

# You want the truth?

FOI success stories

›TORONTO STAR‹



# A valuable tool

- Success stories and the ideas behind them
- What is accessible?
- How do I make a request?
- Navigating the access systems

- Municipal request for crime hot spots
- Cost: \$25
- Length: 5 months
- Why? Heard about it through a police source, kept secret out of fear of stigmatizing areas

## URBAN DEVELOPMENT

# AN INNER-CITY



ROBYN DOOLITTLE PHOTOS/TORONTO STAR

Gavin Morris, 35, works in the financial sector and recently moved to the Glasshouse Lofts, at Queen and Jarvis.

# renaissance?

Dundas and Sherbourne has long been riddled with crime and poverty, but it appears poised for a surprising rebirth

ROBYN DOOLITTLE  
URBAN AFFAIRS REPORTER

With the top down in her burgundy convertible, real estate agent Kristyn Wong-Tam was enjoying a sunny summer day as she cruised east along Queen St. towards an office supply store.

When the light turned red at Sherbourne St., Wong-Tam was daydreaming about legal folders and labels.

Suddenly, someone was screaming. A young woman with leathery



Less than one square kilometre, the area ranks at the top of the city's crime lists.

skin and matted blond hair sprinted into traffic, then hurled her petite frame into Wong-Tam's passenger seat.

"Drive! Drive!" the woman

shrieked, diving into Wong-Tam's lap. "They're going to kill me!"

"But it's a red light. There's a car in front of me," Wong-Tam stammered.

## Changing neighbourhood

The community clustered around Dundas and Sherbourne Sts. is a high-crime area filled with rooming houses and shelters. But condos are springing up and bringing change.

### CONDOMINIUMS

1. Radio City: 462 units
2. Glasshouse Lofts: 88 units
3. Regent Park revitalization: this massive undertaking includes townhomes, rental units, and houses as well as a highrise condo.
4. Modern: to be completed fall 2011, 343 units
5. Oxygen: to be completed 2013, 48 units
6. Pace: to be completed 2015, 417 units

### SHELTERS

7. Seaton House: 580 beds (after proposed expansion)
8. Salvation Army Maxwell Meighen: 260 beds
9. Dixon Hall Schoolhouse Shelter: 55 beds
10. Shelter: 27 beds
11. Shelter: 90 beds



Within seconds, two men appeared on opposite sides of the Mercedes, madly swinging their fists toward the woman. Wong-Tam was receiving the majority of the blows.

The light changed. She hit the gas. In pain and trembling with fright, Wong-Tam pulled over a block later to call the police. The woman ran away.

Two years later, Wong-Tam is the neighbourhood's city councillor. She has never publicly spoken

about the attack, but mentions it reluctantly during an interview as proof of her personal commitment to turn the area around.

It won't be easy.

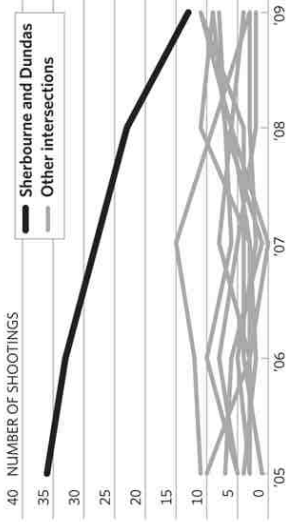
Year after year, the east side of downtown tops every major police crime list in Toronto. Simply put, this is the part of the city where, statistically, you are most likely to be shot, stabbed, robbed or sexually assaulted.

RENAISSANCE continued on GT4

# Hottest of the hot spots

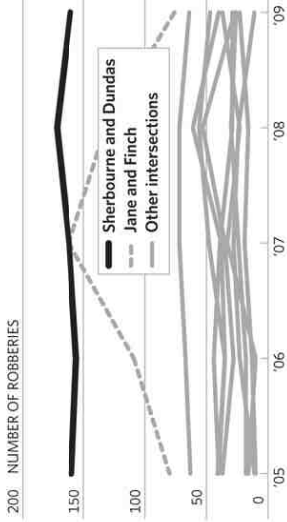
The Toronto Police Service constantly monitors crime rates across the city. Areas with high concentrations of crime are called "hot spots." This chart shows how much police activity centres on Sherbourne and Dundas. The following data was obtained by the Star through a freedom of information request.

## WORST INTERSECTIONS FOR SHOOTINGS



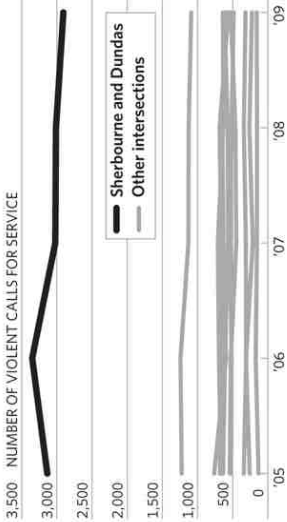
| Rank |                       | '09 total | '05-'09 total |
|------|-----------------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1.   | Sherbourne and Dundas | 13        | 133           |
| 2.   | Jane and Finch        | 3         | 50            |
| 3.   | Finch and Albion      | 11        | 38            |
| 4.   | Jane and Wilson       | 8         | 36            |
| 5.   | Rogers and Keele      | 9         | 30            |
| 6.   | Weston and Lawrence   | 9         | 29            |
| 7.   | Dufferin and Eglinton | 11        | 24            |
| 8.   | Neilson and Sheppard  | 2         | 22            |
| 9.   | Eglinton and Midland  | 4         | 19            |
| 10.  | Markham and Eglinton  | 4         | 16            |
| 10.  | Queen and Dufferin    | 3         | 16            |

## WORST INTERSECTIONS FOR ROBBERIES



| Rank |                       | '09 total | '05-'09 total |
|------|-----------------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1.   | Sherbourne and Dundas | 161       | 811           |
| 2.   | Jane and Finch        | 76        | 559           |
| 3.   | Finch and Albion      | 64        | 338           |
| 4.   | Eglinton and Midland  | 47        | 227           |
| 5.   | Queen and Dufferin    | 40        | 214           |
| 6.   | Weston and Lawrence   | 29        | 181           |
| 7.   | Rogers and Keele      | 27        | 180           |
| 8.   | Neilson and Sheppard  | 37        | 119           |
| 9.   | Dufferin and Eglinton | 26        | 116           |
| 10.  | Jane and Wilson       | 11        | 97            |
| 11.  | Markham and Eglinton  | 23        | 81            |

## WORST INTERSECTIONS FOR VIOLENT CALLS FOR SERVICE\*\*



|                          | '09 total | '05-'09 total |
|--------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1. Sherbourne and Dundas | 2,908     | 15,431        |
| 2. Jane and Finch        | 1,090     | 5,817         |
| 3. Eglinton and Midland  | 640       | 3,351         |
| 4. Finch and Albion      | 612       | 3,254         |
| 5. Queen and Dufferin    | 564       | 3,239         |
| 6. Weston and Lawrence   | 619       | 3,008         |
| 7. Rogers and Keele      | 487       | 2,586         |
| 8. Dufferin and Eglinton | 529       | 2,513         |
| 9. Markham and Eglinton  | 318       | 1,628         |
| 10. Jane and Wilson      | 227       | 1,277         |
| 11. Neilson and Sheppard | 160       | 779           |

SOURCE: Toronto Police Service

\*\*Includes events such as: assaults, sex attacks, person with a gun or knife

TORONTO STAR GRAPHIC

- Federal request
- Cost: \$5
- Length: Few months
- Why: Tipped by internal defence department committee minutes

SID

THE KID GROWS UP

Team Canada 2010 will be led by Sidney Crosby. So why won't they let him wear the 'C'? The *Star's* **Damien Cox** explains from Calgary. **S1**

35

COURSE MEAL

From Cherry Umeboshi to Sea Anemones with Tea, the world's top chef offers a 5 1/2-hour indulgence. **E1**

TORONTO STAR

PARTLY SUNNY. HIGH 27C (WEATHER MAP ON S12) • [thestar.com](http://thestar.com) • TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2009

Olympics push army over edge

STAR EXCLUSIVE

Guarding 2010 Games and G8 summit means compromises elsewhere — even in Afghanistan, defence documents say

ALLAN WOODS

OTTAWA BUREAU

OTTAWA—Canada is considering outsourcing military work in Afghanistan and pulling soldiers from low-profile foreign missions to relieve the pressure of fighting in Kandahar, guarding the 2010 Olympics and protecting world leaders in Muskoka.

According to documents obtained by the *Toronto Star*, more than 32,000 military personnel — about

half the entire Canadian Forces — will be in training or set to deploy on missions to Kandahar, the Vancouver Olympics and next summer's G8 meeting in Huntsville between now and July 2010.

That staffing burden makes it impossible to carry on current operations and still respond to the weekly requests for Canadian soldiers from the Americans, NATO and the United Nations, the military says.

The defence department has labelled the problem "Personnel Crunch 2010."

"We...are now at the point where some requests that would seem to be minor (e.g., for only a few personnel) are, in reality, difficult to source initially and impossible to sustain over the 2010 timeframe," says a March 17 memorandum to chief of defence staff Gen. Walter Natynczyk.

Already military officials are considering passing some signature

work in Afghanistan, such as the operation of a military college for Afghan army officers, to civilian contractors or retired soldiers.

