



**IN THE MATTER OF THE INJURY OF A WOMAN
WHILE BEING APPREHENDED BY MEMBERS OF THE RCMP
IN QUESNEL, BRITISH COLUMBIA
ON JANUARY 6, 2024**

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

Chief Civilian Director:

Jessica Berglund

IIO File Number:

2025-046

Date of Release:

September 17, 2025

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INTRODUCTION

In the early morning hours of January 6, 2024, Quesnel RCMP were given information that texts had been received on a crisis line saying the person texting was drinking, self-harming and intending to die. Police were able to identify the Affected Person (“AP”) as the subscriber of the cell phone from which the texts had originated, and proceeded to patrol the area of the AP’s last known address. Police located the AP and apprehended her under the *Mental Health Act* (“MHA”). The AP was resistant and suffered an ankle injury in the course of her apprehension.

The Independent Investigations Office (“IIO”) was notified and commenced an investigation. The following narrative is based on evidence collected and analyzed during the investigation, including the following:

- statements of the AP and three witness police officers;
- police Computer-Aided Dispatch (“CAD”) and Police Records Information Management Environment (“PRIME”) records;
- audio recordings of police 911 and radio channels; and
- medical evidence.

The IIO does not require officers whose actions are the subject of an investigation to give an account. In this case, Subject Officer 1 (“SO1”) provided a voluntary statement to investigators. Subject Officer 2 (“SO2”) did not offer any evidence.

NARRATIVE

The incident occurred on January 6, 2024, but did not come to the attention of the IIO until February 12, 2025, when the RCMP notified the IIO after being told by the AP she wished to file a formal complaint. The AP had reported her injury at the Quesnel RCMP detachment on January 23, 2024, attending at the front desk on crutches and in a boot cast. The complaint process was explained to her, but she did not indicate she wanted to file a complaint at that time. When she subsequently returned over a year later, on February 3, 2025, and expressed her intention to make a formal complaint, the RCMP obtained her medical records. The records indicated, when she was taken to hospital after the MHA apprehension on the morning of January 6, 2024, the AP was found to have suffered “a minimally displaced fracture of the distal fibula” of her right leg. It should be noted the records also indicate the AP made no mention of ankle pain to medical staff

until after she had been left in the care of the hospital and police had departed. On January 19, 2024, the AP underwent surgery for what were now discovered to be two fractures, which were repaired with a plate and six screws.

The AP was interviewed by the RCMP on February 3, 2025. She told the interviewer when the officers located her on the morning of January 6, 2024, “they tried to have a conversation with me to see what was going on, but I obviously was not compliant enough...” so three officers “grabbed me and took me down to the ground, tackled me to the ground, which resulted in a leg slash ankle break.” The AP stated she immediately told the officers she thought they had broken her leg.

On March 4, 2025, the AP was interviewed by IIO investigators. She said the first officer she dealt with “was trying to have a conversation with me for about five minutes” but she did not respond to him. Then, the officer “rushed” towards her, and she was grabbed by three officers, spun around and pushed to the ground with her hands behind her back. She said she “guessed” these movements were what caused her leg to be fractured in two spots, as well as causing “lots of other injuries.” In this interview too, the AP said she had immediately told the officers she thought they had broken her leg, but said she then thought it might have just been “twisted.” She said upon arrival at the hospital, a wheelchair was brought for her at her request, and she was wheeled from the police vehicle into the building.

The 911 call leading to the incident was received by police at 12:29 a.m. on January 6, 2024. The caller was a help line operator who reported that she was receiving concerning texts from an unidentified individual (the AP). The information shared with police gave them reasonable grounds to believe the AP should be apprehended under the MHA.

Three officers responded: Subject Officer 1 (“SO1”), Subject Officer 2 (“SO2”) and Witness Officer 1 (“WO1”). Police requested an ambulance to be kept available nearby. At 1.21 a.m., SO1 located the AP and called the other officers to his location.

WO1 told the IIO that when he arrived, he found SO1 attempting unsuccessfully to get a response from the AP to his questions. WO1 said that eventually, SO1 told the AP that if she did not respond he would have to proceed based on the information he had received from the crisis line and apprehend her under the MHA.

WO1 said SO1 reached to take the AP by her right wrist, to apply handcuffs, but she pulled away, stepping back into SO2, who was standing behind her. “It was almost one fluid motion,” WO1 continued, “and [SO2] just basically does a slight hip toss and [the AP] lands on her back on the ground.”

SO1 started to search the AP's clothing for a knife, and she told him she had a folding knife in her pocket. The knife was transferred to the AP's backpack, which was returned to her at the hospital.

The AP was taken to a police vehicle and transported to hospital. Both SO1 and WO1 stated the AP did not show any physical sign of injury or pain and did not cry out or complain of pain at any point. WO1 noted police had an ambulance standing by, less than a block away, and there would be no reason not to call in the paramedics if the AP had given any indication she was injured.

In his IIO interview, Witness Officer 2 ("WO2") described arriving on scene shortly after the officers had stood the AP up on her feet. He said he observed her standing with three officers, all three of whom appeared calm. WO2 said his instructions were the AP had been apprehended, and he was to transport her for a psychiatric evaluation. WO2 said he parked about 10 feet from the group and the AP walked normally to his police vehicle. He said the AP did not say anything on the way to the hospital and gave no indication she was injured.

Because the AP had described requiring a wheelchair to transfer from WO2's police vehicle to the hospital, IIO investigators attempted to obtain video recordings from the hospital from the day in question. Unfortunately, because more than a year had passed since the incident, the video recordings from that day were no longer available.

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 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, the 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.

It is unfortunate the AP did not pursue making a complaint at the time she attended the RCMP detachment in January 2024. This may have led to confirmation of her injury sooner and expedited notification to the IIO. Perishable evidence such as surveillance recordings might have been secured.

Having noted this, though, the evidence available does not establish the actions of the three involved officers as unjustified or unlawful. By the AP's own admission, she was not responsive to the inquiries of SO1, who was following up on information which gave reasonable grounds to apprehend her, unless she could satisfy him otherwise by giving her own account and explanation. After exhausting attempts to get the AP to communicate, he was acting lawfully in apprehending her under mental health legislation and was empowered to use reasonably necessary force in doing so.

The evidence establishes that the AP was taken down onto the ground to be handcuffed due to her non-compliance, and it appears the ankle injury occurred during this interaction. Despite the AP's assertion she told the officers she was injured, the allegation is inconsistent with medical reports which state she did not complain of ankle pain at the hospital until some time after arrival there, and after all police officers had left. In her interviews about the incident, the AP acknowledged having consumed a significant quantity of alcohol on the night in question, and it is possible that the pain of the injury did not make itself felt until the effects started to wear off, a few hours later. The evidence does not establish any officer used excessive force in the AP's apprehension and is not consistent with any officer improperly ignoring the AP's complaints, on the night of the incident, about having been injured.

Accordingly, as Chief Civilian Director of the IIO, I do not consider there are reasonable grounds to believe 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

September 17, 2025
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