people say that to you, and you go, I didn't know that when
24 I was going through it because that's all I had, and you
25 just responded to it, right? Then I go, yeah, as the more

1 I sent her back and I left all that stuff that's on top of
2 me off and the truth shows out more and more, I cried for
3 myself. It's a miracle I'm here, right? But the spirit
4 world showed me later on in life they were very happy I was
5 here. So that gift keeps me going.

6 But what eventually happened with my
7 mother is -- she cut her hair. That picture's short but
8 then she started -- in my family, there's something about
9 our women, we're very traditional even if we don't want to
10 be, it's there. And my mother kept her hair long and when
11 the last time I'd seen her in Edmonton, I was already doing
12 what I was doing, right? I went to see her and my hair was
13 cut short and I intuitively knew that was the last time I'm
14 going to see her. So when I seen her again, she was on the
15 machine. Now, they want to ask you, "Do you want to let
16 them go?" I was freaking right out because I could see her
17 in that blown-up body. And she was brain dead, but I knew
18 she was still in there, and it scared me, so my siblings
19 and my brothers and I all said, "If we ever get like that,
20 let us go because you're trapped. Your spirit can't move
21 on," and I said my mom loved to party.

22 And I just thought another woman I used to
23 work with as a nurse, I go in, I go to work, and I dance
24 with her because she loved to party, this woman, when she
25 wasn't -- got hospitalized. And one time, she got

1 coherent, and there I am dancing with her and she looked at
2 me, she said, "What the heck," and I said, "Yeah, I know."
3 So we all have moments of when we are okay. So we
4 unplugged her and let her go, but it was -- at times, I can
5 cry out for her because there is nothing stronger than a
6 mother's love. You know, and I have the -- I'm fortunate
7 today, the ability to love.

8 So, next picture, please. Nope. That's -
9 - you have to go back. I think you're going to wrong way -
10 - let me talk about that. We'll do that right now. I'm
11 here to talk about the violence that I went through, and I
12 want to start with this because we never pay attention to
13 the language. And it was actually a gay feminist, and I
14 can't remember her name, so it doesn't come from me, but
15 she was a linguistic and she said, "In the woman's
16 movement, we have to pay attention to what we do when
17 people share their stories." Hey, this is appropriate
18 because I'm going to share my story right away and be
19 mindful because we get educated and we get socialized in
20 how to look at this.

21 And if anybody here's name is John, it was
22 not on purpose. I just couldn't think of a -- so, it says
23 John beats Sandra. That's when, you know, people find out
24 I'm getting beaten up, right? Then it says, "Sandra was
25 beaten by John," but you notice John is starting to fall

1 off the paper? And it says, "Sandra was beaten." So John
2 doesn't even exist anymore. So Sandra was beaten. And
3 then we change the terminology that Sandra was battered.
4 And now we change that to "Sandra is a battered woman," and
5 that's the only identity that they say about me, is I'm a
6 battered woman.

7 And when I came up here and I share my
8 story, I am an indigenous woman. I am White Thunderbird
9 Woman. I'm from the -- my citizenship is from Lutsel K'e,
10 and I am not a survivor. I survived. I'm not a victim. I
11 was victimized. I'm not vulnerable. I'm just not
12 protected. So, we have to pay attention to the terminology
13 because I had a public display of linguistics because it
14 was difficult to explain that women do not make themselves
15 vulnerable. We're not responsible for what people do to us
16 in acts of violence.

17 And I got into a bit of a disagreement
18 with somebody very close to me when they said to my 13 year
19 old was sent back to the summer camp because of the
20 clothing she had on which it was a hot summer day. We give
21 them bathing suits, but she had to be responsible around
22 the elders and the men, how they looked at her, and I go,
23 "Oh, no, no, no. This is a 13 year old girl. It's the
24 responsibility upon the men for their thinking and the
25 elderly men for how they think. It's not for her to wear

1 their responsibilities, so we all have responsibility in
2 this, right?" But it's hard for me when my girl's sitting
3 there, and they go, "But these are the teachings if you
4 want to be a young, Indigenous, cultural girl," and they
5 are not my teachings. This is not what I pass onto my
6 daughter, right? People are responsible for their own
7 thinking and it reminds me of White Buffalo Calf Woman the
8 teaching.

9 So these things -- when I -- my parents
10 came out of residential school, my dad had immense rage,
11 and, you know, they got married, they were young. My dad
12 was really, really violent, and my mom ran for herself and
13 her life. My dad's mother, my kookum, had leukemia, so she
14 was going to help raise us. And on the reserve -- because
15 we learnt and we didn't get proper help. And you have to
16 remember, you're coming out of a time of -- you can't have
17 ceremony and if you had, it went underground, but we had
18 two or three churches and people accepting the faith, and
19 I'm not here to question anybody's spirituality, but it had
20 impacts and the way they taught it. So it was wrong to
21 follow because it was evil, you know, and it was to --
22 whoever had that faith, like I won't get into it. I'm not
23 here to do a bunch of blame gaming stuff because I already
24 did that.

25 So my parents couldn't get anything that

1 could help them because they couldn't talk about sex in the
2 church. They couldn't admit that they're beating even
3 though everybody would see my mother beaten to a pulp. My
4 dad couldn't go to anybody because when he was sober, he
5 was ashamed. So there was no way to rectify this, right?
6 So now my grandmother was dying, so dad put us in a home
7 because he didn't want anything to happen to me.

8 I'm 4 years old, and he made an agreement.
9 An Indian agent just left the reserve when he did that. So
10 there's a saying that back in the day, they were called
11 "open-air prisons," and Canada called them "reserves." And
12 I think Canadians think -- a lot of the Canadians think
13 that the Treaty Act was the treaty. No, that was the
14 government's response to the treaty because we never asked
15 to be shoved off our lands and given a pass system much
16 like the Jews had to wear the star. We had the pass
17 system. And in that prison, the first prisoner was an
18 Aboriginal man who didn't -- who left the reserve without
19 his pass, and they put him in prison and whipped him in
20 Prince Albert. That's what my cousin was telling me. So
21 we have -- it's very different from -- because they call it
22 the South.

23 And so, sometimes when I'm looking through
24 the world through my traditional eyes, my traditionalist
25 and the spirit of that, it's really hard when I'm looking

1 and working with -- because we've all adopted a lot of
2 colonialism. I have it in me, too. And it hurts when it
3 shows up because -- anyways. My father -- well, he found
4 out that I was raped in that first home. I heard that he
5 cried and cried and cried. But when I was first telling my
6 story, I forgot how my father might read this. So I'm very
7 mindful that, you know, my daughter could be listening to
8 this right now, my father could be watching it, but I'm not
9 -- I'm trying to think about them at the same time and the
10 truth is the truth, but I'm trying to be compassionate,
11 too, right? But I'm not going to sterilize stuff either.
12 There's a big difference.

13 I was 4 years old and I was there for a
14 while. And I was at my aunt's funeral two years ago, and I
15 never had anybody confirm to me because for whatever
16 reason, the Department of Inuit Affairs would just keep
17 moving me, and I don't know why I never had a medical or if
18 I had a medical, then they hid it, that you wouldn't see
19 this little 4 year old is not a virgin anymore. What
20 happened to my trauma? Because I remember me looking down
21 at me. I have so many years that are gone from my life
22 from the time I was four till the time I was 34 -- no, 32.
23 I have all these patches that are gone. And some I wish
24 that never came back, right? So when I don't remember
25 something, I don't push it because I trust.

1 To me, that is the gift. That's what a
2 gift is. I got no control. I got no responsibility to it,
3 but something is given to us so that we could go through --
4 when somebody else works their stuff and I call it "leaves
5 their dirt in me." I don't have to remember it, right?
6 And another person told me one time, "You know, Sandra,
7 you're not responsible for what happened to you, but you
8 are 100 per cent responsible for the healing." And I was
9 so angry, but I knew it was the truth because as much as
10 this happened to me, I have a responsibility to not pass it
11 on and I've not always fulfilled it, I've always wanted to,
12 but I'm getting closer and closer, right?

13 So this girl came up to me at my aunt's
14 funeral and told me that -- she was told that her
15 grandmother, who was at the home I was at, said that they
16 couldn't find me one day. And I guess she had men living
17 in the place, and this guy brought me in the house and put
18 me in front of her, and she took one look at me and she
19 knew something had happened to me. I'm in the shock. I'm
20 in shock from this. I'm at a funeral. I couldn't deal
21 with it because it was the first time somebody came back
22 confirming my reality.

23 And that's why I was so grateful that you
24 gave me tobacco because I was spent my whole life trying to
25 get people to believe me, and to say I promise or I swear

1 to tell the truth, it's very different than you asking me
2 to share it with you, and to hear me, right? And that's
3 what I love about this inquiry. I finally get to say it my
4 way and I don't have organizations. I don't have
5 counsellors. I don't have service providers. I get to
6 tell my story my own way because I lived it, right? And
7 the state is complicit in this. They failed me with child
8 welfare. Somebody didn't get me a medical or somebody did
9 and did nothing with it.

10 I was moved to several different homes and
11 I was moved into this one home, and this is my brother
12 Derek. He's gone now. My poor brother. He -- what do you
13 call it? Vicarious trauma? This guy. I remember him
14 coming down the stairs. I remember him in the fields. I
15 remember him in the barn. But it was always my brother
16 that would take care of me and clean me up because that man
17 left everything all over me. I have a memory and I heard
18 one of the people sharing of -- I have some memories that
19 come from in here and then I have some memories that are
20 some places over here. And these are one of them that --
21 and I think it's not true because it doesn't come from in
22 here and in my language and in my own heart. And I
23 understand therapists.

24 I get all that stuff about being
25 disconnected, but it's crazy making stuff, okay, because I

1 remember telling someone "your husband is hurting me." I
2 didn't say it that way, but I remember saying "he's hurting
3 me," and I'm sure it's a little girl. It's the only way I
4 could say it. But this voice saying to me, "You're just an
5 Indian anyway." So what does a little girl do with that?
6 So, of course I want to be white, then I don't get hurt.

7 Then I grew up as a teenager and nobody
8 wants to go out with an Indian. Kay didn't want to be a
9 white girl, right? So for whatever reason, it just seems
10 like a lot of homes I was going to. It was okay to do that
11 to me. And then my mom came and got me and by then, you
12 know, in English, you call it being "promiscuous."

13 I was leaving the orphanage and one of the
14 things that I appreciated about St. Patrick's Orphanage was
15 we were all the same. In my mind, I thought we were all
16 coming from the same places. I didn't know that some
17 parents had made arrangements like schooling. I wasn't one
18 of them, so when we went through the TRC, the state picked
19 where they put me. But then the state got to decide, "No,
20 we're not going to recognize that school because that
21 started with the Knight of Columbus. And I said, "No, the
22 state was paying the church." So I never got recognized.
23 And I hope nobody sees this as petty, but it's really
24 difficult for me sometimes when my husband is processing
25 his residential school or sitting around other people when

1 they are. And I can't be part of the group because I
2 didn't get recognized. So when they came here, you
3 remember, Marie, I went and gave my testimony anyways. The
4 state doesn't recognize it, but I sure do and here's my
5 story, right?

6 So I've always -- that's why I say the
7 spirit runs through me. So my mom got me out of the
8 orphanage, but I witnessed Sister Robichaud (ph) beating --
9 I watched her beat on one of the girls and there was blood
10 all over that. It was a schoolroom and she locked her in
11 there. And I've seen acts of defiance. I was being taught
12 very young. I mean, I had another friend, she hated castor
13 oil. So she cut a hole in the doll and would stick them in
14 the doll until the nun picked it up when it ended -- fell
15 out the other end.

