



**IN THE MATTER OF AN INVESTIGATION INTO AN IN-CUSTODY DEATH
DURING RCMP ARREST IN RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF ST. LAURENT**

FINAL REPORT OF THE CIVILIAN DIRECTOR
OF THE INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION UNIT

Acting Civilian Director:	Bruce M. Sychuk
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Introduction

On Jan. 24, 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. 24, 2025:

On Jan. 24, 2025, WO1 stopped a vehicle for speeding on Highway 6 in the Rural Municipality of St. Laurent, MB. During the course of the initial investigation, AP (driver) and CW1 (passenger) were arrested under the Excise Act for possession of illicit tobacco and placed in the rear of the police vehicle.

A search of the vehicle located a significant quantity of Canadian currency. AP and CW1 were subsequently placed under arrest for possession of proceeds of crime. Shortly after the arrest, WO1 noted that AP was suffering from a medical emergency and contacted EMS.

WO3 arrived on scene and walked up to the police vehicle, noting AP to be unresponsive, head hanging and blood coming from his mouth. WO3 checked his pulse and could not locate same. AP was removed from the police vehicle and administered CPR. EMS arrived and continued working on AP for approximately 45 minutes before pronouncing death.

As this matter concerned an in-custody death 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
- audio transmissions
- watch guard video
- medical reports

The civilian director declined to designate a subject officer. The civilian director designated three witness officers (WO1 to WO3). IIU investigators also received information from one civilian witness (CW1).

Facts and Circumstances

Scene Examination

No scene examination or canvassing of the area was conducted by the IIU because the entire incident could be reviewed on video.

Interviews

Civilian Witness 1 (CW1)

CW1 was interviewed by IIU investigators on Jan. 24, 2025, and provided the following information:

CW1 confirmed that AP was driving the vehicle while he was sleeping in the passenger seat. CW1 noted that he was awoken from his sleep when the vehicle was pulled over by the police officer. CW1 confirmed that WO1 asked for the license and registration from AP. AP gave WO1 the registration, but asked WO1 if he could exit the vehicle to grab his license, because it fell under the seat. WO1 allowed AP to exit the vehicle when WO1 saw a pack of cigarettes in the vehicle, which did not look like they had duty paid.

CW1 confirmed that WO1 advised AP and CW1 that they were under arrest and asked both of them to exit the vehicle. CW1 confirmed that WO1 was never physical with AP or CW1. CW1 stated that WO1 did a search of the vehicle after they had been arrested and located a bag of money, which resulted in further charges. CW1 confirmed that at this point, AP and CW1 were placed in the back of the police vehicle by WO1. CW1 confirmed again that WO1 was not aggressive with either AP or CW1 while being placed in the vehicle. CW1 noted that neither individual was placed in handcuffs by WO1 when they were placed in the back of the vehicle.

CW1 stated that WO1 went back to the vehicle and continued his search for a period of time. CW1 stated that WO1 returned back to the police vehicle and was talking to another officer over the radio when AP started to tense up. CW1 alerted WO1 to AP's condition. WO1 asked CW1 if he knew if AP had a history of seizures. CW1 was not sure, however, he told WO1 that AP had a stroke this past summer. CW1 confirmed that WO1 called for medical assistance immediately.

CW1 confirmed that WO1 opened the door on AP's side and was making sure that AP's arms did not cause any injuries to him. CW1 made it clear that WO1 was not "manhandling" AP and was focused on AP's well-being in his actions. CW1 noted that another officer arrived on scene and both officers removed AP to provide medical assistance, while waiting for the ambulance. CW1 confirmed that an ambulance arrived and AP was taken away after a period of time.

CW1 stated that he did not know if AP had consumed any drugs before his arrest because CW1 had been sleeping in the vehicle. CW1 confirmed that WO1 was "just doing his job" and at no point was physical with AP or CW1.

Witness Officers

Witness Officer 1 (WO1)

WO1 was interviewed by IIU investigators on April 10, 2025, and provided the following information:

WO1 confirmed that he was conducting traffic enforcement on the date of the incident. WO1 confirmed that he caught AP's vehicle travelling at 120 kilometres per hour (km/h) in a 100 km/h posted zone. WO1 activated his emergency lights and conducted a traffic stop on the vehicle.

WO1 noted two male individuals in the vehicle and saw a partial carton of cigarettes in the front seat area. WO1 asked AP for his registration and license, and AP asked to exit the vehicle

because his license had fallen underneath the seat. WO1 confirmed that when AP exited the vehicle, he saw that the carton of cigarettes appeared to be non-duty. WO1 noted that non-duty cigarettes is an issue for that area of the province. WO1 went back to his police vehicle and radioed WO3 to discuss the cigarette issue further. WO3 confirmed that AP and CW1 could be arrested under the Excise Act, which would allow WO1 to search their vehicle.

WO1 returned to AP's vehicle to advise AP and CW1 that they were under arrest for having non-duty paid cigarettes. WO1 advised CW1 and AP that he would be searching the vehicle. WO1 located a bag of money with a substantial amount in denominations of \$10 or \$20. WO1 advised AP and CW1 that they were also being charged with proceeds of crime.

