1		Vancouver, BC
2		October 25, 2011
3		(PROCEEDINGS RECONVENED AT 10:03 A.M.)
4	THE REGISTRA	R: Order. This hearing is now resumed.
5	MR. CHANTLER	: Mr. Commissioner, Neil Chantler, counsel for the
6		families.
7		LORI-ANN ELLIS, resumed:
8	CONTINUED EX	AMINATION IN CHIEF BY MR. CHANTLER:
9	Q	Ms. Ellis, you told this commission yesterday
10		that you met Cara at her father's wedding on June
11		27th, 1990. You got to know each other a bit at
12		that wedding?
13	А	Yes.
14	Q	You told the commission that Cara returned to
15		Vancouver after the wedding and, and returned to
16		her life on the Downtown Eastside?
17	А	Yes.
18	Q	And that was a life of addiction, work in the sex
19		trade. She said to you it was a hard life.
20	А	Yes.
21	Q	But over the next few years, Cara stayed in touch
22		with her family in Alberta and she called home
23		from time to time?
24	А	Yes, she did.
25	Q	And she wrote home?

1	А	Yes.
2	Q	And she'd usually write home when she was in jail?
3	A	Yes, she would.
4	Q	She was in jail a couple of times over that
5		period, 1990 through to 1996, when she was
6		released from a year and-a-half in jail after an
7		attempted manslaughter conviction?
8	А	Yes.
9	Q	I'm going to pass up a package of some of the
10		letters that Cara wrote to her father, while she
11		was incarcerated, from time to time in that
12		period. These letters were disclosed to the
13		commission some months ago and the package is
14		referenced as Doc ID FAM-001-000001.
15	А	Thank you.
16	Q	Ms. Ellis, you have seen these letters before; is
17		that right?
18	A	Yes, I have.
19	Q	And you have had a chance to review these letters
20		recently?
21	A	Oh, yes.
22	Q	Were you aware of these letters at the time they
23		were written?
24	A	I knew the letters were coming. I didn't know
25		what the contents of the letters were. They

weren't written to me. They were written to her 1 2 father. But you have had a chance to read them since then? 3 Q 4 Α Yes. 5 And you would agree these letters are -- the date 0 6 of these letters is not always clear, but they 7 range from approximately 1990 to 1992? 8 Α Yes. 9 Q Okay. Can you tell the commission just generally what Cara would, would write about in these 10 11 letters to her family? Well, you know, she talked about how much she 12 Α loved her family and, and how much she missed them 13 and she talked about her life on the streets, her 14 15 addiction to drugs. In, in one of the letters, she refers to her addiction and that she wants to 16 17 get into rehab, which actually did happen with the help of her father. And she talks about her 18 19 brothers and her, and her life at home. Basically 20 trying to stay connected. Because phone calls weren't always available at the prison, letters 21 22 were, was her way of keeping in contact. Was your family ever able to write her back? 23 Q 24 Her father and her stepmom wrote to her regularly 25 at the prison.

1	Q	Okay. What other kinds of things did she talk
2		about in these letters?
3	А	Uh, she just talks about her boyfriend, Stan. He
4		was a member of the Hells Angels and she was
5		really kind of a biker chick she called herself.
6		She talks about spending time with him. There is,
7		at one point, she talks about breaking up with him
8		and, and how the only way she can really make it
9		with the breakup is to actually go away. Uhm, she
10		basically it, it's kind of a mix of a lot of
11		different emotions but, to me, when I read them,
12		it shows that she has really made an effort to try
13		to keep connected with her family.
14	Q	Does she make any mention of staying in touch?
15	А	She does. She talks quite a bit in here about how
16		much she would love to spend some time I'm
17		looking at one here actually:
18		Good-bye for now. Love, your daughter. Hope
19		there is enough for everyone. Hugs and
20		kisses.
21		She talks about how important it is, that she
22		is promising that she will stay in touch with the
23		family.
24	Q	Does she talk about her life in the sex trade?
25	А	She touches upon it throughout some of the

letters. Basically that it's -- well, I knew, 1 2 this is the thing I picked up later, but it's a 3 hard life and she kind of touches upon that 4 throughout what she's writing here. Does she talk about the future, her plans for the 5 Q 6 future? 7 She did. She actually talks in one of the letters Α actually about going to school, some classes 8 which, I don't believe in the letter she talks 9 about what classes they are, but I am assuming 10 11 it's journalism, being that we had talked about her taking some courses in that. 12 13 You gave evidence yesterday that Cara got out of Q jail in approximately '96, we don't know precisely 14 15 when, and the family lost touch with her at that point. Can you tell us what happened? 16 17 Well, uhm, my stepmother-in-law, Crystal, had been Α told by a friend of hers, who worked in the prison 18 19 system, that it isn't a good idea to be bringing 20 gifts to people in prison that are drug addicted, because what they will do is they will trade what 21 22 they have received as gifts in order to be able to 23 get drugs, and if you give her money or cigarettes, it's the same thing. 24 25 So, a decision was made by her father and her

stepmother that they were going to stop the gravy 1 train. She was not going to be getting any more 2 3 money or gifts from them, because they were afraid 4 it would feed her addiction. So, when they cut 5 off the money from her, that was the last we heard 6 from her, which, to me, the assumption was, she 7 was pissed off. She wanted the money to come in and she didn't want anything to do with anybody 8 9 because of that. Was that conversation the last anybody heard from 10 Q Cara? 11 Unfortunately, yes, it was. 12 13 MR. CHANTLER: I would like to mark this package of letters as 14 the next exhibit. 15 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes. THE REGISTRAR: Exhibit number 16. 16 (EXHIBIT NO. 16: Bundle of handwritten letters 17 consisting of 24 pages - FAM-001-000001) 18 MR. CHANTLER: 19 20 What happened over the next few weeks and months Q after that conversation in '96? 21 22 Α We sat and we waited. When we talked to, my husband and I, Steven, when we talked to her dad 23 on the phone or to Crystal, the stepmom, we would 24 25 ask if they had heard from Cara. And it was more

often that we called asking if they had heard from 1 her than Cara had been calling actually. We 2 3 called every few days, every two or three days 4 we'd call, "Have you heard from her? Have you 5 heard from her?" And when we'd get then the answer "no," our phone calls slowed down, because 6 7 we didn't want to hurt their feelings. But we all just -- we were in a holding pattern. We were 8 9 waiting to hear from her. What did you think had happened to her? 10 Q 11 Α I thought at first, for quite some time, that she was just very angry. She had a bit of anger 12 issues anyway and could kind of fly into a rage 13 really quickly. So, I thought she was just having 14 15 somewhat of a temper tantrum. "Fine, if you won't give me money, then I won't call you," was my 16 17 thought. So, we weren't overly concerned for a while. We just thought she would calm down and 18 get in contact again, but that contact never 19 20 happened. What was the longest she had gone before without 21 Q 22 contacting the family? I would say probably two months. 23 Α 24 And how long went by before you started to get Q 25 worried?

I personally worried really, but didn't share it 1 Α 2 with anyone. But I know the family, on the whole, 3 probably after about six months, they started to 4 really get concerned that something was wrong. 5 And what did you do? Q Well, we were really poor, my husband and I. 6 Α 7 didn't have a large income coming in, so my 8 capability to do anything was really limited. We 9 had been saving for about three years, for my children and myself, to be able to take a holiday 10 11 during the summer vacation. My husband works 12 during the summer, so he can't come. So, we would save like crazy and our intention was that I would 13 14 come to visit my brother in BC with the 15 expectation of walking the streets and finding 16 Cara. 17 And did you take that trip? Q I did. 18 Α 19 Do you recall the dates? Q 20 It was from I believe the 13th of July to the 23rd Α of July, 1998. 21 Okay. And what -- tell us again, what was the 22 Q 23 purpose of this trip? 24 It was for my kids to have a break, a vacation of Α 25 course, but in my mind, I knew, when I left

Calgary, that that was just kind of a sideline for me, that I was taking this trip to fulfill a promise I made to my husband that I would find his sister.

And what did you do?

A I carried a pink piece of notepaper in my hand, all the way on the airplane, and I, uhm, on the second-last day of our vacation, I walked the streets of Hastings looking for Cara. And I had on the pink piece of paper the numbers of, the phone numbers of both brothers and mom and dad and I wanted to see her and hug her and see that she was okay and give her the, the numbers and say, "call home."

But I, I walked down the streets in Hastings and talked to anybody who they would likely, would listen to me for, from just after lunch until it was well into dusk. And a lot of people said they had seen her, but they hadn't seen her in a really long time. And one person had said that they had seen her over at the, they called it the Vernon rooming house. I know now that it goes under a slightly different name, but I didn't know where that was, because I was new to this environment.

I, I basically walked away feeling really hollow

and like I had really let my husband down in not 1 2 being able to find his sister. 3 THE COMMISSIONER: Do you, do you want a few minutes? Do you 4 want me to stand down? 5 THE WITNESS: No, I'm good. With all that I have been through, 6 this is easy. 7 MR. CHANTLER: 8 You met a lot of people that day walking around Q 9 the Downtown Eastside in your search for Cara; is that right? 10 Yes, I did. Yes. 11 Α And did the people you meet know Cara? 12 Q There was actually quite a few people who knew 13 Α 14 Cara. I would say probably between 12 and 15 people knew who she was. They recognized the 15 16 picture. 17 And what did they say about Cara when they had Q last seen her or what they knew about her? 18 They, they had kind of -- as, as I am talking 19 Α 20 through, there was a few people who were actually very high, obviously, and they would say things 21 22 that made absolutely no sense. Like, they were 23 talking about her being at the movies, and if you look at the theater, you might see her; that type 24 25 of thing. And I would just kind of put those to

the side, because I knew that they were not in 1 2 their right frame of mind. But a lot of people said that they had seen 3 4 her and that she is probably just one of the other 5 girls who's gone missing. And I couldn't really 6 get a lot more detail from that, because the 7 people that I talked to were -- in, in the environment that they were in, they didn't like to 8 9 stand still for any length of time I found. So, they would give you little snippets of information 10 11 and then just walk away on you. Did you get a sense that the problem was bigger 12 Q 13 than just Cara? It took me about an hour, I am pretty slow, I 14 Α 15 guess, to realize, but when I got the first comment about the fact that she's just one of the 16 17 other girls going missing, I started to realize that I had bitten off more than I could chew. 18 What did you do next? 19 Q 20 Well, I only talked to the people on the street, Α the sex trade workers, and I even talked to a few 21 drug dealers. I was really uncomfortable asking 22 23 the police, because my brother lived very near 24 Hastings and he had already kind of, sort of 25 threatened me, "Don't you dare go to Hastings

looking for Cara," because he said that, "if you 1 2 get into trouble there, even the cops won't help you." 3 4 So, I was going to go to the police station, 5 because when I got to, uhm, Carnegie Centre, when I looked over, I saw a police station there, and I 6 7 thought, "Well, I am not going to waste my time looking there because my brother had already 8 9 warned me that they don't do a really terrific job in that area and they really won't give a shit 10 11 whether you're looking for her or not." So, I didn't go there. I did go into Carnegie Centre 12 13 and talked to some people who were eating in the kitchen thing there, and that's pretty much it. 14 15 Do you have the names of anybody who you talked to Q 16 that day? 17 No, because unlike now, I didn't realize the Α importance of what I was doing being documented. 18 I thought I would walk the streets, turn the 19 20 corner and find my sister-in-law. So, I, I didn't think that that was really important. It wasn't 21 22 until quite later that I realized that I had better start keeping track of these things, 23 24 because nobody else seemed to be doing it. 25 Now, you are, you are quite certain about the date 0

that you were in Vancouver though; is that right? 1 2 Absolutely. And I know that because, when we came Α 3 back to Calgary, my kids, being their very first 4 vacation, they forced me somewhat to sit and make 5 up a scrapbook of our vacation and they had saved 6 little SkyTrain tickets and bus receipts and our 7 transfers, I guess they call them, and they had also put in there the boarding passes from our 8 9 trip. And I was able -- I knew it was the day 10 before I was going home that I went to Hastings. 11 So, I can say with certainty it was between 1 o'clock and dusk, whatever time that is in July, 12 the day before I left, which would have been the 13 22nd of July. 14 15 1998? Q 1998. 16 Α What did you do the next day, Lori -- Ms. Ellis? 17 Q Uhm, after I got in trouble from my brother when I 18 Α 19 went over the night before, we discussed what 20 should be the next step. So, I got up really early in the morning. We were going home at noon. 21 22 So, I waited until 8 o'clock, which I thought would be the time that the police station would 23 24 open, and I called and got kind of a receptionist 25 person and said that I needed to talk to somebody

in their Missing Persons Unit, because I had to report someone missing.

And so they transferred me, it took a few minutes, but they transferred me to a gentleman, and I don't remember his name. I didn't see the need to write it down, but I did ask him, "Are you with the Missing Persons Unit?" Because I have experience with talking on the phone and I know you should always confirm that you have the right department. And he said he was the -- a, a constable or officer in the Missing Persons Unit.

So, I told him that I would like to report my sister-in-law, Cara, as missing. And then he proceeded to take a report from me, which took a long time, the better part of an hour. And I remember getting mad at him at one point during that conversation because he said to me, "What was Cara wearing the last time you saw her?" And I said, "Well, I saw her a year and-a-half ago. I am pretty sure she's changed her clothes by now." And then he was snarky at me. He said, "There is no need to be snappy at me like that." And I said that, "I am from Calgary reporting my sister-in-law missing and that she hasn't been heard from for a really long time. How am I

supposed to know what she was last wearing?" And 1 2 then we kind of got back on track. I took a deep 3 breath and I told him everything that I could 4 think of at the time that might help them to 5 locate her. 6 Can you give us some specific examples of what you Q 7 told him about Cara? Well, I didn't really know what I should tell him 8 Α 9 because I thought that they -- it was their job, they should know what they're doing. But he asked 10 11 me things like her height and her weight, which I could kind of guess at, but she's a pretty tiny 12 person; her eye colour, hair colour; any 13 14 information I knew about where she lived, and I 15 had only got the information from the people on the street saying she lived at this Vernon place. 16 17 But I didn't really supply a lot, only because I figured, whatever they needed to know, they would 18 ask me. 19 20 Did he ask you a lot of questions? Q Quite a bit. Like, he would ask me a question and 21 Α 22 then take a few minutes to write it down, and then 23 he would ask another question. I thought they were pretty basic questions, actually. I think 24 25 they could have got into more depth, but they

didn't. It was very general, just how they would 1 recognize her and maybe where I had last known 2 3 that she was. 4 How did you know he was writing this information Q 5 down? 6 Because he told me. He said, "Just a minute. Let Α 7 me get this down." And then he would, he would say, "Just a minute." And then he would sometimes 8 9 ask me to repeat something, because, as you guys probably know now, I talk quite fast, so I think 10 11 he couldn't keep up with what I was saying, and so I would repeat what I had said so he could get it 12 13 written down. What did he say he was going to do? 14 Q 15 He said to leave it with him and they would look Α into it. And I should say, I gave all the contact 16 17 phone numbers for her family as well. So, I felt, at that time -- boy, I was an idiot then -- that 18 they were actually going to do something about it. 19 20 And how did you leave off that conversation? Q I told them, you know, "When you hear anything at 21 Α 22 all, please get in contact with me. I am the main person, so please call my house." And I wasn't, 23 at that time, working, so I could be reached 24 25 pretty much anytime. And "to please get in

contact with me," and that was the end of it. 1 2 What happened next? Q I flew back to Calgary, and I looked in my 3 Α 4 husband's face and told him that I wasn't able to 5 find his sister, and I felt just terrible, because I don't like doing something halfway. Uhm, if I 6 7 promise something to someone, I try to carry it through, even if it takes a really long time. So, 8 I felt terrible and I told him I couldn't find his 9 sister, and then we started waiting. 10 11 How had you felt about the reaction you got from Q the police officer in Vancouver? 12 13 Well, it was my first real contact having to speak Α 14 to the police. So, at that point in time, I, I 15 felt that they were actually going to do something, that they, they would look, because to 16 17 think anything else would just be unbelievable. So, I, I really felt that they would do something. 18 19 I felt they would look for her. And every time 20 the phone rang, I would literally run to the phone thinking that it would be Cara calling, or the 21 police calling saying, "Cara will be getting in 22 touch with you," but we never got that call. 23 What happened next? What did you do next? 24 Q 25 Well, my husband, Steve, and I, we waited. And on Α

Saturday nights, there used to a TV show on in 1 2 Calgary, and I don't remember what it's called, 3 but it was a cop show that they would tape quite 4 often in Vancouver. And so our kids didn't hear 5 what we were doing, we would pull the kitchen 6 chairs up to the TV really close and turn the 7 sound down, and we weren't watching what the police officers were doing on the show. We would 8 9 watch the background to see if we could even just get a little glimpse of Cara to see, maybe she 10 11 didn't want to get in contact with us, but that at least she was alive. And we did that until the 12 13 show stopped being on the air on Saturdays and we never saw her. 14 15 Did you follow up with the police after you got Q 16 back to Calgary? 17 When, when I first got back, I, because I was Α frustrated, I contacted the RCMP detachment on 18 19 16th Avenue, North East, because it was closest to 20 where I lived, and I asked them if there is anything else that they could suggest that I do to 21 try to help find Cara, because I felt, the more 22 people that were looking, the better. So -- they 23 were really nice. They, they gave me a lot of 24

advice. They told me that I could call hospitals

25

in Vancouver, and the jails, rehab, some different 1 2 places where she may be and that would explain why 3 she wasn't on the streets. 4 And then they also told me that there is a 5 gentleman, and I don't remember his name, it was a 6 Scottish name though, who worked with the Red 7 Cross and that I could get in touch with him, and he had a computer system set up so that if anybody 8 9 ever got arrested, families could be passed a message, through him, to that person. 10 11 So, after I talked to the RCMP, I called the gentleman with the Red Cross, and then I waited 12 13 for the -- my husband's next payday so I could 14 afford a calling card, and I started calling 15 everybody I could think of at the hospitals and whatnot in Calgary -- from Calgary to Vancouver. 16 17 Was that man at the Red Cross ever able to help Q 18 you? No, because we didn't know, at that point in time, 19 Α 20 Cara was already dead. Did the Calgary RCMP suggest that they would get 21 Q 22 in touch with the Vancouver Police Department? I don't recall if they ever said that. 23 Α 24 Do you know if they ever did? Q 25 Α No, I don't.

