

WOMEN'S PRISON NETWORK



- ISSUE #16 / FALL 2019 -

Editor's Note:

Welcome to Issue #16 of Women's Prison Network, a magazine by and for women, trans and youth prisoners in Canada.

This is a safe space to share art, poetry, news, thoughts, conversation, connections ...

We send copies into all Women & Youth prisons in Canada.

Send your art, poems, short stories, comments, articles, etc, to Women's Prison Network if you would like to be a part of the next Issue. – Thanks!

Women's Prison Network
PO Box 39, Stn P
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Contents:

Letters	3
News	3-7, 10
Feature Story	8-9
Book Review	11
Resources.....	12-16

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Writers:

One column is only 300 words, so do choose your words carefully. It must be short & to the point. Poems that are tight & give space for others are the first in. *Thank you for your words!*

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NEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWS

Prisoners are paying the tab for staff to watch TV

3 more women join lawsuit alleging sexual assault at women's prison in Truro

I have recently completed a series of Access to Information Act requests across Correctional Services Canada (CSC) spectrum and found that without exception Canadian prison Inmate Welfare Funds (IWF) are paying for the various institutions' administrative and correctional staff cable TV service.

Three more women have joined a lawsuit alleging they were sexually assaulted by a guard at the Nova Institution, a prison for women located in Truro, N.S.

Bottom line, I want:

They join three other women who launched the civil suit in May. The guard has resigned.

1) A full stop to the 'fraudulent practice' through the 'abuse of authority' by using IWF money to pay for 'television and cable/satellite services' that are used and enjoyed exclusively by CSC administrative and correctional staff at every prison institution across Canada.

Truro police are conducting a criminal investigation into the allegations at the institute, one of six federal correctional facilities for women across Canada.

2) A full audit by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada to review the administration of all prisoners' trust funds by the respective institutional program managers and AWOs.

CBC is not identifying any of the women because of the nature of their allegations. They have the support of the Elizabeth Fry Society, an organization which provides help for women in conflict with the law.

3) An immediate refund to the IWF of every Canadian prison institution to cover the maladministration and misappropriation of funds; whereby, prisoners have been paying the tab for institutional staff to watch TV for over 40 years.

In their suit, the women allege the assaults happened in 2013 and 2018. They name a former guard, Brian Wilson, as their attacker.

4) A Treasury Board inquiry into the breach of fiduciary trust and ethical code violations related to the maladministration and misappropriation of IWF being used for institutional staff's TV viewing pleasure.

Guard claims he has been wrongfully accused. In an interview with CBC News in May, Wilson denied the allegations and said he has been wrongfully accused.

5) Accountability, transparency, reprisals and repercussions in accordance with CD 001 Sc. 3 "adherence to the expected (Public Sector Values and Ethics) behaviours constitute a condition of employment for all CSC employees".

Correctional Service Canada told CBC News it began an internal investigation when it first heard of the allegations in last December.

The preliminary findings of that investigation were delivered on March 29. That's when CSC contacted police.

Wilson said he was suspended this January and resigned in April on the advice of his psychologist. He has been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

The allegations in the civil lawsuit have not been tested in court.

Thanks everyone for your kind consideration of the foregoing and understanding that 'playing the prisoners' for staff entertainment is beyond the pale of civility in this the 21st Century. It is also illegal!

Blair Rhodes

CBC News

Jul 19, 2019

*George Fraser
Aug 10, 2019*

You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated.

In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it.

- Maya Angelou

*Your brain has a mind of its own.
- Kathryn Barrett*

'Fear doesn't rehabilitate our youth':
Southern chiefs call for changes after reports
on youth in custody

A former Manitoba Justice employee who worked with incarcerated youth at the Manitoba and Agassiz youth centres says she's heartbroken, but not surprised, with the findings in two reports released this week about the treatment of youth in custody.

Chantell Barker, who is now the director of justice with the Southern Chiefs' Organization, said the reports - from the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth and the Manitoba Ombudsman - are consistent with what she saw working in the centres.

"I heard many stories of how our people get treated in the system," said Barker, who worked with Manitoba Justice for 10 years, including eight as a probation officer.

The two reports, both released on Thursday, examined the province's two youth correctional facilities.

