

TODAY IS PRISONER'S JUSTICE DAY; HERE'S WHAT IT MEANS TO ME

August 10th, 2020 by anonymous former provincial prisoner (forwarded to Cell Count by Forgotten Warrior: "Friend, somehow, some way I got blessed with these articlez concerning Aug 10th. So I don't know if you have these, so Imma send on 2 ya 4 this upcoming PJD, remind those why we have what we have because of those be 4 us. Anywayz please keep shit real and Imma keep these motherfuckerz in check in this here shithole.")

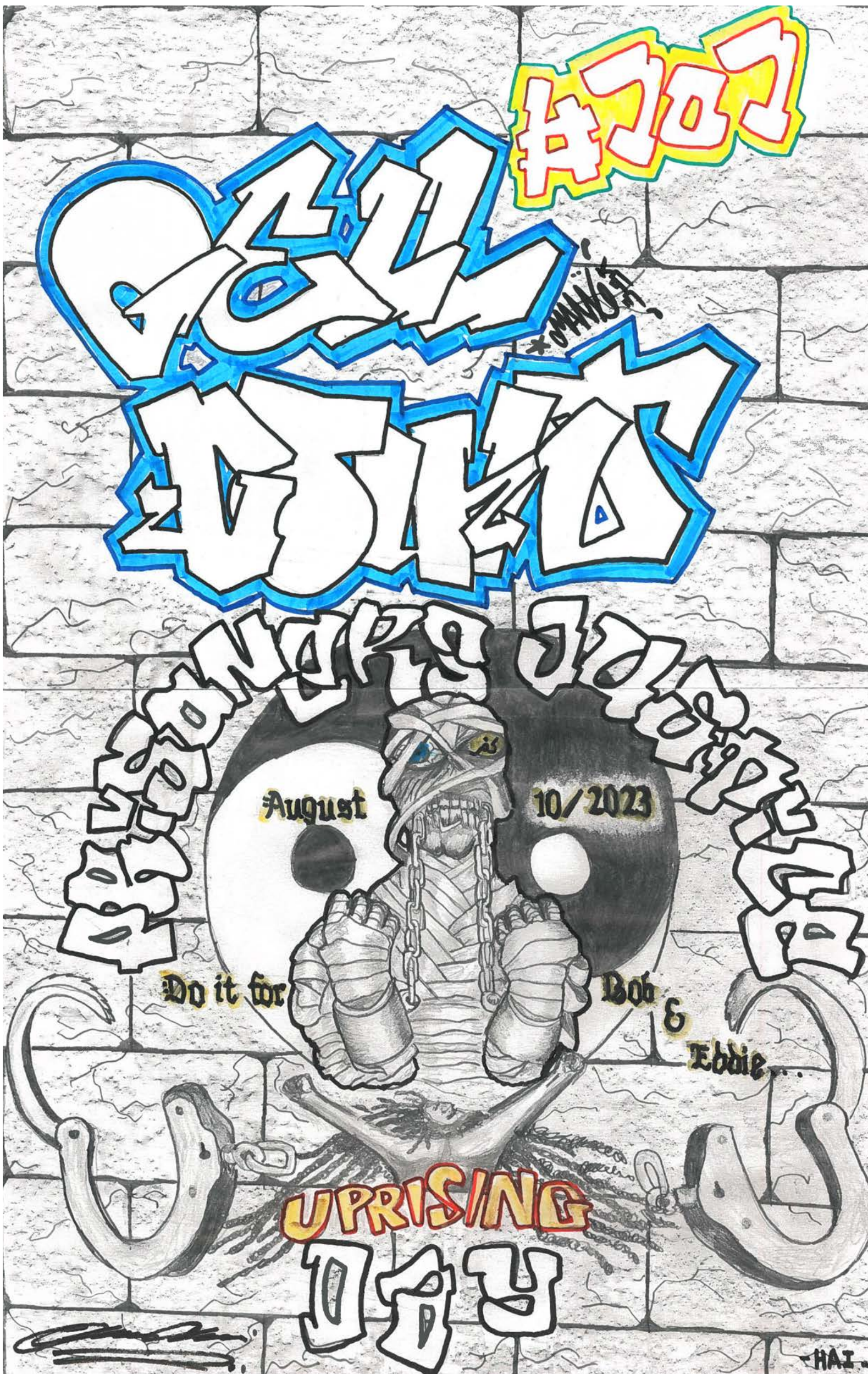
August 10, is Prisoner's Justice Day. I got my first real lesson on Prisoner's Justice Day in Millhaven Institution when I was incarcerated there in the early 2000s. I had been around in some provincial jails on August 10s before that, but it was just a day when you didn't eat the food and I didn't really know why. Someone told me once, "It's for the guys who fought to get us TVs on the range and things like that."

In Millhaven, I had a chance to hear about the history of PJD from a couple of lifers there. They told me about how bad the conditions used to be in Canadian prisons: about the way prisoners were treated by the guards, and specifically about how a lifer named Ed Nalon died in a segregation cell there in Millhaven in 1974. A group of cons got together the next year on the anniversary of that day, August 10, and held a 24-hour hunger strike to protest and remember Eddie's death as well as all the other men and women who died and fought and sacrificed for better conditions in our jails and prisons.

That struck a chord with me having experienced segregation myself and having had guys I knew who never made it out of jail alive. But as much as I was down for the cause every year I was in jail on August 10, every time I got out, I just wanted to forget about the shit that happened to me and others on the inside. Until recently, when I realized that I never did forget any of those things. All I did was try to block them out with drugs and alcohol and by hurting other people and myself. I hope that by telling my story I can help somebody going through the same things and worse right now.

I'll tell a couple of stories about things that happened to me in jail. I don't have to think back very far to think of some that are relevant. Some months ago, I was in [a Nova Scotia provincial jail] on remand one day when the captains were doing their rounds. In the morning I got into an

cont'd on pg 6



INSIDE THE PJD 2023 ISSUE	PASAN	2
	Health & harm redux	3-4
	News on the Block	5
	Prisoners Justice Day	6
	Features	7
	Art Centrefold	8-9
	Writings on the Wall	10-11
	Beyond the Walls	12-13
	From Inside	14
	Bulletin Board	15
Resources	16	

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

As we approach Prisoners' Justice Day, I write to you from a prison abolitionist perspective, to reflect on the profound significance of this day and to stand in solidarity with all those who are incarcerated. In the pursuit of justice and true liberation, we must question the very existence of the current prison system and envision alternative paths towards healing and societal transformation.

Prisoners' Justice Day, observed on August 10th each year, serves as a stark reminder of the injustices perpetuated by the prison-industrial complex. It is a day to honour and remember the lives that have been lost and the dignity that has been stripped away within the walls of these oppressive institutions. We must acknowledge that prisons have failed to create a safer society or address the root causes of harm.

For too long, our society has been conditioned to believe that punitive measures are the only solution to addressing harm. However, this approach has only led to the perpetuation of violence and dehumanization of those who find themselves caught in this cycle. As an abolitionist, I firmly believe that punishment does not equate to justice, and the transformation of individuals and communities can only be achieved through a restorative and transformative lens.

It is essential to recognize the inherent humanity and potential for growth within every human being, regardless of their actions in the past. Prison abolitionists advocate for a focus on rehabilitation, education, and community support as means to heal and reintegrate individuals back into society. By addressing the root causes of harm, such as wealth inequality, systemic oppression, colonialism, anti-Black racism, bad drug policies and lack of access to resources, we can begin to build a more equitable world for everyone.

On this day, let us recommit ourselves to the fight against the prison-industrial complex and all forms of institutionalized violence. Let us engage in dialogue that challenges the status quo and imagines a future without prisons, where communities can come together to address harm in transformative and non-punitive ways.

As a publication, we pledge to elevate the voices of those directly impacted by the prison system. We will continue to share stories that highlight the urgent need for change and advocate for alternatives that prioritize compassion, empathy, restoration and transformation.

To our readers on the inside, we see you and we hear you. Your experiences are not forgotten, and your call for liberation resonates deeply within our hearts. We will continue to be by your side as we collectively work towards dismantling the oppressive structures that confine and dehumanize you.

In solidarity with prisoners, we envision a world where true justice prevails—one that fosters healing, reconciliation, and the well-being of all its members.

With hope for a better future,
Sena Hussain
Lead Editor
Cell Count

HEPATITIS C IN ONTARIO

Forward by Oliva Gemma

People with prison experience are among one of six priority populations in the fight to eliminate hepatitis C in Canada. It's reported that approximately one in nine prisoners have had a hepatitis C infection during their lifetime. Recommendations are to provide universal hepatitis C testing in prisons, as well as treatment and linkage to care in community. Below you can review a short factsheet that clearly outlines prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. If you have any further questions, our new Hepatitis C Coordinator, Chance, would be more than happy to chat. Please dial extension 230 to get a hold of him.

More than 110,000 Ontarians are living with hepatitis C, a leading cause of death and illness from an infectious disease.

Prevention

Hepatitis C is an infection of the liver caused by the hepatitis C virus. It is passed from person to person through blood-to-blood contact. If left untreated, chronic hepatitis C infection can cause serious liver injury over time, which may lead to liver failure and liver cancer. Ontario currently funds a number of prevention initiatives across the province, including an established harm reduction distribution program for new drug use equipment.

Continued investment in harm reduction programs is crucial to preventing new hepatitis C cases among people who use drugs. This includes widespread access to new drug use equipment, including in smaller communities and in prisons. Testing and diagnosis
It is estimated that one in three Ontarians living with hepatitis C are unaware of their infection. The only way to know if a person has hepatitis C is through testing. Standard testing in Ontario requires two separate blood tests that are sent from a

clinic to a central testing laboratory. Testing can take several weeks and requires at least two appointments. Newer testing approaches can streamline diagnosis.

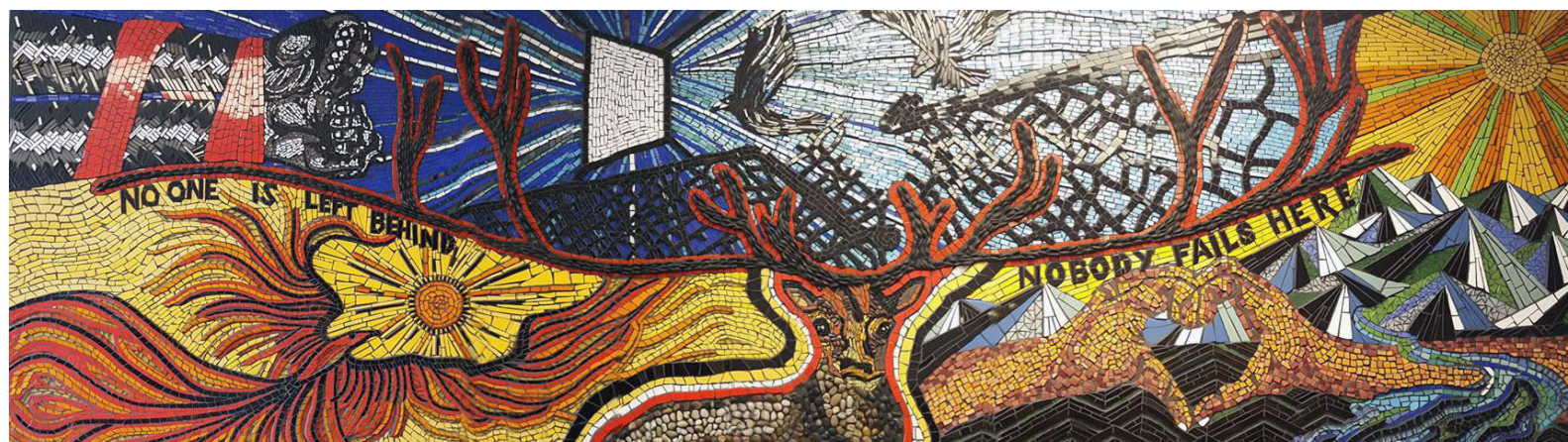
Funding point-of-care and dried blood spot testing can expand access to simplified testing in community or nonclinical settings, including for people with difficult vein access or who live in rural areas. Reflex testing, where the second diagnostic test is done automatically, can dramatically shorten the time for diagnosis, enabling people to be linked to treatment more quickly and reducing the likelihood that they will fall out of care.

One-time, universal testing as part of routine healthcare can find people who are undiagnosed. Universal testing can reduce the stigma associated with hepatitis C and is cost effective compared with the burden of the long-term health impacts of hepatitis C infection. Publicizing universal testing can help raise awareness of hepatitis C among the public and their providers.

Treatment

Modern treatments for hepatitis C are highly elective and cure over 95% of people with hepatitis C. These treatments are elective for everyone living with hepatitis C, including people who use drugs. Treatment is covered for most people in Ontario through public insurance plans. Primary care providers are key to expanding access to hepatitis C treatment. With adequate training and supports, physicians and nurse practitioners can prescribe treatment.

Other providers, like nurses, can oversee most aspects of care during treatment. Hepatitis C care can be integrated into existing services and delivered by familiar, trusted providers. This includes providers working in primary care settings and pop-up clinics or in partnerships with other health and social services accessed by people most affected by hepatitis C.



PASAN is a community-based harm reduction/HIV/HCV organization that provides support, education and advocacy to prisoners and ex-prisoners. PASAN formed in 1991 as a grassroots response to the HIV crisis in the Canadian prison system. We strive to provide community development, education and support to prisoners and ex-prisoners in Ontario on HIV, Hepatitis C (HCV), overdose prevention and other harm reduction issues. Today, PASAN is the only community-based organization in Canada exclusively providing HIV and HCV prevention, education and support services to prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families.

SUPPORT SERVICES

- Individual support, informal coun-

selling, case management, pre-release planning, and referrals for those in custody living with HIV and/or HCV

- We assist our clients in accessing adequate medical care and support while incarcerated
- You can reach us via our toll free number at 1-866-224-9978. If you can't get through to us from our toll-free number, we also accept collect calls from prisoners across Canada at 416-920-9567, but we prefer people use our toll-free number
- Provide ongoing support, community development, resources and training for community groups across Ontario.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

- Conducts HIV/HCV and harm reduction workshops inside many of the provincial and federal adult institutions in Ontario
- Produces a newsletter, Cell Count, which contains article, poetry and art produced by current and ex-prisoners
- Facilitates Prison Life 101, HIV/HCV

prevention and harm reduction/overdose prevention trainings for agencies working with prison populations

- Assist agencies to start prison in-reach and support and act as a referral "hub" for HIV/HCV positive prisoners who are transferred from one region to another, to ensure continuity of support
- Peer health/harm reduction workers where ex-prisoners assist those who are currently incarcerated, about to be released, or already released to get medical and health needs met.

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ONTARIO JAIL STAFF EXEMPT FROM CONTRABAND SCANNING AS INMATE OVERDOSE DEATHS RISE: REPORT

By Abby O'Brien, CTV News Toronto

Acute drug toxicity is the major contributing factor in the deaths of Ontario inmates in recent years, yet provincial correctional employees are exempt from regular security screenings for contraband – a policy researchers said they were ‘shocked’ to discover while crafting a January coroner’s report.

The findings are outlined in the January report entitled ‘An Obligation to Prevent,’ authored by a team of researchers made up of academics, healthcare professionals, correctional staff, government officials, and people with lived experience in custody.

