

FULL COMMENT

Matt Gurney: Poster boy for bad B.C. Mounties dodges jail time in fatal crash



MATT GURNEY | Jul 27, 2012 2:32 PM ET | Last Updated: Jul 27, 2012 3:26 PM ET
[More from Matt Gurney](#) | [@mattgurney](#)



That the British Columbia detachment of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police has serious problems has been [obvious for years](#). The RCMP's entire disciplinary process needs an overhaul — [even the commissioner](#) of the force agrees with that — and B.C. is in a particularly bad way. The province has long been treated as a dumping ground for the most troublesome of the force's officers that the dysfunctional disciplinary process makes it impossible to get rid of.

Exhibit A for that problem, up until just days ago, could have been former RCMP Corporal Benjamin (Monty) Robinson. Robinson [resigned suddenly](#) from the force last Friday, just days ahead of his sentencing hearing on a [conviction for obstructing justice](#). The charge stemmed from a car accident in 2008. Robinson, who had been drinking, was behind the wheel when his car collided with a motorcycle, whose rider, Orion Glenn Hutchinson, was instantly killed. Rather than remain at the scene, then-Cpl. Robinson continued home, where he consumed alcohol, then returned to the scene.

He explained his actions as being the result of his shock at the accident. A court concluded, quite understandably, that Robinson had in fact consumed the alcohol only to render useless the sobriety tests he was subjected to in the aftermath of the accident. Witnesses testified that ahead of the accident, Robinson had already consumed a substantial amount of alcohol, but his admitted post-accident drinking made that difficult, effectively impossible, really, to determine through breath and blood samples.

That's bad. But this isn't the only brush with the law that Robinson — a law enforcement officer, recall — has had. Robinson first came to the public's attention in 2007, as one of the four Mounties involved in the taser death of Polish immigrant Robert Dziekanski at Vancouver's airport. The appalling death of Dziekanski, who was roughly handled and repeatedly shocked by the officers after becoming disoriented and upset after hours spent wandering the airport lost, was caught on film by a witness.

The film of the event completely contradicted the account of the incident given by Robinson and his fellow officers, which portrayed their takedown of Dziekanski as a necessary use of force by police to bring down a rampaging mad man. Robinson, and three other officers, were [charged with perjury](#) in late 2011, in relation to testimony they had given while under oath, shown to be false, at the inquiry convened to look into the shocking death — some have said murder — of Dziekanski.

Robinson had been on suspension, with pay, since the 2008 crash. His resignation denies the RCMP the opportunity to fire him in disgrace, as was their stated intention. That's frustrating. But how exactly he got off the RCMP payroll pales next to the light sentence he was handed on Friday on his conviction of obstruction of justice. A judge sentenced Robinson to one month of house arrest and another 11 months after that of supervised probation. He will serve no time actually behind bars. It seems a light sentence given that an investigation into a fatal crash was deliberately compromised by a man sworn to uphold the law, not obstruct it.

Robinson may yet see the inside of a jail cell, of course, pending the outcome of his upcoming trial for perjury relating to his allegedly false testimony during the Dziekanski hearings. But until then, it seems doubtful that the tarnished reputation of the B.C. Mounties will be helped much by a former officer dodging jail time in a circumstances where the average citizen could have reasonably expected to see jail time handed down, and would almost certainly have expected to receive some themselves in caught up in similar circumstances.

National Post
mgurney@nationalpost.com

Popular Stories



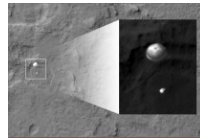
Jonathan Kay: The...



Matt Gurney: How...



Conrad Black on...



Matt Gurney: Curiosity's...

Topics: Full Comment, B.C. Politics, Canadian Politics, RCMP, Robert Dziekanski

78 comments • 22 reactions

0 Stars

Comments for this thread are now closed.

Discussion Community



LewisDodgson • 11 days ago

This guys has killed TWO people and has received suspension WITH PAY for four years prior to his resignation. Disgusting.

97 / 1 • Reply • Share



sometown • 11 days ago • parent

Agreed.

37 / 1 • Reply • Share



politically correct • 11 days ago

There is simply no respect left for the RCMP or the provincial courts of BC after the fiasco that involves this killer. The public must demand we rid ourselves of this cursed police force within the next five years when the contract comes up for renewal. In the meantime a complete overhaul of the judicial system including it's incompetent and/or biased judges must be undertaken in order to restore some small amount of respect by the public.

68 / 3 • Reply • Share



Guest • 11 days ago

Hear, hear! We have lost a lot of faith here in B.C. What was once a force we looked up to has deteriorated into a force with too many 'unpolished apples' dragging its once-proud reputation towards the gutter. The change since the 1950s is a sad reflection on the history of the RCMP. It is nowhere near the same outfit it once was and should really no longer be allowed the name of The Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

58 / 2 • Reply • Share



Keeping Them Honest • 10 days ago • parent

Time for the RCMP to get out of frontline policing ("mercenary policing")--selling themselves out to each province.

1 / • Reply • Share



pathetic • 11 days ago

"Robinson had been on suspension, with pay, since the 2008 crash"

if anything, it sounds as though he was rewarded for his previous actions

pathetic

53 / • Reply • Share



Silvanus • 11 days ago

I'll be absolutely stunned if this guy sees a day in jail.

This whole trial was not about him driving while intoxicated and killing someone...it was about him obstructing the investigation of the accident. Nowhere anywhere in this whole sordid story is there any mention...any hint...any intention of this guy being held to account for someone now dead.

And you know...there never will be. And police, especially RCMP, wonder why the average civilian doesn't trust them? Why would we?

47 / • Reply • Share



sometown • 11 days ago • parent

I agree.

17 / • Reply • Share



quadibloc • 11 days ago

I am confused. Since there were witnesses to him having been drinking before the accident, he should still have been convicted of impaired driving causing death. Of course, our laws don't hand down an adequate sentence for that - life imprisonment, with one's first parole hearing in 25 years would be appropriate - but there would be some jail time.

43 / 2 • Reply • Share



Elarie • 11 days ago • parent

© 2012 National Post, a division of Postmedia Network Inc. All rights reserved. Unauthorized distribution, transmission or republication strictly prohibited.

☺