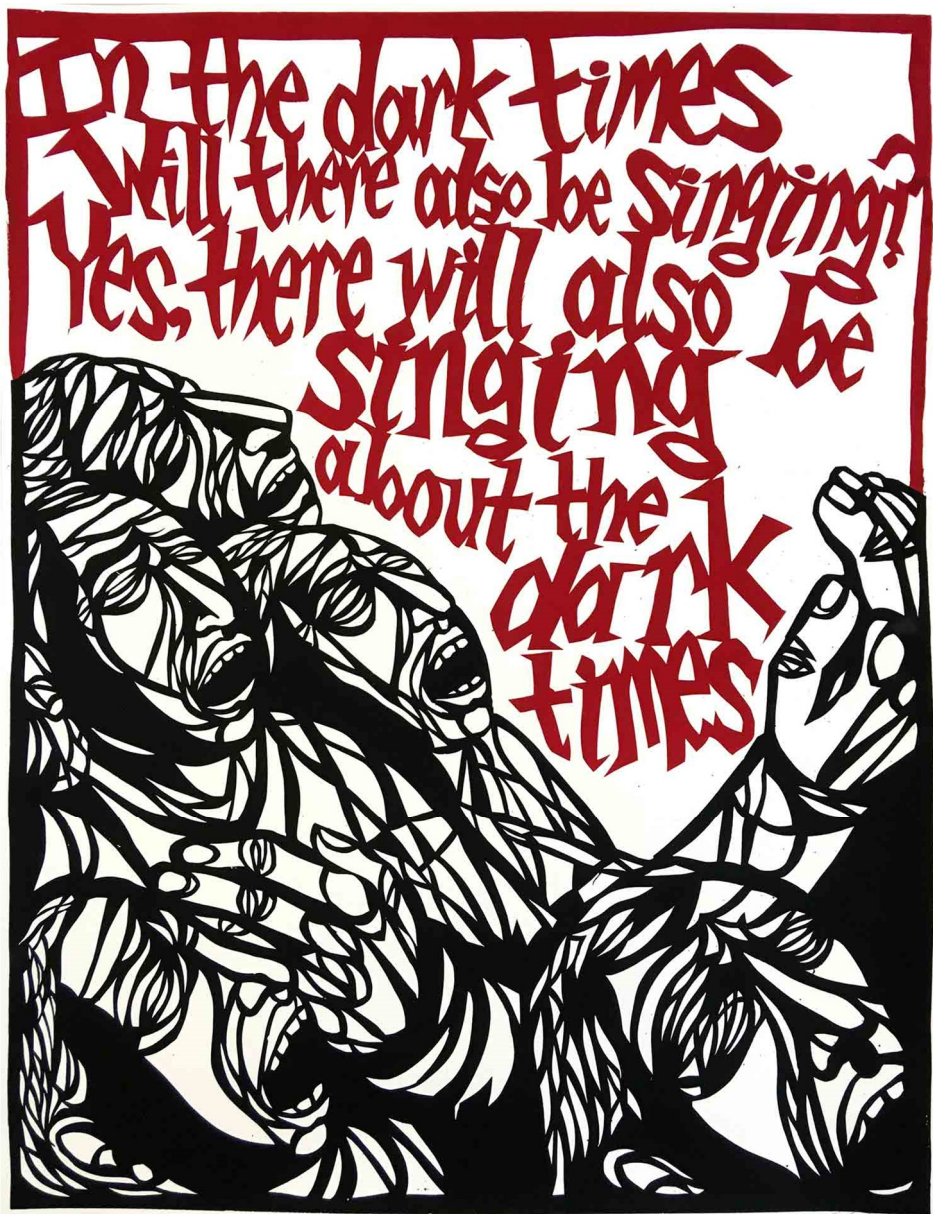


Class Action News



Issue 31 ~ Fall 2023

< *Editor's Note* >

It is Fall & Issue #31 of
'Class Action News'.

This zine is by & for the
'Prisoner Class' on Treaty
Lands with Canada.



In every Issue we provide a safe space for
creative expression, informative news & support
resources. These zines feature art, poetry,
stories, news, observations, concerns, & anything
of sincere value to share.

Health & Harm Reduction info will always be
provided, of course - Yes, Do Be Safe!

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please do consider a donation.

It really, really does help to get this inside!

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Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms

- The right of life, liberty and security of person (Section 7).
- The right not to be arbitrarily detained (Section 9).
- The right not to be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment (Section 12).
- The right to be equal before and under the law (Section 15).

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≈ 'Dish With One Spoon' Treaty ≈

Prison is, simply put,
the bottom rung of the welfare ladder.
- Stephen Reid

Prison is the only form of public housing that the
government has truly invested in over the past 5
decades.

- Marc Lamont Hill

Quebec court authorizes class action against new isolation system in federal prisons

A Quebec Superior Court judge has authorized a class-action lawsuit on behalf of federal prisoners in Quebec who were held in segregation units for more than 15 days after November 2019.

Lawyers for Daniel Fournier, the representative plaintiff, say he was subject to cruel and unusual punishment when he was held in segregation units for 40 consecutive days in 2019 and 2020, never knowing when he would be released back into the general population.

The transfer "caused the plaintiff to experience symptoms of depression and increased anxiety attacks; he now requires psychological counselling," Fournier's lawyers Justin Wee, Justine Monty and Alain Arsenault wrote in their request for a class action.

