**Jolly, Joanna. (2019). Red River Girl: The Life and Death of Tina Fontaine.
Toronto: Viking Press.**

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“Red River Girl: The Life and Death of Tina Fontaine” is a true crime narrative written by Joanna Jolly which recounts the investigation into the death of Tina Fontaine, a fifteen-year-old Indigenous girl whose body was pulled from Winnipeg’s Red River in the summer of 2014. Jolly’s narrative seeks to accentuate systemic racism and missing Indigenous women by untangling the events prior to Tina Fontaine’s death, emphasizing the failures of Child and Family Services (CFS) and the Winnipeg Police Services. In this pursuance, Jolly scrutinizes the exceedingly large number of missing Indigenous women, historical racism, marginalization and recapitulates interviews with Fontaine’s family, Sergeant O'Donovan of Winnipeg's homicide unit, key witnesses, and potential suspects. “Red River Girl: The Life and Death of Tina Fontaine” is a well-organized book that details Fontaine’s life, describes the incoherent events leading to her death and murder investigation, while debating the national genocide of missing Indigenous women.

In attempting to reveal Canadian racism, Jolly emphasizes that Tina Fontaine’s case is not unique and that many Indigenous women go missing without their case being investigated. In doing so, Jolly enlightens the reader on other cases of missing Indigenous women and recounts interviews with their family members. Jolly describes a case in which sixteen-year old, Felicia

Solomon had reported being followed home from school when a few weeks later she went missing but her mother did not receive adequate support from Winnipeg Police Services, “Her mother immediately called the police, but she was told Felicia needed to be missing for twenty-four hours before a search could start. In fact, it was more than a week before the police interviewed her and almost two months before they issued a press release asking for help in finding Felicia” (p. 21). Through this testimonial, Jolly demonstrates how missing Indigenous women have yet to be taken seriously by police services. Indigenous people are more likely to be victims of serious crimes due to social and economic inequalities, yet there have been no substantial changes to the intensity or punctuality of the police services investigation methods. In an interview with CBC, Raven Thundersky whose sister was murdered, vented her frustration at the lack of justice for murdered Indigenous women by stating, “I can’t remember the last time- and I mean for Aboriginal women- when the last time was that we actually were able to see the face and have the name of one of the murderers responsible for taking one of our women” (p. 23). By disclosing information on other Indigenous women that have gone missing in the last decade and the frustration their families felt due to a lack of investigation, Jolly successfully revealed how insignificant Indigenous women are to the Canadian justice system and society stating that society often holds “Aboriginal women in particular, in a position of such low self-esteem” (p. 21).

In addition to the frustrations Indigenous families feel in relation to the substantial number of missing Indigenous women, Jolly clearly outlines the failures of the Winnipeg Police Services and Child and Family Services in Tina Fontaine’s case. Jolly claims that after being reported missing by her great aunt Thelma, CFS had met with Tina on two occasions. On one of these

occasions Tina was in the hospital after she was found unconscious under the overhang of the Helen Betty Osborne building (p. 91). After being released from the hospital Kimberly Chute, an intake worker for CFS, took Tina to stay at the Best Western Charterhouse Hotel in downtown Winnipeg placing her in the care of a private welfare agency (p. 94). That night Tina went off to meet with a friend at Portage Place, a well-known location for criminal activities, when she “failed to return to the hotel, and at 2 P.M. the following afternoon, CFS registered her as missing to the police for the final time” (p. 95). Although Jolly does not explicitly blame CFS for Tina’s death, she ultimately reveals their failures by emphasizing the multiple occasions they had come into contact with Tina and failed to provide her a safe place to stay. Jolly neglects to mention Thelma ever being contacted by CFS regarding the two occasions they knew of Tina’s whereabouts, only quoting Thelma stating she was coping with being slammed with a \$500 bill for Tina’s ambulance ride (p. 99), thereby expanding on CFS’s negligence.

Equally important, Jolly discloses the failures of Winnipeg Police Services prior to Tina’s death when police officers pulled over a vehicle that Tina had gotten into with an older man but failed to notice that Tina was listed as a missing person. Jolly portrays their failures by explaining that police officer Jansen was clearly capable of recognizing that Tina was at risk, “Jansen had been the more senior of the pair, experienced in dealing with sexually exploited women and the johns who frequented the area” (p. 98). With transparent phrasing, Jolly emphasizes the point that the police officers should have been experienced enough to be aware that Tina looked young and that their mistakes cost a fifteen-year old her life, invoking anger within the reader. In doing this, Jolly underscores the objective that police consider Indigenous people to be of a lesser class

making them easily overlooked and marginalized.

Despite racism in the criminal justice system and the mistakes of the Winnipeg Police Services, Jolly frequently reiterates the long hours, resources, and passion Sergeant O'Donovan put into investigating Tina's case, dwelling on the pressures he felt to solve the case due to national protests of violence against Indigenous women. After months of investigating a suspect in Tina's murder, another Indigenous girl was found in the Red River, yet this time she had been found alive and the Winnipeg Police Services had quickly solved her attempted murder case. This resulted in immense pressure on investigators to solve Tina's case, "the result was that the Homicide Unit felt under mounting pressure to announce an arrest for Tina's murder and was facing public criticism for dragging its feet" (p. 163). It is made apparent that Sergeant O' Donovan was devoted to the investigation, however, by vigorously explaining the pressures O' Donovan felt, Jolly leaves the reader feeling that justice for Tina was not his only motivation for solving the case.

Likewise, Jolly dedicated a large portion of "Red River Girl: The Life and Death of Tina Fontaine" to "Project Styx", a Mr. Big investigation where Winnipeg Police went undercover in an attempt to elicit a confession from Raymond Cormier. However, after devoting months of time and numerous resources to the project, undercover agents failed to get a confession out of Cormier, forcing investigators to arrest him and press charges based on circumstantial evidence which lead to a non-guilty acquittal (p. 269). Jolly allocates a large portion of "Red River Girl: The Life and Death of Tina Fontaine" to the events surrounding Project Styx and Raymond Cormier, which takes the focus away from Tina's unfortunate circumstances and the subject of advocating for

missing Indigenous women. Although Raymond Cormier did not receive a guilty verdict and justice for Tina was not granted, Jolly does highlight that Tina's death was a turning point in society where future changes such as the "National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women" provides hope for Indigenous women (p. 271).

Through telling the narrative of Tina Fontaine's murder investigation Jolly intends to educate her readers on the disproportionate number of missing Indigenous women and the lack of support this demographic receives. As a direct result, Jolly aims to raise awareness of discrimination and negative attitudes towards missing Indigenous women in hopes that "Red River Girl: The Life and Death of Tina Fontaine" will contribute to wider societal changes. Thus, "Red River Girl: The Life and Death of Tina Fontaine" is an exceptional composition that could be utilized in the disciplines of history, social work, and family law. More specifically, the discipline of Criminology could use the book to examine the underlying issues surrounding the high rates of Indigenous victimization. I found this book to be a chilling piece that was seamlessly tied together and enlightened my thoughts on the genocide of missing Indigenous women.