

EDITORS' PREFACE

Each year, the *Journal* presents in the Forum a selection of pieces on a topic of current legal interest. This year's topic is "Privacy in the Community", addressing potential conflicts between the public's need to know about certain individuals and the individual's right to privacy.

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada produced a discussion paper last year entitled "Publicizing the Identity of Violent Offenders on their Release Into the Community" in response to such a conflict.¹ In Fort St. John, B.C., the RCMP had informed the City Council of a known sex offender's presence in their community — which had motivated the Council to aid local community groups in printing and distributing posters publicizing his presence. Similar scenes played out in other communities across the country as citizens demanded to be informed of the presence of offenders in their region.

On 17 September 1996, Justice Minister Allan Rock announced plans to toughen Canada's treatment of high-risk offenders. The new act proposed mandatory indeterminate sentencing for dangerous offenders and allowed for electronic surveillance of offenders upon their release.²

The dangers of crying "wolf" are explored within. This Forum presents articles written from legal, academic and journalistic perspectives. The issues are both historical and current, and even as this volume goes to press, the debate continues over whether service of a prison term should be the final payment of a convicted high-risk offender's debt to society.

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¹"Publicizing the identity of violent offenders on their release into the community" (31 May 1996), <http://infoweb.maji.com/~privcan//pubs/960531.html> (15 May 1997).

²*An Act to amend the Criminal Code (high-risk offenders), the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the Criminal Records Act, the Prisons and Reformatories Act and the Department of the Solicitor General Act*, S.C. 1997, c. 17.