



YWCA
T O R O N T O

A TURNING POINT
FOR WOMEN



To: Chair of the Police Services Board
From: YWCA Toronto
Re: Consultation for new chief of police for the Police Services of Toronto

Tuesday February 15th, 2005

Background

YWCA Toronto is the city's oldest and largest women's service association. We are the city's only multi-service organization by, for and about women and girls. We welcome women of all faiths, sexual orientations, races, cultural affiliations and creeds. We provide shelter, housing, counselling, employment programs and outdoor education for 49,000 women, men and girls from across the city.

1. What are the issues and challenges facing the Toronto Police Service today and over the next 2-3 years?

The implementation of the Jane Doe audit and the full recognition of the insights included in the original judgment in the case that led to the audit by Judge McFarlane remain pressing concerns for our association. No less so, we are concerned about the evidence of racial profiling –vigorously denied by the current chief—that is certainly borne out by the anecdotal evidence brought to our attention by our membership.

With regard to sexual assault, McFarlane's judgment, the original 1999 audit, the interim review and the most recent Auditor General's report all have called for sweeping changes to how police are trained to deal with the issue of sexual assault.

Jeffrey Griffiths' January 2005 report makes clear the need for continued collaborative work with the women's anti-violence services, and a complete overhaul of police training in order to keep true to the recommendations of the original audit report from 1999. To us, these two broad areas encompass the operational details that require attention, as per the Auditor General's Report.

Seeing violence against women in the cold factual light of day means understanding that the majority of assaults take place within the context of relationships of trust, by perpetrators known to the woman. This in turn begs the understanding of the crime as one of domination rather than sexual gratification. It also begs the understanding that each form of violence against women is linked on a continuum to the other. Judge McFarlane made this point when she surfaced that the investigation into the rape of Jane Doe might have been resolved more quickly had the police been searching for a pattern of violence against women: the rapist in that case has already been on record for assaulting his spouse. His address was within the area police were targeting. His profile

as a misogynist would have, in a different framework of reference, earmarked him as a suspect long before Jane Doe herself was raped.

We stand by the advocacy work of Jane Doe, and have awarded her our highest honour. In 2002, she received the Woman of Distinction Award for Social Justice. We stand by this work because it mirrors, echoes and addresses the experiences we hear from ordinary women who experience violence every day.

YWCA Toronto has been involved in this issue since the ruling in Jane Doe's case –as part of the professional consultation team that supported the auditor's work, and as part of the Reference group that assisted the original review and follow-up.

The recalcitrance, foot-dragging and outright belligerence that we have witnessed in the official police responses and reactions to this whole audit process, now into its 6th year –but actually dragging on now since Jane Doe's legal battle began in 1986—has created a deteriorated service to women and beleaguered relations with potential allies in the women's anti-violence community. Fixing this will take a leader of remarkable sincerity, skill, commitment and an ability to deliver real change within a complacent, insular and outdated institution. Having said this, if sincere and committed officers can deliver at the front lines in this atmosphere –which most certainly some do—then real leadership accompanied with the guts to assume power **with**, instead of power **over** community concerns, will also be able to deliver.

Clearly, as the Auditor's report indicates, there is a great deal of overlap of concerns about the police services relations with ethno-racial communities, those with mental health issues, sex trade workers and Transgendered communities. Until the police catch up to the values of the city they are serving and protecting, and until their chief can hear concerns from citizens without taking it personally and becoming defensive, we will not have a reformed police service that sees people through a citizens' "rights and responsibilities" framework. We will remain stuck with a police service operating from a 19th century "criminalize and demean" framework.

2. what should the priorities be for the new chief?

Institutional reform, guiding a culture shift, supporting change and restructuring the location of expertise should top the list for the new chief. This should incorporate input from the community that builds toward a renewed credibility and accountability to/with community that will strengthen the internal buy in.

Specifically, we recommend that the Police Services take stock and ensure that violence against women –that is the continuum of violence from domestic abuse to sexual assault—be highlighted as one the key strategic priorities of the Police Services Priorities. Currently the stated priorities take us to 2004, and include Youth Violence and Victimization of Youth; Organized Crime; Traffic Safety; Drug Enforcement and Education; Human Resource Development; Service Infrastructure; and Community Safety and Satisfaction. It should be redeveloped with the named priorities of tackling violence against women and improving race relations. Name it clearly, and then you can address and measure it. If the only crime that is rising is the one of violence against women, then surely that makes it priority, even if repairing relations was not enough of a reason. We understand that the Police Services are not run by individuals or groups that operate outside the police institutional structures. We merely want to participate in the development of policing that benefits from community involvement and support.

The woman known as Jane Doe will be the first to tell you that this work is not about one person, one good or bad handling of a rape case, “good” cops or “bad cops”. This is about key strategic priorities that match the reality of a crime that none of us has been able to prevent, adequately respond to or thoroughly prosecute in isolation. Change is not the enemy. Women’s services are not the enemy. The police are not the enemy. The assaulted women of Toronto are not the enemy. The Police Services Board is not the enemy. Sadly, this “who is the enemy” mentality has plagued our work on race relations and violence against women crime prevention.

The original Auditor’s Report on Sexual Assault landed on the desk of out-going Chief Boothby, and our engagement with it officially has sat there ever since. The evidence-based support to community concerns about racial profiling landed on Chief Fantino’s desk, whence it was unconvincingly dismissed and ridiculed. These priorities for an incoming Chief cannot be over-stressed. Expectations will be high. We need a chief with more than rudimentary skills at handling public debate and citizen’s concerns.

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