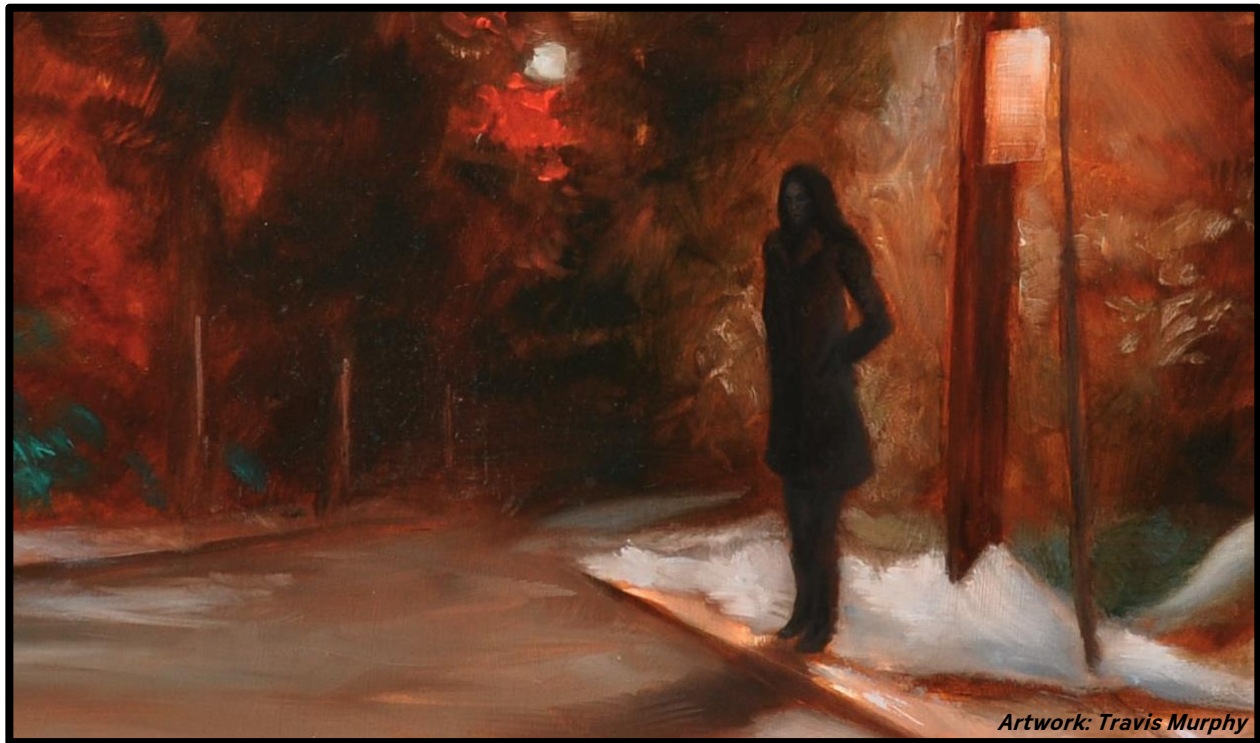




in association with

THE HOURS THAT REMAIN

By Keith Barker



Study Guide

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The Play

THE HOURS THAT REMAIN

The Hours That Remain is a fictional play inspired by true stories of missing and murdered Canadian Aboriginal women – particularly from the “Highway of Tears.” The “Highway of Tears” refers to the 800km section of Highway 16 between Prince George and Prince Rupert, British Columbia, Canada. The “Highway of Tears” received its name due to the high number of unsolved murders and disappearances of young women along the highway since 1969. Many of these women are Aboriginal.

The play involves three main characters: Michelle, Denise and Daniel. Michelle and Denise are sisters; and Denise and Daniel are a married couple who live together. This is a three-person play, but the female actor who plays Michelle also brings many characters to life, including missing women from various walks of life.

In the beginning of the play, the loving and familial relationships between the three main characters are clearly showcased. Michelle is a humorous, charismatic, and somewhat tomboyish little sister. She works at a local diner and drives an old beater car. Denise is an attractive, witty woman who has a comfortable home and a good man who loves her deeply.

One evening as Michelle drives home, her car breaks down along the highway and so she catches a ride with a transport truck driver. That night she goes missing.

For years after Michelle’s disappearance Denise desperately seeks answers to her sister’s whereabouts. She begins experiencing dreams and visions of Michelle which skew her reality. This affects Denise and Daniel’s relationship and leads Daniel to question his wife’s sanity.

After a series of events, we discover at the end of the play that Daniel also is holding a secret.

The Theatre Companies



Yukon theatre artists Patti Flather and Leonard Linklater co-founded Gwaandak Theatre in Whitehorse in 1999. Our company name, “gwaandak,” is from a Gwich’in Aboriginal word, which can mean “storyteller” and “telling a story”.

Gwaandak Theatre is a professional not-for-profit theatre company. We develop, produce and tour plays to empower Aboriginal, Northern and diverse voices, engaging in meaningful dialogue and feeding both spirit and soul of our community. Our programming includes new play development, readings, premieres, productions and tours.



