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Organized Crime in Canada: A Quarterly Summary (April to June 2012)

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ENFORCEMENT

Organized Crime Activities

Auto Theft

Balwinder Dhaliwal, 55, and four family members are facing numerous charges related to auto theft after police raided the family's auto repair shop in Mississauga. According to the CBC, "police allege that non-existent cars from New York state would be registered in Canada, then the phony vehicle registration numbers would be placed on cars stolen in the Greater Toronto Area. The cars would then be re-sold with the owners unaware of the car's origin." Because of the phony registration numbers, a buyer looking up the history of one of the stolen cars using Ontario's Used Vehicle Information Package wouldn't find anything suspicious. Police allege that people would bring stolen cars to Collision World to have their vehicle identification numbers changed and then sold at a profit. Police said three stolen vehicles including a BMW M5 and a custom Shelby Mustang were seized from Collision World. The Mustang had allegedly been stolen just six days ago and was already altered and ready for resale. Police say they also

recovered \$500,000 dollars worth of stolen parts from four other vehicles. The four accused are charged with possession of stolen property over \$5,000, tampering with a vehicle identification number, trafficking in stolen property and breach of recognizance. In the early 2000s, Balwinder Dhaliwal was convicted of selling stolen cars and was sentenced to 10 years in jail at Joyceville Prison near Kingston. In 2003, in an interview with the CBC he said he used to fill specific orders for stolen cars, down to the make, model and even colour. Dhaliwal said he would ship about 20 stolen cars a month and pocket about \$400,000 in profit. Dhaliwal was even profiled on the History Channel series *Masterminds* in an episode entitled *The King of Car Thieves*. In January 2010, Dhaliwal, along with his sons, daughter and three others, were arrested when police dismantled a massive marijuana grow-op under *Collision World*. Police found more than 1,300 marijuana plants worth \$1.3 million.

Source: *CBC Toronto*, June 14, 2012, Toronto family facing charges after auto-shop raid

Corruption

Steven Von Holtum, a former Air Canada baggage handler at Vancouver International Airport has been sentenced to 10 years in prison for his role in trying to smuggle cocaine worth \$1.2-million through the airport. He was convicted by a B.C. Supreme Court jury in November 2011 of importing a controlled substance. The sentence relates specifically to an incident on December 23, 2007 when he picked up four pieces of luggage that had arrived from Mexico and tried to remove them from the airport without going through customs. The bags contained 50 kilograms of cocaine. In addition to this one incident, the court heard that he had breached airport security seven times – including days that he was off duty – before finally being caught. There is no indication, however, that he was ever questioned about those earlier incidents. Baggage handlers are generally not permitted into the customs hall except on the rare occasion when they've received specific orders, and that violating this rule was deemed a "serious employee misconduct."

Von Holtum wasn't scheduled to work in the early morning hours of Dec. 23, 2007, when he "volunteered" to help offload a charter flight from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. After that, he entered the customs hall, where he was observed pushing a trolley with four unclaimed suitcases toward an area that handles fragile luggage. (The suitcases were loaded onto the plane in Mexico even though there were no passengers linked to them.) At this point, he was confronted by an Air Canada worker, who told him he can't push those suitcases to that area, and referred him to customs. He was also spotted pulling the identification tags off from the suitcases. It was later learned that the suitcases contained 50 one-kilogram bricks of high quality cocaine, with a purity of between 89 and 95 per cent.

Sources: *CBC British Columbia*, June 22 2012, B.C. cocaine smuggler gets 10-year sentence; *The Richmond Review*, June 26 2012, Convicted drug smuggler breached security 7 times.

A public inquiry into allegations of corruption in Quebec's construction industry began in May. The commission, presided over by Quebec Superior Court Justice France Charbonneau, has a broad mandate to look at how public contracts were awarded in Quebec over the last 15 years. The Charbonneau Commission was struck by the provincial government and is expected to explore allegations of corruption involving the construction industry, organized crime, political parties and the awarding of public contracts. The commission's powers include the right to compel witnesses to testify. While the commission's final report, expected in late 2013, is allowed to make recommendations, it's not a court of law, so it is not entitled to find anyone guilty.

The Commission has already indicated that investigations and wiretaps by the RCMP show the existence of direct links between the Mafia and construction firms throughout Quebec. The information was gathered by the RCMP in the course of Operation Colisée, a wide-ranging investigation targeting the Montreal Mafia, which concluded in 2006 and resulted in successful convictions against numerous members and associates of the Rizzuto crime family. The RCMP had originally refused to turn over evidence linking Montreal's construction industry to Nicolo Rizzuto, the head of the family until his assassination in November 2010. RCMP lawyers argued the information would endanger national security. As a result, the Charbonneau Commission took legal action against the RCMP, which resulted in an order from a Quebec judge demanding the RCMP to hand over evidence and intelligence information they had collected.

Many expect the inquiry will implicate dozens of businesses, government employees and political professionals as it reveals possible links between organized crime and politicians and political parties, engineering and consulting firms, labour unions, the Quebec Transport Ministry and other government departments. This includes former politicians such as Frank Zampino – a key advisor to Montreal Mayor Gérald Tremblay and the second-highest elected official in the city until his resignation in 2008 – and construction magnate Paolo Catania, who was arrested along with Zampino on May 14. Zampino was charged with fraud and breach of trust; the charges are based on allegations of political payoffs connected to a multimillion-dollar land deal.

Catania's arrest stems from a \$300 million deal between the City of Montreal and his construction company, Frank Catania and Associates. Catania came to police attention during Operation Colisée when he was identified on surveillance tapes of the Rizzuto crime family headquarters in Montreal and was present as Nicolo Rizzuto shoved wads of cash into his socks to sneak it out of the building. Frank Catania's son, Paolo, was also arrested at the Montreal airport, accused of fraud and breach of trust for allegedly bribing municipal officials.

Former Montreal police chief Jacques Duchesneau, who led an investigation into collusion and corruption in the Quebec construction industry, predicts there will be new revelations about the involvement of organized crime in other cases. "We saw over the years, especially the last ten years, Hell's Angels, or other mafia-type organizations, they bought enterprises that are directly involved in construction. And, for them, it is a way laundering their money."

Another figure central to the inquiry is construction tycoon Tony Accurso, who was arrested in April on fraud and conspiracy charges relating to an alleged kickback scheme in the Montreal suburb of Mascouche. Police revealed that Frank Zampino was twice a guest on Accurso's

yacht, while Accurso was negotiating a \$355 million water meter contract with the city of Montreal.

In June, 11 more people were arrested by police in Quebec and police indicated that criminal charges will be laid against small-town municipal officials and more construction industry players. Those arrested are accused of participating in fraud schemes related to public works projects worth \$20-million overall. About 77 charges have been laid against those 11, as well as nine companies, for suspected crimes as well as violations of federal competition laws. The charges include breach of trust, influencing a public official, defrauding the government, producing and using counterfeit documents, accepting a bribe, extortion and conspiracy.

To date, approximately 30 people have been arrested in three major raids by Quebec police since 2011. Eleven companies are also implicated.

