

# CELL COUNT



YOUR PRISON HEALTH RESOURCE SINCE 1995

FREE FOR PRISONERS, EX-PRISONERS & THEIR FAMILIES

THE COMMUNICATION ISSUE - #90



## A prisoner's perspective on phone calls from prison

By Ganesh

My name is Ganesh and I have been incarcerated for about 20 years. I have a front row seat to the struggles and financial pains my family and friends had to face in paying large sums of money on phone bills, just so that I can stay in contact with the outside world.

Over the years I have come to realize some very factual things about what being in prison means; "it means being cut off from direct contact with the world. It means being away from family, friends and those who care about us." For many prisoners, the loss of contact can produce a profound sense of impotence and dislocation. Incarceration can be and is often a slow strangulation of the human mind, body and spirit. For the families left in the community, they struggle with the absence of their loved one and at the same time, they have to carry the added burden of being a good moral, emotional and financial support for that loved one in prison.

Until recently, telephone providers have monopolized on the limited choices families of incarcerated individuals have in getting telephone numbers so they can receive calls from prison at a reasonable rate. Both the inmates and their families have felt that they are being exploited because of the lack of choices and the high costs providers charge for a secondary line that can receive collect calls. Moreover, these costs/charges ultimately falls on the women (wives and mothers) who have to persevere and make the sacrifices for the predominantly male incarcerated population so that they can stay in contact with their children and their families while behind bars.

For some perspective, providers like "Trapp Call and Call-to-talk" until two months ago had been charging \$59.99 per number and \$1.50 per collect call so that inmates can stay in contact with their families in prison. It wasn't until another provider "Federation" came on the scene and was charging \$15.99 and \$39.99 per number did these other providers reduce their costs per number.

Illustration by D. Horne

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## Outreach & Support Schedule

If you want to see a worker or attend a program put in a request to the Volunteer Coordinator, the Social Work Dept, or call us toll-free at 1-866-224-9978

### Ontario Provincial institutions:

**CECC:** monthly visits, phone to request 1-1 visit, sign up sheet for workshops

**CNCC:** Phone to request 1-1 visit, sign up sheet for workshops

**HWDC & Maplehurst:** Groups/1on1: Call PASAN

**TEDC & TSDC:** Groups/1on1: Call for a program on your unit or a 1on1 educational

### Ontario Provincial & Federal institutions for women:

**VCW & GVI:** Call PASAN (no regular programming)

### Ontario Federal institutions for men:

We try to visit each prison at least 3 times a year. We visit: Bath, Beaver Creek, Collins Bay, Joyceville, Millhaven, Pittsburgh & Warkworth. We see people individually or in group settings and talk about health, harm reduction and other topics you might request. If you wish to know more or are living with HIV/HCV, please contact us to find out when we will be at your facility.

### LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

PASAN's office, where we publish Cell Count, is on the historical territory of the Huron-Wendat, Petun, Seneca and, most recently, the Mississaugas of the New Credit Indigenous peoples. This territory is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the lands and resources around the Great Lakes.

### HIV+ CLIENT SERVICES

In order to be a client & access these services you need to have confirmed HIV+ status and be a prisoner or ex-prisoner (all times Eastern Standard time)

- Phone Hours: Mon - Fri from 9-5, except Tuesday mornings
- Workshops and Programming - Scheduled usually on Mondays or Thursdays, give us a call or check out our website for a complete list of events we have scheduled.
- ID Clinic - 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday 1:00-2:00 every month - for everyone.
- Release Funds - \$50 (twice a year max)
- TTC Tokens - 2 each for clients who attend workshops
- Harm Reduction Materials - Mon - Fri from 9-5, except Tuesday AM (Safer-Crack-Use-Kits, Safer-Needle-Use-Kits, Piercing Needles, Condoms, etc.) - for everyone.

Sometimes we and the phones are very busy so please keep trying!

### ABOUT CELL COUNT

PASAN publishes 'Cell Count', a minimum of 4 issues per year. We are based in Toronto on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of New Credit First Nation, the Haudenosaunee, the Huron-Wendat and home to many diverse Indigenous peoples. It is sent out for FREE to Clients & Prisoners in Canada. If you are on the outside or part of an organization, please consider a donation @ \$20 per year. We are proud to release our 86th issue to you. We are also grateful for all the wonderful feedback we have been receiving from our readers, and encourage you to keep putting your two cents in. Our goal is to have

most of our content written and produced by prisoners and ex-prisoners, so we highly encourage you to get in touch with us if you're interested in being part of the Cell Count team.

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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."

### A NOTE ABOUT PEN PALS:

Here is a list of correspondence services for people inside (alternatives to pen pals, which is, sadly, no longer a part of Cell Count):  
Canadian Inmates Connect: Currently, there is a \$35/year subscription. Your ad will be placed on a website, and people with internet access browse through to decide who to connect with. A point of caution: you are asked to say what you have been convicted for, and your full name will be published online. Melissa is the person to contact for more information. Write or call her at: Canadian Inmates Connect Inc. 3085 Kingston Rd, Suite 267, Toronto, Ontario, M1M 1P1 - (647) 344-3404

Black and Pink: Specifically for queer and trans prisoners. They are based in the United States, it does not cost anything to be part of the list, and you don't have to tell them your conviction. Here is how to reach them: Black and Pink National Office, 614 Columbia Rd, Dorchester, MA 02125 617.519.4387

Prison Fellowship Canada: This is a faith-based, Christian organization that connects prisoners with volunteers of either the same gender, or where there is a 15-20 year age difference. The point is for you to have an outlet to express yourself to someone who will listen. If you are of the Christian faith, this may be a great option for you. You can reach them for more info at: Prison

Fellowship Canada - National Office, 5945 Airport Road, Suite 144, Mississauga, ON L4V 1R9 905.673.5867

Prisoner Correspondence Project: "...a solidarity project for gay, lesbian, transsexual, transgender, gendervariant, two-spirit, intersex, bisexual and queer prisoners in Canada and the United States, linking them with people who are part of these same communities outside of prison." - From their website. Write to them here: QPIRG Concordia c/o Concordia University 1455 de Maisonneuve Ouest, Montreal, QC H3G 1M8

Inmate Ink: "Help us bring Hope to a prisoner one letter at a time. Offers memberships from \$20 - \$40. Your completed ad will be published on our website for anyone in the general public to view and contact you directly. For an application or more info, please contact Tasha Brown at: P.O. Box 53222 Marlborough CRO, Calgary AB. T2A 7L9 or www.InmateInk.ca"

If you have had success using a pen pal service (other than ours) and would like to share it with other Cell Count subscribers, please write to us or call. We can list it in a future issue.

### MOVING?

We were getting about 75 Cell Counts sent back to us each mail-out labelled, 'Not Here'. Please help us reduce our mailing expenses by letting us know of any address change, ASAP! Thank you for taking care with this.

**CALLING ALL ARTISTS, WRITERS (FICTION, NON-FICTION), ILLUSTRATORS, CARTOONISTS, POETS, JOURNALISTS (ASPIRING OR OTHERWISE), AND OTHER CREATIVE TYPES:**

We want your submissions! We get lots of letters from our readers telling us how much they love seeing all your work and they're hungry for more. Send us your stuff and get published in Cell Count. When you send us stuff, please make sure you write a line in that gives us permission to publish your work. Also, let us know if you would like your work returned to you or sent on to someone else! Please also type your work or write clearly if you can!  
Writers: We get a lot of great work sent in that we are unable to use because of very limited space. Apologies. Please consider the column width & keep articles/poems tight & to the point. Honestly, the first items to go in are the ones that fit nicely and leave space for others - quality and quantity! Also, let us know in writing if it's ok to edit your work for grammar, spelling and so we can fit it in.

Please note: If you do send something to us, please give us a call if you can so we can look out for it in the mail. Also, call us again at least a week after you send it to make sure we got it. If not, if you're sending in a piece of writing, we can transcribe it over the phone for you, so keep a copy of everything you send us!

Women are the fastest-growing prisoner population in Canada, but often their experiences are marginalized in conversations about the prison system. We want to hear your take on prison, life, family, or anything else you're interested in writing about. We can guarantee confidentiality, and can publish your pieces under a pseudonym if you want! Please submit your articles, poetry, art, or letters to the Cell Count editor at 526 Richmond St E,

Toronto, ON M5A 1R3.

### WHEN SUBSCRIBING TO CELL COUNT

We have been notified by a few different institutions that if you'd like your subscription of Cell Count to make it into your hands, you have to register at the library to receive it first. Please do this before requesting a subscription from us just to make sure! Also, if you are interested in subscribing please contact: Cell Count, 526 Richmond St E, Toronto, ON, M5A 1R3 or call Sena at: 1-866-224-9978 ext 228

### NEXT CELL COUNT DEADLINE

We are realizing that setting a deadline date is difficult because sometimes it takes a long time for Cell Count to get to our readers, and then people who would like to submit don't have enough time to write/draw their submissions. We are going to try something new: We will create a new issue once we receive enough submissions to make one. So just write/draw your submission and send it in! If it doesn't make it in the next issue, it will be prioritized for the issue after.

### OBITUARY SECTION

With this section, we hope to give you an outlet to express your grief so you don't have to experience it alone. You can send in an obituary about someone you may have lost in prison or on the outside. We will start with a limit of 125 words per obituary and expand based on your feedback.

### BRING PASAN TO YOUR GROUP

Are you a PEC/APEC worker or part of a Prisoner run group? PASAN regularly visits and holds workshops at prisons, if you would like to request us to come and be a part of your work give us a call at 1-866-224-9978. It is a free call from any phone and we would love to hear from you!

### CONTACT NUMBERS

If you are in any Federal/Provincial Institution or Detention Centre call us only with this #: Toll-free 1-866-224-9978

### CSC'S NEW PRISON NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAM (PNEP)

We want to hear from you! After refusing for more than 20 years, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) announced last year the introduction of its "prison needle exchange program" or PNEP in federal prisons. This is the result of an ongoing court case by the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, PASAN and others. The PNEP began in Summer 2018 at two prisons: Grand Valley Institution for Women in Kitchener, Ontario and Atlantic Institution in Renous, New Brunswick. Beginning in January 2019, CSC has said it will start phasing in PNEP across the federal prison system. The Legal Network and PASAN are continuing with our legal case to make sure all prisoners who need it can access the PNEP, and we want to hear from you. If you are in a prison with a PNEP, we are interested in learning about your observations and experiences of the PNEP: \* Are people using the program? \* Do you think the program works? \* Are there any problems for those who wish to participate? If you are able to share your thoughts with us, please contact: PASAN (toll free: 1-866-224-9978) or Sandra Chu at the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network at 416-595-1666 ext. 232. Both PASAN and the Legal Network accept collect calls from prisoners.

**EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW**

**By J.C.**

*To Sena*

Hey there! Of course, it was nice seeing you on Friday, I missed saying goodbye but I hope I see you soon! Now I am not sure if you got news of someone passing away here? I just feel so pissed off, because I really think staff failed big time.

We all want harm reduction, but CSC continues to create dangerous situations over and over, orchestrating violence by telling "trusted" inmates that this inmate is a rat, caused a certain problem, did something "non-solid", was or is a "P.C.", lockdowns, garbage food... It can be so tough on everyone. Sorry, I'm rambling.

So this is what I know about what happened: For whatever reason staff got word that an inmate was involved in drugs, they searched him and his cell and found some paraphernalia, some drug dog wants praise or is tired and sits? This inmate is brought for x-ray to the hospital, why he let them x-ray him I don't know (pretty sure they can't force x-ray on you?). Something paper-shaped was seen on x-ray, I am sure he was pressured/uncomfortable/not wanting to get caught/get more time.

He was being put in a situation he had no control over, had no access to a phone or legal help or even a friend. He was placed in a small cage inside a van being taken to a dry-cell. When the cage was unlocked, and opened, he was gone.

If a person thought to have, or be involved in drugs, shouldn't we offer help, programs, counselling, Methadone, detox, etc? "Harm Reduction", not being trapped in a situation where he is put in more risk. I feel so bad I don't know who to talk to, who to be mad at? I watched a guy who OD'ed not get Narcan for over 20 minutes, locked inside a jail cell? He passed in April.

I want people to know what is happening inside here, but I don't know who to tell. Sorry to dump this one you, I just have to reach out to everyone I can.

I am willing to write/talk to anyone about wrongs I have seen in the prison. All I want is for some real common-sense change to happen. I know I should be in more contact, it's just hard for me being here, dealing with loneliness and depression. I will always keep in touch;

I hope we can maybe print some of this. It seems like people who die in prison are kind of swept under the rug of CSC! Thank you for being so nice, hope to hear from you soon!

PS - I got this info from someone who works here but doesn't want to be involved.