Did the Vancouver Police Department get back to 1 Q 2 you in the coming weeks and months after your visit? 3 4 Until I put in the second missing persons report Α 5 in 2002, I never heard from the Vancouver Police 6 Department at all. 7 You never heard from them once? Q 8 Α Never. 9 Q Did you follow up with the Vancouver Police 10 yourself? 11 Α I called back about a month later roughly, because I was concerned that I hadn't heard anything and 12 13 I, kind of wrongfully now I realize, but I thought 14 that sex trade workers got arrested all the time, 15 and I thought, "It's been a month. Surely to goodness, she's been arrested by now and given the 16 17 message that we're looking for her." So, I called back and asked again to talk to 18 19 the Missing Persons Unit, and this time I got a 20 girl on the phone who was, to say the least, a bitch. She was awful. That woman should never be 21 22 talking to the public. She told me, in a really 23 snarky tone -- I'll try my best to kind of imitate 24 the way she said it -- "If Cara wants to be found, 25 she will be found. Why don't you leave us alone

1		and let us do our job." And I just could not
2		believe that anybody working with the public could
3		ever talk to somebody that way. That was just
4		horrible. It made me, who already felt bad about
5		not being able to find Cara, even worse. And now
6		I started to lose faith that the Vancouver Police
7		Department was even going to do anything to look
8		for her.
9	Q	Do you recall any other comments she might have
10		made about where
11	А	She told me that she's probably on vacation.
12		Like, it took me and my husband three years to
13		save for us to go to Vancouver. How the hell can
14		someone earning, like, a hundred dollars a month
15		on Welfare be able to go on vacation? That woman
16		should never have been in that job.
17	Q	This was approximately one month after your visit
18		to Vancouver?
19	А	Approximately, yeah.
20	Q	So that
21	А	I don't remember the exact date.
22	Q	That would have been in August 1998?
23	А	Yes.
24	Q	Okay. You don't know the name of the person you
25		were speaking with when you called back?

I mean, I knew she worked in the Missing 1 Α 2 Persons Department, because I had asked if she 3 was, but I don't know her name. She was -- her words really had a bite to them though. I do know 4 5 that. 6 So, how did you feel after that conversation? Q 7 I felt like I wanted to get on the plane and come Α back to Vancouver and take up the search myself 8 9 but, of course, financially, that wasn't possible. So, I sat and I waited and I hoped that maybe, if 10 11 things didn't go, seemed to be going good in Vancouver, that the Red Cross gentleman that I had 12 13 talked to would at least be able to do something 14 for us. 15 So, in the years '98 to 2002, when Robert Pickton Q was finally arrested, you didn't have any further 16 17 contact with Vancouver Police; is that right? 18 Α No. And why didn't you follow up with them again 19 Q 20 yourself? Because, at that point in time, my husband and I 21 Α 22 had moved to a house, where the rent was a lot 23 more expensive, and the utilities, and we were just barely scraping by. So, for me to take money 24 25 out of our budget, even to buy a calling card to

call Vancouver, just wasn't possible. We 1 2 literally were down to, like, our last penny. 3 Sometimes I would have to return pop bottles 4 before payday to be able to afford to buy food. 5 So, a calling card was just something I couldn't 6 afford. 7 What happened after Robert Pickton was arrested? Q Well, along with, like, the day of 9/11, this day 8 Α 9 is going to just burn into my memory. It was early morning and my kids had just gone off to 10 11 school. So, it was about 8 o'clock and the news report came over, excuse me, the news report came 12 over the news, and I was playing Solitaire on the 13 14 computer and looking kind of at the TV and they started talking about a man in Vancouver had been 15 arrested for murder, and that if you knew anybody 16 17 who was a sex trade worker in Vancouver, or a drug addict, if they could please get in contact with a 18 19 number. And, of course, I didn't think to write 20 the number down right away, because I was kind of shocked, like, wow, that is a description of Cara. 21 22 So, I sat there all day, and I waited for the 23 news report to come on again, which I didn't see 24 actually, so I could get the number down. And 25 when my husband came home from work, I, uhm, I

sent the kids off to their room and I talked to him and I said, "This man in Vancouver was just arrested for killing, and they said that if there was people who had someone who was in the sex trade in Vancouver or a drug addict, that they should get in contact with this number." And I have never heard my husband say "yes" fast enough when I asked him if I should put the name in.

So then what I did was I, uhm, I called collect to my father-in-law, who was living in Vernon, and asked for his permission to put Cara's name in with this investigation, and he said, "yes." And then I called my mother-in-law in Guelph and asked her the same question, and did the same thing with my brother-in-law, and all of them were really clear that, yes, I had their permission to do this. They felt it was a little futile, because nothing had happened when I made the first report, but we were all worried.

So, I called them the next morning, the number that they had given. It turned out to not work through Calgary. So I, again, called the RCMP office in Calgary and said, "How do I get the number for this task force that they talked about in the news?" So, it took about an hour, but they

called my home back and gave me the number. So I 1 2 called Victim Services and said, or the phone 3 message machine, and said that my sister-in-law 4 fit the category that they were looking for and 5 could they get back to me so we can get them to 6 look for her. 7 And did they get back to you? Q About two weeks later, I believe they got back to 8 Α 9 me, and we had a very short conversation on the phone. They asked about Cara, where she was 10 11 living, her lifestyle, the drug addiction, working in the sex trade. And then they said, "Well, that 12 pretty much fits the profile of what we're looking 13 for. We'll get back to you." And then they kind 14 15 of started things moving to be able to get her name into the situation. 16 17 At some point, you were visited by two members of Q the Missing Women's Task Force; is that right? 18 Yes. I don't remember the exact date. It's one 19 Α 20 of the dates that isn't sticking with me very 21 good. 22 Q In March 2002? That sounds about right, yes. They came to our 23 Α 24 house and they, they asked us some questions about 25 Cara's lifestyle and did she keep contact with the

family, did we know about her friends on Hastings, 1 2 that type of thing. So, we explained about her boyfriend, Stan, 3 that he was a Hells Angel, and we had some 4 5 pictures of him and her by the Harley in front of 6 a house; and we had some pictures that she had 7 taken, uhm, and sent in letters that we also gave to them; as well as a really good description of 8 9 Cara and anything we could think of that might help them to locate her, or to see if she could be 10 11 one of these women who was murdered at this man's farm. 12 13 Do you know the names of the officers who came to Q 14 visit you? 15 Unfortunately, I don't. Still, at that point in Α time, I wasn't really good -- I, I would just be 16 17 quessing, I think, if I told you their names. And when did you hear from them again? 18 Q I believe it was October. They came back to the 19 Α 20 house at that point in time and said that they had 21 checked, like, the jails and rehab and bank 22 accounts, that type of thing, to see if there had 23 been anything happen that would show that there had been activity by Cara, and, and nothing came 24 25 up positive. Like, they said, "There has been no

record that she existed at all during that time." 1 2 So, they were going to put her face on the Missing 3 Women's poster so that they could ask society to 4 help look for her and maybe they knew where she 5 was, and, and then we waited again. 6 You said October. Was that the same year, 2002, Q 7 or was it the following year? It would have been October 2002, I believe. 8 Α Okay. And at this point, you still have no 9 Q confirmation that Cara has any connection to 10 Robert Pickton's farm at all? 11 12 Α No. When did you receive that confirmation? 13 Q This is another day that's really easy to 14 Α 15 remember. It was January 26th, 2004, because it was my sister-in-law's birthday, and I had baked 16 17 all day. My house was covered in baking -muffins, cookies, cakes, you name it -- because I 18 19 was cooking food to put in the freezer. And my 20 husband had just left to go across the street to the store and the doorbell rang, and I thought, 21 22 "Now, why is my husband ringing the doorbell from 23 home," and when I opened the door, it was, uhm, it was two people from Missing Women's Task Force and 24 25 a Victim Services worker from Calgary. And as

soon as I opened the door, I knew that they had 1 2 found Cara at the farm. 3 So, when I told them to come into the house, 4 I actually said to them, "You are here to tell me 5 that Cara was found at the farm," and they said, "yes." And I said that, "I told you what you are 6 7 here for, but you have to tell my husband because I don't want to be remembered as the person who 8 9 told my husband that his sister was dead." So, I, uhm, I sat there, and when Steve walked in a few 10 11 minutes later, I said that they had something to tell him, and then they told Steve that her 12 remains had been found at the farm. 13 14 Lori-Ann, after you filed this missing person's 0 15 report in 1998, after your visit to Vancouver, you have given evidence that the police never got back 16 17 to you, the Vancouver Police Department never got back to you or your family. 18 No. 19 Α 20 They had your contact information but they didn't Q call you; is that right? 21 22 Α Never. What would you have been able to tell them about 23 24 Cara that might have assisted in an investigation 25 for her?

Well, you know, I have the ability now to look Α back, but I actually wrote a list, if I can just kind of refer to what I wrote here. Uhm, there were so many things, had they even asked me. Uhm, we had Cara's return address on letters that she had sent to her family that might have helped track where she was. We had her boyfriend's name as Stan and that he was a Hells Angel, and then, of course, we would have had the picture of Stan. So, they even knew what he looked like. We also would have had her banking information, because when her dad was sending her money, he was depositing money into her account directly. So, we would have been able to say where her bank account was and, and they would be able to check if it had been active.

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Uhm, one other thing, and I didn't think about this until a lot later. If they had said that there was an investigation going on about missing women, I would have been able to tell them that, on the night of her father's wedding, when I first met her, I had asked Cara if there was ever a place where she could go to, to get away from this filthy life on the street that she lived, and, and she had told me that she could get out of

town to this -- pardon me, I have a cold -- to this place where this guy would let her stay at his farm for free and give her drugs, as long as she would clean the house. The guy wasn't very clean. She actually said, "He lived like a pig, but at least you could get free drugs and you were off the street for a while." And I can't help but wonder if she was basically telling me in advance where she was going to end up dead. I think she might have been talking about Pickton. Of course, there is no way to prove that, but it sure fits the description of where she ended up.

I am just trying to think. We would have had the letters, of course, that she wrote to her mom and her, her stepmom and father. I might have said this already, but the call log, her brother, Bill, had the same cellphone number forever, and he would have been able to pull the phone numbers that she had called him collect on his cellphone from his phone.

And we also had some documents, my father-inlaw and my stepmother, stepmother-in-law, she would have had records from Cara being on probation and her rehab, because they had been helping her with that. So, all of those records

were things that they had available. If they had 1 2 only taken five seconds out of their busy schedule 3 to ask me, I could have told them these things. 4 The list, by the way, is 36 items long and 5 none of these were ever asked by them to me, and 6 these are things that I knew at that point in 7 time, and had they led me through what to say, I could have given them every one of these items, 8 9 which would have made their job a lot easier, and they never bothered to ask. 10 11 You have produced that list recently? Q 12 Α Yes. And you produced that list in consultation with 13 0 the other family members? 14 15 We actually had a meeting together where I had Α written up the list myself, and what I wanted to 16 17 do was have a little group meeting to see if they could come up with other ideas, and all they did 18 19 was basically reinforce what I already had on the 20 list. Everything that I had come up with, they came up with as well, and I didn't tell them that 21 22 I had already written a list myself. And by then, I had kind of rehashed the situation so many times 23 that it was really easy for me to come up with a 24

list. But had the Missing Persons police officer

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actually prompted me to more information, like, 1 2 maybe saying, "Do you know where she calls home from," or things like that, it would have made the 3 4 list very easy for me to make in '98. 5 So, you were never given an opportunity to tell Q 6 the police any of those things? 7 No. No, they just, like, said, "question 1, Α question 2, question 3." That's all they did. 8 9 Q You held a memorial service for Cara in 2004. Can you tell us about that? 10 11 Α We held a memorial service, even though we didn't have any of her remains back. What we had done 12 was we had chosen a date, and by coincidence, it 13 14 actually happened when three workers from the 15 Missing Women's Task Force came to the house --Freda Enns, Marilyn Johnny and Murray Lund -- came 16 to the house on -- I can't remember the date now, 17 July -- June or July -- you will have to help me 18 19 with this. I'm sorry, I gave you the date, but I 20 forgot. 21 I don't remember. Q But it was in mid-summer. I could check my notes 22 Α here to, to clarify the date. But the day before 23 24 the memorial, they had come to get some 25 information, including DNA, from my husband and

his brother for the investigation, and I was in 1 2 the middle of making coffee for everyone and 3 serving them cookies and whatnot, being a good 4 hostess, and Murray Lund turned to me and he said, 5 "By the way, Lori-Ann, I found that missing 6 persons report that you put in in '98. It was in 7 a filing drawer and it had never been actioned," and I almost dropped the coffeepot. 8 9 All this time that we were sitting there waiting to hear, it had sat in the damned drawer 10 11 in the police station and no one had ever even taken the time to do it. They were getting their 12 13 pay cheque to do it but they're not doing it, and that really pissed me off. 14 Did he ever provide you with a copy of that 15 Q missing person report? 16 17 No, he didn't, unfortunately. I wish he had. Α And we are speaking about the missing person 18 Q report from 1998 --19 20 Α Yes. 21 -- that you believe was completed when you called Q 22 the police station? I was told it was completed. Well, I had to keep 23 Α 24 waiting while the man was writing things down. 25 So, I know that, on his end of the phone, he was

writing things down on the missing persons report. 1 2 And to your knowledge, has that missing persons Q 3 report been disclosed in the course of this 4 commission of inquiry? 5 Along with a huge amount of documents that I have Α not received, that is one of them. 6 7 Ms. Ellis, looking back over these years, how do Q you feel about the response you got from the 8 9 Vancouver Police Department to your report? I think it is just shameful. I think that the 10 Α 11 people at the police department get a pay cheque 12 to do a job. And I know myself, as a citizen of Calgary, I expect the Calgary police force to do 13 their job, and I think the people of Vancouver 14 15 should expect the same. When someone calls to get help from the people who are there to keep the 16 17 peace and to take care of you in situations that aren't normal, everyday situations, when they turn 18 19 their back on you, I think that's shameful. And I 20 think every person in Vancouver should be standing up and making them accountable for taking their 21 22 pay cheque, cashing it in the bank every two weeks and not doing their job. And it pissed me off. 23 And I think that everybody in our family can say 24 25 that they felt the same way.

1	Q	Ms. Ellis, you have come here from Calgary. You
2		have been at every day of the hearings. I expect
3		you will be staying a little while longer. What
4		are you hoping to get out of this process?
5	A	Well, uhm, I made a list, if, if I can refer to
6		that.
7	Q	Can you tell us what this list is about?
8	А	Basically what this list is, is I, I want to try
9		to see what changes can be made so this never has
10		to happen to another family, at least do our very
11		best to do that. You have to bear with me.
12	Q	With the commissioner's permission, the witness
13		has something to read.
14	THE COMMISSI	ONER: Yes.
		T actually have to ask Mail for the conv. I gave
15	THE WITNESS:	I actually have to ask Neil for the copy I gave
15 16	THE WITNESS:	you back, because I need to see it. I'm sorry.
	THE WITNESS:	
16	THE WITNESS:	you back, because I need to see it. I'm sorry.
16 17	THE WITNESS:	you back, because I need to see it. I'm sorry. Thank you.
16 17 18	THE WITNESS:	you back, because I need to see it. I'm sorry. Thank you. I, uhm, I have given great thought to this
16 17 18 19	THE WITNESS:	you back, because I need to see it. I'm sorry. Thank you. I, uhm, I have given great thought to this and I am going to turn to you, Mr. Oppal, uhm, and
16 17 18 19 20	THE WITNESS:	you back, because I need to see it. I'm sorry. Thank you. I, uhm, I have given great thought to this and I am going to turn to you, Mr. Oppal, uhm, and I am going to actually just read it the way that I
16 17 18 19 20 21	THE WITNESS:	you back, because I need to see it. I'm sorry. Thank you. I, uhm, I have given great thought to this and I am going to turn to you, Mr. Oppal, uhm, and I am going to actually just read it the way that I wrote it this morning.
16 17 18 19 20 21 22	THE WITNESS:	you back, because I need to see it. I'm sorry. Thank you. I, uhm, I have given great thought to this and I am going to turn to you, Mr. Oppal, uhm, and I am going to actually just read it the way that I wrote it this morning. Mr. Commissioner and the people of Vancouver.

accountable for the welfare of their clients.

Cara and the other girls who have addiction
problems rely on their Welfare cheque as part of
their day-to-day survival. The Welfare system
should be revamped in order to red flag cheques
that are not being picked up by these addicts.