They found that in a one-year period, segregation was used in the facilities 1,455 times, affecting more than one in three youths entering custody.

In one case, a teenager was kept in solitary confinement for 400 consecutive days in a cell smaller than a parking stall.

Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth Daphne Penrose said others were kept in solitary for weeks on end.

There is currently no maximum time limit for how long a young person can be kept in solitary confinement or isolation in Manitoba's youth custody facilities.

"What we discovered through the course of this two-year investigation was extremely concerning, unacceptable and must immediately change," Penrose said Thursday.

Barker, who left Manitoba Justice in December 2016, said while she can't share specific stories about the youth she encountered in the facilities or her work in them, there were common themes.

"I just think how heartbreaking it is," she said. "They go from the [Child and Family Services] system to the youth centre to segregation.

"It's heartbreaking to know that this is the beginning ... laying the foundation for their adult life, and it's been nothing but a struggle."

The reports were commissioned after the office of the Manitoba advocate received public complaints about the use of pepper spray and segregation at the province's youth correctional facilities.

Building relationships, seeing results

A former professor of social work at the University of Manitoba says the use of solitary confinement should be a last resort, and only if danger is an issue.

Stephen de Groot has been working in the areas of child welfare and youth justice for more than 20 years.

"Now what's interesting is many of the situations that end up in a physical restraint often could have been avoided dozens of times prior," de Groot told CBC Up to Speed host Ismaila Alfa.

"Unfortunately, incident reports don't always reflect that youth [have] said, 'Please leave me alone, can I have some space, I'm not feeling good today,'" he said.

"And it just escalates from there and the report reads 'Youth out of control needed to be restrained, secure isolation.'"

According to de Groot, what's missing in juvenile facilities is meaningful connections between the staff and the youth.

"We equip the people that are on the frontline to be able to build relationships in a way where physical altercations and outbursts are minimized significantly," he said. "And that when there is one then that's when we have to take those extreme precautions."

He's worked with the Ontario government on implementing this kind of approach. He said that province is leading the way on building a rapport with the young people by getting to know them.

"That is getting way more of a positive response with youth than any formal intervention," said de Groot.

He said he wants to work with the Manitoba government and has reached out, but has not received a response.

End segregation in youth facilities: SCO

Barker said she wants to see the Manitoba government commit to ending segregation among youth.

Manitoba Justice Minister Cliff Cullen said Thursday that his department plans to act on the recommendations from the ombudsman.

That report included 32 recommendations focused on oversight and reporting, including mandatory reporting when pepper spray or segregation are used.

However, he wouldn't commit to the six main recommendations from the advocate, which include limiting segregation and offering more mental health supports for youth.

"I'm hoping that the recommendations will be implemented," Barker said. "The minister never committed to changing segregation."

Barker said the Southern Chiefs' Organization is in the process of discussing and implementing its own measures in the hopes of rehabilitating youth in their own communities, as opposed to in correctional facilities.

"Fear doesn't rehabilitate our youth - love does," said Barker.

Riley Laychuk
CBC News
Feb 23, 2019

What is life like for women in jail?

Author remembers supportive community, but also fellow inmates' screams

Ann Hansen said she found a supportive community of intelligent, diverse women during her seven years in a women's prison.

But she also remembers being routinely woken up by the sound of women screaming.

Hansen details her life in prison in her book 'Taking the Rap: Women Doing Time for Society's Crimes'.

Hansen was sent to prison in the 1980s for crimes she committed while part of a guerrilla activist group known as the Squamish Five. She spent most of her time at the now-closed Prison For Women in Kingston, Ont.

Though life in prison was challenging, Hansen said she developed strong relationships with the women she met there, probably because she and her fellow inmates were housed in the same cells together for years.

"To this day, I would say that the strongest relationships I've ever had were with the women that I was in prison with," she said.

"I was struck by what a diverse and interesting group of women they were. They really weren't any different than people that you would meet on the street."

Hansen said she also saw a disproportionate number of inmates who were Indigenous or black, and many who had mental health or addictions issues. Virtually all of them came from very poor backgrounds, she said.

"You can't help but wonder if the reasons that they are in prison are because they've committed crimes resulting from trying to survive economically," she said.