New Harlem Productions is a Toronto-based company telling new stories/true stories/good stories that impact our communities. Past productions include the Dora award-winning *Gas Girls* in Toronto, *The Hours That Remain* with Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company (a Saskatoon theatre awards winner), *Job's Wife* and *A Song For Tomorrow* with Eventual Ashes. The company's development work has been presented at festivals such as Summerworks (Toronto, ON), Springworks (Stratford, ON), Bayimba International Arts Festival (Kampala, Uganda), Kendu Hearth (Kampala, Uganda) and Mad Pride (Toronto, ON).

New Harlem’s Artistic Director DM St. Bernard is an emcee, playwright and arts administrator. Her works for the stage include *A Man A Fish*, *Salome's Clothes*, *Cake* and *Gas Girls*. She also is playwright in residence at the National Arts Centre and a vocalist with folk/funk/hip hop trio ergo sum.

Developing a New Play for the Stage

Developing a new play with a playwright or group of creators may take several years.

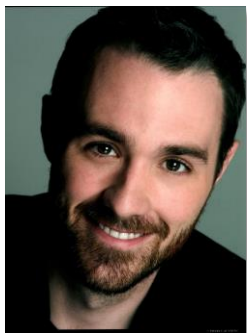
New play development usually includes the following:

- research
- writing and revising several drafts of a script
- discussions with a dramaturg, who is a kind of experienced editor, guide and consultant helping the playwright to achieve his or her vision
- one or more readings or longer workshops with actors and a dramaturg and/or director
- fine-tuning the script during two-to-four weeks of rehearsals leading up to the premiere production
- revisions after the first production



Public Reading of *The Hours That Remain* with Gwaandak Theatre in Whitehorse, 2012 (Bruce Barrett Photo).

Playwright's Notes: Keith Barker



There are no words to express the emotions one must endure when faced with the loss of a loved one. Unfortunately, every person must go through this difficult process at some point in a lifetime. I have lost someone dear to me, as have you, most likely. And if you haven't, I am sorry to say this, but you will. It is the cycle of life. And so it goes.

Grief is even more difficult to overcome when a loved one goes missing. Families and friends are left with an array of paralyzing emotions - the unending questions, guilt, anger, grief, and the open wound of not having any answers.

Firstly, *The Hours That Remain* was written to honour such incomprehensible loss and suffering. But it was also written out of my frustration at the lack of response by our governments to the staggering statistics and painful truths surrounding the Highway of Tears. But mostly it was written because I believe it is a conversation every Canadian needs to be a part of. In its essence it is a story about love: about the sacrifices we would make and the trials we would endure to find someone we love who disappeared from our lives.

Director's Notes: David Storch



Keith Barker is a gentle man with a big heart. He was overwhelmed, he told me, by the realities of the Highway of Tears. His response, *The Hours That Remain*, is personal and powerful. It's not an "issue play": it doesn't set out to document the tragedy of the missing women epidemic, or to prescribe a solution. Instead it speaks to the heart, from the heart, about individual loss. The subtle power of his play is in the way it allows loss to echo loss, grief to ripple out over grief, single people becoming part of the greater awful story, until we're all suddenly confronting the loss, and talking with each other about what it means.

Actor's Notes: Melaina Sheldon



Why you were drawn to be a part of this play?

When I first became involved with theatre I quickly recognized its ability to transcend boundaries. Within the medium of playwriting things that are thought but usually go unsaid are given voice, and a light can be shone on shadowed issues that society would rather ignore. When a story is put on paper, it is given voice; when a story is acted out via characters, it is *felt*; and that is what drew me to this play.

I think for too long the reality of missing and murdered women in Canada has gone unrecognized and that this reoccurring tragedy has become normalized to a point of being dismissible. As an actor in this production I have the chance to be a conduit for getting people to engage with the issue. As a character I have the opportunity to help bring this message home and that message is that the lives and murders of these women are not just stories. This is an ongoing reality that needs to change and it will only change with the more people who are aware.

What is the creative process behind preparing yourself for such a role?

In preparing for these roles I envision the characters and really *see* them and associate them to some aspect of myself. I imagine how they walk, who they are to the people around them, who their friends are, how they talk, what drives them, so that they become realistic to the point that I could almost reach out and touch them. Then when I am on stage as the character, I can completely forget about myself and let these personas work through me.

This play is very heavy and it is not easy to go to such dark emotional places and come back from them, but I always keep in mind the greater importance of bringing awareness to the audience. I keep in mind that I am portraying a true story about real women; someone's sister, mother, auntie or friend and in doing so I am a part of ensuring that their lives do not go unnoticed, and that I may be a part of instigating the change necessary so that this does not continue to happen.

Theatre 101

I want to be on the stage!

Maybe you want to be on the stage. Or maybe you want to be the one bossing the actors around. Or maybe you just love those funky lights.

There's lots of ways to get involved in theatre. Contact a community or professional theatre in your region and let them know you would like to pitch in.

If you want to study theatre and learn more, a drama class or production at your school is a great place to start. Look for drama and theatre workshops offered after school or on weekends in your region too.

If there's no theatre company or drama class in your area, why not start your own? Put on a play with your friends. Talk to your teachers.

If you're about to graduate, there are many college and university programs across Canada for all aspects of theatre - writing, directing, acting, stage managing, and design.

