

## Melfort woman's remains found on B.C. pig farm

**Shauna Rempel**

The StarPhoenix

A Melfort man whose mother's remains were found at Robert Pickton's B.C. pig farm is glad to know the truth about her disappearance, but angry at the circumstances of his mother's death.

"It's not happy closure but it's closure," says Joel Boen, who found out last month his mother, Yvonne Marie Boen, is among the dead found at Pickton's Port Coquitlam farm.

Pickton faces 15 charges of first-degree murder, with at least seven more charges pending. The total number of confirmed deaths in the case is 31 -- including Yvonne -- and police are investigating the disappearances of another 30 women. Many of the missing women were drug addicts and prostitutes from Vancouver's downtown eastside.

Although not much is known about Yvonne's death and no one has been charged, 19-year-old Joel is finding it difficult to accept how his mother may have died.

"She didn't deserve that," he said.

"I don't think there's any way to justify that."

Joel says anyone who might have had a hand in his mother's death needs to pay.

"There's really no way to punish someone for what they did, especially when it's that gruesome," he said, banging pots around as he makes lunch in his Melfort home.

"I mean, you can put 'em in jail forever, but really, does that do anything? I don't think it does."

Yvonne was 33 when she disappeared in March 2001.

The mother of three left Melfort when Joel was two years old and bounced around from job to job, working with a travelling fair for about five years.

"She never really stayed in one place for too long," said Joel. He knew his mom had problems.

"I knew she did drugs but, I mean, there's not much I can do to stop that," he said.

However, Joel doesn't like his mother described as a sex trade worker, as many of Pickton's alleged victims were.

"Just because a couple of them were like that doesn't mean all of them were like that," he said.

"It's not really nice to say about somebody's mom."

Yvonne grew up in Melfort and married Joel's father when she was 16. She gave birth to three boys in the next three years.

"It was hard to manage that," said Yvonne's mother-in-law, Edith Boen. Joel stayed with his father and paternal grandmother while younger brother Troy went to live with Yvonne's mother



**(Yvonne Marie) Boen**

in B.C. The youngest child, born after Yvonne left Melfort, was placed in foster care.

Edith said Yvonne told her she was staying at a farm, so Edith feared the worst when police started searching Pickton's farm two years ago.

The family doesn't know when police will release Yvonne's remains.

"It's kind of hard, because we were going to do a memorial thing," said Joel.

However, if the service takes place in B.C., Joel won't be able to afford the time off work. His grandmother is unable to fly due to a heart attack and doesn't feel up to the long journey by bus or car.

Joel says he'd rather stay home to grieve.

"I'd rather just do it in my own way," he said. "My mom knows that I miss her."

Joel says he has good memories the summer of 1999 when he joined Yvonne on the fair circuit.

"We worked together and I had the best time," he said.

It was the last time he saw her.

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