“No person should gain access to any secure area of these facilities that hasn’t been properly screened for contraband,” Norm Taylor, panel moderator and lead writer for the report, told CTV News Toronto Wednesday. “Unless [the government] adopts that decision, you’re putting people in harm’s way.”

Not only does an absence of the most stringent screening measures put inmates in direct harm, but places staff at “great risk for extortion and duress,” the panel wrote.

While the province says it has made “considerable progress” to combat contraband, including the implementation of randomized staff screenings and ion detection tools, the report found that drugs continue to make their way into facilities across the province “at an alarming rate.”

“We know it’s an imperfect world,” Taylor said. “There’s always going to be ways that people circumvent security procedures, but in our view, the situation is critical enough, [the government] should be putting in as rigorous a policy as possible to ensure that no unprescribed medications are getting to people in custody.”

Correctional staff who choose to smuggle in contraband likely represent a small fraction of Ontario correctional officers and are by no means the only route for illicit drugs to enter prisons — they can be brought in by individuals entering custody, visitors and visiting professionals such as lawyers, and drones, among other avenues, the report states.

Nonetheless, as the “most frequent” in-bound line, screening “must surely be expanded to all staff to the extent possible,” the panel suggested in January.

However, three months after the report’s release and subsequent recommendations, searches are still being implemented on a randomized basis in Ontario jails, the Ministry of the Solicitor General, which oversees Ontario’s carceral operations, told CTV News Toronto.

When asked this week if staff screening measures have been expanded as per the report’s request, the ministry said “processes [are] in place to randomly select staff to search when entering the secure part of the correctional institution.” The ministry did not provide a direct response when asked if it had plans to expand screenings to staff.

“The Ministry continues to do everything possible to prevent deaths in custody,” spokesperson Greg Flood said in a statement. “A great deal of work has been underway to address many of the issues outlined in [the coroner’s report].”

As part of its Contraband Strategy and Action Plan, introduced in 2021, the ministry said it has implemented ion scanners – meant to detect trace elements of drugs – and contraband cell phone detectors, alongside existing measures such as body

scanners, hand-held and walk-through metal detectors, searches, and canine units, to security protocols. It didn’t specify how often these measures are implemented, to whom, or whether they were mandatory for all.

The authors of the report said they question the effectiveness of these tools and the levels of willingness among staff to implement them.

The panel said they noted “astonishing levels of non-compliance” among staff, and “were left to wonder [...] if perhaps too many of the policies cited are out of step with operational realities.”

When reached for comment, the Ontario Public Service Employee Union said it was unable to comment on search operations, “as that particular policy is currently before the Grievance Settlement Board.”

Spokesperson Janet Laverty said the coroner’s report echoes what the correctional bargaining unit has been saying “for years,” that there is a crisis in corrections.

“The report identifies that policies are out of step with operational realities; that contraband continues to enter our institutions with the inmates on admit/return from court, despite the additional contraband detection strategies already in place; and that there are significant gaps in training for frontline staff, particularly around mental health and addiction issues,” Laverty said.

“Preventing deaths in custody cannot be accomplished by focusing on one recommendation, but rather, it requires the Ministry to action all of the recommendations made by the review panel.

People who enter custody surrender almost all autonomy and, in doing so, they and their families must be able to expect that those who assume that control will protect them from harm, the report states.

Families like those of Angela Vos, a Tiny Township resident who lost her 26-year-old while in custody in 2020.

“I believed they could help my son,” Vos told CTV News Toronto Thursday. Vos said Jordan struggled with addiction for months before entering the system in 2020, which she hoped might provide him with the structure and oversight to withdraw.

Instead, Jordan died of a fatal overdose within days of incarceration at a Lindsay, Ont. jail.

“I was, I am devastated,” Vos said. “I had literally been screaming for help for him.”

In the three years since Jordan’s death, Vos has continued to advocate for inmate safety and wellness. She’s currently seeking more than \$1 million in damages from the province and two unnamed doctors and is still awaiting an official inquest into the circumstances of her son’s death.

“[People in jail] are not safe – I had that delusion too – but they are exposed to just as much in there as they are on the streets,” she said.

Alongside the expansion of security measures, the coroner’s office issued a number of recommendations to the Ontario correctional facilities in its report. Recommendations relating to reducing the number of overdose-related deaths include, but are not limited to:

- The creation of an Intersectoral Custody Advisory Committee which will, among a litany of other duties, review contraband insights, staff compliance, safety improvements, harm reduction practices, and CO competency models;
 - A comprehensive report on best practices to implement in and ongoing evaluation methods for eliminating the trafficking of contraband in all facilities;
 - The dependence upon reliable forms of contraband screening for access to secure areas, with the inclusion of corrections staff in all scanning and inspection procedures;
 - The development and implementation of improved intelligence and surveillance methods, including wider deployment of canine units, for the recognition and interdiction of contraband;
 - A revision of quality standards for correctional health care services; and
 - The integration of care with programs funded and delivered by other institutions with expertise, such as the Ministry of Health or Ontario Health
- Every recommendation made as a result of an inquest into an inmate’s death “must be implemented,” Vos said, adding that, until that’s the case, she will continue to raise her voice for one of Canada’s “most marginalized groups.”
- “[The families of those who lose their lives in custody suffer years of mental torture to make these recommendations,” Vos said.
- “The least they do is take them.”



What else should I know?

- It works! It is extremely rare to get HIV if PrEP is used correctly.
- You have to be HIV negative to take PrEP. You need to have an HIV test before starting PrEP.
- PrEP is an option for anyone at high risk for HIV.
- Most people on PrEP take one pill every day.
- Taking PrEP involves regular medical appointments for monitoring and support.
- It is safe and usually well-tolerated.
- It is approved by Health Canada and is prescribed by a healthcare provider.
- The cost may be covered by your private or public drug plan.

How do I know if PrEP might be right for me?

Some simple questions can help guide you through thinking about whether PrEP might be right for you.

- Do you sometimes have sex without condoms?
- Do you have sex partner(s) whose HIV status you don’t know?
- Do you have sex partner(s) who are HIV positive but are not on successful treatment?
- Have you had a sexually transmitted infection (STI) in the past year?
- Have you used post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) more than once?
- Are you thinking about having a baby with an HIV-positive partner who is not on successful treatment?
- Do you ever share equipment for injection drug use?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, you might be a good candidate for PrEP.

Talk to a healthcare provider to help you make the final decision about whether PrEP is right for you. PrEP is relatively new so you may prefer to find a healthcare provider who is knowledgeable about PrEP.

A 'TRAGEDY': HIV-POSITIVE WOMAN SAYS JUSTICE SYSTEM FAILED HER

Advocates say courts have often misinterpreted science around the virus; 'A lot of people still don't understand how HIV is transmitted and who are the most vulnerable,' says Gilbert Centre executive director **By Marg. Bruineman, Barrie Today Nov 25, 2022**

Jennifer Murphy is still reeling after serving a 39-month prison sentence and being placed on a sex-offender registry based on what advocates say was a misinterpretation of science.

"The law that was there to protect me was used against me," Murphy said in a phone interview.

She no longer lives in the Barrie area for fear of persecution following her experience here.

Gerry Croteau, the Barrie Gilbert Centre's executive director who has been working with Murphy for 20 years, suggested an enduring stigma around HIV/AIDS has resulted in a double whammy against her.

In August, the Ontario Court of Appeal overturned Murphy's 2013 conviction, acquitting her of aggravated sexual assault in relation to a single incident of vaginal intercourse without disclosing to her partner that she was HIV-positive and not using a condom.

In its written decision in August, the appeal court panel found that fresh evidence establishes that developments in the science in relation to HIV transmission supports Murphy's assertion that there was no realistic possibility of transmission of HIV, even if a condom was not used during intercourse.

Murphy had been under treatment and taking medication when she had the 2011 sexual encounter for which she was charged. Advocates say that clearly resulted in an undetectable viral load and was known at the time to pose an extremely small risk of transmission.

When she learned she was wanted, Murphy fled, leading to a concerted police pursuit, which included the circulation of an unflattering photo of Murphy. Along with the wanted story, it was widely published.

But her case had already captured widespread national attention. Murphy had previously been in trouble for the same thing. In 2005, she was convicted of failing to disclose her HIV status to two soldiers from CFB Borden, a military base located about 20 minutes west of Barrie.

In an analysis of the communication in the July 2005 issue of Blue Line, described as Canada's national law enforcement magazine, the Canadian Armed Forces' communications director at the time chronicled how the base put out word in 2005 and was surprised by "an onslaught of media interest" that erupted as a result. The case, he wrote, was among "the most unique and challenging" the organization had ever faced.

Murphy's subsequent prosecution in 2013 in Barrie followed a Supreme Court of Canada decision a year earlier that found people living with HIV had the duty to disclose their status before having sex.

Even in 2013, the science clearly indicated Murphy was non transmissible when she had sex, said Cecile Kazatchkine, who was among the protesters at the Barrie courthouse during Murphy's trial.

Kazatchkine, a senior policy analyst at the HIV Legal Network, said Murphy's is one of about 220 Canadian cases involving the criminal conviction of someone with HIV. The organization asserts Canada

is known to be one of the world's "hot spots" for the criminalization of people living with HIV.

"They were not ready at the time to admit that having an undetectable viral load in itself would automatically preclude criminal liability," Kazatchkine said. "We already knew that was not the right interpretation of the science."

Yet, Murphy points out, after her 2013 conviction, which has since been overturned, the Crown considered applying to have her declared a long-term offender, which can carry an indefinite prison sentence — an approach that was eventually abandoned.

In 2014, the year after Murphy's conviction, Canadian scientists released a statement about the "poor appreciation of the science related to HIV" contributing to an overly broad use of the criminal law against those living with HIV in cases of HIV nondisclosure.

Despite advances in the treatment of HIV, those living with HIV are still facing challenges in the community, said Croteau from the Gilbert Centre. The Barrie not-for-profit supports people with HIV and individuals and families from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) communities.

"We're very careful and discrete about people who come to access services with us because we serve a population in this community," Croteau said.

"Often times, it's people who are HIV positive, it's drug users, homeless, sex workers, so these folks are very vulnerable," Croteau added. "A lot of people still don't understand how HIV is transmitted and who are the most vulnerable."

"Gay men, men who have sex with men, are still representative of 46 per cent of new infections of HIV. But then there's 54 per cent of others, some are straight, some are bi and some are injection drug users."

There can be a general misunderstanding of the information, but Croteau points out there have been a lot of good things happening for those who are HIV-positive on the medical front.

The Canadian Coalition to Reform HIV Criminalization (CCRHC) has long been advocating for change to "the misguided law" on HIV nondisclosure. This past July, the federal government announced new community consultations with an eye to reform.

Canada has no law specific to nondisclosure, so the charge of aggravated sexual assault — an extremely serious criminal offence — has been used against those with HIV.

Advocates want the law to be strictly limited to those who intentionally transmit the virus.

The coalition has argued that Canada's criminal law, which resulted in the criminal prosecution and incarceration of Murphy and others living with HIV, was unscientific and discriminatory.

There have been other acquittals since the appeal court's finding involving Murphy last summer.

Last month, the Ontario Court of Appeal overturned the aggravated sexual assault conviction of a Toronto man who did not disclose his HIV-positive status to a sexual partner, also citing new evidence.

An online database of articles about Murphy, the police pursuit of her and her case compiled by the HIV Justice Network clearly suggests this is an aggrieved woman. But whether or not Murphy is pursuing the matter further in the courts, she would not say.

Murphy's case "shows the tragedy of the current use of criminal law," Kazatchkine said of her prosecution.

YOU CAN HAVE HEPATITIS C AND NOT KNOW IT



The only way to know if you have hepatitis C is to get tested



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THE NAME OF THE GAME

HIV is the name of the game, to beat this thing you got to do your part, have a strong will and love in your heart.

Make your doctor get on down, don't let anyone push you around! Don't stress out, it will mess up your T-cell count.

Stress is the number one killer for people like you and me. From stress we must be free.

Take care of yourself, get plenty of exercise, don't you ever think of dying

This is not a death sentence so clear your head. The meaning of HIV, is not dead!

Joann Walker
Chowchilla, California

Joann Walker, Coalition to Support Women Prisoners at Chowchilla. Flyer. "The Name of the Game," early 1990s. Drawing and design unknown. Text by Joann Walker. Judy Green-span Papers, The LGBT Community Center National History Archive. Source: Visualaids.org

INDIGENOUS JUSTICE AND A NEW PATH FOR CANADA'S PRISONS

A report offers a blueprint for fixing Indigenous overrepresentation in jails.

Simon Rolston, The Tyee, 26 Jun 2023
*Simon Rolston lives in Vancouver, and he writes about criminal justice system issues. His book, *Prison Life Writing: Conversion and the Literary Roots of the U.S. Prison System*, was published in 2021 by Wilfrid Laurier University Press.*

When I asked Boyd Peters, a Sts'ailes First Nation member and BC First Nations Justice Council director, about the effects of long-term incarceration on Indigenous people, his brow furrowed. He exhaled and looked down before responding.

"Nobody should have to go through that," he said.

But more and more Indigenous people are going "through that" — living in Canadian prisons despite federal government commitments "to reset the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the justice system." From 2009 to 2018, as the general prison population expanded by only one per cent, the Indigenous prisoner population increased by 43 per cent.

A recent report by B.C.'s Prisoners' Legal Services, "Decarceration Through Self-determination: Ending the Mass Incarceration of Indigenous People in Canada," suggests a better way to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in Canada's prisons. The report's proposal seems radical, but it potentially realizes Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission's goal of reducing the "extreme overrepresentation of Indigenous individuals as incarcerated offenders" while honouring the right to Indigenous self-determination in Section 35 of Canada's Constitution Act.

Moreover, the report's proposal largely relies on existing sections of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, which governs the country's corrections and parole systems, offering the potential to bring change within the existing legislation.

Prisoners' Legal Services makes several proposals in their report, including reforming parole hearings so they better respect Indigenous people's traditions and rights to self-determination, changing regulations on security classifications to properly account for Indigenous people's traumatic experiences with colonial violence and reforming Section 84 of the act so that "Indigenous communities are reasonably compensated for the costs of providing community supervision" for Indigenous people on parole.

But their central proposal is to divert Indigenous prisoners from federal correctional facilities to Indigenous-operated alternatives to incarceration. To make this change in correctional policy happen in practice, the report argues, the federal government should transfer funds and resources from Correctional Service Canada to Indigenous communities and governments.

"Canada must move resources away from CSC and toward supporting self-determination so that First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples can decide what they need to address harm, create safety and heal their nations, communities, families and individuals from colonial genocide, outside of prisons," the report argues.

Since 32 per cent of federal prisoners are Indigenous, the report notes, the federal government should transfer the equivalent percentage of CSC's budget to Indigenous communities who would be responsible for Indigenous people who would otherwise be in federal custody. That's roughly \$1 billion of a \$3-billion annual budget. "These funds could be used... for a wide range of alternatives to prison, as well as for autonomous, independent Indigenous services for Indigenous people in prison and on conditional release," explains the report.

The report notes that the Corrections

and Conditional Release Act already provides some important mechanisms for this transfer of responsibility and funding. These mechanisms need to be used more effectively and according to their original intentions, it says.

