

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK *Celebrating 20 Years*

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Executive Digest

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Critics suggest darker cruisers 'disturbing'



Oct 30 2016

TORONTO - Toronto's police force isn't the only Canadian municipal law enforcement agency to give its vehicles a makeover that critics say makes them seem more militarized, aggressive and also, possibly, less safe.

Police services across the country, including Vancouver and Calgary, are replacing their aging fleets with cars painted in darker hues, like Toronto's switch from white with red and blue stripes, to dark grey with white reflective lettering.

Last week, Toronto Police Chief Mark Saunders acknowledged a "backlash" to the recent colour change, a decision he admits he made without a lot of thought or consultation.

The civilian oversight board has asked for a report on the fleet and Saunders hasn't ruled out backtracking on the planned rollout.

When the Calgary Police Service went looking for a design change, it switched the colour of its cars from white - with red and blue stripes - to a black-and-white paint job.

Some Calgarians, "a vocal minority" feel it makes the vehicles too "aggressive," Const.

Riley Babott wrote in a spirited defence on Facebook that he called The Black & White Debate.

He said naysayers must "suffer from chromophobia," which is an irrational fear of colour.

"I can't identify with this feeling because I don't find inanimate objects or colours to be capable (of) being aggressive," Babott wrote. "It is a very identifiable look for police vehicles dating back many decades and used throughout the world."

In 2014, the Vancouver Police Department began replacing its aging fleet of white Crown Victorias with black Dodge Chargers, with an Aboriginal-designed thunderbird over the front fender.

The VPD said it had overwhelming support for the new design, but a local advocate told a Vancouver radio station vulnerable people might not feel comfortable approaching one of the "intimidating" vehicles.

And the topic of cruiser colours isn't just being discussed in big cities.

In Barrie, city councillors have asked the

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police board to explain the “business case and research done” to rebrand the city’s cruisers from white to navy blue, the Barrie Examiner reported last week.

“The current (navy blue) colour scheme and inability to distinguish between a soccer mom and a police car appears to be counter-intuitive,” Councillor Michael Prowse told the newspaper.

“Thus far, this has been the only negative ‘backlash’ we have seen,” Barrie Police Service Const. Nicole Rodgers wrote in email to the Star. “We pride ourselves on being connected and engaged to our community by our daily actions, rather than the colour of our vehicles.”

Former Toronto police chief Julian Fantino said the criticism today reminds him of the blowback when officer shirts changed from baby blue to black.

“We got that with the black shirts, this flurry of rhetoric about stormtroopers and back to the Nazi era, and on and on. In a way it was comical if not ridiculous,” he said Friday.

Fantino, former commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police, also remembers experts objecting to his decision to transition that force’s fleet back to the traditional black-and-white cars, beginning in 2007.

OPP lore has it Fantino was inspired to make the change after spotting some black and white cows grazing in a field at the Big Curve Acres Farm on his daily commute to headquarters in Orillia.

Told this, Fantino roared with laughter. “No, what inspired me was the good men and women of the OPP who wanted them back.” He listened to what they - not the experts - said on what made them more visible and safer.

The numbers back that up, he said.

Reintroducing the black-and-whites was one of several initiatives to make Ontario roads safer and it worked, he said. Fatalities dropped

dramatically from 451 in 2007 to 323 in 2008, a downward trend continues today.

Rather than menacing, rural and small town Ontario residents loved that old was new again. “If you need a cop, you need a cop, you don’t care if they come in a black and white, a pink car, you don’t care if they’re a man or woman.”

But Johnathon Vaughn Strebly, ethics chair and president of the Graphic Designers of Canada, said policing agencies seem unaware that “there’s a real connection between the use of colours and perceptions,” and that these designs convey “oppressive, aggressive, intimidating and combative traits.”

Strebly argues Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary appear to be influenced by TV, and films such as Robocop and Batman, which is “fine in a fantastical, science fiction mode.” U.S. law enforcement and militaristic influence is also undeniable, he says, adding it’s “a disturbing trend to say the least.”

There will always be the need for the undercover, covert aspect of policing, “but when that becomes the norm in regular community exposure value, then we’ve lost sight of what it is we’re trying to do for our community assistance,” Strebly said from Vancouver.

Dr. Stephen S. Solomon, a retired optometrist from Owego, N.Y., and an emergency services consultant, agrees grey “is not a good colour,” if you want “the presence of law enforcement in the neighbourhood to be a positive, good feeling sort of a thing.”

As well, rather than enhancing visibility, grey is a “very camouflaging colour. It does not stand out well against background,” said Solomon. His research has focused on emergency vehicle safety and vehicular technology that improves visibility and reduces accidents.

“Law-abiding, good citizens want to know there’s . . . a police cruiser on their block every now and then. It’s a reassurance that ‘we’re watching your neighbourhood, we’re taking care of you.’”

And having highly visible police vehicles acts as a deterrent to criminals and, on city streets and highways, speeding motorists. Drivers often can’t hear wailing sirens until an emergency vehicle is closing in, and even flashing lights can be difficult to see in well-lit Toronto, Solomon said.

“Flashing lights are important, but so is vehicle colour. So it all works together as a team.”

