



**IN THE MATTER OF THE DEATH OF A MAN
AND INJURIES TO TWO WOMEN
IN AN INCIDENT INVOLVING MEMBERS OF THE
VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT IN
VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA
ON DECEMBER 4, 2024**

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

Chief Civilian Director:

Jessica Berglund

IIO File Number:

2024-287

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October 22, 2025

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INTRODUCTION

On the morning of December 4, 2024, police were called to a convenience store on Robson Street in Vancouver. A staff member was complaining about a man who had come into the store several times asking for free cigarettes. Two officers responded and the man left without incident. Shortly afterwards, the man went into a nearby restaurant and stole liquor and other items, including two knives. He then went back to the convenience store and trapped two employees behind the counter, threatening and assaulting them with the knives. There was an urgent police response, and after attempts by officers to subdue the man using a Conducted Energy Weapon (“CEW” or “Taser”), an officer discharged his firearm and the man was fatally wounded. The two store employees were also injured, one from being stabbed and the other from being struck by a bullet fragment.

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 seventeen civilian witnesses including the two injured store employees, four paramedics and three witness police officers;
- police Computer-Aided Dispatch (“CAD”) and Police Records Information Management Environment (“PRIME”) records;
- audio recordings of 911 calls and police radio transmissions;
- video recordings from commercial security cameras, a transit bus and civilian cell phones;
- police training records and policies;
- medical evidence, including autopsy and toxicology reports for the AP.

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.

NARRATIVE

On December 4, 2024, Witness Officers 1 and 2 (“WO1” and “WO2”) responded to a 911 call from a Robson Street convenience store about a man, Affected Person 1 (“AP1”), who had been bothering staff. AP1 was said to have come into the store several times

trying to get the staff to give him free cigarettes. The complaint was resolved without significant interaction between the officers and AP1, who left the scene.

About half an hour later, AP1 went into a nearby restaurant and stole bottles of liquor, an iPad and two knives. Restaurant staff were able to lock the doors after AP1 left the establishment, and called 911.

AP1 then returned to the convenience store and walked inside. He approached the front counter and quickly went behind it, trapping Affected Persons 2 and 3 ("AP2" and "AP3") and threatening them with the knives. A third staff member, Civilian Witness 1 ("CW1"), tried to engage with AP1 from the customer side of the counter, but AP1 chased him away before returning behind the counter. CW1 then tried again, unsuccessfully, to reason with AP1, and AP2 attempted to hold AP1 off using a portable fan unit, which AP1 pulled from her hands and threw aside.

Staff members offered AP1 cigarettes and money, but he ignored them and started to make stabbing motions at AP2 and AP3. There was an exit door to the street behind the counter, but it was obstructed by a shelving unit holding a computer terminal and a variety of stored items, so the two staff members were unable to exit the convenience store through that door.

Several police officers had responded to the 911 call from the restaurant, and were re-directed by civilian witnesses to the convenience store. The Subject Officer ("SO") was first to enter the store, with his pistol drawn. He was followed closely by WO1 and WO2 (the same officers who had interacted with AP1 earlier). WO1 drew and pointed his CEW and positioned himself between AP1 and CW1, who was still pleading with AP1 not to harm anyone. WO1 told the IIO that he could only see AP1's head and shoulders above a display on the counter. He said the SO started to talk to AP1, attempting to de-escalate. WO1 said he pushed the SO sideways, to obtain a better view of AP1 as a target for the CEW if necessary.

CW1 said that the officers were giving AP1 "strong warnings," to drop the knife but AP1 was responding angrily and not complying with those directions. Video recordings from the store's security system and civilian cell phones show the SO motioning to AP1, apparently directing him to step away from AP2 and AP3, who are huddled together defensively at the closed-off end of the space behind the counter. WO1 deploys the CEW, but it fails to incapacitate AP1, who steps towards the officers, saying something through gritted teeth, a knife and a bottle visible in his hands. AP1 then turns away and moves back into very close proximity to AP2 and AP3. At that moment, WO1 deploys the CEW for a second time and the SO discharges four rounds from his firearm. AP1 is now making stabbing motions at AP2 and AP3, and the SO fires five more rounds. AP1 falls to his knees behind the counter and the SO, leaning across the counter, fires one final shot.

AP1 received immediate medical attention, but died from cardiac arrest caused by multiple gunshot wounds. He was declared deceased in the hospital at 12:14 p.m.

AP2 had been struck in the face by a bullet fragment, causing traumatic injuries around her left eye that subsequently required surgery. AP3 was treated for knife wounds to her head, back, and left thumb, suffered during the attack by AP1.

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 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 (or Affected Persons, as in this case) 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.

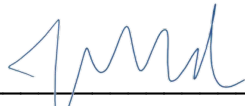
In a case such as this one, involving the use of lethal force by an officer, evidence is gathered about potential justifications for that use of force. The CCD then applies legal tests such as necessity, proportionality and reasonableness to reach conclusions as to whether the officer's actions were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

The actions of AP1 clearly presented a threat of death or grievous bodily harm to AP2 and AP3, and the SO was justified—and in fact bound by his duty as a police officer—to use all necessary force to protect them from it. When WO1's attempt to subdue AP1 with his CEW failed and AP1 turned back to the two store employees to attack them with a

knife, it was reasonable for the SO to conclude that there was no viable option but to use lethal force against him. This was so despite the risk to AP2 and AP3 because of their proximity to AP1 when the SO fired his first shots. While it is unfortunate that AP2 was struck and injured by a bullet fragment, the lethal threat posed by AP1 to the two employees was even greater than the risk of harm from the SO's shots.

With AP1 still in possession of his weapons, still in close proximity to his victims and still effectively trapping them behind the counter, the deployment of lethal force against him continued to be justified until he was fully immobilized. Once that was achieved and the threat to the civilians was negated, the SO stopped firing.

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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