



## NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Saskatoon, SK

Day 1

April 20, 2023

### EVIDENCE

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**Witness 8: Bryan Baraniski**

Full Day 1 Timestamp: 10:10:45–10:34:11

Source URL: <https://rumble.com/v2ie0zu-national-citizens-inquiry-saskatoon-day-1.html>

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**Wayne Lenhardt**

I think this is going to be an interesting sequel, which wasn't really planned. But we may be able to call this Exhibit 1 or a supplement to Mr. Bourgault's presentation.

Bryan, could you give us your full name and then spell it for us, and then I'll swear your oath.

**Bryan Baraniski**

Bryan Baraniski. B-R-Y-A-N, Baraniski, B-A-R-A-N-I-S-K-I.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help you God?

**Bryan Baraniski**

I do.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

You own a hotel that includes a bar and the usual accoutrements in Tobin Lake. Is that correct?

**Bryan Baraniski**

Yes, I do. We have a resort there. It's the hotel with a restaurant, a bar, conference facilities, cabins, campground. We do guided fishing.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

And it runs year-round, correct?

**Bryan Baraniski**

Three hundred sixty-five days a year, yeah.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay. At a certain point, you contracted COVID, correct?

**Bryan Baraniski**

I did on March the 6th, 2021.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay. Could you tell us about that?

**Bryan Baraniski**

Well, I went to work in the morning. I show up to the hotel usually at 8 o'clock in the morning. And I showed up and went to my office. I wasn't feeling good when I woke up. I decided, well, I'm just going to hide out in my office for the day, so I don't give anybody the flu, or whatever I think I have. As the day progressed, I was getting a little bit worse. I had the shakes a little bit, so I decided, well, I better go home. So I went home. I have a house four blocks away from there and drove home. Went in my house and decided I'll just lay down and maybe it'll get better.

My son shows up at about six o'clock, and he hears that I'm not at work, so he comes to check on me. He comes to the door and I answer the door. He goes, "Dad, your lips are blue." I said, "Oh, okay." I said, "Well, I'm trying to sleep this off, get better in the morning." So he takes off. In the meantime, he had phoned my ex-wife, which is his mother, and tells her the situation. Well, he comes back, and he says, "Dad, I'm taking you to the hospital." I said, "No, no I don't think so." I said, "I'm going to sleep this off." And he goes, "No, get in the truck or I'm going to throw you in the truck." And of course, me and him are always confrontational, but I was too weak and stuff to argue with him. So I jumped in the truck and, okay, I'm going to the hospital.

I get to the hospital, and they admit me. They do some tests on me and they tell me I've got pneumonia. After the doctor had told me that, another nurse comes in. She takes a swab and sticks it up my nose, and it's painful as hell, and she runs out of my room. I'm sitting there, and I end up spending the night. The next morning, I was having a little tough time breathing; it was getting a little worse. And then the doctor comes in and says, "You have COVID." Okay, that's new. They were monitoring me fairly close. Then about noon or so, my breathing was getting a little tough—shorter, shorter breaths. And the doctor says, "We got to load you up and take you to Saskatoon."

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Your oxygen levels were a bit down, were they?

## **Bryan Baraniski**

Yeah, I was short of breath and it was tougher to breathe. Yeah. I knew I had something, maybe it was pneumonia. I've never had pneumonia before, so I didn't know what it entailed. So yeah, so the ambulance shows up, and they're concerned whether I have enough oxygen to make it to the city or not because it's a three-hour drive. So they put an extra tank in just to make sure I'm going to make it there.

They loaded me up and hit the sirens and away we went, flying. It was fast. I was looking out the back window, and we were passing the vehicles and siren on pretty much all the way there. Get into Saskatoon University Hospital. They admit me. About half an hour in the waiting room—or not in the waiting room, just waiting to get a bed, I guess. Then, finally, they admit me into a room and they're monitoring me. My breathing is getting worse; they got me on a mask. The next day, I was getting worse and worse and worse. The next day, I'm off to ICU,

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into the ward they had for all the COVID patients. I think there was 10 rooms, all separately isolated and behind glass. So, on oxygen, of course. It was getting worse and worse; pretty soon I was on 90 per cent required oxygen. So the doc goes, "We're going to have to put you on the ventilator if it gets any worse than this." And, of course, they put a tube down my nose, a feeding tube. And yeah, like I don't know if you've seen the picture. It was on CBC News, anyway, because I was the anti-lockdown guy. So they had to beat me up.

