

Justin Trudeau’s “Democracy” and the Freedom Convoy: The “Coutts Four” Denied Bail, in Prison in Canada for Over 500 Days Without Trial. Are They Political Prisoners?

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Over five hundred and twenty-five days ago, between the evening of February 13 and afternoon of February 14, 2022, four men were arrested for their participation in Freedom Convoy protests at the Alberta border town of Coutts.

They were charged with conspiracy to commit murder of police officers in support of a plot to overthrow the Government of Canada. They have been dubbed the ‘Coutts Four.’

The accused are self-employed fisherman Chris Carbert, who ran a landscaping and fencing business with nine employees. A Lethbridge, Alberta, resident, 42-year-old Carbert is a single father who has been raising his son since the boy was nine-months-old.

Another Lethbridge resident, and best friend of Chris Carbert since public school, is 49-year-old Chris Lysak. He is an electrician and father of two girls.

A third member of the ‘Coutts Four’ accused of conspiracy to commit murder is 41-year-old Jerry Morin. He is a lineman who grew up near Vulcan, Alberta. The CBC states he resided in Olds, Alberta, at the time of his arrest. The fourth accused of these serious charges is Anthony “Tony” Olienkick. Tony, age 40, took part of the clean-up in High River, Alberta, after the 2013 floods.[1] He has a gravel truck and is self-employed, and the CBC has reported his home is in Claresholm, Alberta.

The Coutts Four have been denied bail. They have remained in custody for over 525 days with a trial date yet to be set. More pretrial motions will be heard between July 25 to 28 by the crown and defence lawyers at the Lethbridge court house. Since the

Magna Carta was signed in 1215, kingdoms and democracies have allowed those charged with a crime to be presumed innocent until proven guilty. With that provision has come the right to be granted bail and to a speedy trial. When citizens are accused of a crime and left to rot in prison without having their day in court, their spirits can be broken and be persuaded to agree to plead guilty even when they are innocent.

Bail Is Granted to Those Accused of Having Committed Murder, and Lesser Charges in Canada

In Canada, when someone is charged with committing a crime, they are released on bail. This includes for those charged with murder. For example, on September 2021, 31-year-old Umar Zameer was released on bail after being charged with first-degree murder of Toronto Police Constable Jeffrey Northrup.[2] In April 2022, Marlana Isnardy was released on bail after while awaiting her trial for the charge of murdering 27-year-old Matthew Cholette in Kelowna, British Columbia.[3] A case of double murder in the city of Mission in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia, concerned the deaths of Lisa Dudley and her boyfriend Guthrie McKay. Accused of first-degree murder, Tom Holden was released on bail.[4] And in March 2023, 22-year-old Ali Mian was released on bail as he awaited trial to answer to charges of second-degree murder in the shooting death of an armed intruder, 21-year-old Alexander Amoroso-Leacock.[5]

But the Coutts Four are not granted bail.

Meanwhile others charged of first and second-degree murder are out on bail. What is going on here? Does the RCMP have a case that proves the accused pose a danger, if released on bail, and plan to violently overthrow of the government? Or, are their applications for bail being denied as part of political theatre within a larger government narrative to justify invocation of the *Emergencies Act*?

In 1166 the Assize of Clarendon ruling under England's King Henry II established the tradition of *habeas corpus* (in Latin: "that you have the body") which gave those charged with a crime a right to appear in court to defend themselves. The 1166 judgment declared, "No Freeman shall be taken or imprisoned, or be disseized of his Freehold, or Liberties, or free Customs, or be outlawed, or exiled, or any other wise destroyed; nor will We not pass upon him, nor condemn him, but by lawful judgment of his Peers, or by the Law of the land." [6] And, in the Magna Carta, section 38 states "No bailiff (legal officer) shall start proceedings against anyone [*not just freemen, this was even then a universal human right*] on his accusation alone (on his own mere say-so), without trustworthy witnesses having been brought for the purpose." [7] *Habeas corpus* rights are part of the British legal tradition inherited by Canada. The rights exist in the common law and have been enshrined in section 10(c) of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which states that "[e]veryone has the right on arrest or detention ... to have the validity of the detention determined by way of *habeas corpus* and to be released if the detention is not lawful." While section 9(c) of the Charter states that a protected right of Canadian citizens is "freedom from arbitrary detention or imprisonment." [8]

Former Toronto Police Sergeant Detective, **Donald Best**, points out that it is almost unheard of in Canada for an accused to be denied bail.

Does the denial of bail mean the four must be guilty? Consider the way the RCMP gathered evidence.

The Mounties alleged that other unknown persons were still at large and **connected to the plot to overthrow the government.**

Yet, the RCMP didn't fingerprint and DNA test the firearms and other items that might have originated with 'other unknown' suspects. If you are an investigator, you want to identify who else might be involved in a plot. If you have a weapon, getting the fingerprints and DNA evidence can point to the identities of other persons that are suspects in the larger plot. Yet, the RCMP didn't bag each item where it was found, and protect each item for its secure transit to a forensic lab. Best wrote on his website, "Failure of police officers to adhere to fundamentals of exhibits collection and protection doesn't just potentially weaken the prosecution's case, it can also deny exculpatory evidence to the defense. Many times, I have seen otherwise good officers get 'tunnel vision' about a suspect or an investigation, and begin to pay attention only to evidence that supports their theory of the case and the crime. These officers become so focused that they will even deliberately exclude evidence that doesn't support their vision of events."

