



**IN THE MATTER OF THE INJURY OF A WOMAN
WHILE BEING APPREHENDED BY MEMBERS OF THE RCMP
IN CHILLIWACK, BRITISH COLUMBIA
ON NOVEMBER 23, 2024**

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

Chief Civilian Director: Jessica Berglund

IIO File Number: 2024-270

Date of Release: March 19, 2026

INTRODUCTION

In the early morning hours of November 23, 2024, Chilliwack RCMP members responded to a call about an intoxicated person attempting to drive away from a local bar. There was an interaction between officers and the Affected Person (“AP”) that became physical, and the AP was injured.

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, two paramedics and two witness police officers;
- police Computer-Aided Dispatch (“CAD”) and Police Records Information Management Environment (“PRIME”) records;
- security camera and police vehicle dash camera video;
- audio recordings of a 911 call and police radio transmissions; and
- medical evidence.

The IIO does not require officers whose actions are the subject of an investigation to provide evidence. In this case, the Subject Officer (“SO”) has not given any account. The AP has also declined to give a statement to the IIO.

NARRATIVE

The incident leading to the AP’s injury occurred in the parking lot of a Chilliwack bar. IIO investigators were able to establish the sequence of events from civilian and police witness statements, corroborated by objective video evidence.

Shortly after 2:00 a.m., the AP left the bar and engaged in a physical altercation with a man in the parking lot. Two members of the bar’s security staff went to the couple and spoke with them, but the AP continued walking around in the parking lot, waving her arms.

At 2:26 a.m., a taxi was in the lot, and a third staff member was holding its passenger door open, attempting to have the AP get in. The AP, however, went back towards the man with whom she was apparently in a dispute, her fist in the air.

The AP then got into the driver's seat of a parked Buick SUV and started the engine. A staff member called 911 to report an intoxicated person apparently intending to drive home. Only about a minute later, a marked police car entered the parking lot and stopped behind the Buick, activating its emergency lights. The Buick moved forward very slightly, but then stopped.

Witness Officer 1 ("WO1") exited the passenger side of the police vehicle and approached the driver's door of the Buick. WO1 opened the driver's door, and at the same time, the SO went to the passenger side of the Buick and shone a flashlight into the rear seat. WO1 then stepped back and the AP got out of the Buick. At about the same time, a second police vehicle driven by Witness Officer 2 ("WO2") pulled into the parking lot and stopped. The Watchguard dash camera system on WO2's vehicle captured the majority of the interaction that followed.

The AP walked back towards the SO, who was now standing near the rear of the Buick. WO1 entered the driver's side of the vehicle, looking for the keys and identification for the AP. WO1 told the IIO that she then heard raised voices behind her, and heard the AP telling the SO that she was going back into the car to get her phone.

WO1 stepped out of the Buick and was standing between the driver's seat and the door as the AP approached. WO1 said she told the AP she could not re-enter the car and extended her arm to stop the AP. At that point, WO1 said, she felt what she considered a punch to her cheek, and told the AP she was under arrest for assault.

A struggle ensued between WO1 and the AP, with WO1 trying to put the AP's arm behind her back and the AP grabbing WO1's ponytail. The SO came to assist, pushing the AP against the side of the Buick, but the AP kept hold of WO1's hair. The SO delivered two knee strikes to the AP, but they were not effective. WO1 swept the AP's legs from under her, they both fell to the ground together and the struggle continued. WO1 said that the AP kned her in the head twice and that when she was able to free herself from the AP's grip, she delivered distraction strikes to the AP's mid-section and thigh. Both officers were giving repeated commands for the AP to stop resisting.

WO2 described the interaction between WO1 and the AP as a "tussle" that moved quickly from "like absolutely nothing" to "suddenly they're fighting." He said he saw the struggle go to the ground, with the AP landing on her back, "flailing." WO2 did not initially participate in controlling the AP as his attention was drawn to an approaching group of people he judged to be intoxicated and hostile. He said he did see the SO deliver a punch to the upper chest or face area of the AP.

The Watchguard video from WO2's police vehicle generally corroborates the police account of the incident, including WO1's description of the AP grabbing and holding

WO1's hair, but it appears to show three strikes by the SO to the AP's face as the two officers try to control her on the ground. The SO and WO1 were then able to turn the AP over and handcuff her. The AP was bleeding from injuries to her face.

The AP was subsequently found to have suffered a fractured jaw requiring surgery.

ANALYSIS

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 most 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 force by officers, IIO investigators collect evidence with respect to potential justifications for that use of force. The CCD then analyzes this evidence using legal tests such as necessity, proportionality and reasonableness to reach conclusions as to whether officers' actions were lawful, or whether an officer may have committed the offence of assault.

The responding officers were acting in the lawful execution of their duty in preventing the AP from driving in a state of apparent intoxication. There was justification to arrest her for impaired care or control of a motor vehicle and assault, and the officers were authorized to use a degree of force that was reasonably necessary for the purpose. While blows to the head are a higher level of force, with greater risk of injury, there was a need to get the AP under control quickly. Video of the scene and the evidence of WO2 show that the officers were at risk of interference or violence from angry and intoxicated bystanders. In those circumstances, it cannot be said that the force used by the SO and WO1 was unnecessary or excessive.

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

March 19, 2026

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