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Executive Digest

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A new initiative from the Fraser Health Authority could soon allow RCMP in Surrey to administer Naloxone to people suffering from potentially deadly fentanyl overdoses.

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CALGARY - Calgary police are raising concerns about a marijuana-derivative drug that is so potent it can cause bouts of psychosis in people who inhale it, and result in explosions during the extraction process.

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Innovative ideas to combat mental health crisis



Sep 23 2015

VANCOUVER - In Orlando, Fla., an unassuming building has become a model for mental-health care in North America.

The Belvin Perry Jr. Central Receiving Center serves as a single point of entry for those with mental-health and substance-use disorders, Jonathan Cherry, president and CEO of Florida’s LifeStream Behavioral Center, told a room of international mental-health experts in Vancouver this week. The free-standing facility, named after a judge

who championed its creation, not only simplifies the navigation of an often byzantine mental-health system, but diverts those who might otherwise have been taken to an emergency room - or jail - by police.

“If someone is having a mental-health emergency, police, family or whoever know to take folks to that single point of access,” Mr. Cherry said. “The professionals are all there at that single point of access. There is a hospital there, there are stabilization units, detox units, outpatient therapies all over the city, but folks are assessed there, and it’s de-



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terminated what they really need.”

Orange County estimates that the centre has saved taxpayers more than \$50-million (U.S.) since it opened in 2003.

The Vancouver meeting, titled Community Crisis Response and the Crisis Pathway, was one of many being held in the city this week as part of the International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership and International Initiative for Disability Leadership conferences.

About 350 mental-health and disability experts from around the world are in Vancouver; there are also smaller meetings being held throughout North America. The conference comes as many North American jurisdictions shift mental-health treatment toward community-based care and away from institutions, emergency rooms and jails.

There is significance to Vancouver playing host. Two years earlier, the city’s mayor and police chief declared a “mental-health crisis,” noting that police officers had become de facto front-line mental-health workers. Since at least 2010, police apprehensions under B.C.’s Mental Health Act have grown year after year, increasing from 2,278 to 3,010 in 2014.

Vancouver police have asked for an urgent crisis centre on at least three occasions in the past several years, said acting Inspector Howard Tran, who is in charge of the department’s mental-health portfolio.

“Emergency rooms were designed to deal with trauma, and not issues of mental illness and addiction,” said Insp. Tran, who also spoke at the Community Crisis Response meeting. “For me, utopia would be if we built something like that next to the new St. Paul’s Hospital site.”

Mr. Cherry also spoke of the challenge in finding adequate community-based care following a shift away from institutionalization - a struggle that Metro Vancouver has also experienced with the closing of Riverview Hospital.

He told the room that in Florida, an

estimated 55,000 people were in long-term psychiatric care some 60 years ago, when the population was about four million. Today, with a population of about 20 million, the city has only 600 long-term beds left, he said.

“Now, in order for anyone to access a long-term, in-patient bed, someone has to be discharged,” Mr. Cherry said.

For outsiders, the relationship between the city of Vancouver, its police and its health authorities proved interesting. Vancouver Coastal Health’s multidisciplinary Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams, for example, have police officers embedded with psychiatrists, counsellors and substance-abuse specialists, often meeting clients where they are.

Vancouver’s five ACT teams currently work with 290 clients but have a capacity of 420.

In a study of 80 ACT clients, Mental Health Act apprehensions and violent offences both dropped by half, the city said Wednesday. There was also a 71-per-cent reduction in street disorders.

“I thought it was really impressive, the way that people were working together,” said Sarah McClinton, director of mental health, disability and dementia at Britain’s Department of Health.

“I thought that there were some strong partnerships and people are really starting to think together about what the common vision is.”
(Globe and Mail)



Sep 17 2015

TORONTO - Toronto police have undergone a “cultural change” in dealing with those in crisis in the wake of two reports that scrutinized the force’s policies, Chief Mark Saunders said Thursday.



Police told the Toronto Police Services Board they’ve implemented the majority of recommendations issued as part of a coroner’s inquest and in a separate report by a former Supreme Court justice on officers’ use of lethal force.

“De-escalation is at the forefront, not at the end of policing,” Saunders said after the board’s meeting. That approach involves talking with a person in distress in an effort to defuse the crisis and make the use of force unnecessary.

Deputy chief Mike Federico said the force has adopted a “zero harm” approach in its interactions with people experiencing mental health issues.

He said 45 of the 46 police-related recommendations made in the inquest have been applied, as well as 79 of the 84 issued in the probe by Frank Iacobucci.

Further changes are proposed, the police chief said, including the use of a so-called “sock” gun - a modified shotgun that fires soft bullets similar to a bean bag. The orange-coloured guns will be used in place of regular shotguns in police cruisers by the new year, he said.

“I feel that if it’s used properly it’s going to help us out tremendously,” Saunders said, adding the gun is another non-lethal tool that can help de-escalate a situation. He said police receive 20,000 calls for people in distress each year.

Police said new recruits will receive three more weeks of training to emphasize de-escalation techniques, something critics have long been calling for.

The use of body-worn cameras is also meant to help keep officers accountable for their actions in dealing with those in crisis.

Sep 17 2015

VANCOUVER - Vancouver’s police board has unanimously rejected a prominent advocate’s complaint that the city’s police department was failing to enforce the law against marijuana dispensaries.

Pamela McColl of the group Smart Approaches to Marijuana Canada had accused the department of not doing its duty “to maintain law and order” by not shutting down all pot shops in the city.

But deputy chief Doug LePard delivered a report to the board Thursday that stated criminal laws are less effective than municipal bylaws at closing illegal businesses.

The VPD must respect the City of Vancouver’s decision not to use its bylaw powers to shut down dispensaries and instead create a regulatory framework, he said.

“We don’t operate in a vacuum. We have to consider the circumstances that we operate in,” LePard told the board.

“We have the greatest of respect for policy decisions that the democratically elected council has decided on, and we will work in that environment.”

The police board, chaired by Mayor Gregor Robertson, voted unanimously to dismiss McColl’s complaint after less than 10 minutes of discussion.

The city recently became the first in Canada to regulate its 100 marijuana dispensaries, requiring owners to undergo criminal record checks and pay a \$30,000 licence fee.

Selling marijuana over the counter is illegal in Canada, and last week Health Canada sent cease-and-desist letters to 13 pot stores warning of RCMP raids if they don’t close.

Chief Adam Palmer said he had spoken to RCMP about the letters. He said Mounties have legal authority anywhere in Canada, but

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in practice they don't interfere with local police.

"I don't believe in any sense of the word you're going to see the RCMP come marching into Vancouver," he said outside the meeting.

"Vancouver police will deal with Vancouver issues and the RCMP will deal with the issues in their territory."

Sep 17 2015

A former Strathmore RCMP officer has been charged with assault in connection with an incident last fall.

Christopher Kelly has been charged with one count of common assault, under section 266 of the Criminal Code, for an on-duty incident which occurred while he was an RCMP officer stationed at the Strathmore RCMP Detachment Oct. 25, 2014.

Kelly, who was at the rank of constable when he resigned the following spring, was served a summons on Thursday to appear in Strathmore Provincial Court Oct. 20.