16 They all had -- there was an act of
17 resistance and this one particular girl -- because you got
18 to remember I was what, 11? And she just would refuse. So
19 the sister took her in the classroom and beat her. And
20 they had a glass and it should -- we understand vicarious
21 trauma. I watched it and I was trying to pull the door
22 open. The rest were frozen and all I could see was this
23 face and this blood and these scissors. She was slicing
24 all her hair off. And I don't know if she's ever gotten
25 compensated, apologized to, whatever, but somebody's got to

1 do something for that because that school was not
2 recognized and there are people in there who were seriously
3 damaged.

4 And nobody ever told me that what I was
5 doing from the time I was 4, what I learned to do --
6 because I was sexually active very, very young, and I
7 thought that that was what love was because you see, when
8 they would abuse me at night -- as every child, we want to
9 belong and we want to be touched. Babies need that. We
10 need that as human beings. They wouldn't come near me.
11 The wife wouldn't. And the man wouldn't because that isn't
12 what I was about for him. So I had to find a way, and I
13 only knew one way of touching. It happened way too young.

14 So I had behaviour and as soon as I had a
15 boyfriend, that's what I wanted to do. That didn't mean --
16 I mean, I've been called all kinds of stuff in my life
17 because I was seen as "oh, she just wants to have sex.
18 That's all she's about." And then, you know, we were at
19 the bottom of the barrel in our community, so I was just
20 the kind of girl that you could do anything to because
21 that's what she's for. I've been raped a lot when I was
22 younger. And it was expected that I would be because isn't
23 that what I'm all about? They never, ever questioned the
24 husband or the boyfriend. It was always her. Nobody ever
25 questioned, "Why was she behaving like that, you know?"

1 And it's tougher in small communities, right, when you're
2 interrelated. It just brings a whole bag of stuff up. So
3 it was just easier to get rid of people like me. So they
4 just kept moving me.

5 I went to live with my mom when I was --
6 she came and got us. So by that time, I met my bothers for
7 the first time, and I was reunited because they separated
8 me from my other two brothers, right, because I was alone
9 when I went through a lot. When I came to Edmonton, my mom
10 would get her cheque and you wouldn't see her for a couple
11 of weeks, but she tried. And of course, my models were
12 women that -- they were Indigenous women from Edmonton
13 Drag. And a lot of them were prostitutes. That's what you
14 call them, but that's not really what it is. It's survival
15 sex. And a lot of us are corralled into that, and you
16 know, for those who have never done that, you know, thank
17 your Creator because there's nothing pretty about it. I
18 have a lot of -- I mean, I saw a lot, but I remember the
19 day that I said I wanted to be like them because I saw
20 something and to this day, I think it might have been -- I
21 saw it. I don't know. I'm going to lie if I say -- I
22 don't know what I saw, but I wanted whatever I thought I
23 saw. You got to be careful because you're going to get
24 what you ask for. I'm a kind of quantum physics girl, too.
25 So I ended up -- tried to go to school.

1 Didn't work out. Grew up too fast. And then I tasted -- I
2 never, ever liked the taste of booze, but I liked the way
3 it felt. And our house became a party place. And I've
4 seen some awful things happen to my mom. I had awful
5 things happen to me. I watched some really shitty things
6 happen to other women, but that was what it was all about.

7 I was supposed to go to school, but I
8 couldn't learn. It wasn't that I was smart, I mean, how
9 are you supposed to learn when you're in a racist society
10 when it was okay to criticize you because you were
11 indigenous and you were thought of as dumb to begin with,
12 right? I mean, it was 1960 when the Indian agent left this
13 to lawsuits, so the tax system must have been still alive
14 and well.

15 And I used to hate my people, like how
16 come we were supposed to be these bums, but I didn't know.
17 I thought the Indian Act was the treaty. I thought these
18 people who were telling me about who we were as a people
19 was the truth. It wasn't the truth, right? So the thing
20 about learning the truth is it'll set you free, but it's
21 painful as hell going through the process.

22 So I paid my dime for where I am today
23 because I have searched and searched for truth. And I've
24 always looked -- I've balanced it out with what doesn't
25 work for us, what are we doing, and it's been really

1 painful and I do my share of that, you could say. And I've
2 been on radio and I know people get tired of hearing me,
3 but there's something about the truth, it's just a lot of
4 people don't want to hear it, right, because it's
5 uncomfortable even if it's going to be for a better health.
6 It's an uncomfortable thing to go through. It's very
7 painful. But I ended up -- I want to get -- you know
8 what's happening to me right now, I think I'm taking too
9 much time.

10 It's like -- but I know it's inbred. I've
11 said to my friends, "You need to sit with me because I know
12 sure as shit. I'm going to want to stop because I'm taking
13 up your time, right? Just born by the clock." And I said,
14 "I don't know where this oral journey is going to take me."
15 So I'm trying to think of these guys because I know -- I
16 keep thinking people want to go home, people want to do
17 things, right? But I also recognize that this is important
18 because I get to tell my truth, right?

19 So anyways, part of the reason I could be
20 in school and take that is racism. But also back in the
21 day, we negotiated for our own schools. And at the
22 beginning at one time, we had them but then the government,
23 the provincial -- federal government said to the
24 provincial, "if you'll take money to take these Indigenous
25 people in your education system --" because it's funny they

1 didn't want us -- they had the pass system for us. They
2 put us on reserves. They didn't own as a treaty, they put
3 us in these open-air prisons because it's a Cold War, and
4 it's been a Cold War for a long, long time, okay. And part
5 of the reason I hate the word "survivor" is because it kind
6 of implies it's over. It isn't. It's just gotten colder.

7 I have had some really good female friends
8 that are Indigenous say to me, just like it shows in PSAC,
9 like just get over it. You can't get over it till you get
10 over it because it hasn't stopped, right? So they took us
11 -- and they had these public schools within Saskatchewan --
12 the public didn't want us to be visible and they took the
13 Act, and they had put it so that women could not sit at any
14 of the Chief and Councils. We weren't allowed that.

15 And yet, even today, when we have election
16 back home, and if it's okay, I'll talk to the women, "So
17 who's going to get in?" And I'll phone back to my birth
18 home and I'll say, "Who's going to get in?" And I'll talk
19 to who I consider to be the matriarchs, and sure as heck,
20 they'll tell you who's going to get in before the election,
21 so I don't think that's changed. But, anyway -- so the
22 state took us, didn't fulfill it's obligation. They are
23 now with their education to a point, okay. Yeah, what is
24 that? Feedback? I thought my inside voice is outside now.
25 I do miracles, by the way, after five.

1 But anyways, when I was going to school in
2 Edmonton, I don't remember feeling any racism in this
3 school, but what I did have was classes, and it was cruel.
4 I think it's crueler than racism. I mean you can't change
5 either one, but racism isn't real. It's not rooted in a
6 real -- in a truth. Racism is born out of white supremacy,
7 and I did my research and it was created in 1664 in
8 Maryland in the United States, and the -- it's a construct.
9 It's just an idea, but it was an idea to profit back in the
10 day the plantation owner who reads today as the 1 per cent,
11 and they wanted to punish -- a free woman would get
12 punished if she married a black, a native, and ironically,
13 the Irish, and then they had others, right? And the
14 Irish's culture is a lot like ours. When you look at the
15 Irish's history, man, do I get your history, right?

16 But, anyways, so what would happen, they
17 had slavery, but it was different. They had
18 intermarriages, but you would identify by saying I'm from
19 Jamaica, you know, time and place and location, just like
20 we would, or traditionally, and we didn't have the very
21 things that separate us today, like Métis, all these things
22 that the Crown has given us to identify ourselves with, you
23 know, you're First Nations, you're non-status. Always
24 identifying things, right? They didn't have that back
25 then, you know, I'm from Africa, blah, blah, blah. So they

1 had intermarriage, but they had indentured slavery.

2 But what happens was that that got
3 expensive when the -- because you had to care for these
4 people, and if you brought over people as slavery, you
5 still had to care for them. They can work their way out of
6 being slaves, but they ran out of funds. So the 1 per cent
7 started to tell the male British who owned the land because
8 there was -- they were smaller numbers -- began to tell the
9 other British, "Man, if we could -- you know, you're white
10 like me. If we could just -- they're costing us money. We
11 could get better."

12 So, all of a sudden -- and I don't know if
13 you ever experienced it in your life because I still have
14 to check myself. The sense of belonging, when it hasn't
15 been met, the classes gets ahold of it and you want to fit
16 in with the elite because I see it in my own communities.
17 You know, if you're the Chief's daughter or if you're the
18 actor's kid or you're the store manager's kid, it's a form
19 of classism and elitism and it gives you a warped sense of
20 belonging.

21 Well, I could understand what happened way
22 back in 1664 because now, they're not going to be looked
23 down upon by the 1 per cent because it's part of it, but
24 it's a lie because the white supremacy only applied to
25 them, but it didn't even apply anybody. It was just a way

1 to get free labour and make true slavery and keep the 1 per
2 cent because if you owned land, you have everything, right?
3 And what did Indigenous people have? We have land, but we
4 didn't own it. We cared for it. You can't own a living
5 entity, right.

6 So that's just -- they made it law -- then
7 they made it law, you could not marry a black person, but
8 race started right there. So I think the thing that hurts
9 me about that is -- when I talk about this, although I'm
10 looking at you, I'm actually talking Justin Trudeau because
11 he is the head of this state, and he was recently at an
12 Indigenous community and was appalled with the housing.
13 And I was appalled that he was appalled, okay, because how
14 could you be appalled when you make all the financial
15 decisions? You inherit -- my husband was Chief for many
16 years. He'd say, "It doesn't matter what was done before,
17 I inherit that. So passing the buck wouldn't work." So he
18 had to work with what he got. So we didn't get into the
19 poverty overnight, you know.

20 And I'll tell you something really insane
21 about me, just so we keep this balanced. I spent many
22 years on PSAC, being an Indigenous rep in the union. And I
23 sat at the National Aboriginal Peoples Committee, and we
24 would talk about all the crowding, mold in the house. You
25 know, I do my talk, but I didn't live it. I mean, I had a

1 beautiful home. I had a place. I was working, you know,
2 as a union. I had government salary. I was bringing home
3 \$2,500 every two weeks.

4 Well, I haven't been working for three
5 years because my health has been really bad, but I went
6 home for Christmas. My daughter fundraised to get us home
7 because my husband has just been keeping our heads above
8 water. And we actually had some times where our son has
9 brought groceries for us. And I don't say that out of
10 shame. That's just a gift that my son has given us.
11 That's another gift, right? But that's the way of all
12 people. Indigenous or not. Sharing, right? And I know
13 now my son's going to do well because he knows how to share
14 and he knows how to be responsible and he has a disability,
15 but he still steps up to the game, right?

16 But when I went into my granddaughter's
17 house, it's just full of mould. And I have three
18 generations of my kids living under one roof. And I went,
19 "Oh, my God, oh, My god." I was their voice. But because
20 I wasn't living it, I didn't come out. Like, I'm sure I
21 would do it very differently now, right? So it's really
22 easy for us to sit until we're living it because we don't
23 rush it. So I came home from Christmastime and I was sick
24 because I got that mould and then I got the flu because my
25 lungs are compromised. And I started to think my

1 grandchildren are breathing that in every day.