Canadian soldiers in Kandahar will also be ordered to train and mentor additional Afghan army battalions on the front lines without more troops, say the documents, obtained under the Access to Information Act.

MILITARY continued on A13

- Provincial request
- Cost: ~\$200
- Length: 3 months
- Why: Folo to series

## Star Exclusive: Police ignore SIU's probes

Article [Comments \(117\)](#)

Published On Tue Feb 22 2011

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Special Investigations Unit director Ian Scott.

COLIN MCCONNELL/TORONTO STAR

Michelle Henry and David Bruser  
Staff Reporters

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Police forces across Ontario are thumbing their noses at the provincial agency that investigates cops, refusing to cooperate with or even respond to the Special Investigations Unit, documents obtained by the *Toronto Star* show.



- Provincial request
- Cost: \$14,000, reduced to \$150
- Length: 2 years
- Why: Death of disabled hydro worker in black out
- Results: Death rebate revoked, compensation system reviewed, real changes

## WORKING WOUNDED

# Hiding injuries rewards companies

Star investigation reveals job safety numbers are under-reported, cutting employer costs

**DAVID BRUSER**  
STAFF REPORTER

The provincial government's highly touted campaign to improve workplace safety is rewarding companies for hiding injuries and rushing the wounded back to work.

A *Toronto Star* investigation has found that since 2000, companies have reported thousands of seriously injured Ontarians as having missed no time off work.

Some companies pressure or bribe workers not to report major injuries at all.

Some pay the wounded full salary to do degrading make-work jobs.

Others, such as construction giant

Aecon Group Inc., have lied to make injuries look less serious.

The result is that companies cut costs under the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board's incentive plan.

The provincial agency's plan says that the faster a company gets an injured worker back to work, or off what is known as "loss time," the lower the insurance premium. Shortening this loss time or avoiding reporting it altogether can be lucrative, possibly leading to a rebate check from the WSIB.

The *Star* found that at least 11,000 worker injuries were downplayed or improperly handled over a seven-year period, including 3,000 fractures, dislocations, bad burns and other injuries, even amputations, that companies reported as resulting in not even one day off work.

➤ **FULL INDEX PAGE A2**

Store and Box Sunday Price \$1.00 including



- Federal request
- Cost: \$5
- Length: 9 months
- Why? Suspicious mind

# Were Haitian orphans photo-op victims?



PAWEL DWULIT/THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE PHOTO

A Haitian child is carried by a Citizenship and Immigration Canada volunteer after landing at Ottawa International Airport in late January.

Critics say children destined for Quebec rerouted unnecessarily

**RICHARD J. BRENNAN**  
OTTAWA BUREAU

Haitian orphans destined for Quebec, many of them cold and exhausted, were rerouted through Ottawa for what critics say was nothing more than a photo-op for the Harper government.

The *Star* has learned from government documents obtained through the Access to Information Act that they were originally supposed to go to Montreal and to other destinations in Canada after that.

Haiti was devastated by an earth-

quake on Jan. 12 and many children were left homeless and alone. The government was under a great deal of pressure to speed up existing requests for adoptions by Canadian parents.

"Most are destined to Quebec but some to other regions," wrote Albert Deschamps, director general, Quebec region of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, on Jan. 21. "The plan is that (they) will most likely arrive at Dorval and final destination flight departing soon after."

However, when they arrived three days later it was in Ottawa, not Montreal's Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport.

**ORPHANS** continued on A9

- 10 municipal FOIs, one still under appeal
- Cost: \$125 (10x\$5, plus 3 \$25 appeals)
- Length: 6 weeks on avg.
- Why: Beat reporter's experience and a reporter's observations, anecdotal evidence. Data shows they were right.

STAR EXCLUSIVE

# Rich schools get richer as private cash floods system

First school-by-school look at fundraising in GTA raises alarm about inequality in our classrooms

**PATTY WINSA  
AND KRISTIN RUSHOWY**  
STAFF REPORTERS

Two public and two Catholic high schools in Greater Toronto are bringing in more than a million dollars a year through student fees, private revenue and fundraising

**THE GREAT DIVIDE**  
FUNDRAISING IN SCHOOLS

FIRST IN A TWO-DAY SERIES

cafeteria and vending machine

- Federal request
- Cost: \$5
- Length: 3.5 months
- Why: Fishing expedition

# Accused colonel kept tabs on police probe

Email messages obtained by the Star include condolences to the family of alleged victim

**ALLAN WOODS**  
OTTAWA BUREAU

OTTAWA—Word of Cpl. Marie-France Comeau's murder arrived in her alleged killer's inbox at 12:13 a.m. on Nov. 26, 2009.

The message was marked "significant occurrence" and kicked off a stream of messages that would keep Col. Russ Williams, her commander at Canadian Forces Base Trenton in eastern Ontario, abreast of the unfolding police probe, one that would lead months later to his stunning arrest.

The commanding officer of Comeau's squadron gave Williams the first update from Ontario Provin-

cial Police investigators at 1:13 a.m.: "they are classifying the death as 'suspicious.'"

Williams, the top airman at the country's most important military hub, chimed in from his Blackberry at 6:41 a.m., acknowledging that he was aware of the incident.

"I'll catch up when I get in, if there is additional information," he wrote.

He closed with his signature greeting, contained in almost all of more than 100 pages of emails obtained by the *Toronto Star*.

"Take care, Russ Williams."

**TRENTON** continued on A14

Dear

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the men and women of 8 Wing Trenton to express my sincere condolences on the tragic death of your

Please let me know whether there is anything I can do to help you during this very difficult time. You and your family are in our thoughts and prayers.

With our deepest sympathy,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D.R. Williams', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

D.R. Williams  
Colonel  
Wing Commander

# Peel cops' weapons go up in smoke

**STAR INVESTIGATION** Police pepper spray, batons and firearms frequently mislaid for good

**JESSE MCLEAN**  
STAFF REPORTER

Peel police officers have lost a small arsenal of weapons in recent years and most are still missing.

Nearly 75 per cent of the weapons

lost or stolen since 1994 — a list that includes two sniper rifles, pepper spray canisters, loaded ammunition clips and dozens of police batons — have never been recovered.

The *Star* analyzed 45 police occur-

rence reports from 2005 to 2010 in which a firearm, ammunition or use-of-force equipment was lost or stolen, and found officers lost their weapons in a variety of public places, including a Tim Hortons shop, a parking lot and a park.

There were at least five instances in which the weapons disappeared inside a police facility.

The *Star* also found eight cases in the past two years in which police wrote off the cases as “complete” and “solved,” even though the weapons were never recovered.

Police officials say they have adopted stricter tracking and accountability measures since Chief Mike Metcalf was appointed in 2006. Yet the number of officers

losing their weapons has remained about steady. “Losing that much equipment shows negligence and just a lack of caring. That seems to me to be the big problem,” said John Sewell, a former Toronto mayor who heads the Toronto Police Accountability Coalition.

**WEAPONS** continued on A4

- Municipal request, with an immediate follow request for details on specific missing weapons
- Cost: \$5
- Length: 5 months & 1 month
- Why: I had a dream

- Municipal request
- Cost: \$5
- Length: 30 days
- Why: Riff on news stories on texting drivers

**STAR EXCLUSIVE**

# TTC riders ramp up driving complaints

Transit drivers caught  
playing Sudoku, texting  
and checking Facebook

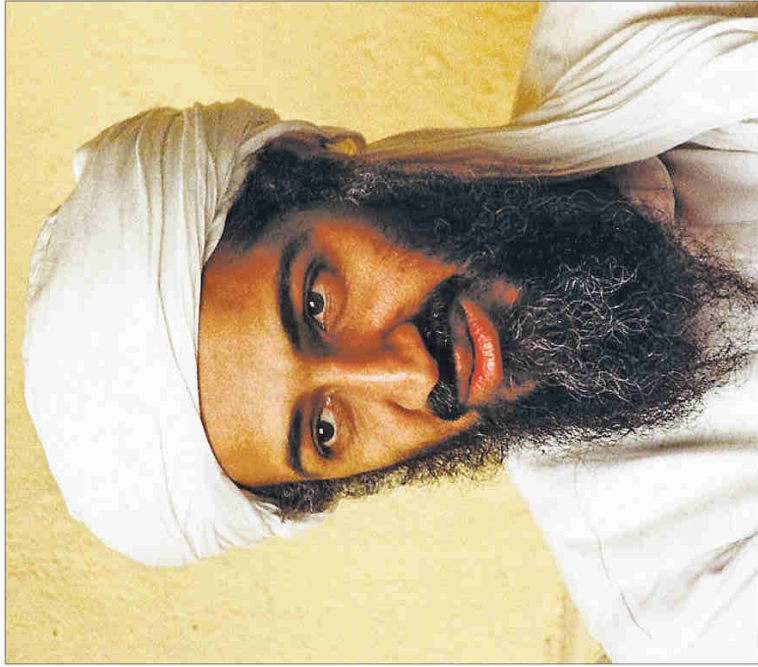
**AMY DEMPSEY**  
STAFF REPORTER

The Toronto Transit Commission is dealing with a surge in complaints from fed-up customers accusing drivers of talking, texting and even working on Sudoku puz-



# BIN LADEN DEAD

Al Qaeda founder, 9/11 mastermind killed in 'targeted assault' by U.S. on Pakistan mansion



The death of Osama bin Laden, photographed in Afghanistan in 1998, ends a 10-year manhunt for the world's most wanted terrorist.

