

'Truth & Reconciliation Rally in Caledonia' News Conference
Queens Park Media Studio, Feb 23, 2011

Healing in the Absence of Justice (4:45)

Mark Vandermaas
(Caledonia Victims Project)

Our long term goal has always been to create the conditions necessary to bring about healing between the people of Caledonia and Six Nations. In contrast to the Ontario government and OPP approach of enabling lawlessness by a small group of violent radicals, however, ours has been to reach out with a message of hope for a better future based on fundamental values such as truth, justice and respect for all human beings irrespective of race or grievance.

We shared that very message with Inspector John Periversoff, commander of the OPP's Haldimand detachment during a meeting before our planned anti-racism rally on March 21, 2010. We provided him a simple, hand-drawn diagram that illustrates our vision. It is called 'Reconciliation: the CANACE Path.' In 2008 we presented it to Brantford Council, and again at the 2010 New Directions in Aboriginal Policy forum at Mount Royal University in Calgary.

We were forced to cancel our rally for safety reasons when the OPP refused to stop those who have participated in and/or supported the lawlessness in Caledonia – including the violence against us – from disrupting the event.

I would like to read part of the speech I planned to give that day to you now. It is called...

HEALING IN THE ABSENCE OF JUSTICE

Yesterday I received two documents. One was from OPP Inspector Periversoff in which he publicly criticized those with "self-serving agendas" who are bringing "discord" into the community.

The other document was an email from Chris Dudych who lives on the Sixth Line. She is the mother of Pam Dudych who, at the age of 14, went with us to Queen's Park three years ago in 2007 to read her Road of Hope school project in which she explained how she has to take medication and go to counselling because of the trauma her family has experienced living on a street without policing.

Her parents Chris and Myron Dudych were interviewed by Christie Blatchford who wrote a story about Myron's heart attacks and Chris's suicide attempt.

Chris's email was in response to my attempt to confirm rumours that the OPP had restored policing to the Sixth Line. This is part of what she wrote to me:

----- excerpt from Chris Dudych email March 20/10
Hi Mark

I really wanted to attend the rally tomorrow but will have to pass due to health reasons. I so wanted to provide my support. Please know that I am with you in spirit. This past two weeks have been horrendous for me. The anxiety attacks are back and the nightmares as well...

We have lost 4 years of our lives which we will never get back. We have tried selling the house with no luck... I hate living this way but until we can get out of here, we don't see any other solution. Why the gov't hasn't stepped forward to help us is beyond me, I feel like Canada has let us down big time. For a land that is suppose to be free, we are prisoners of war who have been left to deal with this predicament on our own.

As for policing back down here, yes it's true. Do we feel any safer NO.

Know that my thoughts are with you tomorrow. God Bless.

chris

In support of his criticism of those who dare to protest against racial policing, Inspector Periversoff says in his letter that, "the litmus test in any action should be how is this going to help the community heal."