Consider, for example, Section 81 of the act, which authorizes the minister of public safety "or a person authorized by the minister" — in this case, CSC — to "enter into an agreement with an Indigenous governing body or any Indigenous organization" to provide "correctional services" to Indigenous people in custody and for the federal government to pay for those services.

Under the act, the primary "correctional services" provided under Section 81 are healing lodges: Indigenous-centred alternatives to regular custody that emphasize Indigenous traditions and spiritual practices as ways for Indigenous people held in custody to heal from the trauma of their experiences and from the long history of colonial violence. Although some healing lodges are operated by CSC, Section 81 healing lodges are operated by Indigenous groups.

Indigenous-run healing lodges have a proven success rate. They reduce incarcerated and formerly incarcerated Indigenous people's rates of recidivism and risk. The 2015 Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission explicitly called on "the federal government to eliminate barriers to the creating of additional Aboriginal healing lodges within the federal correctional system."

Since the TRC recommendation, there have been repeated calls on CSC to establish Section 81 Indigenous-run healing lodges, including in parliamentary reports, a Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs resolution, a Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights report and a Canadian Bar Association resolution. But only six Indigenous-run healing lodges have been established under Section 81, and those lodges are woefully underfunded.

In an email to The Tyee, Kevin Antonucci, a CSC spokesperson, wrote that it is "working to maximize and expand on the use of Section 81 agreements."

"We have worked closely with federal partners, including Indigenous governing bodies and organizations, and with advice from the National Indigenous Advisory Committee, to identify and eliminate barriers in the creation of additional Healing Lodges within the federal correctional system," Antonucci wrote.

But experts and Indigenous groups tell a different story.

Peters told The Tyee that the Section 81 application process is unnecessarily prohibitive. The Sts'ailes First Nation initially tried to work towards a Section 81 agreement to manage and administer a healing village, he said.

But the bureaucracy made the process "very onerous and too limiting," Peters said.

The nation eventually partnered with CSC to manage Kwikwèxwelhp Healing Village, which is a CSC-operated healing lodge. The community still wants a fully Indigenous healing lodge, he said. "It's just not feasible at this time."

Peters said the Sts'ailes First Nation "went through the whole process of negotiating" with CSC, but "what they were offering us as a per diem was way less than what it takes to operate the facility.... It wasn't economically viable."

In his 2021-22 annual report, the Correctional Investigator noted that, through budget 2017 "CSC received \$55.2 million (and \$10.9 million ongoing thereafter) to enhance its capacity to provide effective interventions for Indigenous offenders."

But proportionally "little new funding has been allocated to Indigenous controlled or run community correctional initiatives," noted the Correctional Investigator, a federal office that provides oversight of the corrections system. The

focus of CSC's Indigenous correctional efforts continues to be mainly prison-based and "signature investments" seem to have gone to "CSC-developed custodial initiatives."

The discrepancy between Indigenous-run correctional initiatives and CSC programs can be seen when comparing Indigenous-run healing lodges with CSC-operated healing lodges.

According to a 2012 Correctional Investigator's report called Spirit Matters, "In 2009-10, the allocation of funding to the four CSC-operated Healing Lodges [operating at that time] totalled \$21,555,037, while the amount allocated to Section 81 Healing Lodges was just \$4,819,479. Chronic under-funding of Section 81 Healing Lodges means that they are unable to provide comparable CSC wages or unionized job security."

As a result, Indigenous-run healing lodges not only struggle to remain open but, according to Peters, "Indigenous-operated healing lodges can't pay the staff comparable salaries so it's really hard to retain any staff." Often, staff transition to CSC-run institutions where the pay is significantly better.

Moreover, although CSC-run institutions like B.C.'s Kwikwèxwelhp Healing Village are permanently funded, Indigenous-run healing lodges under Section 81 agreements are only funded for five years at a time, and there is no guarantee that their funding will continue beyond that five-year period. Predictably, such an insecure financial arrangement makes developing and operating a costly and complex system like a healing lodge a risky investment.

It's worth noting that some Indigenous communities are wary of being involved with corrections, for a variety of reasons. David Milward, associate professor of law at the University of Victoria, told The Tyee that it's important to ensure that a community "has the capacity" to manage the services on their own.

Milward said he wasn't making a judgement about the fitness of any community, but instead underscoring how some communities "have been so severely damaged" that they would need outside assistance to implement what are costly and complicated correctional systems.

tems.

It's also important, cautioned Milward, "not to transplant the same idealistic assumptions onto every Indigenous community."

Milward offered a scenario where an Indigenous person was incarcerated for selling alcohol or drugs in an Indigenous community that was struggling with addiction. Although the incarcerated Indigenous person may have experienced their own colonial trauma, and that trauma may play a causal role in their criminality, they might nonetheless constitute a threat to the Indigenous community's safety and stability. Correctional initiatives that are developed by Indigenous communities need to manage such complex tensions resulting from centuries of colonial violence that are not easily resolved.

Benjamin Rolston, assistant professor at the University of Saskatchewan's college of law, told The Tyee that healing lodges can certainly be effective, but Section 81 can also mean a wide variety of Indigenous alternatives to incarceration, like non-facility models, that might be "better tuned" to some communities' circumstance.

"Ultimately, it's going to come down to: What initiatives are being put forward [by Indigenous groups], and where would Indigenous nations like to see that money being allocated?"

The central proposal of the Prisoners' Legal Services report, while bold and certainly politically challenging to adopt, is nevertheless promising since its recommended "nation-to-nation" arrangement between Indigenous nations and the federal government would mean that individual Indigenous communities could decide how correctional initiatives were funded and CSC would no longer act as a middleman holding the purse strings, blocking decision-making and functioning as the ultimate arbiter for Indigenous people in custody.

"When we look at [how] our people dealt with people that were in conflict with the way that we do things normally in our communities," said Peters, "we had ways of dealing with it. We would correct the person. 'Correctional' Services: the way they do it is totally foreign to our people. We treat people with love and respect and dignity. We give them opportunities."

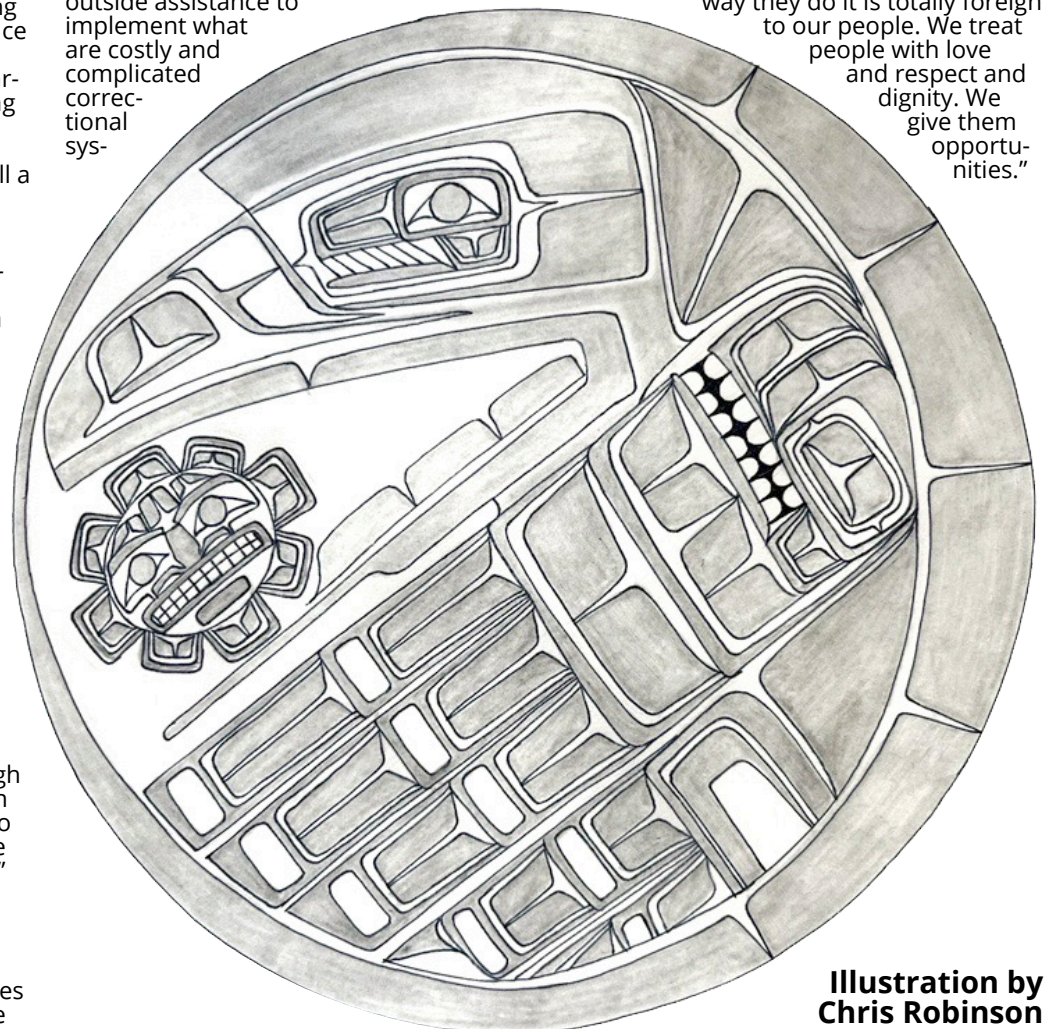


Illustration by Chris Robinson



PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY

Forwarded by Forgotten Warrior

Prisoners' Justice Day is a solidarity movement that takes place annually on August 10. The movement began in Canada in 1974 in support of prisoners' rights and to remember all the people who have died of unnatural deaths while incarcerated. The first Prisoners' Justice Day was held at the Millhaven Institution on August 10, 1975, on the first anniversary of Edward Nolan's death. In addition to a day of mourning, six prisoners took part in an eighteen-day hunger strike.

In 1976, August 10 was recognized as a memorial day where prisoners would strike in opposition to the use of solitary confinement and to protest inmate conditions within the Prison System by going on a one-day hunger strike and refusing to work. Prisoners' Justice Day is a solidarity movement that takes place annually on August 10. The movement began in Canada in 1974 in support of prisoners' rights and to remember all the people who have died of unnatural deaths while incarcerated.

Edward Nolan

On August 10, 1974, while in segregation at the Millhaven Institution, inmate Edward Nolan took his own life by severing the arteries in his elbow. Leading up to his suicide, Nolan had requested to be transferred to a non-working unit. Guards told him that in order to get a transfer he must sign a form refusing to work. Instead, he was transferred to segregation on June 7, 1974, and then into solitary confinement back into segregation, where he requested to be transferred back into general population on July 28, 1974. On July 31, 1974, the Inmate Training Board granted his transfer back into the general population; however, there was no communication for ten days between Millhaven's administration and Nolan regarding the status of his transfer and on August 10, 1974, he died by suicide.

On April 14, 1975, a Coroner's Inquest was filed into the death of Edward Nolan and the following recommendations were outlined:

1. Communication regarding transfers to be carried out without delay
2. Prison medical practitioners relate mental and physical concerns regarding the prisoners being kept in segregation to the Segregation Review Board
3. Operational emergency alarm signals within cells
4. A functional time clock to ensure hourly check-ups by the guards
5. Emergency first aid training for all Millhaven institutional staff

Robert Landers

On May 21, 1976, Robert (Bobby) Landers died while in segregation at Millhaven Institution. Landers tried to call for medical help, however, the emergency system within the prisoners' cells was not functioning, despite having been recommended for repair during the coroner's inquest into Nolan's death. Later, an inquest into Landers' death was held, during which a heart specialist determined he had died from a heart attack, and that he should have been placed in an intensive care unit rather than solitary confinement. Lander's death not only forced the Correctional Service of Canada (then Canadian Penitentiary Service) to implement emergency call systems but also resulted in further National Support for Prisoners' Justice Day.

Over-incarceration of minorities and marginalized people
Prisoners' Justice Day advocates want to combat the overrepresenta-

tion of racial minorities and marginalized peoples in penitentiaries. The overincarceration of Indigenous people is a "colonial effect" in countries formed through colonization such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States. The Canadian Parliament enacted section 718.2 (e) of the Criminal Code in 1996, better known as the Gladue Report to combat the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in Canadian prisons. Additional Indigenous programming was implemented inside prisons, and Indigenous courts, the percentage of federally incarcerated Indigenous peoples doubled in the period from 2005 to 2015.

Indigenous women are more overrepresented in the Canadian federal correctional system than Indigenous men. The Prison for Women (P4W) in Kingston, Ontario was the only maximum-security women's prison until its closure in 2001. The facility closed after fifteen inquiries, commissions and reports concerning poor conditions for women and the effect these conditions had on increased suicide rates.

PJD CONT'D FROM COVER

argument with them about the fact that we had been locked down a lot for "short staff issues." I said what I had to say and finally returned to my cell. But they decided I should be moved to the hole and they got the team suited up and came to take me there. I refused so they rushed my cell and forced me into cuffs and shackles and dragged me down to the hole. Once down there, the captain looked at the three empty cells and said put him in the last one, which was painted floor to ceiling with shit and blood from whoever was in there before. When I got to the door to the cell, the smell and the thought of being locked in there made me fight back panic. They asked me, "Are you going to comply with a strip search?" I said, "I'll strip for you fucks in either one of those other cells but not in that one." I told them, "You know it's not right putting me in there." Then fight was on again. Not much of a fight though, six of the biggest guards there with football equipment on and hockey helmets vs me cuffed behind my back and shackled.

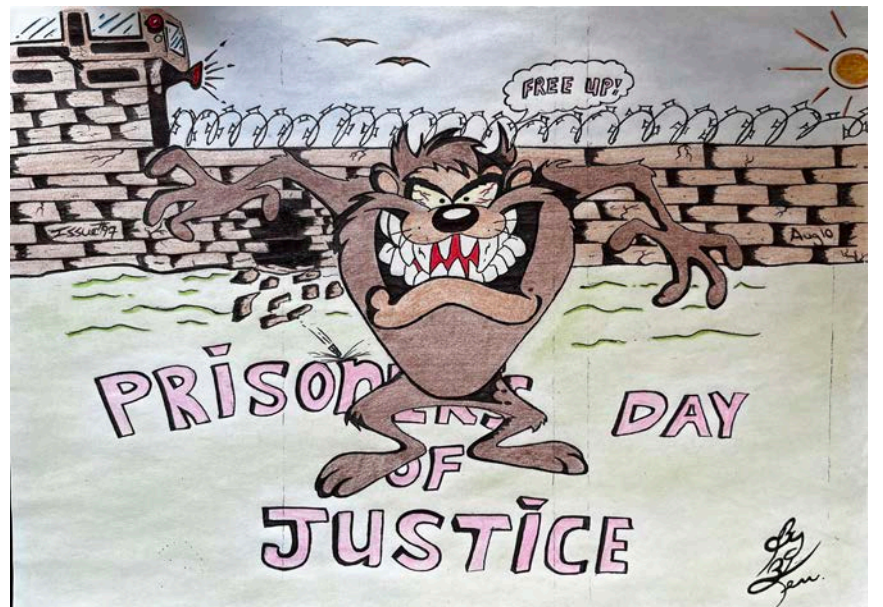
They slammed me face down and stripped me on the floor while the captains and another guard watched from the door. When they were done they slammed the door and closed the window hatch so you couldn't even see out the door. I stood there naked with bloody knees, wrists, and ankles, the front of me smeared with shit in open wounds from being forced down and stripped on the concrete. I stood there like that for a good couple of hours until they threw me the same filthy clothes that they had ripped off me.

