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Vancouver, BC

April 17, 2012

(PROCEEDINGS RECOMMENCED AT 9:30 A.M.)

THE REGISTRAR: Order. The hearing is now resumed.

SANDRA GAGNON: Resumed

MS. HUNT: Good morning, Mr. Commissioner. Elizabeth Hunt,
counsel for the aboriginal interest.

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. HUNT:

Q Good morning, Sandra.

A Good morning.

Q I just wanted to ask you some more about your twin
brother. And you said that your brother was
killed by a police officer driving his car. Can
you tell us a little bit more about that?

A Well, I was really frustrated when it happened,
and frustrated when we had to have another
inquiry, but later on as I thought about it -- it
was an accident, and I thought about what the
police officer must have went through, and I
actually was able to find out to get a hold of him
and I spoke to him, and I told him that I forgave
him because I have a strong faith and I know I'm
going to see my twin brother again in the new
system, and that's what helped me to be able to do
that.

1 Q The forgiveness that you said you gave this police
2 officer, was that an informal process or was that
3 a formal process?

4 A I spoke to him on the phone.

5 Q And you called him?

6 A Yeah. Yeah, we talked a few times on the phone,
7 yeah, and I settled it. And I feel relieved,
8 because I'm not a bitter person, I'm not a hateful
9 person, and I look through -- I examine things,
10 you know, and I think of what the creator would be
11 wanting me to do. And I just, you know, have a
12 strong faith, and that's all I can say.

13 Q So you felt that the process to have -- do you
14 feel the process to have, in this process you're
15 in now, to have the police officers that you were
16 dealing with as well as the VPD and you and your
17 family involved in a process that would help with
18 the healing?

19 A Sorry, about that. What did you say?

20 Q I'm just asking about the healing of this process.
21 There's this inquiry here, but do you feel that
22 the actual conversations and the forgiveness that
23 you experienced with that other situation would be
24 helpful in this situation? I know you received an
25 apology from the Vancouver Police Department

1 through their counsel, but --

2 A Yeah. Well, like I said I look through every
3 situation and stuff like that, but like I said it
4 was really uncalled for with what some of the
5 police officers said about the missing women. For
6 example, one of them said that the women were ugly
7 anyway. And that was really tough for me, and
8 maybe some day I'll come to terms with that, but
9 I've got to go bit by bit. And I just find it
10 difficult that we have to come to this to have a
11 public inquiry because of -- because of the police
12 not doing anything right from the beginning.

13 Q I just wanted to ask you about Detective Constable
14 Shenher. There was some positive experiences and
15 there was also some negative experiences during
16 the investigation?

17 A Yeah. Actually Lori Shenher called me this
18 morning and she really did an experience to me
19 that was very touching. She talked to me about
20 her baby having leukemia, and her baby is okay
21 now, and the baby is doing fine and she said, "You
22 know what, Sandra, when I went through the stuff I
23 thought about you on everything that you've been
24 through and how strong you are," and she said
25 that's what helped her to get through her stuff.

1 Q So the sharing between the Vancouver Police
2 Department officer and you and just being two
3 people supporting each other in events that you
4 experienced in your lives has been a positive
5 experience?

6 A Yeah, it has been with some of the police
7 officers. I got a call this morning too from
8 Wayne Clary, and he was also encouraging to me.

9 Q Did Detective Constable Shenher mention to you
10 that she had dedicated a page to your sister in
11 her manuscript?

12 A No, she didn't, but I heard about that, and I
13 think that's really, really something. And I
14 don't realize how my story helps people to get
15 through their life, because it seems like it's a
16 story of my life, you know, like always losing
17 someone or somebody is dying. Like right now
18 there's still health problems in my family where I
19 worry about one of my nieces because she's really
20 sick. But again I pray all the time, and I pray
21 before I come to court for the wisdom to know what
22 to say and, you know, but at the same time I have
23 righteous anger toward the police that did not
24 take it seriously right from the beginning. Like
25 there's a lot of stuff that happened that they

1 should have done from all the news I've heard.

2 Q Just changing back to your personal experiences
3 that relate to the criminal justice system, have
4 you been the victim of crimes and dealt with the
5 criminal justice system over your life?

6 A Yeah, I have three times. Probably three times
7 I've gone to court because I was sexually
8 assaulted when I was 16 years old, and I was held
9 in the middle of nowhere for hours and hours, and
10 that guy got away with it. And it's because I
11 didn't remember a lot of stuff because I was
12 drinking at that time, and it happened to me a
13 couple of times where nothing happened to these
14 guys where I went to court a couple of times over
15 rapes. And so another time when I was on my own I
16 was really young too, and I was hitchhiking and I
17 got gang raped by three white men.

18 Q Were those men charged?

19 A No, I didn't want to go to the police because I
20 didn't want to go through court again because it's
21 ugly. And I feel angry because those guys got
22 away with it. There was three -- three white men
23 on Vancouver Island and they -- they raped me over
24 and over, and they were taking pictures of me and
25 laughing each time they took turns. And those

1 guys, you know, like I wish that something would
2 have been done about that because I really hate
3 those guys. And I lived with that for a long
4 time, but I'm learning how to keep my head up
5 because I'm not going to let those men do what
6 they done to me. And, you know, I have really
7 good friends, I have loving, supportive friends,
8 but stuff like this I don't like to go to court
9 because -- with the justice system because these
10 men get away with it all because you're drinking
11 or because you don't remember anything, and yet I
12 feel angry still to this day because those guys
13 done what they done to me. And I always thought
14 to myself, you know, I pray that one day someone
15 will speak up and I wish they'd get charged and
16 answer to what they done to me.

17 Q During the investigation dealing with your sister
18 was there support systems available for you and
19 your family?

20 A I'm sorry, what did you say?

21 Q During the investigation and looking for your
22 sister were there counselling and support systems
23 available to you?

24 A Yeah, I used to go see a counsellor here in
25 Vancouver. I was in Vancouver for a couple of

1 years. And right now I'm seeing a really fine
2 counsellor, she helps with people who have been
3 traumatized over and over in their life and people
4 who have post-traumatic stress disorder, which I
5 have. I went to the Internet to get help because
6 I want to be healthy. Like I said I'm a grandma,
7 and I want to live my life. I'm going to be
8 really glad when this is all over, and I really
9 hope and pray that there will be some kind of
10 justice because there wouldn't be so many women
11 that went missing if something was done in the
12 beginning.

13 Q The counselling that you just mentioned you said
14 you found through the Internet, was there a
15 liaison or somebody there between the Vancouver
16 Police Department and yourself during any part of
17 the investigation?

18 A I went to native liaison for a while, but I wanted
19 to get extensive counselling, like what I'm doing
20 right now.

21 Q I just want to turn to the beginning of your
22 testimony yesterday where you started talking
23 about your family in Kingcome Inlet.

24 A Yeah.

25 Q And I just wanted to ask you for your view. That

1 was a time prior to not much contact with this
2 civilization as we know it now.

3 A Yeah.

4 Q And I just wanted to ask you why it was a positive
5 memory and if you can tell us more about that?

6 A Yeah, yesterday I said that I didn't remember a
7 lot of my childhood, but I forgot about when we
8 were in Kingcome Inlet it was really old
9 fashioned. It was old fashioned there. It was
10 neat. I remember the fond memories of my mother
11 always knitting, and I'd be helping her with the
12 balls of wool and helping her to get the wool
13 together. And when I came home -- when we came
14 home from school my mom would always have baking
15 done. And my dad -- when we were little kids we
16 had the house with stilts and my dad made swings
17 for us under the house. And what I loved about my
18 dad is he was so loving and so supportive. One
19 thing I remember as a little girl is we had a
20 strawberry patch outside. And everything was so
21 good then. Like it was -- it was peaceful when my
22 dad was alive. And I went to Kingcome Inlet
23 probably about two years ago after maybe 35, 40
24 years ago and I started thinking about the fond
25 memories. I try to not to think about the bad

1 memories after my dad died, because I'm learning
2 to face and go home and have a good time. That's
3 what I do when I go to Alert Bay too. Like I only
4 went home for funerals for quite a while, and I
5 told myself I'm going to start learning to go home
6 and enjoy my home again and enjoy the scenery.
7 Like when I went to Alert Bay I took a bunch of
8 pictures. And I'm just learning to cope with all
9 the situations that I've been through in my life.

10 MS. HUNT: Thank you. I don't have any more questions,
11 Mr. Commissioner.

12 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Ms. Hunt.

13 MR. DICKSON: Mr. Commissioner, Ms. Gagnon, Tim Dickson for the
14 Vancouver Police Department. And, Ms. Gagnon, I
15 want to express the department's sympathies for
16 your loss and its regrets --

17 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

18 MR. DICKSON: -- for not catching Pickton sooner, and for not
19 being able to determine what happened to Janet.

20 THE WITNESS: Thanks.

21 MR. DICKSON: I have just a few questions for you.

22 THE WITNESS: All right.

23 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. DICKSON:**

24 Q You spoke about Lori Shenher, and you indeed spoke
25 about your call with her this morning?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And it seemed clear from your testimony that you
3 felt that she helped you a great deal searching
4 for Janet?

5 A Yeah, she did. I consider her my friend. A
6 friend, yeah.

7 Q She provided -- among other things she provided
8 emotional support?

9 A She did.

10 Q And I saw in the file that she wrote a letter to
11 Janet's daughter Deborah?

12 A Yes.

13 Q And it seemed like an attempt to try and help
14 Deborah cope with the situation by telling her
15 what was being done to search for Janet?

16 A Yes, because Deborah was just a little girl when
17 her mom went missing, and I told Lori Shenher
18 about Deborah, and I don't remember with what it
19 was, but it was really, really hard for Deborah,
20 for my niece, and Lori wrote that letter.

21 Q And it's fair to say, I think, that Lori was very
22 dedicated to searching for Janet?

23 A Yeah, she done -- she done a lot. Like I said too
24 though I don't remember a lot of stuff with all
25 the police what they've done because I have met so

1 many police officers since Janet went missing.

2 Like I can't tell you how many because they kept

3 changing.

4 Q Yes. I do want to ask you a little bit about the
5 investigation before Lori Shenher took it over.

6 A Yeah.

7 Q It seems she took it over in 1998 at some point,
8 at least by August of 1998 from my review of the
9 file. Would that strike you as correct or --

10 A I don't remember --

11 Q Yes.

12 A -- what date.

13 Q Before then it was mainly Detective Steinbach who
14 had conduct of the investigation. Do you recall
15 that?

16 A There was Steinbach, there was Howlett.

17 Q Yes.

18 A I've forgotten who the others were, but like you
19 said there was quite a few of them.

20 Q Yes, I saw Steinbach having -- when I looked at
21 the file I saw Steinbach having conduct quite a
22 lot, and I saw Howlett coming in just before Lori
23 Shenher took it over.

24 A Yeah.

25 Q And you said yesterday you had quite a lot of

1 contact with Detective Steinbach when he was
2 running the file?

3 A Yeah. Well, I kept phoning in with information
4 that I got.

5 Q Yes.

6 A And, yeah, I kept in contact with all of them
7 actually because I wanted to find answers and I --
8 even if it was a small detail I called him just in
9 case anything came out of it.

10 Q Yes. You reported Janet missing at the end of
11 June 1997?

12 A Yeah.

13 Q And I saw in July of that same year that you and
14 the VPD spoke on eight different dates, and
15 sometimes it was more than once a day, and you met
16 with them in person a couple of times?

17 A Well, actually my sister Dorothy and I did.

18 Q Yes.

19 A We went down to the police department and they
20 talked to my sister Dot and I, and yeah, we told
21 them about Janet, that it wasn't like her to go
22 missing.

23 Q Yes. And I saw from looking at the file that
24 after July 1997 there remains quite a lot of
25 contact between you and the VPD talking many times

1 a month. Is that fair?

2 A Yeah, because I wanted to find Janet.

3 Q Yes. Detective Steinbach searched Janet's room at
4 the Holburn Rooms on July 17th, 1997, and you
5 spoke about that yesterday?

6 A Yeah.

7 Q And I note you saying you felt that should have
8 been done earlier. And you spoke as well that you
9 had been to Janet's room before he went and
10 searched it. And I saw from the file that you
11 spoke with Detective Steinbach on July 4th, 7th,
12 9th, 15th and 16th, and then he searched it on the
13 17th?

14 A I don't remember the dates, and I don't remember
15 the chronology of it all. I really don't.

16 Q No, I understand that. And I just want to ask you
17 do you recall speaking with him or do you think
18 that you would have spoken with him about what you
19 saw in Janet's room before he went and searched
20 it?

21 A We talked about it.

22 Q Yes. And I remember you were saying that you were
23 worried that Janet might be -- might have taken
24 her life?

25 A Yeah.

1 Q And I take it you went there and you saw that was
2 not the case, she was not in the room, and you
3 would have told Detective Steinbach that I
4 imagine?

5 A Probably. I don't remember. I don't remember a
6 lot of details to be honest with you, but my whole
7 thing was I wanted to make sure that Janet wasn't
8 dead in her room because I thought maybe she took
9 her life.

10 Q Yes.

11 A And I also was worried because I thought that John
12 Gary Silvey might have taken her because he got
13 out of jail after sexually assaulting her. He was
14 charged for aggravated assault. So there are a
15 couple of avenues that I thought might have
16 happened to Janet when she went missing.

17 Q Yes, I saw when I looked at the file that there
18 were three persons of interest who were discussed
19 in the file and they were interviewed and
20 investigated.

21 A M'hm.

22 Q And I don't have names for them, they are
23 redacted, they only have numbers, but I saw three
24 different persons of interest. Do you recall -- I
25 mean, is that sort of consistent with your

1 recollection?

2 A Yeah, I do. I don't remember what officer it was,
3 but they talked to the person who sexually
4 assaulted Janet, the one that just got out of
5 jail, and they got a probation officer -- that
6 guy's probation officer to go speak to him, and he
7 passed the lie detector test, and they said to me
8 that he wasn't responsible for her disappearance.

9 Q I saw that there were a number of other witnesses
10 that Detective Steinbach and Howlett spoke to
11 before Lori Shenher took over the investigation.
12 There was, I just have initials for them, CP and
13 SB, JB and GB. The file just has the initials in
14 them.

15 A Yeah.

16 Q But I take it you were -- you and the man you
17 referred to as Louie --

18 A Yeah.

19 Q -- were providing tips to the VPD and they were
20 going and interviewing these witnesses?

21 A They interviewed -- yeah, they interviewed Louie.
22 I told them I didn't trust Louie because he was an
23 older man and he took advantage of my sister, and
24 he was really obsessed with her, and I was worried
25 about him too because I couldn't stand him.

1 Q Yes. Yes, I saw that. And I saw as well that
2 right after -- early on in the file Detective
3 Steinbach talked to a number of doctors about
4 Janet, to a reverend, and her dentist and the
5 coroner's office and the welfare office. Do you
6 recall those inquiries being made?

7 A No, I don't, because I was the one that kept
8 phoning the human resources office and asking them
9 if Janet picked up her cheque.

10 Q Yes.

11 A And I don't remember getting any information about
12 that, but I do know that I was the one who kept
13 phoning human resources, and I was the one who
14 went to the bank to see if Janet had been there to
15 cash any cheques, and they just told me that she
16 still had money in the bank. Yeah, they told me
17 that she had \$115 in the bank, and I knew for sure
18 something was wrong. I done a lot of my searching
19 myself too.

20 MR. DICKSON: Yes. Yes, I think that's very clear. Again, Ms.
21 Gagnon, thank you very much for coming and
22 providing your evidence.

23 THE WITNESS: You're welcome.

24 THE COMMISSIONER: Any further questions? Thank you. Ms.
25 Gagnon, I want to express my sincere appreciation

1 for you coming here and telling us what happened
2 to you. The sorrow that you have experienced
3 throughout your life and what happened to Janet is
4 something that is heart wrenching.

5 THE WITNESS: Yes.

6 THE COMMISSIONER: And I just want to commend you and thank you
7 for your courage in coming here and talking about
8 this. It is important that we learn about what
9 happened to you.

10 THE WITNESS: Yes.

11 THE COMMISSIONER: If we are going to improve our system we
12 need to hear from you and from other family
13 members who have experienced firsthand these
14 tragedies. And I also want to thank you for the
15 other work that you're doing across the country
16 where you've gone and spoken, have talked about
17 these things and how important they are, and
18 you're very courageous.

19 THE WITNESS: Thank you very much.

20 THE COMMISSIONER: Your testimony here and what you've had to
21 say to all of us I can say assure you, along with
22 other family members, affects all of us, and if
23 we're going to have any changes made we do need to
24 hear from you.

25 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

1 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you again for coming here.

2 THE WITNESS: Yeah, and I appreciate that. Thanks. And I just
3 hope that by our testimonies that something will
4 come out of this because we didn't have to go
5 through all this. It's been really, really tough.
6 But I'm actually glad that I did come in to
7 testify, because Janet was my sister and she was
8 my best friend. And like I said I fought for
9 Janet and I fought for other women because so much
10 things is happening -- happened to us First
11 Nations women. But at the same time, you know, I
12 have my strong faith and I keep my head up and,
13 you know, I --

14 THE COMMISSIONER: With the personal tragedies you've
15 experienced in your own life, there were eleven
16 siblings and only three of you are now alive, and
17 you told us about your son and your brother, and
18 it's amazing to me what you're doing and how
19 you've given encouragement to everybody around
20 you, so thank you very much.

21 THE WITNESS: Thank you. And my credit goes to the creator.

22 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

23 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

24 **(WITNESS EXCUSED)**

25 THE COMMISSIONER: Mr. Chantler.

1 MR. CHANTLER: Thank you, Mr. Commissioner. Neil Chandler,
2 counsel for the families. I'd like to call the
3 next witness please, Ms. Marilyn Renter.

4 THE REGISTRAR: Good morning. Would you just turn on your
5 microphone, please.

6 **MARILYN RENTER: Affirmed**

7 THE REGISTRAR: Would you state your name, please?

8 THE WITNESS: Marilyn Renter.

9 THE REGISTRAR: And how do you spell your last name?

10 THE WITNESS: R-e-n-t-e-r.

11 THE REGISTRAR: Thank you. Counsel.

12 THE COMMISSIONER: Okay. Could you spell it for me again,
13 please?

14 THE WITNESS: R-e-n-t-e-r.

15 THE COMMISSIONER: All right.

16 MR. CHANTLER: Mr. Commissioner, I've handed up a brief that
17 contains a number of documents I may refer to
18 dealing with three witnesses I intend to call
19 today.

20 THE COMMISSIONER: All right.

21 MR. CHANTLER: And I've also handed up a photo. If a copy of
22 each could please be given to the witness.

23 **EXAMINATION IN CHIEF BY MR. CHANTLER:**

24 Q Thank you, Ms. Renter, for being here today.

25 A You're welcome.

1 Q You are the stepmother of Cindy Feliks?

2 A Yes, I am.

3 Q And Cindy disappeared from the Downtown Eastside
4 in the fall of 1997?

5 A As far as we know, yes.

6 Q Can you confirm for us that Cindy is one of the
7 women on the missing person poster to your left?
8 And the registrar will give you a pointer.