So then that night or the second day in, the doc comes in. He says, "You better get a hold of your family and tell them to prepare for the worst." Because as I'm there for my two days, I see them taking body bags out as people dying, right? That are dying of COVID. So, I'm down to short breaths—"aha-aha-aha-aha"—like that's how I'm breathing all day long because I've got no lung capacity. So then, when the doc tells that, I figure, "Well, I'm not going to call my kids and worry them." I'll just start writing letters, right? So I figured this is it for me, right? You know, he's telling me to prepare for the worst. I know what that meant. And so I'm writing letters to people that I figure should hear from me.

The third day in, I was still holding at 90 per cent. Then I woke up one morning, and I had the feeding tube out of my nose. I figured, "Oh Jesus, now they're going to fight to put that back in." It was painful as hell. And the doc goes, "Oh, no, maybe not." He says, "You're down to 85 per cent oxygen." He says, "Maybe we don't have to put that back in." So they monitored me for a few more days and I hovered around that 85 per cent, not over 90. So I wasn't on the ventilator.

The staff treated me really good. One nurse brought me chicken noodle soup because I said, "Hey, if I'm going to die, can I die with chicken noodle soup in me because I don't get none in here, right?" So, she went home and made homemade chicken noodle soup and brought it to me. She said she wasn't supposed to do that, but she brought it to me anyways, which I was thankful for.

Finally, I get out of ICU 10 days later, and they put me in recovery. I'm down to 65 per cent required oxygen, and it won't get any better, and it's staying the same. They tried to get me down to 55, and I struggled to breathe, and they put me back up. So I had several doctors that would come throughout the time I was there, probably three or four different doctors. And one doc says, "You know, you could be here for a couple of months. We've seen it where it takes a while to get you to recover, to get your lung capacity back." And I figured geez, I'm not sticking around here for a couple months.

In the meantime, the CBC had done a story on me while I was in ICU, with the tubes and everything in me. They posted it on social media and on the CBC News. And, of course, all the people beat me up there. They were on social media. They were commenting about how bad of a guy I was and wasn't following the rules, and I was the anti-lockdown guy. Then, Joseph Bourgault, the previous guy that was just on here, he seen me on CBC News. He phoned up the hotel my son was running at that time. In the meantime, they had shut my hotel down; they had shut it down for two weeks. Kicked everybody out of the rooms. Told everybody that they had to leave. My son wasn't even allowed to go there. I was peeved off because it was on autopilot. It was on autopilot for three days in the entire hotel—12,600 square feet. Mechanical systems running, everything. Nobody's allowed in that hotel for three days. Not my son. He's told to be isolated.

I was furious—wild at the government. I couldn't believe that they're handling it like this. This thing could blow up; there could be a water leak. But nobody was allowed in the hotel for three days because we had a COVID outbreak, they said, at the hotel. So that was fine. I was arguing with my son to get back there. And of course, his mom, my ex-wife, was saying, "No. Listen to public health. Don't get in any more trouble. Your dad's in enough trouble already." Right? So that's how that went down. We ended up opening up two weeks later. We had to get an independent cleaner to come clean the entire hotel because they wouldn't let any of our staff do it because they might have COVID.

So anyway, I'm back in the hospital trying to recover here. My ex-wife, of course,

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she's bringing me grapes and chocolate bars and stuff up to the ward, not allowed to see me because I'm isolated. This is probably day 20-some that I'm already there, and she's brought grapes and stuff several times. In the meantime, Joseph had called me, and said, "Hey, I seen you on CBC News." Of course, he got the number from my son because I have my cell phone right by my bedside. He said, "I like the fight in you." He introduced himself. We had a lot in common. I used to farm, and he had Bourgault Industries. We actually owned some of his cultivators and so had a good introduction there for about half an hour.

Then Joseph says to me, "You go get some quercetin and some zinc, and you're going to walk out of that hospital in five days." And I figured, "Oh, well, I'm going to try that for sure." He said, "I run a health food store, and I've helped lots of people with COVID. And they've all recovered with quercetin and zinc." So, I phoned up one of my wait staff. I have 25 employees in the summer but about 12 to 13 in the winter. One of my waitresses in the city that I'm fairly good friends with, I phoned her up said, "Go down to the health food store, get some quercetin and some zinc. Bring it up to this ward, up here at the University Hospital, and I'll e-transfer you whatever it is." So she did that. I e-transferred the amount.

