



*Women  
Prison  
Network*



**Issue 4. FALL 2016  
WOMEN'S PRISON  
NETWORK**

**Editor's Note:**

Welcome to Issue #4 of Women's Prison Network, a magazine by and for women, trans and youth prisoners in Canada.

Its purpose is to be a safe space to share art, poetry, news, thoughts, conversation, and connections. We strive to send copies into all women's prisons in Canada.

*This magazine is sent into women's prisons only!*

Please send in your art, poems, short stories and articles to Women's Prison Network if you would like your voice to be part of the next issue.

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

'Women's Prison Network' is produced 4 times per year. It is sent out for free to Women's Prisons in Canada.

*If you are on the outside or part of an organization, please consider a donation!!!*

Editor: aliyah  
info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

Publication: Women's Prison Network  
Publisher: Prison Free Press  
PO Box 39, Stn P  
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

Circulation: 350+  
Recirculation: ?,???

*All original artwork, poems & writings are the sole/soul property of the artist & author.*

*Fair Dealing & the Canadian Copyright Act Sections 29, 29.1, 29.2:*

*"Fair dealing for the purpose of research, private study, education, parody, satire, criticism, review, and news reporting does not infringe copyright."*

**COVER ART**

All Cover Art featured will receive a \$25.00 donation.

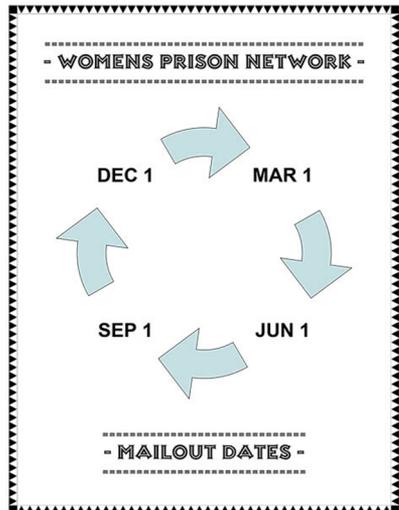
Thank you for your work!

Please note that since our magazine is for women, trans and youth from all backgrounds, any religious imagery will not be included in the future.

This issue does include a beautiful piece by Allana Custer, and I have included it in this issue since the terms were never specified before.

Let us know how & where you would like the donation sent to & where you would like your art returned to.

Thanks!



Cover Art: Allana Custer  
Back Cover Art: Stacy Lee Bluebird

## Federal government facing two lawsuits over inmate deaths

The families of two women who died in federal custody at a Nova Scotia prison last year are suing the federal government, arguing in part that the Correctional Service of Canada aggravated their health issues by prescribing stints in solitary confinement rather than visits to a doctor's office. The lawsuits – filed in the Nova Scotia Supreme Court – offer rare, if one-sided, accounts of fatal experiences behind the walls of a federal women's prison. "I think it's sad that these families, after the death of a loved one, sometimes have their sadness aggravated by the way they are treated by CSC," said Frances Shapiro Munn, the Ottawa lawyer for both families. None of the allegations have been proven in court. CSC spokeswoman Lori Halfper said it would be inappropriate "to comment on matters before the courts," but added that the agency took prompt action to "analyze our response to these deaths in custody and to make improvements." Veronica Park, a 38-year-old mother of one, began her stay at Nova Institution for Women in Truro, N.S., on Aug. 14, 2014. According to her family's lawsuit, she coped with her mental-health issues and extended separation from her 18-year-old son by inhaling prescription drugs obtained from other inmates. Prison staff dealt with her issues by sending her to segregation at least three times (for a total of 22 days), cutting off family visits and reclassifying her from medium to maximum security. Together these actions triggered "numerous psychological disorders, including depression," the lawsuit states. On April 23, 2015, Ms. Park visited the prison clinic twice with a sore throat, cough, body aches and shortness of breath. Nurses declared her lungs clear, gave her a respiratory puffer and sent her on her way. The next day, prison staff found her gasping for air and she was rushed to hospital, where she was diagnosed with a serious case of pneumonia. Her condition proved too advanced, and Ms. Park was dead by 4:30 p.m. Later tests found she had contracted the antibiotic-resistant staph infection MRSA earlier in the month, the lawsuit states. For the Park family, the heartache was only just beginning. "My mom was perfectly healthy and she dropped dead the day after we buried my baby sister," said Patricia Park, Veronica's sister. "It's been a

nightmare." The Parks, who are asking for \$2-million in damages, spent months trying to acquire details about Veronica's death from CSC. Some arrived via an access-to-information request, but other details continue to be withheld. "When they asked for more info, they were told it was protected," said Kim Pate, executive director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, who has worked with the Park family in their quest for answers. "It is outrageous." Three months later, Nova was rocked by another death. Camille Strickland-Murphy, 22, the subject of the second lawsuit, began her sentence at Nova on Nov. 10, 2014.



