

Reflections on Dr. Shiv Chopra
Author of “Corrupt to the Core - Memoirs of a Health Canada Whistleblower”
by Ken Billings

January 4, 2018, Ottawa, Canada

Definition of Whistleblower: Guardian of the Public Trust. Proposed legislation for Greece - A black and white law to protect any person exposing waste, fraud, abuse, illegality or threat to the public health or public safety.” - John Kiriakou, CIA Whistleblower, Jan 4, 2019
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On January 7, 2018, Whistleblower Dr. Shiv Chopra died, just three months after a 13 year court battle with Health Canada. The Federal Court of Appeal ruled that Dr. Chopra was guilty of insubordination (Sept 6, 2017). He was fired in 2004 for blowing the whistle on Health Canada’s corrupt drug approval process.

Working with Shiv over his last four years has been a privilege and an honour. To me personally, Shiv was like a multifaceted diamond. He was so many things to so many people. To his family he was the consummate caring husband, loving father and wise grandfather. To his colleagues and the public he was a veterinarian, a microbiologist, a scientist, a health regulator, a rights defender and a whistleblower. He was also a poet, a researcher, an author and his community knew him for his fervent leadership in field hockey. The place though, where he felt most rooted was in his organic garden and I think that is understandable because of his passion for safe and healthy food.

To the Canadian public, Shiv Chopra was a veterinarian and microbiologist who drew national attention for his criticism of the veterinary drug approval process. He was one of three researchers fired in June 2004 by Health Canada. While the other two scientists were eventually ordered reinstated, the Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board upheld Chopra’s dismissal. <1>

In 1998-99, Dr. Shiv Chopra and two colleagues testified at the Senate Agriculture and Forestry Committee investigation that Health Canada managers had pressured them to release suspect veterinary drugs into the food chain without the evidence of safety required by the Food and Drugs Act.

These allegations shocked the public, triggered headlines around the world and ultimately led to the rejection of one particular drug: Monsanto's Posilac, a bovine growth hormone (rBGH), which produced unwanted side effects in cow's milk. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had approved rBGH prompting Monsanto to pressure Health Canada regulators to do the same. The scientists’ testimony raised serious questions about the effectiveness of Health Canada as a regulator and its relationship with the drug industry. <2>

Court Decision Sept 5, 2000 - ***"The Federal Court ruled that it was my duty, it was my obligation to blow the whistle. If I have told the department that there's wrongdoing going on in the hands of managers, they should not be doing that. The Court ruled it was my obligation to do that."*** Dr. Shiv Chopra

Chopra's first lesson regarding the mindset of the bureaucracy came in 1974, during an interview for a promotion:

... a member of the Selection Board, Norman Stevenson, asked me as follows: "Suppose you are selected for this post, whom would you consider to be your client?" I replied: "The public, of course." "No, it is the industry," said Stevenson. I begged to disagree with him. "From whom do you draw your mandate?" asked Scott as a follow-up question. "From the Food and Drugs Act, passed by the Canadian Parliament on behalf of the public" I replied. I hate to think that the reason I failed to obtain this post was due to my answers before this Public Service Commission Selection Board.

In 2009, Dr. Chopra published a book, explaining in black and white how Health Canada management treated Shiv and other health regulators. The title was "Corrupt to the Core - Memoirs of a Health Canada Whistleblower." He named names and described corrupt practices that played out between Health Canada Management and Corporate lobbyists and detailed how he had been maligned. No one sued him. <3>

Chopra chronicles intrigue, manipulation and deception as Health Canada managers — under directions of their political bosses — worked to please their drug company clients. Among other things, Dr. Chopra accuses management of:

- Ignoring a central tenet of the Food and Drugs Act requiring manufacturers to provide evidence of safety before approval
- Ignoring and sidelining scientists who refuse to approve drugs without evidence of safety
- Approving veterinary drugs containing carcinogens and hormones that have detrimental health effects
- Refusing to revisit approved drugs after new evidence showed they were unsafe
- Ignoring or manipulating scientists' reports on certain drugs
- Forbidding scientists to speak to anyone about their work.