2 Now where in the heck -- and the state not
3 only has a fiduciary, they have a moral responsibility and
4 they took that under themselves. We never gave it. The
5 Indian Act took it. And we agreed, we negotiated, "give us
6 a house in times of hard times." Well, if it's not hard
7 times now, then what is? They have to buy their water.
8 They get \$200 a month. Out of that has to come the water.
9 Now, try to live without water, right? I remember I
10 complained to one of our Elders in Lutsel K'e. I said, "My
11 son wants to be a truck driver, a water truck driver. I
12 want so much more for him." And I was going on and on and
13 she turned to me and she says, "Well, I don't know. Try
14 living without the water." Very simply said, but I got the
15 message.

16 It was in my -- it's not my responsibility
17 to get into these whatever I think higher stages are that
18 given him the promise. That's our classism. That's why I
19 think it's so cruel. It's much crueler than racism, right?
20 Because the classism entitles him to privilege. I've
21 learned that consciously or unconsciously because he's
22 worse more if he's the Chief than he is the water truck
23 driver. I have to admit my mind thinks like that. So I've
24 been praying for help because it's not healthy. We call it
25 the European disease. It's a diseased way of thinking.

1 And it's not about rules or responsibilities anymore.

2 And I've seen myself over the years as
3 being a feminist. So these are all kind of backward
4 recommendations to you, okay, because I don't believe that
5 Justin can say that he doesn't know what's happening to us
6 because he also has our funds from land and resources. So
7 we're not tax dollars problems. And taxes didn't come till
8 after the First World War, and it was promised to be a one
9 time thing, right, then the coffers were getting full.

10 But the state still takes our land and our
11 resources, so we're only getting what belongs to us. I
12 went to a recent gathering -- what I'm talking about to you
13 about is the psychological damages that have been done to
14 me in different ways but is still being done to my
15 granddaughter. She's Vietnamese-Cree. She's beautiful.
16 She got her hair in braids the other day and somebody said
17 to her, "You really look like a Native." She is, you know
18 what I mean? You know what she said? "Don't say that."
19 Because she's now in grade 9, and we think because we have
20 education classes in grade 9, that's stopping the innate
21 racism and white supremacy that our children are being
22 taught indirectly and it's happening not so much by race,
23 but by classism.

24 And we don't have race studies and that's
25 the big recommendations I'm trying to get to here. I have

1 watched many of my friends that are here. I have learned
2 on and on about Robin DiAngelo. She does race studies and
3 she has videotapes, and she'll say, "If race doesn't have
4 anything, then why are we getting so upset?" And it
5 shouldn't be burdened on women like me to educate my
6 friend, who's not Indigenous about the white supremacy.
7 And I'm not about her being a Caucasian woman. I mean, it
8 was created, but it's hard to undue that, right, because I
9 take great pride in telling you I'm Cree Dakota.

10 I don't think I'm going to let that go
11 because race doesn't exist, you know what I mean? But the
12 supremacy, it doesn't benefit anybody except the 1 per
13 cent, okay? It doesn't benefit me. It doesn't benefit you
14 because it hurts us both. Well, she gets hurt by it in a
15 different way than I do. I spent my whole life apologizing
16 pretty well for being Indigenous. I don't want her to
17 apologize because she's not indigenous. That's crazy.
18 She's here because God gave her life, right?

19 It's not by the way of our people or any
20 people who have a heart, but this type of disease will
21 dehumanize us when it's done its job. And we need to call
22 it out, but it takes education, so we need race studies.
23 We also need the state in making these free studies, not
24 just giving it to -- people say, "I took that in
25 sociology," and I said, "Well, good for you because I have

1 lots of people that --" when I was in Saskatchewan, the
2 state is trying to say now -- listen. This is how I hear
3 it. "Listen Sandra, when your ancestors negotiated for
4 education, it was only up to grade 12, and I sit back, and
5 I go, "Yeah, we really want to be your janitor." Give your
6 head a shake. We meant we wanted education.

7 So now the state is saying they cap out on
8 reserves. It's a little bit different in the North, but
9 what's happening in the North is -- and I think it was
10 meant to be good, but it's turning out to be a bad joke.
11 This applies to the GNWT as well. There's this idea that
12 if you keep passing students along, that I don't know, is
13 the education supposed to happen by osmosis? Is it going
14 to come floating into the books and the brains, right?
15 It's not. So when it came time to go to university, we're
16 starting to use our own negotiated dollars or -- what's
17 that other fund -- ASETS funds or other funds that we put
18 aside from our negotiations with mines. They're supposed
19 to go help out post-secondary. These students of ours will
20 graduate and then the next -- they're filling out forms to
21 go to Aurora College, but in the community, outside the
22 community, they get their grade 12. That's ridiculous,
23 right?

24 So passing people along doesn't cut it.
25 And when I took my nursing, there was 16 or 17 of us and

1 maybe two non-Indigenous nursing access because as far as
2 my education from my life, I had grade 8 whether I needed
3 it or not. I just couldn't learn in school. There was too
4 much going on about who I was as a being and all the
5 impacts of it surviving, adjusting, adapting, right? Never
6 mind resilience. I was just too busy doing that. Today we
7 call it resilience. I have a problem with that because I
8 don't see it as resilience. I think we're still adapting,
9 adjusting, you know, and I think it makes it easier for the
10 public conscious to call us "resilient." That's my take,
11 okay? And I see my daughter starting the cycle. I lost
12 myself. Where was I? Yeah, there's a quality --

13 So I want to go back to the race studies.
14 They get offered in post-secondary, but it should be for
15 everybody because it's so hard to have conversation when
16 the burden is put on me to educate Canadians about what
17 we're talking about when we say white supremacy. It's a
18 construct. It's not about them. It's an idea, right? And
19 it's killing -- like, we see it's rearing its ugly head in
20 the states, right, but it's here too. But it's not about
21 the people, it's about an idea.

22 And Robin DiAngelo -- if you ever get --
23 watch her, please, because she does an excellent job.
24 She'll start and she blew me up because when I was YouTube,
25 I really feel like they're just talking to me. Okay, very

1 good. I'm not alone. So, she says to me, "Look at me,"
2 she said, "Do you see it? Do you see it?" Then I go,
3 "What?" "Do you see my whiteness?" And I went, "What?"
4 She said, "Well, you know, whenever we talked about race, I
5 always thought it was about you because of colour, you
6 know, or me as Indigenous." But we were coloured, right?
7 It was never about my whiteness. I was white, we weren't a
8 race. And she said, "We are though. If you want to call
9 race, then we're part of it." And then she talks about how
10 you see it and she laid it out, and I was so shocked. She
11 said, "I went to school, and you see all these white
12 things," because she talks about segregation. We had
13 segregation through reserves, right? Okay.

14 We don't have many reserves up here, but
15 the reserve mentality is alive and well up here, okay,
16 because I have mobility right as an Indigenous person, and
17 I am in Akaitcho territory, which drives these territories
18 as part of it, but this is Akaitcho. I live in
19 Yellowknife. I am in my government. I'm in my territory,
20 but there's this ideology that if I don't live in Lutsel
21 K'e, I'm not living in my territory. That open-air reserve
22 mentality is still there.

23 I've been in public meetings in
24 Yellowknife, what, four, five years ago, where the solution
25 to what was happening downtown in the streets was send us

1 all back home. But they were talking about people from
2 jail, but they meant -- eventually, it will mean the rest
3 of us, like we don't have mobility right, and that's the
4 reserve mentality. And they really are open-air prisons.
5 Those are our homes back there. You know where -- people
6 that were coming from, and there are people who think that
7 because I wasn't born here, that I'm not from here. I grew
8 up with that kind of ideology all my life and it has
9 crippled me so many times.

10 When I first came to the North -- remember
11 I told you I was born to the earth -- I stepped out at
12 Providence, and the energy ran up my legs. Today, you call
13 it the spirit of the land. I wish I could speak the
14 language, but the spirit ran up my legs and I knew she was
15 going to make me or break me. Well, I've been here for
16 over 20 years and she's broke me many times to make me.
17 And I know she's not finished with me because I'm still
18 arrogant, and I still got lots of stuff about me, right.

19 I remember when I went to a dentist once,
20 he said, "What do you need?" And I said, "Whatever it is,
21 it's going to buy your house." And then, you know, I
22 started hearing you're not from here again. And that's
23 really hard on me because, you know, I've been
24 dispossessed. I was dispossessed because of the legacy my
25 parents had. You know, my grandma -- if you've ever seen a

1 picture of her when she's got her two daughters with her,
2 one of them when my aunt was murdered, and my mother
3 committed suicide, but you see a picture and you can see
4 the sadness because she really doesn't -- she didn't get to
5 raise us. And she gets to see their lives. And remember,
6 she's a traditionalist, but somehow, she knew she had
7 better pray for me.

8 So when I was, you know, in the street
9 getting my face cut up -- I have scars here, and on the
10 street, you don't interfere with violence. And there was
11 another girl -- you know the old saying is we're
12 "nightwalkers." That's what we were called a long time
13 ago. She kicked this door down, otherwise I'd have no
14 face. It would be sliced, right, so something took care of
15 me and gave her courage. And I hope it went back to her,
16 and I hope she's alive.

17 Another time, this guy had used all the
18 dope up, and I was really sick back then, like I'd do
19 anything because drugs could do for me what I couldn't do
20 for myself. And I don't want go into the detail because I
21 have a young 14 year old girl. She's already got to make
22 her past. She doesn't need to be -- have some stuff blown
23 on her by users -- who've been told how horrible we are.
24 But stop and think. T's and R's were called "poor man's
25 heroin". Talwin and Ritalin. And they're 15 cents to

1 make. And if I could, I feel so deeply for myself because
2 it's my wellness when I look -- 15 cents of the things that
3 happened to me for that. It's just -- it's disgusting.
4 Because when I say I have a lot of dirt put in me, I have
5 had to do a lot of work to get it out. So they did stupid
6 shows like "Pretty Woman." That's not my story. And I
7 don't know why I wasn't stronger like other women who
8 didn't do it, but I just wasn't one of them, right? But I
9 wasn't one of the women that got killed from it either.

10 So we used all the drugs and he said,
11 "Come to Winnipeg with me." And one of the things that I
12 had all my life is -- and I've never liked belonging to
13 groups. I don't like people thinking for me or talking for
14 me unless they're really going to talk for me, right? But
15 on the street, I didn't hang with anybody. It was too
16 crazy making -- because you could take a licking for
17 something that had nothing to do with you. It's kind of
18 the gang mentality or herd mentality. And I felt safer
19 because if I was going to take a licking because it was
20 something I did -- and believe me a lot of times I did
21 stuff -- and I deserved it, right? Not deserved it, but I
22 knew it was coming. It was just a street code, like they
23 tell you if you do this, this is going to happen. So you
24 sit back and you think, Okay, I'm going to take it. You
25 got yourself ready because you're going to take it, right?

1 And I met this one woman, I had ripped her
2 off, and she had me by the throat in the York Hotel. My
3 frigging feet are dangling. I guess it's not funny or
4 anything, but some things in your life, you got to kind of
5 look back at. My feet are dangling, she's got me up by the
6 throat. She's got it like this. So she said, "You want to
7 mess around? Now, you burnt me last night, didn't you?"
8 And I intuitively knew, don't you ever, ever admit that
9 because you're not going to get out of here. So I didn't.

