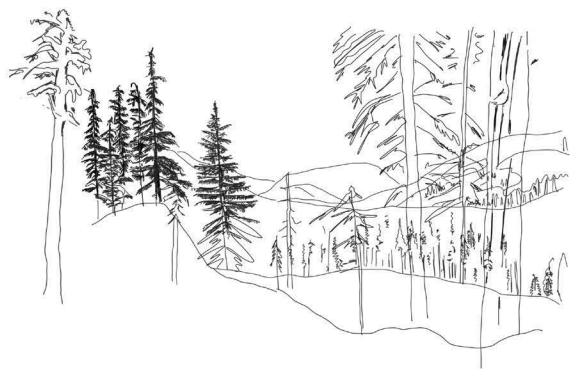


CHRONICLES OF THE FOREST

BY WILLIAM JONES

Elastic Spaces Press



Chronicles of the Forest

From the Walbran to Fairy Creek

What the Forest Needs, Our Heart Needs

by William Jones

ELASTIC SPACES PRESS

Chronicles of the Forest: From the Walbran to Fairy Creek, What the Forest Needs, Our Heart Needs

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William (Bill) Jones in conversation with Leila Sujir and Jorge Zavagno, along with Haema Sivanesan, Santiago Tavera, Nancy J. Turner, Sarah E. Turner, Yves Mayrand, and Keisha Jones.

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DEDICATION

by William (Bill) Jones

To the caring people, the good custodians.

To the many early land defenders, among them the very open and honest Tla-o-qui-aht Elder Tutakwisnapšix Joe Martin, in the long history of standing against clear-cutting Clayoquot Sound and Meares Island.

To the early Walbran helpers 30 years ago, Peter Cressey and Erika Heyrman.

To Fairy Creek, to the thousands of people, including Kimberly Murray, Shawna Knight, Kathy Code, and to Yves Mayrand for his legal analysis and support.

To my mother and father, most intimately involved in my creation, who express the values we all lived by, and their love and care and connection to the oral tradition.

To my mother's father, my grandfather, Billy Yukum, a medical herbalist and spokesman and a shining light on our custom and tradition in potlatch, a renowned gentleman, very special and well-respected; and my dad's father, Queesto, an action man in our legal struggles in fishing rights and mobility.

To all of my future Pacheedaht First Nation children and for all the children and peoples in all places to re-claim, to re-indigenize ourselves, to return to our original selves that were obliterated by what we call "civilization".

CONTENTS

Introduction	8
Chapter 1	16
Coming into consciousness in the Walbran ancient forest	
Chapter 2	23
Becoming aware, awakening, at Ridge Camp, in the Fairy Creek Ecosystem, where 2000-year-old yellow cedars are being felled	
Chapter 3	29
Winter of realization: Rainstorms, the spiritual. In the January-February snows, the acceptance of our Great Mother, and in the lean-to, our laughter and we don't know why	
Chapter 4	34
Acceptance of our Great Mother. In the spring, a call by Her to protect what was created in the ice ages	
Chapter 5	40
The April 1, 2021 injunction, enforced in May 2021 by the RCMP: Maturation and resolution; and the injunction's refusal, September 28, 2021	
Notes	49
Afterword	52



INTRODUCTION

by Leila Sujir

January 2024, looking back on these Zoom recordings made during the height of Covid, Fall 2020 through Fall 2021.

Beginnings William (Bill) Jones, an Elder of the Pacheedaht First Nation, brings a wealth of expertise in Traditional Ecological Knowledge, as living experiences and stories, narratives collected over time, and a sense of archival histories on living practices and engagement with the natural environment.

May 2018: Jorge Zavagno, Technical Director of Elastic Spaces Research Group at Concordia University in Montréal, and I, artist, researcher, Professor Emeritus at Concordia and Director of Elastic Spaces, met Elder Bill Jones at a Friends of the Walbran Bioblitz – a gathering organized to describe and catalogue the biodiversity of an area in a short time or “blitz.” In the Walbran forest, we were in conversation: first, about Bill’s desire for a structure to be built in the Walbran, where people could come to visit, celebrate, just be. Each Tuesday, a community lunch was held at the Pacheedaht First Nation (PFN) Health Centre in Port Renfrew. Jorge drove Bill’s car back to Port Renfrew over the rough trails of the logging roads.

About a week later, we accepted a lunch invitation from Bill, and were joined by curator Haema Sivanesan of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (AGGV) at the Health Centre of the PFN.

August 2018: Towards the end of that summer, Haema Sivanesan presented an off-site activity to the exhibition *Supernatural, Art, Technology and the Forest*. This presentation included a community lunch in Port Renfrew, along with a screening at the Port

Renfrew school gymnasium showing the raw video footage from the Walbran forest, for a work I was making for another project, the *Aerial* IMAX experiment. It also included raw video footage shot in 2016 in that same location in the Walbran. These videos are part of my *Forest Breath* (2018) and *forest documents* (2016 – 2025) video installations.

Aerial was commissioned by curator Janine Marchessault for *Outer Worlds*, a series of video experiments by artists Oliver Husain, Lisa Jackson, Kelly Richardson, Michael Snow, and me.

January 2019: Bill Jones, Jorge Zavagno and I continued our conversations, and came together to give a screening at the Pacheedaht Community Health Centre of the preliminary edit of *Aerial*, prior to the sound mix. Bill Jones, as Elder, and the Band Council then came together to add the text at the end of IMAX video experiment, *Aerial*:

The Forest is a holy place to pray and ask the forest what it wants you to have. Take from it what it gives to you. Give back what you do not need. Seek quiet and spiritual guidance. It is our life and nurtures all, going between the ocean and the land. We are dependent on the forests forever.

– Pacheedaht First Nation

The text speaks to the importance of the Walbran forest, which is part of the unceded territory of the Pacheedaht First Nation.

April 2019: The IMAX *Outer Worlds* project was launched at the Cinesphere Theatre in Toronto.

