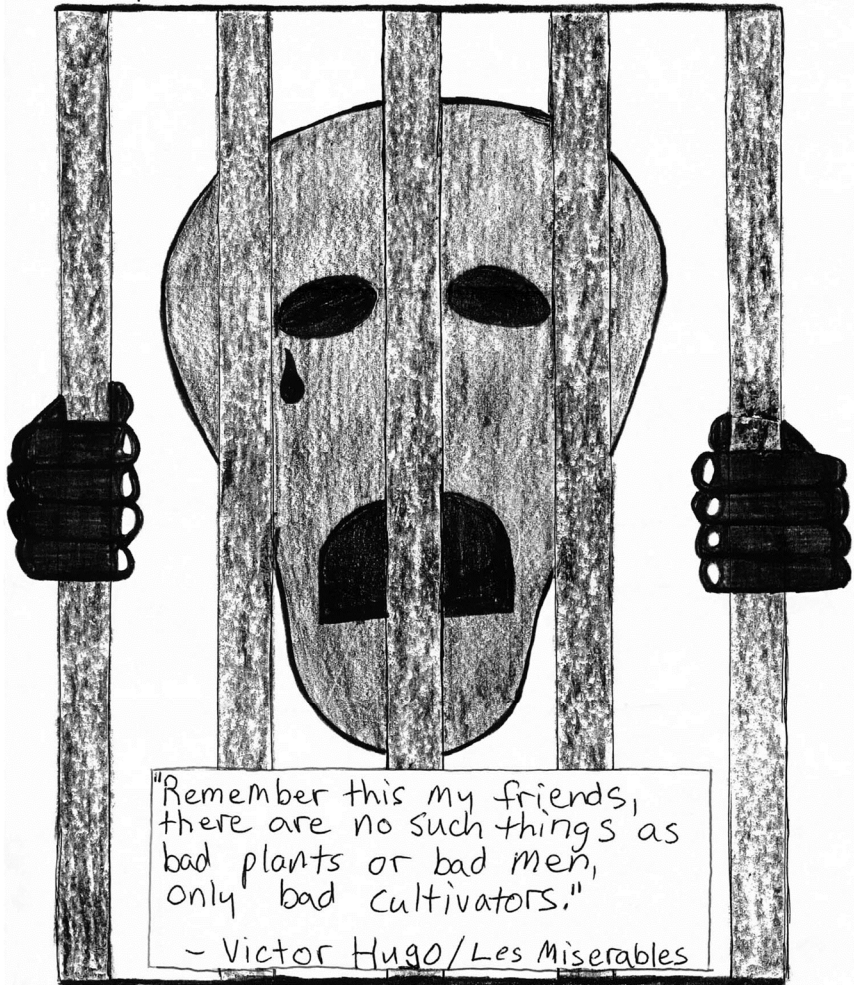


INJUSTICE



LIVES HERE

CLASS ACTION NEWS

ISSUE 23 - FALL 2021

< *Editor's Note* >

It is Fall & Issue #23 of 'Class Action News'. This magazine is by & for the 'Prisoner Class' in 'Settler Canada'.



In every Issue we provide a safe space for creative expression, informative news & support resources. These zines feature art, poetry, stories, news, observations, concerns, & anything of sincere value to share.

Health & Harm Reduction info will always be provided, of course - Yes, Do Be Safe!

Quality & Quantity:

Items printed are those that are common for diverse readers, so no religious items please.

Artwork: Black pen (tat-style) works the best. Cover Artist will receive a \$25 donation.

Writings: only short poems, news, stories, ... Items selected are those that fit nicely & allow space for others (1/2 page = 325 words max).

For author protection, letters & story credits will all be 'Anonymous'.

'Class Action News' is published 4 times a year & is free for prisoners in Canada. If you are on the outside or an organization, please do consider a donation. It really does help to get this inside!

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- The right not to be arbitrarily detained (Section 9).
- The right not to be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment (Section 12).
- The right to be equal before and under the law (Section 15).

< *Ancestral Territorial Acknowledgment* >

We respectfully acknowledge that the land on which Prison Free Press operates is the Traditional Territory of the Wendat, the Anishnaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.

≈ 'Dish With One Spoon' Treaty ≈

A paranoid is someone who knows a little of what's going on.
- William S. Burroughs

A Reader, Writes:

I was in Joyceville until the Spring of 2021 and was not given access to the Native Land. No Sweats, no Prayer on the Land, Change of Seasons Ceremony, or Pipe Ceremony.

Then I came to Beaver Creek and had my Native Medicine taken by CSC. I have regular access to my Elder here which is a great thing. But, I still haven't been allowed on the Native Grounds, no Sweats, no Change of Seasons Ceremony, no Pipe Ceremony.

The Native Grounds are not being looked after. This is disrespect to the fullest.

When I asked why I can't go down to the Land I was told it was because of COVID. But it's outside and we go out as one cohort at a time and can social distance.

The gym is open, Chapel is open, and the yard is open.

So there is no real reason why we can't go to the Land.

Sweats are how we cleanse ourselves and we need to get on the Land to be closer to the Creator.

I'm being limited on how to practice my Faith and Spiritual Beliefs. This is Discrimination in every way.

All other Faiths/ Beliefs are able to practice in the fullest but Aborigines are not allowed on the Native Grounds.



Process of Depression

*Some of us don't want to
Talk about depression
For systemic oppression.
For, if we do,
We're stripped of intention,
Thrown in a dress,
Then left with the tension.*

*Not to mention, the other
Dimension of the lens:
When two of their henchmen
Come & search the hems of the dress
Then tell me to undress
So they can examine what's left.
What's left is a soul in distress,
A man depressed,
A body in stress,
And the spirit oppressed.*

Nicholas Dinardo

Evolution of Trauma

*Night and day
Sit and think
Recording thoughts
With pen and ink
Transcribed emotion
To words on page
Nostalgic youth
Trauma, pain and rage
Talking about abuse, taboo
"They won't believe me"
"They'll say, It's just an excuse"
So I bottle it up
Instead of letting loose
3 pen bits later
And 20 years
Had some laughs
And a few tears
Here I sit at 41
Don't know my daughter
Or my son
My parents on the verge of death
Am I bitter?
I'll let you guess*

- Inmate #?

Quebec jails are still putting inmates in solitary to quarantine

Life in Quebec is the freest it's been in months. Restaurants and bars are open. So are theaters, gyms and concert halls. The curfew is a memory, and the entire province is considered a low-risk "green zone."

In provincial jails, though, it's a different story. Since early on in the pandemic, provincial jails have been quarantining inmates for two weeks upon arrival.

This type of quarantine bears little resemblance to what Canadians are asked to go through when they enter the country or wait for the results of a COVID-19 test.

For many inmates, it's two weeks of solitary confinement, in a small cell, for 23 hours a day, for 14 days straight.

Now, with pandemic restrictions winding down outside the jails, a Montreal doctor is questioning whether solitary quarantines are an effective way to prevent outbreaks, which the province says is the objective, and some lawyers who defend prisoners are sounding the alarm about the practice.

Marie-Claude Lacroix, a criminal defence lawyer who specializes in the rights of incarcerated people, told CBC News keeping inmates in their cell for such long stretches for 14 days with nothing to do is "extreme" and "inhumane."

Some prisoners are still awaiting trial and are presumed innocent.

Quarantine is 'hell'

CBC News spoke to an inmate who went through a 14-day quarantine at a provincial jail. He said he was alone in a cell for two weeks, and that guards let him out only once every 23 hours.

"There were people with mental problems who were screaming at night," the man said. CBC News is not publishing his name or that of the jail because he fears reprisals by guards if he is identified.

He said he was given no books or anything else to help pass the time, and the portions of food were as small as "a quarter of your fist." All he could do was exercise and drink water, he said.

The last two days of his quarantine were even harder to bear, he said, as a June heat wave set in and the cell became extremely humid.

"The quarantine was hell," he said.

At older jails such as Montreal's Bordeaux, which opened in 1912, there is no air conditioning and the isolation cells have become incredibly hot this summer.

"One of my clients at Bordeaux was given one outing in 14 days to a yard the size of a chicken coop and he had to go out alone," said Lacroix. She said another client "spent 14 days in quarantine without even being able to take a shower."

Some inmates are being paired up in a cell during their quarantine.

"Being stuck in a cell for 14 days with a person we don't know can be difficult," said Bianka Savard Lafrenière, a Montreal-based lawyer who is also speaking out against quarantine measures in Quebec jails.

Also, if one inmate tests positive for COVID-19, the cellmate has to start their isolation all over again, she said.

Savard Lafrenière acknowledged many Canadians had to stay at home to quarantine during the pandemic, but this, she said, is on a whole other level.

"You just stay in the cell and you wait for the correctional officers to come see you and say, 'OK, it's your time to shower' or 'It's your time to have a phone call.'"

In interviews, three lawyers told CBC News that a shortage of staff within the jail system has led to such treatment.

Savard Lafrenière said staffing jails during a pandemic can be difficult because guards often will be sent home if it's suspected they have COVID-19. And if a guard is sent home, it's not easy to find a replacement.

Lacroix also said guards have to take each person in quarantine out of their cell individually and there can only be one person in the yard at a time.

"One hour outside per person, if we count 12 hours of daytime, only allows 12 people to go out, when there are a lot more people than that in one row," she said.

Are jail quarantines effective?

Dr. Christopher Labos, a Montreal cardiologist with a degree in epidemiology, is skeptical of the effectiveness of the quarantine measures.

"The problem with COVID-19 is that it's very much spread by respiratory droplets," he said. "So if everyone is just breathing the same air, if

there's not good air circulation in that prison, it doesn't really matter if you're in your cell or not. Cells are not airtight cubicles."

He said vaccines are the "clear path forward" to control COVID-19 now.

The Quebec government said it's difficult, if not impossible, to know the rate of vaccination in jails since the population is in near constant flux. The stays of many inmates are just short term.

Despite the quarantines, Quebec's jails have seen outbreaks, affecting inmates and staff.

In January, there was an outbreak at the Saint-Jérôme detention centre, where 45 inmates and 17 workers tested positive for COVID-19. In February, an outbreak at Bordeaux infected about 100 inmates and about 17 staff members.

As of June 30, more than 600 detainees across the province have been infected during the pandemic. In Montreal's jails, 268 detainees out of 2,221 have tested positive for COVID-19.

Marie-Josée Montminy, a spokesperson for Quebec's Public Security Ministry, said the use of isolation for jail admissions and transfers is intended to limit the spread of COVID-19.

A 14-day quarantine is mandatory, even for those who are fully vaccinated. However, that policy could change as the pandemic wanes, she said.

Quebec stricter than some provinces

Other provinces also require inmates to isolate when they arrive in provincial jails to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, though Quebec is stricter than some.