I stayed in that hole cell until the next day when I was returned to the range because the only institutional charge I had from that was for failing to obey a direct order. All that for failing to obey a direct order. In reality, that's what I got for telling the captain how I felt about the way he was doing things on our unit in not so nice words in front of the whole range.

It's easy to think about PJD in terms of "what was happening in the 1970s was 50 years ago and things are different now." Well, again, I only have to think back recently to draw certain parallels to something that happened to me. In 1971 Ed Nalon was placed in segregation for an extended period of time and then told that on a certain day he would be moved back to population. That day came and went because of some mix up he was not moved back on the day he was told. The next day he slashed his arm and bled to death in his hole cell. In my case, it was [in the same provincial jail] about a month before the time I just spoke about. I was moved to segregation for an alleged fight on the range. I was in seg for my 10th day without being adjudicated or even given a copy of the charge as to why I was there. On the eighth day, a Thursday, the captain on shift said 'if you aren't adjudicated by tomorrow you will be moved back to the range.' Friday came and went and that captain was no longer on shift and the one working told me, "You might be adjudicated Tuesday and you will be in seg until then." On that Saturday, the 10th day in seg, I blocked up my window in protest. The team came in to unblock it and I resisted and fought with them. That ended up with me being "street charged" for assault on a guard and placed on administrative hold citing, "the good order of the institution" as the reason: the same language used when punitive segregation was introduced as a form of punishment. I was then held in seg for another 12 days, making it a 22 day seg term, seven days over the legal amount of time allowed to be in segregation in provincial jails in Nova Scotia.

There are many other stories I can remember, like being held in the hole at Maplehurst Institution in Ontario for months on "mattress protocol": no mattress, no books, no paper or pencil, nothing in the cell from 6am until 10pm. And on a restricted diet of veggie load twice a day. But even with my first-hand knowledge of prison conditions it was easy for me to say, "I'm glad those guys stood up to make things better for us in jail now, but I just want to get out and put this shit behind me."

But I'm thinking now that PJD is about trying to stop the next young person from having to go through this shit. So they don't have to get out of jail and try and block that fucking shit out with drugs and alcohol and by hurting other people and hurting themselves, all just to end up back there again so they can go through more of the same. I think that's what PJD is about for me now, about being able to say, "I don't have to try and forget this happened. I can use what happened to try and help someone else and by doing that, I can help myself." So thank that group of convicts who started PJD in 1975 and everyone else who stood up and sacrificed before and since, because without them, I wouldn't be talking about this today.



FASD

By Anonymous Cell Count Contributor
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Is a disease that scatters families, Spreading out into the communities, And sometimes homeless & Forsaken on the streets. The syndrome that waits in stasis Grows stronger in prisons; Regenerating deeper into nxt-gen.....

Starting all over again- IS PREVENTABLE.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder**The preventable disease:**

"FASD is the result of utero alcohol exposure. The consumption of alcohol by the mother has adverse effects on the fetus characterized by pre and post-natal growth deficiencies, central nervous dysfunction, and cranial facial malformations. The less obvious symptoms are psychological and range from mild to severe mental disorders, thus affecting the behavioral and emotional wellbeing of the diagnosed (and undiagnosed) recipient. The disabilities of this disease are lifelong with no cure," an excerpt from Indigenous Approaches to FASD Prevention.

FASD is an addiction-based disease affecting all nationalities and cultures globally. For the purposes of this report, the focus will be on the hardest hit demographics, i.e. Indigenous and Black communities, the homeless, and prison systems across North America. These are the geographic spaces where FASD dwells.

Unfortunately, FASD has perpetuated the drunk and lazy stereotypes that have plagued Indigenous and Black communities for generations. In recent years, there have been rays of light, with the strength of grassroots leaders in isolated communities; e.g., (Minwaashin Lodge, An Indigenous Women's Support Centre in Ontario). "In many parts of the world, Indigenous communities have taken a leadership role in developing collaborative and culturally relevant approaches to addressing alcohol during pregnancy. These approaches recognize the historical, social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions of alcohol during pregnancy. They also work to promote Indigenous women's health and wellness overall," (Indigenous Approaches to FASD Prevention).

These communities and reservation-based leaders and volunteers are developing a new language and strategies to eradicate FASD for all time.

FASD Part 2: Adults living with FASD

The consequences of FASD are not relegated to pre and postnatal babies and children in Indigenous and Black communities. The disease is a major contributor for adults who cannot get a handle on their symptoms, which include anti-social behaviors, severe depression, and profound

emotions of alienation. The crux of the problem is a mystery to them as a large percentage of people suffering from FASD go undiagnosed. "These unfortunate" (as A.A Anonymous often times have misjudged some individuals) "have the natural inability to be honest with themselves"; Imagine an alcoholic with FASD wondering why they have a natural inclination for deceit? These undiagnosed truly feel doomed to failure, even in their own support groups.

The consequences of FASD can also domino into general society in the form of DUIs (Driving Under the Influence) causing injury and death, violent crimes causing injury and death, and property crimes by robbery and theft; thus skyrocketing insurance rates. The overall costs associated with FASD and crime is in the unknown billions.

The impacts of treating FASD are astronomical in terms of government cost. For every dollar spent on prevention, there is a future savings of five to seven dollars. The lifetime cost of just one person can exceed one million dollars, with a low-ball estimate of 1% of the population; not to mention the number of undiagnosed ripping holes in the economic fabric... Let's just say, that's a whole lotta "loonies". Dr. Ab Chudley says, "I believe attitudes are changing for the better: there is now more government funding for FASD education, prevention, diagnosis screening and intervention programs, but we still have a long way to go" (Damaged Angels; pg., xiv). Dr Chudley goes on to say, "More diagnosis screening needs to be done. Only a fraction of affected children shows the identifiable symptoms of skull and facial deformities. Most of the impairments are invisible, but are profoundly challenging, especially in the areas of social skills and common sense. These children and adults pass the tests but fail at life," (Damaged Angels; pg., xiii).

With the emphasis on prenatal care and prevention education, adults living with FASD have largely gone unnoticed in terms of government funding. The biggest problem facing adults are the cases of undiagnosed FASD. Free testing should be made available to all Indigenous and Black adults in the community and in prisons. A positive test should have an immediate impact on how cases are dealt with by: Health Care, National Parole Board, Case Management, and the Criminal Justice System. Mandatory treatment should be made available to said test subjects and allowances made across the board for this damaging disability. Let us be clear, FASD is definitely a physical and mental disease, on the same levels as: cancer, diabetes, clinical depression, schizophrenia, and/or any other disease, disability or mental health diagnosis.

The most disconcerting aspects of adults with FASD are the total lack of empathy and fairness they receive from the criminal

justice system. When it comes to sentencing Indigenous prisoners suffering with a bona fide disease, which can actually be CAT scanned as a neurological deformity in the brain, they receive no saving grace. How can an actual malformed brain not be taken into account as a mitigating factor? Sentencing, recidivism, and programming/treatment are just the obvious branches that need to be restructured to make a level playing field for those living with FASD. I know the first concern for government officials will be the costs of restructuring the system for FASD patients. Like most problems facing society, it will cost more *not* to fix the problem.

Works Cited:

- Indigenous Approaches to FASD Prevention – Internet Pamphlet
- Damaged Angels – Bonnie Buxton
- Alcoholics Anonymous

LOST IN A CAGE: LIVING WITH EARLY-ONSET ALZHEIMER'S IN PRISON

By J.M.

Dear Cell Count:

My story isn't easy and doesn't have a happy ending, either. Everyday I wake up hoping I'll remember who, what, where and how I came to prison.

On November 21st, 2021, at the age of 52, I was told I have terminal early-onset alzheimer's and I'm going to die!

Today I awoke lost and confused, couldn't understand why my room door was locked and wasn't sure how to open it, but the ringing was new in my ear, along with the shooting pain in my shoulder, head and butt.

It wasn't until my best friend checked up on me to let me know that I had fallen the night before in the yard on an icy hill. Turns out, I'd slipped the night before, bounced 2 feet off the ground, knocking myself out. The ringing was a concussion and all the soreness was from the fall. I'm lucky, at almost 53, I didn't break a hip. Health care considers me a "fall risk" now.

It's funny, the things I forget in short periods of time. You see, Alzheimer's doesn't take away every thought all at once, I could only be so lucky. It's taken away the sound of my mom's voice, the smell of her hair when we used to hug, the way my dad sounded when telling me, "you'll be okay, kiddo."

Slowly, it's stealing the most important memories: my partner who died in 2003, my first gay kiss (as sloppy as it was), the time I food poisoned a date, my first Valentine's when I dressed up as cupid running across my university in 1997. Just now I called a friend to look in my photos to see what year I did that.

It doesn't take away certain memories like hurting my fiancé in 2011 or...

More and more everyday I'm lost. Everyday I wish I could choose memories to lose. A lot of my friends say they'd get rid of crime memories, or memories of hurting their wives, husband

or kids. I can see why, but for me, it's the stranger who's wallet I stole on a one-night stand because my alcohol addiction was out of control, the boyfriend I slapped because he cheated.

The boyfriend who left me for a doctor in Nova Scotia, or the guy in prison I paid to love me because I was lonely (15,000.00); the one in Sundry, Alberta, who's heart I broke when I cheated right before our wedding, because I'm addicted to sex.

These are some of the memories I wish I could forget, I truly don't want to forget why I'm serving Indeterminate Life in prison, it wouldn't be fair to my victim and his family, but eventually, I will forget.

I've forgotten details of my case now, I forgot a lot of people I've hurt all the years I was using and I've forgot a lot of how we met or the first time our eyes met.

The scary part is when I forget to breathe in my sleep or when I'm walking in the yard, you see, Alzheimer's takes more than just your short-term and long-term memories.

It takes away daily functions such as using the bathroom, eating, walking and using your hands, remembering how to spell the simplest words such as "love" – "hi" – miss me We have bad days as well, Blow up at The small things, frustration is our new best friend You can be walking somewhere and Forget why you're walking so you turn around Head back the other way, you'll be standing just Lost in your own mind. We get frustrated worse than a 2 year old being told "No".

I used to be a happy man in my life. Most days I'm unhappy in my head space, I don't say why I know the answer to that. I'm sad for my boyfriend (I wrote

"boyfriend" but I realized I don't have one because he got parole) for the rest of people in my life, past, present and even the future ones.

I'm sure some of you are happy I'm dying or soon to be there, but some will be sad, some will lay blame, some will feel relief for me and the rest I hope you remember 1 thing we did together that made us smile at one another or ourselves.

Sorry, forgot what I was writing here, and that happens daily now.

The men who come into my life that are interested in dating, they all walk away after a month. They get tired of the same questions being asked or that I can't remember them. The movie 50 first dates says it all. They can't handle watching me get lost in my mind, but get scared of knowing that my mind is dying is even harder.

I was engaged to be married this year but once he was told I'd die in a couple of years, he disappeared, no letter or even a phone call to my sister explaining why, but we know why.

I come from a good family, had 2 sets of parents, a big brother (he's gone now), but I still have a sister and we talk when I remember to call, and a little sister who lives in Africa, she's a great kid.

Mom and Step-dad are gone, Step-mom has her hands full cause it's not just me with Alzheimer's, Dad has it too. I'm lucky today, I remember all this, but sadly, my Dad doesn't ever remember me and thanks to him, I know what I'm in for soon.

I'm serving an indeterminate sentence and it feels like a death sentence. Until I fully lose my mind and forget to breathe, I'll be hopeful to find love once again.

PS. Sorry it's taken 2 months to finish this letter, most days I forget what I'm doing.

--



Prisoner
Jesse
James
Fugitive
Wanted





DON'T SPEAK ABOUT IT, BE ABOUT IT!

By X

It's a shame that in 2023 we still must fight for equal rights and justice here in the "free" democratic republic of Canada. As an educated, Black/Indigenous Muslim serving a federal sentence in the province of Quebec, I'm seen as a quadruple threat and thus treated as so. I face racism, discrimination, and stereotypical biases on almost a daily basis.

CD-767 Ethnocultural offenders services and interventions highlights CSC's role and commitment in responding to the specific needs of any initiative actually being taken by the powers that be. Commissioner Anne Kelly sends out weekly newsletters that don't seem to reflect on what really transpires in the Correctional Service of Canada. She speaks of CSC's mandate to combat racism and discrimination, but it's just a bunch of smoke and mirrors.

Our complaints and requests for change continue to be ignored, being denied at every possible level. Leaving those who should be held accountable and reprimanded feel like they're above the rules and regulations, which then permits the abuse to continue. Anytime an issue of race or discrimination arises, we are almost called liars to our faces or labelled as "someone who plays the victim." This is extremely frustrating and taxing on one's own mental health. Even when in distress and threatening to "slash up", we're ignored and not taken serious enough to be seen by mental health officials until

days or weeks later.

We had attempted to reach Ms. Kelly personally, but she had redirected our letter to the same administration that we were complaining against, prompting a full-on attack against us. Last February turned out to be a complete chaos because of us asking to be included in a number of the institution's operations such as: programs, activities, an ethnic local and a few items to be added to our canteen list.

After 6 months of the position not being filled, I was finally hired as Ethnocultural representative and met with social programs officers about our needs as a populace that's been neglected for years. After hearing our proposals, the main SPO, Richard M., refused to meet us at all costs. So, we wrote to our deputy warden, and he gave us the ok to have access to a local and to host a Black History Month celebration, however, on the first day of February, the start of Black History Month, I got a visit by the security intelligence officers. They advised me to, "slow down" and to "stop pushing for certain things" because they knew how hard we worked to get our positions and they didn't want to see us lose our jobs for "nothing." 6 days later, I was suspended and told to be patient, that I was getting my job back. But after a month, the SPO's decided I was too much for them to deal with and wanted to work with someone who isn't going to fight them. I explained that I was simply doing what was being asked by the inmates I represented.

The SPO's then stole my ideas on the event and took full credit

for the botched attempt to celebrate Black History Month with the aid of the kitchen manager Manon B., who refused to allow us access to CSC's kitchen to prepare the food we requested. Instead, they put on a small gathering with light snacks, dominoes, and trivia on Bob Marley. Instead of allowing us to acquire food that we culturally identify with, they fed the entire population the same Jerk chicken, rice and Naan bread already given to us on our national menu. They made it an issue for our group to celebrate Black History Month with only the guys who signed up. They rather serve the whole population and write it off as a purchase made by the Ethnocultural group, which is fraud.

Firing me was nothing but a tactic used by the administration to get us to relinquish our mission to bring change to CSC and it's outdated policies. I think it's going to take more than a few tears from MPs like Blake Desjarlais for real action to be taken to help improve Canada's penal system and society as a collective.

DURING THESE DIFFICULT TIMES

Reprint of cover story from Cell Count issue #99, which was cut off due to formatting error. Our sincerest apologies to Darrell.

