

## AWAN Statement Issued at Press Conference

As we stand before you today, on occupied Aboriginal territory, I invite you all to reflect back on all the conditions of colonization that have been playing out in the media in recent days and weeks. We have been hearing about the two Aboriginal women in Winnipeg who dialled "911" and got a response 7 hours later, only to be found dead. We have been hearing about the Aboriginal men who were dumped in freezing weather on the outskirts of Saskatoon by the police, and left to freeze to death. We read in the paper yesterday that Gilbert Paul Jordan is out of jail and headed back to Vancouver.

As we sit here and remember all of these atrocities, we are being bombarded by some very extreme, very drastic cuts to programs and services of all sorts in this province - the slashes to healthcare and social services; the lifting of the freeze on tuition fees; the move towards privatization, in the name of saving.

I ask you - what has brought these women to the streets of the downtown eastside? Can we, as a society blame these women for their drug addiction? Can we write them off because they were prostitutes? Does this society still adhere to the notion that "the only good Indian is a dead Indian?"

In a few days, we will be holding the 11th annual Memorial March to send our prayers to these women, who have been killed, and to the families that they have left behind. We have made our statement in front of the police station in each of these marches, but all of this has fallen on deaf ears. Police incompetence and neglect is totally unforgivable.

I say that the Campbell government is constructing a recipe for much more of the same. His cuts will increase the levels of vulnerability for women. When we have no access to education, there is no way to escape from poverty. When there is only \$510.00 per month for rent for a single mother of two, prostitution, despite the dehumanization of these acts, becomes very tempting. When Aboriginal women's lives are dispensable, then the likes of Gilbert Paul Jordan and Robert William Pickton can come out and perform without fear of any consequences.

I urge you, the media to report, in a more accurate fashion, to move away from the victim blaming that pervades your stories on the "Missing Women" and the "Memorial March". And from the social justice perspective, we need to continue to work in solidarity to stop this government from carving a path of destruction in British Columbia.

All My Relations

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<b>Exhibit: National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls</b>		
<b>Location/Phase:</b> <u>Part III: Quebec</u>		
<b>Witness:</b> <u>Fay Blaney</u>		
<b>Submitted by:</b> <u>Big Canoe, C. Counsel</u>		
<b>Add'l info:</b> <u>P030 P02 P0101</u>		
<b>Date:</b> <u>MAY 14 2018</u>		
<b>Initials</b>	<b>I/D</b>	<b>Entered</b>
<u>fb</u>		<u>All</u>