Sources: *The Examiner.com*, April 1 2012, RCMP proves existence of links between the Mafia and construction firms in Quebec; *Montreal Gazette*, April 19 2012, Arrests made in relation to corruption in Quebec's construction industry, *The Canadian Press*, April 27 2012, RCMP ordered to hand over Mafia documents to Quebec corruption inquiry; *CBC Television, The National*, May 17 2012, Another big name arrested in Montreal by Quebec's anti-corruption unit; *CBC Montreal*, May 22 2012, Quebec construction inquiry to probe organized crime links; *The Canadian Press*, June 21 2012, Eleven arrested in Quebec's anti-corruption campaign

Four police officers in Quebec were arrested in June due to suspected ties to organized crime. Two officers from the Montreal police force and two Longueuil policemen were taken into custody. Media reports said at least two of the officers were arrested and questioned in connection with an attack on a Montreal officer in Playa Del Carmen, Mexico two years ago. The off-duty police investigator was attacked and was beaten so badly that most of his facial bones were broken. Police say the victim was vacationing with several colleagues when he recognized two Hells Angels associates in the bar near Cancun. When he pulled out a camera to snap some pictures of them, he was grabbed and taken into a nearby tent, where he was held for several hours and beaten mercilessly. Marc-André Lachance and Shane Kenneth Maloney, two men alleged to have links to the Hells Angels, were later arrested and charged in the beating. The two Longueuil police officers arrested in the assault case aren't believed to have taken part in the beating, but the media has reported that they allegedly have connections to the two Hells Angels associates accused of the attack.

Sources: *CBC Montreal*, June 15 2012, 4 Quebec police officers arrested; *CNews.com*, June 15 2012, Four Montreal police officers arrested on corruption charges; *Montreal Gazette*, June 15 2012, Two Longueuil cops arrested, questioned about Mexico beating: reports

Mario Lambert, a 44-year-old homicide detective with the Montreal Police was found guilty in May of using the police database to glean personal information and pass it on to criminal

associates. He was arrested in September 2009 after the Montreal police internal affairs department discovered someone had used the computer between December 2008 and June 2009 for reasons other than legitimate police work. The investigation into Lambert began when two Montreal police officers were told by an informant about a car-theft network that would ship the stolen vehicles overseas. The source said he knew someone affiliated with criminal groups in the city who could get information from a Quebec police officer with access to a Quebec police database. A meeting with a second source revealed the same allegations. The second source said the investigator in question worked in the homicide division and didn't ask for money in exchange for the information. To test the allegations, police created fictitious plate numbers and gave them to the sources, who then asked for information on the plates from Lambert. As soon as the numbers were searched on the database, the officers investigating the allegations were immediately notified. The first notification contained erroneous information about the plates. But a second attempt, on May 6 2009, produced accurate information as did one on June 9. Police then installed a surveillance camera in Lambert's office, which showed him at his computer on June 9, 2009, the same time his CRPQ password was used to get information on the fictitious plate.

Source: *Montreal Gazette*, May 26 2012, Montreal homicide detective guilty of passing data to criminals

Drug Trafficking

Poly Drug Trafficking

Police laid 82 counts of criminal charges against a 27-year-old Toronto-area man after they raided his vehicle, his Yorkville apartment, and a second property. Following the serving of three search warrants, police seized a cornucopia of drugs, including ecstasy, cocaine, crack cocaine, heroin, crystal meth, GHB, marijuana, ketamine, hashish, and OxyContin. While executing the search warrants, police also found at least one bag marked as "bath salts." In total, the street value of the drugs seized was estimated by police to be worth \$1.5 million. In addition, police found 11 guns – including various handguns, an AK-47 assault rifle, a sawed-off shotgun and a rifle – as well as ammunition. Police say they also found \$175,000 in cash after searching the accused man's vehicle.

Source: *CBC Toronto*, June 25, 2012, Yorkville resident charged in \$1.5M drug seizure

Eight people were arrested on the Tobique First Nation in New Brunswick and in Montreal at the end of May as part of an inter-provincial drug investigation. The RCMP in New Brunswick and Quebec as well as the Edmundston police force seized approximately two kilos of cocaine, 10,000 methamphetamine pills and 4.5 kilograms of marijuana during the course of the three-year investigation. The police operation, named J-Themis, targeted drug trafficking in northwest

New Brunswick. Police said four of the men are part of what they called an organized crime group that supplied drugs in northwestern New Brunswick.

Source: *CBC New Brunswick*, May 31 2012, 8 arrests in New Brunswick-Quebec drug probe; *Telegraph-Journal*, June 9, 2012, Joint forces drug investigation results in several arrests

In May, following months of investigation, a police raid targeting street-level drugs in Portage la Prairie in Manitoba has led to the arrest of 28 people. Police seized more than \$20,000 worth of drugs including ecstasy, MDMA, marijuana, and cocaine. Three guns were seized – a handgun, sawed-off shotgun and rifle – plus a machete, brass knuckles and a collapsible baton. A police spokesman said the investigation targeted “foot soldiers” of organized crime. “They’re suppliers of drugs in rural Manitoba.”

Source: *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 19 2012, Police arrest 28 in Portage drug bust

Bath Salts

A new synthetic drug that’s known for being cheap and highly addictive has begun to make an appearance in Canada.

Bath salts come in salt- or sugar-like clumps that can be ingested orally (in pill form) or smoked, snorted or injected. The drug acts as a stimulant, similar to amphetamines, but with a much longer high (some have been reported as long as 12 hours). Reactions of users to this drug include alertness, euphoria, excitement, loquacity, and a markedly increased tolerance for pain. They are also highly addictive and are known to cause vascular damage, cardiac arrhythmias, hallucinations, paranoia, violent behaviour, and suicide. Bath salts have been on American police’s radar for at least two years and have been link to violent incidents and even death in some U.S. cities.

Although the drugs have no relation to the tub-soaking product, sometimes, they resemble the harmless bath additive are often packaged to look like the commercial product, and are given soap-sounding names such as Ivory Wave, Bubbles, Pixie Dust, Vanilla Sky, Tranquility and Blue Magic.

There are growing signs the drug is spreading in Canada. In April, the Rothesay Regional Police Force in New Brunswick confirmed the seizure of 818 pills in September of 2011. It was first confirmed case of bath salts in this province. The pills ranged in colour and shape, including blue hearts, red stars and green cell phones. White and red pills had an imprint of an Air Jordan logo and white pills were stamped with a Virgin logo. In addition, there have been more than a dozen incidents related to bath salts in Nova Scotia this year.

During a raid on an apartment in the Yorkville neighbourhood of Toronto, police discovered a bag marked “bath salts” among other synthetic drugs. In Calgary, the parents of a 21-year-old man called police to their home in June after he had taken the drug and experienced a psychotic episode. A police spokesperson told the media, “We were a little surprised by this because this fella that we encountered, he actually turned out to be extremely powerful for his size and completely impervious to any sort of pain compliance techniques we might have been able to use on him.” Police officers were able to wrestle him to the ground but only after calling in reinforcements.

The key ingredient in bath salts is methylenedioxypropylamphetamine (MDPV), which is an amphetamine-type substance. MDPV is a synthetic cathinone, which occurs naturally in the East African evergreen shrub known as khat. MDPV speeds up the central nervous system and produces a number of powerful effects typical of amphetamines. Although MDPV and other cathinones have been used medically as an appetite-suppressant, their appearance as recreational drugs is fairly new.

In October of 2011, the American government placed an one-year ban on the three main components of the – MDPV, methylene/methylone, and mephedrone.

Bath salts are not currently illegal in Canada, but this is about to change as Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq began the process to outlaw possession or trafficking of MDPV in Canada. The drug will be regulated under the *Controlled Drug and Substances Act* in the same category as heroin and cocaine, and it’s expected to be officially illegal in the fall. Other ingredients found in bath salts, such as mephedrone and methylone are already illegal in Canada.

Sources: *New Glasgow News*, June 9 2012, Government seeking to make dangerous drug illegal; *CBC Calgary*, June 24 2012, City’s 1st ‘bath salts’ drug incident sends 2 to hospital; *Moncton Times & Transcript*, June 25 2012, Bath salts drug cause concern? Now-illegal drug first seized in N.B. last September; *CBC Toronto*, June 25 2012, What are ‘bath salts’? A look at Canada’s newest illegal drug

Cocaine

On June 4, The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) announced the seizure of 7.5 kilograms of suspected cocaine at the Léo-Blanchette mail processing centre in Montreal. X-rays of parcels from Peru revealed the presence of a suspicious substance hidden inside mascot costumes. Once opened, officers found bags of white powder that later tested positive for cocaine.