It may also be, she says, that "being victims of racial discrimination [has] led them ... to be involved either in crime to survive, or they've turned to various substances in order to alleviate the stress and trauma."

Traumatic moments

The most challenging moments were hearing women in segregation screaming in agony, Hansen says. Some of them were people suffering mental health issues, who ended up being in segregation for months at a time.

She remembers listening to an interview recently with a man who spent time in prison in Iran who was traumatized by listening to screams there.

"And I thought, do people realize that that's what you experience in a Canadian prison?" she said.

Hansen said she's come to terms with her crimes, and how she might be perceived as a person who has spent time in prison. But she says many women like her have a difficult time talking about it.

"Most women, when they're being interviewed by the media, are really hesitant about talking about their crime - just simply because that moment in time will define them for the rest of their lives, no matter what they do," she said.

CBC News
Mar 09, 2019

Because you are women, people will force their thinking on you, their boundaries on you.

They will tell you how to dress, how to behave, who you can meet and where you can go.

Don't live in the shadows of people's judgement.

Make your own choices in the light of your own wisdom.

- Amitabh Bachchan

'It's a heavy load': Former prison babies demand apology, recognition

Robert Burke, 68, was born inside the notorious Andrew Mercer Reformatory, the first penitentiary for women in Canada, after his mother was jailed for becoming pregnant out of wedlock.

Despite having no memories of the prison, Burke nevertheless continues to suffer from vivid nightmares of abuse and abandonment by the matrons who once staffed the foreboding building on Toronto's King Street, which opened its doors in 1872.

Burke's Ottawa-born mother, Muriel Joan Walker, a promising ballerina, was one of hundreds of young women labelled "incorrigible" and sent to the prison to learn "feminine virtues." "I spent the first eight months of my life incarcerated with her," said Burke, who obtained his mother's records after a year-long legal battle. "It was pretty horrific. There was a lot of beatings and torture that went on."

Allegations of abuse

The prison was eventually investigated over allegations of abuse including the use of experimental drugs on inmates - all of which his mother experienced after her arrival in 1951, Burke said.

Burke said his mother, initially labelled by court officials as being "temperate and abstinent," developed a drug addiction and mental health issues after leaving the prison with her son more than a year later. Burke was eventually taken from her by the province and adopted by another family.

A fight for recognition

For years, former Andrew Mercer inmates and their children have fought for official acknowledgement of the illegality of their imprisonment, as well as recognition of the abuse, torture and trauma they experienced at the Toronto prison.

Burke said he wants an official apology, and wants the children of those women to have better access to the documents detailing their incarceration.

"I could have saved myself so much grief because I had all these nightmares [growing up] and all these strange feelings, and I was so withdrawn,"

he said. "If I had known my past, I would have had a way better understanding of where I was coming from."

Velma Demerson, who died last week at the age of 98, is the one of the only women in Canada to get a public apology and compensation from the federal and provincial governments for her time at the reformatory.

At 19, after her parents tipped off authorities, Demerson was jailed and stripped of her citizenship for falling in love with a Chinese man and having a child out of wedlock. Her child, also born at the prison, was taken from her when he was three months old.

She received an apology for her incarceration, for the abuse she experienced and for several medical procedures performed on her by a doctor at the reformatory.

Trauma continues

Kim Pate, an independent senator and long-standing prisoner rights advocate, told Ottawa Morning she's also calling on the federal and provincial governments to apologize to the women sent to the reformatory, and to their children.

Pate said the children, many now approaching old age, continue to suffer trauma due to their experiences at the prison, which closed its doors in 1969.

"It would mean a great deal [to get an apology]," Pate said. "I'm hopeful that some small comfort would come from [the] recognition that what was done was wrong and that it wasn't their fault, nor was it their mothers' faults."

Burke said he's forgiven those who harmed him and his mother, but an apology would go a long way to alleviate the load he's carried all these years.

"You can't just carry this hate around," he said. "It's a heavy load."

CBC News
May 26, 2019

Likely as not, the child you can do the least with will do the most to make you proud.
- Mignon McLaughlin

Adulthood was invented to repair the wounds of childhood.
- Joy Browne

Prisoners' Justice Day vigil calls for better medical supports at OCDC

Dozens of advocates at a Prisoner's Justice Day vigil in Ottawa called for more mental health and other medical supports at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre.