During a previous stint at the prison, she endured at least two inmate beatings – including one assault that left her with serious head trauma causing seizures, fainting spells, headaches and dizziness. The family alleges that rather than try to diagnose her head injury and treat a variety of complicated psychiatric conditions, CSC staff preferred to place her in solitary confinement, and it lists seven different admissions to segregation totalling 23 days. She also "engaged in numerous incidents of self-harm and twice attempted suicide," the claim states. "Camille's incidents of self-harm included head banging, attempting to strangle herself in her cell and setting herself on fire." In February, 2015, she cut her neck and face with a razor blade. A month later, she lit her own leg on fire.

Despite being urged by social workers to keep Ms. Strickland-Murphy in the mental-health unit, CSC elevated her security status from medium to maximum, the lawsuit claims. On July 20, 2015, she attempted suicide by hanging. She was found unconscious and rushed to hospital. Upon her return, CSC determined she was a low risk for suicide and, eight days after her previous attempt, she was found lying in her cell with a plastic bag over her face and a shoelace around

her neck, the family alleges. She was pronounced dead just after 7 p.m. The family is seeking \$2.5 million in damages, alleging “negligence caused Camille’s death by prioritizing a security-focused environment at Nova over meeting Camille’s deteriorating mental health and increasing mental-health needs.” Both suits make claims of false imprisonment, negligence and violations of Charter of Rights sections guaranteeing equal protection, security of the person, and protection from cruel and unusual punishment. They also state that CSC’s decision to withhold information was an act of bad faith warranting damages.

Patrick White  
Globe and Mail  
Aug 03, 2016

---

### **Correctional Service Canada must be more transparent about prison deaths**

A report from prison ombudsman Howard Sapers paints a picture of an insensitive agency that too often skirts public scrutiny.

When a person dies behind bars, the government has a clear moral duty to be sensitive and transparent with the loved ones left behind. Yet a recent report from prison ombudsman Howard Sapers suggests Correctional Service Canada (CSC) is consistently failing to fulfill that duty.

Sapers’ report, *In the Dark*, paints a picture of an insensitive agency that too often obscures the truth around the circumstances of prison deaths, skirting public scrutiny and compounding the anguish of grieving loved ones in the process.

It is required by law that when an inmate dies from non-natural causes, an investigation be conducted and a report issued. But in several cases, Sapers found CSC redacted portions of reports, altering or obscuring their meaning. Of particular concern was a tendency to black out details that might implicate correctional officers for failing to follow policy or worse.

The examples Sapers provides are deeply troubling. In one report about a death that occurred between 2013 and 2015, any mention of the fact that the prisoner in question had threatened to kill himself was excised from the report. But this was information essential for evaluating the conduct of the correctional officers involved. Another family whose loved one died

during the same period received an 88-page report that had 44 pages blacked out.

It’s not just at the report stage that the agency is apparently secretive.

“CSC withholds as much information as possible at all points — from notification of death through the investigative process,” Sapers said.

And, according to the report, when it does communicate with families, it often does so inhumanely. In one case a family member arrived to view the body of his loved one at an appointed time, but was informed the inmate had already been cremated. Later, without warning, the prison couriered the ashes to the family. “Sending someone in the mail ... it’s just not right,” a family member told Sapers’ office.

While some of the agency’s redactions are no doubt legitimate, such as those that protect the privacy of a prisoner’s cellmate, Sapers found that many appeared to be a misuse of the access to information and privacy laws. That harms not just the families of those who die in government custody, but also the public.

CSC has the discretion, Sapers notes, to release information in the public interest. That ought to be the default. In recent years, prison deaths tied to Canada’s cruel overuse of solitary confinement have finally started to come to light. The problem, and others like it, must not be allowed to recede into the shadows. Those affected by our penal policies have little public voice. It is on issues like the humane treatment of prisoners, whose plight might easily be ignored, where government opacity can be most damaging. Ottawa should take a close look at Sapers’ recommendations for reform and act quickly to fix this unjust, anti-democratic practice.

