



Grand Council Treaty #3

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Grand Council Treaty #3 Welcomes Guilty Verdict in Bushby Trial

Ogichidaa Francis Kavanaugh and Grand Council Treaty #3 welcome the guilty verdict in the Bushby trial.

“I was relieved to hear the guilty verdict because far too often our people are let down by the justice system and sadly we have become accustomed to it,” said Ogichidaa Francis Kavanaugh. “It was painful to follow this case as the defence relied on victim blaming as though indigenous peoples need to justify their humanity. My thoughts and prayers are with the Kentner family and the community of Wabigoon Lake during this heartbreaking experience.”

Barbara Kentner passed away at age 34 after being struck by a trailer hitch thrown by Brayden Bushby from a moving vehicle in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Justice Pierce rejected the victim-blaming defence arguments and decided that Bushby’s assault was a “contributing cause” of Kentner’s death. It was also decided that injury to Kentner was a foreseeable result of this assault and that the act was “objectively dangerous.”

This case, like many similar cases across Canada, is an example of the systemic racism and violence experienced by indigenous peoples every single day. This systemic racism causes society at large to place less value on indigenous lives and often results in the courts determining that indigenous peoples are responsible for their own deaths.

This tragedy cannot be separated from the larger issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls as we know that indigenous women are often specifically targeted with violence with very little consequence. This is why a guilty verdict in this case is a relief to indigenous peoples across Canada.

Bushby was found guilty of manslaughter and conditionally guilty of aggravated assault. The sentencing hearing is scheduled for February 9, 2021.

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