The vigil, held Saturday night at Major's Hill park, comes off the heels of a new report from the Jail Accountability and Information Line - a program launched in December as a way for inmates of the Innes Road jail to report concerns and seek help from a live volunteer.

This is the second such report that the hotline organizers have released, and shows many of the inmates' concerns revolve around inadequate medical and mental health care.

"The healthcare system is abhorrent, people living with mental and physical health conditions and not receiving care they need," said hotline volunteer Souheil Benslimane.

Prisoners reported a lack of medical confidentiality which deters some inmates from seeking medical attention, limited access to opioid substitution treatment and delays in being able to see a doctor or a dentist, the report states.

Inmates also complained that medications are often diluted in water in an effort to prevent hoarding and misuse, but doing so reduces the intended effects of the medications.

In a statement to CBC, a spokesperson from Ontario's Ministry of the Solicitor General, which oversees the prison, conceded that these are complex issues that are difficult to resolve, but that inmates have access to supports.

"All inmates have access to a variety of services and supports including health care, psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers, regardless of a diagnosis of a specific mental illness, and corrections officers are trained to detect possible signs of mental illness, and how to refer these inmates to health care or other professional staff that can provide the appropriate level of care they may require," the statement reads.

But Justin Piché, an associate professor of criminology at the University of Ottawa and volunteer with the hotline, said even if prisoners are meant to have access to proper supports as a matter of policy, it is not happening in practice. "We've gotten 1,500 calls in the first six months that we were open. That volume of calls suggests

there is something very wrong at OCDC," he said. The report lists several recommendations in order to address the issues, including prohibiting dilution of medications.

But Piché said something as simple as allowing access to magazines purchased by the inmates could make a difference.

"That's not a big ask. Having access to information and things to keep your brain going inside shouldn't be an object of contestation," he said.

More issues than health

The report lists a number of other issues that inmates have been reporting, including access to legal aid and proper access to request and complaint forms.

But the prison's outdated phone system is another easy fix that can make a big difference, Benslimane said.

OCDC's current system only allows for collect calls to be made to land lines, but not cellphones.

"A lot of people don't have land lines, they're families don't have land lines," he said. "[It's] further isolating people who are already isolated." Benslimane said there needs to be more investment in supports for inmates, but said there seems to be a lack of political will.

Prisoners' Justice Day started almost 45 years ago in memory of Edward Nolan, a Millhaven Penitentiary inmate who died in solitary confinement.

CBC News
Aug 11, 2019

The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any.

- Alice Walker

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

- Margaret Mead

We realize the importance of our voices only when we are silenced.

- Malala Yousafzai

I decided it is better to scream.

Silence is the real crime against humanity.

- Nadezhda Mandelstam

< *Feature Story* >

Convicted But Not Convinced:

A memory - a theatre group called 'Convicted But Not Convinced'.

We were convicted, but we were not convinced that life in prison was conducive to reconstruction of lives. How could we demonstrate these convictions? It was the theatre - portray the life within the prisons to the people 'outside'. And our company would consist of those who had been in prison.

Our leader was a veteran of Russian prisons - five years for narcotic smuggling before his father managed to spring him. Solitary confinement, he could not speak Russian. He did his time before it did him though it was only a reprieve.

A variety of offenders. He did a political crime. Dick was recently released after ten years for manslaughter.

I was an actor, but found myself repeating the same roles in different plays. The imposters who masqueraded as theatre directors had missed out on their true calling as headwaiters as they continued to serve half-baked puddings to a warmed-over audience. A talentless clique which hired each other, some armed with a foreign accent.

Films were worse. Cattle calls I attended featured a variety of Deliverance creeps as Hollywood North emulated Hollywood South. My rugged looks brought me work where talent didn't count and I suffered from receiving money for catering to an appetite for violence, greed and exploitation. I clung to the idea that there was hope for Canadian theatre but my idealism was rapidly fading.

I had written a thesis on drama in prisons and had toured shows in prisons and asylums. I believed that a sympathetic portrayal of parallel emotions acted out and the channelling of aggression in a controlled forum would relieve hostility. As we portrayed the uselessness of life inside, we would build an adjustment to life outside. We would leave the past behind by exorcising it through make believe. Theatre would be the bridge to the so called 'normal' life.

