



[Daniel Voshart](#)

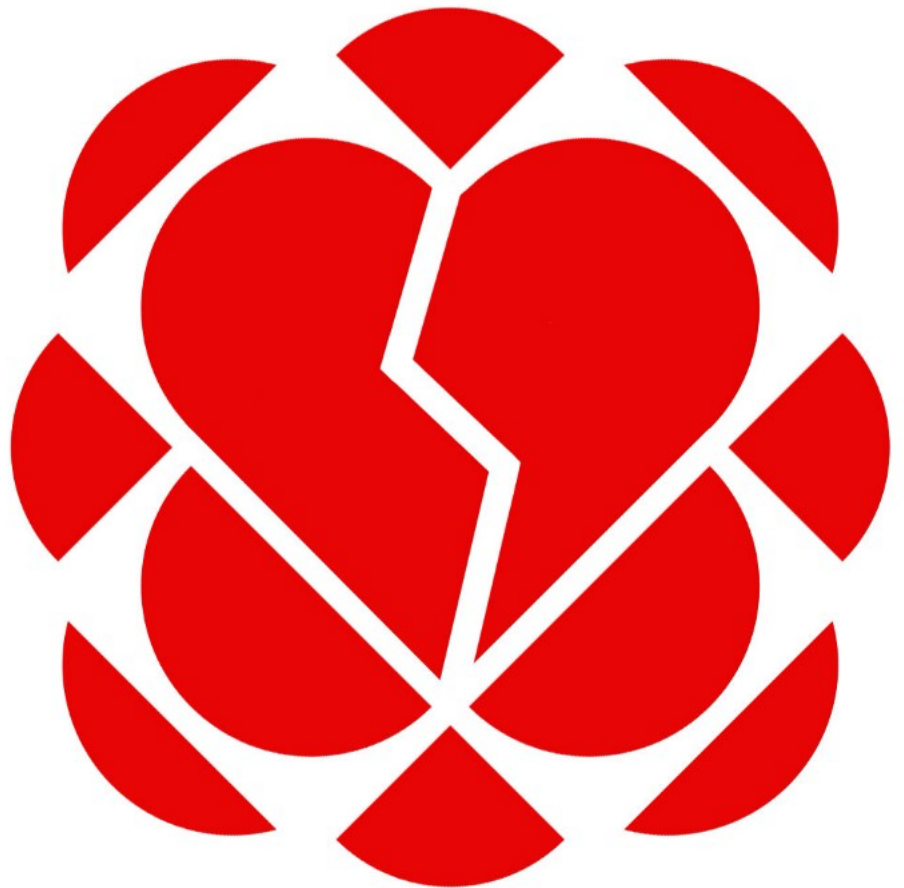
Apr 9, 2021

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# CBC's Misuse of Genealogy to Attack Indigenous Identity

Publicly broadcasting genealogical quackery

Over the last two years, the government-funded Crown corporation *CBC* has ramped up enforcement of a narrowed definition of Indigenous with a clever use of non-Indigenous reporters, lateral violence and arguments founded in [Eugenics](#).

*TRIGGER WARNING. Topics include: mental health, systemic racism, sexism, antisemitism, genocide and white supremacy.*

As someone who has documented cultural exchange programs with First Nation communities, trained as an expert witness, and who collaborates on international forensic identification projects, I made every effort to make the *CBC* aware of the hostile nature of recent articles regarding Indigenous identity. Over the past three months I've communicated my concerns to the *CBC* Ombudsman Jack Nagler who forwarded them to Editor in Chief of *CBC News* Brodie Fenlon and Managing Editor of *CBC Manitoba* Melanie Verhaeghe.

The most disturbing issue is that the genealogist Dominique Ritchot, who the *CBC* has presented as a '[specialist](#)' or having '[expertise](#)', has a 2010 blog [post on identity that cites Nazi-era eugenics](#). This article was [easily found by clicking the website listed on their Twitter](#) or