Best points out in the RCMP photo of the cache of weapons 'discovered' by the Mounties, "Items have been arranged on the floor with five of the long-guns rather precariously leaning against the table for display. No (investigator) would normally position or store firearms in such a manner where a bump of the table might cause them to fall..." A photo of the cache of weapons "had a national impact and was used by both the media and the government as justification for invoking the Emergencies Act, and the police operations to arrest and clear Freedom Convoy protesters in Ottawa." [9]

Background

In January 2022 Canadian mainstream media and politicians described an unruly mob headed for Ottawa. On January 26, 2022, **Prime Minister Justin Trudeau** told Canadians there was a "fringe minority" with "unacceptable views" coming to Ottawa in a "so-called freedom convoy." [10] Protesters began arriving in Ottawa on January 28, with the majority arriving the following day.



Source: OffGuardian

Protest leaders worked with Ottawa Police Service Police Liaison Teams to ensure emergency lanes in downtown Ottawa remained open. On two occasions, an Ontario court ruled the protests in Ottawa could proceed. The second ruling, on February 16, 2022, took into account the protesters adhering to the February 7th injunction against honking of horns. There was no looting, no acts of actual physical violence, no smashing of windows. Numbers of police remarked about the lack of criminality. Nonetheless, inflammatory rhetoric coming from politicians and the media depicted the protesters as “terrorists,” “mercenaries,” “hillbillies,” “white supremacists,” “Nazis,” “insurrectionists,” “an unruly mob,” and more.[11]

Protest leaders held press conferences welcoming an opportunity to meet with government leaders, including public health officials. They wanted to have a discussion about the pandemic measures.

Could dialogue lead to a breakthrough, a win-win? Even when unions and management are in tough negotiations during a strike, there can be a breakthrough with an unexpected way forward to resolve matters. Face-to-face dialogue was always a first step to learn if there was a way forward. **A 73-page plan by the Ontario Provincial Police included recommendations that the federal government enter into dialogue with the protesters.** The government did so in 2020 when First Nations protesters disrupted rail service, ferry sailings, pipeline construction and blockaded an Ontario highway. But in 2022, the Liberal government was in no mood for dialogue. Policing agencies and even the Ontario Attorney-General had suggested the federal government engage in dialogue with the protesters. But the protesters were depicted as impossible, unreasonable people, incapable of participating in discussion.

On the 31st of January 2022, the prime minister of Canada, **Justin Trudeau** addressed the nation regarding the Freedom Convoy protest movement at a Press Conference from an undisclosed location which was broadcast live.

He portrayed the protesters as violent people, racists and more.

On the 2nd of February, he added another layer with a tweet. (Below, See [this](#))



Justin Trudeau ✓

@JustinTrudeau

🇨🇦 Officiel du gouvernement - Canada

Today in the House, Members of Parliament unanimously condemned the antisemitism, Islamophobia, anti-Black racism, homophobia, and transphobia that we've seen on display in Ottawa over the past number of days. Together, let's keep working to make Canada more inclusive.

12:47 AM · Feb 2, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Are the protesters really what he claims them to be?

I was there for four days with my camera, I never saw or witnessed anything close to what he describes.

Is it possible this is all made up? If it is, what is the purpose? (Jean Francois Girard)

VIDEO

At 4:30 p.m., February 14, Justin Trudeau invoked the *Emergencies Act* to crush the protest. Bank accounts of some hundreds of protesters were frozen.

Yet, in an effort to defuse the situation in downtown Ottawa, on February 12, 2022 protest leaders came to an agreement with the City of Ottawa to remove seventy-five percent of protest vehicles from the city between February 14th and 16th. By 12PM, February 14, 102 vehicles had been removed, according to Serge Arpin, City of Ottawa Chief of Staff to the Mayor.[12] There were other Freedom Convoy protests that emerged during the Ottawa protests. Yet, in relation to the justification to invoke the *Emergencies Act*, in Windsor, Ontario, protesters and police reached an agreement to clear the blockade at the

Ambassador Bridge by late on February 13th. The charges against protesters in Coutts, Alberta, across from Sweetgrass, Montana, were dealt with under the existing laws of the land on the February 14.

“Comments made publicly, by public figures and in the media (about Ottawa protests) ... were not premised in fact” – Supt. Patrick Morris (Ontario Provincial Police Intelligence)

After the *Emergencies Act* was invoked, it triggered a mandatory inquiry as prescribed in 1988 legislation passed in Parliament. A Public Order Emergency Commission (POEC) was held over six weeks in Ottawa during the fall of 2022. But the justification for invoking the *Emergencies Act* began to unravel as police and intelligence officers gave testimony. At 1:00 PM on February 14, 2022, prior to the *Emergencies Act* invocation, an Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) “Operational Intelligence Report” described the Ottawa protest. “The mood today was again calm, festive, and family oriented. Speakers were again telling people to walk away from agitators and thanked the police for remaining calm. Many of the speakers were promoting love and peaceful protest, some even taking quotes from the Bible. Speakers were also wishing everyone a happy Valentine’s.” The memo noted there were “children on Wellington Street playing hockey.”[13]

Supt. Patrick Morris, “the foremost authority in the Province of Ontario regarding Intelligence” with the OPP testified before the POEC. He said of the protest, “ ... the lack of violent crime was shocking If there was an actual threat, then there would have been an investigation, and if it was an actual threat, I assume the Ottawa Police Service would have laid a charge for uttering threats.”

