

CANADA

PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA

IN THE MATTER OF THE  
*FATALITY INVESTIGATIONS ACT*  
S.N.S. 2001, c. 31

**THE DESMOND FATALITY INQUIRY**

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**TRANSCRIPT**

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**HEARD BEFORE:** The Honourable Judge Warren K. Zimmer

**PLACE HEARD:** Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia

**DATE HEARD:** February, 18, 2021

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1 FEBRUARY 18, 2021

2 COURT OPENED (09:28 HRS)

3

4 THE COURT: Thank you. Good morning.

5 COUNSEL: Good morning, Your Honour.

6 THE COURT: I note that I've come in a couple minutes  
7 early and I note that everyone is here but Ms. Miller. So have  
8 we caught Ms. Miller off guard?

9 Good morning, Ms. Miller.

10 MS. MILLER: Good morning, Your Honour. Your Honour, I  
11 have Diane Desmond as our next witness.

12 THE COURT: All right. Thank you. Ms. Desmond, would  
13 you like to come forward, please? If you could just cross  
14 behind that row of tables there and just come over here for a  
15 minute, please.

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1 **DIANE DESMOND**, sworn, testified:

2 **THE COURT**: Good morning, Ms. Desmond.

3 **MS. DESMOND**: Good morning, Your Honour.

4 **THE COURT**: Ms. Desmond, there's a bottle of water there  
5 for you. That's a fresh bottle. It's for you ...

6 **MS. DESMOND**: Thank you.

7 **THE COURT**: ... if you decide that you want to have a  
8 drink during the proceedings. There's a microphone that's in  
9 front of you that will ... it'll pick up your voice. It records  
10 your voice and amplifies your voice a little bit. If you have  
11 any difficulty hearing any questions from anyone, just ask them  
12 to repeat it. I might remind people to raise their voices a  
13 little bit and if I do, I'm not picking on you. Just make sure  
14 everybody can hear the first time you answer a question.

15 **MS. DESMOND**: Understand.

16 **THE COURT**: All right? Thank you.

17 **MS. DESMOND**: Thank you.

18 **THE COURT**: Ms. Miller?

19 **MS. MILLER**: Thank you, Your Honour.

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22

**DIRECT EXAMINATION**

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**MS. MILLER:** Ms. Desmond, can you state your full name for the record, please?

**A.** Diane Marie Elizabeth Desmond.

**Q.** Thank you. Diane, what's your date of birth?

**A.** May 26, 1982.

**Q.** And where do you currently live?

**A.** I live in Halifax.

**Q.** Who do you live there with?

**A.** Me and my husband.

**Q.** You and your husband live in Halifax. And we understand that you ... well, tell us where you were raised ... born and raised.

**A.** I was raised ... born and raised in Lincolnville ...

**Q.** Yes.

**A.** ... with my mom and my grandparents and 15, 20 others in the household. We come from a big family ...

**Q.** Yeah.

**A.** ... a blessed family, actually. Life was good.

**Q.** And at what point in your life did you move from Lincolnville to Halifax?

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **A.**    I moved in 2009.

2           **Q.**    Okay.  And what do you do in Halifax?

3           **A.**    I'm a continuing care assistant.

4           **Q.**    Okay.  And share with us your relationship to Lionel  
5 Desmond, Brenda Desmond, Shanna Desmond, and Aaliyah Desmond.  
6 What are you in relation to each of those individuals?

7           **A.**    So I am Brenda Desmond's oldest and then I'm Lionel's  
8 oldest sister.  Aaliyah is my niece and Shanna is my sister-in-  
9 law.

10          **Q.**    Yes.  So you are the first born of the family of five.

11          **A.**    Yeah.

12          **Q.**    Yeah.  You were born in 1982 and Lionel came along in  
13 November of 1983.  Correct?

14          **A.**    That is correct.

15          **Q.**    Yeah.  So tell us about your relationship with Lionel  
16 over those years, because there had been a period of time when  
17 it was just you and he before the twins were born.

18          **A.**    That is right.

19          **Q.**    What with us how your relationship was with your  
20 brother Lionel.

21          **A.**    Well, where I'm the oldest, it was always just me and  
22 my brother growing up, you know.  The twins came way down the

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 road but my relationship with my brother was really good. Like  
2 kids, we argued and fight but, at the end of the day, I would  
3 let nobody hurt him. I always had his back, you know, even  
4 through school when people were bullying him, whatever, like big  
5 sis come along. That was my duty.

6 But Lionel was a good kid, a real good kid. Like he didn't  
7 ask for much in life. He was always the one that if it was a  
8 snowstorm, and we know how it can get in Lincolnville, he was  
9 out shoveling, helping everybody. If there was wood, he'd be  
10 out cutting the wood. He was a really active kid and a good  
11 kid. He really was.

12 **Q.** Yeah. And as he progressed through school, you would  
13 have been maybe a year ahead of him in school?

14 **A.** That is correct. Yes.

15 **Q.** Yeah.

16 **A.** Yeah.

17 **Q.** Tell us about as he grew into his teenage years and as  
18 he approached the period of time what he was like when he was  
19 getting ready to leave home to join the military.

20 **A.** He was really active within the schools. Like I  
21 never, ever thought that he would talk about going to military.  
22 But I knew he was going somewheres because he had a good head on

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 his shoulders. He really did. Like my mom ... like, at the  
2 time, it was just me and him, like I said, and raised us on  
3 Assistance and with the blessings of our grandparents. Like it  
4 was a true blessing. And I never ... like we always had people  
5 come to the school, like military, the police force. And I  
6 always seen like he grabbed a pamphlet. Like, He's not going to  
7 the military. Well, I got fooled. He decided one day that when  
8 he graduated, he was going to go to the military and ... I don't  
9 know. I just couldn't picture him but ...

10 **Q.** And why was that?

11 **A.** Because he was just ... I didn't think he was military  
12 ready. Like that's my own mind. Like I always said I wanted to  
13 be a police officer but I never became a police officer. But I  
14 guess it's different strokes for different folks and Lionel was  
15 different.

16 **Q.** How would you describe his personality, Diane, before  
17 he left to join the military?

18 **A.** Prior to leading up to him going to the military, he  
19 was awesome. He'd make you laugh, make you mad, make you cry.  
20 But he was harmless. He wouldn't hurt a fly. Like, if  
21 anything, he would ... he would comfort you before he'd sit  
22 there and let somebody laugh on your behalf or anything like

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 that. He was unique. You know, he had his own personality, his  
2 own ways about things but, like I said, he was harmless.

3 Q. Would you say that he was generally in a good mood and  
4 upbeat and in ...

5 A. Always.

6 Q. ... good spirits?

7 A. Always. Yeah. He was always.

8 Q. That was consistent for him prior to the military.

9 A. It wasn't a day that he didn't make somebody laugh or  
10 have a joke. It may be the weirdest joke but it was Lionel's  
11 joke.

12 Q. Yeah. So would you say that he was a social person  
13 before leaving to go to the military, engaging with other folks?

14 A. He did. But leading up to him going to the military,  
15 like we had a get-together at the Bordens' residence for him.  
16 Like it was just family. And he was very emotional. Aaliyah  
17 was only, I believe, a month or two months. I could be wrong.  
18 But you can tell he didn't want to leave his family, especially  
19 a newborn. Who would want to depart from them? Right?

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. And, yeah, he ... he just wasn't himself.

22 Q. Right. That was a significant event in Lionel's life,

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 as I understand it, the birth of his child, Aaliyah ...

2 **A.** Yeah.

3 **Q.** ... in December 28, 2006.

4 **A.** Uh-huh.

5 **Q.** What did you observe about his character around being  
6 a father?

7 **A.** He loved Aaliyah. He was ... he was and ... he may  
8 not be here but he still is a beautiful dad, an awesome dad. He  
9 took proud and joy in her. Like everything consisted of ...  
10 anything he did was for his daughter ...

11 **Q.** Yeah.

12 **A.** ... may it be going to work, may be out making a few  
13 extra dollars on the side. He did it for Aaliyah because there  
14 was nothing that she wanted that she didn't get.

15 **Q.** Thank you. I'm going to fast-forward now, Diane, to a  
16 period of time after Lionel comes back from Afghanistan. And we  
17 know that, from the records, that's in and around 2008 that he's  
18 finished with the time in Afghanistan. You're still living in  
19 Lincolnvile.

20 **A.** Yes.

21 **Q.** You moved to Halifax in 2009. Share with us your  
22 observations and memories, Diane, of the change that you

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 observed in Lionel's personality and his character after his  
2 return from Afghanistan.

3       **A.** When he came back, we surprised him, picked him up at  
4 the airport in a limo. My grandfather drove it.

5       **Q.** Yeah.

6       **A.** And it was packed. Like we were so ... it was a  
7 freezing rain storm and I'll never forget it. And we got to the  
8 airport. His flight was delayed a little bit because of the  
9 weather but ... I seen him coming down the ramp and he had two  
10 flight attendants escorting him down. And you'd think, you  
11 know, him coming home, he would have been smiling, all happy.  
12 But it just wasn't Lionel. Like I know my brother. Like I  
13 said, it was always me and him for the longest time. And it  
14 wasn't hard to pick up like something was wrong.

15       So we get in the limo and he's holding Aaliyah. Right?  
16 And he's handing out the gifts he brang home for all of us, and  
17 he just got quiet, silence ... very ... he wasn't talkative. He  
18 just kept on looking out the window and then he'd look straight.  
19 Like I knew something was wrong then.

20       **Q.** And that ... you've described for us was this moment  
21 when he returns home ...

22       **A.** Yes.

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **Q.**   ... and the family had the celebration to pick him up  
2 at the airport in your grandfather's limo.

3           **A.**   Uh-huh.

4           **Q.**   Yeah. And what else did you observe about Lionel as  
5 time progressed, outside of that day in terms of his character  
6 and personality?

7           **A.**   He just ... he wasn't himself. He wasn't ... like  
8 Lionel is a people person. And when he didn't come around much  
9 you knew, like, What's going on? Like you start questioning.  
10 You know? Like in a million years, I wouldn't have thought  
11 Lionel was sick. You know, you go away to be a peacekeeper and  
12 you come home on vacation ... like I just ... I just didn't ...  
13 I didn't feel like he was the Lionel that I knew.

14          **Q.**   Okay. And did ... and when you say you didn't feel  
15 that he was the Lionel that you knew, Diane, were there certain  
16 things that he was doing or reactions he had to things like  
17 noise? Were there things like that that you observed were  
18 different ...

19          **A.**   He couldn't take ...

20          **Q.**   ... for him?

21          **A.**   He couldn't take noise.

22          **Q.**   Yeah.

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 (09:40)

2 A. Like kids, like the yelling, he got very short-fused.  
3 He had to leave. That's ... like being around him, that's all I  
4 could remember. Like he just didn't like noise, like the kids  
5 yelling and stuff or banging. He came very sensitive to that.

6 Q. Did his personality change at all, from your  
7 perspective, Diane?

8 A. He did. He went from being the jolly Lionel to being  
9 like ... you got to know which buttons to hit, which buttons  
10 not. Like you had to walk on tiptoes around him because you  
11 didn't know how to take him at times.

12 Q. Okay. Were you worried about setting him off or ...

13 A. To be honest with you, him being my brother, I was  
14 scared because I just didn't know.

15 Q. Right. And that was, as I understand from your  
16 evidence, about what he was like before he went to Afghanistan.  
17 Now it's a completely different picture.

18 A. Oh, big time.

19 Q. Yeah. Okay. Did he ever share with you directly  
20 experiences that he had when he was in Afghanistan, Diane?

21 A. He didn't go into great details about anything  
22 specific besides the fact that if you saw ... like he told me

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 about the spiders over there. They're as big as basketballs, he  
2 said. The snake pit. The kids ... he was drawn to the kids  
3 over there. And when he came home, actually, that time for the  
4 first visit, he said he had to make sure he takes back a whole  
5 bunch of candy for the kids and which he did. He went to the  
6 Bulk Barn and got a stack of candies for them. But other than  
7 that there, he didn't go into great details.

8 Q. Did you understand, through conversation with your mom  
9 or other family members, did you come to learn other stories  
10 about what Lionel had experienced when he was in Afghanistan?

11 A. No, because I always remember my mom saying like, If  
12 you seen what he's seen over there, or, you know ... she prayed  
13 over him a lot because ...

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. ... we didn't know and she didn't now, but when you  
16 read the paper ... and I tell you, not to take you off guard,  
17 but every day that he was over there, I read the paper  
18 faithfully.

19 Q. The newspaper.

20 A. Newspaper ... the **Chronicle Herald** ...

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. ... faithfully. Because you hear on the news, you

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 know, this one got killed in such and such a part, Kabul or  
2 wherever. And I'm like, Dear God, don't let that be my brother.

3 Q. Right.

4 A. And I read the paper faithfully.

5 Q. Yeah. So him being there was stressful for your  
6 family.

7 A. Big time. It was worrisome.

8 Q. Yeah. And then when he returned home, you were  
9 relieved initially.

10 A. I was happy.

11 Q. You ... celebration at the airport. Everyone picks  
12 him up.

13 A. Uh-huh.

14 Q. But as you've described, things were different with  
15 Lionel. And so is it fair to say that that stress about Lionel  
16 continued once he returned home?

17 A. It did.

18 Q. Okay. What did you think was wrong with Lionel when  
19 he returned home, Diane?

20 A. I really didn't know what was wrong.

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. I truly didn't. You know, like when you read the

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 paper, you see what's going on over there, when you watch the  
2 news and you see it, and you're like, you go over there ... he  
3 went over there as a peacekeeper and he come home and ... you  
4 wonder to yourself like, Is my brother going to come back okay?

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. Like I hope he's not going to be traumatized from what  
7 he sees over there. And as time progressed and not being around  
8 him as much because where I'm in Halifax ... and my mother would  
9 tell me, like, you know, Lionel is not himself today or ... you  
10 know, she wouldn't go into great details but she would say, He's  
11 not himself today. I'm going down the road. She'd be down the  
12 road with Aaliyah.

13 Q. Right.

14 A. It made me wonder. Like not in a million years would  
15 I thought this would be the outcome.

16 Q. Right. When you say your mom would go down the road  
17 with Aaliyah, does that mean to where ...

18 A. Oh! To where Shanna and ...

19 Q. Yeah.

20 A. ... Aaliyah lived. Yeah.

21 Q. We're learning the direction language. I just wanted  
22 you to clarify. Thank you for that.

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **A.**    You're welcome.

2           **Q.**    So your mom would share with you ... you know, I think  
3 you'd said if you ... if you had seen the things that ...

4           **A.**    Seen what he seen.

5           **Q.**    ... he had seen. So your understanding was that she  
6 had some sense that there was something going on. Did you know  
7 what his diagnosis was, Diane?

8           **A.**    None. I never knew.

9           **Q.**    When did you learn that your brother had PTSD?

10          **A.**    After this episode that happened.

11          **Q.**    After this tragedy.

12          **A.**    Yeah.

13          **Q.**    Yeah. You knew, though, from conversations with your  
14 mom that he was not well.

15          **A.**    My mom said he was sick.

16          **Q.**    Yes.

17          **A.**    But for my mom to sit there and say that he was  
18 diagnosed with severe PTSD or he was diagnosed with  
19 schizophrenia, I'm not saying he was, my mom wouldn't be able to  
20 tell you that ...

21          **Q.**    What that meant.

22          **A.**    ... because ... what it meant. Exactly. Like she

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 would say he was sick, but she would never use the terminology  
2 of PTSD because me, being a CCA and did my pharmaceutical/med  
3 course and that there, I didn't know what PTSD was until later  
4 on when he got diagnosed with it.

5 **Q.** Okay. What did you understand through this period of  
6 time when Lionel was home and he's struggling, your mom says  
7 he's sick ... and I think you had shared ... does your Nan ever  
8 talk to you about what her observations were about Lionel, as  
9 well?

10 **A.** Nan ... Nan always ... Nan was born with a call, I  
11 believe, because she sees things that we don't. And Nan would  
12 say to us ... well, say to me that his eyes were dark. She  
13 said, His eyes were dark like a crow. I'd say, Nan, what do you  
14 mean, Nan? She's like, That's not Lionel. She's like, It's ...  
15 something is wrong here. And her way of saying it was, They  
16 left Lionel over here and brang somebody home here and it's not  
17 ... she said, That's not my Lionel.

18 **Q.** Right. Yeah.

19 **A.** Right? But Nan was around ... he was always up the  
20 road around Nan and Granddad. And Nan would know firsthand, she  
21 would.

22 **Q.** Okay. And through that period of time you're making

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 your observations, your mom, you understand, knows he's sick.  
2 Your Nan is telling you he's not well. What did you understand,  
3 Diane, was his treatment for whatever was going on, that he had  
4 returned from Afghanistan with?

5 **A.** You know, I honestly don't even know. All I know is  
6 he told me he was doing medical marijuana.

7 **Q.** Yeah.

8 **A.** And never told me why, but I knew he had medical  
9 marijuana. And I knew he was on medication, like pills.

10 **Q.** Yeah.

11 **A.** And the worst thing they could have ever did was  
12 prescribe him marijuana. With somebody with severe PTSD, I  
13 would never prescribe him that.

14 **Q.** When you were ... were you around him when he would  
15 use the medical marijuana, Diane?

16 **A.** A couple of times I was.

17 **Q.** Yeah.

18 **A.** Yes.

19 **Q.** And what were your observations of his personality  
20 when he would use the medical marijuana?

21 **A.** He'd be Lionel. He'd be laughing. He'll tell you  
22 stories ... like in my company, personally ...

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **Q.**    Yeah.

2           **A.**    ... seeing him onto it.  But there were days like  
3 you'd see him out in the woodpile ... I don't know if he would  
4 smoke it before he'd go in the woodpile or what, but I knew when  
5 he was on it because he was calm and he was relaxed.

6           **Q.**    Okay.

7           **A.**    You know?  I honestly can't even say I seen Lionel  
8 with many outbursts because I'd be lying to you.

9           **Q.**    Yeah.  No, that's fair.  All you can do is give us  
10 your observations.

11          **A.**    Right?

12          **Q.**    At this point, you're in Halifax ...

13          **A.**    Exactly.

14          **Q.**    ... returning home periodically.

15          **A.**    Yeah.

16          **Q.**    We know, of course, that your brother spent some time  
17 at an intensive treatment facility in Quebec called Ste. Anne's  
18 through ...

19          **A.**    Uh-huh.

20          **Q.**    ... the summer of 2016.  After he returned back to  
21 Nova Scotia from that time at Ste. Anne's, do you have  
22 opportunities to be around him?

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **A.**    Not much, no.

2           **Q.**    Okay.  There's one incident, I think ... was there a  
3 time when you were in Lincolnville and you were meeting at a  
4 friend's house?

5           **A.**    Me and my cousin, we had went over to the neighbour's  
6 house, Steve's.

7           **Q.**    Yes.

8           **A.**    That's where everybody ... as kids, we always went  
9 there, play cards and stuff.

10          **Q.**    Yes.

11          **A.**    Me and my cousin had went over there and we played  
12 cards.  And Lionel and his friend Greg MacEachern was there.  
13 Greg was in the house and Lionel was outdoors chopping Steve's  
14 wood up for him.  And so we were playing cards and Steve offered  
15 us a beer and we said, Sure.  So I went out to see if he was  
16 coming in.  I had the beer in my hand and I went to see if he  
17 was coming in to have a game of cards.  And he said, Who the "f-  
18 --" gave you that beer?  And I said, Steve gave it to me.  Why?  
19 Don't be giving ... he said, Don't be giving my beer away.  He  
20 said, I'll chop your ... he said, I'll chop your f---ing head  
21 off.  I said, Oh my God, I said, it's only a beer.

22          So I said to my cousin, I said ... you know what?  I put

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 the beer down. I said to my cousin, I said, Here, it's time to  
2 go because that's not my brother. I said, Something is wrong.  
3 And she said, Yeah, let's go. So we left and went nextdoor  
4 because my grandmother, my dad's mom, lived nextdoor to Steve's.  
5 And we had went there. And she's like, Wow, she said, that's  
6 weird. I said, Yeah, I said, that's not Lionel. I said,  
7 Because Lionel would give you a beer, not a problem. But I  
8 guess if it wasn't him that gave it to you, and it's his ... I  
9 don't know. But my brother was never that way towards me.

10 Q. So his reaction that day, Diane, sounds like it caused  
11 you concern.

12 A. Scared me.

13 Q. Yeah. Enough that you actually left.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. And was Shanna present that day at all?

18 A. No, she wasn't.

19 Q. No.

20 A. No.

21 Q. So that behaviour was demonstrated in the context with  
22 just family and friends.

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **A.**    Exactly.

2           **Q.**    And Shanna was not present.

3           **A.**    That's correct.

4           **Q.**    Okay. I want to move now, Diane, to let you share  
5 with us some of the memories you have and detail around your  
6 relationship with your mom. You were her first born.

7    **(09:50)**

8           **A.**    Yeah.

9           **Q.**    Yeah. So talk to us about that.

10          **A.**    I was her first.

11          **Q.**    What was your relationship like with your mom?