**WHAT IS THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA PROTOCOL FOR THE CORONA VIRUS?**

Memo to:

Anne Kelly, Commissioner, Correctional Service Canada  
Honourable Bill Blair MP, Minister of Public Safety  
Ian Irving, Regional Manager of Clinical Services CSC

**By George Fraser  
Reason for this Request:**

The aging prison population, many with low immune systems across Canada, is a vulnerable population that is quite comparable to a Petri dish for the culture of any viral infections that may be running in the Canadian population. While the prisoners are not circulating in the community, we do have visitors, volunteers and staff coming into the insular kingdom on a daily basis and then there are all the community organizations linked to Correctional Service Canada.

Just a reminder to everyone, individuals incarcerated in federal penitentiaries have a **right** to protection from discriminatory practices in accordance with the CHRA. Canada has a health care protocol for the Corona Virus but that protocol is not necessary specific and relevant to the incarcerated prison population.

One only has to read the Senate Interim Report, 'Study on the human rights of federally-sentenced persons', to understand that CSC stumbles, trips and falls on essentially every issue with the exception of safety and security. The Correctional Investigator annually reports that timely health care access and the quality of medical service delivery are the major sources of prisoner complaints and grievances across the Correctional Service Canada spectrum. This is because the Service is mandated to provide 'essential health care' and every prisoner and CSC staff health care professionals understand that 'essential health care' is code for 'substandard health care' when compared to the health care offered in the community.

These are the major reasons why I want to know, **What is the Correctional**

**Service Canada protocol for the Corona Virus?'. My recommendation would be that the Commissioner reports the protocol immediately in a Bulletin to both prisoners and staff.**

**#FACTS**

**By Victoria Kenny**

It's easier to get on the needle program and shoot up drugs than it is trying to get a smudge kit or prayer scarf in this jail [GVIW] and that's pretty sad...

Why not bring back the (safe) tattoo program because not all inmates use I.V. but are at risk of infection by tattooing more than anything!

**RELAXATION TECHNIQUES**

**Breathing:** Breathe in; count one. Hold your breath; two. Breathe out; three. Start over... concentrating on your breaths, and count. If a thought comes to your attention, dismiss it, and start again counting.

**Yoga:** Yoga positions, or Asanas, are great for grounding. For a fast grounding using yoga, you may choose Asanas that require you to find balance in off-balance positions or comfort in uncomfortable positions.

**Mindfulness:** Mindfulness is a state of active, open attention on the present. When you're mindful, you observe your thoughts and feelings from a distance, without judging them good or bad. Instead of letting your life pass you by, mindfulness means living in the moment and awakening to experience. Pay attention to your body and how it interacts with the environment. For example, if you are sitting down, observe the weight of your body on the chair, or observe how your feet's sole interacts with the floor, and try to feel each finger touching the floor, just observe, and be mindful to the interaction.

**Three Mindful Senses:** Another helpful mindfulness trick is simply to notice what you are experiencing right now through three senses- sound, sight, touch. Take a few slow breaths and ask yourself: What are three things I can hear? What are three things I can see? What are three things I can feel?

**Writing as Meditation:**

1. Settle into a contemplative space of silence by taking a minimum of 21 deep breaths- or sitting in stillness for 5-15 minutes with your attention lightly on your breath, body sensations, or sounds in the room. Cultivate an atmosphere of warmth and openness toward yourself and your experience.

2. Free write without stopping for 10 minutes, beginning with the prompt "Right now..." "Don't stop to reflect, edit, try to make sense or write a "piece." Simply finish the sentence and keep going until you run out of things to say, then write the prompt again and finish the sentence. You don't need to write fast-just without pausing to think. Be willing to let the words surprise you: The idea is to relax your mind - there is no way to do it wrong.

3. After 10 min, take a few breaths and read aloud what you wrote, listening deeply to yourself. Notice what your mind does when you read it back-expectations, fears, pleasures and judgments will likely arise. Allow them to be just as they are in an atmosphere of warmth and openness. You might jot a few notes on what you notice at the end of your piece for later reference.

4. Now scan through the writ-

ing and underline any phrases, sentences or sections that strike you as particularly alive or that intrigue you for some reason-you don't need to know why. Any of these fragments can be used as a prompt for another piece of timed writing, either now or in your next session. The prompt "Right now..." is the fundamental prompt for this practice.

5. At the end of the session, share the benefits of the practice by making the wish that whatever insight you gained produce positive effects for yourself and all beings touched by you.

**Journaling Exercise for Mindfulness**

1. Start by opening to a fresh clean page in your journal. While taking a deep breath to begin, take a moment to notice and appreciate the empty page.

2. Rest the tip of your pen onto the page, and select a simple first word or phrase to become a focus during your meditation. Write the word(s) slowly.

3. Allow your pen to move gently; watch the ink get absorbed onto the page. While you continue selecting thoughts or phrases, don't worry if they are not full sentences. Simply allow yourself to drop your thoughts, one

Cont'd on page 4

## Write ON!

Supporting prisoners through correspondence

**INCARCERATED IN CANADA?  
NEED INFORMATION?**

WRITE ON! is an all-volunteer group whose goal is to help and support prisoners in Canada, through correspondence.

**WE CAN:**

Research general information you need, such as:


- general legal information
- info on prison rules and policies
- info on resources, programs and services
- and possibly other kinds of information you need.

**WE CANNOT:**

- Give any kind of professional advice, legal or otherwise.
- be a pen-pal service (though we could refer you to one)
- promise to adequately respond to all requests for information.

**CONTACT US:**

Write ON!  
Suite # 234  
110 Cumberland Street  
Toronto, On M5R 3V5



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR AND PASAN STAFF

To our dear Cell Count readers inside, we want you to know that we are with you and thinking of you. We know that it is a scary time with COVID-19 being declared a global pandemic, especially to those of you who are behind the walls. We are working to make sure that you are not forgotten nor neglected during this crisis, because we believe that you all deserve equal access to healthcare and prevention measures to stay safe and healthy.

I have created this section in Cell Count to help get out some basic information about COVID-19, and what you can do to try and stay as safe as possible during this time, given your circumstances.

We also want you to know that we will be available by telephone as long as we can, that is, Monday - Friday, 10am - 5pm EST - 1-866-224-9978. There is a chance that Toronto may be locked down at some point, in which case, we will not be available by phone nor snail mail. We will update our voicemail greeting to reflect that.

We hope that you find the information in this section useful. We also hope that you will all look out for each other the best you can. Stay calm, we'll get through this together. And, as our good friend Michael Hector says, be well and be safe.

In solidarity and care, Sena Husain, Cell Count lead editor and the PASAN team.

## COVID-19 Safety

- 1) Wash hands for 20-30 seconds; after using washroom, sneezing/coughing, using phone, playing a game of cards or scrabble
- 2) Make sure ranges, cells, toilets, sinks, and common spaces of the jails are wiped down every night
- 3) Ask officers to use bleach, or get access to some bleach, when wiping all tables and soft chairs down on ranges. If you can't get bleach ask officers for any other cleaning supplies
- 4) Wipe down pay phones, door-knobs, cell doors, tv remote control, pencils

How coronavirus spreads  
Human coronaviruses cause infections of the nose, throat and lungs. They are most commonly spread from an infected person through:

- respiratory droplets generated when you cough or sneeze
- close, prolonged personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- touching something with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands

Current evidence suggests person-to-person spread is efficient when there is close contact.

Symptoms according to Public Health

Symptoms have included:

- fever
- cough
- difficulty breathing
- pneumonia in both lungs

Contact Numbers

Public Health Authorities

1-866-797-0000

PASAN

1-866-224-9978

Ontario Ombudsman

1-800-263-1830

Stay calm. We'll get through this together.

### CONT'D FROM PAGE 3

phrase at a time, as if they are being caught in a net.

4. If there is a pause, or a moment between words, take the opportunity to reconnect with your breath. Notice your inhale and exhale. Let your attention rest on the tip of your pen, allowing it to pull out the next word for you. Allow your pen to move, as if holding the cursor of a Ouija board, channeling wisdom from your inner spirit.

### Basic Art Journal

Exercise #1: Take your pencil and a page in your journal. Start by drawing lines around the edges of the paper - just straight lines - get to know how the pencil feels in your hands. After you have outlined the paper several times, try drawing some diagonal lines across the paper. Try using the pencil in different ways such as laying the point down and drawing like you are shading. Try to make short sharp lines. Try to make different shapes. Let yourself experiment with how many different ways you can use a pencil. After you have filled the page look at what you have drawn. Maybe write a few lines about how the page makes you feel or how doing the exercise made you feel. Give a title if you feel inspired.

Exercise #2: Using pencil & paper-with your eyes open or closed or both, start by drawing lines randomly on the page as you did in exercise #1. Think of how you are feeling as you drawing these lines. Look to see if there is any shape to your lines. Try to develop that shape - turn your drawing around if you want to. Look at it from all directions - are there other shapes that are apparent? Work on any shapes that you see to form a composition. When you are satisfied try to write a few lines describing your drawing or how you felt doing it. See if you can give it a title

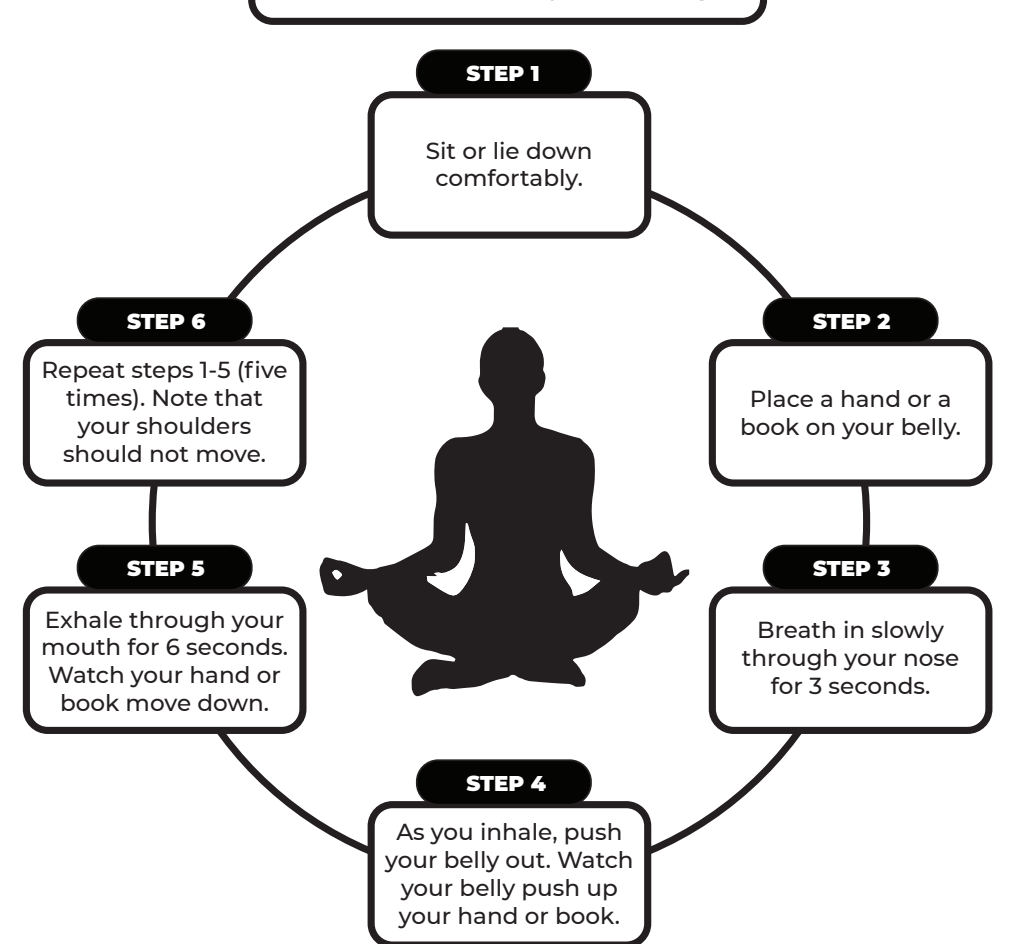
Exercise #3: Using pencil & paper- close your eyes and think of a sound. It could be a sound that you heard recently that resonated with you or a sound from your past that you remember. Keeping your eyes closed try to draw the shape of the sound on the page. Think of the components of the sound. Is it a repetitive sound or is it constantly changing? Is it loud or soft? Rhythmic or erratic? Try to keep hearing

