

This is a contentious interaction with a Victoria Police Cst. MacLean who complained an event I was facilitating was mishandled. I was having to defend myself to the health authority as they were alarmed to hear he was upset about being mistreated in an after-film Q&A. Strangely another officer from another community was very positive about the event, as were other credible folks in the audience.

-----Original Message-----

From: Bruce Saunders [mailto:bruces@islandnet.com]

Sent: Monday, May 09, 2005 11:22 PM

To: Ron Thomson

Subject: Hard copy

Hi Ron,

I wonder if you could give me the essence of what MacLean said to you. And also what's come down to you through VIHA and from whom. When I try to explain it it sounds like I'm exaggerating the story to make it sound outlandish.

I need to anchor the story down so I can deal with it squarely. This stuff really attacks my credibility and I am determined to get it cleared up.

Bruce

----- ron.thomson@caphealth.org (May 10) my friendly contact with VIHA

Cst. MacLean felt he was attacked by the audience, unfairly.....people were bringing up incidents that happened in other provinces and jurisdictions and taking it out on them, Monday evening....he told me he felt it was a negative experience....and one not moderated properly....and that he wouldn't be back again to a forum such as the one he attended...that's about it....your contract was mailed this am to Nanaimo....let's cross our fingers that it's going to be paid.....thanks

-----By contrast....

>>> Bruce Saunders <bruces@islandnet.com> 04/26/05 07:42am >>>

Hi Greg,

Thanks for coming and participating tonight. I felt pretty good about how it went. As my friend Neil said so well towards the end, it really does increase empathy and understanding between all parties.

.....Bruce

Hi Bruce,

The film was excellent and I am recommending that the department purchase a copy as a resource. As far as the discussion, I felt very good about what I could offer the group realizing that there were many emotional issues. I sensed that the police perspective was appreciated and as you said was a chance to break down stereotypes on both sides and open up the lines of communication.

I am also impressed by your sincerity and community-minded devotion to educating the public about community issues. If I can be supportive in the future, please do not hesitate to call. If I cannot help you specifically, I will direct you accordingly.

Greg Nelson

Greg Nelson, Sergeant #76
Community Liaison Division
250-475-4321 Local 1076
pager: 995-0877

These testimonials collected to defend my event to the authority against MacLeans complaint:

Peter.Shurvin@viha.ca May 12/05 [Chaplain who was in the audience]

My memory of the forum after watching Crisis Call was that, yes, there was certainly some hostility voiced against the police, but, no, it did not appear to me to get out of control. Sure, some of the comments were misdirected, and had nothing to do with Victoria (or Saanich) Police Departments. But that is the nature of a Q & A. It certainly did not disintegrate into a yelling match or anything. It seemed pretty tame compared to other forums, such as the Legislature here. Or Parliament in Ottawa.

I think if one of the officers felt that he or his department was being attacked or accused, then he needs to step back a bit and acknowledge that either:

- the comments were irrelevant since they related to a different Police Department and shouldn't hurt him, or
- the comments hurt because they were TOO relevant, and his department needs to address them.

I felt that there were certainly positive comments made about police practices, and appreciation expressed.

I felt that you moderated it well. Part of the whole message of the movie seemed to be the importance of letting people speak, and express themselves; and the importance of the police learning how to listen. Police don't have to always agree, but they need to hear people's complaints, even if they are misdirected or just "venting" from past experiences when they were not heard.

Peter

cartsvictoria@yahoo.ca May 30/05 [a VIHA nurse]

Dear Bruce - thanks for the information and if I could give my response and take to the evening: I was thrilled with the movie presentation and presenter/guest. It was very informative and what impressed me the most was the empathy that was demonstrated on behalf of the police officer. She was both professional and caring, attributes that we admire and respect in those who are in occupations which call for tough decision making.

The discussion which followed was very informative, one that offered an opportunity for us, the general public, to ask questions about our police involvement in our own community. The discussions were very open and informative both on the part of the audience and the police. I myself expressed the fact that we, as service providers in the community, would welcome the opportunity to come together with police officers and start to create an atmosphere where we could work together with our common issues and concerns, especially in the role that finds me working with the street community. I was invited to meet with one of the officers after the discussion to get his name and talk about perhaps a meeting time that we could come together in this which seemed extremely positive as I believe that working together, we can do nothing but enhance our community support systems. After the evening however, the police officer had gone, but I was hoping that perhaps I would catch up with him at another point.

I found the questions from the audience to be well within the boundaries of what would be fair questioning and people generally seeking information regarding the situations police are faced with on a daily basis. I felt there was a sense of respect going both ways, from audience to police and visa versa, as this was a question and answer session and that comments and discussion were open from both sides. All in all, I thoroughly enjoyed the evening and came away hoping that at some point, our Outreach group might have the opportunity of inviting one of the officers to a volunteer evening as a guest speaker. It is always very worthwhile exploring all possibilities and options when working together as it can only enhance our city if people are open to a common goal.