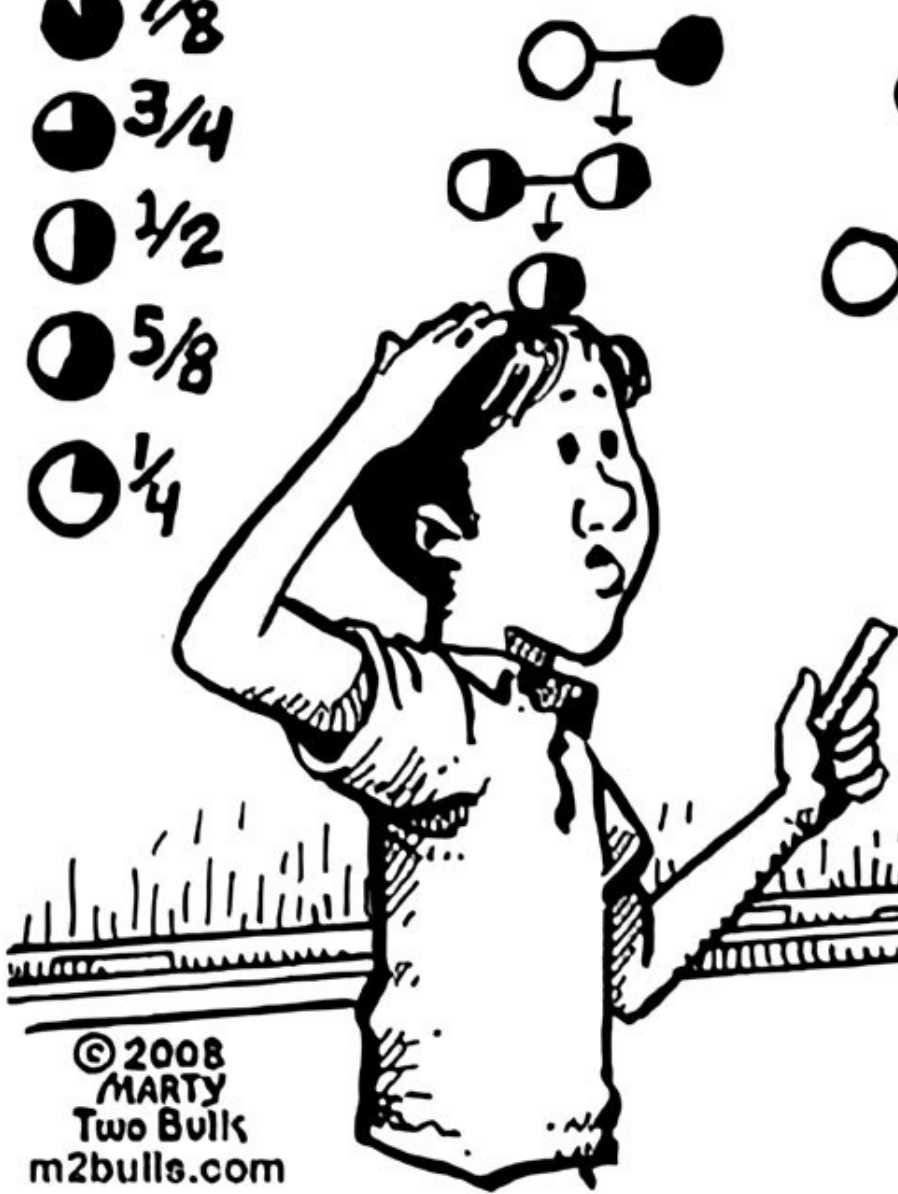
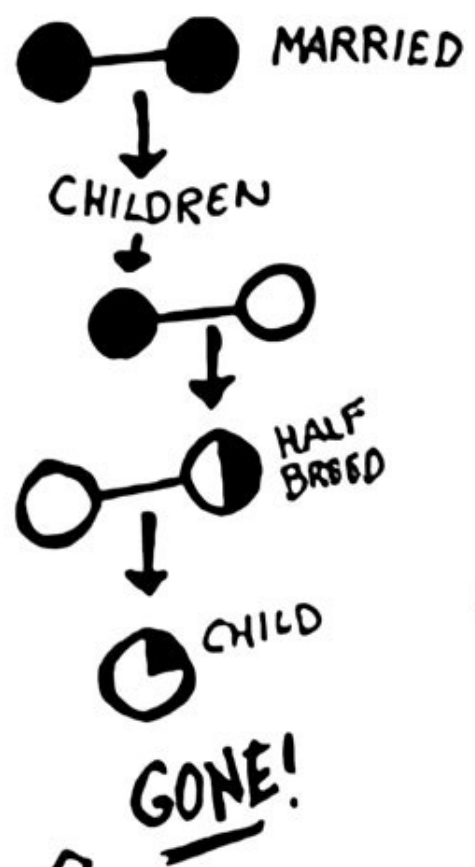
searching their name on Google. Ritchot [shared a similar post on identity one year earlier to a genealogy forum.](#)

Ritchot believes that their Indigenous “genetic baggage”<sup>1</sup> has been bred out of themselves and she provides free ‘research’ on the topic to people who will listen. [Eugenics](#) is the antithesis of humanism. It grants its proponents a pseudoscientific reason to subjugate people.

