

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK

A CHRONICLE OF NEWS FOR THE CANADIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY  February 08, 2013 – Vol. 18 No. 6

Executive Digest

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BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK

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Police raid Super Bowl party north of Toronto



Feb 04 2013

AURORA, Ont. - Police in Ontario say they busted a multimillion-dollar illegal gaming operation when they raided an invitation-only Super Bowl event Sunday night.

Six men have been arrested and face illegal gaming-related charges following the raid at a packed banquet hall in Markham, north of Toronto.

Police say the joint-forces investigation also shut down an offshore betting site called the Platinum Sports Book which they allege was being run by the group.

York Regional Police Supt. Paul Pedersen says almost \$2.5 million in cash was seized after more than 400 officers executed search

warrants across the Greater Toronto Area and as far away as London, Ont.

Pedersen says about 2,300 people had gathered at the hall, which had been turned into an illegal gaming house.

He says the people found in the hall were allowed to leave without charges, except for the six, whom police allege were profiting from the gaming operation.

He says 20 computers were seized at the banquet hall "where online offshore gaming was taking place, along with cellphones and business records."

Charged are William Miller, 49, Arno Thomsen, 45, and Shlomo Buchler, 40, all of Toronto; David Hair, 44, and Andrew Bielli,



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48, both of London, Ont.; and Martin Spruce, 45, of Vaughan, Ont.

All six are charged with engaging in book-making, participating in a criminal organization, keeping a common gaming house and conspiracy to commit an indictable offence. They are scheduled to appear in court in Toronto on March 21.

"I want to be clear that this event last night was not open to the public. Online gaming in this fashion is not available to anyone," Pedersen said during a news conference Monday.

"Only those invited by the organizers of this criminal enterprise could attend and only those sponsored by this criminal organization could participate in the website," Pedersen said.

"Last night we were able to shut down that website. All traffic going to that website is now being redirected to (the police joint investigation) site."

"As of early this morning over 17,000 hits were registered at this website from illegal gamers trying to collect on their bets."

Acting RCMP Supt. Keith Finn said while there is legal gaming in Ontario that is properly managed and licensed, illegal gaming such as this alleged operation "lines the pockets of organized crime."

"Thousands of gamblers placed illegal bets using this large-scale gaming site. This was the largest investigation to date targeting illegal gaming and organized crime's participation in these criminal offences."

The raids followed an investigation by the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit, which includes the RCMP, the Ontario Provincial Police, York Regional Police, the Toronto Police Service, Peel Regional Police and the Durham Regional Police Service.

The unit has a mandate to "expose, investigate, prosecute and dismantle organized criminal enterprises."

THURSDAY JANUARY 31, 2013

Jan 31 2013

OTTAWA - Canada's prison service plans a new pilot project to test the effectiveness of electronic ankle bracelets on offenders released into the community with conditions.

In addition, the federal border agency will consult the United States and Britain as part of a study looking at expanded use of the devices on immigrants and refugee claimants.

Public Safety Minister Vic Toews outlined the initiatives in a written response to a Commons committee that examined electronic bracelets last year.

A majority of the committee recommended the federal agencies look into broader use of electronic monitoring.

Jan 31 2013

WINNIPEG - Mounties believe they have dismantled an outlaw motorcycle club in the Manitoba capital.

RCMP announced Thursday that they have arrested 11 people, including four members and one prospect, of the Rock Machine biker club. The others arrested were described as independent drug traffickers.

They all face various charges related to drug and firearms trafficking.

At a news conference, officers displayed black Rock Machine jackets, shirts and patches alongside drugs, guns and cash seized during the arrests Wednesday.

Insp. Len Delpino said the arrests have wiped out the gang's operation in Winnipeg.

"We have in custody the entire, full Winnipeg chapter of the Rock Machine," he said. "We brought down a very high level, organized crime group and ... it's a safe and better place here in Manitoba today."

Some pipe bombs and dynamite were also discovered during a raid at a building on Wall Street where one Rock Machine member worked, said Delpino. Nearby homes and businesses were temporarily evacuated.

Supt. Robert Bazin said the complicated investigation, dubbed Operation Dilemma, began last summer and involved more than 140 officers, including Winnipeg police.