By Darrell Ivany

I have been "Stripped of Everything in Life" and my freedom. Accused of doing "Everything Right in Life", and being "REHABILITATED" having "Emotions", but never doing anything wrong, or acting on my "Emotions", being "Persecuted" and accused of

being "Crazy", falsely labeled and "Punished" beyond all measure.

However, not a crime nor a charge in 21 years, I've been a minimum security for 17 years, I have lived in the community for the last 12 years, 6 years on my very first day parole and 6 years on my very first full parole as a productive "Member of the Community". No one ever called the police on me ever and not even an incident.

Suspended, "Illegally Detained and Imprisoned", not just once, but 3 times now over the last 12 Years, for no wrong doing whatsoever, other than "Systemic Discrimination Based on Disability" caused by "Defamation of Character" by case management, forced to take psychotic medication for no reason for 26 years.

Six psychiatrist and eight psychiatric assessments saying that there is nothing wrong with me, paid and contracted by CSC. All of these doctors "Vindicated" me of all CSC's "Allegations" and "Removed Medications" three times.

However, I'm currently sitting here in this high medium institution for no reason or wrongdoing, locking me down trying to - "Nail me to the Cross" for another 2 life sentences, begging someone to fix this "Horrible" wrong.

Such, "Disrespect for Human Life", I have done time from 1988 to 2008, 20 Years on a life 10 sentence. When is enough, enough? How many more life sentences

would you like to "Nail me to the Cross"?

According to "Correctional Service of Canada" their "Commissioners Directives", "Mission Statements" and their "Correctional Programs", I have done everything, that they told me, that I had to do, to get to live in the community as a productive, "Law-abiding member of Society".

In addition, I have done no wrong since I was released for the first time in 2008, and if it were not for this "Systemic Discrimination", I would have lived in the community now for the last 24 years, not just the last 12 years.

It took me "44 Years of my Life" to get to sit at my own kitchen table for the first time ever in my life, doing it the right way and please excuse me for being "Rehabilitated".

Since when did CSC, start locking offenders up for doing "Everything Right in Life"? How do these parole officers have so much power? However, are not doctors, I guess when they're trying to "Chemically Control Offenders" against their will.

I'm sure we're not "Robots" and according to all your "Correctional Service Programs", it's okay to be a "Human Being"!

"Please excuse me for being a Human Being"

Give ear O Lord to My prayer, listen To my plea for Grace, Amen!

-



write to us!

A FREE, PLATONIC PEN PAL PROGRAM FOR FEDERAL PRISONERS

Who are we?
We are a group of community volunteers who help to support prisoners in having platonic, safe, and meaningful pen pal connections.

We are dedicated to social justice, anti-racism, and freedom. We believe in the right to dignity and humanity for all.

PENN2PAPER

Pacific & Prairie Institutions
Penn2Paper
104-1015 Columbia St.
Box 873
New Westminster, BC
V3M 6V3

send us a note to one of these addresses depending on your location for more info

Ontario & Atlantic Institutions
Penn2Paper
2-140 King St. E.
Box 308
Hamilton, ON
L8N 1B2

WHY Bellconcalls.com?

Real Connections In Canada Only

IN CORRECTIONS

SIMPLE AS 1.2.3.

1. We Give You A Local Landline Number (We redirect this to your cellphone or home number, no need to download apps etc)
2. You Give The Prisoner The Landline Number (They request it to be added to their prison pin phone # list. It may take a couple of days for the prison to authorize)
3. Get Unlimited Prison Calls To Your Cellphone or Homeline! (prisoner only pays a local landline price of just \$0.57/hr, stop paying expensive inmate telephone system prison phone call costs! (Save over 60%))

CELL COUNT!!

I was recently introduced to the publication and read the 100th series edition, I want to take the time to really thank those of you who take our stories and compile, compare and cycle to other inmates all over. I didn't realize a lot of similarities between myself and other writers. I'm layin' in the cell reading the next man's story and thoughts and find myself reflecting on an item or 2 thinking "Damn, this dude gets it." Like same wavelengths. So anyway; Cell Count/PASAN from MY Block at EDML thank you for puttin' us out there.

L&R,
Connor

MARK ZAMMIT

I am Me

To whom does this world owe a debt? To the victims that's who! The victims of the tortures of which blind eyes were turned. Pains, violent and non-violent traumas. But then, who the Fuck am I? Who the fuck am I to speak on topics of such capacity and worth?

!! I am a victim, that is who I am! "DO NOT" call me a survivor because a survivor does not bleed beneath already healed scars. A survivor does not shit himself as he cries in fear of what lurks on the other side of his eyelids every morning. Day in day out. No! I simply am nothing more than a victim. A victim of this world, a victim of protected religion, a victim of lost trust and misguided shame.

Also, I am an author of sorts, not a storyteller, because my words, paragraphs and pages are of truth, not fiction and falsities. Every word I spew comes from painful fact.

My sorrow, my trauma is 100% real. My blood is warm, wet and red, I am an author, not a storyteller.

I too, am a poet, a proud and published poet. Not a rapper. My verses are not scripted from a dictionary, thesaurus or rhyming guide, they are bled through my pores, from my veins and pulsated via my blackened, soiled and broken heart.

In blood I close, I also am loyal

to a fault, honourable, respectful and I ride proudly by "South Side." I stand for what I believe and I believe for what I live for. I follow the rules, orders and guidelines laid out before me by the family that's bled and kept me alive for 52 years. I will stand up for as well as lay down my life for them. Laugh, cry, live, die for my family, hood, block and crew. I am South Side and I am Me.

A coward that acts upon the graves of others, is a coward straight from the womb. Given the chance, likely to have eaten the fetus of its weaker twin. Nonetheless, still nothing more than a coward, always and till death.

Cowards hunt for chances, not prey. They hunt for the already weak because they themselves are spineless. From sun up until Moon shine, cowards seek the broken. Bullies seek the weak, pedophiles hunt the broken. Each targets because they themselves are gutless, spineless cowards.

Cowardice comes straight from the bloodline. Hereditary cowards, wife abusers and pedophiles. It's not a lesson, it's a thirst that cannot be fixed.

So! Today as I sit and conjure these words, know that I am a man of loyalty, honour and truth, and I ask you, who believe in adaptation and change.

cont'd on pg 14

MARY ELLEN YOUNG

A little about M.E.Y.

I've been appealing for the past several years since 2010 as long as I've been incarcerated, I've done it all myself, no help from no one. I've even represented myself! I've had random lawyers but none ever stuck around. I lost at court of Appeal Winnipeg level, I'm currently at a Supreme Court level so we'll see what happens. I also have mental health issues. I self-harm, swallow objects and I end up in hospital due to my self-harming. I've flatlined twice, in other words, I've died and been revived, twice. I've done this for many years. I've gotten better though, meaning I don't choose to self-harm by swallowing objects. The two

types of objects I've swallowed are full pens and full forks. I don't break them to pieces, I swallow them whole. I've come a long way and don't do that no more.

I wish to see changes on how self-harm is dealt with and mental health at the moment, I don't take any meds for my mental health, I don't need them. There is no medication for self-harm. I've also been diagnosed with breast cancer. I found out in December 2022 that I had a huge lump in my right breast. The lump has shrunk down, it was as big as a chicken breast, but now it's so small I can't feel it. I've been doing chemo treatments every 3 weeks now, I hope it's not for too much longer because I'm getting tired of it. My breast doesn't have to be cut off, I feel terrible for those who have to get their breast cut off. Because I'm incarcerated, I'm limited to meds for my cancer I feel that I suffer inhumanely.

I've also put in a request for Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) but I pulled it, if I continue to suffer inhumanely with limited meds, I may consider MAID once again. For now, I'm dealing with the best way I can. I've been told by a staff member here at GVI that I'm not a candidate because I'm an inmate when I requested something from her. All this is basically, long story short, due to my situation. I definitely would like to see changes made for cancer, self-harm and mental health.

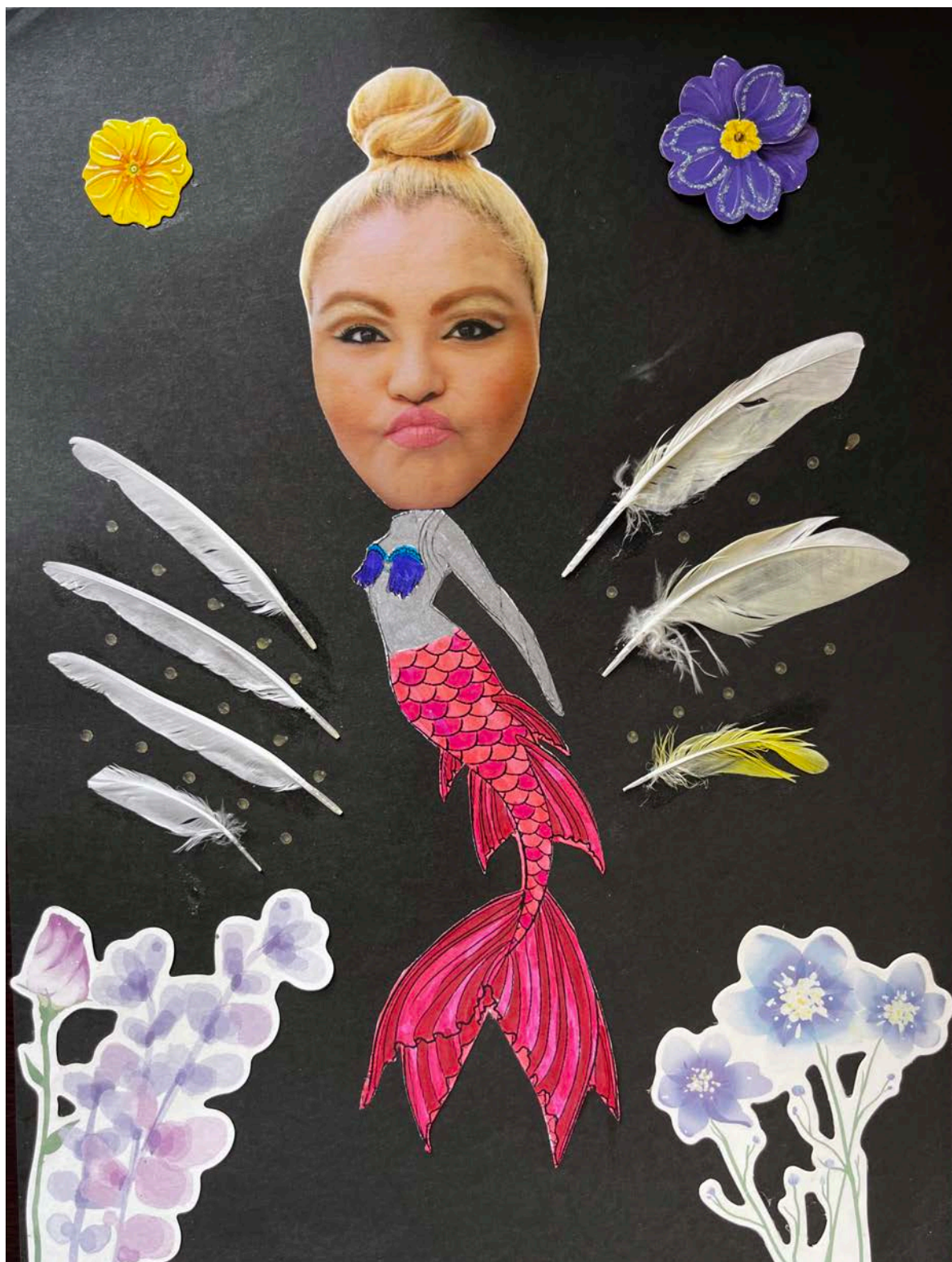
Mermaids and M.E.Y.

I've loved mermaids, since I was a child I find mermaids to be so amazing and mysterious like myself mermaids are beautiful. Also, mermaids love to sing, like myself. Mermaids love to look into their mirrors and comb their hair, I love to do that. Mermaids love shiny sparkle objects all that shines and glitters. They prefer human men over mermen

because they can hypnotize a human man with her voice. Men also love my voice but I don't know if I can hypnotize them. In all the mermaid stories I've read, the mermaid has a bad ending when it comes to human men they are in love with. I have that same problem. I'm always and forever in bad, sad endings with men I've been with. Mermaids wish to be human, I wish to be a mermaid because I'm unhappy on land with mankind. What I have in common with the mermaid is that I'm a Pisces, which is a water sign.

The photo of myself, the face is me, I coloured the mermaid body. I added 7 small real feathers from some birds I used to work with in another institution. I added some flowers that I glued on. I hope you enjoyed my art and my comparison of mermaids and M.E.Y.

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STAGES OF TRANSFORMATION

Theatre as Healing for Formerly Incarcerated Women (an excerpt) By Amina & Nikki

Community worker and artist Amina Mohamed sits down with artists Charlene Chapman, April Labine and Laverne Malcolm to reflect on the roles art can play as healing for women with lived experience of incarceration. They reflect on their shared experience working on Confluence Arts Collective's original play *The Countess and Me*, and discuss what they think prisons are, are not, and could be.

My name is Amina Mohamed, and I'm a member of Confluence Arts Collective, as well as the Women's Community Coordinator at PASAN: an organization that provides education, advocacy, and case management for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people living with HIV. I also have lived experience around incarceration in my family and in my community.

I'm an artist with a varied practice — I'm a DJ, an organizer of queer community spaces, and I have long history of participating in theatre, film, and community arts projects as a writer, performer, and facilitator. Confluence Arts Collective was founded in 2017 by a group of community-engaged artists in Ontario, and I joined as a core artist-facilitator shortly thereafter. Here's a bit about how we describe ourselves:

Confluence Arts Collective came together over a shared investment in dignity, humanity, and justice for people experiencing, or who have experienced incarceration. Through artistic processes, Confluence strives to create moments of community convergence, self-determination, and self-expression for criminalized people. We recognize that criminalized people are disproportionately those living in poverty, Indigenous, racialized, queer, transgender, women, and themselves victims of crime. We aim to open up humanizing spaces to explore and articulate who we all are outside of, and because of, criminal convictions, social marginalizations, and situations of incarceration.

Confluence was my first experience collaborating artistically with incarcerated people, and this artistic work actually provided a lot of foundation for the community work I'm doing in my current job.

Through my position at PASAN, I was able to invite Confluence in to lead a theatre program for our community there. Fifteen women with lived experience of incarceration came together to make theatre. The inaugural Confluence/PASAN project included a collaboration with lemonTree creations and their production of *Lilies*; or, *The Revival of a Romantic Drama* (a co-production with Why Not Theatre and Buddies in Bad Times Theatre). Through that project, we developed *The Countess and Me*, an original play created by the women at PASAN in response to *Lilies*' themes of justice and care, based on the participants' own stories. It was performed at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre in May 2019.

For this article, I sat down with three artists from *The Countess and Me* — Charlene Chapman, April Labine, and Laverne Malcolm — to reflect on the power of theatre and art, the lived experiences of criminalized women, and how that project lingers with us today. Three beloved members of our community who were part of creating and performing *The Countess and Me* have since passed on: Brandi Nashkewa, Mona Farmer, and Marcia Riseborough. We honour and remember the three of them in these reflections.

