



VERDICT AT INQUEST

File No.: 2011:0216:0067

An Inquest was held at Burnaby Coroners Court, in the municipality of Burnaby in the Province of British Columbia, on the following dates July 15th - 17th, 2013

before Margaret Janzen, Presiding Coroner,

into the death of BEDDOW Brendon Samuel, 23, Male, Female

and the following findings were made:

Date and Time of Death: March 23, 2011, 1420 hours

Place of Death: 3080 McBride Ave. Surrey/BC

Medical Cause of Death

(1) Immediate Cause of Death: a) Gunshot wound to chest

DUE TO OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF

Antecedent Cause if any: b)

DUE TO OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF

Giving rise to the immediate cause (a) above, stating underlying cause last. c)

(2) Other Significant Conditions Contributing to Death:

Classification of Death: Accidental, Homicide, Natural, Suicide, Undetermined

The above verdict certified by the Jury on the 17th day of July AD, 2013.

Margaret Janzen Presiding Coroner's Printed Name

M. Janzen Presiding Coroner's Signature

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FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AS A RESULT OF THE INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF

FILE No.: 2011:0216:0067

BEDDOW

Surname

Brendon Samuel

Given Names

Pursuant to Section 38 of the Coroners Act, the following recommendations are forwarded to the Chief Coroner of the Province of British Columbia for distribution to the appropriate agency:

PARTIES INVOLVED IN THE INQUEST:

Presiding Coroner: Margaret Janzen
Coroner Counsel: Rodrick Mackenzie
Court Reporting/Recording Agency: Verbatim Words West Ltd.
Participants/Counsel: David Kwan/Attorney General of Canada/RCMP

The Sheriff took charge of the jury and recorded 9 exhibits. Twenty five witnesses were duly sworn in and testified.

PRESIDING CORONER'S COMMENTS:

The following is a brief summary of the circumstances of the death as set out in the evidence presented to the jury at the inquest. The following summary of the evidence as presented at the inquest is to assist the reader to more fully understand the Verdict and Recommendations of the jury. This summary is not intended to be considered evidence nor is it intended in any way to replace the jury's verdict.

On March 23, 2011, in the late morning or early afternoon Brendon Samuel Beddow attended to a residence in Surrey where his ex-girlfriend was staying. At approximately 1330 hours, she exited the house with Mr. Beddow following her and went onto the neighbouring property where construction workers were building a house. The workers saw that they were having a heated disagreement which included Mr. Beddow shoving her and apparently trying to remove something from her grip. A worker who was walking to his work vehicle asked if there was anything wrong and was sworn at by Mr. Beddow. Although emotions were high, it did not appear to the construction workers that there was any need to summon help at that time, and Mr. Beddow and the ex-girlfriend soon went back into the residence.

A short time later, the construction workers and some of the neighbours heard loud noises at the residence and saw Mr. Beddow on the outside of the residence in a highly agitated state, apparently trying to regain access. This was soon followed by the sound of breaking glass so one of the neighbours called 9-1-1. At about the same time, the ex-girlfriend exited the residence and went over to the construction workers, asking for help and saying that Mr. Beddow was trashing the property and was going to kill her. She was on a cell phone calling 9-1-1 at the same time. The workers took her into the residence and locked the doors.

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The transcript of the radio dispatch to Surrey RCMP members recorded that they were told that Mr. Beddow was known to carry guns and that the complainant was safe inside the neighbour's house. The first Surrey RCMP member who arrived at the residence observed Mr. Beddow pacing back and forth in front of the residence. He exited his cruiser and told Mr. Beddow to come over to him. At that point Mr. Beddow reached into his waistband and pulled out a pistol. The RCMP member crouched down behind a stucco wall that surrounded the residence and yelled at Mr. Beddow to drop his weapon. Two more RCMP members arrived at about that time and exited their cruiser, also taking cover behind the stucco wall and high wooden front gates. All three members continued to tell Mr. Beddow to put down his weapon, but he refused, swearing and yelling at them and continuing to pace back and forth waving the pistol. At approximately 1410 hours when he began to point the pistol at them, two of the members shot at him. One of the bullets struck Mr. Beddow in the left chest and he fell to the ground.

The jury also heard evidence that it was spring break and that there were many members of the public in the general vicinity.

The RCMP requested that an Advanced Life Saving (ALS) unit attend and handcuffed Mr. Beddow behind his back. By 1420 hours Mr. Beddow was not breathing and members started CPR. An ALS paramedic arrived at 1425 hours and attended to Mr. Beddow, but he could not be resuscitated.