Told of Solomon’s opinion, Saunders said he wasn’t going to “compete against an optometrist and hopefully he won’t compete against me in law enforcement.”

In Europe, many law enforcement agencies - and highway construction crews - paint their vehicles in lime-yellow, which is “on the top of the visibility pyramid of paint colour,” Solomon said.

“It is the colour of choice for safety. It stands out against all common backgrounds.” (Toronto Star)

THURSDAY OCTOBER 27, 2016

Oct 27 2016

COQUITLAM, B.C. - British Columbia’s police watchdog has concluded the death of a man in custody last week was not the fault of Mounties.

RCMP responded to calls of a break-in at a home in Coquitlam on Oct. 19.

Officers found a man who was severely injured and agitated, and police say a conducted-energy weapon was used on the suspect before taking him into custody.

The man went into medical distress shortly after the arrest and was taken to hospital where he died.

The Independent Investigation Office says the man’s death was a result of injuries sustained before the police arrived, and was not connected with the use of the Taser.

FRIDAY OCTOBER 28, 2016

Oct 28 2016

VANCOUVER - British Columbia’s public safety minister has stepped in to reassure residents after several reports of targeted violence and deaths connected to gang activity in Metro Vancouver.



Mike Morris says B.C.’s anti-gang units have their targets set on known gang members and their associates and he has confidence the units are working hard on the investigations.

There was a shooting in Burnaby Wednesday that injured a man on the same day that human remains were found alongside a Langley street in what police said was a targeted killing.

On Oct. 16, Langley police said that a “well-established member” of the Hells Angels was murdered and they arrested a man the next day who was allegedly from another crime organization.

Morris says two, newly established 10-person teams within the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit are now fully operational.

Oct 28 2016

MONTREAL - The Quebec government has released its long-awaited plan to fight and prevent sexual violence.

The new measures include a police unit to specialize in sexual crimes as well as video-conferencing tools to help victims keep contact with authorities.

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The \$200-million, five-year plan includes about \$26 million in new spending. The rest is made up of previously announced funding or a continuation of existing programs.

The strategy also includes awareness campaigns, training for personnel who work with victims and a plan to combat sexual exploitation on school campuses.

Oct 28 2016

CALGARY - A veteran Calgary Police Service sergeant has been charged with assaulting his former spouse.

Police say a woman reported that she was assaulted and that the man also threatened her boyfriend and tried to force his way into her home.

Investigators say the sergeant was in uniform and on duty at the time and was under a court order to stay away from the woman.

The woman also reported that she received two emails from the officer and had an argument with him in a public location.

The man has been charged with assault, uttering threats and four counts of breach of probation.

The suspect, who was not named, has been placed on administrative duty pending the outcome of the case.

Oct 28 2016

HALIFAX - Nova Scotia is launching a multi-front battle to try to head off a repetition of the crisis underway in British Columbia in opioid drug deaths.

The province's chief public health officer says the 49 deaths so far this year from opioids - including seven from the highly addictive painkiller fentanyl - show "urgent" action is needed to avert a crisis.

Robert Strang says a figure of 70 deaths released last week was incorrect due to an error on his part, but the number of deaths and rescues from overdoses per capita is approaching the situation elsewhere in Canada.

Seven committees have been set up in Nova Scotia to study issues ranging from increasing the availability of naloxone kits to securing funding for struggling, non-profit addiction centres that educate on the lethal dangers of opioids.

Strang says that plans will be discussed and recommendations will be available early in 2017.

He says there are now signs of illegally produced fentanyl, which caused two of the deaths so far this year, coming to the province, possibly through illegal mail deliveries from Chinese pharmaceutical factories.

Oct 28 2016

VANCOUVER - As the death toll from opioid-related overdoses continues to climb, harm reduction advocates are encouraging the government of British Columbia to expand the scope of its injection sites beyond supervising only intravenous drug use.

Sarah Blyth, a harm-reduction worker in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, says people

with addictions should have a place to go where they can feel safe using, whether they snort, smoke or inject their drugs.

She says the situation has become far more dangerous since the arrival of the deadly opioid fentanyl, which B.C.'s coroners' service says is responsible for about 60 per cent of the province's more than 550 illicit-drug deaths so far this year.

Dr. Patricia Daly, chief medical officer with the Vancouver Coastal Health authority, says there has been discussion in the past about creating a supervised-smoking room, but that the focus has been on injection drugs because they pose a far the greatest health concern.

Daly says the concern at supervised facilities is not only with overdoses, but also


with the transmission of blood-borne infections.

In Alberta, where opioids have also taken a lethal toll, the government announced on Thursday it would invest \$230,000 to explore the possibility of opening a safe-consumption site.

Oct 28 2016

REVELSTOKE - RCMP have been cleared in the death of Sheldon Thunderblanket, a man wanted in connection to a Saskatchewan homicide and for shooting a Revelstoke Mountie.

The Independent Investigation Office of BC or IIO has been looking into the case and




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has now ruled there is no casual connection between his death and the actions or inactions of police.

The incident, which happened earlier this month, began mid-afternoon as RCMP were conducting a road stop and check on Highway 1 near Golden.