con't on page 5

## COVID-19 symptoms compared to common conditions

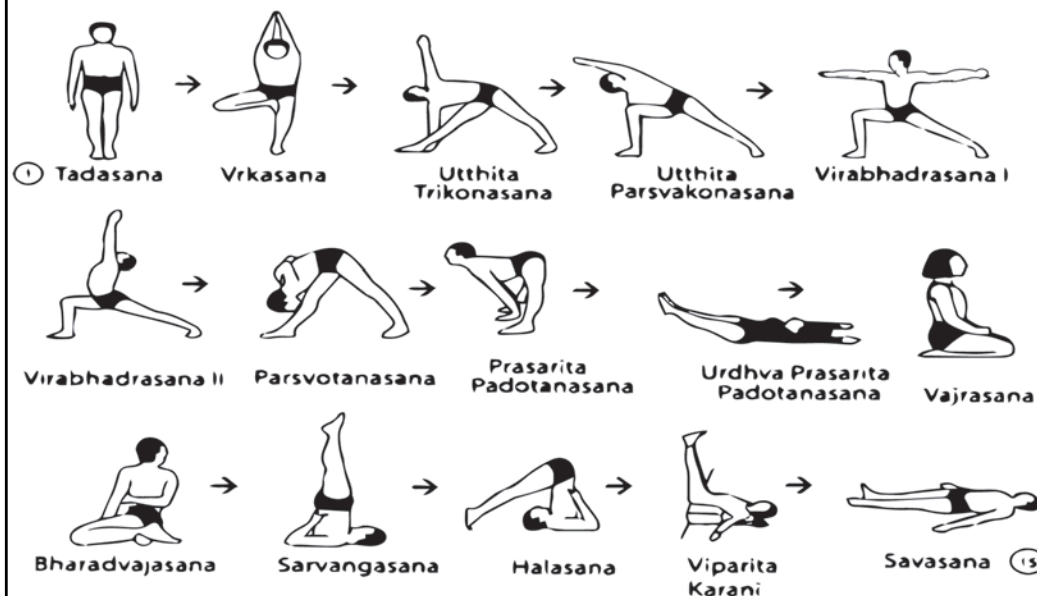
SYMPTOM	COVID-19	COMMON COLD	FLU	ALLERGIES
Fever	Common	Rare	Common	Sometimes
Dry cough	Common	Mild	Common	Sometimes
Shortness of breath	Common	No	No	Common
Headaches	Sometimes	Rare	Common	Sometimes
Aches and pains	Sometimes	Common	Common	No
Sore throat	Sometimes	Common	Common	No

### 6-Steps to do Belly Breathing



Note: Exhalation is key to relaxation. Make your out-breath longer and smoother than your in-breath. Over time you can increase the number of breaths and the length of time exhaling until you feel better.

## ASSANAS



**cont'd from page 4**

the sound as you draw. Keep your eyes closed and try to picture yourself within the sound. Is it bigger than you or smaller? Try to think of how the sound is affecting you as you draw. When you feel satisfied, open your eyes? Look at the page and see how the image affects you? Write a few lines about the sound and your relationship to it. Try to also write about how you feel about drawing. Does it give you any ideas? Exercise #4 (Self-portrait with eyes closed): Using pencil and paper- close your eye and try to imagine that you are looking at yourself in the mirror. Keep the pencil on the paper for the entire exercise. DON'T LIFT THE PENCIL UP. Start by outlining the shape of your head. Do this a few times until you feel comfortable with the shape you are imagining. Keeping the pencil on the paper continue by outlining your eyes. The shape of the eyes then the iris and pupil. Move on to the eyebrows - imagine how they are positioned over your eyes. Draw your nose and then your mouth. Add the ears and your hair. Add any details that are unique to your face such as dimples, birthmarks, facial hair or moles. When you feel you have completed your face open your eyes. What comes to mind when you look at your drawing? What emotions or thoughts do you have? Write out a few lines on how you feel?

**CANADA'S PRISONS PREPARING FOR COVID-19, WANT PUBLIC TO LIMIT VISITS**

**Liam Casey and Bill Grave-land,** *The Canadian Press*

Canadian prison officials say they are adopting an existing flu-outbreak plan in preparation for the novel coronavirus outbreak that is sweeping across the country.

Correctional Service Canada says it wants the prisoners' family and friends to avoid its institutions should they be sick and to consider other ways of communicating with loved ones, such as a video visitation or by telephone.

"CSC has considerable experience managing influenza outbreaks and the requirements for managing COVID-19 are similar," spokeswoman Martine Rondeau said in an email to *The Canadian Press*.

Rondeau said there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in CSC institutions, but noted the service will comply "with requirements set by public health authorities, which could include an institution being quarantined."

In Ontario, the provincial government announced late Friday it was barring personal visits to inmates in its adult provincial jails, allowing only professional visits, such as from prisoners' lawyers. Offenders serving their sentences on weekends will also see their restrictions loosened.

Experts and prisoner advocates have expressed concerns for the health of the highly vulnerable prisoner population.

Martha Paynter, a nurse who also researches prisoner health as part of her doctoral studies at Dalhousie University in Halifax, said prisons and jails are "petri dishes" where disease spreads quickly and inmates can do little to isolate themselves for protection.

"People who are inside cannot easily get away from others, there is poor ventilation, little time outside and a lack of hygiene products," she said. "It is considered contraband to have access to alcohol-based substances like hand sanitizer. They're lucky to get a bar of soap. It's terrifying."

James Bloomfield, president of the Prairies region for the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers, said the panic over COVID-19 has crept inside the institutions.

"It gets pretty complicated when you start housing hundreds of people together," he said. "We're at the stage now where we're trying to look at all of our protective equipment, gloves, masks, making sure we've got enough of that type of stuff, disinfectants."

He said the constant flow of visitors, workers and medical staff leave the institution vulnerable to infection. "We can't isolate everyone either," he said from Winnipeg. "We've got 800 people at Stony Mountain (Institution) for example and when you start trying to isolate, it's impossible."

"If it does get in we're going to be bringing it home, the officers bringing it home to their families." About a third of inmates in Canada are housed in federal institutions with the remainder in provincial jails, where those on sentences of two years less a day mix with those awaiting trial who are presumed innocent.

Toronto criminal defence lawyer Daniel Brown said it's only a matter of time before an inmate contracts the virus. He's worried for his clients.

"There's no way the jails can address the health concerns raised by a pandemic -- they don't have the facilities, they don't have the ability to self-isolate," he said. "Jails are overcrowded and underfunded. The staff aren't equipped to deal with a crisis like this."

A spokeswoman for Ontario's Ministry of Solicitor General that oversees the jails said no one has tested positive for COVID-19 in the province's jails.

"If an outbreak of any communicable disease occurs or is suspected, institution officials take immediate precautionary measures in accordance with operating procedures, including notifying the local medical officer of health, and provincial health professionals," said Kristy Denette.

"Inmates may be isolated if required, and medical attention and treatment is provided." Paynter said she was also worried about inmates' mental health. "This is also an anxiety epidemic," she said, adding that inmate populations have high rates of mental health afflictions.

"People who are inside are not able to easily contact their families. They don't have unlimited cellphone plans to call their mom and kid," she said. "That's how we outside institutions are going to cope. We can cope with social distancing because of technology. It's the opposite in jails or prisons."

Deadly riots recently broke out in Italian prisons after visitors were banned while the country deals with a COVID-19 outbreak that has so far sickened over 17,000 people, including at least 1,266 deaths.

**A MOM'S \$6,000 PHONE BILL IN THREE MONTHS: THE PUSH TO REIN IN ONTARIO'S COSTLY PRISON PHONE SYSTEM**

**By Patrick White, The Globe and Mail**

Last summer, a 65-year-old at a Montreal seniors' home racked up a phone bill of \$6,072.12 in just three months. Administrators at the complex were so alarmed they warned her she was being defrauded.

When she reviewed the bill, however, she realized the charges originated from the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre, a provincial prison where her son was being held on domestic-abuse allegations. His criminal charges were eventually dropped, but the phone charges remained.

The tenant couldn't afford the whole bill at once, so she opted for a payment plan: \$50 a month for 11 years.

"They've got me until I'm 76 years old," said the tenant, Isabel, whose full name *The Globe and Mail* is withholding to avoid discrimination against her son. "He was innocent, yet this huge bill came our way. That's what makes this whole thing more

infuriating."

As it turned out, she was not the victim of fraud, but rather a telephone system in Ontario prisons that critics say divides families, deters rehabilitation and limits access to the justice system by hitting a vulnerable population with exorbitant bills. Bell Canada holds the contract for providing phone service at Ontario prisons. On Wednesday, the 10th anniversary of Bell's Let's Talk campaign to eliminate stigma around mental health, advocates for prisoners called on the company and the province to make the phone system free.

"We think that the free telecommunication is less costly than the cost of separating people from their families, from their supports," said Souheil Benslimane, co-ordinator of the Jail Accountability and Information Line, a hotline fielding calls from prisoners at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre (OCDC) concerned about jail conditions. "When people are cut off from their families, they become angry; they become ill; they cannot co-ordinate with loved ones when they get out and they end up back in jail."

Bell's contract with the province, signed in 2013 and expiring later this year, states that rates should not exceed the basic residential rate charged in the community surrounding the prison. In a statement, Bell Canada spokesman Nathan Gibson said the cost is comparable to public pay phones, not to home-phone packages. The company advertises basic home-phone service for \$46.45 a month with an extra \$10 a month for unlimited long distance in North America. Isabel managed to top that monthly rate in just two calls. Her phone bill shows charges as high as \$30.43 for single calls from the jail, each capped at 20 minutes. That squares with the experiences of other prisoners.

"To call locally, I pay two bucks, but calling Toronto or Vancouver is 30 bucks a call," said Deepan Budlakoti, a current prisoner at OCDC.

Unlike the federal and other provincial prison systems, Ontario allows for calls only to numbers that can accept collect charges. That prohibits calls to cellphones, forcing many families to get home-phone lines for the sole purpose of talking to an incarcerated relative.

It also poses access-to-justice issues, said Mr. Budlakoti, who had to postpone his bail hearing three times while trying to track down lawyers and family members on landlines to arrange legal representation and sureties.

Prisons do post phone num-

bers of toll-free social-service agencies, but Mr. Budlakoti said the current list at OCDC is largely out of date. "There are 24 numbers on the list here and a lot of them don't even work," he said. "The John Howard Society number doesn't work. The lawyer referral number doesn't work. It's a joke."

In its policy and procedures manual, the province acknowledges that phone calls are "important for rehabilitation and successful reintegration into society." That jibes with voluminous research showing the value of family contact to a prisoner's mental health and prospects following release.

"Regular calls are absolutely critical," said Louise Leonardi, executive director of Canadian Families and Corrections Network. "It's better for the person inside; it's better for the family on the outside and any children. With strong supports, that person is less likely to reoffend, and that means better public safety for you and me. Everybody wins."

The Ministry of the Solicitor-General has been aware of the burdensome phone bills for years. A 2016 ministry briefing note obtained by *The Globe* states the Liberal government of the day was considering alternative options to collect calling "in order to assist inmates with limited income."

The province has a financial stake in the status quo. The contract shows that Bell pays the government a commission from its gross monthly prison revenues, but the exact figures were redacted.

"I find that aspect repulsive," said lawyer Michael Spratt, who filed an access-to-information request for the contract to examine why his firm was spending thousands of dollars a month to receive collect calls from prisoners who were simply exercising their constitutional right to contact counsel. "Gone are the days when we should be profiting off an incarcerated population."

Ministry spokeswoman Kristy Denette said the government intends to provide phone services at "reasonable rates" and allow prisoners to call cellphones in its next contract. Bell is among the bidders.

**SHE SPENT 4 YEARS IN A MEN'S PRISON — HOW CANADA OFTEN IGNORES COMPLEXITIES IN TRANS VIOLENCE**

**By Rachael D'Amore, Global News**

Over four years, Moka Dawkins slowly learned how to stay safe as a transgender woman in a men's prison. She wasn't always successful.

There were threats and

**Cont'd on page 6**

**Cont'd from page 5**

name-calling. She was always looking over her shoulder in the shower.

Now, in the handful of months since she's been released, she fills her schedule with efforts to give back to the LGBTQ2 community that kept her going even when she wasn't sure she could.

It's a community that believed her when she insisted to police that she had acted in self-defence — even though a jury did not — after being found with a sword and knives, covered in blood. It's a community that pressured police and the courts to use the right pronouns, even when the justice system insisted on misgendering Dawkins while she was most vulnerable — a community that is all too aware of the amount of violence, discrimination and prejudice Dawkins faces just being a woman on the streets of Toronto.

"I'm out here because people took the time to hear my story," she says. "There are people in the world who are just like me, but they can't be themselves. When something happens to them, as something happened to me, I was able to turn to a community who supported me."

Nov. 20, the Transgender Day of Remembrance, was particularly hard.

Dawkins woke before sunrise, her mind buzzing about the day ahead. She had to condense her life story into a speech for a crowd at York University and then get to Toronto City Hall in time to raise the blue, pink and white striped flag. First, she stopped by the police station where her wig and purse had been held since her arrest.