The reason for the cheque not being signed for
should be notated on the file and a list compiled
weekly or monthly, sent to the Vancouver Police
Department right away so that they can be made
aware to look out for the welfare of this person.

Second recommendation. Banks should also be -- implement a red-flag system whereas a pattern of regular cheques being deposited and withdrawn. If this pattern changes, they should be able to notate when a fixed pattern changes and alert the authorities.

Number three. Let social agencies that deal with these women on a day-to-day basis be more involved with being able to report changes that may indicate problems, such as disappearances; and have regular meetings with the police to have a better flow of information so that they can work toward a common good for these women.

Have an election within the Downtown Eastside

population for spokesmen or spokeswomen to attend regular meetings with social workers, police representatives, as well as workers in the community, thus allowing a flow of information that now seems to not exist.

Mr. Commissioner, I do not envy the task that you have taken on as commissioner of this inquiry. I understand that the recommendations that you make at the end of the day could be an uphill battle to implement. This I know, this I know. All the work we have done and are doing today is looking at the problem that has been left in shadows for a long time. Let us use this inquiry for what it is. It is a way to shine light on the deplorable situation and make real changes. What has been done is obviously not working. You have the power to recommend changes that it be done and it must be done.

Ask people working in the trenches. They look at these problems right in the eye every day. Ask them for help and listen to them. The lives of these girls were taken right, one at a time, right under the noses of the Vancouver Police Department and the RCMP. If we do not fix this now, maybe the next woman slain could be your

daughter. 1 2 MR. CHANTLER: 3 Thank you, Ms. Ellis. Is there anything else that Q 4 you would like to tell this commission? 5 I do, and I do apologize that this is rather a Α lengthy statement. I don't know where we are on 6 7 time. Okay. Mr. Commissioner, she has something else to 8 Q 9 read --10 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes. 11 MR. CHANTLER: 12 -- as a concluding statement. 0 Okav. I would like actually everybody in this 13 14 room to please play along with me for just a 15 second, so you can kind of get just a slight inkling of what it is that our family has gone 16 through. If everybody could just close their eyes 17 for just one moment please. I want you to 18 19 pretend, for just a moment, that it's your child's 20 first day of kindergarten and you are walking down the street and they're holding your hand and 21 22 skipping and really excited to be starting in 23 school. And the days pass and the weeks pass and the months and the years. Now open your eyes. 24 25 Your child just graduated from college. That's

how long the Ellis family has been waiting to see justice, to find my sister-in-law, or to have some kind of awareness as to what's going on, and that's where I am sitting right now. My son right now is in college, and still I sit and wait and still I don't have the answers.

I would like to now tell you that I have a couple of people to thank and one other thing here, and then I am going to read an entry from my diary. First, I would like to start by thanking Wayne Leng. He was the very first person who reached out to our family when we found Cara. Cara's remains had been left at the Pickton farm. He has kept the Vancouver website going and many of the families who had nowhere else to turn ended up on that website and Wayne, at his own expense, has kept that site going and reached out to so many families and been there for them, you have no idea, and to him we say a very, very big "thank you."

I would also like to thank Cameron Ward and Neil Chantler, who were the very first people in all of this to truly believe that the truth had to come out, and they took us on, even though it was a huge task and a huge undertaking to them. I say

a huge, "thank you."

And now this is the hard one to read. I would like to apologize to my children. I am very sorry that in order to try to find the truth about your Auntie Cara, that I stole time from you. I cannot give that time back to you, but from the bottom of my heart, I am very sorry I did that to you.

Now, I would like to read my entry from my diary. This is a diary entry from November 12th, 2010.

Today I prepare to close another chapter in the trial. I am going to be meeting with Owen Court. He is the coroner. He's going to hand over the remains of Cara. That sounds so final, remains. Yesterday I took some time and made a bag out of cotton. The pattern was pink. It had a print of a mother and a baby on it. I had eaten, slept and dreamt of bringing Cara home, and now that the moment has arrived, it is surreal. I am going to be taking the small pink bag, empty, and full only of Vancouver's salty air, and bring home the only small remaining part of a person who used to be Cara Ellis, a life

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cut short by a madman. He lived in muck and mire and picked off one life at a time stopping only when he was caught. The small piece of bone that I will be carrying home to her mother's arms is smaller than a baby fingernail. The memories are something that Pickton cannot steal from us, but he took the rest. We remember her as she laughed and cried and loved. He remembers her as she fought for her life, a battle that she lost. In the moments, what was going through her mind? Was she remembering her mom and dad or her brothers? Did she think she would win against this madman? When she knew her earthly time was over, did she lay in the loving arms of her heavenly father? As her life slipped away, did she think no one would ever find her? She died all alone, fighting for every breath, and all who loved her were far, far away. We went on. We went about our day. We had no way of knowing what had happened. Cara died at the hands of this killer. He had stripped her of her clothes and treated her as nothing but meat. He was nothing -- she was nothing to Pickton. She

was just another body. When he was finished for her -- with her, he would throw her away like yesterday's garbage. He went on living every day like the rest until, in the filth of the farm, until he felt the need to take another life. The poor girls did not even see it coming.

And so I sit here and I prepare to go and start the first step of Cara's journey home. I will place the urn in the cotton bag. I will tie it closed with loving hands. I will pause and I will remember. I will remember the life that was lost. I will remember all that could have been. I will mourn. I will pray for her soul and then I will cry yet again. I will remember all the tears that have been shed before and I will let them flow. I will hold her in my heart and I will start to say "good-bye."

Many years ago, I promised my husband that I would find his sister, and today I am going to bring her home. I will carry her with pride. I sit here now and I have a heavy heart. When you love someone you love with all your heart, you open your heart and

let your love have wings. You shower your 1 love upon that person in the hope that it 2 3 will come back to you. 4 That is what I did with Cara. I opened 5 myself to her. I prayed that we could be friends. I hoped that she would trust me. 6 7 From the short time that we were first 8 together until now, the love I felt has been 9 one-sided. She was unable to build our relationship because she was taken. She was 10 11 taken much too young. 12 She loved so many things. She loved cheesecake. She loved calamari. She loved 13 14 the colour yellow and she loved her family. 15 She adored her brothers. They were older, but when they were together, she was the 16 boss. She called the shots. She loved them 17 with all her heart. To see her, was to know 18 19 that. She may have kept secrets from her 20 family about her life in Hastings, but one thing she could not hide was her love. 21 22 I can still not believe that she is 23 gone. I think today, when I hold her in my hands, I will understand. I will feel her 24

life force in my embrace and all will be

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1 well.

There are so many families who will not know this feeling. Pickton was so careful to dispose of any evidence that this person even walked the earth. I remember at the trial, they kept saying he was slow, just a pig farmer. A slow person would not take the care that he did to hide his crimes. A person like that planned what he was going to do. He hunted these women, stalked them really. He worked his way into the lives of these women. He became a fixture to the Downtown Eastside. It was normal to see them in his home.

They knew that every day could be their last. They knew that, even though they had to do deplorable things for their next fix, they had to be careful. They had regular guys that they would go with. They had a comfort zone. As long as things went well, they were able to stay in their comfort zone. There were, however, times when they got sick. Not just the flu or a cold, like you and me. They got drug sick. They would shiver and

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puke and they would ache to their very soul. They needed a fix and now were willing to do anything to get it. They would step out of their comfort zone and take chances they would not normally take. They would make bad choices. They would go on dates that, to say the least, were risky. When they were not sick, they would never think to go out with bad dates. When the drug sickness hit, they would take their chances. A bad date list is out there. The girls knew it. The cops knew it. But the list means nothing. Just one more hit and then it will be okay. I have said many times that you take the drugs in order to be able to turn the next trick and do the next trick in order to be able to take the drugs.

I remember the first time I saw

Hastings. I was not prepared for what I saw.

As the bus rounded the corner, I saw sadness.

I was looking for Cara and was well-prepared to jump off of the bus if I saw her. I remember seeing sleeping bags on the side -- on the ground by the buildings. There were people sleeping in them. The sidewalks were

littered with small pieces of paper. There
were people leaning against the walls. They
were dirty and poor and looked very sad. I
did not want to overreact when I saw the
squalor. I had my children with me and did
not want them to see me disappointed with
Vancouver. How could a country like Canada,
a proud nation like ours, allow this to
happen?

As the bus moved along the street, I
could not take my eyes off the sidewalks. As

As the bus moved along the street, I could not take my eyes off the sidewalks. As they slipped by, I knew these people had all started off with their families. They had many twists and turns in their life that had brought them here. You could see the drug dealers working right under the noses of the police.

The loss of spirit is a great loss. The people on the Downtown Eastside are sad.

They have given their lives over to a power force so big, it envelopes every part of their being. The drugs they crave are real.

It will take away their pain. It will numb them even for a few minutes. The drugs they take are just a small pause, a small moment

when they do not have to feel their pain, 1 2 loss and hurt. It can be a dark, dismal 3 place. 4 I always thought Vancouver was a great place 5 to visit, yet when you look close, it is a 6 city with many dark corners. You can live 7 the high life, you can live the train, but 8 you can also live in decay and squalor as 9 well. The people who live in higher-class neighbourhoods seem to have it all: beauty, 10 11 money and a house on the hill. The houses 12 look welcoming. They look like home. 13 call to you. And yet the flip side of the coin is Hastings. A sidewalk, an alley, a 14 15 doorway. We all live in different kinds of 16 17 homes. We can take it for granted that it will always be there for us. When the day is 18 19 over and we head from our workplace, we have 20 a destination. We can go home. We have a warm bed. We have a door that we can lock to 21 22 close out the world. We can close things out 23 or close ourselves in, but we are home. 24 For some of the people in Hastings, a 25 doorway is home. They have a blanket if

they're lucky. They can curl up and sleep a cold, lonely sleep. They never make the mistake of sleeping soundly, because to do so is dangerous. You can never sleep soundly because, at any moment, something could happen. You have to be ready for whatever life hands you.

You do not have a kitchen to cook a warm

Meal or a washroom to clean yourself or do your business. You have to make do. You have places like WISH or one of the kitchens in the area. You shower at the church. Thank God for WISH and places like it. It's home for many of these girls. They can shower there, eat, put on their makeup or perhaps find a change of clothes from the donations. For many of the girls, this is their only home. Here they are safe from harm. They come to this place to relax and let down their guard. They can just let life happen.

When they walk out the door, it's a different story. You have to have eyes in the back of your head. There is always someone worse off than you. They want what

you have and will do anything to get it. The girls of Hastings are protective of what they have because they have so little.

I am home now and my heart is racing. I know that I have in a bag the remains of my husband's sister. I know that I will give this bag to the mother knowing this is all that is left of her daughter. It's so final to place this urn in the hands of her mother, a life that you bring into the world and this is all that is left. A tear comes into my eye as I place the pink bag in the hands of her mother. There is nothing left to say.

All over the country, this story has been repeated. Oh, the names are different, but the story is the same. The police could have done more, a lot more to stop this.

We put our faith in them and they let us down over and over, and when the truth is told, the world will know that they dropped the ball. The world will know that they did not do their job. The world will know our pain and the world will know these girls' stories. The world will know the truth. The world will know we have been lied to, mistreated,

misled and manipulated. We know the true story and finally the world will listen to what we have to say, what we have needed to say for so long.

I have very little faith that the police and the RCMP will tell the truth. Why will they tell the truth? They have so much to hide. Shame on them for all they did and shame on them for all they could have done but, instead, turned the other way. Lives were lost that could have been saved. Lives were ended that should have carried on.

If there is to be answers in this inquiry, the truth needs to be told, a truth we know because we lived it, a truth that the women who were murdered deserve, a truth we carry in our hearts and a truth that died with our loved ones.

I keep thinking how the police made themselves sound so important when they arrested Pickton. In fact, they just stumbled onto this murderer. While they were shuffling and reshuffling paperwork, an informant looking for a deal led them by the nose to Pickton. Sure, they took their bows

and had their moment in the limelight, but
the truth is that they did not find Pickton.
They tripped over him because someone told
them where to look. Sure, they did
interviews and reconstructed themselves many
times. They did not find Pickton. He was
handed to them on a silver platter.

I feel the inquiry will do its best to seek the truth, but in the end, I am sure this time we have spent today, and all we have done to get the truth, will be lost. Things will not change. Hastings doorways will not sit empty. Drugs will still be dispensed by drug dealers like human Pez dispensers. The johns will drive the streets looking for a quick release and the sex trade workers will turn their next trick. The sun will rise and the sun will fall and police will turn their gaze away from what needs to be looked at the most.

Shame on all that looked the other way when we needed them the most. The police must know that they are our last hope for us and they looked the other way. Shame, shame, shame. If they carried even half of our

1 pain, they would have done their jobs.

To all that helped us, thank you. To all who looked the other way, well, I hope you never even have to know our pain. I hope you never have to depend on someone the way we depended on you. I hope maybe they will listen to you. No, I hope things will change and me wishing bad things on you makes me just as bad as you are, and that would be wrong, so wrong.

What should we learn from this? Listen to the families seriously. Don't write these girls off. Tell the truth. Learn from this. If we don't, nothing will ever change. Learn that you can be wrong and correct things. Learn to not make a second group of victims by further victimizing the families as well. Treat those seeking answers with respect. We put our trust in you and you let us down. Learn from this and maybe, just maybe, things can change and move forward. If we stay with the old boys' club the police have become and stay cloistered in your all-blue uniform world, sitting above everything else, things will never get better. Try dropping to your

knee to lend a hand or to give some hope. If 1 2 you are not, you are no better than Robert 3 Pickton who took our girls' lives and all the 4 predators who still remain on the street 5 stalking these women who need your help more than ever. Take a step towards change, admit 6 7 your errors and learn from them as well. We cannot possibly think anything less of you 8 9 than we do right now. Thank you for sharing that with us, Ms. Ellis. 10 0 Those are my questions. 11 12 THE COMMISSIONER: All right. Thank you. We will, we will 13 take the morning break. THE REGISTRAR: The hearing will now recess for 15 minutes. 14 15 (PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED AT 11:05 A.M.) (PROCEEDINGS RESUMED AT 11:24 A.M.) 16 17 THE REGISTRAR: Order. This hearing is now resumed. THE COMMISSIONER: Mr. Gratl? 18 MR. GRATL: Thank you, Mr. Commissioner. Ms. Ellis, I have no 19 20 questions. 21 THE WITNESS: Thank you. 22 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. 23 MS. GERVAIS: I also have no questions. THE COMMISSIONER: Mr. Hern? 24 25 CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. HERN:

1	Q	Thank you. Sean Hern for the VPD and Police
2		Board.
3		Ms. Ellis, thank you for coming today, and I
4		would like to express that I'm sorry for your loss
5		and sorry, on behalf of the Department, for the
6		way that you felt as a result of your dealings
7		with the VPD members.
8	THE COMMISSI	ONER: I think, Mr. Hern, you are going to have to
9		speak up so, so everybody can hear you.
10	MR. HERN: I	will try. Thank you, Commissioner.
11	Q	I do have a few questions for you, Ms. Ellis. In
12		your first, and in your initial call with the VPD
13		officer from the Missing Persons Unit, you had
14		testified that that lasted about an hour?
15	А	Yes.
16	Q	And I just want to understand this. In that call,
17		your evidence was that you weren't asked and you
18		didn't tell about the Hells Angel boyfriend named
19		Stan or the evidence about Cara Ellis sometimes
20		going to a trailer outside of Vancouver?
21	А	No, I didn't tell them at that time.
22	Q	Okay. And, and those, those didn't, those issues
23		or that information didn't come up in your
24		discussion with the police in Calgary?
25	А	No.

1	Q	All right. And you said that you recently saw a
2		copy of the 1998 missing persons report for Cara
3		Ellis.
4	А	No, I did not say that. I have never seen that
5		copy at all.
6	Q	Oh, okay. You were I thought, I had noted you
7		referring to seeing something related to that,
8		that Murray Lund had located.
9	А	No, he talked about the fact that the report had
10		been found in a drawer at the police station and
11		had never been actioned. The "never been
12		actioned" part was his exact words.
13	Q	I see. And Murray Lund was an RCMP officer with
14		Evenhanded; is that right?
15	A	I believe so.
16	Q	All right. And when did you have the opportunity
17		to meet him?
18	А	It was the day before Cara's memorial.
19	Q	I see. And do you know what, what was the date of
20		the memorial?
21	А	It was the summer. I believe it was June of 2004.
22	Q	Okay. And you had been in contact with
23		Evenhanded, Project Evenhanded members from after
24		February 2002?
25	А	Just when they came to my house.

