

ASIRT DECISION

**IN THE MATTER OF A DEATH AFTER RCMP ARREST
ON ENOCH CREE NATION ON JUNE 24, 2025**

Executive Director: Matthew Block

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Introduction

On June 24, 2025, pursuant to s. 46.1 of the Police Act, the Director of Law Enforcement directed the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT) to provide oversight of an RCMP investigation into the death of the affected person (AP) after being arrested at the River Cree Resort & Casino (River Cree) on the Enoch Cree Nation earlier that day. On Aug. 17, the Director of Law Enforcement directed ASIRT to assume carriage of the investigation. ASIRT designated one subject officer (the SO), with notice to him. 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 obtained RCMP interviews of the following civilians:

- Civilian witness #1 (CW1), director of security at River Cree who responded to the disturbance;
- Civilian witness #2 (CW2), manager of security at River Cree who responded to the disturbance;
- Civilian witness #3 (CW3), who was in the hotel room below the AP and alerted security;
- Civilian witness #4 (CW4), who was with CW3;
- Civilian witness #5 (CW5), who was a security guard that responded to the disturbance;
- Civilian witness #6 (CW6), who responded with CW5;
- Civilian witness #7 (CW7), who was the shift engineer at River Cree that assisted with opening doors for the police and witnessed much of the incident;
- Civilian witness #8 (CW8), who was a technician at River Cree that assisted with roof access and witnessed some of the incident;
- Civilian witness #9 (CW9), who was with CW7;
- Civilian witness #10 (CW10), who was initially with CW7 and CW9;
- Civilian witness #11 (CW11), who briefly dealt with the AP at a bar in River Cree;
- Civilian witness #12 (CW12), spouse of the AP who spoke on the phone with him before the incident;
- Civilian witness #13 (CW13), security supervisor at River Cree who responded to the disturbance;
- Civilian witness #14 (CW14), an advanced care paramedic who treated the AP;
- Civilian witness #15 (CW15), manager of security at River Cree who responded to the disturbance;
- Civilian witness #16 (CW16), who was a security guard that responded to the disturbance;
- Civilian witness #17 (CW17), a paramedic who treated the AP;
- Civilian witness #18 (CW18), a student working with CW14; and
- Civilian witness #19 (CW19), who was a security guard that responded to the disturbance.

ASIRT investigators interviewed the SO. As the subject of a criminal investigation, the SO was entitled

to rely on his right to silence and did not have to speak to ASIRT.

ASIRT investigators obtained RCMP interviews of the following police officers:

Witness officer #1 (WO1), who responded initially to the incident along with the SO;

Witness officer #2 (WO2), who saw the AP from a distance during the incident but arrived at the scene after the AP was handcuffed;

Witness officer #3 (WO3), who arrived shortly after the SO and WO1; and

Witness officer #4 (WO4), a supervisor who arrived shortly after WO3.

ASIRT investigators obtained video from the following sources:

River Cree CCTV;

CW10's cellphone;

The SO's body-worn camera (BWC);

WO1's BWC;

WO2's BWC;

WO3's BWC; and

WO4's BWC.

ASIRT investigators also:

Obtained 911 and RCMP communications audio;

Obtained the report from the SO's conducted energy weapon (CEW);

Obtained River Cree records for the electronic door system at River Cree for the relevant rooms;

Reviewed RCMP photos of the scene; and

Obtained the relevant RCMP policy.

Circumstances Surrounding the Incident

At 7:06 and 7:17 p.m. on June 24, 2025, the AP called his spouse, CW12, in distress. CW12 was very concerned that the AP was in a mental health crisis. Knowing that the AP was at River Cree and she was not nearby, she called the RCMP for assistance.

At the same time, staff and customers of River Cree heard the AP screaming and breaking glass inside his room. CW3 and CW4, who were in the suite directly below the AP, reported hearing yelling and observed blood-covered furniture and glass falling onto the terrace outside their balcony windows.

Parkland RCMP responded and WO1 was the first officer to arrive, followed shortly by the SO.

After arriving, the SO went onto the rooftop and confirmed that the third-storey window of the AP's room had been completely broken. He then joined WO1 at the door of the room. From outside the room, the officers heard the AP repeatedly screaming for help. They attempted to talk with him and made several unsuccessful attempts to enter the room. Although they were able to unlock the door from the outside, an interior latch prevented access.

The SO returned to the rooftop, where he observed the AP sitting on the ledge of the shattered third-storey window of his room. The SO advised other officers that it appeared the AP was about to jump. While WO1 ran to the suite below, the AP jumped from the ledge holding an ironing board and a shard of glass. He landed on the terrace outside a second-storey room, immediately stood up, and began to strike and break the window of that room.

From a raised roof structure approximately 10 to 15 feet away, the SO attempted to communicate with the AP and warned that he would be shocked by the CEW if he did not stop. The AP continued striking the window and broke through the outer pane. The SO discharged his CEW, but the first cartridge did not make contact. A second cartridge made contact and appeared to interrupt the AP's behaviour. The SO cycled the CEW a total of three times, and the AP fell to the ground. From inside the second-storey room, WO1 broke through the remaining pane of the window using his baton. The SO jumped down to the terrace and WO1 joined him there. Once on the terrace, WO1 and the SO handcuffed the AP.