*(Paragraph added April 13th)* Indigenous women were disproportionately sterilized by the eugenics movement in Canada. The hierarchy of the Catholic Church, likely aware of the long history of [mixing](#) in New France, and promoting large families for political purposes, believed they could instead “[breed the Indian out](#)” of the population.

# BLOOD QUANTUM

- NON-INDIAN
- FULL BLOOD
- ◐  $7/8$
- ◑  $3/4$
- ◒  $1/2$
- ◓  $5/8$
- ◔  $1/4$



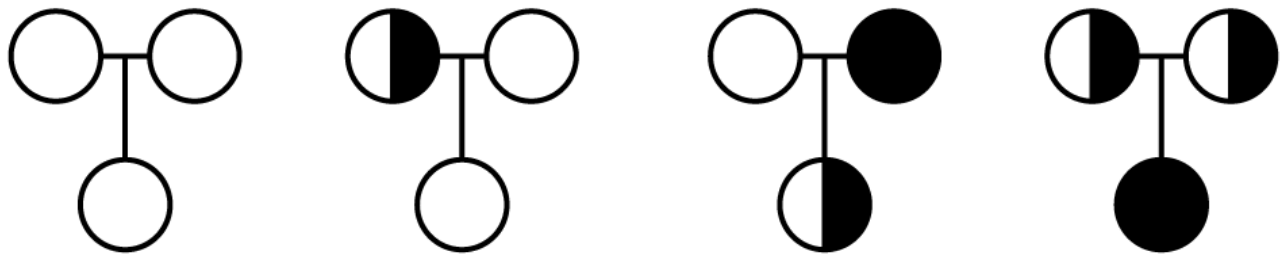
© 2008  
MARTY  
Two Bulls  
m2bulls.com

Hey wait a minute, we're disapp

“BLOOD QUANTUM” by Marty Two Bulls, a Native American Political Cartoonist & Artist, Oglala Lakota. 2008.

(Canada uses [6\(1\) and 6\(2\) Indian Status](#) instead of “Blood Quantum” but the results are nearly identical.)

## CANADA INDIAN STATUS



-  = 6(1) Indian Status in Canada
-  = 6(2) Indian Status in Canada
-  = No Indian Status in Canada

Current [Canadian Indian Status](#). Diagram by author.

DNA identification has evolved rapidly since it was discovered in the 80's. Yet in their blog, Ritchot bases her knowledge about modern genetic issues on the 1945 book *L'HÉRÉDITÉ ET L'HOMME* [EN: HEREDITY AND MAN]. It is a tomb of pseudoscience. The book is

from the collection “France Forever” and describes how among “the first settlers of Quebec, deprived of medical care and exposed to the harsh climate, the infant mortality filter selected a robust breed. Modern progress, on the other hand, extends the average length of life by protecting unfit and crazed people once doomed to a brief existence.”<sup>2</sup> It states “Whites have an average IQ of 100, Native Americans 70, Negroes in the southern United States, 75”<sup>3</sup> but that “A black elite” is perfectly capable of leading Blacks<sup>4</sup>. The book is against race-mixing; and advocates sterilization of the “unfit”. The book cites the extremist literature of [Henschel](#) the man who sought to renew the Aryan race through selective breeding. He spawned the anti-Semitic, anti-Slavic movement that [predated, but was eventually absorbed into, the Nazi party](#). The phrase “[Pure race](#)”<sup>5</sup> show up 26 times in the book’s Google Books preview.

In addition to citing proto-Nazis the book, quite literally, cites Nazi Germany’s [Law for The Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring](#) moralizing only a few elements insofar as they are “specifically condemned by the encyclical Casti connubii [Pope Pius XI](1930) and by the Holy Office (1931)”<sup>6</sup>. The book’s author advocates for prenuptial examination of women saying “Far from being an attack on freedom, it is an elementary act of justice: to hide serious anomalies is to deceive the spouse. Few people would happily marry someone with venereal disease or hereditary mental defects.”<sup>7</sup>



Left: [Jacques Rousseau](#) among Inuit children in 1948. Right: Scan of *L'HÉRÉDITÉ ET L'HOMME* 1945. Purchased in January 2021. [Link to partial translation](#).

