

CLASS ACTION! NEWS



Issue 4 : Winter 2016-7

< Editor's Note >

It is Winter & Issue #4 of 'Class Action News'.

This magazine is by & for the Prisoner Class in Canada.



In every Issue we strive to provide a safe, constructive space for creative expression and literacy development. These zines feature art, poetry, stories, news, observations, concerns, and anything of interest to share.

Health & Harm Reduction info will always be promoted – Be Safe!

Quality & Quantity:

Content selected is of a general nature for our diverse readers, so please, no religious items.

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 & leave space for others (1/2 page = 350 words max).

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

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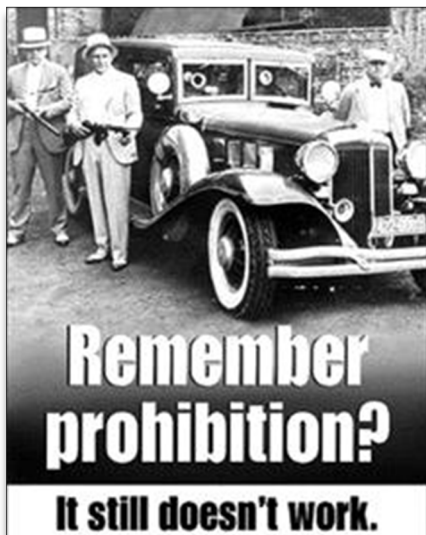
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The human eye is a wonderful device. With a little effort, it can fail to see even the most glaring injustice.

- Richard K. Morgan

< Letters >

No GST Rebate, Over-Charging ...

Folks in prison are not entitled to GST Rebate but we get charged GST on everything we buy. We are charged Room & Board. When we buy a 19" tv, they get away with charging us over \$200.

- Anonymous

Hep C Success ...

I would like to bring attention to the doctor at Vancouver Infectious Disease Centre (VIDC) and tell of the thanks I owe him and staff for giving me my life back.

Ten+ years of living with Hepatitis C Virus, genotype 3a, the hardest and longest to cure.

Doctor after doctor put me off from getting treatment even after sitting in custody for two years.

Within 5 months of meeting the doctor at VIDC, I was cured of this disease with new up-to-date medications that have very little or no side effects. VIDC helps people with little or no money in the downtown area of Vancouver by offering state-of-the-art diagnosis and treatment of chronic infectious diseases.

The doctor and staff give hope and help to all who ask for it, even to people in custody. I now have new hope for getting my life back together.

Thank you again for all the help and the respect shown to me each time I went there.

- Anonymous

Until the great mass of the people shall be filled with the sense of responsibility for each other's welfare, social justice can never be attained.

- Helen Keller

Just because everything's different, doesn't mean anything's changed.

- Irene Porter

Enemies are so stimulating.

- Katharine Hepburn

CSC Secrets

In Feb 2014 I took CSC to the Human Rights Tribunal in BC and was successful in suing CSC. But I was given a 'gag order' not to disclose any info to the general public or they would take back my Monetary Settlement (which was substantial) and also face a possible prison term for Breach of Confidential Agreement.

I am a 'Hermaphrodite' or the correct term now, 'Intersex' person. It's got to do with a person being born with an extra chromosome eg: xx female, xy male, xxy female-identified intersex, yxy male-identified intersex. What this means is Intersex persons are born with both sex organs, one or both functional, or only one fully functional, or neither one functional. We are all very different from each other and one as rare as the next.

I was born in 1961 with both sex organs and was the first Intersex child to be allowed to be taken home by my parents. Prior to that we were put in Asylums (Mental Inst.) or sold to circus 'Freak Shows'.

I had a horrible life of secrecy as you can imagine in order to cover-up my birth difference. Back then if you were born disfigured you were and still are shunned by society.

Anyway, my life was not so good and at 17, I ended up in Canada's worst prison, Collins Bay. Yes, I was a female with a fully functional vagina and breasts placed into the General Pop. of a male inst. because I also had a very tiny phallic penis-like structure that was non-functional.

You can only imagine what I went through for those 3 years: rapes, beatings, sodomy, degraded, passed around for every man to use me. I tried to kill myself many times by cutting my arm to the bone, hoping to bleed out. I was to endure this cycle for 32 years in prisons.

I was also sent to the old Prison for Women (P4W) twice. That was how the coin tossed in Kingston, Heads - I went to Kingston Pen, Tails - I went across the street to P4W.

I now have cancer and will die soon and feel my story should be told. CSC has gone to great lengths to cover it up and hide their shame. The Human Rights Commission said my Case was the worst atrocity ever committed by CSC.

- Anonymous

Judge certifies \$600 million lawsuit for mentally ill inmates

A \$600-million class action lawsuit was certified in an Ontario court this week, opening the door for thousands of prison inmates with diagnosed mental illnesses to seek compensation for their alleged mistreatment in federal jails.

The lawsuit alleges Canada's federal prison agency fails to properly care for mentally ill inmates, relies too much on the "cruel and unusual punishment" of solitary confinement and neglects to adequately train its staff. Superior Court Justice Paul Perrell ruled that the lawsuit should go ahead in a decision released Wednesday.

"It's an incredibly vulnerable population," said James Sayce, a lawyer for the plaintiffs who expects "tens of thousands" of current and former inmates to join the class action against the federal justice ministry.

"It's a group of people who are often ignored by most of society," he said. "They're people who are often subjected to solitary confinement for months and years as a result of their mental and medical conditions."

Chris Brazeau, one of the lead plaintiffs in the suit, said in a statement through his lawyer that he has a "duty" to participate in the class action.

"In my own case, I remember asking myself 'how much more of this can I take?' I must have asked myself 500 times, before I reached my breaking point. I now know what it feels like to want to die. I know what it feels like to have no hope and no options," said Brazeau, 34, who claims to have spent periods of up to a year in solitary confinement during his 12-year sentence at an Edmonton jail.

A spokesperson for the federal justice ministry referred questions on the lawsuit to the Correctional Service of Canada, the agency responsible for running federal prisons.

In an emailed statement, Corrections spokesperson Véronique Rioux said "effective and timely" treatment for inmates with mental illness is a priority for the agency. Front-line staff are trained to "understand the mental health needs of offenders," and \$77 million was "invested" to address the needs of these inmates during the 2015/16 fiscal year, she said. Rioux added that segregation - the term the government uses for solitary confinement -

is a legally-available tool that is used to "manage risk," either to the inmate or staff, and is not a punitive measure. She said there are ongoing reviews of an inmate's placement in solitary confinement, including on their physical and mental health, and that the agency is legally required to remove them from segregation "at the earliest time."

She would not discuss the newly-certified lawsuit, because it "is currently before the courts."

The lawsuit arrives at a time of heightened concern over the use of solitary confinement in provincial and federal jails, particularly when it involves inmates with mental illness. In his mandate letter to the justice minister after he came to power last year, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau called for restricted use of solitary confinement and the improved treatment of mentally ill inmates, as recommended by inquests into the death of Ashley Smith, a 19-year-old who strangled herself in 2007 after more than 1,000 days in segregation.

The B.C. Civil Liberties Association and John Howard Society launched their own lawsuit in 2015, alleging the use of solitary confinement in federal prisons violates prisoners' Charter rights to life, liberty and security of the person.

In Ontario, the issue caused a storm this fall when the province's human rights commissioner revealed how Adam Capay, a 24-year-old with mental illness who is charged with murdering another inmate, was kept in solitary confinement at the Thunder Bay Jail — a provincial facility — for almost four years.

The United Nations considers 15 straight days of solitary confinement to be a form of torture. Eligible class-action participants must have been in a federal prison at some point since Nov. 1, 1992, and been diagnosed with a mental illness during or before their time in jail, according to Perrell's decision this week.

Alongside Brazeau, the other lead plaintiff in the case is David Kift, a 58-year-old former Mountie who is now serving a six-year sentence at the Joyceville Institution for "gun possession-related" crimes, according to the statement of claim. He is diagnosed with PTSD and depression, and the statement of claim alleges that he has endured "long periods" without his medication and has been held in solitary confinement.

"You become unfit to function in a social way," Brazeau said in his statement to the Star. "That is a prerequisite to live. You need social skills to survive. Solitary confinement removes that."

Alex Ballingall
Toronto Star
Dec 14, 2016

Prison violence won't stop until overcrowding addressed, former inmate

For many familiar with this country's correctional facilities, news of prison riots is not surprising. For years across Canada, violence in prisons has been steadily rising.

Lee Chapelle has 100 convictions on his record - all of them property-related and non-violent in nature. He's spent 21 years in prison and tells The Current's Friday host Piya Chattopadhyay that overcrowding plays a huge role in prison violence.

"Double bunking and triple bunking is absolutely a catalyst for violence," says Chapelle, who is the president of Canadian Prison Consulting an organization that helps inmates prepare for life on the inside after they're convicted and for life on the outside after they're paroled.

"Just imagine 50 or 60 men or women living in a very small area, sharing everything from toilets to food and all the domestic issues that could arise from that," Chapelle explains.

He tells Chattopadhyay that one example of violence involved one inmate dying over mistakenly using a cell mate's toothbrush.

"When it's overcrowded it's just exasperating," says Chapelle.

He suggests "public safety should come to the forefront," to make Canada's prison system work better for the people that are incarcerated inside them.

"If they are not violent, scary people and don't have a long history, let's look at alternative sentencing - restorative," Chapelle says.

"I think we really need to restore our belief in the potential of rehabilitation."

CBC Radio
Dec 16, 2016

20 Minutes ...

Justin St. Armour hanged himself in his jail cell, and may have been without oxygen for 20 minutes before guards found him. His mother is now on a mission to improve mental health services in Ontario prisons.

