



Home security starting from the inside out

By Tom Reimer

Home security starting from the inside out

Here's a fresh, original story centered on home security and protecting valuables—no recycled plot, no clichés, just a clean narrative with practical ideas woven into the fiction.

The house sat quietly at the end of the cul-de-sac, its windows glowing with warm evening light. Inside, Marissa moved through each room with a deliberate calm, checking the small details most people overlooked. She wasn't paranoid—just prepared. After a break-in on her street last winter, she'd decided her home would never be an easy target.

She started in the living room, where her grandmother's jewelry box rested inside a cabinet. It looked ordinary enough, but the cabinet itself was anchored to the wall, and the jewelry box was empty. The real heirlooms—rings, brooches, and a delicate gold necklace—were locked in a fire-rated safe bolted to the floor in her upstairs closet. A thief could smash every drawer in the house and still walk away with nothing but splinters.

Next, she checked the windows. Each one had security film, nearly invisible but strong enough to slow down anyone trying to smash their way in. The sensors blinked softly, armed and ready. She tested the latch on the back sliding door, then tugged gently on the dowel rod she kept in the track. Simple, cheap, effective.

Her phone buzzed. A notification from her camera system: motion detected in the driveway. She glanced at the screen—just a raccoon waddling past the car. Still, she appreciated the reminder that her cameras were always watching, always recording. The system uploaded footage to the cloud automatically, so even if someone tried to destroy the cameras, the evidence would survive. She walked into the hallway and paused at the console table. Beneath it, hidden behind a decorative basket, was a small lockbox containing her passport, birth certificate, and spare credit card. Not exactly a fortress, but enough to keep important documents from being snatched in a quick grab-and-go burglary.

Upstairs, she opened the closet and checked the safe. Solid steel, digital keypad, anchored into the studs. Inside were her valuables—but also a USB drive with scanned copies of every important document she owned. If disaster ever struck, she'd have backups ready.

As she closed the safe, she heard a soft chime from the front door. Someone had opened it. Her heart jumped, but only for a moment—she recognized the pattern. Her neighbor, Daniel, had come by to borrow the ladder she kept in the garage. She'd given him a temporary access code earlier that day.

"Just grabbing the ladder," he called out.

"No problem," she replied, smiling. Even trust had layers. Temporary codes expired automatically, and her system logged every entry.

When he left, she locked the door behind him and glanced around her home. It wasn't a fortress, and she didn't want it to feel like one. But it was secure—quietly, intelligently, confidentially secure.

Marissa turned off the lights, set the alarm, and headed upstairs. Her home wasn't just where she lived. It was where her memories lived, where her future lived, where everything she valued was protected. And she intended to keep it that way.

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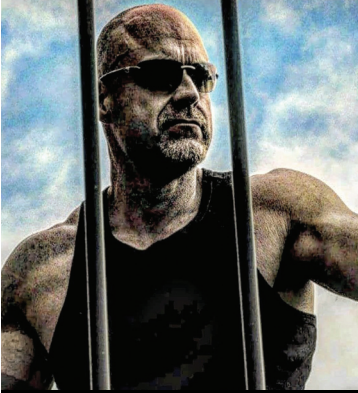
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THE

Mr.

X

Files

By John Mutton

CENTRAL EXCLUSIVE

Karmageddon

MR. X: Two Mayor's Races - And Two Candidates Worth Watching

By Mr. 'X' ~ John Mutton, Former Mayor of Clarington

Election campaigns have a funny way of looking predictable - right up until they aren't. Over the past several weeks, I have been following municipal races across Durham Region, looking at everything from candidate experience and organization to issues, historical voting patterns and what appears to be happening on the ground.

Two races particularly interest me: Oshawa and Clarington. And I'll disclose something right at the beginning. While I intend to continue analyzing these races based on the evidence, I have a positive view of Tito-Dante Marimpietri in Oshawa and Tom Dingwall in Clarington. Readers can decide for themselves whether they agree. Oshawa: Nine Candidates, One Chair.