Respect!

Putting on a play is hard work. It takes a lot of guts to get up on the stage. So make sure you show respect.

You can help make the play more enjoyable for everyone by following a few simple rules:

- Only get up, move around, or talk before or after the play
- Turn your cell phone and other electronics off
- Clap loud at the end if you liked the play

A Brief History of Aboriginal Peoples and Policy in Canada

Learning about the history of Aboriginal peoples will help you to know more about why Aboriginal women go missing and are murdered at a much higher rate in Canada.

It's complicated, but there are many reasons why Aboriginal women end up more often in these terrible situations. Some immediate reasons are: homelessness, alcohol and drug addictions, abuse, violence, and poverty. Perhaps by understanding this you will feel compassion and empathy for these marginalized people and their families.

Why might Aboriginal women be more affected by some of these problems? There are deeper causes too, some going back hundreds of years.

Before Europeans first came to Canada, groups of Indigenous people understood and organized themselves as independent societies – each with their own languages, customs and laws. These different Nations existed right across Canada. It wasn't until Europeans arrived that these distinct Indigenous peoples began to be known collectively as “Indian” or later “Aboriginal.”

There is a long and detailed history between Aboriginal peoples and the Canadian government. We'll touch briefly on just a few major sections in the Indian Act that still contribute to the high numbers of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada.

These factors include: Indian Residential Schools and the gender discrimination in the Indian Act.



Around 1903 – First students and teacher at Carcross Anglican Mission School, Carcross, Yukon (Yukon Archives, Anglican Church, Diocese of Yukon fonds, 86/61, #587)

The Indian Act

The Parliament of Canada started to pass laws about “Indian affairs” in 1857. In 1876, these laws were combined and expanded into the first Indian Act. It is a Canadian law relating to Indian Status, Bands, and Reserves which has controlled many parts of the lives of Aboriginal people.

The Indian Act is handled by a department of the Canadian government often known as “Indian Affairs” in the past and now called Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. The Act legalized discriminatory practices. Here are a few examples:

- It allowed creation of “reserves” or small settlements
- The Canadian government decided who had Indian Status and who did not. Aboriginal people did not have the right to define this for themselves
- Aboriginal people could not vote or own land until 1960 (unless they gave up their right to Indian Status).
- Cultural practices like potlatches were banned from 1885-1951. If caught, Aboriginal people would be arrested, jailed, and fined
- When more Aboriginal political groups started to pursue land claims, the government changed the Indian Act to bar Aboriginal people from hiring lawyers. For many years almost any gathering of Aboriginal people was prohibited.

Resistance

Aboriginal people all over Canada did many things to preserve their land, culture and identity. During the Klondike Gold Rush in Dawson City, Chief Isaac was the leader of the Hän people. Chief Isaac sent his people’s songs and dances to the Eagle people in Alaska for safekeeping. The Eagle people brought them back. Now, the Hän people are relearning these songs and dances.

Aboriginal groups like the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia went underground to keep fighting for their rights.

Land Claims and Self Government: The Yukon Example

The Council of Yukon First Nations talks about the history of land claims in the Yukon on its website (www.cyfn.ca). Many people think that Yukon Land Claims started in 1973. That's when Elijah Smith and a group of Yukon Chiefs went to Ottawa to meet with Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. They took their determination, courage and the historic document, Together Today For Our Children Tomorrow. They convinced the government to start negotiating land claims with them.

However, Yukon Aboriginal people called for land claims as early as 1901 and 1902. Back then Chief Jim Boss of the present-day Ta'an Kwach'an people wrote letters to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs in Ottawa and to the Commissioner of the Yukon. Jim Boss wrote about concerns his people had. These included being pushed off of their own lands, not being able to harvest their foods, and needing a say in their own lives.

First Nation Final Agreements have been reached with 11 of the 14 Yukon First Nations to date. These are: The First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun in Mayo, the Champagne & Aishihik First Nations in Haines Junction, the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation in Old Crow, the Teslin Tlingit Council in Teslin, the Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation in Carmacks, the Selkirk First Nation in Pelly Crossing, the Kluane First Nation in Burwash Landing, the Ta'an Kwach'an Council in Whitehorse, the Tr'ondek Hw'echin First Nation in Dawson City, the Kwanlin Dun First Nation in Whitehorse and the Carcross Tagish First Nation in Carcross. The remaining Yukon First Nations are still in negotiations.

The First Nation Final Agreements are legal agreements between the government of Canada, the government of the Yukon and each First Nation. They are protected under the Canadian Constitution. They cannot be changed unless all three parties agree. They are often called 'modern-day treaties.'

The Council of Yukon First Nations website is a good place to learn more about these important agreements.

Think and Talk

Imagine a group of malnourished, homeless people began living on your property. You and your family took pity on them, gave them food and taught them how to use the land around to survive. You and your family really liked some of these new people, but there were a few that you found to be very messy and bossy towards you and your family. They began rearranging your front and backyards. They tore up your gardens and cut down your trees.

Eventually, this group of people came right into your house and told you that they will now be living there and that they will be the boss of the house. They set up a long list of rules that you and your family had to follow. You and your family objected, but some of the people from the group were big and mean and if you said no to them they surely would cause a lot of trouble for you and your family.

