

LONDON JAIL

Drug trafficker mistakenly released early from Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre in London

By Jane Sims, Randy Richmond, The London Free Press
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Douglas Spink is wanted in the U.S. for animal cruelty.

A notorious U.S. cocaine trafficker and suspected operator of a bestiality farm was let out of London's maximum security jail when he wasn't supposed to be — the second such mistake in a month — *The Free Press* has learned.

Washington State police, animal rights activists and dozens of social media sites all know who Douglas Spink is.

But somehow Spink, 44, was mistakenly released from Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre (EMDC) on Aug. 10 — the day before he was supposed to be, and apparently not to authorities — and wandered freely to Port Stanley, where he was found a day later by OPP.

"How is this possible? There is no excuse for this," a shocked MPP Rick Nicholls (Chatham-Kent-Essex), the Progressive Conservative corrections critic, said Friday.

On July 22, another EMDC inmate, facing drug and guns charges in London, fooled jailers into believing he was someone else and was released. The man was picked up and arrested two weeks later.

"It seems like they don't learn from their mistakes," said lawyer and inmate advocate Kevin Egan. "It's hard to be completely surprised when they keep messing up again and again."

How or why Spink came to London is not clear, but his past has been reported extensively.

He began running drugs about 15 years ago after he lost his fortune buying and selling companies in Oregon, newspaper reports say.

In 2005, he was arrested with 170 kilograms of cocaine worth an estimated \$34 million and was sentenced to three years in prison and five years of probation.

Once out, Spink became known as an advocate for zoophilia — sex between humans and animals.

That's what ran him afoul of authorities in 2010 after Whatcom County, Wash., authorities raided his property called Exitpoint Farm near Sumas, Wash., where he had dogs and horses.

The area is about 40 kilometres from the Canadian border.

A British citizen was arrested at the farm and convicted of animal cruelty, while Spink was marched back to prison for three years for violating his release order by being with someone committing a crime.

Just before he was to be released, three animal cruelty charges were laid against him for the farm activity. Spink called the counts “bigotry.”

Once out in 2013, he was charged again for his online bestiality websites and blogs despite an order he stay off the Internet.

Then, in February 2014, Spink was suspected of stealing his neighbour’s dog. Spink denied it and told authorities he already had a dog — again a direct violation of his orders for owning an animal.

A federal judge dealt Spink a nine-month sentence in May 2014 for that violation. Spink was let out of prison in December, but there’s a warrant in Whatcom County for misdemeanor charges of animal cruelty.

County prosecutor Eric Richey said Spink fled the jurisdiction some time ago.

He received a phone call a week ago from Canadian authorities telling him Spink was here and being booted back to the U.S.

The Canadian Border Services Agency arrested Spink on Aug. 9 in London, a spokesperson said.

London immigration lawyer Ed Corrigan said the drug conviction alone was enough for Canadian authorities to pick up and deport him.

As for the early release from EMDC, Corrigan said, “They dropped the ball but they recovered quickly.”

Ontario’s Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services confirmed this week there was an “improper release” Aug. 10 of an immigration detainee.

“The improper release of any inmate from a correctional facility is unacceptable,” ministry spokesperson Greg Flood said in an email. “The vast majority of improper releases are due to an administrative or technical error which may involve anyone of the justice sector partners. Correctional officials are responsible for ensuring that accurate records are maintained and that inmates are released only when they are legally entitled to be released from custody.”

London police got a call from EMDC about 9:30 a.m. on Aug. 11 about an improper release, spokesperson Const. Ken Steeves said.

The man was supposed to be held until the next day, he said.

OPP found the person later on Aug. 11 in Port Stanley. He was then transported to Niagara Falls to the care of the Canadian Border Services Agency, Steeves said.

Spink appeared before Canada’s Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) for an admissibility hearing on Aug. 12.

The board ruled Spink could not be admitted to Canada and issued a removal order.

Authorities would not identify the inmate but *The Free Press* has learned it was Spink.

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