

**Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada  
Media Clips**



**Résolution des questions des pensionnats indiens  
Canada  
Manchettes**

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**CFRY-R (Portage)** (12 Sept 06) "Long Plain residential school received a visit from Al Jazeera"

## TRANSCRIPT

Host: The residential school in Long Plain received a visit from Al Jazeera yesterday. Al Jazeera is the arab media network known for releasing Al Qaeda tapes. News anchor Guita Foopri(ph) notes the network tries to report stories that run below the radar. She says the story is focused on people.

Foopri adds the finished story will air all over the world including the Middle East. Al Jazeera chose the Long Plain school once they found out it is being converted into a museum.

**CBK-R (Saskatchewan)** (12 Sept 06) "Breaking the Silence conference in Saskatoon"

TRANSCRIPT

Colin Grewar: There is still another chapter to be written on residential school abuse. Lawsuits may have been settled, millions in compensation paid out, but now the students who were sexually abused must put their lives back together. About 50 First Nations people are in Saskatoon today, talking about that. They are at a conference called Breaking the Silence.

Audrey Pewapis-Conias (ph) is one of the organizers and she joins me now from our Saskatoon studio.

Hello, Audrey.

Audrey Pewapis-Conias (ph) (Event organizer): Hello.

Colin Grewar: Why the name, Breaking the Silence?

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: Because we've been silent too long and it goes a lot further than people would like to think. The sexual abuse is rampant in our communities and nobody seems to want to address it.

Colin Grewar: Why are individuals reluctant to talk about their own experiences of abuse at residential schools?

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: Fear, shame, fear of ridicule or having fingers pointed at us.

Colin Grewar: And what sort of harm is all that unspoken pain inflicting?

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: I think it's so engrained in our communities that nobody wants to be the first one to break the silence. People feel comfortable if they don't have to look at it, if they don't have to hear it. They can turn a blind eye to it and say it's not happening here. It's not happening to us. It's not happening in our community.

Colin Grewar: And what sort of an impact is that silence having in the community?

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: Well, actually, when we started discussing having a conference on sexual abuse, there were nine cases in three months of suicides from young people and we looked around at people to help at the grassroots level and nobody seemed to want to do anything. Like they'll act, when the suicide has just happened. Then after that, they want to forget about it. And everyone of them have disclosed that they were sexually abused. They had disclosed to somebody and they were told, you know, never mind. Don't make waves. Don't say anything. And so they couldn't live with the hurt and they ended up killing themselves.

Colin Grewar: And the...

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: We've gone to the provincial government, the federal government, and nobody seems to want to even offer financial support for a conference like this. Sasktel gave us \$500. Crown corporations, some didn't even acknowledge our letters when we asked for letters of support. CIDA donated \$2,000. SI, Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation donated \$100. First Nations Bank of Canada donated \$500. FSIN Vice Chief Delbert Wapass donated \$5,000 towards the facility rental at Saskatoon Inn.

Colin Grewar: You told me a moment ago about suicides. Now, are these the victims of abuse themselves or are they children or grandchildren of those who were abused?

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: It's ongoing. It's been going on for generations. Yes, it happened at residential school but sexual abuse is a learned behaviour.

Colin Grewar: So it's a cycle then?

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: Yes, it's a cycle and that has to be broken.

Colin Grewar: You were a teacher, weren't you, Audrey?

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: Yes, I have a master's degree in education.

Colin Grewar: And so what have you done to try to do something about this?

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: I started a counselling service.

Colin Grewar: Um-hmm.

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: I couldn't go into a school and tell them that these school subjects are very important for them when they have to go home and you don't know what they're facing. Their main concern is safety, so they're not going to say or think that math is so important. So it's affecting the school, it's affecting mental health, it's affecting physical health and because we're a non-political organization and we're just here to help people, and so we have approached everybody and they don't want to address this. I don't know if it's because it brings back hurt for them or even First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, we approached them.

We went to Regina to meet with Chris Mercredi, the regional director. She said she would help us. Nothing came about. We met with, or sent letters, spoke to the residential school people. The same thing, no money.

Colin Grewar: You set up your own counselling service.

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: Yes, we did.

Colin Grewar: What do you do? What do you do within that service to help people?

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: We have a holistic approach to healing. We do one-on-one counselling, group counselling and we have a pipe holder so he does the traditional healing practices.

Colin Grewar: And how has that been going? You talked about how reluctant people are to talk about the abuse. How have you found people responding to what you're offering?

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: We have, I think our project is funded by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and we see about sometimes 10,000 people in the three-month period.

