

June 14, 2017

IIU concludes investigation into assault allegation made against WPS officer

On May 10, 2017, the Independent Investigation Unit of Manitoba (IIU) concluded its investigation into an incident in which a woman complained to the Winnipeg Police Service that she was assaulted by one of its officers. The IIU has determined there are insufficient grounds for charges against the officer.

The woman alleged that during a roadside stop in St. Boniface on June 7, 2016, an officer physically assaulted her. Although she was not seriously injured, this incident concerned a complaint that police officers had engaged in conduct that may constitute a contravention of the Criminal Code (Canada) or other federal or provincial enactment. IIU assumed jurisdiction over this investigation as the civilian director determined it to be in the public interest for an independent investigation to be conducted and to determine whether a member of WPS subjected the woman to unnecessary and excessive force, whether at the time of her arrest or while in the care and custody of the police service.

Police alleged the woman assaulted one of the arresting officers by kicking him in the leg. The woman denied kicking the officer and stated that, in fact, when she was placed in the rear of the police cruiser, an officer entered the rear seat with her and assaulted her by punching her in the face, pulling her hair and slamming her head onto the passenger seat.

IIU investigators interviewed the woman and several witness officers, and examined the investigative file of the WPS Professional Standards Unit. The woman claimed to have located three witnesses to the incident, but would not disclose their names to the IIU.

In his report on the incident, IIU Civilian Director Zane Tessler said the woman's vehicle was lawfully stopped by police and her detention was warranted, given that her licence had expired and her vehicle was unregistered.

Following a review by Manitoba Prosecution Services and on consideration of all the evidence gathered, Tessler wrote he was "not satisfied that the requisite reasonable and probable grounds exist to justify the laying of a criminal code charge or other offence" against the subject officer.

The woman remains before the Court on charges arising out of this incident. The civilian director's complete report will be posted online once the charges are dealt with.

The details of this investigation were first reported on July 26, 2016.

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Media inquiries may be directed to:
Barbara Czech
Communications, Independent Investigation Unit
204-803-9644
bczech@mts.net