



## Opinion of Canadians on Karla Homolka's Release from Prison

July 2005  
10679-047

### **Methodology**

This Leger Marketing survey was conducted through telephone interviews from July 5 to July 11, 2005 among a representative sample of 1,500 Canadians. The maximum margin of error for a sample of this size is  $\pm 2,5\%$ , 19 times out of 20.

Using the latest data from Statistics Canada, the final results were weighted according to gender, age, province and mother tongue to ensure a sample representative of the Canadian population.



## Karla Homolka is notorious throughout Canada

From coast to coast, Karla Homolka's release from prison has caused quite a stir: 94% of Canadians had heard about it when the survey was conducted at the beginning of July, 2005. It comes as no surprise that Ontario (96%) and Québec (95%) are the provinces where the story has made the biggest sensation.

**TABLE 1**

**Question:** *Recently, have you heard about Karla Homolka's release from prison or not?*  
(n=1 500)

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Atlantic</b>	<b>Québec</b>	<b>Ontario</b>	<b>Prairies</b>	<b>Alberta</b>	<b>British Columbia</b>
<b>Yes</b>	94%	92%	<b>95%</b>	<b>96%</b>	87%	95%	93%
<b>No</b>	5%	8%	5%	3%	<b>13%</b>	5%	7%
<b>Don't know/Refusal</b>	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%

## Karla Homolka has not paid her debt to society according to a majority of Canadians

Canadians are perplexed with the plea-bargain between Karla Homolka and the justice system that allowed her to serve a lesser 12-year prison term in exchange for her testimony against her husband. Thus, two-thirds (64%) of the people surveyed feel that Karla Homolka has not paid her debt to society. Women are among those who reserve the harshest judgement for Karla Homolka, three-quarters of them (73%) feel that she has not paid her debt to society, as opposed to less than six out of ten (55%) among men.

Karla Homolka's charm campaign in Québec seems to have been successful: close to one Quebecker out of two (46%) feel that Ms. Homolka and society are even. In Québec, there seems to have been an increase in sympathy for her if we look at the results of a survey conducted the day after her interview with Radio-Canada. This survey, which was conducted in Québec only, showed that a third (33%) of Quebecers believe that Ms. Homolka has paid her debt to society.

Ontarians who were the direct victims of Ms. Homolka's crimes cannot be fooled. Thus, only 23% of Ontarians believe that she has paid her debt, one of the lowest averages in the country along with Alberta (21%) and British Columbia (23%).

**TABLE 2**

**Question:** *Knowing that Karla Homolka has served the 12-year prison sentence she received after having pleaded guilty to two lesser charges of manslaughter and in exchange for her testimony against her husband, do you believe that she has paid her debt to society or not...?*  
(n=1 437)

	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
<b>YES</b>	29%	<b>39%</b>	21%
<b>No</b>	65%	55%	<b>73%</b>
<b>Don't know /Refusal</b>	6%	6%	6%

## Nobody is convinced of Karla Homolka's sincerity

Canadians are merciless when it comes to Karla Homolka's remorse: they simply do not believe her. Only 14% of Canadians (one person out of seven) think she is sincere when expressing remorse for the crimes she committed. On the other hand, 70% believe she is putting on an act, a proportion that is even higher among women (75%) than men (65%). It should be noted that 16% did not have an opinion.

Once again, Québec reacts differently from the rest of the country. In the Belle Province, 28% of people surveyed believe in Ms Homolka's sincerity, whereas everywhere else rates vary between 7% and 13%.

**TABLE 3**

**Question:** *Do you believe Karla Homolka is sincere when she expresses remorse for the crimes she committed?*  
(n=1 200\*)

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Atlantic</b>	<b>Québec</b>	<b>Ontario</b>	<b>Prairies</b>	<b>Alberta</b>	<b>British Columbia</b>
<b>Yes</b>	14%	7%	<b>28%</b>	11%	12%	13%	9%
<b>No</b>	70%	74%	55%	<b>74%</b>	67%	72%	76%
<b>Don't know/Refusal</b>	16%	19%	17%	15%	21%	15%	15%

\* At the request of the Canadian Press this question was inserted during data collection, which explains the small sample size. The maximum margin of error for 1,200 respondents is  $\pm 2,8\%$ , 19 times out of 20.

