

Participant Consultations Session

Commissioners / Commissaires

The Honourable / L'honorable J. Michael MacDonald,
Chair / Président

Leanne J. Fitch (Ret. Police Chief, M.O.M)

Dr. Kim Stanton

Audio file(s): 20220916_Consultation Group 1_AUD

Held at :

Mass Casualty Commission Office
128 Esplanade Street
Truro, Nova Scotia
B2N 2K3

Friday, September 16, 2022

Tenue à:

Bureau de la Commission des pertes massives
128, rue Esplanade
Truro, Nouvelle-Écosse
B2N 2K3

Vendredi, le 16 septembre 2022

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II Appearances / Comparutions

Mrs. Deb Thibeault	Resident of Portapique
Mr. Richard Ellison	Father of Corrie Ellison
Mr. Harry Bond	Son of Joy and Peter Bond.
Mrs. Crystal Mendiuk	Sister to Jolene Oliver, Aunt of Emily Tuck, and Sister-in-law of Aaron Tuck
Mr. Ryan Farrington	Son to Dawn and Frank Gulenchyn
Mr. Leo Artalejo	Facilitator
Mr. Jamie VanWart	Commission Counsel
Ms. Grace MacCormick	Counsel
Mr. Josh Bryson	Counsel
Mr. Michael MacDonald	Commissioner
Ms. Leanne Fitch	Commissioner
Ms. Kim Stanton	Commissioner

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--- Upon commencing on Tuesday, September 16, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.

Jamie VanWART [00:41:31] Just to let you know, we have started, and this session this afternoon is going to be transcribed. So the machine that's sitting in front of me is recording our conversation this afternoon; it will be typed up, and copy of the transcript will be posted on the website and will be part of the information that's before the proceeding.

So let me introduce myself. I think I've met all of you, but my name is Jamie VanWart and please refer to me as Jamie today, and I'll be co-facilitating today with the three of them. And I'll give a little bit of an introduction just to kind of talk about what the focus of today's session, and then we'll take a moment to kind of go around and have everybody introduce themselves, and then we'll move on to our discussion.

And I acknowledge that we have three people in person and two people appearing virtually, and we'll try to coordinate coming together the best we can. And for those, Crystal and Ryan, who are appearing virtually, I'm mindful of the fact that you cannot see the Commissioners in your camera angle; but you can trust me, they are here; if you want me to, I could even ask them to stretch their legs and walk in your view and wave ... [chuckling].

Commissioner MacDONALD [00:43:05] Where would we go?

Commissioner STANTON [00:43:08] Here. Right here. Yeah.

Leo ARTALEJO [00:43:14] You come in and around to the corner there. There is Commissioner Fitch, Commissioner MacDonald, and there is Commissioner Stanton in the foreground.

Jamie VanWART [00:43:22] And I will say also that the three Commissioners do have a computer in front of them with a screen that shows you. So they have a very good view of you, even though I apologize [indiscernible] for that.

Anyway, let me begin with a few words talking about what this afternoon session is. This is what we are calling a participant consultation session with individuals and families. And this session is part of Phase Three of the Mass Casualty Commission hearings. And in Phase Three, the Commission is continuing to build on what it has learned in Phase One and Phase Two - and refine its understandings and the focus is on how best to shift towards focusing on how to make a difference in the future.

In this Phase of the proceeding, the Commission receives additional input about key issues and potential avenues for [indiscernible] reform to help develop effective and meaningful recommendations. So today's session, along with the Small Group Sessions

1 that some of you participated in, and as well as written submissions by counsel and oral
2 submissions, these are really the final opportunity for input before the Commissioners
3 and the Commission proceed to its ultimate task of shaping what it has learned through
4 all three Phases of its work and sharing this in its final report. And the final report will set
5 out the Commission's findings, lessons learned, and recommendations for the future.
6

7 And so I would acknowledge that we've already heard from a number of individuals and
8 families through the Small Group Sessions. And today we are very glad and happy to
9 be able to hear from you, and you are all people who have been directly affected by the
10 events of April 18th and 19th. And we're very much looking forward to hearing about
11 your ideas for making communities safer and how to respond better in the future to
12 mass casualty events.
13

14 A little bit, how I plan to proceed this afternoon is to make sure that we cover the topics
15 that you've told us that you would like to talk about. I will pose three sets of questions
16 and we'll go around the table and both those present and virtually and give you an
17 opportunity to respond.
18

19 I will ask that people try to keep their comments to five minutes or less in each round.
20 And, you know, if people do go on for too much longer than five minutes, I may interject.
21 And that's really not to ... not because we're not interested in what you're saying, but
22 more just to try to facilitate the way best to be able to hear from everyone equally during
23 the time we have together.
24

25 I would also say that, you know, if you feel like you don't have anything to say about a
26 particular topic that I introduce, there's no pressure to say anything. If you feel like one
27 of your other Participants, one of the other Participants had said something that you
28 thought you were going to say, it's okay to agree with somebody else or echo what
29 somebody else has said. In fact, it is very helpful. You know, identifying patterns and
30 common themes is something the Commission has been looking at throughout the
31 proceedings. So where you agree with somebody, that's helpful to know.
32

33 So at the end of each round, after I set out the question and we go around, I'm going to
34 turn it over to Leo, who will have some comments and reflect back a little bit of what
35 we've heard, and may have some follow up questions or discussion points. At the end of
36 our discussion, I'll invite the Commissioners to ask any questions. But of course,
37 Commissioners, if at any time you feel that you want to interject, please do so. And
38 certainly when Leo is providing a bit of summary at the end of each question as well, if
39 you would like to interject and add something, please feel welcome to do so.
40

41 The other thing I guess I would say is, you know, this is, you know, if at any time during
42 our conversation if you want to leave or you want to skip out a round, please feel
43 welcome to walk away and I'll probably acknowledge that you left, for those in the
44 group, especially because we're half in person and half virtual. And then if you ... come
45 back when you're ready, please feel free to do that. We will be taking a break, midway
46 through our conversation this afternoon.

1 So that's my introduction. And what I thought we could do first is go around and just we
2 could introduce ourselves to each other. And I'll start here in the room and then I'll move
3 to the virtual folks. So why don't we start with you, Debra.

4
5 **Deb Thibeault** [00:48:57] Debra Kellye Thibeault.

6
7 **Jamie VanWART** [00:48:57] And, um ...

8
9 **Richard ELLISON** [00:49:06] Richard Ellison, Corrie's father.

10
11 **Harry BOND** [00:49:14] Harry Bond. My parents were Joy and Peter Bond.

12
13 **Jamie VanWART** [00:49:17] And why don't we go to you, Crystal.

14
15 **Crystal MENDIUK** [00:49:20] Crystal Mendiuk. And I'm the sister to Jolene, Emily and
16 Aaron Tuck.

17
18 **Jamie VanWART** [00:49:30] Ryan?

19
20 **Ryan FARRINGTON** [00:49:35] Ryan Farrington. And I'm a son of Dawn and Frank
21 Gulenchyn.

22
23 **Jamie VanWART** [00:49:39] Leo.

24
25 **Leo ARTALEJO** [00:49:41] My name is Leo Artalejo, and I work for the Commission,
26 [indiscernible] with the stakeholder group.

27
28 **Jamie VanWART** [00:49:48] And I think you all know, by now, Commissioner Stanton;
29 Commissioner MacDonald; and Commissioner Fitch.

30
31 So what I'll try to do is try, as we do a round, and this is mostly to help our transcribers,
32 I'll try to go in the same order that we just went in. So those who are tasked with the job
33 of listening to our conversation and typing it up have an idea of who's speaking when.

34
35 So our first round is on the topic of ensuring public communication during an
36 emergency. And the questions I would pose are thinking about the future, how can we
37 ensure that community members receive the information they need in order to stay safe
38 during an emergency, and what ideas do you have about the role of the public and
39 public education in making these systems effective?

40
41 And I'll start with you, Deborah.

42
43 **Deb Thibeault** [00:50:55] I'm one of the ones that believes we should have had a Public
44 Alert ... it's definitely worth [indiscernible] ... especially where I'm from down there, you
45 know, not everyone has Internet or Twitter or whatever. So Public Alert would really
46 help, having the internet would help a lot. So everybody's in ... you know, it's 2022.

1 Educate people on that. It's nice to know the culture of the land [indiscernible] ... You
2 know, the Amber Alert on my phone for people who are missing really helps no matter
3 what. The phone alerts everybody's phone down there, so [indiscernible] and the
4 Internet helps; it's nice to see ... [indiscernible] ... And then educating [indiscernible].

5

6 **Jamie VanWART** [00:52:01] Thank you. Now, to Richard.

7

8 **Richard ELLISON** [00:52:01] In a community like Orchard Beach Estates, I think the
9 big part of the security down there would be to get to know our neighbors; maybe not
10 personally, but just to get to know them, know their contact information. Just to have it in
11 case of an emergency, you know, it could be fires, like could be anything can happen
12 today and you just don't know, so if the community itself doesn't know who's who and
13 who lives where, then if some sort of trouble then you can say it's at so and so's place,
14 or it's in that area, or subdivision type of thing and you could call the necessary 911 or
15 the local fire hall or fire department or that kind of thing. So, without, without that
16 knowledge, what is there? You're just, you know, I live here and there are people down
17 there, and then you're all just by yourselves kind of thing, eh, if you pick apart like what
18 happened down there. I'm not going to say too much about that, anyways, but it was
19 pretty easy for the killer that's for sure, or it seemed that way.

20

21 **Deb Thibeault** [00:53:18] Jamie, you are asking, like, what our thoughts were about the
22 [indiscernible] forward, right?

23

24 **Jamie VanWART** [00:53:20] Yeah.

25

26 **Deb Thibeault** [00:53:20] Okay. Just making sure.

27

28 **Jamie VanWART** [00:53:20] Harry?

29

30 **Harry BOND** [00:53:32] Yeah. They've been relying on Twitter and Twitter alone, and
31 that's got to stop. Not everybody has Twitter feed. My parents didn't have Twitter. The
32 internet down here is very sketchy. And that's not just once in a while, it's all over
33 sketchy. ... it's always bad ... You get your good spots and your bad spots, same as cell
34 service. We need that we've stretched the community ... [indiscernible] ... radio's on ...
35 radio stations ... [indiscernible] ... And if we don't come to a point of that we're going to
36 do this and this, this will happen again; I guarantee you. Everybody knows
37 [indiscernible] did not think this would ever happen. I lost my parents; we all lost loved
38 ones. We shouldn't have.

39

40 **Deb Thibeault** [00:54:36] Communication helps.

41

42 **Jamie VanWART** [00:54:41] Thank you, Harry. Crystal, did you have anything you
43 wanted to share on this topic of ensuring public communication during an emergency?

