

MME ARIANE ÉMOND :

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Nous vous invitons maintenant à activer la fonction silence de vos téléphones cellulaires s'il vous plaît et j'invite maintenant Monsieur Dexter Xurukulasuriya à venir nous présenter son opinion, ses préoccupations ou ses commentaires. Je m'excuse d'avoir bafouer, bafouiller en nommant votre nom. Bonjour.

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M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

Alors, oui. Mon nom c'est Dexter Xurukulasuriya. Thank you for giving me the chance to share my opinion.

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MME ARIANE ÉMOND :

Could you speak a little bit louder, please?

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M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

Thank you for giving me the chance to share my opinion here today. And, thank you to the Commissioners and the organisers and all the workers from the logistics. I have been treated very courteously and kindly when I showed my interest, and I really appreciate the opportunity.

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I would also like to thank (inaudible) and all the black and racialized youth who put so much effort in last summer to get the signatures to make this consultation happen, and I am a very proud Montrealer. I love this city so much, and this consultation is a little bit of a part of why I love this city so much. And it hurts me a lot, actually, that the city I love has such a burden of shame that it holds, and I'm going to talk about a couple of specific things.

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One, the SPVM are a shame and a dishonour to this city, in my opinion. I think the Chief of Police, Sylvain Caron, does not deserve to hold that position and should be fired. I think anyone who can say with a straight face in public that there are no racists in his police force is not

125 competent to hold that position. Anybody who can say that, I'm going to quote here: yeah: "We
don't have any racist police officers." Anyone who says, quote, "We need to find the right balance
between respecting people's rights and police officers being able to do their jobs", clearly doesn't
understand that his job is to protect our rights. I don't know what he thinks his job is. If they think, if
130 he thinks that the job is to keep down Black and Indigenous and Arab and Brown people then
they're doing a good job.

I've lived through racism my entire life. I was called the 'N' word as a child, 'Paki'. I've been
denied housing because I was in an interracial relationship. I've been denied housing because of
my sexuality. There's always a relationship between being a racialized person, being a gender
135 minority, being a sexual minority.

It hurts me, it's not just a question of racial profiling or stops. I think some people think that
we've made some kind of progress with this report that's come out that is finally documenting
racial profiling. To me, it's an, it's not... it's hard for me to feel like it's a step forward cause what it
140 is to me, when I hear the police spokesperson says that, you know, it's true activist groups and
advocacy groups have been saying this for years but now we have proof. That, to me, is an insult
to me as a racialized person and as a community organizer and a person who has lived through
racism my entire life, and we've been saying this for decades.

145 And now, this person who thinks that he's got a neutral opinion, and that that's an
unbiased opinion and that now that they have proof, it shows me that they have no respect for us.
They have no respect for what we've been saying, they have no respect for our lived experience,
and also, they are trying to slot it into this particular thing, oh it's racial profiling. You know, it's
about stops. So, when I go visit my white friends in the suburbs and I get systematically my
150 backpack checked. Do they actually, is that part of the report because I don't think they took notes
about that. I don't know what made it into, like, in the report that came out, they say people are
stopped less than white people, but that's not my experience. And I don't think all the times I have
been stopped and beaten and insulted are necessarily documented and made it into that report.

155 And when I see how other people are treated, I think... I think the report said that
Indigenous women are 11 times more likely than white people to be stopped. It's not just about
being stopped; like if you see the way people are treated, how they are spoken to. Like, we're
sitting on occupied land, right? There's historic injustices and pain that we see the results of it are
160 people without homes trying assuage their pain through substance abuse, who are treated as less
than humans, right?

 I think we, at minimum, should be supporting groups like the Native Women's Shelter, but
when the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal tries to do sensitization trainings or tries to
intervene with the police they are ridiculed. These are people who are from most impacted
165 community who are making good faith efforts to get the police to address their issues. And they're
cast aside and said you don't have competency to help us see our own racism. We need the
professionals to do it. It's insulting. The whole thing is insulting.

 I'm friends with the Gibbs family. Nicholas Gibbs, a young black father of three who was
170 shot in the back in front of his mom's house last year in NDG. I hope everyone has looked at that
video. It's a horrifying video. There is no justification, there's no story that can be told, although
they're trying to tell a story that justifies a person who is walking away unarmed, hands down,
calmly and slowly walking away, being shot in the back.