In New Brunswick, when an inmate arrives who is asymptomatic, they are observed for five days and tested. If the test comes back negative, they are moved into the general inmate population. In British Columbia, new inmates are held in a special "induction unit" but are given as much time out of their cells as possible and can interact with people in their bubble, said a spokesperson for the province's Public Safety Ministry.

When considering the treatment of inmates, Lacroix said, it's important to remember that they will be released back into society.

And that comes sooner rather than later, since inmates in provincial jails generally serve sentences that last months or weeks. She said this form of quarantine only makes rehabilitation harder.

"When they get outside, a lot of them have a lot of issues," she said. "It makes their situation worse. They're angry against the system and their mental condition is worse."

Ji Eun Lee, Craig Desson

CBC News

Jul 05, 2021

'It came out of nowhere': Residents in the small town of Kemptville don't want a prison. Doug Ford's government says they're getting one anyway

A cheerful welcome sign greets visitors as they drive into the small rural town of Kemptville, with a population of just under 4,000, located an hour south of Ottawa.

Next to the sign sits a plot of empty farmland that local officials and residents had long dreamed would be a fitting place to build a community hub, or if plans came together, to rebuild an agricultural college that was once there.

Those hopes were quashed when the province decided with little consultation and warning that those 182 acres of farmland would be an ideal place to build a new maximum-security 235-bed prison - in a town with no social services, shelters, court or public transit.

"There's been no consultation - it's an imposition, and a sense that no facts will sway them to change their mind," said Kemptville resident Colleen Lynas, head of the Coalition Against the Proposed Prison (CAPP).

"When the project was announced (last summer), people were appalled that it came out of nowhere," she said, adding that the town's mayor was only informed 48 hours before Premier Doug Ford and local MPP Steve Clark - also the minister of municipal affairs and housing - announced the project last August.

The facility is part of the province's plan to build, renovate and expand a number correctional facilities in eastern Ontario to ultimately replace the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre.

Critics of the plan say that the announcement had the feel of a minister's zoning order, or MZO, the special orders that fast-track development, overriding local planning rules. Clark has issued dozens of MZOs, making irrevocable zoning decisions that will change the face of communities across the province. All the

while, they say he hasn't fully answered questions on the development dispute stewing in his own backyard - and the long-term impact it will have on Kemptville.

Residents say they have yet to get answers as to why a town with none of the basic services needed to accommodate a prisoner population would be the best place for a maximum-security prison.

"We have nothing here to support the prisoners, many of them who will be coming in from Ottawa," said Kirk Albert, a local resident with the Jail Opposition Group. "And we have pressed the province on all these issues but the shroud of silence from the solicitor general's office, from Steve Clark's office is really odd."

Stephen Warner, the spokesperson for the Solicitor General said that the project is part of a modernization strategy for correctional services in eastern Ontario.

Warner said that several sites were considered, but "none of those sites met the project requirements, such as municipal servicing, size, site configuration and conserving natural heritage."

But Albert said that according to a document obtained through an Access to Information request, staff with the ministry found that the Kemptville location also didn't meet a number of ministry requirements, such as compatibility with adjacent uses (there is a daycare across the street), distance from the existing Ottawa facility and environmentally sensitive land.

The 145-page document, of which Albert was only given 10 pages, says that the ministry has been looking for a site for the proposed Ottawa Correctional Complex (now called Eastern Ontario Correctional Complex) since 2017 and had looked at 38 properties, and shortlisted four others, before landing on Kemptville.

"It proved in just 10 pages that the plan is really ill-conceived, incredibly costly, lacks the key benefits they touted about bringing jobs to the town," said Albert.

In his capacity as local MPP for the riding of Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Clark said in a statement that "there was understandably a bit of 'fear of the unknown' and 'fear of change' and these fears were stoked by a few small but vocal special interest groups from outside the region."

North Grenville Mayor Nancy Peckford did not respond to repeated requests for comments.

But in a statement issued on the town website in June, Peckford said she was committed to maintaining dialogue with the province, given the long timelines for the prison, expected to open in 2027.

"As we have stated since the beginning, the news of a correctional facility on the old Kemptville College lands came as a complete surprise," said Peckford. "However, the reality is that the province has full ownership of the 180-acre parcel of farm-side lands, and has the correct zoning (institutional) for their proposed use. They do not require our permission to proceed."

The province, in its efforts to sell the project to the community, has promised it will pay for any infrastructure needed for the prison, including servicing of the land for water and sewer, and any related road upgrades. It will also "make best efforts" to give the town the excess land that may not be needed for the facility.

They will also allowing the town to host the International Plowing Match in September next year on the land - an event that brings in up to 80,000 people annually.

The province said it cannot disclose cost estimates until a tender for the facility is awarded, but experts estimate the prison will cost between \$250 million and \$500 million.

Albert said the province has also not justified why spending hundreds of millions on a new prison is a better option than investing money into preventative programs, or investing in fixing the bail and remand system altogether.

"Why not take some of the half a billion dollars and spend some of that money on some of the root causes like homelessness, drug addiction, education," he said.

He added that during the pandemic alone, 2,300 inmates across the province were released from Ontario jails to help curb the spread of COVID-19 - proving that the province is able to reduce the capacity of prisons when needed.

The solicitor general's Warner said his ministry "has a legal responsibility to uphold the orders of the courts and to ensure the safety and security of those in its custody."

Lynas said despite the province's claim the project is a done deal, opposition to it is only growing, and will likely become an issue in next year's provincial election. The group has held

monthly protests and has another one planned outside Clark's constituency office next month.

