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Denied parole for staying with boyfriend

Annie Arbic of Kanesatake, serving time for her role in a drug trafficking and money laundering scheme, has been denied parole for a second time in large part because she refuses to dump her boyfriend, a Hells Angel facing murder charges.

A Kanesatake woman serving time for her role in a drug trafficking and money laundering scheme has been denied parole for a second time because she refuses to dump her boyfriend, a Hells Angel.

VINCENZO D'ALTO GAZETTE FILE PHOTO Annie Arbic of Kanesatake hugs her boyfriend Martin Robert, a full-patch member of the Hells Angels, outside a Laval courtroom in 2008. She is expected to be released in May.

Annie Arbic, 24, is serving a 38-month sentence she received in 2008 after being convicted in Project Cleopatra. The investigation, led by the RCMP, was dubbed Cleopatra because it centred on Arbic's mother, Sharon Simon, 53, a wealthy and powerful woman in Kanesatake. Simon received the equivalent of a six-year, nine-month sentence in Project Cleopatra.

Arbic was turned down for day parole last year and the National Parole Board did not see things differently on her second attempt, last month.

Arbic has a spotless record as an inmate. She participated in rehabilitation programs while behind bars and is pursuing the equivalent of a high school diploma.

It is her relationship with Martin Robert, 35, a full-patch member of the Hells Angels, that leaves the parole board leery about her chances at rehabilitation.

Robert and Arbic were a couple before she was arrested in 2006, and she acknowledges she plans to continue the relationship when she is released even though he faces several murder charges as part of Operation SharQc, a police investigation into the biker gang.

Robert, a member of the gang's Montreal chapter, was arrested in January in Mexico, as Quebec police worked to track down several Hells Angels who were still on the lam in the investigation that produced criminal charges against almost all of the gang's membership in Quebec last April.

The first-degree murder charges he faces are part of the Crown's theory that the gang's entire membership voted in 1994 in favour of the conflict that came to be known as the biker gang war in Quebec.

Martin and several coaccused in the case return to court on April 23.

According to a written summary of the parole board decision, Arbic was about to be approved for placement in a halfway house, where she could pursue her studies, but Operation SharQc changed those plans.

According to the parole board decision, Arbic was "shaken" to learn her boyfriend faces such serious charges and "to this day you find it difficult to conceive that (Robert) was implicated in the violent offences for which he was being sought."

While Robert was on the lam, Arbic applied for unescorted leaves from her penitentiary. She was turned down out of concerns she would flee Canada and join Robert wherever he was hiding.

In turning her down again for a release, two members of the parole board determined Arbic's choice in a partner indicates she has changed little in terms of her attitudes toward organized crime.

Her case management team, or parole officers, feels her choice of associates is the most significant contributing factor to her criminality.

Arbic will reach her statutory release date in late May.

Federal inmates who have not been granted a release before the two-thirds mark of their sentence are automatically released, unless they are deemed likely to commit a violent crime.