



**IN THE MATTER OF AN INVESTIGATION INTO A SERIOUS INJURY
DURING AN INCIDENT ON FEBRUARY 6, 2023**

**FINAL REPORT OF THE CIVILIAN DIRECTOR
OF THE INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION UNIT**

Civilian Director:	Roxanne M. Gagné
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Introduction:

On February 6, 2023, the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) notified the Independent Investigation Unit (IIU) of an incident regarding a female on the Redwood Bridge who fell onto the ice below. She was subsequently transported to the Health Sciences Centre (HSC), where she was treated for several fractures.

The written notification disclosed the following information:

"On Monday, February 6, 2023, at approximately 9:23 a.m., a witness contacted police to report a female standing on the outside of the Redwood Bridge. The caller reported that the female appeared to be about to jump from the bridge. The caller then indicated a male passerby had stopped and was attempting to speak with the female.

North District General Patrol Officers attended to the scene and observed the female standing on the outside of the railing. As officers attempted to speak with her, the female fell to the ice below.

Officers attended to the river and were able to pull the female to the safety of the shoreline. She was found to be suffering from a serious injury to her leg and was subsequently conveyed to the hospital by ambulance where she is currently being treated."

As this matter concerned a serious injury as defined under the IIU regulations, the IIU assumed responsibility for this mandatory investigation in accordance with section 65(4) of the *Police Services Act* (PSA). IIU investigators were assigned to this investigation.

The information obtained by the IIU included the following:

- Several audio files and WPS service call;
- City of Winnipeg transit videos;
- 911 calls
- Audio recording action report
- Officers' notes and narratives
- Photos of the scene
- Interviews of the affected person
- Interviews of three civilian witnesses
- Interviews of two witness officers
- Medical records for the affected person

The civilian director designated two witness officers. In addition to the two witness officers (WO1 and WO2), the IIU investigators met with and interviewed the affected person (AP) and three civilian witnesses (CW 1-3). Due to an absence of information received by IIU at the outset, the civilian director decided to defer the designation of any officers as subject officers

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until more information was received through the investigation. This decision was later re-evaluated, and no officers were ever designated.

A review of three City of Winnipeg transit videos did not show the incident or any pedestrians on the Redwood Bridge.

Facts and Circumstances:

Affected Person (AP):

First Interview

On February 10, 2023, IIU investigators attempted to conduct an interview with the AP at HSC.

As the IIU investigators were preparing to conduct a statement from the AP she stated, "I jumped off the bridge because I thought it would be the best for my family. Nobody did nothing to me, I jumped off a bridge myself, I'm sorry." When asked if she interacted with the police when she was there, she replied, "No, I don't know."

Second Interview

On March 3, 2023, IIU investigators conducted a second interview with her at HSC.

The AP stated that two days prior (February 4, 2023), she was smoking methamphetamine, she was delusional, and her daughter called for a wellness check, and police attended. She was taken by ambulance to HSC, where she was told that she would have a detoxication bed. She said that on February 6, she walked toward the detoxication center on Magnus Avenue, and at 9:00 a.m. when she called, she was told she did not have a bed. She stated that around 9:30 a.m., she was already at the Redwood Bridge, so she just walked over to the Redwood Bridge and jumped. She said, "I climbed over the barriers on the Redwood Bridge; I climbed over the first barrier...I climbed down to...the metal railing at the bottom of the bridge...then basically I jumped off the bridge..." She stated that she had been standing over the barrier for a while and heard two men say, "Do not do it."

She mentioned that she heard sirens while she was on the outside of the bridge. She could not see anybody as the roadway was above her. She stated, "I was crying, talking to myself out loud, trying to convince myself to jump, and I did."

Medical Records and Reports

The AP provided IIU investigators with a signed consent for the release of her medical records and reports from HSC. IIU investigators received the medical reports, which indicated that she suffered a sternal fracture with retrosternal hematoma, multiple bilateral rib fractures, a comminuted open tib-rib fracture on the right, a femur fracture on the left and an ankle fracture

on the left. The report also identified past medical history of PTSD, depression, borderline personality disorder and polysubstance use by the AP.

Civilian Witnesses (CW 1-3)

CW1

On February 21, 2023, IIU investigators interviewed CW1.

CW1 stated between 9:00 and 9:30 a.m.; he was driving westbound on Hespler Avenue over the Redwood Bridge when he observed a woman (AP) walking eastbound down the bridge. He stated that she looked like she was in distress. He further stated that she climbed over the railing, facing away from the bridge with her hands behind her, holding the railing and leaning outward. He stated that the AP was crouching up and down. CW1 said that he approached 10 to 15 feet away and tried to talk with her, but he did not want to spook her because he did not want her to fall. The AP ignored him, was not coherent, was crying, and was not saying anything while standing stationary and facing away. He called 911, and a marked police car arrived within five to eight minutes. He waved them down as they were pulling up, and two police officers in uniform exited and ran past him to the AP. He stated, "So she was doing that up and down, up and down, and when they tried to grab her, she just pulled away, up and down and off she went." CW1 stated, "She tried to pull and put more momentum into going up and down, and I don't know if she deliberately meant to jump off, but she put so much momentum behind it that she fell."

