

ASIRT DECISION

**IN THE MATTER OF SEXUAL ASSAULT ALLEGATIONS
AGAINST AN EDMONTON POLICE SERVICE OFFICER ON
NOVEMBER 5, 2020**

Executive Director: Matthew Block

File No.: 2020-0069(N)

Date of Release: July 22, 2026

Introduction

On November 16, 2020, pursuant to s. 46.1 of the *Police Act*, the Director of Law Enforcement directed the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT) to investigate allegations of sexual assault against an Edmonton Police Service (EPS) officer while conducting a frisk search during the arrest of the affected person (AP). This investigation began prior to the establishment of the Police Review Commission on December 1, 2025, and associated changes to the *Police Act*.

ASIRT designated one subject officer (SO) and provided him with notice. ASIRT's investigation is now complete.

ASIRT's Investigation

ASIRT's investigation was comprehensive and thorough, conducted using current investigative protocols, and in accordance with the principles of major case management.

ASIRT investigators interviewed three police witnesses. In addition, investigators obtained the report and notes of a fourth police witness, as well as written statements from two community peace officers who were working at the Detainee Management Unit (DMU) when the AP was brought into custody.

ASIRT investigators also interviewed the AP and obtained the written statements of two civilian witnesses that had been provided to the arresting officers in relation to the original complaint involving the AP.

As the subject of a criminal investigation, the SO was entitled to rely on his right to silence and not speak to ASIRT. In this case, he provided investigators with a prepared written statement and a copy of his notes.

ASIRT investigators also reviewed video footage from the Southeast Division police detachment.

Circumstances Surrounding the Incident

On November 5, 2020, the AP was arrested for uttering threats arising from a landlord tenant dispute. Prior to placing the AP in a police vehicle, the SO conducted a frisk search for officer safety purposes. Witness officer #1 (WO1) observed the SO check the AP's front hoodie pocket and briefly pat the area around her front waistband two or three times over a period of approximately three seconds. Immediately thereafter, the AP yelled that she was being molested.

Concerned that the AP was experiencing a mental health crisis, WO1 contacted the EPS Police and Crisis Team (PACT). PACT advised that they were familiar with the AP and that her behaviour appeared consistent with her baseline presentation. The AP was transported to the Southeast Division detachment to await transfer to the DMU. However, while en route, DMU staff declined to accept the AP pending a further mental health assessment, and she was returned to the detachment. The 24/7 Alberta Health Services Access Mental Health team subsequently assessed the AP and determined that she was fit for custody. Following that assessment, she was transported back to the DMU.

Throughout the transport and intake process, the AP continued to make statements that were difficult to understand and appeared unrelated to the circumstances. These included claims that she was a member of the FBI, a professional singer, and an alien, as well as assertions that the FBI was watching them.

Although witnesses differed somewhat in their recollection of the precise words used, there was

general agreement that, during the booking process at the DMU, the AP spontaneously alleged that she had been sexually assaulted or molested by police officers. One witness specifically recalled the AP attributing that allegation to the arresting officer, namely the SO.

Affected Person (AP)

ASIRT investigators interviewed the AP on October 15, 2024. The delay in obtaining her statement was attributable to difficulties locating her, as she was intermittently incarcerated and hospitalized during the intervening period.

During the interview, the AP made no allegations of sexual assault or sexual misconduct. Rather, she recalled that the officers had been “rough with her arms,” while she was resisting and pulling away during the handcuffing process. She confirmed that she did not sustain any injuries as a result of the police interaction. The AP also advised investigators that her memory has been affected by prior electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) treatments.

Subject Officer

The SO provided ASIRT investigators with a prepared written statement and a copy of his notes.

The SO advised that he and his partner, WO1, attended a residence in response to a call for service. After speaking with the complainants, who were the landlords and upstairs tenants of the property, they formed grounds to arrest the AP for uttering threats. The officers then attended the AP’s basement suite, where she permitted them to enter. WO1 placed the AP under arrest and began applying handcuffs. The AP pulled away from WO1 during the process, prompting the SO to assist in gaining control of her so that she could be safely handcuffed.

The SO described the AP as appearing jittery throughout the interaction and noted that she made a number of nonsensical statements. Among other things, she claimed to have sustained 16 skull fractures and to be suffering from leukemia. She also repeatedly insisted that WO1 bring her purse and backpack with her. According to the AP, the items contained medications she required to stay alive, as well as a laptop containing national security information. WO1 accommodated the request and carried the AP’s belongings while the SO escorted her to the police vehicle.

Before placing the AP in the vehicle, the SO asked the AP if she was carrying any weapons. The AP did not respond. In the interests of officer safety, the SO conducted a brief pat-down search. He checked the AP’s hoodie pocket and used the back of his gloved hand to pat the area around her waistband to ensure she was not concealing any weapons. During the search, the AP began yelling and accused the SO of molesting her. The AP was then secured in the rear of the police vehicle.

The SO subsequently sat in the front passenger seat, separated from the AP by a glass and metal partition. After obtaining written statements from the original complainants, WO1 returned to the vehicle and transported the AP to the police detachment, with the intention of subsequently escorting her to the DMU. While en route to the DMU, the officers were advised that the AP would not be admitted until she underwent a mental health assessment. As a result, they returned her to the detachment and requested the attendance of PACT to conduct an assessment.

The SO further advised that he informed the watch commander of the allegation made by the AP during the frisk search and of the requirement that the AP undergo a mental health assessment before being accepted at the DMU.

Analysis

A sexual assault occurs where an assault is committed in circumstances of a sexual nature such that the sexual integrity of the complainant is violated. An assault occurs where a person intentionally applies or threatens to apply force to another person, by an act or a gesture, without consent.

Pursuant to the *Police Act*, the Executive Director of ASIRT must refer a matter to the Minister of Justice if they are of the opinion that the actions of the police officer that are the subject of the investigation constitute an offence under an Act of the Parliament of Canada.

The Executive Director must therefore determine that reasonable grounds to believe that an offence was committed exist. This is a higher standard than reasonable suspicion, which requires only a reasonable possibility of a crime. The Executive Director must subjectively have an honest belief that an offence has been committed, and the reasonable grounds must also exist objectively, using the reasonable person test.

In this case, the AP has not alleged that any of the officers involved in her arrest on November 5, 2020, sexually assaulted her. Nor is there any independent evidence to support such an allegation.

The evidence indicates that the AP was experiencing a significant mental health crisis at the time of her arrest. Multiple witnesses described her as making statements appeared disconnected from the circumstances, including claims that she was a member of the FBI, a professional singer, and an alien. Allegations must be assessed independently, based on the available evidence concerning the officer's actions.

The accounts provided by the SO and WO1 regarding the frisk search were consistent. Both described a brief officer safety search involving a check of the AP's hoodie pocket and a pat-down of her waistband area for weapons prior to being placed in the police vehicle. Both officers denied that the SO touched the AP in a manner that was sexual in nature or otherwise inappropriate.

There is no evidence that the SO molested or sexually assaulted the AP at any time while she was in police custody.

Conclusion

The AP has not alleged that either of the responding police officers committed a sexual assault. Furthermore, all reasonable investigative avenues have been exhausted. Based on the totality of the evidence obtained during the investigation, there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the SO committed a criminal offence.

Original signed

Matthew Block
Executive Director

July 22, 2026

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