**MITCH POTTER**  
WASHINGTON—With a single sentence as sudden as it was monumental, U.S. President Barack Obama announced a turning point in the war on terror Tuesday when he said the United States has conducted an operation that killed Osama bin Laden.

Nearly 10 years after becoming the world's most hunted man, Bin Laden was shot dead in a U.S. raid Sunday on a compound deep within in Pakistan's tribal region.

The Al Qaeda leader's body was taken into U.S. custody.

"Justice has been done," Obama said in a nationally televised address.

Obama called the operation "the most significant achievement to date" in the war on terror, adding that it does not mark the end to the struggle, saying, "We must and we will remain vigilant."

Even before Obama spoke, crowds gathered outside the northwest gates of the White House, waving American flags and singing the national anthem.

The implications of the news are incalculable, and the president said the capture or killing of Bin Laden has been a drumbeat for every White House administration since the attack of 9/11, regardless of party power.

Bin Laden was no longer seen as a driving force in the ever-changing face of terrorism in Pakistan. Since the 9/11 attacks, he has been the face of U.S. security officials' fears since identified a range of newer Qaeda-inspired offshoots, most notably the home-based Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, as persistent threats.

But as a symbol, the 6-foot-tall Saudi national has successfully trumped the more complex and diverse human history, including a decade of special-forces teams and U.S. intelligence operatives combing in the borderlands that straddle the Afghanistan/Pakistan border.

In his statement last night, Obama said the operation was "a critical step" in the U.S. effort to "bring to justice the top U.S. national security priority upon taking office in 2009. And

BIN LADEN, continued on A2

## Dozens of TTC staff punished for distracted driving

**STAR EXCLUSIVE** Drivers suspended from duty, issued final warning letters upon return to work

their jobs in February and the first week of March, TTC documents reveal. All but one of the suspended staff.

**SNEAK PLAY**  
Why the art of stealing buses is enjoying a comeback in Toronto, ST

**FULL INDEX PAGE A2**

Don't miss the latest news, photos, and more.



AP FILE PHOTO

The death of Osama bin Laden, photographed in Afghanistan in 1998, ends a 10-year manhunt for the world's most wanted terrorist.

## Dozens of TTC staff punished for distracted driving

**STAR EXCLUSIVE** Drivers suspended from duty, issued final warning letters upon return to work

**AMY DEMPSEY**  
STAFF REPORTER

The Toronto Transit Commission launched more than 70 investigations in a winter crackdown on distracted driving that saw operators

punished for using cellphones, listening to iPods and reading newspapers behind the wheel.

Facing a surge in complaints from exasperated customers, the commission suspended 27 drivers from

their jobs in February and the first week of March, TTC documents reveal.

All but one of the suspended drivers got their jobs back following investigations by TTC officials, the documents show.

Most had their records wiped clean and lost wages returned, but saw a "final notice letter" slipped in

their personnel file — meaning those who reoffend will be fired immediately.

One operator was terminated and no longer works for the commission. Others faced varying levels of discipline not specified in the documents.

TTC continued on A15

- Cost: \$400
- Length: 30 days
- Why: Folo ... how many disciplined?

- Municipal request
- Cost: \$200
- Length: 2 months
- Why: Reporter an irritated rider

# Crude, rude TTC staff top list of complaints

Dreadful lack of people skills, not delays or fare disputes, main concern for commuters

**ROBYN DOOLITTLE**  
URBAN AFFAIRS BUREAU

A driver who refuses to move the bus because a baby is crying on board. A streetcar operator referred to by at least one rider as the "Blonde Dragon." A toll collector who calls a customer "brain dead" when asked for change.

On Monday, the TTC released

## WHAT THEY SAID

From sexual harassment to rude gestures, TTC riders allege a shocking litany of complaints. One female rider's story:

"For the past 17 years this particular bus driver has been trying to get a date with me. He gives me his

- Municipal request
- Cost: \$5
- Length: 1 month
- Why: Because it was secret

# Mayor's 'secret' schedule revealed

While reporters left guessing, Rob Ford's packed itineraries include ethnic, arts groups

**DANIEL DALE**  
URBAN AFFAIRS REPORTER

Mayor Rob Ford quipped in February that "it's pretty hard to hide 300 pounds of fun." Which may be true, but Ford does a pretty good job of it.

Because he has treated his schedule as a "closely held secret," to use the words of the

- Requests at three levels of government
- Cost: ~\$2,000
- Length: 2 years
- Why: Daddy reporter discovers there's no inspection system for daycares

STAR INVESTIGATION

# Dirty little secrets: Abuse in daycares

You're not supposed to know it, but children in licensed centres endure filthy conditions, bad food and physical and emotional harm

ROBERT CRIBB  
AND DALE BRAZAO  
STAFF REPORTERS

Children in provincially licensed daycares have been hit, kicked, allowed to play in filthy conditions and fed allergy-triggering food that nearly claimed their lives.

A *Star* investigation based on thousands of never-before-released daycare incidents and inspection reports has uncovered myriad serious problems including children wandering off unattended, being forcibly confined in closets and storage rooms as punishment, and served meals prepared in mice-infested kitchens.

But even in the most egregious cases, the provincial Ministry of Children and Youth Services is often slow to act.

Daycares with a pattern of problems are allowed to operate for months or even years on provisional licences, while children are exposed to substandard conditions, internal government documents show.

"The conditions you highlight are unacceptable and we take it seriously that we will do that. It isn't consistent with the health and well-being of kids."

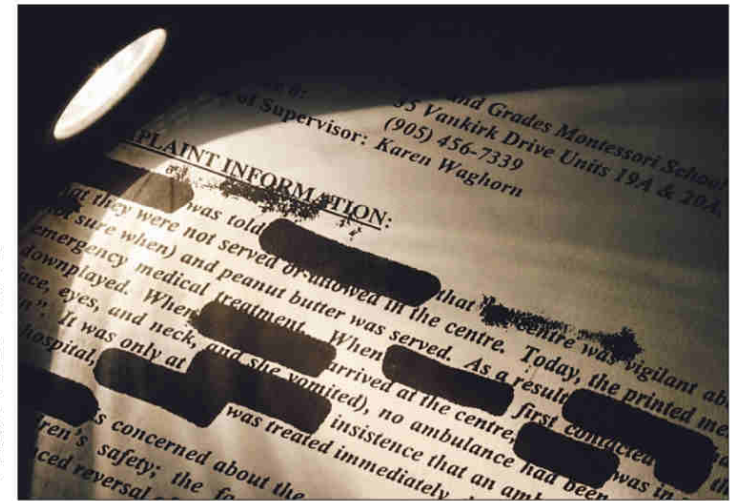
The records are typically kept secret. Parents who trust their children with a licensed daycare have no way of finding out if their daycare is exemplary or riddled with problems.

The highest rate of reported problems was in Toronto, but that may be because the city's daycares are more tightly regulated than others in the province.

more than two years.

They revealed serious problems at several hundred of the 4,400 licensed daycares in the province.

The highest rate of reported problems was in Toronto, but that may be because the city's daycares are more tightly regulated than others in the province.



TARA WALTON/TORONTO STAR

After filing freedom of information requests that took more than two years, the *Star* obtained partially blacked out records, including this document, that detail many disturbing incidents at daycare centres.

## FAILING CARE

There were 5,814 serious occurrences reported by licensed daycares across Ontario in 2005-2006, including nearly 3,000 injuries, 674 missing children reports and 675 allegations of abuse.



- Federal request
- Cost: \$5
- Length: 30 days
- Why: Keeping current on current events, act fast

# A chorus of emails saved our anthem

Messages to Harper revealed anger over proposed lyric changes

**BRUCE CAMPION-SMITH**  
OTTAWA BUREAU CHIEF

OTTAWA—"Ludicrous, ridiculous and idiotic" were just a few of a barrage of angry comments directed to Stephen Harper from everyday Canadians after his government opened the door to changing the lyrics of "O Canada," documents reveal.

Reaction to the Conservatives' surprise move was fast, furious and even vitriolic as citizens vented their unhappiness with the idea of making the anthem gender neutral, with some denouncing it as the "dumbest idea ever."

"Is your Government NUTS?" wrote one person, summing up the sentiments of many who sent notes to Harper's office.

In email message after message, Canadians used words like "appalled" and "outraged" and many warned Harper he would pay a price in the polls for his "ludicrous" proposal.

"Don't you dare fiddle with O Canada," wrote one Canadian.

"Believe me, my wife and I will remember this when . . . you call an



CHRIS ROUSSAKIS/REUTERS FILE PHOTO

Canadians celebrate Olympic gold in men's hockey by singing the anthem.

election," the writer continued.

"Should your office change the lyrics, you are going to upset many, many Canadians . . . It is an outrage to change the lyrics," said another.

"LEAVE O CANADA ALONE," one Canadian wrote in capitals. Harper surprised many, including some apparently even in his own Conservative caucus, with the proposal to ask Parliament to examine the "original gender-neutral" wording of "O Canada."

At stake was the question whether the phrase "In all thy sons command" should be changed to "Thou dost in us command," the wording from the original 1908 version.

