IIU | INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION UNIT OF MANITOBA

IN THE MATTER OF AN INVESTIGATION INTO AN INCIDENT INVOLVING THE SHOOTING DEATH Of A DOG BY A MANITOBA FIRST NATIONS POLICE OFFICER (SWAN LAKE)

FINAL REPORT OF THE CIVILIAN DIRECTOR

OF THE INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION UNIT

Acting Civilian Director:	Bruce M. Sychuk
IIU File Number:	2025-0033
Date of Release:	July 31, 2026

Introduction

On July 9, 2025, the Manitoba First Nations Police Service (MFNPS) 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 July 9, 2025:

On June 11, 2025, SO attended to a residence on the Swan Lake First Nation to arrest an individual. SO was bitten by a dog while leaving the residence (no arrest made). SO attended to the detachment & returned to the residence a short time later, shooting and killing the dog while it was chained up. Family members and children were home at the time of the shooting.

As this matter concerned the shooting death of a dog, the IIU assumed responsibility for this investigation in accordance with Sec. 75 of The Police Services Act. IIU investigators were assigned to this investigation.

IIU investigators obtained the following information from the MFNPS, or of their own accord:

- notes, narratives and reports of officers
- audio transmissions
- detachment video
- GPS report
- use of force report
- injury photo, scene photos and diagrams

The civilian director designated one subject officer (SO1), one police associate (PA1) and one witness officer (WO1). IIU investigators also received information from one civilian witness (CW1) and one affected person (AP).

Facts and Circumstances

Scene Examination and Canvass

IIU investigators attended the scene and were able to take photos and diagrams of the shooting scene. They also canvassed the area for further witnesses or surveillance. No further witnesses or surveillance was available.

Interviews

Affected Person

IIU investigators interviewed AP on July 22, 2025, and were provided with the following information:

AP was awoken by SO knocking at her residence at approximately 7:30 in the morning. She granted SO entry into the residence. SO asked AP if one of her family members was there and she told him that he was not. SO then asked if he could take a look around the residence for the family member. AP declined the request and SO told her he would come back with a warrant.

SO left the residence for a short time before he re-entered, telling AP that her dog just bit him. SO stated that the dog would have to be euthanized because he was aware the dog had bitten another individual the previous day. AP said "go ahead," because she assumed the dog would be taken to the vet and euthanized.

SO came back to her residence approximately 10 to 15 minutes later. He parked his vehicle in the driveway and aimed his high-powered rifle at the dog. AP closed the drapes because there were two children inside the house. SO shot the dog soon after he arrived and left shortly thereafter. AP pointed out that the dog was chained at that time to the front post of her deck. The chain was roughly 15 feet long. SO was near his vehicle when he shot the dog.

Civilian Witness 1 (CW1)

IIU investigators interviewed CW1 on July 22 and July 28, 2025, and were provided with the following information:

CW1 attended to AP's residence before SO attended the residence a second time. CW1 confirmed that SO parked his vehicle in the driveway right behind her vehicle. Initially, she was going to talk to SO and request that he shoot the dog somewhere else, however, she noted that SO had already pulled out his high-powered rifle and was aiming it at the dog. CW1 helped close the curtain and move the children away from the window, so they would not get hurt or witness the shooting.

CW1 noted that the dog was roughly 25 feet away from the officer. The dog was on the ground near the front steps of the residence when SO shot it. CW1 looked out the window and saw SO already driving away after he shot the dog.

Police Associate 1 (PA1)

IIU investigators interviewed PA1 on Nov. 19, 2025, and were provided with the following information:

PA1 arrived at work after the dog had been shot. SO told her that he was bit by the dog and showed her a rip in his pant leg. PA1 recalled seeing an empty rifle case on the ground in the detachment. She recalled that SO informed her that he went to AP's house looking for a family member, and when he exited the house, the dog bit him, so he shot it. PA1 did not know the type of firearm SO used to shoot the dog or the distance from which he shot the dog. She did not know if SO had gone once or multiple times to AP's residence that day.

Witness Officer 1 (WO1)

IIU investigators interviewed WO1 on Nov. 14, 2025, and were provided with the following information:

WO1 recalled hearing SO over the radio in a panicked voice saying that he was attacked by a dog. SO confirmed that he was bitten when he went to AP's house to make an arrest. He told WO1 that the dog had bit another individual the previous day. WO1 later heard over the radio that the dog was disposed of.