The investigation will continue and the accused may face additional charges, he said.

Shootings and firebombings erupted in Winnipeg in 2011 during a turf war between two rival gangs believed to be the Rock Machine and Hells Angels.

In most cases, there were no injuries, but a 14-year-old boy was wounded during one exchange of gunfire.

In an unusual move, police went door to door in neighbourhoods where gang members were known to live and warned residents about potential violence.

Jan 31 2013

VANCOUVER - For a decade, police in B.C. have used bait cars and other ve-

hicles to catch auto thieves, now they're planting bait property inside vehicles to nab smash-and-grab crooks.

The bait car program, in which vehicles are rigged with video cameras, GPS systems and remote ignition locks, has been in use in B.C. since 2003, and police say it has helped reduce auto theft by 73 per cent during that time.

Now, they're moving to tackle thieves who break into cars and steal everything from wallets to toolboxes.

Police say GPS devices planted in property left in bait vehicles will help lead them to the thieves.

The top items stolen from vehicles include smartphones, laptops, tools, credit cards, ID and stereo equipment.

The move to bait property comes after police noticed a slight increase in thefts from vehicles in B.C. in the last four months of 2012.

Jan 31 2013

PORT MOODY, B.C. - The Port Moody, B.C., police say a review of the accuracy of their breathalyzers has determined 14 roadside driving bans imposed in 2011 were based on faulty readings by the devices.

On Thursday, the Office of the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles announced it will be contacting the 14 drivers to inform them their roadside prohibitions and penalties will be cancelled.

"We will also be working with Port Moody police on the issue of restitution for drivers," said superintendent Steve Martin.

"A mistake was made by Port Moody police, the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner investigated and we are working to rectify the situation as quickly as possible."

As a result of the investigation by the Office of the Police Complaint Commission, the police department asked an independent forensic expert to check every screening device to make sure it was calibrated properly.

Police said that of 174 roadside driving bans imposed in 2011, 14 were based on a faulty meter.

Martin said the Justice Ministry's director of police services has written to police agencies to remind them of their responsibility to ensure they adhere to protocols and standards.

Drivers in B.C. face the toughest drunk-driving penalties in Canada, introduced in 2010.

Last summer, the government was forced to adjust the law following a court ruling that said it violated drivers' rights because it didn't provide a way for them to challenge the result of a roadside breath test.

The original law gave police the power to impound cars and hand out fines to drivers whose blood-alcohol level was higher than .05, which is slightly below the .08 legal limit under the Criminal Code.

Under the revised law, police officers must tell drivers they can have a second test if they fail the first one, and the lower of the two readings will prevail.

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Police must also provide sworn reports on every roadside driving ban they issue and must also submit documents confirming the accuracy of the breathalyzers they use.



Jan 31 2013

The RCMP has launched a new national website featuring details of hundreds of cases of missing persons and unidentified remains in an effort to generate new leads.

The force acknowledged Thursday that the files posted online represent only a “sampling” of all the cases out there.

All information on the site, www.canadasmising.ca, is submitted by police, medical examiners or chief coroners, officials said. New cases may be added at the request of primary investigators.

Among the missing persons profiled are women who vanished along B.C.’s infamous Highway of Tears.

The site currently contains information on 427 missing adults, 113 missing children and 157 unidentified remains.

Some files are very detailed, offering a range of information about a person’s physical characteristics, clothes they were wearing, and last known whereabouts.

Some files are accompanied by photographs or — in the case of unidentified remains — artists’ renderings.

The website is one component of a \$10-million initiative announced by the federal government in 2010.

www.canadasmising.ca
(Postmedia)

Jan 31 2013

MONTREAL - Social workers and psychiatrists will train dozens of Montreal police over the next two years to improve their interactions with people who suffer from mental illness.

The training is part of the force’s ambitious three-year mental health action plan announced Thursday. It is the first such policy to be adopted by Montreal police, who receive an average of about 33,000 calls related to mental-health crises each year.

“When our officers respond to someone in a crisis situation, more often than not we’re talking about a victim, someone who is suffering something truly unpleasant,” said Fady Dagher, a community relations chief with the

Montreal police. “Until recently, our officers simply didn’t have the tools to react to these kinds of situations. But we’re working with mental-health experts; we’re educating our officers.”