According to the IIO, a male driver got out of his vehicle and began to fire shots at an officer. Officers returned fire striking Thunderblanket.

An officer, since identified as Constable Amber Brunner, was shot in the arm. She was flown to a Kelowna hospital and has since had reconstructive surgery on both her hand and arm.

No one knew at the time how badly the suspect had been injured.

The man fled on foot and hijacked another car at gun point before fleeing the scene. He drove in the direction of Revelstoke and was found nine kilometres outside of the town.

A road block with spike belts was set up but as he drove through it, more shots were fired. After he evaded officers, the suspect then stopped the car, crossed a highway and ran down a steep embankment. Officers tracking Thunderblanket deployed the K-9 unit.

Investigators wrapped up their search around midnight, setting up a containment around the forest. Police returned to the area the next morning and found him dead in a river.

According to autopsy results, the suspect, whose been identified as Sheldon Thunderblanket, died as a result of head trauma consistent with a rock.

He also had a flesh wound in the forearm, believed to be from Constable Brunner's 9 millimetre handgun.
(News 1130)

Oct 28 2016

EDMONTON - An Edmonton police officer who admitted to stealing eight tanks of gas from city fuelling stations last year will keep his job after a psychologist found he was suffering from major depressive disorder at the time of the thefts.

Const. Heinz Schilling will have his pay cut. He has been ordered to undergo any counselling that human resources staff deem necessary, but will return to the force following a year-long suspension without pay.

In delivering Schilling's penalty Friday, the disciplinary hearing's presiding officer, Supt. Mark Logar, said he was relying on a psychologist's report that found Schilling's depression affected his judgment and impulse control and that the only explanation for the crime was that it was "the desperate actions of a compromised man."

After several traumatic personal events - his father's long-term illness and eventual death, breaking his back and contracting whooping cough - Schilling, who was already being treated for depression, began to suffer under the strain.

His father's medical costs and his own injuries that left him unable to work resulted in mounting financial pressures. Calls from

creditors piled up as payments were missed and in September 2015 his home's power was turned off.

It was then that Schilling began using his police identification card and EPS fuel key to fill up his personal truck at a city fuel pump Sept. 7, 2015. When another officer became suspicious, an audit was conducted.

Schilling was suspended without pay and charged with one count of theft under \$5,000. The criminal charge was later discharged.

Logar said that if there hadn't been a causal link between the crime and Schilling's mental illness, he would have been dismissed, and that it should be "blindingly obvious" to Schilling that it is egregious for a police officer to break a law that he is entrusted to uphold.

Logar noted that legislation does not permit him to order that Schilling pay back the cost of the stolen gas, or to make determinations about the officer's operational role, which will be left up to human resources.
(Edmonton Journal)

SATURDAY OCTOBER 29, 2016

Oct 29 2016

MEADOW LAKE, Sask. - A teenager who killed four people and wounded seven others in a remote Dene community in northern Saskatchewan will face sentencing next year.

The 18-year-old, who can't be named, sat quietly in Meadow Lake court yesterday as his lawyer entered guilty pleas to first-degree murder in the deaths of two teachers at the school in La Loche on January 22nd.

He also pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in the deaths of two brothers aged 13 and 17 at a nearby house, and to attempted murder for wounding seven others at the school.

A hearing is scheduled for next May and June in La Loche to determine if the killer, who was 17 at the time of the shootings, should be sentenced as a youth or an adult.

SUNDAY OCTOBER 30, 2016

Oct 30 2016

VANCOUVER - An independent RCMP review board has launched an investigation into how Mounties handled the arrest of an elderly couple in the Vancouver-area last week.

Widely publicized video posted online appears to show an officer dragging a man down a staircase while another officer arrests a woman, who appears at one point to fall.

Richard Evans, senior director of the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission, says the board will look into whether members of the Coquitlam RCMP used good policing

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practices during the arrest, but cannot recommend criminal or code of conduct charges.

RCMP have said in a statement that officers were called Wednesday evening over reports of fighting at a tenants meeting, and Mounties arrested an elderly couple, who reportedly refused to leave.

Evans says the board has received several complaints about the arrest, and the board's chair, Ian McPhail, launched an investigation after determining it would be in the public interest.

New Westminster police have also been called in to do an external investigation that will look into the entire incident, including the actions of the officers.

Oct 30 2016

EDMONTON - A search for a quick fix to the costly high numbers of police calls to problem properties in Edmonton came up short. But some see long-term success in existing programs.



A report to the city's community services committee Monday says, after a thorough review by city administration and the Edmonton Police Service, no direct means to manage problem properties exists under the current Municipal Government Act.

"Currently under the MGA, there is no provision through tax roll addition ... there's no allowance for the police to collect costs for continually responding to those properties," said Ryan Pleckaitis, Edmonton's director of complaints and investigations.

The report was done to try to reduce the costs the police are incurring when dealing with properties where officers are being asked to respond with a disproportionately high frequency.

"There's one building in Ward 6, which I represent, where there's been nearly 200 calls for service each year over the last two years. That is a ridiculous amount of calls," Coun. Scott McKeen said during a debate in May about user fees in Edmonton.

