

# BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK

A CHRONICLE OF NEWS FOR THE CANADIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY

June 28, 2013 – Vol. 18 No. 26

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## Judge skeptical of perjury allegations at trial of Mountie in Dziekanski case



Jun 26 2013

**VANCOUVER** - The judge hearing the case of a Mountie accused of lying at the public inquiry into Robert Dziekanski's death has raised doubts that the Crown had proved the four officers involved colluded to lie about what happened, suggesting there are other reasonable explanations for mistakes in their initial notes and police statements.

Crown counsel Scott Fenton delivered his closing submissions Wednesday at the perjury trial of Const. Bill Bentley, telling a B.C. Supreme Court judge that "striking similarities" between the notes and statements of each of the officers proves they

collaborated on a fictitious story to tell homicide investigators.

Fenton then alleged Bentley lied at the public inquiry when he attempted to explain discrepancies between his initial accounts and a now-infamous amateur video of the officers stunning Dziekanski with a Taser at Vancouver's airport.

But Justice Mark McEwan interrupted Fenton several times, noting the officers' statements did vary and also pointed out several civilian witnesses made the same sorts of mistakes as the four Mounties.

"They don't have the exact same stories - I've compared them," said McEwan, who is



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hearing the case alone, without a jury.

"In context, they sound like four stories told by four people who saw the same thing. There are some differences."

McEwan also said the explanation Bentley offered during his testimony at the inquiry in February 2009 - that he was confused by a fast-moving situation - may be reasonable.

"I put some stock in his observation that a lot of things happened in a short amount of time," said McEwan.

"We're parsing this down very closely. It's 30 seconds. What happened in 30 seconds, as you can tell from the (civilian) witnesses, it's confusing."

The four officers - all of whom face perjury charges - were called to Vancouver's airport early in the morning of Oct. 14, 2007, after Dziekanski started throwing furniture in the international arrivals terminal. Within seconds of arriving, one of the officers stunned Dziekanski multiple times with a Taser.

Bentley wrote in his notes and told a homicide investigator that Dziekanski grabbed a stapler and came at the officers screaming before he was stunned and that two officers wrestled Dziekanski to the ground - both of which were clearly contradicted by the video, which emerged a month later.

At the inquiry, Bentley said he believed he was accurate when he wrote the note and suggested the account was merely out of sequence, because Dziekanski did start screaming once he was stunned.

He said he had no explanation for why he initially said two of his fellow officers took Dziekanski to the ground, when the video contradicts that statement.

Those explanations were all lies, said Fenton.

All four officers initially claimed Dziekanski was physically taken to the ground, and at least two said he appeared to be "fighting through" the Taser stun.

McEwan replied that, even in those cases, there were differences.

The judge said Bentley qualified his account of how Dziekanski ended up on the floor by saying he "believed" two officers took him down, while Const. Kwesi Millington, who fired the Taser, was more definitive and said all four officers "wrestled" Dziekanski to the ground.

Fenton acknowledged the officers used different language, but he said they all described something that didn't happen: officers physically taking Dziekanski down.

Fenton said four police officers who experienced the events first-hand wouldn't have all made the same mistake by coincidence.

Again, the judge disagreed that collusion between the officers was the only explanation for the errors.

"Experiencing a traumatic event means sometimes you have less of an appreciation of what happens than someone who is watching it," said McEwan.

The trial started earlier this month, with the Crown calling several witnesses from the airport but mostly relying on a comparison of the four officers' statements and police notes.

The defence, which did not call any evidence, has denied Bentley colluded with the other officers and has said his initial errors were honest mistakes that were the product of a fast-paced incident and the trauma of having been involved in an in-custody death.

Bentley, Millington, Const. Gerry Rundell, and former corporal Benjamin (Monty) Robinson, were each charged with perjury in May 2011.

The remaining three officers are standing trial separately. Those trials, scheduled to be heard by juries, are set for November of this year and February 2014.

Saade was suspended with pay in November 2010 and the charges weren't laid against him until April 2011.

(Halifax Chronicle Herald)

Jun 20 2013

## **EDMONTON - New data released by Edmonton police shows officers damaged or destroyed a total of 186 police vehicles in 2012.**

That's the lowest number recorded by EPS in recent years and a nine per cent decrease from 2011, when a total of 205 service vehicles were damaged or destroyed and officers were warned about poor driving.

"We're very happy with this," said Supt. Kevin Galvin on Thursday, as he went over the force's collision numbers in his downtown office.

The number of service vehicle collisions that could have been prevented in 2012 rang in at 132, a six per cent decrease from 2011.

Data shows the majority of preventable collisions in 2012 were fender benders caused by backing up unsafely.

Galvin said while officers tend to be hyper-vigilant during emergency situations, they may be less so when backing up in a parking lot.

Equipment can also make reversing tricky, Galvin explained.

"Imagine as a police officer you have all your equipment on, your vest, you've got your seatbelt on - you're highly constricted," he said. "Then you've got all the equipment in the car so you've got very little room to turn."

Galvin attributed the overall decrease in crashes to better training and maturity of employees, and said the numbers are good news for both the force and the community because it means money can be spent elsewhere.

"Policing is expensive, and one of the expenses of policing is transportation," he said.

(Metro)

Jun 20 2013

## **LOS ANGELES - Continuing the more than 20-year battle over California prisons, a panel of federal judges ordered the state on Thursday to immediately begin plans to release inmates from its overcrowded prisons.**

The three federal judges wrote in a 51-page order that regardless of any existing local laws, the governor must immediately take steps to release prisoners, perhaps by expanding good-behavior time credits that would allow inmates to finish their sentences early.

The ruling allows the state to decide how to carry out the order, enabling officials to, for example, substitute other prisoners for early release. But the judges said they expected the prison capacity to be down to 137 percent - roughly 110,000 inmates - by the end of the year.

The prisons are currently at 150 percent capacity, nearly 10,000 short of the order, according to the state.

**THURSDAY  
JUNE 20, 2013**

Jun 20 2013

## **HALIFAX - An officer with the Halifax Regional Police has resigned as part of an agreement with the Crown that allows him to avoid prosecution in a witness-tampering case.**

The Crown fulfilled its end of the deal Thursday in Nova Scotia Supreme Court in Halifax, withdrawing charges against Sam Saade.

He had been charged with breach of trust, intimidating a justice system participant and uttering threats.

Saade was charged for allegedly providing information about a witness to a friend who'd been charged with impaired driving in June 2010.

That friend allegedly made threats against the witness - though the charges in that case were eventually dropped.

