



He committed the crime.  
But he's doing much more than his time.  
Why can't Kevin come home?

**A HEAVY PRICE**  
**THE KEVIN HIEBERT STORY**

1 Hr. Documentary

**mid**canada  
entertainment

## A HEAVY PRICE: THE KEVIN HIEBERT STORY

Kevin Hiebert was twenty-five years old when he was arrested in Athens airport in 1999. The charge was trafficking - after authorities found two kilos of cocaine concealed in the soles of his shoes. Six other mules from Winnipeg were apprehended in Amsterdam earlier that day. The Greek police knew Kevin was coming. This was a first time offence, usually carrying a three to five year penalty, but Hiebert was given a life sentence with no chance of release for sixteen years. He's served nine years in Malandrino prison. He's got seven more to go.

This documentary challenges the lack of initiative and response of the Canadian Government to bring Kevin home under auspices of the International Transfer of Offenders Act. With the six others all home within a year of their arrests, why is Kevin still locked up in a prison deep within the mountains of Greece, well past our own maximum penalty for his crime? And regardless of its outcome, this is also story of redemption.

The documentary will use re-enactments and interviews to show the events leading up to Kevin's arrest. In his own words we'll hear of his harrowing experience behind bars during the infamous Malandrino prison riots and his regret over poor choices nine years ago. We'll examine the proliferating recruitment of young Canadians enticed to take such a chance by reputed drug rings operating out of Europe. Candid interviews with Dan McTeague, Lloyd Axworthy, Gary Doer, all politicians responsible to Kevin's family, and who have yet to respond to copious letters for the last nine years, as well as lawyers and noted journalists who've reported on the case. We'll seek out the answer to why Kevin is still there. What would it take to kick in Ottawa's diplomatic machine, while it basks media favour for the recently successful transfers of offenders who've only served a year or less in other foreign jails abroad? More specifically, what will it take to get Kevin Hiebert home?



The documentary will attempt to meet with the Greek authorities to uncover the judicial precedents and political reasoning that led to a life sentence, and the need for interminable incarceration. While at home with exclusive access we witness Kevin's family mustering through the ordeal and close friends initiating grass roots rallies to draw public awareness through radio call in shows and the ubiquitous Facebook.

Yet at the heart of this story is the reuniting between Kevin and his family with recent requests for a week's vacation. Greek law does not recognize parole, but they do grant leaves for good behaviour. Kevin is in good standing for such. We'll follow Kevin's family to Greece and share in the reunion. If the requests are denied, we'll interview Kevin in Malandrino prison or use phone contact and to pursue the rational for such isolation, denial of privileges and deportation refusals.

The documentary will incite the debate in the matter of Kevin Hiebert.

1 Hour Documentary from MidCanada Entertainment  
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### TREATMENT

Patricia Patterson is a fifty-eight year old mother, sitting down to write yet another letter to an MP in Ottawa, with the hope they'll rally to save her son and give her answers that never seem to come. While Pat narrates her letter it's revealed that Kevin, her son, has been in Malandrano prison for nine years. He'll be 33 this year. While she writes we see photos, glimpses into what her family used to be. Husband, Dick, now sixty, as his withered Jeep Cherokee pulls up to the Western Union depot in Corpus Christi, Texas, wiring money to Malandrino prison for his son, Kevin. The strain of it all plainly conveyed in his eyes. Daughter Tracy, walking her dogs along the snowy road near Steinbach, telling us she tries not to think very often about what her brother Kevin is going through over there. And finally Kevin himself, pictures showing a handsome man of twenty-five with friends in Winnipeg with nothing but future before him. But one picture shows Kevin a bald man of 33, shoulder to shoulder with other inmates, a life he can't believe he's still living. Kevin tells his story while on a beach, overlooking the aqua blue Mediterranean. "He just wants to go home," she says while we watch Pat write that letter back home, the last of many that received no response from parliamentary ministers from the Solicitor General's office on down. They are alone in their campaign. But what happened to Kevin? How did he become one of Malandrino's longest standing prisoners?