The hope was finding some way to include police presence at an incident in the overall services that garner user fees. In other words, if a property owner calls the police, they might face a fee for the service to offset police costs.

The problem, though, is that doing so might discourage people from calling police when the need is legitimate.

The report suggests two potential indirect methods to reduce costs. The first involves

forcing chronic nuisance businesses to update their property to be in line with crime prevention through environmental design guidelines.

That would mean installing lighting, security cameras and security systems to deter nuisance behaviour, but would only apply to business properties, not residential ones.

The other suggestion is to make a request to the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission to raise the cost of liquor licences and channel the extra revenue back to police departments to offset their costs. Though it might help police pay the bills for the repeat service, it wouldn't reduce the calls to them.

But Pleckaitis said actions already being taken could bring those numbers down. His section includes the problem properties task force, which combines the efforts of bylaw enforcement officers, police, Alberta Health Services, development compliance officers and safety codes officers to try to reduce calls to police from specific addresses.

(Edmonton Journal)



Oct 31 2016

HAPPY-VALLEY-GOOSE BAY - The RCMP is in mourning following the sudden death of its district commander in Labrador.

Insp. Tony Perry was found dead Friday morning in Happy-Valley-Goose Bay.



Perry, who is originally from Deer Lake, joined the RCMP in 1988 and served in Nova Scotia until July 2015, when he was transferred to Newfoundland and Labrador. Most recently,

Perry worked as a negotiator between police, aboriginal leaders and protesters at the Muskrat Falls hydroelectric project site.

Foul play is not suspected.

"We extend our deepest sympathies to Inspector Perry's family, friends and colleagues," the RCMP said in a statement, adding that the force has offered its support to the Perry family and its employees through its Occupational Health and Safety Services Offices, peer-to-peer coordinators, and Employee Assistance Services.

The Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay also issued a statement on Perry's death, calling him "a well-respected and dedicated member of our local Happy Valley-Goose Bay RCMP Detachment.

"He was a beloved community member with incredible volunteerism spirit and he will be missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing and working with him," town officials said. "As head of the Labrador Division, Insp. Perry's involvement in

municipal operations and public events exuded the well-connected role of RCMP Officers in our community."

"The RCMP are an integral part of our community and today we share their loss," Mayor Jamie Snook said.

(The Western Star)

Oct 31 2016

EDMONTON - The province's police watchdog is investigating city police after a Taser was deployed on a 20-year-old man before he was charged with killing a 19-year-old acquaintance.

The Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT) was directed by the acting Director of Law Enforcement on Oct. 23 to investigate the circumstances surrounding an Oct. 22 confrontation between Connor James Miller and members of the Edmonton Police Service that resulted in the use of force by police. Miller suffered a collapsed lung that night but ASIRT is not saying yet if that was caused by his altercation with police.

Officers responding to the area after a 911 call found Christopher Fawcett fatally stabbed and, according to an ASIRT news release issued Monday, a shirtless man, who appeared hyperactive and possibly under the influence of unknown substances, wandering on the road. ASIRT said that as the officers approached the shirtless man, he attempted to flee.

With the assistance of the Air-1 helicopter, the man was found and apprehended but during the arrest, officers used force - including a Taser, a police dog and physical restraint - to gain control, said ASIRT.

Emergency medical services later tended to the man and transported him to hospital where he was admitted for treatment of the collapsed lung and to eliminate any substances he may have ingested.

ASIRT's investigation will focus on the circumstances surrounding the conduct of the officers while engaged with the man.

Miller was later charged with second-degree murder, possession of a weapon for a dangerous purpose, assault of a peace officer and resisting arrest.

Fawcett's was the city's 36th homicide of 2016.

(Edmonton Journal)

Oct 31 2016

REGINA - The Saskatchewan government is moving to close a loophole in its law that bans the use of hand-held cellphones while driving.

The province is changing the law to prohibit drivers from holding, viewing, using or manipulating a cellphone while driving.

The original legislation on cellphones while driving became law in Saskatchewan in 2010, but it referred to "using" a cellphone while driving.

Joe Hargrave, minister responsible for Saskatchewan Government Insurance, says too many people were contesting their tickets by saying they were just holding the phone.

A provincial court judge ruled in March 2015 that the legislation didn't prohibit looking at electronic communication devices.

The decision came in a case where a driver was charged by police, but the driver argued that merely picking up his phone and looking at the screen wasn't covered by the law.

Oct 31 2016

CALGARY - The Calgary Police Commission's top brass have come out in support of embattled Chief Roger Chaffin.

In a joint statement Monday, commission chair Howie Shikaze and vice-chairs Lisa Silver and Brian Thiessen say Chaffin has been very transparent with the oversight body since stepping into the job in October 2015.

"The Commission has full confidence that Chief Chaffin is taking decisive action with the goal of making our city a safer place and CPS a stronger and more progressive police service," they wrote.

Chaffin has been under fire in recent weeks after a Postmedia story unearthed claims of bullying and sexual assault stemming from a 2013 internal review of the service.

The trio maintains Chaffin has always invited "frank, open dialogue" with commission members.

Calgary's top officer has been quick to respond to public and political criticism against his officers and service.

