

Each year, hundreds of people try to smuggle drugs and end up deeply regretting their mistake. Instead of "getting out from under," they get in even deeper and land in prison. Some may make it through customs

in the country they visited, but they may not be so lucky back in Canada. The Canada Customs and Revenue Agency uses state-of-the-art detection techniques.

Life at Stake

Roger, 55, was arrested on drug-trafficking charges while trying to leave Thailand. He was transferred to a hospital to undergo a drug elimination process since he had admitted to swallowing 100 capsules of heroin. With Roger's permission, Canadian consular staff informed his wife of his arrest. She was very upset and started to cry.

Two days later, Roger was transferred to the intensive care unit. Half of the highly toxic capsules were still in his system. He slipped in and out of consciousness, an indication that the heroin was seeping into his system. Too much seepage could result in brain damage or even death. If just one capsule broke open, it could be fatal. Because of his medical problems and age, surgery was too risky. Roger was receiving medication to counter the drugs in his system, as well as laxatives to purge them: a delicate balance.

Roger then slowly started to improve. About a week later, he was transferred to a prison where he shares a small cell with six others and is allowed outside for half an hour a day. Meanwhile, his wife has to pay his hospital and legal bills, the cost of all his medication and his expenses for toiletries, clothes and other incidentals. The lawyer alone cost over US\$4,000. She has to send several months of medical supplies in advance to ensure they arrive on time.

Roger currently awaits his trial, hoping for a better sentence than the death penalty, the maximum sentence in Thailand for drug smuggling.