

September 02, 2016

IIU concludes investigation into death in St. Malo

The Independent Investigation Unit of Manitoba (IIU) has completed its investigation into a fatality during an attempted police traffic stop near St. Malo last fall, and has concluded that officers acted appropriately.

During the morning of November 2, 2015, members of the Winnipeg Police Service were in St. Malo, investigating the death three days earlier of a 49-year-old female in Winnipeg. Investigators had identified the woman's estranged husband as a person of interest in her death. While police were in the town, a vehicle registered to the man drove by them.

Officers decided to stop the vehicle and activated their emergency lights and siren. The driver of the suspect vehicle continued driving at a normal speed. After travelling for approximately five kilometres, the vehicle suddenly veered off the road, through a ditch and barbed wire fence, into a field and came to rest in a wooded area.

Once back-up arrived, officers approached the vehicle. The lone occupant, later identified as the estranged husband, was found deceased inside the vehicle with a sawed-off 12-gauge shotgun between his legs. He had suffered a serious injury to his head.

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

Also as required under the Act, a civilian monitor was appointed by the Manitoba Police Commission. The IIU held monthly briefings with the civilian monitor throughout the course of its investigation.

IIU Civilian Director Zane Tessler received the investigative files, including a medical examiner's report and autopsy results, radio transmissions between the police vehicle and the WPS Communication Centre, and video surveillance footage from an area residence.

Tessler's report says none of the involved police officers had any verbal or physical contact with the suspect at any time, no police vehicle made contact with the suspect's car, and no police firearms were discharged. Tessler concluded the suspect discharged his shotgun while driving, causing his own death, and that the actions of police were careful and appropriate in the circumstances.

The complete report of the civilian director is available online at www.iiumanitoba.ca.

The details of this investigation were first released on November 3, 2015.

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Media inquiries may be directed to:
Barbara Czech
Communications, Independent Investigation Unit
204-803-9644
bczech@mts.net