About 54 cops from downtown precincts will undergo a 30-hour course from workers at the Centres de santé et de services sociaux (CSSS) resource centres. The officers are placed into simulations that recreate the kinds of scenarios they might face when dealing with someone who may suffer from delirium or other afflictions.

After repeated drills, the cops are debriefed by a team of CSSS specialists and encouraged to share their feelings about the simulation.

“An important part of the training is also

for the officers to learn more about their own emotions and how to control them,” Dagher told *The Gazette*. “Sometimes we like to keep certain things ‘in house,’ but Lord knows that if there’s one area where we should reach out to other groups like the CSSS to learn more, this is it.”

About 700 police have received similar training and at least one person in every precinct will take the course to become a kind of go-between for officers and mental-health resource centres.

Recent events have underscored the importance of equipping the city’s police with tools to help the mentally ill. Since 2011, at least two interventions involving men in a crisis situation ended with the use of lethal force.

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Details and application forms at www.blueline.ca/leadership

Applications for 2012 must be received by February 12, 2013 and emailed to leadership@blueline.ca

Since Montreal police chief Marc Parent took the reins in 2010, the department has taken a number of steps to create alternative strategies for the city's marginalized populations. Under the new chief's leadership, the police force expanded its homeless intervention task force.

The six cops on duty for the *Équipe mobile de référence et d'intervention en itinérance* (EMRII) follow about 100 of the Montreal's most troubled homeless people closely. Some officers will spend an entire shift accompanying an itinerant to a detox clinic, they'll help people find subsidized housing or simply offer them a sandwich and a friendly ear.

Most importantly, Parent said, the police work alongside nurses, psychologists and street workers who share their knowledge and techniques with the officers. Though the relationship between law enforcement and the homeless remains troublesome, EMRII's work has been heralded by community groups throughout Montreal.

"EMRII's success inspired us to spend more time sharing our expertise and improving our competence in the field of mental health," Parent said. "We want to end the revolving-door phenomenon, where we keep arresting or intervening with the same people again and again. We want to be compassionate, to be helpful, to give these people the treatment they need."

Last summer, the police department launched a pilot project that saw three officers working alongside CSSS mental health experts to improve the force's practices. So far, the *Équipe de soutien en urgences psychosociales* (ESUP) has fielded 575 crisis calls and redirected about 515 of them to appropriate health care facilities.

"Police and health care specialists aren't usually two groups that work closely together," said Dr. Jean-Bernard Trudeau, a psychiatrist who works closely with ESUP. "But we have to build bridges because we're working with the same patients and we both want to lend them a helping hand."

(Montreal Gazette)

FRIDAY
FEBRUARY 01, 2013

Feb 01 2013

TORONTO - Canada's ban on marijuana was effectively upheld Friday when Ontario's top court struck down the country's laws related to medicinal pot much to the chagrin of activist groups.

In overturning a lower court ruling, the Court of Appeal ruled the trial judge had made numerous errors in striking down the country's medical pot laws.

Among other things, the Appeal Court found the judge was wrong to interpret an earlier ruling as creating a constitutional right to use medical marijuana.

"Given that marijuana can medically benefit some individuals, a blanket criminal prohibition on its use is unconstitutional," the Appeal Court said.

"(However), this court did not hold that serious illness gives rise to an automatic right to use marijuana."

Currently, doctors are allowed to exempt patients from the ban on marijuana, but many physicians have refused to prescribe the drug on the grounds its benefits are not scientifically proven.

The ruling comes in the case of Matthew Mernagh, 37, of St. Catharines, Ont., who suffers from fibromyalgia, scoliosis, seizures and depression.

While he argues marijuana is the most effective treatment of his pain, he said he was unable to find a doctor to support his application for a medical marijuana licence.

Mernagh resorted to growing his own and was charged with producing the drug in April

2008.

In April 2011, Ontario Superior Court Justice Donald Taliano found that sick people cannot get access to medical marijuana through appropriate means. He said that forced ill people who should be able to get the drugs to resort to criminal acts.

Taliano struck down the laws prohibiting possession and production of cannabis as unconstitutional but the ruling was put on hold pending the federal government's appeal, which was heard last May.

