

TRANSCRIPT OF FIFTH ESTATE PROGRAM**THE RECKONING: SECRETS UNEARTHED BY TK'EMLUPS TE
SECWEPEMC****13 JANUARY 2022**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8wXExEHs8>

[Minute 12:50]

Gillian Findlay: For generations the stories were shared in whispers. But last spring the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc First Nation made a decision to see if science could confirm what oral tradition told them.

Video footage of Sarah Beaulieu and her two team members using a GPR machine, not in the apple orchard, but on the site of the new grocery store across the highway from the former Kamloops Indian Residential School.

Sarah Beaulieu: We're looking for a grave shaft for the most part. We can't see bones. We can't see bodies. OK, we're on line 9.

Gillian Findlay: Archaeologist Sarah Beaulieu is an expert in ground penetrating radar. She and her team were hired to look for unmarked graves, starting with the apple orchard.

Sarah Beaulieu: A grave shaft is a soil disturbance. When you dig a grave, and then you put the soil back on top of it that stratigraphy changes from where the burial is. And so I'm looking for that soil disturbance for the most part.

Diana Jules: I've always known since I was a little kid that there was children that were buried.

Gillian Findlay: Diana Jules is the driving force behind the effort. She runs the local museum at the community's Heritage Park, land that includes the old orchard.

Diana Jules: To me, these children are real. It's like, not that they're my children, but it's like I'm a caretaker of them.

Ted Gottfriedson: My whole life, it was something you grew up knowing. It's like you know the sky is blue without really talking about the sky being blue. You just know.

Gillian Findlay: Ted Gottfriedson oversees the museum. In 2019 they got some grant money to upgrade the park.

Ted Gottfriedson: It's a park that we've established, and it has traditional plants. It has some traditional dwellings, that sort of thing. So we applied for funding to get some maintenance work done there, upgrade it a bit.

Gillian Findlay: But then came covid. The maintenance was cancelled. And all of a sudden, there was money to spend.

Ted Gottfriedson: So uh, we met, and uh, Diena, she said, We should look for the, look for the kids.

Diena Jules: We don't have any information confirming where they are. So I said, I want to, for my own, you know, comfort, I guess, is I want to confirm where they are.

Gillian Findlay: The work started on the May long weekend, Dr Beaulieu looking for what she calls subsurface anomalies.

Sarah Beaulieu: When you have a potential coffin or casket or box or a shrouded burial, these can show up differently. Um, whether it be wood or metal reflects differently on the screen. Uh, the time of the burial as well, if it's, you know, pre mechanical excavation, the burials tend to be a little bit more shallow, or if they were excavated in the winter. And the depth of burial is also affected by the size of the individual as well. So children's burials would be shallower than an adult burial. And so these are all different things that I'm considering when I'm looking at anomalies.

Gillian Findlay: That weekend Ted and Diena were among the very few who knew the work was happening, and he didn't have a lot of expectations.

Ted Gottfriedson: Maybe there's none. Hopefully there's none. Right? I don't want to see it happening as it, as it unfolded. Emotionally that would have been too hard for me, and I, I know that about myself.

Gillian Findlay: But Diena made a point of going to the orchard to watch the survey and to comfort the children she believes can hear her.

Diena Jules: I said, Don't be afraid. They are just here looking for you. They are going to be confirming what our oral history has told us, what I've always known. You know, it's going to be OK. We're here to find you, finally.

Gillian Findlay: No one was prepared for the scale of what they found.

[Minute 24:53]:

Diena Jules: I pray that you will help all of the little ones that are down here. I pray that you'll help them find the peace that they need so that they'll be able to travel back home.

Gillian Findlay: Every Friday afternoon the apple orchard beside the Kamloops Indian Residential School comes alive with the sound of drumming and singing, a procession of remembrance for the more than 200 former students they believe are buried here.

Diana Jules: We have to keep praying to them. We have to keep letting them know that they are not forgotten, that they will never be forgotten. I know they're there. Lots of other people know they're there. But until they are uh excavated there'll always be those people that will say, Well maybe they're not.

Ted Gottfriedson: We do get those folks that believe we're lying, that believe we're doing this for money, that you know we're just manipulators, I guess would be a, a word to use. I've even had emails that said that they were probably just brats anyway. I, I, I'm like, this is, these are, they're people that I don't understand how they can feel that way towards any other human being.

Sarah Beaulieu: I have no doubt that there are burials there. Ground penetrating radar is the scientific approach, but we really need to hold uh Indigenous knowledge systems, oral tellings, to an equal space. A number of the anomalies are smaller. They are shallower, which is indicative of a child's burial, but to know what type of remains they are, whether they're adult, child, ancestral, you wouldn't know until you excavated.

Gillian Findlay: And that presented the Tk'emlups Nation with a dilemma.

Ted Gottfriedson: For our people it's really bad to exhume anyone. You know, their final resting place is actually sacred ground in every sense of the word. They must be left alone. We do have elders who do want those children to stay there, without a doubt, but our committee has discussed it and they have said that they should be exhumed.

Manny Jules: I went around the table asking all of the family heads what they felt should happen and every one, every one of the representatives said those little ones uh should be sent home because that's what we would want.

Gillian Findlay: Former Tk'emlups Chief Manny Jules heads the committee that made the decision to exhume.

Manny Jules: Our number one job is to make sure that they have a safe return home with all of the, the honour and respect that they didn't receive in life that they're given in their afterlife.

Gillian Findlay: But identifying remains takes DNA analysis. Determining how someone died requires even more work.