They took over the best parts of the house and told you and your family that you now have to live in the small unfurnished basement, with no heat, no kitchen, no windows and no running water. And when you and your family wanted to leave the basement you all had to carry a special card that notified the new group of people who you are and that you come from the basement.

Discussion

- How would you feel if a group of people just took over your house and pushed around your family?
- How would you react?
- Over time what do you think would happen to your family and to the group of people who took over your home?
- What do you think would happen to your property?

You and your family continued living in the basement for years. Your parents even had a few more kids. And the new people also had more children. For those young babies, that house is the only home they know. You and your family are sick and tired of living in the basement and would like to move back upstairs. But the new people now think that they own the house and they don't want to move.

Activity

Think of ways in which you can share the house and the property outside EQUALLY and FAIRLY. How do you do this?

Indian Residential Schools



Students in front of Chooutla Residential School, around 1935
(Yukon Archives, Anglican Church, Diocese of Yukon fonds, 86/61, #635)

Under the Indian Act, the Canadian government set up Indian Residential Schools in the late 1800s. Most were run together with Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian or United churches. The main goal was to end the Indigenous ways of living and thinking. These schools aimed to assimilate Aboriginal peoples into 'White' Canadian culture, religion and values.

The schools operated in Canada for over 100 years. Over 150,000 Aboriginal children attended the 132 schools located across the country (including within the Yukon). The last of these schools closed in 1996.

Aboriginal children had to attend Indian Residential Schools. It was the law. Many parents who refused to let their children go were charged and thrown in jail. Many schools were very far from the children's homes. Lots of kids did not see their families

for months or even years. Some never came home, because they died there or lost their family connection.

Within the Indian Residential Schools, children were:

- Isolated from their family and community;
- Not allowed to speak their language (they were forced to learn to speak English and/or French);
- Not allowed to practice parts of their culture (including their own ways of life, spiritual practices and/or beliefs);
- Some were subjected to unethical scientific and medical experiments;
- Many were severely neglected (inadequately housed, fed, clothed, nurtured and loved);
- Many also suffered physical, emotional, sexual, and verbal abuse.



Group of boys dressed like Hollywood Indians performing skit in Chooutla Residential School gymnasium, Carcross, Yukon, 1964. (Yukon Archives, Anglican Church, Diocese of Yukon fonds, 86/61, #675).

In 2008, the Government of Canada made a public apology to students who attended these schools, their families and communities. This apology recognized that the Indian Residential Schools and assimilation policies were wrong and caused great harm. The apology also recognized that the legacy from these schools contributes to social problems that continue in many communities today.



Inside a classroom, Chooutla Residential School, Carcross, Yukon (Yukon Archives, Anglican Church, Diocese of Yukon fonds, 86/61, #637)

Think and Talk

Discussion

- What are some attitudes that led the Canadian government and some churches to set up and run these residential schools?
- How might people working in residential schools have felt about their jobs at the time?
- How might people nowadays feel about working in that kind of a place? How have our attitudes changed, and how have they stayed the same?
- What might it have been like to attend residential school?
- Many children were forced to attend residential school but some families sent their children willingly. What kinds of things might they have thought about in making this decision?

- What are some pro's and con's about saying you're sorry – as a government or a large organization - for something hurtful that happened in the past?
- What are other ways to make up for harm that happened to an entire group of people?
- Describe some ways right now that all Canadians might try to come to terms with this history. Then think about some ways they might avoid it and why.
- What are some ways that young people could contribute to this ongoing discussion?



Small girl in dormitory, Chooutla Residential School 1960s (Yukon Archives, Anglican Church, Diocese of Yukon fonds, 86/61, #701)



Girls' choir with teacher Miss Worrall and Reverend C. Stanger, around 1955, Chooutla Residential School, Carcross, Yukon. (Yukon Archives, Anglican Church, Diocese of Yukon fonds, 86/61, #665).

Bill C-31

The Indian Act treated Aboriginal men and women differently. There was a very clear gender bias against Aboriginal women.

In 1921, some Canadian women won the right to vote in federal elections, but most women of colour (including women of Chinese, Japanese and South Asian ancestry) couldn't vote until the late 1940s. Aboriginal women couldn't vote for their band councils until 1951, and could not vote federally until 1960 (which is when all Aboriginal people gained the right to vote).

Until the Indian Act was changed in 1985, it discriminated against Aboriginal women in many ways. Their Indian status legally was based only on the status of their husband. This led women to become isolated and separated from their communities.

For example, if an Aboriginal woman married a non-Aboriginal man (or an Aboriginal man who did not have Indian Status), she and her kids would lose their status. Even if her husband died or they got divorced, she and her children would not get their Indian Status back. The law said that a status Indian woman who married a non-Indian man would cease to be an Indian!

Also, if an Aboriginal woman married an Aboriginal man from another Indian band, she lost membership in her own community and became a member of her husband's band. If they broke up or he died, she would again lose all status completely.

