

# The moral courage to do the right thing



Cindy Blackstock, PhD  
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First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada  
[www.fncaringsociety.com](http://www.fncaringsociety.com)

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# Moral Courage gives effect to 5 Universal Values



Kidder, 2005



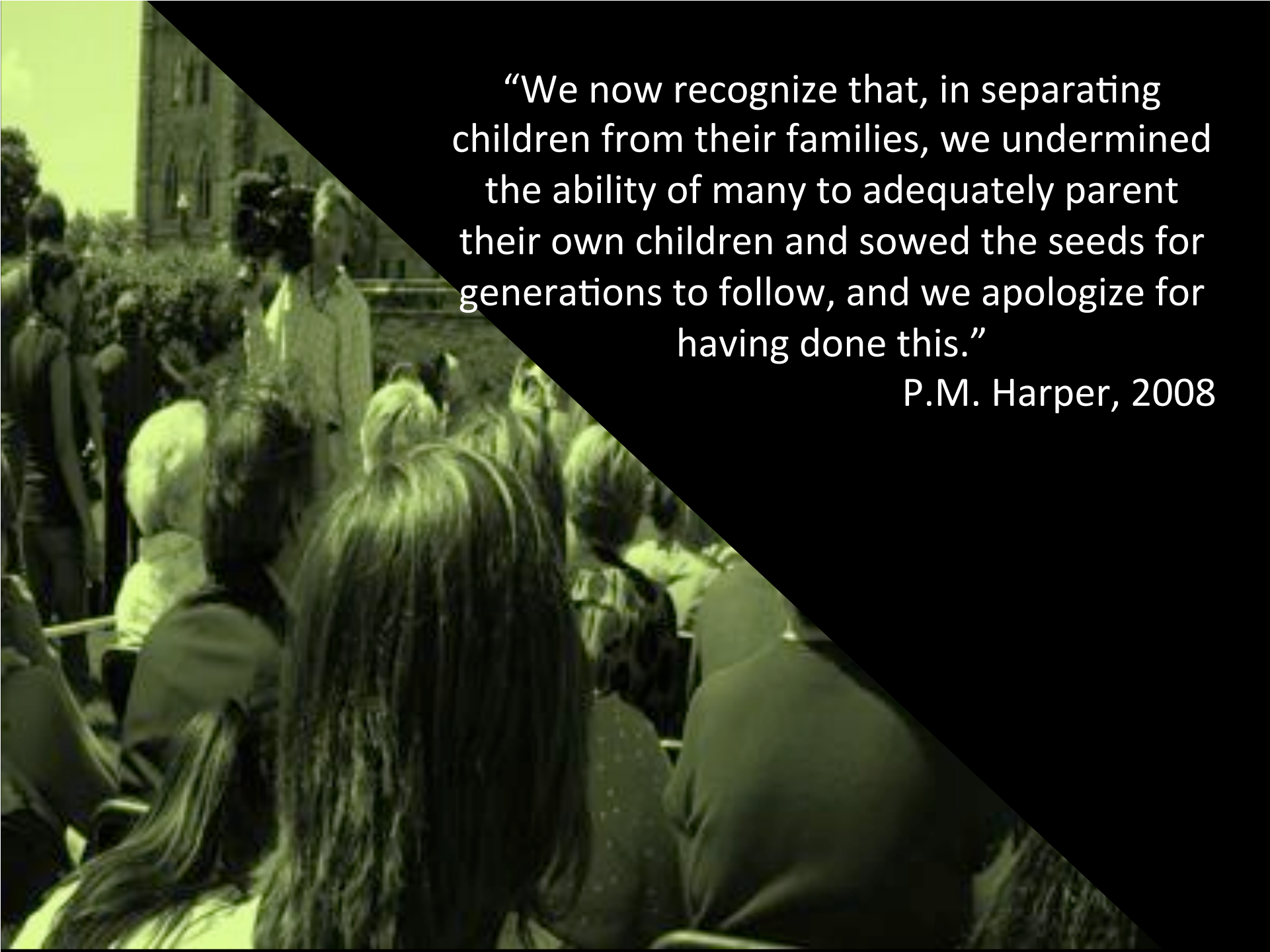
# Moral Courage in Child Welfare

- **Right versus Right:** When one right (loyalty to employer) supersedes another right (loyalty to a child). Example: Jordan's Principle and Shannen's Dream. Tendency to choose option that has least risk for decision maker.
- **Right versus wrong:** Choosing a clear wrong or perpetuating a clear wrong when there is a right. Example: Tribunal. George Bush "WMD syndrome"
- **Wrong versus chance:** When doing the wrong thing seems better than taking a chance on doing the right thing. Example: Not shifting child welfare practice to focus on substance misuse and poverty. **Chronic in child welfare. Reinforced by tendency to get very good at doing the wrong thing (not checking assumptions against research/outcomes for kids)**

# Checklist for Moral Courage

- ✓ **Assess the situation:** Do I need to be courageous?
- ✓ Scan for values: What values are you standing up for?
- ✓ **Stand for conscience:** What principles need to be articulated or defended?
- ✓ **Contemplate the dangers:** Do I have a clear idea of the risks?
- ✓ **Endure the hardship:** Am I willing to deal with the consequences or will the risk make me give up?
- ✓ Avoid the pitfalls: Am I too timid or foolish?
- ✓ **Develop Moral Courage** – Do it!

Kidder, 2005



“We now recognize that, in separating children from their families, we undermined the ability of many to adequately parent their own children and sowed the seeds for generations to follow, and we apologize for having done this.”

P.M. Harper, 2008



**4146 Supporters**



**“School should be a time for dreams –  
every kid deserves this”**

**Shannen Koostachin (1995-2010)**

Jordan River Anderson  
Founder of Jordan's Principle  
1999-2005



## *Jordan's Principle*

A child first principle for First Nations children to resolving payment disputes between the federal and provincial governments about how to pay for services every other child gets

