

**REPORT TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
PUBLIC INQUIRY  
THE FATALITY INQUIRIES ACT**

CANADA  
PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

WHEREAS a Public Inquiry was held at the Law Courts  
in the City of Edmonton  
(City, Town, etc.) (Name of City, Town, etc.)  
on the 20th day of November, 19 96 (and by adjournment  
on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_ ), before  
The Honourable Judge P.G.C. Ketchum, a Provincial Court Judge.

A jury  was  was not summoned and an inquiry was held into the death of  
DOUGLAS PAUL PARENTEAU 33  
(Name in Full) (Age)  
of Edmonton, Alberta and the following findings were made:  
(Residence)

Date and Time of Death April 14, 1996 between 8:00 a.m. and 9:10 a.m.  
Place Parenteau's cell F001 at Edmonton Institution, Highway 15, 30 kilometres N.E.  
of Edmonton, Alberta

Medical Cause of Death ("cause of death" means the medical cause of death according to the International Statistical Classification of Diseases, Injuries and Causes of Death as last revised by the International Conference assembled for that purpose and published by the World Health Organization — The Fatality Inquiries Act, Section 1(d))

Multiple stab wounds.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Manner of Death ("manner of death" means the mode or method of death whether natural, homicidal, suicidal, accidental or undeterminable — The Fatality Inquiries Act, Section 1(g))

"Homicidal"  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **REPORT TO AG 338 - PAGE 2**

### **CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH DEATH OCCURRED**

Immediately prior to his death the deceased was alone in his cell (F001) with the door unlocked. He was attacked by other inmates. Their identity is unknown, but there is some hearsay evidence that the motive appears to be revenge, and that there were likely a minimum of two (and probably three or more) assailants involved, all of whom were of the same ethnic background as the deceased. The deceased was serving life sentences for the homicide of two apparently respected persons from the area of the Hobbema Reserve, south of Edmonton.

The certificate of the Medical Examiner, Exhibit #1 and the Autopsy Report, Exhibit #2, indicate that there were forty-nine stab and puncture wounds distributed over the face, the neck and the trunk of the deceased. No independent physical evidence was discovered in or near the deceased's cell. No instruments consistent with the forty-nine stab wounds have been identified. No fingerprints, blood, hair or fibre samples from prisoners other than the deceased were identified. The cell itself showed no obvious signs of any struggle. I am satisfied that the murderers left the body on the bed covered with a blanket in a sleeping position with a portion of the top of the head visible from the window in the cell door. The deceased's body was not discovered by institution personnel until a prisoner suggested that a physical check be made of the deceased's cell. This occurred approximately five hours after all cells in this range were automatically locked down at approximately 9:10 a.m.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PREVENTION OF SIMILAR DEATHS**

The major issues raised by this inquiry relate to:

1. The early detection of weapons manufactured by prisoners, and;
2. The video and audio monitoring and tape recording of prisoner movement in the common areas of the prison ranges during periods when all cell doors are automatically opened.

With regard to 1. above, I am satisfied that the system for prevention of access to and transportation of metals or weapons and materials in the institution is constantly being reviewed and upgraded. Notwithstanding the recent installation of metal detectors some objects pass detection either through machinery malfunction, or being hidden in the body cavities of prisoners.

The current financial restraints have impacted on the amount of staffing and technological improvements which might make such an institution safer. I note that each cell is equipped with an alarm button near the door whereby an inmate may contact the centrally located security unit, if he wants his cell locked. Cells are locked and unlocked automatically from

the central security office. This office also has the capacity to video the common areas of the E & F ranges of the institution but the cameras are not equipped with tape. Movement of prisoners between cells at particular hours when cells are open is not unusual. However, taped camera surveillance during this period might have assisted in the detection of the persons who traversed the corridor to assault the deceased in his cell.

Observance of the rule to stand, and for prisoners to face the Correction Officers who are observing them in their cells should be routine at all designated formal counts of prisoners. Insistence on this routine would not have prevented the deceased's death, but earlier detection of it might have made the subsequent criminal investigation more fruitful. Early detection and punishment remains a major deterrent for crime, even in prisons. Prisoners' knowledge that taped records of their movements in all common areas of the prison are available to the authorities would, in my judgment, help to prevent similar deaths. The other alternative would be increased staffing of the Central Security Office during hours of prisoner movement so that the monitors for all common areas are scrutinized. It would surprise me if such recommendations had not been made in other Fatality Inquiry Reports. Notwithstanding the admitted need for financial restraint, society still has an interest in keeping its prisons safe for those detained, as well as those who work in them. It has been said that "the degree of civilization in a society is revealed by entering its prisons".  
F. Dostoyevsky - "The House of the Dead".

DATED this 29<sup>th</sup> day of November, 1996



---

Judge P.G.C. Ketchum  
A Judge of the Provincial Court of Alberta