44

45 **Crystal MENDIUK** [00:54:54] Yeah. I mean, I agree with everybody that social media, I
46 mean, can be a great tool. I, however, I don't have any social media accounts, so I don't

1 have Facebook and I don't have Twitter. I have a cell phone. I listen to the radio. I
2 occasionally watch TV. So I know quite often, you know, not only do I get alerts on my
3 phone, you know, to locations that it is provided out to through the public alert system,
4 you know, we've also had where they'll put broadcasts on the TV. Right. So, I mean, if
5 you don't have your phone, it'll go across the TV; it'll go across the radio.

6
7 We actually had an incident in western Canada here two or three weeks ago and it was,
8 it was hurtful because an alert did go out. There were two guys out on the loose and
9 had stabbed an enormous amount of people through Manitoba, Saskatchewan and
10 were heading towards Alberta, and all three provinces got the alert, and we got the alert
11 multiple times on our phone. So it was extremely useful to know that, you know what, I
12 mean, if you're in any of those areas, you know that there was something going on.

13
14 In the city I live in, we also had an event last week where it was the same situation and
15 it was on the radios, it was on the news, it was on our phones. And, you know, we're
16 warning people to stay away from those areas. So, you can tell that there are changes
17 being made with that; it's just sad to think that it was maybe too little too late, but their
18 way of communicating was not with the times. And I think that's the big thing, is
19 communicating.

20
21 These things can't be kept secret. News medias need to know. Alert systems need to be
22 put in place quickly; not a day later. So I think, and informing the public that, you know
23 what, these are the guidelines and these are what they're going to be used for because
24 I hear a lot of people also complaining, you know, that it "woke me up at three in the
25 morning". Well, you know what? You may have needed to know that information at
26 three in the morning. So, you know, informing them that, you know what, it is in the best
27 interest of the public safety and having the public to understand the severity as to why
28 it's being issued.

29
30 **Jamie VanWART** [00:57:37] Thank you, Crystal. Ryan, did you want to share?

31
32 **Ryan FARRINGTON** [00:57:44] I think they pretty much touch-based on everything that
33 I wanted to say. I agree that the public alert or ready alert system is to be used. My
34 parents didn't have Twitter, they didn't have TV. They just had Internet, their cell phones
35 and a radio. So if, you know, we utilize the public alert through cell phones and radios
36 and stuff like that instead of just Twitter or Facebook, I think things might have turned
37 out a little bit differently.

38
39 **Jamie VanWART** [00:58:27] Thank you, Ryan. I'll turn to you, Leo. We heard a lot of
40 people shared good ideas. What are you ...

41
42 **Leo ARTALEJO** [00:58:39] I'm just going to move here so that everyone on the
43 computer can see me. So I'm hearing it, when it comes to public alerting, that a multi-
44 channel approach is important. When I say that, I mean digital and traditional channels.
45 So mobile, cellular - yes; TV and radio - yes; news organization - yes; social media -

1 yes. But that any one of those is not sufficient, and that there needs to be a
2 multichannel approach when it comes to public alerting [indiscernible].

3
4 **Harry BOND** [00:59:17] [indiscernible] concentrate on one or two; you don't got to get
5 them all.

6
7 **Leo ARTALEJO** [00:59:21] Yeah. And I'm also hearing that since the mass casualty,
8 there have been some opportunities for public alerting to be used and that that currently
9 how it's being used may have some drawbacks. But I'm hearing this group say that it's
10 better to wake people up at three in the morning than it is to err on the side of that than
11 not alerting the public. And then the last piece that I really heard in that round was this
12 idea of improving community safety.

13
14 There are two things that I heard Mr. Ellison say. The first is that neighborhoods and
15 communities need to take some responsibility by creating information networks within
16 the community so that people aren't left silent.

17
18 **Richard ELLISON** [01:00:11] Immediate information.

19
20 **Leo ARTALEJO** [01:00:13] Like you were talking about it, and I appreciated what I
21 heard there, was there is piece around, it doesn't mean that you're hanging out, having
22 potlucks and getting to know people; it means that you're connecting the other
23 communication network that allows you to share information quickly if the need should
24 arise.

25
26 And then I thought the other piece I heard was that police and security forces need to
27 know the geography and the culture of the community to understand what is Internet
28 access like, how can we get information to different parts of the community in efficient
29 ways. So I heard all of those things, and I'll just put it back to the group if there's any
30 further comments or anything that you feel like you need to clarify at all.

31
32 **Harry BOND** [01:01:00] I think I remember a lot of people [indiscernible] ... cell phones,
33 right. So, if I got my cell phone off, that ain't gonna help me, right. A lot of people, like
34 elderly people like Mom and Dad, they stay up 'til midnight watching TV. So if that
35 came across television, they'd see it. There are also people that would not be on social
36 media at 11:00 or 12:00.

37
38 **Richard ELLISON** [01:01:27] Or at all.

39
40 **Harry BOND** [01:01:28] Or at all. It's usually in the mornings or right after dinner they do
41 check it. They were checking, and they were checking to see ... [indiscernible] ...
42 brother ... [indiscernible] ... message, and things like that. But their cell phone was, if
43 they went somewhere themselves during the day. So 11:00 o'clock at night, 10:00
44 o'clock at night they would shut them off. And one night, I think by 11:00 o'clock, Mom's
45 cell phone ... [indiscernible] ... still on. .. [indiscernible] cell phone ... [indiscernible] ...
46 they go to bed ... [indiscernible]. Myself, mine's on 24 hours a day; I never shut it off.

1 There's not a lot of people, you know ... I bet you there's people in this room that shuts
2 their phone off. [indiscernible] ... shut if off. ... [indiscernible] I have kids and grandkids,
3 brother, my phone's always ... if you need me, you can get a hold of me. A lot of people
4 don't look at their cell phones. Concentrate just on cell phones, well or Twitter ...
5 computers are off, phones are off, but if you're sitting there watching television, and
6 you're still not going to get everybody. Some people are gone to bed by nighttime.
7 You're gonna have a better chance [indiscernible] ... The fact there's like a single
8 Twitter ... [indiscernible].
9

10 **Leo ARTALEJO** [01:03:05] So agreement that the multichannel approach is important.
11 I'm also hearing you say that it's important to pick up on what Mr. Ellison is saying ...
12

13 **Harry BOND** [01:03:12] ... [indiscernible] ... school ... [indiscernible] ... school,
14 neighborhood watch. It's different than the communities where ... make sure they all
15 [indiscernible].
16

17 **Leo ARTALEJO** [01:03:28] So, it's like you when your phone is on, you might get the
18 Alert and you know someone down the road has a landline, but then you might call.
19

20 **Harry BOND** [01:03:35] Yeah.
21

22 **Leo ARTALEJO** [01:03:35] Something like that.
23

24 **Harry BOND** [01:03:37] Say there's four houses down and it's the Smiths and they're
25 an elderly couple, they don't have Facebook or internet or Twitter or they don't have
26 computer period. Like, if the power's out, well you write [indiscernible]. So this is gone
27 wrong here as a scenario. Things like that. I mean, when we were kids, I mean, we
28 knew if it wasn't friends of parents, we know that Ms. Johnson down here; it's Mr. Smith
29 over there. There's our safe housing. If we were in trouble, we could go there. You don't
30 see that no more. It's almost like prepare yourself, sort of thing.
31

32 **Deb Thibeault** [01:04:28] [Indiscernible] ... you were saying so everybody knows, just
33 like what you're saying at one point, at Great Village we just know, you know, who's
34 going to be there. They know what's going on. Everyone said [indiscernible].
35

36 **Commissioner STANTON** [01:04:49] Crystal and Ryan, can you hear everyone okay in
37 the room? Little hard? Okay, I'd just ask people if they can remember to speak up a
38 little. Just, I want to make sure Crystal and Ryan are hearing and are able to follow the
39 conversation. I know it's hard to be attending remotely. So I just want to try and keep
40 them in mind here. Thanks.
41

42 **Crystal MENDIUK** [01:05:16] I would also just like to add with the communication piece
43 that it needs to be quick. It needs to be faster. You know, I mean, we're talking minutes,
44 not hours or days. And it needs to be where I, you now, agree with Harry, it needs to be
45 multifaceted. It can't just be one form of social media; it can't just be social media. It
46 needs to be on a variety of different ways of communication, and it needs to be quick

1 and fast. And if it would have been quicker and faster and multifaceted, the amount of
2 lives that would have been saved that weekend could have been huge. And we all
3 wouldn't be here today.

4
5 **Commissioner STANTON** [01:06:08] Can I just ask, one of the experts that we had,
6 Michael Hallows, he is an expert on emergency alerting. He said that he regretted, he
7 was part of the London bombings, that he was in the operations room for the London
8 bombings in 2007 ... 2005, I think it was July 2005. And he said they didn't, they were
9 waiting to have like what they thought was reliable, kind of perfect information and he
10 felt like they waited too long. And if they had put out an alert earlier that wasn't perfect,
11 that didn't have everything right, he felt like that would have been a good thing to do.
12 And I just wondered, I hear what you're saying Crystal, you want to get things out right
13 away; would you err on the side of putting out wrong information sooner and, um, rather
14 than letting the perfect be the enemy of the good?

15
16 **Crystal MENDIUK** [01:07:05] I would put wrong information out sooner, or incorrect or
17 not fully, fully understandable information out sooner. You know, any information is
18 better than no information. I get that they probably really, well, they really didn't
19 understand the severity of what happened that weekend right away. However, they had
20 received phone calls very, very early on to know that people were being shot and
21 people were dying. And so there is absolutely no excuse. I mean, at that point in time,
22 you have information; it's not good information; it's not great information. There's
23 virtually no information other than, you know what, people in your very close proximity
24 are being shot. So take cover. It doesn't need to be any more than that. You don't need
25 a who or what or why or when. People are being shot at, and we're not really sure why
26 in your area, so please be safe.

27
28 **Commissioner STANTON** [01:08:08] [indiscernible].

29
30 **Harry BOND** [01:08:12] Pretty much. And I'm getting tired of what happened to our
31 loved ones being compared to ... you're comparing it to London. You can't compare;
32 every scenario is different. You can't compare it. She said that by 10:01, they had a call;
33 they knew who it was, they knew what community it was. Well, why wasn't there an
34 alert? "Man on the loose in Portapique. Lock your doors." You got to stop waiting. You
35 got to... things just got to come quicker. You can't do it when you want to. The law
36 [indiscernible]

37
38 **Ryan FARRINGTON** [01:08:52] I ...

39
40 **Harry BOND** [01:08:53] They're not protected.