4250 Supporters  
[www.jordansprinciple.ca](http://www.jordansprinciple.ca)

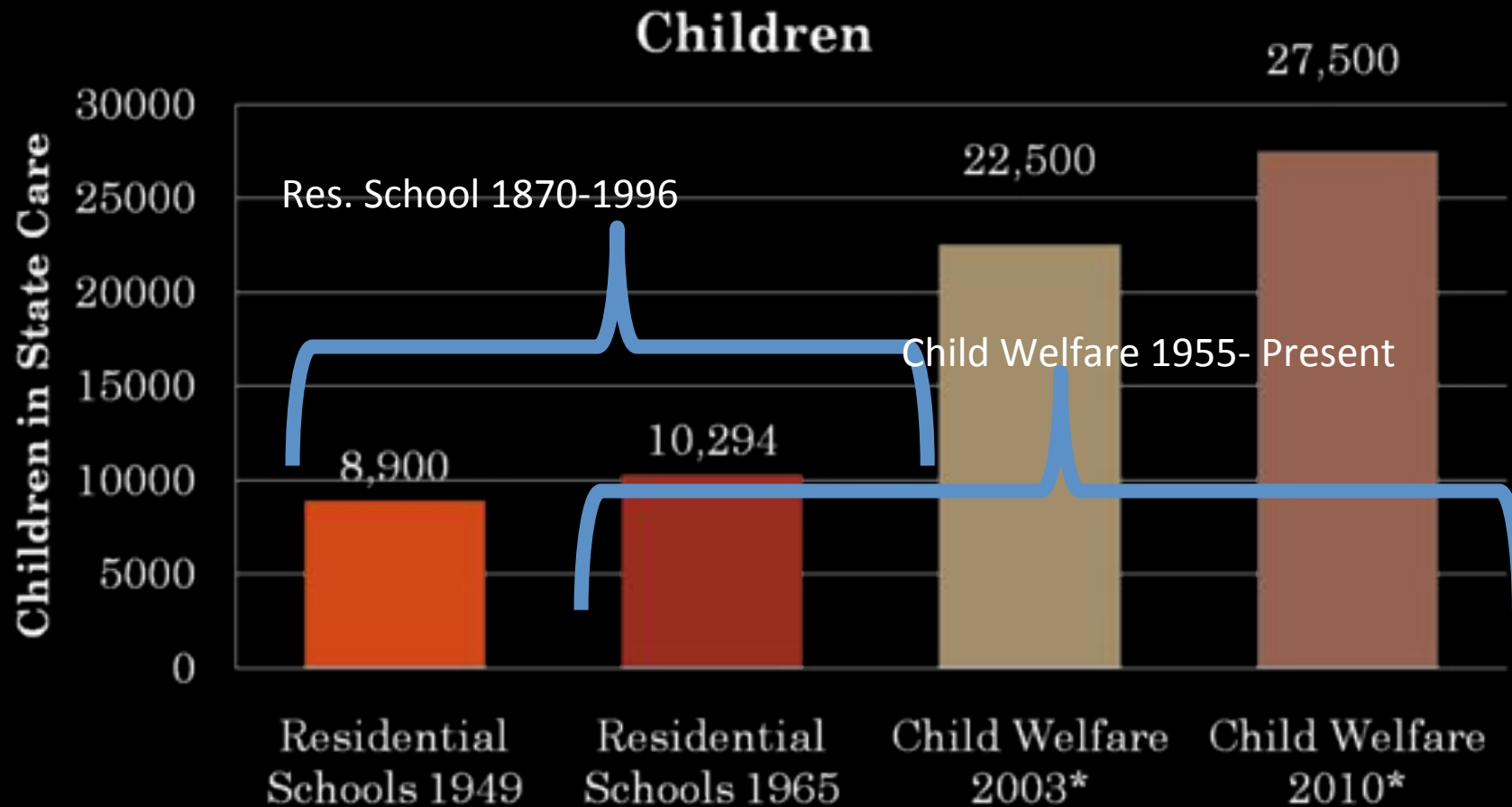




***“Although we have not found ...situations where the federal government has been found liable because of child fatalities or critical incidents relating to failure to provide necessary medical services, we believe that they exist and that, unless solutions are found, they will continue to occur”***

*INAC document on Jordan’s Principle obtained through Access to Information (002474) Likely dated 2006/2007*

# First Nations in State Care in Canada



\*estimates. FN children 6-8 more times likely to be in foster care (Auditor General of Canada, 2008)

“

Funding for the [child welfare] services needs to match the requirements of the policies and also support the delivery of services that are culturally appropriate—which is known to take more time and resources. Current [INAC] funding practices do not lead to equitable funding among Aboriginal and First Nations communities. ”

Sheila Fraser,  
Auditor General of Canada  
(May, 2008)





“circumstances are dire...as a consequence of providing inadequate prevention resources, it is foreseeable that civil proceedings could be initiated against the Government of Canada as a result of neglect or abuse of children in care”

