



**IN THE MATTER OF THE DEATH OF A MALE  
IN VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA DURING AN INTERACTION  
WITH VANCOUVER POLICE  
IN VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA  
ON APRIL 15, 2019**

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

Chief Civilian Director:

Ronald J. MacDonald, Q.C.

IIO File Number:

2019 - 068

Date of Release:

July 10, 2019

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## Facts

On April 15, 2019, Vancouver Police Department (VPD) received a call regarding a male (Affected Person or "AP") on the wrong side of safety railings on an overpass on Broadway Street, Vancouver. Officers attempted to stop AP from falling. AP fell and was declared deceased at the scene.

As a person had died during his involvement with police officers, the Independent Investigations Office (IIO) was notified and commenced an investigation.

Pursuant to section 17.4 of the Memorandum of Understanding between the IIO and BC Police Agencies, officers who are the subject of an investigation are not compelled to submit their notes, reports and data. In this case, there were two officers involved with AP. Each was designated as a Subject Officer ("SO"). Both provided statements to IIO investigators early in the investigation.

Evidence collected during the investigation included the following:

- 1) Police Records Information Management Environment ("PRIME") records;
- 2) statements from two subject police officers;
- 3) notes from AP at scene and additional materials gathered and reviewed;
- 4) 911 call from reporting person;
- 5) police radio transmissions; and
- 6) photographs of the scene.

At approximately 12:33 a.m. on April 15, 2019, VPD received a call stating that AP was sitting on an overpass in Vancouver. The caller described AP as holding on to the wrong side of the railings.

The caller left the scene, but two officers attended and found AP. Officers described AP as sitting at the edge of the overpass on the wrong side of the safety railing. The police officers called out to the AP and failed to gain any response and, concerned that AP would slip off and fall, Subject Officer 1 (SO1) reached over the railing and took hold of AP. Subject Officer 2 (SO2) also reached for AP, but AP shouted "no" and attempted to fight off his hold. SO1 feared for the safety of SO2 and moved so she could hold on to him.

A struggle ensued with AP trying to break free from the hold of SO2. SO2 had hold of AP's jacket and AP eventually managed to wriggle out from his jacket and fell to the railway lines approximately 50 feet below.

A slow-moving train was using the line where AP fell but did not come into contact with AP. Due to the topography of the location, officers could not gain immediate access to AP to provide medical assistance and called for Vancouver Fire Department to assist. Fire and ambulance attended the scene and recovered AP, with paramedics pronouncing AP deceased on scene.

On his person, AP had a note addressed to VPD explaining his wishes to end his own life and a large knife wrapped in newspaper tucked into his waistband.

The coroner confirmed AP's death was as the result of blunt force trauma from a fall at a significant height.

IIO investigators found letters at AP's home explaining his intent to take his own life and his reasons for doing so.

There is no CCTV at this location and due to the time of day, little traffic or pedestrian movement in the area. The two officers involved are therefore the only known witnesses to the incident.

### **Conclusion**

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

The officer's statements about what happened are corroborated by the jacket left on the overpass, the calls made for assistance, and the evidence from AP's person and home address which strongly supports that he had clear intentions to end his own life. Therefore, there is no reason to doubt their description of what occurred.

It is VPD policy for an officer to use a safety tether on themselves before attempting to grab a person in this kind of situation. However, due to the exigent circumstances faced by the officers, they took immediate steps in an effort to save AP's life, even though those actions placed the officers at risk.

Thus, the evidence collected does not provide grounds to consider any charges against any officer. Indeed, the evidence demonstrates that the officers took significant measures, in spite of placing themselves at risk, in an attempt to save AP's life. They fully fulfilled all that could be expected of a police officer in these circumstances.

Accordingly, as the Chief Civilian Director of the IIO, I do not consider that there are any grounds to consider that an officer 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**

July 10, 2019  
**Date of Release**

Where to get help if you are in crisis:

- [Crisis Services Canada](#)
- British Columbia: <http://www.crisislines.bc.ca>
- Vancouver and surrounding areas: [crisiscentre.bc.ca](http://www.crisiscentre.bc.ca)
- Vancouver Island: <http://www.vicrisis.ca>
- VictimLinkBC – Call 1-800-563-0808