

Good morning and thank you for coming.

The news I am about to share with you this morning is not good.

This is a bad day for the Abbotsford Police Department.

Here is how this story unfolds:

Last July, two Abbotsford Police Officers received information that an Abbotsford police officer had leaked information to a suspect so that person could avoid being arrested by our Department.

The police officer who allegedly supplied the information to the drug dealer was identified as Abbotsford Police Constable Christopher Nicholson.

The two members informed their Inspector immediately and as we looked into it, it was clear that we needed to do a full investigation. We also concluded that we would not be able to do it ourselves. The investigation had to be covert and it was going to be large and complex. We knew we had to ask for help.

In August we asked the Vancouver Police Department to take over the investigation. This was a huge request and I need to say how much I appreciate the way Chief Chu and the VPD stepped up and took this on. The team VPD put together is first rate, but this investigation has been extremely taxing for them and I have to pass on my appreciation to them for their work on such a difficult and troubling file. I know many of them have had to sacrifice a lot to get us to today and I can only say thank you to them.

I'm going to ask Chief Chu to fill you in on the scope of that investigation and its conclusions.

Good Morning

In early September 2012, we began a covert investigation with eight investigators from the Vancouver Police Department. As you now know, this arose from a request made to us by Chief Constable Bob Rich of the Abbotsford Police Department. Over the 8 months this investigation spanned, the number of investigators would grow as needed, up to dozens of officers. We assigned senior investigators to this case including many with homicide and gang experience.

VPD investigators believed that Abbotsford Police Constable Christopher Nicholson was providing false information to other police officers who used this information to obtain search warrants that were sworn before judicial authorities. That false information was providing other police officers with the "reasonable and probable grounds" to obtain search warrants for drugs for private dwellings.

He also allegedly conspired with a confidential informant to have drugs delivered to a residence and have other police officers conduct a search warrant soon after.

Since we believe that Christopher Nicholson had knowledge of the drug transaction and was an active participant in the transaction, a charge of conspiracy to traffic a controlled substance has been laid.

The investigative team is preparing more charges relating to the falsifying of information provided to the Justice System. Charges for the other offences will be laid in the upcoming weeks.

Crown Counsel has approved the following charges to date and more are forthcoming:

- Breach of Trust
- Obstruction of Justice
- Conspiracy to Traffic a controlled substance

The accused Christopher Nicholson has been a police officer with the Abbotsford police since November 2005.

When we first learned of the allegations, we understood right away that a thorough investigation was required.

Corrupt conduct is not acceptable to any of us in policing.  
Corrupt conduct will never be tolerated in our ranks and will be investigated thoroughly.

I applaud the personal commitment of the Vancouver police officers assigned to this case. They were as troubled personally, as I was by the initial allegations.

They pursued the investigation with vigor and a professional commitment to uncover as much evidence of wrongdoing and criminal conduct as possible.

They have successfully assembled a substantial and compelling quantity of evidence that will be presented in court.

I am very proud of the police officers who conducted this investigation in such a thorough and professional manner. I would like to also thank the officers from CFSEU and the RCMP who assisted us.

I know Chief Rich has more to add

Thank you Chief Chu.

The courts in Canada give police a lot of discretion and authority to provide true and accurate information when dealing information provided by confidential informants. The trust that is given to police officers enables the police to obtain information that they would not normally be given if a person had to testify in a courtroom. A confidential informant is able to provide information to the police on crime that is occurring that they have knowledge about but want to remain anonymous.

The courts and the judges look at the information provided by the confidential informants on affidavits sworn under oath or solemn affirmation provided by the police and expects the police to be honest and accurate in the information. In fact being honest on documents is part of the oath each police officer must swear.

In breaking that oath, a police officer is committing a Breach of Trust. We believe Christopher Nicholson lied about the information that he was obtaining from confidential informants and was lying to the judges. This impacts the whole justice system. The investigators were able to document and corroborate the misinformation which has led to the charges of Breach of Trust and Obstruction of Justice.

If the facts are proven to be true, it appears that not only did Christopher Nicholson mislead the justice system, but he also put the lives and reputations of other police officer at risk. The

information that Christopher Nicholson has provided over the years has assisted in obtaining dozens of search warrants to residences of drug dealers and gang members. To the front line officers these are some of the most dangerous and high risk entries that police officers undertake. Executing search warrants with false/misleading information puts many police officers in unnecessary danger.

Pursuant to the Police Act Public Trust process, I have ordered that Chris Nicolson be suspended. We have retrieved his badge of office. We have also served him with a notice from the Abbotsford Police Board that they intend to make the suspension without pay as soon as legally possible. This could take 30 days because of the timelines in the Act.

Concurrently with the criminal charges he faces, we will expedite a Police Act disciplinary process which I will oversee. Allegations like this, if proven are very much at the most serious end of the scale of misconduct. However, because I do not wish to have prejudiced my ability to be the disciplinary authority in this matter, I will not comment further on the outcome.

I wish I could guarantee that something like this won't ever happen in policing, that an officer would ever do what we allege has happened here.

I can't.

What Chief Chu and I can do is state, unequivocally, that, whenever we uncover this kind of conduct, we will do whatever it takes to root it out, and hold the person responsible for their actions.