Τ	Q	And that was, that was November 26th, 2002?
2	А	No, that would have been October.
3	Q	Okay. You had an interview, I saw, in the RCMP
4		notes with a Constable Audrey Williams from
5		Evenhanded?
6	А	If you say so. I don't actually remember the
7		names of the people I spoke to but I don't
8		recall that meeting, but that's not to say it did
9		not happen.
10	Q	Okay. I will just read to you from the RCMP note
11		to see if it refreshes your memory at all.
12	А	Sure.
13	Q	It says:
14		On 2000 or November 26th, 2002, Constable
15		Audrey Williams took a combined audiotaped
16		statement from the sister-in-law of Cara
17		Ellis, Lori-Ann Ellis, and the brothers of
18		Cara Ellis, Steven Ellis and William Ellis,
19		Jr.
20	А	Okay. That probably would have been when they
21		came to get the, uhm, DNA testing. So, I, I'm
22		off, I apologize, I'm off for my October date to
23		November, but not a huge amount of time. Just a
24		few weeks difference in time.
25	Q	Sure. Okay. So, so, you're correct. The, the

1		note goes on to say that:
2		They provided information regarding Cara's
3		childhood. Their knowledge of the last
4		several years of Cara's life was limited.
5		Constable Williams also obtained familial
6		DNA, blood samples from Steven Ellis and
7		William Ellis, Jr. on this date.
8	А	Hm-hmm. That would be correct.
9	Q	And had they come to your, uhm, had they come to
10		your home to, to do this?
11	А	Yes, they had.
12	Q	All right. And, and in that interview, do you, do
13		you recall that interview at all?
14	А	Yes.
15	Q	All right. And did, did they ask you about or
16		did you have an opportunity to tell them about the
17		comment that Cara Ellis made, that she would go
18		stay in a trailer in stay at a farm in a
19		trailer with a guy who lived like a pig?
20	А	She never said "trailer," sir. She actually said
21		she would stay at a farm with a guy who lived like
22		a pig and she could get free drugs as long as she
23		cleaned his place. That's what I was told.
24	Q	I see. And was that discussed in that interview
25		in November of 2002?

To be very honest, I don't remember. 1 2 Okay. Thank you, no further questions. 3 THE COMMISSIONER: All right, thank you. Anything from the 4 Federal Crown? 5 MR. BRONGERS: No, Mr. Commissioner. As we explained 6 yesterday, we will not be cross-examining the 7 family --THE COMMISSIONER: I'm, I'm sorry, I can't, I can't hear you. 8 9 You will have to go to the microphone. MR. BRONGERS: Thank you, Mr. Commissioner. No, as we 10 explained yesterday, we will not be cross-11 examining the family witnesses. 12 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Does anyone else have any 13 questions of -- all right. 14 15 Well, thank you, Ms. Ellis. I appreciate you coming forward and giving your evidence. Thank 16 17 you again. THE WITNESS: Thank you for finally listening to us. 18 19 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. 20 (WITNESS EXCUSED) MR. CHANTLER: Mr. Commissioner, Neil Chantler, counsel for the 21 22 families. I would like to call the next witness, 23 Donalee Sebastian. 24 Mr. Commissioner, the witness has requested that her sister sit at her side --25

- 1 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.
- 2 MR. CHANTLER: -- while she testifies.
- 3 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, by all means.
- 4 THE REGISTRAR: I will just have to get another chair. Just a
- 5 second, Mr. Commissioner.
- 6 Good morning.
- 7 THE WITNESS: Good morning.
- 8 THE REGISTRAR: Sorry for the delay.
- 9 DONALEE ROBERTA SEBASTIAN, affirmed:
- 10 THE REGISTRAR: I need you to respond orally.
- 11 THE WITNESS: I do.
- 12 THE REGISTRAR: Thank you. And would you state your name
- 13 please?
- 14 THE WITNESS: Donalee Roberta Sebastian.
- 15 THE REGISTRAR: Would you spell your surname please?
- 16 THE WITNESS: S-e-b-a-s-t-i-a-n.
- 17 THE REGISTRAR: Thank you.
- 18 THE COMMISSIONER: Sebastian, is that right?
- 19 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 20 THE COMMISSIONER: All right, thank you. If you need a break
- at any time, you let me know, all right?
- 22 THE WITNESS: Okay.
- 23 THE COMMISSIONER: All right.
- 24 EXAMINATION IN CHIEF BY MR. CHANTLER:
- 25 Q Thank you, Ms. Sebastian. You are the daughter of

	Elsie Sebastian; is that right?
А	Yes, I am, the second daughter.
Q	And your mother was last seen in 1992?
А	Yes, she was.
Q	She was living in the Downtown Eastside at that
	time?
А	Yes, she was.
Q	Is she one of the missing women on that poster
	behind you?
А	Yes, she is.
Q	Do you know now, sitting here today, what happened
	to your mother?
А	No, I don't.
Q	No trace of your mother has ever been found?
А	No.
Q	I am going to pass up a photo. Is this a
	photograph of your mother, Elsie?
А	Yes, it is.
Q	Do you want to hold that up so everyone can see?
	And do you know when that photo was taken?
А	It was, it was taken in the 1970s.
Q	Roughly how old would she have been then?
А	Twenty.
Q	Ms. Sebastian, I am going to I will mark that
	photo as an exhibit first.
	Q A Q A Q A Q A Q A

1	THE COMMISSI	ONER: Yes, thank you.
2	THE REGISTRA	R: That will be Exhibit Number 17.
3		(EXHIBIT NO. 17: Photocopy of 8-1/2-by-11, black-
4		and-white photograph of Elsie Louise Sebastian)
5	MR. CHANTLER	:
6	Q	I am going to ask you some questions about
7		yourself. You can leave that photo visible, if
8		you like, but I am going to ask you some questions
9		about you and your background first before we turn
10		to your mother. Perhaps you can tell us a bit
11		about where you're from and your background.
12	А	I was born in Prince George and grew up in
13		Hazelton and in Victoria.
14	Q	When were you born?
15	А	1976, January 9th.
16	Q	And you are a member of both the Gitxsan and
17		Pacheedaht First Nation?
18	А	Yes.
19	Q	Your mother was Pacheedaht?
20	А	Yes, she was.
21	Q	And your father was Gitxsan?
22	А	Yes.
23	Q	And the band that you identify with is Hagwilget
24		Village?
25	А	Yes, Hagwilget Village.

1	Q	And that's in Hazelton, BC?
2	А	Yes.
3	Q	That's in northwest BC?
4	А	Yes.
5	Q	Even further north than Prince George?
6	A	Yes, it is. It's about a five, a five-hour drive
7		from Prince George.
8	Q	And where do you currently live?
9	A	In Victoria.
10	Q	What are you doing there?
11	A	I'm in the nursing program at the college, first
12		year.
13	Q	And when do you expect to graduate?
14	А	In four years, four and-a-half.
15	Q	You moved around a lot as a young girl; is that
16		right? Can you give us some idea of the places
17		you lived?
18	A	Uhm, in terms of our, our family growing up, we,
19		we lived in many different places. Uhm, I was
20		born in Prince George. We briefly lived in
21		Smithers, and my father worked with Manpower
22		there. Uhm, my sister was with us and, uhm, we
23		also lived again in Prince George and in Victoria.
24		And then at about Grade 1, we lived in Sooke; and,
25		uhm, Grade 2, we lived in Nanaimo; Grade 3, we

lived in Victoria again; Grade 4 and 5, we lived 1 2 in Prince George and in Edmonton; and Grade 7, 3 back to Prince George. 4 And, and during these times, it was quite the 5 struggle in my parents' marriage. They both 6 drank. And we had a younger brother, Robert Jr.; 7 and my, my older sister, Ann-Marie, is three years older than me, and she was together with us. A 8 9 few times she tried to come stay with us, but because of the drinking, she, she didn't stay too 10 11 long. How many siblings do you have? 12 Q 13 Uhm, with my mother, I have an older brother. My Α mother had him at 16, but he was taken from her 14 and adopted by my great-aunt. And then she had my 15 sister when she was 21, and that was with her 16 17 first common-law, and she spent three years with him, and then they separated, and met my father. 18 When she was 24, she had me; and when she was 29, 19 20 she had my brother, Robert. You were quite young when your mother disappeared? 21 Q 22 Α Yes, I was 16 years old. Where were you living then? 23 Q I was living in Hazelton. I had just moved back 24 Α 25 in with my father after living two and-a-half

years with my uncle and his wife. Uhm, at about 1 2 the age of 12, I was taken from my mother because 3 we had been through foster care and, and I didn't 4 want to go back to foster care. I was getting 5 tired of it and I was wanting to go back to my, my 6 grandmother and my sister in Victoria. And, uhm, 7 I told my mother, I said, "I, I don't want to go back to foster care," and they were on their way. 8 9 And a, a decision was made by my aunties to come and get me and they came from Hazelton to Prince 10 11 George and they took me. And at that time, I wanted my brother to come, but my mom convinced 12 13 him to stay. And Robert was only seven years old 14 and I didn't want him to stay. I wanted him to 15 come with me, because I knew he would be safe with me, because she struggled with her drinking. And 16 17 so my aunt came and got us and we were taken to Hazelton for the first time to be with our 18 father's family, the Gitxsan family. 19 20 And why was it that you were taken from your Q 21 mother? 22 Α Because the Social Services was ready to apprehend us because my mom was struggling with drinking and 23 24 so was my father.

And when was that? How old were you?

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Twelve years old. 1 Α 2 I appreciate we're talking about a time that was Q 3 nearly 20 years ago when your mother disappeared. 4 Can you tell us how clear your recollection is at 5 that time in your life? 6 Uhm, as time went on, when I was 12 years old, Α 7 uhm, my mother would always call us. She would always be in touch with us and, and she would 8 9 always connect with us, regardless of her drinking or not. And when she would contact us, you know, 10 11 whether she was sober or, or under the influence, we took her calls. And it was always a phone call 12 13 collect, and sometimes it was late in the night and my, my auntie would always take her phone 14 15 call. She would always reach out to Ann-Marie also, 16 17 who was living in Victoria with her grandmother and her dad, and, and Ann-Marie would talk to her. 18 At about -- just before I turned 16, I moved 19 20 back in with my father and my father said to me, "Donalee, your, your mom is not doing well and I 21 22 want you to go see her. And she's not getting any better. Be prepared for a tough time, because 23 when you go see her" -- uhm, you know, by the time 24 25 I was 16, she was into drinking and drugging. And

so he said, "I want you to see her, no matter what, because she's still your mother."

And, uhm, so I went with my, my brother. I was 16 and Robert was 11. And we got ahold of my sister, Ann-Marie, and we asked to meet with her over to visit with my mom. And under those conditions, my Uncle John Paul let us stay at his place at UBC, and he said that mom could come there anytime to visit us, and maybe we can even go spend a day with her.

And while we were, uhm, visiting, she, she did come to, to my uncle's house and, uhm, she made us dinner. And when I saw her, she wasn't the same woman that I knew when I was 12. It was obvious that she -- you know, it wasn't just the drinking anymore. It was the drugging. She was a lot more frail. She was lighter. She, uhm, you know, she was a small woman. She was only 5, 2 and she was only about 110 pounds. She was much smaller than me and my sister. And she was a very beautiful native woman. She, uhm, she was 40 years old then, but she didn't look 40. She looked about 30, maybe even, you know, 24.

Uhm, and, and so when we visited with her, she, she was withdrawn. She started in -- from

when I, like, as an adult now, excuse me, I think 1 she needed another fix. And so it got quite --2 3 she got quite restless and she wanted to go. 4 Can you tell us when that was, that visit that you Q 5 are describing? 6 It was in July of '94. And so --Α 7 '94 or '92? Q Or, sorry, '92. July of 1992, because I was 16. 8 Α 9 Yes, I was 16. And so she got ahold of somebody and, and she 10 11 said, "Can you come pick me up and, and I need, I need a fix." And so we didn't want her to go. We 12 wanted her to stay. And my sister, Ann-Marie, 13 14 said as much as she could to, to convince her to 15 stay. And my brother started crying, who was only 11 years old, and saying, "Don't go, mommy. Don't 16 17 go." And I, I stood there and I just tried to hold my brother's hand and, and she left with that 18 19 person. And that person did not look, you know, 20 like, like a normal working person. He looked rough. And, uhm, she left with him in that car, 21 22 and for me, that was the last time that I saw my mother alive. 23 24 Did you hear from her again? Q 25 No, we didn't. The only person that, uhm, may Α

have heard from her shortly after was my Auntie
Tracey, because my mom still continued to call my,
my aunt and uncle's house where I had lived and,
and had a close friendship with my, with my auntie
and would talk to Tracey. And Tracey contacted me
not long after that and she said, "Donalee, your
mom is not calling me anymore. There's something
wrong."

And I, uhm, I got really uncomfortable. So,

I -- and I got scared, you know, because this,

this was not normal. You know, she would, she

would even call, you know, when she was, was under

the influence, and we would take that call.

And, uhm, and so I, I got ahold of my sister and I, I -- my sister, uhm, got ahold of our Auntie Ann, and they, they started looking into trying to find Elsie. And this was in '92. Uhm, I was told that she went right downtown to the Downtown Eastside, looking in, in different places, looking for Elsie on East Hastings, and there, there was no find of Elsie.

I also know that efforts were made by my
Uncle Russell. There were efforts made with my,
uhm, my sister, Ann-Marie, myself, and our
grandmother, the late Mary Jones, coming over to

-- from Victoria to Vancouver to look for Elsie.

I also know that my grandmother from Hazelton inquired about finding Elsie. She went to see a worker who was the native liaison worker for the Vancouver Police Department, and his name was Morris Bates. And when, uhm, when those efforts, uhm, were made, uhm, nothing was found of Elsie.

Uhm, I know for myself, I contacted Morris
Bates and he explained to me -- because I didn't
talk directly to a police officer. They, they
shrugged me off to Morris Bates, the native
liaison worker, and he told me that, "Well, you
might as well, uhm, prepare yourself, Donalee,
because nobody wants to look for a 40-year-old
native woman. They're not interested in looking
for her." And he also mentioned that, uhm,
looking for a, a drug-using woman on the Downtown
Eastside is like looking for a needle in the
haystack.

And, uhm, and, and that was quite the shocker for me to hear, you know, being the daughter of, of, of the woman who brought me into this world and, and my, my brother and my, my sister, and to know that that was their, their reply to, to my plea.

And, uhm, and I also called the, uhm, police 1 2 department and the lady I spoke to, uhm, I can't 3 recall her name, but she basically said the same 4 thing, too. She said that it was their own 5 culture down there and that they cover up for each 6 other, and that if Elsie doesn't want to be found, 7 she won't be found and that she's probably on holiday and, uhm, that, uhm -- and I'm, like, 8 9 holiday? My mother lived on SA. You know, she --What do you mean by that? 10 Q 11 Α She lived on Social Assistance. How, how do you go on holiday with Social Assistance? 12 13 Can you tell us -- can we focus in on that Q 14 conversation you had? What year was that? What year might that have been? 15 It, it would have been around, uhm, 1994. 16 Α 17 And you phoned the Vancouver Police Department? Q 18 Α Yes. Where were you living at the time? 19 Q 20 I was living in Hazelton. And one of the reasons Α 21 why I wanted to get ahold of her was because she, 22 you know, she always took part in our birthdays. 23 She always took part, even if it was a phone call or, or just a, a card, you know. But, you know, 24 25 it had gone on too long. It was going on two

years since we had seen her and I was graduating. 1 2 My, my grandmother and my uncles were coming up 3 from, from Victoria with my, my sister and, uhm, 4 and I wanted to know where she was. 5 And what happened when you made that phone call? Q 6 Uhm, that's when, when the lady said to me that, Α 7 you know, looking for, for a native woman in the Downtown Eastside, is, is, is pretty well near, 8 9 near impossible. I can't remember her exact words 10 but that was basically the message, and she goes, 11 "Especially a native woman who is a drug user." And I said, "Well, can you look for her?" And she 12 goes, "Well, no, I can't, but you can. You can 13 call" -- and I said, "Well, where can I call, 14 15 because I am living in Hazelton and I need to know where to start?" And she brought up a, a few 16 17 different areas. She brought up the Native Women's Centre, a women's centre on the Downtown 18 Eastside, and Carnegie Hall, and, and to check and 19 20 leave messages there, and if I'm lucky, she will go in and she'll, she'll look at the board and, 21 22 and, and see my message, and that was it. You don't know the name of the woman that you 23 0 spoke to? 24 25 No, I don't. Α

1	Q	But she was with the Vancouver Police Department?
2	А	Yes.
3	Q	Do you know if she was a police officer or a
4		civilian?
5	А	I don't I'm not sure. It was just it was
6		the lady they, they connected me to, like,
7		dispatch.
8	Q	Was that the only dealing you had with her?
9	A	Uhm, I think so. I'm just it was so long ago,
10		I'm, I'm, I'm wishing I could remember, you know,
11		her name at least. But no, I that, that was
12		the last time.
13	Q	Was that your first effort to contact the police
14		in response to your mother's disappearance?
15	А	Uhm, well, the first efforts were made in October
16		'92 and that's when I called my sister and my
17		sister, Ann-Marie, and Ann were looking for Elsie
18		and they went right into the, the detachment. I
19		think it's called water, waterfront or something
20		like that. Storefront, sorry. They went into
21		Storefront, and, and they, they asked about Elsie.
22		And they, they told me after that, uhm, that
23		all of the posters that they, they witnessed on,
24		on the wall there were all young women. There was
25		no aboriginal 40-year-old woman there. You know,

it just wasn't a priority. And that's the picture 1 2 that I got, that because my mom was a 40-year-old 3 native woman, there was no priority for her, and 4 because she was a drug user. 5 What were the earlier efforts made by family Q 6 members to report Elsie's disappearance? 7 Like, during '92 and '94? Α Did your Uncle Russell get involved? 8 Q 9 Α Yes, he did. In '94, Russell made a poster of my mother in Port Alberni and he, uhm, filed a 10 11 missing persons report and he got ahold of -- he asked them to get ahold of I think the Vancouver 12 13 Police Department, and it was sent from Port 14 Alberni to, to Vancouver. And, uhm, and there was 15 an error made. They, they thought they saw Elsie but it was a mistake. It wasn't -- it was a lady 16 17 that had the same name and, and was about the same height, but it, it wasn't Elsie. 18 Can you tell us about a bit more about that? 19 Q 20 Uhm, I think what happened was the, the street Α 21 person that was working down there, Morris Bates, 22 mistakened (sic) another person for Elsie, and, 23 and it wasn't her. Uhm, they said that she was a 24 rice wine drinker that frequented Oppenheimer Park 25 and was up and down East Hastings and, uhm, but

Elsie wasn't a rice wine drinker. She was, by 1 then, she was a, a drug user, and, and I am pretty 2 3 sure she was an injection drug user by then. And what did your uncle do after hearing that 4 Q 5 Elsie might still be alive and, and spending time 6 in Oppenheimer Park? 7 Uhm, he, I think he wanted to come over and, uhm, Α but because he got word that she was there and 8 9 okay, he didn't come over. I am going to pass up a package of documents from 10 Q 11 the police disclosure. I have a question for you. There was a letter 12 Α 13 that I wrote in, uhm, I think it was about '94, and it's a letter that I had requested from the 14 15 Missing Women's Task Force, and they don't have a record of that letter. Now, there is an 16 17 electronic copy that my stepmother has of that letter, dated, and I can't recall the exact date 18 but it's not on that file, and I am wondering why. 19 20 And, uhm, and in the letter I, I, I filed for her missing and I also filed, uhm, the letter and 21 22 I, I made a request. I, in it, I described that she was 5 foot, 2, that she was 110; that she was 23 the mother of, of Ann-Marie, me and Robert; and 24 25 that we were looking for her and that the last

time we saw her; and, uhm, and we wanted to know 1 2 where she was, and requested that she be found, and she wasn't. And I haven't seen that letter 3 4 and I would like to ask for it to be found. 5 MR. HERN: Can I speak to the witness for a moment? 6 MR. CHANTLER: Sure. 7 MR. HERN: It looks like that was directed towards myself. THE COMMISSIONER: Yes. 8 9 MR. HERN: I haven't heard that request from the others, but we will certainly look into it. So, after your 10 11 testimony, we'll get down the details of that and, and we'll see if we can find it. Okay? 12 13 THE WITNESS: Thank you. MR. HERN: If you have the electronic copy, that would be 14 15 helpful. THE WITNESS: I'll have to ask my stepmom, but I'll call. 16 17 MR. HERN: Perhaps she could e-mail it to us --18 THE WITNESS: Okay. MR. HERN: -- or something and we will find it. 19 20 MR. CHANTLER: Ms. Sebastian, you, you have just asked, or you've 21 Q 22 just described in some detail a letter that you wrote in 1994. To whom did you write that letter? 23

And why did you write it?

