



**IN THE MATTER OF AN INVESTIGATION
BY MEMBERS OF THE RCMP INTO AN INCIDENT
LEADING TO THE DEATH OF A MALE
IN THE TOWNSHIP OF LANGLEY, BRITISH COLUMBIA
ON AUGUST 7, 2019**

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

Chief Civilian Director:

Ronald J. MacDonald, Q.C.

IIO File Number:

2019-141

Date of Release:

December 9, 2019

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Introduction

On the evening of August 7, 2019, Langley RCMP received a 911 call about a young male said to have consumed a large quantity of drugs and believed to be in distress in the vicinity of a skate park adjoining the Walnut Grove Community Centre. Members attended at that location but were unable to find the male. Later that evening, the male was found in the area of a baseball field, a considerable distance from the skate park. He was taken to hospital and treated for a drug overdose, but did not survive. Because there had been police involvement in the incident, the Independent Investigations Office (IIO) was notified and commenced an investigation. The narrative that follows is based on evidence collected and analyzed during the investigation, including the following:

- statements of two first responders and nine civilian witnesses;
- police Computer-Aided Dispatch (“CAD”) and Police Records Information Management Environment (“PRIME”) records; and
- audio recordings of 911 and dispatch channel calls.

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, neither of the two Subject Officers provided any evidence to the IIO.

Narrative

The Affected Person (“AP”) in this case was a young male. In the afternoon and evening of August 7, 2019, in the area of the Walnut Grove skate park, he had ingested a large quantity of drugs and was showing clear signs of distress. He was in the company of a group of youths. The evidence indicates that by shortly after 7:00 p.m. AP was no longer at the skate park, but was in an area of a baseball diamond on the far side of a community centre and a secondary school.

At 8:01 p.m. on August 7, 2019, Civilian Witness 1 (“CW1”) called 911 to report that her daughter had shown her a Snapchat photo the daughter had received about an hour earlier of a young male (AP) at the Walnut Grove skate park, who looked “out of it.” CW1 passed on to the police dispatcher an assertion that AP had taken fifteen capsules of “Molly” (MDMA, or ecstasy). The photo had apparently been sent by an older teen. CW1 provided a physical description of AP, and said that he was in a group of other teens, but said she did not know exactly where he was.

At 8:08 p.m., Subject Officers 1 and 2 (“SO1” and “SO2”) were dispatched to the skate park for a welfare check, based on the information received from CW1. They arrived at 8:25 p.m. and an ambulance attended shortly afterwards. At 8:31 p.m., SO1 radioed

“Nobody here. GOA [gone on arrival].” At about 8:43 p.m. the two officers were dispatched to another call in the same vicinity. They told waiting paramedics that after walking around the grounds they had not been approached by anyone seeking help, and had not found anyone in distress. The ambulance was cleared from the call.

Civilian Witness 2 (“CW2”), an employee of the Recreation Centre, told IIO investigators that she saw the two officers outside the Centre and asked them what the concern was. She said they told her about the report they had received, and she told them that no intoxicated male had been seen inside the Centre. CW2 said it appeared that the officers were unsure if the report was genuine or a hoax, but were looking to see if they could find anyone around the skate park.

CW3 told investigators that as he was exiting the Recreation Centre at about 8:20 p.m. he saw two police officers who appeared to be searching for someone outside. CW3 saw the officers talking with CW2, but did not speak with them himself.

At 10:39 p.m., a second 911 call was received following the discovery of AP in the area of the baseball diamond, and paramedics and police were dispatched to that location. AP was found to be in serious medical distress and was transported to hospital, where he died. The location where AP was discovered is approximately 650 metres from the skate park, on the other side of a number of large buildings and other visual obstructions.

Legal Issues and Conclusion

The purpose of any IIO investigation is to determine whether there are reasonable grounds to believe that an officer, through an action or inaction, may have committed any offence in relation to the incident that led to the death of AP. More specifically, the issue to be considered in this case is whether an officer may have been negligent with respect to the initial police response. Given the nature of the initial complaint, they had a duty to use reasonable efforts to attempt to locate an individual who may have been in medical distress and in need of help.

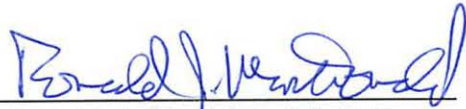
By the time SO1 and SO2 arrived at the skate park, they were aware that the report to which they were responding was at least ten minutes out of date (though they were not told that it was actually more than an hour old). For all they knew, the report could have been false, and even if taken at face value it lacked detail about the exact place and time at which the distressed youth had first been seen. Nevertheless, the evidence shows, the officers spent almost 20 minutes at the skate park area and found no trace of AP or anyone with information about him.

We now know that this was because AP and the group of young people he was with had moved to a location a considerable distance away. Unfortunately, there was nothing at

the skate park to assist the officers in determining where AP might have gone—how far and in which direction. The actions of the officers were not negligent. They acted completely reasonably in the circumstances.

Certainly had any information to suggest the location and condition of AP been known at the time, the police could have reacted to it. As noted, however, there was none. This was a tragic incident leading to the death of a young person. However, the actions of the police played no role in that outcome.

Accordingly, as the Chief Civilian Director of the IIO, I do not consider that an 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

December 9, 2019

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