

July 31, 2017

IIU concludes investigation into shooting by Winnipeg police in downtown skywalk

The Independent Investigation Unit of Manitoba (IIU) has completed its investigation into a shooting by a Winnipeg police officer that left a 25-year-old man with a non-life-threatening gunshot wound, and has concluded there are no grounds for charges against the officer.

Over the noon hour on May 1, 2017, in the Graham Ave. skywalk in downtown Winnipeg, officers of the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) encountered a male who was holding a black stick with the end hidden in his armpit. The man entered an optometrist's office and attempted to hold the door shut. Given that there were a number of people inside the office and that the man was armed with a stick, three officers forced their way into the office. The man pulled the stick from under his arm, revealing scissors taped to one end, and pointed the sharp end at the officers. Moments later, one officer fired two rounds, striking the man in his right side.

As this incident involved serious injuries, the IIU assumed responsibility for the investigation, as required by *The Police Services Act*.

During his encounter with police, the man called 911 two minutes and 14 seconds before the shooting, and the line remained open and active. This allowed IIU investigators to hear a continuous recording of the words of the 911 operator and police officers at the scene, right until the time of the shooting. The audio recording revealed the police officer commanded the man 14 times to drop his weapon, prior to firing his gun.

IIU also interviewed the man, eight witness officers and 11 civilian witnesses. In his report on the incident, Civilian Director Zane Tessler wrote the subject officer "was faced with a dangerous and dynamic situation that unfolded quickly. It would be unreasonable for police to wait before acting. Any delay could have led to the death of WPS officers or other civilians within the (optometrist's) office."

There are charges outstanding against the man as a result of this incident. The civilian director's complete report will be posted online once the charges are dealt with by the courts. The details of this investigation were first released on May 2, 2017.

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