10 When you talk about surviving, I survived
11 10, 11 years of that, that I paid, too. I paid. I wish I
12 could sit here and say that -- you know, that department
13 took my daughter away from me. That I got so sick that I
14 let her go so I could live that. And I don't know how to
15 say it any other way. I was so sick. And there's lots of
16 other stuff in there that my girl doesn't deserve to be
17 aired, right, but I love that little girl. I have a
18 picture up there. That's her. That's her grandson. That
19 is so beautiful because she has survived too, to be loved
20 by her grandson. And you could just see -- my husband said
21 to me the other day -- I was going to say, "Don't be so
22 childish, I was doing something," and he said, "Please
23 don't refer about children like that because I wish we were
24 all children." Because we'd be like that, you now. So
25 just show the next picture.

1 This is my -- oh, go back to the little
2 girl. That's the next legacy. That's Isabella. She's my
3 great-grandchild. And that's -- you know, I kept the kids
4 together after I straightened out. My girl went through
5 her own journey. Her own pain. And I love that smile
6 because she deserves that. Both of them deserve each
7 other, you know. And my girl, they're living in a molded
8 house right now. You get in the shower and I was afraid
9 because I didn't know if it was going to go through the
10 floor, but they bathe there -- they're bathing in it
11 because you can feel it drop. It's a two-bedroom place.

12 And the band had enough -- scraped enough
13 money together because what Justin is telling me is a
14 kookum, and a mother, and a chappon, that when my people
15 negotiated for housing, it didn't mean repairs. That's not
16 true, right? And negotiations now is over with CMHC that
17 they have to pretty well buy their houses.

18 So my daughter went out and learned how to
19 repair. She's an alcohol and drug counsellor today, and
20 she's a darn good one when it comes to understanding
21 addiction. So I pray and I hope you're praying that that
22 little girl isn't getting baths someday and that tub goes
23 right through the floor. And I'm hoping that you're
24 praying with me that her goes through that mold and those
25 pamphlets that Justin's Department of INAC about "Wash with

1 Javex." I'd like him to live in a molded house with his
2 kids and his wife, and I get to give him a pamphlet and a
3 bottle of Javex and say, "Here you go. Here's your health
4 care." So what he says to me as a grandmother -- you know,
5 grandmother and a chappon, that he's shocked? That he's
6 surprised? Then his departments aren't telling him the
7 truth. And this is a truth-seeking place. I expect that
8 whole department to be fired because that's inhumane.

9 And the Indian Act used to see us as non-
10 human. Well, we found out we are. Well, we always knew,
11 but it's not okay. There's a certain place where
12 everything gets to be -- even in the way I live, I didn't
13 sober up because I knew -- woke up one day, I mean, I had
14 spiritual awakening guiding me. But I was so sick, I
15 couldn't get well. I didn't know how to get well.
16 Actually, it was like the Creator had to come and get me to
17 get well. And I think I died.

18 And I used to criticize centres like
19 Arlene's when she ran the Yellowknife Women's Centre. I
20 even criticized her. I said, "All you're doing is
21 enabling, blah, blah, blah." I forgot my own history, but
22 blah, blah, blah. She's like one of my best -- if not my
23 best friend, right, and I'm saying this behind her back
24 because she's not supposed to be helping those women on the
25 street that were like me unless they're going to behave the

1 way that we say they behave. We can't take them the way
2 they are, right?

3 So what happens is: One day, my daughter,
4 who was living her here in Yellowknife, heavily addicted.
5 She -- you know how you can forget things? She went to the
6 shelter, so she didn't have to do anything for a night
7 sleep whether it was selling drugs or whatever. I remember
8 up the drag from Edmonton there was place, and you got a
9 bed, just like the residential school, those old steel
10 beds. My shoes would be gone in the morning or maybe my
11 coat, right? But I didn't have to do anything that night
12 for a place to sleep, to be left alone, for the drugs.

13 You know, when I was out in Vancouver,
14 that's the hardest. That's where I suffered the most
15 because when I was in Edmonton, the bars weren't unionized.
16 So I could go sling beer, right? They were unionized in
17 Vancouver when I went to Hastings, and I couldn't get it
18 together because you know when you're slinging beer, you're
19 still in the environment and you're always hustling.
20 You're always ripping people off, you know what I mean? I
21 couldn't get a job, so I had to do the only thing I knew
22 because I've been taught since I was 4. And it wasn't
23 because I wanted too, I got groomed right into it. But I
24 told myself something else. It's like I was sharing with
25 Arlene -- this one guy before, he beat me. I knew he was

1 going to do it, and I used to tell myself it's only going
2 to hurt for the first couple of shots. And I braced myself
3 for those ones and then I took the licking. And here's how
4 thick I got in myself was -- I didn't think I was loved
5 unless a guy was beating me.

6 So when I came to the North, I remember
7 this guy just before I got married. And nobody had ever
8 told this to me. No man had ever told me. No woman ever
9 told me. And he really liked me. Just imagine me with
10 cheeks, okay. All this stuff, a lot of younger. But he
11 said -- and he was really upset with my husband, right.
12 You know, "What the heck." And I said to him, "I don't
13 know how to -- I feel really, really bad," and then he
14 said, "Why?" Because he must have caught something, you
15 know.

16 And I said, "Because I have no reason to
17 break up with you. You've been so kind to me." And I
18 meant that from the bottom of my soul, like I felt like I
19 owed him for the rest of my life. And yet, I had these
20 incredible feelings for my husband, right? But I didn't
21 know he was my husband yet. He turned to me and said,
22 "Sandra, I'm just going to shoot myself for this." And he
23 starts crying. Big tears coming down his face. He said,
24 "The way I'm treating you is how you should've been treated
25 your whole life. You don't stay with somebody because

1 they're kind to you. You should expect that." And it was
2 like the opening you did for us yesterday. The power of
3 that almost knocked me to my feet because I had never heard
4 that before.

5 When I came to the North, it took Arlene -
6 - and I was so proud of this. People used to say to me,
7 "You're really intelligent for an Indian." And I was so
8 proud of that. I told her that. She said, "Oh, my God
9 Sandra." The people used to say to me, "You're so pretty
10 for an Indian." And I didn't know that that was wrong. So
11 it made me feel better than you or you because you're
12 indigenous, right? So I was better than you. And that
13 goes back to that 1 per cent, the Maryland law 1664, the
14 other men that were lower than the 1 per cent who felt good
15 for once.

16 They were equal to their counterparts, so
17 that gave me "I'm just as good as you." The only thing
18 those -- Albert says he throws the crumbs off the table and
19 when we buy into that, we get laughable privileges.
20 They're laughable. And I want Justin to know that until he
21 gets that Indian Act off of me, he's just handing me
22 laughable privileges and I know it, and I want him to know
23 that I know he knows that I know, so now we both know. And
24 the reason this inquiry is happening is because there is
25 women ahead of me who have started this journey. It's not

1 organizations. Ours or theirs.

2 And they other thing that Robin DiAngelo
3 says in her YouTube thing is she told me she said, "Sandra,
4 when do we get to vote?" Like a good little girl, I say
5 1921. Women, eh. We didn't get it till 1951, and we
6 didn't want it. That's the other thing. We didn't get
7 choices about whether or not we voted in the Canadian
8 election, we were told we were going to vote. Anyways, she
9 said, "So who gave it to us?" I wasn't smart enough to
10 figure it out, right, but there was women in the group or
11 men in the group she was talking to. She says, "Come on,
12 you know it. Tell me." She said men. She said yes, so we
13 got it as long as they give it to us.

14 So, this was fought for by women.
15 Grassroot women. And it's grassroot women that are sitting
16 here because it's happened to us, and that's why I asked
17 both these women to come and sit with me because these
18 grassroot women with organizations in that -- their own
19 businesses, I mean, to help because they're entrepreneurs
20 and they want to help the people. So when you go further
21 with this, I would really encourage it because they should
22 have been the first people contacted.

23 You know, I don't want to throw the baby
24 out with the bathwater, but Health Canada is an
25 institution, and it does what it does for work, and I'm

1 sure it does great work, but it's part of the master's
2 house, and you can't take part of the master's house down
3 with the master's tools, right? So there's a place for
4 absolutely everything, but even Health Canada has to move
5 over, so we have wonderful women like this who went through
6 their journeys, so they could take off -- and I don't
7 believe in empowerment, and I've argued a lot with people.
8 If you can empower me, you can disempower me, right, just
9 like the vote, right?

10 I have always been strong. I've always
11 had power in everything that happened to me on the street,
12 like getting shot, the waking up on the reserves -- when I
13 woke up one morning, and all I could see was feet, and I
14 don't want to look up, and I'm completely naked. And I
15 didn't drink myself. I just went blank. Somebody got a
16 hold of the drug rape. Somebody did something that I
17 passed out and somebody left me there. Another woman left
18 me there. And I asked her, "Why did you leave me there?"
19 And she couldn't look at me. We've never had that
20 discussion.

21 That's those times I woke up in the Hotel
22 International in Edmonton. Doors wide open. Don't know
23 what time I passed out. Not a stitch of clothing on me. I
24 worked in the bar. I didn't know who did what. I went to
25 work like nothing happened. These for those times that

1 I've been slinging beer. Everybody says you're fixing and
2 I said, "No, I'm not," and they said, "Well, get that blood
3 off your arm, then, because I went in the bathroom, and
4 there'd be all over my clothes."

5 I had picture up here that I wanted to
6 show, but I decided to not put it on because you see enough
7 of that already. You can't use these veins because their
8 shot. My lungs are going because there was a chalk I used
9 to have. So I paid. And I have some things that I will
10 never let know because I talk about -- how do I say this in
11 the right way? When I'm out down south, night walking is
12 common. And that's heartbreaking. It's so common. You
13 come up north and it's not so common. So when I came out
14 of the -- such a way weird to say it -- when I came out to
15 declare my past, I didn't do it any other reason than to
16 help people and even here. I just want a little bit of
17 patience because I don't want to cry.

18 When I share here, I'm fully aware that I
19 am a value and that my story is a value and this
20 environment is set up for it. But as soon as the
21 environment is gone, I'm back in the way we socialize each
22 other. And I know there are people that I embarrass. I'm
23 good to work in shelters. I'm good to work -- you know,
24 people living like me. I'm good in different ways, but
25 then there's places I shouldn't go because of my history.

1 I know that. And I even had somebody who told me that
2 because of my past I'll never be in politics, and I said,
3 yeah, whatever. But that's your arena. I have my
4 politics.

5 I'm a political mother. Because when we
6 raise our kids today, we raise them to be political. So
7 our mother is political today. And if it isn't, it should
8 be. It's the only way we're not going to have our kids
9 walking in our footsteps whether we're Indigenous or not.
10 It's a damn shame that the state has to come along and say,
11 "Okay, you got human rights now. I've always had them.
12 What are you talking about? Well, you just don't want to
13 acknowledge it.

14 I haven't lost my power. I have when I
15 was writing the recommendations, and I just want to say
16 this to Justin. I do have my power. You just need to take
17 the state blanket off of me. And it comes through state
18 policy, state law, state acts, and it filters into
19 organizations, and stop making an industry out of me. And
20 I know in the North, and Yellowknife, especially, they get
21 really tired of me talking about how Indigenous people are
22 in the industry, but we are. The money that is -- and
23 there's a place -- let me say this in the right way.

24 In the old days, my kookum talked about
25 when we broke natural law. They would work with us to

1 restore us, right, whatever it took. But if we didn't want
2 to do it, we would get banished until we would get right
3 and want to find out way back. And banishment is still the
4 worst thing because we all need to belong. But as soon as
5 something happens, the first thing we do is we banish. We
6 send them to jail, and then we don't let them in the
7 community or the person in there be part of the restitution
8 or resolution.

