



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Truro, NS

Day 1

March 16, 2023

EVIDENCE

Witness 10: Artur Anselm

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[00:00:00]

Ches Crosbie

Thank you for attending as a witness, Mr. Anselm. Do you affirm that you will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Artur Anselm

Yes, I do.

Ches Crosbie

Thank you.

Nicolle Snow

Good afternoon, Mr. Anselm. Where are you from?

Artur Anselm

I just live in Grand Lake, Nova Scotia. Just about 40 minutes from here.

Nicolle Snow

And who do you live there with?

Artur Anselm

Just in the backyard, in a small cabin. I live with my parents right now, but I'm building a house for my family, so.

Nicolle Snow

Nice. For your family, you said?

Artur Anselm

Yep, my wife and small daughter. She's 14 months old.

Nicolle Snow

And are you employed?

Artur Anselm

Yeah, I work for Canadian National Railways.

Nicolle Snow

What do you do there?

Artur Anselm

I'm a track maintainer. I make sure the tracks are safe for the trains to run and we repair any defects and change rails. Stuff like that.

Nicolle Snow

And how long have you been employed with CN Rail?

Artur Anselm

Six years, it will be six years this year.

Nicolle Snow

And what policies or mandates did CN Rail adopt during the COVID crisis days?

Artur Anselm

November 2021, they implemented the vaccine mandate. And if you weren't vaccinated, you were off paid, off work. Forever, basically.

Nicolle Snow

What was the deadline that employees were given to vaccinate by?

Artur Anselm

The deadline was November 15th, 2021.

Nicolle Snow

And did you receive notification of that directly from your employer?

Artur Anselm

Yeah, I received it from my supervisors and my managers. And work emails as well.

Nicolle Snow

Okay, and you brought in with you today an email dated September 8, 2021, from CN Communications, stating that there was a vaccine mandate that would be effective as of November 1st, 2021.

Artur Anselm

Yes, that's correct.

Nicolle Snow

Okay, and that will be marked as an exhibit [exhibit number unavailable]. What happened after that?

Artur Anselm

Well, basically I was very much against taking any shots. Because I saw what was happening to my co-workers after the vaccines and they were getting sick. They weren't feeling well.

And I really held my stand up until— I was becoming a new father and I had to put food on the table for my family. So I decided to bite the bullet. And on November 13th I took the first shot.

Nicolle Snow

And to clarify, did the timeline for vaccinating remain November 1st? Was it extended?

Artur Anselm

It was extended. It was November 1st and then I just kept not getting it and then they extended it to November 15th. And then on the 13th, I took the shot.

Nicolle Snow

Okay. Just to confirm, Mr. Anselm, you brought in with you today an email dated October 14, 2021, from CN Rail indicating that the mandatory vaccine deadline was extended to November 15th. And what you're saying is, on the 13th, you went ahead and got your vaccination.

Artur Anselm

Yeah.

Nicolle Snow

Did you do so feeling coerced or pressured?

Artur Anselm

Definitely. I was getting phone calls daily from supervisors and everybody and telling me, "After the 15th, you can't come to work, and you'll be off pay."

Nicolle Snow

All right, and so were they indicating that they were going to terminate you? Or put you on leave without pay.

Artur Anselm

They weren't clear with it. They said either you're terminated or you're going to be off pay, basically laid off. So I wasn't sure what was going to happen.

Nicolle Snow

What happened on November 13th when you had your vaccination? Where did you go?

Artur Anselm

To be honest, I don't remember the location—but it was just a walk-in clinic and a nurse vaccinated me.

Nicolle Snow

All right, and do you know that it was a nurse? Did she tell you it was a nurse?

Artur Anselm

She did not, but that's my assumption.

Nicolle Snow

Okay. Do you know that the batch number of your vaccine?

Artur Anselm

No, I could look it up, but I don't know it right now.

Nicolle Snow

Were you made aware of any of the potential risks associated with vaccine?

Artur Anselm

Yeah, I was aware from my own research from before.

Nicolle Snow

Sorry, I'll cut you off. I mean, did the person who administered the vaccine have any discussion with you about the risks associated with the vaccine?

Artur Anselm

Yeah, she actually told me that, for guys my age, there is a potential risk of having heart problems. And she said, "Oh yeah, if you have any heart issues just go to the doctor's office."

They'll give you some drugs and make you feel better." And I was like, "Okay that sounds pretty good." I didn't want to take it, but I still did.

Nicolle Snow

It didn't sound overly serious, in your view.

[00:05:00]

Artur Anselm

No. Like, why are you guys making me take this if there's risks? And I'm perfectly healthy, right?

Nicolle Snow

What if any symptoms developed following the first vaccination?

Artur Anselm

Well, first of all: a week after my vaccine, I got seriously ill, just with very bad flu. And I was basically out for a week. And then two weeks following my vaccination, I started to develop heart pain. And the heart palpitations, shortness of breath, weakness. And just I didn't feel good at all. I felt like I knew something was wrong, especially with my chest. I kept getting stinging chest pain.

Nicolle Snow

And had you had any of these kinds of symptoms before in your life?

Artur Anselm

Never. No.

Nicolle Snow

And how old are you, Mr. Ansel?

Artur Anselm

Now I'm 26.

Nicolle Snow

And how old were you when you got the vaccine?

Artur Anselm

I would have been 25 years old.

Nicolle Snow

What did you do when you started experiencing these heart pain symptoms?

