



VERDICT AT CORONER'S INQUEST

File No.:2008:0621:0004

An Inquest was held at the Supreme Court, in the municipality of Prince George in the Province of British Columbia, on the following dates November 2 - 4, 2009 before Rodrick H. MacKenzie, Presiding Coroner, into the death of BOUEY Cheryl Ann 42 (Age) [] Male [X] Female and the following findings were made:

Date and Time of Death: June 26, 2008 between 2:17:37 hrs and 2:22:23 hrs Prince George RCMP Cells Place of Death: 999 Brunswick Street Prince George BC (Location) (Municipality/Province)

Medical Cause of Death

(1) Immediate Cause of Death: a) Ligature Asphyxia DUE TO OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF

Antecedent Cause if any: b) DUE TO OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF

Giving rise to the immediate cause (a) above, stating underlying cause last. c)

(2) Other Significant Conditions Contributing to Death:

Classification of Death: [] Accidental [] Homicide [] Natural [X] Suicide [] Undetermined

The above verdict certified by the Jury on the

4th day of November AD, 2009

RODRICK H. MACKENZIE

Presiding Coroner's Printed Name

Presiding Coroner's Signature



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FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AS A RESULT OF THE INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF

FILE No.:2008:0621:0004

BOUEY

SURNAME

Cheryl Ann

GIVEN NAMES

PARTIES INVOLVED IN THE INQUEST:

Presiding Coroner: Rodrick H. MacKenzie

Court Reporting/Recording Agency: Verbatim Words West Ltd.

Participants/Counsel: The Attorney General of Canada/Andrew Kemp
The City of Prince George/Mitch Houg
Ray Reznechenko/Jon Duncan

The Sheriff took charge of the jury and recorded eleven (11) exhibits. Seventeen (17) witnesses were duly sworn in and testified.

PRESIDING CORONER'S COMMENTS:

The following is a brief summary of the circumstances of the death as set out in the evidence presented to the jury at the inquest. The following summary of the evidence as presented at the inquest is to assist the reader to more fully understand the Verdict and Recommendations of the jury. This summary not intended to be considered evidence nor is it intended in any way to replace the jury's verdict.

On June 26, 2008 shortly after midnight, police attended the College Heights Pub at 5787 Albert Place, Prince George, British Columbia. There they encountered Cheryl Ann Bouey. Ms. Bouey appeared to be intoxicated and unable to care for herself. She was therefore arrested by reason of being drunk in a public place and transported to the Prince George RCMP cells at 999 Brunswick Street, Prince George, British Columbia.

As part of the booking-in process at the cells, Ms. Bouey was searched by a female member of the RCMP. That member testified that the practice on such a search was to remove drawstrings from sweat pants. She admitted that on her booking-in search of Ms. Bouey, she failed to find and remove the drawstring from Ms. Bouey's sweat pants.

Ms. Bouey was then lodged in the female drunk tank. She removed her pants and tied them to a metal mesh that was attached to the bars of the female drunk tank. This all took considerable time and effort and would have been visible on a closed circuit television monitor located in the guardroom. The guard at one point noticed her pants were off and told her to put them on or he would take them away. He did not notice her actions in attempting to attach her pants to the bars or contemplate that she would tie the pants to the mesh as a means to commit suicide. Once Ms. Bouey had successfully secured the pants and in particular the drawstring to the mesh she leaned forward against the drawstring cutting off the blood flow to her brain. Eventually the guard noticed a problem and entered the cell. He called for help and the female constable who had searched Ms. Bouey arrived first on the scene and cut her down.

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Pursuant to Section 38 of the Coroner's Act, the following recommendations are forwarded to the Chief Coroner of the Province of British Columbia for distribution to the appropriate agency:

JURY RECOMMENDATIONS:

To: Derrek Bates
City Manager
1100 Patricia Blvd.
Prince George BC V2L 3V9

To: Garry Bass
Deputy Commissioner Pacific Region
Commanding Officer "E" Division
657 West 37th Ave.
Vancouver BC V5Z 1K6

1. Guard staffing levels to be increased on traditionally busier days.

Coroner's Comments: The jury heard evidence that on busy days, one guard could not properly carry out the assigned duties.

2. Amend RCMP "E" Division Operational Manual part 21 - Search and Seizure and 21.2 Personal Search section 2.1. to add examples of what to look for such as: draw strings in pant waists, ankles, shirt/sweater draw strings, belts, bras, shoe laces, hats, jewelry etc.

Coroner's Comments: The jury heard evidence from a senior police officer that the addition of examples to the policy would assist, particularly junior officers, in properly conducting searches.

3. The guards shall carry a radio at all times, and supervisors shall enforce this through progressive disciplinary action.

Coroner's Comments: The jury heard and saw evidence that guards did not always carry the radio that was provided.

4. Monitors within the guard room should be upgraded to an anti-glare, larger, flat screen style.

Coroner's Comments: The jury heard evidence that the existing guardroom monitors are difficult to view.

5. Cameras should be installed within the guard room.

Coroner's Comments: The jury heard evidence that the investigating officer could not locate the guard at critical times.

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6. Until such time as a new jail is constructed, the current cells should be upgraded by: removing the expanded metal grating on the bars and doors, replacing it with a clear see-through plexi-glass/lexan covering and two guards to be on duty at all times.

Coroner's Comments: The jury heard evidence concerning the danger posed by the metal grating. As well, the jury took a view of the cells to see the mesh for themselves. They jury heard that generally jails have solid walls and solid doors with glass windows and that the bar and mesh system in place in the Prince George cells is not used today in Canadian jails or prisons.

7. Policy review by guards to be formally documented.

Coroner's Comments: The jury heard that there is no formal requirement in place to document that guards have in fact reviewed jail policy on a regular basis.

8. Policies and procedures for Prince George guards and RCMP in reference to the RCMP lockup should be reviewed for contradictions and inconsistencies.

Coroner's Comments: The jury heard evidence that the policy and procedure is not consistent. For example, policy respecting guards going into cells at one place indicates that they must never go into a cell without a member and at another that this was possible in a serious situation.

9. The guard room to be re-organized in order to provide the guards a better view of the cell camera monitors while being able to complete the computer logs.

Coroner's Comments: The jury heard and saw that when doing required work at their work station, it was difficult for the guards to see the monitors.

To: Mayor and Council
City of Prince George
1100 Patricia Blvd.
Prince George BC V2L 3V9

10. That Prince George City Council approve funding for a new RCMP station including a new lockup. Recommendations from all staff associated with the Prince George lockup to be sought and considered respecting the construction of a new lockup.

Coroner's Comments: The jury heard from many witnesses including senior police officers that the Prince George cells are inadequate, antiquated and should have been replaced years ago.