In a lengthy Facebook post, Chaffin took aim at "inaccuracies" he felt were coming from some in the political sphere.

"Those in the political realm and those that may have once played a role in this organization need to be clear about their intentions and their facts," he wrote last week.

"Sharing information that is inaccurate is irresponsible. It does nothing to foster the public's trust in our service and our officer's trust in the workplace."

(Calgary Herald)

TUESDAY
NOVEMBER 1, 2016

Nov 01 2016

KELOWNA - Kelowna city council wants the RCMP auxiliary constable program back - but it wants to see changes.

The program, which provided civilian volunteers to support the RCMP by working with community groups, at local events and with the public, was suspended by the federal government in January 2016 pending a review of the program.

The Union of B.C. Municipalities has asked its member communities to consider three different options for bringing back the program:

- Option 1: Status quo: Bring back the program as it was when Ottawa suspended it and have auxiliary constables not participate in general duty police patrols and

ride-alongs or receive firearms familiarization training. Auxiliaries would remain appointed peace officers, wear police-type uniforms, and be issued "intervention" tools and soft body armour.

- Option 2: Community corps program: Auxiliaries would participate solely in community policing and would wear civilian-type uniforms and not be appointed as peace officers. Training would consist of 13 courses totaling 81.5 classroom and online hours.
- Option 3: Tiered program: Tier 1 in this option would include the training standards and duties of the community corps program with a maximum participation of 48 hours per year.

Tier 2 would be all the activities of the status quo option, as well as traffic and crowd control, parades and public ceremonies as well as foot and bike patrols under the supervision of an RCMP officer. Under this tier, auxiliary constables would be appointed peace officers and wear police-type uniforms, get intervention tools and soft body armour.

There would be more training and work would be limited to 96 hours of participation per year. They could not work after 9 p.m. Tier 3 would include tier 1 and 2 duties, as well as general duty patrol in RCMP vehicles, manning check stops and other activities deemed appropriate.

An additional level of training would include firearms familiarization as determined by the division training unit and participation would be set at 144 hours per year. Auxiliary constables would only be allowed to work up to midnight.

On Monday, Kelowna council voted to opt for the tiered program option as its choice for a return of the auxiliary constable program.

Coun. Brad Sieben said council appreciates the work past auxiliary constables have put in and see the program as a positive for the community.

(Kelowna Capital News)

Nov 01 2016

BRAMPTON - Peel Regional Police officers spending countless hours at hospitals waiting for mental health patients to be assessed or admitted, even though their resources are needed on the street.

It had been costing police about \$1.1 million in man hours annually in recent years.

But, a new collaborative approach with Carleton University's Mike Halinski, who has a PhD in management from the Sprott School of Business, ultimately saved Peel police \$113,000 in man hours in the first six months, from June-December 2014.

"It just wasn't good for Peel Regional Police. They had an expensive problem when dealing with incidents involving individuals with mental illnesses," Halinski said.

When Peel police have an incident involving an individual with a mental illness, they assess the individual under the Mental Health Act. If they decide to apprehend the

individual, they bring them to the hospital. At that point, the officer must wait for them to be seen by a doctor. This wait, from three to four hours to an entire shift, was costing the police more than \$1.1 million a year.

Halinski, Peel officers and hospital and support workers investigated how the police and the hospital were collaborating. He also involved the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA).

"Getting senior executives from all the parties together at one table was the key to successful change," he said.

Some of the changes include mandatory mental health training for Peel officers and a mandate to complete an Emotionally-Disturbed Person form so that health care workers can better assess the patient.

The hospitals also each added an In Short Term Emergency Deviation (INSTED) worker to help connect mental health patients with the right resources once they are discharged.

Although the numbers aren't available, Halinski said there has been a reduction in recidivism among mental health patients in Peel.

(Mississauga News)

Nov 01 2016

OTTAWA - An Ottawa police officer apologized to his family, the force and the Inuit community Tuesday after pleading guilty to two Police Services Act charges in connection with online remarks he made about the death of indigenous artist Annie Pootoogook.



Sgt. Chris Hrnchiar - a 30-year veteran who was working as a forensic investigator at the time of the remarks - was charged with two counts of discreditable conduct under the act.

In September, Hrnchiar posted Facebook comments suggesting Pootoogook's death ought not to be linked to the phenomenon of missing and murdered indigenous women across Canada.

Pootoogook's body was found in the Rideau River on Sept. 19 - a death that police did not originally treat as suspicious.

"This has nothing to do with missing or murdered aboriginal women," Hrnchiar posted. "It's not a murder case ... could be a suicide, accidental, she got drunk and fell in the river and drowned, who knows."

Hrnchiar, wearing a dark suit, stood and expressed his regret to a room packed with his family, friends and members of the media at the Ottawa police station.

"I'm truly sorry for my actions," he said.

Tuesday's proceedings were heard by

retired York Region police deputy chief Terence Kelly, who is expected to deliver a sentence on Dec. 7.

Hrnchiar's defence lawyers and Ottawa police jointly submitted a recommended penalty of a three-month demotion to the rank of first-class constable and cultural sensitivity training.

An agreed statement of facts presented Tuesday said Hrnchiar appreciates the embarrassment the comments caused the Ottawa police and that he displayed remorse for his actions.

