



Report to the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General Public Fatality Inquiry

Fatality Inquiries Act

WHEREAS a Public Inquiry was held at the Courthouse, 320-4th Street South
in the City of Lethbridge, in the Province of Alberta,
(City, Town or Village) (Name of City, Town, Village)
on the twenty-seventh day of April, 2015, through
year
the twenty-ninth day of April, 2015,
year
before Timothy G. Hironaka, a Provincial Court Judge,
into the death of Deu Raj Puri 26
(Name in Full) (Age)
of 64 Columbia Way West, Lethbridge, Alberta T1K 4J4 and the following findings were made:
(Residence)

Date and Time of Death: July 15, 2012 at 11:48 p.m.

Place: Lethbridge, Alberta

Medical Cause of Death:

("cause of death" means the medical cause of death according to the International Statistical Classification of Diseases, Injuries and Causes of Death as last revised by the International Conference assembled for that purpose and published by the World Health Organization – *The Fatality Inquiries Act*, Section 1(d)).

Multiple gunshot wounds

Manner of Death:

("manner of death" means the mode or method of death whether natural, homicidal, suicidal, accidental, unclassifiable or undeterminable – *The Fatality Inquiries Act*, Section 1(h)).

Homicidal

Circumstances under which Death occurred:

See attached Appendix A

Recommendations for the prevention of similar deaths:

None

DATED June 12, 2015 ,

at Lethbridge , Alberta.

Original signed by

Timothy G. Hironaka
A Judge of the Provincial Court of Alberta

Appendix A

Circumstances Under Which Death Occurred

[1] Police were called to the Puri residence by Deu Raj Puri's (Deu Raj) brother, Nar Puri, because Deu Raj had a knife and was threatening to harm himself or other family members. The 911 transcripts of the July 15, 2012, call indicate that Deu Raj was reported to have had a lot to drink and was becoming violent, that he had a knife in his hand and that he was trying to hurt himself.

[2] Deu Raj was a recent immigrant to Canada and apparently had access to an Immigration Services program which included some degree of English language training and also some guidance in understanding the Canadian policing system. Deu Raj was reported to have completed the program with his family.

[3] Deu Raj also had numerous interactions with police between the date of his arrival in Canada on November 18th, 2011, and the date of his death July 15, 2012. These interactions involved alcohol use and intoxication, threats of self-harm, causing a disturbance in the family home, family fighting and threats to kill himself and others.

[4] The Medical Examiner's report notes that Deu Raj suffered from chronic alcoholism, and his evidence at this inquiry indicated that at the time of death Deu Raj was intoxicated by alcohol to a degree which was between 2 ½ and 4 times the legal limit.

[5] Constables Deines and Grisbrook responded on July 15, 2012, to the Puri residence. Both were aware that there was a domestic or family dispute involving a knife and that there was a language barrier making it difficult for dispatch to obtain complete information from the complainant. Neither officer had attended the residence before nor had either of them had previous interactions with Deu Raj.

[6] Upon arrival at the residence at 64 Columbia Way West, Lethbridge, Alberta, Deines and Grisbrook encountered three gentlemen outside the front door who we now know to be Deu Raj's brothers, Nar, Dal and Chandra Puri. Deines and Grisbrook identified themselves as police and the three brothers were compliant with police instructions. The officers inquired where the knife was and were directed inside the house by hand gestures.

[7] Constable Deines was first to enter the residence with his service pistol drawn. He was followed by Constable Grisbrook with his taser in hand. The residence was by their description, small and dimly lit. Upon ascending the stairs to the living room they saw with the assistance of a flashlight Deu Raj sitting on a sofa on the far left hand side of the room.

[8] Deu Raj was observed by the officers to have a six to eight inch knife. Grisbrook put the taser sight on Deu Raj's chest and Deines pointed his service pistol while both officers directed Deu Raj to drop the knife. At this point Deu Raj appeared to become more agitated and rose from the couch, with knife in hand and began pacing the back portion of the room.

[9] The officers description of Deu Raj’s demeanor included:

- (a) angry expression;
- (b) tension in his jaw;
- (c) clenched teeth; and
- (d) a fearless look on his face.

[10] At this point Grisbrook holstered his taser and unholstered his service weapon. Commands to drop the knife continued.

[11] Deu Raj then proceeded to raise the knife above his head and advanced toward the officers. Constable Deines recalls yelling one last time for Deu Raj to drop the knife or he would “kill him”. Deu Raj did not drop the knife nor did he stop advancing toward the officers and both officers discharged their service weapons. Constable Deines testified that Deu Raj was approximately 5-7 feet from them when he fired his weapon. As noted earlier in this report, Deu Raj died as a result of multiple gunshot wounds.

[12] An investigation was completed by Alberta Serious Incident response Team (ASIRT) which reviewed all of the forensic evidence and interviewed all of the witnesses. They also received written statements from both Constables Deines and Grisbrook. Tim Shannon, a member of ASIRT and who became involved in the Deu Raj Puri shooting July 16, 2012, provided evidence in this Inquiry. He stated that ASIRT’s conclusion was that the lethal force used by the officers in this case was appropriate to the circumstances. He did advise that there are currently 20 members of ASIRT, all of whom have police backgrounds. ASIRT has been in existence since 2008 and in its history has only had one member that has not had a police background.

[13] Christopher Todd Butler, Calgary Police Service Inspector, reviewed the ASIRT file and provided a “Use of Force Review”. He testified that “Police don’t shoot to kill”, they shoot “to stop the threat”, which means shooting at the largest centre of mass, which is the upper torso of the human body. He also concluded that under the circumstances the lethal force used was appropriate and consistent with police training and protocol.