**BLUE LINE  
NEWSWEEK**  
A CHRONICLE OF NEWS FOR THE CANADIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY  
**ISSN 1704-3913**  
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Two years ago, the Supreme Court ruled that the current state prison system amounted to cruel and unusual punishment and demanded changes to improve health and living conditions for prisoners. Gov. Jerry Brown has aggressively fought the court orders in recent months, arguing that state's prison crisis is over and demanding an end to federal oversight, but the judges have threatened to hold him in contempt. Even before Thursday's ruling, he made it clear that he would appeal for a second time to the Supreme Court.

The judges have ordered the state to create a "low-risk list" of candidates for early release, but the state has yet to do so and the court has repeatedly chided the state. If good-behavior time credits do not produce enough releases by the end of 2013, the judges said the state will have to release "low risk" offenders, which critics say will produce a spike in crime.

But in a statement on Thursday afternoon, the governor made it clear he had no intention of releasing prisoners swiftly. "The state will seek an immediate stay of this unprecedented order to release almost 10,000 inmates by the end of this year," Mr. Brown said.

(New York Times)

## FRIDAY JUNE 21, 2013

Jun 21 2013

### **SALMON ARM, B.C. - A driver has been killed after a brief police chase in Salmon Arm, B.C., and the province's independent police watchdog is investigating.**

A release from the Independent Investigations Office says an unnamed driver died early Friday after fleeing as RCMP were about to conduct a routine traffic stop in that Shuswap-area city.

The IIO says RCMP report the officer began a pursuit but the chase was called off.

Minutes later the suspect vehicle collided with a truck, killing the driver of the fleeing car.

The crash happened shortly after 12:15 a.m., and the IIO says it was notified at 12:30 a.m., and immediately arranged for a team, including an accident reconstructionist, to travel to the scene.

Jun 21 2013

### **TORONTO - Ontario has set up a committee to oversee implementation of recommendations aimed at tackling the crisis facing aboriginals in the justice and jury system.**

Establishing the committee was the first of 17 recommendations made by former Supreme Court of Canada justice Frank Iacobucci in February.

Attorney General John Gerretsen says Alvin

Fiddler, deputy grand chief of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, will co-chair the panel with Irwin Glasberg, an assistant deputy minister.

In his report, Iacobucci found the problem went well beyond the lack of First Nations on juries.

He said the justice system as applied to First Nations peoples, particularly in the north, was in crisis.

His report found aboriginals experience "systemic discrimination" when it comes to criminal justice or child services and the courts.

Jun 21 2013

### **BARRIE, Ont. - A guilty verdict today in the case of a police officer charged in the vicious beating of a man at a mall in Barrie, Ont.**

Const. Jason Nevill was convicted of assault causing bodily harm, along with obstruction of justice and fabricating evidence against his victim.

Nevill initially maintained that Barrie resident Jason Stern had attacked him with intent to resist arrest in November 2010.

However, charges against Stern, now 28, were dropped after video surveillance emerged showing the officer attacking him without provocation and beating him even after handcuffing him.

In convicting the officer, the judge said he rejected Nevill's claims that he thought Stern had a knife and had kicked him in the groin based on the video.

At the same time, he said Stern was a forthright witness.

"The force used by Const. Nevill right from the outset was excessive," the judge said.

His version was exaggerated and did not match the surveillance video, which showed the officer's account to be a fabrication, he said.

Stern, he said, was "rag-dolled" by the burly officer.

The incident occurred at the mall after Stern's friend broke a Christmas ornament.

Stern is suing Nevill and the mall for \$1-million, arguing he sustained permanent physical and emotional injuries from the beating.

Nevill, a 14-year veteran of the force, has been suspended from active duty pending the outcome of the trial.

Jun 21 2013

### **EDMONTON - Former RCMP officer Tirith Singh Sehmbi is not criminally responsible for killing his wife, a Court of Queen's Bench justice ruled Friday afternoon.**

Justice Vitale Ouellette weighed conflicting opinions about Sehmbi's mental state from five provincial mental-health professionals, coming to the conclusion that the former RCMP member didn't fully appreciate what he was doing when he killed his wife.

Sehmbi was on trial for second-degree murder for shooting his 29-year-old wife

Rajpinder 16 times in the early morning of July 10, 2010 inside their southeast Edmonton home. Sehmbi is no longer a police officer.

"This is a very trying case and Rajpinder died a horrible death," said Ouellette, noting since Sehmbi admitted to the killing, the case came down to whether or not he knew what he was doing.

Two psychiatrists supported the Crown's case that Sehmbi was criminally responsible despite showing signs of mental disorder in the months before the killing. Three other mental health experts argued that his progressive decline — whether delusional, psychotic or paranoid schizophrenia — showed the former officer was not capable of properly considering his actions.

In a phone conversation before the shooting, Sehmbi had warned family members "something bad" would happen. Afterwards, he told his sons, "I shot your mom" and called an RCMP sergeant, saying "think about the worst thing that could happen."

After he was sent to Alberta Hospital in late 2010, Sehmbi began telling doctors he had seen two vague figures in the room and felt someone lift his arm. That explanation was dismissed by some as unreliable and possibly a later invention.

Ouellette disagreed, noting the story first emerged within a month of his stay at the psychiatric hospital. The meaning of Sehmbi's other actions weren't clear, showing the argument he was criminally responsible was based on "erroneous facts" or "improperly drawn inferences."

Ouellette argued that it came down to a balance of probabilities. It ultimately didn't matter exactly what Sehmbi's diagnosis was, Ouellette said.

"All of the experts in this case, all of them, agree the accused was not acting rationally," Ouellette said.

In the months leading up to the killing, Sehmbi's RCMP work suffered and he was ordered to see a psychologist in March 2010. Though he was cleared for duty, fellow officers noticed he missed work and fell behind in his duties. Sehmbi was consumed by the delusion that his wife cheated on him. He placed surveillance cameras inside their home and hired a private investigator to watch the house. Sehmbi believed the mystery man lived in a "cubby hole" or the basement.

For much of the hearing, Sehmbi shuddered and shook visibly, looking either at the floor or staring at Ouellette. After the decision, he looked over to his family in the courtroom.

Sehmbi will return to Alberta Hospital.

(Edmonton Journal)

Jun 21 2013

### **CALGARY - Some pulled double-shifts, others came in on days off.**

And colleagues from Edmonton joined forces with Calgary police - pretty much

assigned exclusively to any duty to help make surviving the worst flooding Calgary has seen go a little smoother for the citizens they serve.

To say one constable standing outside an Inglewood gas station as rain poured down Thursday was popular would be an understatement.

People literally lined up, one raising his hand, waiting patiently like an elementary school student, anxiously peppering him with questions.

Most queries involved how to navigate a city where traffic was grid locked on many stretches and rerouted on others.

"How do I get out of here?" one man asked the 10-year policing veteran.

"How do I get to Forest Lawn?" queried another.

The officer, patiently repeating the same answer again and again, kept his sense of humour.

