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JANUARY 29, 2016 – Vol. 21 No. 5

Executive Digest

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EDMONTON - A judge has ruled that charges against an accused in the mysterious deaths of two Alberta seniors will stand even though the RCMP made serious mistakes and prosecutors didn't get the suspect to trial quickly.

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TORONTO - The Ontario government is considering giving police chiefs more power to suspend officers without pay, a change that police brass have been seeking for years.

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Auxiliary constables with Canada's national police force will no longer ride shotgun with Mounties following a year-long review.

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OTTAWA - The Supreme Court of Canada has agreed to look at the role of drug recognition experts in a case of impaired driving involving drugs.

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Forcillo guilty of attempted murder in teen's death



Jan 25 2016

TORONTO - A Toronto police officer was found guilty of attempted murder Monday in the shooting death of a troubled teen on an empty streetcar.

After six days of deliberations, an 11-member jury cleared Const. James Forcillo of the more serious charge of second-degree murder in the 2013 death of 18-year-old Sammy Yatim, an incident that sparked public protests in the city.

Forcillo's lawyer indicated the defence would try to have the proceedings stayed - which would prevent a conviction from being registered - claiming abuse of process.

"We say the abuse of process is Const. Forcillo substantially followed the police training he was given and so if the state gave him that training, they should not be entitled to a conviction in the matter," Peter Brauti said outside the courthouse. "This is Phase 1 of a long road for us."



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Forcillo, who remains out on bail, showed little emotion as his verdict was delivered, maintaining the same stoic expression he's held throughout the trial.

Forcillo's case will be back in court in mid-May, when Brauti will argue for the stay of proceedings.

He will also bring a constitutional challenge to the mandatory minimum sentence Forcillo faces after being found guilty of attempted murder, which is four years in prison. An appeal in the case is also being considered.

"It's early days still for officer Forcillo, he's still got a lot of fight ahead of him," Brauti said.

Brauti added that he believed the outcome of the verdict could have been changed if he had been allowed to present the jury with a "suicide-by-cop" theory, which the judge did not allow at trial.

That theory suggested Yatim was depressed and didn't comply with police orders because he didn't care about his own life and was prepared to act in a way that would lead to police actions resulting in his death.

"We thought the suicide by cop was a huge part of our defence," said Brauti. "We were shocked and disappointed we weren't allowed to put that to the jury and I believe it would have had an effect."

Forcillo, 32, had pleaded not guilty to second-degree murder and attempted murder in Yatim's death, which was captured on cellphone videos that went viral online.

The public outrage over the incident prompted the city's police chief to launch a review of officers' use of force and their response to emotionally disturbed people.

Crown prosecutors had argued Forcillo's actions weren't necessary or reasonable, while his lawyer called those actions justified and carried out in self-defence.

The jury heard that Yatim had consumed ecstasy at some point before boarding the

streetcar. Videos showed him exposing himself and pulling out a small knife, causing panicked passengers to pour out of the vehicle when it came to a stop.

Forcillo — the first officer on the scene — screamed repeatedly at Yatim to drop the knife, but the teen refused and swore at police, court heard.

When Yatim took a few steps back from the top of the streetcar steps, Forcillo issued a warning for him not to take another step forward. Yatim then moved back to where he had been standing and Forcillo fired three times, causing the teen to collapse.

The jury has heard that Forcillo then fired six more shots at Yatim.

The entire encounter lasted about 50 seconds. Yatim was hit by eight out of nine bullets fired by Forcillo.

The second-degree murder charge against the officer relates to the first three shots he fired, while the attempted murder charge pertains to the second volley.

Some lawyers who followed the case said it appeared jurors tried to reach a compromise.

The verdict suggests jurors believed the first round of shots - which led to Yatim's death - was fired in self-defence, but found the second volley was unjustified, the lawyers said.

"What the jury must've found was that he didn't intend to kill him with the first three shots? but they must have found that he did intend to kill him with the second set of shots, but because those shots were not and could not have been fatal, that's why it's an attempted murder," said Scott Reid, a Toronto defence lawyer who followed the case.

The Toronto police union said it was concerned about the jury's decision.

"It sends a chilling message to our members and that's going to be a challenge for our frontline members to deal with this issue," said union president Mike McCormack. "It has definitely impacted the psyche of frontline officers."

Toronto Police Chief Mark Saunders said he couldn't comment on the verdict, but pledged to improve the force's relationship with those with mental health issues.

"We are all going forward in time to see what we can do to reduce any harm to anybody we deal with who's a person in crisis," Saunders said.

The national framework for dealing with violence against aboriginal women - two years in the making - will help ensure governments engage closely with indigenous people, said federal Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould.

"We had quite a detailed discussion around a collaborative approach to addressing the challenges that indigenous peoples face," she said at the meeting's conclusion Thursday.

Ministers want to work together "to ultimately do our part to end the horrible and unnecessary situation that indigenous women and girls are facing in terms of violence," Wilson-Raybould added.

The minister said she and her counterparts also talked about the coming national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

Wilson-Raybould and Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale are responsible for shepherding the new Liberal government's promised review of the controversial omnibus security legislation known as Bill C-51.

The federal ministers want to hear from "as many people as we can" on revisiting the bill brought in by the previous government, Wilson-Raybould said.

"We don't have a specific timeline right now, but it is a priority of our government and we will be moving forward with that in collaboration with other ministers."

The prime minister has asked Wilson-Raybould to conduct a general review of changes to the criminal justice system and sentencing reforms over the past decade with an eye to ensuring community safety and value for money.

Goodale has committed to reviewing Conservative changes that made people wait longer and pay more to obtain a criminal pardon.

Jan 21 2016

CARBERRY, Man. - A Mountie has received minor injuries after being dragged by a fleeing vehicle during an investigation of a single-vehicle car crash.

The crash happened on Wednesday morning on the Trans-Canada Highway just east of Carberry, Man.

RCMP said that when they arrived on the scene, they found the female driver of the vehicle to be in possession of a minor quantity of drugs and drug paraphernalia.

The vehicle was towed back to the detachment and a further investigation determined the woman had provided them with false I.D.

RCMP said when the woman realized this, she stepped on the gas and ended up dragging an officer as he tried to disengage the ignition, stopping only when she drove into a snowbank.

Mounties said the woman became combative and had to be subdued.

Caley Elizabeth Steele, 27, of Lac du Bonnet, has been charged with assaulting a police officer, assault with a weapon, escaping custody and identity fraud.

(CTV Winnipeg)



BLUE LINE NEWS WEEK Celebrating 20 Years

ISSN 1704-3913
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THURSDAY
JANUARY 21, 2016

Jan 21 2016

OTTAWA - Justice and safety ministers from across the country have signed off on an approach to reduce violence against indigenous girls and women.

At a meeting in Quebec City, they also discussed legalization of marijuana, radicalization of young people, cybersecurity and physician-assisted dying.

Jan 21 2016

SASKATOON - A Saskatoon mother has failed to convince city police commissioners to impose a curfew to keep young people off the streets at night.

Agatha Eaglechief says such a curfew would reduce crime and make young people more responsible.

Commissioners decided her proposal would not be the best use of police resources in Saskatoon.

Deputy Chief Bernie Pannell says curfews are extremely hard to enforce.

Some members of the board say it is up to parents to set rules for their children to follow.