Thanks for a great presentation Bruce - it was awesome.

Sincerely, Kathy Kossen RN – CARTS Society

What pissed MacLean off.....

(April 20/05)

Victoria Police Chief Paul Battershill

Dear Chief Battershill,

As part of my 12 year long weekly series MOVIE MONDAY I am screening a film CRISIS CALL. It's about police intervention in psychiatric emergencies, see the writeup below and attached.

I was hoping to meet with you as my experience has been curious in trying to connect with your people (and you) who I thought would be receptive to participating in a public screening of this film.

It is remarkably balanced, I think, in presenting a sympathetic portrayal of the position of police being thrust into the position of first responders and trouble shooters in psychiatric crises. I have always had positive interactions with police and even recently have observed exemplary police work involving people with psychiatric problems.

The forums I have set up should work well to settle some of the fear and inform the public about current practices etc in our community. Therefore it has been frustrating not to have had

enthusiastic or anything beyond courteous, delayed responses to my approaches to the Victoria Police, both 1 1/2 years ago and in the last month and a half when attempting to work with your department to present this film.

By contrast, the Sannich Police, when I called, were immediately interested to know more, to send the info about the events through their network of related agencies and working groups, and even to purchase the film for training. What a difference! The Oak Bay Police also seemed most receptive.

And when Const Waterman speaks to the press saying "Police need to continue learning about the mentally ill."! We're trying to help here! This film nails the topic that seems so urgent these days in Victoria and yet your department seems less than receptive.

Daryl MacLean's secretary finally got back to me April 18 that he would attend our Monday April 25th event after his pledge to get back to me the week of April 4. I thought you'd be interested to know how it looks from a citizen-trying-to-help's perspective.

I'd be pleased if you would be able to attend one of the two screenings or at least see the film and consider it as a resource for training on this important part of policing.

Sincerely,
Bruce Saunders 595-5977 daytime pager 413-9925

My own and my program's background and full info about the two CRISIS CALL screening on my site at www.islandnet.com/mm

(the next two events are also about aspects of mental illness if the police really want to know more)

About the event for Battershill:

***** April 23-25 - MOVIE MONDAY Special Events *****

- Laura Sky presents her film -

MY SON THE TATTOO ARTIST

SATURDAY April 23 7pm at the Movie Monday Theatre

Plus two screenings of CRISIS CALL Sunday Apr 24th 7pm at St John's and Mon. 25th 6:30 at Movie Monday

What happens when the boundaries between policing and mental health care disappear....when the police become our new frontline health care workers? This film by Toronto filmmaker Laura Sky addresses that question. Movie Monday is proud to be presenting Crisis Call's theatrical premiere screenings in BC. How can responses to psychiatric emergencies be handled more compassionately, effectively and safely for all concerned? A discussion will follow to bring this topical film into Victoria's context. (Pg13)

· Sunday April 24 - 7pm at St Johns Church Hall (on Balmoral, one block East on Quadra)

· Monday April 25 - 6:30 at the MOVIE MONDAY Theatre

(South entrance EMP Building in the 1900 block of Fort Street)

Director Laura Sky is with us from Toronto to present at both events. (www.laurasky.org)

Movie Monday Sponsors:

B C Schizophrenia Society - Victoria Branch; Canada Council for the Arts; Janssen Ortho; Eli Lilly; St John The Divine Anglican Church; Vancouver Island Health Authority; Yo Video; and the Province Of British Columbia, through the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, supports this event as part of Prevention of Violence Against Women Week.

Details on all three events on the Movie Monday web site www.islandnet.com/mm
Or our 24hr info line 595-FLIC

**May 3/05 (after the event but before hearing from VIHA that things got out of control)
Victoria Police Chief Paul Battershill [no response from the Chief]**

Dear Sir,

I'm afraid it's me again. I did the film/discussion events and quite successfully I believe. I did meet Daryl MacLean who was courteous and helpful in the forum on Monday April 25.

However I felt my earlier email to you (below) was poorly handled. What I got for my efforts was a grumpy call within a few hours from the guy I had complained about. He had the email I sent to you in front of him and was confronting me for getting him in trouble. I suppose wanting me to apologise or see it his way. That seems a nasty way to handle your mail.

I realise bureaucracies have to share that kind of complaint with their own people. But if all one gets when one complains, about something one sees is wrong with a system, is the wrath of the individual you have the problem with - who will complain? If that's what you want, that's what you've got. Are more serious problems treated this way?

I approached you at your secretary's advice with what was meant to be constructive criticism. This outcome I feel speaks volumes about the culture of your organisation.

To his credit Inspector MacLean shook my hand when we met at the theatre and said he'd forgotten the call already and I think we worked pretty well together to present the film in a balanced and informative way.

I'd be pleased to hear from you on this matter.

Sincerely,
Bruce Saunders