The mother of a young mentally ill man who hanged himself inside an Ottawa jail is vowing to take on the provincial prison system that she says failed him repeatedly.

Justin St. Armour passed away on Friday with his mother by his side in the intensive care unit of an Ottawa hospital, after being taken off life support a day earlier. Doctors told her it was unlikely her son would recover and live a normal life. He was 32.

"I kind of feel like I'm in a dream," his mother Laureen St. Armour told VICE News. "I don't think I've really processed it yet."

When his mother was forced to take her son off life support, it had been over a week since he used a bedsheet to hang himself in his cell, from the spot where the sprinkler system had once been.

St. Armour was diagnosed with schizophrenia as a teenager, and had been in and out of prison since then. When he wasn't in jail, he was living in shelters or on the street. His mother guessed this was his tenth time being incarcerated. At least eight of those times, he should've been in a psychiatric hospital, she said.

"Justin was crying out for help and would threaten people, thinking that it would get him into the hospital. If you go to a hospital, and they tell you you don't have mental illness, if you can't go to a hospital for help, where can you go?"

A few days before he was thrown in jail, St. Armour showed up at an Ottawa hospital, telling staff he was suicidal and asking for help, his mother explained.

Laureen said the doctors didn't take his claims seriously.

"He was presenting himself at a hospital for help," she said, her voice breaking.

Afterwards, St. Armour threatened to kill his Ontario Disability Support Program worker by waiting outside of her home and strangling her. That's when a doctor alerted the police and had him arrested, according to Laureen.

"The hospital failed him, the jail that knew he was suicidal even before he got there failed

him," she said, adding that her son was placed in the health ward, where he was checked on by staff every 20 minutes, instead of suicide watch or continuous care, where he would've been checked on more frequently.

"The doctors told me he went from at least eight to 20 minutes without oxygen," she said.

She didn't have a chance to see her son between the time he was admitted and his suicide attempt. She was notified a day later, when he was already in the intensive care unit.

"His mental health was not good. He did in fact have schizophrenia, and often told me about the voices he had in his head. He told me he had conversations with god," she said. "He was just caught with demons."

St. Amour had developed a crippling addiction to opiates, according to Laureen, who tried multiple times to have him enrolled in a detox program. She says her son "used drugs to not have these voices in his head."

Next week, Laureen plans to meet with a lawyer about suing the jail and the province. That's the most effective way she can think of to bring about reform in the system.

"I don't want to make any money off of my son's death," she said. "I just don't ever want this to happen to another person again. We are suing for changes.

"They need to hire doctors, particularly psychiatrists and nurses, to take care of the [mentally ill], and I think they should go to a psychiatric ward, rather than jail," Laureen said. The Ottawa Hospital did not respond to VICE News' request for comment.

The Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre has come to be known as a microcosm of various issues in Ontario's strained prison system. It was so overcrowded this February that inmates were sleeping on mattresses in shower cells. The revelation prompted the ministry to form a task force to address its capacity and crowding issues.

In a statement to VICE News, the Ontario corrections ministry said that, while they were unable to comment on the specific case, they stressed that jails screen inmates for suicide risks and that "the institution's administration and health care team are notified without delay of an inmate who may be at risk of suicide and a clinician would see the inmate within 24 hours."

The spokesperson stressed that inmates would be under surveillance by professionals if they are on suicide watch. It appears that St. Armour wasn't on such a watch — if he had been, correctional officers would've have checked on him every 10 minutes, instead of every 20 minutes.

Yasir Naqvi, while he was Ontario's minister responsible for corrections, had previously vowed to fix the problems at the Ottawa facility. "I have been clear that the status quo with respect to capacity issues and overcrowding at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre, and throughout our correctional system, cannot continue," said Naqvi. "That is why we are moving forward on transforming Ontario's correctional system."

VICE News has previously reported on the crises facing Ontario's prison system: the overcrowding, mental health issues, and staff shortages.

St. Amour is now the fourth person to die as a result of a suicide attempt at the jail. As of December 2014, according to the Ottawa Citizen, there had been 47 attempts over the previous decade.

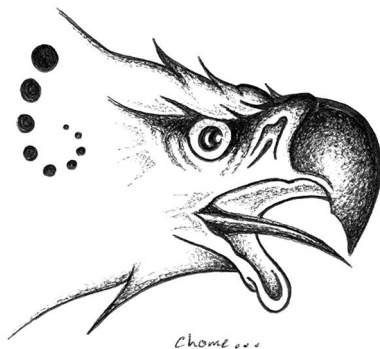
The Ottawa hospital turned St. Amour away when he came to them for help and the prison staff neglected to keep an eye on him while he was in custody, according to Laureen. But as he was dying, he lay handcuffed to the bed, under the full supervision of correctional officers.

"I said to them, if you would've guarded him while he was in your facility, perhaps he wouldn't be laying here, dying."