Others say some kids are out on the street to escape violence or unsafe situations at home. (CKOM)

Jan 21 2016

VANCOUVER - A First Nations woman has been awarded \$9,000 in damages in a lawsuit against the Vancouver Police Department after being restrained during an arrest almost eight years ago.

In March of 2008, Bobbi O'Shea suffered an anxiety attack while under the influence of crack cocaine. She called 911, believing she would be taken to hospital.

However, she was subsequently jailed and placed in a restraining device called a "Hobble," which restrains the prisoner by their ankles and keeps them on the floor, anchored to their cell door.

O'Shea sued the VPD, and in a decision released today, provincial court Judge Laura Bakan found the city liable for a breach in its standard of care.

However, O'Shea says the ruling is far from a victory. She and her lawyer were hoping the lawsuit would lead the VPD to abandon the device as Victoria's police have done.

She likened her treatment to "torture."

She also says she wants to see the city develop a "sobering centre" as an alternative to jail for people under the influence of drugs.

In an emailed statement, the Vancouver Police Department highlighted that Judge Bakan found the use of the Hobble to be justified.

"We continue to use the device when needed and will review and examine the decision to determine if any changes to practices, policies and procedures are needed to ensure we are doing everything possible to keep those in our care safe."

(CBC News)

Jan 21 2016

EDMONTON - Body-worn cameras won't be rolled out in a big way anytime soon in Edmonton.

The Edmonton Police Commission heard Thursday police wanted 60 body-worn cameras for the impaired driving unit and specialized traffic enforcement unit at an initial capital cost of \$412,000, with an additional \$425,000 in operational costs. But the cameras were a lower priority in a tough budget time.

EPS security director Peter Clissold said the pilot project of two body-worn cameras showed the challenges of huge volumes of

data, which takes work to catalogue and store.

Clissold said there are advantages.

"They can provide a perspective for an investigation that currently isn't available, but as well as an advantage, it can become a disadvantage," Clissold said.

By using body-worn cameras in impaired and traffic units, they capture repeat offenders who are more likely to be involved in an arrest. (Edmonton Journal)

Jan 21 2016

HAMILTON - Hamilton's next police chief will come from the service's internal ranks, rather than be an outside hire like Chief Glenn De Caire was - a decision designed in part to improve morale in the service.



Police services board chair Lloyd Ferguson said there are a lot of qualified senior officers already in Hamilton. By choosing one, he hopes it will lift the spirits of rank-and-file officers.

"We took seriously the association survey when they said that morale is low," Ferguson said. "This will create excitement if we can promote everyone right down through the organization."

"There could be six or seven promotions out of this by the time we're finished. It will create great enthusiasm and I hope pick up morale within the membership."

A survey in the fall of 695 officers and civilians shows the service could use it. About 50 per cent of Hamilton police who answered reported "extreme dissatisfaction" with their jobs. They also opposed extending the contract of then-chief Glenn De Caire, whose contract was extended.

This month, De Caire left the service to be new director of security and parking at McMaster University.

De Caire was hired six years ago from the Toronto police service to be a change maker. It's a different time now, Ferguson said.

"I think a number of our internal service members were disappointed that we didn't look internally," Ferguson said.

It will take about two months to find a new chief. The role of interim chief will rotate between Eric Girt and Ken Weatherill, two deputy chiefs.

The next chief will be chosen from a potential pool of 16 senior officers - seven superintendents, seven inspectors and two deputy chiefs. That pool includes 14 men and two women. It's not known how many of them will apply for the post.

(CBC News)

FRIDAY
JANUARY 22, 2016

Jan 22 2016

MONCTON, N.B. - The Crown and defence have asked for more time to prepare a case on alleged Canada Labour Code violations by the RCMP related to the force's response to a June 2014 shooting rampage in Moncton, N.B.

Defence lawyer Mark Ertel of Ottawa told the court that the defence has given the federal Crown a list of changes to the statement of facts and both sides need time in an effort to narrow the issues in the complex case.

"It's a big, serious case," he later told reporters outside the court.

It's the latest in a string of delays dating back to July 2015.

Ertel told Provincial Court Judge Anne Dugas-Horsman that they hope to reach some agreements because a trial would take months to prosecute and defend.

Federal Crown prosecutor Paul Adams agreed and stated that the charges are indictable.

Employment and Social Development Canada alleges there were four violations of the code relating to the force's equipment, training and supervision in the June 4, 2014 incident that resulted in the deaths of three Mounties.

Justin Bourque shot and killed constables Doug Larche, Fabrice Gevaudan and Dave Ross, while constables Eric Dubois and Darlene Goguen were wounded.

An RCMP review of the shootings said responding officers faced a litany of problems that included communicating accurate information, accessing high-powered weaponry and securing protective equipment.

In May of last year, the Public Prosecution Service of Canada recommended the RCMP be prosecuted for contravention of the occupational health and safety provisions of Part II of the Canada Labour Code.

The charges allege the RCMP failed to provide members with appropriate equipment, information, instruction and training in an active shooter event, and failed to provide supervisors with appropriate information and instruction or training in an active shooter event.

A final charge alleges the force failed to ensure in general, the health and safety of its members.

The defence has elected to have the case tried in provincial court and a pretrial conference is set for April 7.

"We'll be discussing issues and seeing if we can narrow issues and keep the case moving," Ertel said.

However he wouldn't say if that could result in a reduction of the number of charges.

"We're really not at that stage yet. The matter is before the court and we have to let things unfold in court the way they will," he said.

Ertel said a plea will be entered on April 7 and a trial date will be set.

THUNDER BAY - A five-year deal announced on Tuesday between the Thunder Bay Police Board and the Thunder Bay Police Association not only includes an average annual pay increase of 2.13 per cent for officers retroactive to 2015 and through to 2019 but it also includes unlimited access to counseling services.

The deal applies to all the force's 305 members, both civilian and sworn officers.

"I think there's a growing understanding in can society of the impact stress has on individuals," said board chair Jackie Dojack. Dojack said removing the existing ceiling cost on mental health counseling reflects not only the effort to de-stigmatize mental health issues but the increasingly mentally challenging arena officers face in the city.

"We talk about post-traumatic stress. Sometimes it could be a single event that could cause difficulty with mental health. In other cases, we know it's cumulative, year after year," she explained. "Our frontline officers are going into very difficult situations on a daily basis, as are call takers and dispatchers receiving these calls on a daily basis."

Officers have been working without a contract since Dec. 31, 2014. Under the terms of the new deal, wages will increase 2.25 per cent retroactively to 2015, two per cent for 2016 through 2018 and 2.4 per cent in 2019. A majority of association members approved those terms and pay increases in the contract will take effect immediately.

"It is in line with our counterparts across the province in similar-sized cities," Dojack said. "We're all happy we have a five year agreement. From a police board perspective, that certainly helps us in terms of budget planning for the next four years."

(tbnewswatch.com)

Jan 22 2016

SASKATOON - For the first time since shortly after Mayor Don Atchison was elected in 2003, he has been replaced as chair of the board of police commissioners.

The new chair is Darlene Brander, a First Nations woman who has been a police board member for just over a year.

Atchison assumed the position of chair in November 2003, just after his first election as mayor, stressing the importance of restoring control of the board to elected officials.

