

## **March 22, 2012 Statement of Allan Wright, father of Alvin Wright**

### **Reply to March 21, 2012 release by the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner**

My name is Allan Wright. I am the father of Alvin Wright who was shot and killed by an RCMP officer in Langley on August 7, 2010.

On March 21, 2012, more than a year and a half after my son was killed, the criminal investigation into that police officer is done. The Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner has issued what they called a *Review of the Criminal Investigation* done by the VPD.

I wish I could say that I was surprised that they found that the police did nothing wrong.

I am not surprised.

My son was working and was training to join me on the docks, working as a longshoreman. He was ringing all the right bells. He had no criminal record. He lived with his common-law wife and his beautiful daughter, my granddaughter.

When the police arrived at my son's house that evening, this was the information they had: Alvin had been drinking, and was now asleep in his room. The door of the house was closed. His common-law wife who had called 911 was safe outside, and had been drinking too. They had been fighting. She had a safe place to go. There was no noise coming from the house.

There were no crimes to investigate. The police had no reason to believe anyone was in danger.

To respond to this calm and controlled situation, the RCMP entered my son's house, went upstairs to his bedroom, confronted him with guns drawn, and killed him.

I think the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner should be called the Office of Police Protection instead.

Just this week they cleared a police officer who shot an unarmed man in the head and killed him in front of a hundred witnesses. In doing so, they created a new defence for police officers who kill unarmed people called "inattentional blindness".

This Police Complaint Commissioner looked at my son, who had gone to bed for the night to sleep off a big night out, and decided he exercised "extremely poor judgment" by going to sleep in his own room that night.

As for the RCMP officers, who took a peaceful and controlled scene and turned it into a fatal police shooting, they decided those police officers "exercised significant restraint."

Nothing about this makes any sense, until you realize, as I do now, that the job of the Police Complaint Commissioner is to protect the police.

British Columbia has the highest number of police deaths per capita in Canada, more than twice as many per person as Ontario. We are a national embarrassment for police accountability. The police operate with impunity.

I just don't understand how this is being allowed to continue.

When an RCMP officer in Agassiz driving the wrong way down a highway without his flashing lights hits another car and kills and maims people, he is not charged with manslaughter or any criminal charge, but instead is charged with "driving without due care and control."

When RCMP officers are accused of sexually assaulting girls in Prince George, the RCMP can't finish their investigation within the two year deadline, and the investigation is called off.

When a hog tied man in Prince George is dropped by RCMP officers on his front, breaking his ribs, and is Tasered repeatedly while restrained, and he dies, the officers are cleared.

When an RCMP officer in Houston shoots a young man in the back of the head and says that this young man was choking him from behind, an act that is physically impossible, nothing happens.

When a man, crawling, or falling on the road, after having been shot six times, and who is completely disarmed, is shot in the head by a police officer in Vancouver and killed, that officer is cleared.

When RCMP officers are caught on videotape killing a man at the airport, they are charged with perjury, not murder.

And these are just the cases we have heard about.

Always the same result is achieved. Nothing changes and the police keep abusing their power and lying in the face of overwhelming evidence. Innocent children and families suffer. It is my opinion that a politician's child or a police officer's child will need to be killed by the police before any meaningful change will happen.

I have no confidence that Richard Rosenthal, the head of the Independent Investigation Office, will be able to change this situation. It is too entrenched, and he will be here for two years, set up his office, and move on. He will not look at cases like my son's, or Ian Bush's, or Paul Boyd's, and these cases need justice now.

I will be participating in the Coroner's Inquest process where, hopefully, some of the truth will come out. Some outrageous allegations have been made about my son. I wish I could talk to you about what is in the documents we received from the Coroner, but I had to promise we would not disclose that information until the Inquest, or the documents would not be given to my lawyer.

This is the system we have: the police have all the information and release the information they want to, and the families get parts of the information and can't release anything. The police get a publicly funded lawyer, and the families don't. The police get away with crimes, and nobody else does.

I'm sorry to say that the way we're going, I don't think that's ever going to change in BC, but that doesn't mean that I will stop fighting for justice for Alvin and other people wrongly killed by the police.