"Maybe float?" he suggested before offering what he knew about the ever-changing available road routes.

The officer - not being named as emergency crews said under directive from Calgary Emergency Management Agency (CEMA), all flood related comment had to come from the agency - was on a day off with plans to go fishing, but got a call in the early morning hours summoning him to work.

And like countless colleagues, he came in. "It's kind of what we do," the officer said.

Instead of chasing criminals, however, police were trying to keep everyone safe.

That meant knocking on doors of homes in evacuated areas to make sure people were out, directing traffic at intersections where the lights were out and basically keeping people safe and away from the rushing waters attracting many curious Calgarians. "Most people I've seen are pretty calm," the officer said. "I've not seen one person agitated, just slightly frustrated."

Sgt. Patty Neely said it was impressive to see such teamwork and commitment to help the community.

"We have 13 members, at least, who have suffered significant or total loss of their homes, a lot are in Canmore or High River," she said.

"They were at work at the time and weren't able to fend for their own belongings but assisting the general public - obviously, it was a choice they made knowing they have a duty and responsibility to the public and choosing to honour that.

"It just shows the deep integrity and commitment our members have to the public."

Neely said it was all hands on deck.

Some officers drove in from northern parts of the province to report to duty while inspectors who don't usually work nights were pulling them - many officers doing everything from manning roadblocks and protecting homes left abandoned in evacuated communities and making sure people were staying

away from dangerous areas.

"People are working 20 hours a day, sleeping for four and back to work," she said.

"There is a job that needs to get done and our members are doing it, sometimes at their own expense."

This city has seen about 75,000 resident evacuated from 25 neighbourhoods due to rising waters in the Bow and Elbow rivers.

A few chose to stay despite emergency crews evacuating their community - something officials couldn't do much about.

Edmonton police sent about 80 officers to Calgary to assist with dealing with flooding while Mounties had assistance from the Canadian Armed Forces which used helicopters to help in rescue and evacuation efforts in the High River area.

Calgary police Insp. Julien Gagne said it appeared the flooding put a damper on crime - a good thing given the need to deploy the bulk of resources to the flooding.

"It's been a quieter day," he said.

Would-be criminals "are displaced just like everyone else. Often times disasters like this bring the best out in people."

(QMI Agency)

Jun 21 2013

**EDMONTON – Edmonton police have arrested 40 people and laid 255 drug-trafficking related charges, following a seven-week undercover operation in the city's downtown core.**

The Edmonton Police Service (EPS) says the operation focused on a street level drug dealing network along 101 and 103 Street, between 103rd and 105 Avenues. During the seven weeks, close to 200 exchanges of cash for drugs were recorded within the few block radius, with the majority of it involving crack cocaine.

EPS spokesperson Claire Seyler says nearly half the suspects are women.

She adds this operation was similar to one conducted last summer, except there are about twice as many suspects involved in this case. In addition to the 40 people already arrested, warrants are still out for 20 others.

Of those who were apprehended, some were released with strict conditions. Seyler says a man and woman who were released on conditions of not returning to the area, were caught there about 10 hours later, with drugs on them. They have been taken back into custody.

If convicted, Seyler says the average time a suspect would serve in this situation is 18 months.

(Global News)

Jun 21 2013

**Calgary Police: A+. Leaving crisis decisions to a computer: #Fail.**

That's the social media report card out of flooded Calgary following a Twitter lockdown that silenced the police department's emergency tweets late Thursday until an outcry on

the social media stream prompted the social media company to release the police from "Twitter jail" a few hours later.

"I'm surprised it got shut down," said Simon Fraser University communication professor Peter Chow-White. "People have been thinking of Twitter as reliable, it seemed to be reliable during Hurricane Sandy, during the bombings in Boston — you didn't hear stories about Twitter shutting anything down.

"Twitter has become really important for crisis communications."

Twitter jail is a term used online for what happens when you tweet too often. According to Twitter rules, users are limited to 1,000 tweets (including retweets) per day, with smaller limits governing "semi-hourly intervals."

"The tweet limit of 1,000 updates per day is further broken down into semi-hourly intervals," Twitter says in its rules. "If you hit your account update/tweet limit, please try again in a few hours after the limit period has elapsed."

Chow-White said the incident shows the risks in leaving decisions in a crisis to a computer algorithm.

"I wouldn't say Twitter failed, I would say (Twitter's) computer algorithm failed," he said.

"When algorithms make decisions in a moment of crisis, those decisions have consequences," he said. "Automated systems can have failures and this was obviously a failure of an automated system."

In the Alberta flooding crisis, Calgary Police — tweeting as @CalgaryPolice — have been a go-to source, answering questions and sharing information with a constant Twitter stream. The account was locked when it reached a daily limit but quick-thinking constable Jeremy Shaw of the department's Digital Communications Unit stepped in to post official information on his own account to keep the information flowing until Twitter lifted the tweet ban.

Chow-White said since emergency services in other crisis situations didn't appear to suffer a similar problem, it could be that the Calgary Police account just wasn't recognized for what it is.

"Maybe Twitter isn't aware the Calgary Police account is the Calgary Police because they're outside the U.S."

Chow-White gives high marks to the Calgary Police department's use of Twitter during the crisis. A read of the Calgary Police Twitter stream indicates it is answering questions as well as broadcasting information to help people cope with the rising flood waters.

"It is fantastic they are engaging people," he said. "I have seen police agencies use Twitter as a one-way medium.

"You have to stop seeing Twitter as a broadcast medium to put information out and see it as a way of engaging the community."

That is a lesson the Vancouver police department learned when it faced its first real

crisis after starting to use Twitter, Vancouver's 2011 hockey riots. Since its early days on Twitter, the VPD — tweeting under the profile @VancouverPD — has broadened its engagement, answering questions and interacting with the online community as well as sharing news and information.

Sgt. Randy Fincham, spokesman for the VPD, said the department, along with the city's emergency services, will be talking to the Calgary Police after the current crisis, to try to ensure Vancouver won't be hit with a similar shutdown in the event of an emergency here.

"What happened in Calgary was a good case study for everybody involved," said Fincham. "I don't think anyone was aware a certain number of tweets would close down the system."

"This will turn into a good test case for all emergency systems in the city. If Twitter is going to be a means of communication with the public following a major event, what happened in Calgary will form a good lesson for everybody involved."

Fincham said Twitter has become an effective communications channel for the VPD.

"We find it is an effective way to get accurate, unfiltered information out to the public very quickly and it is also a way for the public to get unfiltered questions directed to the police very quickly," he said.

Fincham said the Calgary Twitter incident demonstrates the importance of finding out the capabilities of a system.

"Sometimes you won't find out those capabilities or restrictions until something has been pushed to the limit."

Twitter did not respond requests for an interview Friday.