Nov 01 2016

MONTREAL - Montreal police strongly defended a highly controversial decision to spy on a La Presse columnist by tracking his cellphone calls and texts and monitoring his whereabouts as part of a necessary internal police investigation - while the journalist involved called what they did "indefensible."



"Lives were not at stake, this was not a question of national security," La Presse columnist Patrick Lagacé said in an interview Monday. "The leaks made them look bad, that's why they decided to go after me in the way they did."

Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre stood by police chief Philippe Pichet on Monday, noting that a mayor should not intervene in police operations, but did say he was troubled by the news.

For several months this year, police were monitoring Lagacé's iPhone to determine the identity of his sources, La Presse reported. This was confirmed to Lagacé last Thursday by Montreal police.

At least 24 surveillance warrants were granted by courts in 2016, at the request of the Montreal police department's special investigations section. The warrants allowed police to track the telephone numbers of incoming and outgoing calls on Lagacé's phone, and to monitor the phone's location, although Pichet denied at a hastily convened press conference Monday that the GPS on his phone was monitored.

The surveillance warrants were obtained as part of Projet Escouade, which involved allegations that police investigators specializing in street gangs and drug trafficking fabricated evidence. Five police officers were arrested this summer, and two were charged.

One of the officers targeted by Escouade was Fayçal Djelidi. By monitoring his cellphone, Montreal police detected contact

between Djelidi and Lagacé, La Presse reported.

Djelidi was arrested in July and is charged with nine counts, including perjury, attempting to obstruct justice, breach of trust by a public officer and obtaining sexual services for consideration.

The controversial outgoing boss of internal affairs at the Montreal police department, Costa Labos, told La Presse that he gave the green light to the surveillance. On Friday it was announced that Labos has been transferred to the telecommunications department, but there is no evidence the move is related to the surveillance controversy.

While Projet Montréal called on the police chief to step aside temporarily to permit an independent investigation, Pichet said Monday it was an "exceptional situation," which warranted the action.

"I'm saying in an exceptional situation we can use that type of tool," he said in response to a reporter's question during a 15-minute press conference at police headquarters Monday.

He said the journalist was never under investigation, it was the police.

"We do have a responsibility to investigate all types of crimes involving officers," he said.

"What is important for me is that all regulations were followed," Pichet said, adding that there are no other similar surveillances to his knowledge.

Calling the spying "worrisome," Quebec Public Security Minister Martin Coiteux said his department is looking into whether police followed proper procedures.

Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard is forming a committee of experts to look into the surveillance of journalists.

The group will include a judge, a police official and a member of the media. It is expected to present its report to the Quebec justice minister by next spring.

Couillard also announced it will be harder for police to obtain a court-issued warrant to monitor journalists.

"An order will be given this week by the public security minister that will elevate the threshold of difficulty in order to obtain a warrant for members of the media to the same level as what we have now for judges, lawyers and members of the national assembly," he said.

(Montreal Gazette)

Nov 01 2016

VANCOUVER - British Columbia's chief coroner has announced the formation of a specialized drug-death investigation team as part of the province's effort to fight an opioid overdose crisis.

Lisa Lapointe has said most of the fatal overdoses are the result of people taking fentanyl with another drug, mostly cocaine, and many don't know they're ingesting the deadly opioid.

BC Coroners Service spokeswoman Barb McLintock says drug deaths will be

investigated in greater depth in an effort to prevent future tragedies.

She says funding will come from the \$10-million fund announced by Premier Christy Clark in September for various projects including a centre to research addiction.

McLintock says the first drug-death investigation is expected to begin next month and that eventually all drug deaths that have already been investigated in 2016 will be more thoroughly analyzed.

She says reports on all the drug deaths will be available on a public database.

Nov 01 2016

EDMONTON - The Edmonton Police Service has certified its 300th multi-family property under the Crime Free Multi-Housing program as it marks 15 years of making apartments and condominiums safer for residents.

"At one time, it was police going it alone and trying to control crime at problem properties," acting Sgt. Amanda Trenchard said Tuesday.

"Now it's the reverse, where landlords and tenants are taking ownership and not tolerating criminal behaviour. Quite literally, we're now able to get in on the ground floor and that's making all the difference."

The Crime Free Multi-Housing program brings crime prevention techniques inside multi-unit residences to reduce criminal activity, meaning residents and managers are not alone in dealing with issues including illegal drug or gang activity in their buildings.

Officers involved in the program conduct security audits, train managers in creating crime-free buildings and offer safety socials for tenants to build community within a building, educate and empower residents on ways to keep trouble from their doors.

The program also identifies civil processes available under the Residential Tenancies Act - pre-screening applicants, residential tenancy addendum agreements and mediation services - to help avoid or resolve issues with problem tenants.

(Edmonton Journal)

Nov 01 2016

WINNIPEG - The Winnipeg Police Board wants the city's incoming police chief to ensure the Winnipeg Police Service can modify their tactics to deal with crisis situations involving mentally ill people

A draft version of a new use-of-force policy calls on Winnipeg's police chief to issue a variety of directives pertaining to the use of force. One involves ensuring police in the field develop "specific awareness of ways to minimize threats and ensure safety" when they encounter "individuals experiencing mental health crises."

