



DRAMATIC TESTIMONY  
IN ASSAULT TRIAL:

'HE SAID  
**I KILL  
PEOPLE  
FOR A LIVING**'

STORY » A4



**THE SOUND OF MUSIC RETURNS**

National Broadcast Orchestra ready to debut » C4

WEDNESDAY EDITION

OTTAWA SENDS \$7.7M TO ENSURE BILINGUAL GAMES » A9

# THE VANCOUVER SUN



A DIVISION OF CANWEST PUBLISHING INC

BREAKING NEWS | VANCOUVER.SUN.COM

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2009 | FINAL EDITION



**Marriage  
is for  
dummies**

Well, this one is. On Saturday, a ventriloquist's puppet will perform a wedding ceremony in Vancouver. » A7

## Two gunned down in West Van

Pair expected to survive daytime attack; police launch massive manhunt for shooters



Police investigate a shooting scene in West Vancouver where two men were shot by assailants inside a passing car on a quiet street.

DYLAN COSMAN/SPECIAL TO THE VANCOUVER SUN

BY KIM BOLAN  
VANCOUVER SUN

Two men are in hospital with bullet wounds after being sprayed with gunfire from a passing car as they walked down Keith Road in West Vancouver Tuesday afternoon.

The two immediately fell to the ground as the car raced from the scene, according to people in the area.

Cpl. Fred Harding of West Vancouver Police said the incident, in the 200-block of Keith Road, bore "all the hallmarks of a targeted shooting."

"It took place in the street," Harding said.

He said 30 to 40 investigators from both West Vancouver and the North Vancouver RCMP were working so closely they were "cheek and jowl" at the scene, sandwiched between two condo buildings near the border between the municipalities.

Harding said it is too early to say if the victims had gang connections or were known to police. He had no information about whether investigators were able to interview them.

Other witnesses had provided police with a description of a vehicle that may have transported the shooters away from the scene. Police want to talk to

more witnesses before releasing the description, Harding said.

The shooting was the first "in years" in West Vancouver.

"Let's face it — this is an outrage," Harding said. "This is a quiet residential area ... It really is exceptional."

He said West Vancouver has gang members living in the community and police get constant intelligence from other police agencies.

"We are well-briefed on what is going on," he said.

But he said violent gang crimes are rarely committed in West Vancouver because police have the ability to shut down all four entrances to the city, making it hard for suspects to escape.

"We close down every single artery on the roads ... they can't do that in Vancouver where there are 300 access points," Harding said. "It allows us to really concentrate on looking at cars."

Dog teams were combing the area for evidence. No arrests have been made, and no suspect descriptions were released.

Wayne Koski, who lives in Spruray Gardens at 235 Keith Road, told *The Vancouver Sun*: "I heard three shots at 4:38 — precisely. I knew they were gunshots, just by the sound."

CONTINUED ON A9

### OPINION

## The brain drain on the economy may be child's play

PETE  
McMARTIN  
VANCOUVER SUN



Usually, we parents don't look at our little darlings entering kindergarten in terms of being effective contributors to the economy.

We may have to reconsider. We may be raising a generation of economic underperformers whose habits are set well before they reach school age. In the future, it may cost us and the economy big time.

According to a recent study of kindergarten-aged children commissioned by, of all people, the B.C. Business Council, University of B.C. researchers with the school's Human Early Learning Partnership found

that so many children entering kindergarten fail to meet the usual developmental benchmarks that they represent an enormous in-house brain drain on the province's economy.

These are not small numbers. According to the HELP study, which tracked 140,000 students over a decade, just under 30 per cent of B.C. children entering kindergarten are "developmentally vulnerable" — lacking in those basic skills they

need to thrive in school and in the future. The study considers a rate of child vulnerability above 10 per cent as "biologically unnecessary."

"Economic analyses," the study states, "reveal this depletion [in human capital] will cause B.C. to forgo 20 per cent GDP growth over the next 60 years."

"The economic value of this loss is equivalent to investing \$401.5 billion today at a rate of

3.5 per cent interest. Unnecessary vulnerability in B.C. is thus costing the provincial economy a sum of money that is 10 times the total provincial debt load."

That loss in human capital could mean the difference of B.C. being in the economic forefront of developed nations in the future or being mired somewhere in the underperforming middle of the pack.

