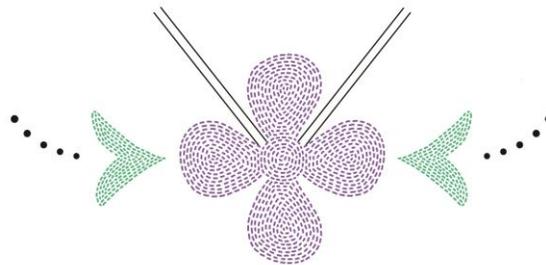


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



Enquête nationale
sur les femmes et les filles
autochtones disparues et assassinées

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part I Statement Gathering
Maison de la famille
Maliotenam/Uashat mak Mani-Utenam, Québec**



PUBLIC

November 29, 2017

**Public Volume 142
Anne-Marie André**

Heard by Jayme Menzies

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II
Table of Contents

Public Volume 142
November 29, 2017

Witness: Anne-Marie André	PAGE
Hearing of Anne-Marie André	1
Legal Dicta-Typist's Certificate	25

Heard by: Jayme Menzies

List of exhibits:

- 1: American Anarchist (2 pages)**

1 *Upon commencing at 4:09 p.m.*

2 MS. JAYME MENZIES: So, I will introduce myself. My name is
3 Jayme, I'm from Winnipeg, I'm from a Métis family and we're
4 in Manitoba.

5 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: OK.

6 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Thank you for being here.
7 Other than that, it's 4:09 p.m. on November 29. Would you
8 like to introduce yourselves?

9 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: My name is Brigitte
10 Renfré (phon.). I'm from [Place of origin] and I was born
11 in [Place of origin].

12 MS. JAYME MENZIES: How are you related to
13 Ms.?

14 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: She is my cousin's
15 wife. First cousins.

16 MS. JAYME MENZIES: OK. Are you here as a
17 support today?

18 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: Yes.

19 MS. JAYME MENZIES: OK. You can sit over
20 here.

21 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: So, my name is Anne-
22 Marie André. (Inaudible)

23 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Anything you want to talk
24 about. Can you tell us about your background?

25 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: OK. I'm from

1 Matimekosh, and I currently live in Sept-Îles. Yes, I
2 moved 10 years ago. I'll go to the washroom and then we
3 can talk.

4 The question was a scenario about
5 (Indigenous name)'s puppets. And we were invited to do a
6 show about/with the anarchists. I had to write a text
7 about anarchists.

8 This is how I introduced myself nearly 50
9 years ago:

10 "They can try to change me, make me
11 someone other than an Innu. To replace
12 my Innu culture by the dominant culture,
13 to make me think the same way as the
14 strangers that my ancestors welcomed,
15 healed and guided.

16 For more than 400 years, Innus have been
17 in the way. The discoverers who, at
18 first, were lost on the territories,
19 without caring that the Innu lived
20 there, that different nations shared
21 these lands in mutual respect.

22 During the year, in the summer, sorry, the
23 Innu travelled by canoe; in the winter
24 they travelled the land on snowshoes.

25 They were a nomadic people who took care

1 of the land; they were its keepers. They
2 were an integral part of nature; they
3 hunted and fished to survive, followed the
4 seasons and developed spiritual knowledge
5 and culture for thousands of years.

6 The newcomers took action, sent masters,
7 took over the lands that were already
8 inhabited by the Innu. In the
9 backcountry, they started operating near
10 rivers and in forests, opening roads,
11 building railways in the north, all on
12 territory inhabited by the Innu.

13 As the operations progressed, the
14 government at the time forced the Innu
15 into a sedentary life in their Indian
16 reserves along the North Coast. The
17 Department of Indian Affairs and Northern
18 Development, with the complicity of the
19 Catholic church and the Oblate priests
20 and nuns, built the Malio residential
21 school.

22 The RCMP was tasked with finding runaways
23 and bringing them back to the residential
24 school. Police officers would go into
25 houses where there were school-aged

1 children, kidnap them and take them to the
2 residential school by force. That was
3 their way of assimilating us, making us
4 into nice little Quebecers who wouldn't
5 bother the multimillionaires operating on
6 Innu territory.

7 For all the physical and sexual abuse that
8 occurred in the residential schools, and
9 all the lives lost in another language,
10 outside our culture, our lands, the
11 federal government has offered us monetary
12 compensation. This made a mockery of us
13 and violated our identity.

