

Speech by Mark Vandermaas for ‘Remember Us’ March, Oct 8/07

NATIVES ARE VICTIMS OF TWO TIER JUSTICE

I have never believed that the violent extremists who have terrorized Caledonia and other towns in Ontario represented all native people, and in all the months I have been involved in the struggle to restore the rule of law, I have never met a single person who believed it either.

In fact, during my meeting with the Solicitor General’s office regarding my complaints against OPP Commissioner Fantino, I told Mr. Kwinter’s consultant that I thought the biggest mistake the government and the OPP were making was treating a relatively small group of extremists as though they spoke for all honourable native people.

The story, however, goes much, much deeper than merely recognizing that native people as a group are not criminals or victimizers of innocent residents. For many months now we have tried to share the reality that native people themselves are victims of Two Tier Justice, a fact that has consistently been unreported by non-native media.

The same race-based policies and procedures implemented by the OPP in Caledonia and endorsed by the official Ipperwash Inquiry report as “best practices,” the same policies that cause OPP officers to violate the rights of non-natives, and allow native criminals to escape justice are responsible for victimizing native people themselves.

Here are some examples:

1. The Ipperwash Inquiry report describes how children were deliberately used to assault Camp Ipperwash on July 29/95.

“Harley George, a fifteen-year-old boy, was instructed to drive the yellow school bus into the barracks with children as passengers. The bus belonged to Warren George, Harley’s father.”

“They ranged in age from eleven to sixteen years, with the exception of one person who was in his twenties.”

“Harley turned the bus around, ‘backed it through the gate,’ breaking the chain lock. The children heard glass...smash and fall to the floor of the bus.

“Harley George “pulled up to the door [of the Drill Hall] and began to push it in with the bus.”

“Harley...backed the bus into the jeep pushing it for about forty to forty-five feet. The bus hit the military vehicle with a fair amount of force.”

[Ipperwash Inquiry, Volume 1, Investigations and Findings, Chapter 7: ‘Occupation of the Army Barracks, “the Built-up Area,” see pages 130-132]

2. The investigation that eventually became The Ipperwash Papers taught us a number of important lessons. One of them is that Two Tier Justice was the likely cause of Dudley George’s death. In March 1996, the Town of Bosanquet (formerly Lambton Shores) wrote a victim impact statement to Justice Robert Reid that contained these revelations:

“DND [Department of National Defence], through its failure to remove illegal occupiers, failure to permit the law to be upheld, failure to protect its boundaries...created a situation that led to the death of at least one individual, the takeover and destruction of public property, terrorizing of a municipality, destruction of property values, and the tearing apart of a community and it’s way of life.”

In other words, in the opinion of the township, Dudley George died and Ipperwash was terrorized because of a failure to enforce the law in the early years prior to Mr. George’s death when the situation was not as dangerous. As we have recently seen in Caledonia, OPP policies allow a peaceful land claim to escalate month after month until extreme violence is occurring. Then and only then do they act.

3. Native elders Clifford George, Rose Manning & Nellie Rogers who were among the original Ipperwash occupiers told the Sarnia Observer in April 1998 that they were “harassed and intimidated into leaving the former Camp Ipperwash by a small band of younger natives who think they’re in charge of the place.”

“They threatened us with guns and said I had to leave.” She described the former camp as a “lawless land.”

Rose Manning’s home was later burnt down in retaliation for speaking out.

4. The same situation occurred in Caledonia. According to Turtle Island News, the Douglas Creek Estates was eventually taken over by uncontrollable youths. Here are some quotes from an article published May 16/07:

“...a young man is recovering from neck injuries after he was struck with a crowbar...”

“A 19 year old man, Kenny Mitchell, has been kicked off the site for two weeks for striking the other youth...after first throwing a brick through the window of the...home he was staying in.”

“That same man also lit up a joint in front of a Turtle Island News reporter...”

“A number of long-term supporters have left the site, citing concerns for their safety.”

“Reclamation spokesperson Hazel Hill rarely attends the site, and another long-term supporter...who wants to remain anonymous, doesn’t feel “comfortable” there anymore.”

Just as in Ipperwash, the failure by police to enforce the law encouraged DCE occupiers to become violent against fellow natives.

5. On May 17th a madman threatened a woman and child with an AK47 assault rifle on the occupied Douglas Creek Estates before leaving to shoot a native man at an illegal smoke shop on Highway Six. Nearby Notre Dame School was locked down. Nearby OPP did not attempt to intervene, but instead called for help from Six Nations Police who were miles away. Had the OPP not been prevented from patrolling the provincially owned DCE, it is quite possible that the shooting of the native man would never have occurred.

6. On August 15th, Turtle Island News reported that elected Six Nations Band Chief David General stated that the seized DCE lands are not sacred because two rapes and “other unseemly acts” had occurred there.

How many of you knew that women were being raped on the Douglas Creek Estates?

So, who is responsible for these crimes against native people? Who is encouraging the lawlessness? Who is corrupting native youth into believing that violence is the only solution to rectifying past injustices? Just look at their flag; the flag of the Mohawk Warriors.