Colin Grewar: Do you feel you're making a difference?

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: Yes, but it's just like throwing sand into the ocean for how much we are doing. We want a network of caregivers to get together and say, okay, let's all work on this and let's help our people, the grassroots people. And the children. It's our children that are paying for everything that's happening in our community. You know, family breakdowns and like I was saying, suicides. Elder abuse, child abuse.

Colin Grewar: What have you heard so far at your conference?

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: We have had evaluations and it's been positive by the people that have attended, really positive. We have got one young person that talks about her experiences. You know, she's not a public speaker and she just volunteered. Everybody there wants to help. That's the one thing I found at all the people that we asked if they would come and talk to the participants. They have all been there. They have all shown up. You know, it's really positive right now for the amount of people that are there.

Colin Grewar: I guess your wish is that there were more people there?

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: Yes, in order to make this worthwhile. As an organization, a small organization, actually, I was saying we're facing financial ruin because we can't pay for everything.

Colin Grewar: You mentioned the young person that spoke. What was her story?

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: her story is being sexually abused and having to go home, being scared to go home while she was in kindergarten because she knew if her mom wasn't home that she would be sexually abused.

Colin Grewar: Sheldon Kennedy spoke at your conference earlier today.

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: Yes, he did.

Colin Grewar: A very powerful message. How did you two come to work together?

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: Actually, I went to see Sheldon. A group of us went to see Sheldon in Edmonton when we started talking about having a sexual abuse conference. And he was very receptive to the idea of coming (inaudible) to work with us. I met with him several times. I went to Calgary to see him.

Colin Grewar: And for you, what is the most powerful part of his message?

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: Having the courage to break the silence because it's not... Like he broke new ground when he broke the silence of what was happening in the sports field and in the sports area that people never even thought about. And that was hard on him. Like it's hard on the people that are breaking the silence. We're breaking new ground...

All we're trying to do is help people, the same with Sheldon. All he wants is to stop the cycle of abuse and if there is anything we can do, that's what we'll do.

Colin Grewar: And what will you do next?

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: I don't know. What I had hoped to see is, you know, meeting with governments, meeting with the powers that be, although I said I'm not political, but in order to get our message across, in order to heal our communities, that's what's going to have to happen.

Colin Grewar: Audrey, thank you so much for joining us today and good luck to you.

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: Okay, thank you.

Colin Grewar: Bye, bye, now.

Audrey Pewapis-Conias: Bye.

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**CBC Vancouver** (11 Sept 06) "Reading, Writing And The Rez"

## PART 1

>>Gloria: Today kicks off the second week of back to school. It's a time when most classes will get going in earnest and the start of a struggle of some teachers, students and families. And all the result of a startling statistic. The fact that fewer than half of first nations students in b.c. graduate from high school. Over the past few months reporter duncan mccue has been taking an indepth look at the problem. He joins me now as part of a special series. Duncan it all started with four kids from the first nation known as the bar regard indian band and they wanted to tell us what school was like for them. We gave them some cameras and we got extraordinary cooperation from their parents, the school board, and the community. and then we spent five months filming them at home and school to find out what works and what doesn't. What they gave us was a very, very candid glimpse into their lives. Here's part one of reading, writing and the rez.

>>Reporter: Tonight is a really big night for the first nation. It's a graduation ceremony to honour all ages, preschool to grade 12.

>>Ladies and gentlemen, your glad class of 2006. [ applause ]

>>Reporter: For years now they believed an education is worth celebrating. Ever since 1967 when one of their leaders, Chief Dan George set out his vision for his people.

>>Oh, God, like the thunder bird, I shall rise again out of the sea, I shall grasp the instruments of the white man's success, his education, his skills and with these new tools I shall build my race into the proudest segment of your society. Jeffrey Hernandez.

>>Reporter: But four decades later, his dream is far from reality. In north vancouver fewer than half of native children graduate from high school. Why are native grad rates so low? I wondered if kids armed with cameras could explain it best. Chelsea george, katelyn george, jordan galy and marcus thomas. All in school. Three have a non-native parent but all identify as indians, all ready to talk about reading, writing and the rez. You are about to see what it's all about.

>>Have fun. see you later, alligator. Where is the off button?

>>Reporter: Every morning they hop in a van they call the rez bus. Headed for school off reserve just minutes away. About 20 of them come here. Sekoeo secondary. A well to do neighbourhood and many here are doing well. Bound for college or university. In a sea of non-native faces, these kids are a minority.

>>Right there, that's where all the indians sit at school. Right at that table. This is the lunch table. This is what we do. Hey, what is it?

