



**IN THE MATTER OF THE DEATH OF AN  
RCMP MEMBER IN  
RICHMOND, BRITISH COLUMBIA  
ON FEBRUARY 21, 2021**

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

Chief Civilian Director:

Ronald J. MacDonald, KC

IIO File Number:

2021-043

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April 29, 2024

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The following report discusses suicide and contains details that may be distressing to some readers. **If you are in crisis, help is available:**

- Call 310-6789 to be connected to the crisis centre nearest you (no area code required)
- Crisis Services Canada: [crisisservicescanada.ca](https://crisisservicescanada.ca)
- British Columbia: [crisislines.bc.ca](https://crisislines.bc.ca)
- Vancouver and surrounding areas: [crisiscentre.bc.ca](https://crisiscentre.bc.ca)
- Vancouver Island: [vicrisis.ca](https://vicrisis.ca)
- VictimLinkBC: 1-800-563-0808

## **Introduction**

On the evening of February 21, 2021, an off-duty police officer died by suicide (Affected Person or 'AP'). It was alleged that AP was "bullied" into taking her own life by a police officer and another individual. The 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 three civilian witnesses;
- statements of two additional civilian witnesses conducted by the RCMP;
- statements of six witness police officers;
- scene examination and collection of evidence;
- CCTV video;
- A phone search and data extraction;
- A review of data transmission records associated with two phone numbers;
- Police Computer-Aided Dispatch ('CAD');
- Police Records Information Management Environment ('PRIME') records;
- Police radio transmissions and telephone recordings; and
- Autopsy and toxicology reports.

An officer was initially designated as a Subject Officer ('SO') in this matter, but his status changed when it was no longer reasonably believed that his presence, actions, and decisions were a significant contributing factor in AP's death. SO subsequently provided a statement to IIO investigators.

## **Narrative**

On February 21, 2021 at 9:11 p.m., AP sent text messages to the Subject Officer ('SO'), Civilian Witness 1 ('CW1'), and Witness Officer 1 ('WO1') that suggested she could be suicidal. Included in some of the messages were references to her being "bullied" to death by SO who was senior in rank to her. The text messages all had different content, which was dependent on the recipient.

CW1 and WO1 called 911 (calls were placed at 9:14 p.m. and 9:18 p.m., respectively). The New Westminster Police initiated an investigation to find AP. Additionally, SO began taking steps to contact AP at 9:24 p.m. and confirmed police had been notified at 9:26 p.m. An alert was broadcasted to all lower mainland police agencies to look for AP.

CCTV video captured the following events as they unfolded. At 9:10 p.m., AP drove her vehicle and parked it in a gravel lot by a bridge in Richmond. AP then sent death notes via text message to SO, WO1 and CW1 at 9:11 p.m.

At 9:12 p.m., video captured a lone figure walking from the vehicle to the middle of the bridge deck, then dropping out of frame. AP shot herself using her police-issued gun at 9:14 p.m., which was confirmed by video and forensic analysis.

Despite their many efforts, AP died before police or anyone else could prevent it, as the video confirms that AP died at the same time the first 911 call was placed by CW1. New Westminster Police responded immediately to the 911 calls and conducted a search of AP's residence at 9:26 p.m. Family members conducted a search. AP's phone was pinged by officers at 9:35 p.m., which located her near a bridge in Richmond. Vancouver Police Department officers patrolled the location and found AP deceased at 10:06 p.m., approximately one hour after AP's initial texts to SO, WO1, and CW1.

IIO investigators gathered information to create a timeline of AP's activities throughout the day prior to her suicide. At 1:48 p.m., CCTV video captured AP entering her detachment, and exiting with a pistol case. Later that day, she communicated with friends and family members over text message. Friends and family members were concerned about AP's wellbeing that day. At 5:51 p.m., CW1 encouraged her to call a helpline.

At 8:25 p.m., AP told CW1 that she was going to get gas, and then drove towards the bridge where she was later found deceased.

AP had a difficult life and was struggling through many issues. She had a troubled relationship with SO. The relationship could be described as tumultuous and had ended prior to her death.

AP sent several messages to SO, WO1, and CW1 before her death. Two of those messages said that she was “bullied” by SO and that they “caused me to do this” [implying SO’s actions made her want to take her own life]. In another message, she blamed other significant personal issues unrelated to the SO for her death.

IIO investigators sought multiple search warrants and production orders to search the phone of AP and obtain data transmission [phone] records associated to the cellular telephones linked to AP and SO, respectively. AP’s phone was password protected, so this involved various techniques and required an extended period of time to ‘break’ passwords and override phone security.

All retrievable materials, including messages, images, videos, emails, and notes were reviewed to specifically assess AP’s interactions with SO, and any other person, leading up to her death. For privacy reasons, the details of those messages are not contained in this Public Report. In summary, while that review showed evidence of a challenging relationship, there were no materials found that indicated any bullying or harassment on the part of SO, or any other person.

SO was interviewed and provided details related to his relationship with AP, which had not been disclosed to senior management within the RCMP prior to AP’s death. SO had not seen or spoken to AP on the day that she died. SO acknowledged that he had an argument with AP on February 20, 2021, ending in the early hours of February 21, 2021 via text message.

An autopsy was performed which confirmed that AP died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound to her right temple. The gun seized from the scene was submitted for DNA and forensic analysis and determined to be AP’s service pistol.

### **Legal Issues and Conclusion**

The Independent Investigations Office of British Columbia has been given the task of investigating any incident that occurs in the province in which an Affected Person has died or suffered serious physical harm and there appears to be a connection to the actions (or sometimes inaction) of police. The aim is to provide assurance to the public that when the investigation is complete, they can trust the IIO’s conclusions, because the investigation was conducted by an independent, unbiased, civilian-led agency.

In the majority of cases, those conclusions are presented in a public report such as this one, which completes the IIO’s mandate by explaining to the public what happened in the

incident and how the Affected Person came to suffer harm. Such reports are generally intended to enhance public confidence in the police and in the justice system as a whole through a transparent and impartial evaluation of the incident and the police role in it.

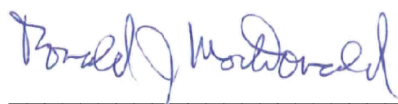
In a smaller number of cases, the evidence gathered may give the Chief Civilian Director ('CCD') reasonable grounds to believe that an officer has committed an offence in connection with the incident. In such a case, the *Police Act* gives the CCD authority to refer the file to Crown counsel for consideration of charges.

This investigation involved the tragic death of a young officer who had an entire future ahead of her. Her death has left a dark hole of grief for the family, friends, and co-workers who loved her.

The investigation determined that there was no evidence to support criminal culpability on the part of SO, or any other person for her death, despite allegations that she was "bullied" to death. The relationship between the two officers and its impact on their work environment was the subject of an internal investigation by the RCMP, and it is properly suited to that forum.

Importantly, there was no evidence of bullying or criminal harassment by SO or any other person that caused AP to take her own life. This tragedy unfolded due to a constellation of factors related to various aspects of AP's life that culminated in her devastating suicide. Given the nature of those details in this specific case, and the absence of any evidence of criminal wrongdoing, I have determined that the privacy rights of AP and others outweighs the public interest in the disclosure of those aspect of AP's life.

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.



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Ronald J. MacDonald, KC  
Chief Civilian Director

April 29, 2024

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