For Aboriginal women losing Indian status meant losing:

- treaty benefits;
- health benefits;
- the right to live on her reserve;
- the right to inherit her family property; and
- the right to be buried on the reserve with her family/ancestors

On the other hand, if an Aboriginal man with Indian status married a woman who was non-Aboriginal or who did not have status, he and his children not only kept their

Indian status but his wife would actually gain status – the legislation actually made it so that non-Aboriginal women became Aboriginal when they married an Aboriginal man!



Leaders of Yukon Indian Women's Association (Jean Gleason, Mary Jane Jim, Adeline Webber, Judy Gingell) featured in Yukon Indian News article, 1976.

For many years, Aboriginal women and their allies have fought tirelessly against the discriminatory policies within the Indian Act. Some of those trailblazers include Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, Yvonne Bedard and Sandra Lovelace in the early 1970s.

Lovelace took her case to the Supreme Court of Canada. It upheld the Indian Act, so Lovelace took her fight all the way to the United Nations Human Rights Committee. In 1981, that UN committee sided with Aboriginal

women and found Canada in the wrong.

Also in 1982 Canada's constitution was amended and the Canadian Charter of Rights of Freedoms added. Section 15 states in part that:

"Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability."

In 1985 Parliament passed Bill C-31 which finally removed much of the discrimination against Aboriginal women contained in the Act. Many people regained

their status while others - who only had status through marriage - lost status. Bill C-31 also gave Indian bands increasing control over their own affairs.

By bringing the Indian Act into accord with the equality provisions of the *Charter*, Bill C-31 helped to enable Aboriginal people in taking an important step toward self-government.

However, many people consider the revised Act as unconstitutional. That's because many Aboriginal people who regained their status can only pass it on for one generation, to their children. Sharon McIvor is an Aboriginal woman who has challenged this latest discrimination in the courts.

Think and talk

- What do you think about the Canadian government deciding who is an Indian (Aboriginal) and who is not? Think about some reasons why this might be a good idea, and why it might not be.
- Who do you think should have the right to decide who is Aboriginal?
- Why do you think the Canadian government treated Aboriginal men and women differently under the law?
- What are some other examples in our laws where women and men have been treated differently? Why might these have been introduced?
- What are some ways our attitudes towards these kinds of laws are changing? Why might that be happening?
- What might happen if the government decided to issue "race cards" to people of every background in the country? How might they actually organize and carry out such a program?
- How do all of us in the room define ourselves? How might the government label us?

Making Connections – Past to Present

So, how does this all relate to missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada?

Well, it is important to know the history of Aboriginal peoples – including something about the Indian Act, the Indian Residential Schools policy, and gender discrimination experienced by Aboriginal women. That's because these pieces of history are directly linked to issues and challenges Aboriginal people face today.

Canada's history of racial and gender discrimination and cultural oppression has significantly contributed to social and cultural inequalities and poverty experienced by many Aboriginal people and communities. This history has forced many to the margins of Canadian society for over a century.

Many Residential Schools did not prepare Aboriginal children for higher education or good jobs in Canadian society. People who chose and were able to live in their home communities struggled because they had lost much of their language, culture, skills and connections to family and community. Many became lost, feeling they didn't belong anywhere.

Some former students say they enjoyed at least part of their time at Residential School. However, most report experiencing great trauma and abuse which has haunted them for much of their lives. Many former students call themselves "survivors." It's important to recognize that each person has a unique story and experience.

For many Aboriginal women, losing Indian Status made their lives even tougher. The forced relocation of Aboriginal women and their children off their reserves and into towns and cities meant even more loss of connection with families, communities, traditional land, culture, language; and thus, aspects of their identity.

The so-called '60's Scoop' was another tragic example of the treatment of Aboriginal children. In the 1960's, many Aboriginal children were taken from their families and communities and put into the child welfare system - usually without their parents'

permission. Many children grew up in numerous foster homes, or were adopted into non-Aboriginal families where they lost connection to their ancestry, traditions, culture and language.

In most urban areas Aboriginal women were and continue to be minorities and many still face discrimination.

Missing & Murdered Aboriginal Women & Girls

The issues of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and the high rates of violence against Aboriginal women in Canada were brought to the forefront as an issue by Amnesty International in a 2004 report called “Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women in Canada.” (Amnesty International is a global movement of more than 3 million supporters, members and activists who campaign to end grave abuses of human rights).

When that report came out, more Canadians, especially politicians, began paying attention to the issue. In 2009, Amnesty International released a follow up report called “No More Stolen Sisters.”

In 2005, a Special Committee of the Senate granted \$5 million dollars over a 5-year period to the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) to research issues identified in the 2004 Amnesty International report – thus was born the National *Sisters in Spirit* project.

Sisters in Spirit – A 5-Year National Project

From 2005-2010, the Native Women’s Association of Canada researched cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women. They published their findings in two reports: “Voices of Our Sisters In Spirit: A Report to Families and Communities” in 2009 and “What Their Stories Tell Us: Research Findings from the Sisters in Spirit Initiative” in 2010.

These reports bring together lots of evidence and statistics about all of these women. They talk about root causes and ways to move forward. The reports also put a human face on this issue by highlighting stories and experiences shared by family members – heartbreaking life stories told by relatives who love and miss their daughters, sisters, mothers, and grandmothers.