9 A That's her right there.

10 Q Okay. Thank you. And I have provided you with a
11 photograph. Can you identify that that is in fact
12 Cindy Feliks?

13 A That's my girl, yes.

14 Q And have you seen that photograph before?

15 A Yes, I have.

16 Q And can you tell us anything about that photo,
17 when it might have been taken?

18 A That photo was taken probably three years after
19 her daughter was born, which Theresa was born in
20 '77, so it would be around 1980, 1981.

21 Q Will you show the camera and the gallery the
22 picture. Now, Cindy's DNA was found on Robert
23 Pickton's property; is that correct?

24 A Yes, it was.

25 Q And Robert Pickton was charged with Cindy's murder

1 until that charge was stayed on August 4th, 2010;
2 correct?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Now, before I ask you a bit about Cindy I'd like
5 to ask you a few questions about yourself.

6 A All right. Not too personal.

7 Q No. You were born in Winnipeg?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And that's October 10th, 1935?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And you met Cindy's father, Don Feliks, in
12 Detroit, Michigan?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And you married in 1960?

15 A Yes.

16 Q You adopted his four children?

17 A Yes, I did.

18 Q Cindy being one of those?

19 A M'hm.

20 Q And you essentially cared for those children
21 thereafter?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Cindy was about five when you met Don?

24 A Yes, she was.

25 Q You and your husband Don and the children moved

1 from Detroit to Vancouver shortly after your
2 marriage?

3 A Yes. No, we were married actually in Vancouver.

4 Q All right. That was about 1960 --

5 A Yeah.

6 Q -- you moved to Vancouver. And over the next few
7 years you raised the kids in Kitsilano, then
8 Surrey, and you moved back to the Dunbar area?

9 A Yes, I did.

10 Q And you presently live in Rosedale?

11 A Yes, I do.

12 Q That's in BC. And whereabouts is that?

13 A It's just outside Chilliwack. It's a small
14 community.

15 Q You're now retired?

16 A Yes, I am.

17 Q You had a lengthy career?

18 A Yes, I did.

19 Q Will you tell us about that?

20 A The last 25 years I worked for the Department of
21 Fisheries and Oceans, which is the federal
22 government, and I retired in 2000.

23 Q Okay. And you travelled to Vancouver to
24 participate in this inquiry today?

25 A I travelled from Rosedale, yes.

1 Q Yes, to Vancouver?

2 A To Vancouver.

3 Q Now, Cindy was born December 12th, 1955 in
4 Detroit, Michigan?

5 A 1954.

6 Q '54?

7 A Yes.

8 Q She was one of the four children of Don Feliks?

9 A Yes.

10 Q What was Cindy like as a young girl after you met
11 her?

12 A Well, any of my girls that I raised I raised them
13 to stand up for themselves and not to let anybody
14 walk on them, so Cindy was very strong headed,
15 strong willed. She was very, I guess you could
16 say, tough. She wouldn't let anyone walk on her.
17 And when she went into sports in high school, she
18 was very fond of swimming, and became quite good
19 at it. And just to make a little story short.
20 She was swimming for the school in meets, and she
21 was so good she was beating all the competition so
22 they upped her one level, and of course she wasn't
23 winning then and she dropped out. But that was
24 Cindy. And like I said very strong headed. Very
25 pleasant lady, girl growing up. Typical teenager.

1 She loved her friends, had a lot of friends, was
2 very popular. And it's unfortunately we had to
3 move to a few schools before, but she always fit
4 in with the school so there was no problem there.
5 And that's about it, she was a typical girl.

6 Q Is it fair to say that things turned a little bit
7 for the worse for Cindy in her teenage years?

8 A Yes. When she got to be 13, 14, 15 she had -- oh,
9 but by this time Don and I had split up and he had
10 moved to Florida. And he was with a boyfriend,
11 and that's the reason why we split up because I
12 found out he was bisexual, and he wouldn't give up
13 his boyfriend, so that was it. And she started
14 asking about him, wanted to know where he was. I
15 did not know where in Florida he was, but somehow
16 she found out, and she ran away and went down
17 there. They sent her the fare. When she went
18 down there she told me that her father met her at
19 the airport with a mickey of booze and they were
20 drinking, and he also introduced her to marijuana,
21 to drugs. And I think the clincher was when he
22 wanted her to sleep with him, because according to
23 him that's what fathers and daughters do to get to
24 know each other. And about a day after that
25 happened he went a little berserk where he was

1 living with a gun and started shooting his gun
2 around, and she called me in tears and frantic,
3 and I sent her the money down to come back. When
4 she came back she was entirely different, and ran
5 away a lot, got involved in drugs, and needless to
6 say I'm pretty sure that's what started it all.

7 Q In 1976 Cindy married?

8 A Yes.

9 Q A man named Terry Mongovious?

10 A Yes.

11 Q She took his name, she became Cindy Mongovious?

12 A Yes.

13 Q And she had a daughter shortly after?

14 A Yes.

15 Q Their relationship didn't last long?

16 A No. Cindy was still heavily into drugs. Actually
17 Terry was too.

18 Q Cindy was never a Canadian citizen?

19 A No. I had calls from immigration saying because
20 they were under age that they would leave it up to
21 me, that when they became of age they could apply
22 for their Canadian citizenship, but none of them
23 ever did.

24 Q Okay. And you happen to know that she was
25 deported a couple of times?

1 A Yes, yes, because of her record.

2 Q Cindy was very close with her sister Audrey?

3 A Yes, she was.

4 Q Can you tell us about that relationship?

5 A Well, Audrey got into drugs as well. It's
6 unfortunate three out of four did. And Cindy
7 would come -- Audrey lived in Surrey as well, and
8 Cindy would come out to Surrey to visit her
9 sister. And they were like two peas in a pod.
10 Cindy was more aggressive than Audrey, but Audrey
11 could stand up for herself as well. They, not to
12 me, but to the police, the VPD, looked very
13 similar, and Cindy when she got into trouble with
14 the VPD often gave Audrey's name as her identity,
15 and Audrey would be hauled into court not knowing
16 anything about what she was there for, and they
17 would eventually find out that she wasn't the
18 person that was arrested to start with. So that
19 became -- Audrey didn't like it, but Cindy made it
20 like a game. And a lot of the dates and things
21 that are in the police reports, I'm sure some of
22 them apply to Audrey and not to Cindy, the
23 sightings, et cetera.

24 Q Audrey is currently living in Surrey?

25 A Yes, she is.

1 Q But she's not well and not able to participate in
2 this process; is that right?

3 A No, no.

4 Q All right. Can we focus on Cindy's final year?

5 A Certainly.

6 Q This is the end of 1996 and through to '97. Can
7 you tell us about Cindy's life then, where was she
8 living?

9 A She moved around. Mostly as far as I know she was
10 up in the Kingsway area around the 2400 Motel, and
11 it wasn't till the trial that I found out that she
12 did go down to the eastside, because some of the
13 women at WISH and things like that knew her. She
14 would -- when she got really bad she would come
15 home, she would come to my house and stay for
16 maybe two or three days till she got filled up
17 with ice cream and all the sweets that she wanted,
18 and cleaned out the fridge, had showers, got a
19 fresh change of clothes and then she'd be gone.
20 This happened several times. But even if she
21 didn't come home she phoned. And at least once a
22 month I'd get a call from her, and especially if
23 she ended up in jail she'd call me.

24 Q And how often was that?

25 A Too often. I don't know, with the rap sheet that

1 she had it was probably once every three months at
2 least.

3 Q Do you know that Cindy was using drugs in that
4 final year?

5 A Yes, I knew that before.

6 Q Was she a heavy user?

7 A Yes. Cindy to me, I don't know anything about the
8 drug world or anything, but to me she overused
9 drugs. She didn't use them to get high, she used
10 them to go to sleep, and she often passed out when
11 she was -- and that's the only thing I can think
12 of that Pickton got her.

13 Q And what drugs was she using?

14 A I think all of them. Cocaine, heroin. Heroin was
15 a big one. And she'd end up in the hospital. One
16 time she was at somebody's house and went into
17 their bathroom and took heart medication because
18 the pills were there, and like I said she'd try
19 anything and ended up in the hospital because of
20 that.

21 Q Are you aware of whether Cindy ever tried to clean
22 herself up?

23 A When she got married she was about the straightest
24 I've seen her for a long time. But Theresa, her
25 daughter, was born addicted, and that scared me.

1 Q How was Cindy supporting her drug habit?

2 A Prostitution.

3 Q Is that something you talked about with her?

4 A I talked about everything with her. And to those
5 people that say to the parents or to sisters of
6 the missing women, until you've gone through what
7 we have with a daughter like that who is addicted
8 there's no way you can keep them home or stop
9 them, not until they hit rock bottom. So to those
10 people I say until you've walked in our shoes and
11 done that there's nothing you can do.

12 Q When did you last see Cindy?

13 A I saw her Christmas of 1996.

14 Q She came to your house?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Can you tell us about that visit?

17 A Why it sticks in my mind was Audrey was there as
18 well, her sister, and I bought them both gifts,
19 and they were an article of clothing, and the
20 rivalry between the two. Cindy liked her gift,
21 but she says to me, "Even her packaging is nicer
22 than mine." So there was the rivalry between the
23 two of them, and that stood out in my mind. But
24 it was a lovely Christmas dinner and she stayed
25 and then left.

1 Q You heard from Cindy after that?

2 A Yes, I heard from her after she had been deported,
3 and she got one month in jail that time, and she
4 phoned me and she told me about it. And I said,
5 "Well, how did you get back?" And she said,
6 "Well, I had somebody waiting for me at the other
7 side of the border," and she came back that way.
8 And then the second time she was deported she got
9 two months, and that was the time when she told me
10 that if she got deported again it would be three
11 months. And every time she came back. But I knew
12 she would never stay down there, she would come
13 back. I think that was around June or July of
14 '97, and that was the last time I heard from her.

15 Q Did Cindy ever talk to you about her relationship
16 with the police?

17 A Yes. It was kind of comical because she'd been
18 arrested so many times. I got picked up again for
19 this, that or the next thing, or I got in a fight
20 or -- she never actually ran them down, she never
21 bellyached about them or anything like that, it
22 was a matter of fact that she got caught. She
23 never talked about being mistreated by the police,
24 by the VPD, so that's about the only thing that I
25 can say that she referred to them as.

1 Q Did you know some of Cindy's friends while she was
2 living this lifestyle?

3 A I knew of -- oh, I did. I met a couple. She was
4 living in Newton outside of Surrey, and I went to
5 where she was staying, and it was more like a drug
6 house, I was very uncomfortable there, but I met a
7 fellow by the name of Junior, who she had a lot to
8 do with. She stayed with him. There was a
9 friendship there, I don't think there was any
10 romance. But I met some of her friends, but I
11 couldn't tell you what their names were.

12 Q And Audrey was quite close with Cindy, she would
13 have known some of the people?

14 A Oh, yeah, she would have known. Okay. I'll let
15 you go on. I was going to say when she was
16 reported missing.

17 Q Okay. You mentioned the last time you heard from
18 Cindy was in the summer of '97?

19 A Yes.

20 Q And when did you start to feel that something
21 might have gone wrong?

22 A Well, her daughter would phone and ask me if I had
23 heard from her mother and I said no. And this was
24 like summer of '97. Now, on top of this my
25 husband got very sick in August and he passed away

1 in November, so I was at the hospital a lot of
2 that time. But both her daughter and her sister
3 would phone and ask me if I'd heard from her,
4 which was unusual because one of us generally
5 heard from her. And then Audrey, her sister,
6 called and told me that some of her friends, her
7 druggy friends, excuse my expression, were calling
8 her and asking her if she'd seen Cindy, and then
9 we got really concerned because these were the
10 people that saw her all the time.

11 Q What did Audrey do?

12 A She said, "Mom, I'm going to go down and report
13 her missing to the Vancouver Police Department,"
14 and I said, "Well, because I'm busy with my
15 husband you go ahead and do it, and I'd appreciate
16 it."

17 Q And you have a specific recollection of when this
18 was?

19 A Yes, this was probably in July or August of '97.

20 Q Okay. And you recall specifically that it was
21 around that time that your husband was ill?

22 A Yes, yes.

23 Q And you recall Audrey going -- telling you she was
24 going to the Vancouver Police Department to report
25 her missing?

1 A Yeah. And when she came back she told me she had
2 done it.

3 Q And she told you about that visit to the police
4 station?

5 A Yes.

6 Q And what did she tell you about it?

7 A Actually nothing.

8 Q Okay.

9 A She just told me she'd reported her missing.

10 Q Now, are you aware of any response to that report
11 from the police department?

12 A No, no. No one got in touch with me, and she I
13 guess had put herself down as the contact person.
14 But it wasn't till I got the papers from your firm
15 and the police that there was another report put
16 in by Audrey in '99 and again in 2001, and I
17 didn't know anything about those. I am surmising
18 because Audrey was not in a good state of mind
19 that she did not put in a missing report in '97.

20 Q Okay. Did you do anything in terms of contacting
21 the police yourself?

22 A No, because I had assumed that she had, and I was
23 of the opinion that no news is good news.

24 Q And your relationship with Audrey was good?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And you believed that she would tell you the
2 truth?

3 A Oh, yes. Yes, as far as she knew it in her own
4 mind.

5 Q And that she would keep you updated if she heard
6 anything?

7 A Yes, yes.

8 Q You've now seen the police disclosure provided for
9 the purpose of this inquiry related to Cindy's
10 disappearance?

11 A Yes, I have.

12 Q And you mentioned a couple of other missing person
13 reports. I'll turn you to those if you have the
14 brief in front of you. At tab 1 is a Vancouver
15 Police Department Missing Persons Report, the date
16 at the top is February 5th, 1999, report of Cindy
17 Dawn Feliks of no fixed address?

18 A Yes.

19 Q And that's your understanding, she did not have a
20 fixed address at the time she disappeared?

21 A As far as I know she was staying with people that
22 she knew.

23 Q And halfway down the page we can see a redacted
24 name brackets sister filed the report?

25 A Yes.

1 Q So this is Audrey?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And Audrey did not tell you about this at the
4 time?

5 A No. No, I didn't know anything about this.

6 Q Have you spoken to her about it since?

7 A No, because I just saw them when I got the pages,
8 the paper.

9 Q Okay. If we turn the page within that tab we see
10 another copy of that missing person report, but
11 with some more information at the bottom of the
12 page. This is the box the police complete when
13 the missing person file is closed. And it's a bit
14 vague, but what it seems to say is:

15 File to go to Surrey per Constable Shenher.

16 A That's right.

17 Q And the date just above that notation is February
18 11th, which would have been six days after the
19 initial report when this report was filed. I
20 suppose you didn't know anything about this at the
21 time?

22 A No. I also did note that it says step mom do not
23 contact, and that surprised me.

24 Q I see. You're referring to a note in the middle
25 of that missing person report?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And you're obviously the step mom being referred
3 to in that note?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Do you have any information as to why --

6 A No, it took me --

7 Q Why this note was made?

8 A No, it took me quite by surprise that her sister
9 would do that, but I assume she wanted to be the
10 first contact.

11 Q Now, can you tell us a bit about your relationship
12 with Audrey? It may be a bit more complicated
13 than we had a good relationship.

14 A Well, Audrey was the youngest of the four, she was
15 six months old when I adopted her. Excuse me.
16 And she got involved into drugs when she was about
17 13, 14, and which really surprised me that she
18 would get involved with them. She was running
19 away and coming back and running away, and finally
20 the courts got a hold of her and they put her in a
21 home for a while. And then she wanted to come
22 home, so she came home. And I told her when you
23 come home there is no more drugs, this is my house
24 with my rules, et cetera. And she was quite good
25 because she missed -- she missed us while she was

1 gone. Then as time and the years went by Audrey
2 got very belligerent and -- I don't know what
3 word. There was a mixture of, I'll say at the
4 time, dislike towards me. She accused me of
5 things that never happened, and I attributed this
6 to the drugs she was taking. We don't have a
7 relationship now because she's been accusing me of
8 wanting to grandstand at the inquiry and be
9 involved with the media, et cetera, et cetera.
10 And I put that back to the beginning when the
11 media finally contacted me in 2001, and in one of
12 these reports it said that a constable had phoned
13 me and I had not returned the call, which I find
14 very difficult to believe because if the police
15 had called me I would have called no matter where
16 I was at the time right back to him, and that was
17 actually when I started to get involved with her
18 disappearance when I found out that they had been
19 contacting Audrey all the time. At the time she
20 wasn't giving them any good answers. Her answers
21 were vague, and as you can see on some of the
22 reports that she couldn't remember a lot of
23 details.

24 Q So you came to learn later on that the police were
25 having some contact back and forth with Audrey?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And essentially you were being left out of events?

3 A I wasn't notified at all. I was in the dark. I
4 was assuming that Cindy was still missing. They
5 had a report on her in '97 and completely lah lah
6 land.

7 Q And you were not at any point in time interviewed
8 by the police in relation to Cindy's
9 disappearance, at least before Robert Pickton's
10 arrest?

11 A No.

12 Q And you were able and willing to be interviewed?

13 A Definitely.

14 Q And you had information that would have assisted
15 the police in understanding who Cindy was and what
16 might have happened to her?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And you're led to believe now with the benefit of
19 the record that's been provided to you that the
20 police may not have contacted you because of
21 information provided to them by your daughter
22 Audrey?

23 A Yes. And that annoys me because I was her mother.
24 Her stepmother, but I raised her from five, so I
25 was her mother.

1 Q And do you feel that the police should in a case
2 like yours always contact the immediately
3 available family?

4 A Well, especially the mother or the father -- and
5 the father.

6 Q Okay. I referred you to the note at the bottom of
7 that missing person report suggesting the file was
8 sent to Surrey.

9 A Yes.

10 Q You didn't have any knowledge of that at the time?

11 A No, I did not.

12 Q If we turn to tab 2, this is a letter, Ms. Renter,
13 which you may have seen in preparation for the
14 inquiry, we were sent this by the commission.
15 This is originally a letter to Mr. Boddie from the
16 Department of Justice, and it's in relation to a
17 request that we made to the commission to search
18 for further documents related to Cindy's
19 disappearance.

20 A M'hm.

21 Q And the Government of Canada's response to that
22 request, if we look at the second paragraph of the
23 letter a couple of sentences in, I'll just read:

24 In response, we note that although VPD file
25 1999-27122 contains a notation that the file

1 would "go to Surrey as per Constable
2 Shenher," the Missing Women Inquiry Liaison
3 Team conducted an extensive review of the
4 PIRS records and the Evenhanded database, and
5 was unable to find an RCMP missing person
6 file in respect of Cindy Feliks or any
7 indication that any such file was ever
8 created.

9 So we now know, and perhaps you'll agree with me,
10 that it appears that Surrey RCMP never did get
11 Cindy's file?

12 A That's right.

13 Q No records have been produced. You've never seen
14 any. What does appear to have happened is,
15 according to the record, the Vancouver Police
16 Department over the course of the following year
17 received several other tips we could call them
18 that Cindy was in fact missing and that she
19 remained missing?

20 A Yes.

21 Q At tab 3 is a document, the doc ID
22 RCMP-017-003631, a lead sheet assignment. The top
23 left of the page incident date June 1st, 1999.