Source: *Canada NewsWire*, June 4 2012, CBSA officers seize 7.5 kilograms of suspected cocaine hidden inside mascot costumes

The Canada Border Services Agency announced it seized about 170 kilograms of cocaine – with a street value of around \$21 million – in two separate incidents at the port of Saint John in New Brunswick. A joint investigation by the CBSA, the New Brunswick RCMP, the RCMP in the Greater Toronto Area, and the Saint John Police Force, has led to the arrest of eight Ontario men, ranging in age from 31 to 70.

The first seizure of 121 kilos was made on May 29 after CBSA officials at the port of Saint John in New Brunswick decided to conduct an inspection of a container from Guyana, South America. The marine shipping container was on its way to Mississauga, Ontario and was filled with sauces, seasonings and noodles. An X-ray of the shipping container at the port by the CBSA revealed some abnormalities in wooden pallets stacked at one end of the container. CBSA inspectors later discovered the cocaine in several plastic bags concealed within the hollowed-out wooden pallets. The drugs were removed and the pallets were packed with another substance as part of a controlled delivery of the cargo to its intended destination in Ontario. Once the cargo was delivered police arrested five people after taking possession of the shipment.

On June 5, only a week after the first bust, another shipping container from Guyana was inspected and found to contain 49 kilos of cocaine. CBSA officers found the drugs stashed in between corrugated cardboard that separated bottles of hot sauce. Inspectors were able to see that some of the cardboard was slightly thicker than others. Police in Toronto had received a tip that the cocaine was being transported from Guyana to Canada. Three people were arrested in relation to this seizure.

In the 2012 [*International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*](#), released by the U.S. Department of State, Guyana was identified as a transit country for cocaine destined for Canada, the United States, the Caribbean, Europe and West Africa. The report says that cocaine, originating from Colombia, is smuggled to Venezuela and on to Guyana via fishing vessels, bulk cargo vessels, tug vessels or air.

The first seizure is the largest one made at the Saint John Port since 2008, when 270 kilograms of cocaine was seized from a marine shipping container. Bruce Connell, deputy chief of the Saint John Police Force, told the media the city has become a gateway for drugs entering Canada. “Halifax, Montreal and Vancouver have been identified as international ports with an entrenched organized crime presence and enforcement activities have targeted these ports,” Connell said. “The unintended consequences of these enforcement activities have been that international ports in smaller urban centres, such as Saint John, have become gateways of convenience for organized crime.” Most of the drugs that come into Saint John originate from the Caribbean and South America.

Sources: *The Fredericton Daily Gleaner*, June 23 2012, Tip leads to seizure of drugs with a street value of \$21-million; Cape Breton Post, June 23, 2012, Eight arrested after 170 kilograms of cocaine seized in New Brunswick; United States Department of State. Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. (2012). *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Volume I Drug and Chemical Control*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, p. 244.

In late June, Toronto police raided more than dozen addresses across the GTA following a nine-month investigation targeting cocaine dealing networks. Police say they arrested 22 people after executing 29 search warrants in the Toronto, York, Waterloo and Durham regions. The raids were part of an investigation that began in September of 2011 called "Project Domo." Several searches conducted since the start of the year, including nine in mid-May, were also part of the investigation, which has concluded. Since then, 36 suspects have been charged with drug-related offences involving cocaine, marijuana, MDMA, heroin and ecstasy. Police estimate the value of all the drugs seized at about \$2.5 million. Police say along with drugs, officers seized \$466,000 worth of proceeds of crime and nine firearms.

Sources: *Toronto Star*, June 26 2012, Police arrest 22 suspects to wrap up GTA-wide drug investigation; *Canadian Press*, June 26 2012, Police in Greater Toronto Area arrest 22 people in early-morning raids

Abram Klassen, 31, of Taber, Alberta and Jacob Dyck, 35, of Coaldale Alberta were charged with importing \$2-million worth of cocaine, possessing cocaine for the purposes of trafficking, and conspiracy to import cocaine following a police investigation into a drug smuggling network that stretched from northern Mexico to a small southern Alberta farming community. The two men, who were arrested in Taber, 250 kilometres southeast of Calgary, are accused of orchestrating a trafficking network with ties to organized crime in Mexico. Police were able to link the men to two seizures of more than 16 kilos of cocaine bound for Alberta. The first seizure occurred on July 27 2011, when 10 kilos of coke were intercepted by American Border Services agents in Great Falls, Montana. They found the drugs secreted in a truck compartment. Canadian Border Services officials found another 6 kilos on March 22 2012 hidden in a piece of furniture at the international border crossing at Coutts, Alberta. Investigators say the sheer volume of drugs involved and the sophistication of the transport methods led them to believe that the men were working closely with Mexican organized crime. The arrests are a culmination of a 15-month investigation drawing on law enforcement agencies from El Paso, Texas, to southern Alberta, including RCMP, Canada Border Services Agency, United States Border Patrol, U.S. Homeland Security, United States Customs and Border Protection and Taber Police.

Sources: *Calgary Herald*, JUNE 27, 2012, Two Alberta men arrested in connection to drug network that stretched from Taber to Mexico; *CNews.com*, June 26, 2012, Two Albertans face charges over cocaine from Mexico

Crystal Meth

Following a routine traffic stop on May 4 in Winnipeg, police seized two kilograms of Methamphetamine, with a street value of approximately \$600,000. Police also seized a small amount of pharmaceutical drugs, including OxyContin. Police then obtained search warrants for

two downtown locations and seized drug paraphernalia. Two men were charged with possession for the purpose of trafficking, possession of drug substance and possessing proceeds of crime.

Source: *CBC News*, May 10 2012, Winnipeg police seize \$600K in crystal meth; *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 11 2012, Bust nets \$600,000 worth of meth

Hashish

In April, nine Montreal-area residents were charged in connection with a massive international drug seizure of more than 43 tonnes of hashish worth an estimated \$860 million. The hash seizure is considered the largest of its kind in Canada.

Eight of the men were charged with conspiracy as well as importing and possessing cannabis resin for the purpose of trafficking. One of those charged was 63-year-old Alain Charron, who was once suspected of being a hit man for Montreal's infamous Dubois Gang, a criminal group of nine brothers who ran a series of rackets in Montreal beginning in the late 1960s. During the 1980s, Charron was charged with four murders but was acquitted in each case. He has served time in prisons in the Bahamas, U.S. and Canada for drug trafficking. This includes jail time in Canada for his role in a 27-tonne hashish shipment seized in Nova Scotia in 1990.

Also arrested were two men who are listed as members of the International Longshoremen's Association, a union that represents workers at the Port of Montreal. The RCMP described them as employees of the port. According to a press release issued by the RCMP, "A number of irregularities were observed with respect to procedures and mandatory referrals, leading investigators to believe that employees performing various duties with companies at the Port of Montreal (the Cast terminal) were involved in the organization." Along with a third man they are charged with conspiring with Charron, and several other people, to smuggle hashish into Canada between March and November 2010.

Due to the sheer size of the hash shipments and the collusion of port employees, police allege [Montreal's West End Gang](#) was involved. Julian Sher, who has written extensively on drug importations through the city, told the media, "Any criminal organization that wanted to get drugs or anything into Montreal and through Montreal, the rest of the country and North America, you had to go through the port and that meant you had to go through the West End Gang."

The RCMP started investigating more than two years ago when Canada Border Services agents found tonnes of hash hidden in containers at the ports of Halifax and Montreal. Police say that the members of the West End Gang brought the drugs from Pakistan. From there the hash was hidden in coffee and clothes shipments that were then sent to several European cities before ending up in Montreal. When the hash arrived here, police say that the workers checking containers at the Port of Montreal alerted the West End Gang their shipment was ready. From there police believe the drugs were shipped throughout North America.