The book, Ritchot formed her identity around, is a pro-Eugenics, misogynistic, anti race mixing, French (~white) supremacist screed. The author Jacques Rousseau (1905–1970) was [a devout Catholic](#) and a 1946 review of the book said prospective readers “[will presumably be drawn chiefly from the ranks of the Catholic Church](#)”<sup>8</sup>. The symptoms of reading this vile pseudoscience can be found in Ritchot’s thousands of posts in numerous genealogy forums from 2007 to the present. Ritchot’s blog [celebrates people with pure French lineage](#) Title:

“*Québécois pur laine*”. She recently tweeted about a [[common and treatable](#)] foot deformity to mock a soccer team (“Clubfoot” being play on words of “Club de foot”).





**Dominique (en veillant su'l perron) Ritchot** 🤔 @DomiRitchot

On peut cependant s'entendre sur une chose: Club de foot  
un nom à coucher dehors.



**Diane H.** 🤔 📚 🏖️ 🛍️ 🚗 @Floradora65 · Jan 20

S'ils jouent mal, on va traduire par club de pied(s)



**Dominique (en veillant su'l perron) Ritchot** 🤔

@DomiRitchot

Replying to @Floradora65 and @NiltonJorge

Clubfoot se traduit par pied bot. Ils ont fait  
recherches!

[Translate Tweet](#)



Dominique Ritchot's [Jan 20, 2021 Tweet](#). Shared with CBC March 4th, 2021.

*CBC News*' [second response](#) to my [January 29th email](#) said “Clearly, you have your own concerns with [Ritchot's] credentials that are not shared by CBC News, and I invite you to take that up with her if you so desire.”

Ritchot blocked me back in December after requesting a works consulted. Her final tweet to me stated “[I'm in no obligation to answer any of your question. I'm done with you.](#)”

Besides Ritchot, the *CBC* also quotes genealogists Eric Pouliot-Thisdale, Darryl Leroux [and other academics, pundits and elders with exclusionary definitions of Métis](#)<sup>9</sup>. Thisdale is a self-taught genealogist who [directly cited Dominique](#) for providing “primary research clues” for his *Facebook* post that was reported on by *CBC*. Leroux is [quoted in 10 CBC stories](#), he is a [narrow-minded](#) academic who runs *raceshifting.com* and recently published the book [Distorted Descent](#). He cites Ritchot 15 times in his book and refers to her as a “[professional genealogist](#)” (oddly, he does this without actually using her last name). Leroux uses Ritchot to move [his arguments](#). He writes in the first chapter “[In the hundreds of forum posts that I have read, Dominique was the clearest](#)”. Leroux has [announced his next targets](#): University Professors.

Broadly speaking, there are Canadians with a ‘together but separate’ worldview. Anti culture mixing and anti “race” mixing. There are many

people who refer to non-Métis National Council as ‘faux Métis’ or ‘pretendians’. The promotion of these disputes in the media sews division and it is sickening to think *CBC*’s vision of multiculturalism is actually a form of soft apartheid. Willing to quote haters to meet those ends.

Regardless of agenda, the genealogist’s approach to Blood Quantum (which I will charitably translate as DNA-based) genealogy doesn’t withstand an ounce of modern scientific rigor. Genealogy that seems paper-accurate is not ground-truth accurate. Here are some reasons:

- 1. Documents (typically church documents) do not explain the higher percent of Indigenous DNA versus genealogy:** Over half of Quebec individuals in a pair of similar studies had genealogy indicating Indigenous ancestry but only a fraction showed up on paper. The 2012 study [[n=794](#)] compared maternal lineage DNA (mitochondrial DNA) versus genealogy which indicated most Indigenous women in these lineages were obscured or hidden for reasons that can only be speculated. The 2013 study [[n=205](#)] compared genealogical records with whole DNA analysis (autosomal DNA) [suggesting](#) only ~20% of the expected “Native American ancestry” was showing up on genealogical records. (*Paragraph updated: June 14, 2021*)
- 2. False identification in documents:** When you have mixed ancestry and your government: stalks, shames and terrorizes Indigenous people (children abducted, used for

experimental drug treatments, sterilized, condemned as heathens etc.) would you not expect public and private identities to be different?

