



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

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EVIDENCE

Witness 2: Julie Pinder

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[00:00:00]

Shawn Buckley

So our next witness is Julie Pinder, who will be attending virtually.

Julie Pinder

Hello?

Shawn Buckley

Yes, Julie, can you turn your camera on please?

Julie Pinder

Yeah, I can. There we go. Hi there.

Shawn Buckley

Thank you. We can see you. I'd like to start by asking you to state your full name for the record, spelling your first and last name for the record.

Julie Pinder

Sure, it's Julie Pinder, J-U-L-I-E P-I-N-D-E-R.

Shawn Buckley

And Julie, do you promised to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Julie Pinder

Yes.

Shawn Buckley

Now your screen is shaking. Can you set your camera down. That's a little better. And I understand that that's—

Julie Pinder

How's that?

Shawn Buckley

That's much better. Thank you.

Julie Pinder

Okay, sorry.

Shawn Buckley

Now, I understand that you have received two doses of the vaccine?

Julie Pinder

Yes.

Shawn Buckley

And I'm going to ask you what led you to make the decision to become vaccinated.

Julie Pinder

The first vaccine, I wanted it because I was scared of COVID and I wanted to do my part. So yeah, I went on ahead and I did the first vaccine. I didn't expect it to hit me the way it did, really. Second vaccine I feel like I was coerced into taking it.

Shawn Buckley

Okay, now— And I'm just going to stop. Your screen is still shaking. I don't know if your hand is on the table or if there's something else that we can do. You're using a cell phone, I presume.

Julie Pinder

Yeah. Here, let me see what I can do here. Try to lean it up, I'm sorry. Okay, is that better?

Shawn Buckley

That is that is much better, thank you. So the first shot—you basically were afraid of COVID.

Julie Pinder

Right.

Shawn Buckley

Could you tell us who was it that was making you afraid of COVID? I mean, what were you seeing and hearing that gave you that fear?

Julie Pinder

The media. It was all over the place. I pretty much believed that, you know, this miracle vaccine was coming and it was going to save us all and we'd be fine. And I kept hearing that the vaccine was safe and effective. So at that point, I wanted to do my part. I was scared of getting COVID.

Shawn Buckley

Okay, and then my understanding is you had your first shot on March 1st of 2021.

Julie Pinder

Yes.

Shawn Buckley

So you were fairly early on in the queue. Can you tell us what happened?

Julie Pinder

So my first shot, I came home and I was really extremely tired but it kind of felt like an anesthetic type of tired. My eyelids swelled up. I had a rash from my neck down to my feet, pretty much. I was itchy everywhere. And it just knocked me out. I want to say the rash lasted quite a while, it just kind of slowly went away.

But then I started noticing that my heart rate was elevated. I used to wear a Fitbit and I was tracking my steps. I'd look at my heart rate and it'd be up as high as 140 beats a minute and then it would drop back down again. And that was kind of continuous. So at one point I just thought my Fitbit was broken and I stopped wearing it.

I also developed weakness behind my ankle bones and I assumed I needed new work boots. So I did that and then I started wearing ankle braces at one point. I never connected the heart rate and the ankle weakness with the vaccine.

Shawn Buckley

Right. Did you seek medical attention for these effects?

Julie Pinder

Between the first and the second one, I think I did a few times because I was also experiencing cramping in my lower calves. Nobody put two and two together at that point.

Shawn Buckley

Okay. Now, my understanding is: because of these complications you were reluctant to have a second shot.

Julie Pinder

I was, yeah.

Shawn Buckley

But you did attend at the pharmacy to get a second shot. And I'm curious why you were kind of willing to do that again after what you had already experienced.

Julie Pinder

Well, I had a brief conversation with my head of health and safety at work. The place where I worked at is extremely hot.

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And we had to wear face masks all day. I had asked him, "Once we're fully vaccinated, are we going to have to wear these masks?" And he said, "No, no, not once you're vaccinated." And I said to him, "Well, what about the people who don't want to get vaccinated?" Because there are a lot of people there. And he said, "Well it's going to be mandated, so they're not going to have a choice, we won't have to worry about it."

And also, I was hoping that I could travel. I had booked a trip to the Bahamas that just obviously didn't happen. So for those reasons. At that point, I was scared to take it, I'm not going to lie. I still at that point thought I was doing what was needed of me.

Shawn Buckley

You mean kind of the societal expectation that you do your part?

Julie Pinder

I saw a shift in the attitudes of Canadians towards people who were unvaccinated. People were turning their backs on the unvaccinated. I mean, I—people had really horrible, not-so-nice things to say. Everybody that was hesitant to get a vaccine became treated like an anti-vaxxer. And apparently. Sorry, I'm trying to—

Shawn Buckley

Just carry on. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt.

Julie Pinder

You didn't want to be—you just didn't want to be associated with somebody who didn't have a vaccine back then because of some not-so-nice things that were said, as far as I'm concerned, by our Prime Minister.