WO1 radioed for WO3 to assist with the investigation and directed AP and CW1 to go to the back of the police vehicle. WO1 confirmed that he completed a quick pat down of both individuals before placing them in the back of the vehicle. WO1 completed the pat down to ensure neither individual was carrying a weapon. WO1 gave AP and CW1 their charges and cautions. WO1 confirmed that CW1 and AP had some questions about the charges.

WO1 stated that he wrote up the speeding ticket while waiting for WO3 to come and assist in the investigation. WO1 noted that AP started to convulse in the back of the vehicle. WO1 thought it was initially a seizure and was asking CW1 about AP's medical history. CW1 told WO1 that AP had recently had a stroke. WO1 reviewed AP's license and confirmed no medical restrictions were noted and radioed for an ambulance. WO1 was trying to talk to AP, but he was not speaking. WO1 asked CW1 if AP had taken any medications or drugs and CW1 said he had not.

WO2 and WO3 arrived shortly after, and they pulled AP out of the police vehicle to administer CPR. WO1 confirmed that WO3 checked AP's pulse while they waited for the ambulance. WO1 noted that the ambulance arrived while they continued to provide CPR to AP. WO1 confirmed that emergency medical services attempted to revive AP without success, and AP was pronounced dead at the scene. WO2 took CW1 to be processed at the detachment for his criminal charges.

WO1 confirmed that at no time did he touch CW1 or AP in an aggressive manner. WO1 confirmed that other than the pat down and providing medical assistance, he did not touch AP because AP complied with the arrest process.

Witness Officer 2 (WO2)

WO2 was interviewed by IIU investigators on April 17, 2025, and provided the following information:

WO2 was assigned to another investigation when he heard over the radio that WO1 requested medical assistance. WO2 decided that he would assist WO1 because of the need for medical attention. WO2 arrived on scene, saw AP in WO1's police vehicle, and he appeared to be nonresponsive. WO2 took CW1 and searched him before placing him in the back of his police vehicle.

WO2 then went over to assist with AP. WO1 and WO3 were providing CPR to AP, so WO2 went to check on CW1's well-being. WO2 recalled that WO1 mentioned that AP had a history of strokes. WO2 advised that the ambulance arrived and provided medical assistance to AP.

Witness Officer 3 (WO3)

WO3 was interviewed by IIU investigators on April 14, 2025, and provided the following information:

WO3 confirmed that he was working in the area on the date of the incident. WO3 confirmed that he had discussed the issue of illegal tobacco with WO1 as well as the results of the vehicle search. WO3 was going to assist WO1 with the investigation because he ran CW1 in the system and reviewed his criminal history. WO3 commented that accused people have faked seizures in the past when they outnumber officers, and WO3 was worried for WO1's safety when he went to the scene.

WO3 arrived and WO1 gave him an update. WO3 confirmed that WO2 was also on the scene. WO3 tried to get a pulse from AP without success. AP was pulled out of the vehicle and medical assistance was provided to him while waiting for the ambulance to arrive. WO3 went over to CW1 and noted he was on his phone texting. WO3 seized the phone. WO3 asked CW1 if AP had taken any drugs because he did not believe AP's condition was the result of a stroke. CW1 denied that he saw AP take anything. CW1 confirmed that AP had a stroke in the summer.

WO3 confirmed that the ambulance pronounced AP as deceased. WO3 noted that they suspected it was not a stroke and most likely an overdose that caused AP's death.

Other evidence

Watchguard video

AP can be heard on the video stating, "I have to get the coke" and then reaches into the back of his pants with his right hand. AP then eats the contents of the baggie and then ingests the baggie itself. Approximately fifteen minutes later, AP's body is tense and starts to shake and convulse.

CW1 asks AP if he is okay without a response. WO1 can be heard radioing for medical assistance. WO1 then moves to the back seat area of the vehicle and is trying to assist AP while his arms are flailing. WO1 is asking CW1 if AP has taken anything and CW1 replies that he does not know. WO1 asks CW1 if AP took anything earlier and CW1 replies that he was sleeping, so he does not know.

WO1 and WO3 can be heard talking about the situation over the radio until WO3 arrives on scene. WO3 can be heard asking CW1 about taking any drugs and CW1 again states that he does not know. AP is then pulled out of the vehicle while CPR is administered by WO1.

Medical reports

The toxicology report noted the concentration of cocaine in AP's body was greater than 5 milligrams per litre (MG/L). The toxicologist states that a concentration greater than 1 mg/l can be life threatening. The toxicology report further noted the concentration of methamphetamine in AP's body was 0.100mg/l. The toxicologist states that a concentration greater than 0.010 mg/l would impair someone's ability to operate a vehicle.

The toxicologist commented that such a high concentration of cocaine in AP's system is indicative of a large dose (or doses) being taken shortly before his death.

IIU has not received the final autopsy report at the time of writing this report. Because of the nature of the event, the Civilian Director has decided to move forward with completing the report to be accountable to the public in a timely manner. An addendum will be prepared if the cause of death varies from the above.

Applicable Law

All relevant sections of the Criminal Code of Canada were considered with respect to this incident. Sec. 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

Having reviewed all the evidence available in connection with the fact that the civilian director declined to designate a subject officer, I am declining to authorize charges in this matter. AP's death is clearly sad and tragic, however, it is not as a result of any actions by the police officers. Therefore, no charges are recommended and the IIU investigation is now completed and closed.