

NEWS RELEASE

British Columbia Civil Liberties Association
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Civil Rights Group Lodges Four Complaints in Police Related Civilian Deaths & Announces Public Forum

The B.C. Civil Liberties Association is lodging new complaints in the case of four men who died in August in British Columbia while in police custody or while being pursued by police. These men include Paul Boyd (Vancouver Police Department), Steve Qualtier (RCMP – Penticton), Christopher Tom (RCMP – Tofino) and an unidentified man (RCMP – Fort St. John).

BCCLA Executive Director Murray Mollard: “August 2007 represents a tragic month perhaps unprecedented for the number of police related civilian deaths in B.C. The sheer magnitude of this problem points to the need for urgent reform for police accountability. No longer should police investigate in-custody deaths.”

The BCCLA has been automatically lodging complaints for in-custody deaths for the last several years in an attempt to ensure some degree of independent civilian oversight. Regrettably, the B.C. Police Complaint Commissioner does not have the legal authority to investigate in-custody deaths involving municipal police in B.C. and the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP (CPC) has so far refused to investigate these deaths itself (including the death of Ian Bush), even though it has the authority to do so.

To address this issue, the BCCLA is organizing a **free public forum on Monday, September 24, 2007 from 8:30 am to 1 pm at the UBC Robson Square Theatre in Vancouver**. Speakers will include the mothers of Ian Bush and Kevin St. Arnaud, lawyers for these families, Shirley Heafey, the former Chair of the CPC and André Marin, the Ombudsman of Ontario who is conducting a review of the Special Investigations Unit (SIU), an Ontario civilian agency responsible for investigating in-custody deaths. Mr. Marin was the Director of the SIU from 1996-1998.

For more details regarding the public forum, visit: <http://www.bccla.org/custody.htm>

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