"This is a very small community, that for many years was defined by that agricultural college and its rural heritage," she said. "But if it's built, this prison will become a defining factor of this community."

"People will either fight the project ... or they will move."

Noor Javed
The Star
Sep 19, 2021

Cost of moving on from criminal past is too high

Denise Durette got out of prison in 2002. She tried to work at a call centre, a burger restaurant, anywhere to stay off social assistance.

But her criminal record got in the way, and she could not afford the \$1,000 cost of a record suspension.

"For many years I was on social assistance," she said.

Now, she's advocating a more affordable record suspension application, so people don't have to keep paying for a crime after they're paid their dues by serving time in jail or prison.

"Employers should give people a chance," she said.

People who have been convicted of crimes can apply for a record suspension, previously called a pardon, 10 years after they're released if they committed an indictable offence, and five years if it was a lesser, summary, conviction.

The application costs about \$1,000, and the final decision is up to the Parole Board of Canada. The wait time for this process is six months to more than a year. The criminal record is restored if a person commits a crime again.

The Elizabeth Fry Society has been trying to raise awareness about the economic and psychological impact on people, women in particular, who have difficulty getting their records put aside.

The society is raising money to help cover the cost of record suspensions for women in need of help, including the \$657 base fee, and the cost of fingerprinting, obtaining record checks, court

information sheets, local police checks, identification and postage.

These costs are prohibitive for people who are coming out of incarceration, unable to get a job, and relying on social assistance, said Judy Murphy, executive director of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Saint John.

"These women and gender diverse people we work with are really tenacious and committed to moving on with their lives," she said. "It just saddens us that this whole situation has to happen."

Murphy said the cost of a record suspension used to be \$25.

"I would like to see this whole system changed and looked at and made accessible for people who have a record," she said.

Murphy said housing and employment are the two main factors required for reintegration to society, and a criminal record is a barrier to both.

"Even now, landlords are asking for criminal record checks. So it's even more difficult to get housing. And, of course, the cost and the availability is another factor."

'Everybody's issue'

Murphy said she wants people to be aware of the impact on society when people who get out of jail or prison are forever followed by a record.

"It's everybody's issue," she said.

Durette said she never wanted to be on social assistance but was forced into relying on it because of her inability to get a job. If she could work, she said, she could have stayed off assistance and saved taxpayers thousands of dollars.

"We want to get out of that circle. It's really hurtful," she said.

Rachel Cave
CBC News
Aug 16, 2021

Of all the animals, man is the only one that is cruel. He is the only one that inflicts pain for the pleasure of doing it.

- Mark Twain

The general population doesn't know what's happening, and it doesn't even know that it doesn't know.

- Noam Chomsky

Groups demand accountability after violent 2016 death of Soleiman Faqiri in Ontario jail

Legal and mental health groups are calling for accountability and change in Ontario's correctional system after a coroner's report determined jail guards contributed to a mentally ill man's death by beating and restraining him five years ago.

Soleiman Faqiri, 30, who lived with schizophrenia, died on Dec. 15, 2016, at the Central East Correctional Centre in Lindsay, Ont. He had been remanded and was awaiting transfer to a hospital for acute psychiatric care. Faqiri, who had been charged with aggravated assault, assault and uttering threats, was held at the correctional centre for 11 days before he died.

In an Aug. 5 report, Dr. Michael Pollanen, Ontario's chief forensic pathologist, said Faqiri died after the guards beat, pepper-sprayed and restrained Faqiri while holding him face down in a segregation cell. Pollanen noted in the report that "key events" happened in the cell with no video surveillance.

"His death occurred during struggle and restraint by correctional officers," the report's synopsis reads. "The events leading to his death in custody included: prone position restraint, blunt impact trauma of the neck and body, handcuffing, shackling, application of a spit hood and exposure to pepper spray."

No criminal charges have been laid. The case has been referred back to the Ontario Provincial Police for review, according to lawyers for his family.

Experts demand change in Ontario jails

Legal and mental health organizations said on Monday that changes to provincial corrections are needed now.

Senator Kim Pate, former executive director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, said people with mental health issues need "appropriate therapeutic interventions" and many should not be criminalized and incarcerated in the first place. When inmates with mental health issues are put into segregation, judicial oversight is required, she said.

"People who have mental health issues should first and foremost be treated in health facilities. We shouldn't be expecting police or correctional

officers to actually be able to diagnose. We don't expect them to be able to diagnose heart disease or other kinds of physical illnesses. Why do we think that they can then diagnose and treat mental health issues?"

Chris Summerville, CEO of the Schizophrenia Society of Canada, said correctional officers should undergo de-escalation training before dealing with mentally ill inmates.

"If they are not teachable by their attitude, they need to be dismissed."

Five organizations, the Black Legal Action Centre, the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario, the Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants and the Colour of Poverty Colour of Change, have called in a joint statement for criminal charges to be laid against the correctional officers responsible for Faqiri's death.

"Those responsible for Mr. Faqiri's death have been allowed to go about their lives without any consequences or accountability for their actions for almost five years. No longer. We call on the Ontario Provincial Police and the provincial Crown attorney to lay criminal charges against guards who participated in and were responsible for the death of Soleiman Faqiri," the joint statement reads.

'Full and public accountability'

The Criminalization and Punishment Education Project, organized by students and professors at Carleton University and the University of Ottawa, says in a letter to provincial Solicitor General Sylvia Jones: "We call on the Ministry of the Solicitor General to provide full and public accountability for the death of Soleiman and to take steps to end the use of violent and lethal force by its employees against prisoners, as well as the repeated collective coverups of all this by ministry staff.

