

Suit against RCMP increased to \$47.4 million

MAN SPENT EIGHT YEARS IN THAI PRISON

Recovered drug addict claims Mounties forced him into heroin plot overseas

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THE GAZETTE

A Montreal man who claims he was entrapped in a botched RCMP sting operation to buy drugs in Thailand has boosted his damage suit to \$47.4 million.

Lawyers for Alain Olivier yesterday amended their original claim against the attorney-general of Canada and undercover members of the RCMP after examining 7,000 documents and questioning six RCMP officers.

Lawyers Reevin Pearl and François Audet said the documents show senior RCMP officers who approved the undercover operation that lured Olivier into help buy heroin in Thailand from July 1987 to February 1989 showed no concern they were putting him in danger of a death sentence if he were arrested.

The documents also indicate the RCMP confused Olivier, 44, a recovered heroin user who had no criminal record before the Thailand trip, with his twin brother, Serge, who had an ex-

tensive record.

Olivier returned to Canada after eight years sleeping on a concrete floor and in chains in a Bangkok jail. The operation, code-named Deception, took a tragic turn when undercover RCMP Cpl. Derek Flanagan died during an aborted drug buy in

"It didn't bother you about bringing a Canadian citizen to be arrested in Thailand?"

"No," senior Mountie replied.

Chiang Mai. Olivier was subsequently arrested and jailed.

He received a death sentence that was commuted by royal pardon to life imprisonment on a plea bargain, before being returned here under a prisoner exchange treaty in July 1997.

He was released on parole in 1998.

The documents and state-

ments in discovery indicate "a wilful and intentional breach of fundamental human rights," Pearl charged.

In the deposition of former chief superintendent Frank Palmer, at the time one of the senior Mounties in Vancouver who approved the operation, Palmer was asked:

"It didn't bother you about bringing a Canadian citizen to be arrested in Thailand for a crime you knew carried the death penalty. That didn't bother you at all?"

"No," was the reply. Palmer retired in 1997 with the rank of deputy commissioner.

The suit charged Palmer "knew or should have known promising someone a half kilo of heroin with a street value of approximately \$3 million is illegal and constitutes entrapment under Canadian law as well as being forbidden by the manual of operations of the RCMP"

The suit also alleges undercover agents repeatedly threatened to kill Olivier unless he co-operated in setting up the Thai drug deal.

Pearl said he hopes the case will be heard in court in six to 12 months.

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Alain Olivier (centre) and his lawyers Reevin Pearl (left) and François Audet explain why they have asked to increase damages in a lawsuit against the RCMP to \$47.4 million.

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