(Calgary Herald)

Sep 17 2015

TORONTO - When he attended a campaign event for federal Liberal candidate Bill Blair, Police Chief Mark Saunders violated a provincial regulation and a police board policy prohibiting officers from endorsing a political candidate, the Law Union of Ontario alleges.

Saunders blurred an "essential separation" between policing and when he appeared at a Tamil Canadian event in support of Blair last month, says Toronto lawyer Jack Gemmill, who filed a complaint Wednesday to Ontario's Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD) on behalf of the Law Union.

"In pretty well every democracy in the world, there is this careful delineation between police and the political process," Gemmill said in an interview. "Once you start to blur that line, you're getting into trouble, particularly with respect to the chief of police."

The event for Blair, who is seeking election in Scarborough-Southwest, was held at the Toronto Hilton hotel on Aug. 28. Wearing a plain white T-shirt, Saunders made brief remarks, then grinned for photos alongside his former boss.

In a statement to the Toronto Sun last week, Saunders said he facilitated the event after members of the Tamil community, who he came to know as unit commander of 12 Division, asked to meet with Blair. Saunders said no money was collected, and there was no admission charge.

"I did not intend to blur the distinction between my responsibilities as police chief and private citizen," Saunders told the Toronto Sun. "I will be more careful in the future."

Members of the Law Union say there needs to be a full investigation into Saunders' attendance and whether the chief actively endorsed Blair - "my view is, that is a clear breach of the regulation on political activity," Gemmill said.

(Toronto Star)

Sep 17 2015

EDMONTON - Edmonton cops wanting to get a promotion are going to have to keep their noses clean thanks to a new policy adopted by the city's police force.

"The police have to, almost above all, have credibility," said Coun. Michael Oshry, who sits on the Edmonton Police Commission.

"I'm happy that the police are looking at it and they have made some changes and I'm hopeful that they're going to keep looking at this and other policies when issues come up."

The change comes on the heels of protests over the promotion of Edmonton Police Service member Mike Wasylyshen to sergeant.

Wasylyshen, the son of former Edmonton police chief Bob Wasylyshen, was suspended for 120 days for insubordination and unlawful or unnecessary exercise of authority in 2012 for an incident a decade earlier when he used a stun gun on an aboriginal teen eight times in 68 seconds despite the teen being passed out.

In 2009, he was fined \$500 for an off-duty incident where he drunkenly punched a man on crutches, called him a cripple and threatened to burn down the house of the security guard who came to the man's aid.

The new policy, which was developed in February and announced to EPS members in May, puts stricter rules on the promotion of officers who have been found guilty of criminal acts or deception.

Old policy:

- Outstanding criminal charges, deceit and misconduct within two years of promotion or during the promotion process may prevent candidate from promotion.
- Being the subject of a pending disciplinary hearing or on-going investigation may delay a final decision on promotion.
- New policy:
- Criminal conviction and deceit will keep an officer from being promoted for five years.
- Outstanding criminal charges or guilty finding for criminal charges or deceit more than five years old may prevent promotion.
- A finding of misconduct during the promotion process or within five years of promotion may prevent it from being awarded.
- Any other matter that "may reasonably affect public confidence in the Edmonton Police Service" may prevent promotion.
- Being the subject of a pending disciplinary hearing or on-going investigation may delay a final decision on promotion.

(Edmonton Sun)

Sep 17 2015

NORTH BAY - Shawn Devine, an officer of 27 years and life-long city resident, will be North Bay's new police chief.

Devine, who currently serves as deputy chief, was named the choice to take over the service's top job during a news conference Thursday at police headquarters. He will officially take on the position Jan. 22 from Paul

Cook, who is retiring after 33 years in policing.

"I just want to tell you that you have our confidence," said Mayor Al McDonald, a member of the police services board. "I'm going to be proud to call you chief."

McDonald, who called Devine a "gentle soul," highlighted his community volunteerism and described him as someone who tries to bring everyone together in order to move forward.

Devine, who thanked Cook for his mentorship, patience and faith, pledged to work hand-in-hand with the department and the community to ensure that North Bay and Callander remain safe.

The 51-year-old started his policing career as a constable in North Bay in 1988.

(The Nugget)

FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 18, 2015

Sep 18 2015

HALIFAX - Police in Halifax have made an unusual request for public assistance after accusing a former volunteer firefighter of murdering an off-duty police officer last week.

Twenty-seven-year-old Christopher Calvin Garnier made a brief court appearance where he was formally charged with second-degree murder in the death of 36-year-old Catherine Campbell.

Campbell was a constable with the Truro Police Force who was reported missing Monday when she failed to show up for work.

Police say Garnier is also charged with indecently interfering with a dead body.

Investigators are asking witnesses to come forward if they saw a white man in shorts and a T-shirt pulling or pushing a large, green compost bin through the city's north end last Friday around 4:30 a.m.

They believe the victim met the accused last Thursday night at a downtown bar, where Campbell was last seen.

Police allege Campbell was killed hours later at a location on McCully Street in the city's north end.

Sep 18 2015

SOUTH PORCUPINE, Ont. - An Ontario Provincial Police officer has been arrested and charged after an investigation into the alleged misappropriation of funds.

The OPP says after an investigation by its professional standards bureau, Sylvie Demers of its South Porcupine unit has been charged with theft over \$5,000, fraud over \$5,000 and breach of trust.

The force says Demers is a 21-year member with the OPP.

She has been suspended from duty with pay.

Demers is to appear in court in Timmins in October.

NIAGARA FALLS, Ont. - The province's police watchdog has found there are no reasonable grounds to charge a Niagara Region office in relation to the drowning death of a 24-year-old man last year.

Three investigators and one forensic investigator looked into the circumstances of what happened on Nov. 17, 2014.

The SIU says the man went to a friend's home in St. Catharines on that day and ingested a quantity of narcotics after which he began to experience delusions and exhibit signs of extreme paranoia couple with incoherent and nonsensical speech. Just after 7 p.m. that evening the man's screams caught the attention of residents in the area and police were called.

An officer confronted the man and followed him along a pathway toward Lake Ontario. The man refused to stop and eventually got into the lake, remaining within metres of the shoreline at first while the officer tried to get him to return to shore.

The SIU says area residents also called out to the man but the distance between the group on land and the man grew as the tide seemed to carry him further into the lake. He was last seen around 8 p.m. His body was found just after 8:35 p.m. on the banks of Lake Ontario not far from where he had entered the water. An autopsy found he died as a result of drowning and hypothermia.

The acting director of the SIU says he was unable to find fault with the conduct of the officer, who he says considered going into the water to attempt a rescue before ruling it out as too dangerous.

HAMILTON - Two Hamilton police officers have been injured after a confrontation with a man wielding a machete.

Police say the incident took place on Thursday evening after reports of a man inside an apartment who was said to be acting aggressively while in possession of weapons.

Officers arrived to find the man exiting the building with a large machete in his hand. The man then began running down the street.

Police say the officers chased him on foot, calling for him to stop and drop the machete but the man ignored the commands.

When the man reached a fence in an alleyway police say he turned to face the officers while still holding the machete. Officers used a Taser on the man but it wasn't effective because of obstructions.

Police say the officers then kept trying to communicate with the man and were able to disarm him when he became distracted, although he continued to fight them during his arrest.

One officer suffered a laceration in the struggle while another officer suffered minor injuries.

