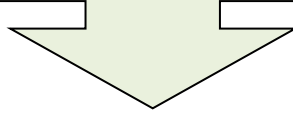


'VOICES OF THE BRUISED REEDS'- PLEASE, PLEASE LISTEN TO THEM!



**double click on the above
article to read in pdf
Adobe Reader**

CANADA- OUR COLLECTIVE SHAME & SILENCE:

December 05th, 2012, after reading this article in the Leader Post (Regina) about *the death of Phoenix, a little First Nations' girl* aged five years from Manitoba, we were reminded that *the 'sad state' of Child Welfare Services is not only endemic in Regina and Saskatchewan but is a pandemic problem across Canada.*

Thanks to Reporter Christie Blatchford for her excellent report. She has given a voice to all the children like Phoenix (even from her grave) who have died tragically because of serious mismanagement, breaches of duty and trust and utter complacency within the Child Welfare Systems across Canada.

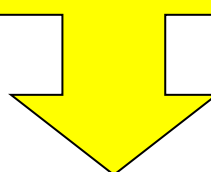
In this article reproduced below **we have highlighted areas that we related directly to in our plight.**

We really hope that stories like Phoenix's story will continue to be told and that other 'at risk' babies and children will be kept safe. Rehabilitation services must be intensive and long-term and the parents must demonstrate stability before there would be any consideration of reuniting them.

- As Canadians we must not be complacent over these needless deaths of our infants and children 'at risk' but demand better and when we do not receive it then we must demand justice at every level of government and within every level of our justice systems until we see **REAL CHANGE**.

Arlene & Charlene.

**HIGHLIGHTED AREAS THAT
PARALLEL SOME OF OUR
STRUGGLES AND CONCERNS
WITH CHILDREN'S JUSTICE &
PROTECTION SERVICES &
ULTIMATELY THE JUSTICE
SYSTEM.**



A10 Wednesday, December 5th:2012

Leader-Post <leaderpost.com

Case workers shed few tears for young Phoenix
CHRISTIE BLATCHFORD

WINNIPEG- In my second year of college, living on my own for the first time, both careless and selfish, a kitten had died. She'd had a runny nose, my roommate nagged me to take her to the vet, but I was too busy, and the kitten died.

A lovely living creature died because of my neglect. I am suffused

with shame about it still. For all the small missteps of my life, that is one of a handful of profound regrets. It is the absence of something similar - a feeling, some acknowledgment of failure, maybe even a hint of sorrow - that is the striking feature of what goes on in the big room on the second floor of the Winnipeg Convention Centre.

This room is home to the provincial inquiry into the death of Phoenix Sinclair, a little native girl who died at the age of five.

Her mother, Samantha Kematch, and her lover, Karl McKay, actually killed Phoenix, on or about June 11, 2005, after subjecting her, as their murder trial four years ago heard, to months

of horrific abuse that included keeping the little girl in a basement pen, making her eat her own vomit and shooting her with a BB gun.

But there is a larger ring of those who were complicit in her death - including, arguably, a government that tolerates the fact that about 90 per cent of the youngsters who are in the care of its

child-welfare agencies are aboriginal-and chief among these was Winnipeg Child and Family Services.

It was this agency, and its various workers and their bosses, who collectively knew better than anyone else how shattered a family this

Both Kematch and Phoenix's dad, Steve Sinclair, had been wards of the state themselves and were deeply troubled young people. Information in CFS files revealed Sinclair had been subjected to violence, sexual abuse and alcohol abuse before he was removed from his home; Kematch had her first child at 17, which was apprehended and made a ward. She was ambivalent at best about Phoenix, who was apprehended at birth. Their second child died as a baby, of complications due to pneumonia. It was pretty clear from evidence at the inquiry that as parents, the two were a recipe for disaster.

Yet Phoenix kept being put back, first with the pair of them, then, when they split up, with Sinclair, who was deemed the better parent.

The agency would then close the file, again.; you can almost hear, through the paperwork on file, the self-satisfied sounds of hands briskly washing themselves clean - until a new crisis came up, as inevitably it did.

Despite his good intentions, for instance, Sinclair managed only a month on his own before a report came in to CFS that he had left the little girl alone; Kematch had come and picked her up, and then gone out drinking, allegedly also prostituting herself, leaving Phoenix at a crack house.

I have heard testimony from only three workers and one supervisor, and a bit from another, but excellent colleagues here in Winnipeg, some of whom have been at the inquiry every day since it started in September, have reported only one episode of tears - and these came from a supervisor who wept as she talked of the death of a social worker she liked, not of Phoenix.

Most CFS witnesses didn't remember the case of the little girl at all. Most appeared ... well, un-struck by news of her death.

Some, such as the two main witnesses on Tuesday, don't even remember how they heard Phoenix had died.

As Lisa Conlin, a worker in the CFS intake section who got the case when someone phoned in to report Phoenix was in that crack house, said when she was asked how she found out the little girl was dead: "I would have just found out in the news."

Her supervisor, Doug Ingram, did her one better: He had no idea how or when he learned of her death. So many times did Ingram answer a question by saying "I have no independent memory" that it's a safe bet that, once dressed for the day, he has no idea how it happened.

And, just in case, Ingram also shredded his notes about the case.

His practice, in stark breach of the policy that requires workers and supervisors both to make notes, especially about key decisions that saw children apprehended or their files closed, was to shred, shred, shred as he went along.

Does it really need saying that he and Conlin decided to close the file on Phoenix in February of 2004, against the recommendation of another supervisor and after a shoddy and superficial investigation?

After Phoenix's body was found on a reserve about 200 kilometres north of Winnipeg, the CFS did an internal review. By and large, the reviewer pronounced Conlin's work - and by inference Ingram's supervision - to be excellent.

An outside reviewer, working for the province's chief medical examiner, later had a much different view. She said that by leaving the little girl in another home - the caregivers there were loving, but the agency gave them no official status and thus had no way of keeping Phoenix with them - the CFS "was acquiescing to an arrangement for Phoenix that was tenuous at best."

Nothing was in place to keep that little girl safe, and so nothing did.

I still properly beat myself up over that poor kitten, but, oh my, there's little of that going on here.