CONTINUED ON A4



**B.C. MAN WINS  
A MILLION  
AIR MILES**

Find out what he can buy » A3

### INSIDE TODAY'S PAPER

Births & Deaths	D10	Editorials/Letters	A10	Movie Listings	C6
Bridge	E8	Entertainment	C4	Small Business	D2
Business	D1	Ferry Schedule	E8	Sports	F1
Classified	D8	Food	C1	Sudoku	E6
Comics	E6	Horoscope	C2	TV	E7
Crosswords	C2, E8	Issues/Ideas	A11		

### COLUMNISTS

David Baines	D2	Jonathan Manthorpe	B4
Daphne Bramham	A4	Craig McInnes	B1
Miro Cernetig	A11	Vaughn Palmer	A3
Shelley Fralic	A8		
Iain MacIntyre	F2		

### WEATHER

CLOUDY, LIGHT RAIN  
FULL REPORT, E8

\$1.00  
PLUS GST



0 57040 10035 1

\$1.25  
MINIMUM IN  
OUTLYING  
AREAS

\*\*\*  
canada.com

One-way fares from Vancouver starting at:

Ottawa\*

**\$159**  
from

Five non-stop flights every week.

Maui, Hawaii\*\*

**\$249**  
from

Non-stop flights daily.

**We don't overbook.  
That's a promise.**

Book by September 20 for travel on select days until October 31, 2009.\*



**WESTJET**  
BECAUSE OWNERS CARE

To book or for more details visit [westjet.com](http://westjet.com) or 1 800 538 5696. Or call your travel agent.  
\*Book by September 20, 2009 (11:59 p.m. MT) for travel until October 31, 2009. †For flights to Ottawa, travel on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays. ‡For flights to Maui travel on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Taxes, fees and surcharges are extra where applicable. Seats at these fares are limited and may not be available on all flights. New bookings only. Advance purchase required. 100% non-refundable. Offer combinable with other fares. All fares shown are one way. See [westjet.com](http://westjet.com) for details.

## OPINION

# Since when is democracy not in the public interest?

## Justice branch refuses to proceed with charges recommended by RCMP in Central Saanich municipal election

**DAPHNE BRAMHAM**  
VANCOUVER SUN



Not a single charge will be laid in Central Saanich, even though the RCMP's commercial crimes section recommended 19 charges against people and organizations involved in last November's municipal election.

B.C.'s criminal justice branch has refused to proceed, despite acknowledging failures to register as campaign organizers and incorrect, incomplete or no information at all filed about campaign donations and spending. Prosecution was not necessary

or in the public interest, according to criminal justice branch spokesman Neil MacKenzie.

Not in the public interest? It's hard to understand what could more be more important in a democratic society than free and fair elections. And knowing who is financially supporting or campaigning for specific candidates is key to that.

Disclosure is required under the Local Government Act. Penalties include disqualification from council and future elections, fines of up to \$5,000 and/or imprisonment of up to one year.

There's also something odd about MacKenzie's apparent defence of the decision not to lay charges because there didn't appear to be any intent to mislead or act fraudulently.

Since when do well-intentioned groups and individuals get a pass on following the rules?

Complainant David Wilson has appealed to Attorney-General Mike de Jong to override his ministry's decision. Wilson has no reason for optimism. The B.C. government's position has long been that it's up to citizens to enforce the Local Government Act's election provisions.

So now, the onus has been thrown back on Wilson to defend the integrity of democracy's most basic building block — elections.

It means Wilson can either drop the matter or find the money to pay not only the legal and court costs, but the cost of building a case because — of course — he has no access to the RCMP files, reports or recommenda-

tions made after more than 400 hours of investigation.

This is an absurdity that the government has so far refused to remedy, even though Wilson's complaint is not unique.

RCMP investigated similar complaints in Langley. No charges were recommended, but only after consulting with officers with legal training, senior department of justice officials and B.C. ministry officials "to ensure the accuracy of our interpretation of the provisions of the act as well as the procedures and practices of the ministry with respect to complaints arising from the act."

West Vancouver police have also investigated complaints and its report and recommendations are currently before Crown counsel.

RCMP investigated in Central Saanich because Peninsula Co-op was one of several groups named in Wilson's complaint. Among its directors are Paul Hames, the local police chief, and two police board members.

It spent more than \$16,000 on candidates who were willing to support a rezoning of seven acres of land — some of which is outside the urban boundary — so the co-op can build a grocery store adjacent to its gas station.

"The Crown [counsel] shouldn't be playing judge with this kind of legislation," Wilson said Tuesday. "People don't realize how the election process has been co-opted. They may think we have a democracy, but I'm not so sure."

Eventually, he'd like to see Elections BC oversee municipal

voting. He'd like limits on both donations and spending with full disclosure of every cent raised and spent. Because without transparency and full disclosure, Wilson says, citizens can't determine whether their elected officials are acting for the common good or the good of those who paid for their campaigns.

Fortunately for Central Saanich residents in particular and B.C. citizens in general, Wilson is unwilling to let the matter drop. By the end of the month, he plans to file a petition in B.C. Supreme Court.