It was to the Vancouver Police Department.

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Because it had been too long since we had, uhm, 1 Α 2 seen our mother. And, and it wasn't just the 3 efforts of myself. It was efforts from my sister, 4 Ann-Marie, my Auntie Ann, my Uncle Russell, my, my 5 Grandma Mary and my, my Grandma Dora. You know, there was about six or seven different family 6 7 members that contacted the Vancouver Police to ask how we could look for Elsie and they did try to 8 9 file a missing persons report. 10 Did you ever receive a response to that letter? Q 11 Α Uhm, they did follow up with I think a phone call, but other than that, uhm, I didn't hear from them 12 again for, for quite a while. Uhm, I think it's 13 14 when, uhm, the Pickton trial and when they found 15 him that they, uhm, started looking at things like this and, and getting ahold of us. And I, uhm --16 17 it, it was a long period of time before we actually started getting involved. 18 19 I think what came next was at about 2001, we 20 were asked to give blood samples, because they couldn't recreate my mother's DNA. They, they 21 22 couldn't find it. And so they took my DNA, my brother's and my father's and my sister's to 23 separate, uhm, uh, and recreate Elsie's DNA so 24 25 they could start testing it against what they had

found on the farm. 1 2 Were those members of the Missing Women Task Q 3 Force? 4 Yes, they were. Α 5 And they came to visit you in --0 In Hazelton, at my father's house. 6 Α 7 To collect blood samples in 2001? Q 8 Α Yes. 9 Q When was the next visit from the RCMP in regards to your mother's disappearance after they came to 10 11 take your blood sample? We didn't get any visit for quite a while but we 12 Α 13 would get, like, a phone call or a letter in the mail. Beforehand, they did a news release. They 14 15 would contact myself or my sister, and they would let us know the happenings of, of the Pickton 16 17 trial with other women who had been found and, and what was happening. 18 19 But they had to come back to us, and this is 20 what I don't understand. Because over a matter of 21 years, I think it was a good few years, uhm, 22 something went wrong and there was a switchover in 23 the staff of the RCMP and I was told that, uhm, 24 during that time, there was a mix-up in our blood 25 samples. And I, I said to the policeman, I said,

"Excuse me?" I said, "Over these years, you 1 2 haven't recreated my mother's DNA and you haven't 3 been testing it against the, the evidence that you 4 are finding?" And they said, "It's gone missing, 5 Donalee, and we need to take your blood again, and 6 we need to take it from your brother and your father." And so they came back to us a second 7 time and, and took the samples again. And I said, 8 "So, in all this time, you, you haven't been 9 testing, you haven't been able to look for her?" 10 And they said, "No, we're going to have to do it 11 again." 12 13 How long after the first visit to take your blood Q samples was that? 14 It was a good four or five years. 15 Α Okay. Ms. Sebastian, you have described how 16 Q 17 members of your family tried to engage the Vancouver Police in the early '90s, perhaps the 18 19 earliest being '93, in response to your mother's 20 disappearance. You eventually travelled to Vancouver to commence your own search for your 21 22 mother; is that right? Yes, we did. Uhm, I think it was at about -- uhm, 23 Α the first time was when the, uhm -- I came down --24 25 my sister had come over a couple of times on her

own to the Downtown Eastside to look for Elsie, and we got word that her name, Elsie's name, was still being used for Social Assistance, and we found out the address. And so, right away, my sister called me and said, "Let's go to this address and, and find out what's happening. Maybe mom's there."

So, I left with my, my boyfriend at the time and, and Ann-Marie and her boyfriend at the time, and we went over to a place called "The Empress" and, and it -- I had never been to the Downtown Eastside, that part anyways, and I had never been into a building like that, and it was really run down. It was, uhm, single-room housing and, uhm, it was really dirty and, and run down and, uhm, it, it, it was like a hotel but it was, like, where, where Social Assistance people live.

And we went, went into that, that hotel and my, my sister knocked on the door and, uhm, and Al Wilmot answered the door, and he, uhm, he was one of the men that my mom saw when she was down there and, uhm, they did drinking and drugging together. And it -- I know that it was a rough relationship. There, there was violence towards her. And, uhm, so, she knocked on the door and she said -- and he

wouldn't answer. She said, uhm -- because I was standing right there. She said, "Open the door, Al. We know you're in there and we want to know where mom is." And he opened the door and he, uhm, he said, "Well, I haven't seen your mother. She hasn't been here for many years and I don't know why you're here." And I said, "well" -- Ann-Marie and I said, "Well, we know that her name is being used for, for Social Assistance. Why is her name being used?" And, uhm, and he goes, "Well, I don't know. I don't know anything about that."

And, and, and so when we walked down there, my, my Uncle John Paul said to me, he goes, "I will let you go down there for the day," and it had to be during the day, and he goes, "I want you out of there by 4 o'clock." And he goes, "If you don't get out of there by 4 o'clock, I am coming to look for you. I am coming to look for all four of you." And he goes, "And when you go down there, you dress down, because you're going to look like a sore thumb and they're going to know that you're not from there. It is dangerous."

And, uhm, and so, because my boyfriend had a cellphone, he said that he would call him every

hour. And, and so my boyfriend at the time called 1 2 and, and let him know what we were doing and that 3 we were okay. But we had to be out of there by 4 o'clock and we were. 4 5 But when -- in that, that whole day, I, I had 6 never seen the Downtown Eastside and I walked 7 through there and it was like walking through, like, a, a jungle. It's a whole different culture 8 9 and it's a whole high-risk way of living. And, uhm, and it was scary and it was heartbreaking, 10 11 and it was heartbreaking for me because that's where my mom ended up. 12 This particular visit where you came to Vancouver 13 Q and you searched for your mother and you came 14 15 across this man, her ex-boyfriend, who had been collecting her Social Assistance, can you put it 16 in context for us? When was that? 17 Uhm, it, it would have been around, uhm, '99. 18 Α Yeah, it was when I was living in Victoria and I 19 20 was going to the, the college there or, uhm, office administration. So, it was '99. 21 22 Q Did you have any direct contact with the police on that visit? 23 24 No, we didn't. We told them later though that we 25 did go down there.

When was that? 1 0 2 Uhm, it would have been around the, the 2001 time Α 3 when, uhm, when, when they contacted us, uhm, for 4 the first blood samples. Yeah. 5 Did you tell them about the man you'd met who had Q 6 been using your mother's name to collect Social 7 Assistance? Yes, we did. 8 Α 9 Q Was there any response from the police? Did they follow up; do you know? 10 11 Α No, there wasn't. Did you know this Mr. Wilmot? 12 Q 13 I knew of him but I didn't know him personally. I Α 14 was quite, because I was a bit younger, I was 15 quite sheltered by my aunts, my brother and I, because they knew the high-risk living that my 16 17 mother was living in the Downtown Eastside. Uhm, and so my, my sister met him and, and, uhm, and 18 19 she knew of some of the other fellows that my, my 20 mom saw too, but I didn't know them as closely as, as my sister did. 21 22 Q You described your mother's life in the Downtown Eastside as high risk. Do you know if she was 23 involved in the sex trade? 24 25 Uhm, yes, we do know that she was. Α

And how do you know that? 1 Q Uhm, we saw a clipping in, in the newspaper of 2 Α 3 her, her being arrested for prostitution and that 4 she was missing. 5 Is that something you ever talked to her about? Q 6 Α No. 7 Q And your mother was also a user of drugs and alcohol? 8 9 Α Yes. Do you happen to know what drugs she regularly 10 Q 11 used? Uhm, I know that she, uhm, she had a -- she was 12 Α 13 born with a, a back problem. She had an unnatural curvature in her back and so she had to go to the 14 15 doctor a lot. And so we knew of prescription drug use that she had, and, and the alcoholism. 16 17 And then when she ended up on the Downtown Eastside, it, it got worse into, uhm, drug use. 18 19 The day that we spent with her, she, she was --20 wasn't herself, like, the mom that we knew before, because she was so skinny and, and frail. And, 21 22 you know, you have natural muscles as, as a person who has three meals a day and, and she wasn't that 23 person anymore. And she, uhm, said to us, because 24 25 we were at Science World, she said to us, "Can you

imagine being on acid in here?" And, and I looked 1 2 at her and I knew she wasn't herself anymore. I 3 knew that the, the addiction had taken over her 4 life, that this disease had consumed her and that 5 she wasn't the person that she was before. Do you know if your mom ever tried to deal with 6 Q 7 her alcohol and drug addictions? Several times. Uhm, and then, and this is where I 8 Α 9 would like to, to emphasize the efforts that she made, because I think, as an aboriginal woman who 10 11 dealt with her alcoholism and who was a single mother of three, uhm, going through the system, 12 there is a lot of bias and discrimination. I can 13 recall as a child going through a transition home 14 15 when she separated from, from my, my father, and, you know, getting away from the fighting and, and 16 17 the drinking, and, and she was treated differently in the transition home, because she didn't come --18 because she was, uhm, native, she was made to wait 19 20 longer and the non-aboriginal women were seen to a 21 lot quicker, and she was treated differently. She 22 was looked down on. And the same treatment went for, uhm, the 23 24 social workers. They were very rude to my mother. 25 They -- uhm, there was a time where my, my brother

had got seriously hurt and she tried to report it.

She was -- he was hurt by a, a man in our

apartment and, uhm, and the social worker wouldn't

take her report. And, and so there were several

times she tried to reach out and ask for help.

And I think because, you know, she was a native

woman, she was treated differently.

And she also dealt with the demons of, of the Indian residential school. Uhm, she went through the residential school and, all of her brothers and sisters went through the residential school and, uhm, my grandparents went through the residential school. And, and so she would try to be the best mother that she could be, but she couldn't, because she didn't have the tools that mainstream society, when you keep your family unit together and you raise your child, you know, from, from a baby to a toddler, to a child, to, to a, to a young adult, she didn't have that. She didn't have those skills. And, and so she tried to do her best to raise us and, uhm, but she was treated differently because she was an aboriginal woman.

And, uhm, she did make it into treatment. She did try to stay sober. And, uhm, because it was so limited in, in this, in the '70s and '80s,

you, you didn't, you didn't have like what you see today, like with, you know, uhm, New Beginnings or Starting Smart, or, you know, those types of children's programs, mother-and-child programs that we have today, you didn't see it then. And you didn't see single-parent societies, you know, like they do today.

And so she, she, because she so limited, she, she started giving up and she would relapse. But there were quite a few times that she tried to quit. She went to the Nechako Treatment Centre. She went to a treatment centre in Nanaimo. I think it's called Tsow-Tun Le Lum. Uhm, she went through detox, you know, and then she would go into the treatment program. She would complete it. And then she even attempted to go back to school and finish her Grade 12. But it was so limited in those days with social programs and, uhm, and she fell through the cracks. She was one of the women that was missed. And when we called out and asked for help, it wasn't answered until it was too late.

- Q What was your mother's relationship with the police, law enforcement like?
- A Well, later we found out that she was arrested for

prostitution. But I, I know of, you know, the few 1 2 relationships that she did have, it was with men 3 that were violent, and so she would call the 4 police and ask for help. And, you know, like, 5 this isn't, wasn't just a minimal, you know, 6 violent occurrence. It was, it was downright 7 mean. There, there were beatings to the point where her face would be black and blue and you 8 9 couldn't even recognize her. And that was part of being stuck in that lifestyle of the Downtown 10 11 Eastside and not enough, uhm, not enough support to, to encourage her to get out of there. It was 12 13 a, it was a pretty dirty cycle. MR. CHANTLER: I am going to hand up those documents I referred 14 15 to earlier. Mr. Commissioner, this is a small package of 16 17 documents pulled from the police disclosure to this commission of inquiry. They're in order of 18 their doc IDs. You will see that their doc ID --19 20 they're not necessarily one after the other. It's just a series of documents that have been pulled 21 22 out from different places in the disclosure. Ms. Sebastian, the first page of this package is a 23 Q 24 document entitled "Missing Persons Report" from 25 the Vancouver Police Department. The last four

1		digits of the doc ID are 4631. Have you seen this
2		document before?
3	А	No.
4	Q	Have you seen it recently in your preparation for
5		this inquiry?
6	А	Yeah, not until now.
7	Q	Right.
8	А	Yeah.
9	Q	Now, this document has a date on it at the top.
10		It looks like "2001, May 16th". Would you agree
11		to that?
12	А	Yes.
13	Q	And it's, the name below that is your mother's
14		name, Elsie Marie Sebastian?
15	A	Yes.
16	Q	Do you know who filed this missing person report?
17		It says further down the page.
18	А	Ann Livingston.
19	Q	Okay. And what's your relation to Ann Livingston?
20	А	She's my auntie.
21	Q	And Ann is here with us in the room today?
22	A	Yes, she is.
23	Q	Okay. What do you know about Ann's efforts in
24		2001 to get the police involved in a search for
25		your mother's for your mother?