(Vancouver Sun)

## SUNDAY JUNE 23, 2013

Jun 23 2013

### LANGLEY, B.C. - B.C.'s police watchdog is investigating a crash involving an RCMP vehicle that left another driver with serious injuries.

A news release from the province's Independent Investigations Office says the agency is investigating a crash that happened early Sunday morning in Langley.

The news release says an unmarked RCMP car collided with another vehicle driven by a civilian.

The driver of the other car was transported to hospital with serious injuries, while two passengers and the RCMP officer were also injured.

Four investigators from the Independent Investigations Office have been assigned to the case.

The office is not releasing any other details.

## MONDAY JUNE 24, 2013

Jun 24 2013

### VANCOUVER - The navigating officer aboard the Queen of the North passenger ferry when it sank off the B.C. coast, killing two passengers, has been sentenced to four years in prison.

Karl Lilgert was convicted last month of criminal negligence causing the deaths of Gerald Foisy and Shirley Rosette, who vanished when the Queen of the North missed a routine turn, collided with an island and sank in March 2006.

The Crown alleged Lilgert was distracted, possibly by the presence of his former lover, quartermaster Karen Briker, who was the only other person on the bridge with him.

Lilgert testified in his own defence, telling the jury he was busy navigating the ship and ordering course changes as he was challenged with rough weather and unreliable equipment.

B.C. Supreme Court Judge Sunni Stromberg-Stein says it's clear Lilgert's relationship with Briker was a factor in the sinking.

Lilgert's lawyer has already indicated he plans to file an appeal of the conviction.

Jun 24 2013

### ELSIPOGTOG FIRST NATION, N.B. - New Brunswick RCMP say officers were assaulted and cruisers damaged when a large outdoor party on the Elsipogtog First Nation turned violent Sunday.

Police say officers showed up after receiving a number of complaints about the party, which was attended by more than 100 people.

When officers arrived, RCMP say they were surrounded by the crowd, which began hurling beer bottles at the Mounties and their vehicles.

Two Mounties were struck by bottles, including one officer who was taken to hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

RCMP say partygoers also threw bottles at an ambulance that arrived to help the injured Mountie.

They say an RCMP cruiser sustained extensive damage in the melee.

The investigation is ongoing.

Jun 24 2013

### OTTAWA - Canada's privacy czar has singled out several federal departments for their lacklustre approach to data breaches, citing a need for better reporting, security and tracking protocols.

Privacy commissioner Jennifer Stoddart's office has compiled a preliminary list of agencies with potentially worrisome patterns when it comes to the loss of Canadians'

personal information.

The analysis is based on departmental figures tabled in Parliament in April in response to a question from New Democrat MP Charlie Angus. The response indicated there were more than 3,000 data breaches over a 10-year period affecting about 725,000 Canadians.

Upon crunching the numbers, the privacy commissioner identified nine departments and agencies that may lack adequate reporting mechanisms, have faulty security procedures or require improved tracking protocols.

Stoddart's staff cautions that the figures paint a statistical picture but do not shed full light on the kind of data involved in the breaches.

Still, the office says two departments - Fisheries and Oceans and Public Safety - "may lack adequate reporting mechanisms" for alerting the privacy commissioner of a data loss.

Fisheries reported three breaches affecting 73 people between 2002 and 2012. However, for the same period there were actually 12 lapses affecting 4,690 individuals.

None of the 28 breaches that occurred at Public Safety after 2009 was reported, says the privacy commissioner.

"A cursory comparison between institutions indicates that they do not seem to have a consistent method for reporting breaches," say notes prepared by Stoddart's office. "Some systematically report breaches, others almost never."

Institutions that "may have systematic issues in safeguard and security protocols" are Citizenship and Immigration, Passport Canada, the Correctional Service, the RCMP, the Parole Board and Veterans Affairs.

Citizenship and Immigration had 161 breaches in 2012 alone, while the passport office had 131 incidents in 2011-12, said the commissioner.

Finally, the Canada Revenue Agency was not able to present any data, suggesting a "deficiency in tracking and auditing."

The difficulty with federal data breaches is not new, Stoddart said in an interview.

"We know it's a systemic problem. We've seen it for years," she said. "So I think a positive action on the part of the government to strengthen education about it, prevention, followup and so on, would be the way to go."

The commissioner's office points out that while the federal Treasury Board has published guidelines for privacy breaches, they simply recommend - not require - that institutions notify the commissioner of certain kinds of breaches.

They include ones that involve sensitive personal data such as financial or medical information, can result in identity theft, or might otherwise harm or embarrass a person, damaging their career, reputation or well-being.

"Conversely, this means that there are a number of breaches that are not deemed to be



serious enough to warrant notification to our office,” say the notes. “We can presume that this may partially explain the vast number of unreported breaches.”

During a recent meeting, Stoddart urged Treasury Board President Tony Clement to amend the privacy law to make reporting of federal data losses mandatory.

“It was a very positive meeting,” Stoddart said. “Minister Clement seemed very concerned about the question of data and very interested in ways of strengthening data breach awareness, I’d say, and proactive work to minimize data breaches.”

However, she said Clement “made no commitments” about enshrining mandatory reporting.

Andrea Mandel-Campbell, a spokeswoman for Clement, said Monday that the minister is taking Stoddart’s comments “under consideration.”

Angus says a “complete overhaul” of reporting procedures is needed. “Every breach must be reported to the privacy commissioner,” he said Monday.

Government must also ensure Stoddart’s office has the resources to investigate lapses and powers to effectively police both federal agencies and private companies that lose data, he said.

“She has to have the tools that she needs to protect privacy.”

Jun 24 2013

### **VANCOUVER - A B.C. Supreme Court has upheld a ruling by the province’s police-complaint commission that cleared an Abbotsford constable who strip searched a female motorist in a gas station’s washroom.**

The incident took place Aug. 15, 2009 after Const. Karen BurrIDGE and another officer were tipped off that Jocelyn Gowland might be carrying drugs.

Gowland filed a complaint, and an investigation found that while BurrIDGE failed to inform the motorist of her charter rights, the constable’s actions did not constitute misconduct.

Retired judge William Dieblot was then appointed by police complaint commissioner Stan Lowe to investigate the matter, but he also came to a similar conclusion, noting BurrIDGE had acted in good faith.

Lowe then applied for a judicial review of the matter in B.C. Supreme Court.

But Justice Elliott Myers has dismissed the application in a ruling posted online Monday, noting Lowe’s legal counsel was unable to point to anything that indicated intentional or reckless misconduct by the constable.

Jun 24 2013

### **TORONTO - A judge blasted the Toronto police force on Monday after ruling that a veteran officer’s street check — also called carding — was unconstitutional.**

However, Ontario court judge William Horkins allowed a gun found during the stop to be entered into evidence against the accused in the case, Alexander Fountain, and convicted him.

