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By Caryl Churchill

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‘Hundreds, if not thousands’ of cases tainted

Defence lawyers told to review convictions involving four charged police officers

DEAN PRITCHARD

WINNIPEG defence lawyers are being asked to wade through “hundreds, if not thousands” of old case files looking for possible miscarriages of justice following the arrest of four city police officers on corruption charges.

Last month, Manitoba Prosecution Services sent letters to every defence lawyer who has represented a client whose conviction involved Winnipeg Police Service constables Elston Bostock, Vernon Strutinsky, Jonathan Kiazzyk or Matthew Kadyniuk. Bostock, a 22-year veteran of the police service, was first arrested last

November and then re-arrested on more charges in August, along with the three co-accused officers. The officers face a raft of charges, including breaking and entering, theft, drug trafficking, breach of trust and extortion. “Out of an abundance of caution, you are receiving this letter because a conviction was entered on the above charge(s) and Officer Bostock had involvement in the incident’s file,” read one of the letters sent by Winnipeg trials director Jennifer Mann, a copy of which was reviewed by the *Free Press*.

The letter concludes with a list of the charges Bostock is facing. He is accused of conducting more than 80 drug deals while on and off duty over the course of nearly nine years, among many other allegations. He has also been accused of taking an intimate photo of a half-naked dead woman at a sudden-death call, then texting the picture to another officer. Neither Mann nor Justice Minister Matt Wiebe could be reached for comment Thursday. The intent of the letter is made clear in a subsequent “Notice to the

Profession” distributed by Legal Aid Manitoba. “If you have received one of these letters, your duty as counsel requires that you do a summary review to determine whether the conduct of the officer named in the letter may have committed misconduct and whether that misconduct would have reasonably resulted in a miscarriage of justice,” reads the notice, adding the agency has not been provided funding to pay defence counsel for the work.

● CASES, CONTINUED ON A2



WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS MY FRIEND

The Oak Park Raiders hoist the the ANAVETS Bowl at Princess Auto Stadium after defeating the Dakota Lancers 22-17 in the Manitoba High Schools Athletic Association championship game. See coverage on page D1.

Government lawyer facing pointed questions

Supreme Court skeptical on Trump tariffs

KELLY GERALDINE MALONE

WASHINGTON — Countries around the world — Canada included — are waiting anxiously as the U.S. Supreme Court considers whether President Donald Trump has the authority to continue using his favoured tariff tool. No matter which way the court jumps, however, the Trump administration is expected to maintain some level of tariffs on the United States’ trade partners.

Trump told reporters in the Oval Office on Thursday it would be “devastating” for the country if the top court rules against him, “but I also think we will have to develop a game two plan.” The conservative-led U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments Wednesday related to two separate legal challenges of Trump’s use of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act for tariffs. Trump used the national security statute, better known as IEEPA, to impose his so-called “Liberation Day” tariffs and fentanyl-related duties on Canada, Mexico and China. Trump’s top Supreme Court lawyer, Solicitor General D. John Sauer, faced pointed questions when he appeared before the court Wednesday. Several justices voiced skepticism about the president’s use of IEEPA when the statute itself does not include the word “tariff” or any of its synonyms. The justices closely examined the language in the act — particularly the wording about the president’s power to “regulate” imports — to determine whether that allows for Trump’s wide-ranging tariffs. Sauer argued that Trump is using IEEPA to regulate foreign commerce rather than raise money — despite Trump’s repeated public claims that the duties are making America rich. The U.S. Constitution reserves power over taxation and tariffs for Congress. The justices wrestled with the broader implications of handing wide-ranging tariff powers to the president.

● TARIFFS, CONTINUED ON A2

From gas bars to food courts, theft and violence taking a serious toll on business

Wholesale mayhem, retail nightmare

SCOTT BILLECK

IT wasn’t the first time she felt unsafe. An employee at a business in Winnipeg’s Westwood neighbourhood had a cup of coffee hurled at her by a customer recently. Sometimes, she says she has had to lock the doors because she knows the person outside isn’t just looking for a snack — they’re a threat. Other times, she’s kept her distance, hoping the danger would pass. The woman, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, says incidents have become so common they almost feel normal. “It’s a s—t-show,” she said with a laugh, describing the growing chaos. She wasn’t surprised to hear a gas bar just down the road in the 3600 block of Portage Avenue was held up at knifepoint Sunday night. Not with what she’s seeing on the

news and on social media, including security footage from a Logan Avenue convenience store where, on Oct. 28, two people walked in after 1 a.m., held the clerk at gunpoint, poured liquid from a gas can onto the floor and set the building ablaze. “It’s absolutely disgusting.” At CF Polo Park, the city’s largest shopping centre, violence has become routine. One food court employee said the area was recently evacuated after someone discharged pepper spray, sending customers and workers gasping for air. Mall management would not confirm the incident this week, but other workers described similar scenes. “We couldn’t breathe,” said one food court employee. Fights are a common occurrence, and so is the presence of police. “You get used to it,” a worker said. “It happens every day.”

The unease extends beyond malls and convenience stores. On Sunday, a woman was arrested at a Shoppers Drug Mart in the 1100 block of Henderson Highway after threatening security guards with a hatchet when they stopped her from stealing. “It’s scary,” said the employee from the Westwood business, adding she believes a city safety initiative that began in September — Winnipeg Police Service officers are riding on some Winnipeg Transit buses and patrolling near bus shelters — has led to fewer incidents. “People aren’t paying for fares to come rob us out here.” Police reported 325 violent crimes at Winnipeg Transit locations in 2024 — a record high, nearly triple the 2019 total. The WPS said it will target high-risk incidents to support Transit’s community safety team, noting many recent cases exceeded that team’s

capacity. Despite two recent high-profile incidents — the knife pulled at the Portage Avenue gas bar and the hatchet threat on Henderson — police data shows that knife-related crimes are down this year. Both accused have lengthy records of run-ins with police, according to court records, including for theft, robberies and violence. Between January and September, 925 knife-related offences were reported to police — a 17 per cent decrease compared to the same period in 2024, and 12 per cent below the five-year average. Police note that their statistics do not distinguish between different types of knives, such as machetes, switchblades or other bladed weapons.

● CRIME, CONTINUED ON A4

