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## Dealing with 'police-involved' violence

Written by [Jean Cumming](#)

Tuesday, 01 August 2017

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Two Canadian legal experts offered their opinions on “police-involved” violence during the “Justice for All: The Promise of Our Legal System” panel session held at the National Bar Association’s annual conference in Toronto on July 30.

Speaking before an audience of predominantly African-American NBA members at the organization’s conference at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel Sunday, human rights lawyer Julian Falconer of Falconers LLP and Senator Gwen Boniface, a former commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police, weighed in with their professional experience along with Don Lewis of Nilan Johnson Lewis PA and Dennis Archer of Dickinson Wright.

The American-based National Bar Association was founded in 1925 when certain African-Americans were denied membership in the American Bar Association.

For more information on this and other legal topics, visit [http://www.canadianlawyermag.com/legalfeeds/3949/dealing-with-police-involved-violence.html](#)

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At the panel session, Falconer spoke passionately about many aspects of this case, including the alleged “it was not a coverup” position-taking by both police forces. He was most critical of the police officers at the scene who did not interview the eyewitness who came forward, adding Miller’s “blood was in the man’s house.”

“I don’t think it is training alone,” said Boniface, or at least not all in-class training. Field training is extremely important, she continued, and for that “the choice of field trainer is crucial.” And, said Boniface, there needs to be more “scenario-based training.”

She added that 40 per cent of police calls in some municipalities involve issues of mental health and traditional police training may just not be up to that pressure. One police officer told Boniface, “training doesn’t provide preparation for the scenarios actually faced.”

The panelists discussed the need for police to heighten their community relationships. Boniface, the first female president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, and former commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police, took on an advisory position with Ireland's Garda Síochána Inspectorate (National Police Force) in 2006. According to Boniface, the Irish police would say, "Don't police by force, police by consent."

Thomson Reuters, which publishes *Legal Feeds*, sponsored the panel event.

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