

Police shoot steer dead following chase

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By Bal Brach, Canwest News Service

What started as a seemingly lighthearted story of cattle roaming through a Mississauga neighbourhood yesterday morning quickly turned deadly serious after a police officer fired more than a dozen shots and killed one of the animals.

“We were following this cow that was running in the main streets of the subdivision and all of a sudden it turned and started charging at the officer,” said Ontario Provincial Police Const. Dave Woodford. “He just pulled his handgun out and started shooting at it. It would be like a car coming at you, that’s what it would be like.”

The incident started after a pickup truck hauling four cattle rolled over during the morning rush hour on Highway 427 in Mississauga.

While the driver was not hurt, the animals broke free and walked across the highway, bringing several lanes of traffic to a standstill.

“They ran up the QEW [Queen Elizabeth Way] and were smart enough to get off at Dixie Road so they didn’t get hit by any cars,” Woodford said.

Woodford added that police were unprepared for this type of encounter, and therefore did not have a tranquillizer gun to use as an alternative to live bullets.

“We looked at the safety of people and the safety of the officers at the time, and we weren’t prepared to shoot it,” he said. “That wasn’t in our plan.”

Officers have not yet determined what caused the trailer to roll over, but Woodford believes it could have been a curve in the highway off-ramp.

“With the weight of the trailer hauling on the back of the pickup and coming down that ramp, it could have been too fast on the curve.”

“It was sort of a nice story this morning but it didn’t end up that way,” he said.

While no one was seriously injured in the incident, the Queen Elizabeth Way was closed for a short time.

Woodford wasn’t sure where the cattle were being taken, but said it may have been a slaughterhouse.

Photo: Police attempt to recapture one of four cattle which took refuge in a residential area of Mississauga after the truck they were in flipped on the nearby Queen Elizabeth Way and freed them. One of the four was shot and killed by police while three were safely rounded up. (Peter Redman/National Post)