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Quebec coroner investigating death of another Jehovah's Witness after childbirth

Mirlande Cadet, 46, died of suspected hemorrhage day after giving birth by C-section

Stephen Smith - CBC News October 26, 2016 Montreal



Mirlande Cadet left behind two daughters and her newborn son. (Isaac Cadet)

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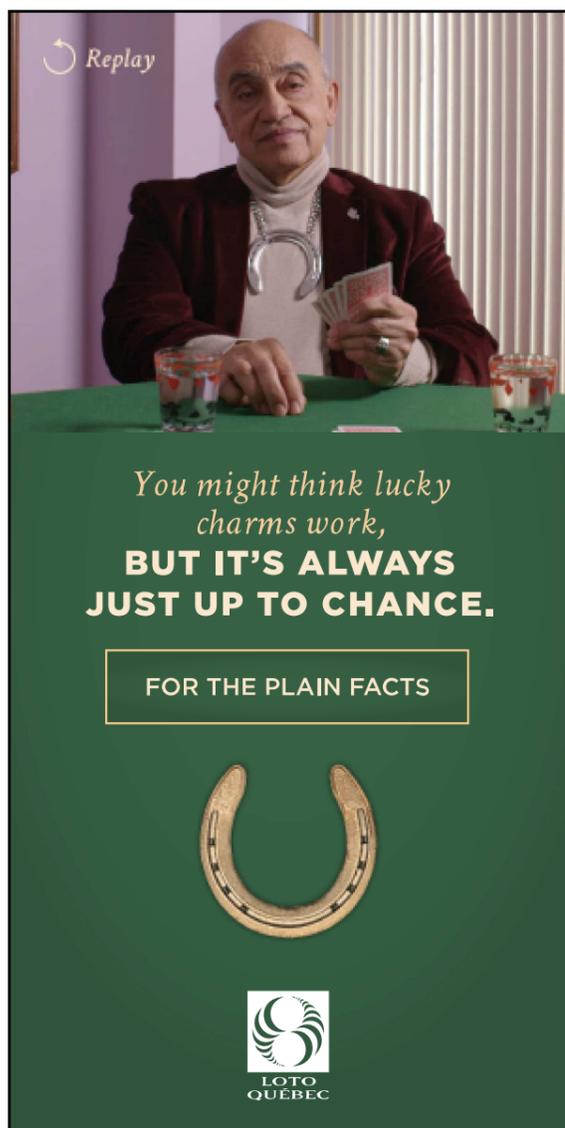
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A Quebec coroner is investigating the death of a 46-year-old Jehovah's Witness who died Oct. 3 from complications shortly after giving birth by caesarian section in a Montreal hospital.

A spokeswoman for the coroner's office, Geneviève Guilbault, confirmed that the bureau was launching an investigation into Cadet's death in an email to CBC Montreal.

"Based on information that's been circulating ... and other information we received from the hospital, it's been decided that a coroner will investigate the death of Mrs. Cadet," Guilbault wrote.

The investigation is the second announced by the Quebec coroner's office this month into the death of a Jehovah's Witness following childbirth.