Sources: *CBC News*, April 19 2012, 43 tonnes of hash destined for Canada seized; *Montreal Gazette*, April 19 2012, Former alleged Dubois gang member arrested; *CBC Television – The National*, April 19, 2012, The RCMP says that it's played a key role in a major international drug bust

On May 7, the HMCS Charlottetown, which sails out of Halifax and operates under the command of the Combined Maritime Forces counter-narcotics task force, seized 272 kilograms of hashish that was being transported between two vessels in the Gulf of Aden, part of the Arabian Sea between Yemen and Somalia. One of Charlottetown's Sea King helicopters spotted the two vessels transferring questionable cargo. The crew of a skiff carrying the hashish began dumping its cargo when it realized it was heading toward the Charlottetown. The helicopter retrieved two packages of hashish from the water while an inflatable boat and launched from the Charlottetown retrieved the remaining eight packages. The Charlottetown's crew then carried out a search of the two vessels. Commander Wade Carter of the HMCS Charlottetown told the media some profits from the drugs run between the coast of Pakistan and coastal nations in east Africa are used to fund terrorism and the purchase of arms. He also says there are indications of links to terrorist organizations in the case of the vessel that was arrested, but he declined to provide further details.

Source: *Halifax Chronicle Herald*, May 8 2012, Frigate makes drug seizure; *The Corner Brook Western Star*, June 9 2012, Drugs captured by Royal Canadian Navy vessel linked to terrorists

Heroin

On May 1, the RCMP Serious and Organized Crime Unit in London, Ontario executed a search warrant at a local residence which resulted in 40-year-old Tracey Anderson being charged with importation and possession of heroin for the purpose of trafficking. The arrest was made after the Department of Homeland Security in Memphis, Tennessee intercepted a package containing approximately 500 grams of heroin. This package originated from India and was destined for an address in London. Homeland Security turned the package over to the RCMP for further investigation. A RCMP news release stated that a "complex concealment method was discovered using elements of the packaging" to hide the heroin "which has an approximate street value of \$100,000."

Canada NewsWire (RCMP Press Release), May 4 2012, RCMP charge London resident with importing heroin

On April, 27, four kilograms of heroin, worth around \$4 million, was seized at the Calgary International Airport by the Canada Border Services Agency. The drugs were found in the false bottom of a Calgary woman's luggage, who was returning to the city from India via Amsterdam.

After she was flagged for further examination, an X-ray revealed luggage with a false bottom, where the white powder was hidden. The woman was arrested and turned over to the RCMP's Calgary drug section where she was charged with two offences under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and taken into custody.

Sources: *CBC Calgary*, May 2, 2012, \$4M of heroin nabbed at Calgary airport; *CBC Calgary*, May 5, 2012, Heroin bust has little street impact locally, says expert

The CBSA announced the seizure of approximately two kilograms of suspected heroin on April 12 at the Léo-Blanchette mail processing centre in Montreal. An X-ray of a parcel from Turkey revealed the presence of the drug carefully concealed in the sides of a box of scarves. According to a CBSA press release, during fiscal year 2010-11, CBSA officers at the mail processing centre made 1158 drug seizures.

Source: *Canada Newswire* (CBSA Press Release), May 8 2012, CBSA officers at the Montréal mail processing centre seize 2 kilograms of suspected heroin

Marijuana

Between the end of March and the beginning of April, the RCMP raided four marijuana-grow operations in rural areas near Kamloops, B.C. resulting in the seizure of more than 2,000 plants and five firearms. Police estimated the retail value of the pot at \$1.6 million. The most sophisticated of the dismantled grow-ops yielded only 50 pot plants, but the operation included four large metal marine shipping containers buried underground and fitted with power and water for growing marijuana. Also found at this site was a stolen travel trailer, worth an estimated \$30,000. The largest of the four busts was ad more than 1,500 plants and 1,000 grams of dried marijuana. At another grow-op, investigators say they found 612 plants, 850 grams of dried pot and three firearms (a semi-automatic rifle, a sawed-off shotgun and a .22-calibre rifle). No arrests were made in any of the four busts, which investigators don't believe are related, but are linked to organized crime. A RCMP spokesperson said nobody was at any of the properties when the warrants were being executed, however they have strong leads as to those behind the grow operations.

Source: *Kamloops This Week*, April 4 2012, Police busy busting pot plantations

One man was hospitalized in critical condition, after being shot by police in Quebec targeting a marijuana grow-op. Sixty-three-year-old André Ferland was shot on April 12 by a member of a Sûreté du Québec's SWAT team that raided an apartment in St. Zotique, 45 minutes from Montreal, on Lake St. Francis. Ferland was taken to a hospital where he was listed in critical but stable condition. According to the *Montreal Gazette*, Ferland has an "extensive" criminal record

and ties to the Hells Angels. Ferland has also been convicted of counterfeiting documents, identity theft and dealing in contraband tobacco. His record includes a conviction in Florida, where he was sentenced to a five-year prison term for money laundering as part of a conspiracy to ship cocaine to Montreal for the Quebec Nomads chapter of the Hells Angels in 1997 and 1998. Court records detail how Ferland travelled to Venezuela for the HA to arrange for the cocaine shipments. He was released from a U.S. penitentiary in 2005 but quickly reoffended, and in 2006 was sentenced Quebec to two years in prison for growing more than 2,500 marijuana plants. Montreal police said the marijuana grow operation is believed to be tied to “Italian organized crime” and three others were arrested as suspects in the grow op. Police seized about 6,000 marijuana plants and more than 30 kilograms of dried marijuana after carrying out search warrants at several addresses, including two warehouses in Laval. In addition, \$730,000 in cash was seized.

Sources: *Montreal Gazette*, April 12 2012, Man, 63, wounded in police drug sweep; *Montreal Gazette*, April 14 2012, Man shot during raid had ties to Hells Angels

In April, a 59-year-old Vietnamese immigrant named Son Cong Ho pleaded guilty to drug trafficking and was sentenced to 15 months in prison by a New Brunswick judge. He also pleaded guilty to one count of producing marijuana in British Columbia that dates back to 2011. Ho’s arrest, prosecution and conviction come as a result of Operation: J Today, a RCMP drug investigation that began in April 2009 and culminated with several arrests and charges in August of that year. Ho and six other suspects – including five other Vietnamese immigrants – were arrested as a result of simultaneous raids at three different New Brunswick homes. In a news release, the RCMP linked the grow operations to larger organized crime groups in Ontario and Quebec.

In an unrelated case, more than 2,100 marijuana plants, a handgun and a stolen all-terrain vehicle were seized by police from a home in Scoudouc, New Brunswick in May. Two men from the area, aged 26 and 27, were arrested.

Source: *Fredericton Daily Gleaner*, April 13, 2012, Marijuana dealer jailed for trafficking Courts Charges laid after RCMP investigation and raid on three N.B. homes; *CBC New Brunswick*, May 4, 2012, 2,100 marijuana plants seized in New Brunswick village

RCMP raided a rural residence in Quesnel, B.C., confiscating 2,519 marijuana plants, worth an estimated \$2.5 million. The raid also turned up three men hiding in a secret compartment between two walls within the home. All three were arrested and charged. Police searched the residence and at first were unable to locate any suspects. With the help of police dog “Baron” a perimeter search of the property was conducted but the police dog showed no indication of a track leading away from the residence. Police were then confident that the suspects were still inside the building. The residence did not have any furniture and the entire building was being used solely for the purpose of producing marijuana.

