

# RCMP chief backs off attack on grow-ops

## Too quick to link pot to murders, Zaccardelli says



RCMP Commissioner  
Guiliano Zaccardelli

OTTAWA - **Canada's top police officer said yesterday he was too quick to condemn a marijuana grow operation as the root cause in the deaths of four Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers last week.**

**RCMP Commissioner Guiliano Zaccardelli** said in an interview that his condemnation of grow-ops just hours after the shootings may have been inappropriate because police and politicians did not have full details of the particular case and the background of cop-killer James Roszko.

**Commissioner Zaccardelli** and Deputy Prime Minister **Anne McLellan**, his political boss as the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, **spoke of the scourge of marijuana grow operations within hours of the killings and the need for tougher penalties for those who operate them.**

"I gave what I believed was the best information I had knowing full well that at that time I didn't have all the information," a contrite Comm. Zaccardelli said. **"Clearly, there's a lot of things in there that, in hindsight, we will have to look at in a different perspective."**



Anne McLellan, Minister of  
Public Safety and  
Emergency Preparedness

**Statement made by Anne McLellan regarding the shootings of the four RCMP officers in Alberta:**

"All of us, whatever role we play in society, need to understand the seriousness of illegal grow-ops and the fact that they are not, in any way, a victimless crime, that, in fact, **most grow-ops are controlled by and run for the benefit of organized crime,**" Ms. McLellan said. "I would say all of us, including the judiciary, need to understand what is at stake here. **Yesterday was a horrible and tragic reminder.**"

"Grits split over legalization of marijuana" - The National Post, March 5, 2005

**"Politicians blowing smoke on grow-ops: lawyers"** - Ottawa Citizen, March 12, 2005

Several lawyers who defend these cases in court suggest Public Security Minister Anne McLellan is misleading the public about the dangers of grow-ops with recent comments following the Alberta killings.

"Anne McLellan does not live in the real world," said Toronto defence lawyer Peter Zaduk. "She just does not know what is going on."

"The judges who hear these cases routinely have a much better handle on the reality of the situation than the minister does. It is also a myth to say these judges are liberal pushovers."

"For a former justice minister, who should know better, to criticize the judiciary on this issue, is both a cheap shot and it is dead wrong," said Vancouver defence lawyer Neil Cobb.

The two experienced lawyers have defended hundreds of grow-op cases in British Columbia and Ontario, and they say **the evidence in court never matches up to the "myths" spread by politicians and the police.**

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