

DOCKET NO. 61526349-I-OIOI

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, Province of Alberta on the 15th day of November, 1996 before the Honourable Judge J.L. Skitsko, a Provincial Court Judge.

AND WHEREAS a jury was not summoned.

AND WHEREAS an inquiry was held into the death of Peter Brideau, of Edmonton in the Province of Alberta, who was incarcerated at the Edmonton Institution at the time of his death.

AND WHEREAS the following findings were made.

DATE OF DEATH: December 27, 1992.

TIME OF DEATH: Between 5:30 p.m. and 9 p.m.

PLACE OF DEATH: Unit B, Cell D008 upper range, Edmonton Institution, Highway 15, 30 kilometers north-east 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).

The cause of death was a stab wound of the heart.

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).

The manner of death was "Homicidal".

CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH DEATH OCCURRED

At the time of Mr. Brideau's death, the Edmonton Institution was designated a medium security institution. The status of this prison was in the process of being changed by a redesignation to a maximum security institution. This was accomplished in September of 1992 and changes were being undertaken at the institution consistent with the redesignation. During this period of transition to maximum security status, the inmates retained a relative freedom of movement within their unit. From 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. they had free movement within their unit with access to both upper cell ranges and lower cell ranges. Each range of cells contains 10 individual living units.

Peter Brideau resided in the upper range of cells, unit number DOO8. He was found unconscious in his cell by institutional personnel after his condition was reported to personnel by a fellow inmate.

Following his discovery in an unconscious state, attempts were made to revive him by medical personnel at the institution and then by emergency medical response (ambulance) summoned to the Edmonton Institution. He died enroute to the Royal Alexandra Hospital.

Following Mr. Brideau's discovery, the facts surrounding the stab wound were uncovered. He had been involved in an altercation with an inmate earlier that evening. The inmate, Manolescu, had been in the process of delivering a home made icepick like item known as a "shank" to another inmate. Brideau, who had been brewing home made alcohol in his cell, had apparently ingested a large amount of the alcohol making him intoxicated and belligerent. It was this belligerence that caused him to be aggressive with Manolescu and upon accosting Manolescu in the lower range of Unit D, he was stabbed. The scuffle was very brief and prison personnel believed it was more roughhousing than a life and death struggle. Amazingly, Mr. Brideau walked from the lower range of cells back to his cell in the upper range, collapsing on his bunk, after receiving a stab directly into his heart. He was silent in his return to his cell and asked for no medical assistance.

The weapon used by Manolescu was constructed from a piece of metal that had been broken off a floor mop used in the D Unit.

The autopsy revealed that Mr. Brideau's blood contained 140 milligrams of ethyl alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood. He was without doubt intoxicated at the time of his death.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PREVENTION OF SIMILAR DEATHS

It should be noted that following the death of Brideau in December of 1992, the death of another inmate, Ri Hui Luo, occurred in April of 1993. A public inquiry under the

Fatality Inquiries Act was summoned and held before the Honourable Judge E.R. Saddy on September 27, 1995. His Honour Judge Saddy referred to eight changes instituted by the Edmonton Maximum Security Institution at the time of the Luo inquiry. These were listed as follows:

1. The common rooms were eliminated as recreational areas, as they were out of view of the sub-control post.
2. All medium security inmates residing at the Edmonton Institution were to be moved as soon as possible to a medium security institution.
3. The inherent control procedure was changed to reflect the maximum security environment and staff training was instituted to ensure proper appreciation of changes.
4. Inmate movement was restricted and where required, closely monitored. The inmates in upper ranges could no longer visit lower range inmates.
5. The metal shop was closed as the availability of metal provided raw materials for weapons to be manufactured.
6. Increased use of camera coverage in the recreation yard and program rooms was instituted.
7. The number of random pat down searches and lock downs of inmates increased dramatically.
8. Metal detectors through which inmates must pass were installed at the gymnasium and program rooms and weight rooms etc. at the prison.

Thus, the Edmonton Institution had already instituted changes by the time of this inquiry. However, a further group of changes have also been instituted. These were related to the inquiry as follows:

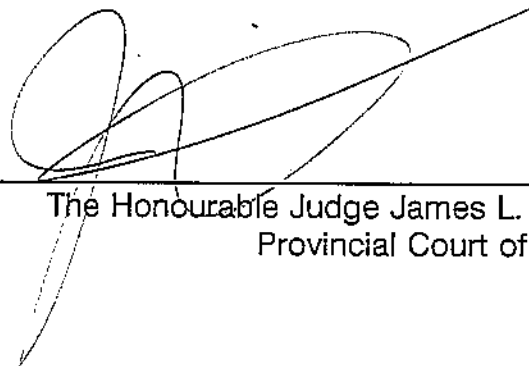
1. Changes were instituted for the purposes of inmates' control and safety procedures. Inmates now pass through metal scanners and are subject to indiscriminate pat downs by security staff whenever movement away from or a return to their units has been completed. Inmate kitchen staff schedules are arranged to ensure that everyone is accounted for on the two shifts in question. The kitchen workers also pass through metal scanners and are subject to a pat down search on each occasion.
2. Installation of observation cameras, with 360 degree range and pan and zoom capabilities in various areas, has been completed.

3. A policy of a minimum of four random searches per year of the entire prison has been instituted. This includes thorough searches of cells, common areas, recreation areas, bathrooms, showers, etc.
4. Ongoing random daily searches of cells on each unit occurs.
5. Prior to Mr. Brideau's death, inmates had been given unlimited access to fruit, fruit juices, and sugar which would be used to brew alcohol. Following Mr. Brideau's death, access to these fruits, fruit juices, sugar and any type of yeast has been severely restricted so as much as possible to make the brewing of alcohol by inmates more difficult. It should be noted that brewing of alcohol by inmates will most likely never be completely eliminated however. For example, incidents of inmates brewing alcohol from ketchup was recently discovered.
6. A new intake program has been completed whereby assessment programs are now in place for all newly admitted inmates to help assess the risks of certain inmates residing together in a unit before their admission.
7. A prison security review committee has also been established. This committee, which is composed of Edmonton Institution staff, reviews the review of any new equipment to the institution in order to assess the potential for new equipment being used to make weapons. It must be noted however that no amount of precautions will absolutely prevent the manufacture of illegal weaponry within the institution. The creativity of inmates in this regard is limitless.

CONCLUSIONS

I am satisfied that Prison authorities have reacted positively to the security concerns raised following the death of Mr. Brideau, I am also satisfied that the restriction of prison movement in particular will be helpful in preventing further similar deaths. No further recommendations are made at this time.

Respectfully submitted,



The Honourable Judge James L. Skitsko
Provincial Court of Alberta