By refusing to collude with what they saw as a breach of the Canada Food and Drugs Act by their own department, Chopra, Dr. Margaret Hayden and Dr. Gerard Lambert joined the ranks of courageous Canadians who have sought to protect the public interest by performing their

duty as public servants, doing their jobs with integrity, even when doing so brought them into conflict with their bosses and risk of dismissal.

The way the corporations, Canadian government, the justice system and media attacked and mistreated Dr. Chopra speaks volumes about the state of our government and world today.

All Prime Ministers including Chretien, Martin, Harper and Trudeau have vilified Dr. Chopra by not protecting him when he spoke out about Health Canada disobeying the Food & Drugs Act. The Feds spent over \$10 million dollars and 13 years to conclude that Dr. Chopra was insubordinate. Canadians should be ashamed, outraged and motivated to get this story told to get real whistleblower protection legislation into practice so that all citizens can experience genuine accountability and a healthy food system.

Sharing from Shiv Chopra's personal page September 7, 2017 after his appeal was denied in court yesterday, ***"A shameful judgement. Three women judges. Not one asked the cause of my insubordination to senior management. Not one asked why I refused to pass unsafe drugs going into the nation's food supply. They implicitly blamed me for speaking out about it in public which, indeed, was my duty under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Who can blame me for publishing CORRUPT TO THE CORE? I may be old but not yet gone from saying O Canada, We stand on guard for thee."***

NOTE: Dr. Chopra's 2000 paper on Bayer's Baytril antibiotic has been banned from public scrutiny since 2004.

In 2014, Shiv founded the "Canadian Council on Food Safety and Health." It is still a very grassroots organization and is focused on three aspects:

- 1) **Actions** to pressure Health Canada to obey Canada's Food & Drugs Act and Regulations.
- 2) **Advocacy** of the public on "**The 5 Pillars of Food Safety**" whereby if these five toxins are removed from Canadian food, it would be the safest in the world. <4>
- 3) **Education** - Use of organic, permaculture and greenhouse gardening as a practical teaching tool (K-12) for all subjects in the school curriculum.

If you want to honour Shiv, use your voices and conversations to make Health Canada accountable and to ensure that future Canadians can enjoy a sovereign food system that is the healthiest in the world.

Quote from: Jules C. Dervaes, Jr. (1947 – December 2016) an urban farmer and a proponent of the urban homesteading movement in California.

"In our society, growing food yourself has become the most RADICAL of acts. It is truly the only effective PROTEST, one that can – and will – overturn the corporate powers that be. By the process of directly working in HARMONY WITH NATURE, we do one thing most essential to CHANGE THE WORLD – WE CHANGE OURSELVES."

Many people called Dr. Chopra a whistleblower and hero but to Shiv, he was just doing his job, speaking truth to power and trying to provide Canadians the safest and healthiest food for all. Humble and fearless to the core. Bless you Shiv.

"Our health and our country are in very serious trouble. When you make money by damaging the nation's health and the children's future that cannot be acceptable, that is not allowed in the law. That is what we have to stop."

Dr. Shiv Chopra - Durham Wellness Lecture, 2016 <5>

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Sources:

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Joanne Laucius, Ottawa Citizen Sept 6, 2017

<https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/after-a-13-year-battle-former-health-canada-scientist-wont-get-his-job-back>

2) Whistleblowing at Health Canada: Chopra speaks out

CMAJ. Sept 18, 2009

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2742145/>

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3) Corrupt to the Core – Memoirs of a Health Canada Whistleblower

Copyright 2009, PDF version 2016

Available in DVD format:

<http://www.foodsovereigntycanada.com/corrupt-to-the-core/>

4) The 5 Pillars of Food Safety

Video: **Stand Up for Food Safety** (4 min) <https://vimeo.com/294170547>

5) Dr. Shiv Chopra - Durham Wellness Lecture, 2016

<https://vimeo.com/172035866>

6) Definition of Whistleblower: Guardian of the Public Trust

John Kiriakou, CIA Whistleblower, Jan 4, 2019 - At 9:36

<https://youtu.be/pL14ICYFXno?t=576>

[Images of Dr. Shiv Chopra](#)