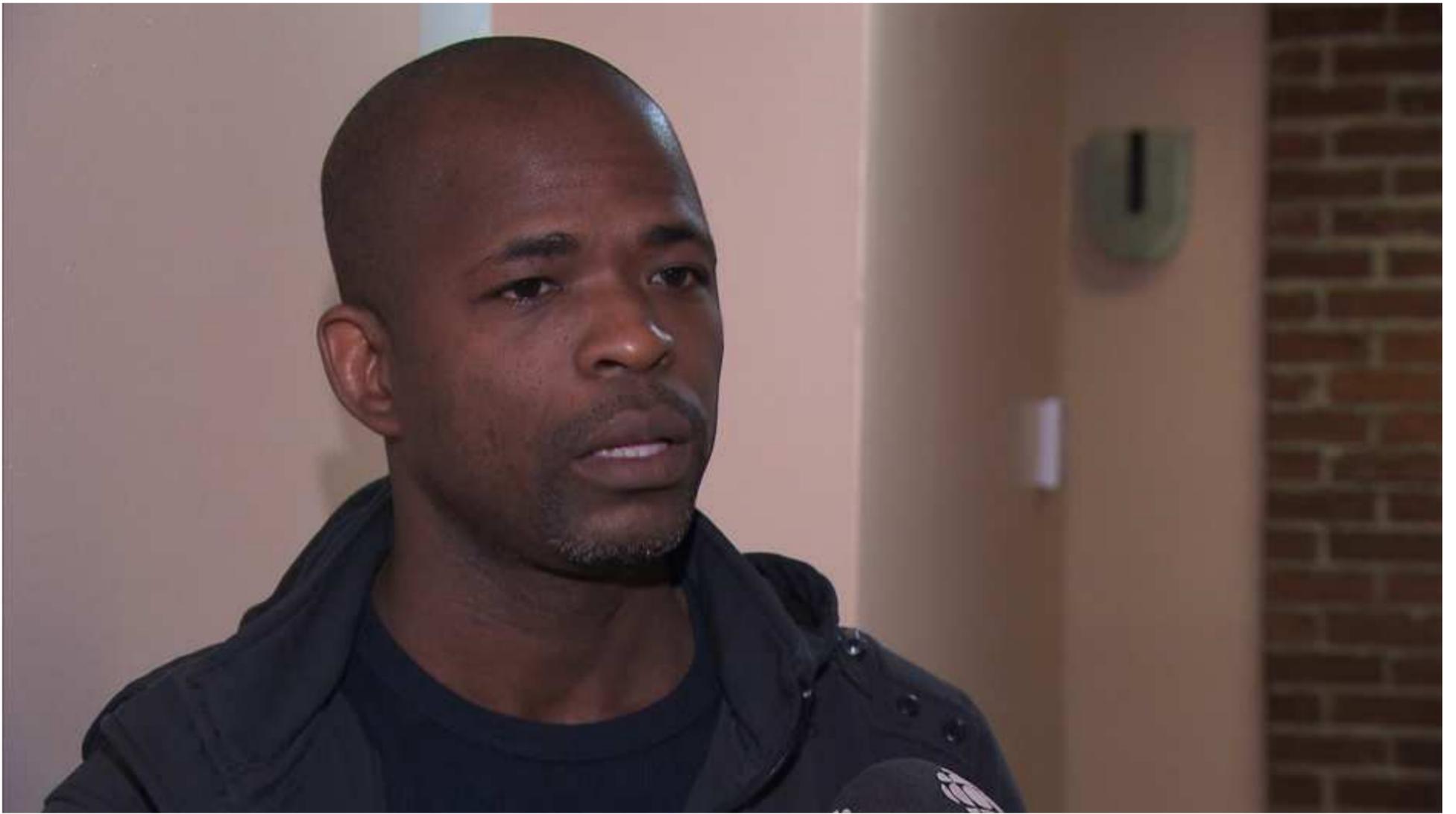
- [Death of Jehovah's Witness during childbirth prompts investigation](#)

Unclear circumstances

Cadet experienced complications after she gave birth to a healthy son by C-section at St. Mary's Hospital on Oct. 2 and required a blood transfusion, according to her brother Isaac Cadet.

It is unclear if Cadet got a blood transfusion, or if she did, when she received it and what the circumstances were that led to its approval.

Blood transfusions are forbidden under Jehovah's Witness doctrine, which holds that the Old and New Testaments command them to abstain from blood.



Isaac Cadet says his family welcomed the news of the coroner's investigation after getting little information from hospital. (CBC)

All Jehovah's Witnesses are expected to sign and carry a card refusing a blood transfusion.

Isaac Cadet questions whether his sister would have signed a card and refused a blood transfusion. He described her as a loving mother to her two other children and a devoted aunt who loved to get family together.

"I have a lot of doubt that my sister signed that document," Cadet told CBC News.

He welcomed news of the coroner's investigation, saying his family needs to know what happened to its "leader."

- [Jehovah's Witness who died after giving birth understood risk of refusing blood, Quebec health minister says](#)

"It's a relief because we've tried to find out what happened, tried to access documents, and we weren't allowed. We were told they're confidential," he said.

Mirlande Cadet's husband declined to be interviewed when contacted by CBC Montreal.

Church elders at hospital 'intimidating'

A Quebec coroner is already investigating the death of Éloïse Dupuis, 27, who is said to have refused an emergency blood transfusion for a hemorrhage after delivering a baby by C-section at Hôtel-Dieu de Lévis Hospital near Quebec City.

She died Oct. 12.

- [Jehovah's Witnesses defend hospital visits that push for bloodless treatment](#)
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Coroner Luc Malouin is working to determine whether her refusal was free and informed as required by medical and legal standards.

After her death, Dupuis's aunt, Manon Boyer, filed a complaint with police in Lévis alleging her niece was pressured into refusing consent by a Jehovah's Witness hospital liaison committee.

The committees are composed of Jehovah's Witness elders who are dispatched to a hospital when a member is facing a blood transfusion decision.

According to the faith group, their role is to advocate for bloodless medical procedures and ensure their members' wishes are respected.

Their presence, however, [has been criticized by a former Jehovah's Witness, who said it's "intimidating."](#)

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