

# Why it's dangerous to label neighbourhoods like Jane and Finch as 'bad' or 'unsafe'



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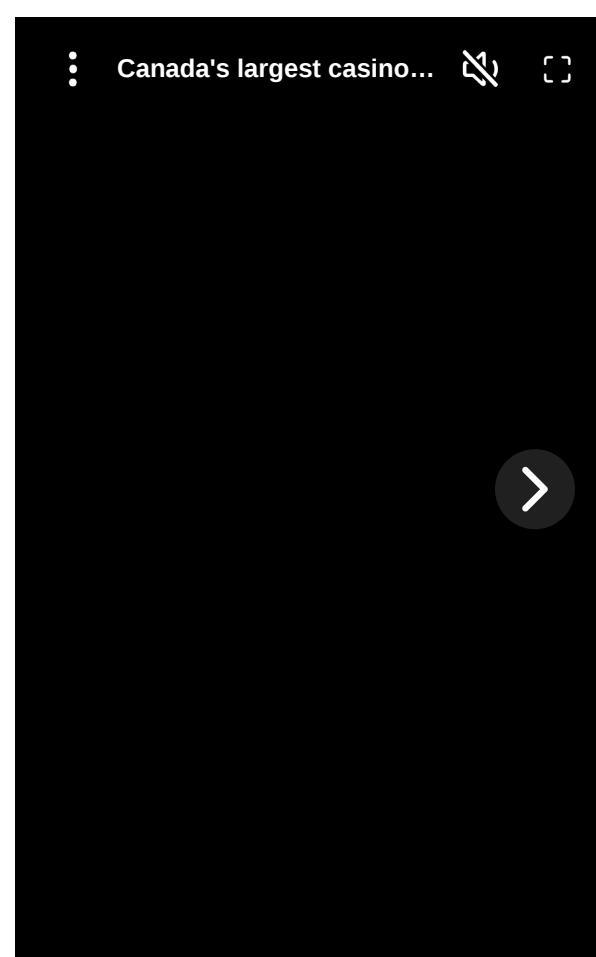
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When I first moved to Toronto, the first thing I was always told about the North York area is to "always avoid [Jane and Finch](#)."

At first, I had no idea where the area was. But as I spent more time here, I heard it from more and more people. Everyone seemed to have the same opinion: stay away from the area, it has a high crime rate.

As I began to research more about the crime rates in Toronto, I realized that the statistics tell a larger story.

While it is true that there is crime in Jane and Finch, the crime rates have increased in several areas around North York as well.

According to the information on the Toronto Public Safety Data Portal, the most common type of crime in Jane and Finch in the past five years has been property crime and robberies.

There were around 703 shootings between 2009 and 2018. But the total amount of shootings has significantly reduced since then.

### The history of Jane and Finch

Originally inhabited by the First Nations Tribe in the 1400s, it was soon replaced by the English and Scottish families in the 1820s.

It was during this time that it was named Elia; and it remained a farming community for decades after, until it was sold to developers later.

The Ontario Housing Corporation [wanted to build this community to accommodate a bigger population](#) through low income and public housing.

But due to insufficient funding, this resulted in the area being known for its high levels of poverty. Today, the area consists of a mix of high-rise apartments and townhouses, public and private.

The area is a product of unfinished projects that started in the 1960s and 1970s; its urban development was also largely defined by the opening of Highway 400 and the planning of York University's campus.

When it was being developed, Jane and Finch represented something different compared to the other neighborhoods in Toronto.

Due to the introduction of Canada's merit-based immigration system, many people from Asia, Africa and South America began to settle in these "low-income" areas. It became an area known for its multicultural environment.

According to [Paul Nguyen](#), the creator of [Jane-Finch.com](#), it became a place for people who wanted new beginnings and opportunities.

### Negativity bias in the media

The negativity bias in the media is nothing new. There are many neighbourhoods and places that fall victim to a bad reputation in the media. They are often labelled as 'bad' neighborhoods, which leads to low real estate values and low investments.

The neighbourhoods are stigmatized and isolated, and this unfortunately, leads to an increase in crime. We create this perception of the neighbourhood, and this leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Once these neighbourhoods are associated with a certain reputation, this leads to extreme inequality, and it only leads to the further suffering of the residents.

Furthermore, growing up in a neighbourhood labelled as 'bad' does more harm to its individual residents than we previously thought. It continues to affect their economic success in later periods of their lives as well.

After being isolated and seen as so called 'criminals,' it can be incredibly hard for them to find a job. These effects are exacerbated if they are a minority.

Their poverty becomes a vicious cycle and it prevents them from receiving the opportunities that people from other neighbourhoods receive.

This does not even include the mental and physical effects of such isolation; [multiple studies have shown](#) that living in 'unsafe' neighbourhoods is associated with higher levels of stress, less physical activity, and higher rates of coronary heart disease.

While there may be a slightly higher rate of poverty in some of these neighbourhoods, it is clear that the media seems to emphasize negative news; there have been many studies that have proved that people are drawn to negative news.