Morris testified,

“I was concerned by the politicization and I was concerned by hyperbole and I was concerned by the affixing of labels without evidence to individuals’ movements et cetera.” Morris elaborated in his testimony that his letter reflected his concern about “comments made publicly, by public figures and in the media that I believed were not premised in fact I was leading the criminal intelligence collection of information and the production of criminal intelligence in relation to these events. So, I believed I was in a unique situation to understand what was transpiring. So, when I read accounts that the State of Russia had something to do with it; Or that this was the result of American influence, either financially or ideologically; Or that Donald Trump was behind it; Or that it was un-Canadian; Or that the people participating were un-Canadian and that they were not Canadian views and they were extremists; I found it to be problematic, because what I ascertained from my role ... I did not see validation for those assertions I did not see information that substantiated what was being said publicly and via the media. And I found that the subjective assertions sensationalized ... and exacerbated conflict So the labelling was problematic to me.”

Morris further stated in a letter before the POEC, “I do not know where the political figures are acquiring information on intelligence on the extent of extremist involvement.” He was emphatic, “I want to be clear on this. We produced no intelligence to indicate these individuals would be armed. There has been a lot of hyperbole around that.”[14]

OPP Commissioner Thomas Carrique, with a certificate from the University of St. Andrews in Terrorism Studies, also testified. He agreed that, “based on all OPP intelligence and the

intelligence provided by the RCMP and federal intelligence agencies to the OPP...**there was no credible threat to the security of Canada.**" Carrique confirmed it "would be my understanding" that in order to invoke the *Emergencies Act*, there needs to be a "credible threat." He agreed that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protected citizens' rights to assemble and protest. He agreed that this includes protesting government policies. Carrique also concurred that the trucks that were arriving in Ottawa in late January 2022 "did so at the direction of police officers." [15]

Incendiary Allegations Made About Coutts Early into the Protest

If the comments made publicly by politicians and the media about the protests in Ottawa were "problematic, being controlled and one-sided," was this also the case in Coutts? On February 1, 2022 Alberta Premier Jason Kenney spoke to the press and residents of the province. He stated that he'd "received reports in the last hour of people allied with the protesters assaulting RCMP officers, including in one instance trying to ram members of the RCMP, later leading to a collision with a civilian vehicle in the area. This kind of conduct is totally unacceptable. Assaulting law enforcement officers who are simply doing their job to maintain public safety and the rule of law is completely unacceptable. And without hesitation, I condemn those actions" [16]

But in a documentary titled *Trucker Rebellion: The Story of the Coutts Blockade*, Rebel News reporters Kiane Simone and Sydney Fizzard learned that Premier Kenney's statements were not accurate. Simone spoke on his cell phone with RCMP Corporal Curtis Peters. The officer clarified, "There were no physical altercation(s) between RCMP officers and protesters. Yesterday, when we had protesters go around and breach the road block set up on Highway 4 to the north, there was some public safety concerns and officer safety concerns that took place there. Vehicles travelled through, drove through fields to get around the road block and then onto Highway 4. They were travelling southbound on Highway 4 in the northbound lanes. And that was happening at the same time we had a few vehicles leaving the protest and travelling northbound in the northbound lanes. So, we had a traffic-meeting head-on on the double-lane highway there. And we did have a collision take place. A head-on collision occurred as a result of all this between a person trying to reach the blockade and a person who was just travelling north on the highway. And fortunately, it was a relatively minor collision. But a confrontation which led to an assault took place as a direct result of that collision."

Kiane Simone asked, "was that an assault on an RCMP officer?" Peters replied, "No. That was an assault between two civilians, between a protester and a civilian." Kian Simone pressed, "So, Jason Kenney's statement was not true at the press conference." RCMP Corporal Peters emphasized, "I can tell you what I just told you, sir. You can have my name. It's Corporal Curtis Peters. I'm the spokesperson here. My badge number is 5-2-9-5-7." [17]

The Coutts Four in the Headlines

On February 14, 2022 the RCMP issued a press release regarding arrests in Coutts. It included a photo of an RCMP vehicle in the background, and a table in the foreground. Leaning against, on and below the table were weapons the RCMP said it "discovered" in "three trailers associated to this criminal organization." The weapons they seized included 13 long guns, several handguns, multiple (three) sets of body armour, a machete, and high-capacity magazines. The press release did not name any of the individuals or the charges against them. [18] Global News carried the story later that day, and a reporter spoke to

Alberta RCMP Supt. Roberta McHale. She said, “There was a heavy stash of weapons and these weapons were brought by people who had the intent on causing harm.” She announced that the RCMP were investigating a range of charges, including conspiracy to commit murder. McHale added, “This was a very complex, layered investigation, and some people might ask why it took so long. These investigations aren’t necessarily easy.”[19]

On February 17, 2022 the *Toronto Star* ran this headline: “Father of accused in alleged Coutts blockade murder conspiracy says son was radicalized online, as others dispute RCMP narrative.” Mike Lysak, whose son Chris is one of the Coutts Four, was reported to have expressed his frustration watching his son “fall further and further into an online world of COVID-19 misinformation.” The *Toronto Star* claimed Mike Lysak said his son had become involved in the Diagonon group.[20] But, Granny Mackay, a guest on the Good Morning with Jason podcast, rejects that narrative. She has let me know that after the *Toronto Star* ran their story, Mike Lysak was upset. He said the newspaper twisted his words.

