

SiRT

SERIOUS INCIDENT
RESPONSE TEAM

Summary of Investigation

SiRT File # 2015-014

Halifax Regional Police

May 21, 2015

Ronald J. MacDonald, QC

Director

January 25, 2016

Facts

On May 21, 2015, the Halifax Regional Police (HRP) contacted SiRT with information regarding a potential theft, breach of trust, and obstruction of justice committed by one of their officers. The allegations of theft and breach of trust related to a substance known as “cut” which went missing from an HRP exhibit locker. “Cut” is used in the illegal drug trade and is mixed with the actual drug to increase quantity and profitability. The allegation of obstruction of justice relates to alleged steps taken to help a third party avoid detection and arrest by other HRP members.

During the investigation, SiRT obtained statements from 20 police witnesses and five civilian witnesses. Other investigative steps included certain forensic investigations, as well as a review of documentary evidence. The investigation was completed on December 23, 2015.

On January 27, 2016, charges of theft, breach of trust, and obstruction of justice will be laid against 35-year-old Cst. Laurence Gary Basso in relation to the above allegations. Cst. Basso will be summoned to appear in Provincial Court in Halifax on a later date.

Relevant Legal Issues:

A theft is committed when a person takes property which belongs to another person or other entity without consent. A breach of trust is committed when a public official, acting in his official capacity, breaches the standard of conduct required of him as a public official in a manner that is a marked departure from expected standards and for a purpose other than the public good. Obstruction of justice is committed when a person acts in a way that attempts to obstruct or defeat justice by a specific action.

Where reasonable grounds exist to believe a criminal offence has been committed, the Director may charge the police officer. Any offence must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt before the accused can be found guilty.

Conclusion

This investigation has led to the conclusion that there are sufficient grounds to lay charges of theft, breach of trust, and obstruction of justice. This matter is now currently before the courts. In accordance with SiRT policy, this report will not discuss the facts of that matter in any further detail. To do otherwise might compromise the fair trial interests of the accused.

The Serious Incident Response Team Regulations under the *Police Act* state that the Director may choose to provide a supplemental summary of the investigation at the conclusion of the prosecution.