Part of this process was the public declaration of being a convict. Thus exposed, one could get on with facing reality rather than obfuscation and shame.

While our director was visionary, he lacked practicality, and I became producer and stage manager. My factotum was a reformed car thief who had found rehabilitation through my theatre school. I introduced him to Chekhov, and he seized on this discovery like a rabid ferret.

We were the core. Others drifted in and out, appeared or disappeared depending on their visions of time or police detainment - mostly peaceful offenders with a predilection for drugs, alcohol, gambling, and occasional thievery.

Our set and props were simple and claustrophobic - an iron bar cage in which the main action took place, props only as in prison. Stark, meagre lighting heightened the drabness which was part of our message and suited our resources.

I was also the musician and songwriter. We illustrated tales that our ex-cons brought us - the night Bobby Landers died of a heart attack screaming for help while two guards sat and played cards. Such a scene would be enacted while I sang the song I had written; 'Bobby Landers Tonight'. Sometimes we sang songs such as 'Go Down You Murderers', an English folk ballad, sometimes we sang of dangerous men such as John Hardy or an original number such as 'Joyceville Hotel'.

Occasionally there was virtual reality. The unfamiliarity with theatrical convention in our company would enable real emotions to get the upper hand. Fists would fly, eyes might be blackened, once an arm was broken. After that, the perpetrator would break down, and end up sobbing: 'I'm really sorry man, I love you man ...' The audience did not know how to react, was it real or make believe? Often it was both. This reinstated my belief that exciting theatre was still possible. Sometimes events were aided by the presence of police who had been tipped off that 'a group of cons were gathering for a rally'.

When we illustrated a jailbreak and a convict escaped, the audience would cheer. When we hunted him down in stylized fashion, often chasing him around the theatre, they would also cheer. The show was never the same, depending on where we were, which actors showed, and the audience reaction. Our leader's dog would join in the fray, barking and bounding throughout the theatre and joining the fights.

Our company, flexible, adaptive, was used to living on the edge. We began to relate in a

similar way to the outside, civilized smugness. Although now we were all 'outside', we lived our lives somewhat as though we were still 'inside'.

Convicted but not convinced? We preached to the sympathetic converted, and only occasionally planted a seed of understanding. One of these blossoms turned out to be one of the spectator cops, who had originally come to observe and control if necessary - he went on to work with street people. Our borrowed station wagon, strapped down with the prison bars, would arrive at the backdoor of a church basement. Volunteers would help move us in. Occasionally, we arrived at the front door of a three story coffee house, and here there were hangers-on and street people who were anxious to help, especially if they were invited to see the 'show' or play a small part.

Our 'rolling convict review' carried on throughout the summer, replacing members with recruits from the street and bars. We rolled along like a snowball down the hill, gaining momentum and gaining size. Word of our show spread slowly, but it spread.

One night, walking home from the 'Silver Dollar', we stumbled over an inert form. It was a native and we decided that Walter would be the native quotient to our show.

'The Trial of the Dene' was included - I will never forget when Walter appeared in front of the Judge, Jackie Burroughs, my friend the movie star. When I first showed Walter the script he glanced at it and said 'I know all that . . .' and handed it back to me. I surmised that he could not read, it would be best to let him improvise.

When Walter appeared on the charge of vagrancy he pleaded guilty: 'Of course I have nothing. You took my land, you took my kids, you took my animals, then you took my life, eh? Now we don't live in this world and our world is gone. Now you move my life inside so you take the thing that was left - I belong outside. You have all now, the law is powerful and right and strong, and we are weak and lost, with no one to show us to the saving path'.

He let out a Hollywood style war whoop grabbing a fiddle and shouting: 'Let's dance, let's dance one more time'. We broke into a ragtime two-step, then two guards grabbed him and dragged him towards the cell. The audience stood up and yelled: 'Let him go, let him go!'

This is one of the highlights that I remember.

Near the end of the summer, the rolling snowball began to melt, and grew smaller as it neared the bottom.

Dick, our star, decided he was a boxer. He was not successful, but he carved out a niche for himself coaching street kids in the manly art. Score one for us.

Some of our best players, natural con men who had been convicted for fraud or dope dealing, found safer and more lucrative ways to break the law.