12          **A.**    My relationship with Mom was a blessing, you know? As  
13 kids, you have your ... you have your ups and your downs, you  
14 know, but she never said anything that would hurt you. She  
15 never led you in the wrong direction of life. If anything,  
16 being a single parent, raising five kids underneath your  
17 parents' roof, my hat went off to her. She was strong. She was  
18 very strong.

19           And when you see her, you're like, Oh, there's Bren.  
20 Everybody said, There's Bren. But my mom ... my mom was "my"  
21 mom. And she was just a blessing. She prayed over all of us,  
22 you know? We could say one thing to her today and then she'll

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 say, Oh, you'll know tomorrow, da-da-da. Tomorrow comes, be  
2 like you never said nothing to her. Like, you know, we were  
3 best of friends.

4 But my mom was beautiful. She loved bingo. And she loved  
5 her kids. She loved her grandkids. She truly loved her  
6 grandkids. And being her oldest ... you know, people tell me to  
7 this day, Oh, you look like your mom. You remind me of your  
8 mom, like resemblance and ... I miss her. I truly miss her.  
9 Like, you know, I ... myself, I cried and I cried so much that  
10 the ducts in my eyes dried up. You know, I ... I feel like  
11 she's with me. I know she's with me.

12 And why I say that, because a couple of weeks ago at work  
13 ... I do all night shifts. And I'm sitting in the chair on my  
14 break and, of course, you know, you're on break a half hour and  
15 your eyes start getting heavy, like you want to close them, have  
16 a quick nap. And that's what happened to me. As I opened my  
17 eyes ... and I have the camera in front of me, watching my  
18 residents.

19 And I opened my eyes and it's like a little blurry but, to  
20 the table, I see Shanna standing there. Beside me, I see my  
21 brother standing beside me. In the other recliner chair beside  
22 me was mom and then Aaliyah. And I shook my head and I said,

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1 God, no. I'm saying to myself, God, no. Cold chills come over  
2 me. I closed my eyes and I open them back up and they're still  
3 ... they're still sitting there.

4 At that point in my life, I said, You know what, Diane,  
5 there's no sense of being scared. They're here for a reason and  
6 they're letting you know that they're with you, especially my  
7 mom. You know, an innocent person, a person of God who held  
8 faith in all of her kids no matter what we put her through or  
9 what our relationship may be good or bad. She went to her ... I  
10 believe she went to her grave knowing that she's in a better  
11 place than you or I.

12 We're on ... like we're on trial here. This is our trial  
13 here before we get to heaven's gates. And she made it. We're  
14 the ones that are left here, feuding amongst each other,  
15 wondering why. But my ... one thing about it, I never question  
16 God. I never ask him why. And my mom ... I don't think my mom  
17 would want us to ask why, you know?

18 Q. Thank you. When you moved to Halifax, Diane, and you  
19 started your own adult life, you wouldn't be around your mom as  
20 much but can you tell us about how you kept in contact with her  
21 from when you were living in Halifax and she's remaining in  
22 Lincolntonville over those years?

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **A.**    I would talk to her mostly daily. Like Mom texted a  
2 lot, too ...

3           **Q.**    Yeah.

4           **A.**    ... and stuff. If she wasn't home in Lincolnville,  
5 she was down the road with Shanna and Aaliyah and Lionel. But I  
6 heard from her regularly.

7           **Q.**    Yeah. And ...

8           **A.**    And ...

9           **Q.**    ... would she ever come to Halifax for work?

10          **A.**    Mom was always in ... like when she worked for  
11 Miller's and that, yes, she was in Halifax. They stayed at the  
12 Stardust Hotel in Bedford. And, of course, me being Chef  
13 Boyardee, was always the cook for her, taking it out to her  
14 because ... she worked in that heat. You know, she never had  
15 time to go back and cook over the stove. By the time she got  
16 off the road, 8:30 - 9 at night, she'd shower and just, you know  
17 ... so it was me. I would always cook and make sure she ate ...  
18 her and my aunt.

19          **Q.**    Your Aunt Linda.

20          **A.**    Yeah.

21          **Q.**    Her twin sister. Yes.

22          **A.**    Yeah.

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **Q.** We understand they worked together.

2           **A.** Uh-huh.

3           **Q.** Yes. Tell us a little bit about what you observed of  
4 your mother's relationship with Aaliyah.

5           **A.** Inseparable.

6           **Q.** They were ...

7           **A.** Them two were inseparable. Like there was nothing  
8 Aaliyah wanted that Mom didn't get for her. She was the first  
9 grandchild. Right? So Mom spent a lot of quality time with  
10 Aaliyah. They had a bond that was unbreakable, unbearable.  
11 When you seen one, you seen the other. It was like you couldn't  
12 call Mom and Aaliyah is in the background, Hi, Aunt Di, or she'd  
13 say, Hi, Aunt Duckie you know, or ... Mom was always with  
14 Aaliyah.

15           **Q.** Yeah. What was your mom's relationship like with  
16 Shanna?

17           **A.** They were like mother/daughter. You know? Shanna  
18 didn't go anywheres without Mom. You know, even when they lived  
19 in New Brunswick, Mom would be going up on the bus. Or if  
20 Shanna came down, Mom would be going up for two weeks, coming  
21 back, you know. So they spent a great ... a lot of quality time  
22 together. And like they were ... yeah, they were inseparable.

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1           **Q.** Your mom ... we've heard from your other sisters, as  
2 well, and now from you. Your mom spent a lot of time with  
3 Aaliyah and Shanna. From your perspective, Diane, why do you  
4 understand your mom spent so much time ... certainly through  
5 2013, '14, '15, '16, why do you think your mom spent so much  
6 time with Shanna and Aaliyah?

7           **A.** To be honest, like I don't know what conversations my  
8 mom and Shanna ever had on a personal note, but there was ...  
9 there's a reason for everything and I believe that whatever  
10 their conversation was, it was enough for mom to say, you know,  
11 she needed to be around more to evaluate the situation, to see  
12 things for herself because, you know, hearsay and seeing is two  
13 different things. And even with ... like Mom would always says  
14 she's there for Aaliyah. I'm down there for Aaliyah, you know.  
15 So whatever she knew, she didn't go into great extent, but all  
16 she would say is, My son ... my son needs to get some help. You  
17 know? She like was worried.

18           **Q.** Right.

19           **A.** So, like I said, whatever her and Shanna's  
20 conversation, if there was conversation ...

21           **Q.** Yeah.

22           **A.** ... she never, ever went out behind her horizon and

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1 let people know. But she was put there for a reason.

2 Q. Yeah. So your observation was that your mom was  
3 there, you said, because of the situation. That "situation"  
4 being Lionel in the household with Shanna?

5 A. Yeah. Because, obviously, my mom must have ... my mom  
6 knew he was sick.

7 Q. Yes.

8 A. And I don't know if she was just worried about him to  
9 the extent that she had to make sure Aaliyah was going to be  
10 okay for her to be there. I don't know.

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. You know? Because I was not there to see it. So I  
13 can't sit there and say that. But I know she was there because  
14 she worried about her grandchild and Shanna.

15 Q. And what about your mom's relationship with Lionel  
16 through those years? We understand, he ... they were ... you  
17 know, he was her first son.

18 A. Only.

19 Q. But as those ... you know, 2013, '14, '15, '16, when  
20 he was ... after he was released from the military, certainly in  
21 2015, what was your mom's relationship with Lionel like during  
22 that period of time leading up to the tragedy?

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **A.**    They were very close, like I said.

2           **Q.**    Yeah.

3           **A.**    I believe in my heart that my mother worried about  
4 Lionel. Not that I believe, I know she worried about him.  
5 Because, as any mother, your son comes back and he's not the son  
6 that went away, you worry. And like I said, she prayed that he  
7 would get help, because she knew he was sick. And I believe  
8 that her being around him more, when he came home, it gave him  
9 more ... it gave her more comfort in knowing if she's there that  
10 he's more calm and more ... he was calm and relaxed.

11           Because, like I said, I don't know what Mom and Shanna's  
12 conversation was, but it was enough for Mom to have to spend  
13 more time down there. Even if Aaliyah wasn't brought into this  
14 here world and it was still the same situation with him gone and  
15 coming home, my mom would have been still down there to comfort  
16 her baby to know, like you know, I'm here. And he wouldn't  
17 probably ... his anger and outbursts probably wouldn't be the  
18 extreme that they say it was.

19           **Q.**    Okay.

20           **A.**    Because he was not ... he was Lionel around Mom.

21           **Q.**    Your observation was that when Lionel was around your  
22 mom ...

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1           **A.**    Uh-huh.

2           **Q.**    ... he was more like his former self?

3           **A.**    Yeah.  He was Lionel.

4           **Q.**    Yeah.  And your perception is that that would have  
5 been almost a calming influence on Lionel and her being with him  
6 ...

7           **A.**    Yes.

8           **Q.**    ... and Shanna?  Yeah.  Okay.  I want to ask you now,  
9 Diane, about your relationship with Aaliyah.  Tell us about  
10 that.  She would have been born ... obviously, we know she was  
11 born in late December 2016.

12          **A.**    That is correct.

13          **Q.**    A couple of years before you moved to Halifax.

14          **A.**    That is correct.

15          **Q.**    Tell us about those years and then after you moved to  
16 Halifax.

17          **A.**    When she was born, I was the most happiest auntie in  
18 the world.  Like, you know, I couldn't wait to go to Old Navy or  
19 to Children's Place.  Like this child had a wardrobe ... I  
20 bought her a wardrobe of dresses, every single dress.  She had a  
21 closet full and she had every ... I believe most of them, Shanna  
22 took pictures in, outfits like, I just spoiled her as if she was

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1 my own, you know, she was the first.

2 (10:00)

3 She was beautiful, smart, funny, intelligent. She ... she  
4 had a love for animals, like, you know, Penny G like, was her  
5 baby, and then came the ...

6 Q. Penny G was her dog.

7 A. Was her dog. And then Lionel got her Bentley, the  
8 cat.

9 Q. That was the cat, yeah.

10 A. And she couldn't wait for her. I remember she  
11 couldn't wait for her cat to get home and she would say, Daddy,  
12 when is my cat coming? He was like, Oh, the cat will be here in  
13 so many days, blah, blah, blah. The cat was in Toronto at the  
14 airport and so they had it in the car show and they sent Shanna  
15 the pictures and everything.

16 Aaliyah was so happy. She was, like, happy that was her  
17 cat, but she was an innocent child. She didn't ask for much,  
18 but I tell you, she was loved by all. She was loved by many and  
19 Lionel always called her ... because Aaliyah couldn't really say  
20 my name at first and she always called me "Aunt Duckie." Lionel  
21 would say, Oh, there's your Aunt Duckie. So then she would say,  
22 Aunt Duckie or Aunt Didi later on down the road. He's like, Go

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1 on, you're just like your Aunt Duckie, you're like your Aunt  
2 Duckie. But she was a beautiful kid, a beautiful kid, right?

3 Q. So you would see her when you would visit?

4 A. Oh God, yeah, and I'd call her on the phone and we  
5 would talk. I used to call her on the phone every night and we  
6 would talk and she would say, What are you doing, Aunt Didi?  
7 Later on, I'd say, A little bit of this and a little bit of  
8 that. And after I said that, she would say, Now, ask me. And I  
9 would ask her, I'd say, Lili ... because Shanna didn't like when  
10 I called her Lili. She's like, Oh, I don't like that name. And  
11 then once down the road, I hear Shanna calling her Lili. And  
12 ... but Aaliyah would say, Aunt Di, she said, ask me what I'm  
13 doing, because I called her every night. She would say, A  
14 little bit of this and a little bit of that.

15 But I remember one story. One time I called her. They  
16 lived in Moncton and ... I mean Oromocto, sorry, and she said,  
17 Aunt Di, can you come get me? I said, Yes, I said, I'm going to  
18 come get you, I said, get your boots and get your jacket on, I  
19 said, and Aunt Di will be there soon to get you. I shouldn't  
20 have said fibbed with her but I did. But if you ever see the  
21 picture of Lionel in his uniform, his navy ... his army suit,  
22 kneeling down with Aaliyah with her red jacket on and her boots,

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1 she was waiting for me to come pick her up. And I remember  
2 Shanna saying, at 11:00 she called me, she said, Don't ever tell  
3 my child you're coming for her, she said, you have her up here  
4 crying that you're coming to get her. And she was mad. Aaliyah  
5 was mad with me for a while. She would tell me every time, Aunt  
6 Di, I'm mad at you. You're not my favourite aunt no more, she  
7 would say to me, but ... kids. She was a typical kid.

8 **Q.** Yeah. What was your observation of her relationship  
9 with her dad?

10 **A.** Spoiled. She was her father's everything. She was  
11 ... like, she had her mother's attitude, but she was her father,  
12 like, she ... she was really ... her and Lionel were  
13 unseparable, like, they did everything together. He ... his  
14 focus was always on her, you know.

15 **Q.** What kinds of things did you see them doing?

16 **A.** They'd be out four-wheeling, fishing. She would ...  
17 he would have her in horseback lessons, horseback riding  
18 lessons. They would always be together. Like Shanna worked  
19 nights, so if Mom wasn't down there, then she'd be up the road  
20 with Lionel for a while. She would go to the hall. Like they  
21 have tutoring nights or CAP site for computers. She'd be up the  
22 road a lot with her dad. They were like mother/daughter ...

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1 father's daughter, like, they were family.

2 Q. Yeah. And what ... tell us lastly what your  
3 observation was that Aaliyah's relationship with Shanna was  
4 like, her mom.

5 A. The twins. Little mini-me. She was a little mini  
6 Shanna, like, she had the gift of gab, but her and Shanna ...  
7 her and Shanna were two peas in a pod. You didn't see one  
8 without the other, you know, Shanna loved her as much as she  
9 loved her mother and father and anything they did was for the  
10 grace of their daughter knowing they had ... you know, her  
11 upbringing. Like, they were ... Shanna was strong-minded,  
12 strong-willed, and she made Aaliyah the same way, because not  
13 ... Aaliyah didn't fear too much of anything, if I ... if ...  
14 anything I know, like, you know, like, snakes, animals. Shanna  
15 was scared of them but Aaliyah wasn't, like she was very ...  
16 Shanna was very adventurous, like, they were always doing  
17 things, you know, but she was a beautiful mom ... a beautiful  
18 mom.

19 Q. Thank you, Dianne.

20 So you shared with us earlier that you knew that something  
21 was wrong with Lionel, and your nan had said he needed help.  
22 There was some sort of sickness. What, if any, resources were

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1 available to you, Diane, as a family member, through that period  
2 of time before the tragedy, from DND or Veterans Affairs Canada.

3 **A.** Absolutely none.

4 **Q.** Okay. And from conversations you would have had with  
5 your mom, and you talked to her every day and texted her, were  
6 you aware of any resources that she received from DND/Canadian  
7 Forces/VAC during this period of time?

8 **A.** Absolutely none, no.

9 **Q.** Okay. And from conversations, again, that you had  
10 with your mom, were you were aware of any resources that Shanna  
11 would've received from Canadian Forces/Veterans Affairs ...

12 **A.** No.

13 **Q.** ... to help with this ...

14 **A.** No.

15 **Q.** ... sickness through this time?

16 **A.** No.

17 **Q.** No. Okay. With the benefit of hindsight now, of  
18 course, do you have any thoughts, Dianne, on recommendations  
19 that could be helpful coming out of this Inquiry for other  
20 family members in terms of resources and supports to assist  
21 their loved ones' return to civilian life like Lionel was doing?

22 **A.** You know, there should be conferences held for

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1 families who ... once they're left ... leaving, on their way  
2 out, there should be something in place for them.

3 Q. Conferences held when someone is medically discharged  
4 from the military?

5 A. From ... yeah.

6 Q. For the families.

7 A. For the family as well, like prepare them. Let them  
8 know what they're being put into, you know. We were not  
9 prepared. We were not expecting this, you know, they should  
10 offer first aid for this here and when I say "first aid" ...

11 Q. Yeah, talk to us about that in terms of is there a  
12 specific type of first-aid course that you, yourself, have had  
13 an opportunity to take?

14 A. It was for the ... oh my God. I'm losing thought ...  
15 train of thought.

16 Q. Mental ...

17 A. It was the mental health awareness first aid.

18 Q. Yes.

19 A. And that should be recommended to everyone, you know,  
20 military, fire ... like, not even just military. You've got the  
21 fire departments, you've got police officers, ambulances, who  
22 see this line of stuff on a daily basis, like, you know, maybe

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1 not in our regions, but it's happening.

2 Q. Yeah. So you're talking about ... when I hear "first-  
3 aid course", I think of the traditional ...

4 A. CPR? No.

5 Q. Exactly, but you're talking about a specific mental  
6 health first-aid course and you, yourself, had an opportunity to  
7 take that course?

8 A. Exactly.

9 Q. Through your employment?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Yeah. And as a result of that course, how did that  
12 help with your understanding of mental health illness and  
13 diagnosis?

14 A. You know what? There's so much that you don't know  
15 until you take the course itself and it ... after going what we  
16 ... after going through what we went through, it was like ... it  
17 was like, Wow, wow.

18 Q. Yeah. It was helpful.

19 A. Very helpful.

20 Q. Diane, as we come to the end of your questions, can  
21 you share with us how you came to learn about the events of  
22 January the 3rd, 2017, the tragedy?

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1           **A.**    I learned when I was at my cousin's house in Halifax.  
2    We were getting ready ... actually, we were getting ready to go  
3    to PEI, we were, and she received this phone call and she's  
4    screaming. And I said, What's wrong? And she's like, Here, you  
5    on the phone. It was my cousin calling from Toronto and he's  
6    like, How you doing? I said, How am I doing? I said, Okay.  
7    He's like, Are you ... are you doing all right? I'm like, Yeah,  
8    what's going on? He's like, Your mother and them are gone. I  
9    said, My mother is gone, I said, I was just talking to my mother  
10   an hour before. And he said, Lionel, they're all gone.

11           Well, I dropped the phone and my body just froze and I  
12   screamed and I said, Not my mother. I said, Not my brother, I  
13   said, no, there's no way.

14           So we called down home and they said ... and I called my  
15   Aunt Sandra, actually, I called my Aunt Sandra, and she wouldn't  
16   come on the phone. She would not come to the phone and I said,  
17   Oh my God, I said, Kalista ... it was a snowstorm. I said,  
18   Kalista, I said, we've got to get on this road. I said, I don't  
19   know who is going to drive, I said, but we've got to get on this  
20   road, I said, and we've got to get on this road now. And she  
21   started driving and she was shaking so bad. I was shaking. She  
22   was shaking so bad, and I'm not going to lie to nobody, I smoke

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1 marijuana for my own personal reasons and I said, You know, I  
2 said, Pull this car over. I said, If anybody is leading the  
3 way, I said, I trust my own driving. So she pulled over and I  
4 drove us all the way through.

5 **(10:10)**

6 We got to Monastery. I seen the police. Upper Trac- ...  
7 well, past Upper Big Tracadie, and we seen all the police got it  
8 duct-taped off. Pulled over and I got out of the vehicle and I  
9 started to go up the hill and the police officer said, No, you  
10 can't go in. I said, My mom is in there, I said, I have to go  
11 in there. He said, Nobody can go in, he said ... he said  
12 something to me and I just got sick. I got ... I vomited  
13 everywheres.

14 So I got to my grandparents' house and Grampy, you know, my  
15 grand- ... God love him. Grampy is strong, but he was weak at  
16 the same time and he said, Come here, he said. Oh, he said, me  
17 and your grandmother are going to take care of you guys now, he  
18 said. He said, You guys are left to us. And I said, Oh Grampy,  
19 I said, don't worry, I said ... I said, You always had us. I  
20 said, You had us since we were babies, I said, you know, you  
21 bought us milk and diapers. Like, just to take him off guard,  
22 you know, clear his mind.

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1 I said, We wanted for nothing with you and Nanny. And he  
2 said, No, but now we've got to make sure we take care of youse  
3 now, he said.

4 So we sat down and we talked and then I couldn't sleep ...  
5 I just couldn't sleep. Every day I was up cooking and cleaning  
6 the whole house. I had to keep my mind focussed. You know, my  
7 aunts from Toronto was there. They're like, Go have a nap. I  
8 said, I can't sleep. Kept on thinking about my mom and  
9 everything, you know?

10 And then as days went by, it was like the day before the  
11 funeral. I was just so burnt out and I laid on the floor, Nan's  
12 floor, and my ... I remember my aunt, she threw a piece of bread  
13 onto me and she prayed over me and I don't even remember falling  
14 asleep. And when I woke up, it was 4:30 that day. She ... and  
15 she said, My God, she said, you were snoring, she said, you were  
16 tired. She said, I knew, she said, you never slept, she said,  
17 and you're keeping your mind focussed, she said, but your mother  
18 made sure you got some rest. I said, Yeah.

19 Then I remember going to the funeral and I stopped in  
20 Monastery to grab a pack of cigarettes and I laid ... I had a  
21 half a cigarette, so I butted it out and I laid it onto the  
22 armrest in the car. I knew I laid it there and I come back out

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1 and it's gone and I said, Shanna, I said ... because Shanna  
2 always liked playing tricks in front of Aaliyah. She'd hide  
3 things on you. And I said, Shanna, I said, if you're in this  
4 here vehicle, I said, you'd better put my cigarette back by the  
5 time I come back from in the store getting a pack of cigarettes.

