

Ottawa Police Service Board Meeting – June 27, 2022

Good afternoon members of the board

My name is Tim Ruggles and I am a Loss Prevention Officer for a large retail company in the city of Ottawa.

I have been in the Security industry for over 41 years and have seen many changes to policing, security and the justice system, good and bad.

Prior to coming to the meeting today, I had requested apprehension numbers and dollar value statistics from over 100 of my colleagues and unfortunately, received only a handful of responses, because from everyone I had spoken to, said that they believe that the police just don't care about us anymore. In fact, the opinion of most of the loss prevention community and the retailers themselves feel that the police don't have time for property crimes anymore. I don't want to believe this is true.

I have been told by suspects that I have dealt with, that they know, that the police and the courts will not do anything to them and that it is open season on shoplifting. Repeat offenders are now more brazen and arrogant when stealing. Ten years ago, if caught, a lot of them would still show remorse hoping not to be charged criminally. Not anymore. I feel the men and women that get into policing want to help the victims, but I feel that they are forced not to charge even repeat offenders and minor violent cases because of the Crown's office. We the Loss Prevention Officers and the retailers realize that there are much more serious crimes that need to be dealt with, however, petty crimes can't be ignored and asking offenders to go through a program does not always work. We are sending the wrong message. This all is leading to three things.

1) Public Safety (lack of it)

A staff Sgt with OPS said to me a few years ago and I quote. We can't figure out what is going on. Simple shoplifting calls are turning into robberies and armed robberies. Commercial crimes are becoming much more violent. End quote. I, myself, have been stabbed while affecting an arrest and that is not to mention other injuries in my career. LPOs all over the city are having knives, guns and needles used against them. This puts innocent shoppers at risk as well.

2) Much Higher Prices

The retailer **WILL NOT** take the loss, so they have no choice but to pass it on to the consumer. The average person believes that retailers are insured for this type of crime, but let me tell you, no insurance company in the world would insure a retail business for theft and frauds because they know it's an everyday occurrence. That means it is up to you and I to pay for these crimes, while the thief gets sent to a program and is allowed to re-offend again with no further consequences. Years ago, I remember when a repeat offender would be sentenced to a 90 day stay in jail, giving the stores and LPOs a reprieve for that time period. The company I work for has five stores in the Ottawa area and in the last year has lost approximately 2.5 million dollars. Just imagine how much company wide. Shoplifting is a multibillion dollar a year business in Canada. Society's perception of shoplifting is a kid with candy or an elderly lady with a tube of lipstick. They don't realize the thousands of professional thieves that do it for a living. We are

paying for this. When the big box stores are hurting from this type of crime.... How can the small businessperson survive? Again, we are all paying for this.

3) Vigilantism

I believe it's possible that people in the future could take the law into their own hands. I have heard many people over the last few years say to me (in jest) "The police won't do anything, why don't you just take them out back". People are getting fed up with these criminals and justice is not being served. The scales are tipped way over to their side. It seems to us that crime does pay.

In closing, I'd just like to say that we don't have the solution but, this, is every honest citizen's 911 call.