INDEPENDENT
Investigations Office of BC

IN THE MATTER OF THE INJURY OF A MAN WHILE BEING APPREHENDED BY MEMBERS OF THE RCMP IN PRINCE GEORGE, BRITISH COLUMBIA ON APRIL 9, 2025

DECISION OF THE CHIEF CIVILIAN DIRECTOR OF THE INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIONS OFFICE

Chief Civilian Director:	Jessica Berglund
IIO File Number:	2025-093
Date of Release:	March 11, 2026

INTRODUCTION

On April 9, 2025, staff at a supportive housing complex in Prince George called 911 to report that the Affected Person ("AP") was walking around the facility with a gun. In the course of being arrested by the two subject officers, the AP was taken to the ground, and was kicked in the face. He suffered a fractured facial bone.

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 the AP, four other civilian witnesses and eight witness police officers;
- police Computer-Aided Dispatch ("CAD") and Police Records Information Management Environment ("PRIME") records;
- audio recordings of 911 call and police radio transmissions;
- scene photographs;
- photographs of the AP's injuries;
- RCMP jail log;
- video recordings from security cameras and police body-worn cameras; and
- medical evidence.

The IIO does not require officers whose actions are the subject of an investigation to provide evidence. In this case, neither of the subject officers has given any account.

NARRATIVE

The incident leading to the AP's injury occurred shortly before midnight on April 9, 2025, at a supportive housing facility in Prince George, where the AP was a resident. He had a close relationship with an individual in a neighbouring suite, and had keys and access to both suites.

Affected Person's evidence

Interviewed later by IIO investigators, the AP said he had been drinking and had been in an argument with a friend, but otherwise was not experiencing any sort of crisis. He said he knew the police were coming, because staff told him they had called 911.

When the police arrived, the AP said, he was in the neighbouring suite referred to above, and saw police run past with guns drawn. He said he realized they were going to the wrong room, so he went out and approached the officers. He said he put his hands in the air and said, “Hey guys, I’m back here. You missed me.”

The AP said this seemed to “piss off” the officers, who tackled him and “slammed” him to the ground, face first. He was handcuffed, he said, but he did not recall being struck while on the ground. He said he was placed in the back of a police vehicle, but about five seconds later, a male officer with a beard “got into the backseat with me and punched my eye in.” The AP said he was punched in the eye two or three times, and the officer then got out and walked away. Shown photographs of all the officers who were present at the time of the incident, the AP was not able to identify the officer he said had punched him. The AP said the officer had entered through the rear driver’s side door, and had punched him in the left side of his face.

The AP said that a friend took some video of the incident from the second floor of the residential complex. He said he knew he was accused of having a gun with a “banana clip,” and said the police searched both his room and and the neighbouring suite.

The AP said he could not recall if he was driven directly to the hospital or if he was taken first to the RCMP detachment and then to the hospital. At the hospital, he said, he was told he needed surgery for his eye injury. He said he was booked for the surgery about a week later, but did not attend for it.

Police evidence

At 11:39 p.m. on April 9, 2025, Prince George RCMP received a 911 call from the supportive housing facility saying the AP was walking around intoxicated with a firearm. Police dispatch put out a tone alert indicating an active threat at the address.

The first officers to arrive, at 11:47 p.m., were Witness Officer 1 (“WO1”), Witness Officer 2 (“WO2”), Witness Officer 3 (“WO3”) and Witness Officer 4 (“WO4”). WO3 was armed with a “less lethal” 40mm impact weapon, and the other three officers were carrying police carbines. Based on information from the facility’s staff, the officers understood that the AP was at the rear of the property, so they headed in that direction.

As they did so, WO2 later told IIO investigators, a man (the AP) came out of a room and approached the officers, yelling profanities. WO2 said the AP was shouting, “murderers” and “baby killers.” WO2 said that he quickly dismissed the AP as a threat, because despite his aggressive demeanour he did not have anything in his hands and was not coming from the area where the suspect was indicated to be.

As the initial group of officers moved away, Witness Officer 5 (“WO5”) and Subject Officer 1 (“SO1”) arrived on scene. WO5 told the IIO that as the officers were passing the staff office, a staff member pointed out the AP as the person police were looking for. WO5 said she drew her pistol and ordered the AP to get down on the ground, but he ignored her and continued shouting at the other officers. When she drew SO1’s attention to the AP, WO5 said, SO1 turned back and tackled the AP to the ground by wrapping his arms around the AP’s body and taking him down, face-first. WO5 said SO1 then placed his knee on the AP’s back and took hold of his left arm. WO5 went to the AP’s right side and tried to pull his right arm out from under him, but said the AP was “resistant” and she was concerned he might have a weapon under him.

As SO1 and WO5 struggled to restrain the AP, Subject Officer 2 (“SO2”), accompanied by Witness Officer 6 (“WO6”), Witness Officer 7 (“WO7”) and Witness Officer 8 (“WO8”), ran up to assist. WO5 said she saw an officer’s boot strike the right side of the AP’s face, though she could not say which officer had delivered the kick. Describing the force of the kick, WO5 said, “It wasn’t like it’s going to knock his head off. I didn’t think it was, like, excessive, given the circumstances.” Asked by investigators specifically if she thought the kick was unnecessary or unreasonable, WO5 responded that if she had thought so, “I would have found out who did it and had a chat, yes.”