The Mohawk Warriors are involved in weapons smuggling, cigarette smuggling, liquor smuggling and gambling as reported by both RCMP and native web sites as well as other investigative journalists. Contrary to what you may have been led to believe, they are not noble advocates for natives who are tired of waiting for land claims to be settled. They are an organized crime operation using land claims as a means to further their own corrupt goals.

Here are some excerpts from an extensive chronology written by a native who was concerned about the impact the Warriors were having on native communities who wanted to live in peace:

1989 - About 100 members of the warriors form the Mohawk Sovereignty Security Force and begin a reign of terror that included beatings, drive-by shootings, ramming cars on reservation roads and thousands of rounds being fired at cars, homes and opponents of gambling. The Mohawk Sovereignty Security Force served as the private army for the casino owners and the smuggling organizations.

March 23, 1990 - The traditional Mohawks at Akwesasne set up roadblocks to protest the eight illegal gambling casinos that were operated by the Warrior Society. They were intent on keeping gamblers out of their territory and were maintained for 33 days. The warriors reacted by attacking the barricades and nightly fire fights broke out. In April the warriors mounted a full scale assault on the barricades, burned the cars and bulldozed the roads clear. Several of the protesters were seriously beaten and hospitalized. In fear of the violence, all of the schools in the community were closed. Nightly harassments and drive-by shooting created armed camps on both sides.

May 1, 1990 - Harold J.R. Edwards and Matthew Pike (shot in the back) are killed in gunfire between pro and anti gambling factions at Akwesasne. Pike was trying to rescue Doug George (Akwesasne Notes editor) and his brother from an all-night fire fight with the warriors. The reservation was sealed off by State and Provincial Police. 2,000 Mohawks leave their community in fear of their lives.

By 1994, a gang of warriors and their non-Indian supporters terrorized Kanasatake. Gun running and drug dealing became the principal activities to support the warrior agenda at Oka. Drug use was out of control among the Mohawk youth. Lawlessness was the arena created by the warriors.”

Here is the author’s take on the Warriors’ role in the Oka crisis.

“During the confrontation at Oka, the warriors took over the agenda and turned it from land rights for the Oka Mohawks to demanding that the warriors be given the right to operate high-stakes bingo. The real reason that the warriors moved in on Oka was to

protect their gaming at Kahnawake and to spread their gaming operations to other Haudenosaunee communities.”

In summary, the Warriors are in the business of hijacking land claims for their own benefit. The Warriors were in Oka, they were in Ipperwash and they are in Caledonia. According to the same author, “The warrior’s agenda is to create disruption through violence, threats and intimidation.”

OPP Two Tier Justice policies are based on the false premise that organized criminals speak for honourable native people and that native people are willing to live in a lawless world ruled by criminals who take what they want, when they want. For more than 15 years the OPP has been sacrificing the well-being of law-abiding people - both native and non-native - for the benefit of sociopaths and demagogues.

What does it say to honourable native parents who try to raise their children to have respect for the rights and property of other human beings when the OPP so eagerly reward the sociopaths in native communities for their violence and criminality? How many native youth have been turned away from productive lives by well-meaning, but destructive racial policing policies? How many native parents have been intimidated into silence by Warrior thugs?

When we become aware of injustice we have a duty to expose and confront it to the best of our ability. Just as we have a duty to speak up for children afraid in their homes on Sixth Line, and for a man almost beaten to death in a home he was building for his daughter, we have a duty to speak up on behalf of the native women who have been raped on DCE, for the woman and child who were threatened by a gunman on DCE and for the native man who was eventually shot.

We did our very best to reach out to Chief David General, to invite him to speak here today against the injustices suffered by both communities. Unfortunately, he refused to do so. I believe that he is a good man of good will, so we hope that one day he will reconsider. In that vein, I implore all of you to share what you have learned here today with those who did not come, and especially, with those who refused to come.

We must demand that the truth be told. There can be no healing or reconciliation or constructive movement to address legitimate grievances of native people, except that based on truth. The truth is that both native and non-native Canadians are being victimized by a small group of extremists due to the OPP’s unwillingness to enforce the law, and it is in both our interests that these criminals be exposed for who and what they are, and vigorously pursued by law enforcement.

I believe that Two Tier Justice is the ultimate expression of racism by the Ontario Provincial Police towards honourable native people. The time has come for all of us - native and non-native - to join together to end this most shameful period in Ontario’s history for the benefit of all Canadians.

I would like to leave you with my last words to an Iroquois man named Terry who inspired a VoiceofCanada article back in January. Our discussion didn’t begin on a positive note, but it ended with us sincerely wishing each other well. These were my last words to Terry:

“My hope is that one day people will come to Caledonia, not to study the destruction caused by those who would do evil to other human beings for their own selfish purposes, but to learn about your culture, about the damage that was done to it, and how Caledonians - native and non-native - came together as one in the dark days to peacefully proclaim Six Nations and the rest of Haldimand County as a sanctuary from that evil.”

Thank you for listening.