9 And because of mental health, there are
10 people who need to be in certain places for the safety of
11 the community. And then we just -- when they fished
12 serving -- and the thing is -- We went to a justice thing
13 and I said, "You know, I'm having a real hard time
14 accepting Canadian justice because it's not about
15 relationships. It's about making public safety, and in
16 some ways, the irony of this is: We have fought to have
17 our voices heard, but we're really contributing to public
18 safety, you know.

19 If you look at the Pickton case, remember
20 John hit Mary? Well, Pickton murdered Indigenous women.
21 And you can go down until Indigenous women fall off. Who
22 is notorious right now? John Pickton. Everybody becomes
23 notorious for their horror, right? So we're so busy
24 talking about the Indian Act that the effect of that Indian
25 Act, the Indigenous men, women, and children fall off the

1 conversation.

2 We're still not in the conversation when
3 we talk about the molding. We're talking about the water.
4 We don't have a basic right to water, give me a break,
5 right? Income support, I was talking with a group of
6 Indigenous women, and they said, "You know, I'm so ashamed
7 on being on income support. I'm so ashamed of it." I
8 said, "You know what, can I just interfere please." I
9 said, "I don't know. I think treaties are all negotiated
10 the same, but our people knew that with the changes." And
11 you have to know they use pipe because you need spiritual
12 intervention. We're just human, right?

13 So they negotiated for those hard times of
14 housing and food and shelters and the medicine chest.
15 Someplace along that, Canada -- because it's in everybody's
16 heart to share, so they made what is called "welfare."
17 Somebody somewhere made that dirty, the sharing, right?
18 And then someplace along the line, they took our
19 negotiations and traded it for welfare and said, "We're
20 living up to your part, but we're giving you welfare."
21 That again is part of the Indian Act.

22 That's not what we negotiated and whoever
23 made welfare income support dirty doesn't get it because
24 you pay into income tax when you work, okay. You pay for
25 those social programs, so all it is is you put money in the

1 public coffers for the time that you need it. And if you
2 don't work, things prevent you from that. We actually have
3 the gift of sharing and this country has forgotten what
4 that is, but they have forgotten we negotiated for that, so
5 we do not get welfare in any of our communities or our
6 reserves. We got what we negotiated for. And that's the
7 type of thing I educate for women.

8 Now, we have people that will come and
9 have the job to support that and they treat people as
10 though it's coming out of their personal pockets, so Justin
11 is going to have those monies that we paid into and what we
12 negotiated then he better start doing criteria or education
13 about this. There's a difference when you are fulfilling
14 your treaty obligations to Indigenous people, and there's a
15 difference when you're fulfilling and returning back to the
16 people in those programs because they paid income tax, and
17 for the ones who do is because we all get an opportunity to
18 do the genuine spirit of sharing.

19 They have made income support something
20 dirty, so we really dehumanized ourselves and disconnected
21 from our Creator because look at the way we treat the earth
22 and it's not like I can do it too. I don't want to give up
23 a fridge. Well, where does it come from? It comes from
24 the earth and somewhere -- you know what I mean.

25 But I think that Justin being the head

1 really needs to start looking at cultural confidence. It's
2 real. He needs to start honouring women like the women
3 behind me who have went through their own healing. In this
4 kind of events, they should have been the first words. And
5 I just want to talk about Maggie for a minute. I hope you
6 don't mind. She does the blanket exercise and the
7 government has asked her to do it. She does an incredible
8 job. She asked me to do a part about reconciliation, but
9 what I was gifted in seeing is she has a very traditional
10 way of doing things, and today, we call it networking,
11 right? But if you talk with a traditionalist, and you go
12 and you make your offering for any kind of doctoring or any
13 kind of prayers or help, they'll tell you whether or not
14 they can do it. And then they'll say, "But I know somebody
15 here. They might be able to do it, but I can't do that."

16 That's what she did with hers, and she
17 will go to -- she came to me, she went to other groups and
18 other Indigenous people and said, "You would do that very
19 well. Would you please with this?" It was her contract.
20 I mean, she could have took it all herself. Someway,
21 right? But she knew the people to ask and gave us an
22 opportunity, right, but then the good ol' government tried
23 to tell me how to do it and what I couldn't do. And I
24 said, "I'm not a good fit." They weren't wrong. I wasn't
25 wrong, just not a good fit, okay? But to me, that's just

1 traditionalism. It's not about the way we dress or the way
2 we talk. It's the spirit in which we do things and every
3 nation knows how to do that, but we've just lost touch with
4 it, right? We have -- I just got to stop a minute.
5 There's a memory coming up right now. I just want a
6 picture. Did I run out of pictures? Okay.

7 I want to talk about this because we got
8 married in Desnethé. I saw my husband seven years before I
9 ever met him. And my husband always says, "I met you
10 before. I met you before." He just -- whatever, he has a
11 different way of remembering. He had a hard time with me.
12 A very hard time. And he went through residential school
13 and I want to talk to you about how hard it's been for us
14 because he was brought up that he couldn't put his hands
15 under the blanket. It just freaks my mind. Because if he
16 put his hands under the blanket, it implied something. He
17 couldn't talk to his sister because it implied something
18 because she was female. So that interfered with us. I
19 went through what I went through where I never had a
20 choice. It was just "here, take me," right? So he had a
21 hard, hard time, but we had a tradition and it's still
22 there and it's okay.

23 When you get married, you got to go to
24 every camp, and you listen to what people have to say. And
25 we were consistently told, "Watch her for seven years.

1 They're going to be very hard." Because two people coming
2 together, I mean, I was 38. He was 48, right? Two
3 different peoples -- and when he asked me to first marry
4 him, this is how he did it. He said, "What do you think of
5 marriage, Sandra?" I said, "It's okay." And he says, "Do
6 you want to?" And I said, "Sure."

7 But I was also looking for that little
8 princess scenario, so Arlene was the one who introduced us
9 and twice she was trying to introduce me, and I was trying
10 to do a survey for the Yellowknife Women's Centre on sexual
11 assault and I was telling her, "When I phoned communities,
12 you can feel the fear. They don't want to talk about it."
13 Right? And you could just -- it was palpable. So I was
14 frustrated. And I used to smoke. And this man walked by
15 and I looked. And he looked down at me and I looked up at
16 him. And then he stopped. And I intuitively knew he was
17 going to a few tables down, but he stopped and he sat
18 beside me. You know, I was arrogant. Even though I was
19 wounded, I still have the arrogance about me and I said,
20 "Relax."

21 And so, she kept trying to introduce me,
22 but I wasn't interested at that time. And then she says,
23 "Well, you know, he's the Chief." And I went, "Really?"
24 So my arrogance, off I went to meet the Chief, and I
25 married him the Chief because my husband said to me one day

1 -- I was struggling to be a chief's wife -- he said, "You
2 married the Chief." I said, "Yeah. Yeah, I did." He
3 said, "How's it working out for you?" So that's --

4 But anyways, I just wanted to tell that
5 because we brought our own stuff in different ways to the
6 marriage, but when I met him the second date, he said to me
7 -- out of nowhere, he looked at me. He said, "If you came
8 to where I lived, you would find what you're looking for."
9 And I started to cry because no other being knew that I was
10 looking for something. Something was missing in me.

11 And I had visions and I had went to his
12 community, and he introduced me because I had four visions
13 before I met him. But I didn't know what being Indigenous
14 was. I didn't know what was Indigenous spirit was. So
15 he'd take me out on the land and he taught me the
16 difference between the treaty and the Indian Act. And I
17 would complain about white people. He'd say, "Sandra, they
18 were land people. They're land people. They're spirits of
19 the land. You got to be careful." And he gets frustrated,
20 right, he gets angry.

21 But one time, I'm walking in the
22 community, and I'm walking down the road. And her name,
23 she's left us, but Auntie Annie. Small like my mother. No
24 fireball, right. She's walking towards me, and we all know
25 when we're intuitively safe to lose it on somebody, right?

1 Hard to talk with a -- so she comes up to me and she says,
2 "Well, I can tell you're not from here." Well, I lost it.
3 "What is it with that? I've heard that I wasn't white
4 enough. I wasn't Indian enough --" she looks at me -- but
5 she's looking up at me -- she goes, "Well, I don't know
6 what they were saying, what they're talking about. But I
7 can tell that you're not used to the spirit of the land.
8 It's still working of you because you're not walking with
9 it right."

10 And I hung onto that because in our --
11 we've gotten colonized. All of us. And we think these
12 boundaries are real. And we think that if you're not born
13 here or you're not from here, somewhere, you're not part of
14 it. You're separated. But you were not. And she reminded
15 me that -- Rosanna Lockhart (ph), she's also left us. When
16 she was getting ready to leave. She called for her
17 granddaughters and her grandsons, and I thought -- because
18 she was a granddaughter to one of my grandchildren.

19 Those little acts from the elders that
20 were true traditionalists have offered me healing and
21 that's what my husband was talking about. It wasn't the
22 place. It was the way of being because she brought in all
23 my grandchildren because that's how she saw them. I'm
24 still not seeing like that. I'm still not well, but at
25 least I know it, right? And she passed on some teachings

1 to them in Stanton, to all her grandchildren. She didn't
2 say oh, you're Cree, you're this. Not that it's wrong.
3 Nobody's ever said I'm wrong for being Cree. I can never
4 be Danny Zukele (ph). I'm Cree Dakota, and my husband --
5 he loves me for that. And when he had asked me to marry
6 him, he said, "you got to go see my dad." And my father-
7 in-law is Morris Lockhart. He's left too.

8 And we went over to go see him, so I
9 thought he was going to go tell him I'm getting married,
10 right? And I'm sitting there for a while, but they're
11 talking to each other and I understand, but I can kind of
12 feel the language. You can feel the truth regardless of
13 what language. The first thing I said, "What are you guys
14 saying because some things kind of feeling off here." And
15 he says, "Well, I'm just talking to my dad about the
16 possibility of us getting married." And I went, oh, my
17 God, he's asking his dad if he can marry me, and he's 48,
18 and I'm just really struggling with this, but that
19 traditional.

20 And his father said to him, "She's a long
21 ways from home. You make sure you take her home sometimes
22 because her culture is different. She needs her culture."
23 He never said she's not from here. "Just make sure you
24 take her home sometimes." And when my dad would always
25 thank Felix for bringing me home even though he wasn't

1 traditional culture, the spirit of the land, I was born to
2 it. They remember these things. And that's my mother, the
3 earth, because she was my first one. So she teaches me a
4 lot, but when I'm wrong, because of my onus and my moons,
5 right, when creation shows me I'm wrong, there's nowhere
6 for me to go and it's just a fact. I don't get punished.
7 I don't get ridiculed. I don't get shamed. It's just
8 there, you know. Do I want to stay there? And it hurts me
9 because it's true.

10 So, I came to testify because I was
11 really, really hurt. But I've recovered a lot. I've
12 researched, I've study, and I get more hurt now from the
13 policies, from the deceit that the state tries to deny that
14 they don't know what's hurting us. They don't recognize
15 our inherent self-right to self-governance. They're still
16 treating us like wards. We're not wards, never were, and
17 we didn't negotiate that. So I think the state has an
18 obligation. Apology is an apology, but you ever notice
19 that state has never asked for forgiveness? There's a big
20 difference.