"Detainees placed in solitary confinement can suffer psychological and physical disorders that can be long-lasting and irreversible from the very first day of isolation," they write.

"Prolonged isolation has negative consequences on the detainee's reintegration into the prison population, on his rehabilitation and increases the risk of recidivism.

The federal government argued against allowing the class action, telling the court that Fournier doesn't have grounds for a lawsuit as an individual, let alone as part of a class action.

Justice Department lawyers argued that significant changes were made to segregation units in November 2019 after courts in British Columbia and Ontario found that solitary confinement for more than 15 days was unconstitutional.

Court documents indicate they said inmates held in the new facilities, called Structured Intervention Units, are able to spend four hours a day outside their cell, including two hours during which they have opportunities to interact with other people.

This means, they argued, that the new system doesn't involve solitary confinement - defined by the United Nations as being alone in a cell for at least 22 hours a day - and that even extended periods in an SIU are constitutional.

New standards for isolation aren't being met: reports

Fournier, who is currently serving a 14-year sentence for robbery and using a fake firearm in the commission of his crimes, was transferred to an SIU after he threatened to harm himself and others.

Because the medium-security prison where he was being held didn't have an SIU, he was placed on restricted movement - a type of lockdown with similar conditions to the SIU - for three days before his transfer to a maximum security prison where he would spend another 37 days in the SIU.

The government argued that he was placed in the segregated facility because of his own actions and was generally allowed to have four hours a day outside his cell.

Included in the evidence introduced by Fournier's lawyers were several reports that found the new standards aren't being met.

Almost 80% of inmates in SIU facilities, according to one of the reports, were regularly unable to have four hours outside their cell every day and nearly 40 per cent were never given four hours outside their cell at all.

In his July 28 decision authorizing the class action, Justice Christian Immer found there were arguable questions about whether periods of detention in SIU or restricted movement of more than 15 days violated Charter protections against cruel and unusual punishment.

He also found there were questions about whether those periods of detention violated the Quebec Civil Code. But he rejected a portion of the lawsuit which argued the periods of segregation had violated Fournier's Charter rights to life, liberty and security of person.

The authorized class action lawsuit, which will now be heard on its merits, includes all federal prisoners in Quebec who were detained in a SIU or placed on restricted movement for more than 15 consecutive days after the new system came into effect on Nov. 30, 2019.

Jacob Serebrin
CBC News
Aug 08, 2023

Please try to remember that what they believe, as well as what they do and cause you to endure does not testify to your inferiority but to their inhumanity.
- James Baldwin

Canadian prisons need international oversight to prevent human rights violations

Today, Canada will receive an assessment of its human rights record as part of the United Nations' Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Every UN member state undergoes a UPR assessment, which invites "relevant stakeholders" such as national human rights institutions to provide documentation about the human rights successes and failures of the state under review.

In that spirit, the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) made a submission to the UPR that focused on "situations where people are deprived of their liberty." Ultimately, the CHRC recommended that Canada ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT), which would enable "ongoing and enhanced independent oversight, monitoring and reporting in all places of detention" to ensure that Canada meets its human rights commitments in facilities such as jails and prisons.

We at the John Howard Society of Canada (JHSC), an organization committed to protecting the human rights of incarcerated people in this country, support the CHRC's call for Canada to ratify the OPCAT. We believe that oversight from an international body is needed in this country because we frequently hear from incarcerated people whose human rights have been violated, including from people whose treatment in Canadian prisons amounts to torture.

According to the Canadian Criminal Code, torture "means any act or omission by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person." Yet the application of this definition isn't straightforward in jails and prisons, which are by nature punitive and violent but also secretive. Excessive institutional violence, including torture, is often hard for outsiders to identify and easy for officials to rationalize.

Consider, for example, Canada's continued use of solitary confinement. In 2019, the Supreme Court found that administrative segregation, a form of solitary confinement used in Canadian prisons, was cruel and unconstitutional. According to the UN's Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Rules 43 and 44), prolonged solitary confinement, which many

imprisoned people experienced in administrative segregation, met the definition of torture. And so, to great fanfare, the federal government passed Bill C-83, which introduced structured intervention units (SIUs) to separate prisoners and, in theory, ensure that they were not isolated for extended periods of time.

Yet a 2021 report found that prolonged solitary confinement continued to be used in Canada's prisons, and imprisoned people tell us that the practice persists today. The structured intervention units were only a rebranding that obscured torture; like a new dust sheet covering an old chair, it served to soften the rough edges and distort the details.

At JHSC, we hear from Canadian prisoners who have been subjected to other cruelties that meet the definition of torture, but their experiences go largely unreported. Sometimes, these cruelties form a pattern, indicating that they aren't isolated acts of brutality but are instead, at some level, established practices.

For example, some imprisoned people tell us that guards have refused to provide them with their prescribed medication, including for pain. Although seemingly passive, withholding pain medication constitutes torture under the Criminal Code because it is the intentional infliction of "pain and suffering" through "omission."

Imprisoned people have also described how guards at some facilities have intentionally locked prisoners who are known enemies, such as rival gang members, between two safety doors, caging them together to coerce them to fight. This practice, called "double dooring," is used by guards to intimidate, coerce, or punish disobedient prisoners. Double dooring did receive some media exposure in a 2017 report about harassment at the Edmonton Institution maximum-security prison, but in that case, it was only discussed as a practice used by guards to intimidate other guards. That this cruel practice has a history of being used against imprisoned people has gone largely unrecognized.