Editorial  
Toronto Star  
Aug 8, 2016

---

*I had crossed the line.*

*I was free; but there was no one to welcome me to the land of freedom.*

*I was a stranger in a strange land.*

- Harriet Tubman

---

## **Toronto police, province settle transphobia complaint amid Pride Month**

An agreement with Boyd Kodak, a transsexual man who was jailed in a women's facility, will lead to revised policies for police interactions.

Toronto police and the province have settled a human rights complaint lodged by a transsexual man who was arrested, placed in a women's jail and forced to put on women's undergarments and a prison gown. After a series of mediations, the parties agreed Thursday to set out terms to, within 18 months, develop and revise policies, procedures and training for "interaction with trans people," from searches to detention, in conjunction with the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the trans community. "I feel a mix of emotions. I'm pleased with the remedy we got. Everything was dealt with and there's a willingness on their part to make changes and involve the community in doing so," said the complainant, Boyd Kodak. "I will never forget the humiliation. I am still suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and depression. I am still paranoid when I hear sirens and see people in uniforms. But we felt we have moved mountains." In recent years, the rights of transgender people have been hotly debated. In Canada, complaints about mistreatment have included that of British visitor Avery Edison, who was "misgendered" while detained at the Maplehurst Correctional Complex for men. She, too, has filed a human rights complaint. In the United States, communities, politicians and courts are battling over whether transgender people should be allowed to use bathrooms that match their gender identity rather than their biological gender. "We are excited about what has transpired. We hope the systemic remedies will lead to reduction in such incidents and bring about the societal changes that are needed," said Khizer Anwar, who represented Boyd with co-counsel Aditi Agnihotri. "The settlement couldn't have come at a better time than Pride Month."

According to Boyd's complaint, York Region police came to his house in Gormley on Dec. 6, 2012, to execute a warrant issued by their counterparts in Toronto over harassment charges laid by his estranged business partner. Kodak, a prominent transsexual activist in Toronto, was transferred to Toronto police and placed in the women's holding area, even though he is identified as male

in his personal documents, is long past surgery and continues to take hormones. Later, he was taken to the Vanier Centre for Women, a jail in Milton. His penile prosthesis was also confiscated. In 2012, Ontario passed what's known as Toby's Law, amending the Human Rights Code to reaffirm the protection of trans people. It states that every person has a right to equal treatment without discrimination regardless of gender identity and gender expression. The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services adopted guidelines in 2015 that require jail guards to ask trans people in custody to identify their own gender and about their preference to be searched by male or female guards. It has already developed mandatory staff training on treating trans inmates. "All inmates in Ontario correctional facilities deserve to be treated with respect and dignity," said Minister Yasir Naqvi. "Human rights are a fundamental part of the social fabric of Ontario; that's why we were proud to announce our new policy for trans inmates last year." Anwar said the Toronto police have agreed to honour the gender preference in their policy. "If a member of the trans community self-identifies as male, he's going to a male prison. If a member of the community self-identifies as female, she's going to a female prison or holding area," he said. Renu Mandhane, Ontario's chief human rights commissioner, said trans people are one of the most vulnerable populations in custody situations, which involve being searched and held in gender-segregated areas. "It is critical for police to respect the rights of trans people, and the commission urges police services across the province to ensure that their practices meet the needs of this community," said Mandhane. The police service credited Kodak for the agreement. "Today's settlement complements the efforts of the service over the last number of years when it comes to improving relations with the LGBTQ community and, specifically, trans persons," the force said in a statement. "The service has trans-specific procedures and training in place. Ongoing projects include the creation of a guide to policing for the trans communities. The service is pleased to be moving forward in these areas."

Nicholas Keung  
Toronto Star/ Jun 3, 2016

## **BC prisoners get addiction therapy after settlement in Charter challenge**

Prisoners struggling with opiate addictions in British Columbia jails have gained the same right to medical treatment as people outside the corrections system. B.C. Corrections has implemented a new policy after four men who alleged they were denied opiate replacement therapy launched a charter challenge last month. The men, who are addicted to opiates and range in age from their 20s to late 40s, are now under the care of doctors after a settlement that will also give other prisoners access to timely therapy. "We know, regrettably, there are drugs in provincial and federal institutions," their lawyer Adrienne Smith said Friday. "The fentanyl epidemic doesn't stop at the prison gate."

"This is a step in the right direction to keep people well, particularly when they're at a good place being able to ask for medical support."

