

# The political pressures of getting a lube and a vaccine

*Chris Cooke - May 2021*

So, it's a Saturday morning in mid-April less than 24 hours after Ontario's Solicitor General Sylvia Jones decided my civil rights should be violated. Due to the pandemic, she believes I should be at home isolated from society in a form of house arrest.

To say I'm not good with that would be an understatement.

I've been fully vaccinated with Moderna shots provided at a Rite Aid Pharmacy in Davison, Michigan. I double mask. I social distance and I have a pair of WeatherTech fuel gloves I wear when gassing up the six-year-old daily driver which just happens to have a broke windshield wiper and is in urgent need of a grease job and oil change.

So, you can appreciate my trepidation venturing out to Jiffy Lube after Sylvia decides she controls my life and that Sarnia Police Chief Norm Hansen should assist by stopping me at any moment should he decide a trip to get a lube isn't an essential service.

My dilapidated windshield wiper would likely disagree but just in case I called the printing plant in the middle of the night to find out just what was and is essential on Sylvia's new list of essential whatever.

Peter Wilpstra who is my all-knowing vice president of operations explained it this way.

The lube is essential. Getting there not so much.

Peter suggested if caught up in some police sting I may want to show them my vaccination passport, make reference to my double masking, social distance, show them my WeatherTech fuel gloves and suggest my only phone call be made to Sylvia to ask if violating my civil rights is the new normal.

However, it was not to be.

I wiped my brow with my shirt sleeve as I drove up Indian Road that Saturday morning apparently unnoticed as one of Norm's police cruisers went zipping by.

Within an hour Norm issued a press release questioning the mental astuteness of the Solicitor General's decision and making it clear he wasn't about to arrest me, or anyone like me for fixing a windshield wiper and getting a lube.

I'm not sure if it was police push back or public outrage but clearly politicians like Sylvia were getting slapped around, pandemic or no pandemic.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association called the move unconstitutional and threatened court action.

It forced Premier Doug Ford to apologize, although Sylvia who should have apologized didn't. Hopefully by the next Provincial election the good folks in her Dufferin – Caledon riding north of Toronto will have had enough of their civil liberties being trampled and show her the door.

Which brings me to this.

I'm not on Facebook, Twitter or any other form of social media developed by computer geeks with the social skills of a four-year-old.

But readers seem to find me, think they know me and believe I should care about them and their opinions.

Case in point is Ken Preiss of Mooretown who provided the following email.

*Dear Editor:*

*Chris Cooke informed us in the last edition of First Monday that he is 74 years old and already fully vaccinated.*

*How did Chris manage to get fully vaccinated before any Canadian his age?*

*Was it because of his money?*

*Was it because of his rich friends pulling political strings?*

*It wasn't because of any ethical standards, now was it?*

*Please, just pretend that you are brave enough to seek the truth for just a few seconds before you bury this question with all your journalistic ethics.*

*Thank you,*

*Ken Preiss, Mooretown*

My response to Ken is as follows.

Dear Ken:

Here's the brave truth.

Nothing illegal or questionable is going on here. In fact, I have saved plenty of Canadian vaccine just for you Ken.

My wife is American and co-owns our printing company Huron Web Printing and Graphics in Wyoming, which is an essential service to the American grocery industry. As a result, she and I were and are eligible for the Moderna vaccine.

We were fully vaccinated (both shots) at a Rite Aid Pharmacy in Davison, Michigan 30 days apart as it was designed to be.

In fact, unlike Canada where vaccine rollouts have been spotty at best, the Americans have been much more efficient.

As for my rich friends, I don't believe I have any.

My oldest and dearest friend is an 81-year-old local photographer. He and I have known each other for 40 years.

I don't think he is rich.

The rest are acquaintances and I don't go around asking them if they are rich.

Sincerely,

Chris

And then there was this one from Wayne Harris of Sarnia.

He wrote the following.

*Dear Editor:*

*Regarding your April column.*

*Thanks for confirming that our Federal government is diligently checking that folks entering Canada are following the 14-day quarantine rules.*

*Your concern about how the two agents were dressed, and your belief that your wife was harassed by the process, continues your often-expressed objection to any rules or laws that may inconvenience you.*

*I don't like Justin Trudeau either, especially his phony public speaking style.*

*Actually, I find you and Trudeau are alike in some ways, arrogant and pompous except he swings left and you swing right.*

*Yours truly,*

*Wayne Harris, Sarnia*

Dear Wayne:

It isn't a case of government officials being diligent. It's a case of government officials violating civil rights. And they do so because they can. People like you enable them.

They are inefficient, ineffective and incompetent at rolling out vaccines that will stop the pandemic.

I know it. You know it. They know it but you apparently are okay with it.

I'm not.

I could be wrong about this but I'm usually not.