Source: *Quesnel Cariboo Observer*, May 9 2012, Three men busted in major grow-op

Human Smuggling & Trafficking

In April, Ferenc Domotor pleaded guilty and received a nine year sentence for human trafficking. He headed what prosecutors called a family-operated human trafficking ring. His wife Gyongyi Kolompar, and son Ferenc Domotor Jr., pleaded guilty to similar charges. According to the *National Post*, “The family lured victims to Canada with the promise of a better life. Once here, they were forced to work at construction sites without pay, fed table scraps, suffered brutal living conditions and threatened with violence. Victims were recruited from the town of Papa in Hungary, and they arrived in Canada with refugee status.” Police identified at least 19 Hungarian nationals that were victimized by Domotor. Police had launched a 10-month investigation, dubbed “Project OPAPA,” in December 2009 when one of the victims managed to contact the authorities.

Sources: *CTV News*, April 3 2012, Human smuggling; *National Post*, April 4 2012, Ferenc Domotor sentenced to nine years in prison in Canada’s largest-ever human trafficking ring

American federal investigators have dismantled a human trafficking ring thought to have smuggled dozens of illegal immigrants – including children traveling alone – over the Canadian border. The smuggling operation ran from at least November 2010 until authorities intervened in October 2011. According to the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, “Having indicted 16 suspects in recent months, federal prosecutors in Seattle contend the loosely knit group brought more than 70 people into the United States from India, Pakistan and South Korea. Once inside the country, they were driven or flown to at least six states, including Illinois, Texas, New York and Massachusetts. The operation – broken up by an informant and ultimately infiltrated by an undercover federal agent – was apparently lucrative for its leaders. A SeaTac hotel owner who moved and housed the smuggling ring’s customers was paid \$1,000 a head just for a ride south from the U.S. side of the border.”

Eleven of the 12 defendants arrested have pleaded guilty to conspiracy to smuggle illegal immigrants. Among those pleading guilty are two of the group’s purported leaders, Rajendrabhai “Mike” Patel, of Tennessee, and British Columbia resident Manjit “Raj” Dhugga, who has admitted to receiving the illegal immigrants in B.C. and lodging them before they crossed into the U.S. at uninhabited areas on the border.

Another conspirator, 57-year-old Karnail Singh who owned a Seattle-area hotel, was sentenced to 15 months in federal custody. Singh admitted to housing illegal immigrants smuggled into the country at his hotel before they were transferred elsewhere in the country. Singh also hired drivers to take immigrants who crossed into Washington through uninhabited areas along the Canadian border to his hotel, the SeaTac Crest Motor Inn. Those with forged passports were then flown to their destinations; those who didn’t have proper identification were driven to the East

Coast. An undercover agent introduced to the group by an informant went to work as a driver in 2011. The federal prosecutor described Singh's hotel as a hub for illegal immigrants passing through the Seattle area on their way around the United States. In addition to charging \$1,000 per person for transportation from the border to his SeaTac hotel, Karnail Singh told the undercover agent he charged his guests \$3,000 for a forged Washington driver's license, or \$20,000 for a fraudulent marriage Licence.

Source: *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, June 8 2012, Trafficking ring busted smuggling kids over U.S.-Canadian border

In August, 2010, the freighter MV Sun Sea arrived at Victoria, B.C. carrying 492 Sri Lankans. A year earlier the MV Ocean Lady sailed into B.C. waters carrying 76 Tamil asylum seekers. In June of 2012, the RCMP held a press conference to announce charges against three more men, bringing to six the total number charged with organizing the ship's illegal entry into Canada. The men face penalties of life in prison and/or a \$1-million fine. RCMP Superintendent Derek Simmonds, the officer in charge of the federal border integrity program in B.C., said the six men represent not only leadership aboard the vessel, but also organizers from Canada and abroad. The case has contributed to the debate over what to do when illegal migrants are smuggled into the country in such large numbers. The federal Conservative government referred to the two cases to argue for tougher human smuggling and refugee laws. Indeed, the Conservatives announced its intention to draft legislation to deter would-be refugees from paying for illicit passage to Canada by sea.

Sources: *CBC News*, May 15 2012, Tamil migrant ship smuggling probe leads to more charges; *National Post*, May 25, 2012, CSIS tip led to bust of alleged human smuggling ring; *Globe and Mail*, June 6 2012, RCMP 'pulling out all the stops' with new charges in Tamil smuggling case

Contraband Tobacco

At the end of April, the RCMP reported that as a result of the search of a Mississauga, Ontario warehouse, seven tractor-trailer loads of cigarette producing materials – including two cigarette manufacturing machines and tobacco manufacturing equipment along with raw-leaf tobacco, and close to \$50,000 in cash – were seized. In the course of the investigation, the RCMP claims to have disrupted a major illegal tobacco manufacturing network in Ontario. Meanwhile, in Windsor earlier that month, the RCMP made five separate seizures of contraband tobacco over the past four months, confiscating 1,300 cartons and 1,182 baggies of loose, unwrapped cigarettes, for a total of more than 260,000 smokes.

Sources: *Canada NewsWire* (Ontario Convenience Stores Association Press Release), April 27 2012, RCMP, Canada Border Services Agency, and Ontario Ministry of Finance lauded for dismantling major illegal tobacco operation; *Windsor Star*, April 20 2012, Windsor RCMP seize contraband tobacco; Fifth major bust in four months

Violence

The media and the police in B.C. have reported on a number of murders of high profile offenders that have either taken place in the lower mainland or have been committed against individuals known to police outside B.C. and Canada. Gang-related violence appears to have escalated in recent months, although investigators have been cautious about drawing direct links between individual shootings.

In April, 36-year-old Justine Nethaniel Po was gunned down in the Vancouver suburb of Richmond. Po was once charged in connection with the murder of Raymond Chan, an alleged leader of the Lotus Gang and a high-level cocaine dealer, who was found beaten and stabbed to death May 12 2003 in an alley in Richmond. Po is the second person involved in the Chan slaying to be murdered in Richmond. His co-accused Mark James Thrower was shot to death at his apartment in February 2005 – the same day he was to go to trial for killing Chan in May 2003. Po pleaded guilty to accessory after the fact in the Chan murder and was sentenced to nine months in jail. A 2005 court ruling in the Chan case referred to wiretaps on which “Po is intercepted talking about his role in driving the car of the victim from the crime scene” and destroying the evidence. “Po later disposed of the clothes, handcuffs, mag light, cell phones and pagers at a number of locations, including Confederation Park, the Iron Workers Bridge and at a Stanley Park beach,” the ruling said. Thrower’s murder remains unsolved. A third man charged in the Chan slaying, Michael Andrew Mercredi, pleaded guilty to second degree murder in 2006 and got a life sentence with no parole eligibility for 12 years. Another accused in the case told police that the plan was to kidnap Chan and extort money from him.

Also in April, 50-year-old Thomas Gisby, who is known to police in B.C. as a long-time drug trafficker, was shot dead at a Starbucks in the Mexican tourist town of Nuevo Vallarta. RCMP Chief Supt. Dan Malo, told the media he is concerned about retaliation against enemies of Gisby who was from the Fraser Valley. “We wanted to get our message to the community that this wasn’t an individual who was simply on holidays,” Malo said Saturday. “This is a well-known target, a well-known organized crime figure here in British Columbia.” Police said that Gisby was connected to other criminal organizations in Canada and other parts of the world and also was known to traffick in firearms. “He has networks internationally to be able to bring illegal commodities into Canada for distribution,” Malo said. Malo also indicated that the RCMP were aware that Gisby had had travelled to Mexico. One attempt had already been made on his life when a bomb exploded at his motor home near Whistler in January.

