

July 26, 2018

IIU concludes investigation into fatal shooting of suspect by Winnipeg police

The Independent Investigation Unit (IIU) has concluded its investigation into an incident that ended with a 23-year-old male being fatally shot by two members of the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) Tactical Support Team. It has concluded the actions of the officers were justified and unavoidable.

On the night of September 12, 2017, police were investigating multiple offences involving a single male armed with a firearm. He was a suspect in a commercial robbery, carjacking and domestic assault, which had all occurred that same evening. Shortly after midnight on the 13th, the WPS helicopter AIR1 followed a stolen vehicle driven by the suspect until it stopped and the man exited the vehicle in the area of Powers Street and Alfred Avenue, carrying a firearm. When officers moved in, he pointed the gun at his own head, refused repeated commands to drop his weapon, and then pointed the gun at officers, resulting in two members of the tactical team discharging their firearms. The man was transported to Health Sciences Centre where he was pronounced deceased. It was later determined he had been carrying a replica firearm.

An extensive investigation by the IIU included interviews with 18 civilian witnesses and 11 witness officers, statements from the subject officers, a review of police radio transmissions, and video from various sources.

IIU Civilian Director Zane Tessler considered whether the decisions of the two officers to discharge their firearms at the man were reasonable in the circumstances. In his report on the investigation, Tessler noted police were aware the man was reported to be directly involved in three separate and violent incidents involving a firearm and that, as he walked along Alfred Avenue, he was carrying what they believed to be a firearm. He said it was appropriate for officers to arm themselves as they left their vehicles and for the Tactical Support Team to be utilized.

Tessler also noted the man refused commands to drop the weapon, which appeared to be a sawed-off shotgun or rifle, and demanded that police shoot him. "His action of pointing his weapon at a police officer is consistent with a person who wishes to instigate a police shooting to accomplish that purpose," Tessler wrote. This is an unfortunate yet all too familiar circumstance seen across Canada and the United States in situations similar to this."

The civilian director's complete report is available online at www.iiumanitoba.ca. The details of this investigation were first announced on September 14, 2017.

There will also be an inquest into this death, as required under the *Fatality Inquiries Act*.

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Information on the IIU can be found at www.iumanitoba.ca or at www.twitter.com/IUManitoba