1	A	Uhm, it, it just didn't start in 2001. It was
2		well before that. It started in '94. She went
3		downtown to look for her on East Hastings, and she
4		also went to, I think that's when she went to the
5		place called "Storefront" and she asked about
6		Elsie. And, uhm, she talked to a fellow named
7		"Morris Bates" and, uhm, he knew my father, and
8		he, uhm, knew Elsie when, when my, my parents
9		first got together. Morris and my dad grew up
10		together. And I don't think, uhm, Morris knew how
11		close I was to Ann, but I found out after that he
12		referred to Elsie as being a 40-year-old woman
13		that no one will have interest in looking for.
14	THE COMMISSI	ONER: Who said that?
15	THE WITNESS:	Morris Bates, that the police won't look into it
16		because of her age.
17	MR. CHANTLER	:
18	Q	And who was Morris Bates?
19	А	He was a native liaison worker.
20	Q	Was he an employee of the Vancouver Police
21		Department; do you know?
22	A	I think he was.
23	Q	Near halfway down this page, you can see in
24		writing, it says:
25		Complainant attempted to make report in 1992

1	but was refused.
2	A Yes.
3	Q Is that your understanding of what happened, Ann,
4	Ms. Livingston's earlier efforts to report your
5	mother missing and
6	A Yes.
7	Q in vain?
8	A Yeah, because that's when she told me that she
9	looked at the wall of the missing persons bulletin
10	and they were nothing but younger women up there
11	that were not aboriginal.
12	MR. CHANTLER: This might be a good time for the lunch break.
13	THE COMMISSIONER: All right, we will adjourn.
14	THE REGISTRAR: This hearing is now adjourned until 2 p.m.
15	(PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED AT 12:21 P.M.)
16	(PROCEEDINGS RESUMED AT 2:02 P.M.)
17	THE REGISTRAR: Order. This hearing is now resumed.
18	MR. CHANTLER: Commissioner, Neil Chantler, counsel for the
19	families.
20	THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.
21	MR. CHANTLER:
22	Q Ms. Sebastian, before the break, I had just taken
23	you to a package of documents, and we looked at
24	the first page of that package, which was a
25	missing persons report from the Vancouver Police

Department's records dated May 16th, 2001. 1 2 Yes. Α And you were aware at the time that this missing 3 Q 4 persons report was filed by your aunt, Ann 5 Livingston, and your evidence is that this was, by no means, the, the first effort the families went 6 7 to, the family went to, to report your mother's disappearance to the police. It even says on this 8 9 document that there was an attempt as early as 1992; is that right? 10 11 Α Yes. So, if we turn the page to the next document, and 12 Q for the record, this is RCMP-017-004672, this 13 14 document, at the top of the page, says "Vancouver 15 Police and Native Liaison". Do you know what that refers to? Do you know what that organization is? 16 17 Uh, I knew the native liaison, yes. Α You had some dealings with them in the course of 18 Q 19 the '90s and your search for your mother. And 20 this document has some handwritten notes on it. don't suppose you know whose handwriting this is? 21 22 Α Uhm, at that time, I spoke with, uhm, Morris 23 Bates. Okay. And "at that time" is what? Is it -- are 24 Q 25 you referring to the dates on the left-hand side

of the page? 1 2 I think so, yes. Α And that's August 30th and August 31st, 1999? 3 Q 4 Yes. Α 5 And, and what do you recall about your dealings 0 6 with Mr. Bates on that date? 7 Uhm, this is the time where I talked to him about Α trying to look for my mom and I was referred to 8 9 him and, uhm, when I spoke with him, I told him about how worried we were about looking for our 10 11 mother, and that, uhm, uhm, that's when he asked me to gather as much information as I could. And 12 13 I gave him, uhm, his -- or my mom's birth date, 14 her height, her weight. 15 And he also asked me to recall when I last saw her, and he asked about anything significant 16 17 and I, that's when I told him about her hand. When she was a little girl, she had an accident, 18 19 and, uhm, with an axe cutting wood, her and her 20 little, her, her brother, and, uhm, and part of her finger was cut off. And so that's one of the 21 22 obvious, uhm, scars or body marks on her. And then that's when I asked him about 23 24 looking for her, because he explained to me, 25 that's, that's the time when he explained to me,

"It's like looking for a needle in the haystack," 1 2 and that Elsie, because she was a much older 3 native woman, her priority, it wouldn't happen. 4 Looking for her would be hard to, to find and 5 there wouldn't be much help. And, uhm, to me, it 6 seemed like he, he had an overwhelming caseload 7 and so, like, because there were so many, he explained, that, like, there was so many younger, 8 9 uhm, non-aboriginal, you know, they, they would get priority over her, being a 40-year-old native 10 11 woman who is drug addicted. So, the information that's reflected on this form 12 Q 13 is some of the information that you told Mr. Bates in your dealings with him on August the 30th and 14 15 31st, '99? 16 Α Yes. 17 But it's not all of the information you told him? Q 18 Α No. What did he say to you after those conversations? 19 Q 20 Uhm, he said, uhm, he encouraged me to get ahold Α of those local organizations, like, Carnegie Hall 21 22 (sic) and the Women's Native Centre and the Women's Centre and, and that was about it. 23 24 Did he say he was going to get the Vancouver Q 25 Police involved?

1	А	Uhm, he said he would look, but I, I don't recall
2		him saying the VPD would be involved.
3	Q	He didn't offer to do that for you?
4	А	I don't think so.
5	Q	If we turn the page to the next document, this
6		appears to be a flyer, a missing family member.
7		And for the record, it's document RCMP-017-004673.
8		Have you seen this before?
9	А	Yes, I have.
10	Q	Do you know what this, this flyer is and who
11		created it and when?
12	A	This is the flyer my Uncle Russell made in looking
13		for my mom, uhm, in '94. Russell filed or let the
14		Port Alberni Police know that Elsie was missing
15		and, uhm, I think he had it sent to Vancouver
16		because that's where she was last seen. And, uhm,
17		with this flyer, this is where they start making
18		posters of my mom and putting them up with
19		Russell, my Auntie Ann and my sister, Ann.
20	Q	Your Uncle Russell created this flyer and he sent
21		it to the RCMP?
22	A	Yes.
23	Q	Do you know which detachments he sent it to?
24	A	It was the Port Alberni.
25	Q	Okay. There is some handwriting at the bottom of

1		the page below the flyer. Do you happen to know
2		whose handwriting that is?
3	А	This is Morris's handwriting. Yes, it is.
4	Q	And how do you know that?
5	А	Uhm, because he's the one who, uhm, dealt with,
6		uhm, my Uncle Russell and, uhm, said that he was
7		aware that, uhm, Elsie had been seen. And this is
8		when they were saying that, "Oh, Elsie has become
9		a rice wine drinker now and she hangs out in
10		Oppenheimer Park." And, and Elsie wasn't a rice
11		wine drinker.
12	Q	Who was saying that Elsie hung out in Oppenheimer
13		Park?
14	А	Morris.
15	Q	If we can turn the page to the next document,
16		RCMP-017-004667. The top of the page says "VPNLS
17		Client Intake Sheet." I understand that to be the
18		Vancouver Police Native Liaison Service client
19		intake sheet. Have you seen this document before
20		today?
21	А	Uhm, other than this hearing, no, I haven't seen
22		it before.
23	Q	You've seen it in your preparation for the
24		inquiry?
25	А	Yes.

1	Q	Do you know who Russ Jones is?
2	А	That's my Uncle Russell. That's my mom's oldest
3		brother who tried to look for Elsie.
4	Q	Okay. Now, the first entry on that page, the
5		first paragraph, can you just read that to us?
6	А	The first paragraph?
7	Q	Yes.
8	А	Regarding Elsie Louise Sebastian (Jones)
9		missing persons, we received a fax from Port
10		Alberni RCMP this date regarding about
11		missing person poster of Elsie. Contacted
12		Russ Jones missing person's brother in to
13		let known location and well-being of his
14		sister. He will contact RCMP Cst. Clayards,
15		Port Alberni detachment in regards to their
16		involvement. Will keep in contact with
17		regard to incoming to Vancouver for office
18		visit and reuniting.
19	Q	Okay. So, this conforms with your understanding
20		of your Uncle Russell, Uncle Russell's involvement
21		with the Vancouver Police Native Liaison Society
22		in '94?
23	А	Yes.
24	Q	And below that, the next entry dated May 27th,
25		'94, I will just read that.

1	Russ Jones phoned and stated they are closing
2	the file on Elsie.
3	Then it goes on. Do you know why they might
4	have been closing the file on Elsie?
5	A Because they thought this woman who hung out in
6	Oppenheimer Park was Elsie.
7	THE COMMISSIONER: Was what?
8	THE WITNESS: They thought that the lady that was hanging out
9	in Oppenheimer Park was Elsie. They thought that
10	woman was Elsie because, uhm, her name was the
11	same and she was about the same size, but it
12	wasn't, it wasn't her.
13	THE COMMISSIONER: Oh, I see. They thought that because she
14	they thought she was at Oppenheimer Park and she
15	was found?
16	THE WITNESS: Yeah, and they thought
17	THE COMMISSIONER: Oh, I see. Okay.
18	MR. CHANTLER:
19	Q And just to be clear, who do you mean
20	A There is two Elsies.
21	Q who do you mean by "they"? Who is "they" that
22	thought that?
23	A Uhm, when they tried looking for her, the, the
24	police then and Morris.
25	Q Okay. So, it was a mistake?

1	A	Yes. And, uhm, like, that's where I'm kind of
2		disappointed because we should have, like, we
3		should have, we should have had somebody confirm
4		that, you know, like, physically and, you know, ID
5		wise because, like, I think that's an error and
6		she wasn't found.
7	Q	They confused her with somebody else
8	A	Yes, they did.
9	Q	who, who looked like her?
10	A	Yes.
11	Q	Had a similar name?
12	A	Yes.
13	Q	But they didn't follow up
14	A	No.
15	Q	to check that it was your mother?
16	A	No.
17	THE REGISTRA	R: Mr. Chantler, if I may, I notice as we have
18		been going through the documents here, that the
19		first document refers to an "Elsie Marie" and the
20		second three or the third, fourth and fifth
21		record show "Elsie Louise". And I also note that
22		there is a smaller "Louise" printed, and are we
23		talking about the same person or are we talking
24		about two separate persons?
25	THE WITNESS:	The same.

MR. CHANTLER: Thank you, Mr. Registrar. Very good question. 1 2 Elsie Louise is her birth --Α And you can explain, on the first page of this 3 Q 4 package of the missing persons report --5 Α Yeah. -- why it says "Elsie Marie Sebastian"? 6 Q 7 That was a mistake in who wrote it, because that's Α not -- that wasn't her middle name. It was "Elsie 8 9 Louise". But there is no question that this missing person 10 Q 11 report on page 1 of this package is, is a, a 12 report done by your aunt, Ann Livingston, in regards to your mother's disappearance? The name 13 is just simply wrong; is that correct? 14 15 Yes. Α 16 Q Okay. 17 THE REGISTRAR: Did you wish to mark that document? MR. CHANTLER: I have one more question about the, about one 18 19 more page in that package, and then if I can enter 20 it then. I will explain then how I intend to do 21 that. 22 Q If you turn ahead two pages from where we were, I 23 am on RCMP-017-004669. This is a page of 24 handwritten notes. 25 Α Okay.

1	Q	The first line says "missing person" in brackets.
2	А	Yes.
3	Q	Are you with me?
4	А	Yes.
5	Q	Now, this, these handwritten notes are dated, at
6		the top right of that page, February 11th, 1994.
7		They refer to "Elsie Jones". There is a reference
8		to "Ann Livingston". That's your aunt, correct?
9	А	Yes.
10	Q	And these notes refer to "Ann coming into the
11		Storefront." Do you know what that's, what the
12		reference to the "Storefront" is? Is that the
13	A	The native liaison.
14	Q	The native liaison?
15	А	Yes.
16	Q	Okay. This document confirms what you told us
17		earlier, that your aunt, Ann Livingston, went to
18		the native liaison in 1994 and tried to get
19		them
20	A	Yes.
21	Q	involved in your mother's disappearance?
22	А	Yes.
23	Q	Is that right?
24	А	And I am also wondering about, there should have
25		been a note of my other grandmother coming in.

1	Her name was Dora, and why isn't th	at in these
2	notes here too? So, there is anoth	er family
3	member who looked for her.	
4	Q Okay. At the bottom of that page,	there is
5	another entry, "June 21st, 1994," a	ind it says:
6	Talked to Miss Livingston. In	formed her that
7	Elsie Jones, aka Sebastian, wa	as alive and
8	frequents Oppenheimer Park at	approximately 6
9	a.m. and the Sunrise Hotel in	afternoons.
10	You know now that that was inc	correct; is that
11	correct?	
12	A Yeah, it was incorrect.	
13	Q This is referring to the mistake th	at you talked
14	about earlier?	
15	A Yes.	
16	MR. CHANTLER: Okay. Mr. Commissioner, I would	like to enter
17	the documents that we've referred t	to, together as
18	a package,	
19	THE COMMISSIONER: All right.	
20	MR. CHANTLER: as the next exhibit. I had ea	rlier passed
21	around a package of documents, and	for the record,
22	I will just be clear. The document	entitled
23	"Executive Summary - Elsie Sebastia	ın,
24	RCMP-040-006381" I, I do not intend	l this to be a
25	part of the exhibit. I am going to	not, not speak

to it today. So, we will leave that aside. 1 2 THE REGISTRAR: The missing persons report will be marked as 3 Exhibit Number 18 with five pages of attached 4 documents. 5 MR. CHANTLER: Provided there are no objections, of course. 6 THE REGISTRAR: Now, for clarification on the record, that 7 should be marked as "Elsie Louise Sebastian"; is that correct? 8 9 MR. CHANTLER: Correct. 10 THE WITNESS: Yes. 11 THE REGISTRAR: Thank you. 12 (EXHIBIT NO. 18: Document entitled "Vancouver 13 City Police, Missing Persons Report for Elsie Louise SEBASTIAN, Case # 01-103735, 14 15 RCMP-017-0046310") 16 MR. CHANTLER: 17 Ms. Sebastian, you have described to us in great Q detail the efforts that your family went to to 18 report your mother's disappearance and to get the 19 20 police and Native Liaison Society involved in an investigation for her disappearance in -- through 21 22 the '90s. How do you feel now, today, sitting in that witness box, about the response you got? 23 I feel frustrated and I feel let down. I feel 24 Α 25 like there is no closure. I feel like we went on with the rest of our childhood and teenage and, and adult lives without her. And I, I feel like my, my brother and my sister and I have suffered far too long.

I feel like something went wrong. Uhm, apparently, there was turnover and there was, uhm, a point where we had to redo our DNA and I, I don't like that. I think there was lost time there, sensitive time, where she could have been found.

I also don't like the fact that we were told not to talk to the media. We were told not to talk to other family members. They said it would jeopardize the investigation. You have to understand that, as an aboriginal person from the West Coast and the Northwest Coast, there is an order and a cycle of life that we follow. We were told not to give a memorial for her because it would jeopardize the investigation.

Traditionally, our people will mourn for four days. They will have a prayer service or a memorial. They will have the funeral and then they will have the feast. Elsie never got any of that, and Elsie deserves that. It's in her

inherent right to have that and she hasn't been

1 granted that. 2 And there, there was an occurrence once when 3 we were at Surrey Detachment and we -- a family 4 member told me what their loved one went through, 5 and I didn't say what my mom went through, but to hear how those women were murdered on that farm, 6 7 it tore me apart and I know it tore my sister's heart apart. 8 9 We reviewed evidence to try to look for something, but there was so much on there. There 10 11 was so -- and it wasn't just women's stuff. was children's and babies' stuff. And they said, 12 13 "Donalee, you might as well be prepared that you 14 may never see your mother again and we may not 15 find her in this evidence." When was that? 16 0 17 When we were in Surrey. And we spent hours in Α that detachment looking at slide after slide after 18 19 slide, and it broke my heart that I couldn't find 20 anything that was close to mom. That was a meeting at the RCMP detachment in 21 Q 22 Surrev? 23 Α Yes. 24 And you were invited down to that? Q 25 Α Yes.

1	Q	You flew down from Hazelton?
2	А	Yes.
3	Q	To review the belongings of women and you were
4		asked to identify if any of them might be your
5		mother's?
6	A	Yes.
7	Q	In 2001?
8	А	Yes.
9	Q	Okay. Who told you not to speak to the media?
10	А	The RCMP.
11	Q	And when was that?
12	А	It was at the time we were there. They warned us
13		before we came down. They said that there were
14		other family members there who were speaking to
15		the media and they encouraged us not to talk to
16		the media. They encouraged us not to talk to
17		other family members.
18	Q	And who told you not to have a memorial for your
19		mother?
20	А	The RCMP.
21	Q	When was that?
22	A	Uhm, it was, uhm, first when we had, uhm, the
23		Missing Women's Task Force come take our blood in
24		Hazelton, and then it was again in Surrey.
25	Q	Why did they say did they explain why?

1	А	They said it would jeopardize the investigation.
2	Q	Do you have anything else you would like to tell
3		this commission about the police response to your
4		family's efforts
5	А	Yes.
6	Q	and with your mother's disappearance?
7	А	Yes. Mr. Oppal, you take this upon yourself to
8		find out what happened. Find out what happened to
9		my mother, Elsie Jones Sebastian. Find my mother
10		for me. Find Ann-Marie's mother. Find Robert
11		Jr.'s mother and our other brother.
12		She will never know her grandchildren. She
13		will never hold her grandsons in her arms. She
14		will never laugh with her granddaughters. She
15		never saw her daughters and son graduate from
16		college and go to university. She never got to
17		hold her grandchildren in her arms.
18		Sure, she was a mother, a single mother who
19		struggled with alcohol and then addiction, but it
20		doesn't make her any less of a human being. She
21		still reached out to call for us, and the calls
22		stopped. Let's find her.
23		And she went through a horrible time as a
24		child already with the Indian residential school,
25		and she had limited services, trying to rebuild

her life and trying to be a mother, but because 1 2 she wasn't given the foundation of a family unit, 3 she fell through the cracks with her alcohol and 4 drinking and drugging. And she fell in the 5 Downtown Eastside. But she's still a Pacheedaht, 6 Tashot, Taquot woman. She comes from the Wolf and 7 Killer Whale Clans. She was a smart woman, she was a loving woman, and she did the best she could 8 9 with what little skills that she was given. I want an update on my mother's 10 11 investigation. I would really appreciate an update on my mother's investigation. That's my 12 one asking question for you, the VPD and the RCMP. 13 14 Please, let's find her. Let's bring her home. 15 Thank you, Ms. Sebastian. Those are my questions. THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Any, any questions, Ms. Gervais? 16 17 MS. GERVAIS: Robyn Gervais, independent counsel for the aboriginal interests. 18 19 I am wondering if Ms. Sebastian needs a break 20 at this point? THE COMMISSIONER: Pardon me? 21 22 MS. GERVAIS: I am wondering if Ms. Sebastian needs a break at this point. 23 24 THE COMMISSIONER: Do you need a break? We will stand down if 25 you want one.

- 1 THE WITNESS: I should be okay.
- 2 THE COMMISSIONER: All right. You should be okay?
- 3 THE WITNESS: Yes, I'll be fine.
- 4 THE COMMISSIONER: You sure?
- 5 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 6 THE COMMISSIONER: All right.
- 7 MS. GERVAIS: Prior to beginning my very friendly and gentle
- 8 cross-examination, I would just like to introduce
- 9 Robin Bennett, who will be working with Mr.
- Baynham and Mr. Roberts and myself.
- 11 THE COMMISSIONER: All right, thank you.