January 2020: Jorge and I visited Port Renfrew again, at the beginning of a new research project, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, with Bill Jones now working with us as one of the official project researchers, along with John Latour, Concordia University librarian and researcher,

and Haema Sivanesan. We got together for conversations about the forest; the project's title: *Elastic 3D Spaces: the old growth forest as "home" space with an emphasis on land, healing, home, communities.*

March 2020: When the Covid-19 pandemic began, our conversations moved online to Zoom, where Bill started narrating what he was observing on the west coast in his territory: including the giant yellow cedar tree that had been discovered in the forest, along with the uncovering of logging taking place in what had been an unlogged old growth forest. Over the next six months the Fairy Creek protests grew in response to this logging.

Fall 2020 - Fall 2021: The transcripts of the recordings of our Zoom conversations over this time convey Bill's experiences in the ancient (old-growth) temperate rainforest and became the grounding for the writing of this book.

The discovery that this narrative could be a book, that Bill's voice in the Zoom sessions would become a powerful voice on a page occurred to me: this could be a poetic book – like a long poem, translated onto the page, to convey the conversations we had as the Covid isolation went on and on, and while the protests went on, at a distance. The meanders that Bill talks about are his river of language flowing, taking us along, to listen.

The Zoom recordings took place throughout the pandemic year with Bill Jones, Leila Sujir, and Jorge Zavagno, as part of a project on the old growth forests. Haema Sivanesan, moved in and out, as did John Latour, who became the manuscript editor. John moved the transcripts into a manuscript, into the outline of the chapters that Bill Jones developed in October 2021. More precisely, to move the oral document to the page — John took the transcript (created in Zoom), then listened to all the Zoom recordings, carefully editing and correcting to record

the exact words. He then used a search function and a kind of collage process to fit the recordings into the chapter headings that Bill had made in October 2021.

Jorge presented the text in a booklet visually, via Zoom, and Jorge and I then played back the audio recording to Bill, via Zoom while using the Zoom "share screen" function to show the pages of the manuscript. This way Bill could both see and hear the manuscript at the same time, a process that allowed him to use his skills as storyteller in the oral tradition to make sure the text reflected his narrative and intent. Jorge then made an edited video of the Zoom recording, with Sabina Gámez Ibarra, graduate research assistant. We listened to and watched this version attentively as well, while looking at the manuscript, to check punctuation for the nuance needed to move speech to the page as accurately and authentically as possible. Bill explained that the title of the publication itself, *Chronicles of the Forest: From the Walbran to Fairy Creek, What the Forest Needs, Our Heart Needs*, makes reference to the collective heart of our Great Mother.

In 2023, Bill Jones took part in the Elastic Spaces *Thinking Allowed* colloquium with participation in the *West Coast Rainforest Activist Movement* panel, part of the *Research That Matters: Sustainability, Biodiversity and Justice in a Time of Crisis* conference at Concordia University. Then Bill came to Montréal to give the keynote address *The Evolution of Fairy Creek: Still Going Strong* presented at the Montréal Botanical Garden in conversation with Kathy Code, Ecoforestry Institute Society, and Ka'nahsohon Kevin Deer, Mohawk Indigenous Knowledge Holder from Kahnawake Mohawk Territory Québec.

The booklet's manuscript was then presented to our readers for feedback and editing, and now we present it to you, the readers.

How the conversations began ...

The synopsis and chapter headings from Bill Jones as told to Leila Sujir and Jorge Zavagno, in conversation, November 2021, gave the shape to the booklet structure:

“Chronicles of the Forest” comes out of my life experiences, of the forest as a place of healing and spirit. It is about a struggle that is a crowning part of my maturation. Our Great Mother has awakened us, her hands filled with calm water from her mountain creeks by her ancient red cedars. I am not exhausted but am invigorated by this experience. Saving her ancient trees, the ecosystem, two rivers, two waterways -- these blessed places; the sockeye are coming up and the coho are running.¹

We have to keep that water clean.

The loggers are now flying in by helicopter and with the RCMP² - such an odd spectacle.

It is garden work: to repair what we have done, what has been gifted to us.



Drawing of Elder Bill Jones by Daniela Ortiz.

CHAPTER 1

Coming into consciousness in the Walbran ancient forest



I think my thoughts on the forest are tied to ice ages, of all things. Because when the ice ages were here, there were little pockets of tops of mountains, where they had a glacial, alpine forest. They were up there, like Fairy Creek, which was sticking out of the glaciers.



When you're sixteen, you're on the top of a mountain, and you look up into the sky and you could tell which way the world is going with your sensitive eyes and balance. There are probably a lot of us, you know, teens who did that. And so, I think I'd like to remind people of these experiences that can only be available in a pristine, healthy forest where the canopy is way up there, and you're way down here. And it's like looking up in a tunnel.



And that's one story, a romantic part of a romantic chapter of my daydreams is me sitting up on top of Fairy Creek Mountain. And in the glacial alpine forest, looking down from the glacier at where the store is, where there was a midden, and seeing some smoke come up, from where the village was.



Of course, we were gifted on the coast here with a huge rainforest that none of us knew the scope or, how big it really was, and how valuable it was, and how endless it had seemed at the time.



It's quite an experience up there to see people flower and – or deal with problems, personal problems, mental health problems up there, and then you see other people flower into their own selves. It's so touching for me – poignant I guess you can call it. Realizing that the forest is what we dream it should be. And it does what we hope it will do. It brought me to my original self, you know, in the innocence of my youth. And I think that's what the big problem with the Fairy Creek struggle is the fact that I didn't recognize that it was the last of my innocence, of my purity, and my realness as a person. And whereas civilization I call it, or education, has changed me into what society needs, and limits me to my strata I guess you could call it. And I thought that the liberation of the forest is so grand, I have had a lot of stories up there.



Getting lost in this forest is very easy.