 I talk to that family. I talk to his sister almost daily. The pain that that family is experiencing
175 isn't just about losing a son to a police killing; that man had been subjected to harassment, the
way everybody in that neighborhood, any black kid in that neighborhood has been living through
harassment for decades. So this bullet in the back is not one person dying. It's like, it's a little bit of
the iceberg peaking up of profound systemic racism. So the idea that there's no racist cops...
180 when we are not allowed to know the name of the people involved, that's an insult as well.

 There seems to be more effort to investigate or create pretexts or excuses for the police
behaviour, and that's not just in that case. Koray Celik was beaten to death in front of his parent
when his parents had called for help for distress. So this is how people with mental illness are
185 treated, as well. A racialized youth with mental illness gets beaten to death in front of his parents'

eyes. And then, his parents are not allowed to go to him, in his final moments. And there's an investigation of him, not about whether he was, had any substance use, or trying to find anything in the room that would justify him being killed. There's no investigation of the police; were any of them using any substances but would any of them have a background of why they would do this. There's no investigation, like it's a topsy-turvy situation, and that interactions of racialized people, Indigenous people, black people with the police always feels topsy-turvy.

Like, we're not being served, we're not being protected, we're being antagonized, we're being put down, we're being dehumanized, we're being questioned. It doesn't feel like we have a place here' that is how I feel. And that's just the police force. I mean, there's broader issues. I was really happy when we changed the name of Amherst Street so we don't have, you know, a - that we don't have criminal when you walk down the street. But like Sir John A. MacDonald's statue is still up. Like, I love showing family and friends around town and showing everybody everything that we've got. And we have a white supremacist architect of genocide as a monument downtown as if that's something that, that's a Montreal value. Like, I can't walk around under that and feel good about my city.

There's a demonstration this afternoon in Parc Ex for - there's a place called the Homemade Bakery, and we've been asking for that building to be bought for years and years and years, and it was supposed to be... the plan was for that to be turned into 120 units of social housing. It's going to be demolished, and the plan is for it to be replaced with condos.

The homelessness that we see, there are Indigenous sisters downtown is one form of homelessness. They see people, you don't see them on the street. The way we live homelessness is you'll have six (6) they say brothers in an apartment with one bedroom with cockroaches. If you go doorknocking in Parc Ex as I do, and you see the quality of housing, that no human should live in, and for... in some of our cultures, we don't end up on the street, we end up in the substandard housing with no... not even one person should live in it, let alone families or multiple families, and I think there's a relationship...

MME ARIANE ÉMOND:

Could you please speak louder, a little bit louder?

220 **M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :**

225 Sorry. I think there's a relationship between these things, between policing being used in a way that feels like occupation, that feels like harassment, that, you know, there's... most of the people I know in Parc Ex will not call the police. In fact, there's a community group we have that we call each other and figure out ways to deal with things without calling the police because that's not safe. Mostly how we experience the police in Parc Ex is harassment, and it's related to the gentrification. So it's like, it feels like a one-two punch; if you have a police force that feels like an occupation force and then you have speculators and profiteers using renovations and all kinds of tactics to get people out of already substandard housing, destroy the housing, replace it with
230 condos that they are not affordable, and then people - it is so disruptive. If you lose your rent, your affordable rental that was kind of barely keeping you together, your kids have to move, all the friendships are disrupted. Like it tears communities apart. So, it's an entire - it feels like a system.

235 And then, to hear people say : Oh, you know, we're going to try and stop, we're going to do training programs for the police. I don't want more training programs; I want people to be fired. There's people, there needs to be consequences. It's 2019; I do not need anyone to be educated, to be less racist, I just need the racists out of my life. They can go do something else, you know, where it's not impacting people.

240 Like the Lavallois Police Officer who stops someone for driving while black, right, and then, ticketed that person for calling him a racist. It is an unfortunate part of Montreal culture, maybe Quebec culture, it is definitely part of the SPVM culture that they are much more interested in not being called racist than with dealing with racism.

245 **MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :**

Je vous... Do you understand French?

M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

250 Oui.

MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

255 Okay, because my English is a bit lousy.

M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

Je comprends très bien. J'ai mal exprimé quand j'ai l'impression.

