

Abuses and Victimizations by the Ministry for Children and Families

by Deborah Maddison & Paula Ciardullo

In Canada, our Family Services are known as the Ministry of Child and Family Development or MCFD, (an oxymoron to say the least) and they are governed by the Child, Family and Community Services Act, a link to which has been provided as well.

S.S. workers are Social Services workers.

It can be noted, however, that there are a great deal of similarities in both the laws and the abuses throughout North America and the U.K., so much so that without knowing where they are from, solely from the story alone, it would be impossible to determine that they are from different countries.

We do want people to understand that there is much more that unites us all in these issues than divides us, and that our strength comes in working together and supporting each other, which is how we've been running so far, fuelled by emotional support.

These points are in no means in order of importance as they are all important in their own right.

We would suggest, however, that number 1, Public Perception, is one of the biggest problems.

1. Public Perception

Public perception seems to be that "If they (the Ministry) took your child away, there must be a reason." Rarely are parents or family members given a forum to tell their story or have their evidence looked at. In the past year and a half alone, there have been over 100 articles in the media regarding the failures of the Ministry, with the Ministry given the opportunity, by the media, to defend themselves. After that, the story goes away. Rarely, if ever, is the parents' side heard. No politician or media person have ever done an in depth investigation into the parents' side or publicized the evidence that parents have. Therefore, the public only gets to hear the government's side and, thus the public perception.

In a study known as 'Broken Promises' (link provided) a study was done with B.C. S.S. workers that showed some alarming results. In fact, physical abuse by a parent was only grounds for removal in **10%** of apprehensions and sexual abuse by a parent in **less than 1%**.

Overwhelmingly, almost 90% of apprehensions are the result of a parent's struggle with poverty, domestic violence, disability, mental health or addiction 'concerns' (founded or not), and targeting by race, geography, age, IQ, and past victims of systemic abuse. Aboriginal children are **10x more likely** to be in care, and are often the children of victims of government 'care' or Residential Schools and have been targeted for this very reason, continuing the cycle of generational destruction of their families, culture, language, history, religion and emotional security. Though they make up a minority of the population, in 2006 the number of Aboriginal children in care **SURPASSED** the number of non Aboriginal children, the Indian Act routinely violated and ignored, and only **16%** are even placed with aboriginal caregivers. They are **6x** more likely to be taken into care and **9x** more likely to remain there once they are. Workers stated that huge turnover due to burn out, lack of accountability and consistency, disproportionate levels of sick leave and stress leave (approx **25%** more than workers in other government Ministries), lack of confidence in all levels of leadership and management and lack

of preventative and supportive resources for children and families as the main reason for their leaving the Ministry. Many stated that reduced case loads and enhanced services and supports for families would 'very likely have kept them from leaving'. More alarmingly, **49%** of the S.S. workers polled felt they were 'only sometimes' able to act in the best interests of the child, **9%** admitted they 'rarely / never' did, and over **65%** reported they could 'rarely or never give adequate attention to each child or family on their caseload and fulfill their reporting requirements'. Nearly **50%** stated they were 'rarely or never able to give adequate preventative or supportive services for families, and only **29%** even claim to always or even 'usually' explore options for less disruptive measures or even attempt an adequate investigation before removing a child from their family and home. The SS workers themselves were the ones who took place in this poll, voluntarily and anonymously, and some still refused to answer questions relating to accountability.

One of the contributing factors to the travesty that is MCFD in B.C. are the ways there are various means for MCFD to gain entrance to a family's life, without their knowledge or consent. The following are some of the ways they do so:

- a). In the case of a couple separating, it has been known for one of the partners, out of vengeance, to call MCFD on their partner and cite abuse of a child to gain an advantage in a custody hearing. Conversely, many times if the mother is alleging abuse by a male partner towards her or the child, she is deemed 'mentally ill or hysterical', etc. and in many cases the child is then actually given to the abuser.
- b). If a friend, neighbor or relative is upset with you for any reason, they also have been known to call MCFD, out of spite, citing abuse of a child, and again, as they are now grabbing first and skipping the investigations, these false accusations can be enough to ensure you never see your child again.
- c). When applying for daycare subsidy in B.C., you must apply for this subsidy through MCFD, which gives them an open door into your lives. Although they will pay for Both daycare AND Respite Care for Foster Homes, if a parent is overwhelmed and needs some assistance in this area, they can use that as a reason for taking your child, stating you 'can't handle parenting', or 'don't have the means to support your child'. Ironically, if you are on Disability, as I am, I am expected to support myself and my child on approx \$1000 a month, and they take off every extra cent, including child tax credit and child support, and I am expected to continue to maintain a home for us both still so she has somewhere to return to, even though they keep 'forgetting' to top my disability back up, as they cut it back by approx \$400/month, a good 1/3 of my income after they took her. However, they pay strangers over \$800-\$1200 a month ON TOP of any and all other monies they make, pay for children's activities, daycare, respite care, benefits, etc. All this for a child who has Never been abused or neglected in any way, had never even been with a sitter and wasn't even taken from her own home. They routinely bankrupt the parents if they fight to see or get their child back through countless stalling measures and misuse of the court system and serious abuse of their position. In my case they promised to reimburse me to justify their refusal to transfer my case anywhere near where we actually lived, then refused, after forcing me to make 3 trips just to keep putting it over again and again in court, refusing to address anything and completely bankrupting me, and flaring up my disability from the stress to a point that I ended up in the hospital several times, culminating in a stay in the last one for 16 days.
- d). In registering for parenting and/or parent/tot classes, parents usually register through a

community service agency. What people do not realize is that most of these classes are funded by MCFD and MCFD can and will obtain the list of names registered in these classes. MCFD's view is not that these parents want to become better parents, but that they are not good parents and again, can use this to seize your child and will use this as an 'admission to the court that you acknowledge you were not a good parent and need to learn how to be one, therefore they are justified in apprehending your child'. They will even use your attendance against you if you miss classes, even if you are just taking them for the socializing with other mothers or to brush up on new parenting techniques, making you also look unreliable to even attend a parenting class, never mind to actually parent, and making people afraid to try and be better parents as they are then labeled as 'bad parents', preventing families from becoming stronger and healthier out of fear. This is especially sad as many are victims of the system themselves, or their parents were, so they never get the opportunity to build those types of family ties and parenting skills. Their own children are also often targeted when They have children, creating generations of systemically abused children and families and broken communities.

These are only some of the entrances by which the doors are open for MCFD to invade a family's life.

In the majority of cases and in direct violation of their own legal mandates, MCFD will remove a child until the parent is 'proven innocent'. With MCFD, a parent is guilty until proven innocent. Proving your innocence, then, is a near impossibility with MCFD. Although removal is always supposed to be the very last resort it has now become routine to make it a case of 'remove first, sort it out/justify later', for the sake of efficiency for the worker. Little to no effort is made to return these children to their families or even make access a priority once they have been taken. Parents report overwhelmingly being given no information or misinformation to keep them from their own child, no reason given for apprehension or direction to address whatever 'concerns' the S.S. workers express, being treated like criminals, and no matter how well or how many times they address these 'concerns' or the calibre of the professionals speaking for them, the SS workers keep ignoring the evidence and either repeating these 'concerns' or creating new ones, dragging court cases out, delaying them again and again, sometimes for years. Paula's grandson has been kept in care for nearly 3 years now, and my own daughter over 6 months, with no attempt whatsoever being made to even arrange access or transfer these children back to where they belong. Sadly in these cases children and parents often lose all hope and self harm or worse as the emotional toll is often too much for them to bear, and in many cases, the parents are often victims of childhood abuse themselves, making it even more difficult for them to deal with this, such as in my case. Having been abused in care myself as a child, and being targeted for having a disability I am terrified for the physical and emotional health of my child, who already had issues in both areas, and MCFD has not only removed her from her medications and affected her health negatively, but went out of their way to provide access to her abusers, including ones facing serious criminal charges, although they have not even let me know where my daughter is since Oct. 2013. This is a punishment for me for not entering a treatment program and pretending to be an addict as they demanded, even though I have passed 2 hair tests over the past 6 months and have Lupus, so I cannot take chemicals of almost any kind, not even caffeine. It is also a reward for my ex for entering a rehab program because he IS an addict. Even though MCFD has a restraining order and serious physical charges against him and his parents hurt my daughter to the point of hospitalization, as well as attempted to abduct her, affecting her emotionally as well, They are the ones being given access to justify keeping her away from me as they live close by. This is made worse by the medical certificates I provided that I cannot possibly travel to where she is, effectively denying me all possible access in violation of the court order and no way to even Attend court. More disturbingly, they promised to transfer her back home as she wasn't even taken from here, but moved

her closer to her abusers out of spite instead. The social worker was very condescending when he rubbed that in, just as he was when he rubbed it in my face that I wouldn't have my daughter for Christmas, despite meeting all his demands in plenty of time for that to happen. We have since lost Easter, a family funeral and her birthday is next month. They are stealing her life each precious memory and milestone at a time. Despite the fact that both cases have access orders from the court, neither Paula nor myself are being allowed Any forms of access or information anymore, now that there are no more 'concerns' they can 'think up'.