“One of the unsettling things was the apparent lack of training with regards to Charter rights when stopping a person,” said Horkins of the officer who was with the Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy unit, called TAVIS. He was “an experienced officer who had no training. He was not alert to the unlawfulness of his conduct.”

Fountain “was compelled to come over and not free to walk away,” said Horkins. “And that is true for young black males who find themselves the target of policing in certain areas on frequent occasions.”

But the judge ruled the Charter breach wasn’t enough to tip the scales and exclude the evidence. Fountain was convicted of unauthorized possession of a loaded firearm, which comes with a three-year mandatory minimum sentence.

The judge’s criticism comes at a time when the force is retraining its officers on the legal aspects of carding.

The police board was briefed last week by Const. Ali Moosvi on the new training. Moosvi told the board that community policing is “still voluntary and community members have no legal obligation to answer questions or even stay and talk to the officers,” he said. “It’s something we’re highlighting and emphasizing with our officers.”

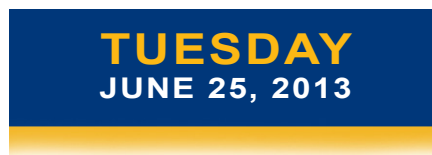
Most individuals don’t know they aren’t legally required to provide the information and can walk away when police approach randomly, which is often the case when TAVIS officers blanket neighbourhoods in the summer.

In his ruling, Justice Horkins noted TAVIS officers card proactively and the program is “close to the flame of Charter offensiveness.” But he says it’s a systemic issue and not necessarily the fault of the individual officer.

Police said they couldn’t comment specifically on the ruling, but spokesperson Meaghan Gray said “police officers communicating face to face with the community in public spaces is a mandated legal responsibility under the Police Service Act.”

However, Horkins says police can only briefly detain individuals when there is reasonable suspicion of an offense, an opinion shared by many other legal experts.

(Toronto Star)



Jun 25 2013

### **TORONTO - Toronto police have wrapped up a three-week drug investigation by arresting 35 people and filing 144 charges.**

The operation, called Project Wanted, began June 3, and targeted the street-level drug trade just north and west of the downtown area.

Police say the operation was undertaken in response to community concerns about drug dealers and users in several areas.

Police also says the sale and use of illicit drugs has a direct link to robberies, assaults, break and enters and other property related offences.

During the operation, police say undercover officers made 12 drug purchases and seized crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin and ecstasy.

Police add that the suspects arrested had 723 total convictions between them, or an average of 20 per suspect.

Jun 25 2013

### **VANCOUVER - A special prosecutor has been appointed to review a 2007 police shooting in Vancouver that prompted renewed headlines last year after a previously unseen video of the incident surfaced.**

Paul Boyd was shot multiple times after police responded to a 911 call about a disturbance in August 2007.

The officer who fired the shot told a coroner’s inquest that he believed Boyd, who at one point was carrying a bike chain, was armed when he fired the fatal shot and may have been wearing body armour.

But a video that surfaced last year showed Boyd crawling on the street before the fatal shot, prompting a review of the case by an Alberta agency that investigates police officers.

A news release from B.C.’s Criminal Justice Branch says the investigation by the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team is finished and the file has now been turned over to special prosecutor Mark Jette.

Boyd was bipolar and was not taking his medication at the time of his fatal confrontation with police.

Jun 25 2013

### **VANCOUVER - The British Columbia and federal governments have lost an early skirmish against a former Mountie, as a proposed class-action lawsuit against the RCMP over discrimination and harassment winds through the courts.**

Janet Merlo alleges she was subjected to name calling, sexist pranks, and demands for sexual favours during her 19-year career with the force and has applied to B.C. Supreme Court to launch a class-action suit against the governments.

But B.C.’s justice minister and Canada’s attorney general asked the court if they could apply to have section’s of Merlo’s civil claim struck in advance of her certification hearing.

Justice Miriam Gropper says Merlo’s and the governments’ applications will be heard at the same time and over a five-day period in April or May 2014.

She says there's no advantage to hearing the applications separately and hearing them at the same time is efficient.

The parties must now submit affidavits, responses and other supporting arguments by the spring.

Jun 25 2013

### **VANCOUVER - Vancouver police have launched a calendar to warn businesses about protests and give companies an opportunity to lock down before demonstrators flood the streets.**

A new website was launched by the department in March to list events from small rallies with just a few people to massive, organized protests with potential impacts to shops and services.

According to Staff Sgt. Mike Purdy, speaking at the June police board meeting, the site would be a better means to work with the community to warn them of events. Vancouver officers police more than 2,000 events annually, he said.

"These businesses need to know, is there a march ... if it will affect their business directly," said Purdy, adding businesses are often aware of demonstrations before police are, and can inform others through the site.

"Eventually, we'll get all the business improvement associations on to it."

As the list is not open to the general public, Vancouver police ask businesses interested to contact the downtown Vancouver BIA to get involved.

Charles Gauthier, executive director of DVBI, said businesses typically find out about protests either through email notices or the "old school" way of posters plastered onto streetlight poles.

"The old way of doing it isn't overly effective," he said. "If there's a possibility there might be a criminal element, then a building manager or owner can decide if they'll post additional security at the doors and lock down if required."

(24 Hours Vancouver)

**WEDNESDAY**  
**JUNE 26, 2013**

Jun 26 2013

### **QUEBEC - Bill 12, to end the practice in Quebec of police investigating incidents where police officers cause death or serious injury, was adopted unanimously by the National Assembly on May 9.**

But the civilian Bureau des enquêtes indépendantes that Bill 12 will create — to conduct independent investigations of police shootings — might not handle its first case before 2015.

When Stéphane Bergeron, public security

minister in the Parti Québécois government, presented his proposal to adopt an approach similar to that of other provinces and leave such investigations to civilians — not the police — human-rights groups were pleased.

Not so police forces and their unions, which maintained that the current system works just fine.

Now, The Gazette has learned that the controversial process of police-investigating-police will remain in place a little longer.

"We foresee that the process will be completed within a year and a half, two years," Bergeron said in an interview Tuesday. "We had to adopt the law before all this could go ahead because we are creating, for all practical purposes, something completely new."

"In the meantime, there will be no vacuum because the present process will continue."

Quebec's ombudsman and the province's human-rights commission have repeatedly criticized the existing practice in Quebec of naming an outside police force to investigate injuries and death caused by police.

The Quebec cabinet met Tuesday for the last time before the summer holiday season. Bergeron was asked by a reporter why there were still no nominations of the director and deputy director for the civilian Bureau des enquêtes indépendantes

"First we have to adopt the regulations," Bergeron explained. "We are in the process of consultations on what we call the regulatory framework."

"After that, once the regulation has been approved, there will be what we call a prepublication."