41
42 **Ryan FARRINGTON** [01:08:55] And I agree with Harry and Crystal on that one is, I'd
43 rather have a little bit of information and know what's going on; and if it turns out to be a
44 false alarm, I'd rather be scared than be dead. And that's the way I've always looked at
45 the Amber Alerts and the Ready Alerts here. I mean, we've seen them numerous times
46 in Ontario, just over an OPP officer being stabbed in my area, and that came out within

1 a couple of minutes. And I mean, I got it. It was 1:00 o'clock in the morning, but I was
2 glad to have it, knowing that, you know there's somebody out running around with a
3 knife that just had stabbed an officer in the throat, I'd like to know that. And that way I'm
4 ready. So any information is better than none. And I totally agree with Crystal and Harry
5 on that one.

6

7 **Deb Thibeault** [01:09:53] And also in this case, they knew [indiscernible], they just
8 [indiscernible].

9

10 **Jamie VanWART** [01:10:00] Well, I think, unless anybody wants as a final ...

11

12 **Commissioner MacDONALD** [01:10:06] If you don't mind, I'm just going to go over
13 here.

14

15 **Jamie VanWART** [01:10:11] Please do.

16

17 **Commissioner MacDONALD** [01:10:11] Just two points, following up what we've heard
18 a lot about or what least, what struck me was it seems to me that often decision makers
19 are afraid of risk. Like, people are really concerned what if it is, as I think both Mr. Bond
20 and Commissioner Stanton said, you know, what if it's wrong. Well, I think maybe we
21 have to change our mindset that maybe you're better off taking a chance and getting it
22 wrong. So that's, so I agree with all that, but something you said, Mr. Bond, when I first
23 was asked to become involved in this and learn a little more about it, my very first
24 thought was when my kids were young, we had Block Parents and Neighborhood
25 Watch. And I just remember thinking, [indiscernible] I knew very little is whatever
26 happened, like, whatever happened to Block Parents and Neighborhood Watch? At
27 least they are not, and they weren't in our neighborhood by the time we left ... And that's
28 just, it's your point Mr. Ellison, that's just, just kind of knowing a little more about your
29 neighbor, not in their face, but at least knowing and knowing about their well-being and
30 have some kind of plan ahead if something like this should happen. So those are just a
31 couple of observations that I kind of wanted to walk around for folks to understand.

32

33 **Jamie VanWART** [01:11:47] Thank you

34

35 **Commissioner FITCH** [01:11:52] And we didn't plan this, but my point actually was
36 very close to what you just raised, Michael, and was inspired by Mr. Ellison when you
37 started to talk about community and getting to know your neighbors. And all the things
38 that I've been listening to and how good technology is for this, that and the other thing.
39 And I agree that public alerting is a good resource to have going forward, but I'm
40 reminded of, and I don't mean to turn this into a history lesson, but back in the 1800s
41 before policing started to formalize like we know it today there used to be a system
42 called "hue and cry" and that's basically community members going out on the street
43 when there was danger approaching and alerting their neighbors, right. But they had,
44 they had information and the person that was a holder of that information, community
45 member shared that with the other community members. To partly answer your
46 question, Commissioner MacDonald, about, you know, what happened to

1 Neighbourhood Watch and Block Parent - I grew up with those too, right and they were
2 really important. And during my policing time, I remember going into neighbourhoods
3 having problems with vandalism and that type of thing, and they'd say, well we want a
4 neighborhood watch and I'd be like, that's great; let's set it up. And they're like well, you
5 set it up. It's like no, this is what the neighbourhood, you know, we'll be here and help
6 out, but the police shouldn't own that. And so what I worried about what's happened
7 over the years is that we've all become so conditioned to think that the police are getting
8 paid to protect us all and then we've forgotten some of those community connections
9 that used to work really, really well. And so I just wanted to support what you were
10 saying about getting the, you know, having those contacts and have those mechanisms
11 in your own, your own neighborhoods out there instead of Neighbourhood Watch and
12 it's something that a community can own [indiscernible].
13

14 **Harry BOND** [01:14:02] You just look for the sign in the window, Neighbourhood Watch
15 or Block Parent.
16

17 **Commissioner FITCH** [01:14:10] Yeah. So, thanks for listening.
18

19 **Jamie VanWART** [01:14:10] Thank you all. I think at this point, I'll move to our next
20 topic, and follow the similar format. We'll start with going around the table.
21

22 And our next topic is on supporting individuals, families, first responders and
23 communities after a mass casualty event. And I pose the questions, what kind of
24 support do individuals, families, first and secondary responders in communities affected
25 by a mass casualty need? What role should communities and government play in
26 designing and delivering these supports? What role can individuals play? And do you
27 have any additional suggestions for ensuring the immediate and long term needs of
28 those affected by a mass casualty are met?
29

30 We will start again with you, Deborah. Or, I could go the opposite direction if that's what
31 you'd prefer?
32

33 **Deb Thibeault** [01:15:18] I'm just thinking, one thing at a time ... break it up there and
34 just, it's different from being a sign out. There's so many things, it's hard for us to have
35 the time over the past year ... [indiscernible] get to our houses. You have someone
36 remove the people to be brought to our house. It was a big problem ... [indiscernible] ...
37 personally, because [indiscernible] we couldn't get to our homes. It was every
38 [indiscernible] province wide. So, there'd be a counsellor who would step in and remove.
39 You'd have to have a place when people would go to, 'cause they want to go afterward.
40 Like they probably want to go, but [indiscernible] residence. So they had to move
41 everything to ensure ... [indiscernible] ... residence. That was a big deal, something you
42 know you would never think of unless you actually lived there.
43

44 **Jamie VanWART** [01:16:38] That's speaking to the immediate needs, and what about
45 the more long-term needs ...
46

1 **Deb Thibeault** [01:16:42] Well we did ... Myself, well we didn't know there were
2 supports for us. There was no contact. Nobody ... had to get through the crowd, like to
3 that one place in Portapique for supports. After we moved in, it was easier for us to go
4 over. We didn't know what place in the world that supports. After that removed, it was
5 easier for us to go over [indiscernible]. We just didn't know what there was, nothing, just
6 we had contact and call, try to call ... [indiscernible] ... It's mixed up.
7

8 **Jamie VanWART** [01:17:25] If you were to give a suggestion about how to make all this
9 better for someone like you who was away from Portapique and was coming back to
10 Portapique, do you have any suggestions?
11

12 **Deb Thibeault** [01:17:38] Yes. So, you know, something like this happens and you got
13 to have a point for people that have nowhere's to go so you have to first remove that. So
14 people have the right of way for emergencies or whatever. That's very important;
15 ambulances or anything going down you can't block it. So, over resources and mental
16 health and that, more clear maybe on the inside, have a person appointed that they can
17 talk to and give them directions. Supports; I had a lot of ... I would have liked to have
18 had someone to contact because they were coming from the beach end, the public, and
19 harassing us at night. And who were we going to call, you know, but like it ... there was
20 no resources; it just didn't seem like this. Okay, so, people from the inside, it would be
21 nice to have someone appointed that we could all know, like you were saying, the
22 community [indiscernible] ... who's got the list of what for us. People in the community
23 knew where to go, trying to get together, talking but some of us did do that, you know.
24 [Indiscernible] policing maybe down and through, but --
25

26 **Jamie VanWART** [01:19:41] Thank you. You shared a lot. I think I'll move on to
27 Richard.
28

29 **Richard ELLISON** [01:19:47] And I'd say that things have changed so much in the
30 last ... I moved down to Orchard Beach Estates in 1988. And back then I got to know
31 everybody in there. But as of the last ... I moved out there, out of there for about five
32 years to Bible Hill and then I came back down there and I didn't know anybody. And
33 then, sure enough this took place. And I was just getting to know ... well, I knew Harry's
34 parents, Peter and Joy, and I was just getting to know Lisa McCully and that was it. And
35 then all of a sudden these people were just taken away.
36

37 Just ... a big thing about down in there, it's a unique community in the sense that
38 there's, there's black; it's ... when the sun goes down, anybody can go down in there
39 and hide and you wouldn't know it. And to hide from the police even. They could, you
40 know bank robbers or whatever, there'd be a place to go. Orchard Beach Estates, oh
41 you know, what's down there? Oh, nothing. There's no communication. I wouldn't say
42 there's anything. You know, and that's, that's what kind of community and it really hasn't
43 gone anywheres since, well I don't know the last year gone down hill, same as
44 everything else actually. And then as far as supporting the communities now, well, I
45 know, I give money to you know, arrest there [indiscernible] buyers and that. You know,
46 I try to help them financially, but you know money only goes so far. Like really we ... it

1 would be more clear if there were more lights put in down there. But where there's ... it's
2 a private land down there so the County they won't even look at it, but yet they know
3 where to send a tax bill type of thing. You know, kind of irks me when that happens,
4 eh? We don't, we don't do anything other than we get fire service. [indiscernible] Bass
5 River will come. But we're, we're halfway between the RCMP in Parrsboro and the
6 Detachment in Bible Hill is 25 miles away from us. So they're not going to get there any
7 time soon, right, if anything does go wrong. So, yeah, so it's unfortunate and there's a
8 lot of less [indiscernible] today in society, you know a lot of people don't trust. They just
9 stay away from people because they don't know what they're like, you know, whatever.
10 And it's very unfortunate and that's really basically almost what led to the mass casualty
11 to begin with.

12

13 **Jamie VanWART** [01:22:32] Would you have any thing you could share as far as
14 recommendation about how to respond after mass casualty events like this?

15

16 **Richard ELLISON** [01:22:43] Well, yeah, I thought of this before it even happened, was
17 I'm thinking of Israel, eh. They had the Israeli security forces because they were all
18 surrounded by enemies, eh. Like the Arabs and Palestinians and that's who we
19 [indiscernible].

20

21 **Jamie VanWART** [01:22:53] I guess any sort of respond to help you after ...

22

23 **Richard ELLISON** [01:23:00] Well, no, nobody helped me. I never got any, any calls
24 from the RCMP or nothing, saying you know we're sorry about your son and what
25 happened, just nothing. I had to rely on my congregation more than anything to help
26 me. [indiscernible].

27

28 People's attitudes have to change; that's all there is to it. But they're not gonna change
29 because there's things in play today. You know, you don't say anything, but there's evil
30 out there. Like what happened out in urban Saskatchewan. You know, something like
31 that you'd have to be out of your mind. And the same with Wortman there, totally insane
32 to do something like that. You'd just have to ... I wouldn't even call him Hitler, more like
33 a werewolf or something, eh, kind of thing. You know, just snapped, eh? Once ... and I
34 heard different stories about this COVID-19 and he said something about money and
35 you know, he was gonna lose his position at the dentist and all that and just went
36 crazy.

