

New

# First Nations student deaths inquest: School support worker testifies

Court will also hear from Thunder Bay police officers Thursday

[CBC News](#) Posted: Nov 05, 2015 12:55 PM ET Last Updated: Nov 05, 2015 12:55 PM ET

The school support worker for Jethro Anderson testified Thursday at the coroner's inquest into his death. Anderson is one of seven First Nation students whose deaths in Thunder Bay are the subject of the inquest. All had left their remote northern Ontario communities to attend school in the city.

- [Boarding home parent testifies at inquest](#)

Thunder Bay police officers who were involved in the investigation of Anderson's death in 2000 are also expected to testify at the inquest Thursday.

Anderson's aunt raised concerns in her Wednesday testimony about the police response to Anderson's disappearance. He was missing for two weeks before searchers from Kasabonika Lake First Nation found his body in the Kaministiquia River in Thunder Bay.

Below is a look at the some of the proceedings from CBC reporter Jody Porter in the courtroom.

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Inquest resumes with Derek Donnio, an education counsellor at Dennis Franklin Cromarty School when Jethro Anderson died, on stand [#cbctb](#)

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Donnio calls Jethro 'Mr. Anderson', says he was respectful, 'he was a good boy, from what I remember' [#cbctb](#)

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'Attendance was an issue,' Donnio says of Jethro. 'He did exhibit behaviour problems as relates to alcohol.' [#cbctb](#)

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Donnio asked about his involvement in search for Jethro. 'That time was a blur,' he says [#cbctb](#)

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Donnio was Jethro's 'worker' at the school, says he was 'beyond' the 3 strikes policy that sent students home for bad behaviour [#cbctb](#)

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Donnio says Jethro, like other students with 3 strikes, was offered an 'extended contract' to stay at school. [#cbctb](#)

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'He did know he was in danger of being sent home,' Donnio says. 'You could tell he didn't like what he was hearing' [#cbctb](#)

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'It's all fuzzy to me,' Donnio says when pressed about his memory of specific conversations with Jethro or his boarding parents [#cbctb](#)

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Nishnawbe Aski Nation lawyer Meaghan Daniel asks whether 3 strike rule was for student safety. Donnio says yes [#cbctb](#)

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Daniel asks: if you couldn't keep them safe then the best thing to do was to send them back to their parents who could? Donnio: yes [#cbctb](#)

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Lawyer for provincial advocate for children & youth asks if Donnio had info about whether Jethro would be safe back home. Donnio: no [#cbctb](#)

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PACY lawyer Chantelle Bryson: but your only option was to send him home to keep him safe? Donnio: yes [#cbctb](#)

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Under questioning from police lawyer Donnio says Jethro's boarding home parent called for after hours support for Jethro 2x per week [#cbctb](#)

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Donnio says he understands brding home parent didn't call more often b/c 'fear of having him sent home & missing out on education' [#cbctb](#)

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Nishnawbe Aski Nation lawyer raises objection w/ witness's use of term 'they' when referring to home-brew in First Nations [#cbctb](#)

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NAN lawyer Julian Falconer: 'the they concept just reinforces some of the concerns' raised by the inquest [#cbctb](#)

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Presiding coroner Dr. Eden: 'I don't see the they as pointing to any group in particular' [#cbctb](#)

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Donnio says each support worker at school in 1st year was responsible for about 75 students. 'It was a lot' [#cbctb](#)

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Next witness Allan Shorrock was Detective Sgt. w/ [#tbay](#) police at time of Jethro Anderson's death, now teaches at police college [#cbctb](#)

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Shorrock describing [#tbay](#) police use of pneumatic tubes for inter-office communications. [#cbctb](#)

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Shorrock: police received call from man who found cap at the Kam River park, washed it and wore it b/4 seeing poster of Jethro in it [#cbctb](#)

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Police took the cap to the school, where boarding parent Dora Morris identified it as Jethro's [#cbctb](#)

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At time of Jethro's disappearance, Shorrock says [#tbay](#) police had volunteer underwater search unit, who did a dive at Kam River park [#cbctb](#)

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Shorrock says there was 6 day gap between report of Jethro being missing and the involvement of [#tbay](#) police criminal investigators [#cbctb](#)

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Shorrock identified the gap in 2000 as a 'systemic' gap. 'I saw the gap existed, why it existed, I don't know,' he says [#cbctb](#)

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Shorrock says he does not know about the OPP re-investigation of all 7 First Nation student deaths. [#cbctb](#)

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Shorrock being shown [#tbay](#) news release from Nov. 11, 2000, the day Jethro's body was found [#cbctb](#)

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Police news release from day Jethro was found says 'at this point foul play is not suspected' [#cbctb](#)

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Shorrock says 'people reading that would believe police ruled out foul play, but I don't believe we had' [#cbctb](#)

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The internal police missing persons report refers to Jethro Anderson being a student at 'the Native school'. [#cbctb](#)

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During cross exam. NAN lawyer Julian Falconer outlines 3 ways in which Jethro Anderson police investigation 'not exactly ideal' [#cbctb](#)

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Falconer: those w/ expertise and resources to investigate disappearances not brought in 5 or 6 days 1/3 [#cbctb](#)

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Falconer: 'an officer, yet to be identified, utters a racist epithet' to Jethro's aunt when she reports him missing 2/3 [#cbctb](#)

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Falconer: 'By Nov. 11, foul play is already ruled out' in police news release to public 3/3 [#cbctb](#)

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Shorrock says he doesn't know how his concern about 'systemic gap' in reporting missing person to criminal investigators addressed [#cbctb](#)

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Shorrock asked about notes from officers he supervised that show school staff ask for police to search Kam River on Nov. 4. [#cbctb](#)

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The police dive team searched the river Nov. 9. First Nations search team in borrowed boat found Jethro on Nov. 11 [#cbctb](#)

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Shorrock says he understands missing persons report for Jethro would have been broadcast to 'all units' within an hour of filing [#cbctb](#)

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Shorrock says Jethro's disappearance fell 'slightly below' an 'immediate priority' for police. 1/2 [#cbctb](#)

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Shorrock says top priority for missing persons = children under 12 or 12-15, no history of running away 2/2 [#cbctb](#)

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