



For Immediate Release: Press Statement—Nathan Phillips Responds to Investigative Report on Covington Catholic Student Behavior

Contact:

Daniel Paul Nelson

Lakota People's Law Project

831-406-0349

DanielPaul@LakotaLaw.org

In response to the "independent" investigative report issued today by Greater Cincinnati Investigation, Inc., retained by Dressman, Benzinger, Lavelle (DBL LAW) on behalf of the Covington Diocese and Covington Catholic High School, Indigenous Peoples March and Native rights activist Nathan Phillips, says:

“I stand by my original observation that the situation seemed potentially dangerous and that I felt a spiritual call to sing between the two groups as a peacemaker. I ask everybody to remember what we all saw—students performing a culturally-appropriated ‘school chant’ and the tomahawk chop just feet away from me on that fateful day. That this racially insensitive behavior is still widely seen in America in 2019 does not make it okay—and, from my perspective, it was disrespectful, racially charged and harmful. I remain hopeful that we, as a nation, can all learn a better way to treat one another from this incident.”

Earlier, Lakota People's Law Project Lead Counsel and Indigenous Peoples March organizer Chase Iron Eyes said:

“It’s unsurprising to us that an investigative team hired by a law firm at the behest of the the school and diocese would fail to hold the students accountable for their

behavior that day—or to hold the parents and guardians accountable for what they enabled.

"The culture that allows for this kind of behavior is where the blame should be placed. We are living in a nation where our president makes jokes about genocidal acts like the Trail of Tears and Wounded Knee. It's possible that people within the Covington Catholic community are not intentionally expressing racism, but as is clear from the report's findings, there's a lack of understanding about the racism inherent in the tomahawk chop and in war whoops, the latter of which the report conveniently ignored.

"That this community does not understand our perspectives on these important matters shows how much they have to learn and how far we need to go to teach the painful history of Indigenous cultures to our youth. This is exactly why we marched in the first place.

"This is a time to reiterate Nathan's call for prayer, peace with justice and forgiveness. Our continuing hope is that we can communicate the realities of our history and perspective, increase justice for Indigenous peoples, and eventually find a place of understanding that decreases the divisions keeping us locked in a cycle of violence and hate."

The Lakota People's Law project has also created a petition for those who would like to express their solidarity with Nathan Phillips and his call for "peace with justice": <https://www.lakotalaw.org/our-actions/peace-with-justice>

BE A PART OF THE MOVEMENT. BE A PART OF HISTORY. BE A PART OF THE CHANGE.

INDIGENOUSPEOPLESMOVEMENT.COM

INDIGENOUSPEOPLESMOVEMENT@GMAIL.COM



Lakota People's
LAW PROJECT

The Lakota People's Law Project is part of the 501(c)(3) Romero Institute, a nonprofit law and policy center.