Tamara Khandaker

Vice News

Dec 12, 2016



Suicide equally stubborn behind bars: 140 hangings tell us so

Yousef Hussein is not alone, though he died that way. Inmates in Ontario take their own lives with alarming regularity.

Because coroner's inquests are mandatory in such cases, we actually have an accurate picture of how often prisoners die by their own hands in this province.

In 2014, a Toronto Star analysis of 20 years of coroners' proceedings found 163 inquests into self-inflicted deaths in prison or police custody. And, of those, 138 died by hanging, just as Hussein, 27, did Tuesday by using a bed sheet.

There will be an inquest, of course. But we know two things already: the Ministry of Correctional Services is free to ignore the recommendations of the jury and, secondly - even with all the money, resources and goodwill in the world - suicide can be incredibly difficult to prevent.

Inmates, like Hussein, have died after coming off suicide watch. Others have died ON suicide watch. Patients have taken their own lives inside our best mental health hospitals. Suicide has occurred in police custody, in cells, showers and laundry rooms.

Juries of laymen, meanwhile, have recommended pretty much every sensible improvement: removal of "anchor points" in cells, where any kind of ligature can be fastened; better training for correctional officers; mental health assessments by nurses during intake; improved sharing of medical histories and prescription drug needs; making automated defibrillators and other rescue equipment more readily available.

There have been 163 juries in 20 years: you can just imagine the range of improvements proposed, but never ordered.

"Inquest recommendations are non-binding and are therefore generated for consideration purposes," reads a statement from Cheryl Mahyr, the issues manager for Ontario's chief coroner's office.

"It is not appropriate for the (office of the chief coroner) to provide commentary on the actions or inactions of recommendation recipients as there is no legal requirement for any recommendation made by our office to be implemented."

All of which to say, maybe nothing changes because Hussein died in solitary confinement, between 20-minute bed checks, in his third year awaiting trial. Maybe his family's outrage only sits and seethes.

What, after all, is an over-stretched system to do - basically operating a warehouse for the mentally ill - when even a relative says this? "He was perfectly fine, living his life, reading the Holy Book," said his sister, who saw Hussein 11 days before his death.

We talk a good deal about suicide in this day and age, but it is to ask if we're getting any better at prevention, inside jails and out.

Indeed, rates in Canada have not changed much since 1950, with levels among men always about three times higher than those for women.

Dr. Zul Merali is president of The Royal Ottawa's Institute of Mental Health Research. Suicide rates have flatlined, he said Thursday, while much progress has been made on conditions like stroke, leukemia and heart disease.

He pointed to two big reasons. Suicide is usually linked to depression and, decades later, we still aren't great at treating the condition. Drugs work effectively in about a third of cases, somewhat effectively in another third, and not at all in the last third, he said.

The problem? We don't have a full understanding of the underlying causes in the brain. "Even to this date, we don't know what the underlying mechanisms are for most mental health conditions."

Secondly, as a society, we haven't poured enough health care dollars into mental health treatment and research - especially given the vast economic toll the illnesses take over a lifetime. "Mental illness is really the orphan of health care."

To that end, the Royal is about to announce a new research chair into suicide prevention.

The Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre, its current woes aside, has had relatively few suicides in the past decade or so.

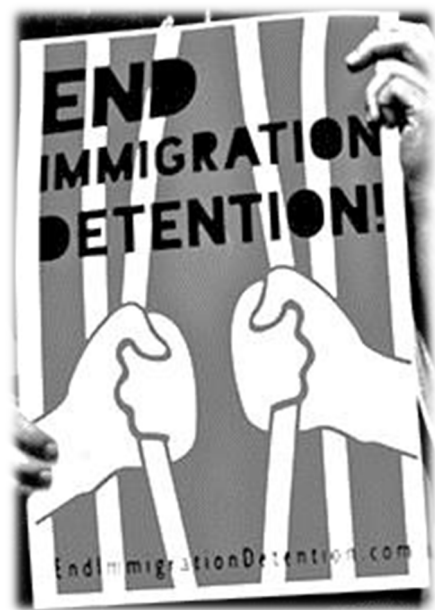
The last inquest for a self-inflicted death there was in 2014, at which time ministry staff said two suicides and 47 attempts had occurred in the preceding 10 years.

The inquest was into the death of a Cornwall man, Renaud-Louis Grenier, 55, who was in the Ottawa jail in 2011 on charges of assault with

a weapon. Only two weeks after being in custody, he was found in his cell hanging from a bed-sheet.

Sadly, Grenier had been sent to Ottawa by a justice of the peace who ordered a mental health assessment to determine fitness for trial. Innes Road. Attawapiskat. Fly-in health teams. Sad-eyed ministers with money. Tears. How to stop suicide? Easily said: get serious about understanding, treating the suicidal.

Kelly Egan
Ottawa Citizen
Apr 14, 2016



Untitled

I almost over-dosed
And took my own light out
Cause I thought it was over
And I had tons of doubt
If you can't think of why you're here
Or why you've been spared
It's more than your life's journey
So you always must be prepared!

- Donna Brown

Lost In Time

By bricks and steel that soar so high
At times I wonder, I wonder why?
My hopes and dreams taken away
There is no escape from this hell to pay

In here the start begins at the end
They have turned away all my friends
I had lost it all, lost all hope
I am lost in time, it is hard to cope

These prison walls are closing in
From where I am to where I've been
I use to have a happy life
I lost my family, I lost my wife

Once behind these walls there is no return
There is no emotion, no concern
Yet so many get caught in the race
The system of judges have lost my case

So I sit here and watch time go by
What I speak of truth is backed by lies
One day this injustice, I will overcome
My time in here, my time will come.

- Sean Kennedy

Intimidation

Scared for what, for freedom, for strength?
For psychotic inmates placed beside you
The crazy ones whom hate on the world so much
They hate on themselves

Rights feel extremely violated
Nerves shot so hard every nail is bitten to the core
My mind feels high from anxiety
Emotions all a mix
Suddenly all these fears make you need a fix

Help me! Does anybody hear?
I've only felt this way for over a year
Forgive me, it's only my safety I fear.

- A. Wilson

Untitled

In the last 100 days
 I've seen many faces
 Faces that come and go
 And in those faces
 There's something distinct
 Something you should know
 Looks of hate, looks of fear
 From down their face
 Runs a blood stained tear
 From living in alleys
 To apartment stairs
 Jail is the place
 Where anyone cares
 From broken-down stairs
 And broken-down homes
 Into jail they retreat
 To rest their bones
 And just when you think
 That they've gone insane
 They're let out on the street
 To start all over again

- James Nicholson

Days They Pass

I look out the window, of my cell
 I see razor wire, a great fence as well
 Maximum Security, is what they say
 A debt to society, I must pay
 But I am not sentenced, I didn't plea
 But this hell on earth, holds on to me
 The man in the Bubble, the cameras too
 All of the time, someone's watching you
 A small world it is, in every way
 So watch what you do, and watch what you say
 You have to watch, the man in blue
 For all the time, he's watching you
 They don't give a damn, and don't really care
 For you're in here, and they're out there
 I look outside, the sun shines bright
 Soon it will be dark, and then it will be night
 The sun goes down, the moon's in the sky
 Life here in hell, another day gone by
 I count the days, as they pass
 Soon this place, can kiss my ass

- Al Summers

Feelings

Some feelings I have
 Just cannot be told
 For they are the ones
 I will always hold

Can't open my heart
 To see ...
 Cause I know in the end
 It will only hurt me

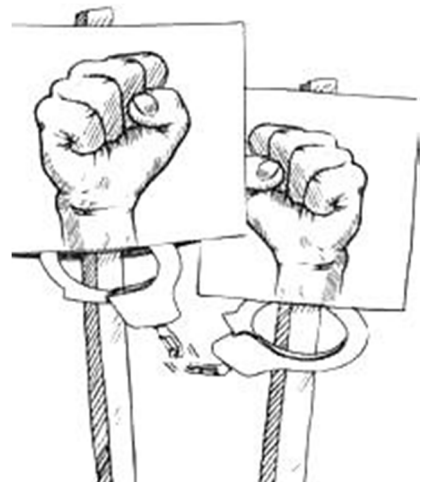
I hope you understand
 And realize it's for the best
 To let these feelings die
 And be put to rest

- Anne Kellar

This Home

*This home of loneliness & pain
 A place of steel & stone
 An iron cell, a home in hell
 Is where I sit alone
 For the crime I pay with time
 Where lights glare night & day
 It sometimes seems that all my dreams
 Must wait for a new tomorrow
 But don't be sad, it's not that bad
 Though I hide it well within
 No trace outside, it's deep inside
 What my trip through hell has been*

- Melanie Daniels



Why did Soleiman die?

Family of mentally ill inmate who died in Ontario jail says system failed them

The family of an inmate who died in an Ontario jail last week is searching for answers about how a loved one they say struggled with a serious mental illness ended up lifeless in a jail cell just days after being taken into custody.

CBC News has learned from his family that Soleiman Faqiri, 30, died under mysterious circumstances on Dec. 15 in segregation at Central East Correctional Centre in Lindsay. His death is under investigation by both the coroner and Kawartha Lakes Police Service.

"We're trying to come to terms with the fact that he's gone and he's not coming back," Faqiri's brother, Yusuf, recently told CBC Toronto at the family's Ajax, Ont., home.

'Why did Soleiman die?'

"We want to know why my brother died," Yusuf said, his grief still raw. "Why did Soleiman die? How did Soleiman die? That's what we're looking for."

Those questions remain unanswered since Dec. 15, when the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services said "a male inmate passed away at the Central East Correctional Centre."

"All we were told was that he died when the guards entered his cell," Yusuf said. "We haven't been given any answers."