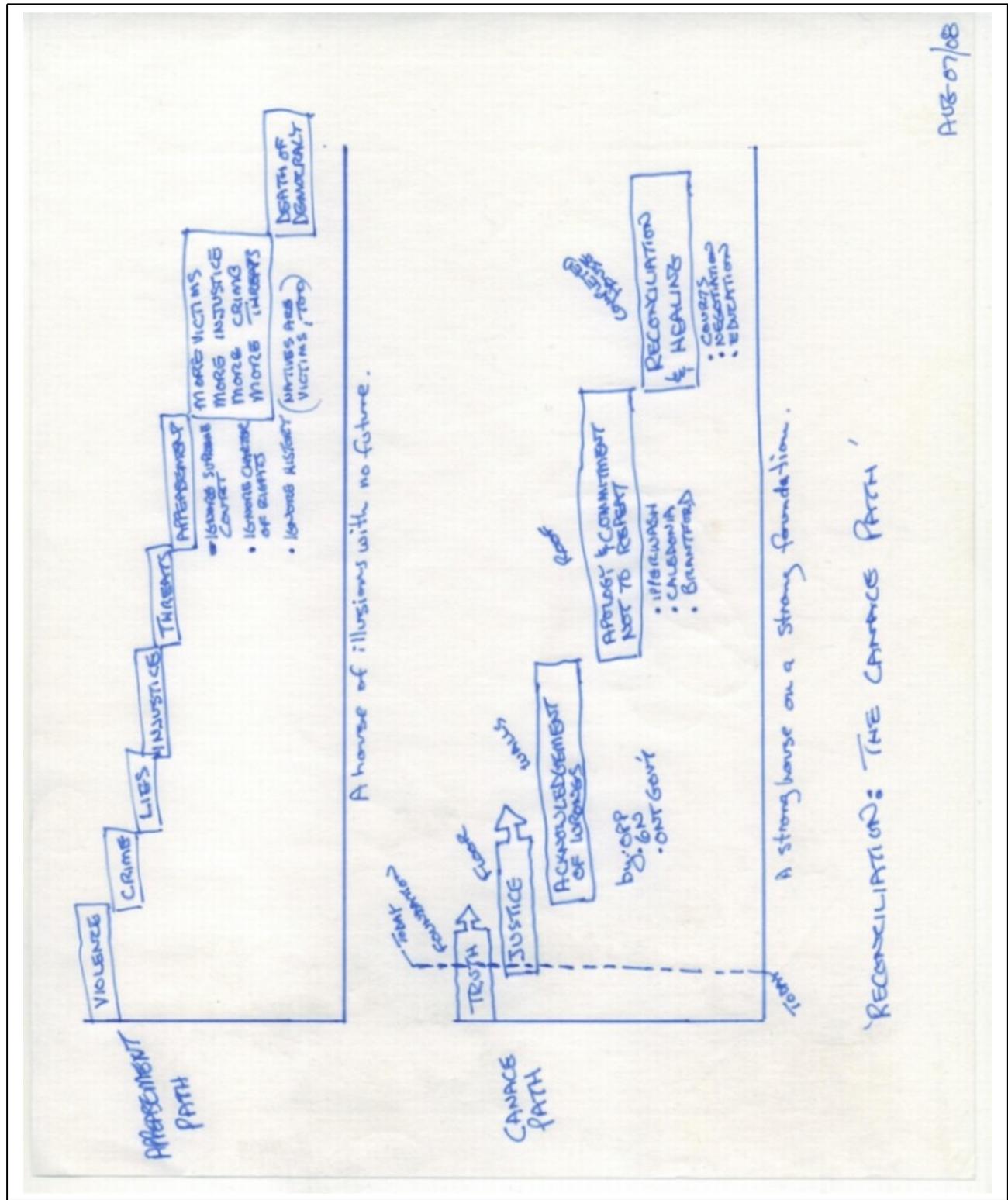
Does it SOUND to you as if the Dudych family is going to begin "healing" anytime soon??? The lives of these people have been destroyed and the Inspector has the unmitigated gall to pretend the OPP has done nothing wrong. I believe in healing, but healing can never truly begin without truth, justice, and an acknowledgement that wrongs have been committed. And the final step of course – an APOLOGY.

The OPP talking about healing without acknowledging the wrongs committed, and apologizing for them is like me using a baseball bat to break someone's leg and, instead of calling an ambulance, I just stand there for hours asking...Are you healing yet?

If the OPP truly want to help "heal" this community they would begin by apologizing for the shameful conduct of their force. Then, they would help us find a credible partner from Six Nations who would be willing to help convince THAT community to apologize for THEIR role in victimizing Caledonia.

Until the apologies are forthcoming from those responsible for Caledonia's misery, I will continue my 'self-serving agenda' of promoting healing by speaking out for innocent victims of native extremism and racist policing policies...like the Dudych family.

Thank you.



AUG-07/08

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7. Caledonia Victims Project: [About Mark Vandermaas](http://caledoniavictimsproject.wordpress.com/about-3/resume-mark-vandermaas-2/)

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