



**IN THE MATTER OF THE INJURY OF A MALE
WHILE BEING APPREHENDED BY MEMBERS OF THE
RCMP IN PRINCE GEORGE, BRITISH COLUMBIA
ON APRIL 26, 2023**

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

Chief Civilian Director:

Jessica Berglund

IIO File Number:

2023-112

Date of Release:

September 10, 2025

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INTRODUCTION

On the evening of April 26, 2023, police received a 911 call saying an individual, the Affected Person (“AP”) in this case, had committed stabbings at a residence in Prince George. Before officers reached the scene, the AP had gone along the street and had broken into another home. Police received a second 911 call from that home. The AP then left and attempted to enter a third residence nearby. The AP was eventually taken into custody, but only after advancing on officers, ignoring commands to drop the knife he was carrying, and being shot by police. The AP was taken to hospital, where he subsequently recovered from his wounds.

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 the AP, twelve civilian witnesses and one witness police officer;
- police Computer-Aided Dispatch (“CAD”) and Police Records Information Management Environment (“PRIME”) records;
- audio recordings of 911 calls;
- cell phone video recording from a civilian witness;
- scene examination;
- data download from a Conducted Energy Weapon (“CEW” or “Taser”); and
- medical evidence.

The IIO does not compel officers who are the subject of an investigation to submit their notes, reports and data. In this case, the Subject Officers have not provided any account to the IIO.

NARRATIVE

At 8:54 p.m. on April 26, 2023, Prince George RCMP received a 911 call reporting that a violent incident had occurred in a residence where several people were consuming hard drugs. The caller stated that the Affected Person (“AP”) had stabbed people with a “machete.” Civilian witnesses later told the IIO that the AP had come out of the house screaming as if in psychosis, a knife in his hand.

As the AP walked away along the street, two of the civilians followed, and he was seen to force his way into a second house. The occupant of the house called 911 to report that

the AP had a knife in his hand and was rummaging through drawers, apparently looking for car keys, before leaving and attempting to break into a third house. Interviewed by the IIO, the occupant of that home described hearing loud banging at the front door, and hearing the AP screaming unintelligibly outside. Police officers then arrived drawing their firearms, investigators were told.

Civilian witnesses observing the AP said they judged him to be a threat to others. They directed the witness police officer ("WO") to the AP, telling him, "Don't let him get into another house."

The WO told investigators that he saw the AP in a driveway, pacing back and forth and screaming "gibberish" with a knife in his hand. He said he also saw a civilian male with blood down the front of his shirt, who said that the AP had "just fucking stabbed me."

The WO drew his Conducted Energy Weapon ("CEW" or "Taser") and was covered by the two subject officers with their service pistols. Evidence from the civilian witnesses established that the officers were shouting at the AP to "drop the knife" and to "get on the ground," but the AP was not complying.

The WO told the IIO that he judged pepper spray or a baton to be inappropriate force options in the circumstances, as their use would require approaching too closely to the AP, who had already committed assaults with the knife that he was still holding, and was acting very unpredictably.

The AP made his way into the back yard of the residence and was able to climb over the fence into the adjoining property. Another civilian witness described the AP coming out onto the driveway of that property, and three police officers pointing their weapons at him:

He was definitely angry. He didn't seem scared at having three police around him with guns. [The AP] was still holding the knife in a way that if anyone approached him, he would use the knife. His body language and his tone of voice said that.

The officers' tone as they directed the AP to drop the knife was described as "stern" and "assertive," but also "calm" rather than angry.

Seeing the AP now trying to get into the next residence, the WO's concern heightened. He shouted at the AP that he was "going to get Tasered." He fired his CEW at the AP, who "jolted" and yelled, "Fuck your Taser" and swung his arms in front of him, apparently attempting to break the CEW wires. The WO said it did not appear that the CEW was effective, as the AP was still holding the knife and was "moving around like crazy."

The WO discharged a second CEW cartridge at the AP, but it too appeared to be ineffective, and the WO was now out of cartridges. He told IIO investigators that he then saw the AP raise the knife above his head and advance "quite quickly" towards the two

subject officers. He then heard “four or five” gunshots from beside him and the AP fell to the ground. A civilian witness said he saw the AP on the ground about six feet from the officers, the knife still in his hand.

As other officers arrived, the AP was given first aid, and was transported to hospital by ambulance. He was found to have sustained eight gunshot wounds to his upper body and legs. Internal injuries included trauma to the AP’s liver, stomach and colon.

The photograph below shows a home-made knife or machete that was recovered from the scene. It appeared to have been roughly manufactured from a piece of steel with a handle created by a wrapping of tape. The exposed blade was dark grey in colour, and measured approximately 17 centimetres.



The AP provided IIO investigators with his own account of the incident. He said that as soon as officers arrived, he put his hands in the air, attempting to surrender, but “[t]he cop took that as a threat. He started shooting at me. He shot me six times.” The AP said that police continued to shoot him as he lay on the ground. At another point, he also said, “In my mind, I was trying to put my hands in the air ... That’s what I was trying to do.”

IIO investigators obtained a video recording from the cell phone of a civilian witness located in a residence nearby. The video initially shows the AP climbing over a fence into the driveway of a home. A civilian can be seen at the open front door of the home before going inside and closing the door as the AP appears. The responding officers run along the street parallel to the AP’s path, weapons drawn and held pointing down at the ground. In response to police commands, including repeated directions to “drop the knife,” the AP can be heard shouting, “No!”

The WO steps forward and discharges his CEW, which causes the AP to cry out but does not appear to incapacitate him. He moves towards the front door of the house and a second discharge of the WO’s CEW is heard. At one point, as the AP waves his arms in

the air, the video shows something in the AP's right hand that appears large and dark-coloured. The AP is then seen to come quickly down from the front steps, moving in the direction of the three officers, and several gunshots are audible as the officers are observed backing up.

LEGAL ISSUES AND CONCLUSION

The Independent Investigations Office of British Columbia is mandated to investigate 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.

In a case such as this one, involving the use of lethal force by officers, one of the threads of the IIO investigation is the gathering of evidence about potential justifications for that use of force. The CCD will then apply legal tests such as necessity, proportionality and reasonableness to reach conclusions as to whether officers' actions were lawful. The specific focus will be on the degree of threat posed by each Affected Person and whether, in the words of the *Criminal Code*, it gave reasonable grounds for the officers to believe lethal force was "necessary for the self-preservation of [the officers] or the preservation of any one under [the officers'] protection from death or grievous bodily harm."

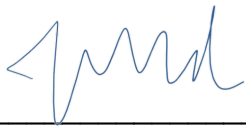
In this case, there were ample grounds for police to respond urgently to the 911 calls and to place the AP under arrest when they located him. They had accounts from several civilian sources about the AP's criminal acts up to that point, as well as their own observations of him.

Throughout the interaction, the AP may well have intended in his mind to surrender. However, independent civilian witnesses and the witness police officer confirm that in fact he was attempting to flee and to break into private residences while armed with a knife, which he failed to drop when ordered repeatedly to do so. The evidence also establishes

that after two reasonable but unsuccessful attempts by police to control the AP using a CEW, he moved quickly towards them, still brandishing the knife. At that point, the officers were facing a threat of death or grievous bodily harm, and their deployment of lethal force was justifiable. On the evidence, the AP was within a few metres of the officers when he was shot, and represented an imminent lethal threat to them.

Nothing in the witness accounts, other than that of the AP, supports an allegation that he was shot repeatedly while lying helpless on the ground. There is, in fact, no reliable evidence that any significant force was used against the AP once he was disabled.

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



Jessica Berglund
Chief Civilian Director

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