An autopsy was performed and the pathologist testified that Mr. Beddow died of the gunshot wound to the chest. Toxicology testing revealed the presence of heroin and cocaine. The toxicologist testified that the cocaine level was in a range where non-lethal concentrations overlap with those found in fatal overdoses.

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JURY RECOMMENDATIONS:

To: British Columbia Association of Chiefs of Police

1. RCMP/Municipal Police to implement a policy to have unimpeded primary access of vehicles to the crime scene in a reasonable time (estimated 15 minutes) to allow all rescue/ emergency vehicles to have access.

Coroners Comments

The jury heard testimony that there were so many police cruisers parked on the road in front of the residence that the fire truck could not get past them to get to the scene.

2. RCMP and Municipal police forces to recertify weapons training every year mandatory

Coroner's Comments

The jury heard testimony that this was the current policy and that any police officer who failed to certify had their handgun taken away until they re-qualified.

3. RCMP dispatch to have in place an algorithm similar to BCAS dispatch, that supports timely decision making for decisions to be made to support field agents. Example: Gun noted by police-dispatch to promote ERT or PDS. Second example: when shots fired immediate dispatch for EHS and ALS.

Coroner's Comments

The jury heard testimony from a paramedic that the Advanced Life Saving crew was automatically dispatched if available when certain serious conditions or symptoms were present. This recommendation is suggesting that implementation of a similar dispatch process could be beneficial for use by police in critical incidents.

4. RCMP to have video and recording devices attached to all police cruisers and unmarked cars.

Coroner's Comments

Testimony given by witnesses regarding what was said and done by the parties at the time of the incident, although consistent in some regards, also varied considerably. The jury also heard evidence regarding 'auditory exclusion' and the effect of life-threatening danger on participant physiology and recall. Audio/video recording would address witness fallibility and provide high quality evidence for incident review.

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5. To implement critical incident training and high-intensity simulator training and first aid training every 3 years during their block training for all police members.

Coroner's Comments

The jury heard testimony that de-escalation training is part of RCMP block training and that members are required to recertify for basic first aid every three years. The jury believed that critical incident training and high-intensity simulator training would be a valuable addition.

6. Once the scene is secure that the injured individual's restraints do not impede the EMS/ALS's medical attention – consider adjusting or changing restraints. Recommendation is to respect the body once the body is pronounced dead that the restraints be removed before transportation.

Coroner's Comments

The jury heard testimony that CPR was performed on Mr. Beddow while he was still handcuffed behind his back. A paramedic gave evidence that this would not impede the efficacy of CPR so long as the hands could be moved to the side and the upper back was flat on the ground. They also heard evidence that the body was still handcuffed when it arrived at the post mortem examination. No evidence was led on the point, but removal of handcuffs after death would be an interference with the evidence available for the coroner and pathologist, and would not be recommended.

7. To have some kind of video/voice recording device on each member's person to help maintain the integrity and evidence at the crime scene, i.e.: removal of weapon for public safety without photo of where it was located and status of weapon. (example: attached to radio)

Coroner's Comments

Please refer to recommendation number four. There was no photographic evidence to show the location or status of Mr. Beddow's weapon following the shooting.

To: BC Ambulance Service, Chief Operating Officer

8. Ensure that each community has proper ALS coverage based on population and geographics

Coroner's Comments

The jury heard evidence that in the Surrey district there were two ALS crews at the time of the incident as a result of a pilot project that had added another unit, and that as a result of an aging population, need for ALS service was likely to continue to increase.

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To: Fire Chief, City of Surrey

9. To have smaller fire rescue vehicles to ensure that each community has proper coverage based on population and geographics

Coroner's Comments

There was no testimony to suggest that smaller fire rescue vehicles would have been of assistance in this case or would assist future operations. The jury heard evidence that the vehicle used in the pilot project referred to in the recommendation 1 to the Fire Chief, City of Surrey, was a smaller unit. The jury appeared to believe that this should be a permanent addition to the Surrey operations.

To: Fraser Health Authority, Chief Operating Officer

10. If someone has been admitted to hospital due to drug abuse/suicide attempt or anything that effects bodily harm to themselves to be offered a week in hospital and based on doctor's recommendations to make available to the person admission to rehab for 30 days, then to have a social worker continue to follow-up on the person every week as directed by a medical professional.

Coroner's Comments

The jury heard testimony from a psychiatrist that Mr. Beddow had tried to commit suicide in January, 2011, and had been admitted to hospital at that time. He stated that he had no desire for treatment and refused antidepressant medications recommended by the psychiatrist. He had attended a rehabilitation program following the hospital stay. The jury appeared to believe that more aggressive medical intervention could have assisted Mr. Beddow.