



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

BLUNDELL

SURNAME

ROBERT ANDREW

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: October 3 - 6, 2022

before: Margaret Janzen, Presiding Coroner.

into the death of Blundell Robert Andrew 49 Male Female
(Last Name) (First Name) (Middle Name) (Age)

The following findings were made:

Date and Time of Death: June 18, 2017 1928 hours
(Date) (time)

Place of Death: 2103 Audrey Drive Port Coquitlam, BC
(Location) (Municipality/Province)

Medical Cause of Death:

(1) Immediate Cause of Death: a) Gunshot wound of left arm and 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 6th day of October AD, 2022

Margaret Janzen
Presiding Coroner's Printed Name

M. Janzen
Presiding Coroner's Signature



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PARTIES INVOLVED IN THE INQUEST:

Presiding Coroner:	Margaret Janzen
Inquest Counsel:	John McNamee
Court Recorder:	Verbatim Words West Ltd.
Participants/Counsel:	David Kwan, counsel for the Attorney General of Canada representing the interests of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police

The Sheriff took charge of the jury and recorded **12** exhibits. **19** 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.

Robert Andrew Blundell was a 49-year-old male who lived in Port Coquitlam. He was reported to have strong mechanical skills and a good sense of humour. He got along well with his neighbours. He owned guns, which he had handled responsibly and kept locked up when they were not in use. His medical history included chronic pain from back injuries and chronic use of alcohol. He had developed anxiety and depression and had post traumatic stress disorder. He had previous incidents of suicidal ideation and had seen a psychiatrist once in 2016.

His physician was following a treatment plan with him and had last seen Mr. Blundell three days before his death. The visit was for routine care and Mr. Blundell was not felt to be suicidal or homicidal at that time. He normally lived with his spouse and son, but his son had left the residence the day before Mr. Blundell's death. He had several matters of personal concern.

The jury heard evidence about Mr. Blundell's interaction with police from both police and civilian witnesses as well as viewing video that captured some of what occurred.

Mr. Blundell's spouse reported that, on the afternoon of June 18, 2017, she and Mr. Blundell shared some cocktails and then they ate dinner together. He did not display any unusual behaviour. Following dinner Mr. Blundell went to the garage of the home while his spouse started to clean up the kitchen. She heard a loud bang and went to the garage to see what had happened. The door connecting the garage to the house was locked, which was unusual, so she went around to the front of the garage and opened the door with the garage door opener.



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Mr. Blundell's spouse testified that, when she entered the garage, Mr. Blundell was holding a rifle and appeared to be loading it. She noted that his demeanour and speech were markedly out of character at that time. She expressed her concern and attempted to take the rifle away from him. He pushed her down, so she got up and went back into the house where she got her purse and the dog, then left in her vehicle.

She drove about a block away from the residence and called Mr. Blundell's parents. His father answered the phone and told her that Mr. Blundell had called him and said that he was going to kill himself. His father had already called the Coquitlam RCMP at approximately 1907 hours.

Officers responded to the call and began to arrive in the neighborhood at approximately 1920 hours. Four officers parked some distance from the residence to set up a containment area, block public access, and ready themselves to approach the residence. An additional officer arrived and saw the first police vehicles. He testified that he decided to approach from a different direction to set up containment on the other side of the residence.

Unbeknownst to him, when he parked, he parked almost right in front of Mr. Blundell's residence. He began to exit the vehicle. The officer recounted that, as he was exiting his police vehicle to get his rifle and equipment ready, Mr. Blundell appeared on the other side of the police vehicle. The officer testified that Mr. Blundell had a high-power rifle which he pointed in the officer's direction, and they had a brief conversation. He reported that Mr. Blundell told him to go away. The officer activated the emergency button on his radio that would indicate to other officers and dispatch that he was in an emergency situation. He advised the other police officers that he had a person pointing a gun at him. He told Mr. Blundell that he was leaving and to just lower the rifle. He got into his vehicle and backed away.

Mr. Blundell disappeared behind a cedar hedge. The officer stopped his vehicle nearby in a more protected location and went to the rear of the vehicle to get his rifle. As he was doing this, he heard rifle fire.

While this was unfolding, the first officers to arrive had prepared themselves for approach and were advancing on the residence from the other direction. The Emergency Response Team had been activated and were en route. Because of the use of the emergency button, the officers had overheard part of the conversation between Mr. Blundell and the officer who had encountered him.

Other officers testified that, as they approached the residence, they could see Mr. Blundell and yelled to him that they were police and to drop the rifle. The jury heard that, instead, Mr. Blundell told them to get out of there and fired his rifle toward them. They took cover behind vehicles and a house. One of the officers advised the others that he could see Mr.

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Blundell from his position. He was instructed to shoot and did so at approximately 1928 hours. Mr. Blundell disappeared.

Because of the cedar hedge and a retaining wall, it was not easy to determine Mr. Blundell's location or status without breaking cover. Information provided to the officers suggested that there may be another person in the residence. That person's location and status was also unclear.

During this time another of Mr. Blundell's family members had arrived and started to approach the residence. The officer who had encountered Mr. Blundell at his police vehicle prevented the family member from going any closer and brought them to a place of cover. The family member advised him that they had seen Mr. Blundell lying in his driveway.

Officers were directed by the Team Leader of the Emergency Response Team to contain the scene until the arrival of the Emergency Response Team, who had equipment and an armoured vehicle that would allow them to approach the residence and Mr. Blundell with greater safety. They could see Mr. Blundell lying motionless in his driveway.

When the Emergency Response Team arrived, they approached the residence in the armoured vehicle. They could see that Mr. Blundell was lying in the driveway with his rifle near his legs, not moving. To ensure that Mr. Blundell did not still present a risk to officers two low-calibre, non-lethal shots were fired by a sniper and struck Mr. Blundell once in the leg and once near his belt line. The projectiles had foam crushable heads designed to collapse on impact and cause a pain response that would ordinarily trigger movement. Mr. Blundell did not move. The Emergency Response Team members then approached him and determined that he was deceased at 2035 hours. His residence was cleared, finding no other person present. Paramedics were asked to assess Mr. Blundell and his death was confirmed at 2057 hours.

A forensic autopsy was conducted which revealed Mr. Blundell's cause of death to be a single gunshot wound that entered and passed through his left arm and then entered his left chest, lacerating both his brachial artery and his aorta. The nature of the injuries would have resulted in rapid loss of consciousness and death. Forensic toxicological examination revealed an ethyl alcohol concentration of 0.18%, which is considered to be a moderate to heavy level of intoxication. Therapeutic levels of prescription medications for depression and anxiety were also detected.

The Independent Investigations Office investigated the incident. No charges were forwarded to the Crown for their consideration. During the investigation it was determined that two neighbouring houses had been struck by shots from Mr. Blundell's rifle, in one case narrowly missing a resident working in their home office. One vehicle on the street had also been hit. Various neighbours witnessed some or all of the incident, and some had taken videos or photographs of the incident as it was unfolding.



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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:

No Recommendations.