37

38 **Jamie VanWART** [01:24:13] Well, thank you for your comments, Richard. Maybe I'll
39 move on to Harry and ... about any comments you might have about supporting
40 individuals, families, first responders and community after a mass casualty.

41

42 **Harry BOND** [01:24:26] Yeah, I'll get you to repeat that.

43

44 **Jamie VanWART** [01:24:31] Yeah, sure. Why don't I repeat the questions for you again.
45 So what kind of supports do individuals, families, first and secondary responders and
46 communities impacted by a mass casualty need? What role should communities and

1 government play in designing and delivering these supports? What role can individuals
2 play? And do you have any additional suggestions for ensuring the immediate and
3 long-term needs of those affected by a mass casualty from that?

4
5 **Harry BOND** [01:24:59] You're talking about the aftermath?

6
7 **Jamie VanWART** [01:25:01] Yeah. Yeah.

8
9 **Harry BOND** [01:25:04] Pretty much hit us head on afterwards. I mean they ... there
10 was a therapist and whatnot dedicated to ... for us to talk to. A lot of them come forward.
11 A lot of therapists that come forward, said put us on the list for any families that want to
12 talk, they can contact us.

13
14 **Jamie VanWART** [01:25:35] And how did you hear about that?

15
16 **Harry BOND** [01:25:35] I think it was from Serg- ... something or whoever was there.
17 It's hard to keep things straight, a lot of people ... well myself, I had a lot of people
18 reaching out to make sure I was all right. The biggest thing is having the contacts;
19 having your contacts out there. If you've got a community, they can [indiscernible] to
20 the fire department to have them have [indiscernible]. Like I live on a private road.
21 Someone could take charge to make sure they get everybody's address. Who, who
22 lives at 82; who lives at 76? What their phone number is; what their email address is
23 and that could be passed on right? Okay, we've got the Smiths at number 76. We've
24 got the Bonds at 92; here's their contact information. There's a lot of things you can do
25 that you should do, maybe do; it's, every scenario is different. Until you go through
26 them, it's ... you think you got everything [indiscernible] like everything. Okay we're
27 ready, but when it happens ... you can never be ... you can never be too prepared, go
28 overkill, getting people's contacts, getting people's email addresses, whatever they
29 have. That's all I can think of.

30
31 **Jamie VanWART** [01:26:59] Thank you. Crystal?

32
33 **Crystal MENDIUK** [01:27:22] So I'm going to guess that Ryan's probably going to feel
34 somewhat similar to myself, and I'm thrilled that people actually reached out to Harry
35 and again reached out and said, you know what, here's a contact for you. You know,
36 call them those kinds of things. For us out here in Alberta, it was all reactive.

37
38 So my parents there ... an RCMP, never showed up on their door, never came to check
39 on them. Every community across the country has a Victim Services of some kind. Not
40 one single person in Alberta contacted my parents or my sister or I. So it was all ... we
41 provided them with, you know, names and email addresses and phone numbers, and
42 they sent us all out these wonderful little packages of, you know what, this is what you
43 need to do. However, for us in Alberta, there was not a single counselor approved for us
44 to use the system. It took three months for us to get a counselor approved so that we
45 could go through the process.

46

1 Now, for myself and even my daughter, I wasn't ready. I wasn't ready right away. I
2 basically became their legal representative and had to deal with the estates. And there
3 was an enormous amount of things that were going on, and I wasn't ready. But nobody
4 ever called to check up on us after probably the first, maybe four or five weeks after it
5 happened. And even now, today, I mean, everything is reactive, you know, continually
6 having to check with my family members, who still has funding available? Who doesn't?
7 Who still needs counseling? Who doesn't? That's all fallen on me to administer. And I
8 have a great deal of responsibility with a lot of other aspects with all of this that is going
9 on.

10
11 So, it was ... the ball was dropped across Canada for me. There was nothing; there was
12 nothing for any of us, and nobody ever called us and said, "you know what? Here's
13 somebody that you can talk to." We never had anybody reach out to ask, "Can we help
14 you with something? Can we find you a counselor? Can we get somebody for you? Is
15 there anything that you need?" So for us not being there and being so far away, it didn't
16 appear that anybody in our province really cared what happened and what was
17 happening to us. And for Victim Services in Nova Scotia, again, it was emails. Rarely
18 did we ever get a phone call after the first couple of weeks. It was just done via email,
19 and the only time phone calls happened is when I had to call at my dissatisfaction of a
20 variety of processes and policies that they had to try to advocate for my family, for
21 whether it be counseling in general, whether it be the fees, whether it be additional
22 funding. So it was an enormous amount of work for me.

23
24 So things that could be more readily available is these are government agencies. So
25 why, why couldn't they have come together? Why couldn't they have worked a little bit
26 more collaboratively to have checked on people? Yeah, there were a lot of victims and a
27 lot of victims with a lot of then family. But it just seemed that once you left a certain area
28 of Nova Scotia that it didn't matter as much.

29
30 **Jamie VanWART** [01:31:19] Thank you, Crystal. Ryan, you might be on mute. Now
31 you're good.

32
33 **Ryan FARRINGTON** [01:31:26] Yeah, a lot of what Crystal said covered what I had to
34 say. I found that being out in Ontario very hard to get any sort of, any sort of support. I
35 mean, Victim Services did the best they can in Nova Scotia, but out here where I am
36 trying to find any, any sort of therapy that is, is covered that is proving to be quite hard.
37 By that, I haven't had any yet.

38
39 I think some sort of cross-provincial funding from the government on something like this
40 that happens. You know, someone should be in touch with you right away; whether it's,
41 you know, Victim Services gets in touch with Victim Services here and they work with
42 you from here. I didn't hear anything from anybody. Like, like Crystal said, it was emails.
43 It wasn't until I started recently coming to the MCC that I, I started to, you know, get to
44 know Barb Smith and stuff like that and was able to talk to her and that she was able to
45 help point me along and get me going in the right direction. So I definitely think
46 communication based when you're in another province is a huge issue. I just felt like I

1 was in the dark and had absolutely nobody to lean on or talk to besides, you know, my
2 wife that was here with me.

3
4 **Jamie VanWART** [01:33:10] Thank you, Ryan.

5
6 **Ryan FARRINGTON** [01:33:10] No problem. Thank you.

7
8 **Jamie VanWART** [01:33:14] So Leo, do you have any comments about what we've
9 heard in this round?

10
11 **Leo ARTALEJO** [01:33:17] So I want to be clear that what I'm trying to do is reflect
12 back what you are trying to share and that we're making the transcript. So what I'm
13 reflecting back is not the totality of what we're hearing. I just want to re kind of
14 summarize a little bit about what we're hearing.

15
16 So I'm really hearing, there's three things that I just heard in that round. One is there's a
17 set of immediate needs that happened during the event. And then there's a set of what
18 we might call ... there's the immediate, there's the short-term and there's the longer-
19 term. And I think we've touched on all three of those.

20
21 Let me start with the immediate. And I thought Debra spoke clearly that, when
22 something like this happens, it's overwhelming and it's quite chaotic and that there
23 needs to be a sort of, you were describing one geographic location where you could
24 receive support or one geographic location for mourners and media to go, and there
25 needs to be some immediate, you could just say traffic-cop type of, bringing some order
26 to the chaos, so to speak, on the ground immediately as you were describing that there
27 was ... you weren't really sure where to go. Part of that is a clear point of contact for
28 families, because you said that you weren't quite sure where you would fall. So I would
29 say those sort of things are, we need to make sure are there in the immediate
30 aftermath.

31
32 And then I think there's the shorter term, we might say, in the one to two weeks
33 afterwards. I'm hearing that there needs to be support for families to understand how
34 they set up support, how they get mental health services or even what was available for
35 those things.

36
37 So that's kind of the shorter term and then the longer term, what we heard from our
38 friends that are out of the province that in particular they need support breaking out of
39 the provincial models that Victim Services and some of the other things are in. Crystal
40 said that it took three months just to get her mental health resources added to the
41 contract or to the available network. So there needs to be some breaking down of
42 barriers across provinces to make sure the families have the support they need in all
43 three of those phases to streamline that process.

44

1 So that's kind of what I heard overall and I'm happy to open it up and hear any
2 comments from the Participants if there's anything that I missed or anything you would
3 like to add. Mr. Ellison?

4
5 **Richard ELLISON** [01:36:01] I shouldn't say I didn't get any support; I talked to
6 counsellors up at the Mental Health Centre at the Colchester Hospital where I went for
7 three sessions. Gosh dang hanger, I just didn't keep going back because you can say
8 everything you want to say but it is not going to erase what happened, type of thing. It's
9 not going to get it out of your head either. It's stuck in there, like I say, I will suffer the
10 rest of my life.

11
12 **Leo ARTALEJO** [01:36:32] How do you know where to go in that case?

13
14 **Richard ELLISON** [01:36:41] I just forget. Like this, it messed me up pretty bad. Like, I
15 can't remember much. Somebody steered me there, that's for sure. But it is, I'd say
16 money well spent by the province to have these in the hospitals, but to help people.
17 Because other counsellors there, you know, they're on their whatever... you have pay
18 them just like lawyers and that, like professional counsellors.

19
20 **Leo ARTALEJO** [01:37:22] Debra?

21
22 **Deb Thibeault** [01:37:22] I just want to say that Portapique Hall when we finally realized
23 that we were told that by, I think it was the Commission ... [indiscernible] ... that we
24 could access that because we didn't know we could access Portapique Hall and once
25 we were able to get through the crowd because they blocked again it's just that it was in
26 [indiscernible] ...

27
28 **Richard ELLISON** [01:37:56] I forgot all about that. [indiscernible] Department of
29 Justice or whatever, they were the ones that told me about the hospital.

30
31 **Harry BOND** [01:37:57] That was on the news, too.

32
33 **Richard ELLISON** [01:38:12] But you know, down in there, they were so bad I never
34 knew what happened past my place. Like, I mean people went right there and it was
35 pretty well a week later before I found out that his parents were victims and plus Bruce
36 Tuck's - his son and his family. And I knew Bruce Tuck; he was a good neighbour for
37 years and years.

38
39 **Jamie VanWART** [01:38:33] Before we bring this round to an end, did you have
40 anything you wanted to add Crystal or Ryan to anything you've heard?

41
42 **Ryan FARRINGTON** [01:38:49] No. I think everything's pretty much been said for me
43 on my part.