The policy, which comes before the police board on Friday, calls for police to de-escalate crisis situations whenever possible to reduce the potential for harm to mentally people and other members of the public.

Incoming police-board chair Jeff Browaty (North Kildonan) said incidents such as the 2013 police shooting of Sammy Yatim on a Toronto streetcar highlights the need for additional training for police officers.

"Crises situations are obviously difficult. Wherever possible, de-escalation is the first course of action," said Browaty, who takes over the helm of the police board from St. James-Brooklands Coun. Scott Gillingham.

The Canadian Mental Health Association applauded the police board for taking a proactive approach toward the treatment of the mentally ill.

"We're quite thrilled about what this policy could lead to in practice change for individuals experiencing mental health problems who might encounter the police," said Marion Cooper, executive director of the CMHA's Manitoba and Winnipeg office.

"It would suggest there is more effort made to support the training of police officers toward understanding the complexity of mental illness and what it might be like for somebody experiencing mental health illnesses."

The police service acknowledged but did not respond to a request for comment about the manner in which it trains police to deal with people experiencing mental illness.

Danny Smyth will be sworn in as Winnipeg's new police chief on Nov. 8. (CBC News)

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 2, 2016

Nov 02 2016

CALGARY - Three people are facing charges after police seized thousands of fentanyl pills during two separate investigations in Calgary late last month.

The Alberta Law Enforcement Response Team, or ALERT, says upwards of 2,800 pills were found Oct. 28 in a vehicle at a home in the city's Killarney neighbourhood that had been identified as a potential fentanyl stash site.

Police say they were made aware of the residence based on an ALERT investigation the previous week in which officers uncovered hundreds of fentanyl pills from the Calgary area during an arrest in Aldersyde, just south of the city.

It's alleged the home was being used as a cocaine conversion lab.

Two people were arrested on a number of drug-related charges.

The second Calgary seizure occurred Oct. 26 when more than 940 pills were discovered in an apartment, two days after the arrest of a 22-year-old man who had been the target of an investigation.

Nov 02 2016 A 46-year-old male suspect has been apprehended near Des Moines, Iowa, after two police officers were shot and killed early Wednesday in a pair of "ambush-style attacks."

Des Moines police spokesman Sgt. Paul Parizek said Scott Michael Greene was taken into custody without incident in Dallas County, just west of Des Moines.

The first shooting occurred at 1:06 a.m. when an officer in Urbandale, a suburb of Des Moines, responded to a report of shots fired. The officer was shot while sitting alone in his patrol car and pronounced dead on the scene, Parizek said.

About 20 minutes later, Des Moines police officers responding to the shooting came across a patrol car at an intersection about three kilometres away, where they found another officer with a gunshot wound, according to Parizek. The officer, who was among those responding, was transported to the hospital, where he, too, was pronounced dead.

Police said the shootings appeared to have been "ambush-style attacks."

"They clearly were just seated in their cars when they were shot," Parizek said. "The best they can tell from the scene there was no interaction between them and whoever did this."

Police subsequently identified Greene, a resident of Urbandale, as a suspect in the killings, describing him as armed and dangerous and urging members of the public to not approach him if they see him, but to call 911.

Parizek said investigators determined Greene was a suspect through "a series of leads and investigative tips."

Nov 02 2016

MONTREAL - Montreal's mayor still has confidence in the city's police chief, but said that confidence is not absolute.



"He has my confidence until there is proof (of wrongdoing)," Coderre told reporters at a news conference Wednesday.

Coderre has mandated the city's public safety commission to study the issue of police spying on journalists, and determine what role Philippe Pichet, the city's police chief, played in the scandal.

Coderre's endorsement of the head of police comes as calls for his resignation heighten.

Montreal's police brotherhood called on Pichet to resign as head of the city's police force after it was revealed that the cellphones of at least four journalists including La Presse columnist Patrick Lagacé were being monitored by police, who were listening in to calls and tracking their location.

Coderre said the city will examine the issue thoroughly, but despite a poll saying most Montrealers would like to see a public inquiry,

the city's examination will be done behind closed doors.

Various media outlets reported Wednesday that provincial police were keeping track in 2013 of who their own journalists were speaking to.

Some of the journalists reportedly targeted say police were attempting to figure out the source of a leak concerning a criminal investigation into a prominent labour leader.

In all, six reporters were targeted, including three from Radio-Canada and one each from La Presse and Le Journal de Montreal. The employer of the sixth has not been revealed.

Nov 02 2016

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. - Charges of murder and aggravated assault have been laid against a man in his early 20s over a stabbing attack in an Abbotsford, B.C., high school that left one girl dead and another injured.

Court records show Gabriel Klein has been charged with second-degree murder and aggravated assault in connection with an offence in Abbotsford, B.C., on Tuesday.

Klein appeared in Abbotsford Provincial Court on Wednesday.

Police and school-district officials have said they believe the attack was a random act of violence against the two teenage girls and they don't believe the victims knew their attacker.

Police said a barefoot man walked into the school on Tuesday afternoon while classes were in session and attacked the girls.