Our dene star grew tired of his role - it was too painful to recite the horrors of his life night after night - he gradually disappeared into the back alleys.

Our director discovered he had dementia. In a lucid moment he disappeared. His body was never found, but on the riverbank not far from the Don Jail where the last executions in Canada took place around the time I had first come to Toronto, his faithful dog was discovered whimpering by the shore in starved condition.

My right-hand man started his own theatre, 'socially relevant drama' dealing with abuse, mental incompetence and victims of circumstance and poverty.

I returned to a disgruntled acting career. I had sipped absinthe with the theatre gods, and now draft beer?

That fall at the 'Festival of Festivals', I received tickets for five films in which I appeared. I saw the first, and although it starred Richard Burton in one of his final roles, it was so abysmal I returned to the street without watching the others or hanging out at the reception with the beautiful people. I walked home thinking things over.

Unlike Pierre, I did not have the state of the entire country to consider, I only had the rest of my life.

I thought of Walter, our leader, the ferret, the boxer - that summer the theatre had lived.

They, the players in life's production, had all made decisions for themselves, I suppose, and had moved on.

What was wrong with me?

- and so ended my theatre and film career.

Larry Ewashen (2001)
www.larrysdesk.com

Write what should not be forgotten.

- Isabel Allende

Nova Scotia lifting restrictions to restorative justice to give more people 'a second chance'

Justice Minister Mark Furey announced changes to referral protocols, which he said will ensure all players consider sending cases to the restorative justice system more often and will allow them to do so earlier in the criminal process.

Police, lawyers, judges, correctional services, victim services and the province's eight community justice agencies committed to the protocols by signing a five-year memorandum of understanding with the province.

Restorative justice requires offenders to take responsibility for their actions and participate in addressing the damage done. Furey said that restorative justice has been proven to break the criminal cycle common in the traditional penal system.

"It gives people a second chance," Furey said at the announcement on Tuesday.

Furey said it also reduces the chance of reoffending and increases victims' satisfaction with the justice system.

The protocols were last updated in 2007 when the service was focused on young offenders. The same rules were extended to the adult restorative justice program when it was rolled out in Nova Scotia in 2016.

Some cases still won't be referred to restorative justice until after a guilty plea or conviction, including murder and manslaughter, child pornography, certain instances of abuse, firearms offences, impaired driving and perjury.

But Furey said more cases can now be sent to restorative justice before entering the court system.

"We are lifting these restrictions to allow for an earlier and more responsive intervention to the impacts of crime," Furey said.

"A government sub-management committee has been established to provide oversight and ensure protocols are being applied, and that restorative justice is being used in all appropriate cases."

The only crimes barred from restorative justice are cases of domestic and sexual violence.

Furey said his department has "started a discussion" around those offences, keeping in mind the potential for re-traumatizing survivors.

He expects the new protocols to lighten the load on the traditional court system and increase the

demand for restorative justice, but had no idea how much of an increase to expect.

He hasn't directly altered the capacity of the community justice agencies that run the service on behalf of the Justice Department, but he thinks reallocating probation officers to work with those agencies will help manage any increased caseload.

In the summer of 2018, caseworkers at the Halifax-based Community Justice Society (CJS) went on strike for five weeks over wages and their increased caseload, which had ballooned since the adult restorative justice program was introduced two years before.

The labour dispute ended with a wage increase, among other alterations to the collective agreement. Furey said CJS didn't receive any resources to increase capacity, but cases there "are being managed now."

The justice minister said he thinks agencies will "find efficiencies" to deal with the potential uptick in their caseload due to the new protocols, adding that his department will monitor changes in demand.

Jamie Van Wart, a Nova Scotia Crown prosecutor who spoke at the announcement, was pleased with the new protocols, especially removing the delays to referral.

He said early intervention allows people to "start addressing the underlying issues that lead to the conditions of their offence in the first place."

"That's such a different approach and a positive approach," he said, adding that waiting for a conviction sometimes adds months to the process.

Brandon Rolle, a lawyer with Nova Scotia Legal Aid, added that by having the discussion around restorative justice more often and earlier, it will be easier for defence attorneys to seek that option for their clients.