We believe that art can be a vehicle for social change, and can support individuals and communities with healing. That to me is one of the most beautiful aspects of Confluence.

Amina: Can you share a bit about yourselves?

April: I am a harm reduction worker and an outreach worker. I've worked at Fred Victor, Unison Health, and St. Stephens. I am an activist. I speak in regard to homelessness, mental health, addiction, and abused women, at events like Reclaim the Streets and Take Back the Night. I'm an ex-addict and I have lived experience of homelessness, addiction, abuse, and mental health issues.

Laverne: I've been living in Toronto since 2001, and a client of PASAN since 2012. I work in HIV/AIDS harm reduction with Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy. I was a prisoner, a long time ago. I am an ex-addict. The challenges I face now are with alcoholism but I've managed to kind of stay away, I'm very proud of that. I am a mother of four, a grandmother of six, and I am originally from Ebb and Flow First Nation in Manitoba.

Charlene: I come from north of Fort St. James. I am an Indigenous woman. With art, I love most to do bead work. I have four kids from age ten to fifteen, almost sixteen now. My spirit name is Red Bear.

Amina: I know creating and performing *The Countess and Me* was the first time each of you worked on a theatre project, but what has been your relationship to art more broadly?

Laverne: A lot of my art is hands-on. I do a lot of beading, dreamcatchers, ribbon skirts. Hands-on stuff helps me heal. It helps me calm my inner self, I can think a lot about things when I do what I'm doing — it's like therapy to work with your hands.

April: I love to write. I love visual arts. I have been abused and I have a lot of shadows that I try to conquer, a lot of anger. My relationship to art is that it's like therapy. It has healed many of my open wounds. It gives me opportunity to express myself. I enjoy doing it, it brings relaxation to me, it's peaceful. I no longer feel overwhelmed when I express myself through art.

Charlene: I do a lot of beadwork, a lot of Indigenous art forms. I'm actually going to try to get into making moccasins — I didn't have the patience before, but I believe I do now! I do too many beadworks every week, I don't have enough fingers and toes to count it.

Laverne: She's always online, beading!

Amina: Oh yeah, on Facebook Live!

Charlene: I don't even talk, I

just sit there and I bead. Now I am making earrings because the pow wows are coming up soon. My hands are getting sore from making earrings!

Amina: What was your relationship with art when you were inside?

April: I did lots of art when I was in prison. Indigenous art like painting, drawing, beading, dreamcatchers, even headdress- es. I have lots of artistic talents in different fields. Abstract art is the one I love the most, because there's only one. It's the original. Someone could try to copy it, but it wouldn't be the same, it comes from your inner soul. When I was in prison, art got rid of a lot of my anger. I was in the penitentiary a long time so I had a lot of time on my hands. I had to make the best of it, you know? Instead of going on misconduct, I would get out the pencil crayons, or paints, or charcoal, and I would fill my cell with art, with the art that meant the most to me, that brought out the best in me. I would post it up on my cell walls, with toothpaste. I made the best of a bad situation. I was also able to sell some of my art through the years, and enter some of my art in contests.

Laverne: You're bringing back memories. You know what I used to do? The social workers would have these pictures, pictures of women doing things like snorting cocaine, drinking a beer. I would take a piece of paper and trace the picture, and colour them. I would make the whole scene on the paper. Then I'd put the start of a sentence: "I am..." and then I'd roll the paper and pass it to someone, like the person working the canteen. And then, she'd finish the sentence. We'd pass it all along the jail cells, and make a big blog. And at the end of the day we'd read it. It was just a thing we used to do, it was always so funny! We got in trouble sometimes. But it was art! We loved it. It was my art.

Charlene: I did a bit of art when I was inside. I would always rather do the art. I would sit with just paper and pencil and sketch stuff out. It helped me to not get into trouble. I didn't want to do that, I didn't want to spend any longer in there. I stayed by myself and drew a lot of pictures.

Amina: We all often talk about how there are a lot of misconceptions about criminalized women. What is something about being a criminalized woman that is misunderstood?

April: People don't understand the poverty we live through and what actually leads us to criminal behaviour — lifelong abuse, mental illness, addiction, homelessness, the things that add up that lead to us becoming the women we are. We endure pain, and sometimes want to give back pain, we make bad choices. But the system fails to remember, we are all still human. You misjudge us, categorize us, stereotype us. There are so many artists within the system. People with so much talent, yet to be discovered. We never had the opportunity to show people that we can give anybody anything from our hearts. But look at me now, I'm a prime example. I'm a harm reduction worker, working at a safe injection site, working with other addicts — what I've been all my life. Now I have an

opportunity to give back to the community. People need to see this. People that come from these walks of life, you can't look down on us. We have voices. And our voices need to be heard.

Laverne: When I first went in, there were a lot of things that were hard. Being criminalized, being an addict, having all these labels on you, having HIV as well, they gave me a hard time. They were also confused because I was in the Native circle and also following my Muslim religion. There were a lot of rules. I kept myself busy. I never had such an unlivable situation in my life, the eleven months I was there. The last thing an officer told me was "Oh, you'll be back". I said "I'm never coming back." There are stereotypes in society: you're a criminal, you're an alcoholic, you're a drug addict, you're homeless, you're a nobody, you're not beautiful, you don't stand a chance — those things follow you. Yes, I was a criminal, yes, I was an addict, but you shouldn't label me.

Charlene: Pretty much a lot of it is misunderstood. You're labeled right away as soon as you come out. People think you're no good, you'll always be in and out of jail, you're never gonna get work. Half the time people listen to it, and, whatever. The other half of the time, there are women who just brush it off their shoulder, they don't listen to that crap. They go out there and do what they need to do: get work, get their education. That's what it's like for me.

Charlene: Art has supported my healing by helping me stay focused on something else rather than what I'm going through. It also helps for me to move forward — if I'm by myself, I do art. And if I'm not, if I'm around community, and family and friends, we can all heal together.

Amina: Can you imagine a world without prisons?

April: It would be a dream, right? As today is, no. I cannot. We need rehabilitation more than anything. We need plans for all people coming out of the system. Not to repeat the revolving door. It's a system — you go away and then you keep going around and around and around, and there's no end. It took 35 years of my life, the prison system. It didn't matter what I did, I always came out with a crack pipe in my mouth or a syringe in my arm. And of course, prostitution, crime, it's going to continue to follow. That shit is not going to change unless we make change. Sometimes I think it would be nice if we didn't have prisons. But, you know what, sometimes the prison saves your life. You

could have been in the morgue the week after, but you got arrested instead.

Laverne: Sometimes, once in a while, when my life is chaotic, I think if I'm in jail I'd have calm. Charlene: There needs to be more programs and things inside of prisons to help people get their life on track, instead of living that life over and over, in and out of jail.

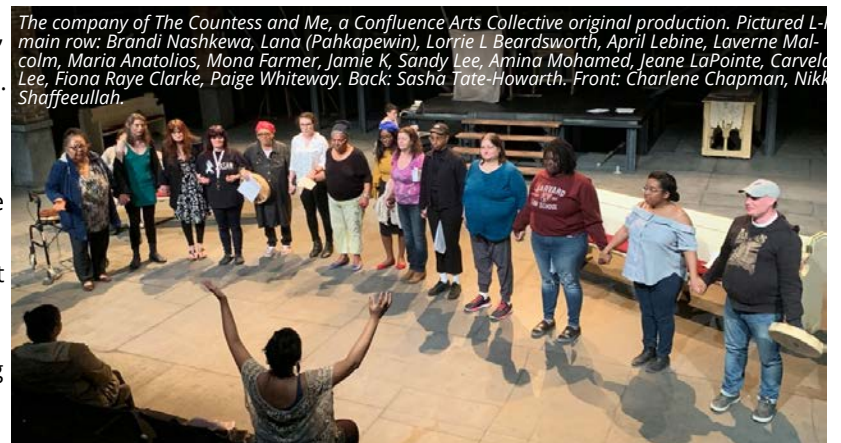
Amina: The hope seems to be that a prison is somewhere where people can rehabilitate and return to society. From my perspective, and from what you are saying, prisons aren't achieving that. What is something we can replace prisons with?

April: Rehabilitation — they don't achieve that whatsoever. Not even close. Some of the programs they offer, Substance 1, Substance 2, Anger Management, Psychology, all that shit they throw at you is a crock of shit. Anger Management made me so fucking angry. The lady facilitating it thought we were kids. "Colour the light, red, yellow, green." Am I in Romper Room here? I'm a grown ass woman. You're insulting my intelligence. I know the choices I made in my life. I know right from wrong. Some of the programs in jail degrade you as a woman, make you feel bad about yourself. Your self-esteem gets lower and lower and lower, until they got you trapped in a corner. I didn't allow the system to conquer me that way. I got my diploma. I made many good strides. I honestly believe if there's any rehabilitation done within the current system, it's just because it came from the person themselves.

Laverne: When I was there, I found it to be a joke. They always say they want to rehabilitate you. But, you open my door, and close my door, you turn off the light, you turn on the light. You do everything for me, so what "rehabilitation" do I get? If I knock on the door, will you open it? No. And, I can't open it myself because it's locked. It's a joke, when they say they are trying to rehabilitate you. I had no freedom in jail, nothing at all. They give you all these programs in jail, and what does it get you, when you get out?

April: Same place where you started.

Laverne: Exactly. I was back where I started: nowhere. I had to start all over again. Because those prison program documents, they aren't going to come with me. It's "not important" because you did it in jail, it's not recognized as being a good thing. It won't be any good when you come out. Jail is a joke, man.



The company of *The Countess and Me*, a Confluence Arts Collective original production. Pictured L-R: main row: Brandi Nashkewa, Lana (Pahkapewin), Lorrie L Beardsworth, April Labine, Laverne Malcolm, Maria Anatholios, Mona Farmer, Jamie K, Sandy Lee, Amina Mohamed, Jeane LaPointe, Carvela Lee, Fiona Raye Clarke, Paige Whiteway. Back: Sasha Tate-Howarth. Front: Charlene Chapman, Nikki Shaffeullah.

BEYOND THE WALLS: A NEW SECTION OF CELL COUNT!

By Sena Hussain, Cell Count Editor

Welcome to the newest section of Cell Count called "Beyond the Walls". This section will highlight content submitted by people who are formerly incarcerated and now living in outside communities. We hope that this section can give space to those who want to speak out against injustices they faced while inside, what life on the outside has been like, and more.

If you are someone who is formerly incarcerated and would like to submit content to Cell Count, please reach out to me via telephone, email, or drop by the office during work hours and we can talk!

Phone: 1-866-224-9978

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THE IMPORTANCE OF GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR THE PRISONER'S JUSTICE DAY MOVEMENT

By George Flowers

The Prisoner's Justice Day (PJD) movement is an important social movement that advocates for the rights of prisoners and seeks to improve their living conditions. However, the movement faces significant challenges in securing financial funding and support from the government. This essay explores the reasons why the PJD movement needs more government support and provides recommendations on how to better secure financial funding and support for the movement.

The PJD movement was first established in 1975 to commemorate the death of Eddie Nalon, a prisoner who died while in solitary confinement. Since then, the movement has grown to become an international movement that seeks to improve the living conditions of prisoners and advocate for their rights. However, the movement is often ignored or marginalized by governments and mainstream media. This lack of support makes it difficult for the movement to achieve its goals and raises the question of how to better secure financial funding and support for the PJD movement.

The Need for Government Support:

The PJD movement needs government support for several reasons. Firstly, governments have a responsibility to ensure that prisoners are treated humanely and that their rights are protected. By supporting the PJD movement, governments can demonstrate their commitment to upholding these principles and show that they take the issue of prisoner's rights seriously. Secondly, the PJD movement is often underfunded and lacks the resources needed to achieve its goals. Government funding can help the movement to build organizational capacity and increase its outreach efforts. Finally, government support can help to legitimize the PJD movement and raise its profile within

society, making it more likely that its message will be heard and acted upon.

Strategies for Securing Government Support:

To secure government support for the PJD movement, several strategies can be employed. Firstly, the movement needs to build strong relationships with politicians and policymakers at all levels of government. This can be achieved by engaging with these individuals and providing them with information about the PJD movement and its goals. Secondly, the movement needs to develop a clear and concise message that resonates with policymakers and the public. This message should highlight the importance of prisoner's rights and the need for government support.

Thirdly, the movement needs to engage in advocacy efforts that target key decision-makers and highlight the benefits of supporting the PJD movement. This can be achieved through campaigns, petitions, and other forms of public engagement.

Conclusion:

The PJD movement is an important social movement that seeks to improve the living conditions of prisoners and advocate for their rights. However, the movement faces significant challenges in securing financial funding and support from the government. To overcome these challenges, the movement needs to build strong relationships with policymakers, develop a clear and concise message, and engage in advocacy efforts that target key decision-makers. By doing so, the movement can secure the financial funding and support it needs to achieve its goals and continue to advocate for the rights of prisoners.

GAMES OF FATE

By Zakaria Amara

Last week I had to perform a poem about fate at a public library. It was going to be an elaborate performance involving a preamble, a toy bow and arrow, and 17 secretly placed envelopes under the seats of unsuspecting audience members.

Unfortunately, the subway service in the area was halted and so I had to walk all the way to the library. When I finally showed up, no one was there. Wrong date.

I tip my hat to fate.

The jokes on me.

Try again next week.

Next week comes and I show up early.

Good, I got the right date! Now I have to inform the organizer about the envelopes to avoid a misunderstanding with security.

He is not there.

Hmm...What to do?

He finally shows up after 20 minutes but some of the audience members are already starting to arrive.

He gives me the green light, I have to be stealthy and avoid detection from arriving audience members.

I start taping the envelopes but I have eyes on me. Someone is going to see something.

I'm struggling with the scotch tape that I bought from the dollar store. Even with the tiny arrows telling me where the end

of the roll begins I just can't get a grip. Story of my life.

After several tries, I finally got it.

TchSHchSHchSHkkkkk!!!!

PUK!

TchSHchSHchSHkkkkk!!!!

PUK!

Damn, this thing is loud.

I start taping envelopes beneath seats in as many different areas as possible. After awhile I notice some of the envelopes are already falling off or visibly hanging.

Never use dollar store products for important tasks!

I go back to re-tape the falling/hanging envelopes.

The envelopes I just taped also begin to hang or fall.

It's a game of Whac-A-Mole at this point!

God help me!

Some audience members start to eye me with suspicion.

Why is this guy moving around from seat to seat?

One lady catches me red handed so I just hand her the envelope and spill the beans on the operation. She is half convinced but doesn't appear intent on calling security so I continue with my business.

More hanging/falling envelopes.

This is harder than I thought.

Too many people are now here and I still have 6 envelopes left. I resign myself to fate and take a seat.

I glance at my watch and note that the program will begin in 15 minutes.

An older man greets me and begins a conversation that leads to, of all things, the reason behind the civilizational crisis of Muslims. I know where this conversation is heading. Why is this happening to me?!

I really don't want to talk to anybody right now about anything. This is my 12th hour into a day's long fast, so my patience is hanging just like that envelope I'm eyeing in row 4.

After spending 16 years in prison due to my extremist beliefs, I just can't stand discussions related to power or politics.

The man is talking, but I don't want to listen.

