



Province of British Columbia
VERDICT AT CORONERS INQUEST

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AS A RESULT OF THE CORONER'S INQUEST PURSUANT TO SECTION 38 OF THE CORONERS ACT, [SBC 2007] C 15, INTO THE DEATH OF

HIRSI

SURNAME

Abdi Gani Mahamud

GIVEN NAMES

An Inquest was held at Burnaby Coroners Court, in the municipality of Burnaby

in the Province of British Columbia, on the following dates: November 5, 2018 to November 8, 2018

before: Michael Egilson, Presiding Coroner.

into the death of HIRSI, ABDI GANI MAHAMUD 26 (Last Name) (First Name) (Middle Name) (Age) [x] Male [] Female

The following findings were made:

Date and Time of Death: April 09, 2015 1711 (Date) (time)

Place of Death: 400 BLOCK of GORE AVENUE Vancouver, BC (Location) (Municipality/Province)

Medical Cause of Death: Multiple Gunshot Wounds

(1) Immediate Cause of Death: a) internal injuries Due to or as a consequence of

Antecedent Cause if any: b) multiple gunshot wounds 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 [x] Homicide [] Natural [] Suicide [] Undetermined

The above verdict certified by the Jury on the 8th day of November AD, 2018

Michael Egilson Presiding Coroner's Printed Name

Michael Egilson Presiding Coroner's Signature



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PARTIES INVOLVED IN THE INQUEST:

Presiding Coroner: Michael Egilson
Inquest Counsel: John M. Orr, Q.C.
Court Reporting/Recording Agency: Verbatim Words West Ltd.
Participants/Counsel: Bryant Mackey, counsel for the Vancouver Police Department

The Sheriff took charge of the jury and recorded 12 exhibits. 21 witnesses were duly sworn 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. This is to assist in understanding, but does not replace, the jury verdict and recommendations. This summary is not evidence.

This inquest dealt with the death of Abdi Gani Mahamud Hirsi who died in the 400 block of Gore Avenue, Vancouver as the result of internal injuries from multiple gunshot wounds.

Mr. Hirsi was described by his mother as being very close to his family and the elders in his community and he was studying to become a power engineer.

The jury heard testimony about the events leading up to Mr. Hirsi's death from nine civilian witnesses and four police officers. Additionally, the jury viewed video recordings of the events from a low frame rate camera on a building, a partially blocked video recording from a parked car and a video taken from a phone camera shortly after Mr. Hirsi was shot.

On April 9, 2015 at around 5 PM, the Vancouver police were contacted regarding a man who had stabbed two people. Four Vancouver police officers responded to the scene. Civilian witnesses saw Mr. Hirsi engaged with two men, both of whom reported that Mr. Hirsi had stabbed them. This evidence came from recorded testimony the two men had provided to the Independent Investigations Office because one could not be located and the other was unable to testify.

Civilian witnesses testified that a lone officer arrived on the scene first and drew his gun on Mr. Hirsi who was described as holding a large knife. The officer repeatedly commanded Mr. Hirsi to drop his knife and get onto the ground.



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A second and third police officer arrived very shortly after the first. The second officer pointed a shotgun at Mr. Hirsi and also commanded him to drop his knife and get onto the ground. Mr. Hirsi was described as being in an aggressive stance and did not respond to the officers' commands. The second officer shot Mr. Hirsi with a bean bag discharge (a less lethal use of force option) from the shot gun. Mr. Hirsi flinched but did not fall or drop the knife he was holding.

Mr. Hirsi then moved quickly towards the three officers while still holding the knife. The second officer fired more bean bag rounds at Mr. Hirsi and the first police officer fired his pistol five times at Mr. Hirsi. Mr. Hirsi fell momentarily, dropped the knife and then quickly picked up the knife and rolled back up. Mr. Hirsi then ran north towards a church parkade and the three officers followed him.

As Mr. Hirsi arrived at the parkade entrance, a short distance away, he encountered a woman. A fourth police officer arrived on the scene at 5:04 PM. Once Mr. Hirsi encountered the woman he began to stab her repeatedly. At this point the first officer discharged his pistol five more times at Mr. Hirsi.

Mr. Hirsi then slumped over the woman who was bleeding profusely from her wounds. The third and fourth officers approached Mr. Hirsi while officers two and three remained with their guns drawn on Mr. Hirsi. Officers three and four pulled the woman out from underneath Mr. Hirsi and then handcuffed Mr. Hirsi who was motionless and prone on the ground.

No resuscitation efforts were commenced on Mr. Hirsi. Forty-nine seconds passed from the arrival of the first officer on scene to the time Mr. Hirsi was shot while stabbing the bystander woman, as observed on a civilian car camera video of the incident.