The new policy comes as the province's medical health officer Dr. Perry Kendall declared Thursday that B.C. is facing a public health emergency involving overdoses involving drugs such as the opioid-based pain killer fentanyl.

Dr. M-J Milloy, of the B.C. Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS, said that under Canadian law, health care must be equivalent for people inside and outside corrections facilities.

"Anything that moves us closer to that being the reality ... is a good thing," said the infectious-disease epidemiologist. Opioid addicts who have been released from prison are at greater risk of suffering a fatal overdose, Milloy said. A Washington state-based study in *The New England Journal of Medicine* found opioid dependent people were 12 times more likely to face that risk in the two weeks following release, he said. B.C. Corrections' current policy follows the same guidelines for administering Suboxone or methadone treatment to opioid addicts as set out by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of B.C. That means any addicted prisoner seeking help can request therapy during an appointment with a jail doctor. Suboxone, which is now listed in the policy as the first line of treatment for prisoners, can be dissolved under the tongue in tablet form. Methadone is administered as a liquid that's usually mixed with orange juice. An application for injunction and notice of civil claim was filed on March 18 as the four prisoners

sought therapeutic prescriptions but alleged they were repeatedly told they were required to be in custody for at least three months before being eligible for treatment. B.C. Corrections spokeswoman Cindy Rose said in a statement that methadone has been available in jails since 2002 and Suboxone since 2010. Rose declined to discuss the process leading to the settlement or the terms, and said B.C. Corrections was working on updating the opiate addiction treatment policy before the prisoners' legal challenge. "B.C. Corrections will continue to offer treatment in conjunction with substance abuse management programs," she said, adding that the department is pleased that the matter has been settled.

B.C.'s Ministry of Public Safety has said there is no minimum time or length of custodial sentence to start treatment but did not explain why the four prisoners were refused therapy. The ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Friday. Milloy said there is evidence that opioid-addictions therapy not only prevents overdoses, but protects against HIV infections and helps people living with HIV stay on their drugs. "There's an awful lot of benefits tied up into one relatively inexpensive medication," he said. One of Smith's clients, Shawn Gillam, overdosed on illicit drugs at North Fraser Pretrial Centre in Port Coquitlam after repeatedly being refused treatment, according to his affidavit.

"There are lots of drugs in this jail," he said. "I've seen MDMA, acid, heroin, cocaine and oxs. I don't want to overdose again."

Smith said 33-year-old Gillam "will be safer now."

Tamsyn Burgmann  
The Canadian Press  
Apr 15, 2016

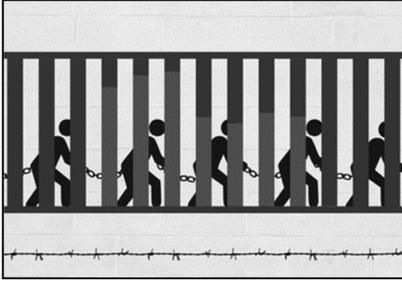
---

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

---



## Stop transfer of immigration detainees to provincial jails

More than 100 lawyers, legal scholars and specialists are calling on the Ontario government to cancel an agreement that allows the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) to transfer immigration detainees to provincial jails, whom they say are exposed to "profoundly disturbing" conditions. In an open letter to Yasir Naqvi, Ontario Community Safety and Correctional Services Minister, the legal professionals say they are "alarmed" by the practice. They say it raises "very serious" human rights and concerns about the rule of law." We are gravely concerned that there are no public laws or regulations governing when and in what circumstances an immigration detainee can be transferred to, and incarcerated in, a provincial jail," the letter reads. "We call on the Government of Ontario to bring an end to this harmful practice immediately." The letter follows a growing outcry over the transfer of detainees with physical and mental health problems to jails. Fifteen people have died in immigration detention while in CBSA custody since 2000. Detainees are transferred by the CBSA from immigration holding centres to provincial jails when they are considered high risk. That includes detainees who have criminal backgrounds, outstanding charges, a history of violence, are an escape risk, or pose a danger to themselves or others. The agency can also transfer detainees with serious physical and mental health problems who cannot get adequate medical care at holding centres.

The letter urges the minister to cancel the federal-provincial agreement, signed in October 2014, that allows transfers to continue, and during the notice period of one year, to stop accepting the transfer of any detainees with physical and mental health problems.