3. **Statistical uncertainty in connections:** The rates of [NPEs \(Not Parent Expected or Non-Paternal Event\)](#) in genealogy is in the [single digit percent for each generation](#). Errors compound for each generation (i.e. there is a ~10% chance one parent within a great grandparent tree is inaccurate. Everyone likes to think they are exempt because biological determinism is woven into our language ‘like father like son’ etc.). With thousands of connections there are guaranteed to be errors. Genetic genealogists know this and accordingly don’t make judgements on family trees prior to confirmation. This often takes years.
4. **Genealogy websites are unreliable:** [Ancestry websites all](#) have “AS IS” legal disclaimers. Their structure is built on nuclear family kinships. They don’t recognize ceremonial adoption. Most trees published are anonymously built, require no primary source documents, contain no public changelogs and no official oversight. They encourage genealogical fanfiction.

NOTE: I am using the umbrella term “Indigenous,” not “Indian”, “Métis Nation” (note the uppercase) or “First Nation.”<sup>10</sup>

Free genealogy forums are, at best, a lead. Many names lack primary source documentation. When primary source documents do exist,

people fall into two camps: those who find ancestors without a documentation of origin are inclined to believe they are Indigenous and keep looking for answers, others are content with a European origin and stop looking. Ritchot is very active in these forums [sewing doubt](#) in the first category<sup>11</sup> (she has no oral history and believes she is genetically pure French through Nazi-era pseudoscience). Leroux, for his book, claims to have read all these forum threads and widely shares Ritchot's perspective.

The first sentence on [CBC's Journalistic Standards and Practices](#) on sourcing states news gathering “lives and dies based on the quality of its sources of information.” Stories that should have died got published. Stories that could have affirmed identities did the opposite.

*CBC's* mandate to “reflect the multicultural and multiracial nature of Canada” is at odds with quoting people who make a name for themselves by invalidating strangers on the internet. After a century of legislated cultural genocide, *CBC* should be encouraging reconnection.

Here are some *CBC* stories that have relied on speculative genealogy:

- [Metis for some, usurpers for others](#) [Translated] (Belzile, Jan 21 2021) | cites: Leroux, Thisdale.

- [City councilor Marie-Josée Parent maintains she is Indigenous](#) [Translated] (Belzile, Jan 21 2021) | cites: Ritchot
- [Trickster producers resign amid Michelle Latimer Indigenous identity questions](#) (Deer & Barrera, Dec 18 2020) | cites: Ritchot
- [Award-winning filmmaker Michelle Latimer's Indigenous identity under scrutiny](#) (Deer & Barrera, Dec 17 2020) | cites Ritchot
- [Questioning the origins of an indigenous activist; leaders denounce](#) [Translated](Niosi, Feb 7 2020) | cites Ritchot, Thisdale
- [Montreal city councillor steps down as reconciliation advisor after Indigenous identity questioned](#) (Deer, Nov 5 2019) | cites Ritchot
- [Montreal elected official accused of lying claiming to be Indigenous](#) [Translated] (Niosi, Nov 5 2019) | cites Ritchot, Thisdale & Leroux
- [4 federal candidates accused of Indigenous identity appropriation by Halifax academic](#) (Deer & Barrera, Oct 10 2019) | cites Ritchot & Leroux

### **CBC Won't Stop Quoting A Eugenicist**

Why is Dominique Ritchot still being quoted?