The web site Mafiatoday.com speculated that Gisby’s murder was in retaliation for the death of 29-year-old Jonathan Bacon, one-third of the notorious Bacon brothers and a member of the Red Scorpions gang. Bacon was shot dead outside a hotel and casino complex in the B.C interior in August of 2011. Police have yet to identify the assailant, who wore a mask. According to the May 14 edition of the Vancouver Sun, “Gisby’s slaying in Mexico may be part of the on-going tit-for-tat violence in B.C. between a group consisting of some Hells Angels, some Red Scorpions and some Independent Soldiers and their rivals in the so-called Dhak-Duhre group.” The *National Post* reported that “Gisby is believed to be linked to Metro Vancouver’s notorious

Dhak group, who alongside the Duhre gang has been the subject of retaliatory hits since last summer's well-publicized Kelowna murder of Red Scorpion Jonathon Bacon.”

On May 2, forty-three-year-old Ranjit Singh Cheema was gunned down in a drive-by shooting outside his parents' home in Vancouver. Cheema had just finished a prison sentence in California, for heroin and cocaine trafficking and had told the media that he had found religion and was now going straight. The *Vancouver Sun* reported, however, that since returning from a California, Cheema “had been trying to muscle his way back into the lucrative B.C. drug trade ...” At least one attempt had already been made to kill Cheema; in 1995 he was shot five times in the chest and abdomen outside a Vancouver karaoke bar. He was in a coma for six weeks after the shooting. Cheema was an associate of several other individual who were also shot to death, including Bindy Johal who died in 1998, Mike Brar in 2000 and Robbie Kandola in 2002.

Both Cheema and Gisby were long time players in the Lower Mainland drug trade and both had convictions for heroin trafficking. Despite knowing each other for years, police do not believe the two murders are linked. According to the *Vancouver Sun*, “Cheema's murder is more likely linked to a conflict between the 44-year-old and rivals from his south Vancouver neighbourhood.” Cheema “was aligned with what remained of the Buttar group. Former Buttar gang associates are on both sides in the new gang landscape — where Bacon's associates, some Hells Angels and some Independent Soldiers have been clashing with rivals in what police call the Dhak-Duhre group,” the *Vancouver Sun* reported on May 2. According to the *National Post*, “it is believed the Dhak's and Duhre's are involved in a turf war with elements of the now-defunct Red Scorpions gang, the Independent Soldiers and some Hells Angels associates.”

Cheema's shooting came days after police issued a unique public warning about the possibility of escalating gang violence in the Lower Mainland. While the exact reason behind the gangland murders are often unknown, a number of different groups are have long jockeyed for position in B.C.'s lucrative drug trade. The province is a major producer of marijuana and synthetic drugs and the Port of Vancouver is a gateway for cocaine from South America.

Durham Regional Police in Ontario confirmed that B.C. resident Kamran Ahmadbeigi was shot to death in a driveway on the evening of May 25. He was rushed to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead after being hit multiple times by gunfire. The *Vancouver Sun* reported that the 26-year-old Ahmadbeigi “is connected to a gang called the Afghan Dragons which is associated with the United Nations gang.” Ahmadbeigi had one criminal conviction in B.C. for driving while prohibited and several driving infractions, but no criminal history related to his gang connections.

Also in May, 35-year-old Gurbinder Singh Toor, who police identified as a member of the Dhak-Duhre group, was murdered by gunfire outside a recreation centre in Port Moody, east of Vancouver. On the afternoon of June 23, 34-year-old Randynesh (Randy) Raman Naicker was also shot and killed by masked gunman outside a Starbucks in Port Moody. A Vancouver police spokesman told the media that Naicker is widely known as one of the co-founders of the Independent Soldiers gang. Naicker was convicted in 2006 along with Harpreet Narwal of kidnapping, confinement and extortion. The pair kidnapped Harpreet Singh because they believed Singh was responsible for a missing marijuana shipment destined for the United States

that was worth \$400,000. Their trial heard that Naicker and Narwal threatened to kill Singh and members of his family unless he paid them the \$400,000. Singh managed to escape, running to a nearby fast food restaurant, where he climbed through the drive-thru window until staff called for help.

Sources: *Vancouver Sun*, April 20 2012, Richmond, B.C. shooting victim tied to gangland hit; *CBC British Columbia*, April 20 2012, Police ID Richmond shooting victim; *Canadian Press*, April 28 2012, B.C. gangster with international crime connections killed in Mexico; *CTV News*, April 29 2012, Fears of gangland turf war; *National Post*, April 29 2012, B.C. gangster Thomas Gisby gunned down in Mexico; *Vancouver Sun*, May 2 2012, Vancouver drive-by shooting victim is high-profile gangster Ranjit Cheema; *Globe and Mail*, May 2 2012, Victim of daylight killing reportedly notorious B.C. gangster; *CBC News*, May 2 2012, Convicted Vancouver drug trafficker killed outside parents' home; *Mafiatoday.com*, May 5 2012, With two deaths this week, killing season has returned to B.C.'s gangland; *Vancouver Sun*, May 14 2012, Hundreds attend funeral of gangster Ranjit Cheema amid strong police monitoring; *Vancouver Sun*, June 7 2012, North Vancouver Man with gang links killed in Ontario; *Canadian Press*, June 26 2012, Police identify victim of Vancouver-area shooting as gang co-founder; *CBC British Columbia*, June 26 2012, B.C. gangster identified as latest shooting victim

Organized Crime Genres

Albanian

In May, Toronto police arrested Kujtim (Timmy) Lika, a man once called a “Kingpin of Albanian organized crime.” Police say the 47-year-old Lika is wanted for drug trafficking in New Jersey. He had been featured on the U.S. television show *America's Most Wanted*. Its web site says the FBI identified Lika as an Albanian illegal immigrant from the former Yugoslavian republic of Macedonia. Toronto police helped the FBI nab Lika's accomplice Myfit (Mike) Dika, who was arrested in Toronto in 2010. They have been looking for Lika ever since. *CBC News* reported an investigation into Albanian organized crime began in the U.S. in 2005. Named “Operation Black Eagle” after the two-headed eagle on the Albanian flag, the investigation focused largely on Lika and Dika. Investigators allege the pair shipped everything from heroin and guns to bootleg sneakers around the world. They managed to evade a 2009 mass arrest of fellow gang members in New Jersey and fled to Canada. Dika is being held in Toronto where he has been fighting extradition for two years.

Sources: *CBC News*, May 25, 2012, Kingpin in Albanian mafia arrested in Toronto; *Canadian Press*, May 24, 2012, ‘America's Most Wanted’ fugitive arrested in Toronto, wanted by FBI; *America's Most Wanted* web site, www.amw.com

In June 2010, 17 men were arrested and charged by the U.S. Attorney's office in Manhattan with a long list of federal organized crime charges that included robbery, kidnapping, murder, drug

dealing, weapons possession, conspiracy, extortion, arson, and obstruction of justice. All were from Albania. Authorities called it the Krasniqi Organization, a criminal enterprise run from 2003-2010 by two twenty-something Albanian brothers, Bruno and Saimir Krasniqi, who led a crew of hustlers, first in Michigan then in New York City. One of the Krasniqis' hustles was to supplement their drug dealing and crime by stealing marijuana they got on consignment or from other suppliers or dealers. In 2005, they stole a 100-poiund package of marijuana they purchased on consignment from a Toronto-based Albanian dealer. The Canadian dealer responded to the theft by paying \$50,000 to men who were described at the trial as hard, northern Albanians from the Bronx to kidnap Grezda in New York. They grabbed Grezda and transported him to Michigan, where they beat him until he agreed to participate in a plan to set up Bruno to be kidnapped. Grezda called and told Bruno to go to some spot in New York to pick him up. Bruno agreed. When he got to the spot he was jumped by the kidnapers. He was bound, tossed in a van, beaten, stabbed, had his head covered with a pillow case and had guns put in his mouth.