21 When I -- I did something to my best
22 friend. We were doing some work around cultural
23 competency, and I was beginning to understand that she was
24 a white woman, and I was in the harshness of it. And I
25 said -- you know, I was making her wrong from my heart.

1 And then we went through that and we came in through
2 another stage. And it was never what I said. What I said
3 was the truth. What I did was the spirit in which I did
4 it. And I had that moment where Creator showed it to me,
5 and I asked for forgiveness because I threw it at her. So,
6 as land and resources with, it's not about us as a people,
7 it's what we have underneath us.

8 And it's pitiful that Indigenous women,
9 here or any parts else of Mother Earth or any other country
10 that we have the right to be and we have responsibilities
11 to care for the earth, that we're putting shelters outside
12 of our communities. And some of those shelters ask us to
13 leave our children, our sons, because of the policies.
14 They can't come in there with us. So not only are we
15 trying to protect ourselves, we're asked to break our
16 family up even some more, so we put them in child welfare.
17 What's the message to our sons, right? If you want to get
18 well, this is what you got to do. What the heck is that?

19 That's not -- and then the state tries to
20 tell us it's funding cultural confident programs. No, it's
21 not. It's still more complacent organizations doing the
22 colonial work and it's a colonial relationship and that
23 stuff needs to stop because I want Justin to know that
24 these women in front of me, beside me, behind me, and the
25 ones who went on to make this possible, who may not be

1 here, so that they know that. And we know he knows. So
2 now that we all know, it can't be unknown.

3 So I'm not going to make a bunch of
4 recommendations of this justice system, that education
5 system. It's like, get honest. Get rid of the Indian Act.
6 Sit down and go nation to nation. And if you really can't
7 remember what it is, let us educate you because it's in the
8 treaty. It's in our negotiations. Our original language
9 had no language for "he" or "she." Remember I said I was
10 ashamed of my grandmother? Because she'd get them mixed
11 up. So I've been saying to my white sisters. White
12 feminism.

13 I'm not asking you to apologize to me for
14 any ideology, but I'm asking you to make some room because
15 we have our own understanding from who we are, and we want
16 gender balance. It's like the pipe. The pipe has no power
17 until you bring the bowl and the stem together, so many of
18 us have to be like me, have to help me remember. And when
19 you do the analysis of your data, I think it would do me an
20 injustice if you didn't do it in this way, which is you
21 have Indigenous scholars because they'll bring an
22 Indigenous perspective.

23 But you also have traditionalists who have
24 the old language because as an Indigenous person myself, I
25 don't have the old language and I used to work in an

1 organization where I was to put language in, and I started
2 to find out that I could speak Cree but have an indigenous
3 concept of the Cree where I was Anglo-saxifying the
4 language that the -- how you say that -- the higher the old
5 language, the meaning, the conceptualization was getting
6 lost over the generations. And there are still things we
7 can't translate. So we need those traditionalists talking
8 to the -- because I'm going for my master's soon, but I
9 don't have a lot of the -- I can feel it in me, but I can't
10 articulate it. But when I hear it, I know it, right?

11 And you'll have people that are very
12 humble, like men and elder in Winnipeg. I'm going to wrap
13 up soon, but I met an elder in Winnipeg. I was at a 12-
14 step meeting. Breaking my own anonymity here, and I
15 thought I would do a really kind thinking for this old
16 drunk, right? That's my thinking. So I take him for
17 coffee. I said well, I better feed him too because I don't
18 know where he's -- because of the way he was dressed. It
19 was my stuff projecting, right? And we're in the
20 restaurant and all of a sudden -- and I didn't have a cell,
21 but I hear a cell phone going off, and this old drunk
22 across from me, his eyes start to twinkle and he answers
23 the phone and he's talking in his language because he was
24 Ojibwe Cree. He's not only a traditionalist, he's a
25 professor at their university. Oh, man, was I humbled.

1 But she was so kind to me, but he just let the eyes
2 twinkle, right?

3 So I've come to understand that -- I asked
4 him questions. I said, "How come we can't say our names?
5 They say you can't talk about it in public. He said,
6 "Well, a lot of people have forgotten where that teaching
7 comes from." And you'd think I'd remember because I heard
8 about it from my own grandmother. He said people were
9 jailed. They were hung. And they were punished for
10 practicing that, so if all of a sudden, a child was born
11 and then had a name, the Indian agent would know they were
12 practicing culture. And they hunt -- or whoever was doing
13 it.

14 So they started to add, "Don't tell
15 anybody" but it wasn't because it was in our teachings,
16 right? So, it's people like him that I'm trying -- and
17 when I asked, I phoned another elder in Winnipeg -- his
18 name is -- what is it when you say truth and he said oh,
19 boy. He said the best way for me to say it to you in
20 English -- and that's what's frustrated way for me he said,
21 "Just come from and tell it. Tell whatever it is." And
22 when I talk to a cousin, she says, "Well, don't lie. Maybe
23 you better talk to a traditionalist because --"

24 That's what I mean about the language, is
25 we've taken the English concept and we say it in our

1 language because we've forgotten what it means and the
2 traditional. So there's old traditionalists that have that
3 language and they very much need to be part of the data
4 because I'm stumbling around here trying to say that those
5 ideologies that you're ancestors, my ancestors, her
6 ancestors, before all this treaty making happened, before
7 1664, they knew how to coexist. There was a time we all
8 knew how to coexist. We all knew the value. We couldn't
9 dominate the earth. The earth took care of us. We need to
10 find our way back there.

11 And if Justin doesn't do it, he has to
12 know that we know that he's refusing to, and he can stop
13 the facade on behalf of the current government that they
14 care because telling me you care without having asked for
15 forgiveness -- by not asking for forgiveness, you're not
16 taking ownership. You're just apologizing for what
17 somebody else did. But when you ask for forgiveness,
18 you're like my husband, you're taking the legacy and you're
19 owning it and you're going to correct it.

20 So Canada needs to ask for forgiveness,
21 not just apologize because it's empty. And it's not easy
22 to ask for forgiveness because it wasn't easy for me to ask
23 for it and I love her because I was wrong. There's a bunch
24 of layers to work down to get to there. Today, I
25 understand and she finally -- it was just yesterday that

1 she said, "I get it." It's not about her being white, it's
2 not about her having privileges, it's about a construct and
3 it's a diseased one we all bought into, and we fight over
4 it.

5 So the 1 per cent is still marching along
6 like it has for how many generations, and her people and my
7 people and people of colour were fighting. And I see
8 what's happening with my people now with this disease. Is
9 we're now looking at immigrants and going, "Why are they
10 getting this stuff and we're suffering?" So we found
11 another group lower than us. You see how that disease
12 work? So it's always thriving and working, right? And
13 when I think -- I'll say this. When I think about climate
14 change and the people say it's not happening, it's
15 happening. But it's politically cool and it justifies
16 something.

17 In North America, we went on and destroyed
18 other countries, their land and their resources, and we
19 destroyed the ozone layer because we haven't respected what
20 we've been given. We've taken too much. Now these people,
21 their land, they have to run. They're fleeing over here.
22 They don't want to be here. I don't want to flee to
23 Europe. I want to be in my own home, the earth, where I
24 feel it, where I was born to kind of thing, right? They're
25 coming here and the disease has got -- that we actually

1 will see babies starving. Their parents haven't died
2 trying to get here and will say, "No, they can't come."
3 It's not ours to save the earth, right? Stop and think if
4 that was our children going over to Argentina. The climate
5 change is demanding of us because it's going to keep
6 destroying the land. It's like in California. They got no
7 water. What do we have lots of? Water. We're the blue
8 gold, right?

9 So I would like to show the picture of my
10 family and I'd like to wrap it up. There they are. That's
11 my daughter and her children. All those young girls, young
12 women that you see there, that's why I'm here. Just like
13 the women who did the groundwork to get here. The
14 grassroots women. They did it so I can be here, but I
15 don't want them to go through what I did, and some of them
16 have already as Indigenous women. But I'm also doing it
17 for men because I don't want my boys to apologizing because
18 they're male. Without them, there's no power. There's no
19 balance. And they're raised. And you know Robin DiAngelo,
20 if you actually watch her, you're going to be challenged
21 because she said to me, "Were you raised to treat everyone
22 equal?" I said of course I was. She said, "You couldn't
23 have been. It doesn't exist. We don't live like that. We
24 think like that, but we don't move in this world like that,
25 so how could you be taught that?" Right? It's just words.

1 So we have a lot of healing to do
2 together. It's not just Indigenous people. And I don't
3 want us to be an industry anymore. There's a place for
4 child welfare. There's a place for shelters. There's all
5 these places. They're needed, but they're not being done
6 in the right way, for anybody. They don't work, okay? I'm
7 not a social worker, so I can talk, talk, talk, and I don't
8 know if I have a role in the next phase, but I do believe
9 there's places for women like this to help you, and I
10 really encourage you that you reach out when you go to the
11 next place. Where are the Indigenous entrepreneurs? And
12 Health Canada moves over and lets these women do the work
13 they're supposed to do.

14 I'm going to do a band hearing because
15 there's some really horrible stuff done to me and when it
16 started I didn't know. It came back, and I kept saying
17 bullshit. I'm making that up. But I don't want to wear it
18 outside of these rooms because I know once we get out of
19 these rooms, we're going to fall into the environment we
20 living in. And I don't want you looking at me, seeing me
21 from that experience because I had on a experience that
22 isn't who I am. They're totally different things. And I
23 don't want to deal with it, but I need to talk about it.

24 Some days I feel so dirty. Some days I
25 feel so unimportant. And I want something done about the

1 hiring policy here in the North. I have mobility right.
2 If I want to transfer between bands and one band will let
3 me go and another will take me with my citizenship. I am
4 supposed to have equal citizenship. But here's the disease
5 of classism. The HR policy here, because I wasn't born
6 here, supersedes my right to full citizenship in Lutsel
7 K'e. So they're telling me I'm not Priority One, so white
8 male has more priority over my hiring because he was born
9 here and I -- that's not what the whole equity or
10 affirmative action is supposed to be about and I tried to
11 talk to the government here, and I get it thrown back in my
12 face. "You're not born here."

13 The United Nations Declaration tells us
14 Indigenous people those are false boundaries. My treaty
15 says I have citizenship. I have full citizenship. Indian
16 Affairs didn't tell me if you transfer to Lutsel K'e,
17 you're a second-class citizen and nowhere do I read in
18 anywhere that a hiring policy has got more authority than
19 my Indigenous rights.

20 Chief and Council has not told me they're
21 endorsing that I'm second-rate citizen. My band I left
22 never said, "We're not letting you go to be a second-rate
23 citizen." But somehow the GNWT has the right in their
24 hiring policy to supersede my -- and I talked to Minister
25 Bennett. I talked to her directly to her about it. She

1 says, "Well, write me a letter." I'm not writing her a
2 letter. We went to court orally. Oral has just as much
3 strength as written if not more. I have told her. I'm not
4 going to do anymore of that and now I'm telling Justin and
5 you.

6 How come the state is letting an HR policy
7 supersede my inherent right to citizenship and nationhood?
8 And you want me to buy that? I don't buy it. And I'm not
9 going to get into a big fight with the GNWT because we'll
10 fight it and I said, "If I fight it, it makes it true. I'm
11 not fighting it. I'm not going to make it true. It's a
12 lie." So now that you know that I know that they know, we
13 all know. You can't undue what you know. So when you
14 don't see me, that I don't fight is because I don't want to
15 make a lie the truth.