"I still want to proceed and try to bring this into the open," he says. "I could be going quietly into retirement. But this is just not ethical or moral."

[dbraham@vancouver.sun.com](mailto:dbraham@vancouver.sun.com)

## COURTS

# Defendant 'got rid' of Johal

## Admission came just before victim was beaten, court hears

**BY KIM BOLAN**  
VANCOUVER SUN

An intoxicated Manny Buttar told a restaurant patron that he killed for a living and had gotten "rid" of gangster Bindy Johal, B.C. Supreme Court heard Tuesday.

Pardeep Dhillon recounted the night that he was left bleeding and dazed after Buttar allegedly began pummeling him in a Surrey restaurant.

Dhillon said Buttar and two friends offered to buy a round at the India Kitchen Restaurant on Nov. 6, 2006 after learning Dhillon and the restaurant owner had the same last names as Buttar's two pals.

He said he was making small talk with the trio, who were strangers, when he asked Buttar what he did for a living.

"He said 'I kill people for a living,'" Dhillon told Justice Kathleen Ker, saying he began to laugh because he assumed Buttar was joking.

He said Buttar repeated that his profession was hit man.

"I said I had a cousin and he used to do the same thing, but he is dead now," Dhillon replied, saying he told Buttar his cousin was Johal.

"Mr. Buttar was very upset." Dhillon said Buttar began punching and slapping him as he urged the man to "remem-



Pardeep Dhillon walks into the New Westminster courts on Tuesday.

ber" his name.

"He mentioned that 'I got rid of him and I can get rid of you,'" Dhillon testified.

No one has ever been charged in the December 1998 execution of Johal, an admitted cocaine trafficker gunned down at a Vancouver nightclub.

But Buttar's younger brother Bal confessed to *The Vancouver Sun* in 2004 that he had arranged the hit on Johal even though he was working under the gangster in the "Indo-Canadian Mafia" at the time.

Vancouver police have described Manny Buttar as the leader of a mid-level drug trafficking gang that has been involved in a violent conflict with two rival groups on the city's south slope in recent years.

The undercover probe dubbed Project Rebellion has led to dozens of arrests of members of all three gangs this year alone.

Buttar is facing three charges related to the 2006 assault — including assault with a weapon, uttering threats and using an imitation firearm.

His co-accused, Tirathpal Dhillon, pleaded guilty to assault as the trial opened in New Westminster on Monday.

Pardeep Dhillon said he saw his namesake pull a gun out while Buttar continued to beat on him.

"The magazine fell out and I was able to kick it," the victim testified. "Mr. Dhillon looked like he was scared ... It was almost like he wanted to scare me and he did."

Under cross-examination, Dhillon admitted he was an alcoholic with convictions for assault, impaired driving and breaches of probation.

Buttar's defence lawyer Karen Bastow suggested that Dhillon's account "seems incredibly unlikely."

She said no one would admit to a stranger that he had committed murder.

"So Manny Buttar says 'I am a killer and I copped Bindy Johal.' Is that what happened?" she asked.

"Yes," replied Dhillon.

She also said it was unlikely he had the fortitude to kick a clip away while he was being slapped and punched.

"That's pretty fancy footwork Mr. Dhillon for a guy that is not part of the life," Bastow said.

She suggested someone else punched Dhillon and Buttar was not even near the booth where the attack occurred.

But Dhillon strongly disagreed, pointing to Buttar as his attacker several times.

Also Tuesday, a waitress at the restaurant who called 911 claimed she saw Buttar — not his associate — with the gun.

Rosie Nand's emergency call was played in court in which she could be heard saying "there is a big guy beating another guy ... he is bleeding but I think he is okay."

[kbolan@vancouver.sun.com](mailto:kbolan@vancouver.sun.com)

READ KIM BOLAN'S BLOG, THE REAL SCOOP, AT [VANCOUVERSUN.COM/BOLAN](http://VANCOUVERSUN.COM/BOLAN)

SEE MORE STORIES ON LOWER MAINLAND GANG VIOLENCE AT [VANCOUVERSUN.COM/GANGS](http://VANCOUVERSUN.COM/GANGS)

## HEALTH

# Officials investigate PNE after children hospitalized

## At least seven kids exposed to E. coli, a bacteria present in some farm animals

**BY MARY FRANCES HILL**  
VANCOUVER SUN

Vancouver Coastal Health is investigating after a number of children were hospitalized due to exposure to E. coli — a bacteria that could have been spread at the petting farm at the Pacific National Exhibition.

At least seven children who had been exposed to the bacteria came forward after the 17-day fair ended on Labour Day.