44
45 **Crystal MENDIUK** [01:38:57] I think I would just like to add that, you know, with the,
46 with the counseling services and, and the support, having somebody come to us and

1 reach out to us rather than us having to do all of the legwork. There was an enormous
2 amount of responsibility and there was an enormous amount of other things that were
3 going on that it, it to a certain degree, somewhat became an additional task that needed
4 to be completed and additional effort that needed to be put forth. So, you know, having
5 somebody actually do some of that legwork and you know contact us and not just send
6 out an application form saying, you know what, here you've got some funding to get
7 some counseling. You know, you need to fill out this form and send it in for approval and
8 all of these other kinds of things. It should have been proactively done where they
9 basically would call us and say, "You know what, here are some qualified people. Here
10 are some qualified counselors that can help you in the situation that you are now in."
11 Because I know even for myself, my daughter and I, we tried to get other counseling
12 through other means that I had through my employer and Alberta Health Services and
13 those kinds of things, and the most difficult thing that I found is that they were not
14 qualified. They were not qualified to help us in any way. Victim Services did eventually
15 actually help us find a counseling service and a counselor. And even though Victim
16 Services was the one that actually found the individuals for us, it took three months,
17 right, for them to get approval and it was continually following up on my side of it. So I
18 think, if anything, I have things in place, and for immediate family members and people
19 immediately in the vicinity, it shouldn't have been that much of an effort for us to get the
20 help that we needed. It should have come to us and it should have come to us already
21 done, already complete, you know, easy and it was done. And it would have been one
22 less thing that as family we would have had to have tried to continually dealt with.

23
24 **Jamie VanWART** [01:41:23] Very well said, Crystal. So maybe I'll give the last word to
25 Harry, and then maybe we'll take a bit of a break.

26
27 **Harry BOND** [01:41:30] Well, like Crystal said, when something like that happens,
28 you've got so much on your plate. I was the Executor for Mom and Dad, but I gotta look
29 after Mom, I gotta look after Dad, plus I gotta look after my own family. I gotta look after
30 my brother. And then you've got to reach out to find your own therapist or your own
31 whatever. It's too much. But if you had like I said, you had your personal information, but
32 if you got that information, you have to use it. The RCMP had my information sheet, had
33 my email, they had my phone number; I never heard from them. I've never heard from
34 the RCMP. They knew my parents was gone hours - many, many hours before I found
35 out and they never told me. The only reason my brother and I and my wife found out we
36 just drove down, we took the two and a half hour drive to go down and demanded. And
37 once they gave us the answers we wanted or answered our questions, they told us they
38 would have been there. That was Monday afternoon; it wouldn't have been 'til
39 Wednesday that we found out. Why? We found out 35 and a half hours later that Mom
40 and Dad was killed, thirty-five and a half hours. We knew Sunday morning something
41 was going on their back yard. They knew quarter to five Sunday afternoon, but never
42 called. They had my phone number, never called. I called Bible Hill Monday morning at
43 8:00 and they wouldn't tell me nothing. Quarter to four in the afternoon on Monday
44 finally a Sergeant called and said, you know, they're gone. He also said if I wasn't ... if
45 we wouldn't have drove there, we wouldn't have found out 'til Wednesday.

46

1 **Leo ARTALEJO** [01:43:48] And when did you drive there?
2

3 **Harry BOND** [01:43:48] Monday. They were at one, just finishing up at one scene and
4 they were going to another scene, but that wasn't Mom and Dad's; but because I was
5 standing there and demanded answers, they went to Mom and Dad's house. That's the
6 only reason we found out Monday afternoon. You've got one crew down there with
7 multiple, multiple scenes, your priority is ... as far as I'm concerned, it should be number
8 one: let, let the families know. 'Cause families know there's something going on; we
9 knew, we knew something was going on because it's right in Mom and Dad's backyard.
10 That, that's, right there that's troubling. The not knowing, it's, that's a killer.
11

12 **Jamie VanWART** [01:44:40] Thanks.
13

14 **Deb Thibeault** [01:44:42] Communication. [indiscernible] ... early that morning and
15 was texting him and they told me that ... [indiscernible] ... coming down another way.
16 So supports and communication, someone to follow through.
17

18 **Jamie VanWART** [01:45:11] Why don't we take a moment, reflect ourselves, as we
19 break for 10 minutes, and we can come back and continue.
20

21 **Jamie VanWART** [02:08:34] So thank you. We had a break and we're back. I think as
22 we approach the last week of the Mass Casualty Commission, I think one of the most
23 problems is I ask for 10 minutes and they are never 10 minutes. I hope people had an
24 opportunity to get a refreshment, and I'm glad we're back and we'll have one more
25 round following the same format. I thought to be fair, I might go in the opposite direction
26 this time, and call upon Crystal first and then work around in the other direction, so I'm
27 not putting you on any hot seat each time, Debra.
28

29 **Commissioner STANTON** [02:09:16] If we did the opposite, we would be starting with
30 Ryan.
31

32 **Jamie VanWART** [02:09:17] Oh, sorry, Ryan. Thank you. We're a team.
33

34 For the last question is really meant to give you an opportunity to share information
35 about forward looking recommendations, lessons to take with us and learn from; just to
36 give you an opportunity and comments on things that you haven't had an opportunity to
37 share today. But I will frame it a little bit and I'll raise a couple of questions and it's not
38 the expectation that you'll answer each of these questions, but they're just framed
39 because of some of the input that we received coming into this meeting that you might
40 be interested in talking about. But by no means feel obliged to answer each of these
41 questions.
42

43 So, based on what you've learned so far in the Inquiry, what are other key areas where
44 change is needed and what ideas do you have for making sure recommendations get
45 implemented?
46

1 Some topics we have heard you want to tell us about include: Firearms. What should
2 access to fire ... or how should to firearms be regulated in Canada? How can laws about
3 the possession, importation and transfer of firearms be effectively enforced?
4

5 Police paraphernalia. What limits, if any, should be placed on the private ownership of
6 police equipment, uniforms and vehicles? Do you have any additional suggestions
7 about the regulation of police paraphernalia?
8

9 Changes to Policing. Is change required to our current structure and approach to
10 policing? If so, what changes would lead to improvements, especially in rural settings?
11 Thinking about the future, how is community confidence in policing built?
12

13 And finally, implementation. What steps can we take to help ensure the Commission's
14 report and recommendations lead to substantive, positive change? What can we do to
15 make sure that lessons learned from the Nova Scotia mass casualty lead to change?
16 What one change would be ... would have the biggest impact?
17

18 And I'll start with you this time, Ryan?
19

20 **Ryan FARRINGTON** [02:11:46] I'm not going to lie. That was very long.
21

22 **Jamie VanWART** [02:11:49] It is very long. And that's why I had an even longer build-
23 up. That is, I'm trying to remind everyone we are really looking forward and focusing on
24 recommendations, and really it feels important to have your input about
25 recommendations.
26

27 **Ryan FARRINGTON** [02:12:07] Of course.
28

29 **Jamie VanWART** [02:12:08] This is your chance to give us ... another chance for you to
30 give us input. Is there anything you want to share with the Commissioners and each
31 other this afternoon?
32

33 **Ryan FARRINGTON** [02:12:17] I'm going to start with the firearms and stuff like that.
34 One of my biggest things is, is I'm not against firearms. I legally own firearms. Friends
35 own firearms. It's not the firearms that kill people; it's the people that kill people.
36

37 I think we need stiffer penalties across the board, across Canada on gun laws, when it
38 comes to committing a crime with a gun or getting caught with a gun and you're not
39 supposed to have it. None of this, two months', six months' probation and you're out.
40

41 Our gun laws are a joke compared to the U.S. and a lot of other states. So that being
42 said, I definitely think that we need to sit down and look at the way the justice system
43 handles, you know, prosecuting someone that has been charged with a firearm offence.
44

1 Importation and stuff; that's a tough one. I mean, you're getting into Border Security
2 there. I don't know if maybe they have to do a little bit more training on, you know,
3 where to look, how to find these firearms. I'm not 100% sure on that.

4
5 But yeah, my biggest thing is I've noticed, you know, over the years just reading in the
6 newspapers or hearing the news, you know, people get caught with guns and you're not
7 even facing a sentence. I think we definitely need to crack down on that. Because you
8 can ban the guns. You can ban guns all you want, but if somebody wants to get a gun,
9 they're going to get a gun. So we definitely need to start cracking down on the
10 sentencing, on the crime itself instead of letting, you know, this go unpunished.

11
12 **Jamie VanWART** [02:14:44] Thank you, Ryan. And do you have any comments at any
13 of the other like police paraphernalia, policing and implementation of the
14 recommendations? Anything you wanted to add? It's okay if you don't.

15
16 **Ryan FARRINGTON** [02:14:56] On the, on the paraphernalia and stuff like that, I think I
17 touched base on this there the other day, you know. Kudos to the Nova Scotia
18 Government for banning, you know, the police stuff and being able to access it. I think
19 the federal government needs to take a look at that as well and maybe consider doing a
20 similar thing as what the Province of Nova Scotia has done.

21
22 I'd like to see something change in that where, you know, it's not as easily accessible,
23 especially uniforms. There's no need for people to have mock uniforms.

24
25 Decommissioned cars; I don't see the point in them. They're rundown. The only reason
26 you're driving them is because they, you know, they look like a mock police car. I mean,
27 you can tell which ones are decommissioned. So it's very easily that, you can put one
28 together. So as for that, a lot of, you know, I'd like to see the federal government step in
29 and do something similar to what Nova Scotia did.

30
31 And what was your other question, Jamie?

32
33 **Jamie VanWART** [02:16:14] I think again it was about changes to policing and the
34 implementation of the recommendations if you had any comments, but --

35
36 **Ryan FARRINGTON** [02:16:25] No, I touched based on that there the other day. And
37 you know, like I said, I think the RCMP are, are far outdated. I think they need a lot of
38 change in order to be able to police any rural community properly. You know, if Nova
39 Scotia or whatever decides to keep with the RCMP, I really hope that, you know, the
40 recommendations that the Commissioners put out there, I hope the RCMP really, you
41 know, take a hard look at it and implement the ones they can. But I think they have a lot
42 of, a lot of work to do when it comes to that. I personally think an outside force or a
43 municipal force in itself would probably serve better for the communities.

44
45 **Jamie VanWART** [02:17:24] Thank you, Ryan.

46

1 **Ryan FARRINGTON** [02:17:25] Thank you.

2

3 **Jamie VanWART** [02:17:27] Crystal, so again, as we do our last go around, do you
4 have any other ... anything else you want to share with regards to this topic of
5 recommendations, touching upon some of the things I've suggested, but really more of
6 an open-ended question?

7

8 **Crystal MENDIUK** [02:17:44] I always have opinions.

9

10 **Jamie VanWART** [02:17:46] Well that's great.

11

12 **Crystal MENDIUK** [02:17:49] You know what, I'm going to, I'm going to agree with a lot
13 of what Ryan said.

