

# SiRT

SERIOUS INCIDENT  
RESPONSE TEAM

Summary of Investigation  
SiRT File # 2021-023  
Referral from  
RCMP  
August 13, 2021

Felix Cacchione  
Director  
November 17, 2021

SiRT was contacted by the RCMP in the early morning of August 13, 2021, and advised of the Affected Person's (AP) death as a result of a gunshot. The gunshot occurred during a search under warrant of a residence in Yarmouth. An investigation was commenced that day and concluded on November 3, 2021.

The following evidence was obtained, reviewed and considered in the preparation of this report: a statement of the AP's parents, audio/video statements of seven witness officers (WOs) present at the scene, reports and notes of one WO, reports and notes of two officers who were not at the scene but were aware of the information used to obtain (ITO) a search warrant, the search warrant, photographs of the scene, Halifax Regional Police (HRP) Forensic Identification Service (FIS) reports, autopsy photographs and the Medical Examiner's Certificate noting the cause and the manner of death.

**Facts:**

As a result of information received in June 2021, one of the WOs began a Controlled Drugs and Substances Act investigation into the AP's activities. The investigation led to a search warrant being obtained on August 12, 2021, authorizing a search of the AP's residence on August 13, 2021. The role of each of the eight officers involved in the search was outlined at a meeting held in the early morning hours of August 13, 2021.

A no-knock hard entry of the AP's residence was made at 7:21 a.m. on August 13, 2021, because of the known presence of firearms in that location. Six WOs entered the two-storey residence and two WOs remained outside guarding the front and rear exits. Three of the WOs who entered proceeded to the upper level to begin a search of that area and three WOs began searching the various rooms on the main level. The officers yelled "Police" "Search Warrant" and "Get down on the floor" as they entered and again as they proceeded through the residence.

One of the WOs, searching a room on the main level that had been added to the original structure, noticed an empty hammock swinging. Resting on a hanging chair next to the hammock was a loaded .22 calibre assault style rifle with its safety in the off position. Cocaine, money and an array of knives and swords were also in that room.

There was also a closed sliding door in the room. The WO heard a pop from the other side of the sliding door. The WO attempted to open the door but was only able to slide it open a short distance before it jammed. The WO then used more force to completely open the door to a very small bathroom. The naked AP was partially sitting on the toilet seat with their upper body leaning to the right and their feet angled to the left. A .22 calibre assault style rifle together with an empty .22 calibre shell casing were laying at the AP's feet near the door. A large amount of blood was coming from the AP.

The WO kicked the firearm away from the AP's feet and pulled the AP's lifeless body into the adjoining room. The WO then administered first aid. The AP's face and upper body was covered in blood. The WO performed chest compressions until the arrival of paramedics who pronounced the AP dead at the scene. A member of the Medical Examiner's Office examined the body at the scene but was unable to find an entry or exit wound.

An autopsy conducted by the Medical Examiner the following day determined the cause of death to be a gunshot wound to the head. The bullet entered the skull through the lower part of the AP's chin but did not exit the skull. A .22 calibre bullet was recovered from the AP's skull. The manner of death was identified as a suicide.

All WOs at the scene were armed with 9 mm pistols which is the standard calibre pistol carried by all police officers in Nova Scotia.

**Conclusion:**

In order to be designated as a Subject Officer (SO) in a SiRT investigation, a police officer must have had some contact or interaction with the AP. No SOs were identified in this investigation because none of the officers who entered the residence had any direct or indirect interaction or contact with the AP before they shot themselves. The physical evidence observed at the scene is consistent with all the forensic identification reports, autopsy photographs and the medical examiner's post-mortem examination. The only contact any WO had with the AP was to provide first aid to the AP after the AP shot themselves in the bathroom.

The autopsy findings and results confirm that the AP died as a result of a self-inflicted gunshot wound and not at the hands of the police.