The Appeal Court found Taliano had relied on "anecdotal evidence" and drew unfounded conclusions that the medicinal pot scheme made it almost impossible for patients to get legal access to the drug.

"The trial judge found that the 'vast ma-



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jority' of those who needed medical marijuana were unable to get physicians to sign (exemption) declarations," the Appeal Court said.

"The record does not support the trial judge's inference that they failed to obtain medical declarations only because Canadian physicians are boycotting the (medicinal pot scheme)."

In December, Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq announced Ottawa would no longer grant medical marijuana licences to users, and only doctors would be able to prescribe pot.

In Friday's decision, the court said Mernagh had failed to provide evidence from a doctor that he met the criteria for a medical exemption to the country's pot ban.

"It was not open to the trial judge to hold that Mr. Mernagh and the patient witnesses who had not obtained medical declarations were entitled to exemptions," the Appeal Court said.

Feb 01 2013

VICTORIA - More than 1,100 B.C. drivers who were caught up in tougher drunk driving rules before part of the law was found unconstitutional will have their penalties overturned.

The provincial Justice Ministry confirms at least 1,137 drivers who were required to attend driver education programs and install ignition-lock systems face the penalties.

But ministry officials say the government is still deciding if it will issue refunds to some of the drivers who paid more than \$2,600 to take the course and install the ignition locks.

Justice Minister Shirley Bond said last month the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles was reviewing the roadside prohibitions issued during a three-week period in November 2011 just before the B.C. Supreme Court struck down part of the drunk driving law.

Vancouver lawyer Paul Doroshenko says he has filed legal challenges over driver penalty program, arguing it appeared to be mandatory despite some drivers having perfect driving records prior to the roadside prohibition.

Doroshenko says he's now considering launching legal test cases that could challenge the 35,000 penalties issued to B.C. drivers since the province introduced its new impaired laws in September 2010.

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 02, 2013

Feb 02 2013

VANCOUVER - A 33-year old Vancouver man is now facing a slew of assault charges in connection with Thursday night's mass stabbing at an apartment building in the city's West End.

Police say they arrested Jerome Bonneric inside the building shortly after several tenants were attacked in the hallways outside their apartments.

Bonneric, who police say isn't known to them, is charged with four counts of aggravated assault, four of assault with a weapon, three of common assault and one count of as-

saulting a police officer.

He'll remain in custody until his next court appearance 9:30 Monday morning.

Police say they believe Bonneric had been staying with a friend in the building and that he went from floor to floor attacking people, apparently at random.

They have yet to speculate on a possible motive. Seven people were injured, six of them were rushed to hospital with significant injuries. Two victims are still in hospital - one in stable condition and the other in very serious condition.

A police officer was also treated at the scene for injuries suffered during Bonneric's arrest.

MONDAY FEBRUARY 04, 2013

Feb 04 2013

OTTAWA - The veterans ombudsman says ex-soldiers and members of the RCMP should no longer be at the mercy of government institutions when it comes to submitting their disability applications.

Guy Parent's new report calls on the federal government to stop keeping veterans in the dark over the medical records used to decide on compensation claims.

Under the current system, when a claim is filed the applicant's medical records are requested from either the military, the RCMP or Library and Archives Canada, if the documents date back decades.

Federal bureaucrats also cherry-pick the records that are deemed relevant, a process known as flagging, before they are sent on to an adjudicator for review.

The applicant never gets a copy of the submitted records, nor the chance to point out whether documents are missing.

Parent says the process infringes on the applicant's ability to substantiate claims, and may even result in a biased decision.

"It's certainly an unfair procedure," Parent said in an interview Monday. "Fairness demands the individual be able to participate, but there is no participation whatsoever."

The ombudsman says it isn't a deliberate

attempt to inject bias, as some veterans groups have suggested over the years.

Instead, Parent said, the procedures have evolved over the years, sometimes at the expense of fairness.

"You can't forget there's fairness for the applicant as well as for the administrator, and in this case in point, it seems we've forgotten the applicant's side, which is important," he said.

Although the ombudsman's office did not investigate specific accusations of bias, it has received complaints about the application process since the Harper government established Parent's watchdog agency.