School district Supt. Kevin Godden said there's no indication the accused knew the teenage girls.

The site of the stabbing, Abbotsford Senior Secondary School, remained closed Wednesday so police could maintain the integrity of the investigation, Godden said.

He praised the school's staff for their actions under a very difficult situation.

"What I will say was in the middle of this horrific situation they stopped this individual, first by just yelling at him and then the staff converged on him and got him. The knife fell from his hands and they got him to take a seat while they held him in some restraint and then provided first aid to the students, who were obviously hurt."

Every school in the Abbotsford district had locked all but one of its doors on Wednesday, in what Godden called a precautionary measure.

Officials were expected to make a decision later in the day about when the school would reopen.

There is a video circulating of the stabbing, and Godden asked those sharing it to please stop.

"This video is a trigger to trauma, not only for our students and our community but for any person that has been involved in a traumatic incident."

Police also asked that the video not be shared further.

REGINA - The union representing deputy sheriffs says 14 jobs have been cut at courthouses in Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, North Battleford and Weyburn.

The deputy sheriffs screen people entering a courthouse, operate detention areas, escort prisoners inside the courthouse, provide courtroom security and transport prisoners by vehicle.

Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union president Bob Bymoan says losing the deputy sheriffs will jeopardize public safety.

The union says deputy sheriffs carry firearms.

Bymoan says it's his understanding that the work will be contracted out to commissionaires who don't have the same level of training and are not armed.

Justice Minister Gord Wyant says 16 positions will be cut. He says those are perimeter security staff, the workers who screen people entering courthouses. The justice minister says they are not currently armed.

"We not dealing with the in-court security and we're not dealing with prisoner transport," Wyant said at the legislature.

Wyant says whoever wins the contract to replace the deputy sheriffs will need to meet stringent requirements. He wants them to do the job for less money. He won't say how much the province is hoping to save.

Nov 02 2016

Police in Iowa recently took a man named Scott Michael Greene, 46, into custody in connection with the ambush killings of two officers in the Des Moines area Wednesday morning.

The killings are the 51st and 52nd police officer deaths caused by firearms this year, according to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, a group that tracks police fatalities. As of today, these firearm-related deaths were up by more than 50 percent from the previous year.

Although shooting deaths have increased sharply this year, data from the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund shows that on-the-job police fatalities overall are up by only 13 percent. This is the result of a smaller increase in traffic-related fatalities, which are a leading cause of officer deaths, as well as decreases in fatalities from other causes such as falls, fires and job-related illnesses.

Taken together, the numbers illustrate an uneasy paradox: Disgruntled individuals do appear to be targeting police officers for violence more often now than they have in the past. A report earlier this year found that ambush killings of police are up significantly this year from prior years.

(Washington Post)

THURSDAY

NOVEMBER 3, 2016

Nov 03 2016

MONTREAL - The Quebec government has announced a full public inquiry into freedom of the press and the police surveillance of journalists.

Justice Minister Stephanie Vallee says a panel of experts will be convened and will have all the powers typically given to a commission of inquiry - including being able to compel witnesses to testify.

The province's largest police forces have admitted this week to monitoring the phones of several journalists.

Vallee and Public Security Minister Martin Coiteux made the inquiry announcement today in Quebec City.

It comes on the heels of Premier Philippe Couillard's decision earlier this week to set up a committee of experts to look into the surveillance of journalists in the wake of revelations Montreal police kept tabs on the iPhone of a La Presse reporter.

On Wednesday, Quebec provincial police said they too had employed the controversial tactic on six other prominent journalists in 2013 in an effort to track down a person alleged to have leaked sensitive wiretap information involving a prominent labour leader.

Nov 03 2016

WINNIPEG - Court records show 24 charges against a Winnipeg police officer who was killed in a mysterious crash this fall have now been stayed by Manitoba justice officials.

Trent Milan was on administrative leave when his pickup truck slammed head-on into the front of a gravel truck on Oct 3.

At the time, the officer was still free in the community on promises to appear in court.

Before he died, Milan had been charged with offences that included obstruction of justice, breach of trust and theft and possession of prohibited weapons.

They are for offences which allegedly occurred between 2010 and 2016.

Another 12 charges involving drugs are expected to be dropped on Nov. 10, when Milan had been scheduled to appear in court. (Winnipeg Free Press)

Nov 03 2016

HAMILTON - Hamilton police say the discovery of a liquid form of fentanyl during a drug bust is a "game changer" for field officers handling the powerful opioid, which can be easily absorbed through the skin.

Det. Const. Adam Brown says the drug was found in vials during a raid in May, but officers believed it was GHB - also known as a date-rape drug.

A sample of the seized drug was sent to

Health Canada for testing, and the result showed it was liquid fentanyl.

After consultations with Health Canada and the RCMP, Hamilton police say they believe it is the first time liquid fentanyl is seized in Canada.

Brown says the force is currently revamping its protocols for how front-line officers handle drugs they come across.

He says officers will now wear eye protection and long sleeves when dealing with street drugs in addition to the usual practice of wearing nitrile gloves.

Liquid fentanyl is believed to be more powerful than the powder drug, which is already dangerous because police say even a dose of just two milligrams can be deadly.

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