Twenty-seven-year-old Jordan Roy is charged with possession of a weapon and break and enter for an unrelated property crime.

VANCOUVER - British Columbia's Criminal Justice Branch says no police officers will be charged in two separate incidents that resulted in injuries to a pair of men being pursued.

In a September 2014 case, the branch says two Mounties in Kamloops were chasing a man who jumped a fence, injured his neck and immediately became paralyzed.

It says the first officer rolled the complainant over and cuffed his hands behind his back, and there's no evidence that he knew right away that the man who landed on his head was hurt.

The branch says there's nothing to suggest that the officers applied any other force but there is evidence that they tried to keep him still once he told them his neck may be injured.

In a second case a month later, the branch says there's no evidence to show that two Vancouver police officers pursuing a man in their marked vehicle made contact with a cyclist who sustained multiple injuries.

In both incidents, the branch says the men's statements to the province's police watchdog were inconsistent and there's evidence that they were both under the influence of narcotics.

BURNABY, B.C. - RCMP say officers tried to negotiate with a man before he was shot dead by police in order to protect others in a home in Burnaby, B.C.

Mounties say police responded to a complaint around 7 a.m. Friday about shots fired in a house where at least one man had been fatally shot and the suspect was still inside.

Sgt. Annie Linteau said officers, including from the Vancouver Police Department, surrounded the home and police entered the two-level residence after negotiations with

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the man failed.

“Shots were fired, the circumstances of which are now under investigation,” she said. “A male suspect was pronounced deceased at the scene.”

Linteau said police found the body of the initial victim inside the residence and that a tenant was safely removed from the home.

British Columbia’s police watchdog is investigating the police-involved shooting.

The Independent Investigations Office said in an online statement that investigators are on the scene and that updates will be provided when information is available.

Sep 18 2015

TORONTO - No charge will be laid against a Toronto police officer who fatally shot a robbery suspect on New Year’s Eve.

Ontario’s police watchdog says the officer and his partner “had every right” to be concerned about their safety when 33-year-old Daniel Clause pulled out what appeared to be a gun.

The Special Investigations Unit says the pair had no way of knowing the weapon was actually a pellet gun.

The SIU says the officers approached Clause because he matched the description of a man wanted in an armed robbery at a nearby subway station.

It says the officers told Clause to drop his weapon and one of them shot him three times when he raised his gun in their direction.

Two of the bullets went into Clause’s abdomen and the third hit his shoulder and travelled through his heart.

Sep 18 2015

A former Vernon RCMP officer found guilty for possessing and accessing child pornography has received a one day jail sentencing.

The verdict was handed down in a Kelowna court room on Friday, where former Constable Ryan Hampton was found guilty on eight out of the nine counts charged against him.

According to Hampton’s lawyer, Jason Tarnow, he was not found guilty on count nine: obstruction of justice.

“Mr. Hampton is naturally disappointed in the guilty verdicts on the two counts that relate to child pornography,” said Tarnow in an email to KelownaNow.com.

“There was strong evidence that Constable Valerie Little, his then-wife, took possession of the USB drive prior to the downloading of the child porn. [...] The judge found Constable Little’s evidence to be contradictory and her credibility to be of significant concern. Nonetheless, there was other evidence heard in the trial, which the judge felt he could accept and that evidence is what led to the verdict.”

The judge sentenced Hampton to 10.5 months in jail, but accounted seven months of time-served with a 1.5 time credit into the sentencing, meaning he will only serve one more day in jail and can be released on Saturday.

However, Hampton also received a two-year probation sentencing.

Hampton was suspended from duty without pay once Vernon RCMP were made aware of the allegations.

Hampton’s ex-wife, Valeria Little, said that she had found a black USB drive with child pornography on it in the basement where they lived on April 7th, 2013. She gave it to police on May 5th, 2013.

Crown Counsel said that there were around 62 images of child pornography found, as well as three videos.

During the trial in July, Tarnow argued that the child pornography was found on both a laptop and the USB, and that the laptop wasn’t Hampton’s. Rather, the laptop was bought by Little and set up using all of Hampton’s information.

Moving forward, Tarnow said he is not sure if Hampton will appeal the judge’s verdict, but that he has 30 days to decide.

(Kelowna Now)

Sep 18 2015

Niagara Regional Police Const. Scott Heron has been found guilty of four criminal charges that include conspiracy to smuggle cheese and chicken wings across the border from the United States into Canada.

Heron, 42, had been charged with six counts, three of which related to the Customs Act, and three breach of trust charges that related to his duties as a police officer.

Heron was found guilty on all three of the charges laid under the Customs Act, but only one breach of trust charge.

Justice James Ramsay delivered his decision on Friday following a five-day trial in the Superior Court of Justice in Welland.

The Crown’s case depended heavily on the evidence of former NRP Const. Geoff Purdie who lost his job in April 2013 following his conviction in a Buffalo courtroom on a charge of conspiracy to smuggle steroids from the United States into Canada.

Purdie received a sentence of one year in jail, which he served in an American prison. Part of his plea agreement with U.S. officials was that he would testify in court about the cheese smuggling operation.

NRP Chief Jeff McGuire issued a statement following the court’s decision.

The chief said “the involvement of any police officer in criminal activity is unacceptable. The facts upon which Scott Heron was convicted today are disturbing and his conviction tarnishes the reputation of the entire service.”

(Niagara Falls Review)

Sep 18 2015

VERNON - RCMP Traffic Services officers from six different units along with officers from the Provincial Commercial Vehicle Safety Enforcement program will be joining forces with provincial conservation officers on a traffic enforcement project next week.

“This is an opportunity for us to work

with partner agencies to increase the police presence on our highways,” says Sgt. Bell with North Okanagan Traffic Services. “Our message is: if you are prone to bad or aggressive driving habits that put yourself and others at risk, there is a real likelihood that you will be caught.”

Cst. Jocelyn Noseworthy with Vernon/North Okanagan RCMP says teams of officers from West Kelowna, Sicamous, Revelstoke, Golden and south Okanagan units will work day and night September 21 to September 25 to target the main causes of serious injury collisions and fatalities.

“In particular, they will be looking for distracted drivers, impaired drivers, aggressive drivers, and people not wearing seatbelts,” says Noseworthy. “

Noseworthy adds the project comes after two other successful enforcement initiatives conducted in the south Okanagan and Golden areas this summer.

(Global News)

Sep 18 2015

EDMONTON - Edmonton police are taking action after two Alberta grand chiefs warned the practice of carding erodes trust with the aboriginal community and jeopardizes the reconciliation process.

“I can tell you right now I’m looking at reaching out to those two chiefs specifically,” said Insp. Dan Jones with the EPS Investigative Support Branch which includes the Aboriginal Relations Unit.

“Anytime something erodes trust we have to make sure that we don’t allow that to erode trust, so we always look at our practices, we always look at best practices,” he said.

On Thursday Treaty 6 Grand Chief Tony Alexis said he could not support street checks by police. He was responding to a CBC story highlighting concerns that carding, or recording of personal information including race, during random street stops unfairly singles out indigenous people and members of other racialized groups.

Alexis said even the perception of racial profiling would “undermine any attempt towards reconciliation between the indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.”