Abridged from: [Kevin Heldman, The Streets of Tirana and the roots of Albanian-American organized crime, *The Capital*, June 14 2012](#)

Italian

After serving six years in jail for his role in the wounding of Louise Russo, Pietro “Peter” Scarcella was freed from prison on April 11 under a statutory release program. Russo was the innocent victim of a botched mob hit at a North York sandwich shop in 2004; shot in the back, she is now paralyzed and confined to a wheelchair. Police alleged this shooting stemmed from a dispute between Scarcella and other organized crime figures during which Scarcella ordered the murder of some of his associates. According to police, Scarcella ran a number of illegal gambling and bookmaking operations in the Toronto region and was worried his business was being threatened at the time of the Russo shooting. Scarcella has long had connections with Italian organized crime in Canada. Scarcella was a lieutenant for the high profile Toronto Mafiosi Paul Volpe during the late 1970s and early 1980s and was the last person known to have seen him alive (his bullet-riddled body was found in a car trunk in 1983). According to Police, Scarcella also has ties to the Rizzuto crime family of Montreal. According to one recent media source, “Some organized crime watchers say Pietro “Peter” Scarcella could be a target in a continuing mob war against Montreal’s Rizzuto crime family. But others believe the man solidified his place in the murderous hierarchy of organized crime and will emerge stronger than when he entered the prison system — that the risk of his demise is no greater than anyone else in the world of organized crime, police sources say.”

Sources: *Globe and Mail*, April 16, 2005, Mob war led to Russo shooting, sources say; *Toronto Sun*, April 3 2012, Boss of “Scarcella” family to be released from federal prison,

Another man, who is alleged to have close ties to the Rizzuto crime family, sixty-five-year-old Sabatino Nicolucci, will also soon be released from prison after reaching his statutory release

date. In 1985, he was sentenced to 14 years for his role in a conspiracy to smuggle cocaine from Brazil to Canada. He was released on full parole in January 1991 but vanished before his sentence expired. Nicolucci was abducted from Montreal in 1994 by Colombians because he owed \$1.7 million stemming from a dispute that involved a deal for 280 kilograms of cocaine; Nicolucci refused to pay the \$1.7 million because he felt the cocaine was of poor quality. His kidnappers eventually smuggled him out of the country and ended up in Colombia, where he was held for ransom. He ended up working for the cartel to erase his debt, was found by Colombian police and in May 1996 was extradited to Canada where he had already been charged for money laundering stemming from a sting operation orchestrated by the RCMP. Specifically, his charges stemmed from his role in laundering money for the Rizzuto mafia clan. While on parole, Nicolucci laundered more than \$30 million from 1990 to 1994 at a fake currency exchange office established by the RCMP. The money was tied to two transactions involving 290 kilograms of cocaine. In 1997, months after Nicolucci was returned to Canada from Colombia, he was convicted on four drug trafficking counts as well as 168 money-laundering offences and was sentenced to a 19-year prison term. When he was returned to a federal penitentiary, his two sentences were combined to make up a 33-year prison term. Nicolucci was denied parole three times since 2007, primarily because he did not cooperate with his Correctional Service Canada case management team, who prepare inmates for release.

Sources: *Montreal Gazette*, May 22 2012, Drug smuggler, money launderer set for release from prison; Lee Lamothe and Adrian Humphreys, 2008, *The Sixth Family: The Collapse of the New York Mafia and the Rise of Vito Rizzuto*, Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 182-183

In June, 45-year-old Giuseppe (Ponytail) De Vito was sentenced to a 15-year prison term for his role in a conspiracy to import of cocaine from Haiti through Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport in Montreal. De Vito became known to police during Project Colisée, a wide-ranging investigation into Montreal's Rizzuto mafia family, in 2005, after a shipment of 218 kilograms of cocaine was seized by the RCMP. He was convicted of conspiracy to smuggle cocaine and committing a crime for the benefit of a criminal organization. According to a story in the *Montreal Gazette*, "wiretaps revealed De Vito was furious, not because the cocaine had been seized but because the people who did the actual smuggling lied to the Mafia about how much they were importing to avoid a so-called tax the organization charged for "a door" through the airport created by De Vito. According to police evidence, De Vito played a key role in recruiting airport employees to help bring cocaine into Canada. He managed to avoid arrest for nearly four years, but was discovered in Montreal in 2010. While on the lam from police, De Vito's wife, Adele Sorella, is alleged to have killed their two daughters. She is scheduled to stand trial in 2013.

Sources: *Montreal Gazette*, June 5 2012, 15-year term sought for Mafia drug-case fugitive; *Montreal Gazette*, June 20 2012, 15-year sentence for Giuseppe De Vito

Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs

Steven Gareau, an Ottawa drug dealer who was sentenced to life in prison in 2000 as a Hells Angels contract killer, has won a new trial. The 56-year-old Gareau filed a handwritten appeal to court from his jail cell on several grounds — notably that the trial judge erred when she told the jury they could consider as evidence the fact that his co-conspirators in the killing had previously been found guilty. The appeal court of Nova Scotia — where the homicide plot was executed in October 2000 — ruled this week that the trial judge made a “fatal error” when she told the jury in her charge they could consider that evidence. “Specifically the judge told the jury that they could use this evidence against this appellant when considering his guilt or innocence,” the appeal court ruled. Gareau’s murder conviction has been set aside. His new trial date has not yet been scheduled.

Source: *Ottawa Citizen*, April 30 2012, Ottawa drug dealer gets new trial

Paul (Sasquatch) Porter, the president of the Hells Angels Nomads chapter in Ontario, pleaded guilty to possessing 248.1 grams of cocaine with a street value of about \$14,000. Police found the drugs in his girlfriend’s purse after stopping the pair in Porter’s car on September 12 2009. Porter took responsibility for the cocaine, sparing his girlfriend a potential criminal conviction and prison sentence. Officers from the Biker Enforcement Unit and Ottawa police drug section had Porter under surveillance after receiving information that he was going to be making a cocaine pickup, according to a federal prosecutor. He will be sentenced in September. Charges were filed against his girlfriend, Debbie Brennan, but are expected to be withdrawn after Porter is sentenced.

Source: *Ottawa Citizen*, April 10 2012, Hells Angels boss ‘Sasquatch’ Porter pleads guilty to cocaine possession

In May, 41-year-old Leslie Douglas Greenwood was sentenced to life for his role in the murders of Barry Mersereau and his wife Nancy Christensen on Sept. 9, 2000. Both were shot to death in their home in Nova Scotia in what police allege was a Hells Angels-ordered killing. The trial for Greenwood got underway in Kentville, Nova Scotia in April. A Nova Scotia Supreme Court jury delivered its verdict following almost three weeks of court proceedings. The Crown prosecutor argued that the execution-style murder was ordered by Jeffrey Lynds, a former full patch member of the Hells Angel who died recently in a Montreal jail of an apparent suicide. Greenwood and Michael Lawrence murdered the couple on the orders of Lynds. Lawrence, who owed Lynds money, pleaded guilty last January to three charges of first-degree murder and was sentenced to life in prison with no possibility of parole for 25 years. The same day as the other murders, Lawrence also killed Charles Maddison, an innocent man who picked up Lawrence when he was hitchhiking. He shot Maddison to take his truck to commit a planned robbery. Greenwood’s lawyer argued that his client went to Mersereau and Christensen’s house to buy drugs and Lawrence shot the couple while he was waiting outside. Following his conviction, the

Montreal Police Service laid first-degree murder charges against Greenwood in the deaths of Kirk Murray, 47, and Antonio Onesi, 51, who were shot in the parking lot of a Montreal McDonald's in January 2010. Police allege this murder was also ordered by Jeffrey Lynds, who was a member of the defunct Halifax Chapter of the Hells Angels and then the Quebec Nomads chapter. Kirk's brother Randall Mersereau was a member of the Hells Angels in Halifax. On October 31, 1999, Mersereau disappeared and is presumed dead. He had parted company with the Angels and was rumoured to be forging links with archrival Bandidos. Kirk Mersereau had placed a \$50,000 bounty on the head of his brother's killer.