Atchison could not be reached for comment. His spokesman Richard Brown said Atchison respects the board's decision. Atchison plans to continue as an active member of the board, Brown added.

Brander said there was no plan prior to Thursday's board meeting for her to replace Atchison, although there has been debate at city council about whether control of the board should belong with citizens or elected officials.

Adding two more civilian members to the police board has been proposed.

Historically, Saskatoon's mayor has served as the board's chair.

Atchison's predecessor as mayor, Jim Maddin, stepped aside and appointed a citizen, Leanne Bellegarde Daniels. Bellegarde Daniels resigned when Atchison was elected to protest his plans for policing.

(Saskatoon Star Phoenix)

Jan 22 2016

VANCOUVER - Canada's spy agency has lost a bid to hold a secret hearing over its involvement in an investigation involving a couple who were later found guilty on terror charges in British Columbia.

B.C. Supreme Court Justice Catherine Bruce has ruled the media and the public will be allowed to attend the hearing that is considering if the RCMP manipulated the couple into carrying out the bomb plot.

John Nuttall and Amanda Korody were found guilty for plotting to blow up the B.C. legislature on Canada Day 2013, but the convictions have been put on hold while their lawyers argue the pair was entrapped by police in an undercover sting.

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service had asked the judge to allow a hearing to be held in camera, arguing that some of the information is so sensitive to national security that only lawyers for the service and the judge should hear it.

The judge says that although the court will be open, the doors could be shuttered at any time if sensitive information comes up.

Bruce says if that happens, the lawyers must put their legal arguments into writing so they can be made available to the public,

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while the sensitive facts will be heard in oral arguments behind closed doors.

Jan 22 2016

WETASKIWIN, Alta. - A judge has handed a life sentence to a man who was 17 when he killed a worker at his Alberta group home.

Travis Scheerschmidt earlier pleaded guilty in youth court to second-degree murder.

The judge ruled Scheerschmidt, now 21, should serve his sentence as an adult.

He will be eligible for parole after serving seven years.

Dianne McClements was found stabbed to death in the basement of the Camrose group home in May 2012.

Court heard Scheerschmidt stole the 61-year-old woman's car and drove to Vermilion, Alta., where he confessed the killing to several people.

The Crown presented evidence from a psychiatrist who said Scheerschmidt hasn't shown any remorse and blames his actions on a psychotic episode, even though there was no evidence of that. The expert believes the young man is a high risk to reoffend.

Jan 22 2016

A Quebec judge has ruled in favour of the Journal de Montréal in a case against the Quebec provincial police.

The Sûreté du Québec has been ordered to pay \$25,000 in damages to the Journal after one of its reporters was defamed in a video posted on its website.

The SQ had insinuated a Journal reporter had committed a crime by taking documents from a hospital for a story in 2012 about lax security at the facility.

Although the judge awarded the paper damages, the decision did not find fault with police for searching the journalist's home for the documents.

The SQ and Journal de Montréal did not want to comment on the judgment.

The Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec also refused comment at this time.

(Montreal Gazette)

Jan 22 2016

VANCOUVER - Health officials in Vancouver are proposing a new twist on the drunk tank, a jail cell where intoxicated people are taken to sober up.

They're hoping an expanded "sobering centre" will put people who've had more than they can handle in touch with the health care system - a measure that may reduce the injuries or deaths that can happen when confrontations escalate between drunk people and police.

"We'd have a handover from police and an immediate assessment with a nurse," said Andrew MacFarlane, Vancouver Coastal Health's director of mental health and addiction services. "Then we'd have ongoing monitoring."

"The fundamental difference is the level of medical care -- the number of nurses we have and our ability to connect to care.

That can be their entry point for an ongoing connection with the health care system," he said.

He said the idea is in its very early stages, and he hopes to consult widely about exactly what this new facility would look like. He said the move was largely prompted by an aging detox facility.

At that site there are 10 beds for intoxicated people, which sees about 2,000 people a year, officials said. But the 60-year-old building needs repairs, and that's an opportunity to re-examine how to improve and expand the service, said MacFarlane.

(CTV News)

Jan 22 2016

WHITEHORSE - The Chief Superintendent of RCMP M Division in Yukon is moving east after six years in charge.

Peter Clark has been the commanding officer for Yukon since 2010 and assumes the role of assistant commissioner in Newfoundland and Labrador in the coming months.

He joined the Mounties in 1982 and has worked at detachments in all three northern territories, as well as Saskatchewan, and Alberta.

During his time in Yukon, he says he advocated for collaboration between community partners and First Nations.

Clark notes the territory has been his home since 2009 and it's difficult to leave.

The force says it could take months to hire a new commanding officer.

(CKRW)

SATURDAY
JANUARY 23, 2016

Jan 23 2016

LA LOCHE, Sask. - As phone calls started coming in from panicked students and teachers about a shooter on the loose, RCMP sped down the street to the local high school and found its main doors blasted with holes.

Mounties say one officer quickly spotted a boy with a gun inside and chased him through the building. Within a few minutes, and without a fight, police say he surrendered.

But so much damage had already been done.

Saskatchewan RCMP say that during the eight minutes the teen was in the La Loche Community school on Friday afternoon, he shot nine people. Two staff members died.

Then they learned there were more victims.

Two brothers, one 13 and the other 17, were discovered dead in a home not far away.

On Saturday, RCMP announced that they had charged a 17-year-old suspect with four counts of first-degree murder, seven counts of attempted murder and unauthorized possession of a firearm.

He can't be named under the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

Investigators could provide no motive.

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RCMP Supt. Grant St. Germaine told reporters gathered in the remote Dene community. "I think it's part of changing times. What we're seeing is what appears to be more violence - and not being able to account for why."

St. Germaine said he also doesn't know if the victims were sought out or targeted at random.

Maria Janvier, 21, died at the school. She had graduated from there two years earlier and was hired as a teacher's aide last fall, said friend Ashton Lemaigre.

Adam Wood, 35, had also just started work at the school in September as a teacher. RCMP said he died of his wounds shortly after arriving at the La Loche hospital.

Drayden Fontaine, 13, and Dayne Fontaine, 17, were found dead in the house. Their mother wrote on Facebook that she was devastated.

RCMP didn't release details on whether the seven injured were staff or students. They said four were flown to a Saskatoon hospital and the remaining were to be transported out later when snowy weather conditions improved.

Students recalled a terrifying scene as they fled for their lives when gunfire first erupted in the school. Some said they ran for the doors when they saw a shotgun, while others hid in gym dressing rooms for hours.

One 16-year-old student forwarded to a screenshot of a chilling exchange that took place on social media just before the shooting.

"Just killed 2 ppl," a young man wrote to his friends. "Bout to shoot ip the school."

The student with the screenshot later posted on Facebook that the shooting happened because the suspect, normally quiet, "was mad."

"This wasn't supposed to happen like this," he said, noting his favourite teacher had been killed.

Jan 23 2016

SASKATOON - Police need to remain above the perception special treatment can be bought by those providing funding, the chair of the Saskatchewan Police Commission says.

Neil Robertson appeared at Thursday's Saskatoon board of police commissioners meeting to explain why the provincial commission has removed a paragraph from its policies that allows foundations to be established to raise money for police.

Robertson compared the issue to police officers who are not allowed to accept gifts from the public for fear of appearing to be susceptible to bribes.