Shawn Buckley

Right. And I just want to make sure that I understand, basically, what was pressuring you because you clearly didn't want to be vaccinated. So basically, there was social pressure from Canadians and there was—

Julie Pinder

There was social pressure. When I went in and talked to the pharmacist and I told him how things had went down, he didn't want to give me the second dose. What he did was he had me tell him what my reaction was. So I told him what my reaction was. And at that time, I didn't even tell him about the elevated heart rate or the ankle weakness because I still hadn't put two and two together there. And so he decided that he didn't want to give it to me without a doctor's note from an immunologist.

I had taken that letter to my local hospital thinking that, you know, maybe there's an immunologist there and they can book me the appointment. We can find out if I'm allergic to anything in it. And instead, the nurse set up a consultation with an ER doctor. So the ER doctor came in and the first thing he said to me is, "I am not giving you an exemption if that's what you're here for." And I said, "No, I just want to make sure—"

Shawn Buckley

I just want to stop you there. So you hadn't even explained to him why you were there or any reasons for or against an exemption. And the doctor tells you, before you guys have any conversation, that he's not going to give you an exemption.

Julie Pinder

That's right.

Shawn Buckley

What was kind of the demeanour and attitude of this doctor and how you were treated?

Julie Pinder

You know, oddly enough, he was really soft-spoken. I think he was trying to come off as kind. But to me it was arrogant. Yeah—I mean, that's all I can say about that. He right away just, you know: "I'm not giving you an exemption." I started to express concern and he told me I should do my part, be a good citizen. Then he said to me, "Do you have any children or elderly people in your family?" And I said, "I have a new grand baby." And he said, "You don't want to be responsible for killing your grand baby."

And so obviously at that point—I think that was probably the only thing that could have been said to me to go back and get the second vaccine. When I saw the pharmacist again, it was the same pharmacist. He said to me, "Are you sure you're okay with this?" And I said, "No, but the doctor made it sound like I'm going to kill my grand baby if I don't do it." And so he gave me the second vaccine. But I feel like he was uncomfortable with it and he didn't want to. And you know, I kind of wish he had've stuck to his guns.

[00:10:00]

Shawn Buckley

And so what happened?

Julie Pinder

I was fine for the 15 minutes that I sat with him. Then on the way home, I could taste metal in my mouth. My right arm felt really heavy. I kind of wondered if maybe I was having a heart attack, so I pulled over, I drank some water, and I thought, “No, you know what, I’m just paranoid. I’m having a panic attack.” Because, you know, I was scared to have the second vaccine.

Another thing the doctor had told me was to take a Benadryl and I’d be fine—I forgot about that. I bought Benadryl from the pharmacist. I came home. I started to get that really, really deep feeling of tiredness again. I took the Benadryl and I went to bed.

I woke up at some point to use the washroom. And I knew I needed water. My head was pounding and I had lost the vision in my right eye. But I was so tired I didn’t even care. I just went back to bed. I want to say the migraine probably lasted another day. And then I woke up at one point and the headache was going away, my vision was restored. And I thought, “thank God, that’s over and done with.”

Then, I want to say, within a week after that, I started dropping things. And it just progressed from there. My hands, when I started this, looked normal. So they went from normal to skeletal looking within a matter of, I want to say, two or three months. I started dropping things. My sense of perception was off. I’d go to open a door and I’d completely miss the door.

I continued to try to work. The cramps in my calf muscles got really, really bad. It felt like all the muscles over top of my kneecaps had bunched up and in my upper thighs. And I remember doing reports at work and I’m holding a pen; I’m trying to make numbers and it’s like my brain just wouldn’t connect. I just couldn’t do it. At that time, I had a week off work and I thought, “Okay, well, I have a week to get better.” I just assumed I would get better.

Instead, things just progressively got worse. I started to be able to feel where I was losing the muscles in my body. To me, it felt like it went from my ankles up into my knees, my thighs, my trunk, my back, my neck, down my arms, and into my hands. And so I went to my local hospital and I spoke with a doctor there. And he told me that sometimes people are getting something called Guillain-Barré syndrome and that he would test me for it. He did blood work. He came back. He told me I was fine. I later found out that’s not even how you test for it, you have to do a spinal tap. So I feel like I was deceived just to get me out of the hospital.

I then started having issues with swallowing—

Shawn Buckley

Can I just stop you? When you’re presenting at the hospital— And this is in St. Thomas, am I correct?

Julie Pinder

Yep.

Shawn Buckley

You’re telling them basically what you’ve just told us, all of these symptoms.

Julie Pinder

Yes.

Shawn Buckley

And so they do a test for one thing. It's not that and so they just send you home without anything further?