So, it's been a good, nice experience for me. When we first met, I think I was going down to the Walbran sometimes by myself for about three or four months. And I would just sit there kind of, you know, meditating. And I never gave up. It's curious. And I think that our Great Mother or our Great Spirit, whoever it is, sort of leads us on. And I think that's what happened. For about two years, sometimes there was just me at the Walbran ... for weeks on end, but I'd go up anyway. Nothing to do. Kill time. But I'd drive two-and-a-half hours up there, stay for three or four hours. Drive two-and-a-half hours. Boom, and that was my day. And then it started growing. Now about, the Walbran just across the bridge there where we're at, there's a park built by about 100 people who claim it as their own summer camping place. So, now there's about 200 or 350, I think somebody said 150 campsites there now, going all the way up the creek there.



And like our Grandpa said, he says, "Sonny, you have to go up there every now and then, be quiet, and don't even think about being at peace. Just empty your mind and don't think, in the forest." That's what Grandpa said, or implied. And our people don't do that. They are thinking in a colonial fashion.



What happened was, while sitting in the forest up

there, something came to me unconsciously, I guess.



My mind started mulling over, "How did this come about?" you know. "Why, what set it up?" and I realized that there was an odd connection that was fuzzy to me with our, to our [Pacheedaht] band.



Oh, I bumped into the forester, that's what happened. How these things happen by accident, sometimes. The forester was saying, "Oh Bill you're in the protests. You've been there, six months or more." I says, "Yup, that's right." So he asked me what we want, and I said, "Well, we want first to save the Walbran, I mean though, the Fairy Lake ecosystem," and then he says "Well, I have a map of the Fairy Lake proposed logging and I'd like to show it to you."



We didn't know how quickly the forest will disappear.



Now, I think the companies are really worried. I think they are definitely trying to defeat this movement because if we win here, it'll be the North Island³, and that's it for the Vancouver Island.



In a way, our lives, our slotted lives, have persuaded songs in me, in my prayers and ... my loneliness here, helped percolate, to understand what I'm seeing. Whereas a lot of the others around here watch TV, got drunk and died, you know. And I was doing that, until Erika [Heyrman] and Peter Cressey came along and dragged me in, horribly up to the forest, and broke my shell. So, I owe it to them, and you, for sitting with me up there in the Walbran, and while I'm on, my mind was blank wondering what I'm supposed to say, or what I'm supposed to think, or what I'm supposed to do. Now, I think I'm there and that's about it.



And then I realized what they were doing and how they felt about it – which were my thoughts in my early twenties when I used to talk to my grandfather who told me that the forests are a holy place, and that they are to be revered and respected and not touched except, accepting what you are given by the forest.



So that's a romantic meandering of ... where was I? Oh, stream ecology. Recovering and reviving that is a crucial thing in actually saving this world when I think of it. Because, if we're going to nurture a forest, we have to try and mimic its past. But with acid rain and then global warming, the past climate the rain

forest needed is gone. Because the pH that it depended on is now turning acidic. And so, I hate to say this, I think we're going to wind up with a lot of deserts, in particularly in our interior where there's not enough rain and it's a whole country-wide problem. So, now we're going to wind up with that having to develop a ... and help our Great Mother, in her ecosystem to adapt our forests to the new climate. Which I think it was, or has happened, numerous times anyway.



It's an odd dilemma, where they, where their parents, me, us, my generation, were a part of the huge, logging industry. But they didn't see the forest as their parents did. But the parents died. Now there's the leftovers and I realized that huge assault this world has gotten from logging. But they didn't see it, and don't understand it. And to top that off, they believe in the old logging ... but that's a part of the dilemma that they are in. And what is the sad part of it, is that this world of let's pretend has been fiercely defended by them forming a, forming a what do they call it? They look after the forest. Stewardship union with the three bands [Huu-ay-aht, Pacheedaht, and Diiitiidaht?].



And I think that's this world, this world now is at the stage where, particularly the rich are now being afraid of their loss of control because of climate change and the exhaustion of the stuff that they want, you know, like ore, iron ore, and oil and whatnot, and forests.



Like my dad said, “Bill you don’t need much brains in this world to figure it out. Just go to the beach, sit down on a log and something will come to you.” And I guess sitting on that log up in the forest, you know, with you all, hatched the egg in me.



I hope to sit in the forest in my ghost stage and say, “Oh good. We’re doing pretty good, the old growth.” Because well, you know, I don’t expect to be around for a while – five to ten years maybe, so I’ll be busy.

CHAPTER 2

Becoming aware, awakening, at Ridge Camp, in the Fairy Creek Ecosystem, where 2000-year-old yellow cedars are being felled



The Fairy Creek ecosystem is just so awesome. It’s just so fantastic in its strength. It has a power that sort of radiates even to the sky and it’s so powerfully peaceful.



I think what it amounts to is that my conscience started acting for me, and letting me know, letting me know that I have to say what little I can in the best way I can. And of all things in the best truth I can give. And I think that’s the crucial part of me simply asking for the truths of our struggle. When we present that truth, it may be an odd thing that our government may listen.



Sometimes I wonder about my own real relevance because, other than the fact that I’m saying what other peoples have said, but what happened in my case is that the Fairy Creek focused everybody to Fairy Creek and they see me there, and they got curious seeing what I want, you know, what I have to say, and then it developed my thoughts, and I’m saying it.



I don't think I can foster or be bubbly or exuberant about the future when I'm still reconciling myself with the past.



It's a sort of a sweet, sad experience – this life because ... they call it attrition [laughter].



It's the last of our original and dreamy hopes of what we want the world to be like.



And so, those things have changed. I think that those things are crucial in helping people understand the nature of both acid rain and global warming. Actually, I think, even the river stream or the creek fauna, I think, has also been affected by acid rain. And that in fact the periwinkles population has virtually disappeared. Whereas I used to sit by creeks there and reach down with a handful and come up with some sand, and there'd be a periwinkle, you know, looking at me. So, through the whole work, the whole ecosystem, I think assaulted by both acid rain and global warming. And mountain creek ecology, I think, is likely a popular place for kids to study nowadays ...