14

15 When it comes to firearms. I, you know, I live in rural Alberta. We are a bunch of
16 redneck farmers. The vast majority of my friends, you know, have guns. I live actually in
17 a community that is highly ex-military. We have a military base right by, so there is
18 enormous amount of people in my community that do have guns. I agree the guns aren't
19 the problem; it's the people that are the problem. You know, a lot of people asked just
20 shortly after right when this happened and the federal government came out and
21 banned, you know, a whole bunch of guns, I have a lot of military friends who actually
22 own some of those guns that became banned and they were from their service time and
23 there's history for them in those weapons and they were, you know, quite upset and
24 were ... they were weird about talking about it around me because of their feelings and
25 you know, and I said banning them isn't going to stop them from coming into the
26 country, it's not going to stop them from people getting their hands on them. That's
27 where the issue is. It's, it's not banning all of these weapons; make it so that they can't
28 come in the country. And like Ryan said, make it so that you have stronger penalties
29 where if you don't have a reason to be carrying this or holding this again, ex-military or
30 whatever the case may be, that's where this needs to start, because the vast majority of
31 the weapons that were used that weekend came from the United States. They did not
32 come here. They were not obtained in any legal fashion to begin with, so banning them
33 would have made no difference whatsoever in this entire situation. So for me, when it
34 comes to firearms, I'm with Ryan. I don't believe that firearms themselves are the
35 issues. It's getting them here and doing something about it when you do find people that
36 have them illegally.

37

38 With regards to police paraphernalia, again, I am same thing with Ryan. Again, I don't, I
39 don't live in Nova Scotia, and I was hot mad when I realized that Nova Scotia put these
40 laws in and none of the other provinces across Canada did.

41

42 We actually had an incident in Alberta about, I'm going to say eight months ago where
43 somebody was actually got a hold of, I believe it was a Calgary Police uniform and was
44 actually going around and hurting people and he had a Calgary Police uniform on. And I
45 was furious, furious that the laws that Nova Scotia put in place to protect their people
46 were not done on a federal level and that none of the other provinces stepped in to do

1 the same thing. Yeah, it shouldn't be allowed, you know, same thing as far as the
2 vehicles. You all know that they're coming. You know, I think this is an extenuating
3 circumstance, but ... as far as what he did with the vehicle, there's no reason for them to
4 sell them. I mean, they're old vehicles. Why? Why do they need to be out there?

5
6 And as far as the uniforms and the paraphernalia, again, I don't see the purpose. And I
7 think that that should be Canada wide; what Nova Scotia did and I commend the
8 province for doing it and doing it as quickly as they did, knowing that it isn't easy to just
9 make these things happen.

10
11 Changing to policing - with this one, I think the approach needs to be more
12 collaborative. I think in the situation that happened, I think the RCMP lacked
13 communication. I think that to a certain degree, and this is just my opinion, they acted
14 arrogantly in the sense that there were many other municipal forces and other agencies
15 that they could have brought in a lot closer that could have helped them. And I know
16 that there were calls that went out and assistance was offered. And I believe that it was
17 their sheer arrogance that didn't allow anybody else to help them and nobody wanted to
18 step on anybody else's toes.

19
20 So I think going forward, I live in, you know, again, rural Alberta. So we have RCMP
21 where I am; we don't have city police forces. You know, I know in Ontario that they have
22 the OPP. You know what? It can work because they are smaller communities. So, you
23 know, what do you do with that? However, I think they just generally need to work
24 together better. Whether you're RCMP, OPP, city police, Sheriff's departments, peace
25 officers, you're all working towards the same goal. So I'm not really sure why the
26 agencies can't work better together more collaboratively and open up the lines of
27 communication when situations occur.

28
29 I also think that, yes, being involved in the community. They need to be out there,
30 whether you're ... regardless of what policing entity you are. I think that at one point in
31 time they ... you saw a police officer or you saw, you know, an RCMP, you saw
32 somebody in uniform and you knew that they were safe and they were your friend, and
33 you saw them walking around like regular, everyday people out there, you know,
34 protecting. I don't think that there's enough of that done. I think that there's a lot of sitting
35 behind your desk. I think that there's a lot of, you know, maybe other areas that they
36 focus on. But I just think that they need to get out there more and be more involved in
37 the communities, especially these small communities. Like I said, I, I live in the small
38 community. You know what? Seeing them around town, you know, stopping in, you
39 know, saying "Hi", those things go a long ways to making people feel that, you know
40 what, there is somebody out there.

41
42 Lastly, as far as the recommendations go, you know, when I briefly talked about this as
43 well, and I understand that this report and these recommendations, there is no validity
44 as far as them having to be done. There's going to be a vast amount of
45 recommendations that are going to go out and they're not enforceable in any sort of
46 sense. And I think that collectively as family, there's enough of us, representatives I

1 guess, if you will, that we need, we need access to who can actually make these
2 changes and we need help and assistance because I think it's going to rely on us to
3 ensure that these things get done. It's going to rely on the public. And again, I think that
4 our job here with regards to this Public Inquiry and all other jobs that we've all had
5 throughout this whole entire process, unfortunately, is not done and it's not going to be
6 done for a while. But to stay diligent and vigilant and make sure that they get done.

7
8 So being able to also get the recommendations but know who we can contact or the
9 people that can help us get this done. And maybe it's a matter of potentially setting up a
10 group of some kind for the immediate family that maybe potentially wants to keep
11 involved and keep this going forward. Maybe something that can also be looked at
12 when the final report comes out. Again, I know for myself I'm more than willing to help
13 see this through. From the very beginning, I've always said, everything I do is for my
14 family and for me ... for me, this final report is their legacy. This will be what keeps them
15 remembered and will what keep them alive and my grandkids will know, hopefully, it's a
16 better place to live, because our families had to die. This is their legacy. And I'm going
17 to continue to fight to make sure that for my grandkids, my great grandkids and the
18 family to come that this is a better place for them and it'll be a better place for them,
19 because of all the lives that we lost.

20
21 **Jamie VanWART** [02:27:34] Thank you so much, Crystal. That was very well spoken.
22 Maybe I'll move to Harry. Again, it's the final round. Did you have any further
23 comments on any of the topics I raised or any final comments you want to make with
24 regards to recommendation?

25
26 **Harry BOND** [02:27:59] I agree with what Ryan and Crystal had said [indiscernible] and
27 put the firearms. Once regulated, like the laws in Canada, they're perfect. You've got to
28 take courses. You've got to get cards. I have firearms. I had to take a course to be an
29 owner or to be able to purchase a firearm. I had to take another course in order to be
30 able to purchase ammunition. And then another course to be able to hand ... to have
31 handguns. My handguns are all registered through the RCMP before I was allowed to
32 even take them home. I mean, everything, everything as far as laws for firearms, I don't
33 see how they can get it better. You take the firearms away, if someone wants to kill,
34 they're still going to get a firearm. You can make them. You can 3D print them, you can
35 make plastic ones. If you worked long enough to kill somebody ...

36
37 In this case, he didn't have any of these cards. He was not legal to possess- ... or have
38 a gun in his possession. There was calls and reports that he had these firearms. Why
39 weren't they look into? And it was easy - just look up on their computer. So I'm not ...
40 it's not registered that he has to carry firearms. Why wasn't that ever looked in to? They
41 would have looked into it and found out that he had firearms; there was lots of reports. I
42 mean, these things got to be taken serious. You ban all these firearms, the only person
43 you're hurting is the hunter or the collector, not someone that's out there to kill
44 somebody. You're not hurting them.

45

1 With the police uniforms, no, they shouldn't be They're not ... you used to look a
2 police with a uniform on, well that was a safety person. Like that was a person that
3 you'd go to; you could trust them. That's not the case anymore. That trust in that
4 uniform is gone. When you retire from the force, there's no need of having the uniform.
5 Why not pass it in?
6

7 The vehicles; it ain't gonna matter if they, if they sell the vehicles or they don't sell the
8 vehicles. They used vehicles of every sort. They, they used Ford trucks. They used
9 Dodge trucks. They used Ford Focuses. Before, when we were kids growing up, they
10 stuck with one vehicle and one vehicle only. It was either white or it was black or brown
11 as a ghost car. You could put lights on any vehicle now and pull people over,
12 because ... down home there they got a brand-new Ford, Ford truck, white. I mean I
13 could go put lights on my truck. In the dark, it's going to look like a police vehicle. In
14 order for that to work, you'd have to stick to one vehicle like they did back 30 years ago.
15 That's, that won't happen, so. We use too many vehicles for undercover. They use
16 every SUV going. It's, it ain't going to matter. If you have a police vehicle or if you don't;
17 if they're selling them or if they're crushing them, it's not gonna matter.
18

19 With the policing, there's a lot of, a lot of work there that got to be done. There's so
20 many police officers out that's only there for the paycheck, but not out there for the job.
21 Within three weeks after this happened, we were on our way back home from down at
22 Mom and Dad's cleaning out the house. And we got pulled over and this very ignorant
23 cop, they're trained not to do that, but his training went out the window. And my niece
24 was ready to bail out of the truck because she thought this officer was fake, the way he
25 was acting. They ... that's not part of their training. Their training is to keep their self
26 calm. No matter if they're ... somebody spits in their face or someone curses them up or
27 down. They're still trained to be calm. Well, I've had friends that was officers. I know
28 some of, some of the training. You get a situation like this, you don't refuse help, and
29 that's the case here. And it still hasn't been said why. But that's something that has to
30 be discovered. Why did they refuse help? The real reason.
31

32 That's the biggest thing I've had the problem with is you get like the senior officer,
33 they're very polite. I find with the younger officers, not all, but most are very, very
34 ignorant. Like I said, it looks to me, the first one was three weeks after and then I got it
35 stopped again about three months after. The wife and I was on our way back from New
36 Brunswick; we went and bought a camper and I had to pull over, and he thought he was
37 gonna get me for weight, but he can't charge me for being overweight anyway; that's for
38 the weighers to do. That's not for an RCMP officer. So once he realized I got ... once
39 he seen my license, I had a Class 1 license so I'm able to haul that way. He got very
40 ignorant. Come to find out, he was the very first officer on scene that night. So I told him
41 he was the person to screw up. Threw my papers at me and nothing.
42

43 So I mean stuff like that makes a person wonder. Can they be trusted if they're going to
44 act like that? They're supposed to be there to protect us. And like I say again, they're
45 training [indiscernible], their training's going out the window. So their training needs to
46 be, it needs to be improved. You improve their training, improve their ... who they

1 can ... the women's if they're saying no for help. Well, something like that, the more
2 manpower the better [indiscernible] ...

3

4 **Jamie VanWART** [02:35:59] One of the other questions that I posed, and again, you
5 don't have to make comments on it, but do you have any recommendations about how
6 these, the recommendations that would come forward probably can be best
7 implemented?