"The same applies to services seeking funding from private sources," Robertson told the Saskatoon board. "Policing isn't a charity. It's an essential public service."

Coun. Charlie Clark said the Saskatoon board has had conversations about establishing a police foundation to help fund the service.

Robertson said in a city the size of Saskatoon, even keeping donations to a founda-

tion anonymous would not work since people would likely know where the money is coming from regardless. Even a foundation with anonymous sources could create the impression that individuals or corporations are buying preferential treatment from police.

"The issue is public faith and confidence in the police," Robertson said.

The provincial commission has drafted a conflict of interest policy that would prohibit police from receiving money from any source other than the municipality the police department serves or the provincial or federal governments.

The draft policy allows for chiefs of police to apply for an exemption when the public interest outweighs the perception of conflict.

Robertson said the issue comes down to whether the reward of additional funding outweighs the risk of compromising public perception of police.

"We have a funding mechanism that's worked well for some time," he added. "We're open to being persuaded."

The provincial commission's draft policy is a modified version of one produced last year by the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police.

The commission expects to produce a final report in April after consulting the municipal and First Nations boards of police commissioners in the province.

(Saskatoon Star Phoenix)

MONDAY
JANUARY 25, 2016

Jan 25 2016

CALGARY - A near miss involving a transit driver set off a tense confrontation between a shooter and police officers that led to the gunman's death.

Police warned residents in the northwest Calgary neighbourhood of Huntington Hills to stay indoors and in their basements on Sunday afternoon following news of a shooter. Officers in a police helicopter flying over the area used a bullhorn to reinforce the message.

"The service received a 911 call that a Calgary transit bus driver reported a shot fired into the bus that narrowly missed the driver," police Chief Roger Chaffin said at a Monday news conference.

"It's believed that there were five passengers inside that bus, but fortunately no one was injured."

Bullets being shot from a home also hit a number of surrounding residences.

More than a dozen officers, including members of the tactical team, surrounded the home before the gunman was shot and killed.

Area residents were advised to stay inside and seek shelter," said Chaffin.

"Officers set up containment while shots continued to be fired from the home," he said. "Several attempts were made to resolve

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the situation peacefully; however, the suspect exited the residence and the situation escalated resulting in the discharge of a service firearm ... and killing the suspect.”

The Alberta Serious Incident Response Team is investigating.

Jan 25 2016

EDMONTON - A judge has given an Edmonton website owner a conditional sentence for posting an infamous video of Luka Magnotta dismembering a Chinese university student in Montreal.

Mark Marek, who founded bestgore.com, will have to serve half of the six-month sentence under house arrest.

Marek's trial was to start today, but he pleaded guilty to publishing obscene material - a charge under the corrupting morals section in the Criminal Code.

He was arrested a year after the 2012 killing of Jun Lin.

Police alleged Magnotta sent Marek the video and that Marek posted it online knowing it depicted a real killing.

Magnotta was convicted in 2014 of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison.

TUESDAY
JANUARY 26, 2016

Jan 26 2016

VANCOUVER - The Vancouver police are adding a bunch of cameras to its jail and paddy wagon holding facilities in an attempt to prevent future in-custody deaths.

According to reports for the department's police board, cameras have now been added to many areas at the Vancouver jail in response to a 2005 death.

Changes are connected to the in-custody fatal shooting of a man arrested by Houston, B.C. police. That case involved a 22-year-old man who was struggling with an officer while at the Houston RCMP detachment - the officer ended up shooting the young man.

Recommendations coming out of the man's coroners inquest have resulted in six cameras installed at the Vancouver jail, covering booking areas, entries, the outside, cells, interview and fingerprint rooms.

Meanwhile, another death in police custody - this time a suicide in a paddy wagon in Vancouver - has caused police to examine placing cameras in prisoner compartments, and include additional CPR training for all officers.

In this instance, a man who was drinking heavily was arrested and placed into the wagon in February 2014 - when police found him, he was hanging from a shoelace attached to the grate in the wagon's door.

It took several vital minutes before a nurse arrived to start CPR, but the man did not survive.

Since that day, wire mesh screens in

wagons now have glass installed over them to prevent things from being tied to them, according to the police report.

“The VPD is currently in the process of replacing all of the VPD wagons currently in the fleet, with the goal of installing cameras in each prisoner compartment,” wrote planning research and audit director Drazen Manojlovic in the report.

The force will examine the types of cameras and technology that can be used in the first half of the year.

(24 Hours Vancouver)

Jan 26 2016

HALIFAX - Nova Scotia's justice minister says she will look into the physical fitness of deputies after a prisoner outran four officials who were just steps away.

Diana Whalen says the escape of the partially shackled prisoner late last year raises questions about the deputies' physical conditioning.

She says her department will look into how the RCMP, police or the military manage employee fitness.

A review released yesterday found that a man with a history of escaping custody slipped his handcuffs and broke his leg restraints before outrunning the deputies.

The review says Marc Joseph Pellerin got away as he was being moved from one van to another in the parking lot of the Truro Justice Centre on December 4th.

He was recaptured by the RCMP three days later.

The report also found that checks were not done to make sure deputies' radios and the closed-circuit video system inside the van were working properly.

Jan 26 2016

SALMON ARM , B.C. - A Salmon Arm, B.C., man didn't need a cellphone to call for help as he chased robbers from his home when a lower-tech method proved just as effective, and a lot noisier.

Mounties in the city 60 kilometres north of Vernon say the man jumped in his car just after midnight Monday as he saw thieves drive off with an all-terrain vehicle from his yard.

As he tailed a pickup truck and trailer carrying his ATV, Staff Sgt. Scott West says the man repeatedly honked his horn, hoping to wake neighbours who might call police.

Officers arrived and traced the noisy victim who pointed out the suspect truck and its ill-gotten ATV, embedded in a snow bank after the rattled thieves lost control, crashed and ran off.

Mounties had no trouble tracking and arresting them, or determining that the truck, trailer and ATV had been stolen in separate robberies around Salmon Arm.

Police are reminding residents to keep their vehicles locked, with trailers, ATVs and other pricey objects secured and out of sight to deter thieves.

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Jan 26 2016

PEACE RIVER, Alta. - RCMP in Peace River, Alberta say it appears the escape of a prisoner on his way to hospital yesterday was planned.

An armed, masked gunman stopped two Alberta correctional officers and freed an inmate on his way to a scheduled hospital visit.

Mounties say Harley John Lay, who is 29, was being escorted by two guards to Peace River hospital Monday when they were confronted in the hospital parking lot by a man who was wearing a mask and carrying a firearm.

The gunman and Lay jumped into a minivan being driven by a third man and high-tailed it out of town.

Constable Nicole Viergutz says investigators are trying to locate Lay and his associates and are hoping for information from the public.

A union official says the incident shows just how dangerous the job of a correctional officer is and that counselling is being provided to the two officers.

Jan 26 2016

VANCOUVER - A former Summerland, B.C., Mountie has lost the appeal of his second-degree murder conviction for the slaying of his common-law wife.

A B.C. Court of Appeal panel unanimously rejected overturning the conviction for 59-year-old Keith Wiens.

He was fighting both the conviction and a 13-year minimum sentence before parole eligibility for the August 2011 shooting of 55-year-old Lynn Kalmring in the couple's Penticton home.

