



**IN THE MATTER OF THE INJURY OF A MALE  
AND AN ASSOCIATED INVESTIGATION BY MEMBERS OF THE  
VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT IN  
VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA  
ON NOVEMBER 23, 2023**

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

Interim Chief Civilian Director:

Sandra J. Hentzen

IIO File Number:

2023-340

Date of Release:

May 23, 2024

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## INTRODUCTION

On the evening of November 23, 2023, the attention of Vancouver police officers was drawn to the behaviour of the Affected Person ('AP'). AP had been found by a civilian witness standing on the Granville Bridge, saying he was thinking of jumping from the bridge. The civilian took AP off the bridge to a pizza restaurant, where the officers engaged in conversation with AP, and in due course concluded that he was not apprehendable under the *Mental Health Act* as a person apparently suffering from a mental disorder and in danger of harming himself. Later that evening, AP jumped from the bridge, landing in a parking lot and suffering serious injuries.

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 three civilian witnesses and two witness police officers; and
- police Computer-Aided Dispatch ('CAD') and Police Records Information Management Environment ('PRIME') records.

The IIO does not compel officers who are the subject of an investigation to submit their notes, reports and data. In this case, the two involved officers provided access to their notes and their written reports in PRIME.

## NARRATIVE

Civilian Witness 1 ('CW1') told the IIO that on November 23, 2023, he was walking across Granville Street Bridge when he saw a male (AP) who "looked like he wanted to jump". CW1 talked with AP, and AP told him that he did want to jump. CW1 offered to buy AP some food, and they went together to a pizza shop off the north end of the bridge. While there, CW1 called 911.

The involved officers were dispatched to the pizza shop as a "check wellbeing" call. CW1 told them what he had heard and observed, and the officers entered into a conversation with AP. CW1 said the officers were "very nice", and offered help to AP.

According to the involved officers' PRIME reports, corroborated by CW1, AP told them he was feeling better after eating some food and drinking water. He acknowledged thinking about jumping from the bridge, but said he now just wanted to find a warm place to spend

the night, and might go to his mother's house in Kitsilano. AP was described as calm and happy, denying any further suicidal thoughts and appearing to be "on the right track", planning to take his medications and attend for counselling regularly.

Witness officer evidence corroborates that account. AP was said to be intending to take a bus to go back across the bridge to his mother's house, and was described as calm and forthcoming in his conversation with the officers. As he was leaving, walking back southbound, one of the officers caught up with him to get his mother's address, and found him still apparently in a good frame of mind.

About thirty minutes later, the witness officers were driving south across the bridge when they saw AP again, looking over the edge. Concerned for his wellbeing, they manoeuvred around to turn back and check on him as quickly as they could, but he had disappeared. They then drove down to the area under the bridge and found an ambulance, which had been called to a "possible jumper" at that location. The officers spoke with attending paramedics and determined that the patient was AP.

AP had evidently jumped from the bridge and had landed in a parking lot. He was taken to hospital in critical condition.

## **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.

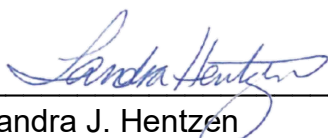
In a case such as this one, involving a potential negligence offence, one of the threads of the IIO investigation will be the gathering of evidence about whether officers met the relevant standard of care.

The nature of the care required of these officers was a diligent inquiry into whether it would be appropriate to apprehend AP and transport him to hospital for psychiatric evaluation. The *Mental Health Act* authorizes such an apprehension if the person appears to be suffering from a mental disorder and is acting in a manner likely to endanger his own safety or the safety of others.

The evidence of four police officers and a civilian witness confirms that AP was not displaying symptoms of mental disorder at the time they spoke with him, and had apparently set aside any thoughts about jumping from a bridge. It was reasonable for the officers to conclude that AP had a safe plan for the night and was no longer at risk of self-harm. In fact, it would have been unreasonable for them to apprehend him after their inquiries, and doing so might even have amounted in law to an assault.

It will never be known if AP was simply misleading the officers with a false display of calm and positivity, or if he was truthful with them, his mood darkening again after he left them. Either way, all of the involved officers performed their duties appropriately, and they are not responsible for AP's unfortunate decision.

Accordingly, as Interim 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 therefore the matter will not be referred to Crown counsel for consideration of charges.

  
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Sandra J. Hentzen  
Interim Chief Civilian Director

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