Grand Chief Steve Courtoreille said carding should not be arbitrary. He urged anyone who believed they had been mistreated to make a formal complaint. Edmonton police Chief Rod Knecht will be invited to an upcoming meeting of the grand chiefs to work through concerns, he said.

Police have insisted carding is not racially motivated and is a valuable investigative tool.

Asked how to explain complaints from critics who say racial profiling is occurring, Jones said “I can’t say never,” noting there are 1,800 police members in the city.

“What I can say is we train that it is never OK to utilize race as a reason to stop someone,” he added.

He said officers receive training in criminal versus racial profiling, bias awareness and cultural safety.

"We train that it is never okay and to be aware of biases and culturally safe in your practices."

Jones said EPS continues to look at how trust can be built in all communities.

"So in relation to that, we are just going to make sure that people are educated on what we're doing and why we're doing it in order to build those trust relationships."

He could not say whether the police chief plans to accept Courtoreille's invitation to attend the upcoming meeting with the grand chiefs.

(CBC News)

Sep 18 2015

WINDSOR - A hearing officer under the Police Standards Branch sentenced a Windsor police constable to an 18-month demotion for his 2012 on-duty assault that saw him caught on video kicking a man lying in a stairwell.

Const. Kent Rice pleaded guilty last week to two misconduct charges under the Police Services Act - using unlawful or unnecessary force and discreditable conduct.

A decision by retired Toronto area Insp. Brian Fazackerley, who presided over the hearing, saw him agree with a joint submission by lawyers from both sides that will see Rice immediately demoted to second-class constable which will mean a loss of \$14,000 in pay over the duration of his penalty.

Rice, 43, will be returned to his current rank of first-class constable when his demotion ends.

He previously received a conditional discharge - or probation - in criminal court after being found guilty of assault for having unnecessarily kicked Gladson Chinyangwa twice in an incident at an apartment building in the 1100 block of McDougall Avenue on Feb. 22, 2012.

Rice was among four Windsor police officers who attended an apartment fight between three men, including Chinyangwa, shortly after 2 a.m. on the night of the assault.

A security camera video in the building's stairwell showed Rice standing over Chinyangwa before kicking him twice forcefully despite little resistance from the 20-year-old man.

The surveillance video didn't surface until months later when revealed by The Star. Rice was suspended with pay in June 2012 when the video came to light.

Rice apologized to his victim last week following his guilty plea and for bringing embarrassment to the police department. He had no previous disciplinary matters against him since joining Windsor police in 1999.

In his hour-long decision, Fazackerley noted "in my view officer Rice used excessive force" when he kicked Chinyangwa twice and was "very fortunate no serious injury was done."

(Windsor Star)

**SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 19, 2015**

Sep 19 2015

In the last five years, nearly 350 officers from police services in the Greater Toronto Area - Toronto, Peel, York, Halton and Durham - and the OPP have been disciplined for what their own services call "serious" misconduct, a Star investigation has found.

Roughly one in five of those officers was disciplined because he or she had been found guilty of criminal offences, including assaulting his or her spouse, drunk driving, possessing drugs and theft.

Nearly 50 of the officers were disciplined more than once; some were nailed for new offences just months after being penalized for past misconduct. One officer was busted for being drunk behind the wheel twice in one week.

Someone with a criminal record would almost never be hired as a cop. But many cops who are convicted of criminal offences are allowed to keep working. Only seven police officers were successfully forced out of their jobs.

Police chiefs say the current law doesn't give them enough power to get rid of problem officers. "Our hands are tied to attempt to deal with some of these individuals who don't deserve to be police officers," said OPP Commissioner Vince Hawkes.

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Most police discipline cases don't get reported beyond station walls.

In decision after decision, the officers presiding over the case - the judges - remark how media coverage of the officer's misconduct would undermine public trust in the police.

"The media is the conduit to the public and ensures we hold accountable those who are found guilty of misconduct," wrote one presiding superintendent in the 2014 case of a Halton constable disciplined for playing hooky from work. It was the officer's eighth time being disciplined.

"Fortunately, in this case, there has been no media attention in this matter and consequently there has been very little damage done to the police service's reputation."

The Star first sought copies of disciplinary decisions from the GTA services and the OPP starting in late 2014. Many of the services took months to supply the records.

Each disciplinary decision gives a detailed account of the officer's alleged misconduct and, if guilty, the penalty. As a whole, the decisions provide a look never seen before at a system insiders and critics say isn't working.

The Star analyzed thousands of pages of decisions, finding patterns of misconduct across police services as well as disparities in how certain forces punish officers for the same type of offence. Those stories will be told in the coming days.

Peel Regional Police is the only service that still has not provided the Star with its full decisions. The force initially redacted names of the offending officers, and then released only Twitter-sized summaries of each case. The service's chief, Jennifer Evans, said the force is reviewing its policies and full decisions should be released in the coming weeks.

In nearly every police tribunal, the presiding officer emphasizes the purpose of the disciplinary hearings: to correct officers' misbehaviour, deter others from committing similar misconduct and assure the public that bad officers will be held to account.

Yet police chiefs and prosecutors say they feel officers are at times treated too lightly. They say they are handcuffed by light penalties doled out previously for serious misconduct.

"There's lots of times where (a supervisor) comes down here and says, 'You're going to ask for this guy's job on this one' and I'll say, 'Sorry boss,'" said Insp. Peter Callaghan, a prosecutor for Toronto police's disciplinary tribunal.

Even when hearing officers do mete out harsher penalties, including dismissal, they complain that the appeal body - the Ontario Civilian Police Commission - will often soften the sentence.

The chiefs emphasize that the vast majority of officers do an upstanding job, and their reputations are unfairly tarnished by the misconduct of a small number of their colleagues.

"When you take an oath to serve and protect the community, you should be held to a higher standard," said Evans, the Peel police

chief. "It's frustrating to think there are certain employees here that (shouldn't be) because there is such great work that goes on on a daily basis."

For cops facing discipline, there is just as much concern about senior officers judging their cases, said Peter Brauti, a lawyer who has represented many officers facing discipline. "The officers don't like it because management picks the prosecutor and the judge - the fix is in."

Brauti and Toronto police union head Mike McCormack argue that in many cases an officer has built up goodwill over years of service and that should be considered when a punishment is handed down. The purpose of the tribunal should be rehabilitative.

"There are all these people who have had one-off mistakes and they aren't treated lightly. They shouldn't be thrown to the curb because of one transgression," Brauti said.

The province is now revisiting the Police Services Act, the law that governs policing in Ontario, and it will likely be amended substantially for the first time since 1990.

Chiefs and police prosecutors say the act needs to be beefed up to empower them to get rid of problem officers. Some raised the possibility of setting penalty ranges for certain types of misconduct such as domestic violence or drunk driving, as well as greater transparency surrounding punishments. The process also needs to be streamlined so cases don't drag on for years.

(Toronto Star)

Sep 19 2015

EDMONTON - Sept. 19, 1912: Police drown out singing in drunk tank

"Vocal solos, duets, and quartettes in the cells of the city police station are not encouraged by the police anymore, as the result of the large dose of vocalism that has been handed out by various inebriates during the last week," the Edmonton Journal reported.

"There has been vocalism by night and more of the same by day, and everything from ragtime to hymns have been foisted on the poor suffering constables and sergeants who happen to be around the station.