"The onus has sort of shifted to the police and the Crown to tell us why can't this go to restorative justice, instead of us having to implore to get in," Rolle said at the announcement. "I see that as a very positive element."

Rolle advocates for restorative justice because he's found it more effective for marginalized and racialized offenders than the traditional justice system.

Taryn Grant
Star Halifax - Jul 16, 2019

< *Book Review* >

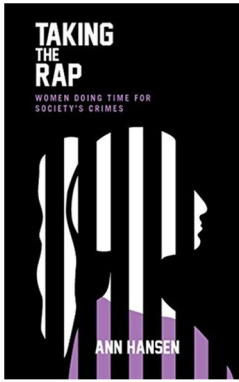
Taking the Rap: Women Doing Time for Society's Crimes

Through the lens of Ann Hansen's experiences in multiple Canadian jails and prisons, which span nearly 30 years, readers are taken inside these institutions for a close-up view of the dynamics that permeate daily prison life.

By weaving together personal stories and political context, Hansen presents three related themes throughout the book: the marginalisation and criminalisation of poor and minority groups, the dehumanisation and infantilisation of prisoners resulting from the nature of prison power dynamics, and the social and economic circumstances that perpetuate the cycle of victimisation and crime.

A self-proclaimed anarchist, Hansen's political activism before her arrest included involvement with groups that worked for prison abolition, women's rights, Indigenous rights, and environmental causes. Hansen's activism and opposition to capitalism as an economic and political form of governance are highlighted throughout the book, and readers are invited to see events through this frame of reference. Yet one need not adopt these perspectives to find this book useful in gaining a deeper understanding of the social, political, and economic forces that drive events both within, and outside, the prison walls.

Hansen's involvement with the group Direct Action, and its activities, comprises much of Part One of the book. Hansen, along with four of her confederates, dubbed the 'Squamish Five' by the media, were arrested on 20 January 1983 for their involvement in the bombing of the Litton Systems Canada, a manufacturing site for cruise missiles in Ontario. In 1984, Hansen was sentenced to life in prison for her involvement in: the Litton bombing; a bombing of the Cheekeye-Dunsmuir plant, part of a hydroelectric project on



Vancouver Island; and bombing of three Red Hot Video Stores, a chain that sold adult videos. The remainder of Part One of the book comprises the criminal trial and Hansen's early days in confinement at the Prison for Women (P4W) in Kingston, Ontario.

Parts Two and Three cover Hansen's time in various women's institutions, her eventual release in 1991, and her eventual return to prison for about two months in 2006. Part Four details Hansen's brief stay at Quinte Detention Center, a provincial prison in Napanee, Ontario, a few days at the Central East Correctional Centre located in Lindsay, Ontario, and finally a stint at the Grand Valley Institution for Women (GVI). Part Five covers the period of Hansen's release in 2006 through her re-incarceration in 2012 at GVI. Part Six covers the changes that had taken place at Grand Valley between 2006 and 2012, and the ongoing expansion of the prison system via new and existing prison facilities throughout Canada during that time.

Although the book is written as a memoir, it is infused throughout with glimpses into the broader social and economic forces that were shaping the growth of prisons and incarceration rates of women throughout North America over the past two decades. Yet, it is the personal stories of the women with whom Hansen was incarcerated that highlight the disproportionate effects on minorities, the uneducated, the drug-addicted, and the poor of various law and order policies.

Hansen has taken on a difficult task in attempting to weave together her own experience in penal institutions, the experiences of other women, and the political and economic forces that have contributed to the rapid expansion of prisons in North America. To a certain extent, some of the impact is lost in the statistics, and the later parts of the book become a bit bogged down and repetitive with numbers. Nevertheless, the parts where this book is at its best is when Hansen steps outside the role of spectator and political activist and relates the daily struggles and deprivations that the women in prisons endure before, during, and after their time in incarceration.

J.L. Kamorowski
Howard Journal of Crime & Justice
Jun 03, 2019

Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI)

Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI) is a registered charity that organizes volunteer-led book clubs within federal penitentiaries across Canada. Currently, BCFI is facilitating 30 book clubs from Nova Scotia to British Columbia.

BCFI runs French and English language book clubs for men and women incarcerated in minimum, medium, and maximum security facilities. Book clubs are usually made up of 10-18 members who meet once a month to discuss books, both fiction and non-fiction of literary merit.