I don't know if you were ever at the Renfrew Creek, what we call River Camp? I guess not. It goes up past about four or five kilometres to the falls, that is, just at the top of the mountain.



So that's why I think it's odd that even non-First Nations are in fact gripped in our thought system, and that we can't wander off too far or you'll be alienated. I think that's true. And, how to give people some personal freedom is a quiet, far, dream. But on the other hand, if you go up to Fairy Lake now, there's probably about a 100 or more people there from what I hear. Yesterday, about a 150. They think there's going to be about a 100 left there all this week. They're going to be the active force going from action place to action place so the cops will be followed wherever they go, which I think will be rather annoying. And I remember that from yesterday. There were thirty cop cars coming from Fairy Lake, just as we crossed the bridge, the Deering Bridge.



They have no money, and they have only a motive that they're going to fight for this, and win without any direction ... It was customary in First Nations to have somebody elected to be the greeter, and usually it was me. And so, my, when there's a do, as we used to call

it, a function in Port Renfrew, they would say, “Okay, now Sonny, you be the greeter. You shake everybody’s hand and bring them to their chair or seat kind of thing, if they want.” So, I was doing that.



The government’s now saying, “Okay we’re really going to help. We’re going to pour lots of money on First Nations and we’re going to rescue the drowning cat. And we’re going to fix the cat up. We’re going to fluff it up and make a healthy cat out of it.” And, there is no word from government on how government led to this mess, you know. And I think Truth and Reconciliation has to be now.



So, it is kind of messy here. I don’t know why I always talk about Fairy Creek. It will take a bit of juggling of thoughts and history.



Anyway, so that’s the part of it– that the Fairy Creek struggle has been taking all my attention lately, and not having time to think of other things, you know; but it keeps me busy. And, that’s about it I guess, except that this Friday there’s going to be another rally, a youth rally, in front of the courthouse and then a parade from there to the Parliament buildings, or I mean Legislature. So, the youth are going to be helped along or inspired ...



So that puts a real different shade on the Fairy Creek protests, protecting the ecosystem ... they were logging it while we were there.



As far as a recruitment is concerned ... there’s about twenty or more First Nations’ youth and young people starting to be active now. I can now alter my focus to Elders. I’m going to visit Elders here and there, and chatting with them. They’re all so very open and up, especially at what we call headquarters right now. So, I’ll try and keep them enthused, and then have them work at recruitment. These are old boys, so they know all about, you know, swinging minds, and that. So, I think that will be helpful.



So now I’m back in another stage where now I’m totally behind the Fairy Creek saving, and I ain’t going away this time.



There’s a really big do, or gathering up at what we call “the HQ” [headquarters of the Fairy Creek protests] now, which is up at the Granite Main logging road campsite. What we call the “River Camp” on the way to it. And they expect 3,000 people and they’re holding a healing circle.



I want to bugle this thought out that they anticipate about 3,000 people to be at Granite Main Road, where the HQ (headquarters) for Fairy Creek is, tomorrow. So, it will be a media thing. I'm sure, then, the media people will be aware. So maybe we will be on TV tomorrow.



It would be a good breaker of this deadlock that we are in, in the Fairy Creek protest. Because I can't see any changes, without bitterness. And how to approach this Fairy Creek protest, and relate it to our dreams, would be so awesome to me. I would be happy to leave this world, knowing that this world is in fact, you know, pursuing, I guess, my dreams of our original innocence.

CHAPTER 3

Winter of realization: Rainstorms, the spiritual. In the January-February snows, the acceptance of our Great Mother, and in the lean-to, our laughter and we don't know why



The only reason I wound up here is because, about ten years ago, in a stormy night, "It was a dark and stormy night" [laughter]. A knock on the door, and there was a wet woman and a wet man standing there saying "My name is Erika and my name is ... Peter," and I said, "Oh, you better come in out of the rain."



We don't know how we're governed. It's odd and I didn't know either until I got warmed up there, sitting in the rain. Things sunk in slowly up there and united us, you know.



Because, the people at the blockade, I feel are escapees from their reservations, and that our reservation is a, what do they call it, a microcosm of the world reservation – or a Canadian reservation. And, these people realize that I'm excluded from my own natural, spiritual freedom to go out in nature where we originally came from.



I'm getting so busy these days. A lot of reporters and young reporters are so anxious to hear what I have to say, and it's so odd. But then I think that maybe this world is lacking of people who are moving towards a spiritual, guided life. And I think they may sense this in me, this world doesn't have the structure or religious guidance that we used to have, and maybe we lost faith in it, which is shown by our empty churches. And I think that's partly – they're indicating to me that they're on a spiritual search. Which is gratifying to me, and even though I'm, I've never been religious, you know, I never – I mulled and I prayed and meditated; but I don't actually, don't think I know how to be a guru or a priest [laughter].



So, grandpa said, "we stopped there at the bridge," and he pointed up and said, "that's where our people stayed. We had four or five lean-tos there. We didn't have permanent dwellings."



I also have been told that the logging companies have logged up further so there's been more and more incursion into old growth. And that's horrible to me because, one place up there, the old cedars are pretty big, you know, six, eight feet [across]. But there's one place there, the cedars are growing under, what do they call it? a limestone karst or something like that. And of all things, in rainstorms, the karst, I guess this cave system under the karst at some places, it squirts up about three or four feet, flooding and squishing

down. And it's awesome, you know. And I hope that it wasn't filled. That would be such a horror story, because it was a very, it is a very precious place ...



But on the other hand, when you go, up there, when you're making your way up there, you see that the troughs that the glaciers ground through, and some of them up the Gordon River are about, I figure, 150-200 feet deep, you can see where the glaciers carved the river out to drain the valley. But now it's filled with debris and logs, and stumps and boulders from logging – which is a sad demise for the current ecosystem. But, on the other hand, it's still there. Maybe our Great Mother is going to blanket it with ice again, ground out the creeks again, and start over. We ain't the boss.



