



---

## PRESS ADVISORY

# CHIEF SAUNDERS IN THE DARK ABOUT BRUTAL BEATING OF DAFONTE MILLER and MISAPPREHENDS THE LAW ON HIS REPORTING OBLIGATIONS: OIPRD REPORT

**August 7, 2020**

The Office of the Independent Police Review Director (“OIPRD”) yesterday released its report regarding a complaint made on behalf of Dafonte Miller against Chief of Police of the Toronto Police Service (“TPS”) Mark Saunders.

Dafonte Miller received the report from the Toronto Police Services Board only minutes before Interim Police Chief James Ramer went public and held a press conference yesterday on August 6, 2020.

Mr. Miller’s OIPRD complaint alleged that Chief Saunders breached the *Police Services Act* by failing to notify the Special Investigations Unit (“SIU”) of TPS Constable Michael Theriault’s off-duty arrest and assault of Mr. Miller on December 28, 2016, and that the failure to report was intended to shield Michael Theriault from criminal charges.

The OIPRD revealed that Chief Saunders was kept in the dark for five months about the brutal beating of Dafonte Miller and indicated that he was not made aware of the incident until May 2, 2017, when the SIU advised that it was invoking its mandate.

Dafonte Miller commented: **“For the first time yesterday, the Toronto Police Service finally acknowledged that they were wrong for not notifying the SIU of what Michael Theriault did to me. The Chief’s press conference and the OIPRD report came as a complete surprise to me and my family. Sincere apologies are important, public relations exercises are not. I believe that true accountability comes from professionals owning up to their mistakes. I have never heard from former Chief Saunders. Until yesterday morning, minutes before he went public, I had never heard of Interim Chief Ramer. Sadly, this does nothing to build bridges – they are simply making it worse for me and my family.”**



Lawyer Julian Falconer of Falconers LLP, who acts for Dafonte Miller and his family in investigating the police misconduct and commencing Mr. Miller's civil lawsuit, stated:

**“Today we learn for the first time that Chief Saunders was in the dark on both the facts of Dafonte’s assault and his legal obligations to have the matter independently investigated. Hear no evil, see no evil: that’s what it looks like. Publicity stunts aside, the Toronto Police Service has a lot of explaining to do on the failure of senior officers to understand their duties and to tell the truth about the role of Theriault senior. It is shocking and quite frankly embarrassing that the Chief of the Toronto Police Service was not made aware of the brutal assault of Mr. Miller by one of his officers until 5 months later, on May 2, 2017. It is beyond me how one of his officers, while off-duty, arrested and brutally assaulted a member of the public – which resulted in my client losing his eye and suffering facial fractures – and none of the officers or their superiors, who received the information that night, thought it would be appropriate to advise the Chief of Police.**

**“This report simply confirms what we have suspected all along: that shenanigans were going on at different levels of the Toronto Police Service all aimed at keeping a lid on what was done to Dafonte Miller. The question remains what role did TPS Det. John Theriault, Michael Theriault’s father, have in this matter.**

**“The fact that the Chief of Police was ignorant to the facts of the incident, and also ignorant on the law around his duty to notify the SIU, does a terrible disservice to the public he was sworn to protect.”**

**To join the press conference call at 11 a.m. EDT on August 7, 2020, dial either 1-888-424-9894 (toll-free from anywhere in North America) or 647-427-3383. When prompted, enter the teleconference ID of 1323205.**

*For further information, please contact Dottie Goriah of Falconers LLP during business hours at 416-964-0495, extension 243.*