"Preventing future violence not only requires accountability for the deaths of Soleiman and countless others who have died by incarceration.... We urge you in the strongest possible terms to build communities, not cages, to prevent interpersonal, corporate and state violence and save lives."

The letter is signed by Aaron Doyle, an associate sociology and anthropology professor at Carleton University, and Justin Piché, an

associate criminology professor at the University of Ottawa.

The project aims to bring together criminologists, students, researchers, community members, front-line workers and others to carry out public education, activism and research in the hopes of creating social change.

The Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario Division is calling for an end to the use of segregation for inmates with mental health issues, saying segregation can create new mental health issues where none existed previously and can worsen existing conditions.

The association is also calling for an independent oversight body for Ontario's correctional system.

Ontario's Ministry of the Solicitor General, which oversees the province's jails, has not yet responded to a request for comment.

Muriel Draaisma, Jasmin Seputis
CBC News
Aug 31, 2021

St. John's inmate who died by suicide needed mental health care not incarceration, family says

Greg Pike died by suicide, unsupervised in a St. John's jail, and he was incarcerated instead of given desperately needed help with his addictions and mental health issues, according to his younger sister.

In an interview Tuesday, Courtney Pike said she was speaking out about what happened to her brother because she wanted people to know the truth about Newfoundland and Labrador's correctional system and how it failed him.

"I can't bring my brother back," she said, her voice breaking. "I just want some justice, I just want something done. I don't want anyone else to die."

The provincial Justice Department said Tuesday in an email that a male inmate at Her Majesty's Penitentiary in St. John's was found unresponsive in his cell on Sept. 16. He was taken to hospital, where he died three days later, according to department spokeswoman Danielle Barron, who did not provide details about the cause or circumstances of his death.

"A thorough review will examine all the circumstances surrounding the death, including

staff response and the appropriateness of related policies and procedures," Barron wrote.

Pike's death is at least the sixth death of an inmate in the province to be reviewed or investigated since 2017. Skye Martin and Samantha Piercey died at a women's correctional facility in Clarendville, N.L., in 2018. Three other men at Her Majesty's Penitentiary - Doug Neary, Chris Sutton and Jonathan Henoche - have died since 2017.

Henoche's death was ruled a homicide and led to charges against 10 correctional officers last year.

An independent review of the province's correctional system, published in 2019 by retired police superintendent Marlene Jesso, found that an overwhelming majority of inmates needed mental health and addictions care - services the report said weren't adequately provided through incarceration.

That was certainly Greg Pike's experience, his sister said.

Courtney Pike said she could barely contain her emotions when she read the Justice Department's statement reported in the media Tuesday. "It was like they were sweeping it under the rug, because they know this is an ongoing issue in the system," she said. "There is not enough help for mental health and addictions."

The 1850s-era jail in St. John's is known for its crumbling infrastructure and persistent rodent problems. The province has committed to building a new facility, and the Justice Department has said construction will begin next year.

Barron said Tuesday that the government could not comment on Courtney Pike's description of her brother's treatment at the jail or on his death, citing the ongoing review. Referring to Jesso's report, Barron added: "We have and will continue to review policies and procedures in Adult Corrections to ensure we meet best practices from across the country. Ensuring we have a safe and healthy living and work environment in our correctional facilities is a top priority."

Pike said her family wasn't told Greg was in the hospital until the morning after he was brought there. She is a nurse, and she said for the next few days until his death, she barely left his side, poring over his charts and scans.

"It was the worst thing I ever went through in my life," she said. "He did everything he could, he would not leave us, because he loved his little sisters, he loved his mom. I don't know how I'm going to get my mom through this."

Greg Pike would often call his family, sometimes in tears, saying he needed help - sometimes even basic medical care - and he wasn't getting it, his sister said. She said he had told the family that if fellow inmates were struggling, especially with suicidal thoughts, they would be placed into segregation units and left on their own.

He had a history of suicide attempts and he struggled with addictions and mental health for about a decade, Courtney Pike said, adding that he was incarcerated this time for breach of conditions. "How did this happen, he was supposed to be watched," she said. "How come my brother wasn't monitored closely, given his mental state?"

Cassidy Dove, Greg Pike's girlfriend, agrees that the system failed him. "Gregory didn't need jail, Gregory needed a (mental health) facility," she said in an interview Tuesday.

Dove said something needs to be done in the province about the way inmates with mental health needs are treated before someone else dies. "He asked for help and nobody gave it to him," she said. "I feel lost I lost my best friend."

Sarah Smellie

The Canadian Press

Sept 21, 2021

Parenting from Prison

One of the hardest things I have to undertake throughout the years of my incarceration would be, without a doubt, attempting to co-parent from prison. This responsibility is a never-ending emotional roller-coaster that has proven to be tremendously overwhelming at times.

The harsh reality for most imprisoned parents, men and women alike, is the fact that many children become ashamed of their imprisoned mothers and fathers and as a result of that shame, most children tend to alienate their parents or become estranged as some sort of coping mechanism. I have come to understand and accept that my daughter is entitled to form her own opinions surrounding mine and her relationship. This was difficult for me to fathom in real time - partly due to the pre-carceral

relationship we had. She is no longer the 6 year old I left physically fatherless when I got locked up (that hurts to say but it's the truth). She actually turned 18 years old today. As I write this reflection, I felt it was only right for me to write about her, in specific, on her special day. I am just grateful to even be able to play a role in her life, irrelevant of the estrangement between us.