At the time of his July 2013 conviction, the jury had recommended Wiens serve a minimum 20-years before parole eligibility, while the Crown was seeking 15-years.

In a decision posted online Tuesday, the court rejected the arguments from Wiens that certain evidence was improperly admitted, including details of Kalmring's peaceful disposition.

During his trial, Wiens said he shot in self-defence when Kalmring lunged at him with a knife, but the Crown presented evidence that the knife was planted after she was shot and the jury rejected the claim of self defence.

Jan 26 2016

The validity of millions of speeding tickets across Canada and the fines, demerits, and increase to insurance premiums that come with them, are being called into question.

According to a CBC report, it comes down to a lack of radar equipment testing, especially in Ontario and Saskatchewan.

The Ontario Provincial Police dropped the tuning fork test more than a decade ago, arguing it was redundant, and the Regina Police Service stopped using it in 2009.

Calgary police say they use it every shift, admitting sometimes they do find discrepancies in accuracy.

(660 News)

Jan 26 2016

TORONTO - A guilty finding against a Toronto police officer who gunned down a knife-wielding teen on an empty streetcar suggests the public has become more sensitive toward how police deal with those in crisis, some experts said Tuesday.

At the same time, they said, the prosecution of Const. James Forcillo has highlighted the need to address systemic issues around police training and the funding of mental health services.

"The public no longer has an appetite for police simply saying, 'This is use of force,'" said Frances Jewell, executive director with the Mental Health Rights Coalition in Hamilton.

"The conversation has started but there's a disconnect between what police are saying has changed and what has changed."

In what has been described as a "compromise" verdict, a jury acquitted Forcillo on Monday of second-degree murder for shooting Sammy Yatim, 18, but found him guilty of attempted murder for continuing to fire after the dying teen had fallen to the floor.

Forcillo's union warned the verdict would put officers at further risk by causing them to hesitate before responding to dangerous situations. On the other hand, the lawyer for Yatim's family suggested too many officers have been literally getting away with murder by claiming self-defence.

Dorothy Cotton, a forensic psychologist

Fellowship of Christian Peace Officers – Canada



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in Kingston, Ont., said the verdict is a sign attitudes toward the mentally ill - and police accountability - have shifted.

"The significance of this whole trial is really in the fact that there was a trial and he was found guilty of anything at all," said Cotton, who has worked with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

"In contrast to attitudes we had in the past toward people who appear to be crazy or out of their minds, society as a whole is saying that this is not the norm and we can't tolerate this any more."

Statistics Canada data show about one million interactions between police and people in some kind of mental health crisis each year. The vast majority end without serious incident. For others, however, the result is what advocates consider an unnecessary fatality as well as trauma for both the families and officers involved.

Advocates have long called for better police training for dealing with people in crisis. They insist officers should do everything possible to defuse a volatile situation before resorting to Tasers or firearms.

For their part, police insist they are doing what they can to help. In B.C., for example, new and seasoned officers are required to undergo training on dealing with the mentally ill. Other services say their training does emphasize de-escalation techniques.

Jewell, however, was skeptical, noting Forcillo barked orders and shot Yatim dead less than one minute after arriving on scene.

"Where on earth did they get the message that was a de-escalation technique?" she said. "I must say I'm jaded in that we hear that the changes will happen and yet they don't."

Still, training and accountability issues aside, mental health advocates say the Yatim killing - and others like it - demonstrate a crying need for more funding of supports for the mentally ill to avert potentially deadly confrontations with officers in the first place.

All too often, they note, people finding themselves on the wrong end of an officer's gun had tried unsuccessfully to find help for their worsening mental health.

A few years ago, for example, Richard Kachkar went on a rampage with a stolen snowplow, prompting Toronto police Sgt. Ryan Russell to open fire in an effort to stop him. In that tragic case, Russell was run down and killed. Kachkar, who for weeks had sparked concerns about his deteriorating behaviour, was found not criminally responsible.

Jan 26 2016

EDMONTON - A judge has ruled that charges against an accused in the mysterious deaths of two Alberta seniors will stand even though the RCMP made serious mistakes and prosecutors didn't get the suspect to trial quickly.

Justice Denny Thomas said Tuesday that lawyers for Travis Vader failed to prove the case should be dropped because it didn't

get to trial in a reasonable time. He also dismissed an alleged abuse of process, which the defence argued occurred when Mounties didn't initially disclose all the evidence against Vader to lawyers.

Vader was charged in 2012 with first-degree murder in the deaths of Lyle and Marie McCann. The McCanns, in their late 70s, were last seen fuelling up their motorhome two years earlier in their hometown of St. Albert, just north of Edmonton. Their bodies have never been found.

The charges against Vader were stayed days before a trial in 2014, but were reactivated by the Crown nine months later. A trial is now set to begin March 8.

"Mr. Vader's long and interrupted march to the courtroom is troubling," Thomas wrote in his decision.

"However ... the seriousness of the charges and the shared interests of Mr. Vader and the public in his very public name being cleared align to favour a full adjudication of the charges against him."

The couple's burned-out motorhome was discovered in a wooded area near Edson, west of Edmonton, two days after they were last seen at the gas station in July 2010. The SUV they had been towing was also found concealed in another location.

The RCMP was criticized early in the investigation. Documents inside the motorhome linked it to the McCanns and officers phoned the couple and knocked on the door of their house.

They didn't begin searching until five days later when the couple's daughter reported that they hadn't shown up for a family camping trip in British Columbia.

Mounties also faced embarrassment when they revealed tipsters had come into a detachment in Prince George, B.C., and reported that they had spotted the McCanns' SUV. RCMP admitted that they hadn't taken down the tipsters' contact information.

Vader, arrested on a long list of outstanding warrants at a rural home in the same area where the vehicles were found, was quickly named as a person of interest and later a suspect. But he wasn't charged for two years.

Just before Vader's trial was to begin in 2014, the Crown said it discovered the "egregious disclosure mess" by RCMP and stayed the charges because it wasn't ready to proceed with a fair trial. Court heard the RCMP have since made changes to the way they handle disclosure in major investigations.

Defence lawyer Brian Beresh argued the delay was a tactic to "buy more time" for investigators. Vader has filed lawsuits against prosecutors and the RCMP claiming malicious prosecution.

Beresh said he plans to argue at trial that any evidence collected after the 2014 stay of charges be excluded.

Court documents have revealed that RCMP believe forensic evidence, an undercover sting and some of the couple's personal belongings tie Vader to the crime.

Jan 26 2016

The Ottawa Police Services Board has extended the contract of Chief Charles Bordeleau until May 2019.



Bordeleau became the Ottawa police chief in March 2012.

"My focus will remain on supporting members and ensuring they have the tools to do their job," Bordeleau is quoted saying in a news release.

"Our service will continue to focus on strengthening community safety - enforcing the law and preventing crime and victimization. We are also committed to keeping a strong focus on transforming and adapting the organization to meet the operational and business challenges it will face in the coming years."

Coun. Eli El-Chantiry, chair of the seven-member civilian board, said in a news release that Bordeleau provides strong leadership along with Deputy Chief Ed Keeley and Deputy Chief Jill Skinner, whose contracts run until July 2017 and June 2018, respectively.