Government of Canada document obtained under Access to Information

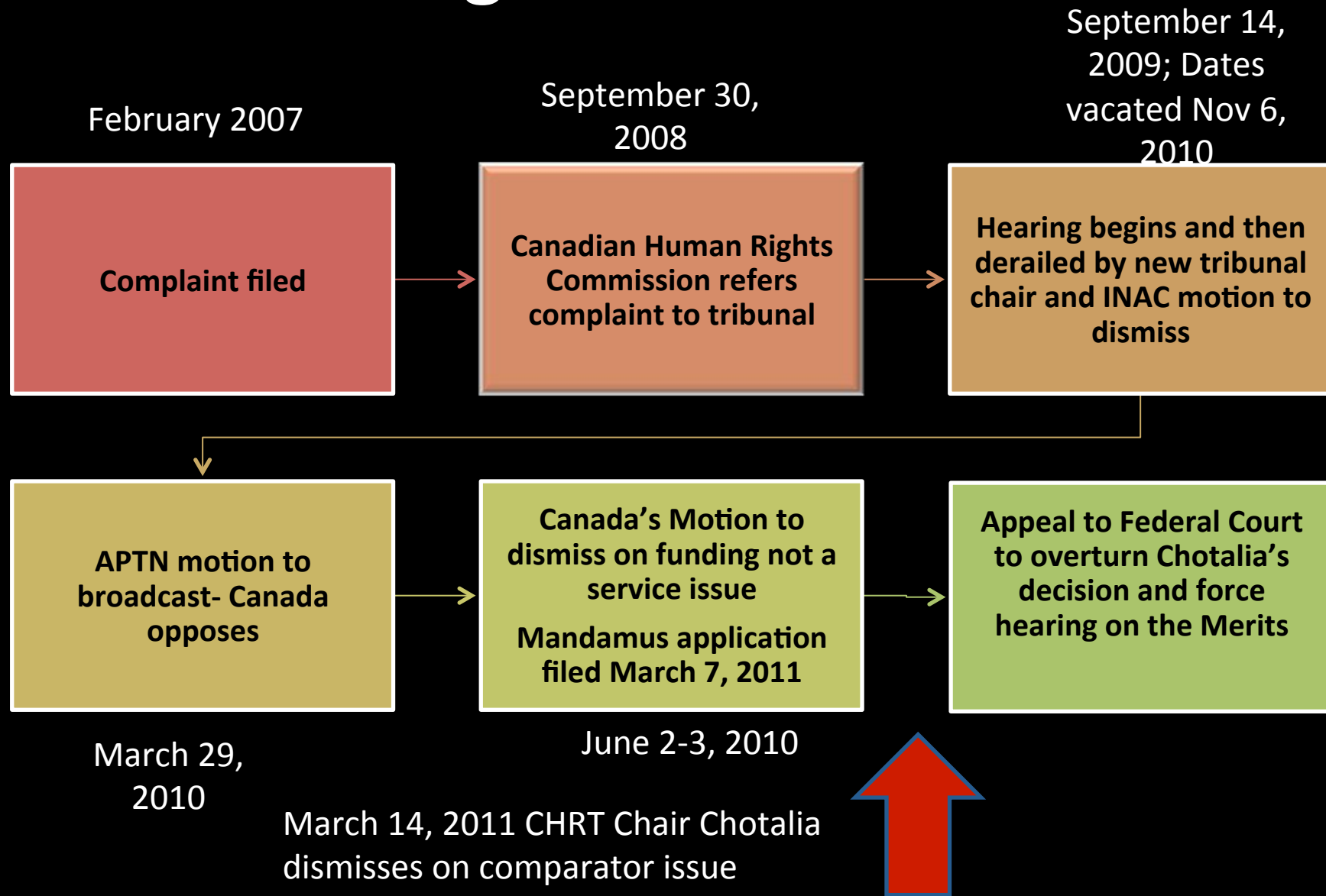


# The I am a witness Campaign

- Watch the case and make up your own minds about whether or not Canada is treating First Nations children fairly
- Currently over 7500 witnesses making this one of the most formally watched legal cases in Canadian history



# Human Rights Tribunal Process



“

Canada's lawyer has to come up with a good reason as to why the Tribunal should be dismissed and really there is no reason except for the fact that the government is scared, and does not want justice to be done. It's no wonder the government doesn't want this to be public. It is quite embarrassing and sad to think that our government is trying to get out of its responsibility to provide the same quality of services to First Nations children in the child welfare system as they do to non-Native children. ”

Summer Brisson,  
Elizabeth Wyn Wood student  
June 2, 3, 2010



# Perils to Moral Courage

1. **Assume benevolence and courage** of the group (we are the good guys, we stand up so we can do no harm and don't wimp out)
2. Ability to minimize harmful consequences experienced by people outside of your group
3. **Diffusion of responsibility** (i.e.: it is the system -not me)
4. Normalizing failed practices or policies (FN over-representation at 75 percent is new normal)
5. **Warped loyalty** to avoid insubordination to bad ideas
6. Ignore or minimize dissenting and expert opinion
7. **Too much reflection** leading away from action and toward rationalizing inaction (Aboriginal people – complex)
8. Bystander apathy (someone else can change it)
9. Rewarding conformity and **punishing moral courage**



If we were continue to wimp out...

A person wearing glasses and a dark jacket over a white shirt stands in a forest of tall evergreen trees. They are holding a white rectangular sign with handwritten text in purple ink. The sign reads: "WE WERE TAKEN TO RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS FROM OUR FAMILY." The person has a serious expression and is looking slightly to the left of the camera.

WE WERE  
TAKEN TO  
RESIDENTIAL  
SCHOOLS FROM OUR  
FAMILY.

# Children: Real leaders of Moral Courage



# Take Action: Reconciliation does not happen without you!

[www.fncaresociety.com](http://www.fncaresociety.com)



*Jordan's Principle*