CW2

On February 7, 2023, IIU investigators interviewed CW2.

CW2 stated shortly before 9:00 a.m., while driving, he observed a woman (AP) sitting on the rail of the fence or the ledge of the Redwood Bridge about four and a half feet above the roadway with her feet hanging over. He said it looked like a suicide attempt, so he immediately called 911. CW2 stated she was sitting straight up, leaning forward with her legs at 90 degrees hanging over the outside of the bridge's roadway. He added she was gazing down at the river at a 45-degree angle and not paying attention to the cars around her.

CW2 identified that he went back over the Redwood Bridge approximately five to 10 minutes later, and there was one police car on the Main Street side that had stopped and another two or three police cars arriving. He noted that he saw a black winter jacket hanging on the bridge railing, but the AP and the police were no longer where he had seen the woman before. CW2 stated that he went back and saw where she fell, approximately 50-75 feet from the street on the west end of the bridge.

CW3

On March 8, 2023, IIU interviewed CW3.

CW3 stated that around 9:30 a.m. when working in the backcourt yard of Holy Family Home, he observed a woman (AP) hanging off the south side of Redwood Bridge and a man pacing around on the bridge talking on the phone. He approached the man who was talking to the police and was told that the AP had been hanging there for a little bit, contemplating letting go and jumping off the bridge. The AP was on the wrong side of the railing, hugging the middle to bottom of the railing with her arms and facing toward the road, moving up and down with her legs on the ledge under the bridge and dangling over the side of the bridge. About 10 minutes before the police arrived, he was about six feet away from the AP, and she was facing him when he tried to talk to her and said, "Don't jump. Think about what you are doing here." He made eye contact with the AP a couple of times, and she appeared to be trying to communicate, but she was very distraught, screaming and crying out, and he could not make out what she was saying.

CW3 stated the police arrived and asked him where she was, and the police walked to where the AP was standing and stated, "Stay on the bridge, don't let go...." The AP was screaming, "I don't want to be here." She had worked herself down to the bottom of the railing when the police arrived and was barely holding on with her body hanging off the edge, and CW3 could only see the AP's head from the road. He noted that the police did not try to pull her over. In his opinion, he did not think it would be safe to try to lean over. The officer would have had to put his whole body over the edge to try to hold her. He added that someone would have had to climb to the other side to grab her because of how low the AP was.

As CW3 walked back to Holy Family Home, he heard a scream and observed the AP let go, fall off the bridge, and hit the ice below. CW3 stated, "The cops were only there for a minute or two before she actually like jumped." CW3 said that the AP took off her jacket during the interaction and was holding it under her arm before she put it on the railing. He noted that the jacket remained hanging from the bridge as the AP jumped.

Witness Officers (WO 1-2)

WO1

On April 19, 2023, IIU investigators interviewed WO1 in the presence of his legal counsel.

WO1 stated that on February 6, 2023, at approximately 9:23 a.m., he and his partner WO2 were dispatched to a danger call on the Redwood Bridge for a female (AP) sitting on the railing. They responded with emergency lights and sirens activated and parked at the southwest corner of the threshold where the bridge was suspended on Redwood at 9:26 a.m. WO1 stated he observed two bystanders on the sidewalk of the west side of the bridge, and they pointed eastward toward the bridge. WO1 stated he observed a black jacket on the railing about 50 to 60 feet from the start of the bridge. As he approached, he saw the AP outside the railing with her feet under the

sidewalk as though she was standing on something structural, facing south away from the bridge with her arms behind her, holding onto the vertical bars on the bridge railing. WO1 stated that the AP's head was at his hip height, well below the railing. He said that as he approached the AP, he made verbal conversation with her, identified himself as a Winnipeg Police officer, and asked her to speak on the safe side of the railing. The AP stated, "I'm done talking about it." WO1 told the AP his name and asked her name to which she yelled something he could not understand. He was on the AP's right side, looking down at her and stated that either she attempted to adjust her right hand or let go. She fell to the ice. He was unsure if it was an intentional jump or if, because it was cold out, her hands got cold on the iron bars and slipped.

WO1 stated that neither he nor his partner had any physical contact with the AP as she was a relatively large woman and that he was constantly assessing the situation. He felt that if he had reached over to grab her or reached in between the bars to try to assist her back over, he felt he would have put himself or his partner in danger and put her in more danger than she already was. He added that their interaction was strictly verbal; he did not touch or attempt to grab her. WO1 stated the AP fell straight down. He was standing three to four feet from her, and she knew he was there as she answered one of his questions. He noted that the brief interaction was 10 to 30 seconds.

WO2

On March 31, 2023, IIU investigators interviewed WO2.

WO2 stated that he and WO1 attended to a threat of suicide call on the Redwood Bridge, and as they arrived, he observed two pedestrians standing on the sidewalk. When he exited the cruiser car, he observed a female (AP) approximately 20 – 30 feet away standing on the opposite or wrong side of the railing, leaning forward away from the south side of the bridge facing south. He noted that from his position, he could see the AP was lower than the sidewalk and could only see the top part of her torso. WO2 believed the AP was standing on something lower than the sidewalk as she was under hip height, facing away, holding the vertical bars of the railing with her hands behind her back while leaning forward. He noted the railing was three to four feet high, and the AP's head was about a foot from the top of the railing. WO2 stated they walked up to about five to ten feet from the AP, and he walked past her while WO1 started a brief interaction with basic crisis communication, but she was unresponsive to his exchange. He noted it was a very brief interaction, and the AP was nonverbal, mumbling incomprehensively. The AP disappeared from his view as he was on the radio notifying dispatch that they were with the AP, but he did not know if the AP jumped or if she slipped as he could not see her full body and only saw her top torso.

WO2 stated that the entire interaction with the AP was over within 30 seconds. She did not say anything but was mumbling quietly. He added that the AP was facing away the entire time they were present, she didn't look at them, and they had no physical interaction with her.

Audio Files & WPS Service Call

At 9:23 a.m., the first 911 call was received from CW2 regarding a possible suicide attempt on the Redwood Bridge that prompted a priority two dispatch of two WPS units. At 9:23 a.m., a

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second 911 call was received from CW1 regarding a possible suicide attempt on the Redwood Bridge. At 9:26 a.m., the 911 dispatcher received a call back from CW1, who identified that the person was now hanging off the side of the bridge, at 9:26 a.m. WO1 and WO2 arrived on the scene, and at 9:27 a.m., they stated that the female had jumped.

According to the log, WO1 and WO2 were on scene for one minute and 24 seconds before the AP jumped.

Conclusion:

Following due consideration of all the circumstances of this matter and a careful, thorough review of all evidence and material facts obtained in this investigation, I am satisfied that:

- On February 6, 2023, the AP learned she did not have a detoxication bed.
- At approximately 9:30 a.m., the AP climbed over the barriers on the Redwood Bridge down to the metal railing at the bottom of the bridge.
- The AP was facing away from the bridge with her arms behind her, holding onto the vertical bars of the bridge.
- The AP either attempted to adjust her right hand, let go or jumped to the ice below.
- WO1 and WO2 had no physical contact with the AP during their brief interaction with her, which lasted 10 to 30 seconds.
- Given the AP was located well below the railing, the WO thought it would have been dangerous for them and the AP to attempt to grab her.
- The AP stated that she jumped off the bridge because she thought it would be the best, that no one did anything to her and that she jumped off the bridge herself.
- WO1 attempted to communicate with the AP, but she said she was done talking.
- WO1 was three to four feet away from AP, looking down at her.
- Both 911 calls made by CW2 and CW1 reported a suicide attempt by a woman on the wrong side of the railing facing away from the Redwood Bridge.
- CW1 attempted to talk to her, but she was not coherent and ignored him.
- CW3 also tried to talk to her, but she was incoherent and crying.
- CW3 corroborates the WOs account of the events in that the police did not physically touch the AP because her low position made it unsafe.
- CW3 also corroborates the evidence that the AP let go, fell off the bridge, and hit the ice below.

This tragic set of circumstances has left the AP with serious injuries. The events started two days prior when the AP had been smoking methamphetamine, and police were called for a wellness check. The AP was taken to HSC, where she was told she would have a detoxication bed. On the day of the incident, the AP was looking for a detoxication bed on Magnus Avenue, but unfortunately, no bed was available. The AP then decided to climb over the railing on the Redwood Bridge. The AP decided to let go of the railing and fell to the ice below.

Although it may not be within the IIU's mandate, it has been noted that the Redwood Bridge has no protective coverings or fencing to prevent persons from climbing over its railing. The feasibility of adding protective railings could be explored by competent authorities.

In this investigation, the IIU's mandate is to consider whether the serious injuries suffered by the AP may have resulted from the actions of the police officers who attended the scene of the incident. Considering all the circumstances, I am satisfied that the very brief interaction of the officers did not contribute to the serious injuries of the AP. Therefore, no charges are recommended against the witness officers, and the IIU investigation is now completed and closed.