6 So I went and got the cigarettes and, honest to God, no  
7 word or ... people might think I'm crazy. When I come back, the  
8 cigarette was sitting back there. And I said, Shanna, I know  
9 you're with me, I said, because when Lionel went to Afghanistan  
10 - not to take you off track - it was always me, Shanna, and  
11 Aaliyah. I was always down the road. I stayed down the road  
12 with Thelma and Ricky and Shanna and Shonda and Sheldon and  
13 Aaliyah.

14 So we were always there and Thelma and me and Shanna were  
15 like husband and wife. Thelma would say ... Thelma, her mother,  
16 would say, Go sit down while I look after you. You're just like  
17 Lionel, husband and wife there, she would say, you know? Like,  
18 Shanna ... me and Shanna were inseparable. We argued and we had  
19 our days, but when it come to ... with Aaliyah, we were a team  
20 ... we were a team.

21 **Q.** Yeah. You were family.

22 **A.** We were family.

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **Q.**    What do you remember about the conversation that you  
2 had with your mom? You said on January the 3rd, you talked to  
3 her.

4           **A.**    She was getting ready ... she said she was going to  
5 bingo and Aaliyah was supposed to go up the road for ... I don't  
6 know if it was CAP night ... like CAP site at the computers, but  
7 she was going up the road, I'm pretty sure, and Mom was going to  
8 bingo and she said, Mom was calling me but I stayed down the  
9 road and I remember she said, Mom called me but I stayed down  
10 the road last night, she said, but I'm getting ready to go to  
11 bingo and then go up the road after bingo. I said, Okay, I  
12 said, well, I'm getting ready to go to work. I said, I'll just  
13 talk to you tomorrow. And that was the last conversation.

14          **Q.**    Yeah.

15          **A.**    That was the last conversation.

16          **Q.**    So she ... when you said she had stayed "down there",  
17 she had stayed the night before ...

18          **A.**    Yes.

19          **Q.**    ... at Lionel and Shanna's?

20          **A.**    Yes, yeah.

21          **Q.**    Yeah, okay. And she was at Lionel and Shanna's that  
22 point when you were talking to her.

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1           **A.**    Yes.

2           **Q.**    Yeah, okay. This is your family, all of them. How  
3 has that impacted you? The loss of your mother, your brother,  
4 your niece, and your sister-in-law, Diane?

5           **A.**    Honest to God, it took a toll on me. I'm medicated.  
6 Do I like taking pills? No, but I need to. But one thing I can  
7 say, I don't let it interfere with my job and ... because that's  
8 my family too as well. And with them gone, it's not the same,  
9 nor will it ever be the same. Can I wake up and wish this was a  
10 dream? Honest to God, I wish it was a dream. I'm left with  
11 just me and my sisters, you know, we don't have Granddad here no  
12 more. We have our grandmother who was always mom, you know, but  
13 Granddad was mom ... Granddad was dad to us. We know our  
14 father, but Granddad was our dad.

15           Now we're just left, like, walking on eggshells. It's like  
16 we're crying, but nobody hears our cries, you know. Mom ... you  
17 know, innocent people got taken away in that short time. It  
18 should've never happened, you know.

19           I feel like ... I feel some days like a child, a baby,  
20 trying to get up and get back on track with life again. Where  
21 do I start at? Where do I end at? Where I do begin at? You  
22 know what I mean?

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           There's days I've got to argue with my sisters because  
2 that's what we did. We had Mom there that would say, you know,  
3 All you fellows stop your arguing, stop your foolishness, you  
4 know. I've got to pick at them. I'm the oldest. They get mad  
5 at me, but at the end of the day, I ain't doing to hurting them.  
6 I'm not saying nothing that hurts them. I'm telling them  
7 because I miss Mom and my only way of getting my anger out is by  
8 arguing or something with them and it's sad. It shouldn't have  
9 come to this. But Mom was our bread provider. She provided for  
10 everybody. She was ...

11           There's kids that would come that weren't even my mother's  
12 kids that were calling her Mom or Nan, you know. She was old  
13 mother hen to everybody. She gave. She'd give the shirt off  
14 her back and there was times that bills needed to be paid, I  
15 couldn't make ends meet and I'd call Mom and Mom would argue and  
16 yell and go on but that bill was paid, you know. And as I ...  
17 as days progressed and months progressed, before I got married  
18 and met my husband, I don't know where I would've been.

19           With the loss of my mother, my husband, he was a blessing  
20 sent to me. Honest to God, like, he prays over me, you know,  
21 and like he said, that him, but he surely see here, no charge.  
22 My mother had us at no charge and she had all five of us and she

**DIANE DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 raised all five of us to the best that we could be, and I just  
2 pray that she continues watching over us because we ... we know  
3 she's not here, but she's here with us and it's her blessings  
4 that gets us through every day that we're going through this.

5 **Q.** Thank you, Diane. Last question for you. We are here  
6 at an Inquiry that your sisters and you advocated very strongly  
7 for. Can you share with us why this Inquiry is important to  
8 you?

9 **A.** It's very important to me because, like I said, it's  
10 sad. It happened. We can't unfold what happened, but we ...  
11 what we can do is move forward and help other families that are  
12 going through this here not to be a victim of what we're going  
13 through, you know.

14 **Q.** Thank you, Diane.

15 **A.** You're welcome.

16 **Q.** Those are my questions and some of my colleagues may  
17 have some questions for you as well.

18 **THE COURT:** Thank you, Ms. Miller. Ms. Ward, do you  
19 have any questions?

20 **MS. WARD:** No, Your Honour.

21 **THE COURT:** Thank you. Mr. Anderson?

22 **MR. ANDERSON:** No, Your Honour.



**DIANE DESMOND, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1 If anybody he trusted, he trusted himself, you know, he trust-  
2 ... I believe he trusted his wife. I know he trusted his wife  
3 and Mom, but he on- ... he was not a person that would go into  
4 great details. He would let you know what he'd want you to  
5 know.

6 Q. Right. And we've been getting a sense that maybe your  
7 mom was someone that he would confide in a little bit or ...

8 (10:20)

9 A. Mom ... I believe Mom knew things but she didn't know  
10 of great details of things.

11 Q. All right. Would you say he was ... I appreciate what  
12 you said about the change in his personality after he came back  
13 from overseas, but was he always sort of a guarded person or a  
14 bit private, even though he was maybe more jovial before he went  
15 overseas? Was that just his nature or do you think that was a  
16 change in his personality?

17 A. I believe when he came home, that's when the change  
18 came with him that he was more guarded. I believe that because  
19 when he ... before he even went in the military, he would say  
20 whatever, you know, speak his mind. Like I said, he was a ...  
21 he was very ... his characteristic was very unique, like he was  
22 Lionel. Like, when I say "he was Lionel", he was jolly,

**DIANE DESMOND, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1 spontaneous. He had a great sense of humour. But when he came  
2 home, it's like he was in military mode. He was on guard.

3 Q. Right. Just seemed that that stayed constantly.

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. If ... you know, I think you had said that you, and  
6 maybe other members of your family, were a little cautious  
7 around him when he came back?

8 A. Mm-hmm.

9 Q. Would he have been easy to sort of ask questions of  
10 about his mental health or his treatment when he came back or  
11 was that something that you were a little cautious about doing?

12 A. I would not dare to ask that because I don't know if  
13 it would've triggered a nerve and I don't know what the outcome  
14 would've been, like ... and when I say "the outcome", I don't  
15 know if it would've, like, set him back, because God only knows,  
16 like I said, we don't know what he seen over there. Only he  
17 knows what he seen over there. You know, he could tell us about  
18 kids or carry his friends' limbs and stuff, but for us to be  
19 there and to actually know, we'll never know.

20 So when he came home, it was like ... and as for me, it  
21 gave me perspective from reading ... like I said, I read the  
22 paper daily, so if he was to come home and I asked him a

**DIANE DESMOND, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1 question, I wouldn't ... I wouldn't know what question to ask  
2 him besides, Are you okay?

3 Q. Right.

4 A. But ... yeah.

5 Q. So I take it that he wasn't particularly open about,  
6 for example, what services he might have received in Montreal or  
7 in New Brunswick. You didn't really have those conversations?

8 A. I never had those conversations

9 Q. All right. And you said when he ... for that period  
10 of time, you observed him ... those few times when he was using  
11 medical marijuana, you had concerns about him using that as a  
12 treatment.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. But you said that it did seem to positively affect his  
15 personality, did it?

16 A. Well, I'm not going to lie because, like I said, I  
17 smoke marijuana and there's days, like, when I'm down and I'm  
18 depressed, I'll have one, I'll have a puff. And you would swear  
19 there was nothing wrong with me, like I'd be sitting there  
20 laughing, talking, you know, but when I come ... I ... I guess,  
21 more or less, you don't let it control you, you control it. And  
22 when he was ... when he had a few puffs when I was around him,

**DIANE DESMOND, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1 he was Lionel. Happy, you know, talking. But at the same time,  
2 when he wasn't onto it ... I couldn't tell you when he was on it  
3 or when he wasn't onto it because he was taking medication as  
4 well. So you don't know what the interference was there.  
5 You're mixing two chemicals with each other.

6 Q. Sure. And he didn't talk to you about the other kinds  
7 of medications that he took or ...

8 A. No.

9 Q. No. Okay. Or any of the side effects from those.  
10 Did he ...

11 A. No.

12 Q. He really didn't comment on those? Okay.

13 Did you see any paranoia in your brother, like, anything  
14 that he might've said or reacted ...

15 A. Not ... not that I can recall.

16 Q. No, okay. And you talked about the one incident where  
17 he kind of surprised you where he had a temperamental outburst  
18 about beer.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. And I don't know how many of those incidents you may  
21 have seen. That may have been one ...

22 A. That was the first.

**DIANE DESMOND, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1           **Q.**    That was the first? Okay. From what you observed  
2 when he would have an outburst like that, would it come on kind  
3 of suddenly or could you kind of see it brewing?

4           **A.**    Like I said, that day, I don't even know where it come  
5 from.

6           **Q.**    Okay.

7           **A.**    You know, because Lionel ... like I said, I see myself  
8 ... we'd be down at Shanna's parents' house where ... where they  
9 were residing at and he would offer you a beer, you know? And  
10 just that day, in particular, it just blew me out of the water.

11          **Q.**    Right. But that's, I guess, what I'm asking, did it  
12 come on suddenly that day?

13          **A.**    Yeah.

14          **Q.**    Like you didn't see it coming?

15          **A.**    I guess because it didn't come from his ... like I  
16 said, I'm assuming, because it didn't come from his hands or he  
17 didn't offer you it. I don't know, but that ... yeah.

18          **Q.**    Can you say ... from the contact you did have with him  
19 after he returned to Nova Scotia, can you say if his personality  
20 changed ... in other words, did he seem to deteriorate or was he  
21 pretty much the same way that he was when he came home? Do you  
22 know what I mean? If you could see a progression at all?

**DIANE DESMOND, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1           **A.**    You know what, I never seen him deteriorating or  
2 anything because when he came home from New Brunswick to Nova  
3 Scotia here, like, his plans was to either go in the police  
4 force or join the firefighters. So he came home with ... he  
5 came back with a plan, if he followed through, I could not tell  
6 you, like I said, because he was very private, personal. He  
7 only let you know what he wanted you to know, so I really can't  
8 recall.

9           **Q.**    Yeah. No, that's fine. But he seemed to have some  
10 plans, to be somewhat forward-thinking, you know?

11          **A.**    Oh yeah. He was on ... on the road, like, you know,  
12 like, he had goals.

13          **Q.**    And you said you and Shanna had a close relationship.

14          **A.**    Oh God, yes.

15          **Q.**    Did she ever confide in you about any of the problems  
16 that she may have had with Lionel?

17          **A.**    No.

18          **Q.**    No.

19          **A.**    No.

20          **Q.**    Did you ever see any of that yourself?

21          **A.**    No. And I ... like I said, even when he came home ...  
22 even when they were living there and I was down there, it was

**DIANE DESMOND, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1 always a good time. Like her mom had her shop. Shanna would  
2 work in the shop down there, you know. Like, even afterwards,  
3 we'd be at the house, her mom would be playing the guitar, you  
4 know, or playing music. It was always ... it was a positive  
5 atmosphere there and ... while I was there, you know. Like,  
6 what happened while I wasn't there, I couldn't tell you, but any  
7 time I went there, it was always the ... always a good time, you  
8 know. Got treated with great hospitality and Shanna was always  
9 cooking. She loved to cook. So I'm really not ... I really  
10 don't know.

11 **Q.** Okay. And we've heard some evidence about an incident  
12 where the police were called to Lionel's house in ... when he  
13 was in Oromocto. Did you know about that?

14 **A.** No. I ... I ... all I recall is when Shanna was just  
15 telling ... like she was concerned for ... she said, I was  
16 concerned about your brother's safety, so I called the police up  
17 there. They went and removed a gun from his house. And that  
18 was all, like, no great big details, like, and that ... that was  
19 the only incident that I was aware of.

20 **Q.** That was the only one involving the police that you  
21 knew about?

22 **A.** Yeah.

**DIANE DESMOND, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1           **Q.**    Okay.  And any times that he went to ... we've heard  
2   some evidence about him going to St. Martha's or, you know, or  
3   attempting to access some mental health care late in his life.  
4   Did you perhaps talk to Shanna about that or were you aware of  
5   that or your mom?

6           **A.**    I couldn't say if my mom was ... were aware of it, but  
7   I know I wasn't.

8           **Q.**    Okay.

9           **A.**    I knew he had went to the hospital but anything after  
10  that there, I couldn't tell you.

11          **Q.**    No, okay.  And when you talked to your mom on January  
12  3rd, how did she appear?

13          **A.**    She was Mom.  She was the same mom.

14          **Q.**    Okay.

15          **A.**    Nothing out of the norm or anything like that.

16          **Q.**    She didn't ... nothing stood out ...

17          **A.**    No.

18          **Q.**    ... to you that she was particularly concerned about  
19  anything that day.

20          **A.**    No, because he wasn't home that day, like, right?  So  
21  it was just her and Shanna and Aaliyah there.

22          **Q.**    Right.  Thank you, Ms. Desmond.

**DIANE DESMOND, Examination by the Court**

1           **A.**    You're welcome.

2

3

**EXAMINATION BY THE COURT**

4   **(10:29)**

5           **THE COURT:**       Ms. Desmond, when ... you were asked a  
6 question and I'm going to ask it in a little different way. Two  
7 questions. The first question is with regard to anyone ever  
8 having reached out. So the initiative coming from somebody  
9 outside your family.

10          **A.**    Mm-hmm.

11          **Q.**    Did anyone ever reach out to you or, to your  
12 knowledge, to any members of your family to provide you with any  
13 assistance in the broadest way after January 3rd? Anyone from  
14 ...

15          **A.**    The on- ... sorry.

16   **(10:30)**

17          **Q.**    ... any federal agencies? Any provincial agencies?

18          **A.**    Your Honour, not one that I can recount. I remember  
19 Veteran Affairs, when this tragedy happened, I remember they  
20 offered to pay for people's flights home, reimburse them their  
21 gas, and I never understood why.

22          **Q.**    What about, like, mental health counselling, grief

**DIANE DESMOND, Examination by the Court**

1 counselling? Anything of that nature from, for instance, any of  
2 the provincial authorities? Any provincial agency in this  
3 province?

4 **A.** I honestly don't recall. I could be wrong, but I ...  
5 I honestly ...

6 **Q.** Okay.

7 You said that when Lionel was in Afghanistan, at some point  
8 during his deployment, he was home for a period of time, was he?  
9 Did he come back?

10 **A.** Because ... okay, so when he went over there, he did  
11 so many ... I think it was a month, two months, and then he came  
12 home for, I think, a week or two weeks. That's when we picked  
13 him up with the limo. Because there was a few times that they  
14 were like ...

15 **Q.** So that ... so just let me stop you.

16 **A.** Sorry.

17 **Q.** So that wasn't at the end of his deployment? That was  
18 in the middle of his deployment?

19 **A.** That is correct.

20 **Q.** So it was in the middle of his deployment. That's  
21 when you picked him up in the limo. He was home for a period of  
22 time and then he went back to Afghanistan?

**DIANE DESMOND, Examination by the Court**

1           **A.**    That is correct, yeah, because he did two tours,  
2 right?

3           **Q.**    So he had a break from his tour. He was home for a  
4 period of time after a number of months?

5           **A.**    Yes. I believe he came home for a week or two.

6           **Q.**    Mm-hmm. And that was when you picked him up at the  
7 airport?

8           **A.**    That is correct.

9           **Q.**    When he finished his tour, when he was finally home,  
10 did people ... did you go out to pick him up at the airport  
11 again? Do you know how he actually got home ...

12          **A.**    No.

13          **Q.**    ... on that occasion?

14          **A.**    I'm pretty sure he would've flew into Oromocto that  
15 time.

16          **Q.**    It would've been Oromocto, okay. So that was why he  
17 was back in Halifax because he was getting a break from the  
18 tour.

19          **A.**    Yes, because Shanna was living at her mom's. Even  
20 though they had their ... they were living on base in Oromocto,  
21 them houses, Shanna was down with her mom when he was deployed.  
22 So ... yeah. She had the baby in Antigonish. So yes, yes.

**DIANE DESMOND, Examination by the Court**

1           **Q.** All right. That's what I was just trying to get  
2 straight, just to find out when he was home. We can track down  
3 when he was actually home, for how long he was home.

4           **A.** Yes.

5           **Q.** But that was the event, when he was picked up at the  
6 airport in the limousine was his ...

7           **A.** Yes, his first tour.

8           **Q.** After his ... after the first tour.

9           **A.** That is correct.

10          **Q.** Then he went back.

11          **A.** Yes.

12          **Q.** Is your understanding. All right, thank you.

13          Any questions, Counsel, following on mine? No? Thank you.

14          If I can call you Diane ... Diane, I know how difficult it  
15 is to be here, but you know how important it is to hear from  
16 you. We very much appreciate your time.

17          **A.** Thank you.

18          **Q.** Thank you.

19          **WITNESS WITHDREW (10:33 hrs.)**

20          **MR. RODGERS:** Your Honour?

21          **THE COURT:** Mr. Rodgers?

22          **MR. RODGERS:** Mr. Trotter is here in the building.

**DIANE DESMOND, Examination by the Court**

1           **THE COURT:**       Right.

2           **MR. RODGERS:**    And I would like to have a few minutes to  
3 speak with him before he takes the stand.

4           **THE COURT:**       All right, that's fine. So we'll stand  
5 down, Mr. Rodgers. When you're ready, just ...

6           **MR. RODGERS:**    Your Honour, sorry to interrupt. One other  
7 thing. Mr. Trotter has a support person with him, and so maybe  
8 we can think about that accommodation during the break as well?

9           **THE COURT:**       All right. So we'll take a break. We'll  
10 return when you're ready, and maybe just after we adjourn, we'll  
11 have a discussion.

12          **MR. RODGERS:**    Very good, thank you.

13          **THE COURT:**       All right, thank you.

14   **COURT RECESSED**        **(10:30 hrs.)**

15   **COURT RESUMED**         **(11:02 hrs.)**

16          **THE COURT:**       Mr. Rodgers?

17          **MR. RODGERS:**    Yes, thank you, Your Honour. The next  
18 witness is Orlando Trotter. Mr. Trotter is present.

19          **THE COURT:**       All right. Thank you. Mr. Trotter, could  
20 you come up here, please?

21

22

1 **ORLANDO TROTTER**, affirmed, testified:

2 **THE COURT**: Good morning, Mr. Trotter. You brought a  
3 bottle of water with you there. The second bottle is there for  
4 your convenience as well.

5 A. Okay.

6 **THE COURT**: All right? Thank you.

7 A. Thank you.

8 **THE COURT**: If you're content ... if you want to  
9 continue to wear your mask you can, otherwise you can take it  
10 off if it's more convenient for you. The way the court is  
11 configured, we have six feet distance, and all of the table and  
12 everything that's in front of you has been sanitized since the  
13 last witness was there.

14 A. Okay. Thank you.

15 **THE COURT**: All right? Thank you. Mr. Rodgers?

16 **MR. RODGERS**: Thank you, Your Honour.

17

18 **DIRECT EXAMINATION**

19

20 **MR. RODGERS**: Mr. Trotter, thank you for coming here  
21 today. Could you introduce yourself and perhaps spell your name  
22 for us for the record, please?

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1           **A.**    My name is Orlando Trotter.  It's O-R-L-A-N-D-O.  
2 Trotter is T-R-O-T-T-E-R.

3           **Q.**    Great, and Mr. Trotter, where do you reside?

4           **A.**    I live in Belnan, Nova Scotia.

5           **Q.**    And where are your ... where are you originally from  
6 though?

7           **A.**    Well, I was born in Venezuela and then I immigrated to  
8 Canada when I was six and lived in Barrie, Ontario.

9           **Q.**    Okay.

10          **A.**    And from Barrie, I joined the military and I moved to  
11 New Brunswick.

12          **Q.**    And you've been asked here today because you're a  
13 person that knew Cpl. Lionel Desmond both in training, in  
14 service in Afghanistan, and then following that tour of duty.  
15 Correct?

