



# BUSH WINS LEGAL VICTORY

## Tragic Story of Violet Arrow

### Plus Gross Negligence of Alaska Native Med. Center

By MARGIE BAUMAN

ANCHORAGE — A coroner's jury in Anchorage has blamed negligence in diagnosis and negligence in providing care for the April 5 death of Violet Arrow at the Alaska Native Medical Center.

The jury report came down to Coroner Ronnie Bray April 25, after ten persons testified earlier in a coroner's inquest called after protests were made about Mrs. Arrow's death.

Further action on the case will be in the hands of U.S. Attorney G. Kent Edwards. The District Attorney's office in Anchorage said Monday that it is currently conducting investigations to determine whether there is any evidence to justify criminal proceedings.

A group calling itself the Public Health Survivors Committee met with Edwards on

Thursday to discuss the filing of a civil suit against the Health Service.

Survivors Committee began the protest shortly after the death occurred, charging that Mrs. Arrow was refused admittance to the ANMC three times before being admitted to the hospital, where she died one hour later.

The jury had first found that Mrs. Arrow died of pneumonia and that a person or persons unknown may have committed a crime in connection with the death. But Mrs. Arrow said there was a contradiction between the jury verdict of a natural death (pneumonia) and the contention that a crime may have been committed.

The jury reconvened the following morning and found negligence to be the cause of death.

Dr. Robert Tank, a pathologist

who performed the autopsy on Mrs. Arrow for the ANMC, testified before the coroner's jury that pneumonia, complicated by a blood clot on the lungs, a broken hip, damaged liver and multiple bruises to the face, arms and legs were evident from his autopsy.

Tank said pneumonia appeared to be the major cause of death, complicated by the embolism in the lungs, the fracture and liver damage, the latter due to alcohol.

The pathologist also found evidence of bronchitis, fibrosis of the lungs and calcium deposits caused by an old case of tuberculosis and an injured right eye, for which Mrs. Arrow was treated the night of April 4.

Dr. Michael Emmick, a physician who saw Mrs. Arrow in the outpatient department of ANMC, said he felt at the time "that her primary problem was post-alcohol. I felt she was ill because of withdrawal."

Emmick said he noted from hospital records that Mrs. Arrow was treated the night of April 4 for the eye injury and other minor injuries (possibly inflicted in a beating earlier that week) and then transferred to the Social Development Center (SDC) detoxification facilities.

Emmick said when he saw Mrs. Arrow the next morning she appeared lucid, even "joking to some extent," Emmick said when he asked her what she was doing there she replied "nothing wrong, if I had a drink, I'd be all right."

The physician said he conducted a thorough neurological examination, but judged her not to need hospitalization.

Emmick noted that Mrs. Arrow underwent surgery in October of 1972 for a blood clot on the brain and the possible connection between that and the seizures which she suf-

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## Alaska Legal Services Successfully Push Through New Policy

By JACQUELINE GLASGOW  
Staff Writer

Attorney General John Have-lock has issued an important "policy" change for the Department of Public Safety. The new directive guarantees person arrested at remote locations that they will be furnished transportation back to the site of the arrest upon their release at any time during trial proceedings.

The much needed ruling is the outcome of a test case filed in Fairbanks last month by Alaska Legal Services. It represents another foothold in the fight for equal rights under the law for bush residents.

In January of 1973, an Alaska Native was arrested and charged with forgery in the village of Stoney River, Alaska. He was taken into custody and flown to Aniak, about 100 miles

away, where he appeared before a magistrate.

Bail was set at \$1000 and the defendant indicated he would like to contact an attorney. That same day, he was transported to Bethel, another 100 miles distant, and held in the Bethel City Jail.

About a week later, he was released upon his own recognition with the condition that he not return to Stoney River until after his preliminary hearing.

Another hearing was held on Feb. 2, and the defendant waived the preliminary hearing, which meant that the next step would be a grand jury hearing in Fairbanks. Future proceedings would not necessarily take place in Bethel.