After being restrained, the AP stopped screaming and lay relatively motionless on the rooftop. Additional officers WO2, WO3, and WO4 attended to assist while WO1 left the terrace to escort emergency medical services (EMS) personnel to the location. Before EMS arrived, officers determined that the AP was unresponsive and began life-saving measures. EMS continued those efforts before transporting the AP to hospital. The AP was later pronounced deceased at hospital.

Subject Officer's Body-Worn Camera

During the entire incident with the AP, the SO's chest-mounted BWC was on.

The SO went onto the roof at 7:42 p.m. He was guided to the area of the AP by a River Cree employee and briefly looked around a corner at the AP. When he came out into the open where the AP could see him, he had his hands raised and open. The SO said, "hey – you alright?" The AP was saying "help!" repeatedly.

The SO then walked closer to the AP (Figure 1).



Figure 1 - The AP sitting in the windowsill holding an ironing board. Source: The SO's BWC.

The AP waved around an item that appeared to be a large shard of glass. The SO tried to get the AP to talk to him and said he would help him. At 7:43:58 p.m., the AP jumped down to the roof below. The SO went up to the edge of the roof he was on, then backed up a few steps and drew his CEW. He told the AP to get on the ground. The AP began to strike the window of the room he was now next to, using a large glass shard, an object from the rooftop, the ironing board, and his hand. The SO told him to stop repeatedly and told him that he would get shocked.

The AP continued to smash the window, and the SO deployed his CEW (Figure 2).



Figure 2 - The AP at the time of the SO's first CEW use. Source: The SO's BWC.

The AP yelled and then went back to smashing the window. The SO activated the CEW again, and W01 came into the room next to the AP and began to smash out the remaining window.

The SO activated his CEW again, and the AP fell to the ground (Figure 3).



Figure 3 - The AP on the ground. Source: The SO's BWC.

The SO then jumped down to the level that the AP was on, and WO1 smashed through the remaining window and came out onto the roof. The SO first put a hand on the AP's back at 7:46:16 p.m. The two officers then grabbed the AP's arms while the AP struggled against the officers and tried to hold on to the ironing board. Additional officers arrived and assisted. At 7:46:43 p.m., the officers handcuffed the AP and stepped back from him. The AP was lying face down with handcuffs behind his back.

Officers watched the AP while EMS was en route. The SO briefly left the area to wash blood off his hands. When he returned at 7:52:02 p.m., the other officers turned the AP over and began to provide first aid. They administered Narcan, moved his handcuffs to the front, and began CPR. EMS arrived and took over care at 7:53:45 p.m.

Autopsy

A pathologist conducted an autopsy on the AP on June 27 at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Edmonton. The pathologist found the cause of death to be cardiorespiratory arrest due to, or as a consequence of, hyperactive delirium with agitation and the effects of cocaine. The pathologist directly addressed the use of the CEW and handcuffing by the officers and stated that they did not contribute to the death.

Analysis

Section 25 Generally

Under s. 25 of the *Criminal Code*, police officers are permitted to use as much force as is necessary for execution of their duties. For the defence provided by s. 25 to apply to the actions of an officer, the officer must be required or authorized by law to perform the action in the administration or enforcement of the law, must have acted on reasonable grounds in performing the action, and must not have used unnecessary force.

All uses of force by police must also be proportionate, necessary, and reasonable. Proportionality requires balancing a use of force with the action to which it responds.

Necessity requires that there are not reasonable alternatives to the use of force that also accomplish the same goal. These alternatives can include no action at all. Analysis of police actions must recognize the dynamic situations in which officers often find themselves, and such analysis should not expect police officers in the moment to weigh alternatives in the same way they can later be scrutinized in a stress-free environment.

Reasonableness looks at the use of force and the situation from an objective viewpoint. Police actions are not to be judged on a standard of perfection, but on a standard of reasonableness.

Section 25 Applied

The SO and other officers were responding to a mental health call.

When the SO first observed the AP, he was on the windowsill. While the AP presented as being in a mental health crisis, he was also holding a large glass shard in his hand which could have been used as a weapon. The SO responded reasonably – he tried to talk to the AP and offer him help but also proceeded cautiously given the risk.

After the AP jumped and began to smash into another room, the SO deployed his CEW to get the AP to stop and allow them to arrest him. This was a minor use of force that allowed the officers to remain safe while presenting a minor risk of harm to the AP. It was proportionate to the risk the AP presented

to the officers, necessary given the AP's actions, and reasonable. The SO's use of force was justified under s. 25 of the *Criminal Code*.

The autopsy found that neither the use of the CEW nor the restraint used by officers contributed to the AP's death.

Conclusion

The SO's use of force was justified in the circumstances and played no part in the AP's unfortunate death. As a result, there are not reasonable grounds to believe that an offence was committed.

Original Signed

Matthew Block
Executive Director

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