



Lisa Robinson

PICKERING CITY COUNCILLOR

Clothing Is Not Consent

There is a certain kind of conversation you only have on a doorstep. No microphone, no agenda, no gallery watching. Just two people and whatever they actually believe.

I was canvassing in Pickering, talking about the things residents raise most often when you give them the chance — safe streets, safe parks, human trafficking in Durham, and whether a woman can walk home at night without doing the arithmetic every woman learns to do. A man I was speaking with looked me in the eye and told me that women and girls bring rape upon themselves by the way they dress. That men have a right to act on those weaknesses.

I have been called a great many things in the last four years, and I have learned to keep my composure through most of it. I did not keep it well that afternoon. I stood on a sidewalk in the city I have spent my adult life serving, and I felt something closer to grief than anger.

So let me be clear, in the plainest words I own. No girl brings rape upon herself. No woman asks for it. A woman does not surrender her safety, her dignity, or her bodily autonomy because of what she chose to wear that morning. Clothing is not consent. Appearance is not permission. And rape is the responsibility of the rapist — full stop, no footnote, no context that softens it.

I want to be careful here, because this is where these conversations usually go wrong. I am not talking about one man at one door. If it were one man, it would be a story and not a column. I am talking about an idea — an old, tired, cowardly idea that has outlived every civilization that ever indulged it, and that still finds a hearing in living rooms in this country. The idea that a man's impulses are a force of nature and a woman's clothing is the thing that provokes them. The idea that self-control is optional equipment.

It is not optional. It is the price of admission to a free society. We do not build our laws, our streets, or our cities around the appetites of whoever refuses to govern himself. We build them around the rights of the people he would otherwise harm.

And notice what that idea really asks of us. It asks us to lower our expectations of men. I decline. I have more respect for the men of this city than that — for the fathers who walk their daughters to the rink, for the sons who call their mothers, for the men who would put themselves between a stranger and harm without being asked twice. Those men are the rule here, not the exception, and they are insulted by the excuse-making more than anyone. Tell a good man that his character is a weakness he cannot help, and watch how quickly he corrects you. No belief, no culture, no tradition, and no supposed weakness in men excuses sexual violence. I say that knowing exactly how the sentence will be read by people who make a living reading sentences unkindly. I am not indicting anyone's faith or anyone's homeland. I am holding every man in this city to the same standard, which is precisely what equality means. A rule that bends for some men is not a rule at all — and the women it fails to protect are always the women with the least power to complain. Here is the part where a column like this usually asks government to do something, so let me tell you what a city actually can and cannot do. A city cannot legislate a man's character. What a city can do is refuse to be a comfortable place for the alternative. Lighting on the paths where our kids walk. Cameras and patrols where they are needed, not where they photograph well. Front-line training so the staff who deal with trafficking know exactly what they are looking at. Partnership with Durham Regional Police instead of turf war. Support for the shelters and the crisis lines that catch women when everything else has failed them. And a Council that will say the words out loud instead of routing them to a subcommittee. That last one matters more than people think. Silence is a policy. When leaders will not name a thing, residents conclude the thing is negotiable. It is not negotiable. And no woman in Pickering should have to wonder where her Mayor stands on whether she asked for it.

I have knocked on thousands of doors in this city. The overwhelming majority open onto decent people. But I will not pretend I did not hear what I heard, and I will not soften it for the comfort of the record. Our daughters are not responsible for other people's self-control. They never were.

Clothing is not consent. No man has the right. If we can still say that plainly in Pickering — and mean it, and hold to it — then we are the kind of city worth handing to our daughters.

Lisa Robinson is a Pickering City Councillor and a candidate for Mayor. If you or someone you love needs help, 211 or 905-668-9200 - 24-hour Crisis and Support Line is available 24 hours a day.



5 Seconds Can Change Your Life

"Time is money"

By Tom Reimer

Metalex Security

Last week the topic was on “How do you rob a thief” Well this all comes down to efficiency and how quickly a task can be done to provide a monetary reward, leading to a phrase "Time is money" in "Advice to a Young Tradesman", an essay by Benjamin Franklin that appeared in George Fisher's 1748 book, The American Instructor: or Young Man's Best Companion. My ultimate goal, your security advisor, and you the homeowner, is to ensure that we don't provide any monetary rewards, take away the time needed to remove your stuff and peace of mind.

In our last episode, our unwelcome guest just spent the last 4 minutes attempting to break in through the front entrance with no reward, Sly is still determined and figures that he may have better luck at the side, you gave him access with the unlocked gate. padlock would make him climb over the fence, but he's in and with the side door tucked in behind the garage and a tall fence with trees to give him cover Sly feel safe in the shadow. Last week's episode all it took is for Sly to grab a convenient garbage can to get him up to the large window beside the door and it wasn't latched or it will be easily prided open. So, what can be done?

Remember, if you take away the time needed to gain entry, you can almost certainly avoid the crime. 1.) all gate latches have a means of using a pad lock and this is a simple first defense. 2.) fortify the door the same way that we locked down the front with 3" long screws on the hinges and dead bolt, guardian flip latches, I prefer a minimum of two, 6" down from the top and the same up from the bottom. If you have a window on the door then a mesh grille on the inside that will discourage an attempt that will prevent a broken window taking away the ability to unlock the dead bolt, you can also purchase polycarbonate sheet that overlaps the glass by 2" on the sides, top and bottom drill holes every 4 to 6" and screw it down to the outside of the door, this will make the glass unbreakable. On the window beside the door, make sure that you don't leave tools and items that can give a leg up.