2. Conflict of Interest

In Paula's case, her daughter had a social worker who told her that she was doing well and there would be no need to remove her son. This social worker said she would have the paperwork completed to transfer her file to Support Services Only. As this particular social worker was transferring to another office, (note the stats on turnover and inconsistency) she told this client that she would get another social worker to complete the paperwork and have the file transferred as she was very pleased with the young mother's progress. The file landed on the desk of a social worker who had previously worked with Paula. She had won a job over the social worker in the government and the social worker was very unhappy that she did not get the job to say the least, and they had such an unpleasant work relationship Paula actually chose to transfer to another office.

In one of the first meetings with this social worker and the respite worker, the social worker handed this young mom a document and said, "Sign this or I'll take away your son, and hurry up because I'm going on vacation." Out of fear, the mom signed the document and the respite worker left with her son. Later that day, the respite worker phoned this mom and apologized to her, and said that she did not know that was going to happen, nor did she know she would be leaving the office with this mom's son. As this social worker had previously worked with this client's mother, she should have been removed from this client's case. She fought for nine months to have this social worker removed, and in the meantime this social worker cut off access to her child, tried to have this client's mother arrested and even tried to get a restraining order for her filing a complaint with the Ombudsman's Office. In my case, not only had that office messed up by forcing me to live with an abuser, but a social worker was removed from the entire area for racist behavior based on a complaint I made about her. How 'convenient' then, that when I was on a Brief trip back there 8 months later the grabbed my daughter only hours before we were to head back home. Even though they are so far away they can NEVER deal with me and this case from there, they are STILL refusing to transfer it or just accept the copious medical proof firmly and with No Question refuting All of their 'concerns' and then some, nor will the social worker take his name off the file, causing a huge amount of difficulty for all the other worker's where everyone ACTUALLY LIVES to try and deal with it, leaving us in limbo and my daughter's only contact dangerous abusers and people facing serious and violent criminal and weapons charges.

3. Persons with Disabilities.

On the B.C. Government website, it states, "Government offers a vast array of programs and services for people with disabilities with total funding at more than \$5 billion a year. They state they want persons with disabilities to be able to develop and be more integrated into their workplace and community. Yet, MCFD has been known to remove children from parents with even a mild disability. In my case they paid thousands for adaptive equipment to work Saving Lives at 911 with a disability, yet my child was taken while I was receiving fluids after becoming sick from smoke inhalation after an accidental electrical fire. One I safely rescued my child from and put out as well. Anyone would have

