

July 27, 2015  
Letter to the Editor

Brian Hutchinson successfully paints a bleak and inflammatory picture of police operations ("Questions raised over police confrontations", July 25, 2015) by taking three separate and unfortunate events and trying to draw a link between the three, where none exists.

First and foremost it should be noted that no police officer, in any jurisdiction, ever hopes to fire his or her weapon in the course of their duties, particularly because the results are often tragic, even in completely lawful situations, both for the officer, and for those whose families are impacted. That being said, police personnel are called upon to do a job that, in many circumstances, can seem violent and even excessive when not considered in the full context of events. That's why our profession benefits from a number of layers of appropriate and independent oversight.

Part of that oversight involves investigations by qualified personnel to determine whether an officer exercised proper judgement, and as police, all we ask is that those investigators conduct a fair and unbiased review. Unfortunately, articles such as this one exist almost solely to inflame public opinion against the police, without waiting for the facts to be determined.

The fact of the matter is that despite the erroneous perception some in the media try to propagate, and despite millions of contacts between police and the civilians we serve on an annual basis, the number of times our officers use force is extremely low, and I know I speak for our members when I say that each and every one of us wishes it were even lower.

Police in Canada recognize that the public places an incredible amount of trust in those who wear the uniform by giving us a legal authority to use deadly force only when circumstances dictate, and with that comes the expectation that our members are held to a higher standard of accountability. All we ask in return is that when that force is used, investigations and oversight are allowed to take place without the kind of prejudice shown by Mr. Hutchinson.

Tom Stamatakis  
President, Canadian Police Association