"There was blood in the purse, on the hair, everywhere," she says.

It had been four years, but seeing her belongings took Dawkins straight back to the police sirens, the court hearings, the lockups — a time when Dawkins' identity was constantly being challenged.

"I was misgendered all the time. They did it purposely. To them, it was all just a joke."

Violence against women is slowly being recognized as a national issue in Canada — on average, a woman is killed every other day. Once a week, a woman is murdered by her partner, and one in three women will experience some form of sexual violence over the course of their lives.

All too often, the conversations — and even the statistics — ignore people who are trans or non-binary, despite the fact they live with a heightened risk of violence. Trans women, specifically those of colour, can be attacked because of misogyny, sexism and transphobia but

also racism. When they're erased from these conversations, so, too, is the violence against them.

Dawkins smiles wide, her glossy lips shimmering as she describes the joy in her mom's voice when she earned her GED, a high school equivalency, in prison. She swings her long, dark hair across one shoulder as she proudly talks about studying psychology. She says she wouldn't be dreaming about a future as a social worker if it wasn't for the support she received during the darkest days of her life.

There were fundraisers and tributes, and many advocated for her through social media. Members of sex workers' rights organization Maggie's Toronto showed up in force at her hearings.

If Dawkins is certain about anything these days, it's that education is key to preventing other people from having to go through what she did — the violence and blatant dismissal of her identity and work.

The public, the police, the courts and the correctional system are behind the times, she says, and these systems need to adapt, understand and learn how to interact with trans and non-binary folks as well as sex workers. It's why she was so excited to get a job helping people just like her.

Dawkins is hopeful for her future.

Whatever comes next, she's determined to move on from the pain of the last four years.

"It doesn't matter how you identify. If you're biologically born or spiritually born a woman, you're a woman at the end of the day. You know yourself," she says.

"Change is going to come. It is going to come."

#### INDIGENOUS INMATES OVER 30 PER CENT OF PRISON POPULATION: CORRECTIONAL INVESTIGATOR

#### By Bernise Carolino, Canadian Lawyer

Indigenous inmate population has increased by 43.4 per cent since April 2010.

A federal government report laments the worsening "Indigenization" of the country's correctional system, with Indigenous inmates comprising over 30 per cent of the prison population, up from 25 per cent from four years ago.

Although Indigenous people make up only five per cent of the Canadian population, they are increasingly over-represented in prisons. And while the non-Indigenous inmate population has decreased by 13.7 per cent since April 2010, the Indigenous population has risen by 43.4 per cent, with 42 per cent of female inmates are Indigenous women.

These statistics hint at "disturbing and entrenched imbalances," Dr. Ivan Zinger, Correctional Investigator of Canada, said in a news release last week. He attributed these trends to a number of systemic issues, and noted that Indigenous people are more likely to be assigned to maximum security institutions and to solitary confinement units. They also generally wait longer to be granted parole.

The news release additionally states that "Indigenous people reoffend or are returned to custody at much higher levels, as high as 70 per cent for Indigenous men in the Prairie region."

Zinger warned that, at current rates, the percentage of Indigenous inmates in prisons may increase to 33 per cent within three years. "It is not acceptable that Indigenous people in this country experience incarceration rates that are six to seven times higher than the national average," Zinger said. "Bold and urgent action is required to address one of Canada's most persistent and pressing human rights issues."

The Office of the Correctional Investigator outlined solutions proposed by various government bodies and advocacy organizations to deal with this problem, including the delegation of responsibility to Indigenous groups and communities, the appointment of a deputy commissioner for Indigenous corrections, and the devotion of resources to reintegration services.

Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, stated in a news release a day after the Office of the Correctional Investigator had released its findings that the report was an "alarming wake-up call" for Canada to confront the discrimination and apathy ingrained into its correctional system.

"We need a justice system that embraces First Nations legal traditions and puts First Nations laws on the same footing as civil law and common law," Bellegarde said. "Additionally, judges and crown attorneys need to be more responsive to the circumstances of Indigenous offenders and offer alternatives to incarceration."

Bellegarde added that he intended to meet with Canada's correctional investigator and the relevant federal ministers in order to discuss a plan of action.

#### SECOND ALBERTA INSTITUTION TO IMPLEMENT PRISON NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAM

#### By Sammy Hudes, Calgary Herald

Inmates will be provided with clean needles, but must

use them to inject drugs out of sight, in their cells.

The union representing Canadian correctional officers is warning that a harm-reduction program to be implemented at a Bowden prison, which would give inmates access to needles to use drugs, could increase safety risks to each other and staff.

Instead, the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers says the federal government should be using an alternative program in prisons that mimics supervised consumption sites, allowing supervision by medical professionals when drugs are injected.

Correctional Service Canada is implementing the prison needle exchange program at the Bowden Institution beginning in March.

The program has been around since June 2018, having been rolled out at nine federal institutions across Canada "to help prevent the sharing of needles among inmates and the spread of infectious diseases."

To take part in the program, an inmate must receive approval from prison authorities, who are responsible for confirming there are no security concerns related to their participation. Kits containing a plastic container, a clean needle and other items are provided to participants, who obtain drugs through their own means.

"There's very little trust in the program," said James Bloomfield, the Prairie president for the correctional officers' union.

"On the officer side of it, we have found the inmates have shared the needles. The inmates have not secured them as they are supposed to, leaving their doors open."

He said inmates are left alone to consume their drugs within their cells, rather than under medical supervision.

"They have to illegally get their drugs into the institution and then they hide or curl up in a corner, so to speak, and inject," said Bloomfield.

"It's 'go take it, hide it,' because no one's supposed to know that you're doing this. It is not supposed to be public knowledge for anybody that they are doing this."

So far, the Edmonton Institution for Women is the only other federal prison in Alberta that has implemented the prison needle exchange program.

Correctional Service Canada declined an interview Friday, but spokeswoman Véronique Rioux said in an emailed statement that appropriate safeguards are in place at every institution to ensure prison needle exchange program kits "are safely stored and accounted for at all times."

She added there have been

no safety incidents involving staff or other inmates at the nine prisons where the program is in place.

Bloomfield, though, pointed to an alternative program in place at the Drumheller Institution, which he argued is safer and more effective in limiting overdoses.

Like supervised consumption sites, such as the one at Calgary's Sheldon M. Chumir Centre, the Drumheller program allows inmates to inject drugs under the supervision of trained nurses in a designated location within the prison's health-care unit.

"It's a much more controlled program and safer for everybody involved," Bloomfield said of the program, which has been around more than six months. "It's been well-accepted by the inmate populations and it keeps the danger of having that needle and that inmate curling up in a corner out of the cells."

Bloomfield said he "can't understand why" the federal government isn't on board with the alternative model.

But Rioux said "there is no single effective intervention in managing problematic substance use" and that Drumheller was selected for the alternative model "based on the health needs of the population." She said the program would also be implemented at the Springhill Institution in Nova Scotia.

Janet Rowe, executive director of Ontario-based prisoner health and harm-reduction organization PASAN, said there has never been a reported attack involving equipment from prison needle exchange programs, despite the concerns expressed by correctional officers.

She said it could be difficult for overdose prevention sites, like the one at Drumheller Institution, to exist without risking further stigmatization to inmates.

"For a prison-based overdose prevention site to succeed, prisoners must trust staff and be confident that they can access this service confidentially, without exposing them to further stigma and criminalization," said Rowe, whose organization provides support to prisoners and ex-prisoners across Canada.

"In the current prison environment this would be virtually impossible — and prison guards would certainly be aware of prisoners who are using the overdose prevention site. Further overdose prevention sites should not replace prison needle and syringe programs, which are widely accepted and studied and have been successfully implemented in prisons around the world for almost 30 years."

# In my Realm



By Victoria Kenny

I wish I were saying anything other than goodbye to my loved ones. They say things happen in 3's but for me it's 10-fold. I never got to go to anyone's funeral while I was in Jail. I listened to my big sister Raven literally take her last breath on the phone. Then a year later, the guards came to my pod with gloves on with the elder and chaplain. They tried to shut me in the interrogation room, but I refused to let them shut the door. I kicked it open and wouldn't budge and asked for them to at least have the decency to tell me to my face and not thru a glass window... So the elder stepped through, the elder I talked to that very morning in tears about a dream I had of my mom dying, I didn't know what it meant until 3 hours later... that my little brother Presley was stabbed to death. Then before them, was my father Lionel and best friend Larry.

Raven's liver shut down from drinking too much when she was in her early 30's; young. I asked my dad Lionel to stop drinking and a week later he died... maybe if I let him drink, he wouldn't have went through the withdrawal and died... and Larry died of an overdose shortly after my sentence. The family I lost after them is endless while I've been incarcerated.

The two recent deaths were my world, my best friend Amber King died a few months ago. Just a couple days after her release, of an overdose, and shortly after me and my friend Taylor Diamond Banks got out of jail in April 2019. We spent a week

together and chased that paper, we never slept that week. He left for a few hours and some where someone gave him fentanyl and left him to OD. Who does that!? Who? Why not call an ambulance? Why give your friend fentanyl any ways... That's not a friend! I wish I went with him... I wish I made him sleep. I wished a million things... and relapsed myself. I was Canada-wide for 4 months, and was caught in a standoff with Regina SWAT... I overdosed on a busted balloon inside me, of dope, I almost lost my life. I got revoked and came back, got to see my best friend Amber King... Somehow saying I love you doesn't cut it anymore... Somewhere has to be enough. If my mom could quit using drugs, so can I... So instead of breaking each other down I'm gonna boss up and stop being a puppet to my addiction, to the gang life... and build each other up. No one in my realm likes the term being called a puppet, but if you think about it... that's all we really are... all of us sitting in Jail, we're a puppet to some thing! I get out of Jail in 3 days and I refuse to let these be my last words. To honor my friends and family I'm gonna act right and count my blessings... Cut people off no matter how hard, it's mind over matter, and I refuse to let up and remain a broken spirit. I vow to be a better friend, a better sister, daughter, and most of all, mother. I wish you all the best,

Sincerely!  
Keep your head up  
Vikki Rose Kenny

SUBSCRIBING TO CELL COUNT AT SASK PEN

By Steven Lewis

So here at Sask Pen near/at Prince Albert, SK, I've found out the proper way to go about subscribing and receiving the Cell Count Newsletter.

First and foremost - Talk or request from PO permission to subscribe and have the PO tell or send copy of request to V and C.

2nd. Once V and C knows the inmate has permission, they will deliver the newsletters directly to the inmates' cell along with regular mail.

3rd. Call the number or write in to Cell Count to subscribe.

4th. Wait and enjoy receiving your first copy.

## Words Used by CSC

By: A Lifer

CSC uses words which have meanings they clearly do not know. Accountability; respect; timely manner; act fairly; responsibility. Rehabilitate: to help someone who has been in prison and help them to live a normal life again. This is what the dictionary says the meaning is -- not to keep someone in prison longer than they need to be.

Another one of the CSC terms is safe and timely reintegration. Please tell me what the hell that means. Okay you get a life 25 sentence you do all your programs and take full responsibility for your crime and get good reports from your program teachers you are not into the gangs or drugs, drinking or smoking and psychology report say I'm good to go to min security and says I can be managed there. I have done my full sentence of 25 years done ETA and had fence clearance with no problems, but my parole officer thinks a transfer to another medium security would be

best suitable for me. She has taken many steps to make sure that I have many inaccurate reports and information on my files so it can support her claims and not followed by the CCRA sec 24 Accuracy, etc. of information or correction of information PO's don't believe in that either.

I know another inmate on a double murder in camp after 5 years. I know another inmate on a triple murder in a halfway house on his full parole 5 years in. My PO said, "Well their parole officers were too soft on them and not doing their jobs properly. A lifer should spend the rest of their life in prison with no parole." So if this is the mind set of some parole officer in the prisons, I think we are going to need to build a lot more prisons because some parole officers feel all lifers should stay in prison and die there. Don't get me wrong, I have had a few good parole officers over the years that have done good things. But the bad ones outnumber the good ones and some of the new ones are the worst I have seen yet. So what do we as inmates do about this?

### COVER STORY CONTINUED

Many of the men I have served time with and I can see through what has been happening for far too long, Providers like Trap Call and Call-to-talk had been exploiting us for the years that we have paid them \$59.99 per month for a telephone number. I believe that there needs to be more competition for our share of the market "the prison system." More competition will mean telephone for inmates will become cheaper and provide more options. Many of the men I have spoken with have voiced their satisfaction with services like Fedphoneline where they have a choice to get a local calling card number for \$15.99 or get a collect call number for \$39.99 and pay \$1.50 per collect call. With added competition in this segment of the market for collect call number, inmates are hoping that the services can become even cheaper and thus change the prison landscape for the families of incarcerated individuals who have been struggling for far too long with hefty phone bills.