We go back to Athens airport in 1999 as twenty-five year old Kevin disembarks his international flight, sensing something amiss. He's being watched, and rightly so, because in his suitcase, concealed in his shoes, he's smuggling two kilograms of cocaine. It's the one moment in his life he wants to convey to young people they should never live through, never consider. It was arrogant and audacious and it's taken nine years of his life away. Athens airport security forces converge on him at the gate, dogs and guns drawn, they press him to the floor. And then the court appearance, his parents emotionally wrung and disillusioned sitting together, shame and concern commingled, and Kevin feeling the onus of his actions in their faces. The judge's gavel slams down and Kevin tells us from that warm beach how surprised and devastated he was when the judge gave him a life sentence with no chance of release for sixteen years. How could he have been so stupid and careless? He knows what he did, but now he wants to rebuild his life.

Pat tells us about her and Dick's divorce and how after a car accident Dick decided to spend his winters in Texas. Between the two of them, they alternate sending money to Kevin for phone calls and toiletries. "It's been a rough nine years," she says emotionally. Candid interviews with family and friends only reiterate her feelings while politicians who have something to say on the pro and con side of the "International Transfer of Offenders Act" voice their positions, both admonishing and defending the lack of action from Ottawa. And lawyer Michael Mercury, who ventured to Greece on Kevin's behalf, still shaking his head his client is over there serving a life sentence for a crime that would only have seen him incarcerated for three years at home. Never mind the cultural degrees of separation and isolation from family and rehabilitative reintegration in Greece. So, what really happened nine years ago? What advice was Kevin given?

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There is no parole system in Greece, a Greek mandarin explains, offering his condolences in the matter, but that said, there is not much his or any other office can do to spear head the situation for Kevin. He's already served nine years; twice the maximum term he would've been handed down in Canada, and our own prisoner-transfer treaty states any offender incarcerated for a period longer than six months has the right to consular intervention and a transfer application. The Greek courts rebuked Kevin's transfer request initially in 1999, citing Canada's sentence of three years would not assuage their ruling. Subsequently he lost his chance to apply for another transfer until 2005. The second blow came that year, when that second request was also denied.

And Pat asks the question we all ask now...why? Why was his transfer refused? Kevin asks that very question on that warm beach, gesturing to the Mediterranean post card view before him. If they give him a one-week vacation leave, why is he still serving in Greece? The politicians interviewed in Ottawa would have their comments and speculations, but investigative journalism tinged questions would beckon for the answer Patricia has never received. The question a mother needs to have. Why is he still there? And what is Ottawa prepared to do to bring him home?

Life hasn't been about the beach for Kevin. It's the first time he's been out of a compound in nine years, to feel sun with out shadows of barbed wire speckling his face, to remind him he's a prisoner. And while he recites life in Malandrino, we see re-enactments of jail cells slamming, the reality to life in isolation in a foreign country, and the Muslim voices of disgruntled inmates. All of it leading to the worst prison revolts in Greek history in the spring of 2007.

At home Pat and Dick rally together, watch the news covering the riots and worry for Kevin's safety. A phone call comes and he tells his mom and dad he's fine. Past inmates who shared a cell with Kevin tell us what a stand up guy he is, and how the revolts surged from Saudi prisoners and the torture they endured. Kevin's lawyer, Michael Mercury, explains the laws Kevin has to overcome, and what his real chances of coming home within the next eight years really are. Slim to none, if the Canadian government does not rally for their citizen.

Pat finishes her letter, addressed to Dan McTeague who spearheaded the Bill Sampson release from a Saudi prison, while we see Prime Minister Harper at his podium, lobbying for the speedy release of a white collar offender in South America while at Pearson airport, news footage shows us the safe return of Bert Tatham, arrested at Dubai International Airport in April 2006 for hashish and two poppy bulbs and returned to Canada a YEAR LATER! Why is Kevin Hiebert still in a Greek Prison in the mountains 200 kms northwest of Athens?

Pat walks her letter to the local postal drop box. "I won't rest until he's home."

And on that beach overlooking the Mediterranean, Kevin hugs his mom, dad, and sister, Tracy, apologizing for the anguish it's brought them. If but for the moment, a family reunited again... Is it all too heavy a price?

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FACEBOOK: "Free Kevin Hiebert"

### LETTER FROM KEVIN HIEBERT

Dear Readers,

Greetings to friends on Facebook...I would like to take the time to express my gratitude to each and every one of you who has taken an interest to my case. The time and effort that some of you contributed towards my complicated transfer request has overwhelmed my desire to retort and write about the problems I face being a foreigner abroad this historical Country...