The letter says one third of the 7,300 immigration detainees held by the CBSA in 2013 were transferred to provincial jails in Canada. It says decisions to transfer detainees appear to be made on an ad hoc basis and detainees are denied basic legal rights given to criminal inmates. "Immigration detainees are rarely given any notice that they are going to be transferred to a jail; are provided with no disclosure of any evidence used to inform the transfer decision; and receive no written reasons for why the transfer occurred," the letter reads.

"On one day, a detainee who has no criminal history or charge may be with her family in low security immigration holding centre, and the next she could be wearing a prison jumpsuit and be behind bars in a maximum security prison, based on the decision of a single officer whom she may have never met." It says detainees are exposed to conditions that may include solitary confinement and situations where the jails are locked down. "Prisons are part of the criminal justice system. Their principal function is to hold those charged with and convicted of criminal wrongdoing. Individuals held for immigration purposes should not be transferred to, and detained in, these institutions." The letter notes that the federal Immigration and Refugee Protection Act governs detention, but the federal-provincial agreement means incarceration of detainees has become a provincial matter. Lawyers who signed the letter include Samer Muscati, director of the International Human Rights Program at the University of Toronto, Anthony Navaneelan, staff lawyer at the refugee law office of Legal Aid Ontario, Sukanya Pillay, executive director of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, and Maureen Silcoff, president of the Jewish Refugee Action Network. Naqvi was not available for comment.

Muriel Draaisma  
CBC News  
May 26, 2016

---

*I am not eccentric.*

*It's just that I am more alive than most people.*

*I am an unpopular electric eel set in a pond of goldfish.*

- Edith Sitwell

## Supreme Court strikes down 2 Conservative sentencing reforms

The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that two key "tough on crime" measures brought in by the previous Conservative government are unconstitutional. In the first case, the court ruled 6-3 that a mandatory minimum sentence of one year in prison for a drug offence violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It centres on Joseph Ryan Lloyd, a man with drug addictions in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, who was convicted of trafficking after police caught him in 2013 with less than 10 grams of heroin, crack cocaine and crystal methamphetamine.

The court ruled the sentence cast too wide a net over a wide range of potential conduct, catching not only the serious drug trafficking that is its proper aim, but also conduct that is "much less blameworthy."

"If Parliament hopes to maintain mandatory minimum sentences for offences that cast a wide net, it should consider narrowing their reach so that they only catch offenders that merit that mandatory minimum sentence," the decision reads. "In the alternative, Parliament could provide for judicial discretion to allow for a lesser sentence where the mandatory minimum would be grossly disproportionate and would constitute cruel and unusual punishment."

The dissenting view argued that the law as drafted was narrow enough, and that it did not amount to cruel and unusual punishment.

### Omnibus bill

The sentence imposed stemmed from the so-called "omnibus crime bill" brought in by the Stephen Harper government in 2012. The Safe Streets and Communities Act, also known as C10, made sweeping changes to Canada's criminal justice system, including mandatory minimum sentences for non-violent drug offenders. On Friday, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said the Liberal approach to criminal justice is to protect public safety while respecting rights. He said mandatory minimums are appropriate in some conditions, and noted that past Liberal governments have imposed them for certain crimes like murder.

"At the same time, there is a general sense, reinforced by the Supreme Court decision, that mandatory minimums brought in by the previous

government in a number of cases went too far," he said after an event in Waterloo, Ont.

A mandate letter from Trudeau to Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould called for an overhaul of the measures brought in by the Conservatives.

"You should conduct a review of the changes in our criminal justice system and sentencing reforms over the past decade with a mandate to assess the changes, ensure that we are increasing the safety of our communities, getting value for money, addressing gaps and ensuring that current provisions are aligned with the objectives of the criminal justice system," the letter reads. Conservative deputy justice critic Michael Cooper said he hopes the Liberals don't use today's decisions as a licence to roll back other Conservative measures that were brought in to hold "violent, hard-core" criminals to account. He said he's disappointed by the high court's decision to overturn measures meant to keep streets safe.

"Canadians lose confidence in the criminal justice system when the sentence doesn't fit the crime," he told CBC News.

### Credit for time served

In the other case, the Supreme Court was unanimous in ruling that a person who is denied bail because of prior convictions should be able to receive credit for time served before sentencing. Normally, a person denied bail can get 1.5 days of credit for each day spent in pre-sentence custody, reflecting what are often harsh conditions with a lack of access to programs.

Under sentencing reforms introduced by the Conservatives in 2009, a person denied bail because of a previous conviction is not eligible for enhanced credit.