## Despite everything, nearly a third of Canadians would accept Karla Homolka as their neighbour

Though many of them do not feel that Ms. Homolka has paid her debt to society and are sceptical of her sincerity, 31% of Canadians would accept that she live in their neighbourhood. Admittedly, the total proportion is inflated by the figure from Québec, where 50% would be willing to share their neighbourhood with the criminal. Still, in the rest of Canada 25% would accept Ms. Homolka as their neighbour, including Ontario.

Furthermore, among those who would like to keep a certain distance between their house and hers, 14% would not object if she lived in the same city, 12% would tolerate her in their province, and 43% would want her further away.

**TABLE 3**  
**Question:** *Would you accept that Karla Homolka live in your neighbourhood...?*  
(n=1 437)

	<b>Would Accept (cumulative)</b>	<b>Québec</b>	<b>ROC</b>
<b>THAT SHE LIVE IN MY NEIGHBOURHOOD</b>	31%	50%	25%
<b>That she live in my city</b>	14%	13%	13%
<b>That she live in my province</b>	12%	15%	14%
<b>Refuse all options presented</b>	43%	22%	48%
	100%	100%	100%

## The majority believe Karla Homolka still represents a danger

Six respondents out of ten (61%) are of the opinion that Karla Homolka still represents a danger to society, a danger that is not lessened by the strict conditions imposed on the criminal upon her release. A stronger proportion of women fear the serial killer (71% against 52% for men). Once again, Quebecers take the situation more lightly as only 51% are afraid that Ms. Homolka is still dangerous.

**TABLE 3**

**Question:** As you may know, Karla Homolka has been released from prison but the Courts have imposed strict restrictions on her freedom even though she has served her full sentence. For example: a curfew, reporting to police regularly, no contact with those under the age of 16, etc. In your opinion is Karla Homolka a danger to society or not?  
(n=1 483)

	Total	Atlantic	Québec	Ontario	Prairies	Alberta	British Columbia
Yes	61%	63%	51%	65%	67%	64%	64%
No	25%	21%	39%	21%	22%	20%	18%
Don't know /Refusal	14%	16%	10%	14%	11%	16%	82%

## Questionnaire

### PC4

PC4. Recently, have you heard about Karla Homolka's release from prison or not?

Yes .....	1	
No .....	2	=> +6
Don't know .....	8	=> +6
Refusal .....	9	=> +6
«PC4»		

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### PC5

PC5. Knowing that Karla Homolka has served the 12-year prison sentence she received after having pleaded guilty to two lesser charges of manslaughter and in exchange for her testimony against her husband, do you believe that she has paid her debt to society or not?

Yes .....	1	
No .....	2	
Don't know .....	8	
Refusal .....	9	
«PC5»		

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### PC55

PC55. Do you believe Karla Homolka is sincere when she expresses remorse for the crimes she committed?

Yes .....	1	
No .....	2	
Don't know .....	8	
Refusal .....	9	
«PC55»		

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### PC6

PC6. Would you accept that Karla Homolka live in your neighbourhood ?

Yes .....	1	=> PC9
No .....	2	
Don't know .....	8	
Refusal .....	9	
«PC6»		

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### PC7

PC7. Would you accept that Karla Homolka live in your city?

Yes .....	1	=> PC9
No .....	2	
Don't know .....	8	
Refusal .....	9	
«PC7»		

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**PC8**

PC8. Would you accept that Karla Homolka live in your province ?

Yes .....	1	=> PC9
No .....	2	
Don't know .....	8	
Refusal .....	9	

«PC8»

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**PC9**

PC9. As you may know, Karla Homolka has been released from prison but the Courts have imposed strict restrictions on her freedom even though she has served her full sentence. For example: a curfew, reporting to police regularly, no contact with those under the age of 16, etc. In your opinion is Karla Homolka a danger to society or not?

Yes .....	1
No .....	2
Don't know .....	8
Refusal .....	9

«PC9»

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