>>Reporter: They are a tight-knit tribe and they feel different. School sucks. It's for white people. Not a place for them.

>>Remember what we used these two. One inch or seven i think. One. A little lower than one.

>>Reporter: This is the only class chelsea likes. She is building a bench.

>>You should take this class ki. Why? It's a fun class. Perfect.

>>Reporter: She doesn't see the point in other subjects and she opts for easy classes like math essentials.

>>Why are you sitting doing nothing?

>>Reporter: In essentials kids learn practical math skills not university prep. Chelsea calls it stupid math.

>>Since we started getting grades I was c minus kid for math. Never got it. If you are in easy something, like easy math or easy english, then you can pass. Because I know if I was in normal math I would be failing. Right now I'm passing so that's all I care about.

>>Reporter: She has failed some courses so she has packed her grade 11 timetable trying to graduate on time. But chelsea is as discouraged as katelyn is determined.

>>Oh, okay. That's why I didn't get it before.

>>Reporter: Katelyn george, kiki as she is known to her friends is a mother hen.

>>You better be going to math, doug.

>>Reporter: Sometimes it's a role of a few individuals have a really powerful impact on a lot of these communities.

>>His goal was to assimilate all first nations people.

>>Reporter: Ki works hard at school. She is even taking extra credits. Motivation her cousins envy.

>>Some of them have said to me I really wish I was you right now when it comes to school. And I just tell them well, it was hard for me. You guys are all playing cards and just sitting around at lunchtime and I have to go in and do work, and last year I filled in one of my breaks to take math. They say yeah that's true. They would never do that. I am different from them.

>>Reporter: How are you different?

>>Well, I pass. There is some of us who do, and some of us who just don't get the big picture just yet.



>>Reporter: She feels different from her native friends, but she feels separate from the rest of the school because she is native.

>>We appear to have these big reputations. Everyone is scared of us. We are dangerous. We are scary. We always fail. We always drink. We always do drugs. But if they opened up their eyes they would see there is more people out there that drink and do drugs than just us.

>>Reporter: Jordan Gally is at a crossroads. He started grade 10 at siko but mid-way through the year the school kicked him out.

>>Me going to classes wasn't really happening. So I was on a contract thing that the principal put me on. Then i had to get the teachers' signature from every class and mark of ten meaning my attitude, attendance, and my achievement in the class, and I got that done. I got it signed but then my principal said that I didn't meet up to the standards of the contract so he is going to have to ask me to leave the school. He wants back in school, but other staff keeps getting in the way. I don't smoke.

>>Reporter: Are you going back to school right now?

>>I have a contract so I have to go class.

>>Reporter: Marcus Thomas chose a different school than most of the kids.Windsor secondary.

>>As far as we are concerned where does our power come from? Where is its ultimate origin. Where does power come from.

>>Reporter: Good-natured kid. That means his academic troubles will fly under the radar. He is late for a test. Marcus didn't study. That's not unusual.

>>I have this big ass test tomorrow for english. you know, that one book "To kill a mockingbird". Yeah, we have a big chapter test on that, and to be honest, never really read the book. so ...

>>Reporter: There goes the rez bus heading home after school. Tomorrow night the kids and their parents tell us what life is like at home and how it impacts school.

## PART 2

>>Gloria: Last night we told you about the dismal graduation rates for aboriginal high school students in b.c. Fewer than half of them graduate. And over a five-month period duncan mccue has been getting unprecedented access shooting a special documentary about why that is. Duncan joins me now to introduce part two of our week long series. What have you got tonight?

>>Duncan: Tonight we are going to hook up with Jordan and Marcus and Chelsea and Kiki again but we'll meet their parents and talk to them about some of the challenges at school and at home. Here's part two of reading, writing and the rez.

>>Reporter: Few teachers know much about this place. Kids call it the rez. For most, if not all of their lives. Music is everything.

>>I want to do dances and do parties. If there wasn't music wouldn't be me I guess.

>>Reporter: His grandparents bought him a scratch box. They raised him since his parents split up when Marcus was young. It's a big, proud Indian family. Grandma Maureen finished high school. Now she is an office manager. Grandpa Stan didn't much like school. He went to St. Paul's residential school. Back then education for Indians meant the simulation. It meant being taken away from home.

>>Nobody liked to leave home. No matter what age they were. Maybe at six years old they didn't know what was going on but eventually I found out that I didn't like to go back, being couped up in a building.