### 'Ineffective, costly and unjust'

The B.C. Civil Liberties Association, which acted as an intervener in both cases, applauded the rulings. Staff lawyer Laura Track called mandatory minimum sentences "ineffective, costly and unjust."

"Judges must be able to weigh all of the evidence and decide on a fair sentence that fits the crime," she said in a release. "Mandatory minimums take away judges' ability to do just that."

Kathleen Harris  
CBC News  
Apr 15, 2016

## **GVI Inmate, 30, Dies after being Found Unresponsive in Cell**

A 30-year-old inmate at Grand Valley Institution for Women in Kitchener, Ont., has died after she was found unresponsive in her cell on Monday evening. According to a statement from Corrections Canada, Terry Baker was found by staff, who started performing CPR immediately and called emergency services. "We don't have a lot of information; the fact that she was in segregation is of significant concern," Kim Pate, with the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, told CBC News. Pate said that regional advocates for the society had expressed concerns about Baker, citing "significant mental health issues." Pate said Baker had been in segregation and had attempted suicide on Monday night. Baker had been on suicide watch at some point during the past few weeks, according to Pate.

"We know that she was in restraints a number of times; we suspect there were uses of force, but we don't know that for certain and we have asked the correctional investigator to also look into it," said Pate. Baker was taken to St. Mary's Hospital in Kitchener, but was pronounced dead at 12:06 p.m. Wednesday. "Terry was a very sweet, gentle young woman except when it came to herself. She had been very self-destructive and self-harming for a number of years," said Pate. "She's someone who, when I last saw her in Saskatchewan, she was actually doing quite well. She was involved in a dog therapy program.

"From our perspective, [this] underscores exactly why we have the position of no women in segregation, particularly those with mental health issues," said Pate.

"We've known [Baker] since she came into the system through the youth system, very similar to too many women, including Ashley Smith. And for many years, we have been extremely concerned that she needs to be out of the system," said Pate. Smith was 19 when died in a segregated prison cell in the same facility in 2007. An Ontario coroner's jury ruled that Smith's self-inflicted death in her cell was a homicide.

According to the Corrections statement, Baker had been serving a sentence for first-degree murder since January 2006. Her next of kin have been notified. Police and the coroner have also been notified.

CBC News - Jul 6, 2016

## **Assisted Dying Canada: Prison Watchdog Wonders if Inmates will get Access**

A Belgian man three decades into a life sentence for rape and murder wanted doctors to help him die - and he nearly got his wish.

Frank Van den Bleeken suffered no terminal disease when he was granted a doctor-assisted death in September 2014. Rather, he sought to end his "unbearable" psychological suffering, arguing his life behind bars was intolerable and there was no hope his violent sexual urges would ever go away.

The case underscores some of the prickly issues Canadian corrections authorities may have to tackle with the legalization of medically assisted dying. So far, there's been little clarity on how prisoner requests should be handled.

In January 2015, Van den Bleeken was supposed to die by lethal injection, but doctors backed out.

Canada's law still unclear

Belgium has allowed doctor-assisted death since 2002 and there, the practice is not limited to terminal patients. It's unclear whether or not Canada's law will be restricted to those close to death.

Howard Sapers, Canada's prison watchdog, wants to know how authorities will deal with the issue.

"We are in discussion with the Correctional Service of Canada to get a sense of the state of their planning, to see how advanced it is, to determine whether or not they're appropriately consulting, as they are required to by law, with the inmate population," he said.

By law, inmates must have the same standard of health care they would on the outside.

But Sapers has raised concerns about how inmates are cared for in their final years. About a quarter of the prison population is over the age of 50 and inmates tend to have more health problems and shorter life spans compared to the general public, he said.

"As that proportion of the population of inmates grows, we expect to see more deaths in custody, particularly since we're now looking at 20 per cent inside penitentiaries serving a life sentence," said Sapers.

"So we've been very concerned about how CSC responds to death in custody."

The Correctional Service's Avely Serin said the department is closely monitoring the debate.

"Any policy changes developed to meet the legislative requirements would take into account CSC's unique operational context and the population under its responsibility, should it be required."

The matter is likely to raise some tough issues for corrections officials, said Catherine Latimer, who leads the John Howard Society of Canada, which advocates for an "effective, just and humane" corrections system.

"Their mandate is to protect the lives of these men and women who are serving sentences, so their mindset is to keep everybody going," Latimer said. "I think it will be difficult for them." It may be best for an independent body to oversee the matter, she said.