24 A M'hm.

25 Q A few months after the initial report. Sorry, the

1 1999 report. And the subject midway down the page
2 is Cindy Mongovious, and it appears the
3 investigator assigned in response to this task or
4 tip was Dave Dickson, who you got to know?

5 A Yes, yes.

6 Q And the task at the bottom suggests that:

7 Information from source that subject could be
8 missing. Please confirm. Follow up required
9 to determine if Mongovious/Feliks is missing,
10 as per L Shenher. Checks to be done with
11 welfare and NCIC.

12 I've read that correctly?

13 A Yes.

14 Q You weren't aware of this at the time?

15 A No.

16 Q That information had come into the police from a
17 source about Cindy. You're not aware if Audrey
18 had been provided this information?

19 A No. I was just aware that Audrey going down
20 supposedly in 1997 and listing her missing.

21 Q Right. And beneath the task that I just read is a
22 handwritten notation with a date June 12th, 2001,
23 approximately two years later, and it reads:

24 Reviewed. Unclear as to whatever happened as
25 a result of this information. Ongoing. Need

1 to check with ICU investigator assigned.

2 And that note is signed 768, who we understand to
3 be an RCMP officer with Project Evenhanded,
4 Detective Jim McKnight.

5 A Sounds like they screwed up.

6 Q You didn't know anything about this at the time?

7 A No, I didn't.

8 Q Over the tab at tab 4 are handwritten notes we
9 understand to be Dave Dickson's of the Vancouver
10 Police Department. This is VPD-001-003781. And
11 his handwritten note for June 31st, 1999, which
12 was a couple of days after that task was assigned
13 to him, suggests that he checked into Cindy
14 Mongovious. He writes:

15 Check into Cindy Mongovious. Missing
16 December 12th.

17 A That's her birthday.

18 Q Oh, sorry, missing and then December 12th, '54.
19 Possibly deported. I don't believe there's any
20 other information about her on that page. So we
21 know that was something was being looked into?

22 A Yeah, late, but better late than never.

23 Q Right. We don't have information that a file was
24 ongoing or opened again in relation to Cindy's
25 disappearance. Would you agree?

1 A Yes, that's something that I often wondered about
2 why it took from '97 to 2001 to list her as
3 missing.

4 Q Right. And then at tab 5 is a document with ID
5 RCMP-017-003686. Top of the page it says Tip
6 Information Received. Tip file 207. The date
7 received was July 29th, 1999. The reportee was a
8 Brian Ball of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide
9 Unit regarding Cindy Mongovious aka Feliks. And
10 in the comments section the tip form says:

11 Info from source - see if Cindy Mongovious
12 could be missing.

13 Beneath that:

14 1621 - assign to me.

15 We understand 1621 to be a reference to Constable
16 Lori Shenher.

17 A Okay.

18 Q Again, you didn't know anything about this?

19 A No.

20 Q And to your knowledge they didn't contact Audrey
21 either to advise her that the information was
22 coming about Cindy?

23 A I don't know if they did or not.

24 Q Okay. Now, you know as well from the record that
25 Audrey attended the New West police station

1 January 2001 to report Cindy missing to the New
2 West police department?

3 A Yes. I don't know why.

4 Q Just to be clear, you don't know anything about
5 that, you don't know why she went?

6 A No, unless she was asked to go there and file
7 another one.

8 Q And there's some reference to that at tab 8 for
9 the commissioner's benefit. There's not much for
10 me to take the witness to it because she doesn't
11 know about this incident. But, in any event, the
12 record seems to show that Audrey returned to the
13 police at least in 1999 and again in 2001 to try
14 and report Cindy missing. So I gather you didn't
15 have the impression that much was being done in
16 those years to search for Cindy?

17 A I got the impression nothing was being done, that
18 she was still listed as missing.

19 Q And do you believe that Audrey had that same
20 impression?

21 A Probably, yes.

22 Q There's actually a note at the second page of tab
23 8 that a Constable Ward, who seems to have been
24 assigned the file after her report to the New
25 Westminster police, left a message for you; right?

1 A Yes.

2 Q You briefly mentioned this, but just to be clear
3 you don't have any recollection of this message?

4 A No, I would have remembered it if -- if I had been
5 contacted by the police.

6 Q And he says no phone call has been received in
7 response?

8 A Exactly. I would have repeated -- I would have
9 phoned right away.

10 Q You have no reason at all not to return a phone
11 call from the police?

12 A No, no.

13 Q Did you ever speak to Constable Ward of the New
14 Westminster Police Department?

15 A I don't recall. I may have, but I don't recall
16 later on.

17 Q To your knowledge was Cindy ever added to a
18 so-called missing persons list?

19 A Yes, in 2001 her picture was posted.

20 Q And how do you know that?

21 A That's a good question. I must have been
22 notified. Plus they had -- when it first broke in
23 the newspaper, the *Vancouver Province*, their front
24 page had a picture of all the missing women at
25 that time and her picture was on there.

1 Q Is that how you learned?

2 A It could possibly be that, yes.

3 Q You don't recall having any contact with the
4 police?

5 A No, I don't. And I think I would remember if I
6 did.

7 Q Okay. You heard about Pickton's property being
8 searched in 2002?

9 A Yes, but I didn't really pay any attention to it
10 because I didn't think that that would be a place
11 that Cindy would go to.

12 Q And how did you find out that Cindy had any
13 connection at all to that property?

14 A On December 2002, December the 2nd, 2002, I was
15 asleep in my bed in Calgary and my phone rang, and
16 it was a woman from the RCMP informing me at that
17 time that Cindy's DNA had been found on the
18 Pickton farm. They phoned me. They didn't call
19 the Calgary police to bring someone to my door. I
20 was all alone in the house. That floored me,
21 absolutely took the wind right out of my sails at
22 seven o'clock in the morning. And I found that
23 irreprehensible they would actually phone me about
24 the death of my daughter at the Pickton farm when
25 I had no idea that she was even going there or

1 anything like that.

2 Q You feel a visit by the police and victim services
3 would have been more appropriate?

4 A Of course. I was to understand they did that to
5 others, but maybe because I was so far away in
6 Calgary that they couldn't phone the Calgary
7 police and ask them to come and tell me about it.
8 It would have been nice because I didn't have any
9 support at home at the time.

10 Q Can you speak generally to the commissioner about
11 how you feel about the Vancouver Police
12 Department's response, perhaps the New Westminster
13 Police Department's response to Cindy's
14 disappearance?

15 A Well, from 1997 to 2001 I was kept in the dark. I
16 knew nothing about what the Vancouver Police
17 Department or the New West police department were
18 doing. When I got the phone call about Cindy's
19 DNA being found at the farm I phoned the coroner
20 at the time, Kent was his name, and asked him if
21 he could tell me how she was found, how they got
22 the DNA from hair, from blood or anything like
23 that, and he told me he couldn't tell me these
24 things because of the ongoing investigation.
25 Which I understood. I tried making phone calls

1 around to -- I think I called the Vancouver Police
2 Department to find out what was ongoing about
3 that, 'cause I knew nothing up until then, and I
4 should have been notified right away and not my
5 other stepdaughter, because she was a drug addict,
6 she still is, and she could not be bothered with
7 phone calls. Half the times when you called her
8 she was high and she'd fall asleep when you were
9 talking to her or she didn't want to talk because
10 she wanted to sleep. A very irresponsible person.
11 And I was working. There was no reason why they
12 needed to follow the order here not to contact me.
13 So when all of this came down it was like Cindy's
14 dead. No, she's not. I don't believe it. She's
15 missing. She's going to show up on Kingsway or
16 downtown or somewhere else. They should have
17 notified me immediately when they had the slightly
18 recollection that she was missing, that she didn't
19 turn up anywhere. And that's something that
20 should be changed. Even though in the reports a
21 lot of the pages they say that Audrey when they
22 talked to her was incoherent, she couldn't talk,
23 she couldn't remember details. And that's what I
24 think happened to her, that she thought she
25 probably went down to report it in '97 and didn't,

1 but in her own mind she did. She reported her
2 again in '99, which I knew nothing about, and
3 again in 2001. Why didn't the police notify me?
4 In the last fifteen years I've been involved with
5 her disappearance trying to get answers as to what
6 happened. They just don't come. Any time I asked
7 anybody, victim services, any of the police, they
8 couldn't talk about it because of the ongoing
9 investigation.

10 The victims services -- and I have to tell
11 you this. I went to the voir dire one week in
12 March when it was on. I flew from Calgary to New
13 Westminster. I stayed with a friend in Surrey.
14 And unbeknownst to me because I wasn't told the
15 DNA expert was on the stand. They went through
16 the different cases as to the DNA, how many
17 millions, and quite a science. They went by
18 number. Cindy was number 19 on the missing
19 women's list. When they came to number 19 the
20 lawyer asked the DNA expert how they found Cindy's
21 DNA. He started to say that there were six
22 packages of meat in the freezer, they drilled
23 cores in the meat, and Cindy's DNA was in one of
24 the cores. I just about fainted. I put my head
25 down to get my composure back, and I got an elbow

1 in the side from Marilyn Johnny who was sitting
2 next to me and she said to me, "Don't go to sleep,
3 the judge frowns on it." And I had just heard how
4 my daughter was found. Afterwards I said to her,
5 "Why didn't you tell me as to what was going to
6 happen so I was at least prepared?" She says,
7 "We're not allowed to talk about it because it's
8 an ongoing investigation, and we can't discuss
9 it." And I said, "That's for reporters. I'm a
10 family member. I'm a mother. You can tell me or
11 any of the other families that were there." And
12 that's how I found out how they discovered Cindy,
13 which wasn't too pleasant.

14 Q What are you hoping to get out of this process
15 participating in this commission?

16 A Several things. I'd like the police to notify if
17 a sister or an aunt or someone reports a missing
18 woman, or a missing man for that matter, they get
19 all the relatives involved, at least the parents
20 of the missing person. Don't leave them in the
21 dark just because somebody says do not contact
22 them. Another thing, too, is that if people go
23 missing, if women go missing don't wait till
24 there's 20 people missing before you start an
25 investigation because there are no bodies, because

1 as you know in this instance he got rid of the
2 bodies very very well, so there was no bodies to
3 be had. And don't treat prostitutes and drug
4 addicts as if they're second class citizens and
5 throwaway people. It's not right. They are
6 people and they're daughters, they have daughters
7 of their own, they have children of their own that
8 we're left to raise, and it's a tragedy.

9 Q Ms. Renter, I understand you've prepared something
10 that you'd like to read. Is now the time for that
11 or do you have anything else you'd like to tell
12 the commissioner?

13 A No, I think I've pretty well told you everything.
14 I have a little statement to read to you. This is
15 a poem I call Cindy's Poem. It's very short, but
16 it's like she's talking to me from heaven:

17 As I sit in heaven and watch you every day,
18 I try and let you know with signs I never
19 went away.

20 I hear you when you're laughing and watch you
21 as you sleep,

22 I even place my arms around you to calm you
23 as you weep.

24 I see you wish the day away begging to have
25 me home,

1 So I try to send you signs so you know you're
2 not alone.

3 Don't feel guilty that you have life that was
4 denied to me,

5 Heaven is truly beautiful just you wait and
6 see.

7 So live your life and laugh again, enjoy
8 yourself, be free,

9 Then I know with every breath you take you'll
10 be taking one for me.

11 Mr. Commissioner, I know you've heard from some of
12 the families of our murdered women. I want you to
13 also know the heartbreak that this past fifteen
14 years has done to decimate the very core of family
15 life. Like a pebble thrown into a quiet pool the
16 ripple effect is enormous. At the start it breaks
17 the centre of their universe, the immediate
18 family. Then as the months and years go by the
19 grief goes out to the next circle, the cousins,
20 aunts, uncles and grandparents. After that the
21 other relatives and friends are encompassed and so
22 on. We have heard the past two days of other
23 deaths in families, deaths that I am sure are
24 indirectly contributed to the horrific killings of
25 one man. All I can say is it's just too bad

1 Canada doesn't have the death penalty anymore.

2 That's it.

3 Q Do you have anything else to say, Ms. Renter?

4 A No. My mind is full of details, but they're
5 rolling around.

6 MR. CHANTLER: Thank you very much, those are my questions.

7 THE REGISTRAR: Mr. Chantler, did you wish the picture to be
8 marked?

9 MR. CHANTLER: Yes, please. My apologies for forgetting. If
10 we could mark the photograph as the next exhibit.

11 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

12 MR. CHANTLER: And perhaps the brief as an exhibit NR.

13 THE REGISTRAR: The photograph will be marked as Exhibit 140,
14 and your brief will be marked as 141NR. Thank
15 you.

16 **(EXHIBIT 140: Photograph of Cindy Feliks)**

17 **(EXHIBIT 141NR: Document entitled Family**
18 **Witness Brief #2)**

19 THE COMMISSIONER: Anyone have any questions? Yes.

20 MR. DICKSON: Ms. Renter, I represent the Vancouver Police
21 Department, Tim Dickson, and on behalf of the
22 department I want to apologize that Pickton was
23 not caught sooner, and apologize for the way that
24 that 1999 report of Cindy's disappearance was
25 handled, and specifically to you not being

1 notified right away. We hear you on that, and
2 really thank you for coming and giving your
3 evidence. The department is seeking to make its
4 Missing Persons Unit as effective as possible and
5 a lot of changes have been made since back then,
6 but as I say it continues to seek to make it
7 better, and with respect to your evidence we very
8 much acknowledge that.

9 THE WITNESS: I hope so. And I hope with all my heart that
10 your apology is really heartfelt, because they're
11 words and they're easy to speak, but to make them
12 honest and to make them truthful is hard for the
13 families to believe after what we've gone through.

14 MR. DICKSON: I understand.

15 THE WITNESS: But I thank you for that.

16 MR. DICKSON: Thank you for coming.

17 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Ms. Renter, I want to thank you
18 sincerely for coming here and sharing the sorrow
19 that you have felt and the hurt that you've gone
20 through, the pain that you have gone through. I
21 cannot imagine anything worse than having a child
22 that you have raised for the whole of her life
23 essentially go missing and then learn that she met
24 this horrible death, and I want to thank you for
25 the strength that you have shown in coming here

1 and telling us about it. I've said this before to
2 other family victims who have come here to testify
3 that we need to hear from you. That if changes
4 are going to result, and you've pointed out some
5 very valuable advice as to what changes should
6 take place, and you know we're making note of
7 that, and those positive changes can only come if
8 you come here and tell us about what happened.
9 It's unfortunate that you have to live the tragedy
10 as you lived it, and the pain and suffering that
11 you've gone through, but I just want you to know
12 that I very much appreciate you coming here and
13 telling us about that. Thank you.

14 THE WITNESS: Well, I'll be looking for the changes definitely.

15 THE COMMISSIONER: All right.

16 THE WITNESS: And hopefully both the RCMP and VPD can consider
17 what the families have mentioned.

18 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

19 THE WITNESS: And as you can see even after fifteen years it
20 still hurts.

21 THE COMMISSIONER: Well, the pain will never go away.

22 THE WITNESS: No. It will soften.

23 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, but you have to do the best you can
24 with courage and try to get over it.

25 THE WITNESS: Exactly.

1 THE COMMISSIONER: Okay.

2 THE WITNESS: Getting over it isn't easy either.

3 THE COMMISSIONER: Oh, I know that. Thank you.

4 THE WITNESS: You're welcome.

5 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much for coming.

6 **(WITNESS EXCUSED)**

7 MR. CHANTLER: Mr. Commissioner, Neil Chantler for the record.

8 I could go ahead and call the next witness or we
9 could take a break.

10 THE COMMISSIONER: We'll take a break.

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

12 **(PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED AT 10:51 A.M.)**

13 **(PROCEEDINGS RESUMED AT 11:11 A.M.)**

14 THE REGISTRAR: Order. The hearing is now resumed.

15 MR. CHANTLER: Neil Chantler, counsel for the families. I
16 intend to call next three witnesses. One will
17 speak on behalf of the family, primarily Ms.
18 Bonnie Fowler, and with her are her sisters
19 Cynthia Cardinal and Elana Papin.

20 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

21 MR. CHANTLER: Ms. Fowler will be giving most of the evidence
22 for the family, but the other two sisters may have
23 a few comments and so I ask that they all be
24 sworn.

25 THE REGISTRAR: Is this yellow one a witness too?

1 THE COMMISSIONER: All right. Are you all comfortable there?

2 MS. PAPIN: Yeah.

3 THE REGISTRAR: Good morning. Would you just turn on the
4 microphones, please. There's a button there.
5 Thank you.

6 **ELANA PAPIN: Affirmed**

7 THE REGISTRAR: How do you respond? One at a time, please.

8 MS. PAPIN: Yes, I swear.

9 THE REGISTRAR: And your name, please?

10 MS. PAPIN: Elana Papin.

11 **BONNIE FOWLER: Affirmed**

12 THE REGISTRAR: Thank you. And how do you respond?

13 MS. FOWLER: I swear also.

14 THE REGISTRAR: And your name, please?

15 MS. FOWLER: Bonnie Fowler.

16 THE REGISTRAR: Thank you.

17 **CYNTHIA CARDINAL: Affirmed**

18 MS. CARDINAL: I swear. Cynthia Cardinal.

19 THE REGISTRAR: Thank you.

20 THE COMMISSIONER: I got Ms. Papin's name, but you have to give
21 me the rest. Your name is?

22 MS. PAPIN: Elana.

23 THE COMMISSIONER: Oh, I know, I got yours.

24 MS. FOWLER: I'm Bonnie Fowler.

25 THE COMMISSIONER: Oh, Bonnie Fowler. Of course. And you are?

1 MS. CARDINAL: Cynthia Cardinal.

2 THE COMMISSIONER: Okay. I know all of you from your names
3 that I've read, but I haven't seen you personally
4 before so I thought I would get everybody
5 straight.

6 **EXAMINATION IN CHIEF BY MR. CHANTLER:**

7 Q Ms. Fowler, I'm going to address the first couple
8 of questions to you. You're the younger sister of
9 Georgina Papin?

10 A Yeah.

11 Q And to your left and right are two of your older
12 sisters?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Georgina went missing from the Downtown Eastside
15 in approximately March 1999; correct?

16 A That's correct.

17 Q And Georgina's DNA was later to be found on the
18 Pickton's farm in Port Coquitlam?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Can you confirm for us that Georgina is one of the
21 women on the poster of missing women to your left?

22 A Right here, that's our sister.

23 Q Okay. Thank you. And you've provided us with a
24 photograph of Georgina?

25 A Yeah.

1 Q And that's been presented to you now. You can
2 identify that as the photograph of Georgina?

3 A Yes, it is.

4 Q And can you tell us a bit about that photograph,
5 how old was she there and when was that taken?

6 MS. CARDINAL: She's probably about 33 years old in this
7 picture, which would be about a year before she
8 went missing.

9 MS. FOWLER: It was here in Vancouver.

10 MR. CHANTLER: Okay.

11 MS. CARDINAL: Taken in Vancouver at a friend's house.

12 MR. CHANTLER: Okay. Could you hold the photo up for the
13 camera and the gallery to see. If that could be
14 marked as the next exhibit.