Global News had reported on February 15th about tweets by the Canadian Anti-Hate Network which stressed that RCMP had seized “a plate carrier with Diagonon patches.” The tweets described Diagonon as “an accelerationist movement that believes a revolution is inevitable and necessary to collapse the current government system.” Deputy Director for Anti-Hate, Elizabeth Simmons, warned about Diagonon. “A lot of them claim to be ex-military and ... have some kind of military training.” She added, “this is a very anti-Semitic group. It’s rife with neo-Nazis.” She pointed to the February 3, 2022 arrest in Nova Scotia of Jeremy MacKenzie on firearms charges.[21]

A Global News story on February 3, 2022 described Jeremy MacKenzie as the “creator of Diagonon.” An RCMP warrant to search MacKenzie’s home in Pictou, Nova Scotia on January 26, 2022 referred to a video where MacKenzie spoke about “Diagonona.” RCMP contended that MacKenzie intended to create a new nation from Alaska to Florida made up of the provinces and states with the fewest pandemic restrictions. MacKenzie, a Canadian Armed Forces veteran of the Afghanistan War, attended some of the Freedom Convoy protest in Ottawa. But his firearms charges are not related to the Freedom Convoy. MacKenzie had a firearms license, but it was alleged he had an over-capacity magazine.[18] At the time the news story was reported, the Freedom Convoy protests were less than a week old. But, the headline, “Man who attended Ottawa protest convoy arrested on firearms charges,” inferred that the people protesting on Parliament Hill were violent. And now, here were followers of Jeremy MacKenzie in Coutts who were allegedly also violent.[22]

Radio-Canada reported on February 17, 2022 about the names of those who were charged. Chris Carbert and Chris Lysak were described as people who have “ties to Jeremy MacKenzie, of the “American-style militia movement” Diagonon, a “neo-fascist, white supremacist” and “violent insurrectionist movement.” The news story contended it was the aim of Diagonon to “establish a white nationalist state ... that would run diagonally from Alaska through westerns Canada’s provinces, all the way south to Florida.” The news story cited a Facebook post in October 2021 by Carbert where he said he was “prepared to die in protest of government mandates.” Carbert apparently posted, “I’ll likely be dead soon and likely will be front page news ... I will die fighting for what I believe is right and I mean this.” He added in another post, “I won’t live long. I’ve come to terms with this.” Radio-Canada stated that “Carbert has prior convictions for assault, drug trafficking and two drunk driving convictions.” However, Granny Mackay has learned from Chris Carbert that he was never convicted of assault. Another man picked a fight with him in a bar. Carbert was given a conditional sentence. He has no record of an assault conviction. The drug charge in question

concerns getting some ecstasy for a friend when he was in his early 20s. Both happened prior to 2004. Jerry Morin posted on February 13, 2022 “This is war. Your country needs (you) more than ever now.”[23]

On April 25, 2022 the CBC reported that crown prosecutors Aaron Rankin and Matt Dalidowicz stated that the plan was to try all four men in one trial. Daldowicz told the CBC that the cases for Carbert, Olienick and Morin were “moving quickly.” But there were complications with the Lysak case.[24] The *Lethbridge Herald* reported on June 10, 2022 that three of the Coutts Four had been denied bail, with Jerry Morin awaiting his bail hearing.[25]

In early September 2022, some of the contents of the Information To Obtain search warrant by RCMP Constable Trevor Checkley was made public in the press. The warrant in question was the one granted by an Alberta judge to allow RCMP officers to search properties. This was due to Checkley’s urgent request and belief that a serious crime was about to be committed. In the ITO, Checkley swore before the judge, “I have reasonable grounds to believe that (Tony) Olienick, (Chris) Carbert and (Jerry) Morin were part of a group that participated in the Coutts blockade and brought firearms into the Coutts blockade area with the intention of using those firearms against police.” The officer attested that “I believe (these protesters were) arming themselves for a standoff against police.”[26]

On November 30, 2022 the *Calgary Herald* ran the attention-getting headline “Some Coutts protesters wanted to alter Canada’s political system.” Allegedly, in conversations with undercover officers, RCMP Constable Trevor Checkley stated Anthony “Olienick described (Christopher) Lysak as a hitman, sniper and gun-fighter.” Checkley emphasized that Jerry “Morin said it was World War Three and that stripping freedoms and making everyone slaves was warfare.”[27] The next day, the CBC ran a story about how the Coutts Four were making calls while in custody directly to their bosses in “the extremist network called Diagonon.” It was inferred that bosses outside of Coutts who were directing the Coutts Four to agitate for a new order.[28]

