

PRESS RELEASE

Canadian peace-builder launches THE VIOLENCE VACCINE

For Immediate Release

December 08, 2016 – Victoria, BC: From the horrors of ISIL and the fear of homegrown terrorism to the tragedy of youth suicides in Canadian Aboriginal communities, ordinary people feel that violence is spiralling out of control. The gap between those who 'have' and 'have not' is a breeding ground for violence and terrorism. The destructive use of power over other people and the environment prevails on such a scale that our survival as a species is at risk. It's crazy out there.



But what if personal, family, community and international violence can be prevented? What if lasting peace can be achieved? What if we could liberate human potential?

THE VIOLENCE VACCINE absorbs the reader in Dr. [Ben Hoffman](#)'s lifelong odyssey as he pursued his obsession with eliminating violence. Based on over 40 years of direct experience working in some of the world's most violent situations with some of the world's most violent people, Ben Hoffman prescribes a treatment to stop the spread of violence.

Ben points towards a path that we as individuals can choose to walk, but that mankind must walk if we are to survive our "isms": fundamentalism, tribalism, materialism and self-righteous spiritualism. He challenges us to live a non-violent, goodly life without god. The questions he raises are bothersome: if you have no Bible, what is good, and what is bad; what is right and what is wrong?

Don't look for easy answers here. Ben doesn't. Moved by the atrocities of ISIL, and beginning his own fight with cancer, Ben digs deep to discover 'the violence vaccine'. He illustrates how ferocious kindness can overcome the tumult in one's soul and another's. This book is raw, yet inspirational.

Journalists, freelancers, academics and teachers can contact us for free review copies.

For more information, contact:

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Descriptions and Endorsements from the Back Cover

THE VIOLENCE VACCINE absorbs the reader in Dr. Ben Hoffman's lifelong odyssey as he pursued his obsession with eliminating violence: in families, in our communities, and internationally with abusive regimes and terrorists. Moved by the atrocities of ISIL, and beginning his own fight with cancer, Ben digs deep to discover 'the violence vaccine'. To learn more about Ben, please visit his website <http://benhoffman.ca/>

"This book is great! Ben challenges us to live a non-violent, goodly life without God. From his childhood as a born-again Christian to his experiences as an international peace mediator, his story is gripping. The questions he raises are bothersome: If you have no Bible, what is good, and what is bad; what is right, and what is wrong? Don't look for easy answers – Ben doesn't. But if you are looking for *yourself*, you might find Ben's brutally honest enquiry into his 'god question' and his discovery of the simple elements of his 'violence vaccine' somewhere between instructive and life-saving."

James V. Arbuckle, O.M.M., C.D., Lieutenant-Colonel (Ret'd.), co-founder of Peacehawks.

"Raw yet inspirational, *The Violence Vaccine* is a must-read for anyone involved in peace, international development, and personal soul-searching about 'the ground zero' in all of us. 'The Sahara', Ben writes, 'was a fabric of windswept golden dunes and shadowy rifts.' The same can be said about his journey from despair to joy; from violence to peace. Told as only a philosopher poet could, it is at once intimate, global and spiritual – yet distilled."

Evelyn Voigt, Peace activist, author of *Flying Snakes and Green Turtles – Tanzania up close*.

"*The Violence Vaccine* is a gift from Ben Hoffman to anyone who will accept it. Ben points towards a path that we as individuals can choose to walk, but that mankind **must** walk if we are to survive our 'isms': narcissism, tribalism, nationalism, fundamentalism, fascism, materialism, spiritualism, theism, righteousness; and our mistake in believing that love and caring makes us weak; that more of everything is good; and that power over others leads to the good life."

Wayne Nadler, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist.

"Ben Hoffman's spiritual autobiography chronicles a journey from received faith to living belief, refined in the crucible of realpolitik. Not a slick self-helper, *The Violence Vaccine* will nevertheless inspire and motivate readers on their paths to wholeness. Against alienation, hopelessness, and 'the craziness out there', Ben illustrates how ferocious kindness can overcome the tumult in one's soul and another's. We could all use a dose of the violence vaccine."

Rich Corman, M. Div., D. Min., Psychiatric outpatient management and crisis counselling therapist.

Excerpt from the book's Introduction

Introduction

This book is divided into three parts: Experimenting on Myself; Facing Evil Without a God; and The Violence Vaccine.

You will find stories from which I extract key lessons about violence, power, and evil; poetry, and field notes from my confidential diary in an attempt to share my private reality as I worked for peace, sometimes in very dangerous situations; reflections on my spiritual odyssey which contribute to the violence vaccine; and key values and insights into how we can 'take' the vaccine and live a good life without violence.

Like the songwriter who wrote '*Ain't gonna study war no more*', I do not present my theory of war, and thus my theory of peace. Indeed, there is little theory, *per se*; and I try to avoid platitudes and hackneyed prescriptions. I do not talk about anger management, conflict resolution, or even improving the United Nations and other solutions addressed at statecraft, international relations, and peacebuilding.

Those, I am fully convinced, are all necessary but insufficient. Rather, I use my life as a lens through which I come to an understanding of violence that could be potentially as radical as the problem. It spans from the despair of violence to the joy of peace. If authentic, it has to be bold and run the risk of failure and rebuff. It has to get to the core of violence, to ground zero in each of us. And I discovered that this radical root has to do with humanity's need for 'sacred meaning', a fundamental need I fully acknowledge. Mary Clark named this need in the 1980s, and I take it to mean our need to address the question of what *is* the meaning of our life. I interpret that further to mean my need to live an examined life, to live consciously; and to have a sense of spiritual resolution.

Ironically, getting to the insights found at ground zero requires each of us to confront the fact that we need to let go of God, and religion. Of course, this causes us to shudder: the idea of our lives and a world without God. This is not a popular view, although there is some evidence that more and more people are giving up religion, as indicated by the growing number who, when asked what their religion is, check the box 'None'. In absolute numbers there are, however, far more people who follow some religious belief.

Down through the ages, religion has generally been considered to be an essential social engineering tool, defining and enforcing morally-right behaviour. An enlightened and humane religion may tend to produce an orderly and compassionate society, and create traditions that can be passed on to succeeding generations. Religion may thus be of positive benefit to the species. Of course, those who would benefit most from such a society would be the rulers who, over time, cast themselves as ruling by divine right and thus being infallible and irreplaceable. And this led to such severe abuses that it became advisable to separate Church from State. Amongst other things, this separation produced and nurtured democracy.

Those States where this did not happen, theocracies, tended – and tend still today – to produce violent, unstable governments ruling over people generally deeply unhappy with their lot, and highly inclined to resort to more violence. So we see more and more chronic instability. Sharia vs. Shi-ite, Orthodox vs. Catholic, Catholic vs. Protestant, Arab vs. Jew – there are few serious conflicts in our deeply-troubled world today which are not largely religious conflicts. You may not agree at all that religion as a mechanism for social order is outdated. I do, to say the least. And I am deeply disturbed that we seem unable to come to grips with who or what we are. We seem unable to let go of God and find a new basis upon which we can build peace within and among ourselves. We seem unable to say we can live the good life in a godless world.

But what, then, can replace God as casting out evil and religion as producing and supporting 'right behaviour'? How do we cope with our essential fear? What is 'good' if we have let go of God? And why should we place ourselves in danger to do good?

How to Purchase the Violence Vaccine

The Violence Vaccine is now available for purchase on Amazon.

For Canadian Customers [Click Here](#)

For US Orders [Click Here](#)