"Whether it is the change in the weather or the brand of whiskey they are drinking, is a question, but somebody thought of the water cure for inebriates, and it has proven successful beyond all expectations. The recipe is: One large-sized fire hose, water pressure amounting to anywhere from 25 to 100 pounds, a regulation sized fire hydrant in good repair, and a first class man to turn it on. Administer for five minutes at a stretch, 12 times an hour, until the patient's ardour is so dampened that he will want to swim. If the vocalism does not cease then call a doctor," the story said.

"The city police cells are quiet now. Neither bad whiskey nor cold weather can force the devotees of John Barley corn to break into song.

The water cure is a success. "
(Edmonton Journal)

Sep 19 2015

EDMONTON - Some of Canada's biggest brewers are coming together in the fight against impaired driving.

Beer Canada, which represents 32 brewers across the country-including Molson, Labatt and Sleeman, launched its "Partners for Safer Communities" initiative Friday. The joint campaign aims to reduce the number of people drinking and driving by promoting the use of designated drivers.

"Although we're individual brewers in a fiercely competitive industry, there's strength in putting our differences aside and taking action together to promote responsible drinking," said John Sleeman, founder of Sleeman Breweries and chairman of Beer Canada.

"We know that 85 per cent of Canadians follow Health Canada's safe drinking guidelines, it's that other 15 per cent that we really want to get through," added Jeff Ryan with Labatt Breweries.

About 1,500 brewery employees will visit close to 2,500 establishments across Canada asking people to take the pledge not to drink and drive. For every pledge made, a donation will be made to "Change the Conversation," an organization that creates awareness about the dangers of impaired driving.

(Global News)



Sep 21 2015

SURREY, B.C. - A mysterious reign of terror targeting 15 people who seemingly had no connection has resulted in arson and firearms charges against two men including an alleged gang associate, police say.

The pieces of a complex four-year investigation began to come together when random victims were linked to the British Columbia Justice Institute, which trains police officers and first responders.

Chief Supt. Kevin Hackett of the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit said some of the victims parked their vehicles at the institute's parking lot to take their children to a function next door.

"Although the intent was to target people who were likely associated with law enforcement and the justice institute, other people who weren't connected in any way to the (institute) were being targeted," Hackett told a news conference Monday.

The justice institute received a threatening email in January 2011 referencing nine people, and eight of them had been targeted, police said.

Hackett said the victims lived across the Lower Mainland and their homes and vehicles were set aflame or shot at in 23 attacks between April 2011 and January 2012.

Police believe an Insurance Corp. of B.C. employee used the victims' licence plate numbers to access their personal information.

Between December 2014 and January

2015, several victims received suspicious letters, one of which warned attacks would resume in the new year, Hackett said.

He said investigators reconnected with all the victims to ensure their safety while trying to solve the mystery of why someone would target them.

Hackett declined to provide details of a possible motive, saying they would emerge in court.

"This investigation was complicated and made even more challenging by the efforts of the accused to disguise their attempts through cunning and calculated misdirection," he said.

Vincent Cheung, 40, of Langley allegedly orchestrated the attacks and is an associate of the United Nations gang, Hackett said.

Cheung faces 23 firearms and arson charges, while 54-year-old Thurman Taffe of Burnaby is accused of a single count of arson.

Both men were arrested Friday in Burnaby and appeared in a Vancouver court Monday. They are being held in custody until their next court date on Oct. 1.

"We know there are still people who have additional information about these offences and this investigation is continuing with further arrests and charges anticipated," Hackett said.

The RCMP's Lower Mainland Chief Supt. Jodie Boudreau said police from various jurisdictions joined forces to move the investigation forward and culminate in arrests.

"Ongoing intelligence work, information sharing and the expertise of investigators were instrumental in helping us figure out how the pieces fit together and how they contributed to the whole picture," she said.

Boudreau said police are grateful for the victims' patience.

"Many unfortunately were at home during the arsons of their residences and vehicles or when their homes and vehicle were shot at and I imagine many of the victims are still feeling the emotional impact of the crimes today, regardless of this outcome."

Sep 21 2015

STELLARTON, N.S. - An off-duty police officer whose body was found near the foot of a bridge in Halifax was remembered Monday as "sweet and strong" in a funeral service that saw police officers and firefighters line a street in Stellarton, N.S., in her honour.



Hundreds of people attended the service at the First Presbyterian church in Catherine Campbell's hometown and heard her aunt, Mandy Wong, describe her niece as an adventurous person who also had a gentle touch with children. She remembered how Campbell would often bend down on her knee

to speak to children to ensure they weren't afraid of police officers.

"She never would have imagined the effect she would have," she said. "Catherine was brave and beautiful and sweet and strong."

Eddie Stewart, a retired volunteer firefighter, placed a firefighter's helmet in a hearse carrying Campbell's coffin after the service.

He described Campbell, who was 36, as a vivacious woman who one minute would grab a tool belt and help someone build their deck, and the next be wearing a party dress and "be looking great."

Mike O'Sullivan, who served with Campbell during her 10 years as a volunteer firefighter in Stellarton, said the family is known in the community for its devotion to community service.

"Catherine's been here at the station since she could walk, and it's a terrible loss for our community," he said.

Members of the Truro police service lined the entrance to the church and saluted as Campbell's parents and family arrived.

Campbell's father Dwight, the chief of Stellarton's volunteer fire department, and her mother Susan walked into the church beneath the outstretched cranes of fire trucks from Stellarton and Truro.

Campbell was reported missing on Sept. 14 when she failed to show up for work with the police service in Truro. Halifax police recovered her body last Wednesday below an underpass leading to the Macdonald Bridge

that crosses Halifax harbour.

Christopher Calvin Garnier, 27, is charged with second-degree murder in Campbell's death. He is also charged with indecently interfering with a dead body.

O'Sullivan said Campbell's death is incomprehensible.

"She had everything going for her ... for this to happen it's just senseless to begin with," he added. "You think it's going to happen elsewhere. It hits home and it's tough."

Campbell's family has said she held a variety of jobs in the community before deciding to train as a police officer, finding a job in Truro as soon as she graduated six years ago.


Sep 21 2015

REGINA - RCMP officers turned out to be the life of the party in a small Saskatchewan community.



After learning of plans for a high school frosh gathering in the Lumsden area, officers posted on Facebook that they would be showing up with chips and salsa, but possibly also with charges for underage drinking, open liquor and providing alcohol to minors.

In the end, no fines or charges were laid.



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But several people at the party posted photos to Facebook showing them enjoying their snack.

Sgt. John Armstrong of the Lumsden RCMP detachment said it had to be done.

“(It) sort of took on a life of its own and if we didn’t bring the chips and salsa, I think we would have had more consequences ... if we didn’t show up, with all the press,” said Armstrong.

Mounties mingled with the party-goers and made sure everyone knew they could be more strict if things started getting out of control.

But Armstrong said in the end, the young people were very well-behaved. They took selfies with the chips and group photos with the officers and shared them on social media. Mounties patrolled the road outside the party and pulled over numerous vehicles, but found no impaired drivers.

“It was well received and they sort of all swarmed to us and we handed out the chips and salsa and they loved it,” Armstrong said. “They couldn’t believe that we had come through on our promise.”

(CJME)

TUESDAY
SEPTEMBER 22, 2015

Sep 22 2015

WINNIPEG - A 44-year-old man who was shot and killed by police on the weekend had been suffering from depression, says his stepmother.