had the same response, it had nothing whatsoever to do with my disability, but they keep saying that's why they are 'so concerned' and won't return her. Even though I have been her main and often sole caregiver since birth, made all her food from scratch, run a large non-profit for children and animals, and have a home where people pay me to have their children come to, I keep being told that because I have a disability, I must either be an addict, or be mentally unstable although I have passed 2 hair tests since they took my daughter, 4 medical and psychiatric clearances, and even the Head of Family Services where I used to live spoke up for me as they were in my home twice a week the entire time I lived there, with never a problem to report as they provided home supports for assistance with cleaning, and as a mandated reporter she would have had to let them know if my child was ever at risk or I was ever unable to care for her. The worker here is so arrogant that because the head of Namgis Family Services is Aboriginal, she seems to feel they are beneath her to deal with, though this woman runs Family Services for all of Alert Bay and is highly qualified and respected. She has tried to call my new worker here, Traci Braley, who has chosen to just ignore her and every other professional and report that was favorable to me, leaving only that first worker's 'vague concerns about my disability again'. The B.C. Government will hire persons with disabilities and spent thousands of dollars on equipment and incentives for employers to hire them and to enable that person to do their job. Unless that job is parenting with a disability. Once my disability made me only able to work from home, (allowing me to also be a stay-at-home mom and raise my child, as I wanted to) they did nothing to help me with home supports or any other 'concerns' they had, making one have to wonder how 'concerned' they really are. They are completely discounting all my medical documentation and the work I do with children and animals and the community through my non-profit and treat me as though I am mentally addled or just completely irrelevant, essentially stating that someone with a disability cannot raise their own child, even going so far as to force me to stay with what they knew was an addict and an abuser, because he did not have a disability, and I did. I was later told when they grabbed my daughter that even though MCFD FORCED me to stay with my abuser until his addiction was so bad it was putting my child and I at serious risk and I had to leave (and had the support of my disability office here, and my child and I were at our healthiest, and doing the best we ever had) they then said that I was Both wrong to leave as they had said I needed to stay there, even though after we had that lifted we never saw or heard from the ss worker again, in fact, she was removed from our community for her racist actions, and I was told I was wrong to be there in the first place, showing 'poor judgment for choosing an abuser'. Therefore it was 'my fault' for being abused, and for my ex being an addict, even though I was not just a victim, but forced to remain there longer by MCFD, which they are now using as a double edged sword. This can have devastating consequences on women terrified to get help for abuse or leave their abusers, knowing they are at risk of losing their children if they do, yet they are also contributing to the abuse if they do not, creating the worst type of trap..

4. Violation of FOIPP Act (Freedom of Information and Privacy Act)

Social workers will illegally obtain parents' and family members personal/medical information without consent citing Section 96 of the Child, Family and Community Service Act. Section 96 of this Act is so broad as to give complete autonomy for a social worker to obtain all kinds of information. Yet, if you read Sections 26 and 27 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act of B.C. (FOIPP Act), there are parameters that need to be followed. But with the autonomy that the Ministry has, no one reads or pays attention to the FOIPP Act. The Ministry has even been known to show up at a medical specialist's office to harass and intimidate a family member of a client, only to be thrown out by the specialist. Again, people become terrified to get medical assistance or counseling as it is used and misused against them. Even I am scared when I get sick now, as it is used against me because I have a disability, even if I just have a cold.

5. Libel and Slander/Emotional Abuse

We know of quite a few cases where this happens. The biggest one being if any parent or family member fights for their child, the social worker will label them with a mental illness. In one case, when a foster parent was actually following their mandate to work with the biological mother towards reunification with her children, against the Ministry's wishes. The Ministry phoned this foster mom's place of employment, slandered her and had her fired. Since Paula has begun working as an advocate for parents' and children's rights the Ministry has called the RCMP on her several times citing that she had a mental illness and was accelerating, and that she was stalking a social worker, all to get her arrested and have her Facebook group shut down. She was able to prove these were false allegations, but there were no consequences for the Ministry. She's also held several protests, one of which the media was going to attend. MCFD phoned the media outlet and told them that the advocate was "off her rocker" and had a mental illness and stated they would bring in police. The media then refused to cover the protest as this is a small area. I have been accused again and again of mental illness/addiction, while they ignore hair tests (which Cannot be altered in any way) and all my medical and psych evaluations, even claiming I am 'too mentally addled to carry on a conversation, so this is why they hang up on me'. My 'worker' Colin Brouwer, went so far as to tell my husband that a man who had stalked and terrorized me might be MY CHILD'S REAL FATHER, AND RECOMMENDED A DNA TEST! This same worker tried to block hair tests being done, refused to remove himself or transfer or even investigate my file, has made a medical reports 'disappear', causing me to have to provide the new worker's with all the real information, and rubbed it in via personal email that my child would be in Foster Care for the first Christmas she would ever remember. Even though he knew how badly this stalker had hurt and terrorized our family, and my husband and I are the only 2 people who need to test our child's DNA, and were both available to, he let this person have information and insinuate himself back into our lives and tried to force me to ok a DNA test with *him*, Again, with my child's father and I right there, available. They find ways to abuse you, and if you get upset, they call you 'mentally ill' if you are a woman and 'a threat' if you're a man. Either way, even someone who has proved themselves in every way still has to defend themselves against serious accusations with no basis, and all evidence to the contrary, is deemed 'inconclusive' or just ignored completely. To call someone who doesn't drink, smoke, touch caffeine and runs a non profit for children and animals a mentally ill addict could destroy their life. Luckily, my life speaks for itself, but even with TWO PASSED HAIR TESTS, AND AN ADDICTION ASSESSMENT STATING I HAVE NONE AND AM NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THEIR PROGRAM, MCFD is still trying to make me commit fraud and go to some 'treatment program' anyway to justify the fact they took my child by making it look as though I really was some magical secret addict all along., despite the countless tests to the contrary.