OPCAT's review of Canada's detention facilities would help protect imprisoned Canadians against these and other forms of torture and cruelty because international oversight can affect domestic policy. International attention to segregation and racial violence in the 1950s and 1960s, for instance, helped force U.S. politicians

to pass legislation like the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act.

Ultimately, ratifying the OPCAT would help safeguard this country's human rights obligations as established in agreements such as the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and clarify Canadian values both domestically and internationally. It would also give Canada the moral authority to demand that other countries be similarly transparent to international oversight. That, after all, is what Canadian leadership on the world stage should look like.

Catherine Latimer
Globe and Mail
Aug 7, 2023

Nova Scotia becomes first province to stop holding immigration detainees

Nova Scotia has become the first province to stop holding immigration detainees on behalf of the federal government.

Canada Border Services Agency says the province ended the practice of housing migrants in its jails on Aug. 8.

Other provinces have said they would stop holding immigration detainees, including British Columbia and Alberta.

However, both of those provinces have agreed to temporarily continue housing high-risk detainees in jails, but they are not accepting new inmates.

Saskatchewan is slated to end its agreement with the agency on Sept. 30, while Manitoba and Ontario are set to terminate their deals next year.

The agency says it does not have agreements with Prince Edward Island or Newfoundland and Labrador but works with them on a case-by-case basis.

CBSA says it considers several factors for detaining immigrants, including whether a person is inadmissible to Canada, poses a flight risk or is a danger to the public due to a criminal history.

The agency runs its own immigration detention centres in Laval, Que., Toronto, and Surrey, B.C.

The Canadian Press
Sep 1, 2023

My Situation ...

So here's my situation, for your consideration.
No need for dramatization, nor exaggeration.

Not seeking glorification, for this abomination.
I'll give you an illustration, and a demonstration.
- My final inspiration.

It's like a hallucination, police fabrication.
Of a declaration - for an assassination.

This is not an explanation, nor my inauguration.
But 30 years of incarceration – with no capitulation,
No self-mutilation, no humiliation, no cooperation and no institutionalization.

My sophistication, building organization
Became an allegation, that lead to speculation
Of pure domination, and radicalization
Of the inmate population.

This lead to falsification, of my classification
There strategic disinformation - became the preservation
Of discrimination.

This misrepresentation, and their deprivation
Began my transportation, with the destination
Right to segregation.

Defying my termination, and demoralization
No need for explanation - but use your imagination.

I give authorization, no need for hesitation
Watch my activation that starts this litigation.
No need for annihilation, not even extermination

I claim no affiliation, but all my amalgamation
Stand fast with obligation, to bring retaliation.

It's time for corroboration, and the authentication of my vindication
I need some publication, and some mediatization
To end my situation...

- Tommy Bassio

Video shows Quebec prison guards' violent effort to force Sask. inmate to lock up

Lawyers for a Saskatchewan inmate who has taken the Correctional Service of Canada to court released surveillance footage showing a violent attempt by staff at a Quebec prison to force the inmate to lock up.

Nicholas Dinardo, a member of Piapot First Nation, has filed human rights and civil claims against CSC, alleging staff used excessive force and has discriminated against them. Dinardo, who uses they/them pronouns, is a Two-Spirit person.

On Tuesday, their legal counsel released video depicting a May 30, 2021 incident at Port-Cartier Institution in Quebec.

"I am relieved to finally have these videos so the world can see the violence and injustice I have experienced in prison. But the struggle is far from over. CSC has only released a fraction of the records I requested and am entitled to. Our court case continues," Dinardo, who is currently at Kent Institution in British Columbia, said in a statement.

In a 2021 interview with the StarPhoenix, Dinardo said guards tried to restrain them when they didn't want to lock up because they didn't want to be alone out of fear they would self-harm.

Dinardo said one guard twisted their arm back during the struggle, and the next day they couldn't move their arm, which looked purple. They said a nurse contacted a doctor eight days later and an X-ray was ordered, showing the arm was broken.

Dinardo also obtained a copy of the use of force review related to the incident.

In a prepared statement, the CSC said it conducted an investigation and concluded the use of force was disproportionate; a disciplinary investigation was also carried out.

"Following these processes, corrective measures to address the incident were taken," the statement said. When asked how many staff had been disciplined and what the corrective measures entailed, the CSC said it can't share details related to employees due to privacy laws.

Dinardo initially applied to obtain the video in August 2021 under the Privacy Act. Under legislated guidelines, a federal institution has 30

days to respond, but the deadline can be extended under certain limited circumstances.

When the video wasn't provided within legislated timelines, Dinardo filed a complaint to the federal privacy commissioner. Dinardo applied to Federal Court to compel the CSC to release the records, but the case hasn't been decided yet, said Jessica Magnonet, a staff lawyer with Prisoner Legal Services.

The 12:19 long video, which the CSC released to Dinardo in April, starts with Dinardo standing outside a cell speaking with four guards. It does not include audio and the faces of the guards are redacted.

Moments later, one guard steps forward to push Dinardo into an open cell; two guards push Dinardo into the cell and try to slide the door closed, but Dinardo's foot blocks the doorway. A guard can be seen kicking Dinardo's foot.

During the struggle, one guard leaves the camera's view and returns with what appears to be a shield. The guard can be seen putting the shield down and then pulling back Dinardo's arm, pulling them away from the wall, and eventually taking him to the floor with another guard. One guard appears to pull Dinardo's right arm behind their back while Dinardo is face-down on the floor. More staff arrive as Dinardo is restrained.