Winnipeg police weren’t commenting on the incident. The province’s newly formed Independent Investigations Unit - which looks at all serious incidents involving police - has taken over the investigation.

Executive director Zane Tessler told a news conference that officers got a call from a man’s family on Sunday and began a search for his white work van. They spotted it inside the city and followed it to the area where the shooting took place.

“There was a concern for him,” Tessler said, though he wouldn’t say if the family warned whether the man might commit any crimes.

Tessler wouldn’t confirm the man shot had a gun of his own but said a firearm was found at the scene that did not belong to any of the police officers.

“We’re just in the process of trying to link that to him,” he said.

Tessler wouldn’t say whether the man threatened police or whether officers felt in danger but said “officers were required to use their service weapons.” No officers were hurt during the incident.

Some tried to perform CPR on the man after the shooting.

This is the first officer-involved shooting being looked at by the Independent Investigations Unit, which began operations in June.

(CTV Winnipeg, CJOB)

Sep 22 2015

VANCOUVER - Thieves take note - if you plan to steal a delivery van, have your morning coffee before committing the crime.

A 55-year-old man is pondering that lesson while awaiting a Sept. 30 court date in Vancouver.

Brian Phillips faces various charges after a delivery van was stolen from downtown Vancouver early Monday morning.

The frantic victim reported he’d left the keys in the parked vehicle, but returned from a 6 a.m. delivery to see the truck pulling away as he ran after it.

Minutes later, Const. Brian Montague says several officers watched as the same van was driven by the police station before the driver parked and calmly sauntered into a coffee shop.

The officers followed, arresting the man after a brief struggle, while Montague says the van and its untouched cargo were quickly returned to the thankful delivery driver.

Sep 22 2015

WILNO, Ont. - Ontario Provincial Police investigating a fatal shooting in a small community west of Ottawa say they are now investigating three homicides.

Police say all three victims are women.

A 57-year-old suspect, who has not been named, has been arrested by police in Ottawa.

Ontario Provincial Police say various lockdowns which were put in place while police searched for the armed suspect earlier in the day have been lifted.

Police had initially only said the man was being sought in connection with one shooting.

By Tuesday afternoon, police provided details on how the events unfolded.

They said officers were called to a location in Wilno, Ont., just before 9 a.m. and found the body of a woman. As a result of information they received, they then went to another home in the community and found the body of a second woman.

Shortly after 11:10 a.m., police say they found a third woman dead at a home about half an hour away from Wilno.

Several businesses and schools in Wilno were placed on lockdown while the search for the suspect was underway.

Extra security measures were also taken in Ottawa, as police announced the suspect may have headed to the city.

Heavily armed RCMP officers were seen on Parliament Hill and many buildings in the vicinity were placed on lockdown.

The man was arrested around 2:30 p.m. in the community of Kinburn, in western Ottawa, which is about 130 kilometres away from Wilno.

Sep 22 2015

VANCOUVER - A coroners’ inquest has been called into the death of a 48-year-old man who was shot by police during an armed standoff outside a casino in New Westminster, B.C.

Mehrdad Bayrami died in hospital in November 2012, 10 days after he was shot in the abdomen.

Const. Jordan MacWilliams of the Delta Police Department was charged with second-degree murder but the charge was dropped this past July.

The Criminal Justice Branch said the available evidence didn’t support a viable prosecution of MacWilliams.

The inquest is scheduled to begin next February, when jurors will hear evidence from witnesses under oath before making recommendations aimed at preventing similar deaths.

MacWilliams also faces a civil lawsuit from Bayrami’s daughter, who has accused the officer of gross negligence and malicious misconduct though none of the allegations have been tested in court.

Sep 22 2015

SUDBURY - Two Greater Sudbury Police officers - including one already facing allegations of assault - have been charged with fraud.

In a release, police said the charges relate “to the alleged misuse of company insurance benefits.

“In August 2015, the (Greater Sudbury Police Service) Professional Standards Bureau began an investigation into the activities of the two involved officers after receiving complaints from our benefits provider,” police said.

“As a result of this investigation both members had been assigned to non-operational duties.”

On Tuesday, Const. Kathryn Howard and Const. Christopher Labreche were arrested for fraud under \$5,000 and uttering a forged document.

The officers will appear in court Oct. 28.

Const. Labreche is already facing an assault charge following a violent incident at police headquarters June 8, 2014.

(Sudbury Star)

Sep 22 2015

MONTREAL - After a series of high-profile clashes between Montreal police and journalists during the 2012 student protests and beyond, both groups are meeting in hopes of forging a better working relationship in the future.

Representatives from the city’s independent press and a national media coalition sat down with Montreal police commander Ian Lafrenière on Monday to iron out past differences and lay down ground rules for future interactions. Since the 2012 protests - many of which ended in mass arrests and violence - reporters have frequently been detained and sometimes assaulted by riot police.

“It was a great meeting,” said Tom Henheffer, the executive director of Canadian Journalists for Free Expression. “Lafrenière was even quite apologetic about the situation that had happened in the past. He apologized for officers he said had stepped out of line.

He said they were more than willing to continue the conversation to work with us so that these instances of journalists being arrested or assaulted are reduced as much as possible. ... There was a buildup of animosity between these two groups that was diffused with this meeting.”

Three of the journalists who met with Lafrenière work for the student press, which developed something of an acrimonious relationship with police in the past few years. There were about 700 anti-austerity marches throughout Quebec during the spring and summer of 2012 and student journalists were frequently detained alongside protesters.

One of the chief problems that arose since the 2012 protests is that police became the unofficial arbiters of who is and who isn't a professional journalist. The people they deemed journalists were often limited to those working for mainstream outlets. They allowed these reporters to escape arrest after police surrounded a crowd and began rounding up protesters.

Others from student newspapers - like Matt D'Amours from The Link - were sometimes handcuffed, given a hefty fine and had their equipment seized, preventing them from finishing their assignment.

“Asking the police to identify who is a journalist is a tall order,” said Lafrenière. “(In 2012) we could have 200 people claim they were journalists during a march and it's not always easy to sort that out.”

But the new ground rules are expected to clarify this.

“(Police are) going to base their treatment of journalists based on (the journalist's) behaviour,” said Henheffer. “So if they're behaving like professional journalists, they'll be treated like professional journalists.”

(Montreal Gazette)

Sep 22 2015

A new initiative from the Fraser Health Authority could soon allow RCMP in Surrey to administer Naloxone to people suffering from potentially deadly fentanyl overdoses.

Dr. Marcus Lem, medical health officer for the Fraser Health Authority, said Tuesday the problem of fatal fentanyl overdoses is getting worse.

In 2014, the Fraser Health region had 29 fentanyl-related deaths, while across the rest of Metro Vancouver there were 25 deaths. Across the province there were 88 fentanyl-related deaths in 2014. By the end of 2015 those figures are expected to more than double.

Lem said that while nothing has been finalized, they are hoping in the upcoming months to train RCMP officers to use Naloxone on a person who has overdosed on a drug laced with fentanyl.

“Naloxone is very safe,” he said of the small bottle of liquid with a syringe on the end that is spiked into a person's leg or other limb.