16 So if you don't do something about that,
17 I'm going to have to return your tobacco because you asked
18 me to tell you truth, right? And the truth is, I
19 transferred -- I have mobility right. You don't deny her
20 to health care if she moves to Alberta, but you'll allow
21 the GNWT to deny my Indigenoussness because they decided I
22 wasn't born here. That's wrong. And it's a lie. It's
23 also a lie that we -- when our kids go into camps, that
24 they don't have parents. They have parents. Those parents
25 are struggling.

1 My daughter was trying to raise eight kids
2 in Lutsel K'e -- I mean four kids in Lutsel K'e. She has
3 ten. I'm very rich. And the state gave her \$800 a month.
4 And when she got a job, if it went over what they state
5 had, they caught it back. She couldn't afford child care,
6 so she had to stop working. We didn't get our treaty for
7 housing, so she had her kids in that one little room of her
8 in-laws.

9 She went into voluntary agreement, but
10 instead of keeping services to go with her, they just let
11 her loose, and of course, she just really messed up. When
12 I took them out of care -- and I'll be straight up honest
13 here -- I took them out of care because I was really
14 worried about what people would say to me or about me if I
15 didn't. But I didn't know how to parent. I was vicious
16 with my little girl and my little girl was put in care and
17 the state took her out. Put her in a place and it got
18 really horrible. People weren't ready.

19 So when I took the children, I said, "I
20 need help with them." I got a cheque the first month for
21 over \$3,000. To me, that's discrimination against
22 Indigenous families, Indigenous parents because she got
23 \$800. I got -- because all of a sudden, they had illnesses
24 that they didn't have when they were with the mother. She
25 had \$800 for all of them including herself under income

1 support. Our negotiated treaties were hard times.

2 I got a thousand for each of them. The
3 state can't discriminate me if I'm against income support
4 but they can discriminate against Indigenous people who are
5 on income support. I get child care paid for whether I'm
6 working or not because they're the state's kids, right?
7 And isn't every child born in Canada -- doesn't the state
8 have a responsibility to those same -- to every family in
9 Canada. But when they're the state's children -- so child
10 welfare was paid -- I mean child care was paid by them.
11 They make the decisions on how much money goes into child -
12 - what you got to pay, right?

13 They also give \$1,200 for clothing. My
14 daughter got 20 bucks a month for each of them, for the
15 whole work for them. They give sports money which I'm
16 grateful for. My daughter didn't get that, right? She got
17 so much money a month a year for visiting. They didn't
18 give her that. So I put in a formal complaint once because
19 they have -- they also created a Foster Care Association.
20 It's funded. Where's the parent one? Right? Then they
21 come up with an idea lately of having these family children
22 circles, but it's run by the state, so what are you going
23 to say in there? As soon as you say you have a problem,
24 like I have an anger issue. Do you run and tell the social
25 worker that you have an apprehensive child? You know, when

1 I said leave it with the First Nations, we need a place
2 where we can talk about our horrors and our traumas without
3 running the risk of losing our kids, right?

4 So I go to the Foster Care Association, I
5 tell them how bad I feel. I'm almost ashamed. And I
6 carried that shame for a long time, for taking the money.
7 And my daughter was just dying, right? Out in the street
8 using. And you know when we talk about addictions, it just
9 drives me crazy every year it's Indigenous people that get
10 profiled, but we're not the ones driving that to pay for
11 the drugs. We don't own the liquor store. We don't own
12 the hotels. And we don't drive -- how do you say it, for
13 cocaine and crack. We do the trafficking of it, but we're
14 not the biggest consumers. They're sitting in their
15 houses, going to work in the ledge or the hospital or the
16 justice because those are -- they're social drugs. They're
17 acceptable ones especially coke, right? So there's such an
18 irony to that, right?

19 But I see it as discrimination not only
20 against Indigenous people but because most of the kids in
21 carrier are Indigenous. I really see it as discrimination
22 against Indigenous parents when you don't give them the
23 same thing you give foster parents, but it's the same
24 child. So don't do this best interest of the child thing
25 for me when you don't give them the same amount of money.

1 I know that they've ruled that down south, that when
2 they're off-reserve, they're supposed to get the same as
3 on-reserve for child care and foster care, but I think
4 that's just a band date. If we want to foster -- and I'm
5 not a foster parent, and I've been saying for four or five
6 years.

7 We need another place because that's my
8 grandchildren. And I used to feel ashamed, you know,
9 because I knew other people were raising their kids, but I
10 struggled because why should my kids live in poverty when
11 the state is giving foster care people more than they do.
12 They should be entitled to it, but I'll tell you what the
13 danger of that is because I've seen through the years, and
14 I lived through it too. I didn't want to go live with my
15 people. I wanted to live with my white people because they
16 had the money. A lot of our kids go into care and they
17 don't want to go back because of the income that comes.
18 It's classism. But it's targeted in different ways so that
19 the kid feels better being with a foster parent than back
20 home.

21 Her and I went to a meeting where I
22 actually heard a foster parent was going to buy themselves
23 another house, and we both wanted to say, "Does the foster
24 parent get part of your house after? Because what happens
25 there is they got lost like I did. I didn't know where I

1 belonged. So that belonging comes out of those kinds of
2 policies.

3 So you may not have us in residential
4 schools, right, but what Justin is doing now is it's called
5 "voluntary agreements of child welfare." He knows there's
6 more in care, but they're hiding -- it's like hidden right
7 out in the open. These kids are going into care, but the
8 state is paying big bucks. But as soon as they go back to
9 the parents, the big bucks are gone. They're living up to
10 their treaty. There's no housing for those kids, right?
11 The state will say, "Yeah, you can do so much, but policy
12 says you can't do what you want to do. It's your own
13 land." We can't even have a dog or VCR unless the state
14 approves of it. Because we have to take our VCRs up to
15 Indian Affairs, so that isn't what we negotiated for.

16 So while there's a lot of horrible things
17 and I've suffered, and they start with the policies, the
18 Indian Act, they start with the state, and it's gotten
19 dressed up and forgotten about over time, but it's white
20 supremacy that doesn't benefit her, it doesn't benefit me,
21 it benefits a certain percentage. But you, her and I are
22 left and our kids are left, and it's been multi-
23 generations and the blame goes back and forth, back and
24 forth, right, when the root of the problem is that lie. So
25 unless he start doing a -- what am I trying to say --

1 unless there's a criteria, a true criteria, that's looking
2 for that lie of supremacy, that every new policy and old
3 ones -- because I know that INAC is looking at its
4 policies, but it's not just INAC. It's right from the
5 state because that's what this country was built on was a
6 lie.

7 And without those treaties, Canada can't
8 exist, right? So we're nation to nation. And you know
9 I've heard it's said that people are afraid of us. That
10 hurts me to hear that because the only thing that I can
11 rationalize that what it's about is they think we're going
12 to do to them what they did to us. And what it tells me is
13 that they don't understand it's being done to them.
14 Because they're not part of the 1 per cent and the
15 privileges they get from the white privilege are laughable
16 because they're left with holes in the bag for the 1 per
17 cent because they apologize for being white now, right?

18 I have a good friend that came to sit with
19 me today because I was trying to talk to her because she
20 feels guilty because of what happened in Ontario. The
21 state had the Public Land Act and gave out a lot of lands
22 that wasn't theirs to give away, so she's inheriting land
23 and then you leave those people that followed state law to
24 go get the land and now you're saying, you know, you should
25 be guilty that you have it because of the poverty over

1 here.

2 And that's what I'm talking about. Nobody
3 is benefitting but only the small percentages. It's not
4 even government. So if you're really honest about ending
5 the violence because the women -- murdered and missing
6 Indigenous women and us survivors in LGBT, we're the bottom
7 of the bottom. So there's nowhere else to go but the
8 truth, and I'm not going to waste your time and mine with
9 smaller recommendations because the root of it is that lie.
10 And Robin DiAngelo knows it's a lie. I know it's a lie.
11 Now you know it's a lie, right? He knows it's a lie. You
12 can't be in government that long and not know the lies.
13 And now they all know, right?

14 So where do we go when we know that we
15 know? My grandma used to say to me, "You can't walk two
16 roads." When I found out the hard way, because I've heard
17 a lot of people on asserting my Indigenous, so when it was
18 revealed to me, it was really just a lie and it's hurt them
19 as much as it's hurting me even when I see them sitting in
20 their colonial minds, right? It bugs me. But they're
21 sicker than me because they still don't know they're living
22 the lie. But their kids will know.

23 And the traditionalist teaches, "You know,
24 if you're going to be a traditionalist, be careful because
25 you're working with truth. And if you lie, it may not come

1 back to you, but it's going to come back to some generation
2 of yours, so now we see it coming full circle."

3 And my sister, my friend, my true friend,
4 suffers yet she was the woman and her organization, still
5 today is, that will take the very women that was me and my
6 daughter and my mother and give them shelter and there are
7 still women in this town that are doing incredibly human
8 debasing things just to get a ride over there so they can
9 sleep. All they want to do is sleep and we're still there.
10 And they're the group of women that nobody wants to deal
11 with. That was me. That was my mom. That was my
12 daughter. I don't want it to be my granddaughter, that
13 little cutie you saw, and my great-granddaughter. I don't
14 want that to happen.

15 So, I don't want to do blessing and
16 blaming, but the state has an obligation to go through the
17 pain of growing into the truth. It needs to stop putting
18 it on its citizens and having us fight it out because it's
19 not our fight. It's not our burden. It's the state's. So
20 when they asked me, did I want a reset for murdered and
21 missing? I thought I did until I came here and something
22 started moving in me which is the spirit of the truth.
23 It's not the state, it's -- I'm glad I'm here. I need to
24 stop.

25 You know I said there's this speech that I

1 want to say, there's a speech I say. And I'm going to
2 leave and I go, "Oh, I should have been said this. I
3 should have said that." But there's lots of -- very, very
4 more to come. Very strong women coming with their stories
5 and we're all at different places. But I know I'm of
6 worth, but I also know that I have to be careful what I
7 share because we are in different places.

8 There's a band part that I'm going to do.
9 I don't want to carry it or have it -- people looking at
10 me. But I do need to talk about it, so I'm so grateful
11 that you set it up the way you set it up. I'm so grateful
12 that it's very traditional. And I'm sad for Mary and
13 Brueller (ph) because she's actually -- we're both from the
14 same area, same root, First Nations. Because we live in a
15 colonial environment she's restricted by the government and
16 until it starts setting itself free from the lies, it's
17 going to keep hurting people, and it's going to have to
18 keep lying to itself about itself. And Josephine
19 Mackenzie, when I was talking to her, I said, "I don't know
20 why I got to live and my mother didn't." And she said,
21 "Well, it's really none of your business, anyway." And
22 traditionally, I get that.

23 So then I was talking about the inquiry,
24 just like Truth and Reconciliation. We didn't know where
25 it was going, but the people came and rose to talk. And

1 it's still growing. It's still alive. And it's the same
2 as murdered and missing. We don't know where it's going,
3 but the spirit has been let out. That is the main thing.
4 The spirit is out now. So my spirit is out. Right? And
5 it's going to feed me. And I hope that it does for every
6 other person and I hope those that are persons this knows
7 what's happening, that they can look at it another way.
8 This inquiry belongs to me, for me to talk because God
9 didn't take me. When I tried so hard for him to do that.
10 Creator gave me back my life because I went to detox centre
11 and I'll wrap it up with this.