Every month, hundreds of inmates participate in book clubs across the country and each year thousands of brand new books are purchased, read, and discussed.

Book Clubs for Inmates

720 Bathurst St.

Toronto, ON, M5S 2R4

www.BookClubsForInmates.com

✎ PEN PALS ✎

Send in your ad: 25 Words or Less.

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Participants agree that by using this service, it is at their own risk, and by accessing this service all users agree that WPN is not to be held liable in any way for harms suffered as a result of this service.

This magazine is only sent into women's prisons. Ads are not on the web version.

NOT
AVAILABLE
ONLINE!

Incarcerated in Ontario? Need Information?

Write On! is a new volunteer group whose goal is to support Ontario prisoners 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).

You don't get to choose how you're going to die, or when. You can only decide how you're going to live now.

- Joan Baez

There's hope from a prison but none from the grave.

- Irish Proverb

I'd rather regret the things I've done than regret the things I haven't done.

- Lucille Ball

Knowing what must be done does away with fear.

- Rosa Parks

Children of Inmates Reading Program (ChIRP)

"Reading aloud is the single most important thing a parent or caregiver can do to help a child prepare for reading and learning"

"Reading is the gateway to future success in life and in school"

BCFI's commitment to the successful re-integration of inmates and to stronger, healthier communities includes the development of Children of Inmates Reading Program (ChIRP). The mandate of ChIRP is to build and enhance a healthier parent/ child relationship, develop literacy and listening skills, increase vocabulary and attention spans for children and promote a love of learning in children through the consistent presence of a parent and books.

For the past 10 years, Carla Veitch, a children's educator, has been successfully developing and operating a parent/child reading initiative. Twice a month, Carla, along with another volunteer, enter the institution and offer men the opportunity to select a book for their child and then read that book into a recording device. The book and recording are then mailed to the child. This initiative provides a direct connection for the child with his or her incarcerated parent. In addition to the opportunity of hearing a parent's voice, the reading initiative underscores the value of reading and the importance of books. For a number of the participants, reading aloud to their child has not been part of their pattern of parenting, nor was it modeled for them as part of their early childhood years.

Children are never responsible for their parents' choices. At the same time, they are the hidden victims not only in the justice and correctional system, but also within our larger community.

Book Clubs for Inmates
720 Bathurst St.
Toronto, ON, M5S 2R4
www.BookClubsForInmates.com

Anything less than the truth is a lie.
- Tamara Starblanket

Those who do not move,
do not notice their chains.
- Rosa Luxemburg

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

Nov 20 is Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR), 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.

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% of prisoners
HIV = 1-5% of prisoners

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

**BLEACH DOES NOT
KILL HEP C**



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:

info@FeatForChildren.org
416-505-5333

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*
- *Over 5,000 children are impacted by parental imprisonment in the GTA*
- *The number of children affected by parental incarceration only increased 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*

FeatForChildren.org ~ 416-505-5333

Prison Radio

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

This program features content produced by CFRC volunteers and by other campus and community radio broadcasters, including CKUT Montreal's Prison Radio and 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, Lower 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

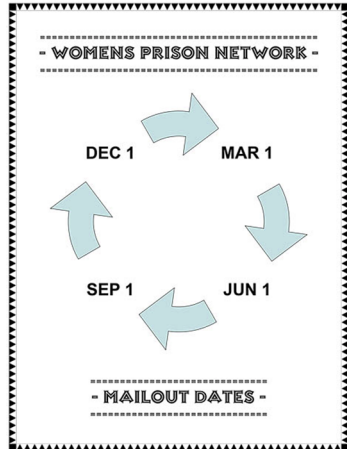
☞ In Remembrance ☞
- August 10 -

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



☞ Fall 2019 - Issue #16 ☞

Women's Prison Network
PO Box 39, Stn P
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

visit, download, print, donate!
WomensPrisonNetwork.org

Send in your work
before Nov 1, 2019
Winter Issue #17 is sent
out Dec 1, 2019

Women, Trans & Youth Prisoners:
Wish to receive 'Women's Prison Network'?
Contact us & we will add you to the mailing list!
Please let us know if you move.
This magazine is by and for you.
Thank you for sharing!
