This page was exported from - Shelburne Free Press
Export date: Fri Oct 30 4:10:53 2026 / +0000 GMT

Dufferin County resident helps investigative journalist uncover alleged coverup by RCMP in 2020 Nova Scotia mass shooting

Written By **Paula Brown**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

When a gunman in Nova Scotia went on a two-day killing spree in April of 2020, murdering 22 people in cold blood, there were many unknowns left in the wake. What was also unknown is how an Orangeville resident months later would help an investigative journalist uncover an alleged coverup by the RCMP.

Paul Palango had been retired from journalism for 30-years when the events of April 18 and April 19 unfolded in Portapique, N.S. Having worked for the Globe and Mail for 13 years and in the years since his retirement written three books on the RCMP, Palango said he knew there was something wrong with the initial reports.

Originally looking to help other journalists look deeper into what was being reported to the public, Palango eventually began covering the Portapique killings himself. His articles would be published in several publications including Maclean's magazine, the Halifax Examiner, and Frank magazine.

?I felt that no one else was going to do it,? said Palango. ?I know how it works so I have to do it.?

In his most recent novel, ?22 Murders: Investigating the Massacre, Cover-up, and Obstacles to Justice in Nova Scotia?, Palango breaks down the intricate details leading up to and after the massacre, and his reporting following the event.

He also tells how a Facebook message from an Orangeville resident became a turning point in his investigation.

After months of writing articles on the Portapique massacre and the RCMP, Palango received a message on Facebook on Dec. 30, 2020. The message was from an Orangeville resident who had heard him speaking on Nighttime, a podcast created by Jordan Bonaparte. In the message the Orangeville resident asked Palango if anyone had contacted him regarding what had been heard through police scanner the night of the massacre.

In back and forward messages, the Orangeville resident described what they heard broadcasted over the Pictou County Public Safety channel on April 18, and noted how the timeline from the RCMP didn't match what they'd heard over the police scanner.

Palango began work on corroborating the tip, and eventually found the archived audiotapes through a U.S based website.

?I tracked it down and there were the tapes of what was going on. Exactly, a perfect replica of what [they] remembered nine months before.?

Palango told the Citizen the find was a significant turning point.

?What it did was allow me to write stories now challenging the RCMP narrative, and once I started doing that with conclusive proof, then the whole story opened up,? said Palango ?All kinds of people started cooperating because now I was onto a real story and it's wasn't just speculation anymore.?

While there are more than 1,700 kilometres between Orangeville and Portapique, N.S., the distance between the two communities shortened across the airwaves the night of April 18.

?There was a lot of activity on the channel at the time and that's what caught my attention. Once I realized it was something really

horrific happening, I was freaked out. I listened for about two hours and I was surprised how much information I was hearing,? the Orangeville resident told the Citizen.

Sitting on the what they'd heard months before, the Orangeville resident said they were compelled to share the information with Paul because of the lack of updates and information being shared with the public and the victims' families.

?I felt compelled at the time that Paul should have this information. I was just filtering a piece of information over to him that would shed light on his investigation, I didn't think it would have an impact it has,? said the resident. ?There was still so much information that the victims' families were not aware of, it was justice for them.?

Palango's book ?22 Murders: Investigating the Massacre, Cover-up, and Obstacles to Justice in Nova Scotia?, was published April 12.