8

9 **Harry BOND** [02:36:14] In other words ...

10

11 **Jamie VanWART** [02:36:16] Well, what steps can be taken to ensure that if you have
12 any comments about the recommendations that are ultimately coming forward in this
13 report, but how we can ensure they're actually followed up on, implemented?

14

15 **Harry BOND** [02:36:34] You'd almost have to have an agreement with the government,
16 and I don't trust the government, so. Crystal said she'd do it or she would be part of the
17 group and do it herself. I'd be 100% behind that if you needed someone to ... a group of
18 people, as for probably the only way you're going to make sure is either have someone
19 like yourselves or another group to make sure this doesn't stop because if not, it's going
20 to be a lot of stuff that happened in this mass shooting been remembered, I don't know
21 'cause it got put underneath the rug or it got thrown in the fire . And once stuff got
22 destroyed, hidden, buried, it's, then that would happen with these recommendations.
23 And I mean my mother and father didn't deserve this, and I'll do everything in my power
24 to make sure this doesn't happen to somebody else's parents. So if I can help out to
25 make sure these things are done whatever you come up; 100% behind you. ...
26 [indiscernible] ...

27

28 **Richard ELLISON** [02:38:00] [indiscernible]. One of the huge factors that made this
29 possible for the shooter is the fact that we don't have RCMP or any other police
30 protection in Orchard Beach Estates. You could walk on that road all day and not see a
31 patrol car go down. Like you go down to the beach and then come back out, you know,
32 just to make sure and whatever. And that's a big thing right there, yet they're right there
33 with their hand out wanting money from the taxpayers to pay for police protection. And
34 yet we don't get any, not one minute of it. And unfortunately, he used that to his
35 advantage, the killer, right.
36 Like I say, there's no lights down there, you know, you're in the middle of nowhere, you
37 might say.

38

39 And as far as gun control laws are concerned, they only apply to law abiding citizens.
40 Criminals aren't gonna worry about how many magazines or ask them where their pistol
41 is, which is standard in this country ... [indiscernible] ... legally, the magazines have to
42 be 10 shots per gun and the same as semi-fired rifles; five shots in a magazine, not 30
43 or ... [indiscernible] ... because they're only made for one thing and that's military
44 purposes, right?

45

1 So unless the Canadian Government stands up and gives the RCMP some heat to deal
2 with people like Mr. Wortman; there was a police officer that went down there 12 or 13
3 times to check up on him or something. He never ... there was no results and he's got
4 guns there and yet they didn't bother finding ... put the kiboshes to him and say listen,
5 where are the firearms? Put him right in jail and then you tell us where the guns are
6 and we might let you out of jail but we are going to charge you. Yeah, so without that
7 kind of enforcement, then there's, you can't really blame those guys because their
8 hands are tied. They were tied when they came down here that night. They should
9 have had rifles, they whining and going on about these carbines that they want to carry;
10 I never seen any of them, any of that stuff.

11
12 Drones, they must have had drones that they could have used for surveillance and
13 Google Maps to show them okay, well this ... you know, I blame it on them on how he
14 got out of there ... when telling he can't get out of there and he went on to kill nine more
15 people over around Wentworth and Debert. Simple as that. You know, incompetent I
16 call it. Like the government's incompetent. They're not worried about the people.
17 They're just worried about getting re-elected. So unless things like that do change, then
18 this is all for nothing really. It will happen, well it has happened again. There were
19 shootings out West and you know, 'cause people don't care. There's no laws that
20 prevent it or if I'm going to jail or things like taking a life, I'm gonna go to prison. They're
21 going to get, you know, three meals a day and whatever other support they need type of
22 thing. But when it comes to firearms, it should be a whole different ballgame because
23 they are what they are. They're dangerous and you know, we found out the hard way,
24 especially the ones that he had; they were assault. He showed me his gun; I seen a
25 shotgun there. It was prohibited in this country but yet he had it because there was no
26 law ... well the law's here but they didn't apply to him because he was outside the law.
27 He was a criminal right from the sole of his feet to the crown of his head and they
28 didn't ... and he had money. And that's I think that was a big factor why they looked the
29 other way.

30
31 **Jamie VanWART** [02:41:54] I'm hearing your ... you mentioned enforcement being a
32 major focus for the firearms issue. Do you have any other comments with regards to
33 police paraphernalia or?

34
35 **Richard ELLISON** [02:42:15] Well the police paraphernalia and that; if they sold them
36 to Surplus, then they should sell them to Surplus in other countries; get them right out of
37 Canada and sell them wherever, down ... [indiscernible] someplace where they might
38 need them; in Nigeria or something. They don't need them in this country because
39 they've already had their useful purpose for the officers that did have them.

40
41 **Harry BOND** [02:42:31] They'd make their way back here.

42
43 **Richard ELLISON** [02:42:37] Well, I suppose they could, but ...

44
45 **Harry BOND** [02:42:38] Just burn them.

46

1 **Richard ELLISON** [02:42:38] Either that or burn them. Like I say, down there nothing's
2 changed since April [indiscernible]. Not a thing has changed. The road's just as black
3 as it ever was. It's just as dark down there as it ever was. There's no community
4 support. They ... people are pretty cold hearted, a lot of them, it seems. It's just as long
5 as doesn't happen to them, you know, too bad type of thing. But ... and police cars too,
6 I know at Blenkhorn's they sell ex-Mountie cars there, or they used to. Maybe they don't
7 now. Maybe they just crush them. See they're out for the money. Even I had a guy
8 come in here from the RCMP concerning firearms and I bought a couple of handguns
9 just not that long ago, within the month. And I didn't realize that my membership at a
10 gun club had run out, so I wasn't going to get them guns transferred into my name until I
11 join a gun club, and I joined one down here on Juniper Street. It cost me \$300, but
12 that's a law abiding citizen. See somebody that's not abiding they're not going to worry
13 about stuff like that. As long as they got the gun, that gives them the power in their
14 hands to yeah, enforce ... impose through on other people. That's all it is.

15
16 **Jamie VanWART** [02:44:02] Thank you Richard. Debra, I'll turn to you again. Again it's
17 our third round and a last opportunity to talk about recommendations that you might
18 want to comment on.

19
20 **Deb Thibeault** [02:44:33] I agree with everything's been said, honestly. In the policing,
21 I'd like to say though the policing of our area I'd like it if they would know the area of
22 policing, they have a map and they have technology. They're aware that ... Again, we
23 live in a world with internet. There is map or whatever. They need to know all this stuff;
24 that is so important. It would be nice if there had have been a helicopter if they needed
25 it in the area that was [indiscernible] that night. They couldn't get the technology for the
26 maps I heard. So that is really big. That would help a lot.

27
28 I'd like to see them bridge with the community, meeting people in the area. They would
29 know the ways out. They would know, you know, you can have someone police an
30 area, but you should have ... if you knew a little bit about the people who have been
31 there forever, they would have shown you how to keep yourself safe too and the roads
32 in and out. That was a big deal. I would like to see a police officer there. Real one. It
33 makes me feel better to know that if someone does police my area, they know the area.
34 [indiscernible] people a little bit for help.

35
36 When I did speak to an investigator, he told me that he had 16 crime scenes and he
37 was only one person. [indiscernible] so it's just ... it was a big deal [indiscernible]. They
38 didn't have any staffing. ... [indiscernible] ... there was more staff; they were short-
39 handed. He was overwhelmed. So, it's a pretty sad situation. And it seems like
40 [indiscernible] where down in that area a lot of money and power. They treat you
41 differently. Yeah, you get away with a lot more, especially that area where a lot of the
42 other men would see a lot of things and they'd treat different and let things go, because
43 you got money and power and buy some things. See, I just noticed that you treat
44 different, right.

45

1 You have an officer go to their house 16 times and they have everything, they think
2 different. [indiscernible] ... I just think that's ... that's probably a little bit of interest and
3 down there [indiscernible] out and seeing them. That was a big thing. I would just like
4 them to know the area. I'd like to have them have the technology and a lot of staff, not
5 just somebody who shows up now and then; doesn't know their way out or nothing;
6 short cuts to the highway. Yeah, that's all I have to say.
7

8 **Jamie VanWART** [02:47:26] Thanks Debra. So I'll turn now to Leo. I think we are in
9 [indiscernible] to rounding up. Just perhaps you could share your comments.
10

11 **Leo ARTALEJO** [02:47:29] I'm always smiling, because this is one of those boil-the-
12 ocean kind of ... lots to cover here, so I won't be able to touch on everything that was
13 said. But at the highest level what I was hearing from the group in terms of consensus
14 is that many of the gun laws in place are sufficient, but that enforcement is an important
15 part of keeping people safe.
16

17 So there's something around mandatory investigation and someone is reported to have
18 a gun and then I think some of our friends online were very clear that banning doesn't
19 stop importation. Banning doesn't stop outlaws from having the guns. So it's something
20 around investigation and enforcement.
21

22 Paraphernalia, we've heard that it'd be great to see other provinces follow suit with what
23 Nova Scotia has done. And there were some realistic comments from Harry about the
24 fact that they use local type of vehicles and it's not like it was 30 years ago, you know,
25 Ford Taurus or whatever it was.
26

27 **Harry BOND** [02:48:50] Crown Vics.
28

29 **Leo ARTALEJO** [02:48:50] Yeah. Yeah. So especially at night they might put sirens
30 on, pretty much any vehicle, you know, to pull people over. General agreement that the
31 uniforms aren't necessarily to be made in the private sector.
32

33 Changes to policing, what I heard was very interesting, which is it's not so much about
34 swapping one force up for another force; it's about making sure the force that's there is
35 prepared. That they have the technology, the gear, the air support and staff to do it. And
36 I also heard that there was a breakdown in communication that really led to the
37 problem, not so much that we had necessarily the wrong force on the ground, and that
38 communication breakdown was influenced by arrogance. And I think what I heard the
39 group say is that there needs to be some sort of mandatory collaboration model
40 between forces when they're forced to collaborate. So that collaboration can happen.
41 And then just the clear call that training needs to be improved. Again, whatever
42 resource is there they need to make sure that they have Alert training.
43

44 And when it comes to implementation, I'm hearing that there is some kind of an
45 oversight group or a committee that the families may be interested in playing a part in
46 and that makes sense. But the public is going to need to exert pressure to make sure

1 that the recommendations are implemented. That's an important piece of following
2 through.