The statistics below are based on the Native Women’s Association of Canada’s database for 582 cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls as of March 31st, 2010.

- 67% are murder cases;
- 20% are cases of missing persons;
- 9% are cases where the nature of the case is unknown;
- 4% are cases of death regarded as natural or accidental by police, (but family or community members may believe they are suspicious).

The number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada is disproportionately high.

- NWAC’s research shows that, between 2000 and 2008, Aboriginal women and girls represented approximately 10% of all female homicides in Canada. However, Aboriginal women make up only 3% of the female population.

Most cases involve young women.

- 55% are women between the age of 19 and 31;
- 17% are women 18 years of age or younger;
- 20% are women between the ages 32 and 44;
- 8% are women over the age of 45.

Most cases occurred in Western Canada (54%), with:

- 28% of all cases being from British Columbia;
- 16% from Alberta;
- 29% from Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec (combined);
- 6% from the northern Territories (combined);
- 2% from Atlantic provinces (combined).

There are higher rates of violence against Aboriginal and other women and girls in the North.

- About 6% of the cases recorded in NWAC's database happened in the Territories (combined), but the total population is 0.3% (0.1% per territory) of Canada's total population. That makes the rate for missing and murdered Aboriginal women in the North disproportionately high;
- Rates of violence against women and girls of all backgrounds is much higher in the three Territories, according to a 2013 Statistics Canada report;
- The report found rates of violence (reported to police) against women was 13 times higher than the national average in Nunavut, 11 times higher in the Northwest Territories and four times higher in the Yukon in 2011.

Most Cases Occurred in Urban Areas.

- 70% of women and girls disappeared from an urban area and 60% were murdered in an urban area.

Aboriginal women are almost three times more likely to be killed by a stranger than non-Aboriginal women are:

Of the murder cases in NWAC's database where someone has been charged:

- 16.5% of offenders are strangers with no prior connection to the woman or girl (in contrast, Statistics Canada reports that between 1997 and 2004, only 6% of murdered non-Aboriginal women were killed by strangers)

Many of the women were mothers.

- Of the cases where this information is known, **88%** of missing and murdered women and girls **left behind children and grandchildren.**

Nearly half of murder cases in NWAC's database remain unsolved.

- Only 53% of murder cases involving Aboriginal women and girls have led to charges of homicide. This is a lot less than in murder cases overall. Statistics Canada found the national clearance rate for all homicides in Canada (cases which led to criminal charges) was 84% in 2005

Misconceptions about these women

Many Canadians believe all the missing and murdered Aboriginal women were or are prostitutes (offering sexual intercourse for money). This is not true. Most had nothing to do with the sex trade.

However, a few have been reported to earn their living in this way. It's important to have understanding and compassion. Many people who become prostitutes have suffered from trauma or abuse, including as children. Some don't have a lot of options for reasons like poverty, homelessness and addictions.

Prostitutes are very vulnerable and often experience high levels of violence. This makes them a marginalized group in need of more protection.

The situation right now

The Native Women's Association of Canada is calling for a national public inquiry into the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women for some time. Political leaders of the provinces and territories support this call, but the Canadian government does not.

New research in 2013 suggests the number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada is much higher. Graduate law student Maryann Pearce built a public database by cross-referencing news articles, police reports, court records and other sources. Her list has the names of 824 Aboriginal women. She found that 80 per cent of these women did not work in the sex trade.

Aboriginal women remain the most at-risk group in Canada for issues related to violence. They continue to experience complex issues linked to intergenerational impacts of colonization, particularly those resulting from residential schools and the child welfare system.

Think and talk

- What do all of these numbers and statistics mean to us?
- Do you think a national public inquiry into this issue will help to solve the problem and bring closure for families? Why or why not?
- What other ideas do you have to help us all to tackle this problem in our society?

Grassroots Efforts – The Yukon Sisters in Spirit Project



These Grandmother Moon carvings at Kwanlin Dün Culture Centre in Whitehorse, Yukon represent known cases of missing and murdered Yukon Aboriginal women. Original design: Dick Baker, Kwakwaka'wakw/Squamish Nations. Replicas: Joel good, Snuneymuxw Nation.

As a result of the findings of the national SIS project, and recommendations made by Aboriginal women at the 2007 Yukon Aboriginal Women's Summits, the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council (YAWC) began the Yukon Sisters in Spirit project in 2010.

Both NWAC and YAWC believe that there are many more unidentified cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women across Canada and in Yukon that need specific attention.