"Listen brother," I interrupt him, "Your interpretation of Islam seems to be obsessed with power. Some Muslim thinkers in the post-colonial era have tried to make power and politics the defining theme of Islam. The core of our religion, however, is neither about power nor politics, it's about piety. Look at the last 22 years since 9/11. How has the militants' obsession with gaining power through violence benefited Islam and Muslims? Indeed, power and politics are part of Islam, but they are not part of its defining core. If we spend more time being pious and decent human beings, as many Muslims are, then our situation will eventually change. It has to. Now please excuse me because I am presenting first and I have to prepare."

A part of me felt bad because this man was no foaming-at-the-mouth radical. He was a kind man who was simply regurgitating the ideas of post-colonial Muslim thinkers who were influenced by Marxist ideas and extremely oppressive environ-

ments.

5 minutes left.

I have no clue how to distribute the remaining envelopes.

So again, I just resign myself to fate and sit at the front row with two tote bags, one of which contains a concealed bow and arrow.

"What kind of instrument is that?" the man next to me asks, pointing to the bag.

"Hmm, it's an instrument alright, but it's not musical. I use props in my performances."

Thankfully, the man just laughs and doesn't ask anymore questions.

It's go time!

The organizer lays out the rules: No hate, violent, or abusive speech. And no more than 5 minutes per performance. He then calls out my name.

Holding the bow and arrow in one hand, I go up to the mic wearing a white T-shirt with "Hey Humans" written across the front.

"Nothing is going as planned today! Maybe it's due to the topic at hand. Oh! And if you are wondering what this is for," I say holding up the bow and arrow, "it's for you, Will,"

I walk over to the organizer and place the weapon in his hand.

"If I go over 5 minutes, just shoot me!"

The audience erupts with laughter.

"Ok, secondly, please forgive me, but I have to leave at 7 o'clock because I am fasting. So please don't interpret my leaving as a snub to the rest of the performers."

I can feel the audience's sympathy.

"Oh, and by the way, this is my fasting face. I am usually way more handsome than this!"

More laughter.

"Okay, so what was I here for?" I ask, genuinely forgetting the actual topic.

"Oh! Yes! I am here to present a poem about an idea that most of you probably don't believe in. I am here to talk about the idea of fate; as in F.A.T.E, as in predestination; as in everything happens for a reason; as in we are all Kings, Queens, Bishops, Rooks, and Pawns on the Chess Board of Destiny, and that while we may all have the freedom to make a variety of moves, we are ultimately limited by the parameters of the Chess board. Having said that, I have placed a number of envelopes under some of your seats so please check to see if you have been chosen by fate."

Excitement is buzzing through the audience.

"And don't worry, for those of you who didn't find anything, I got 6 more envelopes in my bag,"

I am improvising at this point.

"Who here has the letter Z in their first or last name?"

Only one person raises their hand.

"Alright, let's make this easier. How about a B in your first or last name,"

"Did you say V or B," someone in the audience asks.

"B! We gotta do this quickly or I'll get shot!"

They laugh again.

I finally deliver the mail and return to the mic.

"Okay, don't open the envelopes yet. For those in the audience who didn't get anything, please let me explain. So the envelopes contain a symbolic ring that participants are supposed to wear or simply hold on to as a reminder to take on a goal or an obstacle that has been dogging them for a long time. For the next month, I want you to obsessively focus on this task emotionally, mentally, and physically. Then, once the month is over, I want you to look back and assess what role fate may have played in your pursuit. Steve Jobs once famously said that in life, "you can't connect the dots looking forward, you can only connect them looking backwards."

"And now, without further ado, here is my poem..."

My fate,
hangs around my neck,
like a necklace.

My life is an outline of a portrait,
drawn by God,
that I must pain with my deeds.

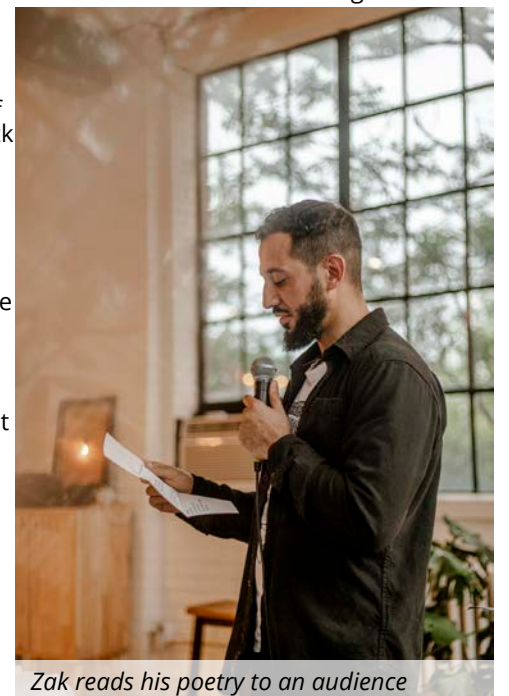
Freewill and Fate,
are like twin horses,
that we ride standing,
not knowing which is which,
until the race is over.

There can be no peace,
no rest,
and no stillness of the mind
without embracing destiny.
Wholehearted surrender...

Glimpsing into the secrets of the universe,
"Maktoob," the Arabs said,
"It is written."

Your life,
and your death;
your sorrows,
and your joys;
every grain of rice,
and every golden coin,
on its way to you,
was marked with your name,
50,000 years before existence.

What hit you was never meant to miss you,
and what missed you was never meant to hit you.
The pens of destiny have been lifted,
and their ink has long dried.



Zak reads his poetry to an audience

KAITLYN HUNTER (A SURVIVOR)

A Love Story

You've had me since I was 16 years old,
I always obeyed and done as I was told.

You went and dragged me through the
mud & dirt,
Always causing me so much pain and
hurt.

You promised that you'd always be
around,
And my fears of loneliness wouldn't let
me put you down.

Every time I get the strength to try and
walk away,
There you'd be, begging me to stay.

Looking so good who could really resist?
All it ever took was that first kiss.

Then I'm yours again a pawn at your will,
You give me some but never enough to
fill.

This hole in me caused from so much
pain,
You said you could cure it but only tried
in vain.

You helped at first, at least I thought you
did,
You quenched my thirst but who am I to
fib?

Things got worse I didn't know what was
real,
After numbing so long I forgot how to
feel.

You taunt me now, every day and night,
I am getting stronger and now I know
how to fight.

I will see you soon, just around the bend,
This time is different, you are not my
friend.

This time I'll crush you, this fight is to the
death,
I'll see the last of you, good-bye Crystal
Meth.

Time to Wake Up

I think it's finally time for me to wake up
Start to worry about things other than
how to get my cake up
Cause thinking that way has only ever
brought me trouble
And every time I get knocked my time
seems to double
Not too long ago I was making chops
down the alley
Now I'm wasting life just sitting in Grand
Valley
Never did I think this was the life I was
meant to live
I really need to stop giving all I have to
give
They say you know your friends when
you're doing time
The way they disappear should really be
a crime
With so many fake is there anybody real?
Cause I'm really fucking sick of feeling
how I feel!
A real Ride or Die, no limit to what I'd do
Yet never has a man stayed to see my
sentence through
I can finally see this just isn't what I want
for me
So nothings gonna stop me the next time
I get free!

FORGOTTEN WARRIOR

Endless Prison Nitez

therez not a week that goez by
when I either don't see blood or I don't

hear of yet another murder or suicide in
this hell

No matter how hard I push myself
Sleep never comez easily 2 me
in these endless prison nitez

Even my imagination seemz 2 be
locked the fuck up - I only seez
barz, violence and emptiness, as
the dayz, monthz, seasonz and
then yearz melt in 2 one another

The excess stress, edginess, sleeplessness
paranoia - the irritability, tearz and
loneliness never seemz 2 end - the want
of love, acceptingness and emotional
release

In these endless prison nitez

KENNETH WHITEMAN

"Nightmare"

As I breathe in fumes of my resin encrust-
ed bowl
Fear grips me as shapes of unknown enti-
ties surround me
The acrid scent of toxic smoke permeates
the air
Filling the room in a thick blanket of
obscurity
Shapes take form and I'm convinced I'm
not alone
Faint voices seem to beckon me from the
gloom
I reach for a weapon to defend myself
But my only adversary is me, alone in this
room
The walls close in around me
And reality settles in
As another nightmare comes to pass
Another day begins

MICKEY LA COURSE

Mastermind

When in jail I never fail to believe that I'm
still free
And in my cell I can always tell that my mind
belongs to me
The warden shows he thinks he knows that
solitude is my only need
So keys will turn and one will learn that
lessons for their deeds
I just smile all this while they keep me in this
pen
For in my mind I'm not confined to think as
lonely men
To live to love to laugh to myself I will be
kind
For I'm still free and I always be the master
of my mind.

M. ZAMMIT CONT'D FROM PG 11

If you wish and dream for love and redemp-
tion in a world that so needs it, then clench
your fists, raise them high and scream to the
heavens above, "Bury all Racism, Defeat all
Racists, bury it and them deep and forever."
Shout towards the universe of Moons
and when you finally allow yourself to
dream past your exhaustion, take yourself
to a place that bigotry and racism are not
even words that exist. Ask your powers, the
powers you never knew you had, to take you
back and repent, re-do, re-work and repeat.
Rid the world of coward bullies, racists, big-
ots, wipe the slate of hate and allow yourself
an eye for an eye with no fear of retaliation
or punishments.

False forgiveness and fake fluidity from
frumpy friends who fly off the handle to be
at your side, allegedly to fight in your corner
are spoken about you in regards to your
personality, face, intelligence or family.
Who needs them?
Right?

Bonds are broken at best when beauti-
ful beats are pounded into your soul. Your

broken soul of Angels in a basic society that
has already botched birds nests because the
feed in the houses was met with gravel and
gorilla glue compressed with dusted pills
which back-handedly killed the feathered
fucks so they'd stop shitting on the elitist
pigs' Rolls Royce.
Eat the Rich!
Then Vomit!

Why do institutions and in-laws lie to ice
cream filled inbreeds? Then promise them
internal freedom and interracial fixes the
state they will fix the ones they choose to
lock away, ignore and then forget about.
Burn their rights!

131/2!
Flag it, Melt it, Cook it, hit it, Fuck it. Yes!
Euphoria
Peaceful, useful, worthy, trusting, cared for,
loved and needed...

Harm Reduction
Our Father, No Father, God Father, Whose
Father? Where's Father? Father May I? Fake
Father
Father Joseph Wasik
Pedophile

If all words had meaning in the order that
was meant to be, then quite possibly my
life would support some sort of meaning, a
meaning of which I could take some pride
in, a meaning that would have made my
mother proud of me.
Instead
Shame surrounds my soul, my mind, my
minds eye and the memory of the me my
mother took to her grave.
I'm sorry Mama

Consume yourself with the judgement
of me, the judgement of me at every turn.
From sun up to Moonshine you glare
through me and empty my soul to the point
that I dream of an ending that leaves you
laying deathly still and painfully burning to
ash and nothing less.

What I eat and wear, whom I have be-
friended and who I have chosen to call fami-
ly or foe, you seem to find the need to judge
me and my every action & motive. If my
life's path ills you so much, then please go
and fuck yourself, look into a mirror and ask
yourself "what makes you so much better
than "I" or anyone else for that matter? How
is it that your shit is odourless and does not
stink? Because if in fact it's true, you should
market it asshole!

Perfection is a perfect mixture of love, joy
and happiness and of course beauty and
respect. So read the ingredients, follow the
recipe, pre-heat the oven and step aside.
Now allow someone to judge you and all
that you are, wear and breathe. Your faults,
failures, wins and losses and see how you
like it. Trust me, you will not.

Sugar Beach,
Crystal Beach,
Cherry Beach
Crystal on the beach
Wasaga Beach,
Sauble Beach,
WhiteRockNudeBeach

Miami Beach
Hanlans Point Nude Beach
Sex on the Beach
Take it off,
Get it off,
All on the beach

They say that pain is temporary, only tem-
porary. Yet, this trauma that has ruled my
days for as long as my body has exchanged
oxygen for life has no intent on slowing
down or lessening. A fucking painful and
lonely journey for 42 fucking years that forc-
es mental and so much emotional damage
unto my already dying soul, blackened heart
and drug-riddled mind and yes, my will or
loss of will, to live.

Men, or so-called men, preach to me
about topics like survival, appreciation and
fucking acceptance, yet in the same breath,
they stuff their face with the exact item my
mind and body crave, but their rules do not
allow, and with a black tooth grin, smile and
watch me squirm and jonez like the piece of
shit they see me to be. They hold no love or
will for me to get well, for I am only a pay-
cheque to these rookies who are catching
an easy ride off my pain and possible death.

A man or woman who can sit and watch
another twist and suffer painfully in the wind
and not offer even a pennywise solution or
temporary sanction to stop the suffering
while they collect a cheque do not deserve
to know the feeling of real love, loyalty,
honour and respect. They deserve nothing
more than fear, bitterness, anger and a life
of self-loathing, cowardice and disgust.

At 52 years old and the love of my life
doing life in prison and my best friend/
mother passed. Should a man with over
half a century of life experience take the
"oh so" obviously regurgitated advice from
a 25 year old rookie wannabe copper who
claims to know the world is round because
he hasn't fallen down yet and probably still
lives with his parents?

Should know it all, fix-it jailhouse lawyers
and shrinks who have never suffered at the
hands of a goof pedophile be allowed to
even offer their version of sound advice on
the topics of abuse and addiction without
catching a beating? Or should all these
clowns just shut their pieholes and realize
that because they wear a uniform, that does
not make them smart. New school guards
are nothing more than glorified key turners.
Why do you think the Toronto South is the
only jail in Ontario that can't run properly?
They got more than enough staff but no
one wants to work there. Their Management
has an average age of 28. The old school
Don, West, Mimico guards (you know, the
good ones we all love and miss), they ain't
stupid. They take their slots, their hours,
escorts, and they're out. They don't wanna
manage the Sandbox/Toybox/Playground
that is the South, and I don't blame them.

Bring back The Don, The West, The Game
and The Respect.

This is a mixture of excerpts from my life,
my poems, some stories, some rants, etc.
It's a breakdown of a book of poetry, rants,
quotes, sayings, memories and such from
my life and it will be called "Strange Voices
and The Ghosts that Haunt," I hope you
all enjoyed it. It is dedicated to the great-
est love I've ever held, "My Mother Anna
Zammit," My Baba and one of best friends
"Bosnia". I love and miss all of you, RIP.



Outreach & Support Schedule

Currently, as places are opening up slowly, we are also starting to do some one-on-one visits and limited capacity programs at a small number of provincial and federal institutions. Please keep an eye out for posters or call us at: **1-866-224-9978 for up-to-date information about when and where we are coming in.**

As things open back up in Ontario on the outside, we are increasing the number of days we are in the office. We are available Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm EST (to reach a specific staff member please dial **1-866-224-9978** followed by the extension):
Amina Mohamed x231
Women's Community Program Coordinator
Anton McCloskey x236
Federal In-Reach Community Development Coordinator
Jennifer Porter x235
Harm Reduction Program Manager

TBA
Harm Reduction Community Care Coordinator
Cherisa Shivcharran x233
Provincial Community Development Coordinator
Claudia Vergara x222
Federal In-Reach Community Development Coordinator
Claudia Medina x227
Program Manager
Eveline Allen x238
Regional Prison In-Reach Coordinator
Susan Shumba x239
POWER Project Coordinator

Janet Rowe x225
Executive Director
Kavita Maharaj x243
Harm Reduction Program Coordinator
Chance Cordon x230
Provincial HepC Program Coordinator
Sena Hussain x234
Communications & Resource Dev Coordinator
Trevor Gray x232
Community Programs Coordinator
You can reach us by mail at: PASAN, 526 Richmond St E, Toronto, ON M5A 1R3

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 - cancelled for now
- 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 91st 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.