It was an idea floated in the March 3, 2010, Speech from the Throne. And while the speech talked about

many government initiatives, from law and order to fighting the recession, it was the anthem that emerged as the talking point — and the lightning rod.

Using access to information legislation, the *Toronto Star* got copies of all messages to the Prime Minister's office on March 4, 2010, the day after the change was proposed.

The reaction was centred on one topic only.

"Mister PM . . . What's with screwing around with the National anthem . . . KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE BALL!!!" wrote one Canadian.

Another urged Harper not to waste his time on "such a trivial issue. The country will not fall apart because it says 'thy sons command.' It will however fall apart if we do

not do something about job creation, our deficit, our health care system," the email read.

Many questioned why the Conservatives would raise the idea of tinkering with the anthem, just days after Canada's impressive performance at the Vancouver Winter Olympics, which stoked national pride and had many singing "O Canada."

There was also a nasty tone from some of the senders, who blamed "feminists" or "immigrants" for the possible change.

"I implore you not to cave to the 'sensitivities' of a handful of insecure women. Why don't we just hum the anthem, that way we only risk offending the musically gifted," said one email.

"Stop bowing down to minority groups," wrote one Canadian. "Why are we as a nation continually changing our heritage to satisfy minorities?"

The Prime Minister's office gave a polite response to the emails, saying their statements would be "carefully reviewed."

The outpouring of angry opinion, a taste of the reaction that apparently flooded into Conservative MPs' offices as well, gives a hint at why the government abruptly scrapped its promised review of the anthem just two days later.



- Federal request
- Cost: \$5
- Length: 6 months
- Why: Following the news, being persistent. A secret review surfaces

# Boarding passes a security weakness

Airports could do more to guard against imposters, review finds

**BRUCE CAMPION-SMITH**  
OTTAWA BUREAU CHIEF

OTTAWA—Fraudulent or duplicated boarding passes could be used by imposters to get onboard aircraft at Canadian airports, a potential weakness that could be exploited for “attacks,” a government review says.

Transport Canada is urging the

- Provincial request
- Cost: \$40
- Length: Year (appealed)
- Why: Because people like porn, and companies monitor employees
- Tip: Don't give up
- Outcome: Data now released quarterly

## CIVIL SERVANTS' WEB SURFING

# NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS



Ontario government keeps staffers' online playtime secret from taxpayers

**ROBERT CRIBB**  
STAFF REPORTER

How many hours each week do Ontario civil servants spend watching pornography, *Grey's Anatomy* or last night's sports highlights on

department regularly monitors the Internet surfing habits of the province's 60,000 bureaucrats and political staffers, and it issues monthly reports on investigations carried out into illicit use. But it refuses to

- Municipal request
- Cost: \$3K, negotiated down to \$350
- Length: 6 months
- Why: Food poisoning that left Rob “praying to die.”
- Result: Canada’s first public restaurant safety system

## SIGNS OF SUCCESS

# DineSafe cuts rate of sickness

Food-related illness cases have plunged 30% since Star exposed violations in city’s eateries

**ROBERT CRIBB**  
STAFF REPORTER

Cases of food-borne illness began to fall almost immediately after Toronto began making restaurant inspection results public in 2001.

Now, eight years after the city launched the DineSafe program that publishes inspection results online and in restaurant windows, cases of individual food-borne illnesses in Toronto have dropped 30 per cent, says a Toronto Public

**MANY CASES  
BUT FEW OFFICIALLY  
RECORDED**

**1 in 6**

people suffers food-borne illness, but fewer than 1 per cent of cases are officially recorded.

- Provincial request
- Cost: \$150
- Time: 3 months
- Why? Following up on previous stories

# Sickening numbers

**ONE IN SIX** Torontonians falls ill every year because of tainted food. That's **437,000** people, according to first-of-its-kind research obtained by the *Star*. And up to **40 PER CENT** of cases are caused by bacteria transferred by food handlers who work sick because they need money.



Patrons dine on a patio yesterday. A Toronto Public Health report says one in six Torontonians falls ill every year from food laced with bacteria. AARON HARRIS/TORONTO STAR

**ROBERT CRIBB**  
STAFF REPORTER

One in six Torontonians — 437,000 each year — is sickened by food laced with bacteria, such as salmonella and listeria, according to a groundbreaking study of food-borne illness in the city. The results, triggered by weaknesses in the country's food safety system, represent about \$500 million a year in health-care costs and lost productivity, says a report from Toronto Public Health obtained by the

## A RAY OF LIGHT ON FOOD SAFETY

There are some promising signs amid the bad news on food safety. Cases of individual food-borne illnesses in Toronto have declined 30 per cent after the city launched the DineSafe program in 2001. That initiative was introduced after the *Star*'s "Dirty Dining" investigation, which found hundreds of restaurants had serious violations — from cockroach infestations to filthy preparation areas.

Many cities release restaurant reports — why can't Toronto? There's nothing world class at food safety and inspection. Shoddy eateries to be named. 'Very scary' bakery shut down.

lic Health Agency of Canada, McKeown said. "We looked at existing research about the sources of under-reporting, how many get sick but don't go to the doctors, how many don't result in a lab test being done, how many don't find the bug the patient has, and you can go back and calculate, estimating how many cases we're losing at each step." Among its recommendations, the report calls for the province to consider compensating food

- Federal request for raw electronic data
- Cost: \$0
- Length: 4 years
- Why: Folo to a Hamilton airport story by city hall reporter, paper reports
- Results: Daily release of data

**Near misses. Navigation errors. Engine fires.**  
**The skies are not as safe as you think. Experts warn**  
**major changes must be made to prevent disaster**



A jet leaves a trail of smoke as it soars through the sky above Toronto — while new aviation data leave a trail of controversy, revealing a slew of near misses and risky takeoffs and landings.

## COLLISION COURSE



**THE REPORTERS:** The Star's Robert Cribb, left, Tamsin McMahon of The Record, and Fred Vallance-Jones of the Hamilton Spectator.

The Toronto Star, Hamilton Spectator and The Record of Waterloo Region teamed up

**ROBERT CRIBB,  
FRED VALLANCE-JONES  
AND TAM SIN MCMAHON**  
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

More than 60,000 passengers have been put at risk over the last five years when airplanes they were travelling in came dangerously close together in Canadian skies, according to never-before-released federal aviation data.

Between 2001 and mid-2005, there were more than 800 incidents in which planes got too close to each other, according to Transport Canada data — about one incident every two days. Sometimes, they come within seconds of crash-

ing.

► Mechanical malfunctions, from engine fires to parts falling off in mid-flight, have risen steadily from 2000 to 2004.

► Smaller aircraft, including planes, gliders and helicopters, are also involved in "near misses," both with other small planes and commercial airplanes heading in and out of increasingly crowded airspace above major airports.

"There will be a serious accident. It's just a matter of time," warns veteran aviator Ken Green, who retired in March after a 33-year career as a commercial pilot.

up 48 per cent between 2004 and 2005, from 27 to 40. It was the largest number of fatal crashes since 2001 and resulted in 61 deaths.

Eight of those deaths were the result of six accidents in the air taxi industry, which uses small planes. That's double the number of fatal accidents in 2004 and the most since 1998. In all, the accident rate for Canadian aircraft — planes, helicopters and gliders — increased 3 per cent between 2004 and 2005.

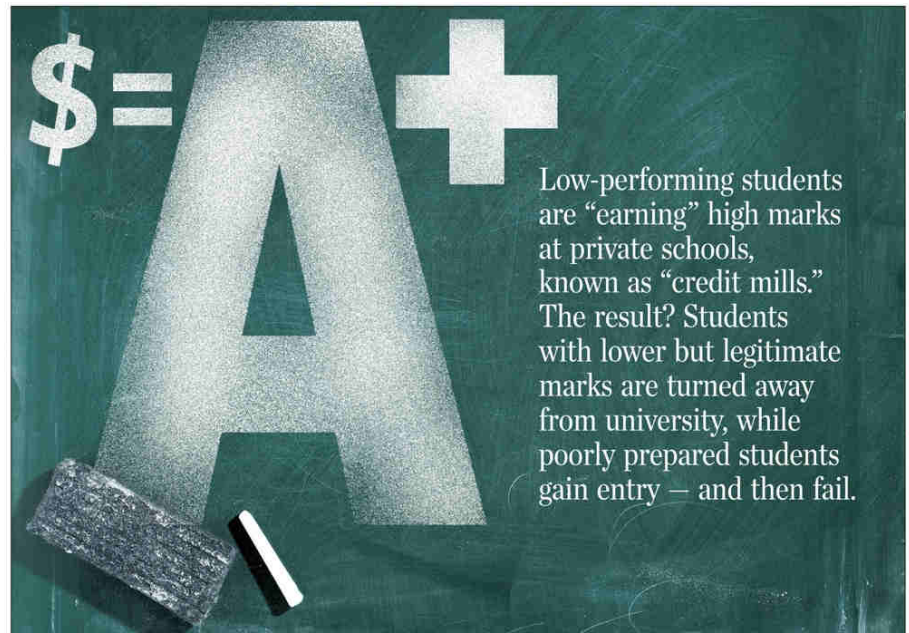
Cost cutting, human fatigue and poor morale are key factors that threaten safety in the skies, according to dozens of pilots, air traffic controllers and mechanics interviewed.



- Dozens of provincial requests
- Cost: \$300
- Length: 3 months
- Inspiration: Ryerson partnership
- Results: Caused a stir during election, vows to clamp down

STAR EXCLUSIVE

# Cash for marks gets kids into university



Low-performing students are “earning” high marks at private schools, known as “credit mills.” The result? Students with lower but legitimate marks are turned away from university, while poorly prepared students gain entry — and then fail.

## MARKS FOR MONEY

### HOW STUDENTS BUY SUCCESS

FIRST IN A SERIES

ROBERT CRIBB  
STAFF REPORTER

Underachieving Ontario high school students are beating out more academically deserving teens for university spots and honours, while teachers with in-

dom of information requests and interviews with students, teachers and principals reveal:

- Grades at some private schools were arbitrarily raised upon request.
- Credits were granted with less than half of mandatory class time completed.
- Teachers used outdated curricula, and had no lesson plans or course outlines.
- Difficult questions were removed from examinations.
- Some teachers do not have proper qualifications and “do not understand” evaluation and assess-



INSIDE A TORONTO CREDIT MILL

She took a credit course...



- Federal and provincial, CPIC and inmate address data
- Cost: \$100 (initial CPIC estimate: **\$1.6 million**)
- Length: 5 years
- Why: Tory approach to crime and punishment

THUNDERSTORMS, HIGH 27°C (WEATHER MAP S10)

VOICE of the GTA

SATURDAY, JULY 19, 2008

# SATURDAY STAR

thestar.com

SPECIAL REPORT

## Why getting tough on crime is toughest on the taxpayer

Under new gun and drug legislation, more people will go to prison to serve longer sentences. Most Canadians think this is a good idea. But an in-depth look at Canada's criminals and prison system suggests the opposite: that it's a recipe for higher costs and, perversely, no less crime

SANDRO CONTENTA,  
JIM RANKIN, BETSY POWELL  
AND PATTY WINSA  
STAFF REPORTERS

Canadians firmly support federal measures that will put more offenders behind bars for longer, according to a poll conducted for the *Star*.

That's good news for the federal Tory government but bad news, experts say, for the criminal justice system and for taxpayers themselves.

The country's annual bill for policing, courts and incarceration — about \$13 billion — is about to jump. And rather than make neighbourhoods safer, the opposite is likely: troubled communities figure to get worse.

Propelling Canadians down this road — one proven to be monstrously expensive and inept at reducing crime in the United States — are seriously flawed perceptions of crime and punishment. Those misperceptions were revealed in the recent poll done for the *Star* and an analysis of three sets of data: one detailing the criminal histories of 2.9 million people and the other two showing what neigh-



LUCAS OLENIUK/TORONTO STAR FILE PHOTO

A prisoner looks out into the sun from his cell at the federal Stony Mountain Institution near Winnipeg.

### THE SERIES

#### TODAY IN IDEAS:

Jailing people is expensive. What are the GTA's costliest neighbourhoods for incarceration? Find the answers on a unique map created with sentencing data. And read how one high-cost neighbourhood is struggling with the incarceration cycle. **ID1**

#### TOMORROW:

Why natives suffer the most; punitive politics

**MONDAY:** Misperceptions about criminals; racial differences

**TUESDAY:** How criminal records can trip up the not guilty

**WEDNESDAY:** Lessons from the United States — longer sentences don't work

**THURSDAY:** Tracking the damage of the incarceration cycle

**FRIDAY:** Straining an already burdened prison system

**SATURDAY:** What can be done

### HOW WE DID IT

The foundation for this series is data from before noon.

"If you wish to proceed with the processing of your request, forward a deposit of \$1,599,840.00 by cheque or money order payable to the Receiver General of Canada," read the letter from the RCMP's access to information co-ordinator.

And, "should you wish to continue your request, please note that there are no guarantees that any part of the information will be released."

# SCHOOL, INTERRUPTED



## Interactive maps and games

When  
Toronto  
suspends  
and jails  
the most

You be  
the  
Principal  
Game

## Related series



The costs of high incarceration

Behind the scenes

Credits

## Must Reads

### Forging a school-to-prison pipeline?

Thousands of students are kicked out of Ontario schools each year, with educators quietly making sure some don't return.



### Are schools too quick to suspend?

The road to being thrown out of school is paved by missed opportunities for early intervention, a limited curriculum and poor teacher training.



## Documents, videos, links

- [More videos: Expulsion School](#)
- [Related documents and links](#)
- [Search schools](#)
- [Related map: High school dropouts](#)
- [Related series: Come & Punishment](#)

[School, Interrupted](#)

- Municipal request, appealed, Divisional Court and COA decisions
- Cost: \$6,000
- Length: 7 years
- Why: Folio to 2002 Race and Crime series

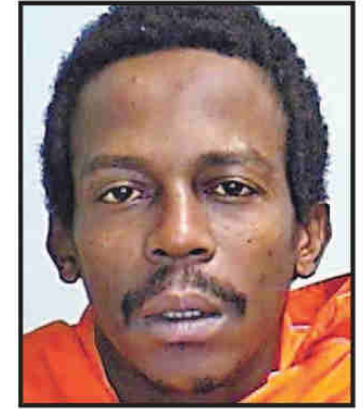
**RACE MATTERS** FIRST IN A SERIES ON POLICING IN TORONTO

# When good people are swept up with the bad



**THE GOOD.** Teacher Rohan Robinson has been stopped numerous times.

|   |                        |  |                            |   |  |
|---|------------------------|--|----------------------------|---|--|
| FIELD INFORMATION CARD - CONTACT DETAILS  |                        |  |                            | TP3008 2009/05  |  |
| DATE (YYYYMMDD)   | TIME (24 HR. CLOCK)    | ZONE   |                            |   |  |
| AT <input type="checkbox"/> NEAR <input type="checkbox"/> LOCATION / INTERSECTION   |                        |  |                            |   |  |
| LOCATION DETAILS  |                        |  | OFFICER NO. (S)            |   |  |
|   |                        |  | 1. 2.                      |   |  |
| PROJECT #   | REFERENCE TYPE/REF NO. | NATURE OF CONTACT  |                            |   |  |
| CIRCUMSTANCES OF INVESTIGATION  |                        |  |                            |   |  |
|   |                        |  |                            |   |  |
| PERSON INVESTIGATED: IN VEHICLE <input type="checkbox"/> PEDESTRIAN <input type="checkbox"/> BICYCLIST <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |  |                            |   |  |
| SURNAME   |                        |  |                            |   |  |
| G2  |                        |  |                            |   |  |
| DOB (YYYYMMDD)  |                        |  |                            |   |  |
| AGE   | SEX                    | BIRTH PLACE  | COLOUR                     |   |  |
| APPEARANCE  |                        | EYES   | HAIR (STYLE/LENGTH/COLOUR) | FACIAL HAIR   |  |
| HEIGHT  | WEIGHT                 | IDENTIFIED BY (I.D. TYPE)  |                            | ID CONFIRMED YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| ADDRESS   |                        | SAME AS LOCATION <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> |                            | PROV/COUNTRY  |  |
| TELEPHONE NO. <input type="checkbox"/>  |                        | CELL NO. <input type="checkbox"/>                                      |                            | E-MAIL <input type="checkbox"/>                                       |  |
| DRIVER'S LICENCE NO.  |                        | PROV / STATE   |                            | DRIVER <input type="checkbox"/> PASS. <input type="checkbox"/>        |  |



**THE BAD.** Police frequently stopped Mark Cain, now a convicted murderer.

**SEVEN YEARS AGO**, a *Star* investigation into race, policing and crime in Toronto was met with denials of racial bias. Today, police across the country readily acknowledge bias is a factor and the Toronto Police Service is setting an example for other services and institutions with its diversity policy. Yet, race still matters. Today, using never-before-released data, the *Star* launches a series highlighting the Toronto police practice of documenting people in mostly non-criminal encounters. In an uneasy trade-off for safer streets, both “good” and “bad” end up in a growing database. Young black men, more than any other group, are most likely to be stopped and documented. **Jim Rankin reports.**



# Police documented hundreds on G20 weekend

**JIM RANKIN**  
STAFF REPORTER

Hundreds of citizens were documented by police in mostly non-criminal encounters during last year's G20 summit — and their names and personal details still live on in an internal police database.

Over three days, more than 500 people were stopped, questioned and documented by Toronto police officers in key G20 patrol areas downtown and near a temporary jail location, according to a *Toronto*

*Star* analysis of police contact card data obtained in a freedom of information request.

Police use the database as an investigative tool to connect people, places and times. For example, in the case of a homicide, detectives can enter a victim's name and see who they associated with in the past — and where and when.

The level of "carding" was unusually high during the summit, which could be expected given the police presence. On an average day in

those areas in 2008, police documented 75 people, according to baseline data previously obtained by the *Star*.

But from June 25 to 27, 2010 — the summit week-end — the daily average was 186. That's an increase of 150 per cent.

Sunday was the busiest day of the

weekend: 235 people were carded. White men were most often stopped, according to the data. This comes as little surprise to anyone who was out on the streets of downtown Toronto that weekend.

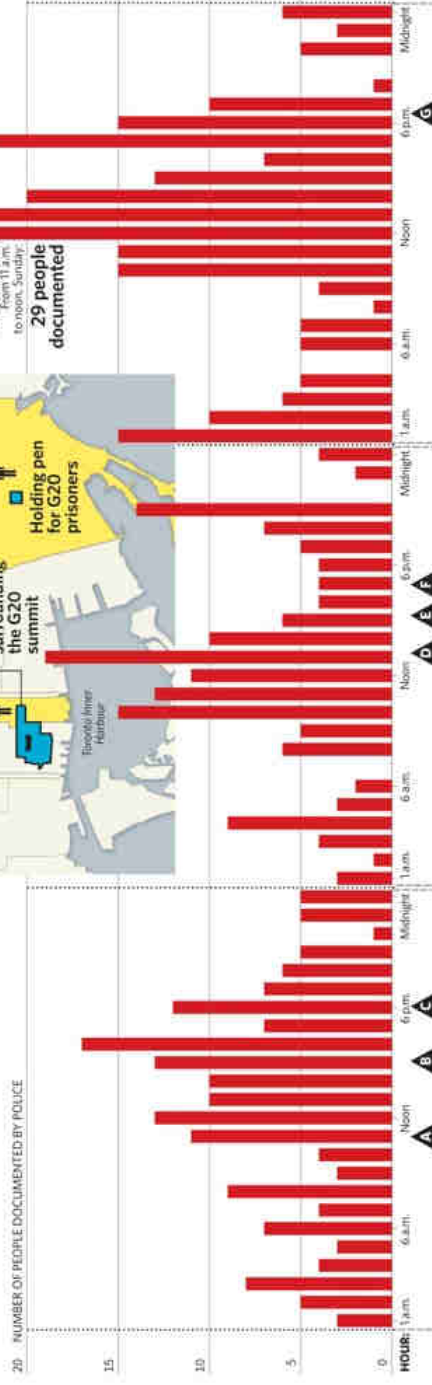
G20 continued on G78



## Documenting citizens and key G20 moments

Toronto police took down names and other personal details of citizens they stopped, questioned and, in many cases, searched during the G20 summit — and then let go without arrest. Data obtained by the *Toronto Star* shows who was stopped, where and when in five key patrol areas.

**WHERE THEY WERE DOCUMENTED:** During the G20 summit Toronto police documented 558 people in five key patrol zones.



### Friday, June 25

Toronto police tend to document more people in the evening, mostly in at-risk neighbourhoods and the Entertainment District. This is not the case in key G20 patrol zones, where police stop, question and document people during daylight hours, peaking in early afternoon.

### Saturday, June 26

A mass, peaceful protest is marred when small numbers of protesters engage in vandalism. Police document people prior to the beginning of the march and pick up again in the evening. During the march and periods of violence, few people are documented.

### Sunday, June 27

Police are out throughout the downtown core questioning and searching citizens, most notably young men wearing black. Particular attention is focused on the area around the Bay St. bus terminal and Queen's Park. This is the heaviest day of police documenting of citizens.

- Municipal request
- No appeals, no cost
- Length: Less than a year

## POLICING

# Known to police

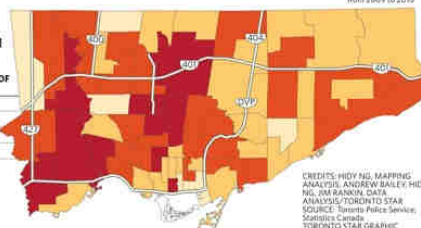
Toronto officers stop, question and document hundreds of thousands each year. Young men of colour are 'carded' in numbers far above their population

## Black and white: A difference in documentation

Police stop and document a higher proportion of black people than white people in each of the city's 72 patrol areas. On average, blacks are 3.2 times more likely to be documented than whites, but in predominantly white, more affluent neighbourhoods that likelihood increases.

Increased likelihood of being stopped and documented by police if you're black, compared to white

| LIKELIHOOD                | NUMBER OF ZONES |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 to less than 2          | 6               |
| 2 to less than 3          | 24              |
| 3 to less than 5          | 31              |
| 5 to 10 times more likely | 11              |
| No data                   |                 |



Mapped by police patrol zones, data from 2009 to 2012

CREDITS: HDV NG, MAPPING ANALYSIS, ANDREW BAILEY, HDV NG, THE RANKIN, DATA ANALYSIS, TORONTO STAR, SOURCE: Toronto Police Services, Statistics Canada, TORONTO STAR GRAPHIC

JIM RANKIN  
PATTY WINSA  
STAFF REPORTERS

In a cramped office in the Weston-Mt. Dennis neighbourhood, this question is put to young men taking part in a program designed to keep them from the trouble that comes with gangs, guns and drugs.

Do you think police have stopped, questioned and documented every young man of colour in this neighbourhood?

To a one, the young men agree that is the case in their part of town, one of 13 designated by the city as priority districts, and one where there had been a spate of homicides.

"I am sure of it," says Arnold Jeyabalan, 25, a case manager and employment counsellor with Prevention Intervention Toronto, the federally funded pilot project operating in this office off the lobby of an apartment building. The project closes at the end of March.

"At least once," continues Jeyabalan, who grew up in Malvern, another of the city's at-risk neighbourhoods, and has worked with youth in Weston-Mt. Dennis since 2007.

A Star analysis of Toronto police stop data from 2008 to mid-2011 shows that the number of young black and brown males aged 15 to 24 documented in each of the city's 72 patrol zones is greater than the actual number of young men of colour living in those areas.

Young white males and those designated as "other" do

"I find the data hugely problematic, regardless of what explanation is provided by the police service."

ALOK MUKHERJEE  
CHAIR,  
TORONTO POLICE  
SERVICES BOARD

attract police attention, but nothing as pronounced as black and brown youth.

Toronto police Chief Bill Blair dismisses the possibility that his officers, who are encouraged to stop, question and document citizens in all areas of the city as part of regular and targeted police work, may have documented all young black and brown men in certain areas.

"I can't imagine that that's true," Blair said in an interview that stretched over two hours and included two deputy chiefs.

People come and go, he said, and citizens are documented in areas where they do not live, which indeed accounts for many of the cards filled out in certain neighbourhoods.

Blair pointed to internal police data that, unsurprisingly, show many of those stopped within patrol zones do not live within them. This, he argues, would account for much of the huge discrepancy in who is carded.

CARDING continued on IN3



TARA WALTON/TORONTO STAR

Chief Bill Blair says the police strategy is working.



> STAR INVESTIGATION

# One cop, five years, 6,600 cards

Is an individual officer's high rate of street checks of blacks a reason for police to be concerned?

**JIM RANKIN AND PATTY WINSA**  
STAFF REPORTERS

**ANDREW BAILEY AND HIDY NG**  
DATA ANALYSTS

During Officer #81499756's time with the Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy unit, the first-class constellation would, on a typical shift, stop, question and document about a dozen people in encounters that typically involved no arrest or charge.

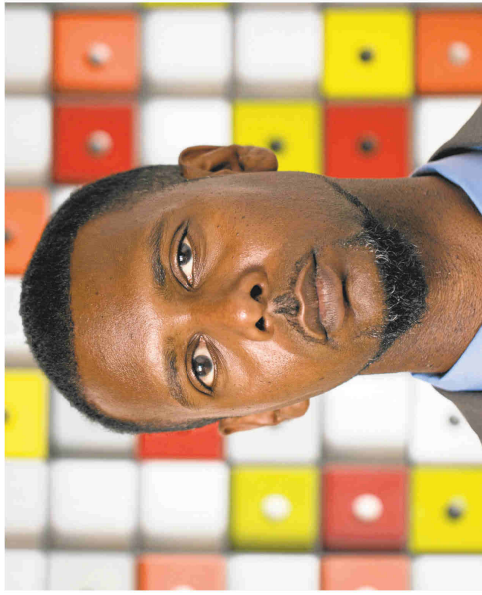
As every other police officer in Toronto is expected to do, this officer filled out contact cards on the people he — and usually one or more partners — stopped.

Name, date of birth, location, physical description, the reason for the stop,

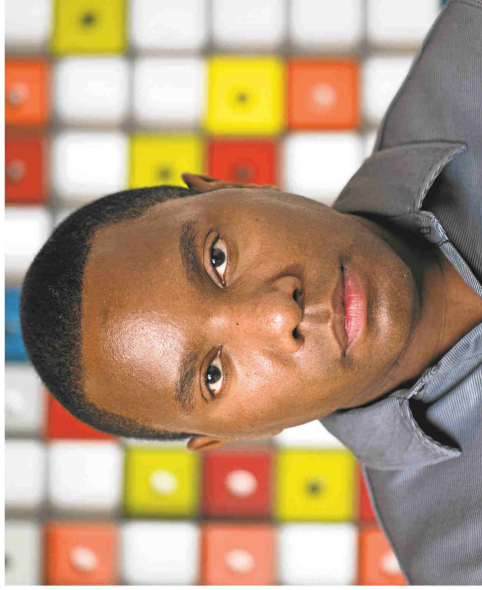


The Star's new analysis of police carding practices began Saturday.

> CARDED BY POLICE



RANDY RISLING/TORONTO STAR  
Knia Singh, a law student and mentor to youth in at-risk areas of the city, filed a freedom-of-information request for access to Toronto police contact cards that involve him.



RANDY RISLING/TORONTO STAR  
Chris Williams, an academic and community activist, received information about one incident where he felt police had no grounds to stop him.

# 'It really infringes upon my safety'

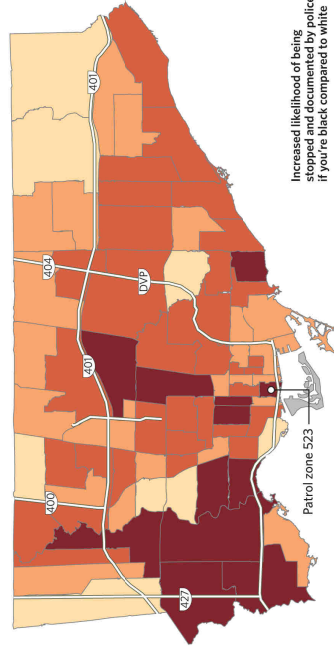
CARDED from INI

And after numerous times of being stopped for no reason you start to feel an infringement upon your rights, me living in a country that's supposed to be free, democratic. I have the Charter of Rights, I'm supposed to be a free person.

You're supposed to be enjoying liberties over other countries that hold people in detention, yet I can't drive a car peacefully without the police pulling me over just because he feels like checking me out and to see if I have a criminal record or if I'm breaching a probation or anything. We call that racial profiling, and whenever I say this to the cops I get rebutted.

*Singh was running for the Green party in the 2011 federal election in the Scarborough-Rouge River riding when he was stopped while driving a friend's car.*

I was trailed by police, the police officer zigzagged behind me for a while and toyed with me as I drove. Then I made a left turn and after I made the turn the lights came on and I was pulled over. And, immediately, I was very upset. I'd been working very hard for the community. I



## Carding likelihood: Black skin vs. white skin

Police are likelier to stop and document people with black skin than with white skin in every patrol zone across Toronto. The chances are highest in the Entertainment District, where the likelihood is 10 times higher.

DATA: From September, 2011 to December, 2012 CREDITS: HDY NG, MAPPING ANALYSIS; ANDREW BAILEY, DATA ANALYSIS/TORONTO STAR

*compiled, though he knew he didn't have to.* Given the nature of the situation, given that I wasn't in a position to leave, I sur-rendered that information.

When I look at this information, I'm kind of amused when I reflect upon the statements that are commonly issued by police officials like (Toronto Police Chief) Bill Blair.

He's suggesting that there's some sort of inescapable link between contact carding and public safety. My response to Bill Blair is, I would ask him, what's the connection between entering me in a data-base as being 'clean slaven' on the one hand, and 'the enhancement of public safety, on the other hand?

It's laughable to suggest that knowing I'm clean slaven is somehow going to enhance public safety, that making an erroneous assessment of my weight is somehow going to enhance public safety. I'm listed as 165 pounds. I'm actually 180. Perhaps I should be flattered.

And also there's a notification about clothing, which of course is intrinsically transitory... So what's the value of noting that I was wearing blue jeans and a black



- Provincial and municipal requests
- Couple of appeals, judicial review, an order
- Cost: \$25
- Length: Years

» SATURDAY STAR «

**WEATHER** HIGH 24 C | MOSTLY CLOUDY | **MAP S8**

**SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2015**

## > STAR INVESTIGATION

# Troubling DNA delay in Williams murder case

Getting result faster might not have stopped another killing, but could have linked crimes

**SANDRO CONTENTA AND JIM RANKIN**  
STAFF REPORTERS

In mid-September 2009, air force colonel Russell Williams broke into a neighbour's home in the village of Tweed. He beat, blindfolded and sexually assaulted a young woman as her 8-week-old daugh-

ter slept in another room.

When police arrived, a DNA sample was lifted from behind the woman's neck. It took less than two weeks for the Centre of Forensic Sciences in Toronto to identify a DNA profile and upload it to the RCMP's National DNA Data Bank.

Days before that upload, Williams unleashed the same violence on another neighbour, Laurie Massicotte, though no useful DNA sample was found. Massicotte lived on Williams' dead-end street called Cosy Cove Lane.

On Nov. 24, he took his crime spree to Brighton, 60 kilometres south of Tweed, and escalated to murder. He broke into the home of Marie-France Comeau, a 38-year-old corporal under his command at Canadian Forces Base Trenton. He rained

blows on her head with a flashlight and sexually assaulted her for hours, capturing much of it on video, before suffocating her.

This time, a Star investigation has revealed, DNA results from that murder — which would have helped investigators by linking the crimes — took 10 weeks to process and upload from the day crime scene items began arriving at Toronto's forensic lab.

DNA continued on A21



Convicted killer  
Russell Williams  
was commander  
at CFB Trenton.

- Eight provincial requests and counting
- Couple of appeals
- Cost: \$6,000
- Length: Ongoing

# TORONTO STAR

WEATHER HIGH 0 C | CLOUDY, BREEZY, SNOW | MAP S8

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2014

> STAR INVESTIGATION

## Just 8% of Toronto kids are black But 41% of kids in care are black

The stunning disparity is being called 'a modern-day residential schools system.' Critics believe that poverty, cultural misunderstanding and racism are to blame

SANDRO CONTENTA, LAURIE MONSEBRAATEN  
AND JIM RANKIN  
STAFF REPORTERS

In the Toronto area, black children are being taken from their families and placed into foster and group-home care at much higher rates than white children.

Numbers obtained by the Star indicate 41 per cent of the children and youth in the care of the Children's Aid Society of Toronto are black. Yet only 8.2 per cent of Toronto's population under the age of 18 is black.

By contrast, 37 per cent of kids in the care of the Toronto CAS are white, at a time when more than half of the city's population under the age of 18 is white.

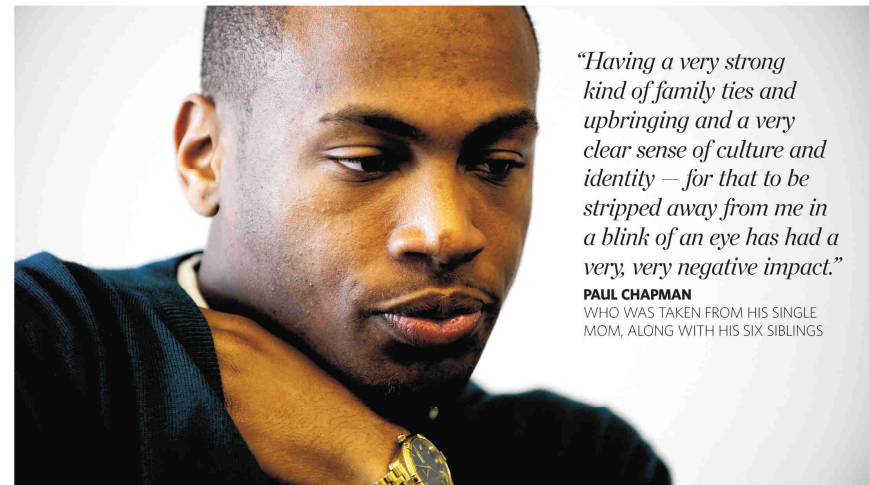
Other figures obtained by the Star indicate the overrepresentation is provincewide.

"The gross overrepresentation of black kids in the CAS is like a modern-day residential schools system," says Margaret Parsons, executive director of the African Canadian Legal Clinic, which advocates on behalf of the province's 590,000 black residents.

"This is another form of racial profiling," she says. "They're profiling black parents in a very negative way."

Patricia knows first-hand how cultural misunderstandings can lead to black children being removed from their homes.

She was shocked when police and a Toronto children's aid worker came to her tidy bungalow two years ago to say her granddaughters were being taken into care.



*"Having a very strong kind of family ties and upbringing and a very clear sense of culture and identity — for that to be stripped away from me in a blink of an eye has had a very, very negative impact."*

**PAUL CHAPMAN**  
WHO WAS TAKEN FROM HIS SINGLE MOM, ALONG WITH HIS SIX SIBLINGS

JIM RANKIN/TORONTO STAR

CARE continued on A33

Paul Chapman, who was 9 when he was removed from his family home, says many black youth "lose themselves" after being put in care.

**SOCIETY'S CHILDREN A SERIES**

**FRIDAY THE DRUG PROBLEM**

Shocking levels of behaviour-altering medication for children in care

**SATURDAY SECRETIVE SYSTEM**

The child welfare system is lacking transparency and accountability

**SUNDAY A NEW APPROACH**

A ride-along with a children's aid society that strives for a gentler way



> **STAR INVESTIGATION**

# 46 children's aid societies, 46 standards of care

Kids in Ontario subject to vastly different treatment depending on the location and the agency

**SANDRO CONTENTA, JIM RANKIN  
AND LAURIE MONSEBRAATEN**  
STAFF REPORTERS

**ANDREW BAILEY AND HIDY NG**  
DATA ANALYSTS

An unprecedented analysis of data from Ontario's children's aid societies has revealed striking differences in the way vulnerable youth are treated across the province.

Whether children are placed with relatives or in group homes, how likely they are to rejoin their families after being placed in care, and even whether they

receive regular dental checkups are all influenced by where they happen to live and which of the province's 46 children's aid societies takes them into care.

The stark differences are revealed in a Toronto Star analysis that, for the first time, compares the performance of these privately run, non-profit agencies. Drawn from budget reports and case audits, the numbers raise the veil on a secretive and unaccountable system that struggles to keep tabs on how well its youth are faring.

A child removed from a family in Toronto, for example, is more likely to end up in a group home than one from Brantford, where a much higher percentage of children are placed with kin.

**CHILDREN'S AID** continued on **A23**

## > **THE SYSTEM AT A GLANCE**

*Children's aid societies in Ontario are private, non-profit corporations regulated by the government. In some areas, aboriginal, faith-based and secular societies share a catchment area.*

**23,300**

Number of children and youth in care in Ontario.

**7,000**

Approximate number who were wards of the province, living in foster care or group homes, in 2013-14

**1,000**

Children on the path to becoming Crown wards in 2013-14

**18**

Age at which children leave care if they are not adopted

## SOCIETY'S CHILDREN A SERIES

# Troubling events rampant at group homes

But province failing to keep track of 'serious occurrences' involving vulnerable young people, Star finds

**SANDRO CONTENTA, JIM RANKIN  
AND LAURIE MONSEBRAATEN**  
STAFF REPORTERS

**ANDREW BAILEY**  
DATA ANALYST

Several times daily in Toronto, vulnerable children and teenagers in group homes are physically restrained by staff or charged by police, or they run away.

Their stories are briefly told in 1,199 Toronto reports describing "serious occurrences" filed to the Ministry of Children

and Youth Services in 2013. Most involve children and youth in publicly funded, privately operated group homes.

The Star obtained the reports in a freedom of information request and compiled them according to the type of serious event that occurred — something the ministry does not do. They note everything from medication errors to emotional meltdowns to deaths.

And they shed light on the troubled lives of children placed in group or foster

homes by children's aid societies and desperate parents.

There are 3,300 children and youth in 484 group homes in Ontario, according to the ministry. Those homes, along with foster parents and children's aid societies, generate almost 20,000 serious occurrences filed provincewide every year.

Yet the ministry does not know, for example, if physical and chemical restraints are being used more or less often over the years, or if more children are sustaining

"There's no evidence that anybody is taking this seriously."

**KIM SNOW**  
RYERSON  
UNIVERSITY  
PROFESSOR AND  
RESEARCHER

serious injuries while in care. How can practices be improved if no one is keeping provincewide track of what is going wrong?

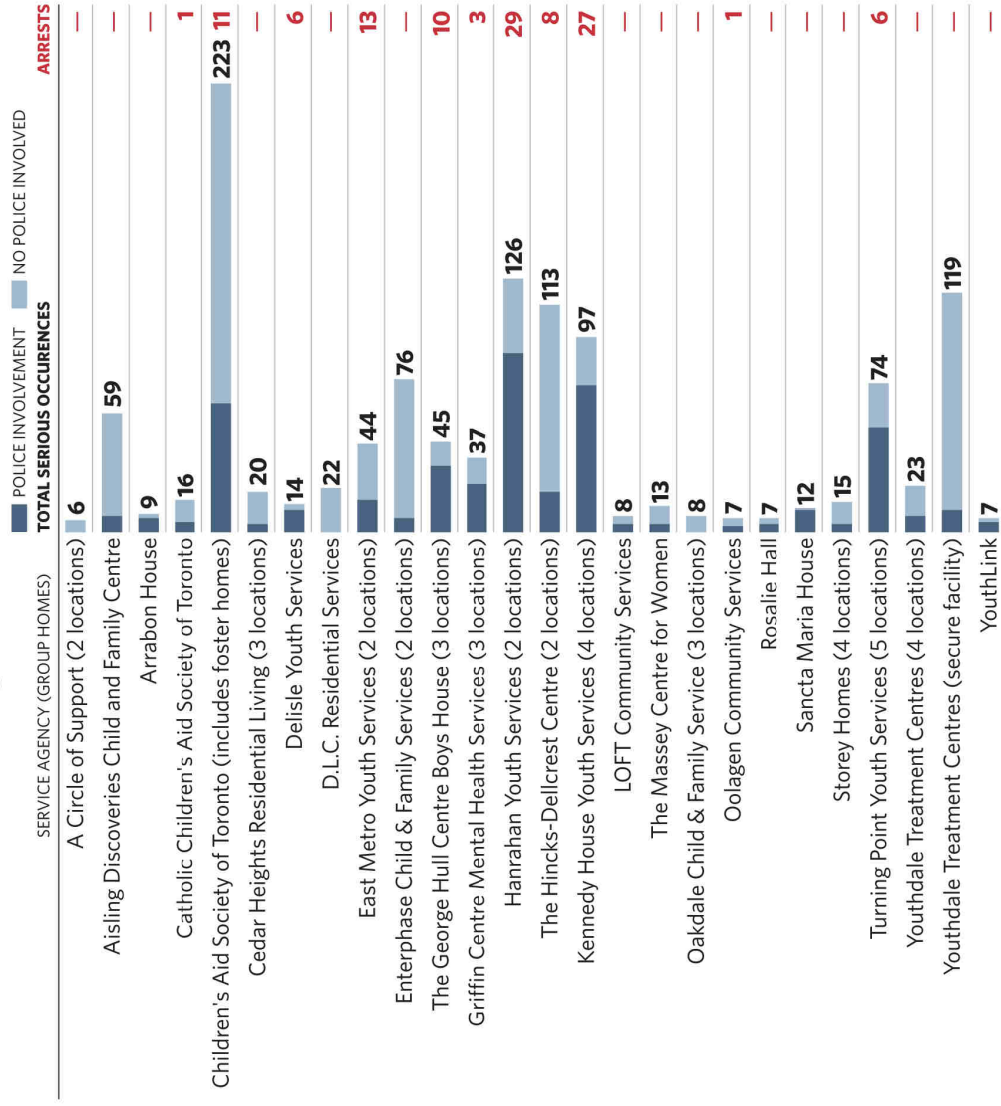
"There's no evidence that anybody is taking this seriously," says Kim Snow, a Ryerson University professor and researcher specializing in child and youth care.

**GROUP HOMES** continued on A17

Use of restraint common in group homes, A16

## Reported serious occurrences in Toronto involving police, 2013

There were almost 1,200 serious occurrences in Toronto group homes in 2013. The police were involved in 460 of those incidents, resulting in 115 arrests.



SOURCE: Ministry of Children and Youth Services ANALYSIS: Toronto Star

TORONTO STAR GRAPHIC



# Missing & Murdered

Unsolved cases of indigenous women and girls

"Having her there at the birth of my daughter is one of my favourite memories."

Candice L'hommeourt, Shelly's sister



Angel Carlick

Shelly Dene

25, Missing since 2013, Unsolved

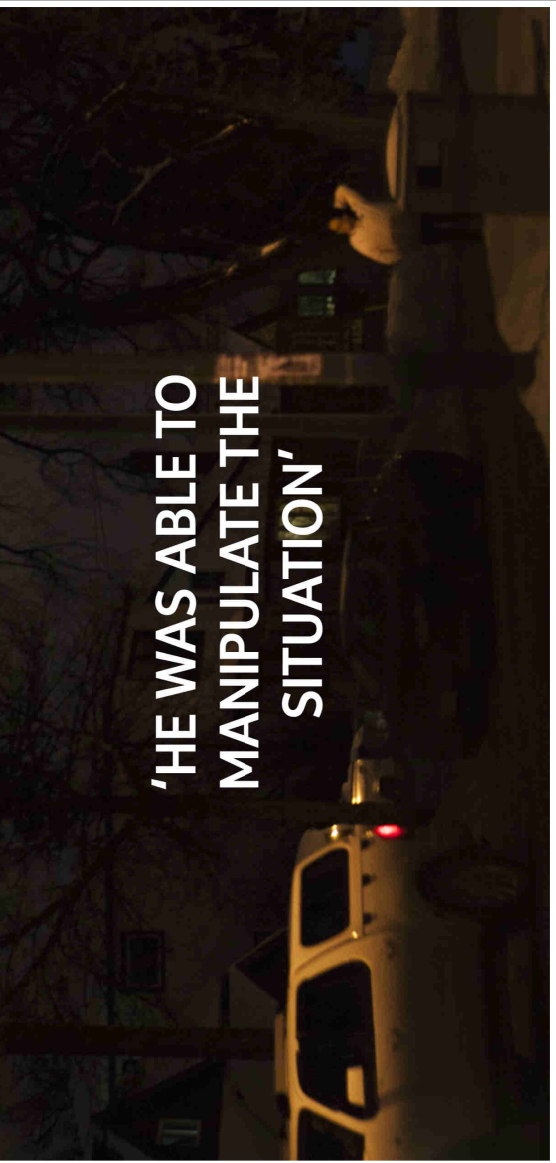
THESE AND MANY



# GONE

MISSING AND MURDERED  
INDIGENOUS WOMEN

'HE WAS ABLE TO  
MANIPULATE THE  
SITUATION'



# Making a request

- First off, is there a way to avoid making a request? Try for a brown envelope.
- Do your homework.
- Carefully craft request letter.
- Keep on top of deadlines.
- Appeal bad decisions.



# The request letter

- The letter is the thing
- Choose wording carefully
- Use boiler-plates as a starting point

# Navigating the system

- Study the acts
- Ask for fee estimates and challenge them
- Always appeal (it's only \$25)
- Ask for help and advice from others
- Lawyers, guns and money (last resort, minus the guns)

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