"Each of them has our confidence," El-Chantiry is quoted saying.

(CBC News)

Jan 26 201

VANCOUVER - The only person convicted in the 1985 Air India bombings has been granted statutory release from prison to a halfway house.

Inderjit Singh Reyat was charged with perjury in 2006 for repeatedly lying during his testimony at the trial into the bombing deaths of 331 people, mostly Canadians.

Reyat was found guilty in 2010 and sentenced to a record nine years in prison, or seven years and seven months after accounting for time served.

Parole Board of Canada spokesman Patrick Storey said Reyat must abide by several conditions as part of his release, including not possessing any extremist propaganda or possessing any components used to build an explosive device.

He is also not allowed to contact victims' families or anyone who is believed to hold extremist views. He will be monitored by a parole officer and must complete counselling.

Reyat is set to serve the rest of his sentence, which ends in August 2018, at a halfway house.

The parole board ruling for Reyat's release said a psychologist's assessment in 2013 found the man's risk was "relatively high" for future group-based violence and that he lacked remorse for the victims of the bombings.

KAMLOOPS, B.C. - More than a year after he was shot and seriously wounded at a traffic stop, Kamloops RCMP Cpl. Jean-Rene Michaud is back on the job.

Supt. Brad Mueller says Michaud has returned to work in a limited capacity, working part-time on administrative duties.

Mueller says Michaud's return is a positive step that has been good for morale in the force.

Michaud was shot in the early-morning hours of Dec. 3, 2014, shortly after pulling over a vehicle.

Kenneth Knutson was arrested after a 12-hour manhunt and is facing an attempted murder charge.

A lawyer for Knutson has said a guilty plea will be entered in March.

(CFJC, Kamloops This Week)

Jan 26 2016

TORONTO - The Ontario government is considering giving police chiefs more power to suspend officers without pay, a change that police brass have been seeking for years.

The current provincial law states that a suspended officer must remain on the payroll and can only be suspended without pay after being sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

Premier Kathleen Wynne told a news conference Tuesday that her government is reviewing that law.

"I think it's something that we have to look at, it's something that we have to weigh and make a determination on," Wynne said.

"That is something that the minister of community safety and correctional services is working on with the police services. I know that it's a live discussion at this moment."

Police chiefs across Ontario have asked for such a change for years.

The issue was raised again this week after Toronto police Const. James Forcillo was found guilty of attempted murder for shooting Sammy Yatim as the 18-year-old brandished a knife on an empty Toronto streetcar.

Forcillo has been suspended with pay since shortly after the July 2013 shooting. Even though the jury found Forcillo guilty, he will remain on the police payroll until - and unless - he is sentenced to time in custody. It's unclear when that will happen, as his defence lawyer is seeking to get the verdict thrown out.

Under the Police Services Act, the provincial law that governs police in Ontario, chiefs can only suspend officers without pay after they are sentenced to serve time.

(CBC News)

Jan 26 2016

Auxiliary constables with Canada's national police force will no longer ride shotgun with Mounties following a year-long review.

Some 1,600 members of the nation's volunteer force received a memo Monday from

RCMP Deputy Commissioner Janice Armstrong, outlining changes to the program, including an end to ride-alongs and firearms familiarization training, as well as more clearly distinguishable uniforms.

"This review will result in some substantial changes to the program and as we move forward, you will be kept informed," read the memo, obtained by Postmedia.

"I am sensitive to the fact that some of you will be disappointed in these changes, however, the continued safety of each of you is paramount and will require some difficult decisions to be made."

A new national training standard will also be created along with a review of their duties.

The review was prompted by the fatal shooting of RCMP Const. David Wynn at a St. Albert casino last January, which also saw Auxiliary Const. David Bond, a volunteer since 2008, injured.

The news came as a shock to at least one Alberta member of the auxiliary, who went through two years of vigorous training and has helped rank-and-file members through some hairy situations.

"We're incredibly frustrated - it doesn't make any sense to take this away," said the member, who Postmedia has agreed not to identify.

"The RCMP are going to lose that contribution."

He said auxiliary constables range from search and rescue technicians to paramedics, all just hoping to make a difference.

An online forum dedicated to auxiliary officers has seen a flurry of posts decrying the move.

"Almost 2 years to wade through application and background check and finally my training course in Sept and now I bloody hour after getting my uniform I get the memo that the program has cancelled all ride alongs," read one posting, in part.

Robert Creasser with the Mounted Police Professional Association of Canada said the changes essentially rob an already overburdened force of an extra resource.

"It really is like having an extra set of eyes," said Creasser, who retired from the national force in 2010, and can recall a time when the volunteers were allowed to carry firearms.

"At the end of the day, because of incidents like St. Albert, the RCMP is unfortunately having to say 'we can't take on that liability.'"

RCMP Sgt. Julie Gagnon said the safety was the major impetus for the changes to the program.

"The men and women who serve as auxiliary constables provide countless hours of dedicated service to their communities, and are a vital part of our organization," she said. "They will remain so regardless of these changes."

Proposed changes to RCMP auxiliary constable program:

- Ride-alongs and firearms familiarization training will be discontinued
- A National Activity Matrix outlining the du-

ties of Auxiliary Constables will be created

- A National Training Standard will be instituted

- National Policy will be updated
- Uniform options will be reviewed

(Calgary Sun)

Jan 26 2016

CALGARY - Lead-footed police officers will have to come to grips with the idea Big Brother is watching them.

Police Chief Roger Chaffin says he wouldn't go so far as to say they are comfortable with it but in a new age of technology and accountability they'll have to adapt.

It's about encouraging - and when necessary enforcing - better driving behaviour across the force.

"There's a rule of law that we follow, that we expect the community to follow and I expect our officers to follow," Chaffin said.

With GPS and brake sensors on a couple of hundred police cruisers - mostly on the unmarked ones, for now - HQ can tell when an officer breaches speed limits, or slams brakes to whip around a corner or what have you, and then maybe the officer gets a call to see what all the fuss was and whether it was appropriate.

Not so long ago, there was a problem, and police concede it was a rather big one.

CPS vehicles were busted with automated enforcement - photo radars and the like - on 4,903 occasions back in 2010.

In 2014 the number was 1,587 - down 68%.

And in 2015 the number was closer to 1,300 and down 71%.

Chaffin said the numbers then versus now show if you pay attention to it you can change behaviour.

Acting Supt. Mike Worden said in a presentation for the Calgary Police Commission Tuesday, "We needed to do something about it."

He also said that number will never hit zero - it can't.

He said over 1,000 vehicles are pushing 17,000,000 km to reach 400,000 incidents every year, 50,000 of which are considered high priority.

"In those (high priority) cases officers are most likely driving over the speed limit with lights and sirens," Worden said.

"Our officers need to get to those calls."

Worden also said, "We still review it - We do not set those aside."

More police vehicles will be monitored in this way as more data comes in and funding allows for the program to be expanded, Chaffin said.

Meanwhile, the service is developing a driver safety and compliance program, which is anticipated to include both proactive and reactive measures.

One of those is an internal demerit point system, which could cost an officer his ability to get behind the wheel.

Worden also pointed out police officers are subject to the criminal code when appropriate.

(Calgary Sun)

Jan 27 2016

GUELPH, Ont. - Police in Guelph say they're investigating an attempt to steal a bank machine from a local hotel.



