



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Saskatoon, SK

Day 2

April 21, 2023

EVIDENCE

Witness 8: Elodie Cossette

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[00:00:00]

Wayne Lenhardt

Could you give us your full name, Elodie, and then spell it for us? And then I'll have you do an oath.

Elodie Cossette

My name is Elodie Cossette, E-L-O-D-I-E, Cossette, C-O-S-S-E-T-T-E.

Wayne Lenhardt

Do you promise that the evidence you give today will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Elodie Cossette

Yes, I do.

Wayne Lenhardt

Where do you live, Elodie?

Elodie Cossette

I live in Estevan, Saskatchewan.

Wayne Lenhardt

And were you living there when this whole COVID mandate thing unfolded?

Elodie Cossette

Correct.

Wayne Lenhardt

Tell us what you were doing for a living at that point.

Elodie Cossette

I was a direct care support worker for a group home. There were several group homes. I worked particularly in one for the last three years. There was two ladies in that home. They had different challenges that made it so there was only two in that home.

I excelled at my job. We were given, kind of, parameters as to the rights of the clients, the rights of us, and we were told to never treat them as kids. We were given the training every year. We were told they had to consent to things.

I started to see things come down that weren't consistent with giving them the right. One of the things that I noticed was the clients did not want to take the vax. And so what they did is they asked their living family to encourage them to get the vax. When that didn't happen, I was told they made them make a doctor's appointment and then encouraged them to get the vax.

Wayne Lenhardt

How long had you been doing this kind of work?

Elodie Cossette

I did that for 10 years. It was my passion. I absolutely loved it. I love those two ladies. I found that they would do anything for me. I asked them, "Could you do this? Could you do that?"

In meetings, I found they were not treated that way always, or they didn't feel safe with the other workers so much as they did with me. I would sit at meetings and think, man, are these two people that I don't know of? Because I never had any difficulties with them.

I was passionate about my job and it was very difficult for me to lose my job.

I had seen inconsistencies for a while. I was not always an anti-vaxxer, but I had been encouraged by my company to start getting the flu vaccines. I started to get that flu vaccine. When I got the flu vaccine, later on, I got an autoimmune skin disease. When I checked with a doctor—a specialist—I said, "I think from what I find, that is a result of the flu vaccine not being tested properly." And she agreed. I said, "I don't think I should take the vax." She said, "I agree."

My boss had, in a group setting, in a team meeting, mentioned she would never get us to that place where we had to be vaxxed. I was quite happy with that. Lo and behold, I'm not too sure how it came down—whether it was the board or her—but they started to implement the need to be vaxxed or to test.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay.

Elodie Cossette

At that point, I began to try and educate her and let her know why I didn't want it. She asked me if I could get this doctor to sign the exemption for me. I believe she liked me as a worker and knew that I did a good job. I had, up to that point, no problems with her.

[00:05:00]

I tried to go back to that specialist. She was scared for her job and said, "No way, that's up to you." You know.

At that point— I had had a mask exemption as well, and I was not allowed to do that. I worked nights for 10 years. It was totally nights. I had been wanting to get a daytime job in that home because I liked it so much, but there wasn't an opening. And by this time, the mandates came down from my boss.

As of October 30th, I had to come to work and either present a test or my vaccine. No, that's not true. The vaccine, she gave me a religious exemption; and I think it's because she knew I was a good worker—I have submitted an evaluation of me that was of excellent report—but then she said I didn't need the vaccine, but I needed to test.

At that point, I knew family members that had believed the science, that had tried to do the test because they were a teacher or something. They tested positive. They stayed home for their duration, never had any symptoms, and I didn't want to become a statistic.

Plus, I knew there were different people that, if you had the COVID shot, you could still get COVID. So therefore, if I came exposed to one of my workers who was vaxxed and allowed to be at work, I would be off two weeks. And there was just no reason why I was going to play that game.

Wayne Lenhardt

So at some point you were terminated. You tried various options.

Elodie Cossette

October 30th of '21.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay. Yeah. So, I assume that had some effect on your financial situation.

Elodie Cossette

Yes. I've been one who pays her bills the day I get them. I hate being in debt. I hate it with a passion.

Wayne Lenhardt

Yeah. Did you try to apply for unemployment insurance? And what happened there?

Elodie Cossette

Yes, I tried. I exhausted— Pardon me.

I exhausted every road. I went up four levels and was denied. The last one was the— I can't think of the name of it. I can't think of the name of it, but it— Not a tribunal, but—

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay. So, you went to more than one level of appeal and you were denied.