"This is an apprehension of bias," he said, noting that some adjudicator might restrict their review strictly to the flagged documents, where other documents could be pertinent.

Veterans Affairs Minister Steven Blaney released a statement Monday saying the report was useful.

"We welcome the ombudsman's report and while over 70 per cent of first applications currently receive a favourable decision, we are always looking for ways to improve how we serve veterans," he said.

The government was expected to release a specific set of responses to ombudsman's report later Monday.

Feb 04 2013

NORWAY HOUSE, Man. - RCMP say they cut crime in a northern Manitoba community by half after launching a three-day anti-booze blitz with a special unit of officers brought in for the occasion.

It was the debut of what the Mounties call their division action response team, or DART.

Fifteen officers from across the province swooped in on Norway House between Thursday and Saturday.

They targeted drunk driving and bootlegging in the community that is supposed to be booze-free.

Police say they stopped some 300 vehicles, charged about 100 people with mostly liquor and traffic violations, and confiscated 1,500 bottles or cans of beer.

RCMP say on a typical weekend, they get about 84 calls for service in Norway House, usually involving alcohol-related violence.

(Global Winnipeg)

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MONTREAL - Montreal police officers are getting new uniforms.



Starting March 5, the baby blue shirts will be traded in for a darker, navy blue look. Shirts will now match the pants, and are a pretty close match to the vests police officers wear over their shirts.

The new uniforms will also match other municipal police outfits in cities across Canada.

The total cost of the transition will be about \$20,000.

Though some have argued the new colour makes officers appear more aggressive and less approachable, police chief M Arc Parent said that's not the case.

"They did a survey in New York in 2007 about that, and they said it's not the colour, it's the way you behave, and the way your attitude (is), the way you work with people," he said.
(CTV News)

TUESDAY
FEBRUARY 05, 2013

NEWARK, N.J. - Federal authorities on Tuesday announced charges against 18 people in an alleged international credit card scam that officials say stole at least \$200 million, which would make it one of the biggest ever broken up by the U.S. Justice Department.

Officials say the losses are still being calculated and could grow much higher.

Charges were filed in U.S. District Court Newark against 18 people. By Tuesday morning, 13 of them were in custody.

The scam operated in at least 28 states and millions of dollars were wired to Pakistan,

India, the United Arab Emirates, Canada, Romania, China and Japan, according to court papers.

The basic charge is that, starting in 2003, perpetrators used 1,800 different addresses to create thousands of false identities, and used those identities to get 25,000 credit cards.

But there's a sophisticated wrinkle, authorities said: The scammers sent credit rating agencies fictitious reports to persuade them to give the fake cardholders excellent credit scores. The better the credit scores, the more could be charged - and never repaid.

Further, the court documents say the conspirators set up at least 80 sham companies that did little or no legitimate business. The

companies, including jewelry stores in Jersey City, had two functions, authorities said: They accepted credit card payments, which their creators kept, and they provided further fake credit reports to help pump up the fake cardholders' credit ratings.

Authorities say the suspects created up to 18 false identities apiece, and obtained up to 298 credit cards.

Two brothers, Muhammad Shafiq and Mohammad Naveed, of Bellrose, N.Y., are accused of together getting 464 cards. Prosecutors said Shafiq and Babar Qureshi, of Iselin, N.J., were the ringleaders.

It was unclear if the three were among those in custody.



TRAINING

<p>Truth Focused Interviewing April 23rd & 24th, 9:00 to 4:00 Instructor: Kevin Byrnes - A Detective with a major GTA police service, an author and facilitator, he has conducted interviews for many police agencies, the FBI and Interpol.</p> <p>Crisis Intervention for First Responders April 23rd 9:00 - 4:00 Instructor: Tom Hart - Retired from Durham Regional Police Service, he is now President of Canadian Critical Incident Inc.</p> <p>Investigative Strategies April 23rd 9:00 - 4:00 Instructor: Dave Perry - Retired Toronto homicide detective and CEO of Investigative Solutions Network</p> <p>Coping with Secondary Traumatic Stress April 24, 9:00 - 4:00 Instructor: Stephanie M. Conn - Registered Clinical Counsellor, Conn Counselling and Consulting and Blue Line Magazine columnist - <i>Holding the Line</i></p>	<p>Economic Crimes: Detection & Investigation (Project Mouse and Project Kite) April 24th, 9:00 - 4:00 Instructors: PROJECT MOUSE: Police Constable Timothy Trotter, Toronto Police Service - 14 Division Detective Constable Michael Kelly, Toronto Police Service - Financial Crimes Unit</p> <p>BLANCHARD CASE: Larry Levasseur CFI, CPP Senior Investigator at MTS Allstream Previous: Winnipeg Police Service, Manitoba Hydro</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For complete course descriptions visit www.blueline.ca/expo</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Registration available online or at 905-640-3048</p>
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APRIL 23 & 24, 2013