3
4 And then the last thing I just wrote down, because it was so beautifully put by Crystal,
5 was this idea of the, that the legacy of this Commission is intertwined with the legacy of
6 the people that you have lost. And that these, that the conversation we're having today
7 is about creating a better place for families in the future. And I thought it was beautiful
8 the way you phrased it, Crystal, but I just wanted to kind of put a point on it that a better
9 place is also like a safer place. And so there's, like when we say a better place to be
10 really clear, this is about keeping Canadians safer and protecting Canadians. And to
11 me, the implementation of these recommendations is the way that we can make that a
12 better, safer place.

13
14 So that's what I heard and there's a lot here. But obviously reflect that back to the
15 previous [indiscernible].

16
17 **Richard ELLISON** [02:51:17] I was talking about Gabriel's firearms and the reason why
18 I didn't report them is for the simple reason I was afraid for my life, 'cause by the time
19 the RCMP got around to dealing with it, you'd come down there and that would be the
20 end of me. 'Cause I do know, he showed them to me just like you just show somebody a
21 new watch you got at Christmas time. He had no fear of the law whatsoever.

22
23 **Harry BOND** [02:52:01] Yeah, but there were other people who did see them and did
24 report them, but the cop, the RCMP didn't do nothing about it.

25
26 **Richard ELLISON** [02:52:01] Didn't do nothing about. But that's why I didn't. They
27 wouldn't do nothing anyways.

28
29 **Leo ARTALEJO** [02:52:01] [indiscernible] ... feel safe.

30
31 **Richard ELLISON** [02:52:01] You know, it's pretty bad that you have to think like that,
32 cause you're afraid to report a criminal, due to lack of police protection. It's just ...

33
34 **Jamie VanWART** [02:52:01] I think I'll now hand it to the Commissioners as we
35 conclude what I think has been a very engaging and really helpful discussion.
36 Commissioner Stanton, if you have any comments or anything you want to say.

37
38 **Commissioner STANTON** [02:52:40] Thanks Jamie. It's a lot to take in, but it's really
39 helpful to hear because there's a number of themes that we've been hearing
40 throughout, right, from the different witnesses and from the different panels, from the
41 experts, from the lawyers, from all directions, and you know we're starting to hear some
42 very common themes and so it's really helpful to kind of have that reinforced today. And
43 I was so struck by the generosity of all of you to take the time to come in to talk to us
44 [indiscernible] ... Ryan, I hope you're feeling better. I know you haven't been well. I see
45 you've still got a bit of a cough, but I hope you're feeling better and ...

46

1 **Ryan FARRINGTON** [02:53:39] I feel a little bit better.

2
3 **Commissioner STANTON** [02:53:41] Okay, good.

4
5 **Ryan FARRINGTON** [02:53:42] Thank you.

6
7 **Commissioner STANTON** [02:53:43] Crystal. You, you always, I don't know, you
8 always make me cry (laughter), but that's, it means a lot to hear you speak the way you
9 do about wanting to carry this forward, and make sure that the part that ... like we can
10 only take it so far by doing our best to make to make the recommendations that can be
11 implemented, but that you, that you're so committed to carrying it forward from there
12 gives me hope. So we'll do our best to give you something to work with. So thank you.
13 And to your family and your parents.

14
15 And Deb, you were one of our early witnesses, and it must have been so scary to be up
16 there doing that, but we really appreciate it. It gave us a good sense of the geography
17 and the view and was really ... [indiscernible] ... understand the area.

18
19 Mr. Ellison, too ... [indiscernible] it, I mean what a nightmare you lived through that night
20 but then the next day as well. It's just ...

21
22 And Mr. Bond, your counsel has brought forward every time, every time about that 19
23 hours.

24
25 **Harry BOND** [02:55:15] I've got him trained some good, huh? (laughter) No, I, I can't
26 imagine having anybody else. I'm very happy with [indiscernible]. We're having a great
27 friendship.

28
29 **Commissioner STANTON** [02:55:28] Well, he cares deeply about you, and it shows.
30 And we have all been, I mean our investigators went and mapped out every GPS they
31 could find to figure out that piece, because all of us wanted, we wanted answers for all
32 of you to share what had happened, so ...

33
34 **Harry BOND** [02:56:07] Well, they had them in that house with the front door wide open
35 for umpteen plus hours with [indiscernible] down there. It's a wonder there wouldn't be
36 an animal. There's coyotes and bears, and Mom had, she had one in her front yard.

37
38 **Deb Thibeault** [02:56:34] She had bears eating out of her compost a lot.

39
40 **Harry BOND** [02:56:36] Yeah, she had a black cougar on her front lawn with her three
41 pups. It's, I mean to think that the door's wide open could go in; I'm just so thankful it
42 didn't, but could have.

43
44 **Deb Thibeault** [02:56:52] [indiscernible]

45
46 **Harry BOND** [02:56:54] It's laughable and that's not the [indiscernible] of change.

1 **Commissioner STANTON** [02:56:54] [indiscernible] ... senior management lost track a
2 little bit.

3
4 **Harry BOND** [02:56:54] Well, if you had a police officer there at 10:00 o'clock or I might
5 not have the time right, but Sunday morning, seen the door was open. But his excuse
6 was I wasn't told to go there, so you was just being nosey and snooping. The only thing
7 keeping the door open was Dad's [indiscernible], well not Dad's [indiscernible]. That's
8 not going to hurt their investigation. Anybody could have snuck in from below and
9 helped [indiscernible]. We wouldn't have ... my brother and I wouldn't have nothing to
10 remember our parents with. There's a lot of little things that's not bottled that we
11 definitely [indiscernible]. They could have went in so, took everything out of that house;
12 they very well could have, it was wide open. Or did the imaginable, burn it down.
13 [indiscernible]. In another situation like that [indiscernible]. That's why we're here to try
14 to prevent things, to change things. Things, like I say, a lot needs to be changed
15 [indiscernible].

16
17 **Commissioner STANTON** [02:58:29] Well, and the messages we've heard from all of
18 you is that you don't want other people to have to go through this..

19
20 **Harry BOND** [02:58:35] No, and if we don't make changes, it will. Unfortunately, it will.

21
22 **Commissioner STANTON** [02:58:44] Well, [indiscernible] sense of and it's no offence
23 to all of you, but for making and helping us try to make sure, that other people don't
24 have to go through what you've been through. Thank you.

25
26 **Commissioner MacDONALD** [02:59:02] I'm totally off the screen. (laughter) I just
27 wanted to echo Commissioner Stanton's thanks, thanks to you, on a number of fronts.
28 I'm learning so much every day and I just learned a lot today. What struck me was
29 you're not only carrying the burden of your loved ... and every one of you, you're not
30 only carrying the burden of your loss, it seems like you're leaders in your own families
31 too and you're carrying extra weight there. And that's, that's trauma on top of trauma.
32 And you know it was pretty obvious to me. And I guess that makes our thanks to you
33 even greater, because, you know, you're ... it's not that you're taking your time; it's
34 valuable, but I'm sure, you know, it wasn't, it wasn't an easy thing to do to come here
35 and relive those experiences again in many ways. And I greatly appreciate that, I want
36 you to know. And all our counsel, you need your counsel, and I want you to know that
37 we need your counsel, too. And they are helpful to us in terms of making sure that, that
38 the Inquiry is the best it can be. And something that's been on my mind the past couple
39 of weeks or whenever it happened in Saskatchewan; it's hard to keep track of time. But
40 without making a comment about Cobequid or how bad it was, but there was a lot of talk
41 about alerts going out and there are more alerts. I don't want to get emotional, but
42 what's been on my mind there was a heavy price to pay for that. There was a heavy
43 price to pay and the fact that lives were saved, if they were saved, it was because of
44 your family and your parents, siblings. That's on my mind. Thank you. And thank you to
45 the counsel; I think I already said that. Thank you.

46

1 **Commissioner FITCH** [03:01:30] [indiscernible] ... I feel like I'm gonna
2 [indiscernible] ... No, I just ... I can't say anything better than what my fellow
3 Commissioners and all of you have said. It just means a tremendous amount to have
4 you both showing up and being here, contributing what you have, and as Commissioner
5 Stanton said, Deb, you were one of the first out of the gate in our whole proceedings.
6 And we had all commented at that time the amount of courage that it took for you to do
7 that and focus that, to set the stage for ... [indiscernible] ... in public proceedings ...
8 [indiscernible], and you as well Mr. Ellison. It's very, very, very humbling for us to be
9 able to share this space with you folks. And I really don't have any wise words other
10 than to, and a psychologist might disagree with me on this, and you folks might as well;
11 Crystal, when you talked about hearing the Alert come out and how triggering that must
12 be for you and for a lot of people, but if there is any take away from that, and
13 Commissioner MacDonald touched on it, is that is the voice of your loved ones helping
14 others in the future. And I don't know if that's a way that can maybe help to reframe that
15 because those Alerts bring back a lot of trauma. So, just thank you and thank you Ms.
16 [indiscernible] ...

17
18 **Jamie VanWART** [03:03:30] Well, thank you everyone. [indiscernible] ... I think we'll
19 bring to an end. Thanks to those who travelled today and thanks for those who endured
20 appearing visual- ... virtually while the rest are around the table. Thank you for your
21 patience and thank you all for being such great listeners and sharing the way that you
22 did in both [indiscernible].

23
24 **Richard ELLISON** [03:04:13] So is this the last part of the Inquiry? Like, is it going to
25 go to March or is this ... [indiscernible].

26
27 **Jamie VanWART** [03:04:13] Well, next week will be the last [indiscernible], you know.

28
29 **Richard ELLISON** [03:04:28] I'm hoping that we'll see some changes. That's what we
30 need, just to see change. If we don't see any change, you know, you're full of doubt
31 and you know you lose sense of trust and especially in our police forces and that. You
32 know, we're not worried about the front people, just where the next cup of coffee's
33 coming from or something like that.

34
35 **Jamie VanWART** [03:04:37] Well thank you, Richard. Well, I'll bring to close our
36 session and obviously we have and still have refreshments if people want to stay and
37 continue talking.

38
39 **Ryan FARRINGTON** [03:05:04] I just want to say thank you, Commissioners, for taking
40 the time out to hear us.

41
42 **Commissioner STANTON** [03:05:12] It's our honour. It's our privilege. Thank you.

43
44 **Ryan FARRINGTON** [03:05:16] Take care, guys. We'll see you after.

45

1 **Crystal MENDIUK** [03:05:22] See you, Ryan. Yeah, I also just want to say thanks to
2 everybody for putting this together and allowing us to come together like this. So it's, it's
3 helpful and it makes it feel like maybe we're being heard a little bit more. So thanks to
4 everybody.

5

6 **Commissioner STANTON** [03:05:47] Thank you.

7

8 **Crystal MENDIUK** [03:05:49] Okay. See you. Bye.

9 **Jamie VanWART** [03:05:49] Bye bye.

10

11 --- END OF AUDIO RECORDING