Our attitudes we adopted, you know, in a world of let's pretend at that time. I think that's an easy thing to describe, and yet I'm trying to meld that in with the reality of Grandpa's dream of us actually living in the real world of spiritual guidance.



And I thought that the liberation of the forest is so grand – I have had a lot of stories up there. One man was bathing. He described to me: he's a bass in the river at 11 o'clock at night in a rainstorm. It was so tumultuous to me to realize that this man experienced consciously the transformation of himself. And I thought that was, you know, so hopeful for all of us.



It's so awesome that we have a government that is continually re-knitting the truth and getting in a terrible mess halfway across a row and we wind up with the nondescript fabric that we hope to be our clothes. And it's sort of inhuman [laughter]. And that doesn't take the knitting that our Great Mother wants in her fabric.



I do apologize for being overbearing and in my meanderings, but that's one staying thought. It's staying with me, so I think I have to try and develop that thought, to put it in a form where I can give it to people, where I can hint at European civilization being a glacier wiping out free thoughts, and that the glacier is receding along with, of all things, the re-creation of thought in freeing, people being freed from their own prisons from town, and coming and discovering the last of the primordial forests that our Great Mother created – an enduring and adaptive forest that emigrated down to the valleys.



It turns out that I have direct experience with prayer and meditating up the Fairy Lake Mountain, and also knowing and seeing both my Uncle Dan Jones and Uncle Wesley Jones up there in our own private prayer and meditation walks or sojourns up there, I

guess you could call it. And then just recently, a most thrilling thing came up to me. I phoned my sister up, youngest sister. And she said, "Oh, you're talking about Fairy Creek, you want to save that?" I says, "Yeah." "Well, Grandpa used to swim there in prayer and meditation, both in Fairy Creek and also in Granite Creek ... which is now Renfrew Creek." So, he swam in both, and both were used for spiritual purposes.

CHAPTER 4

Acceptance of our Great Mother. In the spring, a call by Her to protect what was created in the ice ages



So, we were pushed up the coast, the coastal people, we couldn't go to the land of glory because we'd get killed. So, we didn't have all that great of a weaponry anyway being subsistent, small families. So, that was starting to change when the ice age melted, when the ice melted, and the forest proliferated along the coast, both by the hemlock and the fir, and the alpine red cedar and alpine yellow cedar migrated down the valleys. And so, we wound up with enjoining ecosystems here that proliferated into our rainforests. Essentially what happened here is that our Great Mother, in her great wisdom, grew a forest along the coast here with the intention of nurturing the interior plateau. And when the forest has gone, it doesn't absorb, it doesn't keep and protect the water. So, it doesn't regulate the waterflow over the mountains, so that dries up.



And so now we have a double problem, is that we logged it off too. So now we're in the end game, of our own demise, I guess, of our own creation.



I probably think we're going to, you know, create another world by destroying ourselves. That's sort of odd, but that's just my thoughts about what my grandfather said. Now that I've given you my

understanding of what this forest is, it's a phase between ice ages, and that our civilization, our First Nations, were subsisting at the edge of these glaciers from evidence saying that, you know, up north of Harrison, around Harrison Lake there, there's middens about 100 to 150 up in the air. That used to be flat ocean, tidal, you know where oysters grow. And there's evidence uncovered around Bella Coola that we were there 30,000 years ago.



So now, everything from periwinkles to even the ecology up at some of them lakes, I think, it's probably being devastated. In particular, Amethyst Lake in the Ramparts Mountain Range. Anyway, I used to camp up there. There was ice, little, what do they call it? Little pieces of ice floating around the lake. There was huge three or four-pound rainbow [trout], and the lake was full of tiny red, what do they call that, not ...? Prawns, or something like that. And a girl came along with, there was a rich man's cabin there. They weren't supposed to be there, but the rich men had their cabins. And he used to fly into the lake and do their fishing and fly back. And they had a girl and a boy, a man and wife there, looking after their camp. I was fly casting there, and I asked them about the lake there, and they said, "Well, this was in the ocean 300 million years ago. And, as the mountains rose, it took all the ocean fauna with it. And the little prawns shrunk and they adapted and nurtured the cutthroat trout."



I thought that was so, you know, well, looking back now, it was so awesome to realize that our nurturing system of our Great Mother lets her creations adapt and re-adapt.



Sewing things together is always easier when we knit our stories through, I like to call it the sublime message. That is coming from another place that is directing us. My current saying for that guiding force is our Great Mother, which I think is likely true for me at this time because all my life has led me to this contemplative space where I can actually, you know, let things settle within myself. It's like a bird building a nest. There was one description of a bird making its nest. They said it will put the rough stuff around the edge and knit it, so that it will stay together and then she will decorate and fluff up her nest for her eggs. And I thought that's so apt even in our lives so that they can hatch into other ideas. Which is I think essentially what we're here for – is to nurture and help incubate others into their own creations.



Maybe I told you this story before? Anyway, my dad used to be working in ... running a tugboat, taking the booms out. On some Saturdays (he didn't have to work Sundays) he would say to Mom, "Honey, I feel like some red snapper this morning." So up here at the gravel pile up here we, our house was at, and he paddled down to the mouth of the river and then about a half an hour [later] he came back with a forty-pound red snapper. Which was about, oh, you know, three or four feet long. And so, we had a red snapper head for lunch. We used to savor that. Then, another Saturday he said, "Well, I like, I want to get some duck soup and let's have some duck soup today, Sweetie" he said to Mom. And off he went to the other side there, across the river to the, we used to call it the swamp. The meadows over there. And he got five

ducks in about fifteen minutes. And then he'd come back. So, we were all plucking ducks and had duck soup, which I hated. But dad loved it, so we pretended to love it too.