voshart.medium.com

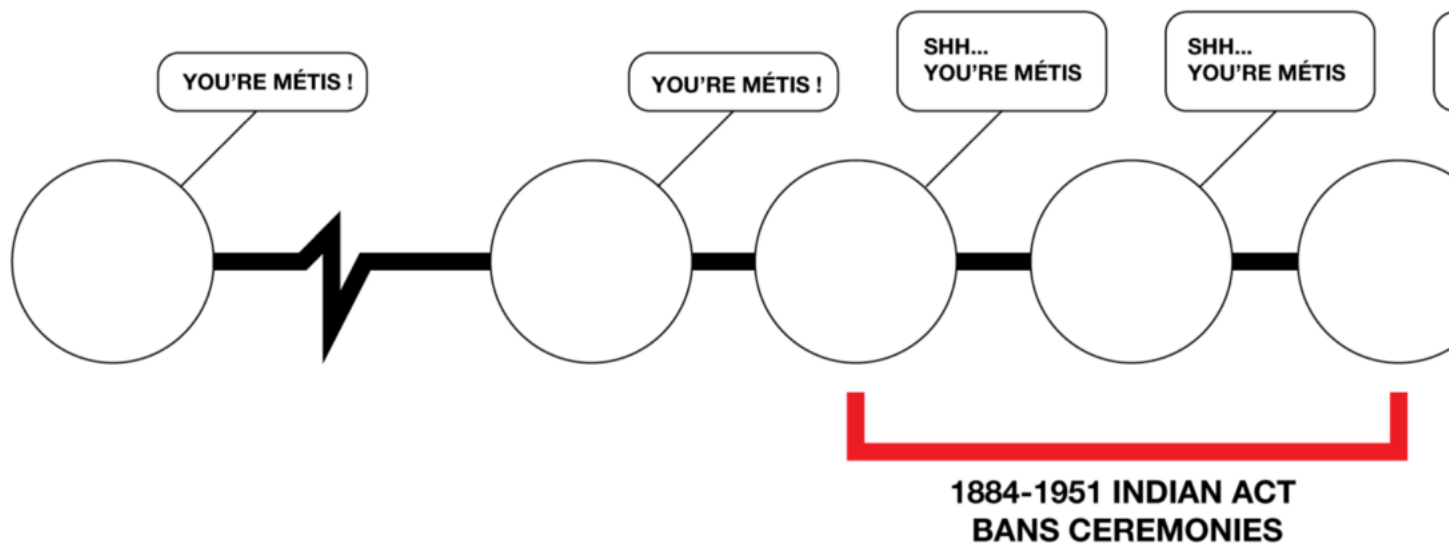
Barrera, the co-author of several of these stories, started the genealogical attacks with a [viral APTN story](#) re-reported by the CBC:

- [Joseph Boyden must take responsibility for misrepresenting heritage, says Indigenous writer](#) (CBC, Dec 28 2016) (I have asked Barrera if Ritchot was one of his three genealogy sources for the [original APTN story](#). No response.)

The targets are put in an impossible position. They are not provided with the source research material. Journalistic privilege is being used to bludgeon people's identity and the result is a brutal and unwarranted public shaming. Typically, when the target is a woman they have stepped down from their job to avoid conflict.

When oral history is denigrated the target may need years and resources of both time and money to mount a concise defense. But who would believe them at that point? An expert has weighed in. (And they [weigh in again](#) even when they do mount a defense)

## MÉTIS ORAL HISTORY



### Rumor story formula about Example Person (EP)

**Title:** Is EP really who they say they are?

**Subheading:** *People are asking questions about EP.*

EP claims they are telling the truth. EP claims their family history is accurate. We spoke with a genealogist and they said something different and ‘the documents don’t lie’. EP declines a full interview. Reader conclusion: Must be guilty. *They won’t talk to the CBC.*

The definition of Indigenous that [I was taught](#) was inclusive — that culture is transmitted primarily [with brains](#). That definition was detached from notions of blood quantum — a foreign concept forced upon Indigenous people [over the last 300 years](#) and remains the most potent code — a cultural diode — engineered to erode identity within *The Indian Act*. Some Indigenous people and their ‘allies’ have



internalized its legitimacy and police it feverishly online.

There is a recent movement to narrow the definition of “Indigenous” and force it in alignment with being “First Nation”. Most Canadians already conflate the two so why not? A combination of [only 2.2% of CBC staff identifying as Indigenous](#), resource scarcity and the erroneous early education of their peers, might make an oversimplification tempting. If *CBC Indigenous* continues to narrow the definition it will never understand the full scope of Indigeneity.

Indigenous identity is a complex issue. Recovering and exploring Indigenous identity is a long process that should be guided by the wisdom of elders and face-to-face involvement in Indigenous communities. To shame that process in the media spotlight is irresponsible, harmful, and in no way serves the mandate the *CBC* claims to follow. DNA verification might be important to some but it costs thousands (through a qualified private lab that won't sell your data to the medical industry).