Lem feels it makes sense to equip RCMP officers with Naloxone as they are the ones who are out daily on the streets interacting

with many who suffer from drug addiction. “The RCMP, they know who the drug users are,” he said.

“Often the police are the first responders and to their credit they want to save lives - that is why they want to work with us.”

Surrey RCMP Cpl. Scotty Schumann said police hope to train officers soon to use Naloxone.

“We see a need for this,” Schumann said. “Often you hear people say, ‘I know my drug dealer, but it is a huge risk as there is no quality control.’”

(The Province)

Sep 22 2015

Some male Stratford, PEI residents were asked to voluntarily give DNA samples last weekend as the RCMP attempts to catch a house burglar who has eluded them for months.

A male has been cutting screens and then pushing open unlocked windows to gain access to homes, say police.

Last weekend, officers asked some male residents in the community to voluntarily give a DNA swab sample.

“As part of the investigation, they were going around last weekend, door-to-door, and had asked some people to give DNA samples,” said Sgt. Leanne Butler.

“If a member comes to your door, they will explain very clearly, have paperwork and explain how it's a voluntary process ... As part of the paperwork, they will explain to the people that these are for this investigation only, and they will be destroyed after.”

RCMP aren't saying how many DNA samples were collected, which neighbourhoods were visited or if they plan to go door to door again.

Similar break-ins have also occurred in Charlottetown and Cornwall. Police have set up a joint task force to investigate the incidents.

Meanwhile, residents are being warned to lock all doors and windows when they aren't at home and to watch for suspicious activity.

(CBC News)



Sep 23 2015

VANCOUVER - Medical marijuana dispensary owners who stand to be uprooted by Vancouver's sweeping new regulations say they won't disappear without a fight.

Vancouver Coun. Kerry Jang estimated this week that only 15 to 20 dispensaries will be approved after the city processes a whopping 176 applications for business licences.

But owners who are expecting rejection letters say the initial red light from the city will only mark the beginning of a months-long process of appeals and even legal action.

“With any new rules or regulations or licensing, it will take a long time. I do know

a lot of dispensaries will file lawsuits,” said Chuck Varabioff of the British Columbia Pain Society.

“I'll never file a lawsuit against the city, but I definitely would appeal if I'm told that I have to move.”

Jang said in an interview that the city is not imposing a cap on dispensaries, but only 15 to 20 shops are likely to meet its strict requirements - including a clean criminal record and a ban on operating 300 metres from schools, community centres and other pot shops.

The councillor, who first revealed the estimate to local politicians at the Union of B.C. Municipalities convention on Monday, said it was his own calculation and not an official figure.

Although Vancouver currently has more than 100 dispensaries, Jang said 15 to 20 would be more than enough to serve the city's medical pot patients.

He said the city is set to begin issuing licences in December.

Sep 23 2015

TORONTO - The ten-second video doesn't show much, just a quick shot of one Toronto police officer, then a second, who then reaches up to slap away the cellphone camera.

But the brief video recording captured the crucial part of Abdi Sheik-Qasim's exchange with Toronto police Consts. Piara Dhaliwal and Akin Gul - enough for an Ontario judge to rule Sheik-Qasim had been assaulted by Toronto police, not the other way around.

“It saved my life, or at least a lot of headaches,” Sheik-Qasim, 32, said in an interview. Without it, “I would have probably been in jail right now.”

But the exonerating video almost didn't make it into the courtroom.

In a development Ontario Court Justice Edward Kelly called “extremely troubling,” Sheik-Qasim's phone went missing soon after he was charged with assaulting an officer and his belongings were confiscated by police. His phone has not been seen since.

While in detention, Toronto police booking video had recorded him asking about the whereabouts of his cellphone, “quite agitated and upset,” Kelly noted. When Sheik-Qasim was released from detention and still could not retrieve his phone, he was angry, knowing it had recorded the interaction.

It was only when he arrived back home that Sheik-Qasim realized he had enabled a function on the phone that automatically uploaded video files to his Google account. The recording was waiting for him when he checked his email.

Neither Dhaliwal and Gul could be reached for comment Tuesday. Toronto police confirmed the officers are now being investigated by the force's Professional Standards division.

The encounter occurred on the night of January 4, 2014, when Dhaliwal and Gul arrived at the apartment of Sheik-Qasim's uncle to investigate a noise complaint. Sheik-

Qasim had answered the door, explained his uncle had stepped out and turned down the music. He supplied his identification to the officers, who ran his name through a police database and determined he was not wanted on any outstanding warrants.

Sheik-Qasim then became frustrated when the officers did not leave and asked to enter the apartment. Sheik-Qasim declined, saying the cops didn't have a reason to enter or a warrant. He then took out his phone to record the interaction - "I knew they were in the wrong," he said.

Within seconds, Dhaliwal knocked the phone out of Sheik-Qasim's hand and onto the ground, and Sheik-Qasim was arrested and charged with assaulting a police officer and failing to comply with a court order.

When he was released from custody, police gave Sheik-Qasim his belongings back and gave him a phone - but not, he says, his own phone. It was his friend's phone, which he says was inside the borrowed jacket he had been wearing.

At trial, both officers testified that Sheik-Qasim initiated physical contact by reaching for Gul's utility belt, prompting Dhaliwal to react.

But Kelly ruled the video showed it would have been very difficult for Sheik-Qasim to make the aggressive move the officers said he had made.

"Officer Dhaliwal's swing of his arm and hand was the very first physical force during the interaction. The accused didn't grab a hold of the belt of Officer Gul in advance of this action by Officer Dhaliwal," Kelly said, adding he had doubt it happened at all.

"I believe that Officer Dhaliwal's action amounted to an assault against the accused," Kelly said in a decision issued Sept. 10, acquitting Sheik-Qasim of both charges.

Kelly took issue with the officers' testimony during the trial, calling it "deliberately misleading," inconsistent with the video and "otherwise implausible." Among the concerns he highlighted was Dhaliwal's initial denial that he had slapped the phone from Sheik-Qasim's hand and that it fell to the ground, and the officer's statement that he had believed the phone could have been a disguised weapon, such as pepper spray.

The judge acknowledged that Sheik-Qasim likely used "inappropriate and provocative language." Kelly said he also took into consideration Sheik-Qasim's criminal history, which includes robbery and assault convictions and failing to comply with court orders.

But the judge said it is clear to him that Sheik-Qasim's account of what happened at the critical moment during the altercation is consistent with what's shown on the video. He also pointed to what he called "an essential question" that arose from the officers' account of what transpired, namely that Sheik-Qasim had turned on his phone camera then proceeded to assault Dhaliwal.

"This would seem to be ill advised. One's own criminal conduct would be recorded," Kelly said, though he acknowledged the

same thing could be asked about why would an officer swing his arm at a phone that was filming him.

Kelly said it was "probable, although not certain" that Gul saw his colleague's "unlawful act" of assault and that the officers retrieved the phone that was used to record the video.

Though Kelly did not rule definitively that Toronto police took possession of the phone after it was knocked out of Sheik-Qasim's hand, he was troubled that the phone was never seen again after the altercation.

"The absence of the phone is extremely troubling when considered in light of the testimony of the officers, which I regard to be deliberately misleading," Kelly said. (Toronto Star)

Sep 23 2015

TORONTO - Two men found guilty of terrorism charges after being accused of plotting to derail a passenger train were sentenced to life in prison Wednesday as a Toronto judge found neither of them had expressed remorse for their offences.