14 The Pope, the supreme leader of the
15 Catholic church, apologized, but the
16 residential school Oblates didn't even
17 apologize. And yet it was in these
18 residential schools that priests and nuns
19 abused little girls and little boys to
20 indulge in their fantasies, going against
21 what their commitments to love and charity
22 (chastity).

23 As compensation, the government should
24 have recognized us as First Nations
25 People. An anarchist, despite myself, I'm

1 an anarchist. America's history made me
2 this way. Today, I stand before you with
3 the travel companions, girls of the last
4 ogre, the last cannibal that was
5 exterminated by (Indigenous name). War
6 outfits were made according to the
7 shamans' instructions with designs that
8 were revealed in their dreams.

9 After each of the girls' feats and
10 (inaudible), they embroidered their shawls
11 to help in their combat. These designs
12 had magical powers. Today, I need these
13 designs as references to the past to
14 continue to live in peace with myself.
15 It's crucial for me to return to my
16 culture, to relearn my grandparents'
17 traditional knowledge, to pass it on to my
18 grandchildren.

19 It's very important for my soul to unite
20 with my Innu spirituality, so that I can
21 continue to be an integral part of nature.

22 I, Anne-Marie, Owahat (phon.) Indian
23 reserve, May 1909 for the (Indigenous
24 name) troop."

25 I wasn't raped or sexually abused, but I

1 lost my culture, myself, my soul; they were lost because of
2 the residential schools, the priests and the nuns. Because
3 of the government, since they're the ones who said, "You're
4 going to stay here, you are..."

5 It would have been easier if they gave us,
6 we could stay there, but with Innu education, without
7 imposing their own programs, changing us radically: how to
8 think, how to live.

9 And all the things we're going through
10 today. It started in 1950, when we went to the residential
11 schools-everything changed. And today, how many years,
12 today?

13 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: Almost 60 years.

14 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: Yes, 60 years, and
15 we're still having problems, because of the disconnect with
16 our parents, the passing on of everything. And it's what
17 we haven't been able to pass on to our children; it's hard
18 for us now.

19 In addition to learning French and all the
20 Quebec education-it was the priests themselves who taught
21 the boys and girls about sexuality, you know. Men are
22 still carrying that to this day; women are scared of being
23 raped to this day. And we need reparation for our
24 children, you know, and men need to learn to externalize,
25 how to live, forgive themselves to get rid of the hurt,

1 that's what we're asking for today.

2 It's having a men's shelter with full time
3 psychologists, with no appointments needed.

4 MS. JAYME MENZIES: In each community.

5 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: In each community or
6 in the Sept-Îles community. It's very far and you have to
7 make appointments: you get an appointment for three months
8 later; you'd have time to commit suicide 3-4 times during
9 that time.

10 And the problem goes on and on, and before
11 we get very old, very old, I'm 74, I'll be 75 in July; I
12 can still teach. I have a degree in Education and I have
13 the time. I can teach. Like today, I'm teaching in... In
14 town, for free, you know. We can do it, too.

15 It would be nice if there was a school in
16 the bush with all our programs and the Innu way of life,
17 what we always wanted, what we lost. Our children would
18 regain all the beautiful gifts, the richness of our
19 knowledge, and the knowledge of our grandfathers and
20 grandmothers.

21 I don't know if the Commission will be able
22 to.

23 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Me, personally, but us,
24 yes, I understand what you're suggesting. First, your
25 letter, it was very well written; I liked it a lot. And

1 that's certainly a recommendation, you're not the only one
2 who recommends a school in the bush.

3 One question: What kind of resources or
4 support would you need to teach in that school, for
5 example, here in the community?

6 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: It would be mostly
7 funding for the building or to give us, to start with,
8 canvas, like in the old days. But to make it cost-
9 effective, and children have to be able to walk on the
10 land, you know, to feel and see the animals and nature.
11 After that we can send them to the city to get their
12 degrees. Or we could have internships like that, yes.

13 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yes, I like that idea.
14 You mentioned that men learned about sexuality in an
15 aggressive environment. Do you have any suggestions or
16 recommendations regarding this? How could we handle this,
17 how could we change it?

18 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: Any time we talk about
19 sexuality, the White counselors say, "Oh, it's very
20 complicated. It's like..." It's more psychological for
21 them, you know. "Oh, it's very complicated, it would cost
22 too much."

23 There are many conditions in order for the
24 individual, the sick person or the pedophile from town to
25 get well. At least, if we could give them the basics to

1 heal, to not...

