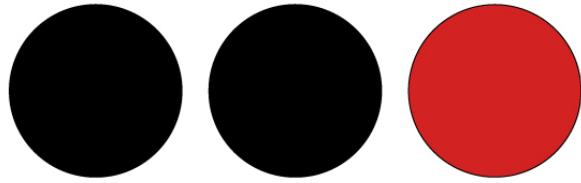




**BATTERED WOMEN'S  
SUPPORT SERVICES**



**Safety Changes Everything**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 8, 2019

**VERNON COURT WATCH IN THE CASE OF CURTIS SAGMOEN  
An Advocacy Organization seeks to hold the Criminal Justice System Accountable**

**VERNON, B.C. September 8, 2019-** Battered Women's Support Services (BWSS) will be on site in Vernon, BC Monday September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 8:30am for the latest trial of serial attacker of women, Curtis Sagmoen. In his latest trial, Sagmoen stands accused of eight offenses including: uttering threats, pointing a firearm, and use of a firearm committing an indictable offense.

Sagmoen has a long history of hiring sex workers, usually Indigenous women, to work at his properties both in the Vancouver area and near Vernon then viciously assaulting them, resulting in an extensive criminal history including brutal attacks with a hammer, guns, and using a spike belt to slash tires and prevent a woman from fleeing from his property.

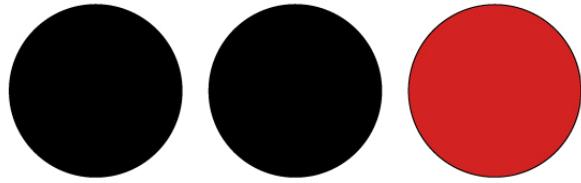
In 2017 the DNA of a missing woman, 18-year-old Traci Genereaux was found on Sagmoen's family farm. Four other women additionally went missing in the area within the same general time period as Genereaux: Deanna Wertz, Ashley Simpson, Caitlin Potts and Nicole Bell. Sagmoen has not as yet been charged in connection with the remains on the farm.

The Sagmoen saga has starkly highlighted the failings of law enforcement and the criminal justice system in offering the same protections to Indigenous women and sex workers that would be offered to other Canadians. This despite B.C.'s Missing Women's Commission of Inquiry (MWCI), the B.C. Auditor General report into MWCI and Canada's National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). Law enforcement, Crown Prosecutors appear to have not heeded the report findings. The Maple Ridge RCMP described the victim who Sagmoen beat with a hammer as "a known Surrey prostitute with an extensive criminal record". The use of the slur "prostitute" by the RCMP to describe victims of crime makes agonizingly clear who is and who is not seen as deserving of basic protection from the state.

"How can they claim to protect us when they are abdicating responsibility for properly investigating attacks on Indigenous women, sex workers, and women living in poverty?", said BWSS Thrive Service Coordinator Brooklyn Fowler who supports women and girls with experience in sex economies. "How can we feel safe or protected by a police force, or within a system that clearly demonstrates its belief that some people are less deserving of protection?"



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“Our understanding the limits of the Canadian legal systems requires us to be vigilant and maintain rigorous critical analysis of the actions of the courts whenever gender violence interfaces with the law.” said Angela Marie MacDougall, executive director at BWSS. “Men who have killed, raped and beaten women are routinely not held accountable for this violence by the Canadian legal systems and law enforcement. Instead, survivors and victims are routinely blamed by the Canadian legal system and law enforcement for the violence inflicted on them by men. The systemic legal advocacy happening around Curtis Sagmoen is essential.”

BWSS’ presence at the courthouse is in solidarity with Jody Leon of the Secwepemc Nation and other women who have long advocated for the legal system to take Sagmoen’s violence seriously.

**Media enquiries**

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