Like others in prison, Dinardo has struggled to obtain records showing force was used, Magonet said, noting many people in custody are not believed when they report their experiences.

"Having video evidence showing a clear, excessive use of force I think is really valuable, just to give credibility to what they've been saying. Nick has been raising concerns about this incident for a long time and previously spoke to the media about it, but now there's - in case anyone had any doubts - now there's evidence that this really happened," she said.

Thia James
Saskatoon StarPhoenix
May 13, 2023

The more that you read,
the more things you will know.
The more that you learn,
the more places you'll go.
- Dr. Seuss

Family, advocates come together in Regina for Prisoners' Justice Day

Thursday marks international Prisoners' Justice Day - and communities in Regina came together at the legislative building to remember lives lost behind bars.

Family members of incarcerated people and advocates gathered in front of the Legislative Building in Regina with banners and green-coloured ribbons.

Every ribbon, advocates say, had names of the people who had died in a provincial jail or prison in the last three years. There were some 25 such ribbons tied to a tree next to the stairway leading to the building's main entrance.

On the banners were photos of people who had died.

Beyond Prison Walls is a local organization representing families of loved ones who are incarcerated. Founder Sherri Gordon says she is joining thousands of inmates across Canada who would be refusing work and food for an entire day today. They are asking for better living conditions in correctional facilities.

"There needs to be justice for these lives lost," Gordon said.

Gordon's husband is serving a life sentence and she says she has seen the lack of mental health supports for those behind bars.

Gordon says the memorial day is part of a solidarity movement. In Canada it began in 1974 in support of prisoners' rights and to remember all the people who have died unnatural deaths while incarcerated.

In total, 54 inmates died in federal custody in Canada last year. Of those, 17 died of what the Correctional Service of Canada called "apparent natural causes." There were also seven inmates who died following a serious attack.

The majority of the deaths, however, don't have a cause listed. Thirty inmates fell into this category.

Ontario had the highest number of inmate deaths, at a total of 18. Saskatchewan saw six inmates die in custody.

Section 20 of Saskatchewan's Coroner's Act states that any deaths in custody are subject to an inquest process unless the coroner is satisfied the death was entirely from natural causes and was not preventable.

The Saskatchewan Coroners Service makes the final decision on whether to hold an inquest into a death in custody.

Sylvia Nagy says she lost a family member in Regina's correctional facilities. It's been two years since, and she says she isn't sure if they'll get an inquest now.

"I don't know if there's a statute of limitations on inquests. So I think we are going to investigate and I think perhaps the band may send a letter to find out why there was no inquest at that time," Nagy said.

Carly Romanow, executive director and a staff lawyer at the non-profit Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan, says people in prisons are more vulnerable because of how much they rely on the institution to treat their illnesses or injuries.

"Many of the people that are brought in may be withdrawing from substances or still intoxicated, and then have to withdraw, generally speaking, with little medical care and attention," Romanow said.

"So a lot of times, that means that the inmate goes through pretty severe medical distress, and sometimes that could lead to death," she said.

The solution for this, Romanow suggests, is funding for out-of-custody programming and support.

"In-custody care generally leads to more harm done to the prisoner and it's not a rehabilitative instrument," Romanow said.

Shlok Talati
CBC News
Aug 10, 2023



Prison Amazon accounts keep federal inmates stuck in the 1990s

Inmates have purchased roughly \$130,000 in vintage video gaming technology since federal prisons opened Amazon accounts last year, as security rules keep entertainment options mired decades in the past.

Correctional Service Canada (CSC) policies forbid inmates from buying any technology capable of communicating with the outside world. That means Canadian penitentiaries are places where the compact disc never died, Smart TVs are unknown and pioneering consoles like the Super Nintendo have endured decades past their prime.

Amazon became CSC's first e-commerce supplier in January 2022, with a B.C. company joining months later. The aim was to give inmates access to wider choice and better prices.

It's proven increasingly successful, according to Ghislaine Sauvé, CSC director general of technical services and facilities.

In 2022, inmates bought \$586,000 worth of goods using the system. So far this year, purchases have already surpassed \$740,000, Sauvé said.

But even with the world's largest e-commerce company on board, the inmate purchasing experience remains decidedly low-tech.

Electronic goods are mostly limited to what CSC called "first-generation" consoles like the Nintendo Entertainment System, the Super Nintendo and the Nintendo 64, as well as the Game Boy and Game Boy Advance.

The 1994-era PlayStation 1 takes top spot as the most popular console behind bars, with about 159 units purchased.

But the Nintendo Switch, Game Boy DS, Wii and GameCube are off limits, according to CSC, as are more recent PlayStations. Policies also explicitly forbid any iteration of the Xbox.

"Some of the more modern consoles can access the internet," said Sauvé. "And this is something that potentially is a risk."

Devices that read MP3s are also banned, according to the policies, although Sauvé could not explain why. And the rules prohibit video-reading devices, which means inmates cannot buy movies or television shows and are limited to cable TV.

Personal computing is likewise stuck in the 20th century. Under the policies, inmates cannot use any Microsoft operating system more recent than Windows 98 and must rely on Microsoft Office 97 for their word processing and spreadsheet requirements.

Inmates do not have direct access to the Amazon account, according to Sauvé. Instead, they choose from a paper list and take their orders to staff, who log on and place the order.

