



**IN THE MATTER OF AN INVESTIGATION INTO AN IN-CUSTODY DEATH  
INVOLVING RCMP ARREST**

**FINAL REPORT OF THE CIVILIAN DIRECTOR**  
**OF THE INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION UNIT**

Acting Civilian Director:	Bruce M. Sychuk
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## **Introduction**

On Jan. 20, 2025, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) notified the Independent Investigation Unit of Manitoba (IIU) of an incident.

The written notification disclosed the following information:

Excerpt from Part 7 Notification received on Jan. 20, 2025:

*On January 19, 2025, an individual attended the Kamsack Detachment to report AP missing. AP was believed to be in the Madge Lake area trying to find the highway. The individual did not believe AP was dressed for the weather.*

*RCMP members along with officers from Manitoba and Saskatchewan conservation attended the area to look for AP. A Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) pilot and drone attended the area and were able to locate AP in bush approximately 200-300 meters from the members. The RPAS pilot directed members through difficult terrain to AP's location. AP was searched and placed in handcuffs for officer safety as there was an indication AP may have had a weapon earlier that day.*

*AP had a pulse and was breathing when he was carried from the bush. Once at the highway AP was placed in the police vehicle for heat and reassessed. CPR was initiated as AP no longer had a pulse. EMS arrived and took over care. AP was transported to Swan River Hospital.*

*On January 20, 2025, police were informed AP had died.*

As this matter concerned injuries during an arrest, the IIU assumed responsibility for this investigation in accordance with Sec. 65(4) of The Police Services Act. IIU investigators were assigned to this investigation.

IIU investigators obtained the following information from the RCMP, among other items:

- notes, narratives and reports of officers
- drone footage and photos
- search and rescue report
- medical reports

The civilian director declined to designate a subject officer. The civilian director designated nine witness officers (WO1 to WO9). IIU investigators also received information from three professional witnesses (PW1 to PW3).

## **Facts and Circumstances**

### **Scene Examination**

IIU investigators attended the area where AP was located. IIU investigators canvassed the area for surveillance or potential witnesses. No further witnesses or surveillance was obtained.

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## **Interviews**

### **Professional Witnesses**

#### **Professional Witness 1 (PW1)**

PW1 was interviewed by IIU investigators on Jan. 19, 2025, and provided the following information:

PW1 was tasked to assist RCMP in locating a missing person. Information provided to PW1 was that he was to assist on the Manitoba border side because they were unsure if the missing person was on the Saskatchewan or Manitoba side of Madge Lake.

PW1 stated that an RCMP drone operator located AP lying in a snowbank, resulting in four officers going to the location to extract AP. The officers requested more assistance over the radio to extract AP, as snowmobiles could not be used because of the terrain. PW1 went into the woods and found AP already handcuffed in the front and unconscious.

PW1 assisted in bringing AP back to the highway where he was placed in the back of a police vehicle to provide heat and CPR. PW1 believed the ambulance arrived 15 minutes later and took AP to Swan River. PW1 noted AP to be poorly dressed for the weather and believed the temperature at the time of extraction was -40°C.

#### **Professional Witness 2 (PW2)**

PW2 was interviewed by IIU investigators on Feb. 6, 2025, and provided the following information:

PW2 stated that she was tasked to attend to AP's location to deal with a hypothermic patient. On their way to the scene, they received an update that AP had gone into cardiac arrest. PW2 stated that they arrived a few minutes later and observed officers performing CPR on AP in the back of a police vehicle.

PW2 confirmed that they engaged cardiac protocol on AP after he was placed on a stretcher and into the ambulance. When they arrived at the hospital, PW2 noted that AP's internal temperature was 22°C.

#### **Professional Witness 3 (PW3)**

PW3 was interviewed by IIU investigators on Feb. 7, 2025, and provided the following information:

PW3 confirmed that he was partnered with PW2 and that they had received the background information that there was a hypothermic patient in cardiac distress. PW3 arrived on scene and saw AP in the back seat of a police vehicle with blankets on top of him, while an officer was performing CPR.

PW3 confirmed that they placed AP on a stretcher and into the ambulance to transport him to Swan River. PW3 noted that AP was extremely cold to touch and that they could not remove his shoes because they were "one solid block of ice."

## **Witness Officers**

### Witness Officer 1 (WO1)

WO1 was interviewed by IIU investigators on April 8, 2025, and provided the following information:

WO1 confirmed that he was asked to assist with locating AP. Background information provided to WO1 suggested that AP may have been involved in a criminal matter earlier in the day and might be armed. WO1 noted the weather to be -48°C.