At a certain point, my daughter started to form her own personal opinions about the way I lived my life in the past. At the time, I couldn't understand where she was coming from. I felt like she was being influenced by sources outside our relationship. However, after much ruminating on the subject, I was able to humble myself and realize that she has all rights to feel the way she does. Throughout the vast majority of my daughter's life, her mother and I told her what we thought was best for her, in hopes of protecting her feelings and stability as a child. So as a consequence of that practice, she felt betrayed and lied to as she got older. I also feel that my daughter's view of me as her father became tainted when she realized I had a "not so perfect" past. A past that has been dragged through the mud by the media and the Toronto Police.

As parents we do our best to protect our children regardless of our individual circumstances. The lifestyle I was living at the time of my daughter's birth was not a lifestyle conducive for raising a child, but I did my best as her father, under the circumstances. As we say in the hood "I was getting it how I lived."

Nevertheless, the truth is, I was damned if I did and I would have done much more irreversible damage if I didn't.

I can unambiguously say, "most" parents in prison, young and old, can concur with the narrative that they were doing their best under the circumstances (emphasis on most). Similar to the physically free world, there are people who are delusional regarding the realities that surround their lives. And in life, very few people successfully play the cards they are dealt. Similar to a game of Black Jack, the house (system of government) always wins. Very few people have enough courage to admit their misgivings and separate them from their misfortunes. We all make choices in life, but as parents, we subject our children to the rewards and repercussions of said choices. Our kids don't choose us we chose

them (out of millions, they're the ones that made it). There are many men that I have been incarcerated with over the years who choose not to take part in their children's lives for whatever reason(s), sometimes these guys think they are doing their children a favour by not putting them through the perils of imprisonment that affect families and friends of the imprisoned i.e.; constant scrutiny from staff when they come to visit, ion scan testing positive because your visitor touched money or smoked a little weed, the constant resending of documents to upkeep visitor applications, the attitude/disrespect given to visitors when they call to book visits or when they arrive for one, the "lost" letters sent by friends and family, the abuse family members have to endure vicariously through the imprisoned whether physical, verbal or mental, the tactical "administrative" delays, denied appeals, denied parole hearings and the long list of feelings of resentment that families feel towards their imprisoned loved ones for not being there in the physical to help with everyday life problems.

The lack of physical interactions could never be replaced by phone calls. There is a profound disconnect with phone calls. As human beings we yearn for physical contact with people, especially those we love and attempt to maintain relations with. Nonetheless, as an active imprisoned parent, you take what you can get when you get it. The reality will forever remain the same, there aren't any consolation prizes for the men and women that are attempting to make, forge or upkeep relations with their children. Our children are owed that right, and a lot of imprisoned parents take the easy way out, which creates an irreparable amount of damage to their children. From abandonment issues to hatred and enormous amounts of anger. So regardless of how difficult it gets at times, it's a no brainer for me. Step up and stand up for what's yours. Stand up for what matters, the future, our children.

Real talk;

from a real inmate;

doing real time;

in a real systemically racist system.

Christophe Lewis

Apr 19, 2021

Average Annual Cost of Housing 1 Person

\$110,230 - Correctional Facility

\$25,200 - Homeless Shelter

\$18,000 - Community Criminal Justice Supervision

\$7,356 - Social Housing

The institutionalization of individuals with mental health issues is as costly as it is ineffective at promoting community safety. In 2019, the average cost per day for incarcerating an individual in Ontario was \$302, resulting in an average yearly cost of \$110,230.

Between 2016 and 2017, the average cost per day for an individual in segregation, in a federal institution, was over \$1,269, totalling an average of \$463,185 per year.

In contrast, the cost of Community Resources and Social Services are significantly less expensive. In 2018, the average cost for Community Criminal Justice Supervision was \$50 per day or \$18,000 per year.

Between 2016 and 2017, the average cost per day for Social Housing was \$20, averaging a total of \$7,356 per year.

Additionally, the average cost per day for a Homeless Shelter bed was \$70, averaging a total of \$25,200 per year.

YES to Corporate Profits - NO to Social Justice!



**IF WE WANT TO TEAR
DOWN MONUMENTS
TO RACISM
WE SHOULD START
WITH PRISONS**



Facts about HIV and HCV

With some exceptions, HIV and HCV infection is generally more prevalent among women than men in prison, particularly among those who have a history of injection drug use.

In a study of provincial prisons in Quebec, the HIV and HCV rate among incarcerated women was, respectively, 8.8 and 29.2 percent, compared to 2.4 and 16.6 percent among male prisoners.

In a study of female prisoners in British Columbia (B.C.), self-reported rates of HIV and HCV were 8 percent and 52 percent, respectively.

In a 2007 nationwide survey by CSC, the HIV and HCV rate among federally incarcerated women was 5.5 and 30.3 percent, compared to 4.5 and 30.8 percent among federally incarcerated men. Aboriginal women reported the highest rates of HIV and HCV, at 11.7 and 49.1 percent, respectively.

While the majority of women in prison are voluntarily tested for both HIV and HCV, the provision of pre- and post-test counselling has been reported to be poor, and in some cases, non-existent.

Women in prison are more likely than women in the general population to have faced violence and abuse; therefore, counselling accompanying HIV diagnosis is particularly important. Women in prison have concerns about the privacy and confidentiality of their HIV status.

Women have reported being forced to draw unwanted attention. Women (37.0%) reported being HCV-positive. Aboriginal women were identified as a particularly high-risk group because they reported the highest rates of HIV (11.7%) and HCV infections (49.1%).

