

Northern B.C. Woman Launches Class Action Suit for Sixties Scoop

By [250 News](#)

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Vancouver, B.C. – A Northern B.C. woman taken from her family and the Gitksan First Nation in 1964 when she was seven years old has launched a class action lawsuit against the federal government.

Sharon Russell has launched the legal action on behalf of Aboriginal British Columbians that suffered the same fate during what came to be known as the "Sixties' Scoop". The suit alleges that between 1962 and 1996, the federal government negligently delegated Indian child welfare services to the Province of B.C. and took no steps to prevent children from losing their Aboriginal identity when they were placed in foster homes and adopted by non-Aboriginal families.

According to lawyer Jason Murray, Russell's story is not unique. He says thousands of First Nations children were removed from their communities by the car and busload and scattered around the world to non-Aboriginal families in Canada, the United States, and Europe.

"It really is an extension of the Residential School system. Just as the Residential School system was closing down, was transitioning out, the scoop began. And the Residential Schools, one of the main purposes they existed was to eradicate Aboriginal culture, to integrate and assimilate Aboriginal children into non-Aboriginal society, and this is just a furtherance of that policy."

Sharon Russell says survivors "lost a lot because taking us away robbed us of our language and culture not to mention the chance to learn important parenting skills."

Murray says the lawsuit isn't about vengeance, but a chance for survivors like Russell to find justice.

A similar class action was given court approval in Ontario in 2010, but Murray says it may be some time before a decision to certify this particular suit.

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