

# News Release

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Friday, May 24, 2024

## **Heiltsuk Nation Demands Immediate Suspension and Removal of RCMP Constable Over Racist Social Media Posts**

Dressed in British regalia in front of the Union Jack flag, Constable Adrian Robinson asks, “Now, whats [sic] to be done about these pesky natives stirring up trouble in the colonies...?”

BELLA BELLA, BRITISH COLUMBIA (May 24, 2024) – Heiltsuk Nation leadership is calling for the immediate suspension and removal of Constable Adrian Robinson from the Bella Bella RCMP detachment, in response to a potentially volatile and escalating safety situation, after the discovery of a series of racist posts made by Robinson on his Facebook account.

A protest is planned for noon today in front of the RCMP office in Bella Bella, which follows a meeting between Heiltsuk and RCMP leadership on Wednesday, during which the RCMP stated that despite initiating a transfer process, Cst. Robinson will remain on active duty in Bella Bella for up to 90 days, during which time he is supposed to be accompanied by another officer when responding to calls.

Posting under the Facebook name “Adrian Reubenstein,” Robinson posted a series of racist and intolerant selfies and captions that were discovered by Heiltsuk community members and provoked a strong reaction, including complaints to the RCMP commissioner.

The posts include:

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- Posing in front of the Union Jack in colonial regalia with the comment, “Now, whats [sic] to be done about these pesky natives stirring up trouble in the colonies...?”
- Crouching and aiming a rifle, in camouflage, with the caption, “This’l [sic] teach those jehovah’s witnesses to come in to [sic] my yard”
- Two selfies where he wears a black afro wig, with his hand raised in a fist, with the captions, “Black and Proud” and “where’s my pick comb?”

“Our community members have seen these postings, which are discriminatory against Indigenous people, and show intolerance against people of colour and different faiths,” said Marilyn Slett, elected Chief of the Heiltsuk Nation. “These are connected to a much deeper pattern of colonial violence and systemic racism against Indigenous people. Our members are angry and feel unsafe that Cst. Robinson is still on active duty in Bella Bella. All trust has been lost. We demand the immediate suspension and removal of Cst. Robinson from our community.”

“This cop has a racist bias toward Indigenous people, and because of that bias he is not a safe person to serve our community,” said Vine-ah Brown, a Heiltsuk community member writing on Facebook. “This bias could hurt someone or even worse, kill someone. Racist cops kill Black and Brown people. He is desensitized to our issues and does not see our humanity. He needs to leave before he moves from offending someone to hurting someone. We deserve better.”



RCMP is so far refusing to initiate a Code of Conduct investigation that could put Robinson on immediate desk duty or a transfer to another assignment out of Bella Bella, saying the posts do not qualify as a conduct violation because they were made prior to his hiring. Heiltsuk leadership and legal counsel reject this explanation, as the impugned posts are evidence of bad character and contravene the RCMP's Code of Conduct and the responsibilities of every RCMP member under the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act, including potential concealment during the hiring process and when he was appointed to the Bella Bella RCMP detachment.

"We have been asking RCMP to work with our joint leadership in the hiring, recruiting and vetting process for officers stationed in our community for years now," said Hemas Harvey Humchitt, a Hereditary Chief of the Heiltsuk Nation. "It is outrageous that an officer with Constable Robinson's social media history could be stationed in an Indigenous community, and it underscores the urgent need to work together to ensure this never happens again."

Since sending private letters to the RCMP to request Robinson's removal, Chief Slett has received anonymous and extremely misogynistic and vulgar hate mail accusing her of being a "race baitor." The timing of the email is suspicious given that only Heiltsuk and RCMP leadership, and the Constable himself, have been aware of the communications up to this point.



Copies of Constable Robinson's social media posts and community reaction to them are available here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/15C7WPo02ogo3rj-gGyNnd6RJON0zradz>

Copies of letters sent by Heiltsuk leaders to the RCMP are available here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1d0fyoC8tdVblqWvcpnF92HaEA-MEWes8>

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