12 I was really sick and I found out the
13 detox centre -- you could go there, but you couldn't self-
14 medicate, so I went and I knew I was really going to be
15 junk sick because I used to -- I was having seizures. I'd
16 be trying to sling booze and I'd have a seizure. Somebody
17 would steal my drugs, and somebody would take my float, and
18 we're stuck in this sick little environment that once they
19 called the medic, they'd find out if I remembered who I
20 was, and it'd take me a while I figure everything out, I go
21 back to work.

22 Because we're so indispensable -- I mean
23 dispensable. Then I found out about this detox. So I said
24 one day, I can't take it anymore. I just -- I can't. So I
25 take myself there, and it's New Year's Eve. I can't get

1 into it. I just couldn't do it anymore. And I go in and I
2 take a Valium because I know I'm going to be sick. And the
3 guy that was on the street with me was with me for five
4 years, a brutal, ugly relationship.

5 I go in and I can tell you, I have a
6 nursing background but what my experience was is I was
7 dying. And I'd like to go back and see my records. But
8 they couldn't put an IV in my arm because my veins kept
9 collapsing. And I remember -- do I hurt? My body really,
10 really hurts, and I had the same green vile coming out of
11 me that I saw my mother, right? So they rushed me off --
12 what do you call that -- Alexander Hospital. That's where
13 my mother died. And the next thing I know, the next thing
14 I remember, was hearing, "I'm sorry. We can't do anything
15 to help you." And then the next thing I know, I'm in this
16 room and it's all white. And it's an irony when you're at
17 your last kind of breath what comes to you.

18 You got to know all through my life with
19 the crazy make and relationship because I had gotten to a
20 place in my life where I would start another relationship
21 with a guy that could beat up the guy that I was just
22 leaving. But the part that I was missing was I was going
23 to get worse lickings and I did and they got really bad
24 like this guy broke my leg because I didn't come back with
25 enough money. I took a tire edge -- and what was it called

1 -- the jack, he broke it with -- and it's all broken up and
2 scarred here, and the other ones, he put holes in my legs.
3 People were watching.

4 So today, when people insinuate or say
5 "You know, you're not from here," people are around
6 watching. It takes me to the same place. It's not what
7 you do. It's the spirit in which you do it. So I'm laying
8 there and I'm sick. You ever fall and make yourself sick?
9 You feel sick from falling you just -- but I'm in so much
10 pain. And he says, "Let's go get some Talwin for your
11 leg." All of a sudden, he's in love with me. And I'm
12 twisted in my head. All I could think about was get me the
13 drugs because I can't deal with -- he just broke my leg.
14 And I believe today that he broke it to get the Talwin.

15 I ended up going to jail. I got caught
16 with it. But when I was in that bed, I had said, "You
17 know, God --" because we always pray. I always prayed.
18 Get me out of this one, get me out of that one. But lots
19 of times, I'd be on the street all alone, and the worst is
20 between eight o'clock in the morning till ten. And I would
21 cry and pray because it's an emptiness. You get no drugs.
22 There's nobody out there. Bars not open. So you're left
23 with yourself. What a horrible, horrible place to be when
24 you have no spirit in you. But I say, "God, I don't know
25 what love is. I can't die." What a saying.

1 And in my recovery journey, my husband has
2 been very, very patient. I'm having a sense of what love
3 is. The youngest one that I raise. I didn't really want
4 to raise her. It was just so many kids all at once. But
5 when the call came because they apprehended her, I said,
6 "I'll be right there." And that little girl has taught me
7 love and still does. And she's a diva.

8 And by waking that up in me and my
9 husband, he's kind to me. He has no shame at all for being
10 with me in spite of how I lived. He gave up, you know,
11 political positions and high-paying jobs because he'll say,
12 "I wasn't gifted with having children, to raise my
13 children, to be the primary parent," and some leaders have
14 made fun out of him for that because we hear about it. But
15 he had an opportunity. He said, "You know, you brought
16 them to me. You gave me what I didn't have. And that's
17 what our daughter gave us." And we can paint her wrong and
18 everything, but she gave us -- to me, another opportunity
19 to get right, and a gift my husband never had. And my
20 little diva has just got him wrapped because she calls us
21 mom an dad. But she know knows who her parent is.

22 So when I said to Creator, "I don't know
23 what love is. It's been a long journey --" and I know what
24 it is. So he's not here. And somebody asked me is he
25 coming? I don't want him to be here not because of any

1 story or anything because when I went home these last few
2 days, it was separate from this. And it was a place --
3 like a haven. I could go home and he could just say "How
4 was your day?" He's got gentle, gentle hands. And he's
5 gentle, you know.

6 And I need that. I still need that. And
7 I need love. And I need to belong. And I need to be kind
8 because I'm not fragile because of what happened to me.
9 Human beings are fragile. I can embrace being fragile, so
10 when I want to cry, I'll cry because I want to cry. I'm
11 hurt. People will say how are you today, and I'll go, "Do
12 you really want to know because I'll tell you," because
13 we're an having an hour conversation, eh? But I couldn't
14 embrace my humanity and I'm fragile and I check with my
15 friends all the time. When I say that, what am I saying
16 like what's that about because I don't just trust in
17 myself. It's a "we" life.

18 So I am very honoured to be with these
19 women because Joanne is very patient with me, right, and
20 everything that she offers me. And I'm not as -- I'm
21 always busy and I'm always doing something. She patiently
22 waited for a phone call for what, two or three months? And
23 most people would walk away from me, right? Arlene has
24 been with me as my white friend, helping me -- and her --
25 both of us on that journey. Finding where she went. Oh, I

1 get it. We both had the ha-ha.

2 It's just a lie. And the 1 per cent need
3 us to fight over it because they get to do all the stuff
4 they're doing and, you know, they say that they don't have
5 land in a country, they won't even have country. Then
6 we'll say things about corporations, well, there's people
7 that are corporations, right. So these people are very,
8 very sick, but -- and while I don't have a close
9 relationship with both of these women, I know from my own
10 journey that they couldn't be doing the work till they've
11 gone through the journey, and I know they have more
12 journey, but my heart goes because we're not recognizing
13 them.

14 This inquiry didn't recognize them because
15 they weren't important of them, but for the future, we have
16 women like them. Health Canada just needs to move over.
17 Everybody just needs to move over, and we just need to step
18 up. But it's about creating that space to do it. And it's
19 really not about making us safe because as long as the
20 disease is there, it's not safe. But we can't let us stop
21 it, but I think the state has an obligation to teach on
22 race relations.

23 They need to teach in the North, have a
24 place where we could do research on Indigenous studies. We
25 don't have Indigenous studies up here. There's a lot that

1 the North is missing. The South doesn't -- one more thing,
2 and I promise I quit. It shocked me when I moved up here
3 that the North is different than the South because there's
4 no reserves. And that's wrong. It's another lie. And up
5 in the communities, we don't get our money, the GNWT -- and
6 it goes into a public pool, and I can't wrap my mind around
7 that one, right? So the state, the ledge will say on
8 behalf of the state, we've engaged, we've consulted -- but
9 they've fostered dependency. And anything that fosters
10 dependency even with our children. We're not supposed to
11 make our children dependent.

12 We're supposed to create a framework with
13 which they can go into life, and we have to be non-
14 interference, like it's not my place to tell -- when you
15 sign, you cannot be -- like right now, he's working in the
16 mall being security because he cares about the people both
17 ways. They need to be -- and he gets hit on, spit on,
18 criticized in the mail, you know, when you're Indigenous,
19 you're hurting our people. But our people hurt themselves,
20 so he's there to try to make sure they don't hurt other
21 people while they're hurting themselves. But that money
22 belongs to us.

23 And I think one of the biggest things
24 that's happening is, you know, if I need to see a
25 neurologist, they'll send me to Edmonton, no problem. I

1 can go see a neurologist, but if I need to see somebody
2 that has shaking tent, you better have somebody that has
3 shaking tent because if you want to access your non-insured
4 health benefit to see a traditionalist that has that, you
5 don't have one, too bad, so sad. And yet, they say they
6 want to reconcile the colonial relationship but they're
7 restricting my access, so I can go as far as the border.

8 Again, United Nations Declaration Rights
9 of Indigenous Peoples says those borders are false. So
10 that is the supremacy. It's another thing that says we're
11 superior. And then you have people like myself and my
12 husband trying to educate nurses and doctors of the ways of
13 our people when they state is saying the very opposite.
14 And we're supposed to be grateful for the little crumbs off
15 the table. It's very hard, my friend.

16 I'm going to wrap up. I'm not doing
17 politics class. Because life is political and I think
18 you've heard enough. Families, you're going to hear more
19 survivors. I just want to make sure that Justin hears that
20 white supremacy is a lie, and until he gets rid of it, his
21 apology means nothing. But if he doesn't want to come
22 right out and ask for forgiveness, act like and you do and
23 get rid of those policies that promote the lie of white
24 supremacy because it's hurting not just the Indigenous
25 people, it's hurting the rest of citizens in Canada because

1 they have to live with it and the laughable privileges they
2 get from it. So, merci cho for hearing me out. For people
3 being so kind to stay and listen because I can talk
4 forever. If anybody knows me, I talk talk, talk. So,
5 merci.

6 MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you.
7 Commissioner Robinson, do you have any comments or
8 questions?

9 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you so
10 much. I'm going to keep it simple. I want to thank you
11 for saying these words over and over. The white supremacy.
12 It's sugarcoated. It's not identified often enough, these
13 ideas. Given in the processes we've been through so far,
14 it's touched on, but those words, racism, classism, white
15 supremacy, sometimes it seems hard to say because people
16 are scared. So I want to thank you for the words that
17 you've used.

18 I'm not going to say much more because I
19 want your words to be the words that will resonate. I want
20 to give you a couple of gifts. You might have heard about
21 the gifts that we've been giving. They're not really gifts
22 from me. I mean, a little bit, there will be. They're
23 gifts from other women, Indigenous women across this
24 country who want to bring you love. That's the simplest
25 way I can describe it. So I'm going to put the mic down

1 because I don't like talking to you through this, so I'm
2 going to come over there.

3 MS. SANDRA LOCKHART: Robin just gave me
4 eagle feathers. I mentioned that I was a Thunderbird and I
5 gave you my name, but I'm from the Bald Eagle Clan. And
6 remember I told you that you were either going to make me
7 or break me. Well, being from the Bald Eagle Clan -- when
8 they're going to mature, they fly to be alone and they'll
9 break their own beak for anyone to grow and they'll pull
10 out their own talons because that's the only way the new
11 one will grow as well as they'll pull off some of their
12 feathers because that's the only way the new one will come.

13 So if you could imagine that, that's what
14 I'm saying when I say the truth that sets you free. But
15 it's very painful because you have to pull out the old.
16 And one of the things I'm responsible for is not only
17 seeing the bigger picture, but to see the fine details. I
18 feel like -- my people, they have their hats, their
19 feathers that they wear and those are to be earned in the
20 staffs. I feel like I just got a blessing from my
21 ancestors. So, merci cho.

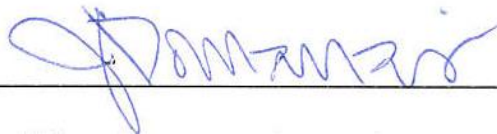
22 MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you with that.
23 The hearing is adjourned.

24 --- Exhibits (code: P01P09P0203)

25 EXHIBIT 1: Folder containing two

1 digital images brought by the family
2 and displayed during their public
3 hearing.
4 --- Whereupon proceeding adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

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



Jovelle Domanais, Court Reporter