15 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

16 THE REGISTRAR: Yes, that will be marked as Exhibit number 142.

17 **(EXHIBIT 142: Photograph of Georgina Papin)**

18 MR. CHANTLER:

19 Q Ms. Fowler, your family is from the Hobbema
20 Reserve, and Enoch Cree Nation?

21 A Yes.

22 Q And you have a big family?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Can you tell us about that?

25 A We have a large family. There's nine kids, all

1 brothers and sisters. Numerous relatives. I
2 don't even know them all.

3 Q Are you the youngest of nine children?

4 A I'm the youngest.

5 Q Your mother was Maggie Rattlesnake?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And after she passed away you were placed in
8 foster care?

9 A I was placed in foster care at age four. She died
10 in '79 when I was nine.

11 Q Okay. Now, I understand that for the purpose of
12 background information the family has prepared
13 collectively a statement that you'd like to read,
14 and you can go ahead and do that now.

15 A All right. Our sister Georgina Faith Papin was
16 born in Edmonton in Alberta on March 11th, 1954.
17 She was the fourth child born to Maggie and George
18 Papin. We are a large family, nine of us in
19 total, and all born between 1960 and 1970.
20 Georgina also has a large family of seven
21 children, four girls and three boys. The youngest
22 are twin girls who were just born a year before
23 Georgina went missing.

24 Georgina was only a year old when she entered
25 the welfare system. She was placed in a foster

1 home with our brother Rick, but were separated
2 from our -- my older sisters Cindy and Debbie who
3 were sent to residential school in Hobbema,
4 Alberta, the same residential school our mother
5 had attended. They were then placed in a foster
6 home together, and at the age of 12 Georgina ran
7 away from her foster home. Later we found out
8 that she had suffered from abuse and a neglect
9 from this home. Like so many isolated and
10 vulnerable youth she became involved in a gang in
11 Calgary, but only for a brief period. This is
12 also where she reunited with our mother, and being
13 an addict our mother could not look after her or
14 us.

15 Georgina then left for Las Vegas, and she was
16 only 14 years old. With a limited education and
17 no money Georgina became involved in the sex trade
18 to support herself while living in the fast paced
19 city. She kept in contact with our oldest -- our
20 older sister Debbie, and they shared a very close
21 relationship. Once our family was reunited in
22 1985 -- oh, sorry. And she experienced her --
23 shared her experience with Debbie. Georgina would
24 also baby-sit for Debbie. In 1988 Georgina was
25 devastated when our sister Debbie died at a young

1 age of heart failure. Georgina became severely
2 depressed and would find solace in using drugs.

3 As for the rest of us siblings we drifted
4 apart and also became addicted to drugs. It
5 seemed normal because we had seen it all our
6 lives. Our native culture was lost to us,
7 therefore, it did not seem important. It was
8 important to Georgina as she was trying to find
9 her roots and a place to belong. She became
10 involved in traditional native dancing. She was
11 very artistic. She could bead and draw. She was
12 a good cook. She made good bannock. She became a
13 proud Cree woman.

14 Georgina tried hard to raise her children.
15 These were the happiest years of her life. She
16 was a mother, a wonderful mother. It made me
17 happy to see how she connected with her children,
18 the love that only a mother can. At the time she
19 had a boyfriend and she found out that he was
20 cheating on her and it devastated her, and we feel
21 that that's what triggered the fall, her fall.
22 She lost her -- she became a different person once
23 welfare took her children. All the hurt and anger
24 she endured became overwhelming. She would find
25 herself incarcerated for a crime she did in order

1 to get drug money. She became to self destruct.

2 During the mid '90s Georgina ended up in the
3 Lethbridge Correctional Centre in southern
4 Alberta, and then later transferred to Burnaby
5 Correctional Centre for Women. These were times
6 when we as siblings would lose contact with each
7 other for months or years. Some of us were also
8 incarcerated or working the streets just trying to
9 find ways to survive and support our own drug
10 habits or trying to live. And then there was some
11 of us who were trying to lead a normal life and
12 who had legitimate employment.

13 The last time we heard from Georgina was when
14 she asked us to come and celebrate her birthday
15 with her in 1999. And I had bought a teddy bear
16 for her, this one, the same one, her name is on
17 here from me. I bought her this teddy bear with
18 the Vegas logo on it, because she would always
19 talk about her life there and how she missed it,
20 and also how she missed her daughter Christina who
21 resides there. Unfortunately I could not contact
22 her to this day and I still have the teddy bear.

23 It wasn't until March of 2001 when I reported
24 Georgina missing. A relative had contacted
25 Christina to see if her mother was with her and/or

1 had tried to contact her. Christina said she had
2 not seen her mother for quite some time. A friend
3 of Georgina's, Kathleen Smith, would drive me
4 Downtown Eastside to look for her, sometimes she
5 would go by herself, and she had to find her.
6 Kathleen convinced me that something was wrong and
7 we drove to the police station in Mission to
8 report Georgina missing. She said that, "You need
9 to do this, Bonnie, you're her sister." I hadn't
10 really taken it in because we were always
11 separated, right, anyways. Approximately six
12 months later Georgina was added to the missing
13 women's list in Vancouver. When I reported
14 Georgina missing to the RCMP in Mission there was
15 no contact from them after I had done that. We
16 were kept in the dark as to what they were doing
17 to find her.

18 Why the officers did not contact members of
19 my family? Why did they take so long to put her
20 on the missing women's list in Vancouver? So many
21 people knew about the Pickton farm and what was
22 going on there. In our opinion it is negligence.
23 The police lacked understanding and compassion
24 towards these women. The police also used poor
25 judgment. That is obvious. This is shameful and

1 they should all be held accountable. They should
2 all be fired because they have broken their own
3 oath which is to serve and protect all Canadians.

4 We knew that Georgina's children were in the
5 welfare system and that they had been placed in
6 different foster homes. It was hard trying to
7 find them as we are not allowed information on
8 their whereabouts even to this day. We know now
9 that they are going through the hardest times of
10 their lives. Like our generation they have been
11 separated from each other and suffered the
12 horrific loss of their mother. The younger
13 children who were once together in a foster home
14 are now separated from each other. One of the
15 older children keeps finding himself in trouble
16 with the law making it hard to travel to Alberta
17 to visit us. We suggested he clear his charges so
18 he could travel to Alberta and live with us. The
19 children have expressed that they want to be
20 closer to us and have more contact. We want to be
21 able to heal with Georgina's children as we have
22 all been affected by her gruesome murder. We want
23 them to know we will always be there for them. We
24 all miss and love Georgina and we know that she
25 would want us to be a family so her children would

1 know her, who her relatives are and where their
2 roots are. As for now they are lost in the
3 system.

4 There are so many people involved somehow in
5 relation to the missing women, and none of them
6 cared until Robert Pickton was charged. If the
7 authorities had been doing their jobs in the first
8 place our sister Georgina and the majority of
9 these women would be alive today. Many of the
10 witnesses to all this are still out there on the
11 streets where our women and children continue to
12 be violated, targeted and overdosed and murdered.

13 As for the potential witness list how are the
14 police witnesses -- how are the police witnesses
15 when they are part of it? How many cops,
16 politicians, lawyers, judges and those in power
17 attended the parties at Piggy's Palace? We will
18 never know because their files are automatically
19 sealed and protected. How come authorities never
20 approached family members, frontline workers or
21 advocates? These are the people who deal with
22 these women on a regular basis and were trying to
23 find out what was happening to all these missing
24 women.

25 How about asking the family members who are

1 powerless to do anything, who searched for their
2 loved ones themselves because nobody cared. They
3 are the ones who travelled far to search for their
4 loved ones and they disappeared because they are
5 not getting answers from the law enforcement
6 agencies. There are also elders trying to locate
7 missing women. These questions have been asked
8 because they cared, and they were shunned and
9 disrespected for it. Some have passed on, but
10 they never gave up. They are the ones that cared
11 about these women. They did not judge them or
12 blame them for their vulnerable situations. They
13 genuinely love them no matter what. There are
14 only two left alive that have been working -- that
15 have worked tirelessly to bring awareness to the
16 plight of the missing women. Rita Blind and
17 Bertie Williams have been working tirelessly since
18 1986. Today they are shunned from some
19 organizations because people do not want to hear
20 the truth about how the women were disappearing
21 throughout the Pickton era which was from the late
22 1980s until his arrest in 2002.

23 The whole court process has protected Robert
24 Pickton from beginning to end. He has the whole
25 judicial system tied up with millions of dollars

1 protecting his rights while the family of the
2 women he murdered are suffering. This is
3 sickening, and it makes it more sickening that the
4 fact that the women and children are still going
5 missing and murdered at a historical rate across
6 the land.

7 The amount of lawyers being retained for the
8 Vancouver Police Department and the RCMP is
9 ridiculous. Money like that is better spent on a
10 healing and wellness centre for all the children
11 and families of the murdered women, many of which
12 have not had the opportunity to mourn. So many
13 things could have been done to better the lives of
14 our women and children. When I reported Georgina
15 missing to the RCMP in Mission, BC there is no
16 contact from them. We had been kept in the dark
17 as to what they were doing to find her. Why
18 didn't they keep in touch with us and call all the
19 family members to ask questions, and why did it
20 take so long to get her on the list? So many knew
21 about the Pickton farm, and why was he allowed to
22 keep killing our sisters? Total negligence from
23 authorities towards these women are so obvious,
24 it's so shameful, and they should all be held
25 accountable. They should all be fired because

1 they have broken their own oath to serve and
2 protect.

3 Since we've lost our sister Georgina we have
4 experienced pain and anger that we hold inside not
5 knowing how to release it. We find comfort in the
6 relationships that we have built with our new
7 extended family. The Walk for Justice has really
8 stepped up to making us feel that we are not alone
9 in this and have supported us through the entire
10 ordeal. It makes we wonder why the awareness for
11 our women isn't more supported by organizations,
12 especially the police nation wide, that already
13 have the public's attention. Sisters in Spirit
14 have also opened their hearts and given their
15 attention and support introducing us to many other
16 family members and people who have also been in
17 vulnerable states and have healed and have become
18 upstanding citizens as they still continue to
19 fight for justice.

20 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

21 MR. CHANTLER: Thank you for that, Ms. Fowler.

22 Q I want to draw from a couple of the things that
23 you referred to in your statement. Can we focus
24 in on March 1999. That's the time you say
25 Georgina was last seen. Tell us a bit about

1 Georgina's life in March '99, where was she living
2 and how was her health and what was the story with
3 her children?

4 A In 1999 she was living in Deroche. I believe she
5 was living in Deroche.

6 Q Where is that?

7 A Yeah, it's just -- it's by Agassiz I'm pretty
8 sure. It's been a long time, I don't remember the
9 area so well. She had a place there, a nice place
10 there. She had the kids. We had celebrated my
11 birthday there. That was actually in '98, I
12 guess.

13 Q Any substance abuse issues at the time?

14 A Yes. Not at that time, but yes, in 1999 she was
15 -- I had not seen her at that time doing drugs or
16 anything, but everybody that knew her knew that
17 she was, and so everyone knew. I knew.

18 Q Was she employed or receiving social assistance?

19 A I believe she was receiving social assistance.

20 Q Was she employed for a period of time before that
21 in Mission?

22 A Well, she used to -- I don't know if it was
23 voluntary, but every day she was up in the Mission
24 Friendship Centre.

25 Q What would she do there?

1 A And very community involved.

2 Q What would she do there?

3 A She would help. There was a lot of kids. She was
4 always active with all the children. They did
5 arts and crafts. She prayed, she sang. She
6 played the guitar with the kids I remember. She
7 taught classes in bead work. She was just a
8 support for everybody in there.

9 Q And where were you living at that time?

10 A I was also living in Mission. Yeah, I was living
11 in Mission. I would go down there once in a while
12 to see her.

13 Q And you were quite close?

14 A Yes. We were just actually getting acquainted and
15 we were getting to know each other and becoming
16 closer.

17 Q What happened in March, towards the end of
18 March -- beginning of March, my apologies, with
19 Georgina and losing her children?

20 A Well, she had a boyfriend Darcy and she -- he had
21 started cheating on her and she found out, and
22 then they broke up, and things started going down
23 hill and that's when the children got taken away.

24 Q And how did Georgina respond to that?

25 A Not good. She just was giving up on her happy

1 life that she had. It was just dwindling and it
2 was going fast.

3 Q Did it affect her health?

4 A Most likely, yes.

5 Q And when did you last see her?

6 A I believe it would have been in '99.

7 Q Did you see her in March of '99?

8 A I don't know if I saw her in March of '99. It was
9 her birthday and I was -- we didn't get to reunite
10 so that I could give her this present, so.

11 Q And when did you learn or start to feel that
12 something might have happened to Georgina?

13 A It was actually her friend had made me think
14 something was wrong. She kept telling me, 'cause
15 she would go down and look for her herself. And
16 she goes, "I've got to go find Georgina." And
17 sometimes she would find her. After -- she said
18 after six months after looking she would just go
19 down there and find her once in a while. After
20 the six months she just kind of vanished and there
21 was no word from her and she told me. And she
22 said, "You're her sister, and I need you to go
23 with me and we'll report her in Mission." So we
24 went and I reported her.

25 Q And when you say go down there, you're referring

1 to the Downtown Eastside?

2 A In Mission.

3 Q When you say Kathleen would go down there to look
4 for her?

5 A Oh, she would go down to -- come down to the
6 eastside, yeah.

7 Q And while Georgina lived in Deroche she would
8 frequent the Downtown Eastside?

9 A Yes.

10 Q And why would she go there?

11 A Probably to get away from what she was living at
12 at home. Get drugs. She was involved in that now
13 and --

14 Q Do you have reason to believe she worked in the
15 sex trade?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Okay. Do you know that to be true?

18 A Yes.

19 Q And the friend you referred to, is this Kathleen
20 we can call her?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Okay. Kathleen was the boyfriend of one of your
23 brothers?

24 A Girlfriend, yes.

25 Q I mean -- sorry. Her boyfriend was one of your

1 brothers?

2 A Yeah.

3 Q And Kathleen was very close with Georgina?

4 A They were like sisters for years.

5 Q Right. Kathleen was perhaps one of the first to

6 become worried that Georgina had gone missing?

7 A Yes. She was very involved with her children and

8 her life.

9 Q And Kathleen came to you and said something might

10 be wrong?

11 A She said, "Something is really wrong."

12 Q She hadn't seen Georgina in some time. How long

13 had it been when she came to you?

14 A Probably a year.

15 Q Okay. And she wanted you to attend the police

16 department and file your own missing person report

17 as a sister?

18 A Yes.

19 Q But she had already made some efforts we know to

20 report Georgina missing; correct?

21 A Yes.

22 Q And if we turn to the binder that's before you --

23 sorry, it's not before you yet, but it will be, at

24 tab 10. You've seen these documents in

25 preparation for the hearings, but you didn't

1 necessarily know about them at the time; is that
2 right?

3 A Yes.

4 Q This is a continuation report. At the top right
5 of the page just for identification it says
6 RCMP-017-006981. And in summary it appears that
7 -- tab 10. It appears that on March 11th, 2001,
8 the month we've been speaking about, Kathleen, a
9 friend, went to the Mission RCMP Detachment to
10 report Georgina missing. So that accords with
11 your recollection of what happened in the time
12 frame; correct?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Over the page at tab 11 is a Vancouver Police
15 Department document, a missing persons report, for
16 identification RCMP-017-006849, and the date of
17 this report is March 14th, 2001, just a couple of
18 days later. So we can see midway down the page
19 that the person reporting Georgina missing to the
20 Vancouver Police Department was Kathleen?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Do you know why Kathleen had to -- sorry. Do you
23 know why Kathleen after attending the Mission RCMP
24 Detachment appears to have attended the Vancouver
25 Police Department as well?

1 A She was desperate to find her.

2 Q Okay.

3 A She was desperate, and when she wants something
4 she goes after it. Kathleen is --

5 Q Did she tell you anything like she was asked to go
6 and do that?

7 A No. Kathleen and I, we kind of went our own ways
8 because our brother had broken up with her and I
9 ended up moving back to Edmonton and so I -- we
10 just lost contact.

11 Q Okay. You didn't have much of a discussion with
12 Kathleen and haven't ever about these two reports?

13 A No.

14 Q But you have said that Kathleen sometime
15 thereafter encouraged you to file your own report?

16 A Yes.

17 Q And you did that?

18 A Yeah.

19 Q When did you do that?

20 A That would have been in 2001.

21 Q Okay. Sometime after these initial reports?

22 A Yeah.

23 Q And where did you attend?

24 A In Mission, BC.

25 Q Can you tell us a bit about that attendance?

1 A It was -- I went to the police station and I told
2 them I needed to make a missing persons report.
3 They said all right. They took me in a room and
4 they took a DNA sample, a swab from my cheek, and
5 I signed a paper and they said, okay, that's it.
6 And it was very like easy, and I thought it was
7 going to be more of a process. It was like
8 reporting a missing wallet or something missing
9 like an object. And at the time it just made me
10 feel like it wasn't a big deal to them or maybe
11 this wasn't even real, maybe she wasn't missing.
12 Like I almost felt like I was overreacting for
13 reporting her missing because of that.

14 Q You I presume provided your contact information
15 when you went to the police department?

16 A Yes, definitely.

17 Q And did you hear back from anyone at the RCMP?

18 A No, never.

19 Q And you say never, not --

20 A Not until 2002 when the task force came and found
21 me in Edmonton.

22 Q Not until after Robert Pickton's arrest?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Okay. You provided some information to the
25 Mission RCMP Detachment, but you had presumably

1 more information than you would have provided had
2 you been interviewed at length?

3 A I believe so. I could have told them anything
4 that I know, like anything that I know and it
5 would have been still fresh in my mind still.

6 Q And you were not at any point in time before
7 Robert Pickton's arrest contacted and interviewed?

8 A No.

9 Q And to your knowledge were any of your siblings,
10 your sisters for example?

11 A No, none of us were. We've talked to all of our
12 family, our siblings, and nobody was contacted at
13 all.

14 Q Nobody was contacted by the police and nobody was
15 interviewed?

16 A No.

17 Q Okay. Any other members of the family other than
18 siblings, were they contacted and/or interviewed?

19 A Not that I know. Possibly we have an Aunt
20 Pauline, but possibly she was, but we --

21 Q Okay.

22 A -- haven't talked to her for years and we're not
23 positive.

24 Q So in summary you feel you could have provided
25 more information to the police had they contacted

1 you and conducted an interview, but that didn't
2 happen?

3 A No.

4 Q And did you ever hear from the Vancouver Police?

5 A No.

6 Q When did you learn of what happened to Georgina?

7 A 2002 when the task force came to my house.

8 Q Do you recall what month?

9 A September, I believe September.

10 Q And where were you living at that time?

11 A I was living in Edmonton.

12 Q Okay. And what did they tell you then? Do you
13 recall who it was?

14 A I don't recall the officers' names. There was a
15 man and a woman. They just told me they had to
16 tell me something, and we went for a little drive,
17 and they parked and they told me that they had
18 found Georgina's DNA on the Pickton farm.

19 Q Okay. Ms. Fowler, do you have some general
20 comments for the commissioner about how you feel
21 the police, particularly the Mission RCMP
22 Detachment, responded to your efforts to engage
23 them in a search for Georgina?

