



What does the mishandling of Stacy DeBungee's death reveal about systemic racism in Canadian police forces?

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Stacy DeBungee's body was found in the McIntyre River in Thunder Bay on Oct. 19, 2015. (CBC)



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Stacy DeBungee was 41-years-old in 2015, when he was found dead in the McIntyre river in Thunder Bay, Ont.

Within hours, police concluded he was not murdered and that his death was not a crime.

[In a story first reported by the CBC's Fifth Estate](#), a report now confirms what many have said in the years since — that the local police failed to properly investigate his death because he was

Indigenous.

This is the latest installment in a long history of Indigenous people being treated as less worthy victims by police services across the country.

- Jonathan Rudin, lawyer and program director of Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto

But this report is not a surprise to Stacy's brother Brad DeBungee, who says he struggled to get the police to look into Stacy's death.

"They tried to say it was ongoing investigation when they weren't really looking into the matter," DeBungee told *The Current's* Anna Maria Tremonti.

"I doubt there'll ever be justice for him."



The seven students who have died in Thunder Bay since 2000 are, from top left, Jethro Anderson, 15, Curran Strang, 18, Paul Panacheese, 17, Robyn Harper, 18, Reggie Bushie, 15, Kyle Morriseau, 17, and Jordan Wabasse, 15. (CBC)

Toronto Star reporter Tanya Talaga says there are parallels between DeBungee's death and the deaths of seven Indigenous students between 2000 and 2011. Those incidents are the focus of her recent book *Seven Fallen Feathers: Racism, Death and Hard Truth in a Northern City*.

"Many of the similarities that we saw with Stacy DeBungee and how the police didn't investigate into his death, you could see those same circumstances in the deaths of some of the kids."

Jonathan Rudin, a lawyer who represented families at the 2016 inquest into the deaths of the seven Indigenous students, says DeBungee's death is part of a systemic issue.

"This is the latest installment in a long history of Indigenous people being treated as less worthy victims by police services across the country."

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This segment was produced by The Current's Geoff Turner, Ines Colabrese and Jason Vermes.

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