

The tragedy of Cindy Burk

After 16 years, family of murdered girl finds a degree of closure

Frank Peebles
Citizen staff

It's a long drive from Carmacks, Yukon, to Prince George, but the journey for Cindy Burk to find her sister after they were separated as children was a lot farther.

Now that Burk is dead, the distance to the trial is not too great for Diane Lilley and others in Burk's family. They didn't want the public to be left with the impression that just because Burk was hitchhiking, young, aboriginal and on no fixed schedule, this "did not mean she was dirt, which is what (the killer) thought of her. He left her dead in the dirt, in a shallow grave in the bush."

Five of her family members are in Prince George to attend the second-degree murder trial of Paul Russell Deleno Felker, 62.

It was in Prince George where they found Burk again after she went missing in mid July 1990, somewhere in the Peace region. She had been in the Fort Nelson area, but was slowly making her way back to Regina where she had been raised. When her phone calls to family members in Carmacks stopped, they worried.

Police found her body on July 24 that year near Fort St. John, but did not know who she was. Due to decomposition, she had to be buried quickly after an autopsy. She was marked as Jane Doe in the Prince George cemetery when post-mortem fingerprinting eventually revealed her identity.

Lilley and the rest of the family had her exhumed and interred at the family plot in Carmacks under a spirit house, as is the custom of the North Tutchone First Nation.

Lilley knew her sister for less than a year before she was killed, although they searched for each other all of Burk's life. The tragedy and victimization of Burk's life started at birth, said Lilley, who was eight when Burk, the youngest of 11, was born June 11, 1969.

She was named Tina Washpan by their



LILLEY

"Mom was told it was temporary, and the kids would all be given back if she got her alcohol problem under control.

"Well she did, right away. She was sober for a year when she applied to have us all returned, but the court told her she had signed a paper agreeing to permanent removal."

The five youngest children were split up and adopted out to different locations by then. One was with a family in Georgia. Lilley and two sisters were with a family in St. Paul, Minn., and Burk was adopted by a family in Saskatchewan.

Lilley said her family was good and kind, but she always knew it was not where she belonged. She remembered Carmacks and all her older family mem-

bers. She remembered she had a sister named Tina. At the age of 14, after a string of abusive and traumatic experiences in residential schools and juvenile homes, Lilley left Minnesota and moved back to the Yukon.

It was sometime around 1989 they got a phone call from Tina - who grew up as Cynthia - telling them their youngest had finally figured out how to find them. She came to visit and stayed in Carmacks.

"I want (whoever did this) to know that no matter what her background, no matter what she went through growing up, no matter what you think she was like, she was someone who was loved very much," Lilley said.

"She cared for people, she had loved ones, she had a lot of determination to get to know her family, she was a strong individual. I thank God I had her for that short period of time, and I wish I had her with me today."

Lilley was not always pleased with the RCMP for their efforts over the years, but 16 years after the murder an arrest was made.

"I'm just glad they didn't give up," Lilley said.

Bond rating

B.C. finances in good shape

The Canadian Press

VANCOUVER — A national bond rating company says B.C.'s finances remain strong despite the troubled economy, but the province will likely have to reduce some of its financial projections.

The Dominion Bond Rating Service says prudent financial management by the provincial Liberals in recent years has left B.C. in good shape to weather the world economic crisis.

The budget introduced last month projects two years of deficits before the province returns to a balanced position, but Dominion says some economic forecasts will probably have to be scaled back because of continuing problems in the national economy.

The agency says the biggest risk to projections is a possible slide in corporate and personal income tax payments.

B.C. voters go to the polls on May 12, and it's likely a new budget will be presented after the election.

Dominion says that post-election budget could be sharply different than the one introduced in February.

Taser inquiry

Another Mountie retracts statements

The Canadian Press

VANCOUVER — Robert Dziekanski was not, as he has been portrayed in the past, the agitated man who withstood the shock from a Taser and swung a stapler at police, the most senior RCMP officer admits.

In the hours and days after Dziekanski collapsed and died on the floor of Vancouver's airport in October 2007, the four RCMP officers involved told investigators he was an aggressive threat to public safety, even after he took the first of four shocks from an RCMP Taser.

The officers said they had to wrestle Dziekanski to the ground - evidence disputed by a witness video to Dziekanski's dying moments.

Cpl. Benjamin Monty Robinson told a public inquiry into Dziekanski's death Wednesday that he made erroneous statements to those homicide investigators.

"I didn't articulate it well," Robinson explained during his third day of testimony at the inquiry.

"I'm blending the whole interaction," he said. "I did the best job I

could. I admit there are inaccuracies."

Dziekanski, a Polish man who didn't speak English, died on the floor of the arrivals area following five blasts of the Taser.