On the Good Morning with Jason podcast, a woman named Danielle who has attended the pretrial motions in June 2023 spoke about the media coverage. A regular guest on the Good Morning with Jason show, Danielle observed “ever since Christmas (2022) mainstream media has been very, very quiet about this. Global News hasn’t reported a single thing on it (since December 2022). There’s been absolute crickets.” Jason Lavigne spoke to a staff member of the *Western Standard* in Alberta, who is also a friend. In addition to the publication ban requested by the defense to protect the jury pool process, there is also some sort of gag order related to the media. Lavigne’s contact at the *Western Standard*, who he spoke with in July 2023, is not at liberty to discuss this any further.[29]

Coutts Protests, Arrests, on the A-list to Justify Invocation of Emergencies Act

Testimony by numbers of government officials at the POEC pointed to the protests at Coutts as being on the A-list of events triggering the *Emergencies Act*. Clerk of the Privy Council, Janice Charette, raised the alarm about the protests in Coutts in the context of discussing the conversation about whether to invoke the *Emergencies Act*. “We were seeing the results of the law enforcement activity and what was happening at Coutts and we were seeing the size of the stash of firearms and ammunition that were found in Coutts amongst the

protesters. So, this was new and I would say relevant information in terms of just the nature of the threat that we were worried about in terms of the risk for serious violence.”[30] Charette testified that “the situation at Coutts was more complex ... It looked like it was getting fixed, then it was not getting fixed; looked like it was getting fixed, then it was not getting fixed The quantity of weapons and ammunition that was discovered by the RCMP conducting that law enforcement activity was more than I would have expected. So that, to me, indicated a seriousness and a scale of the illegal activity that was either contemplated at Coutts or people were ready to engage in at Coutts ... that was beyond ... my prior expectations ” When discussing the Freedom Convoy protests across Canada, including Coutts, Janice Charette warned of insurrectionist intentions. “There was talk of overthrowing the government and installing a different government with a governor general ” [31]

Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council, Nathalie Drouin, was asked if she knew that the protesters in Coutts intended to leave the area. “Well, I was not aware of that. No, that’s not true. I have heard about the potential breakthrough in Coutts. ...prior to the enforcement action, we didn’t know about the cache.”[32] Prime Minister Justin Trudeau explained one of the reasons invoking the *Emergencies Act* was on the table “was (the) presence of weapons at Coutts ” Trudeau complained that once Premier Jason Kenney removed “a number of mandates” in Alberta, “the occupation at Coutts seemed to be emboldened ... ‘Let’s keep going.’” Trudeau also revealed under cross examination that he had been considering invoking the *Emergencies Act* in response to the Freedom Convoy protests “from the very beginning.”[33]

National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister, Jody Thomas, reflected in the decision-making process on the road to invoking the *Emergencies Act*. Regarding “acts of serious violence,” can that include “the violence that people ... of Ottawa were experiencing on the streets, ... the inability of the Town of Coutts to function, is that a line? ... There is a spectrum of activity and behaviour and threat in there that we need to understand ”[34]

One of the Liberal cabinet ministers who cited the situation in Coutts as a catalyst in the A-list of reasons to invoke the *Emergencies Act* was Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino. He testified that “not knowing exactly how it was that the operation in Coutts was going to play out at that time, and bearing in mind the sensitivities, the fact that the situation was combustible, that the individuals that were involved in Coutts were prepared to go down with a fight that could lead to the loss of life, that if that had happened and that occurred, it still remains an open question in my mind as to whether or not it would have triggered other events across the country. And so that’s why I - in my mind, it was very much - it was a threshold moment.”[35]

In her testimony before the POEC, Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland spoke about the protests in Coutts as accelerating the sense that the government had to respond decisively to the Freedom Convoy. She recalled that on February 12, 2022 when “we heard from the RCMP Commissioner about concerns that there were serious weapons in Coutts. ...that really raised the stakes in terms of my degree of concern about what could be happening in this sort of whack-a-mole copycat situation across the country.” [36] Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Bill Blair, also echoed this view in his testimony before the POEC on November 21, 2022.

The mayor of Coutts, Jimmy Willet, also testified before the POEC on November 9, 2022. A text was entered as evidence from Mayor Willett to CTV reporter Bill Graveland. In it the mayor described the protesters in Coutts as “Domestic Terrorists.” But told Graveland in the

text “You need to find someone in a protected position to call these guys what they are, Domestic Terrorists. Won’t be me. They are right outside my window. I would be strung up, literally. Just a thought.” He stated that his wife saw some protesters “moving heavy hockey bags” and said “it’s guns.”[37] Why the mayor’s wife presumed the hockey bags contained guns has not been followed up by any reporters.