These data highlight the need to ensure that culturally appropriate, effective interventions that decrease risk-behaviours and increase utilization of harm-reduction measures are offered to meet the needs of Aboriginal women.

Important Hep C Update!

New treatments with excellent success rates are now available!

These are in pill form and have little or no side effects. The downside is the cost of course: \$1000+ per pill.

Vosevi is a combination of sofosbuvir, velpatasvir and voxilaprevir. These three drugs are combined into one tablet. It is taken once a day with food for 12 weeks.

Federal Prisoners: Great news, now you can start your treatment while inside!

Provincial/Territorial Prisoners: Only BC & ON provide treatment. Elsewhere, you will have to wait till you get out.

- When released, get right on welfare or disability.
- Federal health care programs like NIHB & IFH may cover costs.
- Go to a Clinic and get your blood test done so you can get into a Treatment Program at no cost to you.

There are 2,700 with chronic hep C in Federal prisons.

There are 4,380 with chronic hep C in Prov/Terr prisons.

All Federal prisoners with hep C are now eligible for treatment.

BC & ON Prov prisoners with hep C are now eligible for treatment.

HEP C = 18-30% in prison

HIV = 1-5% in prison

Do Not Share or Re-Use:
needles, ink, ink holders, rigs, ...
... well, anything in contact
with blood !!!

BLEACH DOES NOT KILL HEP C

Toll-Free Support Line for SK Prisoners

For prisoners in Provincial jails & Federal prisons in Saskatchewan.

Funds will be used to help inmates purchase call packages to keep them connected to their family, help out with canteen for necessary things & for transportation home. Maintained by prisoner advocacy groups Beyond Prison Walls Canada and Inmates for Humane Conditions.

☎ 1-866-949-0074 ☎

Jail Accountability and Information Line (JAIL) for prisoners in OCDC

The Jail Accountability and Information Line takes calls from prisoners and their loved ones from 1:00pm to 4:00pm Mon to Wed. This line tracks issues experienced by people incarcerated at the Ottawa Carleton Detention Centre.

☎ 613-567-JAIL (5245) ☎

Jail Hotline for MCC, TSDC & VCW

The Toronto Prisoners' Rights Project (TPRP) is launching the Toronto South Detention Centre, Vanier Centre for Women and Maplehurst Correctional Complex Jail Hotline. This hotline is run by volunteers. It will take calls on:

**Monday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday
9-11am & 2-4pm - 416-755-9329**

Why a Jail Hotline?

Prisons and jails carry out human rights abuses every day because they do not think anyone is watching. We are here in solidarity and struggle with prisoners.

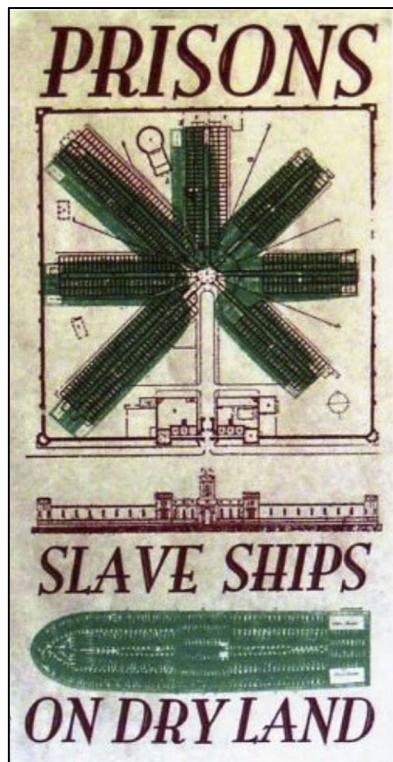
Who Should Call This Hotline?

Please share the hotline with your loved ones inside. We cannot accept calls from other prisons or jails or from people in the community.

If you need to contact us outside of the line, you can message us on social media or an email to:

TorontoPrisonersRightsProject@gmail.com

☎ 416-755-9329 ☎



One of the reasons why I think people have gone from reading mainstream newspapers to the Internet is because they realize they're being lied to.

- Robert Fisk

I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change.

I am changing the things I cannot accept.

- Angela Davis

If I don't speak, this silence is also going to kill me.

- Rehana Hashmi

**Penpal Program for Gay, Queer,
Trans Prisoners**

The Prisoner Correspondence Project runs a penpal program for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, and queer prisoners in Canada, pairing them up with gay and queer and trans people outside of prison for friendship and support. We also coordinate a resource library of information and resources related to health, sexuality, and prisons - get in touch with us for a list of resources we have, or for details.

If you want to be paired up with a penpal, please send a short description of yourself & interests to:

Prisoner Correspondence Project
c/o QPIRG Concordia
1455 de Maisonneuve W.
Montreal, QC, H3G 1M8

Please indicate French or in English. Veuillez svp nous indiquer anglais ou en français.



**Nov 20 is Transgender Day
of Remembrance**

Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR), is an international event commemorating people killed due to anti-trans violence. In the last year, 369 trans or non-binary people have been killed globally.

And it's a Canadian problem too: 74% of trans youth in Canada have been harassed at school, and 37% have experienced physical violence.

☞ Respect ☞

**Incarcerated in Canada?
Need Information?**

Write On! is an all-volunteer group whose goal is to support prisoners in Canada by researching the information you need, such as:

General legal info, prison rules & policies, resources, programs, services, etc.

Write to us at:

Write ON!
234-110 Cumberland St,
Toronto, ON, M5R 3V5

Prison Visiting Rideshare Project

The Prison Rideshare is an ongoing project of Bar None to connect people with rides to visit their friends and loved ones who are in prison in Manitoba.