They say they got a call early Wednesday morning reporting that a truck was trying to break through the front door of the Manor Hotel on Silvercreek Parkway South.

Police say they arrived to find the truck dragging the machine on the ground as it drove away.

Police say the machine eventually detached from the truck on Wellington St.

They say they're looking for a black, four-door Ford F-150 pickup truck and ask anyone with information to come forward.

Jan 27 2016

HALIFAX - A senior police officer in Halifax has been accused of stealing an illicit substance that was seized during an earlier police investigation, the independent watchdog that oversees police in Nova Scotia says.

The Serious Incident Response Team confirmed Wednesday that 35-year-old Det.-Const. Laurence Gary Basso has been charged with theft, breach of trust and obstruction of justice.

The agency says the allegations involve a substance known as "cut," which went missing from an police exhibit locker some time between Jan. 1, 2015 and March 14, 2015. The substance is used in the illegal drug trade to dilute drugs to increase quantity and profitability.

Halifax Regional Police have since conducted an audit of its drug exhibits, but it has yet to receive the results.

When the agency started its investigation last May, Basso was suspended with pay and his status has not changed since then.

"We recognize that citizens expect police officers to be beyond reproach and that these charges will be as much a concern to you as they are to us," the agency said in a statement.

"We assure the public that this is an isolated incident which doesn't represent the hard work, dedication and professionalism our officers show day in and day out."

The agency said the obstruction of justice charge relates to alleged steps taken to help a third party avoid arrest.

During its seven-month investigation, the team said it obtained statements from 20 police witnesses and five civilians.

Jan 27 2016

BERLIN - Public-sector corruption is still a major problem around the world but more countries are improving than worsening and the United States and United Kingdom have reached their best rankings ever, an anti-corruption watchdog said Wednesday.

Denmark remained at the top of Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, a closely watched global barometer, for the second consecutive year as the country perceived as least corrupt. It scored 91 points out of a possible 100 while North Korea and Somalia remained at the bottom with unchanged scores of 8.

Canada was ranked ninth with 83 points, just ahead of a three-way tie for 10th spot by Germany, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom with 81 points each.

The U.S. rose one spot this year to 16th place with a score of 76, tying with Austria.

The index is based on expert opinions of public sector corruption, looking at a range of factors like whether governmental leaders are held to account or go unpunished for corruption, the perceived prevalence of bribery, and whether public institutions respond to citizens' needs.

The other top spots, from second to eighth, were occupied by Finland, Sweden, New Zealand, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, and Singapore.

Jan 27 2016

MONTREAL - The 31-year-old man arrested this month for breaking into the car of a Montreal police commander and stealing a leather bag that contained sensitive intelligence information has been ordered to serve a seven-month prison term.

Bouamrane Ahmed Fouatih, 31, pleaded guilty to four different cases brought against him in the past three years when he appeared before Quebec Court Judge Patrick Healy at the Montreal courthouse on Wednesday. By far the most significant case was the one where, on Dec. 17 last year, he smashed the passenger-side window of a car being used by Commander Patrice Vilceus, head of the Montreal police Eclipse anti-street gang and stole a leather bag.

Included among the items in the leather bag was a USB key that contained sensitive information on an investigation that had just been completed and information about police sources used by the street gang squad. The Montreal police had to scramble to try to determine whether the serious breach had placed the lives of their sources in danger.

The smash-and-grab theft was captured by a security camera at the building where Vilceus was attending a Christmas party. After showing the video to several police officers, investigators focused on Amed Fouatih in part because he had a criminal record for such thefts.

Ahmed Fouatih was placed under police surveillance and, on Jan 14, he was arrested after he tossed a wallet into the snow. Police

searched the discarded wallet and found a woman's credit cards. They later learned their suspect had tried to use one of the credit cards to purchase jewelry at the shopping mall but the transaction was rejected twice.

Prosecutor Éric Poudrier told Healey that when Ahmed Fouatih was arrested, a search conducted at his home turned up items that had been stolen from Vilceus. Poudrier said that during two interviews with investigators, Ahmed Fouatih co-operated with them. The prosecutor also said there were no signs on Vilceus's car to indicate it was a police vehicle so there is no evidence to suggest Ahmed Fouatih knew he was breaking into a car that belonged to a commander with the Montreal police.

(Montreal Gazette)

Jan 27 2016

EDMONTON - Edmonton police have an arresting idea for anyone who has lost a job during the current economic meltdown.

Why not trade in those underused overalls, or that business suit, for a uniform and a badge?

The police department needs to hire 160 new officers this year, and is reaching out to workers who've been laid off because of the downturn in oil prices.

"We're looking for people from a wide variety of backgrounds," said acting Sgt. Terry Mishio with the department's recruit selection unit. "This is a stable, lifelong career choice for a lot of people."

He was quick to mention another important fact for those looking for work.

"We start paying day one, when you're hired."

Alberta suffered its worst year for job losses since the early 1980s last year, according to revised numbers put out by Statistics Canada.

In recent years, Edmonton police have held job fairs in the Maritimes, and recruited officers from as far away as Britain and Ireland.

Now the department is looking closer to home and wants people from a variety of backgrounds.

(CBC News)

Jan 27 2016

MONTREAL - Police in Quebec say they have arrested 13 people who allegedly exchanged information online about their sexual experiences with children.

Quebec provincial police say the investigation with the RCMP began three years ago.

About 150 police officers took part in raids today in various Quebec cities and in Toronto.

Those arrested are aged between 27 and 74 and allegedly used online discussion forums to trade information about their sexual experiences with children.

The accused allegedly gave each other advice on tactics to use and places to frequent with the aim of sexually abusing children without raising suspicion.

They are expected to be arraigned either today or Thursday.

Jan 27 2016

TORONTO - Toronto police deputy chief Peter Sloly said Wednesday he was 'surprised' by the reaction to his criticisms of the current state of police operations and budgeting.



On January 15, Sloly told attendees at an event at the MaRS Discovery District that policing will be "exponentially costly" until it stops "being focused and driven on that reactive enforcement model."

Sloly also said the force could "drop ourselves by several hundred police officers, which represents tens of millions of dollars" by leveraging technology and "big data," the Toronto Star reported.

"The things I was talking about are the things the mayor's been talking about, that our chief and the command have been talking about, that I've been talking about for over a decade," Sloly said while speaking to reporters at the Toronto Police College. "And I'm surprised that people were surprised by those comments."

"They weren't new to me and they weren't new to the people leading progressive change in policing right across this city and right across this country," he said.

Sloly, who had been on vacation since making the comments, said, "Last week, my furnace blew up and my roof was leaking and so I had to take a few days to get my house sorted out."

Sloly's comments about the police budget came under fire from Toronto Police Association President Mike McCormack, who called them "inflammatory" and "self-serving."

"To me, (Sloly's comments) are very suspect," McCormack told CBC News on January 19. "Why would he be making those comments now when he was the deputy chief in charge of field operations for the last six years? Not once have we heard from him about possible reductions or options in reducing the size of the force."

"And that's why it appeared to be nothing more than sour grapes or an agenda."

Jan 27 2016

TORONTO - A Toronto police officer has been charged under the Police Services Act after opening fire on a stolen vehicle in the distillery district last year.