Jeremy MacKenzie and Diagon

On Tom Marazzo’s *Meet Me in the Middle* podcast in June 20, 2023, Jeremy MacKenzie spoke about his February 3, 2022 arrest in Nova Scotia. “They tried to play it up that I was in hiding. I had lawyers who were trying to talk to these people. What is going on. They flew four RCMP officers on their own planes and flew it from Saskatchewan to Halifax, where I spent six days in solitary confinement. And then flew me out to Saskatchewan in chains and ankle and arms and belly chains. And then I did two and a half months in jail in Saskatchewan before I could get bail. I have no criminal record. Never convicted of anything. And there was a murder while I was there, a woman stabbed another woman at a dance club. She was out on bail the next day. But, I’m too dangerous to be let out. And if it wasn’t for my lawyers and my legal team, I’d probably still be in there ... on a common assault charge.” The common assault charge relates to an incident in Saskatchewan in November 2021, and not anything connecting MacKenzie to the Freedom Convoy protests. He told Tom Marazzo on the podcast that sixteen months after the protests in the winter of 2022, “I still to this day have not been asked a single question by the RCMP or CSIS ... regarding any of this (Diagon).” MacKenzie asserted that the government of Canada needed a scapegoat to justify invoking the *Emergencies Act*. [38]

At the POEC, MacKenzie testified from his prison cell in Saskatchewan Correctional Centre. MacKenzie confirmed that in January 2021 he drew a diagonal line on his cell phone from Alaska, through Alberta and Saskatchewan, through the Dakotas, down to Texas and across to Florida and named it Diagon. It became a brand name for followers on his podcasts. He made a plastic goat figurine, named Philip, the vice-president of Diagon. Philip, he explained to his viewers was a demonic time-travelling, cocaine addict. He pointed out that the official narrative about Diagon as “militia” and “extremist, has come from the largely government-funded Canadian Anti-Hate Network. MacKenzie observed how Anti-Hate posts scary articles about Diagon which both the media and the police take at face value. [39] While in Ottawa, Jeremy MacKenzie posted that he wanted any of his followers at Freedom Convoy protests “If there’s a speed limit (go) slower than that. Don’t even litter. Don’t sit. Don’t even throw a snowball. Don’t give anyone any excuse to point at you and say, ‘Look what you’ve done.’” [40]

In his testimony, MacKenzie confirmed that he had met Chris Lysak in person at a meet-and-greet in Saskatchewan in the summer of 2021, and at a BBQ where people were having steak on the grill. MacKenzie spoke to Lysak sometime after the charges for conspiracy to commit murder. He confirmed that the patches on some tactical vests looked like Diagon patches. But that anyone could have made them and sold them. “I really can’t speak to their origins,” stated MacKenzie. Though he did not claim that the RCMP might have planted the Diagon patches on the tactical vests discovered among the weapons cache in Coutts, MacKenzie stated “law enforcement (in) Canada has a history of things like this taking place. It’s not outside the realm of possibility ... Could it be planted? ... I would leave that open to possibility.” [41] During POEC testimony, it was confirmed that Jeremy MacKenzie has no criminal record.

A reasonable person might conclude that an organization whose vice-president is a plastic goat figurine that does time-travelling and has a narcotics addiction should not be taken seriously. Anymore, than a friend at a bar having one too many announces “one day I’ll be Prime Minister.” How might the United States government view an attempt to trigger the secession of 26 states from Alaska, and Idaho across to the Atlantic coast from Virginia to Florida?

But police and intelligence in Canada in 2021-2022 took every statement on Jeremy MacKenzie’s podcasts at face value. If Jeremy MacKenzie read the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears, would Canadian law enforcement issue an all-points-bulletin to be on the lookout for a little girl with blonde hair on charges of breaking and entering, and damaging personal property of the Bear family?

What Sparked the Protests?

As I have written in previous articles, the Freedom Convoy protests began in response to the Canadian government ending the truck driver exemption from vaccination in order to cross the Canadian border. [42] Truck drivers had enjoyed an exemption since the start of the pandemic were hailed as heroes by Prime Minister Trudeau. No data about COVID-19 spread and truck drivers was presented to the House of Commons Health Committee in January 2022. The infection fatality rate for Covid-19 was about 0.25%.[43]



Source: Children’s Health Defense

For truck drivers entering the United States, Labor Secretary Marty Walsh clarified the Biden Administration’s new regulations. “The ironic thing is most truckers are not covered by this, because they’re driving a truck, they’re in a cab, they’re by themselves, they wouldn’t be covered by this,” Walsh said. Though often framed as equivalent to Canadian mandates for truck drivers, American mandates were less restrictive. The US Administration mandate exempted workers “who do not report to a workplace where other individuals such as coworkers or customers are present.”[44] And there were no vaccine requirements for truck drivers entering Mexico. Canadian truck drivers were not being deprived of making a living due to regulations in the United States. During the pandemic, with other nations concerned about healthy economies and supply chains, Canada was an outlier in its vaccine restrictions

for truck drivers.