WO5 radioed that they had located AP face-down in the woods. WO1, WO4, WO3 and another officer went into the woods and located AP. They directed AP to show his hands, but AP did not move or respond. WO1 confirmed that as they got closer to AP, he moved a little bit, so they took hold of him to ensure he did not have a weapon. WO1 confirmed that AP did not have a weapon and moved a bit while they searched him. WO1 did not know if AP was resisting the officers or just confused because of hypothermia. WO1 noted AP to be incoherent.

WO1 confirmed that AP was handcuffed for officer safety, although no force was applied to him. WO1 noted AP to have a slow pulse and that his legs were extremely frozen. WO1 estimated that it took roughly 50 minutes to extract AP from the woods and bring him to the highway. WO1 noted that AP stopped mumbling and that he was not dressed properly for the weather.

### Witness Officer 2 (WO2)

WO2 was interviewed by IIU investigators on April 8, 2025, and provided the following information:

WO2 confirmed that she was asked to assist in locating AP. Background information suggested that AP may have been involved in a criminal matter earlier in the day and might be armed. WO2 noted the temperature to be -32°C, not taking into account the windchill.

WO2 confirmed that a drone operator located AP in the woods. He was not moving and had a barely visible heat signal. WO2 went into the woods to assist the officers who were already in the process of extracting AP. WO2 heard over the radio some mention of AP resisting, but acknowledged the radio reception was spotty. WO2 confirmed she was advised AP did not have a weapon and that he was handcuffed for officer safety.

WO2 assisted in the extraction of AP and saw that his eyes were open but he was otherwise nonresponsive. WO2 confirmed that AP was placed in the back of a police vehicle for warmth and so that he could be given CPR. WO2 did not see any use of force by officers during the time she was with AP.

### Witness Officer 3 (WO3)

WO3 was interviewed by IIU investigators on April 8, 2025, and provided the following information:

WO3 confirmed that he was part of the group that went into the woods to extract AP after the drone operator located his position. WO3 confirmed that he went into the woods with WO1, WO4 and another officer from the Saskatchewan area. WO3 confirmed that when they located AP in the woods, WO1 yelled out to AP “police, show your hands.” AP did not move or reply.

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WO3 saw that AP had pulled his hands into the sleeves of his jacket. Officers moved AP's hands out of the jacket sleeve to ensure AP did not have a weapon. WO3 confirmed that AP woke up when they moved his arms, but he did not say anything or move. WO3 did not believe that AP knew what was going on. WO3 noted AP to be stiff, especially down near his leg area.

WO3 confirmed that they radioed for more officers to attend and assist in extracting AP from the woods. WO3 believed that it took roughly 30 minutes to get AP out of the woods and in the back of a police vehicle. WO3 confirmed that CPR was initiated on AP in the back of the police vehicle.

#### Witness Officer 4 (WO4)

WO4 was interviewed by IIU investigators on April 8, 2025, and provided the following information:

WO4 confirmed that he was asked to assist in locating AP. WO4 confirmed that the background information suggested AP may have been involved in a criminal matter earlier in the day and might also be armed. WO4 noted the temperature to be roughly -45°C.

WO4 confirmed that the drone operator located AP and that WO4 along with other officers went into the woods to extract him. WO4 confirmed that when they located AP in the woods, he was face-down and extremely frozen.

WO4 noted that when they flipped AP over, he started to moan and was resisting having his hands handcuffed. WO4 confirmed that they radioed the other officers that AP was alive and resisting. WO4 confirmed that no other force was applied to AP other than the handcuffs for officer safety.

WO4 estimated that it took roughly 30 to 45 minutes to extract AP from the woods. WO4 confirmed that AP was placed in the back of a police vehicle for warmth and so he could be given CPR, while they waited for the ambulance.

#### Witness Officer 5 (WO5)

WO5 was interviewed by IIU investigators on April 8, 2025, and provided the following information:

WO5 was asked to attend because he is a drone operator. Background information was that AP may have been involved in a criminal matter earlier in the day and might be armed. WO5 noted the temperature to be -30°C, without accounting for the windchill.

WO5 attended to the highway, where he saw tracks entering the woods. WO5 followed the tracks with his drone and located AP face-down in the snow. AP was not moving or reacting to the presence of the drone in the area. WO5 radioed that they located AP, and it took roughly 15 minutes for the officers to locate AP in the woods. WO5 heard the officers radio that AP was alive and resisting. WO5 did not see any form of use of force by the officers on the drone footage. WO5 confirmed that it took the officers roughly 30 minutes to extract AP from the woods and place him in the back of the police vehicle to perform CPR.