"At some point, a box like you've seen on your doorstep will get delivered to one of our institutions," he said.

The money comes from inmate accounts. There are limits to how much each prisoner can possess: \$1,500 of property and an additional \$300 of jewellery.

"It is their money," said Sauvé. "So let's be clear about that. This is not taxpayer money."

The Amazon system is the latest step in a journey that gives offenders more and better choices, while also saving CSC staff unnecessary effort.

Years ago, purchases were made locally, leading to "inconsistencies," Sauvé said.

"It was a bit of a burden on an institution having to have somebody [say] 'OK, your turn to go to Walmart and pick up some items,'" he said.

So CSC later began working with a B.C. company called Prototype Integrated Solutions Inc. That centralized the process, but it had its drawbacks.

"Delivery times could be a bit slow," Sauvé said.

"The variety ... it is what it is, but then again it's vetted through security. And I know offenders were not always happy with the prices."

That prompted the move to Amazon, though Prototype came back on as the second electronic supplier last year.

One advantage of using e-commerce platforms is that it blunts any accusations of price gouging, according to Sauvé.

"This is the same system that you use, or any other Canadian would use," he said. "We don't take a cut. They pay what's there and they get it delivered."

CSC policies limit more than technological progress behind bars. They also censor content - for video games, clothing and even jigsaw puzzles.

The rules forbid games with any information on how to make drugs or weapons, and those that could explain how to commit or cover up crimes.

Games that promote "a theory of racial superiority" or incite hatred against a specific group are also prohibited, as are those that advocate genocide.

The same goes for "material of a sexual nature that involves violence, coercion, degradation, bodily harm or threats thereof to a person, whether real or fictional," and anything that promotes gangs or terrorist ideology.

CSC was unable to provide examples of any sexist, racist or genocidal games unavailable on its e-commerce accounts in accordance with those policies.

Fashion is also restricted: clothing logos cannot depict gangs, alcohol, drugs, sexuality or violence. Musicians, "pop culture icons" are in most cases fine.

Jigsaw puzzles are subject to similar restrictions.

Music appears to be a free-for-all, with "all genres" allowed and no apparent restrictions on lyrics. But the ban on MP3 players will limit, or at least severely delay, access to the newest releases.

CSC did not respond to repeated requests for the complete list of items available through Amazon and Prototype, referring instead to its written policies for guidance on what is allowed.

But a tendering document that first announced CSC's plan to sign a deal with Amazon revealed more about the "list of goods to be made available to inmates." It included geometry sets, acoustic guitars and harmonicas, as well as hacksaws, carving tools, mallets, drills and X-Acto knives.

Asked why inmates would need access to those potentially dangerous tools, Sauvé pointed to Indigenous cultural practices and "arts and crafts."

"It's not like they're just handed tools and here you go," he said. "There's a lot of different policies and steps in place to make sure that's done safely."

He also explained that purchasing options differ between security levels. Medium-security inmates can order scissors, suspenders and moustache trimmers, according to the policies, but those items are off limits in maximum-security prisons.

Geometry sets are explicitly prohibited for both security classes, though the policies are silent on minimum security. They do not clarify which prisoners have access to hacksaws.

Asked why inmates serving sentences for criminal activity should enjoy such a wide range of products, including a selection of vintage gaming consoles, Sauvé pointed to the universal human need for leisure.

"They're going to serve their time in an institution. While they're there, there's [programming] to help their rehabilitation," he said.

"Leisure time forms part of that too," Sauvé added. "It's for them to decide how they're going to spend some of that time, I guess, just like it is for you in your own home."

Arthur White-Crummey
CBC News
Sep 04, 2023

Phone Line Launched for Disabled Prisoners who Experience Ableism and Racism in Hamilton, Milton, Ottawa

We've officially launched our phone lines in Hamilton, Ottawa, and Milton. We're looking to speak with current and former prisoners with disabilities who have experienced racism while inside. This project is a two year project funded by the Laidlaw Foundation.

Please share these numbers in your communities across Ottawa, Milton and Hamilton with folks inside and outside of prison who may want to chat with us:

OUT OF PRISON NUMBER: 905-973-4332

TRAPP Phone Numbers (Toll Free):
Hamilton - 905-631-4084
Niagara - 905-227-5066
Milton - 416-775-7938
London - 519-690-0836
Ottawa - 613-768-9951
Kenora - 807-548-4312

We're also looking to speak directly with young people, in person, about their experiences with incarceration who specifically are Black, racialized and disabled. For participating in this study group, an honorarium will be provided. Please email: DJNOPrisonProject@gmail.com

www.djno.ca

Canada's prison book clubs, closed by COVID-19, pick up where they left off

The first two rules of prison book club are read the book and take part in the debate.

On this late November morning, there are a few violations.

More than 25 guys - they are not referred to as inmates or offenders in book club - signed up, but only eight have shown. Of those, just four have read this month's selection, *The River* by Peter Heller.

When everyone is seated, the discussion leader lays out the first question: What word would you use to describe this month's book? Silence fills the bright activity room deep within the bowels of Joyceville Institution, a federal prison near Kingston, Ont.

Several of the guys gaze downwards at their generic black sneakers and rolled-up blue jeans. These book clubbers can't help it if they're out of practice.

For much of the last two-and-a-half years, COVID-19 forced prisons across Canada to cancel most outside visits.