Raed Jaser and Chiheb Esseghaier were found guilty in March on a total of eight charges between them.

Justice Michael Code, the Toronto judge who presided over their trial earlier this year, found both men have not renounced their extremists beliefs, have not accepted responsibility for their offences and present questionable prospects for rehabilitation.

"I am satisfied that life imprisonment is the appropriate sentence," he said, noting that the men would receive some credit for time already spent in custody.

Sep 23 2015

The brother of a 57-year-old man charged with first-degree murder in the separate slayings of three women says Basil Borutski's family is angry and embarrassed about his alleged crimes.

"Right now, my heart just goes out to the families ... all our brothers and sisters, our hearts go out to all the victims," a weary-sounding Will Borutski told in an interview.

"We're all just in disbelief. Right now the only ones we're thinking about is the victims. The children, the families, the friends."

Two of the victims - 36-year-old Anastasia Kuzyk and Natalie Warmardam, 48 - used to date his brother, Will Borutski said.

The Tuesday morning slayings of Kuzyk, Warmardam and 66-year-old Carol Culleton triggered a lockdown and manhunt in the ordinarily sleepy area of eastern Ontario.

Sep 23 2015

WEST VANCOUVER - Police laid 23 charges Monday against a man they allege was the mastermind behind a string of arson attacks on law enforcement officials including a deliberately set fire in West Vancouver.

Police have arrested and charged Vincent

Eric Gia-Hwa Cheung, a 40-year-old Langley resident with numerous charges including 11 counts of arson for violent incidents across the Lower Mainland between April 2011 and January 2012.

But they said they are still looking for the man who actually carried out the arson on the home of a former West Vancouver police chief in January 2013.

Security footage from the incident, first released three years ago, shows an unidentified suspect pouring liquid from a jerry can on the house in the early hours of Jan. 13, 2012, and lighting it. The resulting fire caused extensive damage to the home and sent one person to hospital.

Until about two weeks before the fire, the home belonged to former West Vancouver Chief Const. Scott Armstrong, who headed the detachment from February to December 2006.

"We are still looking for information to try to identify the person in that video," said Staff Sgt. Lindsey Houghton of the RCMP's Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit. "We believe there are people out there who know who that is."

Investigators concluded the arson was linked to a string of violent Lower Mainland incidents that targeted 15 people with a connection to the Justice Institute of B.C., which trains police and other emergency personnel. Police said a threatening email was received by the Justice Institute in July 2011 that named nine people. All but one had their homes or vehicles targeted in an attack.

Police believe a woman who worked at ICBC used the insurance company's database to obtain personal information about 65 people who worked or studied at the institute, including the 14 victims. The woman was fired from her job in 2011 for inappropriately accessing customer information, said ICBC spokesman Adam Grossman. To date, no charges have been laid against her.

The West Vancouver arson at the former police chief's home was the last in the string of violent incidents. But police said between Dec. 31, 2014, and Jan. 13, 2015, a number of victims of the attacks received suspicious letters in the mail. One of those contained a warning that attacks would resume this year.

Houghton said police believe they know the motive for the attacks, but would not discuss it, saying that will be part of the court case.

Houghton described Cheung as having been "associated with people involved in gangs and organized crime," specifically the United Nations gang. A second man, Thurman Ronley Taffe, a 54-year-old Burnaby resident, has also been arrested and charged with arson in connection with one of the incidents.

Both men appeared in B.C. Supreme Court Monday morning and have been remanded in custody until their next court appearance Oct. 1.

"I'm sure there will be a lot of very interested people going to that court appearance," said Houghton.

(North Shore News)

Sep 23 2015

CALGARY - Calgary police are raising concerns about a marijuana-derivative drug that is so potent it can cause bouts of psychosis in people who inhale it, and result in explosions during the extraction process.



Known as shatter, the drug can contain up to 90 per cent THC - the active ingredient in marijuana.

That compares to about eight to 15 per cent THC found in a typical marijuana cigarette, said Staff Sgt. Martin Schiavetta with the Calgary Police Service.

Even at that level of concentration, Schiavetta said he's not aware of any fatal doses of the drug, although it can overwhelm a person who's not used to such a massive amount of THC all at once leading to "temporary psychosis."

It's the production of shatter that is particularly dangerous, Schiavetta noted, as the chemicals involved can be hazardous to both the producers and anyone in the vicinity.

"One of the methods is putting butane into an extraction tube and of course, butane is highly flammable and combustible," he said.

"We've already had two examples of explosions in a garage and we're very concerned about people, obviously, that are residing next door."

Schiavetta said part of the recent growth of shatter in Calgary is related to the fact it can be consumed in increasingly popular e-cigarettes.

The extraction process creates a strong marijuana odour but smoking or vaping the finished product is practically odourless, he added, making it difficult to detect when people are actually consuming the drug.

(CBC News)

Sep 23 2015

EDMONTON - It's nothing but the best for one Edmonton police officer and his canine companion.

Over the weekend, Edmonton city police Const. Murray Burke and his K-9 police dog, Police Service Dog Maverick, took home the Top Dog award at the 2015 Canadian Police Canine Association (CPCA) K9 Trials in Medicine Hat, AB.

The duo took home the top prize after placing first in obedience, first in apprehension and fourth in detection.

"It's definitely pretty exciting -- it was a very proud moment, for sure. It

shows the dedication and hard work that you put in," said Burke, 34, who has been working with the seven-year-old German Shepherd since Maverick was just four months old.

"As a unit, we work hard together and pride ourselves in doing the best we can at these types of things."

In 2013, Burke and Maverick competed in the CPCA K9 Trials in Sannich, B.C., where they finished a combined third place, but managed to place first in agility and second in obedience.

When it comes to training Maverick, Burke says it's all about practice and repetition.

"Being there before, I kind of have an idea now what they're looking for and what to expect," said Burke, adding the competition at this year's event was very tight.

"The one or two things that might separate you from first and second could be a simple slip on the ground by the dog."

A 12-year veteran of the force, Burke didn't get involved in the K-9 unit until his seventh year as an officer. It's a decision he's never regretted.

"I love it. It's something you can't replace," said Burke.

"You work together over the years and you can see the trust and the improvements you've made -- I would never change it for anything else."

(Edmonton Sun)

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 24, 2015

Sep 24 2015

MONCTON, N.B. - A hearing on four charges against the RCMP for allegedly violating the Canada Labour Code in connection with last year's murder of three Mounties by a lone gunman in Moncton, N.B., has been adjourned.

Crown attorney Nicole Anger says in Moncton provincial court today, defence lawyer Scott McCrossin asked Judge Joseph Michaud for an adjournment, and the Crown consented.

Anger says the matter has been set over until Nov. 19.

Employment and Social Development Canada alleges there were violations of the labour code relating to the force's equipment, training and supervision in the June 4 incident that terrorized the New Brunswick city.

Justin Bourque murdered constables Doug Larche, Fabrice Gevaudan and Dave Ross, and constables Eric Dubois and Darlene Goguen were wounded in the young man's rampage through the city's north end.

Bourque was sentenced to life in prison with no eligibility for parole for 75 years last October after pleading guilty to three counts of first-degree murder and two counts of attempted murder.

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

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