6. Affecting Clients' Livelihood

The Ministry will more often than not schedule children's visits with their parents without input from the parents. They also will not schedule visits in the evenings, or on weekends or holidays, despite the parent's work schedules or children's needs.

In Paula's case, her daughter was trying to finish her Grade 12 in "Street School". At this school, you need to book your time which is morning, afternoon or evening.. The Ministry was constantly booking the visits without the mom's input and constantly changing the schedule at the last minute. The Ministry told her she needed to be available for her son because that should be her first priority. She was unable to finish her schooling in the one-year period given to the students and was unable to

look for employment. Now the Ministry wants a permanent order to put her son up for adoption stating that she does not have the means to care for her son. I myself run a non-profit that includes regular children's programs and rescue animals and live on a very small disability pension. By holding my daughter several day's travel away, even if I could get there with my financial and physical situation, I would lose my home and non profit which is just beginning to grow. Without it my child and I lose everything, and as it is, I can barely run it because of all the appointments I am forced to keep getting reports REDONE almost monthly because it is never what MCFD wants to see (I keep passing). I cannot have the non profit grow or even survive if I am not here running it, and it is the foundation of our life here. How ironic people pay to bring their children here, and the government is currently paying to keep my child away from here.

7. Parental Alienation

The Ministry will cut off all access to a child from a parent citing "best interests of the child" which encompasses various reasons (excuses). Then they will constantly delay and adjourn trials, during which time the parent and family members have no access to the child, no matter how young or how tight the bond for months and Even YEARS at a time, thus alienating the child from the family. Even with access ordered, they will either completely ignore it or routinely cancel at the last minute, regardless of the cost and chaos. In the only visit Ever even 'offered' to me, it was such a terrible situation I will fill you in more verbally, it needs to be told, but in the interest of expediency, let's discuss that when we go over this later. ☺ The levels of depression, self harm and suicides as a result of children being simply ripped right out of their lives and families has been steadily climbing, as have the rates of abuse and deaths of children in care. Then the Ministry will petition to put the child up for adoption stating the child has no ties to the family any longer and needs 'stability', the very thing that has been taken away from them by the Ministry in the first place. The outcomes for children coming out of care are devastating. **73% of Young Offenders come from SS care and only 21% of children in care will even graduate vs. 78% of the general population.** Teens are **4x** more likely to get pregnant in care and worse, **Over 65% of children who were in gov'n't 'care' will have their own children taken from them when they have them, creating generations of systemic abuse and broken families and communities.** **1 in 5 children in BC live below the poverty line, and in our province alone, over 9300 children are in SS 'care' and over 1/2 of them are Aboriginal.** I don't even know what my child looks like anymore, she is so young and they have held her from me so long, what she is watching, reading, eating, who is with her, what they are doing.. It is absolutely the worst kind of torture, and knowing the pain and terror and grief your child must be feeling is truly unbearable. I have lost friends who took their lives when they lost all hope of getting their children back, which is why it is so important we keep fighting to right this and protect our children and families as this is yet another form of genocide. Familial Genocide. Not as P.C. as P.A., but it is the reality.

8. Illegal Search and Seizure

More and more families are now secretly recording their phone calls and meetings with the Ministry because of the lies and denials perpetrated by the Ministry. They are also starting to secretly tape the visits with their child. Under Section 183 of the Criminal Code of Canada, this is their legal right. In one case, the Ministry suspected a foster mother of recording their conversations. When this foster mother went to the Ministry office for a meeting with a social worker, the social worker grabbed the foster mother's purse, went through it and removed the recording device. This foster mother was not aware of her rights, so she did not know she could have charged the social worker with illegal search and seizure, and assault.

