

Reports of excessive force prompt chief to initiate probe

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into the driver's door, forcing it closed. The man then jumps out the passenger side door.

Two officers rush toward the man with their guns drawn. He tries to jump the barrier into the northbound lanes but fails.

One of the officers runs up from behind and strikes the man on the back of the head with his handgun. The man falls to the ground behind the pickup, hidden from the camera's view.

At that point, it appears the same officer stomps on the man's legs. As the man attempts to get up, he is again struck on the top of the head with a pistol by the second officer.

Within seconds, about 12 officers converge on the scene, making it difficult to see the suspect, who is dragged out from behind the truck. But it appears the officer who struck the man on the head also stomped on his lower extremities three to four times during the takedown.

After the man is handcuffed, one officer walks away, gripping his hand as he grimaces in pain.

"The aftermath was mass confusion," said the anonymous officer. "You had a lot of guys really pumped up and that's a hard thing to control. It has a lot to do with maturity."

Fantino said he initiated the probe as soon as he was made aware of the allegations of excessive force. He said the public should be cautious in jumping to conclusions, suggesting television often does not portray the reality of a situation.

"These were serious criminal offences that were ongoing. Even the driving situation elevated the element of danger to police and to the public," Fantino said. "He was armed, he tried to vault the barrier, which would have put him squarely in oncoming traffic at a high rate of speed on a busy highway — maybe we saved his life."

Fantino stressed the man was driving a stolen vehicle, was armed and obviously violent, as he had

already threatened a security guard with a knife.

"If that doesn't constitute a high level of threat to the officers' safety and public safety, I don't know what does," he said. "We're supposed to go after armed and dangerous criminals. That's what police work is all about."

Several other theories about the TV images of the suspect's bloodied clothes and face were floating around York police stations yesterday.

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One officer cut his hand in the melee and the officers speculated the blood on the suspect may be from that injury. The man may also have been injured as a result of the crash, or when the cruiser hit the driver's door.

Fantino said he'd like to see the probe wrap up as quickly as possible and urged residents to be "tempered and reasonable" until it's completed.

"We all owe it to the greater public good to wait for the facts to be determined," Fantino said. "The things I've heard so far are rather inflammatory."

Dang Khoa Lieu, 24, is charged with one count each of robbery, assault with a weapon, weapons dangerous, theft over \$5,000, possession of stolen property over \$5,000, escape lawful custody, dangerous driving, engage police in pursuit, fail to stop and obstruct police. The latter charge relates to the fact the man initially gave police a fake name.

He was also wanted on a Toronto Police warrant for drug trafficking.

He was to appear for a bail hearing in Newmarket Provincial Court late Friday.

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