In today's age of social media, we tend to associate good journalism with exposing problems. Therefore, it is no surprise that media outlets would want to report more crime to draw in more viewers.

In an article by [The Atlantic](#), researchers concluded that a headline with positive news is less likely to be clicked on. As we are exposed to more negative news, we become more attentive to negative news; [it becomes a cycle](#).

This is something that happens all over the world. For instance, in the United States, Florida is known to have a higher crime rate than most states.

There is a viral internet joke called '[Florida man](#)' that represents the seemingly 'wild' or 'irrational' things that people in Florida get arrested for.

Since the evolution of this internet meme, the crimes in Florida have become a running joke throughout the US; people seem to associate Florida with these bizarre crimes.

But there is an explanation as to why the media picks up these stories specifically in Florida; it is because of a law known as the Sunshine law.

In 1909, Florida passed a law called Open records law. According to this law, all government records, which include documents like arrest records, 911 calls, and government meetings are made accessible to the public.

The law specifically says that all meetings held by government bodies must comply with these requirements. Due to this widespread access, journalists and the public simply get faster access to these crimes; it does not mean that Florida is the only state with such bizarre crimes. It simply means we do not have access to most documents in other states.

It is easy to say that some neighbourhoods contain more criminal activity than others, but it could simply mean that the news outlets choose to tell those stories instead of the positive or uplifting ones.

The creator of the Jane-Finch.com website, Paul Nguyen, created the website to share stories that are not about robberies or shootings.

In an interview, he is quoted to have said, "The website is kind of like an unfiltered counterpoint to the mainstream media."

He says that Jane and Finch, like all neighbourhoods in Toronto, has crime and poverty, but he wants people to know the other, vibrant aspects of it as well.

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I love the Jane and Finch community. Racist, terrified, suburbans can stay in Newmarket.

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People are not racist because they don't like crime.

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Oh the irony of this comment.

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I doubt any politician would stay in any of these areas either. pretty sure the property values in Newmarket are better/safer