"After that we will adopt the regulations and after that we will proceed in the process of hiring a director and a deputy director."

"Because there is the process of training, not only preparation for the training but the training itself of our inspectors, of our investigators, obviously, that implies a certain delay."

Bergeron said the Association des policières et policiers provinciaux du Québec, the union representing 5,400 Sûreté du Québec officers, has objected to the regulatory framework proposed by the government.

"We are taking note of that and we are trying to adapt our text," he said.

Bergeron presented a three-page draft regulatory framework during hearings on the bill in April.

The new rules stipulate that police officers involved must be separated so they cannot consult with each other before they meet Bureau investigators.

The draft also calls for an initial meeting between Bureau investigators and officers under investigation in the first 48 hours of an inquiry being called, and with other police witnesses within 24 hours.

The SQ union objected in a news release May 30 that such rules "if adopted as is, will infringe on the fundamental rights of police officers."

(Montreal Gazette)

Jun 26 2013

### **HALIFAX - Two children have been removed from harm and 22 men arrested in Atlantic Canada as part of an investigation by police forces across the region that found millions of pornographic images of children.**

The men who have been arrested range in age from 22 to 61 and face charges that include accessing child pornography, possession of child pornography and making available child pornography, as well as several firearms charges.

In one case, a man in Newfoundland and Labrador faces eight charges of voyeurism and one charge of making pornography.

Det.-Const. Chris Purchas of the Toronto Police Service said officers also found two children who were being photographed or filmed without their knowledge. They were removed from harmful situations.

"This project dealt with the identification of the worst of the worst," said Purchas, who is seconded to the federal centre for missing and exploited children. "We were focused on identifying the high-risk offenders."

Purchas said those charged collected gigabytes of pornographic images and video, including explicit images of young children being sexually assaulted.

RCMP Const. Kent Luther said in one of the cases where a child was removed from harm's way in Newfoundland, a man has been arrested.

In the other case where a child was removed from a harmful situation in Nova Scotia, an arrest has not been made, although RCMP Const. Colleen Fequet said police expect to lay charges.

Police don't believe the men arrested are linked.

"There's no tying together of these people at this point," said Corp. Jadie Spence of Halifax's Integrated Internet Child Exploitation Unit. "These were picked off separately."

Purchas said only one of the 22 men arrested has a criminal record. "I will tell you the majority of our offenders are individuals who have never had a parking ticket," he said.

The investigation, called Operation Snapshot II, began in April.

The arrests announced Wednesday follow a similar operation in October when the RCMP announced charges in 15 different communities in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories.

Purchas said the safety of children is a primary concern for police.

"The goal here is to rescue children. We did that in this case. We took two children out of harm's way and to me that's a great success," he said.

Jun 26 2013

### **BELLEVILLE, Ont. - Four people - including two police officers - had a close call with a train on a railway**

## bridge in Belleville.

The two officers responded to a call about a young man and a young woman on a CN Rail trestle over the Moira River on Wednesday afternoon.

The officers had reached the pair and were preparing to escort them off the bridge when they spotted an approaching Via Rail train.

Police dispatchers alerted Via but the engineer wasn't able to stop.

The four people ran to safety as the train crossed the bridge, narrowly avoiding being hit as the train finally came to a stop just west of the structure.

No one was hurt, but the man and the woman are facing trespassing charges.  
(CJOJ)

Jun 26 2013

## WINNIPEG - A 29-year-old Winnipeg man doesn't deny threatening to rob a cab driver at knifepoint and then pointing the weapon at two police officers who responded to the emergency call.

But John Charlette argues he should walk free of all criminal charges on the basis he was only trying to harm himself that night.

Defence lawyer Jody Ostapiew says his client was depressed and hoped to prod police officers into killing him - something that is known as suicide-by-cop.

He nearly got his wish, as the officers responded to his knife threat by shooting and critically injuring him.

Charlette is on trial for robbery and assault charges but has pleaded not guilty by offering up the unusual legal defence.

"He faked a robbery and wanted police to come," said Ostapiew. "He said to them, 'You are going to have to kill me.' That's all he wanted. That's almost what he got."

The Crown says it doesn't really matter what was in Charlette's mind at the time.

"Yes, it's likely his ultimate goal was to die that evening. But it's irrelevant whether he was really going to stab them," says prosecutor Mark Kantor. "He admitted he brandished the weapon. Those officers believed they were going to be stabbed if they didn't take the action they did."

Queen's Bench Justice Rick Saull has reserved his verdict until July 4.

(Winnipeg Free Press)

Jun 26 2013

## An RCMP constable in British Columbia who is on leave for post-traumatic stress says she was shocked to get a letter this month informing her that the force was moving to dismiss her.

The letter states that the force was taking the action because it couldn't find suitable accommodation for her anywhere within the organization.

But Const. Karen Katz says she thinks the reason for the "notice of intention to

discharge" is because of two lawsuits she filed last year alleging systemic harassment.

"I'm being retaliated against because of my lawsuits and because I'm a public whistleblower. I'm being treated like the enemy," she said in an interview Tuesday.

RCMP spokeswoman Sgt. Julie Gagnon said Tuesday the force "cannot, in good conscience, continue to pay a full salary indefinitely to any employee - regardless of whether they are involved in a lawsuit against the RCMP - whose health prevents them from performing duties within the RCMP."

Before the force considers an administrative discharge, it will ensure that it has considered all reasonable options to keep the member employed, Gagnon said.

Shifting the member into a civilian position might also be explored.

"However, sometimes a member has a condition that permanently impedes them from performing their duties and they cannot be accommodated without causing undue hardship and this may result in an administrative discharge."

As of April, the force had issued letters to just over 30 employees who were on long-term leave, notifying them that the "work accommodation process" had begun. She was unable to say how many have since been discharged.

In a memo to the rank-and-file in February, RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson said the force had to be a good steward of public funds and insisted that the force was not targeting members because they had filed harassment complaints.

"The spin may be that the RCMP is 'firing' employees who are ODS (off duty sick) long-term with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after making a harassment complaint, for example," Paulson wrote. "Let me assure you that this is not the case."

The two-page letter Katz received in the mail states that the force is seeking to discharge her "for reason of physical and/or mental disability. This discharge is based on the grounds that your disability has impaired your ability to perform your duties under the RCMP Act in a manner fitted to the requirements of your position and the limitations and occupational restrictions resulting from your condition are such that accommodation elsewhere in the force has not been possible."

Katz has been on leave since early 2009 - first for a shoulder injury and then for post-traumatic stress stemming from being pressured to return to work, she says.

Katz filed two civil claims against the force last year.

Katz's lawsuits are separate from a proposed class-action lawsuit involving almost 300 current and former female members of the RCMP, who allege systemic harassment and discrimination within the force.