16          **A.**    Yes.

17          **Q.**    I want to ask you a little bit about that, Mr.  
18 Trotter, but first maybe I'll ask you what it was that motivated  
19 you to join the military.

20          **A.**    September 11th.  After attacks hit in the World Trade  
21 Centre, and seeing the victims.  And I felt that I ... it was my  
22 duty, especially as an immigrant, to give back somehow.  Like, I

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1 know it was ... it happened in the US but Canadians were  
2 affected by it.

3 **Q.** And you ... when you joined where were you ... where  
4 did that take place? Where were you first stationed?

5 **A.** So when I joined I was in Quebec doing my basic  
6 training and then after basic training I went to Meaford to do  
7 my battle school, which takes roughly about a year ...

8 **Q.** Okay.

9 **A.** ... to complete and then from there I was posted to  
10 Gagetown, New Brunswick.

11 **Q.** And was Gagetown where you met Lionel Desmond?

12 **A.** Yes.

13 **Q.** Can you tell us about meeting Lionel Desmond and a  
14 little bit about your ... maybe your first impressions of him.

15 **A.** Okay, so at that time I was a senior private and there  
16 was a platoon ... I was in charge of the comms. So the platoon  
17 comms, so radio man. And when ... when I first met Lionel he  
18 was part of a new group that came in. There was only a few of  
19 those guys and I thought he was kind of goofy, right? Like a  
20 funny goofy. Like, he was a nice guy.

21 So as being a senior private, I took him and two of the  
22 other guys he was with and introduced him to the comms. Because

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1 the way our platoon ran is that our private corporals would  
2 teach the newer guys everything. Just because it was just more  
3 competition. You know, because we've always had competitions  
4 with other companies to be the best platoon, right? So we won  
5 awards and stuff like that, right?

6 **Q.** So you wanted to make sure everybody in your platoon  
7 was well trained and capable.

8 **A.** Exactly, yes, yes.

9 **Q.** What about Lionel Desmond as a trainee, somebody that  
10 was involved and had to learn new things? How was he getting  
11 along?

12 **A.** He was very good. One thing that stood out with him  
13 is he was very funny and I like to joke around as well and so we  
14 ... it was easy for us to develop that relationship with each  
15 other. But he was very eager to learn the comm. systems and  
16 learn as much as he could, yeah.

17 **Q.** Would ... what other kind of training are we thinking  
18 about, combat training? Just physical fitness? Strategy  
19 training? What kind of things would you be into?

20 **A.** He would ... he was into physical fitness. Like he  
21 could ... he could run. Like he could run fast and ... which  
22 was really good, because that's all we ever did is ... in

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1 morning PT was run, run, run, run. But he was always eager to  
2 learn his weapon handling drills and ... well, he learned his  
3 comm., the communication aspects of it just because I took him  
4 along, right? Helped him out in that sense.

5 Q. And would you have an opportunity to spend a  
6 considerable amount of time together? What was the atmosphere  
7 in that sense?

8 A. Like when we first started?

9 Q. Yeah, in the training portion before you're sent off  
10 to combat.

11 A. Oh, before Afghanistan?

12 Q. Yes.

13 A. By ...

14 Q. I know Cpl. Desmond ... he was in the military for a  
15 few years before going to Afghanistan. So that's a ...

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. ... considerable amount of time in some ways.

18 A. So before we went to Afghanistan we trained ... the  
19 company trained ... or sorry, the battalion trained for a year.  
20 We did some training in Gagetown and then we went to Wainwright.  
21 That's ... basically, when we went to Wainwright, Alberta, they  
22 made a replica of kind of an area where we were going to to

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1 deploy.

2 Q. Yes.

3 A. And it was a little difficult, because when we went  
4 there it was, like, minus 30 and, you know, vehicles were going  
5 down. Like engines wouldn't start. It was ... it wasn't fun.  
6 It was cold. But we did the best we could. And basically, when  
7 we were there we try to handle ... sorry, I'm just trying to  
8 think back.

9 **(11:10)**

10 So there was a village. We would try to attack a village  
11 because we knew there was going to be informants there. Not  
12 informants but say Taliban.

13 Q. Sure.

14 A. And so when we come in what would happen is that they  
15 would ... I guess the government hired people and they would  
16 come all over and kind of protesting. So it was kind of getting  
17 us ready for dealing with the civilians. Because you can't go  
18 in there and start shooting your weapon. You have to ... you  
19 know, you have to confirm your target and you have to know who's  
20 a civilian and who's not a civilian, right? So I ...

21 Q. So that was about a year of training before you were  
22 deployed.

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1           **A.**    Yes, and the training started very simple from target  
2 practice to proper movement, like bounds and movements, like  
3 tactical movements, and then slowly we escalated from going into  
4 a helicopter and rappelling off the helicopter and, you know,  
5 going into a village, right? A mock village, right?

6           **Q.**    Yes.

7           **A.**    You know.

8           **Q.**    Can you give us a sense of Cpl. Desmond's abilities in  
9 those respects, how ... was he picking up the training well and  
10 keeping up with everybody?

11          **A.**    I think, like, his fitness kept him going and he was a  
12 good morale. Like, he was a good morale booster.

13          **Q.**    Yes.

14          **A.**    So he did very well in that. His training was ...  
15 it's the same as everybody else.

16          **Q.**    Can you give us a sense, Mr. Trotter, about how he was  
17 getting along with his fellow soldiers and superior officers  
18 during this time?

19          **A.**    I think he got along with everyone well. There's ...  
20 you know, looking back, I don't see any issues, like, during  
21 that training period.

22          **Q.**    Yes.

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1           **A.**    Yeah, because at that time we ... we're more of a  
2 family and we're very good friends. So that kind of keeps us  
3 together, yeah.

4           **Q.**    Sounds like you might be spending most of your time  
5 together. So you ...

6           **A.**    Oh, yeah, it's a ...

7           **Q.**    ... have to get along.

8           **A.**    It's a second family.

9           **Q.**    Yeah.

10          **A.**    Yeah.

11          **Q.**    So you're in this training in Gagetown and then out in  
12 the cold tundra of Alberta and then you find out you're being  
13 deployed to Afghanistan. How ... do you know ... do you recall  
14 how long in advance you knew that you were going to be deployed?  
15 Or was it that whole year that you knew?

16          **A.**    No, that whole year we knew. So I believe it was  
17 either late 2005/early 2006 that we had that message. So I  
18 would say in 2005 is when we found out.

19          **Q.**    Okay.

20          **A.**    Yeah.

21          **Q.**    So in addition to having a mock village and the  
22 atmosphere, the sort of physical environment of Afghanistan

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1 replicated in some ways, can you give us a sense of how you were  
2 prepared mentally to face the challenges of combat? Was there a  
3 structured program that you recall of ... you know, of any kind  
4 to prepare you in that manner?

5 **A.** No. No, there was ... the way our training is is we  
6 had targets and usually the targets had ... not a face but  
7 what's ... like a diagram.

8 **Q.** Yeah.

9 **A.** And it ...

10 **THE COURT:** Silhouette?

11 **A.** Yeah, like a silhouette, and it's been the ... it's  
12 the same silhouette that I had in basic training. So you know,  
13 when you look at that target it's not ... it's not a Taliban,  
14 right? It's just ... it's a target. So basically, you know,  
15 we're trained, when there's a target, hit, right? Just shoot  
16 it. And so when we went overseas that's kind of how ... target,  
17 boom. You know, it's just ... it's automatic for us.

18 **MR. RODGERS:** Yes.

19 **A.** Yeah.

20 **Q.** When ... now I want to ask you about Afghanistan, Mr.  
21 Trotter, but I don't want to ask you in detail and I don't  
22 expect you to describe in detail battles or operations there,

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1 but can you give us a sense of the course of your time there?  
2 Which I think was seven months or so.

3 **A.** Yes.

4 **Q.** Can you give us a sense of what that was like, what  
5 you were doing there?

6 **A.** So for that seven months, when we first landed we went  
7 ... we replaced 3RCR. They ... that's when they had ... just  
8 after Operation Medusa. It was all over the news. They lost  
9 ... they had a lot of casualties that day. And they had these  
10 ... a small village or a ... sorry, it's called a compound where  
11 there's about four different homes in that compound. And we  
12 came in to replace them and we took over and we named them  
13 strong points.

14 We were there for about a month, and basically what we did  
15 ... because this is our first time 2RCR has been deployed in  
16 such a long time, right? And we were just gathering  
17 information, trying to understand what was happening in that  
18 area. After that point, then the fire fights started coming,  
19 once we gather intelligence, and I would say probably a good six  
20 months of continuous fire fights. Basically, with these fire  
21 fights we would go out, like after we have intelligence, would  
22 go ... I'd say about midnight, roughly midnight, and we would

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1 patrol for about four hours or so.

2 Because our vehicles couldn't take us to those locations so  
3 we had to walk, and once the sun started coming up, like ... and  
4 like, the enemy, they knew we were there. Because they had cell  
5 phones, they were calling each other. Once the sun started  
6 coming out and they had their prayers, you can hear the prayers  
7 like la-la-la. You can hear that prayer, and once that prayer  
8 was over, then it was just bullets. It was just boom-boom-boom,  
9 just constant fighting.

10 And that would last, probably, about 10 to 11 o'clock ...  
11 or a.m. Because it was too hot at that point. And they kind of  
12 backed away and we backed away because the temperature is  
13 getting about 60 degrees at that point, right? And ...

14 Q. Celsius.

15 A. Celsius, yeah. About 40 to 60, yes.

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. And then we'd stop and go on from there, right? Go  
18 back.

19 Q. And that was more or less a daily occurrence.

20 A. A daily ... yes, and you know, it was to the point  
21 that if you weren't going on these operations, then the enemy  
22 would be firing motors into your camp. So there was no ... that

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1 whole time it was just ... you're always on edge, right?  
2 Because it's ... you know, you could just be sitting there  
3 hanging out talking and the next thing you know the motor is  
4 coming and then ... and land into the camp and now you have to,  
5 like, get kitted up and go out, right?

6 **Q.** Yeah.

7 **A.** So it was really nerve-wracking, yeah.

8 **Q.** During the course of those days what would you observe  
9 about Cpl. Desmond, about Lionel and his reaction and how he  
10 dealt with the stress of that situation?

11 **A.** You know, looking back at it, there was times he was  
12 very quiet and I remember trying to talk to him. At this point,  
13 like, you know, we're good friends at this point and he just  
14 wouldn't talk, right? And he would always say, like, he needed  
15 some time, right? I'm like, Okay, right? So I gave him his  
16 time.

17 But I think it was just ... war, that is very new for all  
18 of us, you know? And we've never been in those situations  
19 before. So everybody needed their own time to kind of, like,  
20 make sense of it in a sense. But he did have ... there was  
21 moments that he did have tough times, yes.

22 **Q.** He had some injuries over there, too. We've heard

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1 from his own writing and some of the other material. Were you  
2 aware of those injuries at the time, the concussions that he  
3 suffered?

4 **A.** Yes, I did hear about the concussions, yes, and ...

5 **Q.** What can you say about the likelihood or the ease with  
6 which a person might suffer a concussion under those  
7 circumstances?

8 **(11:20)**

9 **A.** It's high. I mean it's probably ... I would say it's  
10 high just because, like, the debris. You know, once a 500-pound  
11 bomb comes down there is a concussion from that bomb, you know,  
12 and then there's debris that goes everywhere. So it could land  
13 on your hand. Or you know, there's ... we're shooting missiles,  
14 too. Not missiles but, like, we're shooting motors as well.  
15 And you know, just ... there's debris everywhere. There's just  
16 ... there's a lot going on and you're not paying ... you're not  
17 paying attention to safety because you're in a war zone. So you  
18 know, you dive somewhere and hit your head or anything. It  
19 could ... anything, right?

20 **Q.** And what kind of an injury, how severe of an injury,  
21 might it take for somebody to be removed from the situation and  
22 taken out of there?

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1           **A.**    Either killed or suffer an IED explosion and ... or an  
2 easy one ... or not an easy one but we had some guys in India  
3 Company that suffered ankle injuries.

4           **Q.**    Yes.

5           **A.**    Because of the recovery time will take too long. So  
6 they send them back to Canada and that's probably the only ways  
7 you're going back home, right?

8           **Q.**    Okay.

9           **A.**    Yeah.

10          **Q.**    We've heard, Cpl. Trotter, that there were ... there  
11 was a time in the middle of that deployment where Cpl. Desmond  
12 came home. Can you tell us about that timeframe, if ... what  
13 the situation was? If everybody left or if it was just for him  
14 or how ... what was the situation there?

15          **A.**    So ... no, everybody got that opportunity to go home  
16 or go anywhere they wanted in the world. It's a special leave.  
17 HTA? HLTA? HLTA. So basically, when you're overseas for at  
18 least six months you get a two-week, three-week period? Two-  
19 week period to go anywhere you want. Either come to Canada or  
20 go anywhere you want in the world. So that's ... so he would  
21 have had that and it's different times. It's not halfway  
22 through. Could be the first quarter or second quarter or third

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1 quarter, right?

2 Q. Is that a helpful break? Or how ... you're ...

3 A. I don't think ... I don't think so. Not that one.

4 Because you say goodbye to your family. Then you go over to  
5 Afghanistan. When you go to Afghanistan you have ... at least  
6 for me, I was mentally prepared that I ... that I was going to  
7 die there, right? That's why I signed up. And when you go ...  
8 so when you have that leave and you go back home you have to say  
9 goodbye to your family again, and this time you know what you're  
10 going back to.

11 So I think that's ... it's very difficult. Some guys might  
12 like it just to have that break but I found it tough. I'd  
13 rather just stay there the whole time. For me, personally.

14 Q. After you've completed your tour in Afghanistan and  
15 you're preparing to come back to Canada and return, what kind of  
16 messages are you receiving at that point? Do you ... are you  
17 told, That's it, or are you told, You might be going back? What  
18 happens when you return?

19 A. No, you're not ... you know you're not going back  
20 because, like, you know there's a rotation. So there would be  
21 another company coming in, right? When we ... there ...

22 Q. I guess I'm thinking in terms of reintegration

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1 strategy, strategies, anything that the military does to, you  
2 know, decompress from the experience that you've just gone  
3 through. Like what takes place there?

4 **A.** Before or after the tour?

5 **Q.** After.

6 **A.** After.

7 **Q.** After. When you're returning.

8 **A.** Okay, so after the tour we went to ... they call it  
9 Decompression Cyprus for three days, and basically, it's just  
10 for us to try to relax, right? But at that point ... at that  
11 point it's hard to, right? Because you just want to go home.  
12 Decompression, that's what they call it.

13 **Q.** Yes.

14 **A.** So basically, they don't want you to be so amped up  
15 from fighting or from being on tour and then, boom, you're home  
16 to your family the next day, right? So they want you to  
17 decompress. So basically, that whole time is three days of just  
18 drinking.

19 **Q.** Yeah.

20 **A.** You know, that's what that is. Yeah, and then when  
21 ... so when we came back to Canada we had to work for a few  
22 days. Basically, they kind of just ... like, it was light, you

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1 know? We'd come in and they kind of bring us up, what's  
2 happening with the country. Anything with celebrities for some  
3 reason. You know, try to talk to you about, like, you know,  
4 Remember, guys, your spouse has been taking care of the house,  
5 taking care of the kids, paying all the bills, don't try to just  
6 rush into it.

7 So after those few days were over, then you're off for two  
8 weeks, two to three weeks depending on the ... what platoon  
9 you're in, right? And then after that you just come back to  
10 work, yeah.

11 **Q.** So would most people from your platoon have ... would  
12 the platoon stay together in some way, like after the tour is  
13 done, or does everybody disperse and go their separate ways?  
14 How does that work?

15 **A.** So ... yeah, just before the tour was over we knew  
16 some of the NCOs were going to be posted and moved. Like, some  
17 guys were getting promoted. When we came back to work, let's  
18 say it's a Monday. I'm not sure what day it was. When we came  
19 back to work the sergeant major gathered us and say, Okay,  
20 you're going here, you're going there. And that's where Lionel  
21 was going to pipes and drums.

22 **Q.** Yes.

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1           **A.**    Right?  And basically what happened is just you have a  
2 group of guys that are together and then you start taking  
3 members out and tossing them wherever, right?  Just so they can  
4 fill their men in.

5           **Q.**    Yes.

6           **A.**    So you didn't ... yeah, you ... you weren't together  
7 anymore at that point.

8           **Q.**    That or just the fact of coming back is difficult for  
9 some members, and we've heard of suicides, you know, besides the  
10 tragedy that we're here to talk about.  Can you talk about that,  
11 Mr. Trotter?  Like, did you keep in touch with other members of  
12 the platoon and ... you know, or just hear about them or from  
13 them and hear how others were getting along?

14          **A.**    During that time or ...

15          **Q.**    Yes, after ...

16          **A.**    ... through my life?

17          **Q.**    After the tour is done and people are coming back and  
18 going different directions did ... you know, would most have  
19 stayed in the military in some fashion, or did some people leave  
20 altogether?

21          **A.**    Some ... some people got out right away, and other  
22 guys ... there was a ... there definitely was an increase of

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1 PTSD. I think it took about maybe ... between six months to a  
2 year before I really noticed that. A lot of guys were going to  
3 ... claiming PTSD. They were just having tough times, right?

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. And some guys were posted away and they struggled.  
6 Like, there was ... there was one person I talked to before and  
7 he struggled. Because now he's posted away. He has PTSD, a new  
8 place, doesn't know anybody. So that's really tough, right?

9 Q. One of the things ... and now I'm going to come to at  
10 the end with this broader question. But this Inquiry is looking  
11 to make recommendations for changes and improvements. Can you  
12 think about that phase of the deployment, the return to the  
13 country, and think of things that might be done differently from  
14 your experience?

15 A. I would say keeping the platoons together. Keeping  
16 the guys together for an extended amount of time. I just ...  
17 you know, you ... you're training for an entire year. Then you  
18 do seven months of deployment. Then you go on a two-week leave  
19 and then, boom, everybody is just gone different areas. I think  
20 mentally it's good for us to be close together before we're  
21 dispersed, right?

22 Q. From talking to other members of the platoon and maybe

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1 ... would you have any observations on the PTSD side of it  
2 whether anything seemed to be working for different soldiers,  
3 better or worse, whether it's therapy or just having other  
4 people that you served with to be able to talk to, exercise?  
5 Like, what seemed to be working?

6 **(11:30)**

7 **A.** I think that's it is when you ... talking to other  
8 people who have been in that same situation as you. So like, I  
9 have some friends from that tour that we still talk. And  
10 sometimes we do talk about the war itself and what we have done.  
11 But that's good because it's like ... it's for us to just kind  
12 of get it out somehow in a safe environment for us, right?

13 You know, it is difficult to speak about the events in  
14 Afghanistan to somebody else who has never experienced that  
15 before, you know? So ...

16 **Q.** Even a counsellor, perhaps.

17 **A.** Even a counsellor, yes. I'm not saying they're all  
18 bad but ...

19 **Q.** No, no.

20 **A.** Yeah.

21 **Q.** There are other ... did you notice, like, the effects  
22 of exercise or being outside in nature or anything else that

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1    seemed to be helpful?

2           **A.**    Yeah, definitely. I mean exercise is great. It  
3 releases the endorphins in your body and, you know, it's good  
4 for you to exercise. Being in nature is common. Having a pet  
5 is common. The difficulty with the PTSD is when you're in  
6 depression is to want to exercise, is to want to do anything, is  
7 that ... to get that initial motivation. That's in my  
8 experience that I ... what I found.

9           **Q.**    So what would help you get that motivation? Would it  
10 be medication? Would it be a support person or a support system  
11 around you that would keep reminding you? What would seem to  
12 help?

13          **A.**    I think every individual is different. I mean for me  
14 I had ... I had a young daughter and I ... and I grew up without  
15 a father. So I ... my motivation is to be a father to my  
16 daughter. That was my motivation to get me out of, you know,  
17 some of those hard times. I've heard other guys that had  
18 marijuana for example, right? And it helped them out.  
19 Everybody is different. I can't answer that question, you know.

20          **Q.**    You ...

21          **A.**    Yeah.

22          **Q.**    You kept in touch with Lionel after your tour. Were

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1 you guys posted together for any lengths of time afterward?

2 **A.** Well, we're in the same building, right, with 2RCR.  
3 So the second battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment.

4 **Q.** Yes.

5 **A.** That's in Gagetown and Oromocto is where we live. So  
6 ... so we're in the same building for quite some time.

7 **Q.** Would you be able to say, you know, talk about his  
8 motivations, too? And I'm thinking in particular you said  
9 yours. You had a daughter. So did he. I'm sure that was  
10 something you spoke about with each other?

11 **A.** Yes.

12 **Q.** And do you feel like that was a motivating factor for  
13 him or something he felt strongly about was trying to recover  
14 for his family?

15 **A.** Yes. Yeah, so I know he used to talk about his family  
16 as his wife and daughter. I mean I've been to their house. I,  
17 you know, spent time with them. And he was a very family-  
18 orientated person, right? So I know he loved his daughter.