The incident occurred on Wednesday, Sept. 16. Edward Michael Skotnicki, 60, had

allegedly stolen a car and was being pursued by two police cruisers.

Officers at the scene discharged their weapons a total of 15 times after Skotnicki allegedly tried to hit one of them with the vehicle.

None of the bullets hit the suspect, who was quickly taken into custody.

Skotnicki is facing a total of five charges including theft over \$5,000, flight while pursued by peace officer, and dangerous driving.

Head of the Toronto Police Association Mike McCormack confirmed on Wednesday that Const. Tash Baiati has been charged under the Police Services Act in connection with the shooting.

Police have not yet confirmed the specific charges the officer is facing.

While no one was injured during the incident, questions have been raised about police response to the incident, with many experts calling the police's actions dangerous given the time and location of the shooting.

(CTV Toronto)

THURSDAY JANUARY 28, 2016

Jan 28 2016

HALIFAX - The Public Prosecution Service of Canada says it is reviewing cases involving a Halifax police officer who's now facing criminal charges.

Detective Constable Laurence Gary Basso is accused of stealing an illicit substance seized during an earlier drug investigation.

The substance, known as "cut," is used to dilute drugs to increase quantity and profitability.

Basso is charged with theft, breach of trust, and obstruction of justice.

The Serious Incident Response Team says the last charge relates to steps allegedly taken by Basso to help someone else avoid arrest.

Basso has been suspended with pay since the independent agency started its investigation last May.

He is due in Halifax provincial court on March 30th.

Jan 28 2016

OTTAWA - The Supreme Court of Canada has agreed to look at the role of drug recognition experts in a case of impaired driving involving drugs.

The case involves an Ontario man who was charged in 2009 and twice acquitted, only to see both acquittals overturned by higher courts.

The key issue deals with the role of drug recognition experts.

One of the trial judges found that the Crown had not proved that the science behind the drug recognition training was reliable and refused to certify the police officer as an expert.

A higher court and then the Ontario Court of Appeal ruled that the expert testimony is legitimate and admissible and ordered a third trial.

The issue takes on greater significance in light of the new Liberal government's plan to legalize marijuana, which some critics have warned will increase the number of drivers impaired by drugs.

Jan 28 2016

OTTAWA - A federal watchdog says Canada's electronic spy agency broke privacy laws by sharing information about Canadians with foreign partners.

In his annual report, Jean-Pierre Plouffe says the Communications Security Establishment passed along the information - known as metadata - to counterparts in the United States, Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

Metadata is information associated with a communication - such as a telephone number or email address - but not the message itself.

The Ottawa-based CSE uses highly advanced technology to intercept, sort and analyze foreign communications for information of intelligence interest to the federal government.

Documents leaked in 2013 by former American spy contractor Edward Snowden revealed the U.S. National Security Agency - a close CSE ally - had quietly obtained access to a huge volume of emails, chat logs and other information from major Internet companies, as well as massive amounts of data about telephone calls.

Jan 28 2016

LA LOCHE, Sask. - The northern Saskatchewan school where a mass shooting occurred won't open for at least another week and, when it does, it may have security.



The Northern Lights School Division has told parents that classes at the La Loche Community School won't resume for seven to 10 days.

Donna Johnson of the Education Ministry says the division is willing to put security in the school but wants to talk over the details with the community and Mounties.

The school has been closed since four people were killed in La Loche last week.

The RCMP say officers have completed the basic forensic work at the two crime scenes and are starting to pull out of the community, though a strong police presence remains.

(CJME)

TORONTO - Four Toronto police officers have been charged with obstruction of justice and perjury after allegedly providing false testimony in court.

Police Chief Mark Saunders says the officers face a total of 17 charges and have all been suspended with pay as the case plays out in court.

Saunders says a team from the force's professional standards division will investigate other cases the officers have worked on.

"Anything that questions the integrity of any member of the Toronto Police Service concerns me," Saunders said at a news conference Thursday morning.

Court documents show the charges against the officers stem from the case of a man accused of drug possession and drug trafficking following a traffic stop on Jan. 13, 2014.

In September, Ontario Superior Court Judge Edward Morgan dismissed the charges against Nguyen Son Tran, ruling that the drugs found in his car were not admissible due to an unreasonable search and seizure that violated the defendant's charter rights, according to the court documents.

The judge cited the officers' inconsistent testimony as a reason for dismissing the charges.

"The false creation of a pretext to search the defendant's vehicle, combined with the collusive fabrication of a story by the two lead Officers as to why they came to assist in the traffic stop of the defendant, certainly amounts to egregiously wrongful conduct," Morgan wrote in his decision.

The officers accounts of the initial traffic stop vary, Morgan noted.

Tran was pulled over and police said they saw heroin sprinkled on the console of his car, which led to a further search of the car where they found roughly 12 grams of heroin. One officer alleged Tran had run a red light and nearly hit a pedestrian.

Tran testified that he had not run a red light, but was pulled over by police after one officer recognized him and said no heroin was found in his car, but that an officer pulled a bag of heroin after searching the vehicle.

It was the same officer who had arrested Tran a year earlier. Tran eventually pleaded guilty to possessing heroin in that case, according to court documents.

"There is too much falsehood, and too many unexplained and otherwise unexplainable elements in the police testimony," Morgan wrote in his decision.

"I conclude from all this that the loose heroin was placed on the console of the Toyota by the police after their search, and was not left there by the defendant prior to the search."

The charges against the officers haven't been tested in court.

Tran's lawyer, Kim Schofield, told she was pleased with the charges laid against the officers.

"They figured out afterward that they needed grounds in order to search him," she said, alleging they "conspired to plant evidence."

Toronto police union head Mike McCormack

said the officers were arrested earlier around 7 a.m. Thursday and released before 9 a.m., emphasizing the officers weren't given special treatment.

"These are allegations that haven't been proven," McCormack told reporters, but added the accusations are disturbing. "This has been a very bad week for the members of the Toronto Police Service."

The officers charged Thursday are: Const. Jeffrey Tout, 41, Det. Const. Benjamin Elliott, 32, Const. Michael Taylor, 34, and Det. Const. Fraser Douglas, 37.

All are scheduled to appear in court on March 11.

Jan 28 2016

CALGARY - Police say there are very few details known about a deadly new drug discovered in Calgary.

The opioid, called W-18, is thought to be much more toxic than fentanyl, which Alberta Health Services has linked to hundreds of deaths across the province.

"W-18 is 100 times more powerful than fentanyl, which we know is 100 times more powerful than morphine," Sergeant Jason

Walker of the Calgary Police Service said.

Police have only recorded one instance in which they could confirm the drug was found in Calgary.

Walker said an unknown drug seized by officers had been sent to a lab for tests and when they got the results back, investigators discovered the drug was W-18. Police haven't released specifics on when or where the drug was found.

According to police, only certain labs are able to test for the drug.

"We're just learning what W-18 is," Walker added. "Medical professionals don't yet clinically understand what it might do to you."

Walker said knowing how powerful the drug is, it's likely there will be deaths associated with it.

The circumstances surrounding the mysterious drug are similar to when fentanyl was first found in Calgary, according to Walker.

"Years ago, we didn't really know what fentanyl was when we were seizing it," Walker said. "Fentanyl is what is on our plate today, but tomorrow it could be something different."

(Global News)



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