Context should be taken into account:  
Expert

Trudo Lemmens, Scholl Chair in Health Law and Policy at the University of Toronto, has cautioned against Canada adopting Belgium's open-ended approach to assisted dying.

As the Van den Bleeken case demonstrates, he said context needs to be taken into account.

"The prison system is quite unique because it's an environment in which there is a lot of anxiety, a lot of suffering, a lot of medical issues, a lot of mental health issues," Lemmens said.

"Are there particular components that make the person who is asking for physician-assisted dying more vulnerable? Is this indeed a prisoner who is suffering from a terminal illness? Could it be that the prisoner is asking just because he or she is in pain and there no adequate pain relief, because the prison system is not accommodating a more humane way of dying?"

Lisa Silver, who teaches criminal law at the University of Calgary, wonders whether prisoners will have the means to give their informed consent. That goes beyond mental health and competency — do they have the same access to medical and legal advice in making their end-of-life decisions?

The bill being debated in Ottawa, C-14, would amend the legislation that covers prisons - the Corrections and Conditional Release Act - so an investigation is not required if a prisoner dies with medical assistance.

But Silver said she would like to see the law clearly outline how the issue would play out in prisons.

"Why didn't the government take the time to really look at the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and amend it so that this can be meaningful?"

Lauren Krugel  
The Canadian Press  
Jun 16, 2016

### **PEN PALS**

We have been receiving requests to place pen pal ads for the next Issue.

So, do send in your ad!  
- 30 words or less -

Your ad will be kept anonymous with its own code number for your personal privacy and safety.

This newsletter is sent into women's prisons only.

### **Last Chance**

Reflections in our minds  
Are shadows mirrored in time  
Tragically ... we're wasting away  
We've reminisced all the parts  
That've pulled at our hearts  
While scrolling through lines to be played  
Our enigmatic routines  
Have never been what they seem  
Misery has now left us to our own  
We've fallen so far into this SHIT  
We're beggin' for one wish  
Just grant us an answer from a  
'Place called home'

Sandra Kerfont



POEMSP OEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPO

EMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOE

**The Pain is Real, the Dream I Feel**

I hurt so much the pain is real, I sing my pain  
 from the sorrow of the White Hurricane  
 The cost is so real sometimes I pretend it's only a  
 dream I feel their intentions are to kill not to  
 REHABILITATE ME, I'm the white bird that flies,  
 way up high can touch the sky  
 As the white bird flew in only my blood it got lost  
 due to thickness of pain and agonizing loneliness  
 that only it can despair through the white dove it  
 covered me with compassion gave me the hope  
 of despair it learned me to love through the  
 white dove  
 As my white dove flew through the chaos and  
 crime it always seemed to land on a branch only  
 to hold her up by the chin  
 Better days gone by not a tear drop to cry but  
 only the rain drop of another spit as long as the  
 government seen my head perched up I could  
 give two shits. Cause my tears are dry  
 I'm dying inside and no one seems to care. But  
 my time will come to be treasured and where she  
 will await, like always, my best friend my white  
 dove.  
 I hurt so much and I bleed so real.  
 I sing my pain the sorrow it cost I pay is real. As  
 the white bird flew in only my blood it got lost  
 due to feathers turn to dust as each breath I  
 breathe no wonder why it's the government who  
 we are suppose to trust  
 They paint my cell white and print my reports all  
 black and white to make others believe what my  
 people loss now its all about money and the  
 queen because my life is worth a million bucks  
 only if I can tell what it is they put me through I  
 soared in my dreams to feel it and I seen those  
 dark shadows follow me to believe it  
 I hurt so much I use to cry but now I hurt so  
 much that want me die so I pretend to cry  
 makes me miss my mamma, now I miss her love,  
 it use to impact me so much I was black blue but  
 that was truth of the matter for what it really  
 was she loved me, so much  
 Now the government wanna take my breath  
 send me to my death bed if I lived thru that I'll  
 live thru this

Josephine Pelletier

**All I Can Do**

You got no problems  
 To shake it rough  
 I do it every day  
 And it's fuckin' tough

Always grinding to get one done  
 So my boring time goes by  
 And no one knows to help me  
 One day I'll possibly die

I may have been young & stupid  
 And soon old & grey  
 I may look like the hunter  
 But am really the hunted prey

A victim of sexual assault  
 And parents with drug abuse  
 Born with their genes  
 And no time for a truce or excuse

So don't take pity on me  
 'Cause when I die I'll be free  
 When I'm healed I'll help you  
 And do all I can do