Original Search Warrant Listed Only Mischief Over \$5,000, No Mention of Weapons or Conspiracy to Commit Murder

A Search Warrant was issued on February 13, 2022 to RCMP Constable Trevor Checkley. The search was granted, effective 10PM, February 13th, due to the officer's sworn oath that he had reasonable grounds to suspect "Mischief Over \$5,000." The warrant was not issued on "weapons charges" or "conspiracy to commit murder." The search stated officers could search for "Documents and data related to planning organization and operations of the protest group's security for the Coutts blockade." A question the lawyers for the Coutts Four need to determine is if it is legitimate to have a search warrant for a minimum charge; if the RCMP believes a far more serious crime is about to unfold, but not name it in the search. Donald Best, a former Sergeant (Detective) with the Toronto Police, highlights that in order to get a search warrant, there are affidavits and likely photos presented to the judge to support the Information To Obtain search. [45]

Behaviour of Those Arrested Resembled Ordinary Citizens, Not Domestic Terrorists

On the *Good Morning with Jason* podcast, a local woman named Danielle, summarized the arrests of the Coutts Four. The first person to get arrested was Christopher Lysak at 9PM, on February 13, 2022, "in front of Smuggler's" Saloon, in Coutts. This was in front of many other protesters. When Anthony Olienick learned that Lysak might have been arrested, "he began videotaping and posting online saying he wished the cops would put their guns down and come and have coffee with us." What Olienick did not do was head off and grab a bunch of guns and start a standoff with the police. Then Olienick was arrested about 9:50 PM. This was "in amongst the protesters." Danielle reports that "Chris Carbert was sleeping in his trailer when they (RCMP) did the raid on the property He also knew the other two had been arrested." Yet, Carbert chose to go to bed. He didn't try to overthrow the government. He was arrested around 12:30 AM on February 14, 2022. Later that day, after having gone to work in Calgary, Jerry Morin was arrested by the RCMP about 12PM. At the time of his arrest, Morin knew the other three had been arrested. All of the Coutts Four were unarmed when they were arrested. None of them were running or hiding.

Retired police sergeant Donald Best flags several problems with the timeline of arrests. "This is all politically driven. They (several Liberal cabinet ministers) knew about it in Ottawa before the warrant went down. We saw that from the Commission (POEC). ... that means the politicians on the political side of this were involved in the creation of, and the timeline, and the date and time of execution; and if all that is true, and I believe it is ... these men deserve to see their day in court. And they deserve to be out with an ankle bracelet, or whatever.[46]

Commenting on the cache of weapons displayed by the RCMP on February 14, 2022, local gun owner Zach Schmidt made these observations. "This is not what I would be choosing if I were to hypothetically (try) to take down the RCMP." There were about 50 RCMP vehicles in the Coutts vicinity and so about a hundred officers This just looks like someone's basement was raided. Numbers of the guns are rifles that would be better for hunting deer. There are no sniper rifles, no precision rifles. They're just run-of-the-mill hunting guns " Donald Best added, "When the RCMP were investigating the multiple shooting in Nova Scotia (in 2022), the lead investigators refused to release the types and photos of the

weapons involved. Why? Because they're in the middle of an investigation. They want to know where they came from. Contrast that with the RCMP action in Coutts.”[47]

There are some instances in the past where the RCMP have created a threat, or impeded ongoing investigations. On July 1, 2013 there were reports that a plot to bomb the British Columbia legislature had been averted by the RCMP. Offices acting undercover, with the support of over 200 staff working to prevent the plot, saved the day and caught the plotters red-handed. Or so the public was led to believe. When the case went to court it turned out that the RCMP was in the spotlight, and uncomfortably so. The CBC headline reported, “RCMP entrapment of B.C. couple in legislature bomb plot was ‘travesty of justice,’ court rules: John Nuttall-Amanda Korody’s convictions had been stayed due to entrapment, abuse of process.”[48]

In her verdict, Justice Catherine Bruce wrote, “Simply put, the world has enough terrorists. We do not need the police to create more out of marginalized people who have neither the capacity nor the sufficient motivation to do it themselves.” Bruce made clear that the RCMP had not foiled a pre-existing plan. The couple in the RCMPs crosshairs were not terrorists. They were not people with capacities that terrorists might want to recruit. Said Bruce, “This is truly a case where the RCMP manufactured the crime.”[49]

Writing for *The Tyee*, Bill Tieleman asked:

“Why did the RCMP create the July 1, 2013 B.C. Legislature bomb plot and train and equip a hapless, methadone-addicted, developmentally challenged couple to undertake terrorist actions? And why did the RCMP also break Canada’s laws in doing so? Money. Lots and lots of money. John Nuttall and Amanda Korody were freed Friday after three years in jail thanks to a stunning decision that saw a respected judge condemn the RCMP in the strongest terms possible, while overturning a jury’s guilty verdict on terrorism charges because the Surrey couple were “entrapped” by police, who also committed an “abuse of process.”

So why did the RCMP take such obviously reprehensible actions? What was their motivation in turning two sad, naïve recovering heroin addicts who barely left their basement apartment into Canada’s most famous terrorists? To get government money for its huge operations. The RCMP has a \$2.8-billion annual budget and more than 29,000 employees. It depends on the federal government for its funding – and counterterrorism dollars depend on results, as I wrote in *The Tyee* in 2013 after covering the first court appearances of Nuttall and Korody. The RCMP is also competing with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service for financial support, so it is highly motivated to show public success. And in the RCMP’s Departmental Performance Report one of the major “expected results” is “Terrorist criminal activity is prevented, detected, responded to and denied.”