I want to allude to the recreation of fatherhood because most First Nations, particularly here at home, a lot of the kids are seeking, or looking, or angry, or struggle in some way or other with their father or their father image. And redeveloping that is one [way] that I feel gives a hope structure to a boy.



Actually, my mother said we were always in chaos. She said that our people had a haphazard life. She remembers when she was twelve years old, there was always a loss of one person or the other. They'd disappear in a storm, or they'd get murdered, and she said that, "In reality our lives weren't a bowl of cherries," but she said, of all things, "It was life and we lived it, and we didn't know any better." I remember that too myself, from the boarding schools. Where we were at as a child. That was life, and that was reality. I think that is a good hint to give a boy or a girl, that they can actually see someone focusing or searching for their reality.



But on the other hand, to document that in a part of a story, I think, would be a nice message to help gentle

down this world and realize that the ice age is receding and that we are in fact now going to be able to discover ourselves, and maybe have some tenderness or sensitivity in this world.



I think, then all they have to do is listen, if they want to know.



I remember playing in the sand as a boy, you know, just chasing ants in the sand. And, I remember daydreaming after that, and for some reason or another, I feel that is part of my structure.



So, I think our problem is at the crux of human simplicity, by the fact that we have very simple identities that are blown up into this tree that now we don't understand because, being a big tree, you're busy in our branches, and we can never feel them all. So, we have to just accept them all, like we accept our Great Mother.



So, my contention is that in art, all the world is built by, where civilization is like an ice age.



Yeah well, I think it should be now because of the horrendous effort, they're spending millions of dollars a day policing this debacle, or whatever it should be called, to give the logging companies a free hand.⁴ They're in effect taking our country and making a Happy Hunting Ground for a logging company which actually has been happening for the last 40 or 60 years, starting with BC Forest Products here in this area. So, it's simply, to me, a last defence of a dying system. A dying economic system that, oh boy, they're desperately attempting to preserve the bright and shining lie. It would seem so by adding other lies to a dying being [laughter], the economic system. I think that's sort of sadly shameful, but revealing, in the fact that we somehow managed, a lot of us, to stay sane through this and bear with it, and not protest. But I think it's best that I do say, say what, and give my statements to others as they want, as they see it, and then let them play with it because I think it's high time that there will be some counter balancing to the lies, so that we can at least help get our world in equilibrium again – if we ever can. But it doesn't look very hopeful.



... so, I think we all wind up being drawn, the media says, back to nature. Well, sort of. And, I think it's a meeting of both self and our Great Mother. Where once we go to her, she comes to us, and she gives us our own sensitivity and original innocence where we can be at peace with ourselves and the forests. I think we have to quit logging it.

CHAPTER 5

The April 1, 2021 injunction, enforced in May 2021 by the RCMP: Maturation and resolution; and the injunction's refusal, September 28, 2021



Yeah, you can get up to the bridge, but no further, I think. Or they will tell you to walk down to the bridge.



... but here we have a sort of a circular, contested place, that's bordered by the Nitinaht Lake and the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Cowichan Lake, and the San Juan River. We have oh, six or eight different access places, and so the cops are trying to keep the strategic places, they think, locked off, so that they can get their – the logging company's timber out.



Well, those people who are joining the eco-protection groups are in fact rebels from “their” reservation. So, what it amounts to is that the reservation's rebellion of three or four of us on the reserve is a, what do they call it? A microcosm of what has happened to the white people when they joined the ecology movement. So that's why I think that our experience is parallel, and in fact, mimic each other. So that's why I feel that we're not far off track, you know, particularly with our, what we think is a losing game, you know. Like our losing the injunction fight which is still in process.



Our rights have not been addressed. And I don't think the government really wants to address any of this because of Meares Island. They said they're going to make an “eco-preserve.” That was thirty years ago, twenty-five, thirty years ago. It's going to be protected forever. And, they still haven't signed it into law. So, the stalling game is a famous government thing.



My grandfather Charlie Jones said that the worst impact that he understands was the last plague that hit the coast here, and that, it was the start of the very depressing time or oppressive time. And he said, that crippling of the crucial phase of maturation of First Nations at that time was between twelve and sixteen years old where you're like a farm boy [who] had to learn everything when he was twelve to sixteen, to take over the farm. And we had to learn everything from twelve to sixteen to well, you know, how to do everything in our lives. So that part was the biggest and most damaging part to our nations, and then we were put in the boarding schools, just at the exact finish of the plague. So, we went from shock to numbing, and that destroyed a lot of the, half or three-quarters of our especially male population where the image of manhood was destroyed and has yet to recover. And that is that the most crucial thing, along with the language and cultural destruction from the boarding schools.



Yeah, it tears me apart. The kids are experiencing pain. The First Nations who were there expressed

pain but also, I think that was excellent training for them, because exchange, human interaction, also has to include sharing, you know, emotions and pain, rather than just getting along and tolerating and that. So, adapting to each other and realizing each other's experience, and while these kids are so torn because they didn't have the warning, or whatever it's called that we were told in the boarding school, that this is a dangerous world. You'll experience prejudice. And I don't think they emphasized or mentioned that too much to First Nations in schools, particularly up in the grades where they're starting to understand things. Grade six to grade eight. They don't tell and so they're sort of aware and then, I think probably the parents also have lost the skill of supporting children, up to about 1960. Dad and Mom were very supportive to us in the boarding school, and Dad was experiencing also racism every day in the logging camps where he worked. So, it was a tiring and trying years for my Dad and I think it wore him out, you know. It wore Mom out too.



I think the ego is the glue, and actually a very important glue, that holds our plates of sadness together. When finally our ego is let to shatter, we are able to realize some facts of ourselves. And that is a part of our sadness that we have to realize. It's a structured thing, and that it's held together with our own self-image in that in fact we have to accept it to let us indeed go to another stage in our lives. And I think that is a crucial thing. In my thoughts and how my people can be helped. In fact, maybe that's what the book can be centred around, is the fact that we can work at how our structured world of "let's pretend" is held together by our ego. And that the ego structures us and makes our sadness into a plate

around us. That when it breaks, we are left in a new reality. But, there's a problem. We have to be prepared for that reality, and have some awareness of what the world will be like.