24 A Well, I definitely think that they should have
25 gotten ahold of us. Like I said before our family

1 is huge. There is -- probably half of our family
2 is incarcerated which makes them easy to get ahold
3 of. I don't -- I can't -- I think that was one of
4 their biggest -- one of their biggest mistakes is
5 not doing their whole job when it seems the
6 simplest thing is getting hold of the family and
7 telling them the progress just like for anything,
8 even comfort, even hope that there's something
9 being done about it.

10 Q Would you accept the police explanation that they
11 were in occasional contact with Kathleen, the
12 friend, or in your mind is that not good enough?

13 A No.

14 Q You feel --

15 A Kathleen doesn't even feel that was good enough.
16 She was confused on why -- why she was the only
17 one contacted.

18 Q So you feel that the police should have contacted
19 the other members of the immediate family?

20 A Yes, because we weren't in contact with Kathleen
21 after our brother broke up with her and so our
22 family was separated from her.

23 Q Okay. I understand you've prepared something else
24 you'd like to read. Before you read that are
25 there -- is there anything I haven't asked you

1 that you wish to tell the commissioner about the
2 police investigation into Georgina and the
3 police's handling of the file and communication
4 with the family?

5 A Well, I think that -- I just know that the police
6 did not do their job properly. I know that and
7 everybody else knows that, and we just want some
8 kind of acknowledgment or justice brought to that.
9 We want others charged, the people that were
10 involved in it. The witnesses, some of the
11 witnesses such as Dave Pickton, Lynn Ellingsen,
12 Pat Casanova, we believe that they should all be
13 incarcerated instead of being protected still.

14 MR. CHANTLER: Cindy or Elana, do you have anything to add to
15 that? Is there anything you'd like to tell us?

16 MS. CARDINAL: I'm just wondering why is so much money being
17 spent in helping protect these people when it
18 could have went to the children of the victims.
19 You know, it disgusts me as to how people can get
20 away with lying and yet are still protected. I'm
21 really disappointed at that with the justice
22 system. And like who gave the rights to these
23 police officers to make deals with these killers
24 that were involved also. That really disgusts me.
25 I'm so ashamed at the way everything has gone, and

1 I am totally baffled as to why no changes are
2 still happening. I was listening to Mr. Dickson
3 saying the missing persons are doing something to
4 better -- you know, to better themselves, but yet
5 there are still many more missing women going out,
6 like there's still more. Like how are they
7 getting better? We have not heard anything about
8 how they have improved or anything. So we feel
9 like there's nothing being done yet even.
10 Something should be done like immediately. You
11 know, we can't just let these women go and not
12 have -- you know, like their families are worried
13 about them, and to be able to put them off and
14 stuff it's just disgusting. It's not right. It's
15 inhumane.

16 MR. CHANTLER: Cindy, you would have liked to have seen more
17 contact with the family as well?

18 MS. CARDINAL: Oh, yes, yeah. I would have sure liked to have
19 them gotten hold of myself. Maybe I would have
20 had something to say or something that could add
21 to, you know, the investigation, but that chance
22 was never given to my family at all. As to the
23 path that she was leading, I noticed in the
24 investigation when she was going missing that
25 they're interviewing people that I felt were

1 randomly selected. You know, like these people
2 didn't know her. It was just, I don't know.

3 MR. CHANTLER: Okay. And, Elana, do you have anything to add?

4 MS. PAPIN: I'd like to take the time to thank you, Neil, and
5 to thank everybody for being here to listen to our
6 stories about the people that made a huge impact
7 on -- that were in our families and made a huge
8 impact on communities. She was a great speaker.
9 She went to institutions to sing for men and women
10 and to show them how to be happy with themselves.
11 And like my sister said, she was very involved in
12 the culture. She was very involved in taking a
13 stand in being native. She had a lot of pride,
14 which we all do. And I think I'm pissed off too,
15 but we have ways to -- we have ways and ideas that
16 could implement programs and make it a mandate for
17 RCMP officers or police officers to be able to
18 deal with the people as humans, and I believe my
19 sisters are gonna get to that. And I wish Cameron
20 Ward was here because he's our hero. We couldn't
21 have done that -- we couldn't have done this
22 without the people we've known. And like I said
23 before Robert Pickton tried to murder all of us,
24 but all he did was make us stronger. And I thank
25 everybody for taking the time to be here and

1 support the families.

2 MR. CHANTLER: Ms. Fowler, you have something to read?

3 MS. FOWLER: This is a poem that Georgina wrote and we just
4 wanted to share it. She wrote this between 1994
5 and 1995. It's called I Will Fight.

6 The look upon your face,
7 Innocent you are,
8 Sentenced for a deadly crime,
9 The system's gone too far.
10 I will fight for freedom in a positive way,
11 I will fight for you my people because there
12 is no other way.
13 We hold the key to the missing link,
14 Taxpayers I hereby sentence you to think,
15 Take a good look at the white man's lies,
16 Our present justice system do you hear the
17 nation's cries?
18 The resistance continues,
19 The indigenous are strong,
20 We lived in the right,
21 White men lived in the wrong.
22 I will fight for my people,
23 Feather in my hand,
24 I will fight the injustice,
25 The disease upon our land.

1 My brothers, my sisters,
2 We must make a stand,
3 Together we will fight,
4 The truth is close at hand.

5 MR. CHANTLER: Do you have anything else to say, Bonnie, Elana,
6 Cindy?

7 MS. CARDINAL: Yeah, we just wanted to say a few things that
8 maybe we could -- that would help. So just some
9 recommendations that we want to share, just a few
10 of the list that we have, but we're kind of saving
11 that for the study this weekend.

12 THE COMMISSIONER: All right.

13 MS. CARDINAL: We will express a few of them real quickly here.

14 MS. FOWLER: Okay. To demand accountability and action from
15 the investigative policing, judicial and governing
16 bodies to stop this ongoing violence against
17 women. How can we work together in each community
18 to protect all women and children? We want to
19 achieve building a good strong relationship with
20 our police, government and leaders to ensure the
21 safety of the well-being of every woman, child and
22 man in today's society, to acknowledge that they
23 are valued through all efforts of society. Most
24 importantly the family members, the children who
25 are left behind who need to know what changes will

1 be made to protect the future generations. The
2 initiatives are in place with each community to
3 safeguard women and children from violent
4 situations. What are you doing for the children
5 of the victims? Are there proper healing centres
6 for the families and children? Are legal services
7 available to the victims in violent situations?
8 Are the people aware of their human rights, how to
9 deal with racial discrimination? Taking back our
10 streets and making them safe for women. And
11 learning how to build a relationship with the RCMP
12 and the justice system and the leaders of our
13 community. And one more is extending the training
14 of police officers for at least one year to enable
15 them to protect and serve effectively and treat
16 everyone with dignity. The majority of public
17 servant jobs require several years at university.

18 MR. CHANTLER: Thank you very much for sharing those with us,
19 and for sharing your family's story. Those are my
20 questions.

21 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mr. Chandler. Are there any
22 questions? All right. Thank you.

23 MS. HUNT: Elizabeth Hunt, counsel for the aboriginal interest.
24 I just wanted to thank you for sharing that at
25 this point. It's very difficult. I wanted to go

1 back, Mr. Commissioner, and just talk about the
2 aboriginal experience as it relates to the family,
3 and you've heard one story as it funnels down into
4 the victim, and I'd like to share a little bit or
5 ask some questions around their experiences of
6 family and what's happened to them at this moment
7 in time.

8 THE COMMISSIONER: All right.

9 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. HUNT:**

10 Q And I'll just let you answer them as you feel you
11 need to, because I'm just going to be asking more
12 about your family history and whoever knows can
13 share on that topic. Can you just go back and
14 tell me the name of your nation?

15 MS. FOWLER: The Enoch Cree nation.

16 MS. HUNT: And the whole tribal nation as it relates to your
17 roots from time immemorial up to that point in
18 time the nationhood, if you know?

19 MS. CARDINAL: We're not really too familiar with our
20 background as we were taken from our culture into
21 living in foster homes.

22 MS. HUNT: And can you tell me then the First Nation that your
23 mother belongs to?

24 MS. CARDINAL: She belonged to the Ermineskin Band in Hobbema.

25 MS. HUNT: Okay.

1 MS. CARDINAL: She's Cree.

2 MS. HUNT: Thank you. And your father was?

3 MS. CARDINAL: George Papin, who was our stepfather, he was
4 from the Enoch Cree nation.

5 MS. HUNT: So your band affiliation for all three of you is
6 from?

7 MS. CARDINAL: Mine is Hobbema.

8 MS. FOWLER: Ours are Enoch.

9 MS. HUNT: Okay.

10 MS. CARDINAL: The reason that is my mom had me and my older
11 sister before she got married into the Enoch
12 nation, so.

13 MS. HUNT: And so you all, the three of you, there's nine
14 altogether, but you three have two from one First
15 Nation and one from another band, and then your
16 other brothers and sisters are affiliated with the
17 same bands?

18 MS. CARDINAL: Yes.

19 MS. HUNT: And are all nine brothers and sisters beneficiaries
20 under your treaty?

21 MS. CARDINAL: Yes.

22 MS. HUNT: And, sorry, I should ask that question first. You
23 are a treaty First Nation as well?

24 MS. CARDINAL: Yes.

25 MS. FOWLER: Yes.

1 MS. PAPIN: Yes.

2 MS. HUNT: And that is treaty?

3 MS. CARDINAL: Six.

4 MS. HUNT: And do you know as beneficiaries under your treaty
5 what your rights include?

6 MS. CARDINAL: Not really, no.

7 MS. HUNT: Do you receive any benefits from the signatories of
8 your nation from that treaty?

9 MS. PAPIN: When we beg for them.

10 MS. HUNT: Sorry?

11 MS. PAPIN: When we beg for them.

12 MS. HUNT: And what sort of benefits do you receive?

13 MS. PAPIN: We received a few dollars to come to the inquiry
14 and to court as well.

15 MS. CARDINAL: But there's also medical benefits, and that
16 about it.

17 MS. PAPIN: But it's gone down.

18 MS. HUNT: Is that by way of a treaty card or is that by way of
19 a Department of Indian Affairs card?

20 MS. CARDINAL: By way of treaty card.

21 MS. HUNT: Okay. So I just want to get knowing more about the
22 rest of your family. The oldest sibling is
23 Debbie. And can you tell me, you said the eldest
24 one passed away?

25 MS. FOWLER: Yes.

1 MS. HUNT: And what membership she was from, what band was she
2 from?

3 MS. CARDINAL: Debbie was from the Ermineskin band. Her maiden
4 name was Rattlesnake, but she changed it later to
5 Deborah Bennett. She was 28 years old when she
6 died of a heart attack. Drugs were part of that.
7 Debbie had two children, Michael and April, who
8 are very outstanding citizens now. They have jobs
9 and are doing well. But they were very young when
10 she died, and her common law had looked after them
11 till 1997 and then he had committed suicide, and
12 then after that -- well, they come to us now. So
13 she lived a very short, short life my sister. She
14 was 28 years old.

15 MS. HUNT: Why do you think the children are doing well now?
16 Like what do you think contributed to them doing
17 well?

18 MS. FOWLER: Her parenting.

19 MS. CARDINAL: Yeah. They had wonderful parenting skills my
20 sister and my brother-in-law. And I know they --
21 like the children really looked up to them.
22 They're very loving.

23 MS. HUNT: Would you say despite all the issues with drugs and
24 alcohol that parenting is very good in the First
25 Nation communities?

1 MS. FOWLER: Yes.

2 MS. PAPIN: Yes.

3 MS. HUNT: Would you say that there is a connection of knowing
4 where your family is at most times? Despite, you
5 know, you said your family lives in -- is always
6 connected, but you don't always see each regularly
7 but there is a connection of knowing who your
8 family is?

9 MS. FOWLER: Now we are.

10 MS. CARDINAL: It wasn't always like this actually.

11 MS. FOWLER: Not until 2002.

12 MS. CARDINAL: When Georgina was found.

13 MS. FOWLER: Yeah, we weren't talking to each other, none of
14 us.

15 MS. PAPIN: She brought us together.

16 MS. FOWLER: And now there's not a day we don't talk to each
17 other.

18 MS. HUNT: And, Cindy, you said you have children. How many
19 children do you have?

20 MS. CARDINAL: I have seven children. Four daughters, three
21 boys.

22 MS. HUNT: And how has your experience been with the troubles
23 within the family yourself?

24 MS. CARDINAL: I didn't raise my children. I was on the
25 streets at the age of 12, and I worked the

1 streets, and I also worked in Vancouver on the
2 streets. I was very young when I started selling
3 myself. I was pregnant at 16. At 17 I had my
4 oldest daughter, and raised her for a couple of
5 years, and then was back into my addictions. It
6 was back and forth. I would -- for me it was
7 somebody to love me is the reason I got married
8 when I was very young, to have somebody to look
9 after me, so I decided to get married young. And
10 I thought I had that, but then he is a pedophile
11 and it was not a good thing. But we had our
12 second daughter, then we split up. Then I went on
13 to have five other children with other men. My
14 relationships haven't been very good, so pretty
15 broken.

16 MS. HUNT: And, you know, you can share as much or as little as
17 you want, but this is a common theme then through
18 all of the nine children, would you say that
19 there's been troubles with the relationships as
20 well as the ministry, I think you said earlier in
21 your testimony with the incarcerations and the
22 system?

23 MS. CARDINAL: Yes. Oh, yeah.

24 MS. HUNT: And where is Rick right now?

25 MS. CARDINAL: Rick is in Bowden Penitentiary in Alberta.

1 MS. HUNT: Okay. And you have another sibling, there's
2 Georgina was next and who is after that?
3 MS. FOWLER: And then George.
4 MS. HUNT: Where is George?
5 MS. CARDINAL: George is incarcerated in --
6 MS. HUNT: And you have another sibling after that?
7 MS. FOWLER: Tammy. And she is right now in Edmonton Remand
8 waiting.
9 MS. CARDINAL: She has been in the system all her life. She
10 grew up in children homes, she grew up in youth
11 detentions all the way up until her adult life and
12 she had been pretty much been in the system most
13 of her life. She is now going up to -- they're
14 going to try and make her a dangerous offender on
15 April 30th, and she is going through quite the
16 time right now.
17 MS. FOWLER: She is fighting for her life right now.
18 MS. CARDINAL: She is fighting for her life, yeah.
19 MS. FOWLER: We have to go with her after we're done here.
20 MS. HUNT: Does Tammy have any children?
21 MS. CARDINAL: No.
22 MS. HUNT: And who is the next one down from Tammy?
23 MS. CARDINAL: Randy.
24 MS. FOWLER: Randy.
25 MS. HUNT: And where is Randy?

1 MS. FOWLER: He lives in Florida.

2 MS. HUNT: And was he in care as well?

3 MS. CARDINAL: Yes. He was adopted to Montreal and they moved
4 to New Jersey, and he spent most of his life
5 there. We reunited in '85 with him, and he left
6 again until he found out Georgina was found.

7 MS. FOWLER: He moved up here in 2002.

8 MS. HUNT: You've had more contact with him now?

9 MS. CARDINAL: Yes.

10 MS. HUNT: And has he had involvement in the system as well?
11 Has he been incarcerated as well?

12 MS. CARDINAL: No. He led a totally different life. He is
13 actually pretty successful in travelling and
14 became a computer technician and passed with
15 honours at ITT. Very educated.

16 MS. PAPIN: He was in the navy.

17 MS. HUNT: Okay. I know all three of you have -- I just need
18 to cue you that the reporter is up there taking
19 the transcript, so maybe I'll just ask Cindy and
20 then one at a time. Thank you. And then so do
21 you think that Randy's success as far as having
22 less involvement, I'm assuming that although
23 you've had a family that's been in the system
24 quite a bit with the ministry and the jail
25 systems, that's not where the family wants to be,

1 it's true to say that, it's become a generational
2 occurrence within the family that the children
3 have ended in care. You started in care and then
4 the children have ended -- or that as well are in
5 care, but that hasn't been the case with Randy.
6 And do you think that had to do with the family
7 that he had?

8 MS. CARDINAL: Yes, definitely. Well, I won't say it was a
9 secure family, 'cause later on he did tell us
10 about some abuse he got from his late adopted dad,
11 so.

12 MS. HUNT: And the fathers, I wanted to ask you about the
13 fathers of all of you children. Is it the same
14 father or was it a different father of the
15 children?

16 MS. CARDINAL: For nine children there was seven different
17 fathers. Three of them would be Georgina, Rick
18 and Tammy had the same father.

19 MS. HUNT: And did the fathers also have substance and
20 addiction issues?

21 MS. CARDINAL: Yes.

22 MS. FOWLER: Yes.

23 MS. HUNT: I wanted to ask you a little bit about the criminal
24 justice system because your family has had a big
25 involvement in being primarily the accused

1 involved in being incarcerated, et cetera. I just
2 wanted to ask you your feeling from the First
3 Nation point of view how you felt towards the
4 systems that have been put in place to serve you,
5 and I'll just start with the justice system, just
6 your personal feelings about the justice system,
7 about the people that are there to protect and
8 serve you, just generally as far as you've been in
9 care, the incarceration. Maybe I'll start with
10 you, Cindy.

11 MS. CARDINAL: Well, the justice system to me is always
12 something I try to ignore, 'cause like because of
13 the lifestyle that I've led and also being
14 incarcerated authority figures come across as
15 people that can kill you, like people that can
16 bring you right down, and that is the way I see
17 the justice system. Yeah, authoritative figures
18 tend to make me nervous. I can't -- I have a hard
19 time speaking with those people in the justice
20 system only because I guess the way I've been
21 brought up taught me not to trust cops, you know,
22 don't tell the cops anything, and it's been a lot
23 of that. Yeah, so I'm very wary of the justice
24 system and authority figures.

25 MS. HUNT: Thank you. Bonnie?

1 MS. FOWLER: For me I don't think I trust the system at all.
2 Police especially now I don't. I feel like
3 someone's lying or trying to pull a fast one or
4 something on me. I haven't had that much
5 involvement with police, and I'd just like to keep
6 it that way.

7 MS. HUNT: Elana?

8 MS. PAPIN: I feel that the justice system has failed us as
9 humans and that the people that are carrying out
10 these rules are not following the rules
11 themselves, so I don't trust most systems anyways.

12 MS. HUNT: And I just wanted to ask as it relates to the
13 children being in care, when the children are put
14 in care are the police there to enforce the
15 apprehensions?

16 MS. CARDINAL: Usually, yeah. Usually 'cause the parents will
17 freak out or something, but usually, yeah.

18 MS. HUNT: So there is no tribal police or anybody on your side
19 that is there to -- you're there, and they're
20 there with the police to apprehend your children.
21 And does that leave a mark as far as your children
22 and yourselves as far as being protected?

23 MS. CARDINAL: Well, yeah, because they're taking away your
24 children and you're left standing there feeling
25 totally helpless, and then you just beat yourself

1 up because you think you're not a good parent, so.