2 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: Guidance, support.

3 MS. JAYME MENZIES: OK, OK.

4 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: You're making a face.
5 Is it possible or not?

6 MS. JAYME MENZIES: No, no, it's a good idea.
7 Currently the solution is prison or drugs, and that doesn't
8 work.

9 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: Or suicide. We've seen
10 a lot of that.

11 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: Yes.

12 MS. JAYME MENZIES: It's a good idea.

13 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: I spent a lot time in
14 Schefferville, and the elders there would say, "Why spend
15 so much money on therapy? Why not just give us half the
16 money and we'll take them out in the bush." Once they get
17 here, they'll heal and they'll talk about living a good
18 life and values, and they'll get support; you don't just
19 talk and act.

20 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Have you witnessed any
21 examples of this changing the lives of people in your
22 community?

23 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: Well, a lot of therapy
24 or psychiatry people have died... It's never worked, it's
25 never worked.

1 And they come back, but at the same time,
2 the others need support, too; either they come see us, but
3 we don't have a solution, but they don't want to go to
4 hospitals or psychiatric centres either.

5 They know it's hard, and they know they need
6 to do something, but the support just isn't there either.
7 The follow-up.

8 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Family, professional or
9 cultural support?

10 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: There would be
11 cultural: going out to the bush or speaking to spiritual
12 guides. They also have to be open, they're open to a lot of
13 things, but they also have to be...

14 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: Recognized.

15 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: Recognized.

16 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Are these services
17 already being offered here?

18 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: Excuse me?

19 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Are these services
20 already being offered here?

21 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: Yes. Yes.

22 MS. JAYME MENZIES: OK. They need to be more
23 available, every day, but they're already here, just not as
24 much as we need them to be, right? That's what I
25 understand. OK.

1 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: They're not involved in
2 the system, because we're in a Quebec system, the services,
3 too.

4 MS. JAYME MENZIES: OK, I see, yes.

5 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: You see? That's what
6 often creates a barrier.

7 MS. JAYME MENZIES: OK, yes, I understand.

8 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: (Speaking in an
9 Indigenous language) But at the same time, I don't know
10 how, to what point, they would accept being paid or getting
11 help. They would say, "OK, I'll pay for your wood or I pay
12 for your gas to go get the grandfathers. I'll pay
13 financially." It's getting help to hold meetings that
14 requires a lot.

15 So, to hold Sun Dance ceremonies you need a
16 lot, a lot of fabric, tobacco, food, lots of stuff.

17 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: Wood.

18 MS. JAYME MENZIES: So, in the same way that
19 seeing a doctor in Sept-Îles is free, things like that
20 should be free, too? OK.

21 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: It's free, but it's
22 not free when you go to the doctor's. You use your card.

23 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yes, like the government
24 pays the doctor.

25 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: OK, OK, I understand.

1 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Like that.

2 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: Yes, yes.

3 MS. JAYME MENZIES: So the government should
4 also accept spiritual traditions as treatments? OK.

5 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: It would be more cost-
6 effective, and it would be in the language, in Innu instead
7 of trying to find the words in French, especially when it
8 comes to psychology or sexual matters. I don't really know
9 much about those things.

10 MS. JAYME MENZIES: One of our commissaries
11 speaks Innu. If you want to speak Innu, if you would be
12 more comfortable, or if there's a message you want to share
13 in Innu, you can do that, too.

14 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: Is she a (Indigenous
15 word)?

16 MS. JAYME MENZIES: There's a lawyer working
17 with the Inquiry, but our commissary, Michèle Audette,
18 speaks Innu. It's her maternal language, so if you want to,
19 you can speak Innu on the audio and visual. It's an option.

20 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: Yes, and we would also
21 ask for a school that's open year-round on the land, in the
22 bush, on the territory. The clientele would rotate and
23 there would be a rotation of different people you could go
24 see for healing. And also for ourselves, to learn about
25 the animals, the land, many things, based on... Without

1 having to follow strict rules, like a school, like a
2 residential school.

3 That's the story: children and young adults
4 would have to... Because there are youths who want to spend
5 time in the bush, but they don't have what they need: "I
6 don't have a bag, I don't have a sleeping bag, I don't have
7 this or that, I don't have money for..." Or it could at
8 least be an interior program that could go on year-round.