Nothing to explain the bruises the family alleges covered Faqiri's face when they went to see his body. Nothing to explain the gash they say they found on his forehead.

What is known is that on Dec. 4, Faqiri was charged with two counts of aggravated assault, one count of assault and another count of uttering threats of death and bodily harm. Also known, confirmed by the Ministry of the Attorney General, is that a mental health assessment was ordered for Faqiri on Dec. 12.

But on Dec. 15, Durham Regional Police officers knocked on the family's door to deliver the news that Faqiri was dead. The charges against him were stayed at the request of the Crown a few days later.

The family says it tried several times to visit Faqiri in jail during the 10 days he was there before his death. Each time, they say, they were refused, with prison staff telling them Faqiri was

on lockdown. Staff at Central East Correctional Centre refused to comment on the family's claim and referred all questions to the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

A gentle brother lost

The man whose loss the Faqiri family is grieving was gentle and personable, they say. He spoke three languages, was a straight-A student at Pine Ridge Secondary School in Pickering, and the captain of its rugby team who half-jokingly spoke of dreams of becoming a professional athlete.

Faqiri was one of five siblings, four brothers and a sister, whose parents brought the family to Canada from Afghanistan when he was just a boy. Yusuf was two years older than his brother, but people often confused the one for the other when they were growing up.

"We did everything together," Yusuf said through tears.

The future for Faqiri looked bright. He was studying engineering at the University of Waterloo.

In 2005, his family says his life took a drastic turn after he was involved in a car accident. That year, they say, he would be diagnosed with schizophrenia, unable to continue with university.

Over the years, although Faqiri struggled with his illness, his interest in learning continued, now in religion, studying the Qur'an with hopes of one day becoming an imam.

Lack of information

In September 2012 came a brush with the law. He was convicted in April 2014 of theft under \$5,000 and ordered to pay a restitution of \$980.

"He had mental health issues, but he was an amazing and incredible figure in our family," Yusuf said, refusing to comment specifically on the circumstances through which his brother ended up behind bars earlier this month.

Instead, the family's focus is the lack of information surrounding Faqiri's death, a silence they say is deafening.

"As the matter is under police investigation, it would be inappropriate to comment further at this time," Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services spokesman Andrew Morrison said in a statement. "Should the coroner's investigation determine that the death

was anything other than natural causes, a mandatory inquest will be held."

The results of the autopsy are still outstanding, police say.

Cyclical effect

For Dr. Sandy Simpson, chief of forensic psychiatry at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Faqiri's case underscores a larger need for better training of correctional officers in knowing how to spot and respond to inmates with mental health problems.

"If the person is being agitated on the basis of a mental illness then often what they're feeling more predominantly is fear rather than anger," Simpson said. "If you respond very firmly and overly authoritatively to someone who's already very fearful you'll escalate, rather than contain, the problem."

CAMH has helped to provide that training for about 5,500 officers over the past year, alongside the Ministry of Community Safety and Corrections, Simpson said.

But the psychiatrist said that putting inmates with mental health issues in segregation can create a cyclical effect.

"Your mental health problem may lead you to going into segregation and being in segs will not address the problems that gave rise to you going there," said Simpson.

And long-term segregation can then have damaging effects, bringing on even more mental health problems, he explained.

That compound effect can lead to instances where correctional officers need to use force to protect the safety and well-being of others inside the facility.

"But force needs to be the last thing that you do with a whole range of skillful interventions that come before," said Simpson.

A brother's love

Those interventions involve earlier detection of inmates whose behaviours seem to be escalating, and greater attendance to when people are in difficulty.

Yusuf agreed, saying his brother's condition was something all prison staff should have been aware of, given his prior run-ins with the justice system.

"The system failed our family," the Faqiris said in a statement Tuesday.

While the family awaits the results of Faqiri's autopsy, it's the little, unassuming moments that replay themselves in Yusuf's mind.

As he laid his brother, Soleiman, to rest on a bitterly cold Sunday, his memory travelled back to last winter.

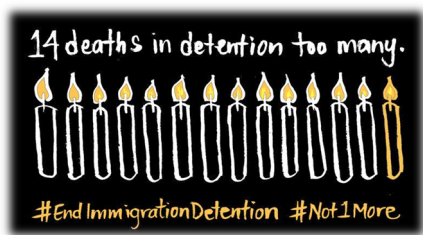
"I was leaving the house and I didn't have a tuque. And he came and said, 'Yusuf, take my tuque. You don't have one.' He gave me a big hug and said, 'I love you.'"

"That's the last thing he would say every single time: 'I love you, bro.'"

Shanifa Nasser

CBC News

Dec 21, 2016



PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY

☞ In Remembrance ☞

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

Inmate families say prison drug-scanning tool finds false positives at 'alarming' rate

Families of federal inmates are urging Canada's prison system to end the use of drug scanning devices they say are faulty and unreliable.

