

Commissioner Lucki,

This note is regarding a meeting you requested on Tuesday April 28, 2020, following a press conference held in 'H' Division in relation to the H-Strong investigation. I am the Director of the Division Strategic Communications Unit and have been with the Force for 12 years.

On that day, Supt. Darren Campbell completed a lengthy press conference to provide information to the public while protecting the integrity of the ongoing investigation. The objective of this press conference was to provide the victims' families, the public and our employees with the facts that we were able to share at that time.

Darren was exceptional, the best I've seen it done. He achieved exactly what we set out to accomplish and did so with poise, class, compassion and courage. Darren restored a sense of pride within our membership and represented the Force in a manner that we should hold as the standard.

Following the press conference, members of the 'H' Division management team gathered to acknowledge the incredible work that had been done, but also reflect on the collective exhaustion we were experiencing as we recognized we had months of long days and sleepless nights ahead.

During this moment of reflection, I received a phone call. D/Commr. Brian Brennan called on your behalf to organize an immediate meeting with you, and in attendance requested A/Commr. Bergerman, C/Supt. Leather, Supt. Campbell, and me. Dan Brien, Sharon Tessier, D/Commr. Brennan were also on the call.

The reason for the meeting was unclear, although I suspected it may have had to do with 'guns', given I was asked if Darren could speak about the guns less than two hours before the press conference was scheduled to take place. Prior to this day, there were conversations between NHQ and the Division about the caliber of guns and why, from an investigational standpoint, they could not be discussed publicly. I indicated in an email to the Deputy and Sharon that the caliber of the guns would not be included in Darren's remarks. It is important for me to point out that within the Division, we made a commitment that guided all of our public releases of information; a commitment to the families of the victims that prior to any public release, we would ensure they were first informed to prevent them from being re-victimized by hearing new information in the media. The families had not been provided with any information related to the guns.

You began speaking to the group and I was struggling to follow but respectfully listened. You personally attacked me, the work we had done and told us that you perceived our actions as a blatant sign of disrespect. You didn't think our communications were strategic and believed that we had "let the boys down", referring to the two young boys whose parents were brutally murdered in front of them. You spoke to us as if we didn't know what we were doing and were ignorant to government and public pressure.

Eventually, you informed us of the pressures and conversation with Minister Blair, which we clearly understood was related to the upcoming passing of the gun legislation...and there it was. I remember a feeling of disgust as I realized this was the catalyst for the conversation and perhaps a justification for what you were saying about us.

In H' Division our focus was broad in scope, it centred on the victims and their families, the public, and our people, while including political requirements at a provincial and national level. The political lens was not our sole focus. I could not believe what you, the leader of our organization, was saying and I was embarrassed to be privy to what was unfolding. It was appalling, inappropriate, unprofessional, and extremely belittling. As the Commissioner of Canada's National Police Force, there is never an appropriate time or audience to be on the receiving end of what you felt it necessary to say.

Collectively around that table, there was plenty of leadership and experience, thankfully. Like you, we have all worked with and alongside many high ranking leaders within the RCMP, including former Commissioners, therefore the realities of Ottawa are not as foreign as one may think. I could empathize with you and the challenges you were facing; I don't envy your position for a second. I remain shocked though at your inability to extend that same sentiment to a team of your people who were facing the largest mass shooting in our country's history - a team who had pressures coming from governments at every level, while at the same time, having the world watching our every move and the global media criticizing our people, including the actions of a fallen member. Our friend and colleague was murdered, there were over twenty individual stories of unbelievable terror that will haunt us forever, and employees were falling apart physically and mentally. Our members were looking to their leaders for help and reassurance. Suffice it to say, what we were facing in Nova Scotia, day in and day out, likely looked and felt very different from the vantage point in Ottawa.

It stood out to me that once you were informed that there was a miscommunication, and Sharon advised that she briefed incorrectly and we had never intended to mention the guns, you did not see it fitting to apologize or take accountability for what you said. I do appreciate others who spoke up to try and minimize on your behalf what just took place, but no one else should have to be accountable for your delivery.

I want to share something personal with you, with a hope of imparting empathy so that this does not happen to another group of people and to ensure you appreciate the impact of words. Do you remember saying to us, "You let those boys down"? A week earlier, the details of the boys' parents being murdered in front of them were discussed internally. Hearing about the foot chase through the home that ended with the boys lying for hours with their parents who were shot to death, while our OCC operator stayed with them on the line and while our ERT team tried to get them out,

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To have anyone in the RCMP say we/I let the boys down. There is nothing that makes that acceptable, especially that it was said by the person, who by rank, is at the top of our organization. It was a revealing moment, one where I realized we were not aligned. Our focus was on the families and on the boys not on the legislation being passed on May 1, 2020.

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Fortunately, I remain friends with many current and former leaders within the RCMP who reminded me why I do what I do – I care about our people – period.

I will forever remain appalled at what took place during that meeting and will use it as a point of growth and a lesson in leadership and values. Ma'am, the core values of the RCMP are only words on paper unless you live them and represent them.

Regards,

Lia Scanlan