



**IN THE MATTER OF THE DEATH OF A MAN
IN AN INCIDENT INVOLVING MEMBERS OF THE RCMP
IN DAWSON CREEK, BRITISH COLUMBIA
ON NOVEMBER 19, 2023**

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

Chief Civilian Director:

Jessica Berglund

IIO File Number:

2023-338

Date of Release:

February 10, 2025

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This report details situations that may be distressing to some readers. If you are in crisis, help is available:

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

INTRODUCTION

On the evening of November 18, 2023, police went to a residence in Dawson Creek with a warrant for the arrest of the Affected Person (“AP”). The AP refused to come out of the home, and fired multiple rounds from a firearm at officers. After several hours of unsuccessful negotiations, police entered the residence and found the AP deceased from a self-inflicted injury.

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 four civilian witnesses and three witness police officers (there was no subject officer in this case);
- police Computer-Aided Dispatch (“CAD”) and Police Records Information Management Environment (“PRIME”) records;
- audio recordings of 911 calls and police radio transmissions;
- audio recordings of negotiation phone calls;
- video and audio recordings of scene from nearby commercial premises;
- police drone video recordings;
- scene and exhibit examinations; and
- autopsy and toxicology reports.

NARRATIVE

Between November 16 and 18, 2023, police were looking for the AP in the Dawson Creek area. There were warrants for his arrest for several firearms-related offences, including a recent allegation that he had threatened and chased someone while pointing a loaded firearm.

Late on the evening of November 18, the AP was located in a residence, and police had information that he was in possession of a loaded shotgun and had said he “was not going back to jail.” Officers also believed that there were three female civilians in the residence with the AP, and there were concerns for their safety. Police, including Emergency Response Team (“ERT”) members, set up containment around the residence.

At about 11:45 p.m., the AP opened the front door and was challenged by police. He retreated back inside the home and closed the door. Police negotiators then began a lengthy series of telephone conversations with the AP, attempting to de-escalate the situation and persuade the AP to surrender peacefully. These attempts were not successful, and the AP indicated repeatedly that he would rather die than go with police.

Between midnight and 1:00 a.m. on November 19, officers were able to assist two of the female occupants to leave through a back window. Some time later, at about 4:00 a.m., the third woman also exited. Shortly after this, the AP fired his shotgun three times in the direction of police, and an ERT officer returned fire. Over the next few hours, in conversations with police negotiators, the AP requested food, and was told that there was food waiting for him outside if he would come out. At 7:10 a.m., the AP told a police negotiator that he had readied the firearm to harm himself.

Following this, ERT members attempted to distract the AP using noise and chemicals inserted into the residence. At 8:04 a.m., the AP told police he was coming out, but there was then a loud sound like a gunshot. Concerned, officers decided to deploy a drone to make observations inside the house. Their initial attempts failed, though, due to technical issues. Meanwhile, the phone line remained open, but there was no further communication from the AP. Finally, at 9:20 a.m., a police drone was successfully inserted into the home and the AP was seen, apparently deceased. ERT medics then entered and confirmed that the AP had died, with evidence of a self-inflicted injury.

At autopsy, it was determined that the AP had died from a self-inflicted shotgun wound, with no other contributing cause of death.

LEGAL ISSUES AND CONCLUSION

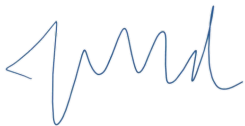
The Independent Investigations Office of British Columbia is mandated to investigate any incident that occurs in the province in which an Affected Person has died or suffered serious physical harm and there appears to be a connection to the actions (or sometimes inaction) of police. The aim is to provide 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.

The officers involved in this incident were acting in the lawful execution of their duty in attempting to arrest the AP on several warrants, and there is no evidence that any act or omission by any officer caused the AP's death. Police properly attempted over a lengthy period to bring the incident to a peaceful conclusion, and took appropriate steps to safeguard uninvolved civilians. The use of noise distraction devices and chemical munitions to prompt the AP to exit the house was reasonable once it was clear that he was prepared to refuse indefinitely to come out.

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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