And that is the biggest fear we have now, with global warming and the lack of resources. We really are up the creek, and I think now we have to nurture the youth, who are going up to the forest ...



But anyway, now the whole vast population of settlers are starting to realize how powerless they are and they're starting to say, in my very vulgar bottom-rung language, they're probably saying, "Fuck it. Give it back to the Indians," you know. And I think that land back sympathy is crucial in identifying the weakness of North American ownership civilization where we're taught that we don't count.



I feel that First Nations have been used to promote political ends by governments, both by the Indian Affairs, well mostly by the Department of Indian Affairs, but I mean by the Federal Government getting what they want and in all their non-treaty bands.⁵ And it's really messy.



So, I think that's a skill that the government has refined to the "T" and that they coerce our people into contracts and treaties that aren't really all that good. Actually, disempowering and entrapping and, oh boy, all the imprisoning stuff.



Actually, in fact, that's I think, a sad result of the Indian Act. It seems like, when we were squashed together, I don't know when it was, when the villages were created and five bands, or five families were squashed into our little reserve, and then we, I guess just naturally started fighting.



And people have that innate skill of sticking our heads in the sand, and we create our lies to believe our lies.



So, we wind up, like myself, wind up in a world of let's pretend. And so now, I'm realizing that the whole of my Nation are, of the Three Nations at least, I know, are locked in a world of "let's pretend."



And I realized that this was a game that the Federal Government, the Provincial Government and the big business learned how to manipulate First Nations' Band Councils to get what they want, you know. A pipeline. A dam, you know. Cutting down the forest and that.



They want to log, and I said no, no, no, no, not now. Not forever maybe.



Try to get some understanding of how we're locked in a process, like you say, you know, giving them money. No money for us, but only money coming from logging revenue. That entrapment is horrific, you know, it's just brutal. My old Indian, what do they call it? pigeon-slang, I forget what they call it. Siwash. Nothing. That's what the government has been administering in a Siwash fashion. Very savage and crude and vulgar entrapment.



And we're all prisoners of a system that has our thinking regulated. This is 1984.⁶



So, I think we're at a bottom of a curve now that's sort of edging uphill, and in self-awareness or sensitivity. And we're, you know, we're now able even to lick our wounds and caress them and realize that it's just the way it is. It's like a doggy finishing a fight and starting to do self-care. And I think that's where we're at particularly.



And it's a very pervasive, I think I could call it, it's spread out, this awareness of our sadness and in admission of sadness, is right throughout even the young teenagers who go up to the protest camps.



So, I meander sometimes, and wonder about these people, you know. How they follow their romantic idealism, I think it is. And abandon the world, and let it come if it's coming. And I think that's part of what happened to me, but it wasn't me – I don't think that was an initiator, or anything like that. But I think I'm an influence.



It's a very difficult part of First Nations men, being a First Nations man – we don't have the talk-down or

talk-up, whichever case this is, after an encounter or an experience. And that's where our greatest weakness is, the connection to our past, and, in particular, our fathers. We don't realize that our fathers are the past. That we are introduced to the past by our fathers picking us up, and hugging us, and putting us over their, his shoulder. These kids, most of them, had no fathers present. No fathers to play with them, and no fathers to bathe them.



Even so, I think that boils down to what our problems boil down to is manhood. Our sense of manhood has been diverted into another ship. Our souls over here in this ship. Our bodies over here in that ship.



My thoughts are tending to the positive and trying not to be hurtful in the, in describing the way things are, in our political setup, you know. How things are. "Status quo" they call it. So, but that is the first admission our band has made, our politicians have made; we have to take a breather. That is tending towards honesty.



But I do think that my thoughts are likely just, I guess you could call them "captional" – I mean, you know, they just come out in bits and pieces that I have to try to put together.



Well, it's my dad's fault. He taught me how to tie shoes. In four years, to teach me how to tie my shoes and I never gave up. So, from there, I never gave up. Weird world.



Maybe I'll end the book with that. The world should have listened to Grandpa ... including all his stupid grandchildren who went logging.

NOTES

1. Sockeye salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*) and coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) are species of Pacific salmon known by many different names in Indigenous languages on the coast and in the interior of BC. Pacific salmon swim from the ocean, up freshwater streams to complete their lifecycle and spawn in the fresh waters. Salmon holds special significance to Indigenous peoples – as relatives, food, for sharing and trade and spiritual worldviews. See S. Moritz, and Qwalqwalten G. John, “It Had the Biggest Spring Salmon Run, It Was a Land of Plenty for All!: Social Transformations, St’at’imc (Salish) Knowledge & Life Projects in the Bridge River Valley,” in *Territories of Life: Equivocations, Entanglements and Endurances*, eds. M. Blaser, and S. Poirier, (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, forthcoming); S. Moritz, “Cúzlhkan Sqwéqwel (‘I Am Going to Tell a Story’): Revitalizing Stories to Strengthen Fish, Water, and the Upper St’at’imc Salish Language,” in *Indigenous Languages and the Promise of Archives*, eds. A. Link, A. Shelton, and P. Spero (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2021), 309-348; and T. Ryan Sm’hayetsk, “Teresa Ryan: Ancestral Legacy of Nature’s Connection,” filmed at TEDx Berkeley in February 2018, TEDx Talk, 15:10, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apV0M55uF3Y>.

2. The RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) is Canada’s federal police force, and is responsible for policing on Federal “Crown” Lands.

3. The Fairy Creek watershed is the last intact old growth watershed on southern Vancouver Island (outside of parks). Its loss would leave the last unlogged old growth in the north part of the island.

4. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police created the Community – Industry Response Group (C-IRG) in 2017. The RCMP and the C-IRG have policed Fairy Creek protestors, and there have been hundreds of official complaints filed against the RCMP and C-IRG's treatment of protestors and enforcement of injunctions at Fairy Creek, including allegations of excessive use of force and unlawful arrest, and illegally blocking access for journalists and Indigenous Elders. See Colin Freeze, "RCMP Under Scrutiny for Enforcement of Injunctions Against Protesters," *Globe and Mail*, March 9, 2023, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-rcmp-under-scrutiny-for-enforcement-of-injunctions-against-protesters/?intcmp=gift_share and David P. Ball, "Judge Says RCMP Acted 'Unlawfully' Enforcing Fairy Creek Injunction After Court Challenge," *CBC News*, August 13, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/rcmp-fairy-creek-court-case-1.6139351>.

5. Non-treaty bands refers to Indigenous bands that do not have a legal treaty with the Canadian government. For discussion of treaty and non-treaty rights, specific legal examples, and the relationships with settler colonialism and resource extraction, please see the following references:

- "Why Treaties?," BC Treaty Commission, accessed October 9, 2024, <https://bctreaty.ca/negotiations/why-treaties/>;

- Emma Gilchrist, "Blueberry River First Nations Win Precedent-Setting Treaty Rights Case," *The Narwhal*, June 30, 2021, <https://thenarwhal.ca/blueberry-river-first-nations-bc-supreme-court-ruling/>;

- Andrew MacLeod, "Has the BC Government Changed Its Approach to First Nations Land Rights?," *The Tyee*, July 30, 2021, <https://thetyee.ca/News/2021/07/30/How-BC-Government-Changed-Approach-First-Nations-Land-Rights/>;

- "Historic Haida Aboriginal Title Legislation Receives Royal Assent," *British Columbia BC Gov News*, May 16, 2024, [\[es/2024/IRR0027-000768\]\(https://news.gov.bc.ca/releas-es/2024/IRR0027-000768;\);](https://news.gov.bc.ca/releas-</p>
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- Norimitsu Onishi, "On Small Islands Off Canada's Coast, a Big Shift in Power," *New York Times*, updated July 5, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/04/world/canada/canada-indigenous-rights-haida.html/>;

- Serena Renner, "The Haida Get Their Land Back," *The Tyee*, April 23, 2024, <https://thetyee.ca/News/2024/04/23/Haida-Get-Their-Land-Back/>;

- "B.C.'s 'War in the Woods' Grounds to Be Permanently Protected," *CBC News*, last updated June 18, 2024, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/bcs-war-in-the-woods-grounds-to-be-permanently-protected-1.7239102>.

6. George Orwell's dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, sometimes written as 1984, was first published in London by Secker & Warburg in 1949.

**AFTERWORD: about the author,
by Bill Jones,
as told to Leila Sujir and Jorge Zavagno**



My name is William Jones. I was born July seventh, 1940, in Alberni, British Columbia, which is now a part of Port Alberni. I'm from the Pacheedaht First Nations in Port Renfrew.



I finished high school there, in Alberni District Senior Secondary School in Port Alberni, May 1959.



I was kept out of school until I was seven. My dad said I was too small.



We were to be up at quarter to seven every morning into what we used to call Assembly, and not listen to our principal, but pretend to listen.



I think that was a crucial teaching in my life, and that is how and why I formed a determined personality where, when I start something I would never ever let this go until I'm satisfied with this, so that I think that initial teaching was crucial in my learning – so what the most First Nations kids, and maybe a lot of kids in the world, get the lessons there. I believe fathers do that for their children. They give them their permanent learning mode.



My mother told me, “Sonny, you have never given anything up in your life. You’ve always pursued it, even when you know you won’t get it, you still pursue it.” And she said, “They think that’s your Dad’s fault, and I think that likely is true.”

That is how and why I was given the personality, or demeanour, or fortitude, or whatever it’s called.



I wasn’t really a bright boy. I had probably average intelligence, as we call it, but I had a very persistent curiosity which helped me.



I was very unusual in that way, in fact. That I excel in analysis in history of all things, and how that gave me a huge scoring in them, my understanding of historical facts.



I finished high school to what we call BC Vocational school in Burnaby, BC and took what they call the Aircraft Maintenance two-year course, and I came seventh in this class. Our instructors told us, “half of you will probably drop out by Christmas, and half of you will make it to the first year,” and there was fifty-two of us, or something like that; by the time we got to Christmas of that year, there was twenty-six, and then fourteen made it to the second year. I had no interest in flying planes or driving cars, or anything like that didn’t seem to be my interest. But I did like fixing things.



I was going chaotically back and forth to logging, and then I wound up becoming a practical nurse. Within the forest industry, the workers and mill workers were laid off in BC. And I was amongst them, and we were sent back to school, and we were all – “has been” loggers. I remember starting in Camosun College—I would bump into other loggers. And oh, there’s another “has been” logger. Then the kids would say, “Well, Bill, we first went to school to learn how to be dumb. Now we’re sent back to school to learn how to be smart.”



I always wind up wandering up from where I was, so that historical understanding of the collapse of our

family system – that of our families of my nine brothers and sisters, only one worked—my youngest sister’s. Her marriage worked, and she’s still married to the same guy. Actually, I think that the whole country is in the family structure chaos, and that we don’t admit things. I think that’s horrible.



Dad was quite helpful. I was a little slow in learning, and Mom told me years later, after she told me about my birth (she didn’t tell me that till I was forty-two), and then she told me about my Dad teaching me how to tie my shoes.

I couldn’t tie my shoes.

My fingers wouldn’t listen.

I would try and try, and finally Dad put –I don’t know– he put me on a chair, and patiently every morning, from when I was four, until I was seven said, “You put this one in here, this one in there,” and he’d do that every morning, and “he,” mom said, “he never gave up.”

He would do that every morning.



Bill Jones and Leila Sujir, Summer 2022.

Photo Credit: Yves Mayrand