9am - 4pm

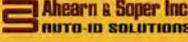
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Feb 05 2013

TORONTO - Canada's federal court has ruled that employers must try to accommodate the family obligations of their staff.

The ruling concerns the case of Fiona Johnston, who worked rotating shifts with the Canada Border Services Agency at Toronto's Pearson International Airport before having her first child.

Johnston argued the agency refused to accommodate her request for more stable hours, which would have allowed her to arrange for child care.

Her case went before the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, which found the agency had discriminated against Johnston on grounds of family status.

The federal court ruling by justice Leonard Mandamin upheld the tribunal's findings.

Mandamin says requests for child-care accommodations stem from legitimate needs and are not simply the result of lifestyle choices.

Feb 05 2013

VICTORIA - The British Columbia branch of the Canadian Bar Association says B.C.'s court system is in crisis and justice reform needs to be a top issue in the campaign for the provincial election in May.

B.C. branch president Kerry Simmons says the association has tabled its justice reform agenda and is calling on the governing Liberals and Opposition New Democrats to make improving the justice system a major focal point of their platforms.

She says the system has been hobbled by funding cuts of more than \$113 million since 2002.

Simmons says the association endorses much of a recent report on changes needed in B.C.'s criminal justice system, but many of the ideas are focused on long-term innovations.

She says the association's reforms fall under four areas, including family stability, community security, business certainty and public accountability.

Simmons says British Columbians want a justice system that erases child custody delays that can amount to more than half of a child's life and ensures criminal charges aren't dropped due to court delays.

WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 06, 2013

Feb 06 2013

HALIFAX - The independent watchdog that handles complaints against the RCMP will review how the Mounties in Nova Scotia handled a woman's calls for help before she tried to hire a hit man to kill her allegedly abusive husband.

Nova Scotia Justice Minister Ross Landry said Wednesday he called for the review from

the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP because the public has raised questions about how Nicole Ryan's case was handled.

"What's at issue for me is the perception in the public, and if there's a feeling of doubt or questions then we want to put that to rest," Landry said, adding that his office received three complaints from the public.

"I don't want to minimize the (problem of) violence against women in our society. ... We know that there have been far too many people abused that do not come forward. We need them to feel safe and that they will be fully supported."

Ryan, a teacher from western Nova Scotia, was arrested in 2008 when she tried to hire an undercover Mountie to kill Michael Ryan, who she accused in court of threatening to kill her and her daughter.

Nicole Ryan was acquitted of counselling to commit murder in 2010. The trial judge said the woman was under duress and not receiving help from police. That ruling was later upheld by Nova Scotia's appeal court.

Last month, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the duress defence was improperly applied at trial, but eight of the nine justices ordered a stay of proceedings, saying it would be unfair to subject the accused to a new trial.

The high court also said the RCMP did not adequately respond to Nicole Ryan's numerous calls for help. But the Mounties have denied that.

Last Friday, the commander of the RCMP in Nova Scotia said an internal review concluded officers had acted appropriately when responding to Nicole Ryan's complaints.

Assistant commissioner Alphonse MacNeil said there are 25 instances when the names of either Nicole Ryan or Michael Ryan appear in police files. But he said there was only one time - in November 2007 - when Nicole Ryan complained about being threat-

ened.

Michael Ryan was later accused of threatening to burn down Nicole Ryan's home near Clare, N.S. He was charged with uttering threats, but the charge was later dropped by the Crown.