19 And one thing that kept getting him going, too, was ... he  
20 was very motivated. He wanted to leave the pipes and drums,  
21 leave ... and he kept talking about being like a ... maybe even  
22 a diesel mechanic. Like, I know he wanted to work on, like,

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1 transport trucks and stuff, right? So that's something. So him  
2 and I were ... you know, we'd always just had those type of  
3 discussions about what we're going to do later on in life,  
4 right?

5 **Q.** Well, let's talk about that because you were retrained  
6 after your time in service. What ... can you tell us, maybe,  
7 about the path you took and discussions that you may have had  
8 with Cpl. Desmond about that aspect of transitioning out of the  
9 military and what he might do? Well, I should say either within  
10 the military in a different capacity or outside of the military?

11 **A.** He talked about ... so I think he was with the JPSU,  
12 right? Usually when you're diagnosed, diagnosed with any type  
13 of illness - like let's say PTSD in this case - he would have  
14 been home for an extended time. Then he was doing a work  
15 integration. So they kind of send him back on ... send him to  
16 base transport and he was there and he was trying. But it just  
17 ... it wasn't working out for him. Like, it was ... he said he  
18 found it too lonely and just wasn't picking it up as well as he  
19 could have, right?

20 **Q.** What do you ... can you explain a little bit about  
21 what you mean by base transport?

22 **A.** So base ... like base transport is basically where ...

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1 part of the base where all the vehicles are. You know, like,  
2 the buses, the trucks, right? And he was working there for a  
3 period of time.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. And so I ... while he was working there he would have  
6 been trained to do some work, right?

7 Q. Yes.

8 A. And get him ready to ... if he wanted to be a  
9 mechanic, get him ready to take that course, right?

10 Q. What about yourself? What did you end up doing in  
11 terms of training?

12 A. I released from the military and I went back to  
13 college. I went back to college, took electrical engineering  
14 technician in Kingston, Ontario, and after that I was offered an  
15 industrial apprenticeship with Invista Canada. They're ... they  
16 make polymer. So basically, they make fabric for air bags. So  
17 80 percent of the world's cars' air bags are from that plant,  
18 right?

19 So I did that for a while. It was just ... I enjoyed it.  
20 It was ... it was mostly because, you know, I can work by  
21 myself. It was electronics and electrical and that's something  
22 that I always liked since I was young.

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1           **Q.**    You ever have a chance to reflect on what Lionel  
2 Desmond might have been able to do after his time? You know, if  
3 ... you know, we've heard some discussions about maybe he would  
4 have liked to be a police officer and talked about that. What  
5 path did you see him taking?

6           **A.**    I kept telling him that he should open up a restaurant  
7 and ... just because it was something he enjoyed. He enjoyed  
8 cooking. And I said ... I said, You should open up a  
9 restaurant, and I want to do it, too, right? That was ... that  
10 was something we'd kid around at that time, right?

11          **Q.**    Yes.

12          **A.**    And another thing I would tell him is, like ...  
13 because he was into the mechanics, he said. What was it? I  
14 can't remember. It's work on boats, you know? Because ...  
15 because I remember talking to him and saying, you know, There's  
16 a big demand on people who can work on boats, right? And you  
17 can ... you know, you can do that anywhere. Come to Halifax,  
18 right?

19          **Q.**    Yeah.

20          **A.**    Lots of places. So basically, when we ... when we had  
21 those discussions is because I was planning to move up here to  
22 Nova Scotia. Because I was living in Ontario at the time.

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1           **Q.**    Yes.

2           **A.**    So ...

3           **Q.**    When did you move to Nova Scotia?

4           **A.**    I just moved here in the summertime.

5           **Q.**    Okay.

6           **A.**    Summertime.

7           **Q.**    When you were in Ontario and he was still in Oromocto  
8 at that time were you able to get a sense from speaking to him  
9 or messaging back and forth of how he was getting along with his  
10 treatment? Any observations about his personality? I mean  
11 you've described him in the time prior to combat as being jovial  
12 and happy and joking around kind of a guy. But what could you  
13 say about your observations of him when he was in Gagetown after  
14 that and while he was getting treatment?

15           **A.**    So you know, from ... when I lived in Ontario my wife  
16 and I and the kids, we travelled to Nova Scotia about two times  
17 a year, and on my way back we ... I would stop at Lionel's  
18 house, right? Lionel and Shanna in Oromocto and, you know,  
19 either spend an afternoon or a day together.

20           So over the years, like, when I ... you know, that 2008 ...  
21 or 2009/2010 timeframe, like, he seemed all right. Like, he  
22 seemed ... you know, I'm not a doctor. I can't tell. But he

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1    seemed like ...

2           **Q.**    Of course.

3           **A.**    We had a good time. We had good ... good laughs. His  
4 wife did say numerous times that he's ... he's shell-shocked,  
5 right? And at that time, like I couldn't tell if it was a joke  
6 or not because ... because ... it makes sense. Because, you  
7 know, you come back from Afghanistan, you know, you're going to  
8 be different. So he seemed grim.

9           And we always talked over the phone. This is a long time  
10 ago. So when they had the Fab Five, you can call your five  
11 people. Well, I was one of the fives, right?

12    **(11:40)**

13           **Q.**    Yes.

14           **A.**    And he would call me and I would call him and we'd  
15 talk over the years and I could see him changing at that time.  
16 Because he was ... he was a lot more depressed and then other  
17 times he'd call me and he was a lot happier. So I would talk to  
18 him, and that's what I mean. Sometimes it's good to have  
19 somebody to talk to.

20           **Q.**    Yeah.

21           **A.**    You know, and I said, Okay, you know? Because he knew  
22 that I went away for treatment as well and, you know, I started

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1 getting my life together. So I told him, like, you know, You  
2 ... you have to ground, you have to practice these things,  
3 right? And it sounded like he did.

4 But over the course of time, like, his ... he started  
5 drinking more and then he just ... making complaints and talking  
6 about, like, his head. He's like, you know, My head's not  
7 right, you know? He's like, There's something wrong with me.  
8 And I said ... you know, so I said, you know, There's something  
9 wrong with all of us right now.

10 And yeah, then he spoke about that treatment, that he went  
11 away to ... was it Montreal? Was it Montreal?

12 **Q.** That's right. To Ste. Anne's in Montreal.

13 **A.** Yes.

14 **Q.** He was there for a few months.

15 **A.** Yeah, so he said ... he said he did that and it just  
16 didn't ... he said it felt okay but it didn't help, right? And  
17 I said, Well, my treatment didn't ... like, it helped me ground  
18 and it kind of calmed my anxiety and understand what sets me  
19 off. So that's what I tried to share with him as to understand  
20 those, right? Those ... they're called triggers.

21 But he said it didn't help him. And near the end, too,  
22 like, I remember him calling me and then he was just ... he was

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1 really drunk at this time and he was just, like, feeling like he  
2 was going to give up, you know? He's like, I can't ... he just  
3 kept saying like, you know, My head ain't right, my head ain't  
4 right, I can't think, I can't sleep, I got these nightmares. He  
5 was struggling, and I was like ... I'm like, There's got to be  
6 somebody you can talk to. But there just wasn't. I was like  
7 ... I remember, like, thinking other guys who were there who  
8 knew him and all these guys got sent in the other ... they're in  
9 Ottawa. They're in Petawawa. They're all over the country,  
10 right?

11 We needed somebody there, you know, in Oromocto that can go  
12 talk to him. Not a padre. Like, yeah, sure, that could help a  
13 little bit. But like, a friend, you know? Somebody there.  
14 There was nobody there. Because he was alone for such a long  
15 period of time, you know?

16 **Q.** You had talked to him about moving to Nova Scotia and  
17 did you talk to him about his plans to move to Nova Scotia as  
18 well and in the course of, well, at least you'd both be here and  
19 maybe be able to hang out and visit more often?

20 **A.** Absolutely, yeah, and we tried to plan that as to ...  
21 because I told him I expected to move to Nova Scotia about, I  
22 think ... I can't remember the time, but I would say three or

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1 four years ago. Actually, it was ... it was the same year as  
2 the shooting happened. Because I was kind of waiting for a job  
3 opportunity to work with Irving.

4 **Q.** Yes.

5 **A.** And it just didn't happen. And I told him, like, you  
6 know, Once I get down there we're going to, you know, hang out.  
7 Because we were good friends. Like, we ... we're really good  
8 ... like, we're tight. Like almost like brothers in a sense and  
9 ... and that was the plan, like, and now that I'm here, like, I  
10 mean I think about him all the time. Like, because he ... he  
11 would have been like my best friend at the time, right? Right  
12 now he would have been.

13 **Q.** I want to ask you about a separate issue, Mr. Trotter.  
14 Then I want to come back to talking about Cpl. Desmond. But one  
15 of the things that's been raised is the issue of race. And just  
16 wondering if you have any reflections on that, whether it's, you  
17 know ... whatever timeframe you might want to think of, whether  
18 it's the training or afterward, if you felt that Lionel was  
19 affected by racial issues within the military in any way.

20 **A.** Yes. Yes. I noticed, like ... when I spoke earlier  
21 about taking certain guys and talking ... like, teaching them  
22 communications. Like, I found in the beginning people would say

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1 stuff to him more than to other guys, and when I first got in  
2 the battalion there was ... there was four dark-skinned people  
3 there. Two were seniors to me and those two talked to me and  
4 said, This is how it's going to happen, you know, like, these  
5 are things that will happen, you're going to deal with race,  
6 right? And I kind of understood that, right? Like, I  
7 understood what they were saying to me. Not fully because I  
8 grew up in Ontario, right? So it's very multicultural in  
9 Ontario.

10 So there was times, yes, that I found that ... just the way  
11 we were spoken to, you know? Or having crappier jobs or bad  
12 jobs, you know?

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. But ...

15 Q. Can you give us a sense of how ... from your  
16 observations, how did Lionel handle that? You know, did it  
17 weigh on him? What was his experience from what you could see?

18 A. I don't know. He might have been ... he might have  
19 been ignorant to the sense, you know, that it was happening.

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. But he learned to brush it off. Like, what else can  
22 you do, right? I mean there's no big movement like there is now

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1 back then. There was none of that. It's like you had no choice  
2 but to brush it off. Somebody call you the ... you know, call  
3 you a nigger, right? You had to brush that off because there's  
4 so many of them and little of us, right?

5 Q. Would that be even within your platoon or would that  
6 be ...

7 A. Oh, yeah.

8 Q. Yeah?

9 A. Yeah. Yeah, but you know, I don't want to say it was  
10 ... it was that bad. Because it really wasn't. You know, but  
11 there was incidents, right?

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. No, I just ... thank you.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. I wanted to ask you about that because it's been  
17 raised by others and I thought it would be good to hear your  
18 perspective on that.

19 I guess if we're thinking about that for a moment, Mr.  
20 Trotter, are there any recommendations that you might think of  
21 in terms of racial experiences and racial harmony that you may  
22 ... that you've thought of or that you'd like to say?

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1           **A.**    No.

2           **Q.**    No.  Okay.  When ... so in 2016 you were thinking  
3 about coming back to Nova Scotia and you were still ... but you  
4 were still in Ontario.  And it was in August of 2016 that Lionel  
5 Desmond came back to Nova Scotia after leaving Ste. Anne's in  
6 Quebec.  Do you remember speaking to him at that time?  And you  
7 know, he's back in Nova Scotia.  He's living with his wife and  
8 daughter.  And during those months.  Do you remember those  
9 times?

10          **A.**    Yeah.

11          **Q.**    What can you tell us about the conversations or  
12 observations that you made about Lionel Desmond at that time?

13          **A.**    He just ... like, he seemed like he was fine at that  
14 time.  It's hard ... like it's difficult to say because we don't  
15 always talk about tragedies, you know?  We talk about more  
16 humour if anything else.  I know that ... I know, like, around  
17 that time, like, he was trying to ... he was trying to just ...  
18 trying to find a purpose in life, right?

19           And he did ... he just didn't have anything.  And I said,  
20 Well, you know, this is a good time to just kind of relax and be  
21 with your family and ... you know?  But it seemed like, you  
22 know, he was just lost on, like, what he's going to do.

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1           **Q.**   Knowing him as well as you did, I mean what do you  
2 think about? You know, do you ... what are your thoughts on,  
3 you know, why he struggled as much as he did and why he wasn't  
4 able to come out of it or why ... how he got to the point where  
5 he did what he did?

6           **A.**   I'm not sure if I can, like, answer that completely  
7 what he did what he ... why he did what he did. But I can say  
8 one thing about Lionel is that he was a gentle, caring person.  
9 And he was a ... like, he was just so kind and funny. And he  
10 has his own core values, right? Those are his core values,  
11 family and, you know, humour and helping people.

12   **(11:50)**

13           And you take somebody like him and put him in a war zone  
14 and to basically, Take this rifle, and that guy, shoot him. It  
15 probably ... I would say it destroyed him, you know? Because  
16 that is ... it's not a natural thing for somebody like him to go  
17 through. And you know, like, when I think about that, like,  
18 that's probably when I saw changes, like after those firefights.

19           Because it's not his personality. You have to have a  
20 certain type of people going into battle, right? And he's just  
21 ... he wasn't one of those guys, you know? He was ... he would  
22 probably be better off working, helping building schools and ...

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1 with kids and stuff, right? Playing with kids and giving them  
2 toys. Like that's probably more his thing.

3 But to go into battle, you have to have a certain  
4 personality, right? And I ... and I imagine, like ... not  
5 imagine. Like, that's exactly what happened. Like, he just ...  
6 he said it hurt, you know? The things he saw. The things we  
7 saw. It just wasn't ... it probably changed ... it changed him.  
8 Because he wasn't like that, like, prior to Afghanistan, you  
9 know?

10 **Q.** Undermined his moral being.

11 **A.** Yes.

12 **Q.** Cpl. Trotter, I'm going to ask you how it was that you  
13 found out about the events of January 3rd, 2017.

14 **A.** Actually, we were down for Christmastime and I was  
15 going to see him and I said, Oh, you know what, there's too much  
16 going on right now, but I should be getting this job, hopefully  
17 I get this job in January timeframe and I'll be here.

18 When I was ... when we were driving back to Ontario we ...  
19 I got a phone call, right? And I could hear it on the speaker  
20 and basically said, What happened, right? They're like, Did you  
21 hear about Lionel? Did you hear about Lionel? And you know,  
22 basically had to pull over and see what happened. And you saw

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1 what ... like, it was a ... shocked. I was in shocked and then  
2 I felt, like, regret because I told him, like ... I'm like, Oh,  
3 okay, I'll see you Christmastime and I ... and I keep thinking  
4 in my head that, you know, if I was there maybe I could talk  
5 some sense into him, understand a little more.

6 Because I knew. I knew he was struggling. I'm like, You  
7 just got to wait, I'm going to be down there, you will have your  
8 support, right? Yeah, it was tough. It was a tough drive home,  
9 drive back to Ontario.

10 **Q.** You have some feelings of guilt over that.

11 **A.** I do. Yeah, I do. I do because there was a  
12 conversation that I had not long before that and that was the  
13 ... can't remember the date, sorry. But it was just ... it was  
14 just before, just before the incident happened, and that's when  
15 he was just, like, telling me that his head isn't right and he  
16 needs help and nobody's helping him and ... well, I thought I  
17 talked to him, like calmed him down at that sense ... at that  
18 time, right?

19 And I remember telling my ... telling my wife. I was like,  
20 This guy is messed up, like, he's bad, and I don't know what to  
21 do. And I don't know who to call, you know? And I'm trying to,  
22 like ... we don't have a phone number. Like I don't have a lot

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1 of these guys' phone numbers. So I'm trying to find them on  
2 Facebook, like, somebody that could talk to him, right? And you  
3 know, he's all the way out here. So like, you know, don't know  
4 anybody.

5 **Q.** Yeah.

6 **A.** So I do have regret and I think, like, if I would have  
7 came down over the Christmas holidays maybe things could have  
8 been different. I don't ... I don't know, right? But I do  
9 think about it. It's sad, you know?

10 **Q.** And the purpose of the Inquiry, Mr. Trotter, like I  
11 said, is to make recommendations for improvements and, you know,  
12 just on your reflections can you think of recommendations you  
13 might make and, you know, whether that's preparing soldiers  
14 better for going to battle or something when they return from  
15 combat. You know, what do you see as ... that could come out of  
16 this?

17 **A.** I think, like you said, preparing soldiers to go into  
18 combat. Just to ... I'm not sure what they can do. But just to  
19 have an idea. If you go over here this is the things that you  
20 will have to do. You know, even if it was just images. I  
21 remember when we were first in Afghanistan the warrant officer  
22 brought us and he's like, See this guy? Like, you know, there

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1 was three dead bodies there, Look at them, look what the bullets  
2 do, this is what you have to do.

3 And nowhere in my training were we prepared for something  
4 like that, to see what an IED does to a human body, you know?  
5 Not just a blow up or what happens in a vehicle. Like, people  
6 think, you know, the vehicle ... boom. It looks fine. But it's  
7 what the body does inside that vehicle, you know? It looks like  
8 you put something in a blender for God sakes, right? And so  
9 you're not prepared for that. That would have been helpful.

10 Another thing is is that when someone is diagnosed with  
11 PTSD they go into JPSU. When you're in JPSU you are very alone.  
12 You're not part of your unit anymore. You're not part of that  
13 group of guys. You are by yourself and you're supposed to be  
14 given treatment. Which is fine. But the treatment, it's once a  
15 week you see a doctor for, maybe, two hours. Two or three  
16 hours. Can't remember.

17 And then ... then you have six and a half days of, What do  
18 I do now, you know? You just opened my mind up. You made me  
19 relive all this stuff. What do I do in the six and a half days?  
20 And like, that's a struggle. And most likely, guys would be  
21 released out of the military, and when you're released you  
22 definitely don't have any help, you know? Sure, I know Veteran

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1 Affairs has these programs and stuff, but they are so swamped  
2 and they ... they're not there. They can't help. You know,  
3 they'll set you up with a psychologist or a counsellor and you  
4 go talk to these guys. But then you're home again and, like,  
5 what do you do at this time? You have no support, no help.

6 And I remember, like, that ... when I had that conversation  
7 with Lionel there, that ... one of the last ones when he was  
8 just irate and panicking and ... I didn't know who to call.  
9 Like, they have this 1-800-number and you call the number and  
10 there's nobody answering the phone at that time, right? Like  
11 who do you talk to? I don't know who to talk to.

12 And I felt ... I feel like if there was ... there was  
13 something established, like, somebody could have helped. Like I  
14 didn't know what to do, right? And a lot of the friends that  
15 I'm with now, like, a few of them are suffering PTSD and, you  
16 know, most of them are alone. Most of them don't have any help.  
17 And then ... and some were getting help but there are ... there  
18 are some guys who are severe. And they can't pick up the phone.  
19 You know, they can't do anything. They can't think.

20 I think VAC has ... their paperwork is so hard to  
21 understand - who to communicate with, what to fill out - that  
22 when somebody is, like, mentally ill they can't handle that, you

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1 know? And I'm not sure what they can do, but they have to be  
2 more involved with the members, you know?

3 **Q.** What about with families, Mr. Trotter? Like, from  
4 your experience or from what you've observed in others, are  
5 there services that are or should be available for families when  
6 a soldier like yourself is returning to home, for them to  
7 understand who is walking through the door?

8 **A.** I think maybe now there is but at that timeframe, I  
9 don't remember. You know, I don't remember that. Also, you  
10 mentioned family. Like, I find with ... if you ... I don't  
11 know. I find if you ... with Veteran Affairs, you know, they  
12 have their clients. They have their client. But the family  
13 member is not able to discuss anything with Veteran Affairs or  
14 with a doctor. They're like, No, it's client privileges, I  
15 can't discuss this.

16 So that's a shortfall because the families at home - the  
17 wife, the kids - they're the ones that are seeing this all the  
18 time, you know? They are suffering as well and, you know, if  
19 they're crying out for help they've got to be helped, you know.

20 **(12:00)**

21 **Q.** Are there any other recommendations that you think of,  
22 Mr. Trotter? I know you've made some good recommendations

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1 already or suggestions, are there others you'd like to ...

2       **A.** The only thing is is like the paperwork is ... if I  
3 went ... with all these services they're so spread out.  
4 Veterans Affairs, you know, you want to go to talk to somebody  
5 at Veterans Affairs about your ... any issues, then okay, they  
6 might address you to a different office or, you know, and then  
7 paperwork is getting transferred everywhere. And it just ... it  
8 should just be one area, you know. You should go in and they  
9 talk whatever you need to talk about, get done what you need to  
10 get done.

11       Oh, another issue too, like ... like I remember when Lionel  
12 first got out he was struggling financially ...

13       **Q.** Yes.

14       **A.** Because ... we all are when we first get out because  
15 there's such a long time before you receive your pension, your  
16 military pension. And I don't understand why it takes so long.  
17 You know, I remember waiting almost ... I think it was like six  
18 months, you know, between four to six months. It was just a  
19 long period of time waiting for my pension and I shouldn't have  
20 to. Because guys, when they first get out, they need that  
21 money, they need that financial help. I think that ... like the  
22 finances is tough, right.

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1           **Q.**    What do ... what would people do otherwise if ...  
2 while they're waiting for that six months to pass?

3           **A.**    Exactly.

4           **Q.**    Yeah.