If you or someone you know is interested in getting a ride to visit one of southern Manitoba's prisons, if you are interested in volunteering, or for more info contact: barnone.wpg@gmail.com

Rides can also be arranged by phone or text message: 204-599-8869 (It's ideal to request a ride at least 5-7 days in advance).

PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY

☞ In Remembrance ☞

- August 10 -

There are more than 200 Unnatural
Prisoner Deaths in Canada.

- Each and Every Year -

We maintain a PJD 'In Remembrance' page on our website for Prisoners who have died in Federal and Provincial Prisons, Remands, Lock-ups and Parole in Canada.

If you wish to have someone remembered there, send us a note or email and we will honour your request.

PJD@PrisonFreePress.org

A Child of an Incarcerated Parent

The Reality

- Every year over 150,000 adults are remanded into custody which results in approximately 180,000 innocent children who suffer from the traumatic effect of parental incarceration in Canada
- Over 5000 children are impacted by parental imprisonment in the GTA
- The number of children affected by parental incarceration only increases with the passing of the Crime Bill C-10

The Need

- Despite the growing prevalence of these innocent victims the resources available are minimal
- The cost and lack of accessibility to correctional facilities restrict child-parent visits. Consequently, some children can never visit their incarcerated parents

The Impact

- Children of incarcerated parents grieve the loss of their parent
- These children are four times more likely to be in conflict with the law
- Social stigma of incarceration causes some families to avoid discussing the absence of a parent

Research suggests that parental incarceration has a detrimental impact on children. These innocent children suffer the traumatic experience of being separated from their parent. Following parental imprisonment, children are faced with a myriad of challenges including:

- feelings of shame, grief, guilt, abandonment, anger
- lowered self-esteem
- economic instability
- social stigma and isolation
- disconnection from parent
- insecurity in familial and peer relationships
- school absenteeism, poor school performance
- difficulty in coping with future stress/ trauma
- compromised trust in others including law enforcement

www.kipcanada.org ~ 416-505-5333



K.I.P. Canada - Family Visitation

Kids with Incarcerated Parents (K.I.P.) was founded in 2011 to support the needs of the over 15,000 children in the Greater Toronto Area that have a parent in the criminal justice system.

K.I.P.'s Family Visitation Program provides weekend transportation from Toronto to correctional facilities in Southern Ontario for children and families to visit imprisoned loved ones.

During our trips, K.I.P. provides free snacks and refreshments, offers a variety of games and activities, and plays movies.

Our bus is a place where youth and families have a chance to talk about their experiences of having a loved one inside and receive support from mentors and other riders.

Our Family Visitation Program is free for anyone 18 years old and younger. If you are interested in participating in our program, please call or email K.I.P. to register today.

For more information or to book a seat on the bus please contact Jessica or Derek Reid by email at:

info.kipcanada@gmail.com

or by phone at: 416-505-5333



PRISON RADIO

- Guelph - CFRU 93.3 FM
Prison Radio - Thurs 10-11 am
Call-in 519-837-2378
- Halifax - CKDU 88.1 FM
Black Power Hour - Fri 1:30-3 pm
Youth Now! - Mon 5-6:30 pm
- Kingston - CFRC 101.9 FM
CPR: Prison Radio - Wed 7-8 pm
- Montreal - CKUT 90.3 FM
PRS - 2nd Thurs 5-6 pm & 4th Fri 11-noon
- Vancouver - CFRO 100.5 FM
Stark Raven - 1st Mon 7-8 pm

CPR: This program features content produced by CFRC volunteers and by other campus and community radio broadcasters, including CKUT Montreal's Prison Radio & Vancouver Co-op Radio's Stark Raven programs.

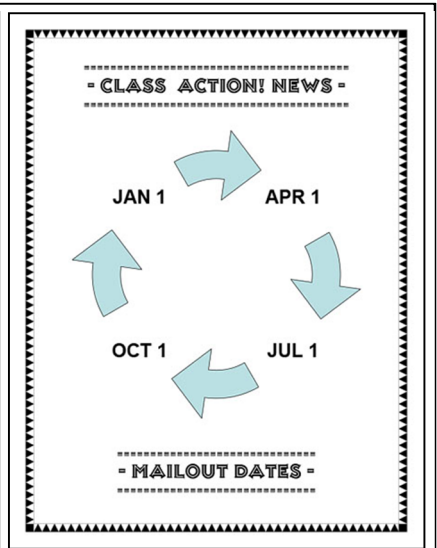
The last Wednesday of each month, CPR features 'Calls From Home', sharing letters, emails, voice messages and music requests by and for prisoners and their loved ones.

Prisoners and their loved ones are invited to contribute music requests, messages and suggestions for the program.

*Write: CPR c/o CFRC, Lwr Carruthers Hall,
Queen's University,
Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6*

*Email: CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net
Call: 613-329-2693 to record a message or
music request to be broadcast on-air.*

☞ Prisoners Justice Day is Aug 10 ☞



☞ Issue #23 - Fall 2021 ☞

Class Action News
PO Box 39, Stn P
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

download, print, contact:
www.ClassActionNews.org

Next Issue: #24 - Winter 2021
Deadline: Dec 1, 2021
Mail-out: Jan 1, 2021

If you don't like the news ...

... make some of your own !!!

Whatcha got in there that needs gettin' out?

... Hmm ... ?

Art, Poems, Stories, News, Whatever !