(Postmedia News)

Jun 26 2013

## The jury for the coroner's inquest into Adam Purdie's death has recommended that all B.C. RCMP vehicles have dashboard video cameras installed.

The jury has also recommended that RCMP officers making traffic stops should not approach offending vehicles until all information attached to the licence plate has been established.

The inquest was looking into the fatal police shooting of Mr. Purdie on March 2, 2011. RCMP Constable Peter Neily fired 30 rounds after seeing Mr. Purdie aim a rifle at him. One of the bullets pierced Mr. Purdie's heart, killing him.

The only video available of the incident was taken by an officer's personal video camera attached to his cruiser's dashboard.

The series of events started when Mr. Purdie was stopped for having blacked-out tail lights. The officer who pulled him over noticed a partially concealed rifle in the back seat, but Mr. Purdie fled when the officer questioned him about it.

As RCMP officers attempted to apprehend the fleeing suspect, they were told by radio that he had a previous firearms conviction and was possibly suicidal.

Earlier on Wednesday, the mother of Adam Purdie told the inquest her son had been trying to stay sober but was "emotionally devastated" by a breakup with his girlfriend shortly before his fatal run-in with police.

"Adam was troubled, absolutely," Jane Purdie told the inquest jury. "But he tried so hard."

An RCMP toxicologist told the inquest Mr. Purdie had cocaine and morphine in his system on the evening of the incident.

The inquest also heard from the lead investigator of the incident, Detective Sergeant Chris Horsley of the Saanich Police Department.

Detective Sgt. Horsley told the jury many of the bullets fired by Const. Neily had hit Mr. Purdie's rifle, disabling it.

According to Detective Sgt. Horsley, Const. Neily told investigators he reloaded his pistol and fired off the second 15 rounds because he had seen Mr. Purdie struggling to fix his rifle.

Forensic evidence presented to the inquest has shown Mr. Purdie had 17 gunshot wounds, including one that was self-inflicted but survivable.

The Saanich police investigation cleared Const. Neily of criminal responsibility in Mr. Purdie's death. The coroner's inquest was to determine the facts of the incident and come up with recommendations to prevent similar fatalities from occurring.

(Globe and Mail)

Jun 26 2013

## MONTREAL - It's possible, but not easy, to disarm a Montreal police officer, a weapons expert told a coroner's inquest examining the 2008 death of



## **an unarmed teen shot by a constable who claimed he feared for his life.**

Alexandre Limoges said the Montreal police force has a custom-made holster with three safety mechanisms, but an officer's gun could still be removed by someone who has enough time and is in the right position.

"Have you tried it?" coroner lawyer François Daviault asked Limoges, a civilian with the Montreal police force responsible for maintenance and supply of the force's weapons.

"I've tried it, but not in a conflict situation," he replied.

The inquest, which began in October 2009 after a few false starts, heard that in 57 seconds, Constable Jean-Loup Lapointe got out of his vehicle, wrestled Dany Villanueva to the ground, pulled his service gun and fired four bullets, killing Dany's brother Fredy, and injuring two other youths.

Lapointe testified that he feared he would be disarmed by the unarmed youths he stopped to question on Aug. 9, 2008, as they played dice in a Montreal North parking lot. Lapointe's partner, Constable Stéphanie Pilote, testified that she wasn't afraid and therefore didn't draw her weapon.

The death sparked riots in Montreal North and drew accusations from the public that the police were using racial profiling. No criminal charges were laid against Lapointe or Pilote.

Police lawyers fought for months at the inquest to keep information about the holsters under wraps, delaying a final report on the inquest, which heard its last witness in November 2010.

Lawyer Pierre-Yves Boisvert argued that revealing the safety mechanism would put officers' lives in danger and would cost thousands of dollars to replace the holsters once the "secret combination" was known.

Not happy with a publication ban on the information — which ad hoc coroner André Perreault agreed to impose at least until he heard the evidence — Boisvert went to Quebec Superior Court to try to have the topic discussed in camera.

But in April, Superior Court Justice Danielle Grenier ruled that the coroner needed to evaluate Lapointe's fear. Maybe the holsters don't sufficiently protect the officers and perhaps Perreault would make recommendations about that, she said in her ruling.

"That's his primordial role and we shouldn't prevent him from doing it just because of the cost of replacing holsters, if that is necessary," she wrote.

As the inquest resumed Wednesday, Boisvert argued that the publication ban on the holster details be maintained in order to protect both the public and the police.

"(If it is made public) police will have reason to believe they no longer have a few seconds to react before drawing their guns and therefore will be a lot less safe," he said.

Lawyers for the victims argued that the

information is already readily available on the Internet and therefore a publication ban isn't necessary.

In the end, Perreault ordered only a partial ban. Media may not report the minute details of the safety mechanisms or publish photos of them.

More weapons experts are to testify Friday, which is supposed to be the last day of the inquest.

It's not known when Perreault will complete his report, which cannot assign blame, only make recommendations.

(Montreal Gazette)

**THURSDAY**  
**JUNE 27, 2013**

Jun 27 2013

## **VANCOUVER - A B.C. Supreme Court jury found a Vancouver man guilty of human trafficking Wednesday night, which Franco Yiu Kwan Orr's lawyer says is a first in Canada.**

Orr was also found guilty of employing a foreign national, specifically his Filipino nanny Leticia Sarmiento, illegally and making a misrepresentation that could induce an error in the administration of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

However, the jury acquitted his partner, Oi Ling Nicole Huen, of human trafficking and employing a foreign national illegally.

"My clients are in shock, frankly, they're stunned," said defence lawyer Nicholas Prevolos outside of court, noting the jury apparently believed the allegations against Orr but not Huen.

"It's odd, and it's frustrating for them."

The Crown declined to comment on the verdict.

Orr is expected to return to court July 10 to set a sentencing hearing and will remain on bail.

Jun 27 2013

## **NEW YORK - New York City lawmakers have passed the most expansive plans in years to impose new oversight on the nation's largest police force.**

The City Council voted early Thursday to create an outside watchdog and make it easier to bring racial profiling claims against the New York Police Department.

Both bills passed with enough votes to override expected mayoral vetoes.

Proponents see the legislation as a check on a police force that's come under scrutiny for its heavy use of a tactic known as stop and frisk and its extensive surveillance of Muslims, which was revealed in stories by The Associated Press.

Critics say the measures would impinge on techniques that have decreased crime dramatically

and would hamper the NYPD.

A pending federal court case could add separate monitoring.

Jun 27 2013

## **TORONTO - Sunrise Propane has been convicted of violating environmental regulations in connection with a 2008 blast in north Toronto that killed a man and forced thousands from their homes.**

Courts documents show the company and its directors, Shay Ben-Moshe and Valery Belshov, have been found guilty of numerous provincial-offences charges in relation to the explosion.