Jorge Barerra, the *CBC* journalist who authored several of the articles linked above, was born in Venezuela, a majority Christian country, and does not identify as Indigenous. He did his [undergrad in religious studies](#). In a podcast, Barerra described a early moment in his learn-on-the-job-journalism career observing a “[really moving](#)” scene in which the Tł̨ch̨q First Nation community spent Easter doing Christ's Passion in [their Dogrib language](#). Put politely: he might not be a [freethinker](#).

I've asked Barerra, Deer and Belzile about their source vetting process. No answers were provided. In a call with Barerra, he kept repeating "the story speaks for itself," he also denied a misattributed quote and directed me to *CBC* Comms Chuck Thompson. The misattribution was corrected 5 weeks later.

### **What a CBC apology should look like**

Full retractions are not within *CBC* policy (all text is a matter of public record) but my hope is that *CBC* can append an apology in a timely, clear way without equivocation. Time should be allocated to those affected. These people deserved more good faith and privacy in the conversations about their identity than they were afforded by the *CBC's* botched reporting.

The worst possible *CBC* response would be a mealy-mouthed, lawyer vetted statement concurrent with another *speculative* genealogist willing to provide false certainty about a stranger's life.

This novel vector of attack has no place at our *CBC*.

<sup>1</sup> FR: "bagage héréditaire" (L'HÉRÉDITÉ ET L'HOMME, 1945) FYI: That's not [how it works](#). At best, Rousseau had a primitive understanding of Autosomal DNA. That understanding ignores "[sticky DNA](#)" and totally neglects Mitochondrial DNA (mother to children) and YDNA (father to son) both traceable 200,000+ years.

<sup>2</sup> FR: “les premiers colons du Québec, privés de soins médicaux et exposés aux rigueurs du climat, le filtre de la mortalité infantile a sélectionné une race robuste. Le progrès moderne par contre prolonge la durée moyenne de la vie en protégeant des inaptes et des tarés autrefois voués à une brève existence.”

<sup>3</sup> FR: “Les Blancs ont un quotient intellectuel moyen de 100, les Amérindiens pur sang, d.e 70, les Nègres du sud des EtatsUnis, de 75”

<sup>4</sup> FR: “Une élite nègre de haut quotient intellectuel pourra conduire au sommet une population noire” NOTE: The author visited several reserves in Quebec between 1942 and 1951 and visited [Haiti in 1944](#).

<sup>5</sup> FR: “race pure”

<sup>6</sup> FR: “La stérilisation chirurgicale des malades, volontaire ou forcée, spécifiquement condamnée par l’encyclique Casti connubii (1930) et par le Saint-Office (1931)”

<sup>7</sup> FR: “L’examen prénuptial, obligatoire dans quelques provinces canadiennes, est eugénique s’il est bien appliqué. [...] Loin d’être un attentat à la liberté il est un acte de justice élémentaire : cacher des anomalies graves, c’est tromper le conjoint. Peu de gens épouseraient de gaieté de cœur une personne atteinte de maladies vénériennes ou de tares mentales héréditaires.”

<sup>8</sup> “the author has related his discussion very closely to the outlook of his prospective readers, who will presumably be drawn chiefly from the ranks of the Catholic Church.” ([Quarterly Review of Biology](#), 1946)

<sup>9</sup> **Exclusionary definition of Métis:** “as descendants of the historic Métis Nation, including those persons whose ancestors inhabited western and northern Canada and received land grants and/or scrip.” **Inclusionary definition of Métis:** “includes all persons of mixed Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ancestry who identify themselves as Métis.” ([Canadian Senate](#), 2019) ([citing Library of Parliament](#))

<sup>10</sup> There are 600+ First Nations occupying ~[0.35%](#) of Canada’s landmass. [~2,300 reserves](#). The [2016 Census](#) shows 4.9% of Canada’s population have an Indigenous identity. (Government imposed resource scarcity results in division.)

<sup>11</sup> There are people [responding to Ritchot with forceful language](#). “The Amerindian holocaust has always needed Ritchot” [EN: “L’holocauste amérindien a toujours eut besoin de Ritchot”]

See also: [My communications with CBC Indigenous requesting a detailed definition of “Indigenous”](#)

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Daniel Voshart is a mixed ancestry mutt, living on Turtle Island, pretending to be Canadian. His mom told him he is “métis” and odds are she’s right.

**Bachelor of Fine Arts** from the School of Image Arts at *Ryerson University*

**Masters of Architecture** at the *University of Toronto*