Since the beginning when I decided to sign the Request for Transfer back in June 2001, I had not fully considered the consequences of being rejected. Most of the conversations discussed were directed on the positive aspects of the transfer treaty. How I fit the criteria of a person who "suits" transfer. Then it was only a matter of time to wait for the process of the paperwork to be completed and finalized. I remember those days...my thoughts were focused and optimistic...something I wasn't used to. Especially from my devastating 1st Court experience back in September 2000. It's one thing listening to a shocking life sentence, and that the next Court, Court of Appeal would not be until 2005! Then to hear another thing - that Canada has a treaty convention with this Country which entitles us to serve our sentences in our native land! Now what would you do? Choose to believe? Wait the 5 years for the appeal? or accept the sentence by withdrawing from the appeal and come back home? Ingenuously I signed the Request...because I was lead to believe before signing that if Canada accepted my Request, even with my excessively harsh sentence, the Greek Ministry of Justice would oblige the Agreement. Because I would be given back to Canada with the life sentence!

However, that was not the case. Although Canada has a life sentence for illegal substances, I am a 1st time offender and if I were to have committed the same offence in Canada my sentence would be a lot more lenient than the one I have now. Which brings me to the fundamental point of this discussion and the very reason why Greece has not approved my Request by recognizing I would spend less time in a Canadian Prison. The Greek Ministry cannot come to an agreement. Hence - the repercussions I continue to face, and the consequences I did not consider...

You see, despite the fact that Canada might have similar laws, for similar offences is contradicting to Canada's plan for me. When giving me a generous sentence of 3 years in a Canadian Prison, it allowed Greece to scrutinize or discredit the approach towards 1st time offenders and perceive it as a "easy way out" which of course is no secret. I want what's best for my family and myself. Having to remain here serves "no purpose" but the continuations of punishment caused by the lack of negotiations within both ministries are the discrepancies of my existence being abroad this Prison.

As some of you might already know...I re-wrote the application Request for Transfer again last month and honestly after 8 years it feels like I'm starting all over again. Now I must wait for the Solicitor General of Canada to give a decision, and if approved I can present my official 4th Request for Transfer to the Greek Ministry of Justice and that my friends is where I am CLUELESS?! What I have now that I didn't have before are the years. Exactly 8 years to this day. Plus the 3 years I've spent working for the Prison. I'm considered 11 years incarcerated. "We don't get paid for our work, we get time deducted off our sentences. A life sentence consists of: 20 years, within those years we must make 4 years work. Which equals the 16 years." All these headaches makes it unfortunate that I gave up my right to appeal, because I know in my heart I would be home right now. That might sound like a bit of a paradox? However if I were to have found the right representation I needed then...there would be a good chance I would not be explaining this to you right now.

Nevertheless, I can no longer look back at what I should have done...In essence I shouldn't be here either! Yet, I chose to be in my own disturbed mindless way. I did a stupendously foolish thing under the influence of drugs. This errant behavior of mine ended up costing my my life's worth!

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But thanks to you guys...for exploring my situation and taking a concern into my matters makes me for the 1st time in a long time...aspired! By helping to contribute to my cause it allows the public to create that awareness I need to survive and stay positive! They say: coming in Prison is easy, it's getting out - I think speaks for itself...

This use of the outlet on Facebook has aroused into a beautiful medium. I'm glad I have the opportunity to write this affirmation to everyone "A small step for man, a a gigantice leap for humanity!" comes to my mind, from where I am. Some of you hwho don't know my struggles, as if I have acces to e-mail? E-mail what's that? They call a computer here a calculator or better yet the remote control for t.v. - I am not kidding. I have no means to a computer. We had a course one time and to describe to you what went on in those lessons...reminded me of Grade 8 when the 1st Apple came out. The only difference was that the hardware is more morden. There we were, like a bunch of 13 year olds humiliated by technology. However, I got the diploma, and passed Grade 8 in case any of you were wondering...

Thank you for your patience. It's been my pleasure...I'm Kevin Hiebert. "Click"

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## Another birthday in Greek prison for former Winnipeg resident

DATE: Jul 30, 11:02

By Aldo Santin - Winnipeg Free Press

Kevin Hiebert celebrates his 33rd birthday today the same way he's marked the previous seven — from the inside of a Greek prison cell.

But friends of the former West Kildonan resident are rallying to support him and generate pressure to get him transferred to Canada to serve out his sentence.