Dawna Brown

**Alone**

I'm surrounded by people  
 But I still feel alone  
 Who knew that this place  
 Would be called my own  
 All I want to do  
 Is go back to my home  
 The people I love  
 I talk to on the phone  
 Other then that  
 I'm stuck in this zone  
 Hiding my feelings  
 They can never be shown  
 Everything about me  
 Is better left unknown  
 I'm surrounded by people  
 But I still feel alone

Jessica Skye Bernard

MSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEEOEMSPOEMSPOE

MSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEM

**Dear Addiction,**

*You watched me with dark eyes, mocking my  
innocence, playing with my soul.*

*Your power devouring me in fictitious grandeur.  
Eyes wide shut I followed your wrath down a  
road of broken dreams. Where you captured a  
daughter, sister, mother, teacher and friend.  
Hiding them deep in shame.*

*Your devastating fury left me chasing the dragon,  
a never-ending quest.*

*Exhausted, alone, full of guilt and remorse. I  
search for my pride, respect and pieces of  
broken lives I left behind in my mayhem.*

*Cravings now conquered, I grow stronger and  
wiser, leaving you to wallow in your ruin.*

*I will look in your gutter from time to time, only  
to remind myself of the broken angel who once  
flew with you.*

Carlea Wetheral

---

**Gangsta Sight**

*I used to be living the life  
Hustling' & selling crack all night  
Gangsta's hate on Gangstas  
Dat's true a'ight  
But I had no choice but 2 watch my back  
Bitches be talking, while holding their gats  
Snitches get stitches, no doubt about that  
Gangsta fa Life  
Gotta do it right  
Can't get caught  
More than likely will do life  
Next time around turn the sound down  
Real Gs do Real thangs*

Vaniella

---

**Tickets**

*Sold out show  
... to see the Devil Live  
Front row seats  
... with nowhere to hide  
Waiting in line  
... and sweating profusely  
Hating this Time  
... and how he used me*

Connie Penney

---

**Untitled**

*Sometimes things don't work out how you want  
And sometimes it's just for the better  
Maybe it depends on how you deal with it  
And how you keep yourself together  
You give a strong impression  
But on the inside you're weak  
Cause people always catch you walking  
And looking down at your feet  
A little advice: Enough is enough  
Reach out to someone  
And quit tryin' to act tough  
Cause it's not the real you  
It's all an act & it looks fake  
Deal with your problems  
This is your life at stake  
Cryin' ain't a weakness  
It's another way of healing  
It's another way of letting go  
Of all the pain you're feeling  
Then your tears all gone & it feels so much  
better  
Cause each time you cry it all comes together  
You're no longer weak & tired  
You're a lot more strong  
So now you find yourself  
And go back home where you belong*

Barbara Napesis Deschambeau

---

*Sanity is a cozy lie.  
- Susan Sontag*

## 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.

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

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

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

Federal Prison: 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 & Ribavirin 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 & Ribavirin. Get your liver tested! New tests have replaced biopsies: Fibre-test (blood) & Fibro-test (imaging).

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**

## 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. 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.

## F.E.A.T. for Children

### 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

## Women's Prison Network Fall 2016 - Issue #4

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

[info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org](mailto:info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org)

download & print:  
[WomensPrisonNetwork.org](http://WomensPrisonNetwork.org)

Send in your work  
before Nov 1, 2016  
Winter Issue #5 is sent  
out Dec 1, 2016



---

### Prison Radio

- Montreal - CKUT 90.3 FM  
*PRS - 2<sup>nd</sup> Thurs 5-6 pm & 4<sup>th</sup> Fri 11-noon*
- Guelph - CFRU 93.3 FM  
*Prison Radio - Thurs 10-11 am*  
*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*

*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](mailto:CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net)  
Call Toll-Free: 1-800-440-5219 to record a  
message or music request to be broadcast on-air.*

---

### Innocence Canada (Formerly AIDWYC)

Innocence Canada is a non-profit, primarily volunteer organization that looks into claims of innocence. If you would like to contact Innocence Canada to discuss whether your case meets their strict criteria, please contact:

1-800-249-1329  
[win@aidwyc.org](mailto:win@aidwyc.org)

111 Peter St, Suite 408  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5V 2H1

---

If you are a woman, trans or youth prisoner and would like to receive a copy of 'Women's Prison Network', write to us and we will put you on our mailing list. Please let us know if you move.

This magazine is by and for you,  
Thank you for your contributions!

---