9 Skills can also change based on the seasons.
10 I can't make moulds to butcher small game, I'm not good at
11 that, but maybe I could ask someone else to come do it and
12 show things to the youth and young adults. There would be
13 rotation of skills, the children would rotate, the people,
14 too, the elders would rotate. That's the return to the
15 land we would like. Yes, with financial support.

16 (speaking Innu)

17 Would you go with me?

18 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: Of course. I'll go.

19 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Do you have any
20 restrictions or anything else?

21 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: No, but in our village,
22 there have already been some experiences with immersion,
23 and there were many results. Youth who spent time in the
24 bush, within the territory, stopped using drugs and alcohol
25 and went back to school. They got a handle on things. You

1 see them now, and they're all doing well. They have
2 companies, some have companies and some work year-round.
3 And they didn't even stay there a year; they stayed for a
4 winter. And now, well, we see how well they're doing and
5 that's what we're aiming for.

6 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: They all work in
7 sales, huh?

8 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: Uh-huh. All the ones
9 that were there have jobs. Not one of them went back to
10 drugs or alcohol.

11 MS. JAYME MENZIES: So that's good.

12 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: Well yes, because we
13 already have some lived experience, but what can it, well,
14 it's forever.

15 I was on the Board of Directors when they
16 started... Our expeditions. But at one point, the
17 government put a stop to it. At first, yes, yes, yes, but
18 at one point, we didn't know where to find the money
19 anymore, and everyone was turning us down. At one point,
20 Brigitte spoke up because we didn't have funding and it was
21 expensive, because we have to feed them, we had to, you
22 know. Pay those working with the youth, because they were
23 teaching them to pray, hunt, survive in the woods and
24 everything.

25 It created jobs, too, and there was someone

1 else teaching the youth about culture, that was something
2 to...

3 MS. JAYME MENZIES: It creates a reason for
4 being.

5 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: Yes, that's what we
6 want to get back, you know. A little bit, it's just a
7 little bit; imagine if we had that. I don't think youth
8 would be in the streets waiting for their welfare to show
9 up. Because we saw how almost all of those youth returned
10 to school. They took control of their lives and they're
11 doing very well.

12 Of course, a few of them relapsed, there's
13 always one who does, but it was very minimal, very minimal.
14 We see the ones who succeeded in life a lot more because
15 they were given the chance to go on a short trip and live
16 on the land. They still talk about it. They're almost our
17 age now, and they still talk about it. It was one of the
18 best experiences of their lives.

19 MS. JAYME MENZIES: What was the name of the
20 program?

21 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: (Indigenous word).

22 MS. JAYME MENZIES: And did it run for a few
23 years or only one season?

24 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: It went on about four
25 or five years.

1 MS. JAYME MENZIES: And there was no
2 money...?

3 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: No. At one point,
4 they were supposed to... We didn't get funding, the
5 government put a stop to everything. To get the money,
6 because it was still... It was expensive, because
7 everything was done in, you know, you had to make the tents
8 and they had to...

9 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: Put them up.

10 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: Put up their tents,
11 make the snowshoes, everything. They learned how to make
12 their own snowshoes, tents, you know. It was a great
13 project.

14 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: Ms. Louisa was there?
15 Was she a teacher there?

16 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: Yes.

17 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: She did the morning
18 prayer.

19 MS. JAYME MENZIES: She was a teacher, OK.

20 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: They took a lot of
21 pictures, and you can see the youth in them. Sometimes we
22 look at the old photos, and you can see how happy they were
23 in the bush.

24 And after that, social services ran another
25 program here, where youth got to spend time out in the

1 bush. My son participated when he was around 12. He was
2 happy. He told me all about it...

3 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: (Inaudible)?

4 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: Well, it was when he
5 was 12, but now he talks about it now, he was 12-13 at the
6 time. They started it up, but they ran out of funding and
7 had to stop everything. After that, we didn't hear about
8 it again.

9 They started it again this year in schools,
10 but it's a week, or three or four days. Three or four days
11 isn't enough for high-school teens. They would need much
12 more than that—at least three months in the bush. They
13 have the time, they can teach, because we're teachers, we
14 can do it in the bush. You just need pens and paper, and
15 the rest, you can make do.

16 Those are things we can do, but we don't
17 have the funding. That's why we're hoping the government
18 will do something about it—that they'll fund our programs.
19 They should stop giving, now, when I see that, they give
20 money and it's all civil servants making big bucks. And
21 then there's just a little bit left for our project. And
22 those guys are well paid.

