

Government is guilty

Two weeks ago the body of a young woman was found between two large, moss covered rocks in Fraser Canyon, B.C. Her name was Melanie Carpenter and she was only 23. She was killed by a convicted sex offender who had been released on parole.

Unfortunately, Melanie is just the latest and best known victim, one in a long line of innocent victims who have been brutalized by an individual convicted of a violent crime and set free to stalk and brutalize society once again. Why?

As far as I'm concerned, the federal government must take the blame for this murder and many other violent crimes since they feel it unnecessary to change the criminal justice system in this country. Somewhere, somehow, it was felt that locking up violent individuals in a federal penitentiary with others like them would protect society and perhaps rehabilitate the offender.

Unfortunately, prisons generally don't reform violent offenders and with time off for good behaviour and the over crowding now common in prisons, many violent offenders find themselves outside the confines of their prison walls all too soon.

Fernand Auger was one such person. A sex offender from Calgary, Auger was released from a federal penitentiary and made his way to the

Vancouver suburb of Surrey where he kidnapped Melanie while she was working alone at a tanning salon. It seems easy enough to place the blame wholly on Auger, but it's something I find impossible to do. After all, hadn't he already been convicted of a violent crime? Hadn't he already been confined to a prison cell?

The government and those responsible for the criminal code in this country seem more willing to err on the side of the convicted criminal than erring on the side of society and its innocents. It is more important it appears to give a violent offender a second chance than to give an innocent victim like Melanie Carpenter a first. It was impossible for her to prevent what happened to her. However, it was within the government's power to prevent it.

Every day, an innocent victim in this country is brutalized by someone against which they have little or no power to stop. Every day the government releases a convicted violent offender. Every year, men who preyed upon the weakest and most vulnerable are set free. I find it hard to believe that a child molester, rapist or murder can ever be wholly cured or rehabilitated. More importantly, and many I'm sure will disagree, I find it hard to rationalize why society has a moral obligation to even try when we have so many other problems.

We already live in a society that is over-burdened with problems that seem impossible to solve or overcome. AIDS has become the single

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The Gazette would like to apologize to Toby Moorsoom and Brooks Kind. Toby wrote the opinions piece "Controlling the Cafeteria" (Feb. 9, 1995), not Shannon Hardies as we had printed. Brooks wrote the article "Canadian complicity in east Timor" (Feb. 9, 1995) which we had laid out incorrectly. We also extend apologies to Tim Covert whose CKDU article was miscredited.

Ask Jo & Joe

Hey out there! We've been asked about what the hell people are supposed to do during the break, if they don't already have plans. And to that we say this: "Be Creative!"

Hey, you don't have to just sit around and read — that's just not what 'Reading Week' is all about. It's about sleeping 'til noon; it's about watching movies 'til you can't focus any more; it's about doing whatever it takes to get your mind clear of everything that's causing you stress and strain and making you crazy.

First off, we recommend that you begin with Thursday night at the 'Wood. It's tradition. And hey, the beer's cheap and the people are great. If you're in to live music, we happen to know that this Thursday night the Under Dogs are playing at the Grad House. They're a good new band, and we do recommend them.

You know what? Do what you want to, dammit! This is your week — why would you follow us around town??

JO: I've decided I want to learn how to bake, and fill up my freezer with goodies. Only eating junk food for the week after Reading Week, when all of your professors think you've finished all the work you were supposed to get done over the break, is just a bad deal. You might actually catch me in the library... Dreaming about the Bahamas.

JOE: I'm planning to read everything I've been meaning to read. I don't mean for class — I'm talking about for fun, you know. I also really want to get drunk, a few times. Maybe while I'm reading.

JO & JOE: So just do what ever makes you happy. There's only about a month of classes when we get back before we have to write our finals, so use this time to your best advantage, and have fun.

See y'all in a week.

Remember, if you have questions about anything at all, nothing's too rude crude or dumb. Just Ask Jo & Joe. We can be reached at the Gazette, or by email at: tratnik@is.dal.ca.

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Dalhousie Women's Centre



6143 South St. (between Seymour & LeMarchant)
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(902) 494-2432

International Women's Week

Look for upcoming events including...

Cooking workshops
including Korean, Perogues

Halifax's 5th Annual International Women's Day Variety Show
March 8 at 8pm

Guest speaker: Priscilla de Villiers
March 7, noon

Women's Talking Circle

Call the Dal Women's Centre for more info.



Dal Women's Centre

Volunteer Meeting

Thursday, Feb. 16, 1995

5:30 pm at the Centre