9. Accusations of Mental Illness

Throughout B.C. it seems that social workers label parents and their family members that fight for their children with a mental illness. A case in Vancouver, B.C. had the Ministry remove four boys from their mother and placed them with their father who was a pedophile. The more the mother fought for her boys, the more she was labeled with a mental illness, which is a very common MCFD tactic. A lawyer by the name of Jack Hittrich took up her cause pro bono. A trial was set for a length of approximately 90 days. At approximately day 64, the Ministry withdrew from the case and returned the boys to their mother. We can cite numerous cases in B.C. where parents and family members have been 'Diagnosed', *by the Ministry*, with a mental illness, simply because they dared to fight the Ministry for their children. Both myself and Paula have been threatened numerous times for speaking out, and personally know people who were arrested for that very reason, with the Ministry claiming to be 'afraid because their remarks are ambiguous'. I am NOT remotely joking. 3 were for Facebook posts alone, one had a SWAT team kick in his door and held 2 weeks no bail *for releasing the actual stats of children killed in gov'n't care over a period of time, the gov'n't had claimed approx 67, he found out there were almost 700 and was arrested for posting the info and proof, held 2 weeks with no bail hearing, and still awaiting charges, as are 4 other wrongfully charged people, just that I know myself.* Apparently we are now paying a Very high cost for 'free speech'...

10. The Ministry's Autonomy

(a) `In B.C. there are few real resources for filing complaints against the Ministry.

Unfortunately, because of the Ministry's autonomy, rarely is anything done or the investigation found in favor of the parent or family member. Here are some examples:

(i) Minister's Letters: On the Ministry's website it states that if you have a complaint, you can write a letter to the Minister. What they do not tell you is that the letter is received in the Minister's office by an admin person, logged in and then sent to the very office the complaint is about so that they get to investigate themselves. They then investigate themselves, write up a letter of response, forward it to the Minister's office, where the admin places it on the Minister's letterhead and is forwarded back to the complainant.

(ii) Dispute Resolution Office: This is a 1-800 number that you can phone and file a complaint with as well. Again, this complaint is then forwarded to the very office the complaint is about so, again, they get to investigate themselves. If you are not happy with the result, then you can file a complaint with the Ombudsman's Office.

(iii) Ombudsman's Office: There are so many restrictions as to when this office can help anyone. For example, they will not investigate if your case is waiting to be heard in court, which can take a year or longer, and is the case with all Ministry files that currently have children stuck in the system. .

When they do investigate, they will take the word of a social worker over the parent, and often not even look at the parent's evidence. They look at it from a 'Procedural' point of view as the courts are the ones who are 'supposed to be dealing with the issues of fact'. Again, there is no accountability, as SS 'workers' also set their own policies and procedures, with absolutely nothing enforcing them to follow or even acknowledge the Legal Mandates they are legislated to follow. The ones who are given the incredible

power of actually removing a child from their home are *not even required to be registered with the College of Social Workers, so no complaints or accountability there either.*

(iv) B.C. Representative for Children and Youth: Again, more often than not this office also will not intervene, no matter how badly the child's rights are being violated. In Paula's case she was turned away on the phone. In mine, he promised to assist, then I never heard from him again. There isn't even a record of him attempting to investigate the situation in either case.

The past year alone, Mary-Ellen Turpel-Lafond, Head of this agency, in several media articles, has stated that the Ministry has failed the children and families of B.C. by squandering millions of dollars and not following through with case plans, to name only two failures among the injustices of this Ministry. Yet, she has failed to fight against these injustices, and failed to fight for change and the removal of the complete autonomy this Ministry has. Our own Premier, Christy Clark, ran on the campaign of MCFD reform, and has not given it a second glance since being elected.

(b) In the case where lawyer Jack Hittrich fought for the mother whose four boys were removed (The Baines Case, hope spelt right v. famous here, and we are friends with her and could get her to do a guest spot as it set a big precedent here) and placed with a pedophile father, the Ministry withdrew from the 90 day trial and returned the boys to their mother after dragging it out for years. Jack Hittrich was able to prove in court that the father was a pedophile and that the Ministry had definitive proof of this the entire time, but it did not support their first position, and rather than admit they were mistaken, these children were instead terribly abused. To this day, there have been no charges brought against the father as the Ministry keeps trying to cover the case up. As a result of this trial, Jack Hittrich is now suing the Ministry for malfeasance in Vancouver Supreme Court. The judge has thrown out 90% of the Ministry's evidence because he caught them perjuring themselves constantly, and this will set a precedent that will open the floodgates if he is successful. ** We could also get a quote or guest spot with him, we work with his wife and secretary and some of his advocates, millions are following this as it is Huge, it would be the first time there was a form of real accountability for those abused by the system.