The condition that the defendant not return to Stoney River was also removed at that time. However, the defendant found himself stranded in Bethel, 200 miles from home, living with relatives in an already overcrowded dwelling, and with no money to pay the \$40 one-way fare back to Stoney River.

An appeal by his attorney to the Division of Corrections and the Department of Public Safety to advance the fare to return home was denied on the basis that it was not the "policy."

Joe Seale, regional supervisor for the Division of Corrections stated that it was not the policy to pay travel expenses except for those persons who had been found innocent, had the charges dismissed, or had served their sentence and been released.

Alaska Legal Services argued that such a policy violated Alaska statutes which required that "The Commissioner shall adopt regulations governing the furnishings of transportation,

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### Editorial Comment—

## Violet Arrow Situation Needs a Hard Look

There are many Violet Arrows walking the streets of Alaska. There are Violet Arrows in alcohol rehabilitation centers. At this very moment, there are other Violet Arrows waiting in emergency rooms of city hospitals.

Many Violet Arrows turn to Alaska Native Medical Center for help, for often they wind up, not only alcoholic, but critically ill as well. And ANMC helps many of them.

But what of the alcoholic overall? How often is he turned aside with the shallow diagnosis that he is only drunk?

Violet Arrow was mortally ill. Her ordeal of April 5 staggers the mind. When she should have been gently handled, when she should have been treated with the utmost understanding and care and caution, when she should have been put under intensive, around-the-clock medical surveillance, she found herself instead — shuffled back and forth.

She found herself pushed and dragged in and out of cars; she found herself unable to sit up in a wheel chair and left to lie on a hard, bare floor; she found herself collapsed, half on her knees in the front seat of a medical car not an ambulance, contorted in the position because another patient was stretched out in the back seat.

For times she was shuffled around in mortal pain, left on the floor, refused treatment, and neglected in a car for two hours.

Violet Arrow turned to ANMC for help. There will be other Violet Arrows who will go there for help. Will the people they turn to look beyond the surface of alcoholism and see the human being needing help, needing all the professional skills at their disposal, needing above all else human compassion?

Violet Arrow was an alcoholic but she did not die of alcoholism. She died of neglect. Is there another Violet Arrow somewhere today who is also being neglected?

We think that this type of situation needs a hard look, especially by the Alaska Native Medical Center and its superiors in Washington, D.C.

### Groh Clarifies Our Article

State Senator Cliff Groh, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, informed the Tundra Times of several errors which were reported in the Times coverage of the 8th Alaska State Legislature.

"First," said Groh, "the article claimed that funds for rural education have plummeted from 15 million a couple of years ago to 9 million this year."

This comment was made by State Senator Willie Hensley at the close of the legislative session. Groh corrects Sen. Hensley, stating, "In truth, the budget for rural education in fiscal 1972 was 17.6 million; in 1973, the authorized figure was \$20.3 million and for 1974, the figure is \$22.9 . . . or an

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## The Alaska Plan and Natives—

### Excluded from Figures are People from Bush

PART III  
By JACQUELINE GLASGOW

Total unemployment in Alaska's work force for the month of March was 15,700 people — 4,400 more than were out of jobs in the month of December.

The Alaska Department of Labor makes the distinction, however, that "work force" includes only those people who are actively participating in or seeking to participate in the state's money economy.

Excluded from the figures or simply not counted are a certain

number of people living in bush Alaska, subsisting by hunting, fishing, and trapping.

Commenting on the outlook for summer, Jim O'Rourke, northern regional manager for the Manpower Center, said, "It is not going to be one of our better years."

It is easy to put the blame on the much delayed trans-Alaska pipeline which attracted many out-of-state workers with the promise of prosperity and jobs and then failed to materialize, leaving them stranded here in the state.

The state's Department of Labor noted that "With the continuing delays in the trans-Alaska pipeline and the higher cost of living in Alaska, many unemployed persons are beginning to leave the area."

No one is less happy with the situation than Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, Inc. whose early projections and data had counted on a much earlier start-up time.

In keeping with Department of the Interior requirements, Alyeska about a year ago sub-

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