

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

News Release

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First Nations Leadership Council disgusted by comedy group profiteering off the Pickton mass murder case

(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵw̓xwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) is deeply offended by the Albertan comedy group The Danger Cats selling t-shirts with the cartoon image of BC serial killer Robert William Pickton and reprehensible text referencing the victims. Pickton, who was convicted of six murders in 2007, is connected to at least 49 murders of women, many of whom were Indigenous and survival sex workers.

The FNLC is calling on Sam Walker, Brendan Blacquier, and Brett Forte, together as The Danger Cats, to remove the t-shirt from their merchandise and to publicly apologize to the families and communities who lost loved ones to Pickton who were deeply re-traumatized by their actions. Further, the FNLC urges the host venues to cancel bookings of any performers who make light of gender-based violence and deepen harm towards victims and survivors.

"Already faced with the memories of the devastating deaths of their loved ones, the families of the victims should not have to suffer such an appalling attempt at humour," said Regional Chief Terry Teegee of the BC Assembly of First Nations. "The members of this so-called comedy group may try to defend this display of poor taste as social commentary and comedy, but the despicable crimes of Robert Pickton and his victims are not something to be made fun of."

"I am absolutely astounded and offended that anyone would sink low enough to actually attempt to joke about, and profit from, Robert Pickton's depraved and despicable acts of murderous violence against women. Such callous disregard is yet another example of why we continue to struggle with missing and murdered Indigenous women in this country. To those who will argue that this constitutes free speech; free speech comes with a responsibility to our collective society and with the duty to be accountable and face the consequences of your actions and words. Simply put, if the group has any shred of decency, they will issue a public apology to the families of the victims of Robert Pickton and will donate the proceeds from any sale of these t-shirts to violence against women support groups" said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

"It is shocking to think anyone would trivialize and make light the heinous crimes of Robert Pickton as a means to sell t-shirts for profit. Demeaning rhetoric and imagery such as this symbolizes women as disposable objects", said Cheryl Casimer of the First Nations Summit Political Executive. "The senseless murder of women should never be the subject of comedy. In doing so, The Danger Cats have shown little regard for common civility and compassion. We are pleased that the group's comedy show, scheduled to take place next month in New Westminster, has been cancelled following a public petition on [Change.org](https://www.change.org)," added Cheryl Casimer of the First Nations Summit Political Executive.

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The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN), First Nations Summit (FNS), and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC).

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