(c) We have tried contacting several MLA's and the three major political parties in B.C. by phone and email regarding this Ministry and not one of them will return either our phone calls or emails. My own, Rich Coleman's office stated that 'they would never do or say anything against another government agency or person'. Excuse me, *but that is their mandate, to represent and assist us locally with other branches of government who are not doing the right thing.* This is a very prevalent attitude, though we do have politicians from both Canada and the US willing to speak out against Social Services, for future shows as well.

The Ministry is an island unto themselves. Complete autonomy breeds complete corruption. As one Manager of the Ministry in Kamloops said to a prominent professional in the community, "We are accountable to no one." Therein lies the problem. Even judges cannot enforce orders that MCFD refuses to follow, then 'gagging' the parents so they cannot publicly demand that they do and leaving them no other avenues.

11. Extortion/Threats and Legal Aid Abuse

“Do as I say or I will take away your child,” “Do as I say or I will put your child up for adoption.” These are threats uttered daily by Ministry social workers, instilling fear in parents and intimidating them. Yet, the public is never made aware of these tactics. In B.C., one parent emailed and phoned the social worker to get access to his children. The social worker would not respond to his emails or return his phone calls. Finally, in desperation, he left a voice mail stating, “I will haunt you till you die.” and not stop calling until they responded to him. The social worker had him arrested and charged with uttering threats. The next day the local newspaper carried the headline “Social worker in fear of client. What about the thousands of parents that are threatened daily? There are never charges laid nor is this reported in the media. As far as the myth of your Legal Aid lawyer being your advocate, this hurts many as they mistakenly believe the lawyer is looking out for their best interests. Parents are routinely not represented in any real way, coerced into orders they don’t want, and threatened if they do not, or complain, they will quit due to your ‘difficulty’. My own lawyer filed 2 fraudulent affidavits, forced my consent to orders, lied to me, didn’t show up in court on scheduled dates and told me ‘she wasn’t paid enough to talk to me on the phone, do my affidavit, read my emails, file motions or argue my case’ as ‘Legal Aid isn’t worth it’. I asked her what she DID do. She said ‘ask MCFD nicely and hope they say yes’. Her abuses were beyond egregious, and I have all the proof, but this woman cost me all access to my child for over 6 months, and treated me as disposable, and admitted it all in emails and letters. She put my life at serious risk, and I will discuss that with you further if you wish, but the Legal Aid problem is yet one more entire show topic I’ve had hundreds of letters about.

12. Death of Children in Care of the Province

An article in The Tyee of March 11, 2013 states that **near daily a child is hurt or dies in the care of the province (B.C.)**. Again, the Ministry is given a chance to defend themselves. The report states, “A report prepared by the Provincial Health Officer and Child and Youth Officer for B.C. asserted in 2006 that, “About 30 per cent of the in-care deaths were due to congenital anomalies, nervous system diseases and childhood cancer -- conditions that have not been highly amenable to prevention.” The Ministry then tries to excuse these deaths by stating that they “maintain the true proportion of such “natural cause” deaths is closer to half.” This article further states,

“About every four days, in other words, a child or youth in the care of B.C. dies (including those who have received services within the last year). And at least every two days, one is critically injured. Kids and teens in care are about four times more likely to die than other B.C. young people, according to another public report.” Those deaths are reviewed in-house by the Ministry.

The true number of deaths of children in care of the province are not known, again, because this Ministry has such a lack of accountability they are not even required to provide that information. There cannot be any good reason to need to hide that number, unless it was too high, as they would be *Bragging* if those statistics I provided you with were about Successful cases, instead of so tragic instead.

This Ministry needs to be audited and an outside agency formed with the power to investigate this Ministry. In real life, everyone is accountable to someone be it their mother, father, spouse, employer, etc. What makes this Ministry so different that a Manager can state “We are accountable to no one.” As taxpayers, we are their employers and yet they feel that they should not have to be accountable to the public or even attempt to follow their own mandates and legislation.

MCFD is a **\$1.35 Billion Industry** that employs 2611 social workers and houses approximately 8,000 to 9,000 children in 3,300 foster homes across the Province. *It costs taxpayers approximately \$60,000 to \$90,000 yearly to keep a child in care per year.* The target families might be lucky to make *half* that per year.

