

Nov. 30, 2011

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
BC Coroners Service

MEDIA ADVISORY

VANCOUVER – The BC Coroners Service has announced it will hold a public inquest into the death of Jeremy Michael Phillips.

Mr. Phillips, aged 33, was found dead in his cell at Mountain federal penitentiary in Agassiz on the morning of Nov. 22, 2010.

Earlier this week another inmate at the penitentiary, Michael Wayne McGray, pleaded guilty to first-degree murder in the death of Mr. Phillips.

Although legislation no longer makes it mandatory for the BC Coroners Service to hold an inquest into all deaths of persons in custody, in this case the chief coroner has determined that issues, which have been raised surrounding the safety of inmates in the prison system, can best be explored through the inquest process.

Presiding coroner Vincent Stancato and a jury will hear evidence from subpoenaed witnesses to determine the facts surrounding this death. While the jury may not, by law, make any findings of legal responsibility, it will have the opportunity to make recommendations aimed at preventing deaths under similar circumstances in the future.

An inquest is a formal process that allows for public presentation of evidence relating to a death.

A date and place for the inquest will be announced once these have been confirmed.

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