5           **A.**    Some guys ... some guys, you know, just take loans out  
6 or ... And when they get the money then they can pay the loans  
7 off, right.

8           **Q.**    Bank loans, not ...

9           **A.**    Bank loans, yeah.

10          **Q.**    Nothing arranged through Veterans Affairs and the  
11 military, it's something ...

12          **A.**    No.

13          **Q.**    ... they do on their own?

14          **A.**    No.

15          **Q.**    Yeah.

16          **A.**    And you think about it, you know, you have somebody  
17 who is mentally ill have to deal with those struggles, right.  
18 That's an area I think that they can help out on. Yeah.

19          **Q.**    Mr. Trotter, I know it's not difficult ... or it's not  
20 easy for you to go through these memories again and I really do  
21 appreciate, and I know everybody here does, appreciate you  
22 coming in and sharing that. So I just want to say thank you for

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1 your service, first of all, but thank you for coming here and  
2 providing the insight into Cpl. Desmond and to the whole  
3 situation. Thank you.

4 **A.** Yeah, no problem.

5 You know, one thing I'd like to say, though, like I find  
6 like, you know, with members, once they're released ...  
7 especially the PTSD members, they need a lot of help. And one  
8 thing that I've noticed that it's never on the news unless the  
9 member is in the military, but I've had ... I've seen eight  
10 people commit suicide that was in that same platoon ... or  
11 sorry, the same company that Lionel was in. Eight people. And  
12 the only ones they would advertise is the military members,  
13 right.

14 **Q.** So once they're out that doesn't ...

15 **A.** Yeah.

16 **Q.** ... become as publicized?

17 **A.** Yeah. Exactly. But I wanted to just say here like  
18 that tour was ... it was a bad tour. It was a ... it was a  
19 terrible tour. Like going to hell, that tour. That's why so  
20 many people are struggling right now.

21 **Q.** The suicides from the individuals in the company, did  
22 you know some of them fairly well?

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1           **A.**    I knew them all, yeah.

2           **Q.**    Yeah.

3           **A.**    I knew them all, you know.  And it's hard to see that  
4 and then, you know, your good friend does ... you know, kills  
5 his family, like.  Yeah, it's ... I don't know.  I just ... I'm  
6 not sure how to help them but they need help.

7           They go overseas, they fight, they need the help when they  
8 come back.

9           **Q.**    They make an unlimited ... you've made an unlimited  
10 commitment in your way, committed your life.

11          **A.**    And that's what I knew what I was doing is putting my  
12 life on line ... on the line, right, but ... And then all the  
13 guys I was with they kind of expected that, you know.  One of us  
14 could die.

15          **Q.**    And your company in Afghanistan, didn't suffer any  
16 deaths while you were in combat?

17          **A.**    The company had ... didn't, but the .. but the  
18 battalion did, right?  So we had other platoons that ... that,  
19 you know, like ... yeah, that died ... died.  You know, that got  
20 killed.

21          I know ten of them hit an IED and were killed not too far  
22 from our camp.  The same road that we travelled, you know.  It's

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1 just the luck of the draw really, like it's ... We travelled  
2 these same roads and you don't know, right. We didn't suffer  
3 any casualties unless a few ankle sprains, right. Yeah.

4 Q. But afterwards there were casualties certainly?

5 A. Yeah, and those are the worst ones, right. Because  
6 those ... these guys are ... they're home and, like I said,  
7 they're by themselves for six and a half days or ... they're not  
8 ... don't even have any treatments, right.

9 Like Lionel, for example, when he left that hospital there  
10 in Montreal, he was alone for about three months without anybody  
11 talking to him. Do you see what I'm talking about? Like  
12 there's a disconnect there.

13 Once he left that treatment there should have been a call  
14 to Veterans Affairs to his caseworker and his caseworker should  
15 have been on that, right. Veterans Affairs' office should have  
16 been on that. Or I think the military, like, you know, they got  
17 to be part of that too.

18 Like I know when a member releases, they say no, he's not  
19 ours anymore. That member is not ours anymore. They ...  
20 they're part of that.

21 I remember my platoon kept saying we're a family, we're a  
22 family. Well, once somebody like got injured or released that

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1 family was done, it was gone.

2 Q. So for the injured member then they're out of the  
3 family?

4 A. Out of the family.

5 Q. And out of that support network?

6 A. Yeah. Out of ... there's no support. But I don't  
7 understand like how a guy can go three months without any help.  
8 And he's not the only one, there's ... I can introduce tons of  
9 other people, right, that are struggling and they don't have  
10 that help there, you know. One, you have to want the help which  
11 is really hard for somebody to want that.

12 Q. It seemed with Cpl. Desmond's case that he asked for  
13 help and didn't have a great barrier to asking for help. We've  
14 seen examples of that. Was that your impression of him? I mean  
15 I know ...

16 A. Well, he ...

17 Q. ... lots of people do but ...

18 A. No, he wanted help. I know he wanted to get better  
19 because he wanted a life. He wanted to live a life, right. We  
20 had plans. I was coming down here and have my kids, his kids,  
21 you know. We had our plans with life, right.

22 And I know he wanted help but there wasn't much help in

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Direct Examination**

1 Oromocto, small area. Then he moves out here and there's no  
2 help here. Like he needs to be either in Halifax or Ontario.  
3 Like I would say probably Ontario when there's Ottawa there,  
4 there's Toronto there, the bigger cities are there, right.

5 Q. Yeah. You know, an issue that's arisen, I'll take ...  
6 see if you have a comment on it, is just the fact that he's in a  
7 rural area with no other people to talk to that have any similar  
8 experience at all to his and how that would impact his mental  
9 state.

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. His ability to cope.

12 A. Exactly. In the rural areas they're also ... like  
13 they don't have a lot of Veterans Affairs offices, right. I had  
14 one right in Kingston, like just down the road from me so it was  
15 easy to go there but when you're out here it's tough.

16 Q. Again, Mr. Trotter, I want to say thank you very much  
17 for coming down here and sharing all of this with us today. As  
18 I said, I know it's not easy for you to do so but it's important  
19 for us to hear it and, like I say, I really appreciate it.  
20 Thank you. Thank you again.

21 A. Thank you.

22 **THE COURT:** Thank you, Mr. Rodgers.



ORLANDO TROTTER, Cross-Examination by Mr. MacdonaldCROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. MACDONALD

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(12:10)

MR. MACDONALD: I guess it's afternoon now. Good afternoon, Mr. Trotter. I'm Tom Macdonald and I'm the lawyer for the Borden family.

Did Lionel ever discuss with you what ... this is after his deployment, what his triggers were? What would set him off potentially after he got back in Canada?

**A.** Yeah, noises. Just loud noises. The smell of oil on the weapons. Like we used this thing called CLP, but once he'd smell like certain oils he said that just would mess him up.

**Q.** You described in some detail the firefights and so very obvious you and Lionel were warriors. Do you have any suggestions in terms of firearms and members of the Canadian Armed Forces who end a tour or end a deployment or end their service and then they're back in Canada, they have PTSD and the policies around their access or acquisition of firearms once they're back into civilian life? Do you have anything you'd like to comment on in that regard?

**A.** Yeah, I think ... you know, if someone has post-traumatic ... suffering from post-traumatic stress they shouldn't have a firearm, you know. Because the fire ... I know

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Cross-Examination by Mr. Macdonald**

1 some guys might argue the fact that they're shooters, they like  
2 to shoot, but the noises, the feel. You know, if you're  
3 suffering from PTSD and you have this firearm, that is going to  
4 trigger you. I know it would trigger me. Weapons will trigger  
5 ... well, not so much trigger but like it would remind me.

6 So if someone is suffering with PTSD and then they start  
7 shooting something or picking up a gun and hearing all the  
8 clicks and noises and cocking, like those will be triggers and  
9 it could ... you know, someone suffering from flashbacks they  
10 can go back in that time. Like they shouldn't have it.

11 **Q.** Thank you, Mr. Trotter, and thank you for your  
12 service.

13 **A.** Thank you.

14 **THE COURT:** Ms. Miller?

15 **MS. MILLER:** No questions, Your Honour. Mr. Trotter,  
16 thank you ...

17 **A.** Thank you.

18 **MS. MILLER:** ... on behalf of myself and the Desmond  
19 family for your service to the country and your friendship and  
20 support of Lionel Desmond.

21 **THE COURT:** Thank you. Mr. MacKenzie?

22 **MR. MACKENZIE:** Thank you. No questions, Your Honour.

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1           **THE COURT:**           Mr. Murray?

2

3

**CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. MURRAY**

4

(12:12)

5           **MR. MURRAY:**           Thank you, Your Honour. Mr. Trotter, I'm  
6 Allen Murray, one of the Inquiry counsel. I just have some  
7 questions you can help us with.

8           When you talked about Lionel Desmond's training when ...  
9 before you were deployed, you said that his fitness and his  
10 morale helped. Did he struggle in other ways with the training  
11 or were there other challenges for him that you recall?

12           **A.**    I don't want to talk down about him, like my friend,  
13 but I found like sometimes it took him a little longer to pick  
14 up on things and that's probably his only struggle. Like he was  
15 a ... he was a pretty hyper guy to begin with, like he was just  
16 hyper, and that's probably why his fitness was so good was  
17 because he just full of energy.

18           **Q.**    Right.

19           **A.**    But some of the training, yeah, took ... it took him a  
20 little bit. And I remember, you know, just talking to him about  
21 certain things just because I'd been there for a while, right.  
22 And our goal was always train like the youngest guys or the

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1 newer guys, right, always. That ... that's something.

2 Q. I appreciate you hadn't fought at that point either, I  
3 guess, but was there anything in his personality or emotional  
4 makeup that you saw then that caused you concern about him being  
5 in the military or being deployed?

6 A. At that point, no. No, I didn't see that at that  
7 point but, you know, what ... like it's easy. Like now I can  
8 look back. But I just remember him, like, overseas and there  
9 were times he was struggling, but we all were struggling so it's  
10 hard to, Hey, you might be suffering from something. It's at  
11 the point where nobody knew what PTSD was.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. We heard about it but we never ... we don't know what  
14 it was. And what I mentioned before just like his ... his  
15 personally, it was just ... he took that hard, right?

16 Q. Right. After you came back, you talked about the  
17 experience of your fellow soldiers being dispersed, I guess, to  
18 other units and going off to different places and you said  
19 Lionel Desmond then was assigned to pipe and drum.

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Did you talk to him about that? How he found that or  
22 what he felt about that?

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1           **A.**    Yeah, I ... it seemed like he was okay like for ...  
2    yes, actually he was fine. It seemed like he was fine at first,  
3    it was a little break, but after a while he did say he didn't  
4    like it and wants to get out of there and then try and like  
5    figure out what else he can do.

6            Around that same timeframe, that's when there ... they had  
7    too many private corporals or corporals and they were trying to  
8    like put them off in different trades, right, around that time,  
9    so that's what he was looking into.

10          **Q.**    Mm-hmm.

11          **A.**    But ... you know, he was good at it I thought. He did  
12    really well. Like he was good at it for a period of time.

13          **Q.**    Right.

14          **A.**    And I remember always saying to him like are you still  
15    making that beautiful music up there, you know, like, it sounds  
16    good. And yeah, he just didn't like it after a while. He just  
17    didn't want to be part of it.

18          **Q.**    And he talked to you about wanting to do the diesel  
19    mechanic ...

20          **A.**    Yeah.

21          **Q.**    ... training? Was that something that it was easy for  
22    him to get in to do you know or ...

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1           **A.**    I'm not sure if it would have been. Like I've never  
2 seen him like with the mechanics and all that but ...

3           **Q.**    Right.

4           **A.**    ... he seemed like he was interested in it.

5           **Q.**    You said when you came back that you and Lionel  
6 Desmond were in the same building, is that work-wise you're  
7 talking about or ...

8           **A.**    Yes, work-wise. Yeah.

9           **Q.**    Okay. All right. Did you have much contact when you  
10 came back with his wife Shanna?

11          **A.**    Yes.

12          **Q.**    Okay.

13          **A.**    Yeah, I was ... I was a family friend so I was there  
14 not too long after Aaliyah was born and I was in his house. And  
15 Shonda his ... her ... Shanna's sister ...

16          **Q.**    Right.

17          **A.**    ... was in their home. Yeah.

18          **Q.**    Okay. And you said that Shanna used the phrase "shell  
19 shock" ...

20          **A.**    Yes.

21          **Q.**    ... when she talked about Lionel. And at that point,  
22 the term PTSD, were a lot of soldiers or former soldiers, were

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1 they familiar with that term or was it still becoming kind of  
2 something you were getting familiar with?

3 **A.** Something we were getting familiar with.

4 **Q.** Okay.

5 **A.** The PTSD it was too new for us.

6 **Q.** And do you ... did she say anything more to you about  
7 that or describe to you what she was seeing in Lionel?

8 **A.** She said he would get angry sometimes, he had  
9 nightmares. But that's just ... you know, like she would talk a  
10 little bit about that.

11 **Q.** Right.

12 **A.** I can't remember everything else, I just ...

13 **Q.** Sure.

14 **A.** ... just remember that.

15 **Q.** Sure. And you had said that different guys deal with  
16 the effects differently and you mentioned that some use medical  
17 marijuana and you knew that Lionel was, for a period of time,  
18 prescribed medical marijuana.

19 **A.** Mm-hmm.

20 **Q.** Did you ever talk to him about that, about his  
21 experience with that or how that helped him or not?

22 **A.** Yeah, he liked it, he said it calmed him down and

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1 liked ... just liked the feel of it.

2 Q. Yeah.

3 A. But I'm not ... I'm not into the medical marijuana,  
4 right, so I just ... I said just be careful you don't get  
5 addicted to this stuff, right.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. They say it's not addicting but the way I see it if it  
8 alters your mind it's a drug and you can get addicted to it,  
9 right. But it did ... he did say that it does calm him down and  
10 he only does it here and there.

11 Q. Okay. Did he talk about any negative side effects  
12 from medical marijuana?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Did you have occasion to talk to him about other forms  
15 of treatment that he was getting in New Brunswick, medication  
16 that he was on?

17 A. I can't think of any other medications that he was on.

18 Q. Did he talk to you about the Occupational Stress  
19 Injury Clinic in New Brunswick?

20 A. Yeah. Yeah, I know he was part of that and ... I'm  
21 just trying to ... just trying to think. I can't ... I can't  
22 remember, I just remember him mentioning it. The only thing I

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1 got from him more is just ... he just ... he just felt more  
2 alone than anything else.

3 Q. Sorry, just felt?

4 A. Alone. Like he felt alone.

5 Q. Alone.

6 A. During that time, like I'm just trying to think. OSI,  
7 is that the group that was like veterans are together or is that  
8 just more of the ...

9 Q. No, this would be more seeing a psychiatrist ...

10 A. Oh yeah, sorry. sorry.

11 Q. ... and maybe a psychologist.

12 A. I've got the two things mixed up.

13 **(12:20)**

14 **THE COURT:** Yeah, the Occupational Stress Injury Clinic  
15 it would be ...

16 A. Yes. Sorry. Yeah, I think he ... I can't remember  
17 exactly who he was seeing and I remember just him saying like it  
18 just wasn't really helping.

19 **MR. MURRAY:** Okay.

20 A. You know, it wasn't helping him at all. And I  
21 remember him making the comment, Oh, the doc thinks I'm crazy.  
22 But that's just him joking around, right, like, so ...

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1           **Q.** In terms of the timeframe, at some point you leave New  
2 Brunswick and you go to Ontario?

3           **A.** Yes.

4           **Q.** And when was that?

5           **A.** 2009.

6           **Q.** Right.

7           **A.** Sometime in 2009.

8           **Q.** All right. So after that, you ... I take it you ...  
9 well, you said you called him a lot and were one of his  
10 favourite fives or ...

11          **A.** Yes.

12          **Q.** Right.

13          **A.** Yeah, yeah.

14          **Q.** Okay. So you would stay in close contact with him  
15 even though there was a geographic difference?

16          **A.** Yeah. Yeah.

17          **Q.** Okay.

18          **A.** Every ... I'd say every three weeks to a month we'd  
19 always talk.

20          **Q.** Okay. And you said you'd travel to Nova Scotia and  
21 sometimes stop to visit on the way back through New Brunswick?

22          **A.** Yes.

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1           **Q.**    Okay. Over those years, did you see a change or can  
2 you ... thinking back on it any progression in his mental  
3 health, either getting worse, getting better, changing in any  
4 way? Can you say over the years?

5           **A.**    Yes. Over the years I could definitely see the  
6 difference. You know, when I first came around or after I left,  
7 you know, we would talk and he was just you know, a happy guy.  
8 We would just chat about, you know, just past experiences and  
9 joke around, right. And then over the years I'd notice like  
10 sometimes he got more real, more descriptive on how he was  
11 feeling. That's where I seen the depression, and, you know, he  
12 was ... I remember ... yeah, depression and then he was always  
13 locking his doors, checking outside, like paranoid. Yeah, so he  
14 was ... he was definitely changing over the years.

15           **Q.**    That paranoia or that kind of paranoid behaviour, that  
16 was getting worse over the years?

17           **A.**    Yeah.

18           **Q.**    More pronounced?

19           **A.**    Yeah, especially when he said he was always locking  
20 the doors and looking outside and seeing who was around. You  
21 know when I think of that it's like, yeah, that's very military  
22 to do that, right.

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1 Q. Right.

2 A. Because when you're overseas you're always ... you're  
3 looking at everything.

4 Q. Sure.

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. Do you have a sense of when that was that you started  
7 noticing him talking about locking his doors more or perhaps  
8 being a little more paranoid?

9 A. I'm just trying to thing. I can't remember the dates,  
10 I just know before ... before the inci- ... I can't remember.  
11 It was 20- ... 2014 maybe. I can't remember.

12 Q. Would it have been before he went to Montreal or  
13 after?

14 A. After.

15 Q. After?

16 A. Yeah. It was ... it was when he was in Oromocto  
17 before he sold his house because I remember him being in that  
18 house, he was alone in that house.

19 Actually, that's ... that's when he was struggling the most  
20 is when he was alone in that house in Oromocto, because his wife  
21 was in school, his daughter was gone. And that's when he lost  
22 his last bit of support at that time because the support from

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1 the military was gone and then, you know, his friends are  
2 leaving, some are committing suicide. So then he was in there  
3 and that's when he ... I found that's when he struggled the  
4 worst, when he was alone.

5 Q. In Oromocto?

6 A. Yes. Yeah. So it was just before that house sold and  
7 there's the stress of trying to sell a house that can't be sold.  
8 Once he was able to sell it he was happy because now, you know,  
9 he has ... financially he's good. But he was really stressed  
10 out because everything was coming down on him at that point.

11 Q. Did you know about the incident where police were  
12 called and took him to hospital in Oromocto?

13 A. Yeah, I remember him telling me that. Yeah.

14 Q. He told you about that?

15 A. Yeah, they took his guns away and ... Yeah.

16 Q. Do you remember what he said about it to you?

17 A. No, can't quite remember.

18 Q. No?

19 A. I just ... I remember when it happened, when they took  
20 ... I wish I could remember. I can't remember.

21 Q. How did you feel hearing about that?

22 A. I was worried. Like, you know, I was worried and I

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1 didn't know what to do. Like that was a ... his situation was  
2 really serious and all I could say is, Just look for help, get  
3 some help. But I knew that I was his friend so I just was his  
4 friend, you know. I would ... I would joke, I would talk, I  
5 would share my experiences with him and I could get him to  
6 laugh, right. He was always laughing with me, we had a good  
7 time together. And ... but at that time, like I just wasn't  
8 around to see enough of him, but I could ... I knew there was a  
9 difference on the phone.

10 Q. Right. When he ... after Montreal and he was back in  
11 Nova Scotia, do you have a recollection of how often you would  
12 have talked to him during that period of time?

13 A. When he was in Montreal?

14 Q. After Montreal.

15 A. After Montreal? No.

16 Q. You would have talked to him, though, on occasion I  
17 take it during that period of time?

18 A. Yeah, probably like once a month. You know, sometimes  
19 we'd go little extended periods without talking.

20 Q. Mm-hmm. Sure. Do you recall if you had ... you  
21 talked about the ability to access services in a rural area, did  
22 he say anything to you that you can recall about what was

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1 available to him in Nova Scotia or what he was trying to get  
2 here?

3 **A.** Well, I just ... when we had that last conversation  
4 about finding help, like that's what he tried to do. You know,  
5 he tried to get help around here and he just couldn't get it.

6 We don't ... like we don't know what to do, we just know  
7 ... like he didn't know what to do, he just knew that there was  
8 something wrong with his head, that's the way he would say it,  
9 and he didn't know what to do and who to talk to. And, I mean,  
10 clearly he tried to speak to a doctor and he got turned away,  
11 right, so he was looking for that help.

12 Now I think if he was in a different area, Kingston,  
13 Ontario, or Ottawa, they might have took that a little more  
14 serious, right. Anywhere that has like more military presence.  
15 But he was looking for the help and he doesn't know what to do.  
16 Like most of these guys don't know what to do, right. They just  
17 know they're suffering and ... Well, I think ... I don't want  
18 to speculate but I think things could be prevented.