12 CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. GERVAIS:

- 13 Q Ms. Sebastian, I am just going to ask you some
 14 questions that will expand a little bit on what
 15 Mr. Chantler talked to you about with respect to
 16 the residential school system and child welfare
- system and things that you and your family endured
- as children dating back to your grandparents.
- 19 Your grandparents had attended residential school,
- 20 correct?
- 21 A Yes, they did.
- 22 Q And do you know anything about their experiences
- there?
- 24 A Uhm, during the time that my mother was missing, I
- 25 became fairly close to my grandmother, Mary Jones,

the late Mary Jones, and she told me that both her and her husband went to the Indian residential school. She told me that she was aware of the violence that my grandfather went through and, and she shared what she went through also. And, uhm, she also told me that she remembers wanting to teach the Tashot and Taquot language to her children when she first started having her family. And she was forced to, uhm, send them to the residential school by law. And, uhm, she told me that her husband said to her, "Don't teach them the language or they will be made fun of because of their Indian accent."

And she also told me that, uhm, she was aware of, uhm, the sexual abuse that occurred and, and the ability that she, she tried her best to raise her family, but she didn't have the family unit skills that any family should have. She did the best she could but she had 10 children and every one of them were made to go to the residential school also.

I also, uhm, have recalls of my mom telling me what she went through in the residential school, in the Port Alberni Residential School.

Elsie was five when she was forced to go there.

And she told me that she remembers as a little girl going there and being forced to go there and being scared. And when she got there, they -- as it got dark, she waited for it to get dark and she waited for everyone to go to sleep and that same night that she was there, she ran away. She ran back home. And when she went back home, she told her mom that she didn't want to go and she wanted to stay with Gram, my Grandma Mary.

And she said that the next day a priest and a nun showed up on their doorstep and kindly told Mary that Elsie had to return to the school, and they were being really nice to Elsie, saying, "Elsie, it's time to go now. Everything is going to be fine. You're going to be okay. We're going to take care of you." And so Mary made Elsie leave and go with them. And when they got Elsie back to the Alberni Residential School, they, once they got her into a room alone, they beat her. They beat her for running away.

And she also told me about what she went through. She was beaten. She was beaten with a metre stick and it -- she was beaten on her, her back and on her legs as a five-year-old girl and onward until she was 16. She couldn't speak her

language. Uhm, the food that she ate was always cold and it, it wasn't your, your, your basic food groups. It wasn't anything like that. It was, uhm, very little and it wasn't healthy.

She also showed me what it was like to be beaten. She said that, uh, as a little girl -- and I want each of you to think of your little girl at home now, whether she's your daughter or your granddaughter or your niece or, or whatnot, your family member. As a little girl, they would take a ruler and they would hit the palms of her hands and then they would make her turn her hands over and hit her knuckles. And, and these types of -- and it wasn't no little spanking. It was a beating. These are things that happened to her, and they were things that happened to me and my sister and my brother when she was angry. We didn't understand why. We didn't know where it came from, but it happened.

And not until I was, uhm, in my early 20s, that I sat with my grandmother and she explained to me what happened, I understood why mom was the way she was. That biological reaction that happens when you are nurturing your child as a child, you know, four and five, didn't occur for

Elsie. And so, psychologically, she didn't have that love and that natural way of, of feeling connected with a family. It wasn't there.

And, uhm, and I felt it with my mom. There were times where I, I wondered because she -- I shared a bit that she had a problem with prescription. I think she tried. I think she tried to turn her life down, turn around with antidepressants and, and, uhm, but she would just zone out. She would just numb out. And as a little girl, I would wonder, what did I do, or what's wrong with my mummy? Mummy is trying to get help and why isn't she getting the help that she needs?

You know, she was displaced from her culture and her family members that did have the opportunity to know their culture. She was separate from them. So she tried to live in mainstream society, but because of her brown skin and not having a very good education and not —being a single mother of three, she was already marginalized.

Q So, I just want to pick up on a couple of things you said. You said that your mom went into residential school when she was five, right? And

D.R. Sebastian (for the Families) Cross-exam by Ms. Gervais

1		she was there until she was how old?
2	A	Sixteen.
3	Q	And so was she there the entire time?
4	A	Yes.
5	Q	Okay. And also, you said that your mom had shown
6		you the physical violence that she endured at
7		residential school and then she inflicted that
8		same violence on you and your siblings; is that
9		right?
10	А	Yes.
11	Q	And so you it would be fair to say that you
12		think that's a, that was a learned behaviour?
13	А	Yes.
14	Q	You said that she was disconnected from her
15		culture.
16	А	Yes.
17	Q	Did she ever get to know her culture while she was
18		in residential school?
19	А	No.
20	Q	When did she, she become familiar with her
21		culture, if she did at all?
22	А	Uhm, I know that she did make attempts to learn
23		about it, but, uhm, she didn't know her language.
24		Uhm, she would, uhm, talk to some family members
25		but she didn't grow up with it consistently. It

wasn't there. 1 2 And how do you think her not knowing her language 0 3 and her culture and growing up with her family and 4 inner community affected her life? 5 I think Elsie had a lot of obstacles and, uhm, you Α know, we, we talk about the social determinants of 6 7 health, and for Elsie, they were poor. There was -- it was very limited. 8 9 Q Could you expand on that a little bit? When you say "the social determinants," can you give me 10 11 some examples? She, well, she was aboriginal, for one. She went 12 Α 13 through the residential school so she didn't have the natural upbringing of a family. The emotional 14 15 and spiritual and, and mental nurturing that you receive as a child, uhm, wasn't there and it 16 17 wasn't provided to Elsie. It was taken from her. And, uhm, she survived. She did the best she 18 could to survive in the residential school. And I 19 20 think she learned to be quiet, because she knew 21 she was oppressed. 22 Q And besides what you have already described with respect to the physical violence that you endured 23 and your siblings endured, how do you think your 24 mother's attendance at residential school affected 25

your life? 1 2 I think it greatly affected our lives. 3 How so? Q 4 Uhm, in that we struggled to understand what went Α 5 wrong. We struggled to understand why she 6 struggled to raise us. Why couldn't she give us 7 the emotional and mental and spiritual guidance that a mother should have in, in raising her 8 9 children? Uh, economically, because she was not a 10 11 graduate and didn't have a job, we grew up with her in -- with Social Services and, and Welfare, 12 13 and that was limited. It wasn't until my family, 14 my father's family took me and my brother did we 15 start learning about our culture and that, that all these aspects of life, of holistic health, in 16 17 heart, mind, body and spirit, you can't have one without the other. 18 19 And, and for Elsie, she, she is -- she went 20 through an inherent crime. The residential school was genocide for our people, and Elsie was part of 21 that and she was lost to it. And I think it's 22 very key and why we have so many aboriginal people 23 24 ending up on the Downtown Eastside, living high-

risk lives, ending up in IDU.

25

1	Q	Can you explain what "IDU" means?
2	A	Injection drug use.
3	Q	Thank you.
4	A	And it's, it's something psychologically that
5		changes, and then they become vulnerable to
6		alcoholism and addiction, and something needs to
7		be done about it. We need to work with it, and
8		it's not going to go away. It's multi-
9		generational.
10	Q	Uhm, your mother left residential school when she
11		was 16 and then she gave birth to her first child
12		shortly after that; is that right?
13	A	Yes.
14	Q	And then you testified earlier this morning that
15		she gave that child up for adoption to a family
16		member?
17	A	Yes.
18	Q	Okay. And was it shortly after that that your mom
19		moved to Prince George?
20	А	Yes.
21	Q	Okay. And she met her
22	А	Oh, no.
23	Q	Oh, sorry?
24	А	She, she met my sister's father. Yes.
25	Q	In

1	А	Ann-Marie.
2	Q	In Prince George?
3	А	No, in Victoria.
4	Q	Oh, okay. And Ann-Marie's father's name is?
5	А	John.
6	Q	John Livingston. And is he an aboriginal man?
7	А	No, he is not.
8	Q	Okay. And was there any significance to your mom
9		dating a non-aboriginal man?
10	А	I think, at that time, for an aboriginal women
11		woman to marry a non-native man, you, you were
12		considered affluent, making it, in modern society.
13		But, uhm, it didn't last.
14	Q	What, what year was that, that she married John?
15	А	It was '73 she was with him, for three years.
16	Q	Okay. And when your older sister Ann-Marie was
17		three, she met your father, the father of you and
18		your younger brother, correct?
19	A	Yes. In about '75, she met my father.
20	Q	Okay. And you grew up primarily with yourself,
21		your younger brother,
22	A	With Elsie.
23	Q	and Elsie and your father?
24	А	Yes.

Okay. And Ann-Marie spent time with you on and

25

off? 1 2 Yes, she came to stay with us a few times. Elsie had -- she would go through cycles of being 3 4 stable and then unstable. When she was stable, 5 Ann-Marie was with us. 6 Okay. Q 7 Because I shared -- she did go to treatment and Α she did try to rebuild her life. 8 9 Q And what was your, your parents' relationship like? 10 11 Α I think it was very strong in the beginning. You know, they had me, so, you know, it was very 12 strong. I think they had a connection with one 13 14 another because my father went through a similar 15 situation with the Prince George College was considered a residential school, and he was also 16 17 displaced from his family when he was only two weeks old and he went through -- uh, at the age of 18 19 five, he was taken away from his family because he 20 had tuberculosis and he had to be sent to Vancouver, and he was isolated, alone, in a room 21 22 for a year. He had no contact with his adopted 23 mother or his mom or any of his family. At the age of five, he went through a whole year of being 24 25 alone at the Vancouver hospital. And then he was

sent back and, uhm, he, he went through the same 1 2 similar situation. 3 At Grade 12, he was pulled into an office and 4 told by the principal there, "Robert, you might as 5 well prepare yourself for a blue-collar job 6 because the colour of your skin, you won't get a 7 white-colour job." And that gave my father incentive to go to college and that's actually how 8 9 he met my mom. He went to, uhm, the college in Victoria and met my mother in about '75, 1975. 10 11 Okay. Did your parents use alcohol? Q Yes, they did. 12 Α Okay. And you testified earlier this morning 13 0 that, at a certain point in your childhood, the 14 child welfare authorities became involved, 15 16 correct? 17 Α Yes. And why was that? 18 Q Their marriage fell apart and, uhm, at 10, they --19 Α 20 I was 10 years old, they separated. My brother was five and my, my dad left and we stayed with 21 22 mom. We wanted, we were always wanting to be with mom, no matter what. 23 24 And, uhm, she met a native fellow, uhm, who 25 was very unstable and it was obvious that he was,

uhm, into drug use and, uhm, he was violent. He
was very violent to Elsie, and to this day, I
don't like that man. Uhm, and I think that's when
her drug use started, was with that fellow,
because I remember seeing it.

Q So, your mom went from a fairly stable

- Q So, your mom went from a fairly stable relationship to separating and then dating a very violent man and using drugs; is that right?
- A Yes.

- Q And that's when child welfare became involved in your life?
- A Yes. We had to -- there was a very horrible incident where he, he started beating Elsie and he started picking up his carving tools and throwing them at her. And I don't know if you have seen a jeweller's carving tools, but they are solid and heavy, and he was throwing them at my mother. And it was in the dead of winter in Edmonton and it was 30 below, and I had to run out of the house in my pajamas and my slippers and I had to run to the corner store and contact the police. And I took my brother with me and we, we asked them to hide us in the, the store so that fellow wouldn't come looking for us. And, uhm, and the police came and that's when, uh, we, we started going through

1		foster homes.
2	Q	And you testified that you were 10 at the time?
3	A	Yes.
4	Q	Okay. And at that time, what did you know about
5		child welfare in general or social workers? What
6		kinds of things were you aware of?
7	А	You know, in my mom's efforts, when she first
8		tried to get stable and get away from the, the
9		violence and the drinking, we went through a
10		transition home before that, and, uhm, she was
11		treated differently. Uhm, there would be
12		non-aboriginal women going through the transition
13		home and they would be seen quicker than my mother
14		would.
15	Q	Were you with your mother at these transition
16		homes?
17	А	Yes.
18	Q	Okay.
19	А	And also with the social worker, uhm, you know,
20		because of her history of drinking, she wasn't
21		treated as well. And they knew that she was with
22		a violent man, so they, they did treat her
23		different.
24	Q	Did you ever have any fear of social workers or
25		the child welfare system?

I knew they were there to help, but I was afraid 1 Α 2 of them. You know, I wanted my family to stay together, and I started looking out for my brother 3 4 at a very young age, me and my sister. I was five 5 and Ann was eight and we always had to look out for our brother. And, uhm, and I wanted to stay 6 7 with mom. I didn't want to go to foster care. But I wanted help and I wanted help for my mom. 8 9 Q How long were you in foster care for? At that time, it was three months. And then we 10 Α 11 had to, uhm, we went through it again at about Grades 5 or 6, it would have been Grade 6 we went 12 through it a second time. And on the third time, 13 14 they said, "If we come back for you a third time, 15 Donalee, you are not going back to your mother. You can say good-bye to your mother. You had 16 better be prepared for it." 17 And this is when you were in Grade 5 or 6? 18 Q Grade 6. 19 Α 20 Grade 6. Q And at Grade 7, that's when my father's family 21 Α 22 came for me, my aunties came for me and my 23 brother. 24 And did you, at any time with your involvement Q 25 with child welfare authorities, did you feel

supported by social workers or by the child 1 2 welfare system? I felt scared. I felt alone. I wanted my mom. I 3 Α 4 wanted her to get the help that she needed. 5 Okay. And you just mentioned that when you were 0 6 in Grade 6, after the second time you went into 7 care, you were -- your uncle from Hazelton came and got you? 8 9 Α Yes. And your family arranged for you to go and live 10 Q with them, right? 11 Yes, they did. 12 Α Okay. And was it just you or did your little 13 0 14 brother go as well? 15 Uhm, well, initially, I wanted to go back to my Α grandmother in Victoria to be with my sister, but 16 17 they asked me to come to Hazelton and give it a chance. They said, "Donalee, you don't know your 18 19 dad's family, so give us a chance." So, I went 20 with them, and within a couple of weeks, my brother was there. I didn't, I didn't want to 21 22 leave mom but I knew that we would have been gone 23 for good in the system if I didn't go with my 24 auntie. 25 Now, you testified that your mom, at certain 0

times, had tried to quit drinking and quit drugs, 1 2 uhm, and you have provided some examples of that. 3 Can you give any more examples of the attempts 4 that she made to try and quit drinking? 5 Well, I know that she went to Tsow-Tun Le Lum. I Α was quite young then. I know that she went to 6 7 Nechako Treatment Centre. I also know that she was a friend of Bill and, and I know, like, 8 9 because I went with her, I even went with her to a couple of meetings. Me and my brother would sit 10 11 there while she went. Well, were there any supports put in place for 12 Q 13 your mother, that you can remember, any consistent 14 supports that she had that would help her to cope 15 with alcohol and drugs or violence that she was experiencing? 16 17 Not very many. Not at that -- not as a child. Α You testified that in the transition home, you 18 Q 19 felt that your mother was treated differently 20 because she's aboriginal. Do you have any other examples of, of her being treated differently 21 22 because she was aboriginal? Uhm, there was a time where my brother was 23 Α seriously hurt and I did everything I can to try 24 25 to protect him, but he got seriously hurt. He was

only three and I was eight. And when she tried to 1 2 report it to the social worker, the social worker 3 wouldn't report it. She was always judged because 4 of her drinking problem, and that social worker 5 wouldn't help her file for what went wrong, and my brother didn't get the help that he needed after 6 7 it happened. Nothing happened. So there was no follow-up at all? 8 Q 9 Α Nothing. And now, looking back, what do you think the child 10 Q 11 welfare system or any other systems involved in your life at the time could have done to help? 12 13 You know, in, in this day and age, as a mother, Α 14 there are single-parent societies we can go to. 15 There are friendship centres we can go to. There are women's native centres we can go to. There 16 17 are women's centres we can go to. There are, you know, spiritual places, like, the, you know, 18 19 church, but because there is so much resentment 20 with the church, aboriginal people won't tap into that service. 21 22 But those types of services needed to be 23 there then. Those weren't there in the '80s, in 24 the '70s. And if they were just beginning, they

weren't reaching the right people at the right

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time and those are the people that fell through 1 the cracks. Those were the people that didn't 2 3 even have the skills of being able to mentally or 4 emotionally take care of themselves because they 5 weren't given those skills. They were -- they 6 went through the residential school. 7 And it breaks my heart that she didn't have the opportunity for counselling that you can get 8 9 today. And she won't have the ability to file her name as a survivor because she is still missing. 10 11 And Elsie was one who would say and put her name forward for that. 12 When you say "file her name for a survivor," are 13 Q you talking about survivor of residential school? 14 15 Α Yes. 16 And can you expand on, on why she can't file her Q 17 name? Because she's still a missing woman. 18 Α And have you tried to file her name? 19 Q 20 Uhm, yes, we are looking into that. Α And what sort of barriers have you come up 21 Q 22 against? They want a death certificate. They want a birth 23 Α certificate and, uhm, marriage certificate. 24 25 You testified this morning that you grew up in 0

various locations throughout the province, but you 1 2 also testified that you had, you lived in Prince 3 George numerous times; is that right? 4 Yes. Α 5 Did you experience any racism growing up in Prince 0 6 George? 7 Yes, we did. Α Okay. Can you provide some examples of that? 8 Q 9 Α Uhm, the types of places that we lived in, when she tried looking for a place, she would call them 10 11 and, and they would be -- they would say, "Sure, come look at the place." And when she would show 12 13 up, they would take one look at her and they would say, "No, it's taken. No, we -- it's not 14 15 available for you, " because she was a native woman. We often ended up in the neighbourhoods 16 17 that weren't very nice. They weren't well -- the -- I remember the apartment that we lived in had a 18 19 cement floor and it was a basement suite. And, 20 you know, they did the best they could to rebuild their lives, build their lives for us, but there, 21 22 there is racism. And how did that affect you growing up? 23 Q Growing up in, in the elementary school where 24 Α 25 you're the minority and it's obvious, you, you

keep to yourself and you don't say much. And you 1 2 don't, because, well, for one, you don't want to 3 get beaten up. Because, you know, my sister and I 4 and, and my brother, it's obvious, when you look 5 at us, that we're native. And my sister was beaten up as a child because of the colour of her 6 7 skin, living there. And so there was racism. Uhm, you have testified about the different 8 Q 9 systems that have affected aboriginal people and you've now just talked about racism and the child 10 11 welfare system, and I was wondering, why did you want to come here to testify today, given that we 12 are here in another system, the justice system? 13 14 Well, for one, it's an opportunity to start taking Α 15 a real look at the social and health care programs that we have and what can we do about it for our 16 17 people who are struggling with IDU, who are struggling on the Downtown Eastside, struggling as 18 19 aboriginal women, struggling as low income, 20 struggling with a health issue. Because when you fall into IDU, injection drug use, it is a 21 22 disease. It's an illness. It takes over the 23 person. And when you help a person like that, you don't just -- you know, we need better programs 24 25 for detox. You know, if you have an opportunity

to put a person in detox and they're willing to 1 2 go, it's a small window of opportunity. So, we 3 need more beds open for that. 4 And you need consistency in after-care 5 programs for people living with addiction. You 6 need follow-up and you need that support to 7 continue so they don't fall back and to relapse. They need a strong network, and when you look at 8 9 social programs and you look at health care programs like that, then you are building a 10 11 network of support for that individual to rebuild their life. And it's not going to go away. And 12 13 you can't say that the residential school was 14 then, this is now. No, it's here, it's now and 15 it's going to continue because it is multigenerational. And as individuals, it's our 16 17 responsibility for that self-care, but we need to do it with a good support network. 18 19 Thank you for your very honest and sincere Q 20 testimony. Those are my questions. 21 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. 22 MR. GRATL: Mr. Commissioner, perhaps now is a good place for a short break. 23 24 THE COMMISSIONER: All right.