Emergency Health Services were called and officer three provided first aid to the woman who had been stabbed. Emergency Health Services were on scene at 5:09 PM and examined Mr. Hirsi. The paramedics determined that Mr. Hirsi was deceased at 5:11 PM. The paramedics connected a bullet wound to Mr. Hirsi's head with what they believed to be brain matter on the ground. The paramedics determined Mr. Hirsi to be an "obvious death" so no resuscitation efforts were commenced.

Toxicology screening performed on Mr. Hirsi identified the only substances present were small amounts of THC and cannabinal, both of which result from consumption of cannabis. A toxicology expert testified that the amount of THC and cannabinal present would not have accounted for Mr. Hirsi's behavior.

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A pathologist testified that Mr. Hirsi had received eight gunshot wounds which caused internal injuries. The pathologist further testified that the gunshot wounds had pierced Mr. Hirsi's lungs, heart and liver which would have caused his rapid death. The pathologist also noted that the bullet wound to Mr. Hirsi's head did not penetrate his skull. As a result, the material observed by the paramedics on the ground was not brain matter.

A use of force expert explained the model Canadian police forces utilize in their training and ongoing practice. The Vancouver Police Department also testified regarding their training and requirements with respect to less lethal use of force tools, de-escalation and crisis management. The jury also heard that there was no set requirement for Vancouver Police Officers to have first aid training.

An emergency medicine physician testified regarding the importance of timely first aid with respect to airway, breathing and circulation for patient survival.

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:

JURY RECOMMENDATIONS:

To: The Chief Constable, Vancouver Police Department

1. Perform a review of policing policies and training with regards to de-escalation procedures, specifically to reassess high stress, potentially lethal, situations.

Presiding Coroner Comment: *The jury heard testimony that officers are required to re-certify de-escalation training every three years and the important role that de-escalation and crisis management play within the context of the use of force model employed by municipal police departments.*

2. Consider training police officers in a wide range of communication skills for use during high stress and potentially lethal situations.

Presiding Coroner Comment: *The jury heard testimony that Mr. Hirsi appeared agitated and did not respond to police commands to drop the knife he was holding.*

3. Require patrol police officers to wear body cameras in order to establish the events for evidence purposes, future training and policy development.

Presiding Coroner Comment: *The jury viewed civilian video evidence that helped establish the sequence of events. The civilian video had poor sound quality and was partially blocked by vehicles. The jury noted that police body cameras would have provided a much clearer picture of the sequence of events.*



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4. Require all police vehicles to be deployed with video capture cameras in order to establish the events for evidence purposes, future training and policy development.

Presiding Coroner Comment: *The jury viewed civilian video evidence that helped establish the sequence of events. The civilian video had poor sound quality and was partially blocked by vehicles. The jury noted that police vehicle cameras would have provided a much clearer picture of the sequence of events.*

5. Require all operationally deployable police officers to undertake mandatory training in the use of at least one less lethal use of force tool, over and beyond those taught in basic training and ensure that all vehicles are equipped with those less lethal force tools.

Presiding Coroner Comment: *The jury heard testimony that not all Vancouver police officers have training in less lethal use of force tools*

6. Mandate the annual review of available less lethal force options as technology evolves e.g.; heavier load cartridges for bean bag shot guns or larger capacity magazines.

Presiding Coroner Comment: *The jury heard testimony about a range of less lethal use of force tools used by the Vancouver Police Department and under what conditions those tools could optimally be deployed.*

7. Ensure all patrol vehicles are equipped with First Aid kits containing supplies that are useful for the interim treatment of serious penetrating injuries, such as gunshot wounds and stab wounds. These supplies should include compression bandages, chest seals and tourniquets and training in the use of these items.

Presiding Coroner Comment: *The jury heard expert emergency medicine testimony on the importance of the timeliness of addressing serious penetrating wounds and that not all Vancouver police officers were trained in first aid.*

8. Require that police officers who are first to encounter a medical emergency provide meaningful assistance until paramedics arrive on scene.

Presiding Coroner Comment: *The jury heard expert emergency medicine testimony on the importance of the timeliness of addressing medical emergencies and that not all police officers were trained in first aid.*



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To: The President of BC Emergency Health Services

9. BC Ambulance Service should review their policy which provides for the circumstances in which paramedics may determine "obvious death" and not provide medical interventions.

Presiding Coroner Comment: *The jury heard testimony that the paramedics' determination of "obvious death" was partially based on an observable head injury which conflicted with testimony provided by the pathologist.*

To: The Chief Coroner of British Columbia

10. Inquests should be held within one year of the investigation concluding to ensure accuracy of recollection and closure for affected families.

Presiding Coroner Comment: *The jury heard testimony from a number of witnesses that they were unable to remember certain events due to the passage of time between Mr. Hirsi's death and the inquest.*