2 MS. HUNT: And do you think it's possible that if the
3 communities got the help they needed with the
4 substance and the addiction issues that they would
5 want to become a part of the system that is
6 serving communities? Can you envision people
7 within the First Nation communities moving away
8 from the dependency of the drugs and the alcohol
9 and being a part of the system working within the
10 communities to serve communities?

11 MS. CARDINAL: Definitely. And I feel that those that have
12 been through the experiences are the people for
13 those jobs definitely. Like a lot of natives have
14 experienced drug, alcohol abuse, and we're
15 involved and we're able to talk to those people,
16 and you can trust them because they've been
17 through the same thing. It would definitely work.

18 MS. HUNT: Do you think the police departments could benefit
19 from what you and your communities know about
20 justice, spirituality, peace, reconciliation, core
21 values of aboriginal communities could become part
22 of our dominant system to better serve our
23 communities as a country?

24 MS. CARDINAL: Oh, definitely. And if that ever happens that
25 would be just wonderful. It would sure bring out

1 more positive in this world through the justice
2 system than it has.

3 MS. HUNT: Thank you. I don't have any more questions.

4 THE COMMISSIONER: All right. Thank you, Ms. Hunt.

5 MR. DICKSON: I'm Tim Dickson, representative of the Vancouver
6 Police Department as I think you know, and I
7 really want to thank you for coming and
8 testifying, and I want to express on behalf of the
9 department its apology for the shortcomings in the
10 investigation of the missing women, and in
11 particular for not catching Pickton sooner. Once
12 again, thank you for coming.

13 MS. CARDINAL: Thank you.

14 MS. FOWLER: Thank you.

15 THE COMMISSIONER: I want to thank each of you for coming here
16 and telling us about Georgina and what happened to
17 her and basically how you were left out of the
18 loop and no one told you what was happening.
19 That's why we're here, we're here to listen to
20 your comments and your complaints and how you
21 think the system should have been responsive to
22 you. And we're only going to improve the system
23 if you come forward and tell us about what
24 happened. It's a terrible tragedy that you've
25 come through losing Georgina, and no words from me

1 can possibly ease the pain that you've gone
2 through and your family has gone through. So I
3 just want to thank you for coming here, and I just
4 want you to know that your words mean a lot to us,
5 and your comments will be taken very very
6 seriously. Thank you.

7 MS. CARDINAL: Thank you.

8 MS. FOWLER: Thank you.

9 MS. PAPIN: Thank you.

10 **(WITNESSES EXCUSED)**

11 MR. CHANTLER: Mr. Commissioner, we're on schedule. I suggest
12 we take a break.

13 THE COMMISSIONER: Break for the noon hour now?

14 MR. CHANTLER: Rather than interrupt the next witness.

15 THE COMMISSIONER: All right.

16 THE REGISTRAR: The hearing is now adjourned until 1:45.

17 **(PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED AT 12:17 P.M.)**

18 **(PROCEEDINGS RESUMED AT 1:50 P.M.)**

19 THE REGISTRAR: Order. The hearing is now resumed.

20 THE COMMISSIONER: Mr. Chantler.

21 MR. CHANTLER: Neil Chantler for the record. Mr. Commissioner,
22 I'd like to call the next witness, Ms. Lisa
23 Bigjohn.

24 THE REGISTRAR: Would you just turn your microphone on, please.
25 Thank you.

1 **LISA BIGJOHN: Affirmed**

2 THE REGISTRAR: Would you state your name, please?

3 THE WITNESS: My name is Lisa Bigjohn.

4 THE REGISTRAR: Thank you. Counsel.

5 **EXAMINATION IN CHIEF BY MR. CHANTLER:**

6 Q Thank you, Ms. Bigjohn. You are the elder sister
7 of Mona Wilson; correct?

8 A Correct.

9 Q And Mona is one of the women who went missing from
10 the Downtown Eastside. Mona went missing in
11 November 2001; correct?

12 A Correct.

13 Q Mona's DNA was later found on the Pickton's
14 property; correct?

15 A Correct.

16 Q And Robert William Pickton was convicted of Mona
17 Wilson's murder in 2007; correct?

18 A Yes, he was.

19 Q Okay. Can you confirm for us that Mona is one of
20 the women on the missing person poster to your
21 left? And the registrar will pass you a pointer.
22 Thank you. I've also handed up a photograph.
23 Mr. Registrar, if you could please provide a copy
24 to the witness. Ms. Bigjohn, can you identify
25 Mona Wilson in that photograph?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And do you know when that photograph was taken?
3 Are you able to tell us how old Mona was in that
4 photograph?

5 A I believe she was around 25, 26 when this picture
6 was taken.

7 Q Okay. Now, Ms. Bigjohn, before I ask you some
8 questions about Mona and her life and her
9 disappearance from the Downtown Eastside I'll ask
10 you a few questions about yourself.

11 A M'hm.

12 Q Where were you born and what year were you born?

13 A Well, first of all, I'm First Nations from outside
14 of Rocky Mountain House, Alberta, it's called
15 O'Chiese, and I'm -- Mona had three sisters, three
16 brothers, and I'm the eldest of her siblings. And
17 she was -- well, she was the youngest of my
18 siblings that was murdered. And her mom and dad
19 are now both deceased. And she was as well a band
20 member from outside of Rocky Mountain House
21 O'Chiese First Nations.

22 Q Okay. Your parents were Rema Bigjohn?

23 A Correct.

24 Q And Lawrence Wilson?

25 A No. My dad was William Flury. Mona and I had a

1 different dad.

2 Q Okay. Mona's father was Lawrence Wilson?

3 A Yes, correct.

4 Q Same mother?

5 A Yeah, same mother.

6 Q And who do you have with you today? You can just
7 say her first name.

8 A This is my granddaughter Cassia.

9 Q Okay.

10 A Cassia.

11 Q Okay.

12 A She's four years old.

13 Q And do you have any other grandchildren?

14 A Yeah. I have my youngest granddaughter who was
15 named after Mona Lee, she is nine months, and I
16 also have two other grandkids that are back in
17 Edmonton, they're both three.

18 Q How many children do you have?

19 A I had four girls, and my oldest one is -- she
20 lives in Vancouver Island, and my youngest
21 daughter is in Edmonton.

22 Q You had five brothers and sisters. Did you grow
23 up together or separately?

24 A Well, I guess you can say our lives were -- we
25 came from a broken family because of a lot of

1 issues that had occurred back then with my mom's
2 issues. Fortunately I was the lucky one to have
3 been raised up by my grandparents. And my sister
4 Mona, a couple of siblings they ended up in a
5 foster home somewhere in the Lower Mainland here.
6 And other than that I've went through a lot of
7 experience of painful issues all through my life,
8 but this is whatever had to come between our lives
9 kept separating us to reunite and it never
10 happened. At least you can say that my brothers
11 and sisters never had -- we never had a chance to
12 grow up together because of the problems that were
13 occurring on back then, and --

14 Q Can you give us a little more detail about those
15 problems?

16 A Well, at the age of -- at the age of six years old
17 I was forced to go to residential school, and back
18 at the time I didn't realize about what rights my
19 grandparents had. I didn't know anything about --
20 anything about things like that, nor did my
21 grandparents, and they had no choice but to give
22 me up to the law, and they're the ones that
23 brought me to residential school. I was forced to
24 go there even though I didn't want to go there,
25 but that was forced against me. It was very scary

1 at the time. I couldn't defend myself. I was
2 brought to a place where I didn't have an idea
3 where I was going. I guess you can say that's
4 where all the problems started was in the
5 residential school that I experienced a lot of
6 issues. And today I still try to resolve my
7 painful issues from the past, and a lot of things
8 that are always trying to stop my life going to a
9 positive side of my life with my family. And now
10 that I'm a grandmother and I try to do what's
11 right for my grandchildren, make sure that they
12 don't walk the same road as my sisters did. But
13 sometimes it's very hard to fight the system,
14 because the system overpowers me sometimes when I
15 try to do what's right. And from there I guess my
16 siblings and I, we came from a broken home that
17 was shattered by alcohol and whatever abusive
18 stuff that had occurred then at the time.

19 Q You mentioned alcohol. Did that have an effect on
20 your life as well?

21 A I was a little girl that had -- I was a troubled
22 little girl back then, but people had just about
23 destroyed my life. I started drinking when I was
24 about nine or ten years old. Back then I didn't
25 realize a lot of things at the time. I didn't

1 have an idea what was right and wrong. But the
2 society always tried to point me to the right way,
3 in their right way. I was never right in the
4 first place on my side of the world. And I had to
5 experience a lot of painful issues back on the res
6 as well. I was bullied, I was picked on. And
7 then the more that happened to me the more I tried
8 to cover up my life with alcohol.

9 Q You're sober now?

10 A I've quit drinking. The day I learnt that my
11 sister was brutally murdered by Robert Pickton I
12 quit drinking to honour her memory. And what else
13 was I supposed to, you know, to re-connect with
14 her other than honouring her memory.

15 Q You were separated from Mona by the foster care
16 system, is that right, and you were unable to
17 remain in touch with her for a number of years,
18 but you re-connected later in life in
19 approximately the year 2000. Can you tell us
20 about that?

21 A First I'm going to share a little bit about back
22 in the early mid '90s, early '90s and mid '90s I
23 tried to re-connect with my sister. I used to
24 always come and look for her in Vancouver. At the
25 time all my daughters were small. But back at the

1 time the system didn't realize what was -- what
2 was then was going to become out of my sister. I
3 tried to reach out to people to know where she
4 was, but I never got that information where she
5 was. And back then again I kind of gave up hope
6 to try so hard to reach out to my little sister,
7 and I wanted to help her out because I knew she
8 had a lot of problems back then when she was on
9 doing them, and I wanted to help her in a lot of
10 ways to overcome all the things that destroyed
11 her. That's why she's not here. If people would
12 have worked with me back then -- if people would
13 have worked with me and focused at the time about
14 who she was, that somebody did care and that was
15 me, but back then the system didn't really --
16 didn't really -- it didn't matter to them, and
17 back then to this day, to this future I didn't
18 realize I was going to be dealing with losing her
19 that way. I got a phone call back in '99, 2000,
20 I'm just trying to -- around that area, and she
21 gave me a -- somebody called me on my cell phone,
22 and then I didn't know who it was, and then she
23 asked me if I was Lisa, and I said "Yes, you're
24 speaking to her." And then she said, "This is
25 Mona." Sorry, I just have to catch my breath.

1 MR. CHANTLER: Take your time.

2 THE COMMISSIONER: Would you like a break?

3 THE WITNESS: Huh?

4 THE COMMISSIONER: Would you like a break?

5 THE WITNESS: Yes, please.

6 THE REGISTRAR: The hearing will now recess for five minutes.

7 **(PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED AT 2:05 P.M.)**

8 **(PROCEEDINGS RESUMED AT 2:11 P.M.)**

9 THE REGISTRAR: Order. The hearing is now resumed.

10 MR. CHANTLER:

11 Q Ms. Bigjohn, before the break you were describing
12 to the commissioner the conversation you had with
13 Mona in 1999 when she called you. Can you tell us
14 a little bit more about that, and then I'll turn
15 back to Mona's early life and you can tell us a
16 bit about that as well. Finish your explanation,
17 if you will, of the conversation you had with her
18 in '99.

19 A As I was saying about her phone call that day, I
20 was very blown away too for her to have called me
21 because I thought at the time there was a lot of
22 -- a lot of -- my positive of reuniting with her
23 was in a positive way at the time. And she got in
24 touch with me, and I was very overwhelmed by it
25 not to have seen her so many years and talked with

1 her so many years. The conversations her and I
2 had, she was talking about she wanted to reach out
3 to me and come and live with me. I think that's
4 what she wanted to do, she wanted to reunite with
5 me to catch up on all the years that she missed
6 being with me. She wanted to know who I was, and
7 she wanted to get to know her nieces, she wanted
8 to get involved in their lives. A lot of things
9 that she wanted to -- that she hoped for. But
10 unfortunately again things got -- things got in
11 the way of our lives, and I moved on to Kamloops.
12 A lot of things I had -- I had hoped for and
13 wished for that would have come to reality to have
14 a life with her, again not knowing where she was
15 again and all the stuff that she had asked me
16 questions about her relatives. She had asked me
17 questions about how her mom -- how our mom was. A
18 lot of things that she was very, very -- that she
19 wanted to know about her family. I thought at the
20 time my prayers were answered to be reunited with
21 her and to have a life with her and to see her
22 again. I was very excited and looking forward to
23 seeing her in real life. All the years -- all the
24 years of searching for her has never gone anywhere
25 but through always ending up in a dead road and

1 not knowing where to turn next or where to look
2 for her or where to begin. And I lost in touch
3 with her. What things might have been if she was
4 around today, what could have been. I have a lot
5 of -- I have a lot of anger and all the years that
6 I had to try to overcome my anger to deal with a
7 dark life that I had to live with for all the
8 years, how to overcome this death. And I felt
9 very -- I felt betrayed by the system when I lost
10 in touch with her again, not realizing that the
11 next experience I was going to have hearing about
12 her when she went missing and I didn't know what
13 to think. My life became bitter again. And it's
14 just the experience of being -- living a painful
15 life I've always asked questions and tried to
16 speak on when is this darkness going to come over
17 me. All through my life my family was -- I'd lost
18 my family through drugs and alcohol. That could
19 have been prevented. Her life would have been
20 still here. I try to wonder and often think when
21 she was ripped out of my life not knowing what
22 kind of -- how this is going to affect my life.
23 It just about shattered my life. I just about
24 gave up hope. I don't know how many times I just
25 about gave up hope to it. I have a lot of regrets

1 I should have been there because she was my baby
2 sister and she was the one that left us first.
3 The youngest is the one that left. I've asked
4 questions continually. What kind of a person
5 would do that to people, hurting them and not
6 knowing how it affects people's lives and what
7 kind of damage that we have to live through. And
8 it has partly destroyed me, because the thing that
9 brought me back to life and made me strong again
10 is when my first granddaughter was born. I knew I
11 had a lot of reason to stay strong and focused to
12 challenge the system that I'm always challenging,
13 the system that always failed me over and over,
14 and the system had failed my family. It was a
15 very -- it was very wrong the things that I think
16 about. She could have been here and what might
17 have been of her and I today? It's always -- it's
18 always the system that always failed me and my
19 family.

20 Q How many children did Mona have?

21 A Well, according to the information about her I've
22 asked if she had any kids, and nobody seemed to
23 know if she had any kids or not. So I can't
24 really answer that one. I've tried to inquire
25 about that information, but nobody seemed to know

1 she had any kids.

2 Q Can you tell about Mona as a teenager, do you know
3 what her life was like then?

4 A Excuse me?

5 Q Can you tell us about Mona as a teenager?

6 A Well, when she was a teenager I've never really
7 was around her. At a very young age she ended up
8 on the streets. I believe she turned -- she
9 turned to her home to the streets and to seek out
10 the people around her, that was her family and the
11 streets is her family. Like I said when I first
12 started talking about her statement I tried to
13 reach out to her back then, back in the early
14 '90s, mid '90s I tried to reach out to her. A lot
15 of people had told me how she was -- she was a
16 good person, but I wanted to know. I wanted to
17 know more. I wanted to know myself. I wanted to
18 meet her in person. I wanted to know who she was.
19 And other than that I never really had a chance
20 unfortunately to see her. I've seen her when she
21 was about -- when she was about three or four
22 years old, and back at the time the last time I
23 had seen her that was back in the late -- I think
24 it was mid '70s was the last time I had seen her.

25 Q She was born January 13th, 1975?

1 A Correct.

2 Q You know that she was incarcerated for a period in
3 the Burnaby Correctional Centre in 2000?

4 A Correct.

5 Q And it's around that time that you had that phone
6 call from her and you started to re-connect?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And she called you fairly often from the Burnaby
9 Correctional Centre?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And you had conversations about each other's lives
12 and caught up with her?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Can you tell us a bit more about that and your
15 plans to re-connect after she was released?

16 A On her behalf of her life, and her and I used to
17 talk, she had wished a lot of things that she
18 wanted to do. She had spoken to me about a lot.
19 She wanted to change her life around. She wanted
20 to -- she wanted to leave the dark world that she
21 -- that she had -- that lost her where she lived
22 in the dark world. She wanted to change her life
23 around and come and live with me. But every time
24 I seem like I talked to her there was one little
25 negative voice that was coming from her. It was

1 about her boyfriend, he would do things here and
2 there that she told me about him, and I asked her
3 that -- I opened my doors for her in my home to
4 come and live with me. I gave her a home
5 regardless of who she was with. I told her just
6 for you to come and live with me, I'll give you --
7 I'm giving you my home to come and live with me.
8 But then that little voice of her boyfriend, I
9 didn't know her boyfriend at the time, didn't know
10 who the person was, but back then I wanted to not
11 be negative about anything about her side. I
12 tried to reach out to her through a phone. That
13 was the only way I could connect with her. Every
14 time she phoned me there was a lot of things that
15 she wanted to do in her life. She had dreams too,
16 just like other people, and they looked down like
17 who she was. The things that she used to tell me
18 that didn't make me feel very good how her life
19 had to become that way. And she mostly always
20 wanted to get away from that person, away from the
21 street. There's a lot of things that she could
22 have did if other people back then understood --
23 understood her reaching out for help, but in my
24 point of view this is why I'm here speaking on her
25 behalf. Now I can sit here and talk about my

1 sister who she was, because when she tried to
2 reach out for help and tried to talk to people she
3 was a nobody to them because of who she was. I
4 know that feeling because I've been in that
5 system, I lived on the street too for many years.
6 I know how the system is. A lot of lives could
7 have been prevented. Now unfortunately it wasn't
8 that way. A lot of things could have been --
9 could have been stopped. The people didn't care.
10 I cared. She was my sister. She was a human
11 being. It was just like anybody, but the person
12 that looked at her as who she was and what she
13 did, what she had to do for her life to survive.
14 Out there she had to fight to survive. What she
15 had to -- how she had to take care of herself. A
16 lot of things that she wanted to do to rebuild her
17 life, but mostly what she was looking for too was
18 reuniting with me and her nieces. She wanted to
19 meet them in person. She wanted to be -- she
20 wanted to be there for them. A lot of things her
21 and I talked about back then when we had the phone
22 conversations, a lot of stuff that she told me
23 about her negative life, the life that she had to
24 live out here, still today I don't understand, and
25 I don't know if I'll ever understand. I'm still

1 searching for answers. I guess the part that left
2 me really bitter was how she had to die has really
3 affected my life.

4 Q Ms. Bigjohn, Mona was released from the
5 correctional facility in Burnaby in 2001, and you
6 had planned to re-connect. Can you tell us what
7 happened and why you unfortunately weren't able to
8 re-connect?