19 **Q.** Did he ever talk to you or ever mention his  
20 interactions with Veterans Affairs Canada, his caseworker or  
21 anyone else from VAC?

22 **A.** The only thing he ever said about that is just like

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1 ... like he just ... no, I can't remember about VAC. I just ...  
2 I just remember that. The only thing ... I can't remember. I  
3 just know that he just said the support wasn't there.

4 **Q.** Okay.

5 **A.** That's what I got from, Lionel.

6 **Q.** And you said, and this is something we've seen and  
7 heard about, soldiers who are struggling, veterans that are  
8 struggling with mental illness, navigating systems, filling out  
9 paperwork can sometimes be a challenge.

10 Was that a conversation you had with him or is that more  
11 generally an experience that you've seen with a number of former  
12 soldiers?

13 **A.** I've seen that with former soldiers and, yeah, we  
14 talked about that. I remember ... I can't remember the services  
15 but I was telling him, like, you know, things he should do and,  
16 you know, you need to, you know, speak to a doctor and try to  
17 work through some programs, even the going away. Like I ... I  
18 mean, I went away to Bellwood in Scarborough, Ontario, to get  
19 some help, right. And I discussed that with him as well, like,  
20 you know ...

21 **Q.** Okay.

22 **A.** Get that. But yes, the paperwork was very difficult

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1 to do with them. And if his wife wasn't around at that time  
2 then good luck, you know. Yeah.

3 Q. Okay. Did you have conversations with Shanna near the  
4 end? Would you have had occasion to speak to her or was it  
5 mostly Lionel you were speaking to?

6 A. No, just Lionel. Yeah.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. When I talked to him she was ... she was off to  
9 school, university so ...

10 **(12:30)**

11 Q. Okay. You said you had a conversation, I guess, very  
12 late in his life or late in 2016. Do you remember when that  
13 conversation was?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Or when you might have spoken to him last?

16 A. I spoke to him, it was just during the Christmas break  
17 was the last time I spoke to him and that's when I thought ... I  
18 did think he seemed okay, he seemed all right, but it was just a  
19 quick conversation talking about Christmas, right? And it was  
20 more me apologizing for not coming up. I said, You know, when I  
21 get this job in January then we'll spend more time together,  
22 right?

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1           **Q.**    Okay.  So he seemed okay to you, though, in that  
2 conversation, or at least not different than he had been in  
3 previous conversations in 2016?

4           **A.**    Yeah.

5           **Q.**    You talked about some of the experiences regarding  
6 race in the Canadian Armed Forces.  Do you have any thoughts  
7 about veterans coming home and whether there would be any  
8 benefit in being able to connect with other, perhaps, veterans  
9 or counsellors who were of similar race or understood some of  
10 those experiences?

11          **A.**    Maybe.  Depends on the veteran and what they have went  
12 through, right?

13          **Q.**    Right.

14          **A.**    Actually, now that you're talking about the race, I  
15 remember now, when we were in Afghanistan, that's really when  
16 you saw more of the racism come out of people because, you know,  
17 they'd have ... that's when you ... you know, like, what's the  
18 term people use?  The "sand n-word", right?  They're called  
19 "sand-niggers".  That's what they call them all the time.  And  
20 it's hard for us to hear those words, right?  And I imagine,  
21 like, you know, even for Lionel, it would've been tough, but I  
22 ... I'd seen it all the time, those words coming out and,

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Cross-Examination by Mr. Murray**

1 because most of those people, you know, they're either my skin  
2 colour or just a little lighter, right? So yeah, I just ... I  
3 don't know. It just wasn't accept- ... it was- ... it wasn't  
4 good. It just ...

5 **Q.** You had said in your evidence that you knew of eight  
6 people in your platoon that had committed suicide?

7 **A.** Battalion, yeah.

8 **Q.** It was in battalion?

9 **A.** Yeah.

10 **Q.** How many people would there have been in the battalion  
11 in total?

12 **A.** If I can guess, 3 to 400 people. There was a lot of  
13 people.

14 **Q.** Okay.

15 **A.** Yeah. And support units and ... yeah.

16 **Q.** Right. And that battalion served in Afghanistan?

17 **A.** Yes.

18 **Q.** Mr. Trotter, thank you very much.

19 **A.** Okay, thanks.

20

21

22

ORLANDO TROTTER, Examination by the CourtEXAMINATION BY THE COURT

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(12:34)

THE COURT: Mr. Trotter, I just have a couple of questions for you.

A. Okay.

Q. I think I do. Just give me a second.

You said that you went to Bellwood yourself?

A. Yes.

Q. Bellwood? And Lionel was aware that you went to Bellwood?

A. Yes.

Q. He would've been aware of what your experience there was.

A. (Nods "yes".)

Q. And when would that have been in relation to when he was thinking of going to Quebec or do you know what that timeframe was, because he went up in, I think it was May of 2016. So that's the date he was there, from May until August 2016.

A. Yes. I was in Bellwood probably 2013?

Q. 2013?

A. Yeah.

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Examination by the Court**

1           **Q.**    Okay.

2           **A.**    Yes.  I was in Bellwood in 2013.  So I went there just  
3 because I was trying to ... I was in that position that I was  
4 with a company and then I got sent off to Kingston, or I went to  
5 Kingston, and I was alone.  So I was having a hard time dealing  
6 with this, so I went to Bellwood just for kind of just a pause  
7 in life in a sense, right?

8           **Q.**    Sure.

9           **A.**    And worked through that.  So those are ... that's  
10 something that I would share.  I would share that with anybody,  
11 right?

12          **Q.**    That's what I was going to ask you.  Lionel would've  
13 been aware of your experience there.  And did you ever have a  
14 discussion with him in the con- ... First off, did he ever  
15 bring up with you the fact that he was looking to go, or he had  
16 the opportunity to go, to the occupational stress injury clinic  
17 in Quebec at Ste. Anne's?

18          **A.**    Yes.  Well, I know he was looking for help because he  
19 was ... he explained, like, the struggles that he had, and  
20 because I've already dealt with some of that, I was able to talk  
21 about it, so I would tell him, you know, what my experience was  
22 in Bellwood and that he should ... it would be good to go,

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Examination by the Court**

1 right?

2           **Q.** When ... You described that ... My notes are not an  
3 exact reflection of what your words are, so I just want to take  
4 you back to something you said earlier.

5           **A.** Okay.

6           **Q.** And your words were something to the effect that it  
7 was near the end. You had a conversation with him. He was  
8 really drunk. You felt like he was maybe giving up?

9           **A.** Yes.

10           **Q.** That he'd been drinking, he was having nightmares, he  
11 said his head wasn't right. What was the timeframe of that  
12 conversation? And just let me start it this way. Sorry. Was  
13 that after he finished his stay at the hospital in Quebec or was  
14 it before or can you remember?

15           **A.** I would say it was after. Okay, so he finished in  
16 2016?

17           **Q.** Yeah, it was August 2016, he was released, and then  
18 ... and I think he sold his ... the house in Oromocto was sold  
19 sometime shortly after that and then he returned to New  
20 Brunswick ... or to Nova Scotia.

21           **A.** Yeah. When we had that conversation, it was before he  
22 moved out of that house.

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Examination by the Court**

1           **Q.** Before he moved out of the house. Okay. And you  
2 think it was after he ...

3           **A.** Hold on. I'm sorry. I'm just ...

4           **Q.** Sorry.

5           **A.** Just trying to think here.

6           **Q.** Okay. Take your time.

7           **A.** Because there was, like, a couple ... like one when I  
8 thought he was paranoid. That was near ... it was just before  
9 he sold his house. Yeah. It was after that. It was after  
10 that, yeah. It was past 2016. It really wasn't that long  
11 before the tragedy happened. That's what I can say. It was  
12 probably maybe six months before that or so. I can't give you  
13 an exact date but ...

14          **Q.** That's fine.

15          **A.** ... I have to think about that.

16          **Q.** No. But at the time, there's really no reason to  
17 pinpoint the time or remember the timeframe. It's part of your  
18 recollections of your conversations and time with Mr. Desmond.

19            After he left the clinic in Quebec we know that, as I said,  
20 he left in August 2016. We know the house in Oromocto was sold.  
21 Sometime after that, it was closed. And then you'd mentioned  
22 that he then went three months without anyone speaking to him

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Examination by the Court**

1 during that period of time. So we're going to go from, say,  
2 August to the end of the year, 2016, because the shootings  
3 happened January 3rd, 2017.

4 **A.** Mmm.

5 **Q.** So during that period of time, do you remember having  
6 any conversations with him? This was a period of time when ...  
7 well, we'll eventually establish a timeline of services he had  
8 but the reflection that there was maybe a three-month period of  
9 time where there was ... he was having little or no contact  
10 would be probably an accurate observation but did he express  
11 that to you? Any concerns or issues you might have with that or  
12 is that your observation?

13 **A.** No, that's my observation, but he didn't ... yeah. So  
14 that makes sense, that timeline. That's when he said ... just  
15 think here. So after that, yeah, that's when he was ... I would  
16 say he was drinking a lot more in that timeframe because ... and  
17 he was talking about his head isn't right and ... but I think  
18 that's when he was really struggling the most during that time.

19 I can understand what he's saying, like, because, you know,  
20 nothing was helping, you know, the treatments weren't helping.  
21 Montreal didn't help. He just ... I think he just seemed like  
22 he was too far gone at this point, you know, like he just ...

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Examination by the Court**

1 but it's hard ... I can't tell, like, sometimes, like, I can see  
2 his emotions, especially if he was drinking or something, but  
3 other times, like I said, I'd just try to be his friend more and  
4 dig deep.

5 Q. Mm-hmm. Well, I think you put it perfectly, that you  
6 saw yourself as his friend and that's what you were to him.

7 A. Yeah. So I can't remember all the details.

8 Q. No, that's fine.

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. That's fine. I just thought I'd ask you. All right.

11 Any other questions, Counsel? No.

12 Thank you for your service, Corporal.

13 A. Thank you.

14 Q. You're free to go. Thank you.

15 A. Yeah. Thanks.

16 Q. Appreciate your time.

17 **WITNESS WITHDREW (12:41 hrs.)**

18 **THE COURT:** Do we have a connection for 1:30? Ms.

19 Miller?

20 **MS. MILLER:** Yes. Kaitlyn Desmond is the final witness  
21 that I intended on calling.

22 **THE COURT:** Yes.

**ORLANDO TROTTER, Examination by the Court**

1           **MS. MILLER:**       And my understanding is she will be  
2 available for her evidence by way of video at 1:30.

3           **THE COURT:**       1:30? All right. We'll be back at 1:25.

4           **MS. MILLER:**       Thank you.

5           **THE COURT:**       Thank you, Counsel.

6           **COURT RECESSED (12:43 hrs.)**

7           **COURT RESUMED (13:31 hrs.)**

8           **MS. MILLER:**       Good afternoon, Your Honour.

9           **THE COURT:**       Good afternoon, Ms. Miller. I understand  
10 that we have Kaitlyn Desmond on a Teams video from some place  
11 west of Nova Scotia.

12           Is that correct, Ms. Desmond?

13           **MS. MILLER:**       No.

14           **THE COURT:**       No?

15           **MS. MILLER:**       She's in Halifax, Your Honour.

16           **THE COURT:**       She's in Halifax?

17           **MS. MILLER:**       Yes. Yes.

18           **THE COURT:**       Okay. Well, that's some place west of Port  
19 Hawkesbury, I guess. Thank you. All right. Thank you.  
20 Perhaps we could swear the witness in.

21

22

1 **KAITLYN DESMOND, affirmed, testified:**

2 **THE COURT:** Thank you, Ms. Desmond. Ms. Miller?

3

4

**DIRECT EXAMINATION**

5

6 **MS. MILLER:** Hi, Kaitlyn. Can you see me?

7 **A.** Hi. I can.

8 **Q.** Hi.

9 **A.** Hi.

10 **Q.** Hi. So I want you to state your full name and your  
11 date of birth for everyone here at the Inquiry.

12 **A.** Kaitlyn Michelle Desmond, August 19th, 1992.

13 **Q.** Okay. So you are, as we've heard now, living in  
14 Halifax.

15 **A.** Yes.

16 **Q.** Okay. And prior to that, were you born and raised in  
17 Guysborough ... in Lincolnville?

18 **A.** I was, yes.

19 **Q.** Okay. And when did you leave Lincolnville to move to  
20 Halifax?

21 **A.** After I graduated, so it would have been June 2010.

22 **Q.** Okay. That was your graduation from high school?

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **A.**    Yes.

2           **Q.**    And then you moved to Halifax.  Okay.  And what are  
3 you doing ...

4           **A.**    Yes.

5           **Q.**    ... in Halifax at the present time, Kaitlyn?

6           **A.**    Presently, I am enrolled at the Eastern College  
7 Criminology Program.

8           **Q.**    Okay.  And share for us your relationship, Kaitlyn, to  
9 Lionel Desmond, Brenda Desmond, Aaliyah Desmond, and Shanna  
10 Desmond.

11          **A.**    Lionel was my brother and Aaliyah was my niece, Shanna  
12 was my sister-in-law and Brenda was my mother.

13          **Q.**    Yes.  And we've heard from your three other sisters.  
14 We understand that you're the baby of the family.

15          **A.**    Yes.

16          **Q.**    Yeah.  And how much of an age difference was there  
17 between you, Kaitlyn, and your brother Lionel?

18          **A.**    Nine years' difference.

19          **Q.**    Nine years.  Okay.  So tell us a little bit about your  
20 relationship with Lionel in that period of time when he was in  
21 Lincolnville and you were there growing up.  Can you describe  
22 that for us?

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **A.**   Well, he always called me "Marybelle". He didn't call  
2 me "Kaitlyn". He always had like this energy about him that he  
3 always wanted people to be happy and he always would crack  
4 jokes. He liked to like act out wrestling characters, like The  
5 Undertaker or Kane. Yeah. He was a good person.

6           **Q.**   Okay. And in terms of the time that you would spend  
7 with Lionel, he was a little bit older than you but he was your  
8 brother, so can you share with us sort of the time that you  
9 would spend with Lionel as you got older and before he left to  
10 go into the military?

11          **A.**   Well, me being his baby sister, he would always like  
12 be protective but he, like I said, would love to crack jokes.  
13 Yeah.

14          **Q.**   Okay.

15          **A.**   For sure.

16          **Q.**   And when Lionel became a father in December of 2006,  
17 you were at home in Lincolnville at that time.

18          **A.**   Yes.

19          **Q.**   Okay. And what was your observation of how Lionel  
20 adjusted to fatherhood at that point in time when Aaliyah  
21 arrived?

22          **A.**   Aaliyah was definitely his pride and joy.

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **Q.**    He was pretty proud?

2           **A.**    It's like hard to get words into it. Yeah. He was  
3 very proud. That was his baby girl.

4           **Q.**    Okay.

5           **A.**    And he always made sure that we knew like to look  
6 after her because that was my first niece. She was the reason  
7 of why I became an auntie.

8           **Q.**    Right. Right. So it was a pretty proud moment for  
9 you, too, with Aaliyah as your ...

10          **A.**    Yeah.

11          **Q.**    ... first niece?

12          **A.**    Yeah.

13          **Q.**    Can you share with us about that day of her birth, how  
14 that worked from your perspective?

15          **A.**    I went to Antigonish with my Aunt Sandra and my mom.  
16 And I was sick because usually around that time, like when I  
17 started my menstrual, I always usually would get sick. So I  
18 threw up. And Mom's like, Oh, no, you're not coming in. And I  
19 was like, Why? I'm like, I'm not ... I don't have the flu or  
20 anything. I just want to see her. She's like, No, you're not  
21 coming to see my baby girl. I'll send ... I'll show you  
22 pictures.

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           And I had basically sat out in the parking lot of the St.  
2 Martha's Hospital and waited for her to come out and tell me  
3 like, Oh, she looks so much like Lionel. She looks a lot like  
4 Shanna, too, but you can see a lot of Lionel in her and ...  
5 yeah. It was definitely a proud moment after that, though, once  
6 I got to really hold her and really watch her grow.

7           **Q.** Yeah. And we'll talk about that in a little bit for  
8 sure, Kaitlyn. So you described Lionel as a joker and he liked  
9 to make people laugh and ... were you one of those people he  
10 liked to make laugh?

11          **A.** Yeah.

12          **Q.** Yeah. Yeah. And his personality, was he a happy-go-  
13 lucky guy?

14          **A.** He was.

15          **Q.** Yeah.

16          **A.** He would always make sure ... like if there was like a  
17 dance, he was on that dance floor.

18          **Q.** Okay.

19          **A.** And ... yeah.

20          **Q.** We know, of course, that Lionel enrolled in the  
21 military and then left for Afghanistan in 2007, shortly after  
22 Aaliyah was born. When he returned from Afghanistan, Kaitlyn,

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 what observations did you have, if any, about how his  
2 personality had changed?

3 **A.** Like when he left and came back, like to how he was  
4 like when he left?

5 **Q.** When he returned from Afghanistan. Did you see if he  
6 ... did you think he was different?

7 **A.** Oh, when he returned.

8 **Q.** Yeah.

9 **A.** Yeah. When he returned, he was very quiet and closed  
10 off and he couldn't be around noise. He was usually always  
11 outside. The majority, he would be like cutting wood or out in  
12 the woods hunting.

13 **Q.** Okay.

14 **A.** But he would always ... he was very closed off.

15 **Q.** And when he returned from Afghanistan, he and Shanna  
16 and Aaliyah would have been living together as a family in New  
17 Brunswick. Do you remember that?

18 **A.** Mm-hmm.

19 **Q.** Yeah. And did you have opportunity ...

20 **A.** Yeah.

21 **Q.** ... to go to New Brunswick to visit them when the  
22 three of them were living there?

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **A.**    Yeah. My mom actually got me a bus ticket and I  
2 traveled on the Acadian Lines when it was around then. I  
3 actually traveled with Shonda, which would have been Shanna's  
4 sister. And we traveled out there, and I believe we spent a  
5 weekend or maybe a week out there. And I got to meet one of  
6 Lionel's friends. He had a little barbecue and they were all  
7 calling me Marybelle ... well, besides Shonda and them because  
8 they know me by "Kaitlyn".

9           But, of course, Lionel, that's his nickname for me, so he's  
10 calling me "Marybelle" and his friends are like, Oh, Marybelle,  
11 that's a nice name. I'm like, No, that's not my name, actually.  
12 My name is actually Kaitlyn. But ... but, yeah, it was a really  
13 good time because I actually got to spend that moment with them.

14           **Q.**    Right. Yeah.

15           **A.**    It was good.

16           **Q.**    And when they would return back to Lincolnville, the  
17 three of them, did you have an opportunity to see them when they  
18 would be back in Lincolnville? This is before you moved to  
19 Halifax.

20           **A.**    A little bit but not too much. Like usually if it was  
21 like Shanna coming to get Mom, she would have Aaliyah with her,  
22 or Lionel and Shanna would come to my grandmother's house ...

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 well, our grandmother's house with Aaliyah. But then a little  
2 bit ... it would be like just a bit would usually just be Shanna  
3 and Aaliyah because Lionel usually can't be around noise. And  
4 Nan's house is very noisy with the family in there.

5 Q. Right. Yes. We've heard about ... from some of your  
6 sisters about what a multigenerational family it was at your  
7 Nan's house, lots of people there.

8 **(13:40)**

9 A. Yeah. Yeah.

10 Q. Yes.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. When you left Lincolnville to move to Halifax in 2010,  
13 Kaitlyn, were you back and forth to Lincolnville for different  
14 events and periods of time?

15 A. When I had like the weekend off or got a few days off,  
16 I would travel home or like if one of my family members up in  
17 Halifax were going down home, I would go with them as much as  
18 possible.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Because I always loved to go see my grandmother and my  
21 mother so ...

22 Q. Yes.

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **A.**   ... spend ... to see as much time with them as I can.

2           **Q.**   Okay. And during that period of time from to when the  
3 tragedy occurred in early 2017, would you have opportunity to be  
4 around Lionel and Shanna and Aaliyah at various points when  
5 you'd be home in Lincolnville and they would be there, as well?

6           **A.**   Yeah.

7           **Q.**   Okay. All right. So you told us that when Lionel  
8 returned from Afghanistan, he seemed more closed off and quiet.  
9 Yes?

10          **A.**   Uh-huh.

11          **Q.**   Okay. And he couldn't be around noises. You observed  
12 that that noise ... noises were upsetting for him?

13          **A.**   Yeah.

14          **Q.**   Did he share any stories with you, Kaitlyn, of his  
15 experiences in Afghanistan?

16          **A.**   No, he didn't share them but I've heard of a few ...

17          **Q.**   Okay.

18          **A.**   ... from other family members of what happened.

19          **Q.**   And what did you hear from other family members?

20          **A.**   I heard of like when he was over there, he would see  
21 like kids that would have bombs strapped to them. And then  
22 there's a few times when he would try to call home or he would

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 stay back ... like a tank that he was supposed to be in would  
2 either drive over a bomb or like explode. And then with the few  
3 bodies, like Lionel was always the first person to go out there  
4 and bring them back. Yeah.