Hiebert was arrested in October 1999 at an Athens airport as he tried to smuggle two kilograms of cocaine in the heels of three pairs of shoes.

"Kevin made one bad mistake and he's served his time — longer than anyone else would have — and he wants to come back to Canada," said Ryan McDonald, who grew up with Hiebert in West Kildonan.

McDonald has started a group for Hiebert in the popular social networking website Facebook (Free Kevin Hiebert at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)) that has already

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attracted the support of several other longtime friends who weren't aware that Hiebert is in a Greek prison.

"A lot of people are asking what's happened to him and we're coming up with some ideas," McDonald said.

McDonald said he hopes the listing in Facebook will generate a grassroots campaign that can raise some money for Hiebert and put pressure on the Canadian government to facilitate his transfer to a Canadian prison.

"No one has stepped up for Kevin and we're going to change that," McDonald said.

Hiebert was one of seven Winnipeggers arrested for drug-smuggling in late 1999 and early 2000, allegedly tied to the same smuggling operation. The RCMP said at the time that all were likely recruited on behalf of a Nigerian drug-trafficking ring operating out of Greece. The first four people arrested in September 1999 in Amsterdam led authorities to Hiebert. Police were waiting for him at the Athens airport.

At Hiebert's trial the following September, his Greek lawyer told him he could expect a sentence of three to five years but the judges shocked the courtroom when they imposed a life sentence, with no eligibility of parole for 10 to 15 years, and a US\$150,000 fine.

Hiebert immediately wanted to appeal the sentence but was told that a hearing couldn't be held until 2005 at the earliest. He was told that his best bet would be to apply for a transfer to Canada, where he could serve his sentence in a Canadian prison. But to do that, he would have to sign away his right to an appeal.

The Greek authorities were originally supportive of the move but backed away when Canadian Embassy officials erroneously told them that the maximum conviction for a similar conviction here was three years — in fact the maximum sentence in Canada is the same, a life sentence, but the most likely sentence for a first offender like Hiebert would be three to five years.

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Hiebert's applied three times now to Greek justice officials for a transfer to serve his sentence in Canada, but each time he's been told he hasn't served enough time to satisfy Greek justice.

Lawyer Michael Mercury, who has worked with the family in the past, said he's dismayed that three successive Canadian governments haven't demanded that the Greeks honour the prisoner-transfer treaty.

"I'm really surprised that nothing has been done," Mercury said. "Kevin was a mule in that drug operation. The other people arrested with him have already served their time and been released but Kevin has been in prison for eight years. I can't understand why Canada has not demanded the Greeks... honour the terms of the treaty."

Hiebert's incarceration has taken a toll on his family. His mother felt betrayed by the lifestyle he was living at the time and after his sentencing suffered a nervous breakdown. His parents have since separated and they've sold their home.

Hiebert's father, Dick Hiebert, said he tries to support his son emotionally and financially but adds he's been living on a CPP disability pension since an auto accident in 1993.

"I'm grateful that Kevin's friends are trying to help him," the elder Hiebert, 60, said this week. He said his son is often frustrated with his situation but that he tries to keep him positive and hopeful. Dick Hiebert said that his son has accepted responsibility for his actions but added he believes it's time for him to come home.

"He's done eight years... it's enough," Hiebert said.

McDonald said Hiebert calls him often and he keeps him informed of what's going on back home. "He has days when he's depressed but I think he'll be OK mentally."

During a recent telephone interview from the Malandrino prison 200 kilometres northwest of Athens, Hiebert said he's surprised that McDonald is trying to help him, adding he's avoided lobbying for help in any way.

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Hiebert said he's tried to stay hopeful but added that the repeated rejections from Greek authorities for his transfer are taking their toll.

"Prison life makes you feel isolated and the longer you're here, the further away you feel from society," Hiebert said. "I don't know how much more I can handle. I don't want to scare anybody but... it's a prison. It's a nightmare environment."

Hiebert escaped unhurt from a prison riot in April, when several hundred inmates took to the roof for several days to protest living conditions.

Hiebert said he's passed his time by working at the prison canteen, reading, exercising and playing soccer and basketball with other inmates.

He said he's still hopeful that Greece will send him to Canada but admits that he no longer expects to hear good news when he makes his next application. "I'm looking at spending 16 years here," Hiebert said. "The Canadian government has its hands full and I'm last on their list. What can I do?"