Sources: *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, April 24 2012, Murder trial with alleged Hells Angels link begins; *Truro Daily News*, May 9 2012, Greenwood found guilty in two killings; *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, May 18 2012, Killer faces new charges in Quebec biker murders

Following raids on numerous homes and businesses, police arrested members and associates of the Manitoba chapter of the Hells Angels in March and laid a number of drug and gang-related charges. By the end of April, 25 people had been arrested as part of Project Flatlined, an undercover operation that relied on wiretaps and surveillance to gather intelligence information and evidence. The Flatlined code name is a reference to the Redlined Support Crew, a puppet club of the Hells Angels that was created in 2010 to counter competing drug trafficking networks that tried to take over from the HA after many of their members were arrested and jailed in the other police operations.

Among competing drug trafficking rivals in Manitoba is the Rock Machine, which waged war with the Hells Angels in Quebec during the 1990s but has not had much presence in Manitoba until recently. Tensions escalated last summer with more than a dozen reported violent incidents, including drive-by shootings and fire bombings, involving Redlined and Rock Machine members.

Among those arrested as part of Flatlined was Winnipeg chapter president Dale Sweeney, who had several vehicles, including a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, seized as the proceeds of crime.

Others not charged as a result of the criminal investigation are being arrested under the rarely-used peace bonds section of the Criminal Code, which states they are likely to "commit a criminal offence for the benefit of a criminal organization." All those arrested are held in custody until they agree to terms of the peace bond ordered by a court. Several Hells Angels members and associates were arrested then released after agreeing to the terms of the peace bond, which include having no contact with any Hells Angels member or associate in the province. Part of the aim of the orders is to cripple communications between various HA members and associates.

Among those who were subject to a peace bond was 43-year-old Rodney Sweeney, Dale's brother, who agreed during a court appearance to abide for a year by the conditions of a peace bond. "Rodney Sweeney was observed through surveillance actively pursuing rival gang members," wrote Winnipeg police Det. Grant Goulet in an affidavit for the peace bond bid.

Goulet detailed several occasions on which Hells Angels associates, including Rodney Sweeney, “assembled in convoys to go on the hunt for rival Rock Machine members.” The peace bond against Sweeney prohibits him from having contact with up to 100 past and present alleged associates of the Hells Angels, Redlined, or the Zig Zag Crew, the one-time puppet club to the Manitoba HA. Any breaches of the conditions could result in a criminal offence and would be grounds for immediate arrest.

The result of the arrests is that almost all patch-wearing members of the Manitoba Hells Angels are either in custody or barred from having contact with any other member or associate. Insp. Rick Guyader of the Winnipeg police organized crime unit said the arrests have decimated the Manitoba Hells Angels, which may be in violation of the biker gang’s charter requiring at least seven active members.

Source: *Winnipeg Free Press*, April 10 2012, Cops make life hell for Angels. Arrested even if they haven’t done a crime; *CTV News*, April 21 2012, Police issue arrest warrants for four men in connection with Hells Angels bust; *Winnipeg Sun*, April 24 2012, Manitoba Hells Angels associate arrested; *Winnipeg Sun*, June 8 2012, Rarely used peace bond issued against Manitoba Hells Angels Member

In B.C., the White Rock chapter of the Hells Angels has been in turmoil in recent months. Most recently a full patch member of the chapter was arrested at his Aldergrove home on drug trafficking charges while another full patch member was expelled from the chapter. On May 16, 50-year-old Brent Douglas Milne was charged with cocaine trafficking. Police found seized 34 ounces of coke and \$26,000 in cash in the house.

Earlier that month, another full patch member and former Sergeant at Arms in the White Rock chapter, Mike Robatzek, was thrown out of the club. His removal from the HA came just four months after a young Abbotsford man was killed in a house owned by Robatzek’s company. Twenty-one-year-old Ryan Saint-Ange was fatally shot January 14 in the house. Two young men known to Saint-Ange have now been charged with killing him. Robatzek didn’t live in the home, but those staying there who were renovating it for resale. Court records indicate Robatzek had fallen on financial hard times, with several suits alleging he had reneged on loans or left debts unpaid. Robatzek had been in the Hells Angels for about 12 years. He was sergeant-at-arms of the White Rock chapter and was previously a member of the Vancouver chapter. In order for a full-patch Hells Angel to be forced out of the club, there must be unanimous agreement among other members. When members are kicked out of the HA, they must give up their vests and any possession with the club insignia, as well as remove or cover up their Hells Angels tattoos.

The White Rock chapter has been linked to ongoing gang tensions in the aftermath of an August 2011 shooting in Kelowna, in which Red Scorpion gang member Jonathon Bacon was killed and another White Rock Hells Angel member Larry Amero, was seriously wounded. Amero was a close friend and associate of Bacon, who, along with his brothers Jamie and Jarrod, are alleged to

control the Red Scorpions gang, which was at the centre of a bloody gang war that played out on the streets of Metro Vancouver nearly three years ago.

In addition, Trevor Jones, the brother of another chapter member named Randy Jones, was indicted in the U.S. in a cross-border drug smuggling operation that American prosecutors allege was carried out for the benefit of the White Rock HA chapter.

Sources: *CBC News*, August 15 2011, B.C. gang leader Bacon killed in hotel shooting; *Langley Times*, May 17 2012, Hells Angel arrested, cocaine and money seized from Aldergrove home; *Vancouver Sun*, May 11 2012, Member expelled from White Rock, BC Hells Angels chapter; *Abbotsford-Mission Times*, May 18 2012, Full patch member of Hells Angels Abbotsford, BC chapter arrested on cocaine charges

Police have arrested Paul Magnan, a full patch member of the Trois-Rivieres chapter of the Hells Angels in Quebec who has been on the run for three years. Magnan was arrested in the Outaouais region, west of Montreal. He will reportedly be charged with murder and drug trafficking. Magnan has alluded police since Operation SharQc in 2009, which aimed to disrupt suspected Hells Angels drug and gang activity in Quebec and New Brunswick.

Source: *CBC Montreal*, June 23, 2012, Member of the Hells Angels arrested

Enforcement

The Alberta Law Enforcement Response Team (ALERT) opened a new organized crime inter-agency unit in Lethbridge Alberta. Made up of police from the Lethbridge RCMP and Lethbridge regional police, the unit will commence work on April 1. Its mandate is to investigate organized crime, including drug trafficking networks, street gangs and larger criminal rings outside Alberta. The new unit, called the Lethbridge Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit, is one of six such task forces across Alberta.

Source: *Lethbridge Herald*, April 14, 2012, ALERT launches organized crime unit

Jarrod Bacon was sentenced to 12 years in May for conspiring to traffic up to 100 kilograms of cocaine. B.C. Supreme Court Associate Chief Justice Austin Cullen said Bacon was an admitted criminal who showed no remorse for his role in a conspiracy to distribute a huge amount of cocaine across the Lower Mainland in the summer of 2009. He said the sentence was a lengthy one because Bacon was on bail when he made the coke deal and continues to be unrepentant. And he said Bacon's enabling family circumstances mean there is little hope for rehabilitation for the 29-year-old. Bacon was given almost five years credit for the time he has been in jail awaiting trial, meaning his net sentence will be seven years and two months. Bacon

and his former father-in-law Wayne Scott were arrested in November 2009 by the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit in B.C. after a reverse sting using an agent. The agent, an acquaintance of Scott's, told police he could get at Bacon, whose Red Scorpion gang at the time was locked in a bloody street war against rivals from the United Nations gang. The agent, a convicted smuggler himself, convinced both Bacon and Scott he was bringing in large shipments of cocaine from Mexico and both accused bought in to the fake deal.

Source: *Vancouver Sun*, May 5, 2012, Jarrod Bacon sentenced to 12 years for cocaine trafficking,