Prisoners couldn't meet with family or the many volunteer-led charities that offer tutoring, legal advice, religious studies and myriad other services to prisoners.

Among the groups barred from entry was Book Clubs for Inmates, a 14-year-old charity that operates in 36 federal penitentiaries, where it has become a literary lifeline to hundreds of prisoners.

Now, the clubs are re-launching. Sort of. The Joyceville book club had a session in September only to have its October date cancelled by another COVID-19 outbreak within the facility.

At 9 a.m., the Joyceville club got rolling again with Peter Heller's modern-day survival tale set in the Hudson Bay watershed. Just as the silence among the group begins to verge on awkward, a 37-year-old participant named Wick speaks up. "It was suspenseful?" he answers.

The nervousness evaporates.

"A wilderness thriller," says Josh, another participant.

"A reflection of life," says Kevin.

Then one of the guys snuffs the vibe. "It's useless to be here if I haven't read the book, eh?" says Jesse, arms crossed. "I'm not contributing anything."

Rule four of book club - they're actually called 'norms' rather than rules on club handouts - is to maintain a welcoming atmosphere. Kevin, the oldest participant at age 52, steps into the breach. "I can help with that," he says, and perfectly summarizes the plot in five minutes flat, spoilers and all. The disruptor seems satisfied.

Book Clubs for Inmates started in the late 2000s when retired Anglican priest Carol Finlay went to Collins Bay Institution in Kingston, intending to pray with segregated prisoners. She soon realized prisoners needed a sense of community more than they needed evangelizing. With the consent of Correctional Service Canada, she launched the first book club with a dozen or so prisoners in 2008. By 2010, she was expanding the program to other penitentiaries.

The value is immediately apparent in the Joyceville activity room.

The book's outdoor setting gives Kevin a chance to talk about the dangers he faced on his many canoeing trips, including one that required an escape from a wildfire, much like the characters in the book. "I've never told anyone here about that side of my life," Kevin marvels later.

Wick opines that one of the protagonists secretly loves a secondary character. Margaret Ford, one of the volunteers facilitating the club, disagrees. But there are no hurt feelings. That's rule six of book club - all views are to be respected. The approach instills the importance of civil debate, a practice that can be lacking in prison, where studies show half the population experienced violence and abuse in childhood.

"The book club offers an opportunity to have a discussion where you can agree or disagree," says Ms. Ford. "That social aspect is so important for these guys because they will all be going back into society eventually."

After a solid hour-and-a-half discussion, there's little discord. All agree they would recommend the book to a friend. Those who haven't read it scramble for spare copies. As the session breaks, the guys thank the volunteers, shake hands and pick up next month's read: *The Spy and the Traitor* by Ben McIntyre.

The titles run from popular pot-boilers to challenging speculative fiction, written by the likes of Stephen King, Kazuo Ishiguro, Omar El Akkad and perennial favourite Richard

Wagamese. One participant says he finishes each selection in a single sitting.

"I crush about 500 pages a day," says Glen. "I didn't used to read much but I got here and I blew through the Game of Thrones series and now another one called Red Rising. This gives us a chance to talk about it. It's really helped."

Several participants said the perpetual pandemic lockdowns kindled a love of books, the stories making up for the loss of mental stimulation. "I never used to read, but I've probably done 15 books the last five months," says Wick.

The guys explain that the low attendance today doesn't reflect a lack of enthusiasm. This part of the prison operates as a regional assessment unit. Guys generally spend a few months here before being shipped out. Many will sign up for book club only to be transferred before they can attend.

The club, say prisoners, cuts through the "con code" of prison life, where there's a strict pecking order starting with guys on life sentences at the top and sex offenders at the very bottom. Within the four walls of the book club, they're all equal for a couple hours.

If some dislike the book and others love it, it makes for a better discussion, says Ashley, who lives in Joyceville's minimum-security confines and has attended book club for more than a decade. "You're forced to see how someone else came to like the book and understand someone else's point of view and how they came to it."

An announcement comes over the intercom. Everyone has to return to their beds for noon count. Ashley heads for the door, then pauses to clarify his last statement. There are some viewpoints he will not tolerate, he says. "I hate Stephen King."

Patrick White
Globe and Mail
Dec 30, 2022

Jails and prisons are designed to break human beings, to convert the population into specimens in a zoo

- obedient to our keepers, but dangerous to each other.

- Angela Davis

Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI)

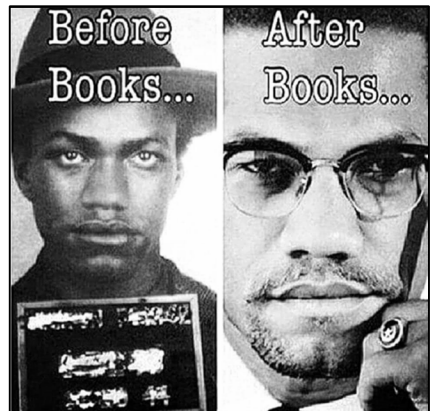
Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI) is a registered charity that organizes volunteer-led book clubs within federal penitentiaries across Canada. Currently, BCFI is facilitating 30 book clubs from Nova Scotia to British Columbia.

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

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

Book Clubs for Inmates

720 Bathurst St, Toronto, ON, M5S 2R4



I have often reflected upon the new vistas that reading has opened to me.

I knew right there in prison that reading had changed forever the course of my life.