Mothers Offering Mutual Support (MOMS), a group whose members have sons and daughters in prison, has filed an electronic petition in Parliament calling on Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale to review the use of ion scanners and explore more effective alternatives to keep drugs from getting behind bars.

The ion scanners devices are designed to detect trace amounts of particles. Correctional Service Canada has placed these devices in the lobbies and mailrooms of some of its prisons in a bid to reduce the flow of drugs into its facilities.

The devices are extremely sensitive, and MOMS says in its petition that the scanners set off false positive readings at an "alarming" rate.

Anne Cattral, whose son is incarcerated at Ontario's Warkworth Institution, said she has lost count of the times she has tested positive for morphine, hash, opium and heroin. She follows a rigorous regime of washing, cleansing coins and jewelry and driving with plastic gloves before visiting the prison to limit the chances of a false reading.

Cattral said a positive test can lead to the visit being denied. It is also recorded on an offender's file, affecting future private family visits, transfers, and parole, she said.

She says she's been denied entry, and knows others who have been as well.

"It causes a great deal of stress, because people know it has serious consequences," she told CBC.

Cattral said the Ion Mobility Spectrometry (IMS) devices used by the Correctional Service Canada can pick up trace amounts of prohibited substances through items like cash, credit cards, or even particles in the air.

Family ties key to rehabilitation

"CSC is paying lip service to keeping drugs out by relying on these tests and is destroying relationships and families in the meantime," she said. "Maintaining strong family ties through visits is a very important component in the rehabilitation and reintegration process but the damage caused by this flawed system is counter-productive."

International research posted on CSC's website acknowledges problems with the technology.

"One drawback of IMS technology is that it measures drug particulates down to the nanogram, identifying false positives frequently," it reads.

The research notes one study found cocaine was the only drug that was reliably tested while heroin and amphetamine were poorly detected.

"Overall, this review indicates that IMS units are useful in detecting most drugs. However, these devices are often oversensitive and are limited in their ability to detect certain forms of drugs," it concludes.

Risk assessment

CSC spokeswoman Esther Mailhot said ion scanners are one of several tools used to stop the flow of drugs and other contraband into prisons, complementing sniffer dogs, body searches and surveillance.

She said CSC does not collect data on false positives in testing.

"CSC policy requires that a risk assessment be completed following a positive indication on the ion scanner before a decision is made regarding the visitor's request for access to a CSC institution. With these added procedures, there is a low likelihood that visitors be refused entry into a federal penitentiary based on these devices alone," she said.

Ion scanners are typically placed at front entrances or within the mailroom of the penitentiary to detect minute traces of substances.

Samples are collected by wiping or vacuuming objects, then placing the filter or swipe into the unit.

The e-petition to end the use of ion scanners, sponsored by Quebec NDP MP Matthew Dubé, will be open for signatures until April 5, 2017. An electronic petition is open for signatures for 120 days. If it gathers more than 500 signatures, the government is required to respond.

Kathleen Harris
CBC News
Dec 21, 2016

We are powerful because we have survived.
- Audre Lorde

Halifax radio show gives inmates outlet on the airwaves

Prisoners perform poetry and rap on the Black Power Hour, a CKDU show co-hosted by former Halifax poet laureate El Jones.

Call in shows on Dalhousie University's campus radio station have become a creative outlet for an unlikely audience – prisoners.

Inmates are taking to the airwaves to perform poetry and rap on the Black Power Hour, an educational program on CKDU co-hosted by former Halifax poet laureate El Jones. The show focuses on social and cultural issues relevant to black people, but is open all listeners, including those behind bars.

"I think what they have really connected to is the idea that they can have a voice beyond themselves," says Jones. "They have this role in creating something and they take that very seriously."

The poetic platform came about "organically," says Jones, and was largely driven by the prisoners themselves. She says Black Power Hour was spun off of another program on CKDU, Youth Now, at an inmate's request for more historical black content.

One of the first prisoners to call into CKDU was Aiden Cromwell, who is currently awaiting a new trial after his second-degree murder conviction was overturned.

"That concrete jungle is never safe," Cromwell recently rapped on-air. "Gotta know when to pull it – Don't hesitate."

Soon after other inmates heard his performance, Jones says, the phones started lighting up.

In some jails, Jones says, prisoners have formed poetry collectives to prepare their best material for the show. Some pay up to \$7 to call into the program, and Jones says inmates have written into her saying they stay on their best behaviour to preserve their radio privileges.

Free expression can be therapeutic for prisoners, Jones says, who use the show to work out issues related to race, gender, love, family, being in prison and the actions that brought them there. Some of her favourite calls came from female prisoners who re-appropriated the machismo of hip-hop to tell men "we're not interested."

The process of sending someone to prison can be silencing, Jones says. She says in court, your

lawyer speaks for you, but on the radio, you don't "have" to say anything.

"When you do say something, it's because you're making a choice to say what you're saying," Jones says. "I think that can be a really important part of returning people's voices to them."

