



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CIVIL LIBERTIES GROUP FILES COMPLAINT AGAINST RCMP AFTER POLICE PURSUIT

The British Columbia Civil Liberties Association filed a complaint with the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP today regarding the pursuit of Mr. Randall Dennis Gerard. Mr. Gerard reportedly stole a 10-ton truck, instigating a protracted police pursuit that ended after road spikes immobilized the vehicle. Mere seconds after Mr. Gerard exited the truck in an attempt to flee he was hit by an unmarked police vehicle. Much of the pursuit was captured on video by a local television news helicopter.

The complaint raises concerns regarding the involvement of the unmarked police vehicle. The vehicle was first to arrive on the scene, remarkable given that, according to RCMP policy, unmarked police vehicles are strictly forbidden from participating in this type of police pursuit. The reason for that policy is to ensure the safety of drivers and pedestrians who obviously are not able to recognize an unmarked police vehicle involved in a pursuit as they would a marked vehicle. Also remarkable is the use of potentially lethal force to end Mr. Gerard's attempt to flee. Mr. Gerard, at the time he was struck by the unmarked police vehicle, appears to have been unarmed and posed no apparent threat to officers or the public.

Following the incident, the police made statements to the press that suggested that an investigation would be made. The BC Civil Liberties Association has made inquiries whether that investigation will result in a timely report to the public. The RCMP indicated to the Association that a public report of the incident would not likely be provided. That is regrettable. As a consequence of that, and of the concerns noted above, the BC Civil Liberties Association has elected to file a complaint.

BCCLA President Rob Holmes: "Everyone recognizes that a troubled individual put the safety of others at risk through his actions and the police had a difficult situation to deal with. Serious questions exist, however, about how the RCMP dealt with this incident. In order to ensure public confidence in law enforcement agencies, the results of the police investigation need to be made public. If there were breaches of existing RCMP policies concerning vehicle pursuits and suspect apprehension, an explanation needs to be given. Questions about public safety, risks to the police themselves and the risk to the life of Mr. Gerard after he left the truck need to be answered.

The full complaint can be viewed at <http://www.bccla.org/othercontent/gerardpursuit.pdf>

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