

RNC chief tight-lipped on shooting

Premier, police chief offer condolences to victim's family

BY JAMES MCLEOD

Both Premier Paul Davis and Royal Newfoundland Constabulary Chief Bill Janes offered their condolences Monday to the family of a 59-year-old man who was shot and killed on Easter Sunday by an RNC officer working on the premier's protective detail.

The victim, Don Dunphy, was visited by a lone police officer after he directed a public message on Twitter towards Davis and cabinet minister Sandy Collins.

The tweet said, "Won't mention any names this time, 2 prick dead MHAs might have good family member I may hurt." .

In the context of a larger series of tweets, it appears Dunphy was not actually threatening to harm anybody. He was declining to name two MHAs who "laughed at poor people," but the language of the message led a staffer in the premier's office to contact the RNC for followup.

Janes would not say what happened when the officer in Davis's protective detail arrived at Dunphy's home in Mitchell's Brook, in the Mount Carmel area.

"I won't be able to speak to any of the evidence of the case," Janes said. "I have to protect the integrity of the RCMP investigation."

Janes did reveal that multiple shots were fired in the incident.

Late Monday, the RCMP confirmed that their Major Crimes Unit along with their Forensic Identification Unit and members of the nearby Holyrood detachment are investigating the matter.

Sgt. Greg Hicks wouldn't get into specifics about what happened at Dunphy's house Sunday afternoon either.

An autopsy is scheduled to be done today.

As of deadline, the police were still on the scene in Mitchell's Brook.

Dunphy was a prolific Twitter user, posting more than 27,000 times. He frequently complained about corrupt politicians, and his own history of alleged mistreatment by the Workplace Health Safety and Compensation Commission.

The tweet that premier's office staffers deemed to be threatening was posted on Good Friday, and Davis said he never actually saw it at the time.

"I didn't know anything about this. I didn't know the tweet existed," Davis told reporters. "I didn't know the police were following up on the comment. I had no idea that the officer had gone there. I didn't know any of it until after this incident happened yesterday."

Both Davis and Janes said they had spoken to the officer who shot Dunphy, to offer support. The RNC is not releasing the name of the officer.

“At this time, we’re ensuring that our officer receives the assistance that they need while at the same time ensuring that we provide the RCMP all the information they need to provide a full and thorough investigation,” Janes said.

The officer is now off on leave, as is standard practice in this sort of situation, Janes said. After three days the police will make an assessment about whether the officer is ready to return to work.