Publisher: PASAN
 526 Richmond St E, Toronto, ON M5A 1R3
 Circulation: 700+ - Recirculation: ???

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

Fair Dealing in the Canadian Copyright Act:

Sections 29, 29.1, 29.2: "Fair dealing for the purpose of research, private study, education, parody, satire, criticism, review, and news reporting does not infringe copyright."

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

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

ATTENTION PRISON FAMILIES!!!!

MAIL YOUR LETTERS STRAIGHT FROM YOUR CELLPHONE.

You can send:

- Letters
- Photos
- Visiting/CPIC Forms
- Puzzles
- Workout Routines
- And more.....
- In just minutes

ALL VISITING AND APPLICATION
FORMS ARE
FREE!!!

www.post2prison.com

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

CONTACT NUMBERS

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

NEXT CELL COUNT DEADLINE

Please get your next submissions in by September 15th! If you submissions didn't make it into this issue, it will be prioritized for the next. Same with future submissions! So don't hesitate to send it in!

NEW CELL COUNT EVALUATIONS

Please take a few minutes to complete the evaluation form we've included with this issue and mail it back to us. We use these evaluations to make sure that Cell Count is useful to you and so our funders know we're on the right track. Call us if you would like to do your evaluation over the phone instead! **1-866-224-9978**

NEW CELL COUNT PEER LIAISONS

Cell Count is looking for peer liaisons who are currently incarcerated to be a representative for Cell Count inside. You would be responsible for gathering subscribers, letting us know when subscribers have moved, encouraging people to submit their work, helping with evaluations, and answering general questions. Call Sena if you're interested! 1-866-224-9978x234

EAST COAST

ALLY CENTRE
Take collect calls
150 Bentinck St, Sydney, NS, B1P
1G6 902-567-1766

AIDS COALITION of NOVA SCOTIA
Accept collect calls
1675 Bedford Row, Halifax, NS, B3J
1T11-800-566-2437, 902-425-4882

**AIDS COMMITTEE of NEWFOUND-
LAND & LABRADOR**
Take collect calls
47 Janeway Place, St. John's, NL, A1A
1R7 1-800-563-1575

AIDS NEW BRUNSWICK
65 Brunswick St, Fredericton, NB, E3B
1G51-800-561-4009, 506-459-7518

AIDS PEI
Take collect calls
2-375 University Ave, Charlottetown,
PE, C1A 4N4 902-566-2437

AIDS SAINT JOHN
Don't accept collect calls
115 Hazen St, NB, E2L 3L3 506-652-
2437

BOOKS BEYOND BARS
P.O. Box 33129
Halifax, NS
B3L 4T6

HEALING OUR NATIONS:
1-800 565 4255
3-15 Alderney Dr, Dartmouth, NS,
B2Y 2N21-800-565-4255, 902-492-4255

MAINLINE NEEDLE EXCHANGE
Calls from within Nova Scotia are free
Don't accept collect calls
5511 Cornwallis St, Halifax, NS, B3K
1B3 902-423-9991

SHARP ADVICE NEEDLE EXCHANGE
Accept collect calls
150 Bentrack St, Sydney, NS, B1P
6H1 902-539-5556 (Collect)

SIDA/AIDS MONCTON
Accept collect calls as long as they're
HIV related
80 Weldon St, Moncton, NB, E1C
5V8 506-859-9616

QUEBEC

CACTUS
Accept collect calls
1300 rue Sanguinet, Montreal, H2X
3E7 514-847-0067

**CENTRE for AIDS SERVICES MON-
TREAL (Women)**
Accept collect calls
1750 Rue Saint-Andre, 3rd Flr, Mon-
treal, H2L 3T81-877-847-3636, 514-495-
0990

**COALITION des ORGANISMESCOM-
MUNAUTAIRES QUEBECOIS de
LUTTECONTRE le SIDA (COCQSIDA)**
Accept collect calls
1 est, rue Sherbrooke, Montréal, H2X
3V8 514-844-2477

**COMITÉ des PERSONNES ATTEINTES
du VIH du QUEBEC (CPAVIH)**
1-800-927-2844
2075 rue Plessis bureau 310, Montre-
al, H2L 2Y4 1-800-927-2844

ONTARIO

**2-SPIRITED PEOPLE of the 1ST
NATIONS**
Accept collect calls
145 Front Street East Suite 105
Toronto, Ontario M5A 1E3 416-944-

9300

**AFRICANS in PARTNERSHIP
AGAINST AIDS**
No collect calls, call PASAN
526 Richmond St E, Toronto, M5A
1R3 416-924-5256

**AIDS COMMITTEE of CAMBRIDGE,
KITCHENER, WATERLOO & AREA**
Accept collect calls
Have a toll-free number
2B-625 King St E, Kitchener, N2G
4V4 519-570-3687 (Collect), 1-877-
770-3687

AIDS COMMITTEE OF GUELPH
Accept collect calls, prefer that peo-
ple use their
89 Dawson Rd, Unit 113, Guelph,
N1H 3X2 1-800-282-4505; 519-763-
2255 (Collect)

**AIDS COMMITTEE of NORTH BAY
and AREA**
Accept collect calls
201-269 Main St W, North Bay, P1B
2T8 705-497-3560 (Collect)

AIDS COMMITTEE OF OTTAWA
700-251 Bank St, Ottawa, K2P
1X3 613-238-5014 (Collect) or Toll
Free (ON & QC only) 1-800-461-2182

AIDS COMMITTEE of THUNDER BAY
574 Memorial Ave, Thunder Bay,
P7B 3Z2 1-800-488-5840, 807-345-
1516 (Collect)

POSITIVE LIVING NIAGARA
Accept collect calls from registered
clients
(Recommend that you get a case
manager to get registered with them)
111 Church St, St Catharines, L2R
3C9 905-984-8684 or toll free 1-800-
773-9843

**ANISHNAWBE HEALTH AIDS PRO-
GRAM**
No collect calls
255 Queen St E, Toronto, M5A
1S4 416-360-0486

ASIAN COMMUNITY AIDS SERVICE
When prisoners call, they offer them
small bursaries to cover their calling
fees
107-33 Isabella St, Toronto, M4Y
2P7 416-963-4300 (Collect)

**BLACK COALITION for AIDS PRE-
VENTION**
Accept collect calls
20 Victoria St, 4th Flr, Toronto, M5C
2N8 416-977-9955 (Collect)

**CANADIAN HIV/AIDS LEGAL NET-
WORK**
Accept collect calls
1240 Bay St #600, Toronto, M5R 2A7 416-
595-1666 (Collect)

FIFE HOUSE
Accepts collect calls
490 Sherbourne St, 2nd Flr, Toronto,
M4X 1K9
416-205-9888

**HIV & AIDS LEGAL CLINIC OF ON.
(HALCO)**
Accept collect calls
55 University Avenue, Suite 1400
Toronto, ON, M5J 2H7 1-888-705-
8889

**HIV/AIDS REGIONAL SERVICES
(HARS)**
Accept collect calls
844-A Princess St, Kingston, K7L
1G5 613-545-3698 (Collect)

ONTARIO ABORIGINAL HIV/AIDS

STRATEGY
Accept collect calls
844-A Princess St, Kingston, K7L
1G5 613-549-7540 (Collect)

PEEL HIV/AIDS NETWORK
Accept collect calls
160 Traders Blvd, Unit 1, Mississauga,
L4Z 3K7
1-866-896-8700, 905-361-0523 (Col-
lect)

**PETERBOROUGH AIDS RESOURCE
NETWORK (PARN)**
Accept collect calls
302-159 King St, Peterborough,
K9J 2R81-800-361-2895, 705-932-
9110 (Collect)

STREET HEALTH CENTRE
Accept collect calls
Hepatitis C Treatment Program 235
Wellington St, Kingston, K7K 0B5 613-
549-1440 (Collect)

THE AIDS NETWORK (TAN)
Don't accept collect calls
101-140 King St E, Hamilton, L8N
1B2 905-528-0854 toll free 1-866-
563-0563

THE WORKS
Accept collect calls
277 Victoria St, Toronto, 416-392-
0520 (Collect)

TORONTO PWA FOUNDATION
Accept collect calls from clients
200 Gerrard St E, 2nd Flr, Toronto,
M5A 2E6 416-506-1400

**Toronto Community Hep C Pro-
gram**
Accept collect calls
955 Queen Street East, Toronto, M4M
3P3
416-461-1925 (Collect only on Tues-
day & Friday, 11am-5pm)
Once out, please call 416-417-6135

John Howard Society of Toronto
1-866-265-4434

Black Legal Action
720 Spadina Ave. #221, Toronto, ON
M5S 2T9 (416) 597-5831

PRAIRIES

HIV COMMUNITY LINK
Accept collect calls
110-1603 10th Ave SW, Calgary, AB,
T3C 0J7 403-508-2500

AIDS SASKATOON
1143 Ave F N, Saskatoon, SK, S7L 1X1306-
242-5005 1-800-667-6876

**CENTRAL ALBERTA AIDS NET-
WORK SOCIETY**
No collect calls
4611 50th Ave, Red Deer, AB, T4N
3Z9 403-346-8858

HIV EDMONTON
9702 111 Ave NW, Edmonton, AB,
T5G 0B1 1-877-388-5742

**KIMAMOW ATOSKANOW FOUNDA-
TION**
Accept collect calls
RR 1, Site 1, Box 133, Onoway, AB,
T0E 1V01-866-971-7233, 780-913-9036

**NINE CIRCLES COMMUNITY
HEALTH CENTRE**
705 Broadway, Winnipeg, MB, R3G
0X2 1-888-305-8647

**PLWA NETWORK OF SASKATCHE-
WAN**
No collect calls
Box 7123, Saskatoon, SK, S7K
411 306-373-7766

OUT SASKATOON
213 Avenue C S, Saskatoon, SK S7M
1N3
306-665-1224

**PRINCE ALBERT METIS WOMEN'S
ASSOC.**
No collect calls
54 10th St E, Prince Albert, SK, S6V
0Y5 306-763-5356

**RED RIBBON PLACE
(ALL NATIONS HOPE AIDS NET-
WORK)**
2735 5th Ave, Regina, SK, S4T
0L2 1-877-210-7622

STREET CONNECTIONS

No collect calls
705 Broadway Ave, Winnipeg, MB,
R3G 0X2 204-940-2504 WOMEN: 50
Argyle, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 0H6 204-
943-6379

WEST COAST

AIDS VANCOUVER ISLAND
Accepts collect calls. 713 Johnson
St, 3rd Flr, Victoria, V8W 1M8 250-
384-2366 or 1-800-665-2437

LINC
33270 14th Ave, Mission, BC, V2V 4Z7
1-877-424-4242 (BC only)

CAAN
6520 Salish Dr, Vancouver, BC V6N
2C7 (604) 266-7616

NATIONAL

**CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF ELIZA-
BETH FRY SOCIETIES (Women)**
701-151 Slater St.
Ottawa, ON
K1P 5H3
(613) 238-2422

BRAIN INJURY ASSOC OF CANADA
440 Laurier Ave. West, Suite 200
Ottawa, ON K1R 7X6 Toll-free: 1-866-
977-2492

CATIE
1-800-263-1638
555 Richmond St W #505, Toronto,
ON M5V 3B1

NEW LIFE PRISON MINISTRIES
P.O. Box 123
Arva, ON
N0M 1C0
Aftercare support: 1-888-842-6898

PRISONER-SPECIFIC

**TORONTO PRISONERS' RIGHTS
PROJECT** (Runs the Prisoner Emer-
gency Support Fund)
PO Box 291 Toronto P Toronto, ON
M5S 2S8

**PRISONERS UNITED ORGANIZA-
TION**
PO Box 30009, Greenbank North PO,
Ottawa, ON, K2H 1A3

**BLACK INMATES & FRIENDS ASSEM-
BLY**
2518 Eglinton Avenue W, Toronto,
ON, M6M 1T1 ph (416) 652-3131

SMAAC.org
The Saskatchewan-Manitoba-Alberta
Abolition Coalition is an alliance of
groups from across the prairie prov-
inces who collaborate and organize
together on issues of prison and
police abolition.

**EAST COAST PRISON JUSTICE SO-
CIETY**
6061 University Ave, PO Box 15000
Halifax, NS, B3H 4R2
www.eastcoastprisonjustice.ca

**West Coast Prison
Justice Society/
Prisoners' Legal Services**
302-7818 6th Street
Burnaby, BC
604-636-0470

OTHER SUBSCRIPTIONS

OUT OF BOUNDS MAGAZINE
6000 William Head Rd, Victoria, BC
V9C 0B5

**JOURNAL OF PRISONERS ON PRIS-
ONS**
c/o Justin Piché, PhD, Dept of Crimi-
nology University of Ottawa, Ottawa,
ON, K1N 6N5

PRISON FREE PRESS
PO Box 39 Stn P Toronto ON M5S 2S6

**HOMINUM (newsletter for gay,
bisexual & questioning men)**
#7—11438 Best Street
Maple Ridge, BC V2X 0V1
Art - 604-477-9553

PRISON BOOK PROGRAMS

**Books To
Prisoners
OPIRG-Car-
leton**
326 UniCenter
Carleton
University
Ottawa, ON.
K1S 5B6
(613) 520-
2757

**Books 2
Prisoners**
PO Box
78005, 1755
East Broad-
way
Vancouver,
BC
V5N 5W1
604-682-3269
x3019

**Books Be-
yond Bars**
PO Box
33129
Halifax NS
B3L 4T6
902-446-1788

**Open Door
Books (ODB)**
c/o QPIRG
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sonneuve O
Montreal,
Quebec
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Write ON!
Supporting prisoners through correspondence

**INCARCERATED IN CANADA?
NEED INFORMATION?**

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

Who are we?
We are a group of
community volunteers who
help to support prisoners
in having platonic, safe,
and meaningful pen pal
connections.

write to us!
A FREE, PLATONIC
PEN PAL PROGRAM FOR
FEDERAL PRISONERS

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social justice, anti-racism,
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Box 873
New Westminster, BC
V3M 6V3

Ontario & Atlantic Region
Penn2Paper
455 Danforth Ave
Box 429
Toronto, ON
M4K 1P1

send us a note to one of
these addresses depending on
your location

TPRP JAIL HOTLINE
(416) 775-9239

MONDAY, WEDNESDAY,
FRIDAY, SATURDAY
9-11AM - 2-4PM

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TORONTO SOUTH DETENTION CTR.
VANIER CENTRE FOR WOMEN
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**THE JAIL HOTLINE IS FREE!
FOR PRISONERS SEEKING
ADVOCACY, REFERRALS,
INFORMATION + SUPPORT!**