As I see it today, the ability to read awoke inside me some long dormant craving to be mentally alive.

- Malcolm X

Being in prison for seven years was like being in an army that never drilled, never deployed, and only fought itself.

- Raegan Butcher

Facts about HIV and HCV

With some exceptions, HIV and HCV infection is generally more prevalent among women than men in prison, particularly among those who have a history of injection drug use.

In a study of provincial prisons in Quebec, the HIV and HCV rate among incarcerated women was, respectively, 8.8 and 29.2%, compared to 2.4 and 16.6% among male prisoners.

In a study of female prisoners in British Columbia (BC), self-reported rates of HIV and HCV were 8% and 52%, respectively.

In a 2007 nationwide survey by CSC, the HIV and HCV rate among federally incarcerated women was 5.5 and 30.3%, compared to 4.5 and 30.8 percent among federally incarcerated men. Aboriginal women reported the highest rates of HIV and HCV, at 11.7 and 49%, respectively.

While the majority of women in prison are voluntarily tested for both HIV and HCV, the provision of pre- and post-test counselling has been reported to be poor, and in some cases, non-existent.

Women in prison are more likely than women in the general population to have faced violence and abuse; therefore, counselling accompanying HIV diagnosis is particularly important. Women in prison have concerns about the privacy and confidentiality of their HIV status.

Women have reported being forced to draw unwanted attention. Women (37%) reported being HCV-positive. Aboriginal women were identified as a particularly high-risk group because they reported the highest rates of HIV (11.7%) and HCV infections (49.1%).

These data highlight the need to ensure that culturally appropriate, effective interventions that decrease risk-behaviours and increase utilization of harm-reduction measures are offered to meet the needs of Aboriginal women.

*Who opens a school door, closes a prison.
- Victor Hugo*

Important Hep C Update!

New treatments with excellent success rates are now available!

These are in pill form and have little or no side effects. The downside is the cost of course: \$1000+ per pill.

Vosevi is a combination of sofosbuvir, velpatasvir and voxilaprevir. These three drugs are combined into one tablet. It is taken once a day with food for 12 weeks.

Federal Prisoners: Great news, now you can start your treatment while inside!

Provincial/Territorial Prisoners: Only BC & ON provide treatment. Elsewhere, you will have to wait till you get out.

- When released, get right on welfare or disability.
- Federal health care programs like NIHB & IFH may cover costs.
- Go to a Clinic and get your blood test done so you can get into a Treatment Program at no cost to you.

There are 2,700 with chronic hep C in Federal prisons.

There are 4,380 with chronic hep C in Prov/Terr prisons.

All Federal prisoners with hep C are now eligible for treatment.

BC & ON Prov prisoners with hep C are now eligible for treatment.

HEP C = 18-30% in prison
HIV = 1-5% in prison

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

BLEACH DOES NOT KILL HEP C

Toll-Free Support Line for SK Prisoners

For prisoners in Provincial jails & Federal prisons in Saskatchewan.

Funds will be used to help inmates purchase call packages to keep them connected to their family, help out with canteen for necessary things & for transportation home. Maintained by prisoner advocacy groups Beyond Prison Walls Canada and Inmates for Humane Conditions.

☎ 1-866-949-0074 ☎

Jail Accountability and Information Line (JAIL) for prisoners in OCDC

The Jail Accountability and Information Line takes calls from prisoners and their loved ones from 1:00pm to 4:00pm Mon to Wed. This line tracks issues experienced by people incarcerated at the Ottawa Carleton Detention Centre.

☎ 613-567-JAIL (5245) ☎

PRISON RADIO

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

CPR: This program features content produced by CFRC volunteers and by other campus and community radio broadcasters, including CKUT Montreal's Prison Radio & Vancouver Co-op Radio's Stark Raven programs.

The last Wednesday of each month, CPR features 'Calls From Home', sharing letters, emails, voice messages and music requests by and for prisoners and their loved ones. Prisoners and their loved ones are invited to contribute music requests, messages and suggestions for the program.

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

Email: CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net
Call: 613-329-2693 to record a message or music request to be broadcast on-air.

Free Jail Hotline for MCC, OCI, TEDC, TSDC & VCW

The Toronto Prisoners' Rights Project (TPRP) provides prisoners with free links to advocacy, referrals, information, and support through the Jail Hotline. This hotline is run by volunteers. It will take calls on:

**Monday to Saturday
9-11 am & 2-4pm**

☎ 416-307-2273 ☎

Why a Jail Hotline?

Prisons and jails carry out human rights abuses every day because they do not think anyone is watching. We are here in solidarity and struggle with prisoners.

Who Should Call This Hotline?

Please share the hotline with your loved ones inside. We cannot accept calls from other prisons or jails or from people in the community.

If you need to contact us outside of the line, you can message us on social media or an email to:

TorontoPrisonersRightsProject@gmail.com

Free Jail Hotline for EMDC

**Monday to Saturday
9-11 am & 2-4pm**

☎ 519-642-9289 ☎

Penpal Program for Gay, Queer, Trans Prisoners

The Prisoner Correspondence Project runs a penpal program for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, and queer prisoners in Canada, pairing them up with gay and queer and trans people outside of prison for friendship and support. We also coordinate a resource library of information and resources related to health, sexuality, and prisons - get in touch with us for a list of resources we have, or for details.