23 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: There should be a
24 program, a five-year funding program, and then you could do
25 things for five years at a time.

1 We would be ready to sit down and say,
2 "Let's do a five-year program. We know what we want to
3 teach, what happens in the bush, the animals and the
4 weather, the seasonal changes and all the other activities
5 related to the seasons."

6 And we would just enter it in the computer
7 and send it to the government. We would tell them the cost
8 and they could send us the money.

9 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: They'll think we're
10 dreaming.

11 MS. JAYME MENZIES: I'll come and join you.

12 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: No, no, that's OK.

13 MS. JAYME MENZIES: I don't have any more
14 questions for you, but I wanted to mention that one side of
15 the Inquiry is making recommendations at the governmental
16 and institutional levels, but the other side is like an
17 artistic side, or the side to honour families, victims,
18 culture. So, witnesses from all over Canada are sharing
19 documents, photos, poems, songs, plants, anything, to help
20 us commemorate the process.

21 So, if you have, like you mentioned,
22 pictures of students who...

23 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: Are smiling.

24 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yes, smiling after their
25 camp, after their time in the bush. I think it would be

1 nice to get a copy of those pictures. You don't have to do
2 it, but if you get the chance to send us a copy of one of
3 the pictures, we could add it to your testimony, and we
4 could display it somewhere. When you talked about them, I
5 just thought it would be nice to see the pictures.

6 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: Yes, because at the
7 same time, today our children aren't Indigenous because
8 they don't know the basics of their culture, and they're
9 not Francophones either, even though they go to the Whites'
10 schools and speak in French. They don't understand the
11 deeper aspects of Quebec culture. And so, that's where we
12 are.

13 There has been a disconnection with the
14 parents, and they don't know the basics of their culture.
15 Things are quickly being forgotten, and we have to at least
16 give them a chance to live in their own language.

17 And there are language courses for four-
18 year-olds. Yes, we do things for four-year-olds, short
19 programs, but they go home and speak French. When they
20 talk, watch TV, go shopping, it's all in French. We need
21 to do a lot of awareness raising about that, too. We're
22 losing our grandchildren. Mine speak English.

23 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: Really?

24 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: Uh-huh.

25 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: And then there's what

1 we're asking for, reparation; reparation for what we used
2 to have and what we lost since the government took over,
3 the priests, the nuns...

4 We've lost everything, but we want it back.
5 We're hoping—we're already of a certain age, you know, we
6 certainly don't have 60 years ahead of us (laughs). But we
7 would at least like to see our grandchildren experience
8 what we didn't get to have.

9 That's what we're asking for, and it's sad
10 to ask for that. I ask myself, why do we ask? Because of
11 the money, the funding. We can't do anything without
12 funding. The government should give us funding and stop
13 saying, "Well, that's reconciliation."

14 We're not thinking about reconciliation;
15 we're thinking about reconciling with our own culture, not
16 with the government. We want to reconcile with our roots.

17 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: There's still some
18 anger there.

19 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: Yes, I feel it, too.
20 It's rising as I speak. Because...

21 MS. JAYME MENZIES: There are a lot of
22 reasons to be angry.

23 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: We're very polite in
24 front of you. (Laughs)

25 MS. JAYME MENZIES: My mother is around your

1 age, I think. She experiences anger sometimes, too.

2 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: Your mother is
3 Indigenous?

4 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Yes, yes.

5 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: And on your father's
6 side?

7 MS. JAYME MENZIES: My father is of Scottish
8 descent. There are a lot of reasons to be angry.

9 MS. BRIGITTE RENFRÉ: Uh-huh.

10 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: I'll give you that.
11 What I wanted to say, when I talk about nuns, priests, too,
12 there was charity, and what is that? OK, that's it. The
13 first commitment, love, that's what I was told, but there
14 was "chastity" in that.

15 MS. JAYME MENZIES: Do you need to stick
16 something?

17 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: No, no, it's OK. I
18 thought she removed it.

19 MS. JAYME MENZIES: I'm going to turn the
20 recorders off.

21 MS. ANNE-MARIE ANDRÉ: Yes.

22 END OF RECORDING

1

LEGAL DICAT-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE*

2

3

I, Anne Michaud, hereby certify that I have transcribed the
4 foregoing and it is a true and accurate transcript of the
5 digital audio provided in this matter.

6

7



8

9

10

Anne Michaud,

11

August 16, 2018

* This certificate refers to the original transcript in
French.