THE REGISTRAR: The hearing will now recess for 15 minutes.

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(PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED AT 3:02 P.M.) 1 2 (PROCEEEDINGS RESUMED AT 3:20 P.M.) 3 THE REGISTRAR: Order. This hearing is now resumed. 4 MR. GRATL: Yes, Mr. Commissioner. I just have a few brief questions for you. I just 5 0 6 want to get a --7 THE REGISTRAR: Name and --MR. GRATL: My name is Jason Gratl and I am independent counsel 8 9 for affected individuals and organizations within the Downtown Eastside, so primarily sex workers 10 11 and drug users, but I'm also, of course, acting on behalf of and trying to serve the interests of 12 people who are alcoholics and chronic alcoholics 13 14 and suffer from mental illnesses, including 15 depression. CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. GRATL: 16 17 I want, I want to try to get a sense of the, of Q the members of your family who went to speak with 18 19 Morris Bates at the Vancouver Police Native 20 Liaison Society office. I guess that's what it was called. Did you know it was, that was the 21 22 formal name, was Vancouver Police Native Liaison Society? 23 I think so. 24 Α 25 Okay. And was it only Morris Bates that members 0

1		of your family spoke to, or that you recall
2		members of your family dealing with?
3	А	Uhm, I don't know, but mainly it was him. I know
4		that my Grandma Dora spoke with him. I know that
5		my father spoke with him. I spoke with him. Uhm,
6		my aunt, my Aunt Cathy spoke with him, and I think
7		even my sister spoke with him.
8	Q	And I suppose your Uncle Russell as well?
9	А	Yes.
10	Q	And then also your Uncle John Paul?
11	А	Yes.
12	Q	And all of those members of your family, at one
13		point or another, spoke with Morris Bates
14		directly?
15	А	Yes.
16	Q	Either in person or over the telephone?
17	А	Yes.
18	Q	And I take it within a two-year period, from 1992
19		to 1994?
20	А	Yes.
21	Q	And all of you, the way you got to Morris Bates,
22		was by calling the Vancouver Police Department
23		general number?
24	A	Yes. The first time I called in, that's how I, I
25		was connected with him.

1	Q	Okay. So, you called the general Vancouver Police
2		Department number and then you spoke to someone?
3	А	I think so, yes.
4	Q	What I am sort of I want to find out more about
5		how you came to be dispatched over to Morris
6		Bates. Did the person you speak to ask you
7		whether you were First Nations or aboriginal or
8		native?
9	А	Uh, I can't remember.
10	Q	Okay.
11	А	Yeah.
12	Q	Well, if you, if you do remember it while you are
13		still on the stand,
14	А	Well, my father knew him, too. So, uhm, because
15		Morris and my father knew each other and he knew
16		that Morris worked in the Downtown Eastside,
17		that's how I think our family came to know him,
18		because my dad knew him when they were younger.
19	Q	All right. Then so, so it wasn't so, you would
20		have called a general number and then asked for
21		Morris Bates? It wasn't you calling the general
22		number?
23	А	They just knew to get ahold of Morris, because
24		they knew Morris worked downtown. Like, my father
25		knew. That's how I think

All right. So, it wasn't, that wasn't a, sort of 1 0 2 a racialized choice to send you to the Native 3 Liaison Society, rather than --4 Well, the second time I tried to call through, I Α 5 did call into the general office and then I was 6 reconnected with him again, regardless. 7 Q Okay. And I, I said, "Well, I have talked to him, so 8 Α 9 what I need is the missing persons report," and that's about the time I wrote the letter. Because 10 11 my stepmother said to me, "This is too long for your mom to be missing, Donalee. Write the 12 letter." And it was addressed -- I can't remember 13 14 the exact date, but it, uhm, it was during that 15 time that I wrote the letter and, uhm, I asked, "Where is that letter?" And I even asked with the 16 17 Missing Women's Task Force, when they came to my house in Hazelton, I said, "Where's the letter?" 18 19 And they said, "We'll locate it for you," but they 20 never got back to me. So that, so that the second, the second time you 21 Q 22 called, you asked to, to speak with the Missing Persons Department rather than the native liaison 23 24 officer? 25 Yes, ves. Α

1	Q	And what did they say when you asked specifically
2		to speak with the Missing Persons Unit?
3	А	They said that Morris was the contact person for
4		missing aboriginal women, so I or, like,
5		missing native people. So, I dealt with him. He
6		was the native liaison person, so they wanted me
7		to deal with him.
8	Q	And they didn't want you to deal with the Missing
9		Persons Unit?
10	А	They said, "Start with him."
11	Q	All right.
12	А	Yes.
13	Q	So, many of your family members dealt with Morris
14		Bates and maybe another person or, or more than
15		one other person at the native, the Vancouver
16		Police Native Liaison Society office, exclusively?
17	А	Yes.
18	Q	Okay. And then, at some point, someone in the
19		police service somewhere called a member of your
20		family to let you know that they thought they had
21		located your mom?
22	A	Yes.
23	Q	Do you remember exactly who it was who called?
24	А	No, I don't, but they, they contacted my Uncle
25		Russell.

1	Q	Okay. So, someone called, contacted your Uncle
2		Russell
3	А	Yes.
4	Q	and said
5	А	That they had seen her.
6	Q	That someone had seen her?
7	А	Yeah.
8	Q	Or that they had seen her?
9	А	Yeah.
10	Q	Do you know which one that either had it been
11		an officer who had seen her or another individual
12		who had seen her, a civilian?
13	А	It was another individual.
14	Q	All right.
15	А	It wasn't the actual police person. It was an
16		individual who had seen her.
17	Q	And on the basis, on the strength of that
18		representation, your Uncle Russell and your Uncle
19		John Paul travelled from Port Alberni all the way
20		to Vancouver?
21	А	Yes. I think they did, yes.
22	Q	And they, they went to Oppenheimer Park to look
23		for your mom?
24	А	I think so, yes.
25	Q	And they didn't find your mom, of course?

1	А	No.
2	Q	At that point, they returned to the Vancouver
3		Police Native Liaison Society office and told
4		Morris Bates that they couldn't find her? They
5		didn't find your mom in Oppenheimer Park?
6	А	No, they didn't.
7	Q	Or at Sunset Hotel?
8	А	No, they didn't.
9	Q	And, and specifically, they but they did return
10		to the office and tell that to Morris Bates, that
11		they didn't find her?
12	A	Yeah.
13	Q	And to your knowledge, was anything done after
14		that by the Vancouver Police Department?
15	A	I don't think so.
16	Q	Or by the Vancouver Police Native Liaison Society?
17	А	No.
18	Q	And at that point, I take it that your,
19		effectively, your family gave up on the Vancouver
20		Police Department?
21	А	Yeah, they did. We, that's when we started doing
22		our own searches again. Uhm, that's when I shared
23		with you that my sister lived with my Aunt Ann,
24		and I came even to look with my boyfriend at the
25		time and Ann-Marie and her boyfriend at the time,

D.R. Sebastian (for the Families)

Cross-exam by Mr. Gratl

Cross-exam by Ms. Livingston

we, we all went down there to look for mom, and we 1 2 really tried, you know. You, you just get so 3 hopeful. You think, like, "Maybe we'll find her. 4 Maybe we'll find her in this bar," or "Maybe 5 somebody saw her," or "Maybe if we ask this person, they will know where she is." And even if 6 7 she's in some dark, dungy, old hotel room in a single room, I'll go in there and I'll get her. 8 But we never found her. 9 I just want to thank you for sharing with us and I 10 Q 11 hope that what you have told us will assist us in making sure that this never happens again. 12 THE COMMISSIONER: Any further -- oh, yes, Mr. Hern? 13 MR. GRATL: Mr. Commissioner, just before I stop. 14 15 Is there something else that you wish to share? 16 Α No, I'm fine. MR. HERN: Ms. Livingston may have some questions. 17 MS. LIVINGSTON: Ann Livingston, Vancouver Area Network of Drug 18 19 Users. 20 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes. CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. LIVINGSTON: 21 22 Just to, uhm, you know, there is a lot of stuff that you have explained about your background and 23 24 your mother's background and a lot of the pain 25 that you went through in life. Would you say

that, uhm, the core of your outrage and at the 1 2 commission at being at this, is for the reluctance 3 of the Vancouver Police Department to take a 4 missing persons report on your mother? 5 Yeah, I think it's quite disturbing that so many Α 6 of my mom's family came forward, because there was 7 myself, my sister, uhm, my, my Grandma Mary and my Grandma Dora, my Uncle John Paul, my Uncle Russell 8 and other family members, you know, who, who went 9 to the police and asked for those reports to go 10 11 through. And, you know, it should have happened in October of '92 when we wanted it to. And I 12 don't see anything until '94. And I don't see the 13 14 Missing Women's Task Force until Pickton is picked 15 up in 2001. And why, all of a sudden, are you interested 16 17 in my mother now when, when all of that was occurring and everything was in the media? Why 18 19 weren't you looking for her in '94, in '93 and '92 20 when there was so many family members asking for 21 help? 22 Q So, you think that you would be less angry and less outraged if you would have been able to get a 23 24 report in, in a timely manner and had the 25 impression or evidence that someone had taken

notes and --1 2 Yes. Α 3 -- investigated your mother's disappearance? Q 4 And also I think that if it was in a different Α neighourhood, it probably would have been looked 5 6 at a lot faster, but because it was the Downtown 7 Eastside, it wasn't. Thank you. 8 Q 9 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes. MR. HERN: Mr. Commissioner, Sean Hern, counsel for the 10 11 Vancouver Police Department and the Vancouver Police Board. 12 And Ms. Sebastian, I just want to say on 13 14 behalf of the Department and the Board, that thank 15 you for coming and sharing your experiences with us, and to say that, on behalf of my clients, I'm 16 sorry that -- sorry for your loss and sorry that 17 more wasn't done when you and your family reached 18 19 out for help to the, the Department and the 20 Liaison Society. You've come here for answers and I hope, as 21 22 the course of this inquiry unfolds, that you will get some of those answers. There is information 23 that different witnesses will speak to about what 24 25 went on in terms of their role and, and the

1	relationship between the Liaison Society and the
2	Department, those kind of things. But I hope
3	that, over the course of the inquiry, that some of
4	those answers are provided to you. Thank you for
5	coming.
6	THE COMMISSIONER: Any, any further questions? All right, Ms.
7	Sebastian, yes, you want to say something else?
8	THE WITNESS: Another thing I'm wondering about is, you know,
9	once Pickton was found and, and charged for the
10	few that went through the court, and he was
11	convicted, why is my mother's missing persons case
12	it seems like it's gone stagnant. I want to
13	know what happened to my mom. Just because he was
14	found, it seemed like they just stopped looking
15	for her. I, I'm, I need to know. My sister needs
16	to know. My brother needs to know. We need
17	closure. We would like to have her found. We
18	want to know what happened. Just because he was
19	found, doesn't mean that her case has to stop.
20	Her case needs to be solved.
21	THE COMMISSIONER: I don't know if I don't know who can give
22	those answers. We expect that we will hear from,
23	from a lot of police officers and maybe they're in
24	a position to they will be in a position to
25	tell us what happened to the investigation. And

as I understand it, your question here and your concern here is, why did the investigation come to a stop and why did they stop looking for your mother. So, I think the only people that can answer that will be the, will be the police, and perhaps they will be able to give -- shed some light onto that. That's why we're here. And this is an investigation into missing women and, in particular, missing women in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. That's the purpose of this, one of the purposes of this commission of inquiry. Okay.

I want to sincerely thank you for coming here and sharing your heart-wrenching story with us.

It, it helps us to know what you have gone through. It helps us to know what your family has gone through. And I think I can speak on behalf of everyone here, we admire you and the other women who have come here, for your courage in coming forward and telling us what happened and the terrible tragedy that took place in your life.

As I said yesterday at the outset, that if things need to be changed, if change is going to come, it will only come from people like yourself who will come here and tell us about what happened to you and how can we improve the system. How can

1	we improve it so it becomes more accountable to
2	all of us. And I just want you to know that your
3	attendance here is, is very much appreciated.
4	Yes?
5	JAN BRONGERS: Thank you, Mr. Commissioner. My name is Jan
6	Brongers. I am counsel for the RCMP. And Ms.
7	Sebastian, I have spoken with my client during the
8	break and we are going to make efforts to contact
9	your counsel directly to provide you with an
10	update on the status of your investigation.
11	THE WITNESS: Okay, thank you very much. Thank you. I mean
12	it.
	MR. BRONGERS: You're welcome.
13	MR. BRONGERS: 100 le Welcome.
13 14	THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.
14	THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.
14 15	THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. (WITNESS EXCUSED)
14 15 16	THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. (WITNESS EXCUSED) THE COMMISSIONER: Do you, do you want to start now or do you
14 15 16 17	THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. (WITNESS EXCUSED) THE COMMISSIONER: Do you, do you want to start now or do you want to wait until tomorrow morning?
14 15 16 17 18	THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. (WITNESS EXCUSED) THE COMMISSIONER: Do you, do you want to start now or do you want to wait until tomorrow morning? MR. CHANTLER: Commissioner, Neil Chantler. I am happy to use
14 15 16 17 18	THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. (WITNESS EXCUSED) THE COMMISSIONER: Do you, do you want to start now or do you want to wait until tomorrow morning? MR. CHANTLER: Commissioner, Neil Chantler. I am happy to use up the balance of the day, beginning with the next
14 15 16 17 18 19	THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. (WITNESS EXCUSED) THE COMMISSIONER: Do you, do you want to start now or do you want to wait until tomorrow morning? MR. CHANTLER: Commissioner, Neil Chantler. I am happy to use up the balance of the day, beginning with the next witness. If that suits you, we can have her
14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21	THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. (WITNESS EXCUSED) THE COMMISSIONER: Do you, do you want to start now or do you want to wait until tomorrow morning? MR. CHANTLER: Commissioner, Neil Chantler. I am happy to use up the balance of the day, beginning with the next witness. If that suits you, we can have her introduce herself and, and her case, if you wish.
14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. (WITNESS EXCUSED) THE COMMISSIONER: Do you, do you want to start now or do you want to wait until tomorrow morning? MR. CHANTLER: Commissioner, Neil Chantler. I am happy to use up the balance of the day, beginning with the next witness. If that suits you, we can have her introduce herself and, and her case, if you wish. I am in your hands.

1	MR.	CHANTLER: Absolutely.
2	THE	COMMISSIONER: All right, thank you.
3	THE	REGISTRAR: The hearing is now adjourned until 10 o'clock
4		in the morning.
5		(PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED AT 3:39 P.M.)
6		I hereby certify the foregoing
7		to be a true and accurate
8		transcription of the proceedings
9		herein to the best of my skill
10		and ability.
11		
12		
13		
14		Gabriele Heise, RPR
15		Official Reporter, BCSRA No. 399
16		Realtime Certified Reporter
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EXHIBITS

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