260 **MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :**

Ça va très bien. Je vous interromps parce que, on a dépassé un petit peu le temps.

M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

265 Excusez-moi.

MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

270 Et je vous en prie. Vous étiez très éloquent, mais si on veut que les commissaires puissent creuser un peu les affirmations et ce que vous avez vécu, on pourrait le faire dans les quelques minutes.

275 Vous avez dit que vous étiez un organisateur communautaire. Juste pour mon information personnelle, l'information de la commission, vous travaillez auprès dans Parc-Extension ou?

M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

As I said, c'est pas un travail, je suis bénévole pour plusieurs...

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MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

Plusieurs organismes.

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M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

C'est même pas des organismes, c'est des organismes informels.

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MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

Informels.

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M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

Alors je fais un a cercle de méditation, résistance et pleine conscience.

MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

O.K.

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M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

Rest to Resist. Dans cette capacité, j'ai organisé des vigiles pour Nicholas Gibbs, pour des autres victimes.

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MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

O.K.

310 **M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :**

... de bavures policières. J'ai organisé des vigiles pour Colten Boushie, Tina Fontaine. Et j'ai travaillé aussi avec une collecte spelled, Juste pour les victimes de police.

315 **MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :**

O.K. Donc...

320 **M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :**

Plusieurs...

MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

325 ... votre engagement citoyen est beaucoup autour des questions de profilage et d'agression.

M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

330 Même pas, mon militantisme premier, c'est plus l'écologique.

MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

Écologie.

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M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

Oui, je suis membre de, maintenant, juste commencé d'être membre d'Extinction Rebellion.

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MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

O.K.

345 **M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :**

Sur le Caucus BIPOC - Black, Indigenous, People of Color Caucus.

MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

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Parfait.

M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

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They have an intersection actually.

MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

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Vous avez dit avoir été vous-même, victime d'abus policier, que vous avez été battu. Est-ce que vous avez porté plainte et pourquoi sinon?

M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

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C'est arrivé plus qu'une fois. On va commencer avec ça. On a commencé une poursuite une fois et ça c'était contre, c'était pas le SPVM dans cette fois, c'était la SQ.

MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

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O.K.

M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

Et, ça c'est avril 2011.

375 **MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :**

Parlez plus fort.

380 **M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :**

Ça c'était en avril 2001 à la ville de Québec.

MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

385 O.K.

M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

390 Les trucs avec quand nous sommes attaqués par la police, c'est immédiatement ils nous accusent de, comme pour justifier la violence, ils nous accusent de violence. Donc, j'ai été accusé de assaut.

MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

395 Hum, hum. Assaut aux policiers.

M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

400 C'est ça, assaut aux policiers.

MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

Résistance ou quelque chose. Hum. Agression d'un policier.

405 **M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :**

Je me souviens pas.

410 **MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :**

O.K.

M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

415 Mais c'est...

MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

Et pour le SPVM, avez-vous déjà déposé des plaintes?

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M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

No. Mais même chose, j'ai été accusé... Juste pour expliquer le niveau de la - il me dit que c'est pas mon pays, c'est pas ton pays, vers moi, c'est pas ton pays, c'est mon pays, tu peux retourner chez vous.

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MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

Le policier vous a dit ça.

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M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

Oui.

MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

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Hum, hum.

M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

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J'hésite, c'est difficile, comme j'ai dit, je suis très impressionné par cette consultation. J'ai été traité vraiment avec respect et concertation, c'est pas mon expérience habituelle. Et l'idée de comme juste, I'm not going to be able to speak... I don't have an education. I am not, I have limited means. The police deontology is very intimidating.

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It's honestly even just to take to come to something like this, most of my friends think it's a waste of time. So the idea of doing a complaint against the police...

MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

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But you don't.

M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

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I've sometimes tried but I can't do it on my own. When I was refused housing because it was an interrelationship, interracial relationship, my fiancée didn't want to bother joining the Human Rights complaint.

MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

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C'est pas assez fort. On n'entend pas. On a tellement de la difficulté à vous entendre.

M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

465 When I was, when we were denied housing because we were in an interracial relationship, my fiancée didn't want to bother doing a Human Rights complaint because...

MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

470 Hum, hum.

M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

475 ... they didn't think anything would come of it and it wouldn't be worth the effort. The only reason we even started to do the lawsuit in the Québec City case was because there was other people who were organising it and they wanted to help me do it. I would never have done it on my own. It's too intimidating, it takes too long. I have no resources.

MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE :

480 I'm sure Judy want to ask a question maybe.

MME JUDY GOLD, COMMISSAIRE:

485 Thank you very much for coming and presenting. You had mentioned that the recent report by the independent researchers, in your opinion, is not a step forward. What would be a step forward? The mandate of our Commission is to propose doable recommendations to the City. Do you have any to suggest to us that would be a step forward? You mentioned firing racist policemen as a recommendation.

490 **M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :**

A concrete, yes, I think that's true. Yes.

MME JUDY GOLD, COMMISSAIRE:

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Are there others that you would recommend?

M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

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I don't mean to say that the report is not a step forward. I think the way the report is received shows that it's not being used as a step forward.

MME JUDY GOLD, COMMISSAIRE:

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Oh, okay. I understand.

M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

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Like the way it's being received to me is insulting. It shows that we need this however many years and how much money put in to get this kind of very thin tiny bit of information. And they are still completely dismissing all of our experience. So it tells me that there hasn't... like, there's something wrong with how they think about us and what we're saying. It shows that what we're saying has not legitimacy or weight to it.

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So, what I would like to see, what - what recommendations. I do not want to hear any more about any training or consciousness-raising on the police force. I want to see police who demonstrate that they are racist by stopping people driving when they are black or lying on the stand, which happens all the time because they will, they just, boost up the charges to and then, get you to plead down, and it's just harassment. If you take the number of people who get charged with stuff, if you can figure out how to get to court and get your way through, 50% of...

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I don't know what the numbers are, I shouldn't use the stats, but police will often make up stories and lie, and everybody knows it, everybody knows it, and there's no consequences. I would like to see some consequences for the misbehaviour of police. I would like to see some

525 consequences for violence. Up until death, I mentioned Gibbs, there's also David Tshiteya Kalubi, I think that's his name, who died in the municipal courthouse.

I've heard - like I read one newspaper story about it. I asked Natalie Goulet to follow up on it, and she promised me she would. I've heard zero about it. So the young black immigrant died in
530 police custody, and we have no information about it.

There has to be consequences for that kind of negligence and not just like a report. And not just a couple of days, or paid days off, and not some training. Like, people need to be replaced with people who can do their job better. If you look at the video of Gibbs being killed, there's
535 basically two conclusions. Either the police are racist or they are racist and incompetent.

MME JUDY GOLD, COMMISSAIRE:

It is interesting that access to the justice system that would in theory, or hopefully serve justice to what you're talking about, you seem to say that it's not accessible or it's intimidating or it's too complicated; is that what you're essentially saying, that the complaint system currently doesn't meet the actual need of those who are...
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M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

545 Le bureau d'enquête indépendante is a joke. There's nothing, and the only thing it's independent of is it's independent of any integrity. It's independent of any credibility. It's stacked with ex-police officers investigating other police. They've never, there's never been any productive anything that's come out of it for any of the victims of police brutality or police killings. So, like - and that was something that was an achievement that we got the independent investigation. It's a, it's
550 counterproductive.

MME JUDY GOLD, COMMISSAIRE:

555 And the Human Rights Commission?

M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

Sorry?

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MME JUDY GOLD, COMMISSAIRE:

And the Human Rights Commission?

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M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

I don't know. I don't know anyone who has used it successfully. I mean, all these things - like I wish this kind of thing was much more used, you know. This is sort of what I mean by the City. Like I said, just the libraries, the museums, if you go there, you don't see people of colour in proportion to our population in the city. And that's like a friendly thing that people love using. So imagine, something that's like intimidating and hard and people are kind of like on defense about you using.

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MME ARIANE ÉMOND, COPRÉSIDENTE:

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Je vais être obligée de vous interrompre. Mais ce que je comprends bien de votre intervention, c'est votre désir de davantage d'imputabilité à des gestes qui ont été des gestes agressifs envers des citoyens souvent racisés.

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Je vous remercie d'être venu devant nous. Merci beaucoup.

M. DEXTER XURUKULASURIYA :

Merci.

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MME MARYSE ALCINDOR, COPRÉSIDENTE :