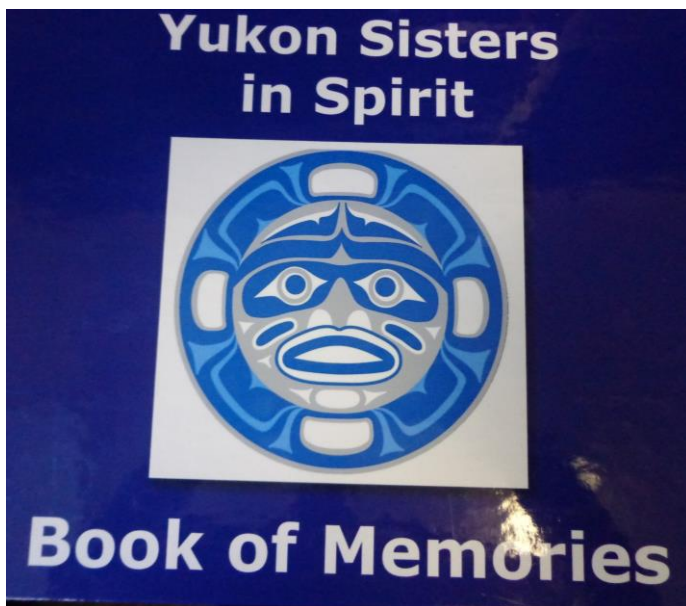
In 2010, YAWC created a Yukon Sisters in Spirit Initiative. This is linked closely with the national initiative. It's designed to include the voices of missing and murdered

Aboriginal women's families and communities. It also aims to develop and support relationships based on trust, respect and reciprocity. This project ran from 2010-2013 and worked to include families of these women in all parts of the project.

In 2012, this Yukon project focused on healing for the families of missing and murdered Yukon Aboriginal women, and hosted a family gathering at Brook's Brook in the southern Yukon. The YAWC and the YSSI also created project scrapbook to honour the lives, families and communities of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Yukon.

Ending violence against Aboriginal women and girls lies with both men and women and with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. It ends with education, recognition, responsibility and cooperation.

If you have any information regarding missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Yukon or would like more information regarding the Yukon Sisters in Spirit project please contact the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council (867) 667-6162 or by email admin@yawc.ca



Yukon Sisters in Spirit Book of Memories

Your Body Your Choice – Sexual Assault Prevention for Youth

The Government of Yukon Women`s Directorate is one excellent place to find lots of resources online about advancing women`s equality, and bringing both women and men into the discussion.

They have a section dedicated to Aboriginal women at:

http://www.womensdirectorate.gov.yk.ca/aboriginal_women.html

They also have many free easy-to-read booklets for youth (and teachers) including the Your Body Your Choice Sexual Assault Prevention series which promote staying safe and healthy. These pamphlets help us to talk about and challenge parts of our culture which condone and encourage violence against women and girls. Some of the most widely used booklets are *Having a Healthy Respectful Relationship*, *Preventing Sexual Assault* and *Just for Guys*. These are all available at:

<http://www.womensdirectorate.gov.yk.ca/ybyc.html>

While Aboriginal women and girls are more often victims of violent crimes by strangers than non-Aboriginal women, the majority of all women and girls in our society are assaulted by someone they know - such as a family member, friend, acquaintance, partner, spouse or babysitter.

The vast majority of perpetrators of these assaults are men. However, men and boys can be victims of violence too and, in a small minority of cases, women also are the aggressor.

From *Your Body Your Choice: Preventing Sexual Assault* Booklet

Check Your Attitude

Do you think you are abusive? Do you think that a person should:

- Control their partner
- Control their partner`s activities
- Choose their partner`s friends

- Control where they go, who they see and claim it is for their protection
- Threaten to hit them, their children, friends, or pets
- Have thrown or deliberately broken things
- Have ever hit them, no matter how sorry you are afterwards

You may be becoming or may already be abusive if you:

- Get jealous of anyone who gets close to your girlfriend/boyfriend
- Criticize what they wear or do
- Sulk silently when you are upset
- Scare them by driving fast or doing other reckless things
- Have an explosive temper
- Are often depressed or withdrawn but won't talk about your feelings
- Become angry or violent when you drink alcohol or use drugs
- Have sexist or discriminatory ideas about male and female roles in relationships

What we all can do...

Sexual assault is a serious problem in society – but it is one that we can all work together to prevent.

As a young adult, you can:

- Encourage teachers, other students and school administrators to coordinate violence prevention programs in your school
- Treat others with respect
- Refuse to believe that violence against women doesn't exist or that it only happens to 'certain types' of women
- Refuse to laugh at jokes that are sexist, racist or homophobic just to fit in
- Question sexual and racial stereotypes
- Refuse to respond to aggression with aggression
- Question the portrayal of women and men in movies, videos, or radio or television

- Boycott media that glorifies violence
- Refuse to buy from companies that exploit women and children in their advertising and their products
- Promote and practice equality and respect

As a man you can:

- Choose not to be violent
- Challenge the tolerance of sexist or violent behaviour
- Educate yourself and encourage your male friends to do the same
- About sexism and violence against women
- Acknowledge that violence is an abuse of power and does not
- Resolve conflict
- Speak out against all forms of inequality towards women
- Challenge abusive friends who display sexist attitudes and
- Encourage alternative ways of thinking and acting
- Keep strong despite the criticisms you may receive for trying
- To end violence

As a woman you can:

- Speak up against violence or abusive behaviour
- Take time to know yourself and what you're feeling
- Treat yourself and other women with respect
- Notice and question media messages about women and about violence
- Recognize that violent people are responsible for their behaviour and should be held accountable for choosing to be violent
- Thank someone who has given you support
- Support someone whom you know is being hurt
- Get involved in promoting alternatives to violence

You are not powerless

Alcohol and Drugs

- Use alcohol and drugs with caution.
- Being drunk or high makes it difficult to judge dangerous situations, or to be in control of what happens to you.
- If you choose to use alcohol or drugs, think about your situation... Can you still take care of yourself?
- Protect your drink when you're in public - drugs can be put into your drink to make you more vulnerable.

