

Report to / Rapport au:

**OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE BOARD
LA COMMISSION DE SERVICE POLICE D'OTTAWA**

29 September 2025 / 29 septembre 2025

Submitted by / Soumis par:

Chief of Police, Ottawa Police Service / Chef de police, Service de police d'Ottawa

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SUBJECT: REPORT ON SIU INVESTIGATION 16-OCD-193

OBJET: RAPPORT SUR L'ENQUÊTE DE L'UES 16-OCD-193

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Police Service Board receive this report for information.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que la Commission de service de police d'Ottawa prenne connaissance du présent rapport à titre d'information.

BACKGROUND

This document outlines a police incident that resulted in the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) invoking its mandate. The document provides the context of the incident, along with SIU findings and recommendations. The Professional Standards Unit (PSU) has also completed an investigation into the policy, services and conduct of the members of the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) in the incident. The document outlines the actions taken by the OPS to respond to the recommendations of the PSU investigation.

The OPS respectfully submits this report while acknowledging that the report is significantly overdue. Although the Section 11 review was completed in 2021, the written report was never formally submitted to the Ottawa Police Services Board. Instead, the OPSB received a verbal briefing and an executive summary. The omission of a written report came to light during the 2024 coroner's inquest into the death of Abdirahman Abdi, after which the Ottawa Police Service publicly acknowledged the

oversight and committed to improving compliance with statutory reporting requirements moving forward.

A number of factors contributed to the delay of the written submission, including leadership transitions within both the Ottawa Police Service and the Ottawa Police Services Board. During that period, deficiencies in administrative oversight and internal communication processes were exposed which contributed to the failure to ensure the timely submission of the Section 11 report during a time of change in personnel. The OPS has taken this opportunity to remedy those deficiencies.

DISCUSSION

On Sunday, July 24, 2016, at approximately 9:30 am, the Complainant (a male) entered a local Community Centre and interacted with a female (Civilian Witness 1, CW1). He appeared lost, speaking incomprehensibly before leaving the premises.

The Complainant then walked on Wellington Street and approached a vehicle stopped at a red light. He approached the female driver (Civilian Witness 2), reached inside through the open window and grabbed her breast. CW2 drove away in a panic.

Shortly after, the Complainant entered a coffee shop and approached two patrons (Civilian Witnesses 3, 4) and asked CW3 if he could touch her breast. CW3 and CW4 both got up and away from the Complainant. He then walked to another table and sat next to Civilian Witness 5. He then got on top of CW5, pinning her against the seat, and began to grab her breasts. Two male patrons, CW6 and CW7, came to CW5's aid, separating him from CW5 and forcing him out of the coffee shop.

Once outside, the Complainant approached a female (CW8) with her young daughter. CW8 was locking her bicycle. The Complainant engaged her in a brief conversation before walking away. The Complainant then met another female (CW9) walking opposite him. He reached out and grabbed her breast. CW9 swatted his hand away, turned the corner, and was later found crying by bystanders.

Next, the Complainant returned to CW8, who was still locking her bike. He grabbed her from behind and began to thrust his hips into her body. CW8 pushed him off and yelled for him to get away. Patrons from the coffee shop saw the interaction. They came out and confronted the Complainant, separating him from CW8. Employees and patrons then went back into the coffee shop and locked the door to prevent the Complainant from entering. One person outside called 911 and described the Complainant to the dispatcher. Witness Official 1 (WO1) was dispatched, arriving at 9:37 am.

WO1 advised the Complainant that he was under arrest and attempted to take him into custody, but to no avail. The Complainant first walked away, then ran from WO1, who

initiated a foot pursuit. After a series of use-of-force deliveries, including open hand strikes, kicks, OC spray deployment, and baton strikes, WO1 was unable to place the Complainant under arrest. As the two arrived at 55 Hilda Street in Ottawa, WO1 used additional strikes and kicks, but the Complainant continued to resist the arrest.

A second officer (Subject Official, SO) arrived and assisted WO1.