Ontario government lawyers argued training negligence in a fireball that killed employee Parminder Saini, 25, and rained debris on the surrounding area.

The August explosion displaced some 12,500 and caused millions in property damage.

Court has heard Saini was "incinerated" during a risky truck-to-truck propane transfer, while fellow employee Felipe De Leon escaped from the blast.

A defence lawyer argued that Saini and De Leon had received training and were responsible for the explosion.

Jun 27 2013

## **MONTREAL - The Harper government has won the latest round in its battle to delete, once and for all, the last remaining portion of the federal long-gun registry.**

Quebec's highest court has ruled against the provincial government there, which is fighting to save data for that province from being destroyed as it has elsewhere in Canada.

In its judgment, the Quebec Court of Appeal said the province has no right to the registry data. It also ordered the provincial government should pay the court costs for the case.

"Quebec has no property right in the data," said the 14-page ruling, released Thursday.

"The data does not belong to Quebec, and the provinces have no control over it... The Parliament of Canada, which considers the data at issue to be pointless and inefficient and believes that its existence in a registry infringes the right to privacy, can certainly decide to stop compiling and preserving that information."

The long-controversial registry could, in theory, be completely destroyed in two weeks. The ruling said the federal government must wait that long before deleting the Quebec data.

Various observers have predicted the issue will wind up before the Supreme Court. The Quebec government immediately announced plans Thursday to appeal to the country's highest court.

The long-gun registry was scrapped in the

rest of Canada last year but remains operational in Quebec following a series of injunctions safeguarding the Quebec data and ordering the registry be maintained while the federal-provincial battle plays out in court.

Thursday's verdict says it was "clearly inappropriate" for a lower court, in a ruling last year, to compel the federal government to maintain the Quebec share of the registry.

It quoted a recent Supreme Court ruling that said that as popular as "flexible federalism" might be, it "cannot sweep designated powers out to sea, nor erode the constitutional balance inherent in the Canadian federal state."

Jun 27 2013

**DETROIT - After years of pay cuts and reduction in their ranks, Detroit police officers and firefighters in the next week face a tough decision: Retire now or put their careers in the hands of Detroit emergency manager Kevyn Orr, who has the power to unilaterally cut their pay and benefits.**

At least several dozen police officers and firefighters will retire early as they try to lock in benefits before Orr imposes new labor contracts, union officials told Reuters.

A large flight of veteran public safety workers could cause disruption in a city facing some of the nation's highest violent crime rates and a rash of arson fires. This in turn would raise the level of difficulty for Orr as he seeks to address Detroit's myriad urban problems.

Uncertainty over future pay and benefits for the city's 500 mid-level unionized police officers and 917 unionized firefighters is causing some to seek the exit, presidents of the two unions said.

Mark Young, president of the Detroit Police Lieutenants & Sergeants Association (LSA), said 200 of the 500 officers he represents are eligible to retire. He said many are "on the bubble" regarding a decision to retire before the union's contract expires next week.

By retiring now, members of the LSA and the Detroit Firefighters' Association could hope to lock in retirement benefits under their existing contract before Orr could impose cuts to pay and benefits -- a power granted him under Michigan's emergency manager law.

The city's contract with the LSA expires July 6.

Early retirement likely would not protect retirement benefits, regardless of whether Orr imposes changes or new terms are set under a possible bankruptcy filing. Orr earlier this month said there is a 50-50

chance that Detroit will enter bankruptcy.

The 1,900-member Detroit Police Officers Association has a contract that extends through June 2014. Its members took a 10-percent pay cut last July.

Jun 27 2013

**CALGARY - It was the "thank you" heard across the city and the plate of homemade cookies shared by hundreds of exhausted police officers, all standing guard over the largest evacuation in Calgary history.**



Well not literally — that would be one big pile of cookies.

But via Twitter, the cookies and card brought to the front lines of the flood by a shy little boy named Aiden Korol became a symbol of gratitude shared by every cop in town.

"I was manning a bridge and he just walked up, looking a little shy — but he had a plate of cookies and a card," said Const. Dehl Vella.

"So I walked up to him and he gave me a big hug and said 'thank you.' It was really cute, it was really cool."

Seldom has a city been so grateful to be under officer rule as Calgary is now, ever since a state of emergency was declared last Thursday and the entire municipality essentially became a police state.

Anywhere else, and that term would conjure visions of barked orders and intimidating officers.

In Calgary, where 75,000 people were forced to leave homes and possessions behind, "police state" means a bunch of men and women in uniforms working long hours to keep our stuff safe — and that includes the bylaw officers, firefighters and soldiers who stood guard too.

That one plate of Smarties cookies, and the handmade card with the hippo, giraffe and panda stickers, summed up a whole city's thanks.

"Seeing that, it helps us out so much — I mean, I would do the job for free after a kid comes up and thanks you like that," said Vella.

It seems a lot of other police officers felt the same, and the card and cookies quickly spread via Twitter.

"Things like this are what keep us going during our 79th hour of work this week.

Thank you!" tweeted the police, along with a photo.

Korol's mom Ana Valencia says she is stunned by the attention her son's token of gratitude has received.

It started simply enough: They live in the south end of town, far from the flood, but needed to go the inner city to help Korol's grandparents.

The three-and-a-half-year-old boy had been watching the flood on television, and he wanted to make a card for the nice "po-wice" officers, to go with the cookies his mom offered to bake.

"He made me drive around until me found a police officer, and I think that may have been the first one he'd ever seen in real life," said Valencia.

"He was a little bit shy at first."

But the image of the little lad dressed up as superman, hugging his real hero, speaks volumes.

The cookie image spreading around the city was a surprise — Valencia didn't know a Calgary police officer named Const. Jeremy Shaw was doing his own part to keep a very human face on the legions of police keeping guard.

While the Calgary Police Service has long maintained an official social media presence, Shaw's new role as digital communications officer has allowed him to give the force a more laid-back, even humorous voice.

"I do all our online content — our main account is very dry and official, but I've also wanted to launch my own personal account so we can have a bit of that informal voice, because people relate to that better," said Shaw, a ten-year service veteran.

Launched just as the flood started, Shaw (@CstShaw) has been a huge hit, from his posting of the cookie photo, to a clever retort made to a woman complaining the flood had driven vagrants into her quiet suburb.

"Suspicious people can be reported by calling 403-266-1234. Homeless people may appreciate a sandwich," was Shaw's response through @calgarypolice, a quip retweeted by thousands of amused Calgarians.

Second most popular so far was the plate of cookies — and Shaw says that was a pleasure to post online.

"When you're working a 20-hour shift and you get a plate of cookies from a three-year-old, it makes the next couple of hours go by much easier," he said.

(Sun Media)

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