WO1 did not know what type of firearm SO had used to shoot the dog nor did he know the circumstances of the dog when it was shot. WO1 said that a dog on a chain would require more discussion than a dog roaming free in the community. He stated that a dog roaming free in the

community would be an immediate threat and would need to be addressed as such. However, a dog on a chain should lead to discussions about how far from the house the dog was or how long the chain was, among other considerations. WO1 was not aware of the circumstances of this incident.

Subject Officer

Subject Officer 1 (SO1)

In accordance with his rights, SO declined to be interviewed by IIU investigators. SO provided IIU investigators with a copy of his occurrence report, which contained the following information:

SO confirmed that he attended AP's residence trying to make an arrest on a member of AP's family. He said the dog jumped on him, but did not growl. The dog lunged at him when he exited AP's residence, and he had to kick the dog in the face and re-enter the residence to get away from it. SO stated that the dog continued to be aggressive. The fact that it was on a chain allowed him to escape into AP's house.

SO told AP that the dog might need to be euthanized because it had bitten another individual the previous day. SO returned to the detachment to flush out his injury. He went back to AP's residence to ensure the dog did not bite anyone else. SO stated that when he arrived, the dog snarled and stood up in an aggressive manner, trying to advance toward him. He shot the dog once. SO stated that he made sure that he shot the dog in a safe manner so as not to put the public at risk. He said he was aware of the two children inside AP's residence when he shot the dog.

[NOTE: CW1 stated that the dog was just lying there when SO shot it. CW1 noted that the dog was approximately two feet from the deck steps when it was shot.]

Other evidence

Injury Photo

IIU investigators were provided with a photo of SO's leg. It appears that he was bitten or scratched near his knee.

GPS Report

The GPS report confirmed that SO had attended twice to AP's residence. He was present at the residence the first time for approximately six minutes. He returned to the detachment and remained there for roughly 10 minutes. When SO returned to AP's residence, the GPS report showed that the vehicle was parked at the far end of the driveway and not near the residence. The report suggests that SO was present at AP's residence for just over two minutes on this occasion.

Detachment Video

SO can be seen leaving the detachment before the dog bite and then returning to the detachment after he was bitten. When he returns, he can be seen on video grabbing a high-powered carbine from a rifle case. SO can be seen checking the sights on the carbine and then exiting the detachment and returning to his vehicle.

SO returns to the detachment a short while after shooting the dog. SO returns the rifle to its case and appears to add two bullets into the rifle magazine from the ammunition box.

Other evidence

IIU investigators confirmed that the dog had bitten another individual the previous day. No statement was required from this individual because they were not present during the shooting.

Use of Force Report

MFNPS prepared an internal use of force report. The report suggests that SO was reasonable in using lethal force against the dog because of the dog's aggressive nature. The report also pointed out that SO failed to consider less lethal options and suggested further training in this area.

Scene diagrams and photos

Based on the measurements and photos of the scene, the dog would have been shot roughly two feet from the first deck step into the residence. This would have positioned the dog in line with the front window of AP's residence. With the assistance of the GPS report and the placement of the police vehicle, we can tell that SO would have been more than 40 feet from the dog when it was euthanized. The dog chain measured 16 feet in length and was attached to a deck post.

Applicable Law

IIU reviewed and considered all potential firearm offences under the Criminal Code along with all relevant caselaw. The review of the law necessitated that the file be sent to the Manitoba Prosecution Service for further consideration.

Crown Opinion

On Feb. 6, 2026, the IIU investigative file was sent to Manitoba Prosecution Service to review the matter and determine whether any Criminal Code offences should be authorized against the subject officer.

On July 16, 2026, a Crown opinion was provided to the IIU, advising that the Crown is not recommending charges against the subject officer.

Conclusion

Given that the Manitoba Prosecution Service's opinion is that the standard for prosecuting charges has not been met, the civilian director will not be authorizing charges. The evidence supports that the dog was aggressive. Lethal force was an option. The internal use of force report suggested that SO would have been well served to have considered all options available, including less lethal options. The report suggested further training for SO in this area, which the IIU supports. Therefore, no charges are recommended and the IIU investigation is now completed and closed.