In the absence of real terrorist plots to foil, the case of Nuttall and Korody indicated the RCMPs work can include manufacturing plots in order to foil them. From the success of these sting operations, the RCMP gets favorable media coverage and a subsequent boost in future yearly budgets. As long as they don’t get caught. [50]

In the past, the RCMP have engaged in policing to advance the political agendas of those in the federal government. The *Halifax Examiner* ran this headline in June 2022: “RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki tried to ‘jeopardize’ mass murder investigation to advance

Trudeau's gun control efforts." The paper reported:

"RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki "made a promise" to Public Safety Minister Bill Blair and the Prime Minister's Office to leverage the mass murders of April 18/19, 2020 to get a gun control law passed." RCMP in Nova Scotia were left out of the loop regarding numbers of victims and release of information. The article detailed how "Contravening the agreed protocol, throughout the early hours of Sunday evening, RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki agreed to a number of one-on-one interviews with reporters. At 7:36PM, CBC News quoted Lucki as stating there were 13 victims; at 7:40PM, CTV reported Lucki had said 14 victims; and at 7:56PM, the Canadian Press quoted Lucki as having confirmed 17 dead, including the gunman. The public and the press corps were both confused and alarmed.

"So how does it happen that Commissioner Lucki ?" Mass Casualty Commission lawyer Krista Smith started to ask Communications director Lia Scanlan during an interview last February. "I don't know, ask National Headquarters," retorted Scanlan. "The commissioner (Lucki) releases a body count that we (Communications) don't even have. She went out and did that. It was all political pressure. That is 100% Minister Blair and the Prime Minister. And we have a Commissioner that does not push back." [51]

During the FLQ Crisis in the fall of 1970, the RCMP was found to have engaged in illegal activities. As the McDonald Commission Report of 1981 found, the RCMP forged documents, was involved in the theft of the membership list of the Parti Quebecois, several break-ins, illegal opening of mail, and the burning a barn in Quebec.[52] The McDonald Commission recommended revisions to the *War Measures Act*. These were tabled by Perrin Beatty in Parliament in July 1988 as the *Emergencies Act*.

Discrepancies in Disclosure Pointed to During Pretrial Motions

Pretrial motions were heard at the Lethbridge, Alberta courthouse between June 12 and 29. At one point, there was an animated discussion between the judge, lawyers for the accused, and the Crown. One of those attending was a local woman named Danielle, who spoke to Jason Lavigne on his podcast on July 13, 2023. She described how "the Crown kept talking about the solicitor-client privilege." A lawyer for one of the accused stopped them after a while. This lawyer said 'Listen. This might not be the case that there's evidence of unlawful activity. We're talking about disclosure that has been discovered.'" Danielle described how the Crown had dumped thousands of pages of disclosure at the last minute on the defence. There was mention of "inadvertent disclosure" on a number of occasions. Danielle told Jason Lavigne, "I don't believe they (defence lawyers) were supposed to have found it. I think she kind of found it. And she got excited that she found it. And then everybody got a lot more excited after the content of that was more apparent to them. Again, we're not privy to exactly what's in that conflict of disclosure. The Crown mentioned that due to the content, the disclosure conflicted not only about the disclosure. It is also in regards to two of the crown prosecutors This application (by the defence) coming up, (two) Crown prosecutors are going to have to be witnesses. So, they (the prosecutors who are representing the case for the Crown) are going to be part of the hearing." This opens up the possibility that some Crown prosecutors may be defendants at some point in relation to this case.

Danielle described to Jason the importance of this moment during the pretrial motions. The defence made an application to the court during disclosure. It related to the cross examination of one of the witnesses as the case against the accused was being built.

Danielle, stated, “There were notes. There were scribbled notes in one book. And there were scribbled notes in another book from the scribes that were hired for this person (witness). And there was also another scribe that had been hired that had ... typed notes. ... it was discovered that the typed notes were never submitted to the defence counsel. However, the witness had testified “I’ve given the Crown everything that I have.” So, it was discovered that there was a large pile of typed notes. What was problematic is the content of the scribbled notes, and the content of the typed notes contain crucial discrepancies. The defence was excited about this inadvertent discovery. What can explain these discrepancies? Were the typed notes exculpatory evidence helpful to the defense? [53]

Another guest on the Good Morning with Jason podcast Margaret “Granny” Mackay has also attended the pretrial motions in June. She also witnessed the astonishing developments in the court house that Danielle described to viewers of the podcast on July 13, 2023.

On the Good Morning with Jason podcast on July 24, Danielle discussed notes she took from the pretrial motions on June 29. That day one of the Crown prosecutors agreed to recuse themselves from the case. [54]

A Facebook group has sprung up under the name Alberta Political Prisoners. The RCMP and the Crown present themselves as having a solid case to convict the four accused on conspiracy to commit murder. But this may not be the case. It’s plausible that the case for the Crown is thin at best, as has been the case for the Trudeau governments justification for invoking the *Emergencies Act*. After over five hundred days without bail, more people are starting to pay attention to this case that’s been largely ignored by the media.

Chris Carbert has been leading a Bible study in the remand centre early into his custody. Jerry Morin has been leading other inmates in yoga classes. One of the guards told Morin after he’d been in custody for a few weeks, “This is weird. We were expecting a lot of different behaviour from you. We thought that you were a white supremacist.”[55] The four men in custody on conspiracy charges are looking less like insurrectionists, and more like political prisoners in Justin Trudeau’s Canada.

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