So the next day, I still hadn't got my stuff. So I said to the nurse, "I'm supposed to get a package delivered up here." And she goes, "Yeah, it was delivered up here. But I showed it to the doctor and the doctor says you can't have it." I said, "Oh, okay." She said, "No, it's not prescribed by us, by the doctor, and whatever's prescribed by him that's all you can have. You can't bring any other medicine in from outside." So I figured, okay, I got to think this one out. So I phoned up my ex-wife and said, "Go down to this health food store, go buy some quercetin and zinc." I said, "Open up the bottle, throw the pills in the bottom of the grapes and bring it up here." So she does that, does what I tell her and brings it up there.

Of course, she told me not to mention her name. She goes, "I'll get in trouble. Don't mention my name." Yeah, okay well, I'm not going to mention her name, but you guys all figured out who she is already.

So then the nurse sees grapes and chocolate bars and brings it through. That was on a Tuesday. So Tuesday, Joe said to take it during your supper and dinner meals. This was Tuesday afternoon when I got this package. I took a quercetin and zinc at supper that night, and then the next morning for breakfast, I took two more. I figured another zinc, another quercetin and— Heck, I'm just about dead, anyway. What the heck are you losing doing three? He said it was maybe hard on the liver and stuff. But I figured that's the least of my worries and so I took it three times. I took it at breakfast the next day, lunch, and supper. By supper, I had improved quite a bit. The doctor noticed. He says, "Yeah, your oxygen requirement is down a bit. You're down to—" I think, it was 45 or 50 per cent. Of course, I never said nothing to him.

The next morning, on Thursday morning, took the same routine, three more times during that day. By supper or just after supper, when the doctor comes through, he goes, "You've improved quite a bit." He said, "If you carry this on, you get under 30 per cent, we can ship you back to Nipawin." He says, "You can go to the hospital there."

So the next day I was down to less than 30 per cent. So then the doctor goes, "Yeah, we can transfer you over to Nipawin." He said, "I'll line up an ambulance." And the ambulance was like 1500 bucks or something like that. I said "Well, can I just catch a ride with my ex-wife? She has a house back in Tobin. She's going back Friday nights, anyway, because she has a business in Saskatoon. She comes up Monday morning, comes back Friday night." So anyway, after being convincing to the doctor, he said, "Oh, okay. We'll just give you an extra oxygen tank to take with you. But she's got to take you straight to Nipawin." And I said "Yep, fair enough."

So anyway, as I'm getting my clothes on and signing out the release forms and everything, as you're getting out of the hospital, I said, "Doc, I got to tell you something." I said—this is tough here but—I said, "You've got to give this quercetin and zinc to everybody that comes in here." I said, "Because I smuggled it in here." So he looks at me, and he goes,

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"How do you spell it?" I said, "quercetin," and I spelled it. So he goes and researches it, and he says, "Well, we can't. It's in Health Canada trials, and we're not allowed to prescribe it yet." And I said, "Let me guess. It's going to be in Health Canada trials till everybody gets a vaccine, right?" And he smiled and walked away. And then, I went to Nipawin.

So I get to Nipawin. I'm in the hospital for three days there and, finally, they release me. They get the oxygen set up in my house. So I got oxygen. They give me five tanks of oxygen—these little portable ones that I can move around. So three days, I get checked out of Nipawin hospital. I head back to my place. Of course, I got to get back to work. The first thing I do as soon as I get home, I grab an oxygen tank and head down to the hotel, right? Dragging this oxygen tank, away I go. A few hours later, it's all used up. So I got to go back and get another one. And next thing you know, my five tanks are used up. Over each day, I was reducing it a bit, anyway, but I didn't have enough to get through for the remainder.

But my mom, who's in her 80s, she's in a senior's home. So I sent my son. I said, "Brady, take these five empty oxygen tanks, go to see Grandma, and bring her full ones back here." So he took the five empty ones there to her place and brought the five full ones back.

Because I was only getting oxygen— Once a month is when the person showed up there, right? So used up a few of those tanks and then, pretty soon, about five days after being out of the hospital, I was off oxygen. I was back to normal. And I have not been sick since.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

So I'm going to move you along a little bit. I think you're sitting here hale and healthy at the moment. So I think you obviously recovered. What was it, 30 days you went through this ordeal?

**Bryan Baraniski**

Yeah, I was admitted in the hospital March 6th, and I got released from Nipawin April 3rd.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay. Tell me about the financial consequences of what you were doing on COVID.