5 Q. And did you ... was your mom one of the people that  
6 shared those conversations and stories with you?

7 A. She shared like the one with the kid and the bomb  
8 strapped to him. And she would always say like, If you were  
9 over there and in his shoes and seen what he seen, then you  
10 would maybe be the same way that he was.

11 Q. Yeah. You noticed these changes in your brother's  
12 personality. He was withdrawn and he was ... couldn't be around  
13 noise. What did you think was going on with him, Kaitlyn?

14 A. I wasn't too sure.

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. I just thought it was moreso him constantly thinking  
17 of what happened.

18 Q. But did you understand there was something different  
19 with your brother than the brother you knew before Afghanistan?

20 A. Oh, yeah. Yeah. He wasn't the same.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Like he wasn't the same when he left.

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **Q.**    Yeah.  And you knew something was wrong, but did you  
2 have an understanding of what exactly was wrong with him?

3           **A.**    No.

4           **Q.**    When did you come to learn, Kaitlyn, that Lionel had a  
5 diagnosis of PTSD?

6           **A.**    After the incident.

7           **Q.**    Okay.  Do you know if your mother knew that he had  
8 that PTSD diagnosis?

9           **A.**    No.

10          **Q.**    Okay.

11          **A.**    She wouldn't ... like if she ... she would moreso like  
12 know something was off but she wouldn't have known the actual  
13 diagnosis.

14          **Q.**    Okay.  And did you have any understanding, Kaitlyn, of  
15 what, if any, treatment Lionel was receiving to help him manage  
16 whatever was going on with him after his return from  
17 Afghanistan?

18          **A.**    Not much, no.  I knew like he was going to like the  
19 hospitals but I wasn't sure exactly for what.

20          **Q.**    Okay.  Did you know or were you aware of any other  
21 medications or prescriptions that he was given to help him?

22          **A.**    I knew he was on medical marijuana.

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **Q.**    Yes.

2           **A.**    And, that, I always questioned because Lionel, he'll  
3 have like a beer and whatnot, but like from what I've known and  
4 seen him like growing-up-wise, like when he was old enough to  
5 drink, obviously, but ... yeah. No.

6           **Q.**    Were you ever around Lionel when he used medical  
7 marijuana?

8           **A.**    Honestly, I wouldn't even have noticed because ...  
9 like maybe. Because he would like still like giggle a little  
10 bit or laugh but you could still see that there was definitely  
11 like a wall there.

12          **Q.**    Okay. Do you recall how you learned that Lionel was  
13 using medical marijuana?

14          **A.**    I've overheard it and ... yeah.

15          **Q.**    Overheard it with family members talking about it?

16          **A.**    Yeah.

17          **Q.**    Okay. Thank you. You mentioned you also knew that  
18 Lionel was going into a hospital?

19          **A.**    Uh-huh.

20          **Q.**    Did you know where that hospital was, Kaitlyn?

21          **A.**    At first, I thought it was Antigonish but I guess it  
22 was the one in Montreal, the Ste. Anne's.

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **Q.**    Yes.  Okay.

2           **A.**    Yes.

3           **Q.**    That's the only hospital that you knew that he went  
4 away for a period of time?

5           **A.**    Mm-hmm.

6           **Q.**    Okay.

7           **A.**    Yeah.

8           **Q.**    And what did you understand about the purpose of him  
9 going to that hospital?

10          **A.**    They always like used the term of "he's sick", so  
11 that's why I always thought it was Antigonish.  But then I  
12 slowly realized, okay, something like happened to him while he  
13 was over in Afghanistan.

14          **Q.**    Okay.  And when he came back from the hospital, we  
15 know that that was in the summer, August of 2016, some five, six  
16 months before the tragedy, did you have an opportunity to spend  
17 any amount of time around Lionel after he returned from the  
18 hospital?

19          **A.**    I would have seen him once when he came to drop  
20 Aaliyah off for Mom to watch her for a bit because he wanted to  
21 go to the woods.  And when he came in and dropped her off, I  
22 said hello to him and he just stood there with like a blank

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 face. And I was like, Are you going to say hello? And then he  
2 just got defensive or mad and was like, I ain't got f---ing time  
3 for this and he stormed off and left. And that's when I looked  
4 at my grandmother and I was like, Did I say something wrong?  
5 And she just said, like, He's going through a lot.

6 **Q.** Okay. So that was an occasion then when you were home  
7 in Lincolnville?

8 **A.** Yeah. I would have stopped in for the weekend to  
9 visit.

10 **Q.** Yeah. And you were staying at your mom and your  
11 grandparents' home?

12 **A.** Yeah.

13 **Q.** Okay. And was that out of character for you that  
14 Lionel would respond to you that way, Kaitlyn, when you asked  
15 him how he was doing?

16 **A.** Yeah.

17 **Q.** Okay. And how was it out of character for you?

18 **A.** Because he would always say "hello" or I would be able  
19 to go give him a hug and ...

20 **Q.** Yeah.

21 **A.** ... I wasn't able to at all.

22 **Q.** All right. Kaitlyn, I'm going to ask you some

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 questions now. We talked about Lionel and I want to ask you  
2 some questions about your mom and let you have an opportunity to  
3 share with us, from your perspective, what your ... you know,  
4 your relationship with your mom and what your mom was like.

5       **A.** Well, I was like ... you might as well say a "leech"  
6 attached to her body because I was her baby. So she literally  
7 had to like try to sneak out the house because I always wanted  
8 her around me, like ... yeah. She was very bubbly. She always  
9 had this big energy, big heart. She made sure that everyone was  
10 okay, everyone was good. She was a very loveable person.

11       **Q.** Yeah.

12       **A.** And she helped anyone, even if she didn't know them.

13       **Q.** So your mother was a woman of faith, as I understand  
14 it.

15       **A.** Yeah.

16       **Q.** Yeah.

17       **A.** She always made sure that she went to church and also  
18 had time to go to bingo. She was not missing bingo. And then  
19 every other Friday, she would go down to the Port Hawkesbury  
20 dances with her alligator shoes, her and Grampy.

21       **Q.** Yeah. Sounds like ...

22       **A.** Yeah.

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **Q.**   ... she was a big part of the community, for sure. Is  
2 that fair?

3           **A.**   She was.

4           **Q.**   Yeah.

5           **A.**   She definitely was. Because any time my Nanny Elsie  
6 needed help, like she would go make sure Nanny Elsie was good.

7           **Q.**   Yeah. When you graduated from high school and moved  
8 to Halifax to start, you know, the next phase of your life,  
9 Kaitlyn, tell us about how you continued to keep in contact with  
10 your mom when you were in Halifax.

11   **(13:50)**

12           **A.**   I would call her or I would text her.

13           **Q.**   Yeah.

14           **A.**   Because if I ... if we don't call each other for New  
15 Year's, she would always text. She would just always say, Happy  
16 New Year's and ... yeah. I always kept in contact with her.

17           **Q.**   What was your mom's relationship like with Aaliyah?

18           **A.**   Well, once Aaliyah was born, I stepped back because  
19 that was her baby. That was her baby girl, her granddaughter,  
20 her first baby girl.

21           **Q.**   Yeah.

22           **A.**   And she did everything and anything for Aaliyah. And

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 she made sure the world knew it. If Aaliyah needed Nanny Bren,  
2 Nanny Bren was there.

3 Q. Okay. We understand that she spent a lot of ... your  
4 mother spent a lot of time with Aaliyah and Shanna. Do you ...

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. ... know why that was?

7 A. Well, Shanna was like another daughter and Mom had a  
8 big heart, so ... and Shanna did, too. So they were like very  
9 much similar people. They were ... yeah.

10 Q. Yeah. They were a support for each other?

11 A. They were. Yeah.

12 Q. And your mother's relationship with Lionel, Kaitlyn,  
13 how would you describe that?

14 A. Well, that's her only boy. And like she's always  
15 going to be there for anyone, but especially for her kids. She  
16 was there until the wheels fell off.

17 Q. Until the wheels fell off. And when Lionel returned  
18 from Afghanistan and the family was in New Brunswick and then  
19 moved back after Lionel's release from the military, did you  
20 have any understanding of how Lionel's personality changes  
21 impacted your mom?

22 A. I could tell like she had a lot of weight on her

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 shoulders but I didn't understand like because of certain things  
2 she would like keep to herself or she would always say like, God  
3 will deal with it, like ... so, yeah.

4 **Q.** Okay. Did your mom talk to you at all about Lionel  
5 trying to get help and her trying to help Lionel?

6 **A.** She did mention it. Yeah. Because I was always  
7 wondering why she was always down the road a lot more often.  
8 And she would always say like she's there for Aaliyah. But she  
9 also did say like, even when he came home, like, He's not the  
10 same, like, he needs help.

11 **Q.** Okay. And when you say "down the road", your mom  
12 would have left her home and be spending time with Lionel and  
13 Shanna?

14 **A.** Yeah. She would stay a few nights.

15 **Q.** Yeah.

16 **A.** Yeah. She would stay a few nights at Shanna's  
17 parents' ...

18 **Q.** Yeah.

19 **A.** ... house ...

20 **Q.** And you said ...

21 **A.** ... like the trailer there.

22 **Q.** And you said that your mom started spending more time

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 at Lionel and Shanna's down the road?

2 **A.** Mm-hmm.

3 **Q.** Do you know when that started to pick up in frequency  
4 when she started to spend more time?

5 **A.** Well, as long as she didn't have to be away for work,  
6 she would have her weekend bag and she would be there as much as  
7 she can.

8 **Q.** Yeah.

9 **A.** Because we all would be calling her to come back up  
10 the road. And it would be like a few hours and then she'd be  
11 back down.

12 **Q.** Yeah. And did you have an opportunity, Kaitlyn, to  
13 observe Shanna and how Lionel's personality/behaviour change had  
14 impacted Shanna?

15 **A.** Not so much, but I definitely could tell like she was  
16 his number one support when he came home. Like she knew more of  
17 what was going on.

18 **Q.** Yeah. Okay. All right. I want you to share with us  
19 now, Kaitlyn, your memories about your relationship with  
20 Aaliyah. We talked a little bit about it earlier, when Aaliyah  
21 was born and how that was a big day in your whole family as the  
22 first grandchild.

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **A.**    Yeah.

2           **Q.**    You were there for the next four years ... three to  
3 four years before you moved to Halifax. Tell us about the depth  
4 of your relationship with Aaliyah.

5           **A.**    Well, I would do my best to see her as much as I  
6 could. And I know there's like times where I would like ... if  
7 someone would be talking to either Shanna or Lionel, I would ask  
8 what Aaliyah is up to and see if she wanted to come hang out, or  
9 I would like take her to the playground in Lincolnville like I  
10 mostly do with all my nieces and nephews. But, yeah, she was  
11 definitely a bright little girl. Like she was wise for her age,  
12 that's for sure.

13          **Q.**    Yeah. Tell us about Aaliyah from your perspective,  
14 Kaitlyn. What was she like?

15          **A.**    She was so happy. Like ... I don't know. It's so  
16 hard to explain but like she was very caring. She had so much  
17 energy. Like she'd walk in a room it like lights up. She  
18 reminds me a lot of her father and definitely a lot of Shanna.  
19 Like she's a little mini Shanna, like ...

20          **Q.**    I think you told me at one point that she was very  
21 fashionable, Aaliyah. Do you ... is that fair?

22          **A.**    Yeah.

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **Q.**    Yeah.

2           **A.**    She always would have high heels on or lipstick like

3   ... Yeah.

4           **Q.**    And what did you understand that Aaliyah wanted to do  
5 when she grew up?

6           **A.**    She wanted to be a veterinarian.

7           **Q.**    And did she have any of her own pets?

8           **A.**    Yeah. She had a cat and a dog.

9           **Q.**    Okay. What was Aaliyah's relationship like with her  
10 father? What kinds of things did they do together, Kaitlyn?

11          **A.**    I know he took her like horseback riding. She was  
12 never like usually far away. She always was in the backseat of  
13 the Jeep. Either Shanna was driving or Lionel was driving.

14          **Q.**    I'm going to move forward now, Kaitlyn, to ask you ...  
15 you shared with us that you didn't understand what Lionel's  
16 diagnosis was of PTSD until after the tragedy. But you knew ...

17          **A.**    Yeah.

18          **Q.**    ... before then that something was wrong. That's  
19 certainly the indication you had from your family members. You  
20 weren't there all the time.

21          **A.**    Yeah.

22          **Q.**    Did you receive, yourself, any supports or resources

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 from DND or Veterans Affairs to help you as a family member?

2 **A.** After the incident, they helped with therapy ...

3 **Q.** Okay.

4 **A.** ... like going to see a therapist and talk to a  
5 therapist, which I continue to do today.

6 **Q.** Okay. Before the incident, though, when Lionel was  
7 still alive and before the tragedy, did you ... were you aware  
8 of any resources that were available to you as a family member  
9 to help support Lionel on his return home?

10 **A.** No. I wish. I wish.

11 **Q.** Yeah.

12 **A.** But, no.

13 **Q.** Yeah. And with the benefit of hindsight, now we are  
14 four years later, lots of time to reflect, do you have any  
15 recommendations, Kaitlyn, as to what might be helpful for other  
16 family members who find themselves in the same position as your  
17 family did, when a loved one returns home with a mental health  
18 diagnosis, into the civilian world?

19 **A.** There needs to be help right away. Like not wait two  
20 days later; four, five, six weeks. Like help them that day.  
21 Like you take them right away so I feel like they deserve that  
22 help.

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1           **Q.**    Okay.  One of the things I recall you sharing with me  
2  is you had the opportunity to a certain type of a course.  Do  
3  you want to tell us about a course that you took?

4           **A.**    In 2015, I actually took Mental Health First Aid.  So  
5  I actually ... it was mind opening for me to hear and see all  
6  the difference of like schizophrenia or bipolar disorders and  
7  all the many things that's out there that is not really much  
8  talked about.

9           **Q.**    Yeah.  And do you think that ... had you known at that  
10 point what Lionel's diagnosis was, which you said you didn't, if  
11 you had known his diagnosis at that point, would that Mental  
12 Health First Aid course have been helpful for you?

13          **A.**    It would have been because I would have tried to help  
14 him ...

15          **Q.**    Yeah.

16          **A.**    ... as much as possible.

17          **Q.**    Okay.  Can you share with us, Kaitlyn, how you found  
18 out about the events of January the 3rd?

19          **A.**    Well, that day, I went to work at Northwood but I had  
20 to leave to go to my driver's test.  And then I went back to  
21 Northwood after passing my driver's test, because they didn't  
22 have anyone to finish a shift so I went there and finished the

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 shift. And I don't usually get service down in the laundry  
2 room, so I went upstairs and I actually went to the Lawtons  
3 there to grab a can of pop, which is my grandfather's favourite,  
4 can of orange pop.

5 **(14:00)**

6 And my phone rings and it's my cousin, Deidrea, and I'm  
7 trying to get my headphones in my ear and she's like not ...  
8 like I can't even make her out. So I'm like, One second, one  
9 second. So I untangle my headphones and I say, Hello. And  
10 she's like, Kaitlyn, Kaitlyn, but she's like choking. And I'm  
11 like, Deidrea, I can't understand you. What's wrong? What's  
12 wrong? And she's like, Lionel. I'm like, What about Lionel?  
13 And she's like, Aunt Brenda. I said, What about my mom? She's  
14 like, Aaliyah, Shanna.

15 I'm like, Deidrea, what's wrong? She's like, They're gone.  
16 I said, Gone where? She's like, They're gone, Kaitlyn. They're  
17 dead. I said, No, they're not. You're lying. And then I just  
18 remember getting hysterical, like choking. I don't know if I  
19 was like screaming or whatever or ... I just know I was bawling.  
20 And then I remember Old Higgy, and her walker, she walks by and  
21 she's just like, There's someone crying down there. And then my  
22 supervisor, he drove me home. And he asked if I needed anyone

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 to come up and I said, No, I'm fine.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And I just remember just driving to Lincolnville that  
4 night and it was the longest drive of my life.

5 Q. Yeah. Had you had an opportunity that day to connect  
6 with your mom, Kaitlyn?

7 A. Yeah. Because she knew I was going to get ... going  
8 for my driver's test. And she's like, You're good. You got  
9 this. And when I actually passed, I said to the driver  
10 instructor, I was like, I should call my mom and tell her that I  
11 got my driver's test. And he's like, No, just drive down and  
12 surprise her. I'm like, Yeah, you're right. I should. But ...  
13 I really wish I called her.

14 Q. Yeah. And when would be the last time you talked to  
15 your mom before that day?

16 A. She would have messaged me and said Happy New Year.  
17 And then I would have called her for Christmas, because I had to  
18 work so, unfortunately, I didn't make it home for Christmas.  
19 But I did get to see her when I went home for like ... I'm  
20 pretty sure it was like Thanksgiving.

21 Q. And what do you remember about that call with your  
22 mom, if she was at Shanna's house and was Lionel there? Do you

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 remember anything about that?

2       **A.** When I did call her, yeah, she was at Shanna's and I  
3 was just talking with her. And it was weird because she thought  
4 I asked where Lionel was but I didn't ask that. And she was  
5 like, Oh, he's downstairs. I said, Oh, what's he doing? And  
6 she's like, Oh, he's just walking back and forth, pacing. And I  
7 was like, Why is he doing that? Because I never heard of him  
8 doing that. And she's just like, Oh, he does that. I'm like,  
9 Okay. And I just told like her, Well, tell him that I love him.  
10 And she's like, I will. And I talked to Aaliyah for a little  
11 bit on the phone but it was just like a quick call.

12       **Q.** Okay. And that was the first time you heard about  
13 your brother pacing back and forth?

14       **A.** Yes.

15       **Q.** Okay. Kaitlyn, my final question for you. This ...  
16 we understand this has been devastating for your whole family  
17 and you, as well. Why is this Inquiry important for you,  
18 Kaitlyn?

19       **A.** Because I don't want another person or family go  
20 through what we're going through.

21       **Q.** Yeah. Okay.

22       **A.** And stuff like this needs to be talked about because

**KAITLYN DESMOND, Direct Examination**

1 there's so many people that are suffering and it's not okay.

2 **Q.** Thank you, Kaitlyn. Really appreciate that. There  
3 may be others in the room that have some questions for you, so  
4 don't hang up on us yet. Okay?

5 **A.** Okay.

6 **THE COURT:** Kaitlyn, I'm just going to ask the other  
7 lawyers in the room if they have any questions for you. All  
8 right? So I'm just going to do a bit of a roll call.

9 **MS. WARD:** No, Your Honour.

10 **THE COURT:** Ms. Ward? Mr. Anderson?

11 **MR. ANDERSON:** No questions, Your Honour.

12 **THE COURT:** Mr. Macdonald?

13 **MR. MACDONALD:** No questions, Your Honour.

14 **THE COURT:** Mr. Rodgers?

15 **MR. RODGERS:** No questions. No, Your Honour.

16 **THE COURT:** Thank you. Mr. Evans ... or Mr. MacKenzie?

17 Sorry.

18 **MR. MACKENZIE:** No questions, Your Honour.

19 **THE COURT:** Thank you. Mr. Murray?

20 **MR. MURRAY:** No questions, Your Honour.

21 **THE COURT:** All right. Thank you. There are no other  
22 questions for you, Kaitlyn, and I don't have any direct

**DISCUSSION**

1 questions for you either. I know it's not an easy ... to come  
2 before us and to answers questions and have to kind of relive  
3 some of the circumstances. But, as you said, you recognize how  
4 important for ... it is for us and perhaps for others to  
5 understand what happened and see if, at the end of the day,  
6 there are not some recommendations that can be made to prevent  
7 other tragedies occurring. So thank you very much for your time  
8 and your courage. Appreciate it.

9 **MS. DESMOND:** Thank you.

10 **THE COURT:** Thank you.

11 **WITNESS WITHDREW (14:05 hrs.)**

12 **THE COURT:** Mr. Rodgers or Ms. Miller?

13 **MS. MILLER:** Your Honour, that's the end of the witnesses  
14 to be called on behalf of Chantel Desmond, the personal  
15 representative for Brenda Desmond and ...

16 **THE COURT:** All right.

17 **MS. MILLER:** ... Aaliyah.

18 **THE COURT:** Thank you. Mr. Rodgers, were we going to  
19 deal with one of your witnesses this afternoon, as well?

20 **MR. RODGERS:** No, Your Honour. That witness is not  
21 available for this afternoon. I'll have to coordinate with  
22 Inquiry counsel as to a time when that might materialize.

1        **THE COURT:**        That was going to be Mr. Greencorn was it?

2        **MR. RODGERS:**        Yes.

3        **THE COURT:**        Do we have anybody else scheduled for today?

4        That would be it for the day then, I guess.

5        Tomorrow, we have a schedule that is fairly tight, but I  
6        think we have most of, if not all of the day available to us.

7        All right. Thank you then. We'll adjourn for the  
8        afternoon. We'll see you tomorrow morning, 9:30. Thank you.

9

10      **COURT CLOSED      (14:07 HRS)**

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**CERTIFICATE OF COURT TRANSCRIBER**

I, Margaret Livingstone, Court Transcriber, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript of the evidence given in this matter, **re Desmond Fatality Inquiry**, taken by way of electronic digital recording.



Margaret Livingstone

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**DARTMOUTH, NOVA SCOTIA**

**February 25, 2021**