**Submission to the Toronto Police Services Board Town Hall**

Nina Patti

July 16, 2020

I am uniquely unqualified to speak about the topics of racism in policing, police brutality, reform, accountability and community safety. So instead I’d like to describe to you what it feels like to live an unpoliced life, although I think many of the Board members reading this may already know. I live in and grew up in Rosedale. Like the majority of our neighbourhood, I am white and attended a private high school. There were no police officers at my school. I have never seen a police officer patrolling my neighbourhood. I have never been stopped on the street and questioned by an officer. In fact, in 20 years of living in Toronto, I’ve spoken to a police officer exactly twice.

This is not because there is no crime in my neighbourhood. We have everything from small time drug dealers to some of the worst tax evaders and white collar criminals in the country. This is just how it works when you live an unpoliced life. I don’t worry that someone will call the cops on me if I take a nap in a park. I don’t worry that I will be stopped for no reason as I go about my day. I don’t worry that bending the rules a bit will get me killed. I barely think about police at all and it seems they barely think of me. It’s really not bad! But it doesn’t work like this for everyone, and that’s the problem.

For so many people in Toronto, Black people, Indigenous people, other racialized people, unsheltered people, trans people, sex workers, people with addiction, with mental illness… an encounter with police is dangerous. Not only have police utterly failed in their duty to serve and protect our community, they are themselves often the biggest threat to safety. And it seems that despite decades of calls for reform, cultural change, training, and better policies, the police are unable to fix themselves. How could they? It’s in their DNA. Police were built to protect people like me, and to criminalize everyone else. It’s time to start over and build something better. I urge the TPSB to immediately adopt the demands of Black Lives Matter Toronto, including the following:

* Immediately reduce the TPS budget by 50%
* Demilitarize and disarm police and end mass surveillance of our communities
* Remove cops from schools and university and college campuses
* Reduce the scope of police:
  + End the policing of public transportation
  + End the policing of minor bylaw infractions and noise complaints
  + End paid-duty policing program
  + End police collaboration with the CBSA
  + Eliminate all stealth police cars and plainclothes operations
  + Eliminate community policing patrols in highly racialized communities
  + End Carding

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission.