

Toronto Police are unaccountable



By not reporting an altercation between Dafonte Miller and an off-duty cop to the SIU, Toronto Police prioritized "the protection of bad cops in the interest of the police brand over the actual interests and safety of the communities they serve," writes Eugene Choi, of Toronto.

Sat., Aug. 5, 2017

Re: Chief contradicts victim in SIU case of off-duty cop, July 27

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The attempt by Toronto police Chief Mark Saunders to defend the decision not to report the incident involving Const. Michael Theriault to the SIU is illustrative of the police service's utter rejection of accountability. It also speaks to the entrenchment of leadership that prioritizes the protection of bad cops in the interest of the police brand over the actual interests and safety of the communities they serve.

If the professional standards unit made the recommendation not to report an incident to the SIU and the incident subsequently results in charges against an officer, that should be a signal for the Toronto police leadership to review the conventions and practices by which the professional standards unit makes its decisions.

Instead, leadership is shrugging its shoulders and rejecting any attempt by the public to hold them accountable and responsible for their mistakes. Apologize for the mistake and vow to do better. It is not that difficult a concept.

It's time for city leaders to make our priority clear: The police serve our communities and not the other way around.

Eugene Choi, Toronto

Problems with policing are deep rooted, Paradkar, July 25, and Police should root out 'bad apples' to avoid spoiling the whole bunch, Keenan, July 29

Shree Paradkar repeats the same flawed thinking she has previously criticized: she judges the group by the flaws of the few.

It is astonishing and upsetting to read the columnist assigned to ensure inclusiveness for all, and to root out stereotyping, make this statement: "... the institution of police is not a good system with a few bad apples. It's a rotten system with a few good eggs."

Joe Polito, Toronto

It's pretty obvious that there is no love lost between the Star and the members of the Toronto Police Service. This past week, Star writer's have had a field day writing about the bad-apple theory, with Shree Paradkar stating there are more bad apples than good and Edward Keenan joining in with his column about bad apples and a picture of Const. Michael Theriault.

Up to this point, the only version of the events involving Theriault have come from lawyer Julian Falconer, who has a vested interest in seeing Theriault

convicted. Perhaps the Star and its writers would be wise to wait until the facts are proven in a court of law. Or are you now judge and jury?

Ken Diamond, Colborne, Ont.

Edward Keenan would have us believe that it's possible to identify "bad apples" in the Toronto police force and get rid of them, and that this is a solution to police officers' misconduct.

None of this is true. The Toronto police have demonstrated repeatedly that they will protect their own, regardless of the misbehaviour of an officer.

Civilian oversight has completely failed to correct or punish the vast majority of police officers who commit an offence.

The whole system of policing in this city is broken. Removing bad apples is an insignificant approach and not worth the effort.

Ted Turner, Toronto

I am convinced that most cops are good people. However, I do agree that one bad apple spoils the bunch, as Edward Keenan writes. I hope columnists and the general public remember to apply that phrase the next time a "good young man" is shot or arrested because he has some "bad friends."

Rita Maio, Woodbridge

The real issue is not so much poor judgment by police officers. It's the systematic culture: from politicians not doing their job policing the police to senior officers or the bombastic police union stonewalling to protect their own.

Sadly, policing in Canada is trending towards the Wild West of the U.S. We must demand accountability from those in positions of power. It's the only way to ensure quality policing.

Paul Coulter, Kincardine, Ont.

So let me see if I've got this straight: The Toronto Police professional standards unit, which failed to notify the SIU about an off-duty cop accused of assaulting a Black man with a steel pipe, is the very same professional standards unit that employs the father of the cop?

Exactly who is the professional standards unit supposed to serve and protect?
Other cops?

The SIU should go through the professional standards unit and identify every single member who knew about this case and failed to report it, and charge each one of them with obstruction of justice. And if that obstruction goes beyond the professional standards unit, then keep charging anyone who failed to report it, right up to the very top.

This may be the only way to get the message through to cops that obstruction of justice is not a fringe benefit of their job.

James Wilson, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.