9 A Just give me time. I'm sorry. Just give me a
10 second. I want to catch my breath. The life that
11 she wanted when she came out of the correction was
12 that she wanted to come and stay with me. She had
13 plans. She wanted to do a lot of things. She was
14 very excited to come and see me and her nieces.
15 She was looking forward to that. She wanted to do
16 a lot of things. We were going to go travelling
17 around. I was going to bring her to places, but I
18 guess that was just -- it was only a dream, the
19 dream that I've always had to re-connect with her
20 too and to have a life with her. There's a --
21 there was a lot of things that she wanted to do.
22 When she tracked me down and called me she told me
23 that I was the only hope that she had was reaching
24 out to me. Because I was her oldest sister she
25 said you'll understand me. Of all the

1 conversations that she wanted to -- what she
2 wanted to do, she wanted to meet her people in
3 Alberta. She's got a lot of relatives in Alberta
4 too, as well as BC. She talked about -- she
5 talked about wanting to native dancing, she said
6 because that made -- when she used to watch native
7 dancers that used to make her feel free. There's
8 a lot of things that she wanted to do, but
9 unfortunately it never went there. And the day
10 when I lost connect with her, I don't know, I used
11 to think something was stopping me from seeing her
12 or finding her. The anguished years that I had, I
13 was living in Abbotsford, I used to always come
14 over here to look for her. I was very concerned
15 about her. I wanted to reach out to her and get
16 her off the street and give her a proper home that
17 she deserved. She deserved a good life, but
18 nobody gave her that. The only life that she had
19 to go is a life that destroyed her and took her
20 away from us.

21 Q You learned from your sister Ada in 2001 that Mona
22 hadn't been seen for a while; is that right?

23 A Correct.

24 Q And what did Ada tell you?

25 A She just only gave me a brief message and said

1 that she was missing. Yeah, I only had a short
2 conversation with her and again I started
3 wondering to myself where am I supposed to start?
4 Where am I supposed to look? The only information
5 that she gave me was that she was missing. She
6 only spoke to me briefly.

7 Q And what did you do?

8 A At the time I was living in Kamloops and I was
9 still -- I was still drinking. I packed up my
10 stuff, I was with my husband, he's in the
11 courtroom here too, and we hiked over here to this
12 city. Little did I realize how frustrated I was
13 going to be looking for her, and how -- and how my
14 life -- how I had to deal with my life after the
15 time when I was looking for her. I felt very
16 frustrated by the system. I tried to reach out to
17 people to help me. My opinion -- in my opinion
18 nobody cared because that wasn't their sister,
19 that wasn't their mom, that wasn't their aunty,
20 that wasn't their relative. But they did not know
21 how I felt in here where this girl disappeared to.
22 I tried to reach out to some people, and the more
23 frustrated I got the more bitterness I became not
24 knowing what happened to my sister. Not knowing
25 if she's -- I used to wonder 'cause I didn't want

1 to think of the worst. I used to always try to
2 stay on the focused side to be positive, but
3 somehow part of me is telling me that it wasn't
4 good. I lived out here for about three months. I
5 slept all over outside, I begged for food, begging
6 from people to help me out. And I thought to
7 myself this is what she had to do, but in her way
8 she had to do it a different way, the fight to
9 survive. In all the three months that I was here
10 at the time looking for her I gave up hope. I
11 didn't want to, but nobody was working with me.
12 Nobody wanted to meet me. All I was to this
13 society was nothing but a drunken native person.
14 That's how they looked at me every time I asked
15 for help. Nobody wanted to listen to me because I
16 was a drunk. And I thought to myself for this
17 individual in the society that's why my sister is
18 not here.

19 Q What did you do in your search when you were
20 living down in the Downtown Eastside, did you
21 speak to people on the street, did you visit
22 organizations? Can you tell us a bit about what
23 you did?

24 A Well, when I was out there on my search I used to
25 talk to people, I went to some organizations and

1 reach out to the friendship centre, but they were
2 -- they did what they had to do back at the time
3 to try and help me out. Walking around with
4 her -- I used to carry around her picture. Talk
5 to some -- here and there I talked to the cops.
6 I've asked them, and the only response that I used
7 to get back from the law enforcement was they used
8 to check up her address and her name and that was
9 it. And sometimes I used to ask them why aren't
10 you guys writing this? Shouldn't you guys
11 supposed to be writing this, and they used to just
12 give me that look like who cares. You know, who
13 cares? We don't care. Why should we? And now
14 the picture is all clear today why my sister's not
15 here. I found some answers, but not all of them.
16 These people that were supposed to be there tried
17 to support on their behalf of their law
18 enforcement to try to do what they had to do to
19 help me out. I wasn't getting that at all. Like
20 I said back at the time I was a drunken native
21 person and I was just a drunk. They used to look
22 at me, you know, what are you talking about.
23 Well, back then I must have been -- I was a
24 nobody. My words were a nobody. My words were
25 invisible. Nobody was listening to me. So what

1 did I do? I walked, walked and walked looking for
2 this girl. I don't know, I must have walked
3 around this whole Vancouver city looking for that
4 girl. I had to do what I had to do. Even though
5 they had that system out here that was supposed to
6 work with us, that was supposed to meet us half
7 ways with our loved ones disappearing, what did
8 they do? In their eyes it was all about them, it
9 was never about -- it was never about my sister,
10 her friends or us relatives.

11 Q What are you referring to specifically?

12 A The liaison workers back at the time they had them
13 that was working with the Vancouver cops.

14 Q Is that the Vancouver Police Native Liaison
15 Society?

16 A Yes.

17 Q You had some dealings with the employees there?

18 A Yup.

19 Q Can you tell us about that experience?

20 A I went into that Vancouver cop station here and
21 they had these native liaison workers working in
22 there that was supposed to be helping us families.
23 I went in there, tried to talk -- tried to talk to
24 the native liaison worker, but they weren't too
25 interested. They used to just be talking to some

1 other people about nothing that they shouldn't
2 even be talking about. I stood there. I tried to
3 talk to the law enforcement. Back in my knowledge
4 they never had time to talk to me. They didn't
5 have any time to talk to me because I was just a
6 -- my words are nothing to them in how they used
7 to look at me. But the one thing that really
8 pissed me off is that when I tried to tell them
9 about this girl, where is she, why are people not
10 doing anything about looking for these girls, and
11 I haven't got no response back. I got thrown in
12 jail a couple of times just because of that, my
13 attitude trying to stick up for my sister got
14 thrown in jail. What was that supposed to do? I
15 didn't do nothing. They only gave me more hate
16 and bitterness.

17 Q When you reported your sister's disappearance to
18 the workers at the Vancouver Police Native Liaison
19 Society, did they offer to get the police involved
20 in a search?

21 A I remember -- back at the time I remember talking
22 to one of the native liaison workers, she just
23 pointed me to talk to one of the cops that was
24 there who was available. And like I said talking
25 to the Vancouver cops was impossible. It was

1 never, never easy for me to talk to these people
2 'cause how they judge me and how they looked at me
3 and how they looked down on me of my concern and
4 information who my sister was. They didn't have
5 to do anything. And again I was on my way with my
6 husband looking for this girl, and there were
7 organizations there that was supposed to help us
8 out, but all they ever did was give us words. The
9 words weren't even any good to my searching. That
10 got me just more frustrated. I did what I had to
11 do to look for my sister, I know, because the only
12 people that tried to give me a little help was the
13 people that knew some of the people that cared
14 about her, that knew her. Sometimes I was told
15 that she was seen alive recently. And I didn't
16 know what to think. I didn't know what to think
17 when people used to tell me that they seen her.
18 And I used to wonder well, if this girl was seen
19 then why, how come these people don't know about
20 it then? Why aren't they telling me that
21 information when people used to tell me that they
22 seen her recently? And I got another negative
23 answer, other people tell me that she -- that she
24 was missing. And I got a few people where she was
25 last seen and who she went with and who was the

1 last person that seen her. I tried to reach out
2 to her boyfriend, but it was impossible to talk
3 with her boyfriend because he was very -- when I
4 first met him he was very -- he was very edgy. He
5 wasn't helpful at all to me. I tried to talk to
6 him about my sister, but he never gave me really
7 answers, and he didn't speak much. And then I go
8 by that Vancouver liaison workers there once in a
9 while just to see if they had anything updated,
10 any new information. Still the same thing. Then
11 I used to try to get to say my words. You know,
12 what was I supposed to do? The only person that
13 was out there searching for my sister was me and
14 my husband. I did not see one person to try to
15 come up to me and give me comfort or try to give
16 me support to tell me we're helping, we're doing
17 all we can. Never once I heard anybody say that
18 to me.

19 Q Did you try and get the Vancouver Police engaged
20 in the search for your sister?

21 A A few times I've -- a few times I've -- I went to
22 the Vancouver Police station, try to talk to a few
23 cops there. And while I was walking around out
24 there looking for her I come across -- I used to
25 come across some cops too. They didn't do

1 nothing, they didn't do nothing for my sister.
2 All they did was give me useless answers. Used to
3 look up her address and her name. And I tried to
4 tell them that, you know, I think something
5 happened to my sister. Nobody seems to know where
6 she is or doesn't seem to know if she's still
7 alive. I said I want to know. I said I want to
8 know if my sister's still alive or what happened
9 to her. Like I said even on that search I was a
10 nobody to society. I was a nobody to the system
11 that is supposed to be out here supporting us.
12 That's why I got so frustrated with the system,
13 and I often wonder why -- why a lot of these girls
14 were let down and who they were, but -- and I had
15 to watch how I had to talk to those people too at
16 the Vancouver cops and liaison workers, because
17 back at the time I was -- I guess you can say I
18 was a very angry person because I was frustrated
19 not finding my sister. I used to get mad at these
20 people. I used to ask them. You know, I tell
21 people you guys are not in my shoes, you don't
22 know how I feel to find my sister. I said
23 nobody's not doing anything to help me find my
24 sister.

25 Q Can you describe the attitude of the police

1 officers who you met on the street?

2 A Some of them used to look at me real ignorant.
3 They had an ignorant attitude towards me. To them
4 that wasn't a concern or wasn't important to them.
5 But what I -- what I've seen coming from them is
6 when -- when I used to wander around where my
7 sister, where she used to hang around, I quite
8 often wander around over there too, walked around
9 over there. I could not believe what I've seen.
10 You don't need to get out of hand to be arrested,
11 you just have to watch your attitude and watch
12 what you say. When I tried to talk to one of the
13 cops they said -- back then I used to be
14 intimidated by cops because of how they used to
15 talk to me and how they used to treat me. I'm not
16 going to sit here and lie and say that I wasn't
17 scared of them. This is the way how they used to
18 have their attitude towards me. I guess back then
19 I used to be intimidated by them. This is why I
20 had to learn over the years overcome that fear, a
21 fear from the law enforcement because I had to pay
22 attention very closely to watch their actions and
23 their attitudes, how they talked to people and how
24 they treat them. A lot of people got treated very
25 bad by the system and here I'm trying to raise a

1 concern about looking for my sister, but that
2 wasn't a concern to them. They didn't have to do
3 anything about it. But when we got -- I got
4 thrown in jail a few times here because of how I
5 talked to them and who I was. Well, when it came
6 to that concern it was -- it was no worth to be
7 recognized and dealt with.

8 Q Did any of the officers you spoke to refer you to
9 the Vancouver Police Missing Persons Unit?

10 A I'm trying to think who gave me that information.
11 I think it was some of the liaison workers that
12 told me that I can get in touch with the Vancouver
13 cops, but during that time in my search back at
14 the time it was impossible to talk to these guys
15 because it wasn't something that they were worried
16 about. They weren't even worried about anything.
17 In my eyes -- in my eyes the attitude I used to
18 get from them is they didn't care. That's how I
19 got treated to look for my sister whether she was
20 alive or whatever had become of her. Some people
21 used to tell me that, you know, a few things, but
22 I didn't know which one to follow or believe. But
23 these guys that were supposed to be working with
24 the missing murdered women, they never watched out
25 for them, they never cared about them. Why do you

1 think a lot of those women went missing, because
2 if they recognized who they were, the people what
3 they did when they disappeared. They didn't take
4 no action, 'cause it was -- it was nothing to
5 them.

6 Q Ms. Bigjohn, did any of the officers you spoke to
7 advise you perhaps after looking through their
8 computer system that your sister had been reported
9 missing to the Vancouver Police Missing Persons
10 Unit by her boyfriend in November of 2001?

11 A Say that again, please? I'm hard of hearing
12 sometimes.

13 Q Did any of the police officers you spoke to
14 perhaps after looking on their computer, which you
15 said they did a couple of times, did they tell you
16 that Mona had been reported missing by her
17 boyfriend?

18 A No. No, all they did was look up her name in the
19 computer, her name and address. I didn't even
20 know -- I didn't even know back at the time how
21 her boyfriend looked, but I never -- I never
22 received any information that she was missing or
23 somebody tell me that she was missing. I wasn't
24 aware of any information on her behalf.

25 Q So none of the police officers you spoke to

1 connected the person you were looking for with a
2 name that was in their system as a missing person
3 already, and perhaps that would have led to them
4 piquing their interest and asking a few more
5 questions. That never happened?

6 A Say that again?

7 Q I'm just trying to determine whether any police
8 officer made the connection when you spoke to them
9 between the information you were providing and the
10 person you were looking for and a person that
11 should have already been in their system, your
12 sister Mona Wilson?

13 A M'hm.

14 Q Did that connection ever get made?

15 A No.

16 Q Okay.

17 A No.

18 Q How did you learn that Mona was eventually
19 connected to Pickton's property?

20 A I had to find out through -- I had to find out
21 through -- they had news, and it was on the news
22 that my sister's DNA was tested positive there at
23 the pig farm.

24 Q So despite all of your efforts to engage the
25 police while you were searching for your sister

1 you ultimately learned of your sister's connection
2 to the pig farm through the news; is that right?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Okay. And how do you feel about that? Do you
5 feel that could have been handled better?

6 A I don't know where to begin to tell you about that
7 because that's a very -- that's a very --
8 something I'm against because a lot -- a lot of
9 these girls that went missing, people had tried to
10 report them missing especially from their family.
11 A lot of lives could have been prevented. My
12 sister still would have been here. The system
13 failed her as well as other missing women. We
14 have to do in our power, every power in our way to
15 try to search for these, our loved ones, not
16 knowing whatever happened to them or what we were
17 going to learn. I did not realize I was going to
18 learn the hard way that my sister was brutally
19 murdered. I still think today when I was out here
20 back at the time when she was missing. But only
21 God knows that. Only God knows what has happened
22 to a lot of these women. A lot of people have
23 been failed. Little did I know that the next in
24 life I was going to reunite with my sister. I
25 didn't realize that I was going to reunite with

1 her her being brutally murdered. And I have every
2 right to feel this way. I have every right to
3 feel this way how I am today, because I had to
4 lose my sister. I'm still -- I'm still living
5 with that, how I had to lose her and how I had to
6 accept that she left me. I'm living with that
7 pain only us we know. There's a lot of things
8 that could have been prevented from us losing our
9 loved ones, but it wasn't supposed to be the way
10 that she was supposed to die. I didn't want her
11 to die like that. That's what's so hard over the
12 years. I try to overcome to try to learn to let
13 go. It gave me a lot of bitterness. I don't know
14 what to think of the Vancouver cops. I don't know
15 what to think of them. They could have prevented
16 a lot of lives that were taken (sic). We didn't
17 deserve to be hurt like this. My sister didn't
18 deserve to die like that. But it didn't matter to
19 them anyways because they didn't live with it.
20 Now we're living with it. And we're still living
21 with it. We're still living in hell to try and
22 let our loved ones to go, to accept whether we
23 like it or not it wasn't our choice for them to
24 die like that. It was their choice, not ours.
25 These girls were somebody that loved them. They

1 were human beings that was loved by their
2 families. I want to ask this commissioner a
3 question.

4 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

5 THE WITNESS: Can you understand how I feel? Can you
6 understand the anguish that I lived in hell? Do
7 you realize how much damage this did to our lives,
8 and how the system that was there to protect these
9 girls that were supposed to be protected but they
10 were failed. I want to know why they were failed.
11 I've been waiting so long to ask you this why
12 these girls were failed.

13 THE COMMISSIONER: Well, that's why we're here, Ms. Bigjohn, to
14 find out what happened and why these things
15 happened. And I'm thankful that you're here to
16 tell me what you went through, and we need to hear
17 from you on that. We don't have the answers yet.
18 We've heard a lot -- we've heard from a lot of
19 different people. A lot of people have told us a
20 lot of different things. And I know -- I accept
21 that you've gone through hell. You've just -- you
22 know, we're all here listening to you, and I can
23 tell you that everybody here hearts go out to you
24 for what you've gone through. I can't imagine
25 anything worse than having a loved one die, and

1 particularly a loved one die in the way that Mona
2 died. So we're just so sympathetic to everything
3 that's happened to you and your family. And, you
4 know, Mona was a young woman, she was a young
5 woman, and what she went through and the suffering
6 she's gone through that's why we're here listening
7 to you, and we want to hear from you how you've
8 gone through this and how your family has gone
9 through this, so we're -- I wish I had some easy
10 answers to you, and I wish I could tell you that
11 Mona sometime would come back, but that's the
12 tragedy of all of this. It's terribly tragic, so
13 we're here listening to you.

14 MR. CHANTLER: Ms. Bigjohn, would you like a minute?

15 THE WITNESS: Sure.

16 THE COMMISSIONER: Would you like a break?

17 THE WITNESS: Yes, please.

18 THE COMMISSIONER: Okay.

19 THE REGISTRAR: The hearing will now recess for ten minutes.

20 **(PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED AT 3:06 P.M.)**

21 **(PROCEEDINGS RESUMED AT 3:21 P.M.)**

22 THE REGISTRAR: Order. The hearing is now resumed.

23 MR. CHANTLER: Neil Chantler, counsel for the families.

24 Mr. Commissioner, Ms. Bigjohn asked me during the
25 break if she could be accompanied by her daughter

1 for her final comments with your leave.

2 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

3 MR. CHANTLER: And I believe her daughter may have a word at
4 the end.

5 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

6 MR. CHANTLER: And perhaps just by way of protocol she --

7 THE REGISTRAR: Do you wish me to affirm her now? Good
8 afternoon. If you're going to make some comments
9 I will need to affirm you. So if you'd just push
10 the button there.

11 **SUSAN ROBINSON: Affirmed**

12 THE REGISTRAR: Would you state your name, please.

13 THE WITNESS: Susan Robinson.

14 THE REGISTRAR: Thank you. Counsel.

15 MR. CHANTLER:

16 Q Thank you. Ms. Bigjohn, I only have a couple more
17 questions for you, and I'll start with maybe a
18 personal question. You've travelled quite a long
19 way to be here and participate in this process,
20 and perhaps you can tell the commissioner what
21 you're hoping to get out of your participation in
22 this commission of inquiry?