For some perspective on how these providers operate. Six years ago when I was in Joyceville, my relative got a Trapp Call number so I can stay in contact with them. Two years after they got the number I was transferred from Joyceville to Fenbrook. However, we did not think anything of what was happening with the number that I had, except that they were paying for the number and putting money on the top up account so I can make the collect calls. I used the number for two months and 13 days before the surprise came, my relative received a call and a bill from Trap Call claiming that they were owed \$1,863.00 for long distance charges.

My relative struggled to pay the bill in full because they were afraid that if they defaulted, their credit would be ruined. They terminated the number and I struggled with having very

limited access to getting in touch with those on the outside. However, now three years later my relatives are still receiving texts, calls and e-mails from trap call- whereby they are promoting their calling service. Another slap in the face, where-by it seems that Trap Call has retained my family's information and is promoting their services despite the several threats and harassment they were spewing to get the bill paid in full.

By contrast of service, individuals should know that when they get a Fedphoneline number they will never be charged for long-distance, even when it is made or received in error.

The Lifers group at CBI has reached out to Fedphoneline, to get a first-hand understanding of the company and to find out whether there are any gimmicks with this cheap service. The manager said; "From experience I understand the importance and benefits for inmates to have contact with the outside world. Some of the men and women who are in prison today will be our neighbours or our co-workers tomorrow. Our objective is to provide a good service at an affordable cost to the families of those who are incarcerated. We want to help the families and their relatives in prison to stay in contact, but not have any financial burdens nor excessive phone bills every month." As a matter of principle and humanity, we believe the reality of prison compels those within the walls to establish crucial ties with the outside. We believe strongly that emotional support systems are needed to help maintain the mental balance required by the inmates to stay healthy and to survive, and this can only be accomplished through communications," he said.

It is with gratitude I am writing this personal account so that others can make an informed choice with the service they get.

FedPhoneLine can be reached toll-free at 1-844-320-9647



## Freedom of Expression?

By Brian G. Kerr

How particular our legal system and governments have become. So hypocritically orientated in their ways, as the very constitutions and Charter Rights they profess to uphold and protect just so happen to be the same rights and freedoms they continually violate.

They allege to be founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and rule of law.

I urge anyone to read Deuteronomy 19:15-20 of the Bible and ask yourself, does this sound anything like a court proceeding you've encountered or are familiar with? Particularly in this day and age or even over the past 50-60 years for that matter?

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in relation to Proceedings in criminal and penal matters section 11(d) states: "Any person charged with an offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to law in a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal."

Well I'll be the first to tell you, not much about our justice system these days appears to be in the least impartial.

For instance, I requested an application for unreasonable delay in two separate court proceedings. In one it took a total of 38 months to have my matter brought to trial, well over the 30-month allotted time frame amended by the Supreme Court of Canada, where admittedly I did have a change of council on two occasions. However, each change took only 1 week and the Crown who at all times retained the entire disclosure could have at any point shared a copy with the expectant new counsel. So, the real question becomes this, "who exactly did the fault of delay reside with?" (But rather, somehow, it is my fault that my lawyer refuses to adhere to his/her fiduciary duty and act in my best interest which resulted in his/her removal from counsel).

The same occurred in respects to a summary charge, except this time the crown even admitted fault of delay, but guess what my so called 'fiduciary obligated' lawyer did? He waived the stay of proceedings application without even consulting with me.

My point is this. Upon successful completion of the bar exam, the graduating attorney is expected to swear an oath to the courts promising to uphold and protect it at all costs... This includes putting such duty before their fiduciary obligation to place the clients' interests above the professional's own interests. Well I am sure

we can safely assume the professional's interests lie primarily with the courts and I am sure it's even safer to say it's evident, which of the two obligations hold precedence.

So much for section 15 (1) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms Act; where it states: "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and in particular sex, age or mental or physical disability."

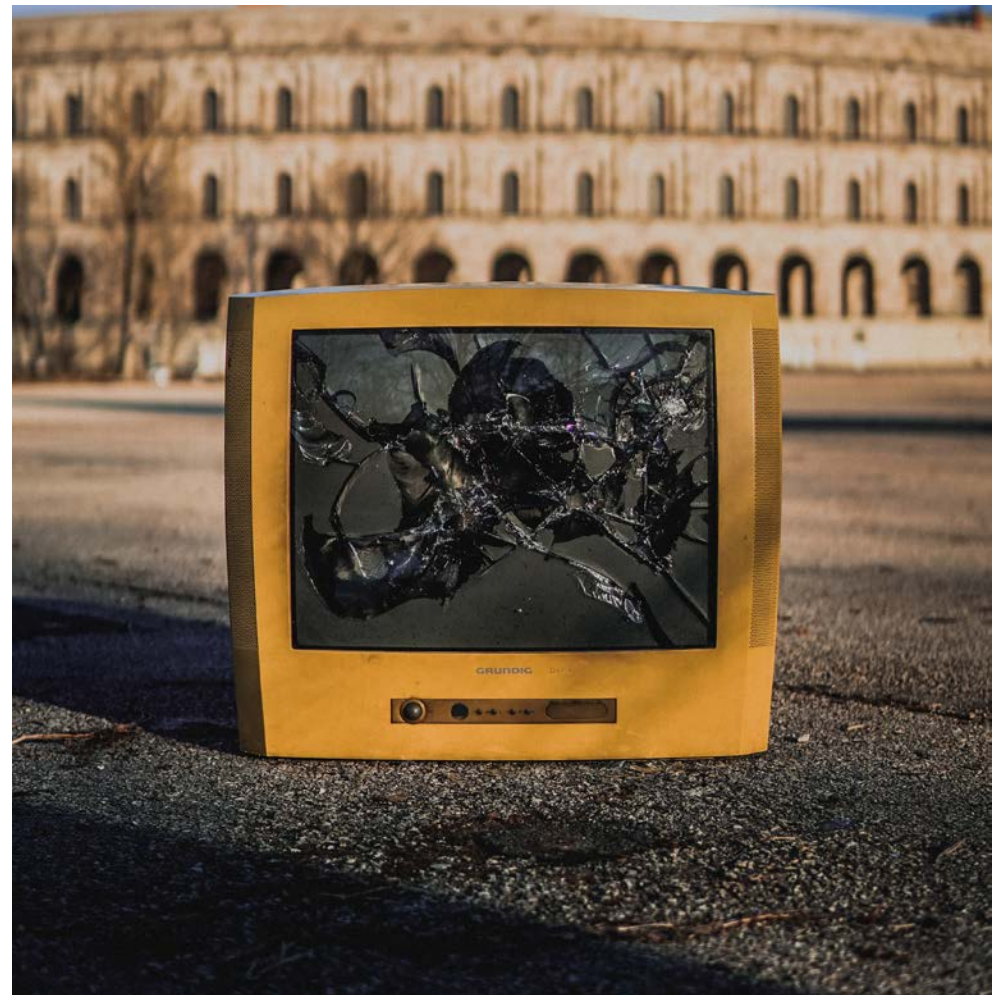
Note: This does not have to be secluded to issues of age, mental or physical disability, but rather includes it. As everyone is entitled to equality before and under the law and equal protection and benefit of law. Also just recently on or about Sept 12, 2019 I sent by mail a (Gladue Report) to the residing judge (F.S Dunphy) in my case, providing him some background risk factors involved in my adverse childhood experiences and into my late adolescence, such as psychological abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, family violence, substance abuse, family mental illness, suicidal incidences and imprisonment issues. My lawyer reports to me that the judge sent him an email expressing he was very upset I did this. I apologized for not including a Hallmark card and concluded I would do my best to be more thoughtful should I feel the need to send the judge anything more in the future.

Why he would express a need to imply his disgruntlement in me providing him with pertinent information pertaining to my case of which would help assist him in his ultimate decision making process, while assessing the dimensions and particularities and structure of my case, is a mystery and suggests to me an indication of absolute partiality, if not a complete bias and prejudice to say the least.

And I ask, does this not conflict with my fundamental rights and Freedoms? (Section 2(b) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms) as it states: "Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms...freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press, and other media of communication."

The fact that a good majority of the jails won't accept (PASAN, Cell Count) into their facilities also conflicts with this so called "fundamental freedom of Rights."

Which leads me to these next final conclusive questions: Is there really such a thing as a Freedom of Expression? Or is this somehow aligned with a so called "Presumption of Innocence?"



## The Revolution SHOULD NOT Be Televised

By Zakaria Amara

The other day I found myself confessing to the prison psychologist, that over the last 14 years I have smashed three televisions and gave away two.

I'd like to believe that this rarely happens, but I sometimes begin to speak with the intention of delivering a profound truth, only to come across as a total lunatic...

As the words left my mouth like a run-away freight train, I immediately registered, with panic, the concerned expression on the psychologist's face.

I tried to soften the blow...

"Actually, 'smash' is the wrong word, it was more like *destroy*..." I said, trying to sound as nonchalant as possible.

"Well, you must have been angry?" he interjected.

"No, no, I wasn't", I replied, feeling like I was just digging myself a deeper grave, by exchanging the impression of a man who destroys televisions out of anger, with that of a cold-blooded psychopath who calmly dismembers them.

"Well, why didn't you just give the TV to another prisoner? You could have easily left it at the front of the unit, and told the guards that you didn't want it?"

I tried to give an explanation, but midway through, surrendered to the fact that I had just stuffed my foot all the way down my throat, and waited for the executioner to deliver his blow, in the form of a report diagnosing me with some sort of mental disorder. Fortunately, however, the Psychologist abandoned his line of inquiry, and graciously allowed me to

move on to another subject.

Nonetheless, I'm sure you're still wondering why I destroyed the televisions in the first place?

Given the fact that for the last 14 years I've had to spend an average of 20 hours a day, locked in a small cell not much larger than a walk-in closet; Why would I destroy my only source of distraction and entertainment? Why would I shut, as one prisoner put it, "the only window that I had left to the outside world?"

To answer this question, it might help to go back to the circumstances surrounding the execution of my first victim: a 15-inch Citizen flat screen.

I began serving my life sentence at the Special Handling Unit, the most dangerous prison in Canada. Almost every convict there has stabbed or killed someone inside. In short, it is a place where the end of the day fills you with equal amounts gratefulness and dread; gratefulness, for the fact that you survived, and dread, for the fact that tomorrow, you will have to do it all over again.

When I first arrived, I was told that I was simply there for a 6-month assessment, and so I was almost certain, that my good behaviour would get me transferred out in half a year. But to my dismay, the administrators decided that I was a "radical threat", and recommended my indefinite placement in the SHU, with reviews to take place every 4 months. My hopes of embracing my family, especially my wife and young daughter, were crushed, and as time passed, I began to fear that I might never leave this place.

This hopeless situation, along with the apathy and cynicism of the administrators, pushed me back

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**Amara continued from pg. 8...**

into the arms of my radical ideology, which had simply gone dormant. Yet despite this, there was always a part of me that wanted to grow. Beneath the radical mask, there was still a deep spiritual yearning; almost like a glimpse or a vision of what I could be, if only I undertook the journey.

But I couldn't...shackles were holding me back.

The wise often say that our lives are nothing but a collection of our days; *how we spend our days is how we will spend our lives.*

And so when I looked at my days, I noticed that I was spending them in distracting myself from my painful reality, that I was not actually watching anything, but simply browsing from channel to channel in order to emotionally numb myself... in order to escape my reality.

Soon, I grew frustrated with myself. Each night I went to bed feeling guilty for wasting my day...for not having grown in any way...for decaying; mentally, spiritually and physically.

Like a drug addict who tries to stop his habit, I tried to control my TV consumption by unplugging it, leaving it under my bed, covering it with a towel, or leaving the cable cord with one of my neighbors, only to beg for it a few hours later.

When all of this failed, I tossed the cable cord in the garbage, only to ingeniously create my own, out of copper wire and two staples...

It felt like an endless wrestling match. The struggle went on for months, until it all came to a head after a visit with my mother and sister...

Coming back from family visits was always devastating, but this time was different. As I lay alone on my bed, I told myself that *if I was going to spend the rest of my life away from my family, then I sure as hell will have something to show for it.*

*No way,* I told myself, as I resolutely got off my bed, placed the television on the ground, and smashed the screen with one foot, leaving it cracked and caved in.

By breaking the television, all I did was break some of the shackles that held me back from growing into the human being that I was meant to be.

Cultural commentator and critical theorist Neil Postman wrote a book aptly titled *"Amusing Ourselves to Death"*, which paints a pretty accurate picture of what modern forms of "entertainment" have done to us as individuals and as a society. *Amusing ourselves to death* is exactly what we are doing; not because we want to, but simply because we are made to. The process of our mental and spiritual enslavement began before most of us could even speak.