Some object to giving criminals a platform, says Jones, and while she is especially sensitive to concerns about respecting crime victims, she says convicts can be victims as well.

"There's a false division that you're either a criminal or a victim, and once you become a criminal, you have no right to healing," she says. "We don't allow space in between that for working out ... trauma and problematic things."

The radio transmission goes both ways: It allows inmates to speak to the world beyond the prison walls, and gives people outside the opportunity to listen.

"I think that's a voice we're not hearing," Jones says. "Unless we expect people to be away forever, we're going to have to find ways to connect to them and I think this is one small step."

Adina Bresge
Metro News (Halifax)
Oct 24 2016

CKDU 88.1 Studio Line: 902-494-2487

Fri 1-3pm – Black Power Hour blends conscious hip hop with discussions of political, cultural, and social issues relevant to Black people.

Mon 5-6pm – Youth Now! Open panel for youth at risk, to help foster growth and understanding.



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.

Harvoni: \$60,000 - 8 weeks (Genotype 1, low viral load, never-treated)

Harvoni: \$90,000 - 12 weeks (Genotype 1)

Sovaldi: \$55,000++ perhaps with other drugs for Genotypes other than Genotype 1

Federal Prisons: *you may be able to start your treatment while inside.*

Provincial Prisons: *Depending on the province, you may 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 work done so you can get into a Treatment Program at no cost to you.

Important: *most prisons, provincial drug plans, and private plans restrict the new drugs to people who have chronic hep C plus scarring of the liver (stage F2 or higher fibrosis). Both never-treated & people for whom Peg-Interferon & Ribavarin did not work are eligible for the newer treatments. For people with hep C and no liver scarring or light scarring (less than F2 fibrosis), it's still Peg-Interferon & Ribavarin. Get your liver tested! New tests have replaced biopsies: Fibre-test (blood) & Fibro-test (imaging).*

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

Hep C & Eating Well Inside

Your liver is your body's processing and power plant - everything you consume filters through it. If you have hep C, eating well can slow its progression in your liver.

We have some general tips on healthy eating for hep C inside. A diet low in fat, sugar, cholesterol, and sodium, but high in complex carbohydrates and sufficient protein is recommended.

- *If you can, talk to health care and see if you qualify for a low-fat, low-cholesterol, or high-protein diet.*
- *Order peanut butter or protein bars from canteen. Watch your protein bar intake as they often contain lots of processed sugar.*
- *Eat protein like meats, peanut butter, beans, nuts, and cheese. Your body needs protein to fight infection and heal damaged liver cells. Protein helps you build and maintain muscle. But eat high-fat protein sources like meat, peanut butter and cheese in moderation.*
- *Eat carbohydrates. You need carbs to give you energy. Try to avoid high-sugar foods like candy, and go for complex carbs like pasta, potatoes, bread, fruits & vegetables.*
- *Eat all your vegetables - whatever you can get. You get vital nutrients from fruits and vegetables.*
- *Drink water. Coffee and cola can dehydrate you. Flush your system with some water.*
- *Cut back on fatty and salty foods if you can, including deep-fried foods. They make your liver work overtime.*
- *Cut down or stop drinking. Alcohol is very hard on your liver.*
- *Try to exercise a bit every day. Walk or jog around the yard. Lift weights to keep your muscles strong or get the blood flowing with push-ups and sit-ups.*
- *Watch your health. Put in a health care request if you get swelling or pain in the right side of your torso.*
- *Educate yourself about hepatitis C.*

** If you have advanced liver disease or another condition like diabetes that requires a special diet, try to talk to a health professional before making changes to your diet.*

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



F.E.A.T. - Family Visitation

F.E.A.T. for Children of Incarcerated Parents 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.

F.E.A.T.'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, F.E.A.T 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 F.E.A.T. to register today.

For more information or to book a seat on the bus please contact Jessica or Derek Reid by email at info@featforchildren.org or by phone at 416-505-5333.



PRISON RADIO

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

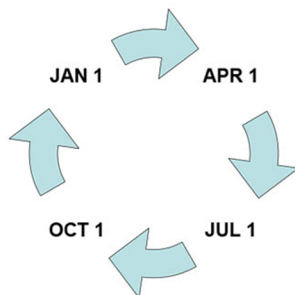
*Write: CPR c/o CFRC, Lwr Carruthers Hall,
Queen's University,
Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6*

Email: CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net

Call: 613-329-2693 to record a message or music request to be broadcast on-air.

Prisoners Justice Day is August 10

- CLASS ACTION! NEWS -



- MAILOUT DATES -

~ Issue #4 - Winter 2016-7 ~

Class Action News

PO Box 39, Stn P
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

download, print, contact:
www.ClassActionNews.org

Next Issue: #5 - Spring 2017

Deadline: Mar 1, 2017

Mail-out: Apr 1, 2017

If you don't like the news ...

... make some of your own !!!

Whatcha got in there that needs to get out ?

... Hmm ...?

Art, Poems, Stories, News, Whatever !