Robinson has insisted he was simply ineloquent when he gave two separate statements to investigators probing the in-custody death. The three other officers have said they gave their best recollections of a fast-paced, stressful event.

Robinson acknowledged Wednesday that Dziekanski was relatively calm when police arrived and initially followed their directions.

He also conceded that Dziekanski didn't swing the stapler, as officers told investigators, and collapsed to the floor on his own after the first shock.

Their initial accounts said he continued standing after the first hit.

All the officers have retracted parts of their statements to homicide investigators when confronted with the bystander's video. Some of the officers' errors - for instance, that Dziekanski had to be wrestled to the floor - were consistent among them.

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Queen of North

Ferry captain gets job back

The Canadian Press

VANCOUVER — The captain of a ferry that sank off the coast of British Columbia, killing two people, will get his job back after a provincial board ruled it was unfair for BC Ferries to fire him.

Colin Henthorne was dismissed last year around the same time as three other bridge crew from the Queen of North.

He complained to WorkSafeBC and in an inspection report released Wednesday, the provincial workers safety board found he was fired for raising safety concerns after the ship went down. The organization said it's against the law to fire an employee for raising such concerns. The Queen of the North ran aground in B.C.'s Inside Passage on the northern coast just after midnight March 22, 2006.

Fifty-five passengers and 46 crew escaped, however Gerald Foisey and Shirley Rosette of 100 Mile House, B.C., didn't make it off the ship and are presumed drowned.

By Rob Van Adrichem

UNBC This Week

March 19, 2009

Graduation at UNBC is still more than two months away but already this grad class is shaping up to be the largest ever. In fact, around 900 students will cross the stage at the end of May.

UNBC also awards honorary degrees during Convocation to people who made significant contributions in education, public service, or the arts. This year, three British Columbians will receive honorary degrees.

Simon Fraser University professor John Borden is perhaps Canada's leading expert on forest insects. He has published more than 300 papers and has nine patents to his credit.

80-year old Witsuwit'en elder Alfred Joseph has been a proponent of Aboriginal land rights since the 1960s. He is also a respected carver and totem poles he helped to create are standing in Moricetown and Kispiox.

Former UNBC Board Chair Don Rix is a physician who spearheaded the availability of laboratory diagnostic services in small communities around British Columbia. He is a recipient of both the Order of BC and the Order of Canada.

They will receive their honorary degrees on May 29.

UNBC FACT:

This year's Convocation ceremony will push the total number of UNBC alumni to around 7800.

PRIMETIME programs on TV tonight 3/26/09

	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30
CTV	talk	Ace of Hollywood (N)	C&I: Crime Scene Investigation		Grey's Anatomy "Eleven for Love Letter" (N)		ER "I Feel Good" (N)	
CBC	Coronation Street (N)	Jeopardy! (N)	Doc Zone: How one of the world's most populous centers feeds itself. (N)				CBC News: The National (N)	
Global	Entertainment Tonight (N)	Entertainment Canada	Bones "The Doctor in the Den" (N) (P)	The Office (N)	Da Kink in My Hair		Life "5 Quarts" (N)	
NBC	Evening Magazine	Inside Edition	My Name Is Earl (N)	The Office "Frame Toby" (N)	The Office (N)	30 Rock (N)	ER "I Feel Good" (N)	
CBS	College Basketball NCAA Tournament Regional Semifinal - Teams TBA. From Boston and Glen Dale, Ariz. (L)			KIRO News Special	Judge Judy (N)	Entertainment Tonight (N)	The Insider (N)	
ABC	Wheel of Fortune (N)	Jeopardy! (N)	In the Motherhood	Samantha Who? (N)	Grey's Anatomy "Eleven for Love Letter" (N)		Private Practice "Do the Right Thing" (N)	
PBS	Rick Steves' Europe	Oregon Field Guide	Doc Martin "Old Dogs"	Pointe! "Incredible Thrill"		Spain ... On the Road Again: Palma Cathedral		
FOX	Two and a Half Men	Two and a Half Men	Bones "The Doctor in the Den" (N) (P)	Hell's Kitchen (N)		News (N)	TMZ (N)	

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442008

The winning numbers in last Friday's **Super 7** draw were **10, 23, 28, 29, 31, 32, 46**. The bonus number was **03**.

The four **EXTRA** winning numbers for British Columbia on last Friday were **37, 66, 81, 91**.

The winning numbers in Wednesday's **Lotto-649** draw were **09, 16, 34, 42, 44, 48**. The bonus number was **13**.

The **BC-49** lottery winning numbers on Wednesday were **08, 26, 28, 29, 44, 45**. The bonus number was **21**.

The four **EXTRA** winning numbers for British Columbia on Wednesday were **12, 25, 28, 87**.

In the event of a discrepancy between this and the official winning numbers list, the latter shall prevail.

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