Oshawa's election is fascinating because Mayor Dan Carter isn't seeking another term and nine candidates are competing to replace him. The certified field includes Sherland Chhangur, Michael Coons, Derek Giberson, Jeremy Large, Jim Lee, Tito-Dante Marimpietri, Henry Onwuachu, Joseph Tomlins and Dave Westlake.

That is an extraordinarily fragmented ballot. And it is one reason I keep coming back to Tito-Dante Marimpietri.

Whatever your opinion of Tito, nobody can reasonably describe him as inexperienced in municipal government. He has spent more than two decades in Oshawa municipal politics and currently serves as a Regional and City Councillor.

There is something else I believe matters. Oshawa is sitting beside one of the greatest economic opportunities this region has seen in generations: Ontario's nuclear expansion. OPG, Darlington, the SMR program, nuclear supply-chain investment and thousands of skilled-trades and professional jobs are transforming Durham's economic landscape.

The next Mayor of Oshawa should be asking a very simple question: How much of that investment can Oshawa capture? That means offices. Engineering companies. Nuclear suppliers. Professional employment. Skilled trades. Restaurants and businesses serving those workers. And, particularly in my view, an opportunity to bring high-quality employment into downtown Oshawa.

Our earlier assessment identified economic development as one of Marimpietri's stronger areas, while also recognizing the obvious vulnerability that accompanies a long record in office: voters wanting change can hold that record against him. That's the kind of trade-off voters should actually examine.

Clarington: No Place to Hide.

Cross the municipal boundary and the mathematics change completely. Clarington voters have only two choices for mayor: Tom Dingwall and Adrian Foster. Foster isn't a newcomer. He is serving his fourth term as mayor, so voters have a substantial record on which to judge him. And that's precisely why I find Dingwall's candidacy interesting.

A two-person election strips away most of the usual electoral noise. There is no third candidate to split the opposition vote. No fourth candidate to absorb protest votes. No complicated mathematical path involving somebody winning with 30 percent.

Clarington voters get a straightforward choice between an incumbent administration and an alternative. I have known municipal government from both sides of the council table, and one thing I have learned is that elections shouldn't simply be about personalities. They should be about what municipal government actually does with your money. What are the core services? What should they cost? Are taxpayers receiving value? Which programs are required, which are discretionary, and are there things municipalities continue doing simply because they've always done them? Those are questions I believe deserve much more attention in municipal politics. And they are among the reasons I am interested in the direction Dingwall is presenting.

Analysis Isn't Polling -

There is one other point I want to make because readers are going to see more election analysis from me over the coming weeks. I've developed analytical models for several municipal races. They are not polls.

My September Oshawa analysis, for example, specifically described its percentages as analytical probabilities rather than voter-intention polling or projected vote share. That's an important distinction. I don't intend to manufacture a poll and tell you that 37 percent of Oshawa supports Candidate X when nobody actually surveyed Oshawa voters. Instead, I look at measurable information: previous election results, candidate experience, campaign organization, issues, endorsements, public visibility and developments during the campaign. Then I update the analysis as the evidence changes.

And Here's Where I Stand

So I'll make my own perspective transparent. I like what I see in Tito-Dante Marimpietri's potential to capitalize on Oshawa's economic opportunities. And in Clarington, I like the discussion Tom Dingwall is bringing about municipal priorities, services and the direction of local government. That doesn't mean either candidate gets a free pass in this column. If they stumble, I'll say so. If their opponents make a good proposal, I'll say that too. And when the evidence changes, the analysis should change with it.

Because there's a difference between having an opinion and manipulating the numbers to support it. Readers deserve to know which is which. Between now and election day, these two neighbouring municipalities are going to give political junkies two very different elections to watch. Oshawa has nine candidates fighting to emerge from the crowd. Clarington has two candidates fighting over the direction of the municipality.

And I'll be watching both.