MacNeil said many of the calls to police dealt with civil matters, including the couple's ongoing disputes over property ownership. He said that whenever Nicole Ryan called for help, the RCMP responded, even though there were times when there was little officers could do.

For his part, Michael Ryan has repeatedly denied threatening or abusing his estranged wife, saying he was never given the opportunity to refute his wife's claims in court.

"All the evidence was just her testimony," he said in an interview Wednesday.

Feb 06 2013

TORONTO - A Toronto police officer shot in vain at a snowplow that was quickly barreling down on him in the seconds before it mowed him down and left him dying in the snow, court heard Wednesday.



Several people who witnessed the death of Sgt. Ryan Russell, 35, testified at the trial of Richard Kachkar, 46, who has pleaded not guilty to charges of first-degree murder and dangerous driving in Russell's death.

The witnesses described coming upon what they at first thought was a police officer

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either trying to pull over a snowplow or helping it manoeuvre snowy side streets early in the morning on Jan. 12, 2011.

"It's only when I hear three gun shots that it first dawns on me that there's something amiss," Maurice Lopes testified.

Driving behind the plow, Lopes' view of the officer was blocked.

But Vance Cooper, driving a short distance behind Lopes, could see Russell standing in front of his cruiser, his left arm extended and his hand up in a "stop" gesture.

But the plow didn't stop, Cooper testified, in fact, it accelerated. Cooper couldn't see a gun in Russell's hand but his right arm was extended as if he were holding one, and he heard two or three gunshots.

None of them hit the windshield of the plow, court has heard.

"At that moment the plow is bearing down on the officer and I'm just holding my breath and hoping that this officer can get out of the way," he said. "(He's) driving straight, no steering, no braking, no apparent effort to change course."

Court has heard the plow hit Russell in the leg, knocking him to the ground, then hit his head, fracturing his skull.

The judge has told the jury that there will be no dispute that Kachkar was the person driving the plow, rather the case will centre around his mental state.

The trial has already heard that Kachkar drove the plow around Toronto for two hours that morning, hitting several cars and shouting about the Taliban, Chinese technology and a microchip in his body.

Feb 06 2013

SASKATOON - Saskatoon's police chief has had surgery in Florida to implant a pacemaker after he fell ill while on vacation.



A news release from the mayor's office says Chief Clive Weighill has been released from hospital and is resting comfortably.

The surgery Monday was performed after tests showed Weighill had a low heart rate.

He had felt weak and dizzy and was admitted to hospital.

Weighill is to return to Saskatoon late next week.

Deputy Bernie Pannell will be acting chief until that time.

Feb 06 2013

QUEBEC - A report by Quebec's provincial police apparently describes communication lapses that plagued the force on the night of the shooting at Parti Quebecois headquarters last year.

The provincial Public Security Minister Stephane Bergeron says he recently received the internal report, which he will not release or discuss in detail.

He is saying that the document describes communication flaws within the provincial police, and also with external partners.

Bergeron says he's been assured by the police that adjustments to procedure have been made in the wake of the report.

One man was killed and another was injured on Sept. 4, the night of the Quebec election, in a shooting that drew international attention. Premier Pauline Marois, who was delivering her victory speech at the time, has said she believes she was the intended target in a politically motivated shooting.

Richard Henry Bain faces 16 charges in the shooting, including first-degree murder, and has been declared mentally fit to stand trial.

Feb 06 2013

WINNIPEG - A jury is set to resume deliberations Thursday morning in the trial of two Winnipeg police officers accused of shooting an unarmed man and then trying to cover it up.

Const. Darrel Selley is charged with attempted murder using a firearm and criminal

negligence causing bodily harm in the shooting of Kristofer Shaun Fournier.

Selly and Const. Kristopher John Overwater have pleaded not guilty to intending to wound Fournier by firing a Glock .40-calibre handgun, aggravated assault and obstruction of justice.

The trial has been told the officers were looking for a suspect in a nearby robbery when they tried to arrest Fournier.

The career criminal has testified he fled, not because he was involved in the robbery but because he was high on crystal meth and in possession of cocaine.

Prosecutor Robert Tapper has argued the officers lied about how fast they were driving, ignored orders to back off and lied about being attacked.

(Winnipeg Free Press)