



Helen McPhaden marvels over a comic book made by Aboriginal girls at Calgary's Young Offenders Centre. The story, "Life As You Don't Know It," is a visual testimony to the girl's shared experiences of abuse, incarceration, and personal redemption. "The girls really normalize violence, which is not normal," said McPhaden. She works with the girls through the Stardale Women's Group in Calgary. "None of the girls feel safe in their community."



With faces of missing women in the background, journalist Isabel Arivide is filmed to document the conference. Arivide's award-winning journalistic works link abduction and killing of Mexican women to drug cartels and pornography. She criticizes the Mexican government for ignoring the cases of missing women. She said those who kill women find it thrilling – like in the movies. These missing women, she said, are often used for smut videos where women are brutalized and killed. Arivide has become the victim of death threats and she has been in jail twice since the release of her 1996 book, *Muerte en Juárez* (Death in Juarez). The book chronicles her investigation into the disappearance and murder of her friend, Heidi Saluquet.

Issue not exclusive to Saskatchewan

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The goals of the event were to raise awareness of sexualized racism, and to provide support networks for families of missing women.

In two years, another conference will be held to check up on the investigations into missing women.

Anderson, whose scholarly work revolves around colonialism and feminism, said she is relatively new to the topic of missing women. She wants the next conference to be held elsewhere because the issue is not exclusive to Saskatchewan.

"I'd like to see other people scoop up the pieces and put it together themselves," she said. "Those who are involved in it will talk and talk but it does no good if nobody will listen."

Keynote speaker Morningstar Mercredi believes that as an Indigenous woman, she can't afford to be a victim.

"If you're an Aboriginal child, or an Aboriginal woman, be careful," she said. "Your life could depend on it."

Mercredi points out that the sexual exploitation of Aboriginal children and women isn't a twentieth century issue, nor is it distinct to Canada – there are connections between missing women in Saskatchewan and in Mexico, among other places.

"Their plight is our plight," she said.

Citing the sexual assault of a 12-year-old Cree girl near Tisdale, Mercredi said the judge's decision in 2001 not to sentence the three men who assaulted the girl shows that Saskatchewan courts condone this kind of behaviour. The case inspired her to write the book "Morningstar: Warrior Spirit" wherein she pays homage to the victim. "It's time to honour the warrior within all of us," she said.

Timeline: Daleen Kay Bosse (Muskego) Murder



• **May 18, 2004:** 25-year-old Daleen Kay Bosse (Muskego), from the Onion Lake First Nation, attended an Assembly of First Nations function in Saskatoon and then went out to a downtown nightclub with family and friends. At the time, Bosse was studying Education at the University of Saskatchewan and had just finished her teaching practicum.

• **May 19, 2004:** Bosse, who was living with her husband and three-year-old daughter, didn't return home. Her parents, Pauline and Herb Muskego, were concerned, so they went to the Saskatoon Police Service to file a missing persons report. They say they were told to wait 48 hours in case Bosse came home, so they returned on May 21, 2004.

• **June 4, 2004:** Bosse's car was found and floor mats and seat covers were supposedly missing.

• **June 2004:** The Muskegos contracted a private investigator and also enlisted the help of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the chief of the Onion Lake First Nation to attend meetings with the police. An award of \$5,000 was offered to anyone who helps locate Bosse.

• **January 2005:** Saskatoon Police Service transferred the case from investigations to their major crimes unit.

• **May 2005:** Muskego family holds first annual walk to raise awareness about their missing daughter. They, along with friends, walk from Onion Lake First Nation to Saskatoon. It would become an annual event.

• **July 2008:** Muskego family holds fourth and final walk for their daughter. They say their culture protocol says to do things in four, so they plan to do something other than a walk to honour their daughter.

• **August 8, 2008:** Saskatoon police find Bosse's remains in a secluded, treed area near Warman that police believe was used by young people for parties.

• **August 10, 2008:** 30-year-old Douglas Hales was arrested in a Saskatoon parking lot in connection with Bosse's body being found

• **August 11, 2008:** Hales made his first court appearance to a Saskatoon provincial courtroom packed with Muskego family and friends. He is charged with first degree murder and offering an indignity to a human body for setting Bosse's remains on fire. The Saskatoon Police Service holds a news conference to talk about the arrest but can offer little information, saying it will come out in the trial. The FSIN offers its condolences to the Muskego family.

• **August 12, 2008:** Hales makes his second appearance in court and is remanded to custody until his next appearance. The Native Women's Association of Canada offers condolences to the Muskego family and speaks on its behalf at a news conference.

• **September 9, 2008:** Hales makes his third court appearance in Saskatoon.



Office of the Treaty Commissioner

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The Honourable Bill McKnight PC,
Treaty Commissioner

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