The number of children in care remains relatively constant, because as 3,000 to 3,500 children age out of the system, they are "replaced" by a similar number of removals. The median age range of removed children is about 5.5 years old. Very few children in proportion of the whole are adopted, though if your child is under 5 you are **77 times more likely to have them forcibly adopted out, as that is what the market demand is for.**

Over 50% of the children in care are aboriginal, yet make up only **6%** of the Entire population. A study of the U.S. prison population states that 70% of inmates came from foster care with similar statistics in Canada.

Child removal is a "business" with the objective of consuming the maximum amount of taxpayer dollars per child as possible.

EVERY child is removed on an "emergency" basis, without a warrant, yet it is absolutely Impossible for Every Single Case to be an Emergency. (As a former 911 operator I can speak on this with experience). 95% of removed children are confirmed by the court as "legal" removals as they play the 'we had to protect the child no matter what card' every time and Always claim to have 'concerns' about the 'child's safety'. The toll on low income families is immense, as all child tax credits and housing allowance based on having children in their care are immediately cut off but they must still provide the same standards of home for them to return to. Many starve, end up homeless and lose what little they have. Myself and Paula are Both currently at risk of losing our homes and forced to go to the Food Bank and do without anything personal from the cost of this battle, and it breaks you mentally and emotionally as well. In my case they also had me make trips for court (then ignored and put over) a visit (under brutal conditions, then Still cancelled at last minute) until I ran out of every penny and resource, promising to reimburse me as it cost over \$4,300 (I make about \$886 a month) and gave me only \$400, stating I 'just didn't want to make the trip'.

Children may get to see their parents under supervised conditions at a facility for about an hour or two per visit, once or twice a week or month, or less. Some go months and even years without any contact, destroying that child's emotional development and taking a terrible toll on the family. The magnitude of the trauma endured by the removed children and parents is immense. Most end up with extensive medical issues from the stress involved as well, and the cost to the system with all that factored in could lift every single family below the poverty line in this province to solid middle class, strengthening our families, communities and countries. Instead, it is spent on all these unnecessary cases and cover ups, running hundreds of millions over budget consistently, and being rewarded for it with regular raises, justified by these 'extensive case loads'.

From the Ministry's standpoint, they are "relieving" parents of their "financial burden" of raising their own children, and foster parents are paid handsomely a minimum of \$900 per child, up to \$3,000 for "special needs" children. This is tax free, monthly respite, free daycare, free babysitters, free medical and dental, two-weeks holiday, sometimes free nanny's are the perks for these homeowners, who also often have full time jobs.

Approximately 80% of the children returned are done so on "Supervision Orders" by agreement or

through court decision, though the parent is basically forced to 'agree' to these in order to try and get their child back sooner. However, the average duration of this separation is about a year, because that is how long the various court dates for each of the steps takes to acquire and MCFD never has to even prove there were grounds for removal or a need for supervision in the first place. This is just another way of justifying their removal before investigating, and parents routinely fall straight into this trap. These also allow MCFD to put parents under a 'gag order', as does any agreement to enter mediation, another trap many fall into. This only makes the parents both 'gagged' but without even a court date, and if they don't get you to agree to what they want, and you take it back to court, you are now gagged as to what happened and the time delays start all over again. The average case *where there is no reason to apprehend the child* **still takes an average of a year to 'sort out', and parents are still held by MCFD as the cause of any and all actions taken, warranted or not.**

Therefore, the remedial services responsible for the "corrective" action " COULD have been supplied to families while they were intact, but the fact is such services are almost never supplied unless a removal occurs, and rarely is there any supports supplied to return or keep children in their own homes, despite the fact that the high social and financial cost of children wrongfully in care is among the worst abuses facing our society today.

The Provincial politicians are loathe to do anything for fear of being portrayed as being against child protection. The clear benefit of child removal from a strictly financial standpoint is that several million dollars of federal funds flow into the Province for each removed child. More funding is provided for aboriginal child removals. This boils down to very little motivation to see the child protection industry as a problem.

Recently there was a 92-day trial that MCFD lost. This cost taxpayers millions of dollars to battle. The third-party law firms that handle cases on behalf of MCFD rake in millions of dollars. The legal aid system also receives tax dollars to defend parents, but they are significantly outgunned, so not too many parents win.

Long trials and wait times are more the norm than the exception.