E. coli, or Escherichia coli, can cause diarrhea, urinary tract infections, respiratory illness and pneumonia.

Vancouver Coastal Health confirmed the incidents to *The Vancouver Sun*, but could not provide a medical officer for comment Tuesday evening.

PNE spokeswoman Laura Ballance said VCH told fair organizers Friday it was looking at the cases.

The bacteria is naturally present in the gastrointestinal tracts of grass-feeding animals such as cows and sheep. Some

dangerous strains can be spread to humans through fecal matter.

The only way to prevent infection is by hand-washing.

Ballance said the PNE is working with VCH to isolate any source of the bacteria.

Every year at the fair, the building housing animals is equipped with 18 hand-washing stations, including hot running water and hand-sanitizing liquid.

"We go to the extremes in prevention," said Ballance.

"You'd be hard-pressed to go anywhere who goes as far as we do."

If VCH finds the petting farm area is the source of the exposure, any recommendations it makes "would be definitely be put into place for next year's fair," she said.

More than 855,000 people visited the fair this year.

[mhill@vancouver.sun.com](mailto:mhill@vancouver.sun.com)

HEALTH STORIES UPDATED 24/7 AT [VANCOUVERSUN.COM/HEALTH](http://VANCOUVERSUN.COM/HEALTH)

FROM PAGE A1

# Invest in early education for best results

The study, entitled *A Comprehensive Policy Framework for Early Human Capital Investment in B.C.*, is to be released next week. One of its authors, Prof. Paul Kershaw, said those children identified as being developmentally vulnerable as they enter kindergarten are less likely to go on and pass their foundation skills assessment test in Grades 4 and 7, and more likely to not show up to even write their tests.

"We know from statistical linking," Kershaw said, "that people who do badly in these [tests] more often than not don't go on to university. The more that children are less school-ready, the more they are less job-ready."

"The question we have to ask ourselves in light of this high rate of developmentally vulnerable children is, how do we go about creating human capital?"

In the past, Kershaw said, we have been looking at the value in education all wrong — completely backwards, in fact. It used to be, he said, that governments hoping to stimulate economic activity would throw the bulk of their resources behind secondary and post-secondary education.

But the most effective use of educational funds to stimulate the economy, Kershaw said, would be to invest in the early years, even before kindergarten, when children's work and study habits are most malleable.

"The early development research," the report states, "is now so compelling that there is a

growing consensus among economists, such as Nobel laureate James Heckman, that the most cost-effective human capital interventions occur among young children."

It was not, Kershaw said, a question of individual parenting skills, or, to a great degree, of economic background.

While the poor are more statistically likely to be vulnerable, he said, the majority of such children in B.C. come from the more populous middle class.

"Vulnerability," then, would not seem to stem from parents, but the way society has structured parenting as we know it now. The 1950s nuclear family where Mom stays home with the kids is dead: the single parent or double-income family is the norm. The result is less family time, and the outcome, "vulnerability."

Yet it is fruitless, Kershaw maintains, to want to turn back the clock. The economy dictates against it.

"This nostalgia," the report maintains, "ignores the current reality; most mothers today are employed, helping to compensate for real declines in male wages, or in order to stave off persistently high rates of child and family poverty. As mothers allocate more time to employment, households struggle with less family time, in part because fathers have not managed to fill the care void. For men and women alike, work/life conflict is pervasive irrespective of earnings, and

time to care personally is a common casualty."

Nowhere in Canada, Kershaw said, are those work/life conflicts greater than in B.C. We devote more to our workplaces, and workplaces demand more of our time, than anywhere else in the country.

How to offset that time imbalance and make our children less vulnerable?

Among its recommendations, the report calls for:


- Extend parental leave from a year to 18 months, with additional months for fathers.
- Redefine full-time work for parents with children over 18 months "to accommodate shorter annual working hour norms without exacerbating gender inequalities in the labour market."
- Increase income support for poor families with children.
- Increase affordable daycare services.

In other words, make policies that allow parents to maximize the time they can spend with a child during his or her earliest years, and during a parent's leave, and provide support when the parents return to the workforce.

The cost of these recommendations? About \$3 billion annually, the study estimates. The cost of maintaining the status quo?

More generations of vulnerable children, Kershaw maintains, and an economy to match.

[pmmcartin@vancouver.sun.com](mailto:pmmcartin@vancouver.sun.com)  
604-605-2905

  
**MIKIMOTO**

EXOTIC GOLDEN SOUTH SEA CULTURED PEARL NECKLACE

**MONTECRISTO**  
 OAKRIDGE CENTRE 604.263.3611  
 HASTINGS AT HORNBY 604.899.8866