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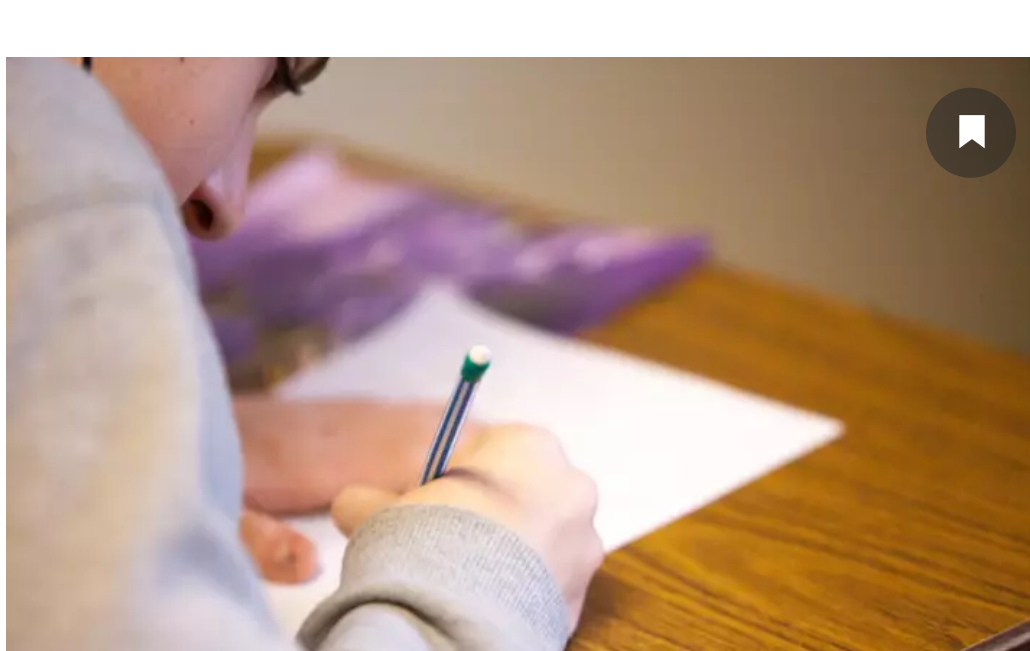
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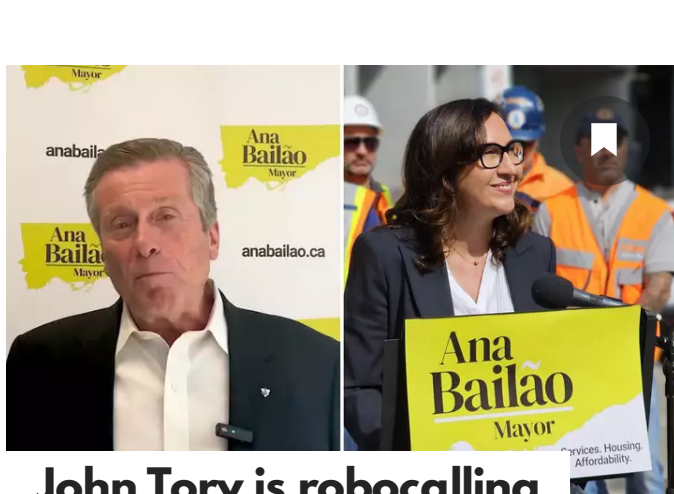
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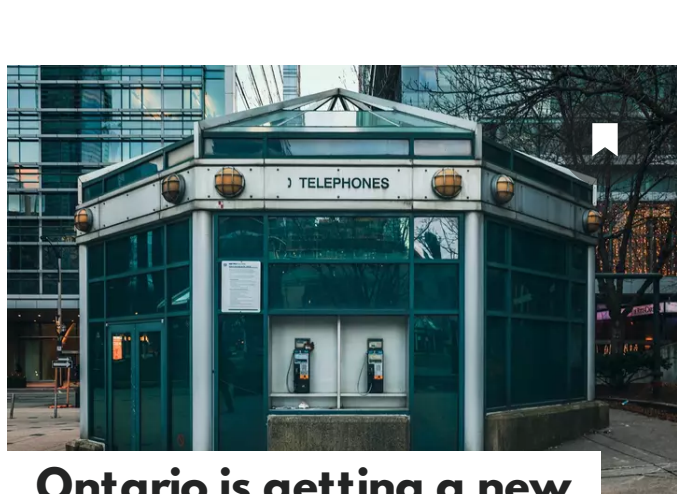
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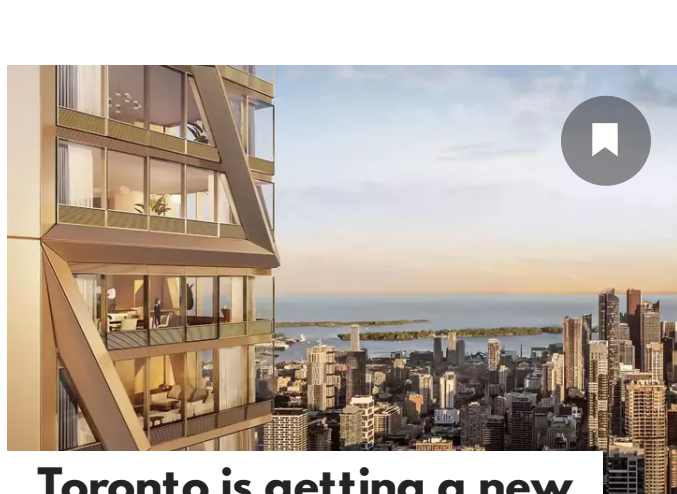
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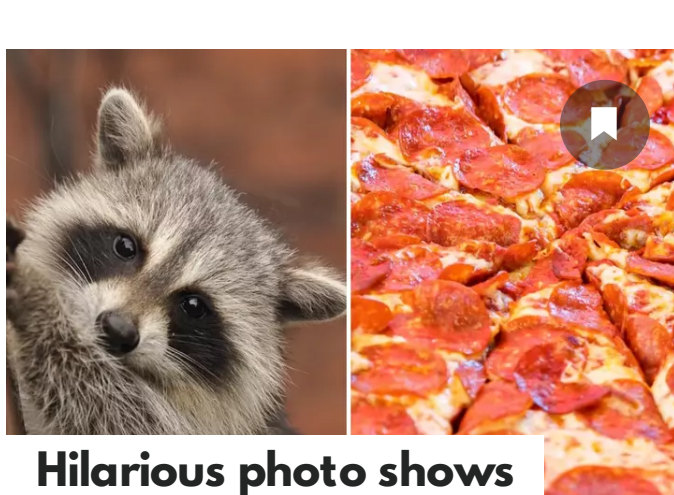
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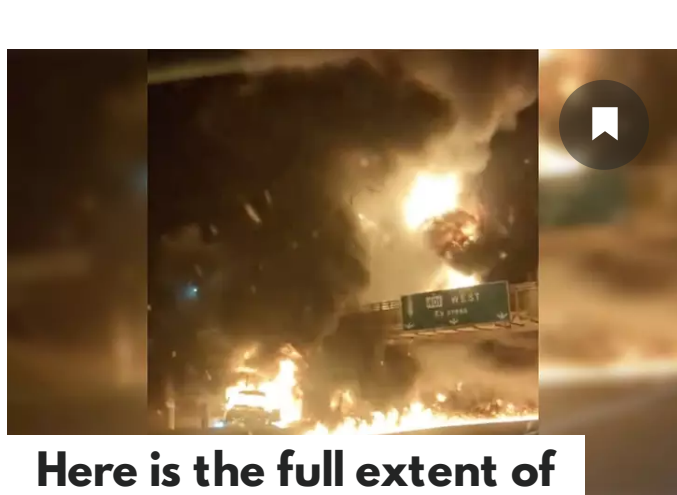
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