Obviously, make sure the window latch is in the locked position and a simple set of bars over the window will create the necessary barrier that will reduce the large opening into a space that can't be breached, if you don't like to look of bars then Security screens will do the job keeping out bugs to burglars, very discrete! Now, if you have other windows along the side then you should use the same efforts to keep them secure as well! Physical barriers need to be your first line of defense; in addition, I like the visual ones! By that, I'm talking about props like a dog bowl, dog leash, maybe a rawhide bone all chewed up and gnarly, anything that will make Sly imagine that “Rex” the 150 lb. bull mastiff is silently waiting behind the door, ready to attack.

We have now used up the bulk of time that Sly is willing to use but if he is going to foolishly carry on then next week, we will discuss the rear. Hey Sly, you might be better off getting a job! Not on my watch, Sly, Till next week.



THE Mr. Files

By John Mutton

CENTRAL EXCLUSIVE

Karmageddon

Mr. X: The Nominations Are Closed

Now Look Beyond the Promises

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

CENTRAL EXCLUSIVE

Mr. X: The Nominations Are Closed - Now Look Beyond the Promises

The nominations are closed.

The names are on the ballot, the campaigns are underway, and now the most important part of the municipal election begins: the voters have to do their homework.

Over the coming weeks, residents are going to hear a lot of promises. Some will sound exciting. Some will make great headlines. Some will fit nicely on a campaign sign or into a 30-second social-media video. But I would encourage every voter to ask one additional question whenever a candidate makes a promise:

How are you actually going to do it? Ideas matter. But the plan behind the idea matters even more. If somebody running for municipal office tells you they are going to "eliminate homelessness," for example, ask them how. Homelessness is an extraordinarily complicated issue involving housing supply and affordability, mental health, addiction, income, health care, supportive housing, policing, social services and responsibilities divided among municipal, regional, provincial and federal governments. No municipal politician can simply wave a wand and eliminate it.

A serious candidate should understand the jurisdiction they are seeking to govern, what powers that municipality actually possesses, what resources are available and what partnerships would be required to produce measurable improvement. That doesn't mean we accept homelessness. Quite the opposite. It means we need candidates with realistic strategies instead of unrealistic slogans. Now consider another candidate who says municipal taxes are too high and proposes a comprehensive review of municipal services to determine what taxpayers are funding, which services are mandated, which are discretionary, where duplication exists and whether programs are producing measurable value.

Whether you ultimately agree with that candidate or not, at least there is a mechanism attached to the promise.

That's what voters should be looking for: the mechanism.

Don't just ask candidates what they want to accomplish.

Ask them how they intend to accomplish it, how much it will cost, where the money will come from and how they will measure whether it worked.

Municipal elections can sometimes become competitions over who can grab the "sexiest" issue.

Candidates see something dominating the television news or social media and suddenly everybody has a position on it.

But municipal government isn't supposed to be a collection of trending topics.

Municipal government is roads.

It's bridges, water, sewer, waste collection, parks, recreation, fire protection, policing, planning, transit, infrastructure and the countless other services residents depend upon every single day.

And there is another responsibility that receives far too little attention during election campaigns: constituent service.

I want councillors who will roll up their sleeves.

I want them returning telephone calls and answering emails. I want them meeting residents. I want them walking neighbourhoods. I want them understanding the problems facing local businesses, seniors, young families and people struggling to make ends meet.

I want them to know why a particular intersection isn't working, why residents are frustrated about a development application, why a park needs attention and why somebody has been trying unsuccessfully for three weeks to get an answer from municipal government.

You cannot properly represent a community that you don't know.

And you don't get to know a community by sitting behind a desk or spending four years arguing politics on social media.

You learn it by being there.

Municipal government is also different from the provincial and federal levels. Councillors aren't elected to be miniature premiers or prime ministers.

Their responsibility is much closer to home.

When they take their seat at that council rail, their job is to represent the people who put them there and exercise responsible stewardship over the public's money.

That's why I encourage residents during this election to look beyond political labels as well.

I've met excellent municipal candidates from the right, the left and the centre. I've also met poor candidates from every part of the political spectrum.

The question shouldn't simply be which political team somebody identifies with.

Ask instead:

Can this person make good decisions for my community?

Do they understand a municipal budget? Do they understand what services the municipality is legally required to provide? Do they understand infrastructure?

Do they understand development and growth?

Can they distinguish between something that sounds good and something taxpayers can actually afford? And perhaps most importantly, will they listen?

Because after all the signs come down and all the campaign literature goes into the recycling bin, somebody still has to govern.

The potholes will still need fixing. The roads will still need rebuilding. The fire trucks will still need replacing. The water will still have to flow. The garbage will still have to be collected.

And residents will still expect somebody at municipal hall to answer the telephone when they have a problem. So over the next several weeks, don't simply count the promises.

Examine the plans behind them.

Ask every candidate what they want to accomplish - and then ask them how they're going to accomplish it. Look for candidates who understand the limits of municipal government but aren't afraid to challenge the way it operates. Look for people prepared to review spending, establish priorities and make difficult decisions.

Look for candidates who understand that every dollar government spends first came from somebody who earned it. And look for people who are willing to roll up their sleeves, get to know their communities and become the strongest possible voice for the residents they represent. The nominations are closed.

Now it's time for the voters to conduct the job interviews.