I believe that deep inside, we all wish to grow. That we all have a vision burnt into our souls of what we could become, if only we freed ourselves from all the chains that tie us down.

*So how sad is it then... for us to live... and then to die... without ever getting to meet... our true selves?*

**A BLACK EYE ON OUR COMMUNITY**

**By: H.B. & N.W.**

*Disclaimer: First and foremost, I acknowledge the fact that black people are not a monolith and that my view is based largely on my own experience or that of those whom shared their experience and or expertise.*

Within the black community, and to be more specific, those of us from the Caribbean, there's an unmistakable stigma attached to mental health issues. There's an unwritten rule that we don't talk about our mental health issues, especially outside of our most intimate confidants. To do otherwise is to invite ridicule, alienation, and even abuse. Fueling this blight is a dated ideology and toxic group think. Granted, other social ills plague our community, but can anyone credibly argue that untreated or ill-treated mental health issues do not play a significant role in those ills? The stakes of inaction or inadequate action are high. Admittedly extreme, but not uncommon incidence of this void are evident increasingly in police involved shootings.

Like insects hiding under a rock is an undertone within the black community. More pervasive than the trepidation towards homosexuality, with far greater ramifications than contravening the quote "no snitching" sentiment. This undertone, which reverberates in our community more like a foghorn, is the self-inflicted discrimination towards those who are afflicted with mental health issues. I find it rich when pontificators get on their soap box to the cry "discrimination in all forms", yet they overlook the proverbial "log" in their own eye. Those who would claim ignorance by no means are any better than the arrogant. Both are self interested to the detriment of the community and ultimately to themselves. For being one of the most empathetic people we sure do exercise empathy sparingly to those who are now the new "3/5 human".

Any rational person would agree that it is counter productive to shun, disparage, or mistreat someone suffering from mental health issues. Moreover, even an irrational person could agree that you can't effectively treat a problem without first acknowledging it. We can close our eyes and plug our ears but left untreated or ill treated it only metastasizes like a malignant cancer. Further compounding all of this is the dinosaur mentality of our elders. Whether it's a matter of "keeping up appearances", a lack of willingness, or just being in denial, the disservice is ours to bare. Furthermore, not only does it impact us it permeates through subsequent generations.

I don't pretend to be a mental health expert, nor can I speak for an entire race. However, being an intrinsic part of the black community affords me personal knowledge through lived and shared experiences. I suspect, to some degree, we all suffer from some form of mental illness. With the glaring absence of

real solutions, how can we even begin to tackle the root causes when we get overwhelmed by the symptoms. The symptoms of this cancer are clear, i.e. family fragmentation, erratic behavior, etc. What's obscure is "SMART" solutions (specific, measured, attainable, realistic timeframes). Until such a time we will continue to suffer in silence. All the while rubbing salt in our self-inflicted wounds.

**MENTAL HEALTH**

**By: Anonymous**

Having a mental health issue could mean many things from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Autism Spectrum Disorder or delusional disorders or anxiety disorder or Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (MTBI) or Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (C-PTSD). Those are just a few disorders, but now the trick is for the doctor seeing you to diagnose you correctly to what you have, one or more. This seems to be a big problem because these disorders affect people in different ways: physical, cognitive, emotional and behavioural. And then you have treatments and therapy and then again no two people react to the same treatment or therapy. Then once you're lucky enough to get the right diagnosis and the doctor says you need to be on disability, it will cost the government more money. So the government will want additional medical information and medical evidence of your mental disability, and then it's not documented correctly so you don't get the right treatment, so you're prescribed medication in the form of pills at the beginning but it's only temporary relief. So doctors like to try new and different treatments. I like it when they tell you "Oh this should work," or "You should be feeling this way soon." Well I don't and they say, "Are you sure?" I think I know how I feel and don't feel. Things were more manageable when I was on the street.

Doctors said the diagnosis was PTSD and ADHD and my treatments were a support animal and Prozac and I saw therapists and it took 5 or 6 therapists before I found one who I felt comfortable and safe talking with. But I couldn't sit in big groups or any group of people without my anxiety and my fear levers going up. I didn't like being in big groups, only one on one. I knew my triggers and stayed away from

them, but my brain is always scanning for dangers, and never at peace. But I found a way to be at peace but then she was gone and now I sometimes don't know if I'm coming or going.

I know I can't be the only one that is going through this or feeling this way, because I have been around for many years and see how some CSC staff treat inmates and their comments to them. But that's not all CSC staff I have met some out-right good staff and professional and law-abiding people with morals and willing to help you successfully return to the community, but they are few and far between. If you took a poll on CSC staff between 1997 to 2018, the staff tried to help and cared, and the inmates were more respectful to them because of that. But now the new generation of inmates have no respect for themselves or anyone else.

Now let's get back to mental health, myself, I'm sensitive to light and sound and some sounds make me irritable and stressed and causes ringing in my ears and headaches, but I found what works well are alternative treatments like chamomile tea, smell of lavender, pulling out my music book and guitar or keyboard and playing a little music to relax my brain, talking with a friend about cars and bikes, walks in nature. But I'm limited in jail to what I can do for my mental health or state of mind - I go to work, and spend a lot of time in my cell. I think what a lot of people don't know about PTSD or C-PTSD or other mental health issues scares them or they think no one they know could have a mental health issue. But truth be told, there are a lot of people who have mental health issues and live with them while hiding it from everyone. Why? Because they are afraid of people making fun of them.

It's very hard for them to ask for help in this day and age and society. There are computer programs and apps to help us, but we need computers and the knowledge to use them. Because in today's society the technology is rapidly changing and it's hard to keep up with. People with mental health issues always get left behind and forgotten, which makes it twice as hard. So most of us just keep to ourselves and some just give up and others of us try to fight but get lost in the system because it does not make sense to us.

--

**BELL, LET US TALK!****We demand:**

1. Free phone calls for prisoners
2. The ability for prisoners to call cell phones and switchboards
3. No more time limits on jail phone calls



## GirlTalk

By Moka Dawkins



I'm back!!! And here to give you all some exciting news. Before I share it with you, I want to give acknowledgement to my committed readers and writers. Thank you for your kind words and support, it really means a lot to me.

The topic this issue is on reintegration back into the community and this is what my exciting news is!!!! I'm out you all!!!! I'm finally back out after four long years of being in the pits of hell's gateway. Just to answer a quick basic question, the first thing I did when I went out was my people took me out and I had my long-deserved celebration I was dying for. It was great!

I got out in November 2019, time served on my manslaughter charge. Since then I've been busy continuously making sure I stay true to my word to all those who have been there supporting me through my ruffest times behind those walls. I am now working with PASAN as a harm reduction outreach worker and doing a lot of public speaking. The most recent event I spoke at was Let's Talk BELL on the 29th of January, regarding Bell's contract

with the federal and provincial prisons, since it's coming to an end.

There are your friends, family and loved ones who are out here rallying to get Bell to give you access to call cell phones and cheaper rates and bringing recognition to the struggles of your mental health and theirs due to their phone system. Know you are all loved and people you don't know, do care for you.

Coming out I didn't know what I was going to do mainly for work and how I was going to support myself. We do all these programs to get certificates to give the judge and parole board to show we are trying to change our lives. We do our part, but the government doesn't do theirs. They take taxpayers hard earned money giving the promise that they will correct our behaviour and reintegrate us back into our community to be proper working members of society. Yet the same government that makes these promises is the same ones that restricts us from accessing our full potential by not providing adequate funding to organizations that provide reintegration support. How do they expect us to survive and adapt to a highly progressive economy and produce productivity of success when the only thing they do is set us up for failure.

I want to end this article urging you all who are still incarcerated to reach out to community supports - get connected - so you can stay connected. If I didn't have the sisterhood and the support of my LGBTQ+ community, I would be even more lost. Until next time, stay strong and know you are not forgotten.

If you have any questions or comments positive or negative please write me addressed to Girl Talk at 526 Richmond Street East, Toronto Ontario, M5A 1R3

And always REMEMBER FREEDOM IS A MUST!!! NUFF LOVE

### GLADUE PROGRAM

**It's important to tell your lawyer that you are Indigenous and have the right to Gladue**

By: Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services Corporation, December 5, 2019

#### What is Gladue?

Gladue is a right for all Indigenous Peoples when their liberty is at stake in the Canadian Justice System.

Gladue promotes healing and restorative approaches. It recognizes the legacy of colonialism in Canada and that Indigenous Peoples face racism and system discrimination in the Canadian Justice System which together has resulted in a crisis of overrepresentation.

Gladue requires Justices to consider all available sanctions, other than imprisonment, that are reasonable in the circumstances, with particular attention to the unique circumstances of Indigenous Peoples.

Lawyers and justice providers work together to prepare submissions on clients' circumstances, and background, and to suggest alternatives to jail

#### How are requests made?

Requests are made using a Gladue Report Request Form.

Where possible, please attach the Crown Brief/Synopsis, CPIC, and Crown Screening Form to the Request Form.

You can get the form by contacting the Gladue Team Lead at (807) 622-1413 or toll-free 1-800-465-5581.

#### What is a Gladue Report?

Gladue Reports are prepared by Gladue Writers. They are part of the Gladue submissions made to the court.

Gladue Reports are formal written reports that detail:

- The individual's life story,
- Relevant information about their family, community, and network,
- Systemic factors that have impacted the individual's life story and brought them before the courts,
- Recommendations for alternatives to incarceration that are restorative and based in healing, culture, and language.

#### What are Gladue Recommendations?

Gladue Writers and Caseworkers work one-on-one with individuals to

### LETTER TO THE PUBLISHER

By R. Ramirez

Cell Count, I would like to say thank you for supporting me since the 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2019. Sincerely,

8 months and I am still at Shediac Jail (NB). I just finished my time in the penitentiary. Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) has detained me since. Upon my arrival to Shediac DC they placed me in solitary confinement for over 90 days. After 15 days on hunger strike the superintendent placed me in general population.

CBSA has been waiting for Cuba to give Canada a permission of travel document since 1997. I do want to come back to Cuba or other country. That's my request to CBSA, but they still keep me in jail. Unlawfully confined.

I have no communication with my family whatsoever. Whenever I request phone calls the institution never gives them to me. I explained to CBSA that I have members of my family in the hospital in a coma. They ignored that.

The government of Canada has criticized the Chinese government over violation of human rights against 2 Canadian citizens detained by Chinese officials. But the government of Ottawa, they have been doing the same thing to me and many other people in jail.

For the past 8 months I have sleeping in a cell with a light over my face 24/7. Because of that I have been suffering from sleep deprivation. My food is being denied to me and much more. This is torture, mentally and physically.

I have sent more than 40 letters to the House of Commons in Ottawa to members of Parliament to end this kind of practice against minorities and people in immigration jail.

I consider myself a political prisoner inside of a Canadian prison.

These members of Parliament refuse to answer our phone calls: PM Justin Trudeau (613) 992-4211 (Direct Line), the Honourable Ahmed Hussen, the Honourable Ralph Goodale, and the Honourable Carl Urquhart (MP of

develop recommendations that are included in the Gladue Report.

Gladue Recommendations are real, achievable, and personalized to suit the individual.

#### Is it true that....

- Gladue is a "get-out-of-jail-free card"? No, suitable sentencing alternatives that are restorative and based in healing are proposed to the court. The court makes a decision in line with principles of law, including considering the harm caused, safety concerns, the need for deterrence and more.

- Gladue is only available at the sentencing stage? No, Gladue is available anytime an Indigenous person's liberty is at stake, including: at bail, after a finding or plea of guilt, at parole hearings, and more. Contact your lawyer or NALSC for more information.

- Individuals can "waive their Gladue rights"? No, an individual can decline to have a Gladue Report prepared, but the court must still consider

NB). 0% answer.

Catastrophe era with no end. I thank the reader and Cell Count for their time.

## PEAK FALL 2020 GRIEF AND LOSS CALL-OUT

Hello Cell Count! This is Aanya Wood writing, the previous Federal Coordinator putting a little blurb to say I miss and think of so many of you often and I hope that you are finding peace and community in whatever situation you may find yourself in while reading this issue. I'm also writing to ask for your help! I am editing (along with Moka Dawkins, the Cell Count contributor behind Girl Talk) an issue of a big magazine that comes out of Guelph but also goes nationwide. We've "taken over" this magazine for the fall issue and are making it about "Grief and Loss". We want to center the voices and artistry of incarcerated people so if you have something you could submit, we will try our best to feature it! Art, poetry, articles, anything is accepted and we want people to really push readers to think about grief beyond just mourning someone who has passed, but to think about how we grieve our communities, our health, our lands, waters, medicines, and teachings, and our freedom, etc.