Witness Officer 6 (WO6)

WO6 was interviewed by IIU investigators on April 8, 2025, and provided the following information:

WO6 confirmed that he spoke with the individual who reported AP as missing near the Madge Lake area. WO6 confirmed that they contacted neighbouring detachments, requesting assistance in locating AP and requesting a drone operator. WO6 was aware that AP was known to be armed. WO6 noted the temperature to be roughly -45°C.

WO6 confirmed that the drone operator located AP in the woods and that the officers who located him radioed that he was alive and resisting. WO6 noted that further information was received later that AP was not resisting, but was just shaking or spasming.

WO6 confirmed that AP was extracted from the woods and placed in the back of his warm vehicle where officers started to perform CPR while waiting for the ambulance. WO6 was not aware if AP was conscious or breathing when he was placed in his vehicle.

WO7 was interviewed by IIU investigators on April 8, 2025, and provided the following information:

WO7 was aware that AP was involved in a criminal matter earlier in the day and had been reported missing near Madge Lake. WO7 contacted neighbouring detachments for assistance in locating AP in the woods.

WO7 confirmed that once the drone operator located AP, she warned the officers that AP might be armed. WO7 recalled that she heard over the radio that AP was located and that he was alive. WO7 was part of the second group of officers that went into the woods to assist in extracting AP. WO7 believed the temperature to be roughly -50°C during extraction.

WO7 did not believe AP was alive when she arrived on scene. WO7 confirmed that AP was placed in the back of a police vehicle and CPR was performed on him while they waited for the ambulance.

Witness Officer 8 (WO8)

WO8 was interviewed by IIU investigators on April 8, 2025, and provided the following information:

WO8 confirmed that he received a call to assist in the search for AP in the woods. WO8 headed to Madge Lake and confirmed that upon arrival, the drone operator had located AP in the woods. WO8 recalled that he heard over the radio that AP was located and alive. WO8 was part of the second group that went in to assist with extracting AP. WO8 confirmed that he assisted in bringing AP out of the woods and into the back of the warm police vehicle where CPR could be performed. WO8 noted the temperature to be -40°C.

Witness Officer 9 (WO9)

WO9 was interviewed by IIU investigators on April 8, 2025, and provided the following information:

WO9 received a call at home related to AP missing in the woods near Madge Lake area. WO9 received background information that AP had been involved in a criminal matter earlier in the day and that he might be armed. WO9 made some calls to neighbouring detachments for assistance. WO9 noted the temperature to be -40°C.

WO9 attended the scene and recalled the drone operator confirming AP's location. WO9 joined the first officers in going to locate AP in the woods. WO9 saw that AP was not moving when they located him. WO9 confirmed an officer from Manitoba provided verbal directions to AP and he did not respond. WO9 and the officers moved up to AP and started to search him. WO9 noted that AP started moving and moaning, but suggested the movement and noises were involuntary, more like a seizure.

WO9 confirmed that AP was handcuffed for officer safety. WO9 noted that AP was not dressed properly for the weather and that his legs were frozen solid. WO9 confirmed that aside from the handcuffs, no officers applied any use of force on AP. WO9 stated that it took roughly 20 minutes to extract AP from the woods and place him in the police vehicle.

### **Other evidence**

#### **Medical Reports**

Autopsy results confirmed the cause of death as hypothermia. A toxicology report noted cocaine and cannabis in AP's system.

#### **Weather Report**

Environment Canada noted the temperature in the nearest tower to AP's area as between -40 to -45°C, taking into account the windchill.

#### **Drone Footage**

In reviewing the footage, it is clear that AP is not moving when the drone locates him in the woods. AP does not move until the officers begin a cursory search of AP's body, at which point it begins to jerk independent of the officers. This independent movement by AP spans a very brief period of time.

The officers place handcuffs on AP and extract him from the woods, each carrying a limb. Aside from the placement of the handcuffs, there is no use of force applied by the officers. Each officer makes a concerted effort to extract AP from the woods as carefully as possible in the circumstances.

### **Applicable Law**

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All relevant sections of the Criminal Code of Canada were considered with respect to this incident. Section 25(1) of the Criminal Code of Canada has been emphasized here for consideration:

*25 (1) Every one who is required or authorized by law to do anything in the administration or enforcement of the law*

*(a) as a private person,*

*(b) as a peace officer or public officer,*

*(c) in aid of a peace officer or public officer, or*

*(d) by virtue of his office,*

*is, if he acts on reasonable grounds, justified in doing what he is required or authorized to do and in using as much force as is necessary for that purpose.*

### **Conclusion**

After reviewing all evidence available, it is clear that the officer's main objective was to locate AP for his own well-being. Furthermore, the civilian director declined to designate a subject officer as no potential criminal activity occurred in this incident. The IIU investigation is now completed and closed.