If you want to be paired up with a penpal, please send a short description of yourself & interests to:

Prisoner Correspondence Project
c/o QPIRG Concordia
1455 de Maisonneuve W.
Montreal, QC, H3G 1M8

Please indicate French or in English. Veuillez
svp nous indiquer anglais ou en français.



Nov 20 is Transgender Day of Remembrance

Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR), is an international event commemorating people killed due to anti-trans violence. In the last year, 369 trans or non-binary people have been killed globally.

And it's a Canadian problem too: 74% of trans youth in Canada have been harassed at school, and 37% have experienced physical violence.

☞ Respect ☞

Incarcerated in Canada? Need Information?

Write On! is an all-volunteer group whose goal is to support prisoners in Canada by researching the information you need, such as:

General legal info, prison rules & policies, resources, programs, services, etc.

Write to us at:

Write ON!
234-1110 Cumberland St,
Toronto, ON, M5R 3V5

Prison Visiting Rideshare Project

The Prison Rideshare is an ongoing project of Bar None to connect people with rides to visit their friends and loved ones who are in prison in Manitoba.

If you or someone you know is interested in getting a ride to visit one of southern Manitoba's prisons, if you are interested in volunteering, or for more info contact: barnone.wpg@gmail.com

Rides can also be arranged by phone or text message: 204-599-8869
(It's ideal to request a ride at least 5-7 days in advance).

PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY

☞ In Remembrance ☞

- August 10 -

There are more than 200 Unnatural
Prisoner Deaths in Canada.

- Each and Every Year -

We maintain a PJD 'In Remembrance' page on our website for Prisoners who have died in Federal and Provincial Prisons, Remands, Lock-ups and Parole in Canada.

If you wish to have someone remembered there, send us a note or email and we will honour your request.

PJD@PrisonFreePress.org

A Child of an Incarcerated Parent

The Reality

- Every year over 150,000 adults are remanded into custody which results in approximately 180,000 innocent children who suffer from the traumatic effect of parental incarceration in Canada
- Over 5000 children are impacted by parental imprisonment in the GTA
- The number of children affected by parental incarceration only increases with the passing of the Crime Bill C-10

The Need

- Despite the growing prevalence of these innocent victims the resources available are minimal
- The cost and lack of accessibility to correctional facilities restrict child-parent visits. Consequently, some children can never visit their incarcerated parents

The Impact

- Children of incarcerated parents grieve the loss of their parent
- These children are four times more likely to be in conflict with the law
- Social stigma of incarceration causes some families to avoid discussing the absence of a parent

Research suggests that parental incarceration has a detrimental impact on children. These innocent children suffer the traumatic experience of being separated from their parent. Following parental imprisonment, children are faced with a myriad of challenges including:

- feelings of shame, grief, guilt, abandonment, anger
- lowered self-esteem
- economic instability
- social stigma and isolation
- disconnection from parent
- insecurity in familial and peer relationships
- school absenteeism, poor school performance
- difficulty in coping with future stress/ trauma
- compromised trust in others including law enforcement

www.kipcanada.org ~ 416-505-5333



K.I.P. Canada - Family Visitation

Kids with Incarcerated Parents (K.I.P.) was founded in 2011 to support the needs of the over 15,000 children in the Greater Toronto Area that have a parent in the criminal justice system.

K.I.P.'s Family Visitation Program provides weekend transportation from Toronto to correctional facilities in Southern Ontario for children and families to visit imprisoned loved ones.

During our trips, K.I.P. provides free snacks and refreshments, offers a variety of games and activities, and plays movies.

Our bus is a place where youth and families have a chance to talk about their experiences of having a loved one inside and receive support from mentors and other riders.

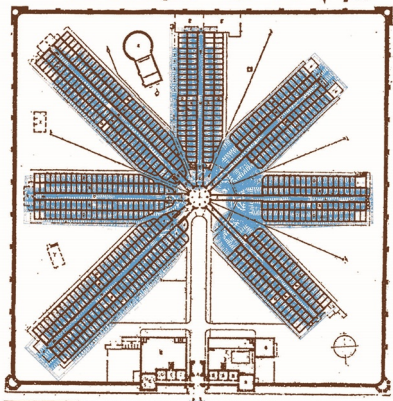
Our Family Visitation Program is free for anyone 18 years old and younger. If you are interested in participating in our program, please call or email K.I.P. to register today.

For more information or to book a seat on the bus please contact Jessica or Derek Reid by email at:

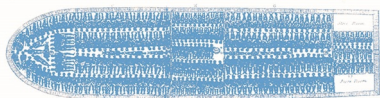
info.kipcanada@gmail.com

or by phone at: 416-505-5333

PRISONS



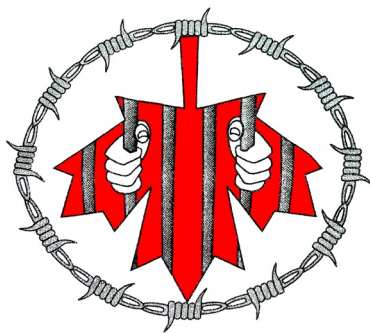
SLAVE SHIPS



ON DRY LAND



**SOLITARY
CONFINEMENT
IS
TORTURE**



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download, print, contact:
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> Jan > Apr > Jul > Oct >

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Deadline: Dec 1, 2023
Mail-out: Jan 1, 2023

If you don't like the news ...

... make some of your own !!!

Whatcha got in there that needs gettin' out?

... Hmm ... ?

Art, Poems, Stories, News, Whatever !

