

From: [Robin Rome](#)
To: [SFPD, Commission \(POL\)](#)
Subject: Taking care of people every day
Date: Thursday, February 15, 2024 6:04:25 PM

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Dear Commissioner Walker, et al,

I feel that this is the proper agency to post my letter. Thank you for reading it.

To the SF Police Department ,

On Tuesday morning, February 13th, 7:30 a.m. on Pond Street, near 17th Street, I was walking out my front door, right across the street from SF Clinic Number One's parking lot. I saw 3 police cars waiting to urge and help an unhoused woman remove her cardboard shelter so that the staff at the clinic could park. I was just popping out to move my car for street sweeping and returned in a few minutes to witness a scene of a suffering woman yelling in anguish.

The officers were quiet and seemed to be listening to the woman, yet doing their duty to clear her off the parking lot. The plight of hopelessness for the woman brought me to tears as I returned to my apartment, directly across from the unfolding scene. It was quite cold out that day, under 50° in the early morning. She was like a cornered animal. The officers were not using any aggression towards her, and appeared to be understanding her plight.

Upon arriving at my flat I felt her situation to be a long time of pain, with no pathway for betterment, no place in the world, no one to take care of her or show her any kind offering or attention. Her life was in the hands of a system that wanted her off the street, maybe a way to get a shelter. I do not have a solution at all.

I made her a cup of hot tea and wrapped up a homemade scone and brought it down to her. The officers encouraged her to take it, and she thanked me. I did not follow up on what happened—it was too sad and not my issue, but I could hear that she quit yelling.

Even though this was a personal experience for me and the officers were following through I believe, I could not get over how revealing it was to see this woman as a suffering human, not just the nuisance that we city citizens have come to regard the folks experiencing homelessness on our streets, in our neighborhoods. Can we not have the police, who are diplomatic and as kind as they can be, add a measure of humanity to the hungry unhoused who are told to pick up and move –somewhere?? *Can the officers bring along a thermos of coffee and some rolls for the people who have to comply with the uprooting? Any offering that says “we are people on the same human team” goes a long way to instill an identity of fellow humanity with folks so marginalized. If they have this miserable task to move, with the law looming over, at least it could be softened with a warm cuppa. Are there police grants to fund this small, but valuable benefaction to reinstate the personhood of these folks?*

Many years ago I took my school students to do volunteer work at St. Anthony's Dining Hall, and in the environs. We were briefed by Father Patrick before taking our places in the various Tenderloin service areas. The thought from Father Patrick that stuck with me after all these years was to remind the distressed and especially the unhoused people we so often see that they are people, like all of us. A smile and greeting gives more to them than we can imagine. It means "I see you, you are a fellow human". There are many other ways to give back some connection to their humanity, and being a SFUSD art teacher and an anthropologist I would appreciate having an agency or organization to meet with for suggesting ideas and solutions.

But the food and beverage offering is definitely for the police work.

Thank you for considering this plan,

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