Have an idea? Send it by July 15, 2020 to Aanya Wood % Peak Magazine, University of Guelph, University Centre, Room 258, Guelph, ON N1G 2W1. If you have an idea but want someone to look over your thoughts or to correspond and brainstorm with, I will do that with you! Just write me at the address above or let the lovely Cell Count editors know and I will do what I can to support you! I've made the deadline far away in case folks on the inside may want to correspond about their pieces. There is also a modest compensation for contributing, which I am working with the magazine on how to get to our friends who are on the inside. Thank you, Nia'wen and Miigwetch to you all for everything you do and have done for me, I pray every day for all of your well-being and freedom and send you all the power I can.

"Gladue factors" in its decision-making process.

- Gladue is only available to "on-reserve" and "status" Indigenous Peoples? No, Gladue is available to all persons who self-identify as Indigenous.

- Gladue Reports are the same as Pre-sentence reports? No, pre-sentence reports are risk-based analyses prepared by probation officers. Gladue Writers are community members who outline the unique circumstances of the Indigenous person and provide suitable alternatives to jail

#### Contact Information

THUNDER BAY: 1805 Arthur St E  
Thunder Bay, Ontario P7E 2R6

TIMMINS: 119 Pine St S, Suite 210  
Timmins, ON P4N 2K3

SIoux LOOKOUT: 37 Front St, Sioux  
Lookout, ON P8T 1A5

KENORA: 308 Second St S, Suite 14  
Kenora, ON P9N 1G4

Please call Toll-free: 1-800-465-5581,  
Phone: (807) 622-1413 for our info.

BILLY JOHN FRANCIS WHITEDEER

**I WANT TO SHOW MY FEELINGS**

I want to show my feelings by smiling;  
Even though I am not happy.  
I want to show you my fears, but I am  
scared; Because I might be laughed  
at!

I made mistakes that hurt me,  
When I tell you, you might reject me,  
There are things that happened to  
me. This causes my heart to ache.

My life is empty  
I want to tell you my pain...

My anger  
My frustration...  
When my tears fall down, Help me get  
up;  
When I see only darkness, Help me to  
see the light.

There are many voices, In many direc-  
tions, That affect me still,  
I am torn apart.

There is a fork in the trail I have a  
choice to make;

So I need you to stand by me, To  
choose the right path.

**TO CATCH A DREAM**

I plunged into black rivers For dream  
leopards

And crush them With my hands;  
I leap their crimson flow  
Of blood with a tongue of gold And  
comb the ivory wavelets With my hair.

I speak quenching words  
Of dreams filling from the distant  
Autumn sky

And see leopards lying Upon the riv-  
erbank Their tails dripping

With the red trueness of death  
I have hungered all my life For the  
wonder

Of dreams maturing  
And traversing beneath my touch And  
made that pilgrimage  
Again and again

Though actually it is not enough The  
older I get, the more difficult It is to  
catch the long years of Nightfall.

**IN THE SUNLIGHT**

In the sunlight  
The pool of light is very bright Silver  
And all that lie beneath The surface  
Is hidden

But when the sky  
Is darkened by a cloud  
The reflection fades and one can see  
with dreadful Clarity  
The fears and depths below.

Can it be  
That all the beauty in life Is but a but a  
reflection On the surface.  
In the sunlight.

BRANDON CÔTÉ

**Making it to the top**

This world is full of so much cruelty  
My happiness I'll not let the cruel  
world see

If I could ask for help from up above  
I'd ask God to fill everyone with love!  
And as we try to make it to the top,  
The people who surround us make us  
drop

As I sit in my cell pouring out my heart  
I know this is only just the start.  
I hate that we're so far apart, but  
we're close together at heart.  
Pretty soon we will be together,  
I'm not locked up in this hell forever.  
To the Cons who are locked up,  
Hold your head high and don't give

up!  
We live in so much poverty...

People fuck others sobriety  
This world makes me fucking sick  
But your friends you can pick.

The bad people you keep around  
Are the people who will bring you  
down

So if you wanna make it to the top,  
Let haters hate and don't stop!

**At Rest**

As I sit here trying to make time pass  
I know soon we will be together, and  
alone at last!

I love you so much I hope you know  
And I mean it when I say I'll never let  
you go!

You're soon gonna be my beautiful  
bride

I will always keep you by my side!  
We will get the kids on the right track,  
They will listen, when we have each  
other's back!

I will be kind to them, and firm and  
fair...

I will show them I love them, and that  
daddy cares!

I know you're going through a tough  
time

I'm away from you cause of my crime!  
When I'm out everything will be fine...

Cause I have you my wonderful di-  
vine!

You're gonna be my newly wed!

On that day tears will be shed  
With each other we're truly blessed

So don't you ever second guess!

You are no doubt the very best!

You will always beat inside my chest...  
And with you my heart's finally at rest!

MICHAEL HECTOR

**The Race**

There was a time when what I did  
Had the consideration of others on a  
shelf

Now all that I do  
Will be for those who are not myself  
Selfless is not the goal

For we are all in this together  
When any of us has shelter  
We can all get through the weather.

Some would have you think  
Nice guys will always finish last  
But when you consider the end, it will  
be nice

To help those you would otherwise  
have past

Don't ever listen to the noise  
Some words are meant to cause a  
mess

Let no person tell you or make you  
think

You could ever be less.

We all want to finish  
It shouldn't matter in what place

When you think about it fully  
We are all part of the human race.

STEVEN W. ZEHR

**Especially for You**

Far too long have we been apart  
Throughout the eons we've shed  
many a tear

Together at last with visions of a fresh  
start

Partner, best friend, soulmate and  
peer

Hand in hand, side by side, we'll  
show'em

That we would meet, I always knew

For it is your love that released this  
poem  
From my heart penned especially for  
you.

HMR 14

**Do Not**

Do not skip our Christmas meal,  
My heart is yours, no one can steal.  
I am away behind these walls,

But love you still, with all my calls.  
Of the hope, and dreams, that fight  
off fear,

Your love's my strength, you shield  
me dear.

So do not cry while I send this kiss,  
For you my love, I'll always miss,

Do not look under the Christmas tree,  
For your present there, for soon you'll  
see,

There is no box or bag or wrap  
With things asked for from Santa's  
lap.

Of the gifts for you I wish to show,  
Would be my heart, in a giant bow.  
So do not cry while I send this kiss,  
For you my love, I'll always miss.

"THE SUNDANCE KID" PATRICK J.M. DOWDELL

**Cannot Erase**

It's time to put on your poker face,  
Cause the Sundance kid just scored  
us an ace.

You run around sticking up every  
place,

You have to remember this cannot be  
erased.

You have already said "you won't  
come back to this place."

Which leaves only one option, best  
clear that head space.

Guns have been drawn, sucked in like  
chess pawns.

Will this be the end? Or will I emerge  
at dawn!?

**Which Way Will You Go?**

They call him the Blue-Eyed Bandit,  
With more than one plan to avoid  
being stranded.

He asks himself is that really the case,  
Deep down he knows what he has to  
fake.

What happened Blue Eyed Bandit isn't  
your life in control?

Or just a joke of an attempt to stay  
out of that hole.

What's it going to take to make some  
serious changes?

Another ten years wasted on fucking  
ranges!?

It's not fair what you do, to those you  
love and respect.

It's time to make sudden changes, or  
you know what to expect.

CHRIS BARNES

**Untitled**

The beginning or is it the end  
Definitely the enemy not the friend  
Time's ticking inside the cage  
Growing more mental as you age

D. HORNE

**It Wasn't Me**

Mother dear mother it wasn't me!  
Don't believe the headline, in that  
newspaper

That you read.

It wasn't me who shot that bank teller

as I robbed her  
And made her bleed.

My lady & sweetest lover  
Who has pleased my every need  
To you I'd never do that dirty, dastard-  
ly deed.

Of fucking all your girlfriends & plant-  
ing all my seeds.

Hey Judge, Judge b4 you pass sen-  
tence down on me.

Please listen to my not guilty plea.  
It wasn't my foolish drunkenness, or  
all that reckless speed.

When I pinned that family's minivan  
To that maple tree.

Hey warden, it wasn't me  
I didn't pipe & stab that guard, when I  
jumped the fence to flee.

Don't you know I like it here,  
I don't ever want to be free.

St. Peters, St. Pete. You know it wasn't  
me!

Don't condemn, just let me in,  
I'll pay you & get on my knees.

Honest lie, cheat & steal  
Never possessed this soul in me.

Son! Son! Wake up! It's Lucifer look  
and see!

It's time I told the truth,  
So listen and take heed!

You've gone & eaten every meal,  
My sinful hands could feed!

Through all your life of torment  
It was I whom took the lead!

Tis it's true, it was never you!  
The only guilty one was me!

**Bi-Polar**

They sneak up from behind me  
At the start of my ground hog day  
My personal space is loudly replaced  
By the venomous word they quietly  
say.

"You're worthless & weak, feral and  
not free"

"We'll help you escape, from your  
poor mental state"

So I let them in to medicate me.  
They said "You're morally twisted,  
And you're thinking is wrong."

"You're too ill to write good poetry,  
Or any meaningful songs"

"You're to blame, for your family's  
shame.

This we'll make you see."

"We'll change all the rules to keep you  
in school"

So I let them in to re-educate me.  
But as I was constantly ordered to  
quietly listen,

To sit and listen quietly to constant  
orders.

The stronger I became to handle my  
dis-order.

They all scratched at their heads  
Like old hound dogs with new fleas.

So I let them in on a secret:  
You underestimated me!

VICTORIA KENNY

**Quotes**

"I used to believe that marriage would  
diminish me, reduce my options. That  
you had to be someone less when,  
of course, you have to be someone  
more!" - Candice Bergen

"My importance to the world is rela-  
tively small. On the other hand, my  
importance to myself is tremendous.

Continued on pg. 12...

**Kenny continued from pg. 11...**

I am all I have to work with, to play with, to suffer, and to enjoy. It is not the eyes of others that I am wary of, but of my own. I do not intend to let myself down more than I can possibly help, and I find that the few illusions I have about myself or the world around me, the better company I am for myself!"

- Noel Coward

"A person can only become a burden when love is no longer the motive!"

- Shan Stein

"Wise men change, fools remain the same!"

- Kevin Gates

"Pain is inevitable, suffering is optional."- MK Casey

**ALAM HAI****The Revolution will not be Televised - Dedicated to Gil Scott-Heron**  
The Revolution will not be Televised...

I said the Revolution will not be Televised... it won't come down from The Cloud. Be Tweeted out on Twitter. Posted up on Facebook. Given a Dot-Com address. Put on Instagram, WhatsApp? Live streamed via satellite, or on an e-mail blast...

The Revolution will not be on the 11:00 o'clock news. Shown on a National Cable Affiliate. Brought to you Without Commercial Interruption. In a slow-motion replay, on TSNs' plays of the week...

The Revolution will not be a dial-up connection. Faxed over the phone. It will not be a message left after the beep. It will not be a code on a pager. Sold on 8-track cassette. Made available on VHS or a Betamax film...

The Revolution will not be Televised...

The Revolution will not see Africans stolen from the Motherland & brought to the Americas chained in the bellies of slave ships.

The Revolution will not see African families forever separated because of the vanity of hatred & greed.

The Revolution will not see Africans bred for their strength. Their babies sold in the Market Square at Auction to the Highest Bidder.

The Revolution will not see Lavar Burton playing a runaway slave, whipped into submission & given the slave name Toby. His name was not Toby! It was Kunta Kinte! He was the son of Omoro & Binta Kinte & they lived in Juffaray on the Gambi Bolongo.

The Revolution will not see a Young Nat Turner preaching a warped interpretation of 'The Word' to deceive slaves into obedience.

The Revolution will not see Harriet Tubman's Underground Railroad, sold for tickets, as a Hollywood feature film, that is just *way too late!*

The Revolution will not see Blood Diamonds worn on the fingers of Aristocrats, while Africans are burned alive for *these stones in the ground.* The Revolution will not hear slaves on plantations singing out in the night...

"Wade in the Water. Wade in the Water Children.

Wade in the Water. God Gonna Still the Waters.

Wade in the Water. Wade in the Water Children.

Wade in the Water. God Gonna Still the Waters."

The Revolution will Not be Televised...

The Revolution will not see a hypocritical emancipation of slavery with the exception of the 13th amendment. Creating a new form of slavery in the American Prison Industrial Complex.

The Revolution will no longer see our freedom fighters like H-Rap Brown, Ghandi, George Jackson, Eldridge Cleaver, & Nelson Mandela unjustly imprisoned.

The Revolution will not see de-facto segregation, coloured washrooms & blacks relegated to the back of the bus, or women pulling their purses closer in to them while a black man passes by them in the street.

The Revolution will not see Sister Rosa, Malcolm X & Dr. King, spoken only in terms of endearment, without the legacies they left behind for us to be attained.

The Revolution will not see the dominant society write the *His-Story* books, while our historians are lost to the sands of time...

The Revolution will not see the separation of black churches & white churches. The Revolution will see us United in God, proclaiming...

*God is Good! All the Time! All the Time!*

*God is Good! All the Time! All the Time!*

The Revolution will not be Televised...

The revolution will not hear black men crying out that they can't breathe - [Gasp] - while being choked to death. Young black men will not be innocently shot for merely wearing a hoodie & young black boys will not be shot in the playground for having a toy gun, while playing cops & robbers.

The Revolution will not have an orange-skinned president Tweeting out racist rants at 3:00 am, drunk on 12-year-old scotch.

The Revolution will not have a disproportionate number of minorities imprisoned for being darker than a brown paper bag.

The Revolution will not see walls built on borders while children are separated from their families. The Revolution will not see young black men staring down the barrel of a gun yelling out...

HANDS UP! DON'T SHOOT!

HANDS UP! DON'T SHOOT!

HANDS UP! DON'T SHOOT!

HANDS UP! DON'T SHOOT!

The Revolution will not be Televised...

The Revolution will not again see the oppression & slavery of Indigenous & African Peoples for over 600 years & the continued *systematic* oppression we have witnessed until this very day.

The Revolution will not see young Native boys & girls stripped of their identity, culture, language, creed & self-respect in residential schools. Abused by men & women whose *mission* was to strip them of their sense of spirituality in *The Creator*.

The Revolution will not see the Gov-

ernment Sanctioned systematic annihilation of cultures through forced Colonization and assimilation.

*We are Borg! Resistance is Futile! You Will Be Assimilated!*

The Revolution will not see the Indigenous peoples of these lands overrepresented in mental health facilities & prison populations.

The Revolution will not see hundreds of Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women. Their stories lost on a highway of tears, behind the mask called Truth & Reconciliation.

The Revolution will not see the lack of honoring the land of the Anishnawbe & Haudenosaunee People upon which we stand...

We Honor You & Your Ancestors.

The Revolution will not see the under-serving & over-policing of reservations & ghettos, while men & women of power build pipelines & get rich off the destruction of Native lands.

The Revolution will hear the cries of the People from all First Nations across Turtle Island yelling out ----

FREEDOM!!!The Revolution will not be Televised...

The Revolution will not see governments perpetrating ethnic cleansing & genocide in Rwanda, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, South Africa, Bosnia, China, Myanmar, Palestine, Syria, Kashmir, & wherever one group of people sees itself as superior to the others because of race, colour or creed.

The Revolution will never again see the horrific incineration of over 6,000,000 Jews in internment camps in Nazi Germany or the death & displacement of over 13,000,000 Palestinians. Kept out of the lands of their heritage behind a wall as third-class citizens.

The Revolution will not see the War on Terror used as a way to further over-police minority communities, & shadow racism.

The Revolution will not see the oppressive control of global economies, via sweatshop workers & the financial oppression of poor peoples of colour for the enrichment of the 1%.

The Revolution will not see innocent parishioners shot down in their Mosques, Churches, Synagogues, Temples & places of worship while praising their Lord.

The Revolution will not see 6-year-old Ella shattered & traumatized from a bomb blast. A young boy covered in blood, shell shocked in the back of an ambulance, or the bodies of fleeing refugee children washed up dead on the shore.

The Revolution will hear us greeting each other with the eternal greetings of Peace...

As-Salaam-Alaikum - Wa-Alaikum-Salaam

The Revolution will...

The Revolution will see the Righteous, Poor & Downtrodden, extending the Olive branch of Peace with *Salaam & Shalom.*

The Revolution will see us Praying for our Enemies & building bridges instead of walls.

The Revolution will see Dr. Kings dream, become the reality of a man being judged not by the colour of his

skin, but by the content of his character.

The Revolution will see hands banded together around the world in the Unity of The Creator.

The Revolution will see an end to the class divide, to sickness, hunger & homelessness.

The Revolution starts with knowing your past, understanding your present condition, & educating yourself for a better & more enlightened future.

The Revolution will see a global shift, of a raised collective consciousness, awakened in the minds of the poor, oppressed, imprisoned & downtrodden.

The Revolution will not see the mistakes of our past become the mistakes of our future.

The Revolution will ensure the protection of the waters that flow through Turtle Island & the respect of Mother Earth. That she not be raped & pillaged for commercial greed & that all people take their rightful place to care for each other - ALL MY RELATIONS... The Revolution will see an end to War.

The Revolution will finally see Dr. Kings dream come to fruition, when we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, Black people & White people, Brown people & Red People, Olive Skinned & Yellow, will be able to join hands & sing in the words of that old negro spiritual...

FREE AT LAST! FREE AT LAST!  
THANK GOD ALMIGHTY! WE ARE FREE AT LAST

**OBITUARIES****JUDY**

I'd like to start by saying that this obituary could never do Judy Thompson and her legacy true justice. Some of you reading this may have heard that Judy Thompson passed away in January. Judy Thompson spent practically her entire adult life in the federal prison system. Before coming out as transgender in her 50s she was incarcerated in almost every men's institution in Ontario (including KP) and - much like all of you reading this - is a part of the living legacy of the Prisoner Justice movement in Canada. Judy was one of the first transgender women to be placed in a women's institution after a brief stint on road. Judy was loved and respected by many, and her presence was unignorable. Judy was my friend, my sister, my mentor and so much more. I'm grateful to have met her, and grateful that she is no longer in pain, and while I wish that our friendship could have continued outside prison walls, I know she felt truly free in her last few days. I'd like to end with a quote from Judy's interview with CBC after her release on parole several years ago:

"I'm happy as hell for a change so if hell is happy, I'm happy.

Fly high Judy, I will miss you and be grateful for you every day.

Until we are all free,

Aanya Wood

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*Illustration by Jeremy Hall*



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Illustration by Ya Boy FTP



Illustration by JT Sha'Oulle

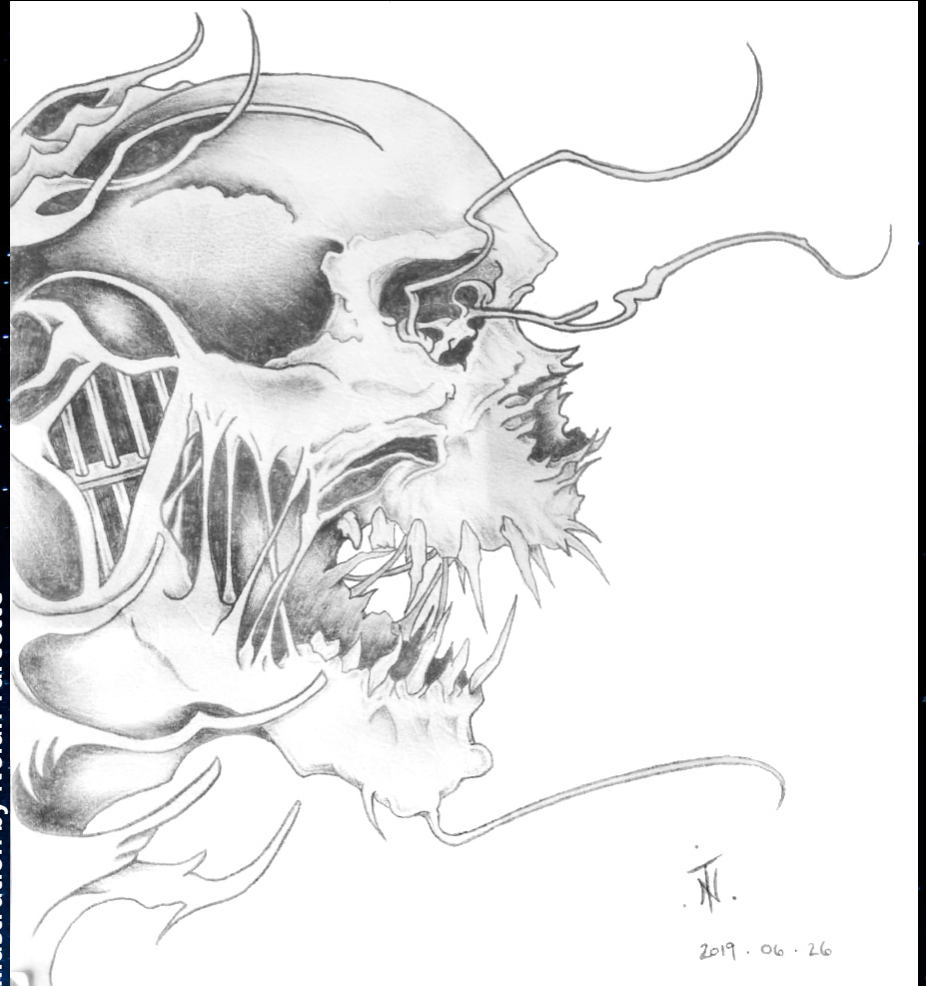


Illustration by Nolan Turcotte

Illustration by D.W.

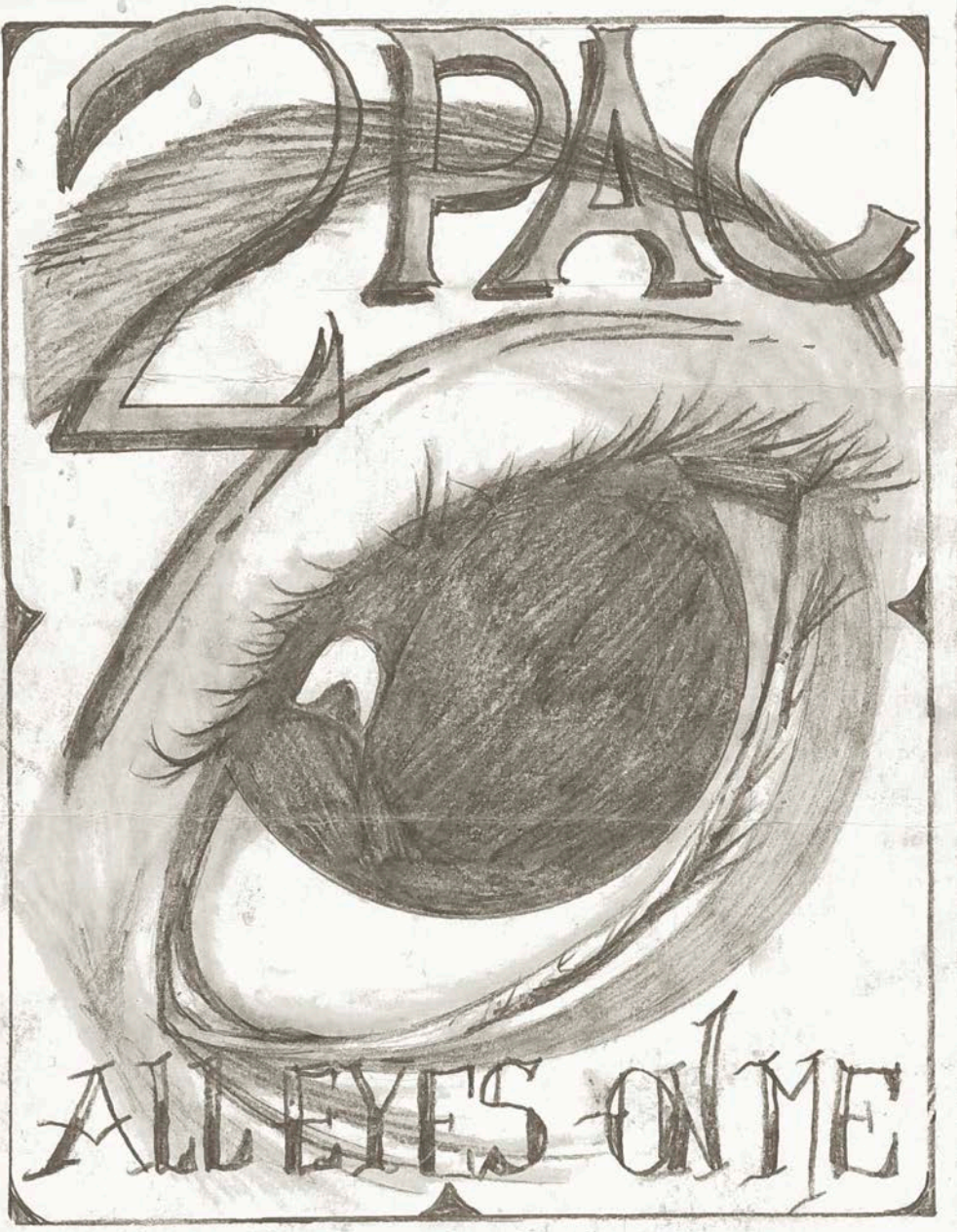


Illustration by D. Horne