The SO and WO1 continued their attempt to arrest the Complainant and used force to get him to the ground. As the Complainant was resisting, it took several more use of force deliveries to apply and secure handcuffs on the Complainant.

The use of force resulted in the Complainant having visible injuries and severe bleeding from the nose area. WO1 attended his police vehicle to get medical supplies while the SO contacted dispatch and requested an ambulance. Approximately two minutes after the handcuffs were applied, the Complainant lost consciousness. Upon noticing this, the SO called dispatch again and requested an ambulance on high priority. The SO placed the Complainant in the recovery position to ensure his airway was clear of obstruction. Upon arriving, the paramedics determined that the Complainant was not breathing and commenced CPR. The paramedics transported the Complainant to the hospital, where he was pronounced deceased by the attending physician.

The SIU was contacted at that time and invoked its mandate.

INVESTIGATION

SIU Investigation

The SIU investigation took nearly eight months and included fourteen officer designations.

On March 6th, 2017, the SIU laid criminal charges of manslaughter, aggravated assault, and assault with a weapon against the SO. The SIU did not identify any other conduct, service, or policy issues regarding this incident. It should be noted that the SIU did not produce a report outlining its investigation. Because of that, this report only refers to the conclusion of the investigation and the charges laid by the SIU against the SO.

The SO's prosecution took nearly three years, with 72 days of trial. On October 20th, 2020, the Honorable Justice R. Kelly of the Ontario Court of Justice acquitted the SO of all charges. The Ministry of the Attorney General did not appeal the acquittal.

Professional Standards Investigation

Under Section 11(1) of Ontario Regulation 267/10 of the Police Services Act, PSU initiated an investigation into this incident to review OPS policies and services provided and to determine if the conduct of the involved police officers was appropriate.

Relevant Conduct Review:

Absent the SIU's written report, the PSU relied on the criminal trial of the SO, as well as performing an independent review of the incident. PSU investigators concurred with the trial judge's decision. While the PSU review did not yield misconduct by the attending officers, it did point out the need to review some of the OPS's policies and procedures.

Relevant Policies and Procedures Review:

Over the course of the incident and the conclusion of the trial (2016-2020), the public demands for more transparency, accountability, and building community trust in policing have increased considerably. This led to the enactment of new legislation (CSPA 2019).

OPS has responded by adopting new policies, procedures, and service delivery models. Specifically, the PSU's review targeted the Procurement and Equipment Policies. This was highlighted by the use of gloves that were issued to members but were not part of the procurement by the Quarter Masters section. The Procurement and Equipment Policies are being updated and will be presented to the OPS Command Team for final review. The PSU also made recommendations on the Use of Force training and the use of unsanctioned video clips.

Furthermore, the incident review has included recommendations for further systemic changes, including but not limited to:

- Expansion of the Conducted Energy Weapon (CEW) program.
- De-escalation training.
- Update of the Ontario Use of Force Model.
- Racial Profiling Policy.
- Systemic and Cultural Change Efforts. EDI Action Plan and the DRIVE2 Strategy.
- Wellness program.
- Mental Health Incidents Policy and responses to mental health calls.

The OPS has engaged in an initiative regarding mental health calls.

The Mental Health Change Initiative (MHCI) is a multi-stage effort led by the Ottawa Police Service to improve how mental health and crisis response are delivered.

Grounded in community collaboration, trauma-informed practices, and accountability, MHCI aims to build trust and improve outcomes for those most impacted by mental health challenges.

Relevant Service Review:

Conduct Findings – No conduct issues identified against attending OPS members.

Service Findings – No service issues identified

Policy Findings – Two policies were identified and updated: the Procurement and Equipment Policy and the Use of Force Policy.

CONCLUSION

The PSU has completed its Section 11 investigation into this incident. No further action is required. It should be noted, nonetheless, that the OPS received several recommendations after the Coroner's Inquest into the incident, these include feedback from community groups and interest holder organizations as well. The OPS is currently undertaking a thorough review of various other policies, procedures, and services. The results of that review will be presented in a separate report.