

March 19, 2018

IIU concludes investigation into fatal shooting of suspect by WPS officer

Civilian Director notes area of concern

The Independent Investigation Unit (IIU) has concluded its investigation into an incident that resulted in the fatal shooting of a 33-year-old male and the non-lethal stabbing of a Winnipeg Police Service officer. It has concluded that no charges should be laid against the officer who fired the shots.

On September 23, 2017, police responded to a 911 call from a woman at a residence in the Maples area of Winnipeg, who said her son was armed with knives, had assaulted his brother, was high on methamphetamine and was paranoid. When officers attended the residence, two of them gained entry and one of them was stabbed in the left bicep by the suspect. He was immediately shot dead by the same officer.

The issue for the IIU was whether the officer's decision to fire at the man was reasonable and justified in the circumstances. The IIU report into the investigation noted that, when officers attended, they could hear male and female screaming from inside the residence; they knew the male suspect was likely high on drugs and may have stabbed another person; the man lunged at and stabbed one officer; and it was reasonable to believe the man had the means and intent to injure others. The IIU found that, in those circumstances, lethal force was justified.

In his report into the investigation, IIU civilian director Zane Tessler commented on a collateral matter:

Two weeks prior to the fatal shooting, police had been called to the same residence regarding the same male, who was again armed with knives and high on methamphetamine. That call ended without incident and the man was admitted to hospital for observation. "While not necessarily relevant to the resolution of the present investigation, this issue does raise concerns respecting the identification and treatment of drug abuse and mental health problems," Tessler wrote. "Considering the very similar factual circumstances that resulted in police intervention and hospitalization less than two weeks before this fatal shooting, one wonders whether a different response, approach or treatment plan would have affected AP's future conduct. This issue is not within IIU's mandate, but other provincial agencies or resources may wish to review the adequacy of responses when dealing with drug abuse and mental health concerns."

The civilian director's complete report is available online at www.iiumanitoba.ca. The details of this investigation were first announced on September 24, 2017.



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