



**IN THE MATTER OF THE DEATH OF A FEMALE ON OCTOBER 7, 2018  
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE RCMP OFFICERS IN CRANBROOK,  
BRITISH COLUMBIA**

**DECISION OF THE CHIEF CIVILIAN DIRECTOR  
OF THE INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIONS OFFICE**

Chief Civilian Director:

Ronald J. MacDonald, Q.C.

IIO File Number:

2018 - 127

Date of Release:

February 22, 2019

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## **Facts**

On the evening of October 6, 2018, RCMP received a call of a female (Affected Person, or 'AP') in distress at a remote rural property. On arrival at the property officers heard shots fired by AP and the incident escalated to what appeared to be a hostage situation with two minors.

Officers requested the Emergency Response Team (ERT) for assistance. Due to the location, it was several hours before ERT members arrived. The ERT then safely extracted the minors from one part of the property before entering an outbuilding where they found AP deceased from carbon monoxide poisoning.

Due to the death occurring while police were on the scene, the Independent Investigations Office (IIO) was notified of this incident by the RCMP and commenced its investigation. The details of the incident and the IIO's investigation are provided below.

Evidence collected during the investigation included the following:

- 1) Pathologist Report;
- 2) PRIME (Police File) reports;
- 3) Video footage from a police robot; and
- 4) Computer Assisted Dispatch (CAD) and police records.

## **Facts**

On October 6, 2018 at approximately 8:54 p.m., RCMP received a call concerning an armed AP who was threatening to harm herself. It was also reported that two minors were with AP.

Officers contacted AP on her cell phone, but she threatened police with her dogs if they proceeded to her property. Officer 1 was first at the scene, which was a large rural property with many detached buildings. Officer 1 requested a containment team, a police dog and body armour.

Three officers responded initially. Officer 2 alerted AP to police presence by activating the emergency lights on a marked police car. The officers then approached the property gate on foot. A loud noise consistent with a gun shot was heard. The officers retreated to their police vehicles and drove down the drive way away from the property and a second shot was heard.

Officer 2 telephoned AP who at first indicated she would let the minors go, but then refused. She explained that she had a firearm, ammunition and wanted to talk to her doctor. Two more gun shots were heard on the phone, followed by a scream and line disconnection.

Officers heard an engine start inside an outbuilding, which they believed to be a tractor. A spike belt was placed across the road to the property to prevent AP leaving in a vehicle. At 10:34 p.m., the officers heard the throttle being revved.

Shortly afterwards, officers determined that the minors and the dogs were in the house and not with AP.

At 11:24 p.m., Officer 2 phoned AP again; the phone was answered but AP did not speak. All that could be heard was an idling engine. Police surrounding the property could see a sports car in the outbuilding. Emergency Health Services (EHS) were called to stage at the perimeter of the area.

At 11:38 p.m., the Emergency Response Team (ERT) was requested. The closest ERT members with specialist equipment are based in Kelowna, approximately five or six hours away. Some more locally based ERT members began arriving at midnight.

At 1:27 a.m., ERT members present removed the minors and police also lost contact with AP as her cell phone disconnected, likely due to a discharged battery.

At 5:31 a.m., the idling engine noise could no longer be heard in the outbuilding. At 7.30 a.m., officers used a loud hailer to attempt to communicate with AP for 30 minutes. AP did not respond. By this time, all ERT members had arrived on scene together with specialist equipment. Two distraction rounds were deployed before a robot was sent into the outbuilding.

The camera on the robot displayed AP lying on the ground, not moving. ERT Officers entered and determined AP to be deceased.

### **Relevant Legal Issues and Conclusion**

The purpose of any IIO investigation is to determine whether any officer, through an action or inaction, may have committed any offence in relation to the incident that led to AP's death.

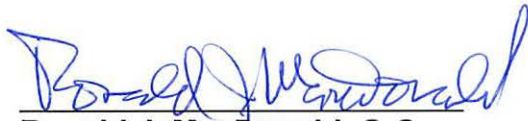
RCMP were faced with an armed hostage situation involving two minors. In a remote area with a small detachment, officers followed protocol and called in a team trained for this type of high risk incident. The minor's removal was priority, and officer safety was also important.

Officers made the reasonable and understandable decision to not attempt to reach AP until the full complement of ERT arrived with the specialist equipment necessary. Once ERT did arrive, AP's car had been running for a great length of time in an enclosed outbuilding. Based on preliminary information from the pathologist report, it is suggested the body was consistent with carbon monoxide poisoning, with no sign of external injury.

The officers had a duty to focus on the minor's safety and protect themselves from an armed individual who had fired four shots while police were present. Officers were therefore cautious about how they dealt with AP and could not know that the situation would end in the way it did.

The evidence collected shows officers carried out their legal duty to protect the minors and does not provide grounds to consider any charges against any officer.

Accordingly, as the Chief Civilian Director of the IIO, I do not consider that any officer may have committed an offence under any enactment and therefore the matter will not be referred to Crown counsel for consideration of charges.



**Ronald J. MacDonald, Q.C.**  
**Chief Civilian Director**

February 22, 2019  
**Date of Release**