Both WO6 and WO8 recalled seeing SO2 deliver a kick to the AP’s face. WO6 characterized the blow as a distraction strike intended to get the AP to release his arm. He said he thought the top of SO2’s boot made contact, but could not remember which side of the AP’s face was struck. He said he did not see any physical reaction from the AP to the kick. WO7 said she saw SO2’s kick, and said it was to the left side of the AP’s face. WO7 also said she was standing next to SO1 as he was putting the AP into the back of a police vehicle, and did not see any punches.

Following the AP’s arrest, police conducted searches of the suite occupied by the AP, as well as the neighbouring suite. A variety of drug-associated paraphernalia was found, as well as quantities of firearm ammunition and an air gun, but nothing matching the appearance of the black object he had earlier been seen carrying and pointing.

Video and CAD evidence

Security video recordings show that shortly after 11:00 p.m. on the day of the incident, the AP was engaged in an animated conversation with an unidentified man at the rear of the complex. The AP was walking back and forth, gesturing and pointing at the man.

A little later, at about 11:35 p.m., the AP was seen on the security video coming out of his room with what appeared to be a firearm. Staff also received a call from an anonymous resident complaining that the AP was threatening people with a gun. At 11:39 p.m., the

AP can be seen on the video moving around the area holding a black object with what looks like a curved “banana-style” ammunition magazine protruding from it. At one point, he appears to be pointing the object up at someone on the second floor.

As police arrive, the AP appears from one of the suites and walks towards them. He is not seen to put his hands in the air at any point. The video shows the AP being tackled and taken down by SO1, and it appears that his face strikes the ground.

WO6 was equipped with a body-worn camera, which captured video and audio of part of the incident. As WO6 is arriving on scene, an officer can be heard shouting, “You’re under arrest,” and a male voice replies, “For what?”

The body-worn camera video shows SO2 passing in front of WO6 as the officers run towards the spot where the AP is struggling on the ground with SO1 and WO5. SO2 can be seen to make what looks like a kicking motion with his left leg as WO6 is telling the AP, “Give us your arm … give us your arm.” It is not possible to determine from either the body-worn camera video or the security video where SO2’s kick struck the AP.

The security camera video shows the AP being taken to a police vehicle at 11:51 p.m., and placed in the back seat. Two minutes later, at 11:53 p.m., SO1 gets into the driver’s seat of the vehicle. At 11:55 p.m., he gets out, opens the rear passenger side door and leans in. At 11:57 p.m., he goes to the rear hatch and opens it before closing it again and returning to the rear passenger side door a few seconds later. No movements of SO1 are seen consistent with punches being delivered by him to the AP.

The police CAD records show that at 11:58 p.m., SO1 advised Dispatch that the AP appeared to be overdosing and he was going to administer Narcan. Two minutes after this, though, he called to cancel the ambulance that had been requested in response to his earlier call, saying that the AP’s apparent overdose was faked. The video shows that no other officer went to the passenger compartment where the AP was being held.

Medical evidence

The AP was transported to cells, and at 12:47 a.m. on April 10, 2025, medical assistance was called for him when he was found to be unresponsive. At that time, WO5 said, she noticed a swelling on the AP’s upper left cheek, and was surprised because she thought SO2’s kick had contacted the right side of the AP’s face. The AP was taken to the hospital, where photographs of his face were taken. They show a scuffed abrasion on the right side of his face, and his left eye is swollen shut. The AP’s hospital records indicate the injury to his eye was the result of his face striking the ground.

The AP was told he needed surgery to repair a fractured left orbital bone, but at the time he was interviewed by IIO investigators, he had not yet returned for the 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, 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.

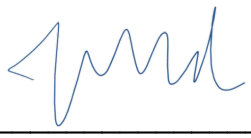
It is not clear from the available evidence whether the most significant injury suffered by the AP (to his left orbital bone) was caused by SO1 taking him to the ground or by SO2's kick. What the evidence does establish is that it was not caused by an officer punching the AP while in the rear seat of a police vehicle. Objective video evidence shows that the only contact between an officer and the AP in the back seat occurred when SO1 was leaning into the vehicle from the AP's right side, contrary to the AP's account.

If that injury was the result of SO1's tackle, it cannot be said that it was the result of an unnecessary, excessive or unreasonable application of force. Police were responding to an "active threat" call about a man reportedly threatening residents at a supportive living complex with a gun. Once the AP was identified as the suspect, it was reasonable to take

immediate action to immobilize him and bring him under physical control. SO1's action did not amount to unjustified use of force.

SO2's kick to the AP's head area is not as straightforward to analyze. Blows to the head, whether with a boot or a closed fist, use a higher degree of force, with associated risk of serious harm up to and including death. Judging by WO5's response when asked if she thought the kick had been reasonable, it would appear that she had some concerns about it. However, it must be considered that, just like SO1, SO2 understood that the AP had been reported as armed and threatening, and SO2 would have seen the AP struggling against two other officers and potentially holding a firearm under his body. That likely led SO2 to conclude that a higher-level "distraction" blow was justified in the circumstances, a conclusion that cannot now be said to have been so unreasonable as to make the kick unlawful.

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.



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