23 A Well, my focus is on what I've always focused on
24 is that there needs to be more safety for these
25 girls to be protected and people need to know --

1 they need to start understanding that how much --
2 how much damage has been done in these families,
3 and they have to start realizing that they need to
4 start recognizing who these people are regardless
5 of what they are and what they do. But I've said
6 in the beginning all through my life I've
7 experienced a system of not being there for me. I
8 had a bad experience of the system all through my
9 life. There needs to be more awareness of who
10 these people are and they need to -- they need to
11 start focusing about their safety, not to just do
12 -- if I was to say what I wanted to say from my
13 heart when my sister was alive walking on this
14 earth she would have been here today, but
15 unfortunately she's not. I want these guys to
16 start paying attention about lives, lives that get
17 taken for no reason. They deserve to be
18 recognized who they are. They deserve to have
19 that system work with them. Other people -- other
20 people have seen this. This seems to be a game to
21 them not realizing the consequences that us
22 families, how devastating. These people, they
23 need to start doing their job and they need to
24 start working with the First Nations, the First
25 Nations that work on the street, they need to work

1 with them, they need to understand what and who
2 they are. The only way that we get addressed when
3 we get out of hand is a negative way. I've been
4 through that system for how long when I was a
5 drunk. They need to start focusing, recognizing
6 to be there for them. Why I say this is because
7 all the years since I've been sober all through my
8 life I want these guys to start opening up their
9 eyes to start realizing who these people are.
10 They need to do more for them. They need to start
11 recognizing who they are. They need to start
12 giving them their respect. When they want respect
13 they get it. Why? Because they demand for it.
14 And if we get out of hand what goes beyond that is
15 beyond them. But my sister's been failed through
16 many years of who she was in the system that had
17 failed her, that was never here for her. If
18 people like that can't work with the homeless
19 people, the street people like that, then what are
20 they doing even bothering to be out there only
21 protecting their society and who they want to
22 protect. All my years I've seen the law
23 enforcement how they abuse their system and what
24 they do beyond that. These are not -- these
25 people are not just anybody, they were our people.

1 They were our people that were never recognized.
2 For so many years I try to seek answers and look
3 for answers why she wasn't protected and helped.
4 Like I said a lot of lives could have been
5 prevented. They didn't do it that way though.
6 That wasn't our choice. We didn't make that
7 choice. It's always -- it's always about whose
8 choice it is, what we want. These people, they
9 need to start doing their job to serve and protect
10 these people that they deserve to get it
11 irregardless of who they were and what a person
12 does. It's not for them to judge us, but they do
13 anyways. I'm sick and tired of the system failing
14 these people that need their help. They need to
15 start protecting lives. You need to start doing
16 more for these people. And if this never comes to
17 a stop it's going to continuously go on and on.
18 It's been going on how many centuries now? I have
19 every right to speak over here for my sister. I
20 have every right to speak for her. I have every
21 right to say that should have been, what could
22 have been today if she was around. But she was
23 nobody to society and that's why she's not here
24 today because the system failed her. These
25 people, they need to start paying attention more

1 closely and to start listening to these people,
2 but it doesn't go that way for them. It's always
3 a negative way that we have to deal with. It
4 doesn't matter who she was, what she did, she was
5 a part of my life. Something that I thought I
6 would never do was something I thought I was never
7 ever going to be traumatized of how it affected my
8 life. I want to see these people giving their
9 respect to these people. They need to start doing
10 a lot for these people that need their help. They
11 have to quit ignoring them. They have to quit
12 ignoring who they are. It's not for them to judge
13 who they are and how they want to judge their law
14 enforcement. I waited so long to speak to the
15 nation. Now that I'm finally here speaking for my
16 sister she's not here now. She could have been.
17 But people need to start realizing how much damage
18 it does. You people don't have to live with that.
19 We live with it, and we know how it feels. It
20 just about shattered my life how I lost my sister.
21 It's not right for them to be ignored. The system
22 has really really failed me. People need to start
23 caring. They need to start paying attention more
24 close. Somebody was taken away from me, and I
25 never thought I'd realize to deal with her. The

1 system out there should be watching these people,
2 taking care of them. We have feelings. We cry.
3 When we lose a loved one it's very hard to deal
4 with that. Like we don't deserve to lose a loved
5 one for a person to be brutally murdered like
6 that. We don't deserve for a person to go that
7 way. That's why God gives lives. He gives lives
8 and takes lives. Nobody else has got no right to
9 be taking other people's lives for what? It's not
10 fair for us to live through this, to live through
11 this hell. What did we do? My sister especially.
12 She never did nothing to anybody. It's very hard
13 to live with this and knowing the system is out
14 there that can do a better job watching out for
15 these women for their safety. But like I said it
16 doesn't matter to them because they were the ones
17 that had to deal with that kind of life. You guys
18 need to start serving and protecting these people.
19 If you can't work with them it's never going to
20 change. The same attitude in law enforcement is
21 there. Get somebody else to work with these women
22 that understands it. Get a First Nation worker
23 out there to work with these people, to speak for
24 them, to advocate for them. That's why we're
25 supposed to look up to law enforcement to serve

1 and protect us. I've been failed, but most of all
2 that's been failed is my sister, she was failed.

3 MR. CHANTLER: Ms. Robinson, do you have some words for the
4 commissioner before we end for the day?

5 MS. ROBINSON: Do I press this button?

6 MR. CHANTLER: Yes.

7 MS. ROBINSON: Well, what I wanted to say on behalf of my aunty
8 is that I remember as growing up I remember my mom
9 used to drive around, like literally drive up each
10 street and I used to question her why we were in
11 Vancouver, and of course I was young and she never
12 really wanted to give me the full out information,
13 she just said we're basically -- we were just
14 there, you know, on our part she explained to us
15 as kids just to have fun. But inside my mom was
16 hurting, you know, I didn't know that she had all
17 this pain, because I was a young child so she
18 didn't want to expose me to that type of
19 information. But when I found out what happened
20 to my aunty when I was 16 years old my mom
21 explained to me about why we were going to
22 Vancouver, you know, and why we were driving
23 around for so long. Because we never really
24 actually like went to any places, and when I was
25 young I questioned why we never stopped anywhere,

1 why we only gassed up and we just kept on driving,
2 you know. And now I understand what happened to
3 her, you know, and how she loved us and
4 everything. I just wanted to explain like how I
5 feel about this. I don't really have any
6 questions, but I just -- I just wish that like the
7 age that I am now that I wish that I could have
8 been, you know, that age many years ago, because I
9 would have been there with my mom looking for her,
10 you know, going everywhere just to find her.
11 These people that used to have contact with her,
12 they used to know where she was, but what I don't
13 get is why did they keep my mom away from her if
14 they understood that she needed that help? Why
15 did they keep my mom away from her, because my mom
16 was willing to shelter her, to feed her, to clothe
17 her, to do anything that will better her life, you
18 know. She wanted to be a mother figure to her
19 sister because she knew that, you know, that's
20 what she needed. My aunty just needed the right
21 guidance, and nobody didn't want to give her that
22 type of support. And what I don't understand is
23 all these organizations out here, you know, like
24 they just give them clothes and food and they send
25 them off back out to the street. What they were

1 doing before they went there, you know, they
2 reached out for a lot of people for help and, you
3 know, they never got anywhere with their feelings,
4 you know, with their past, their history, because
5 people just think, you know what, that that
6 happens to this person, you know, and they just
7 expect people to deal with it on their own. You
8 know, but when there's a problem two people
9 working together is better than one. And I'm just
10 -- I'm -- what makes me kind of proud is that I
11 can be here and speak on behalf of my aunty, and
12 that I'm here to support my mom because my aunty
13 never got that type of support that she needed.
14 You know, and it was hard when I heard what
15 happened to her. Like when I had to read that
16 inside the newspaper her hands being shoved inside
17 her skull, like who wants to hear that? Who wants
18 to hear that? Nobody does. You know, and if that
19 happened to my sisters I would really want justice
20 for my sisters. And I'm thankful that my mom is a
21 good mom and she kept us together and she still
22 has her daughters with her, you know. And I'm
23 just thankful that I have my mom. But, you know,
24 my Aunty Mona could never say I'm thankful to have
25 this person or that person. Inside her life she

1 thought that she was a hopeless case as a human.
2 Why? Because everybody made her feel like that.
3 All of her surroundings. Her living. Nobody ever
4 wanted to bring her up, give her a helping hand to
5 get up. You know, that's what makes me have a lot
6 of anger, because I would like never keep my
7 sister away from my other sister, you know, and
8 that's what her other siblings did. You know, and
9 that's why I don't have any use for my other
10 aunties or uncles, you know, because I understand
11 now like what -- you know, what she went through,
12 what type of pain that she suffered. And me, I'm
13 on this earth and I have a chance to, you know,
14 let other people know that you don't have to be
15 alone, you don't have to do the things that you
16 do. You know, like I would help a complete
17 stranger, you know. But the thing is that people
18 give up on somebody when they realize that they
19 have a lot of problems of their past history. You
20 know, things just don't like get worked out
21 overnight, they could take years and months. But
22 the thing is is that what hurts me that people
23 gave up on her. Like that's what hurts me. You
24 know, and I'm reading these comments that people
25 used to talk to her, usually they used to phone

1 her foster parents, and all those people that used
2 to listen to her and that could have been there
3 for her and they could prevented her death. They
4 could have helped her get off the streets. You
5 know, they could have done everything for her, but
6 the thing is the only reason why I'm thinking the
7 way she was is because she's seen that everybody
8 just wanted to give up on her just because of who
9 she was. You know, and that's why she led herself
10 down that path. You know, and nobody didn't want
11 to, you know, take her off that path or help her,
12 and that's what really upsets me. And reading all
13 of this stuff, like, you know, I'm glad to know
14 this information, but it's like killing me inside
15 from the outside, you know, because I could have
16 met her years ago. Like years ago she could have
17 been with us, you know. But I don't know why
18 people prevented that from happening. Like if
19 they weren't willing to help her and if my mom was
20 then they should have let my mom help her, you
21 know, but she was kept away.

22 MR. CHANTLER: Thank you, Ms. Robinson, and thank you,
23 Ms. Bigjohn.

24 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

25 MR. CHANTLER: Those are my questions for you. Those are my

1 questions, Mr. Commissioner.

2 THE COMMISSIONER: I take it there are no questions?

3 MS. HUNT: I have questions.

4 THE COMMISSIONER: You have questions?

5 THE REGISTRAR: Mr. Chantler, you wish to have that document,
6 the photograph marked?

7 MR. CHANTLER: Yes, please.

8 THE REGISTRAR: Yes, marked as Exhibit 143.

9 **(EXHIBIT 143: Photograph of Mona Wilson)**

10 MS. HUNT: Mr. Commissioner, Elizabeth Hunt appearing as
11 counsel for the aboriginal interest.

12 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. HUNT:**

13 Q I just had a few questions arising from your
14 earlier testimony regarding whether Mona had any
15 children or not, and what I heard you say was that
16 you didn't think that she had any children but it
17 wasn't conclusive?

18 A Was it what? Sorry.

19 Q It wasn't final, that you weren't for sure. I was
20 just wanting to know how much information had been
21 provided from the agencies to you and your family
22 about whether maybe Mona -- because you were
23 separated from her for a period of time maybe she
24 did have children and they were adopted out, but
25 whether you had ever been informed by the agencies

1 who would have been in charge of something like
2 that to your family?

3 A Well, I tried to find out that information on my
4 own. It was very -- it was impossible. Every
5 time I tried to reach out to people about her it
6 just seemed like people didn't want to give me
7 information or say anything to me. It was
8 impossible to work with people like that have a
9 native attitude towards another person. And so at
10 the time I just left it alone as it was, and still
11 today I never heard of any information of her
12 having any kids. I still don't know today.

13 Q And I was just wondering whether her First Nation
14 band was ever involved in helping with locating
15 her when she was missing?

16 A Yeah, I tried to reach out to the community and --
17 let me put it this way. The community that I come
18 from they like to work native against people too,
19 their people, they let them down. And I tried to
20 ask out for their support, never got any support
21 from them. And when I find out people don't care
22 like that I just -- I walk away. What is the use
23 of me standing there and trying to ask people to
24 care when they don't care anyways because it's not
25 them -- it's not them that's -- that are being

1 whatever happened to my sister.

2 Q About the community, do you think many of the
3 issues of the community not helping you, do you
4 think your community suffers from many of the
5 issues that all of the First Nation communities
6 are suffering with, the residential schools and
7 issues that have been talked about today with
8 abuse?

9 A Well, the community itself has a lot of issues,
10 their own problems. They live in a lot of denial.
11 And this is why I don't live in a community,
12 because it's more -- I have a more better
13 lifestyle in the urban cities than I do in the
14 community. Why I say that is because my community
15 is corrupted by a lot of stuff. What they do
16 behind closed doors is beyond them. But I left my
17 community when I was very young. And I tried to
18 reach out to them about my sister's disappearance,
19 and when I know that they didn't -- they didn't
20 care or try to guide with me their support I don't
21 bother them, because like I said the community
22 itself has a lot of corruption problems too, and
23 they're only concerned about their own issues.
24 Heavy issues like I would reach out to them for
25 supporting they don't acknowledge, so we have to

1 do what we have to do to try -- to support we have
2 to do what we have to do to interact with the
3 world out there and to speak for ourselves. And
4 if they cared, they care about their people, maybe
5 a lot of community people would move on from the
6 communities and that, 'cause we had experienced a
7 lot of issues in the community and that's why I
8 left the community.

9 Q And just a final question. Did you ever hear from
10 Aboriginal Affairs regarding Mona's disappearance?
11 Did anybody from the membership ever contact you,
12 did anybody from Aboriginal Affairs ever contact
13 you?

14 A You mean the organizations from here in Vancouver?

15 Q Any of the regional offices or Ottawa, anybody
16 from Indian and Northern Affairs? They're now
17 called Indian affairs and Northern Development,
18 but --

19 A Well, my community didn't do anything about it,
20 they never gave me support, and I never -- I never
21 heard anything. Nobody has ever tried to talk to
22 me or get in touch with me about her. It was just
23 left as it is. Like how -- how it goes on to
24 generations to generations and the people -- if
25 people would start recognizing these issues and

1 then it would be a lot easier to work with the
2 agencies and communities and other aboriginal
3 services, our lives would be more easier. Like we
4 have to do what we have to do to fight to survive
5 out here with our own support and standing for
6 ourselves and speak. I speak for my family, and
7 other than it's -- it's a lot of corruption behind
8 in the community and -- like I said if there was a
9 better caring system in this world then things
10 would be a lot easier for us.

11 MS. HUNT: Thank you. I don't have any more questions.

12 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. All right.

13 THE COMMISSIONER: Go ahead.

14 MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Commissioner. Ms. Bigjohn,
15 Ms. Robinson, I represent the Vancouver Police
16 Department, and I first want to thank you for
17 coming and speaking and giving us your evidence
18 about your sister and about your search, and on
19 behalf of the department I want to apologize that
20 Pickton was not found sooner, and express the
21 department's sympathies for your loss. I've
22 looked at the documents, and as Mr. Chantler was
23 speaking with you, it appears that Mona's
24 boyfriend Steve reported Mona missing to the
25 Vancouver Police on November 30th, 2001. At that

1 time there was a joint task force, it was called
2 Evenhanded, Project Evenhanded, between the VPD
3 and the RCMP to look into the missing women, and
4 they took over the investigation into Mona's
5 disappearance on December 4th, 2001, and it was
6 assigned to a couple of detectives. And when I
7 look through the documents it seems that quite a
8 few -- that there was a substantial investigation.
9 And, Mr. Commissioner, what I propose to do is to
10 have an affidavit, a brief affidavit sent out that
11 just sets out some of the major steps in that
12 investigation and file that. I've discussed that
13 with my friend Mr. Chantler, and I'll seek to
14 tender that just to give some explanation.

15 THE COMMISSIONER: That might be the appropriate way of doing
16 it. I'm sure -- I'm sure that Ms. Bigjohn going
17 through the evidence that she's gone through
18 already, and it's been a difficult afternoon for
19 her, extremely difficult, and I'm sympathetic to
20 her and I'd prefer if you not cross-examine her on
21 what the Vancouver Police did or what Evenhanded
22 did or any of what the policing agencies did. I
23 think it would be unfair to cross-examine her on
24 that. I just think that it's been a very
25 emotional and difficult time for her. All right.

1 MR. DICKSON: Yes, I can see that, and I hope that the
2 affidavit will provide some answers.

3 THE COMMISSIONER: All right. Thank you.

4 MR. VERTLIEB: I think that's --

5 THE COMMISSIONER: Ms. Bigjohn, thank you very much for coming.
6 I know how difficult this has been for you to talk
7 about all of these things, and particularly the
8 loss of Mona. It is important that you come here
9 and tell us about these things otherwise nothing's
10 going to change. And as you said, and I've
11 listened to you, we've all listened to you very
12 carefully about things that need to change, and
13 that's clearly been your message to us that things
14 have to change and we need to care more about
15 people who are poor and people who are not able to
16 look after themselves. And so you've been very
17 helpful coming here, and I just want you to know
18 that I know it's difficult for you to talk about
19 these things because of the tragedy that you've
20 gone through, the loss that you've suffered, but I
21 just want you to know that I really appreciate you
22 coming here. Thank you, both of you. All right.
23 Thank you. Okay.

24 **(WITNESSES EXCUSED)**

25 MR. VERTLIEB: Just a couple of things, Mr. Commissioner. I

1 think we should mark an affidavit of Mr. Hiscox.
 2 He had been consulting with Mr. Chantler and has
 3 now sworn, and there's been some discussion, it's
 4 not critical, but there's been effort go in to
 5 preparing the affidavit, I think we should have it
 6 marked as an exhibit.

7 THE COMMISSIONER: All right.

8 MR. VERTLIEB: This has been distributed.

9 THE COMMISSIONER: Okay.

10 MR. DICKSON: Yes, Mr. Commissioner, Tim Dickson for the
 11 Vancouver police. I believe that affidavit was
 12 distributed yesterday, I have not had a chance to
 13 review it, and I would ask that it be marked for
 14 identification at this time.

15 THE COMMISSIONER: All right.

16 MR. VERTLIEB: Okay. That's fine. And tomorrow we have Roxana
 17 Smith at eleven, and Mr. Chantler has one more
 18 witness that he believes would require no more,
 19 absolutely no more than one-half hour. So the
 20 suggestion I make to you and everyone is that we
 21 start at 10:30, deal with Mr. Chantler's witness
 22 and then at eleven deal with Ms. Smith. Part of
 23 the reason we're doing that is to accommodate
 24 counsel who cannot be here at 9:30 and wish to
 25 hear all of Ms. Smith's evidence.

1 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

2 MR. VERTLIEB: So we're just making due. And as we get into
3 the last few weeks of the inquiry obviously
4 there's less flexibility in our schedule so we are
5 having to be more firm on when witnesses are
6 called, and we'll do our best to accommodate
7 counsel as we're doing with Ms. Smith with a bit
8 of a late start to accommodate, but we could not
9 put her off for another day as requested, and that
10 you'll be hearing more and more as the last number
11 of witnesses are brought forward.

12 THE COMMISSIONER: All right. Thank you.

13 MR. VERTLIEB: So if we start then tomorrow at 10:30, please.
14 I'll give you this, Mr. Giles, and you can mark it
15 for identification once we conclude.

16 THE REGISTRAR: Yes, that will be marked for identification EE,
17 double E.

18 **(EXHIBIT EE FOR IDENTIFICATION: Affidavit of**
19 **William Douglas Hiscox dated April 16, 2012)**

20 MR. VERTLIEB: Thank you, Mr. Commissioner.

21 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

22 THE REGISTRAR: The hearing is now adjourned for the day and
23 will resume at 10:30 tomorrow morning.

24

25

1 **(PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED AT 4:03 P.M.)**

2

3 I hereby certify the foregoing to be a

4 true and accurate transcript of the

5 proceedings transcribed herein to the

6 best of my skill and ability.

7

8

9 Peri McHale

10 Official Reporter

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