Julie Pinder

Yes. I told that doctor that I was losing my muscles. And that was it, he'll do blood work. From there, like I said, things were starting to progress. I started having issues swallowing. I started having issues with my thought process. I knew I was losing my muscles rapidly. And so my husband took me to London Health Science Centre because we knew there were neurologists there. And I was seen by a neurologist in the ER. And he took a look at my hands and he said, "Yeah, something's going on here." And he admitted me. The next day, a neuromuscular doctor came in. And she basically argued with me and told me what I was experiencing wasn't happening. I couldn't walk a straight line, I had no balance, they saw that. I'm assuming my blood pressure was low because I had a nurse ask me twice if I was dizzy. And she had me do a genetic spit test. She also told me that I should protect the muscles in my arms by wearing hockey equipment to bed.

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And I think at that point I had asked to see a different doctor, who was no longer at that hospital. And of course, that took a little bit of time. But yeah, I was sent home like that in active muscle atrophy.

Shawn Buckley

So did they do any follow-up with you? Because they basically told you that you're not experiencing what you're experiencing.

Julie Pinder

No. I was passed off to a different doctor, who has done nerve conduction studies. And has said, "Yeah, you're getting weaker." I've had several blood works done, I've had the genetics testing done, I've had an MRI, I've had CAT scans. And I feel like they just keep looking for autoimmune diseases that I don't have.

Shawn Buckley

Are any of them considering that it's a vaccine injury?

Julie Pinder

I did have an appointment with a rheumatologist who said, "I don't know what the big deal is." She believes it's a vaccine injury. I also saw a spine surgeon who looked at my MRIs and she said there's nothing that she can see that's wrong with my spine except for the normal aging stuff. I think she had said that she agrees that it was a spine injury. I know she said that she can't think of anything that can make your muscles waste that quickly.

Shawn Buckley

Now, you said she thinks it's a spine injury. Did you misspeak there?

Julie Pinder

Oh, yes, I misspoke. She did not think it was a spine injury. Sorry.

Shawn Buckley

Now, you applied for long-term disability. What happened?

Julie Pinder

Yep. I have in the past reacted neurologically to nitrofurantoin. And I think, once I got better, they just left it there. I also had issues back then, like, not nearly this severe. But because of that, they say "pre-existing," and that's just what insurance companies are like. So even though they have the rheumatology report, that's just what they're like.

Shawn Buckley

Right. So how has this affected you financially?

Julie Pinder

My husband also has— He was one of the unlucky people who got a specific batch number of AstraZeneca from the Baltimore plant. He has heart damage and now he's working two jobs. And it's impossible to get compensation from the Vaccine Injury Support Program, from what I understand. Even to get my paperwork, I had to get my MP involved. I kept repeatedly phoning them, sending emails; they didn't even send me the paperwork. And now, I'm just hesitant to do it because I feel like they're going to just be like the insurance company. Well, they're going to just try to disprove it.

I mean, it takes almost a year in Canada just to get an MRI, right? So how are people supposed to function like this? I was told I could apply for my CPP disability but that takes up to eight months. And I mean, quite often, I've heard they deny you the first time.

So—yeah, there's nothing really set up for people who are injured instantly.

Shawn Buckley

If you could share one thing with your fellow Canadians, what would your message be?

Julie Pinder

Don't get it. Because there's nothing— It would be different if they were doing studies or if they cared. I was told by my MP I'm just somebody who happened to fall through the cracks. You know, I mean, I've lost my job.

[00:20:00]

I'm trying to gain back my health.

Don't do it. Until this government is willing to step up and help people and stop trying to divide us, I'd stay the hell away from it. I guess my big concern now is you have a whole bunch of people who have been injured by this vaccine. We're being censored online. If I put anything on, for example my Facebook, I get a warning for false or misleading information. Even if it's pictures of my own vax injury. We've been called liars by people who had it and had no issues with it. The people who were anti-vaxx or against it telling us that we deserve what we got because we didn't listen to them. We can't get treatment by doctors and this government isn't supporting us.

Shawn Buckley

Okay, I'm just going to ask the commissioners if they have any questions of you.

Julie Pinder

Sure.

Shawn Buckley

And the commissioners don't.

Julie Pinder

Okay.

Shawn Buckley

Julie, on behalf of the National Citizens Inquiry, I truly thank you for sharing your story. It's so important that people like you let everyone know what's happened and what your experience is.

Julie Pinder

Can I just say one more thing quickly?

Shawn Buckley

You certainly can.

Julie Pinder

So my concern is: if this vaccination can do this to adults, I can't even begin to imagine what it can do to a child. You have children who are getting myocarditis— I don't understand, you know. If given the choice between getting COVID or getting myocarditis, I'd take my chance with COVID. It doesn't make sense to give children this vaccine to keep an 80-year-old, say, off a ventilator. It makes absolutely no sense to me.

And that's where I better leave it, because I get from upset to angry.

Shawn Buckley

Thank you again, Julie, for sharing with us.

Julie Pinder
Great, thanks.

[00:22:23]

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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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