



Ministry of  
The Solicitor  
General

Ministère du  
Solliciteur  
général

Office of  
The Chief  
Coroner

Bureau du  
coroner  
en chef

# Verdict of Coroner's Jury Verdict du jury du coroner

We the  
undersigned  
Nous soussigné

|                          |    |                        |
|--------------------------|----|------------------------|
| <u>Sandra Puls</u>       | of | <u>Kenora, Ontario</u> |
|                          | de |                        |
| <u>Bart Bergman</u>      | of | <u>Kenora, Ontario</u> |
|                          | de |                        |
| <u>Wayne Beckworth</u>   | of | <u>Kenora, Ontario</u> |
|                          | de |                        |
| <u>Laura Churchill</u>   | of | <u>Kenora, Ontario</u> |
|                          | de |                        |
| <u>Catherine Cadieux</u> | of | <u>Kenora, Ontario</u> |
|                          | de |                        |

the jury serving on the inquest into the death of / dûment assermentés, formant le jury dans l'enquête sur le décès de:

|                          |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Surname / Nom de famille | Given names / Prénom |
| <u>Fobister</u>          | <u>Geronimo</u>      |

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| aged <u>17</u><br>âge(e) de | held at <u>the Kenora Court House, Kenora, Ontario</u><br>qui a été menée à |
|-----------------------------|---|

|              |              |                      |                |              |
|--------------|--------------|----------------------|----------------|--------------|
| on the<br>le | <u>18-29</u> | day(s) of<br>(du/au) | <u>October</u> | <u>20 04</u> |
|--------------|--------------|----------------------|----------------|--------------|

|           |     |                |   |
|-----------|-----|----------------|---|
| By<br>Par | Dr. | <u>Hammett</u> | Coroner for Ontario<br>coroner pour l'Ontario |
|-----------|-----|----------------|---|

having been duly sworn, have inquired into and determined the following: / avons enquêté et avons déterminé ce qui suit:

1. Name of deceased  
Nom du (de la) défunt(e) Geronimo Fobister
2. Date and time of death  
Date et heure du décès August 27, 2003 - 4:35 pm
3. Place of Death  
Lieu de décès Grassy Narrows First Nation, Kenora District
4. Cause of death  
Cause du décès Superficial perforating (tangential) gunshot wound  
of head
5. By what means  
Circonstances entourant le décès Homicide

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <u>Sandra Puls</u><br><b>S. Puls</b>          | <u>B. Bergman</u><br><b>B. Bergman</b>        |
| Original signed by: Foreman/Président du jury | <u>Wayne Beckworth</u><br><b>W. Beckworth</b> |
|   | <u>L. Churchill</u><br><b>L. Churchill</b>    |
|   | <u>C. Cadieux</u><br><b>C. Cadieux</b>        |
|   | Original signed by jurors/jurés               |

The verdict was received on the 29th day of October 20 04  
Ce verdict a été reçu par moi le

[Signature]  
Original signed by Coroner

**Recommendations:**

**To Northern Youth Centre:**

- 1) Northern Youth Centre create a professional development program to ensure all employees are current in their knowledge of the applicable statutes as well as programs offered to residents.
- 2) Following an escape from an open custody facility, a review of the incident be conducted to determine the reasons for leaving and any preventative measures that could be applied in the future.
- 3) Northern Youth Centre shall amend its operating policy to reflect that where a threat is made by a resident against:
  - another resident
  - another staff member
  - an identifiable person
  - an identifiable group of individuals

it shall be reported to a manager of NYC as soon as practical and be documented. When the threat is considered credible by the manager, it shall be reported to the police.

- 4) Northern Youth Centre shall amend its operating policy to reflect that, when a resident threatens suicide or bodily harm, it shall be reported to a supervisor, documented, and appropriate action taken.
- 5) Northern Youth Centre shall deliver Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training to all staff.

Reason: 80% - 90% of residents at Northern Youth Centre are Aboriginal.

**To Treaty Three Police Service:**

- 1) The Government of Ontario and Canada shall provide the appropriate training to the Treaty Three Police Service to permit its members to become qualified in Emergency Response Techniques and Crisis Negotiations.

Reason: Treaty Three Police is the primary police service to First Nation Territories.

**To Grassy Narrows First Nation:**

- 1) Treaty #3 First Nations will provide current community maps to the Treaty Three Police Service since in some cases adequate community maps do not exist.
- 2) Grassy Narrows First Nation shall establish a Community Policing Committee within six months to improve communication between the police and the community.
- 3) Treaty #3 First Nations should encourage their citizens to consider careers in policing.

**To The Commissioner of Ontario Provincial Police:**

- 1) The Commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police should consider placing a TRU in Northwestern Ontario, or consider other options for responding to Level 2 incidents. This should include upgrading the training of ERT members to Level 1 TRU training, further Crisis Negotiation training, and equipping them in a similar manner as the TRU team.

Reason: Geographic distances prevent existing TRU units from responding to the northwest region in a timely manner.

**Recommendations:**

2) The Commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police shall ensure that Emergency Response Teams (ERT) have adequate communications systems.

Reason: The single channel available to the ERT in this incident was often congested.

3) The Commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police shall ensure all OPP members in Northwestern Ontario receive mandatory Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training and such training be updated from time to time.

4) When policing incidents occur on First Nations territory that require the presence ERT or TRU, the Incident Commander should actively seek relevant information from the First Nation Chief, band council, elders and/or family, which might contribute to diffusing the situation.

5) The Commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police should assign one additional K9 unit to the northwest region of Ontario.

Reason: Evidence suggests a high usage of K9 units in the northwest region. The region cannot always be adequately covered by the existing number of units due to training commitments and frequency of calls.

6) The Commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police should continue their proactive action to recruit aboriginal officers.

**To New Directions Counselling Centre:**

1) Develop strategies for expediting psychiatric examinations and reporting thereof, when a resident in open custody is identified as a risk to others.

**To The Ministry of Children and Youth Services/Ministry of Community Safety and Corrections:**

1) Minimum educational qualifications for employment at open custody facilities are established.

Reason: Evidence suggests a variety of qualifications of existing workers at Northern Youth Center, some of which would not be deemed appropriate for youth workers. A standard should be set.

2) Every person currently employed as a youth worker in an open custody facility who has not received basic training shall receive basic training by end of year 2005.

Reason: Evidence indicated that one worker had been employed at Northern Youth Center had been employed for 18 months without receiving basic training.

3) The Ministry will ensure that all new youth workers employed in an open custody facility receive basic training within one year of the commencement of their employment.

**To The Ministry of Community Safety and Corrections: Policing Services Division:**

1) The Policing Services Division shall conduct a study into the operational use of ARWEN in the province of Ontario.