

Edmonton

Edmonton police officer admits using force on man with mental health issues

'I believe that training is necessary to save lives,' victim says

[Janice Johnston](#) · CBC News · Posted: Jun 28, 2020 6:00 AM MT | Last Updated: June 28, 2020



Const. Binoy Prabhu, shown here speaking to the media in 2015, will lose \$3,100 in pay after pleading guilty to discreditable conduct and using inappropriate force on a man with mental health issues. (Travis McEwan/CBC)

A constable with the Edmonton Police Service admitted he used inappropriate force against a man with mental health issues in 2017.

At a hearing held by teleconference Thursday, Binoy Prabhu pleaded guilty to discreditable conduct and inappropriate use of force under the police act.

The victim said he decided to speak out about what happened after watching the hearing remotely.

"I want to do this so that in the future, people with mental disabilities or mental problems can get treated better by the police," Tyler Lychak, 30, told CBC News Thursday. "I believe that training is necessary to save lives."

Lychak's ordeal began on Nov. 3, 2017, when he went to the west Edmonton police station to report concerns about someone who may have been selling drugs to minors.

A civilian at the front counter said Lychak would have to call in the complaint himself.

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"Lychak was upset," presenting officer Derek Cranna, representing the police chief, told the disciplinary hearing. "As he exited the station, his foot hit one of the sliding doors and dislodged it. There was a loud noise."

Prabhu and a fellow officer followed Lychak to the parking lot where there was an argument.

Lychak was arrested for mischief, placed in handcuffs and escorted back into the police station. The officers took him into a holding cell and searched him, finding a can of bear spray. That led to a possession of a weapon charge.

Lychak said he was frightened.

"You started hyperventilating and stated you were scared of Const. Prabhu, then backed towards that wall," Chief Dale McFee wrote in a letter to Lychak summarizing the allegations.





Tyler Lychak's ordeal began on Nov. 3, 2017, when he went to the west Edmonton police station to report concerns about someone who may have been selling drugs to minors. (Facebook/Edmonton Police Service)

Lychak was escorted to a telephone room to make a call.

What happened next was captured on police station closed-circuit cameras.

"At the entrance to the phone room, Const. Prabhu grabbed on his upper right arm or shirt and pulled him with enough force that he went to the ground," Cranna told the disciplinary hearing.

Lychak told investigating officers he hit his head on the wall and suffered bruising to his hip and back along with soreness to his neck and shoulder.

"There was no need to exercise force," Cranna said. "He [Prabhu] acknowledged he used inappropriate force that was in excess of what was necessary in the circumstances."

After the phone room door was closed, Lychak called 911 and asked for help.

"He said he was having a panic attack," Cranna said. "That police were not helping him and he was being beaten."

'Completely inappropriate'

After Lychak made the phone call, Prabhu returned him to the holding cell. Lychak told the officer he was going to try to kill himself and that he had attempted suicide in the past.

At the disciplinary hearing, Prabhu admitted he said, "Go ahead."

Cranna called the remark "completely inappropriate."

"Not only poor judgment in the moment, but it also indicates a lack of empathy," he said. "We are all agreed EPS officers need to demonstrate those traits at all times."

Prabhu's lawyer said the constable was going through a difficult period in his personal life at the time of the incident.

He was charged with assaulting his wife on Nov. 5, 2015. That charge was withdrawn on June 13, 2016, when he admitted he caused his wife to fear personal injury and entered into a one-year peace bond.

The criminal charge led to two separate findings of discreditable conduct. The first finding occurred two weeks after Prabhu's encounter with Lychak. The constable was given a 30-hour suspension without pay and ordered to seek counselling.

As a result, Prabhu went on a six-month medical leave in December 2017 and sought psychological help.

Last year, he also admitted to a neglect of duty misconduct charge that dated back to October 2017.

'I didn't even get a sorry'

At last week's disciplinary hearing, presiding officer Fred Kamins accepted Prabhu's guilty pleas and agreed to a joint sentencing submission that will reduce Prabhu's rank for four months, resulting in a \$3,000 loss in pay.

"He's just happy this is in the rear-view mirror," Edmonton Police Association Sgt. Curtis Hoople told CBC news after the hearing. "He's looking forward to moving in a positive direction."

Tyler Lychak is worried he'll never be able to put this incident behind him.

"I basically relive it every day," he said. "It goes through my head every day and it's really hard to block it out."

Lychak is upset the constable has never apologized.

"I didn't even get a sorry for what happened to me," Lychak said. "I take that as though they don't care."

He also called Prabhu's financial penalty inadequate.

"I could have lost my life because of his actions," Lychak said. "That should have been taken seriously and I don't think it is."

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