Artur Anselm

Well, I went to the emergency room at the Cobequid Health Center. Just did a walk-in emergency and they checked my vitals. They took my blood. They made sure I wasn't having a heart attack and basically sent me on my way.

Nicolle Snow

Did you have any discussion with them about whether this could be vaccine-related?

Artur Anselm

Yeah, I did. I told them this all started after the vaccine. I never had any issues with my heart or anything like that. And they just said, "Oh yeah, like whatever, you're good. You don't have a heart attack, so."

Nicolle Snow

Okay. And was there any discussion about completing a vaccine adverse event form?

Artur Anselm

No, I never heard anything about that.

Nicolle Snow

So as far as you know, that was never completed by the doctors?

Artur Anselm

No.

Nicolle Snow

And what happened after that?

Artur Anselm

After that, I went home, and I kept going to work. I kept fighting the pains. And then I decided to go to my family doctor as well. I told him what was going on after the vaccine, that I was having chest pains and shortness of breath. And same thing with him. He said, "No, it's probably not from the vaccine. Just don't smoke anything. Don't drink anything. And you'll be fine." And I tried that. Symptoms never went away.

Nicolle Snow

Okay, and did your doctor or your family doctor have a discussion with you about whether or not to fill out an adverse event form?

Artur Anselm

No, we never had any discussions about that.

Nicolle Snow

And your doctor didn't feel that there was any connection between the vaccination and the symptoms you were having?

Artur Anselm

No, he did not.

Nicolle Snow

What happened after that?

Artur Anselm

After that, I went in again to my family doctor. I told him, "Listen I'm going to lose my job if I don't get the second shot." I didn't really want to get it at all, obviously. And I asked him, "Can you fill out a medical exemption for me?" And he said, "No, I can't do it without any proof." I just said, "All right, I guess I'll be laid off." Then I went in again—I think it was my third time—and he finally referred me to a cardiologist to get an MRI.

Nicolle Snow

Okay, and so then did you go to the cardiologist?

Artur Anselm

Yeah, I saw the cardiologist. They scanned my heart and did all the tests. And it turned out that the outer lining of my heart was inflamed. And I had pericarditis, myocarditis. And the cardiologist said, "This is from the vaccine."

Nicolle Snow

Okay, and so who is the cardiologist that you saw?

Artur Anselm

His name is— One second, sorry. Dr. Douglas Bate, or, sorry, Hussain Beydoun. That was his name.

Nicolle Snow

B-E-Y-D-O-U-N. And you brought with you today a letter from Dr. Beydoun dated February 11, 2022. Do you have that in front of you?

Artur Anselm

Yep. I've got it right here.

Nicolle Snow

And would you look at page 2?

Artur Anselm

Yep.

Nicolle Snow

And just read the first line at the top of that page.

Artur Anselm

“Very likely, Mr. Anselm has pericarditis, myocarditis post-mRNA vaccine, echocardiogram done today was normal in the view the symptoms improved significantly. I would not start anti-inflammatory therapy. Any change, please let me know and I will be happy to reassess him. I would not recommend him for a second dose, and I am copying this to my colleague.”

Nicolle Snow

All right. Mr. Anselm, you received that exemption,

[00:10:00]

to not have to take the second dose, correct?

Artur Anselm

That’s correct.

Nicolle Snow

All right. And let’s go back to your employment. Had you been working through this at this point?

Artur Anselm

No, it turned out I had just had a kid, so I was able to get the parental benefits, even though I was laid off. So that kept me going, luckily.

Nicolle Snow

Okay, so you were on parental leave during this period. And what happened with respect to the exemption that you had? Were you able to use that to return to work?

Artur Anselm

No, I was still kind of pissed off. I didn’t really want to talk to anybody. And then my manager called me in July. He said the mandates were dropped and you can return to work. I said, “All right, I’ll take my whole leave until September and then I’ll come back to work.” September 2022 is when I returned to work.

Nicolle Snow

So there was no period where you had to return to work prior to the mandates being dropped.

Artur Anselm

Yeah, that's correct.

Nicolle Snow

You remained off in your parental leave.

Artur Anselm

That's correct.

Nicolle Snow

Did you have any conversation with them during that period when you were on parental leave as to whether or not they would take you back with the exemption?

Artur Anselm

No, I did not. I just didn't even want to bother for now.

Nicolle Snow

Okay. How has your heart condition impacted your life?

Artur Anselm

It has impacted me in every aspect of my life. Physically, I can't really do the things I used to anymore. Like with less vigor. Mentally, I was just full of regret, and it made me kind of a less of a father—not less of a father, but mentally I was down. It impacted my fatherhood. Mentally, physically, everything.

Nicolle Snow

All right. Thank you. Those are all my questions. And we'll just pause for a moment to see whether the commissioners have any questions.

Commissioner Drysdale

You said that you had worked with CN Rail, I think you said six years?

Artur Anselm

Yep, six years.

Commissioner Drysdale

When you signed your contract with CN Rail, your employment contract, was there a clause in there requiring that you had to take whatever vaccines that they might require in the future?

Artur Anselm

No, there was none of that. In my eyes, it's illegal what they did.

Nicolle Snow

Thank you, Mr. Anselm.

Artur Anselm

Thank you.

[00:12:55]



Final Review and Approval: Jodi Bruhn, August 3, 2023.

The evidence offered in this transcript is a true and faithful record of witness testimony given during the National Citizens Inquiry (NCI) hearings. The transcript was prepared by members of a team of volunteers using an “intelligent verbatim” transcription method.

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