Use the buddy system

- Don't leave your friends at a party if it doesn't seem safe.
- Watch out for one another if you go to parties.
- Have a plan on how to leave and share a cab ride or walk home together.

Have pocket money

- It's always a good idea to have extra money to get home. You never know what might happen and it's a good way to be independent.

Physical defense

- In the past, women were told not to fight back. However, many women have fought back and escaped from an offender.
- You are not powerless! A self-defense course can help you to learn some tips about protecting yourself.

Be clear

- People aren't mind readers, so you have to communicate clearly. If you don't feel comfortable about how you're being treated, tell that person.
- Be clear with your words, look them in the eye and speak in a strong and assertive tone

Trust your intuition

- It can be hard to leave a party or a dance, but being safe is more important. If something feels wrong, leave.
- If you feel uncomfortable with the way someone is treating you, leave the situation immediately.

Think and talk

- What are some ways that you have noticed sexist attitudes or stereotypes?
 - In the media
 - In school
 - In your community
- How hard is it for young men to speak out about respect for girls and women? Why or why not?
- What are some challenges young women face in being treated with respect?
- Can you think of some situations where both racism and sexism are occurring at the same time?
- How hard might that be for the person or people feeling the effects?

Activities

Break up into small groups. What are some ways that you and your friends could challenge violence against women in our society gender? Come up with 3 ideas to share with the class.

Break up into small groups. What are some ways that you and your friends can help prevent sexual assaults and other violence in your own lives? Come up with 3 ideas to share with the class.

Talk together about some of the interesting campaigns are aimed at young men, getting them to take personal responsibility and choose not to use violence. Some of these include:

- White Ribbon Campaign (www.whiteribbon.ca)
- I am a Kind Man - Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin in Ojibway (www.iamakindman.ca)
- Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council Brothers in Spirit Project (http://yawc.ca/YAWC-Brothers_In_Spirit.html)
- Moosehide Campaign, B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, (moosehidecampaign.ca)

Tips for Teachers Supporting Students Dealing with Trauma

All of the following resources for teachers in supporting students dealing with trauma are recommended by Government of Yukon Department of Education staff.

There are two short appendices to this Study Guide - pamphlets that are available free to download which will be helpful and easy for teachers to read over.

- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network: Psychological and Behavioral Impact of Trauma: High School Students
- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network: Suggestions for Educators
- Additional resources recommended by Department of Education include:
- National Association of School Psychologist
(www.nasponline.org/resources/principals/nasp_trauma.pdf)
- Bruce Perry's Child Trauma Academy (childtrauma.org)
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network – handouts as part of their Trauma Toolkit (www.nctsn.org/resources/audiences/school-personnel/trauma-toolkit)
- Report Intervention To Address Intergenerational Trauma
(http://www.ucalgary.ca/wethurston/files/wethurston/Report_InterventionToAddressIntergenerationalTrauma.pdf)

Selected Resources and Support for Youth

National

- Kids Help Line, 1-800-668-6868 (kidshelpphone.ca)
- PFLAG Canada, 1-888-530-6777 (Toll-free), Resources to anyone with questions or concerns about sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression) (www.pflagcanada.ca)
- Thinking of Running Away? Think Safety First, from Missing Children Society of Canada (www.mcsc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Safety-Tips-for-Teens.pdf)

Yukon - Transition Homes/Shelters

- Whitehorse Youth Emergency Shelter (ages 17-20) 335-1216
- For the coordinator call..... 335-1217
- Kaushee's Place (Whitehorse) 668-5733
- Dawson City Women's Shelter 993-5086
- Help and Hope for Families (Watson Lake) 536-7233

Services for Victims

- Whitehorse Victim Service 667-8500
or toll free..... 1-800-661-0408 ext. 8500
- Dawson City Victim Services 993-5831
- Watson Lake Victim Services..... 536-2541
- Many Rivers Youth Outreach Counsellor (Whitehorse) 667-2970 ext. 222
OR work cell 334-1443
OR..... 334-9551
- Child Abuse Treatment Services (CATS) 667-8227
- Yukon Health Line 811
- Yukon Crisis Prevention "Youth Against Violence" 1-800-680-4264
- Hospice Yukon 667-7429
(Compassionate support for people dying and/or dealing with grief)

Services in B.C.

- VictimLink for BC and Yukon toll free 1-800-563-0808

- Vancouver area, Fraser Valley and Squamish-Lillooet 2-1-1
- Vancouver Native Health Society’s
Family Violence Intervention Program Phone 604-873-6601 ext. 13
- Urban Native Youth Association (UNYA) 604-254-7732
- BC Bereavement Helpline 604-738-9950
- Outside Greater Vancouver 1-877-779-2223
- Battered Women’s Support Services Crisis/intake 604-687-1867
Toll Free 1-855-687-1868

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THE HOURS THAT REMAIN

Study Guide

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