**Bryan Baraniski**

Part of the reason CBC was beating me up is because I got two \$14,000 fines. And then we got five \$2,800 fines, some of my staff members got for failing to wear a mask.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

And they shut you down for a certain period, right?

**Bryan Baraniski**

Two weeks. Probably lost \$50,000, we figured.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

And how many staff did you have that you had to send home?

**Bryan Baraniski**

Thirteen staff all got sent home.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay.

**Bryan Baraniski**

So one of the staff, she had an exemption for a mask, which was fine. The public health supervisor, who had been to the hotel several times had said that she was okay, at first. And then, finally, he came out there. He goes, "No. We're not accepting these exemptions anymore." He said, "You have to fire her or else make her wear a mask." I said, "No, I'm not." I said, "You can go tell her that." So he went up to her, he says, "You either put a mask on or you have to go home or I'm going to give you a \$2,800 fine." She goes, "Fine, I'll go home then." So she went home.

Some of the fines they give me— Of course, the supervisor from public health, he'd phone me up pretty much every second day, right? He always had a complaint, like what we were doing. We had our feet stuck in where we were anti-lockdowns for sure, right? Wherever there was a loophole, we'd try and figure out how to work around it. One of the times, I'll give you an example, is that they lowered it to 10 people, private party, right? That's all you could have at a household. So we had the bar that was closed, locked up, but we'd have 10 people in there every night because people wanted to come there. And we carried on like normal, except the doors were locked.

One time the RCMP showed up. Of course, we were getting complaints and they're at the door, and "No, you can't come in. Sorry, we already got our 10 people in here." So of course, away they went. We wouldn't let them in. There was nothing they could do about it. We had the doors locked, and we weren't open to the public. It was a private party, right? So that's some of the things how we carried through.

What else did we have going on? When they give us the \$14,000 fines, the one was failing to keep track of all the customers who was there. We had a book. We had a desk at the front of the restaurant that you signed in. So anyway, they had come there one time, and they give us the fine because three of the names were unreadable.

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And then some of them were a little bit vulgar, like, there was Daffy Duck, Phil McCrotch. And then, they'd write a number—seven, six, eight f-you, writing stuff like that down. Some of the people just were not following the rules. I couldn't have an extra staff to monitor sitting at the table. So of course, they come in there, and we got a \$14,000 fine for that.

The other fine we got was failing to ask for a vaccine passport. So that was controversial, too. Because I was working the morning in the restaurant, and then there was a public health girl, which I knew that she worked for public health. She was sitting at one of the tables and I'd taken her order and everything. Sorry, I hadn't taken her order yet. I brought her water and everything. Then my son Brady showed up, and I said, "Table two." I said, "I haven't taken her order or anything yet, you can go grab it." So he goes over there with a mask and everything. He puts a mask on because I say, "Hey, that's a public health girl over there. Make sure you get your mask on right." So we're trying to hide it, right?

He goes over there, mask on and everything. Then he gets fined for failing to ask for a vaccine passport. And of course, Brady goes, "Well, I didn't know if my dad asked for it. I just assumed that he asked for it." And no, it didn't matter. So we got nailed a \$14,000 fine because she never got asked for the vaccine passport. So you've kind of set us up there, we thought. It was kind of dirty. So of course, same thing: Three cop cars show up, and the public health people, and they get out. You'd swear to God it was the biggest drug bust that ever happened. And they come out and give us a \$14,000 fine, right? Middle of the afternoon. Cause a big scene, so all the customers can see it.

So we fought them all. Of course, we lost. The judge, he wasn't on my side, for sure, I didn't think. He just thought that the government had the right to invoke those policies. And I didn't follow them and that's just too bad, right? He did reduce the fine down to \$12,000. So we got two of those fines. Then I got a \$2,800 fine. My son got a \$2,800 fine. Three of the staff got \$2,800 fines. The RCMP officer that gave those tickets out also stated to the three girls, "You put your mask on and the next time we come in here, and you have your mask on, we'll just get rid of those three tickets." Of course, went to court, and we tell that story,

and the judge goes, “The RCMP don’t have the authority to release your tickets on a public health order.” So, they all got nailed \$2800 too.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay, due to the late hour, I’m going to ask the commissioners if they have any questions. I think that’s a no. So on behalf of the National Citizens Inquiry, thank you so much for giving us your evidence.

**Bryan Baraniski**

Thanks.

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***Final Review and Approval:*** Jodi Bruhn, August 21, 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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