>>Reporter: He stuck it out until grade 10. The schools shattered family life. Raised by nuns students didn't learn how to parent. Decades later, some families are still trying to repair the damage. Chelsea comes from one of those broken families. Her dad earned any runs the reserve's driving range. After two marriages broke up, he found himself raising three kids. He started drinking, and Chelsea assumed the mother role for herself and her brothers.

>>At one point I guess I was drinking a little too much and she put signage on the cupboards and that and stuff that really hits home. And I finally had to sit her down and tell her that I believed she was maybe eleven at the time, that she has to be a little kid. And take care of herself, go out and have fun. Let me resume the role of being the parent and the responsible one.

>>Reporter: Now Chelsea spends two-weeks living at her dad's house and two-weeks at her mom's. Today she gets matching tattoos with her mom Gina.

>>My mom bleeding more than me.

>>Reporter: Unlike homework or her parents' expectations, this pain she can endure. Ki and Chelsea are cousins. Their moms share a house. The girls are like sisters. Ki is close to her mom Alison who is a finance clerk. She sets the bar high for Kiki and her brother Josh.

>>I probably push the kids maybe more than other parents do, but for me finishing high school, it isn't an option and my kids have always been aware of that.

>>Reporter: Ki's dad left when she was six. All she says about him, she would like to see him more often. Ki loves to read. And that helps in school but it stands out on the rez.

>>A lot of people around here think I'm weird because I read books like crazy.

>>Reporter: Jordan's troubles in school haven't been for lack of talent.

>>This one I like the most out of this book just because it's first nations, one big ocean going through, and I started off with these little things right here, and then I gradually built up. I was going to get that without the feather in the background. I wanted to get that on me somewhere. I did this in art like a couple of years -- a year ago or something. I never got to finish it though.

>>Reporter: His parents split before he was born. He lives with his mom Gillian who recently remarried.

>>Do you want to know what you can give me for mother's day. A new soccer ball.

>>Reporter: Now Gillian has her hands full with Tyler, Jordan's half brother. She says her and Jordan haven't hugged since the baby was born.

>>You are pushing it. You went from one pair of shoes to two pairs of shoes and two pairs of shoes and shirts and clothes. You know they always don't hear. I can repeat and do things again and again and again. There is some points like the school with Jordan it gets to the point it's like okay you know what you have made this decision, I have tried to help you every bit I can. Maybe it's something he needs to learn himself and make his own decisions.

>>Reporter: Jordan copes by smoking pot.

>>Whenever we smoke we are just chilling and then we always talk about deep stuff like just -- talk about our feelings and stuff. When you inhale and the longer you hold it in the more stoned you get. We are like the longer you hold it in the bigger the problems it's taking away from you and when you exhale it's leaving you, it's like taking it away for awhile.

>>Reporter: For Marcus this beats the boredom of rez life but his grandparents don't approve. He gets caught, then apologizes to his camera.

>>Want to do something to make you guys proud of me instead of you guys thinking I'm just some stoner child who just gets stoned and doesn't do anything with his life. So I'm going to try to do something that makes you proud of me.

>>Gloria: Now, Duncan, it's interesting, you mention residential schools in tonight's stories. It has been 20 years since those schools closed. So how do you think that impacts today's teenagers?

>Duncan: I had a long talk with Chelsea's grandpa about this, and he said people say, the residential schools a long time ago, and we have heard about the physical abuse, or worse but he said the impacts are deeper than that. And he said whether students back then learned to distrust school or whether they left the school with a terrible sense of self-esteem or whether they didn't learn how to learn, those are the things that are getting passed down today in some families and it's still affecting young kids.

>>Gloria: Last night we asked our viewers to comment on your story last night, part one. what did you hear?

>>Duncan: We got some great e-mails from our viewers. Sue gower, a principal of a native school in fort nelson wrote in that aboriginal learners can excel but we need to teach to their strengths. We need to realize they are visual learners. Students' families need to feel welcome in schools. Teach the novel "April rain tree" instead of "To kill a mockingbird". Teach a course over three terms instead of two. We need to focus on what's best for students, not what's easiest for our educational institutions.

Got an e-mail from a viewer. He dropped out of school. Then he went back. He wishes he had more role models. He says we need to have a lot more first nation brainiacs getting degrees from university and in the spotlight so kids can get excited about school. A young native woman named raven agreed. She writes in my family alone my sister is a teacher, my cousin is a lawyer, my cousin is doing masters in fisheries. She is studying forestry. feel free to drop us an e-mail.

>>Gloria: Tomorrow night the kids are going to talk about what happens when they skip school. I'm sure the installment will generate much reaction. thanks for that.