Elodie Cossette

Yes, I went up four levels.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay. But you never did get the vaccination, is that correct?

Elodie Cossette

No.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay. Yeah.

Elodie Cossette

No. After I saw what the flu vaccine did, I wasn't going to do that.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay, so you tried to get other employment.

Elodie Cossette

Yes, and it was stressful for me, so I decided— My passion was people, so I started my own business. It was slow going taking off, as any business at its beginnings. I did everything I knew how to get my name out there.

It was difficult, so I tried to take on other jobs that weren't my passion and consequently, was still taking money out of my retirement and had pretty much gone further than I was hoping with that.

Wayne Lenhardt

Did the COVID situation cause you any problems with your children, your family?

Elodie Cossette

I'm passionate about my kids. God is first in my life. And work and my kids and my brothers and sisters: they're at the top of the list. I had, as a parent— They're all adult kids. I've got seven wonderful grandchildren.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay.

Elodie Cossette

They're all adults and I trained them to excel at getting education and making their own decisions and whatnot.

[00:10:00]

I believed they could make the decision on this. If my kids ever ask me advice, I look at it as a privilege to give them advice, but I feel they are adults now and I am there to support them. So consequently, with that, they make their decisions. In light of that, I care about it, I've spoken up as much as I can, but I will not sever any relationship because of my belief system.

I tried to win them. I'm proud of all of them, but they have their belief system that I don't cross unless they open the door for it.

Wayne Lenhardt

Were your siblings vaccinated, as well? Were there any problems there?

Elodie Cossette

Some of my siblings were vaccinated, some weren't. I had a sister that— She believed what the media had said to do and felt she was right to get fully vaxxed. And I had a sister-in-law that was fully vaxxed as well. And within a while, both of them, their livers shut down.

And with my sister, her stomach would get to about a nine-month pregnancy. She would have that drained: a six- to seven-hour procedure, every 10 days, for a long time. She ended up passing November 11th of '21.

And then my sister-in-law also started to have her liver shut down. And her legs would go twice the size and it was painful, with the water not draining. And she passed February 12th of this year.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay. Did you ever catch COVID yourself?

Elodie Cossette

Pardon me?

Yes, I did. I did catch COVID. I started to notice that it was getting difficult, and I knew if I didn't act fast, it would be me going into the hospital. So I phoned a couple of reliable friends who knew what to do. One brought me ivermectin; another one got me an antibiotic and a nebulizer. And within a day or two, the tenseness was gone, but the lasting— And I stayed home for, I believe, 10 to 12 days. And then I had a lasting cough for a couple of months and another physical ailment that I had to do exercises for, for a couple of months, and then I was back to normal.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay. Is there anything final that you would like to comment on with respect to the COVID-scenario?

Elodie Cossette

I guess the thing that hurt me most, in light of our Prime Minister, is that he made it so that people were looked at as uneducated and stupid—I don't know his words; I don't have the memory of it—for not being vaxxed. That is a stigma that I just had a problem with. And so, I gave a lot of leeway to people who were struggling with things, because— I don't know how to say it, yeah.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay. Are there any questions from the commissioners?

Commissioner Kaikkonen

Thank you for your testimony. Do you consider the EI decision to refuse you benefits as a form of institutional segregation that made you an outsider to a system that you had no choice but to contribute to throughout your working career?

Elodie Cossette

I'm sorry, I did not follow that. Could you repeat that?

Commissioner Kaikkonen

It's my voice today, let me try that again. Do you consider the EI decision—when they refused you EI—to be a form of institutional segregation?

[00:15:00]

Elodie Cossette

Correct.

Commissioner Kaikkonen

Where you had contributed to this EI program throughout your working career and then you—but not by choice, because you have to—and felt like an outsider?

Elodie Cossette

Yeah. And what happened to me is I had bought the science at first as well. I started masking. I started doing the things at the very beginning, before all this. I started to buy it from the media.

About two days after I was fired, I went up to the parliament buildings in Saskatchewan to protest, peacefully. I won't be involved in bullying or lying, so I was part of that as well. That night, I went home to watch the news. It said that there was— There was several hundred, possibly 1,000, of us there. And they said there was a few dozen there, and they felt unsafe, and they went indoors—the Province did.

So that's when I stopped the main media. And that's when I gave grace to family members that don't get it.

Commissioner Kaikkonen

Thank you.

Wayne Lenhardt

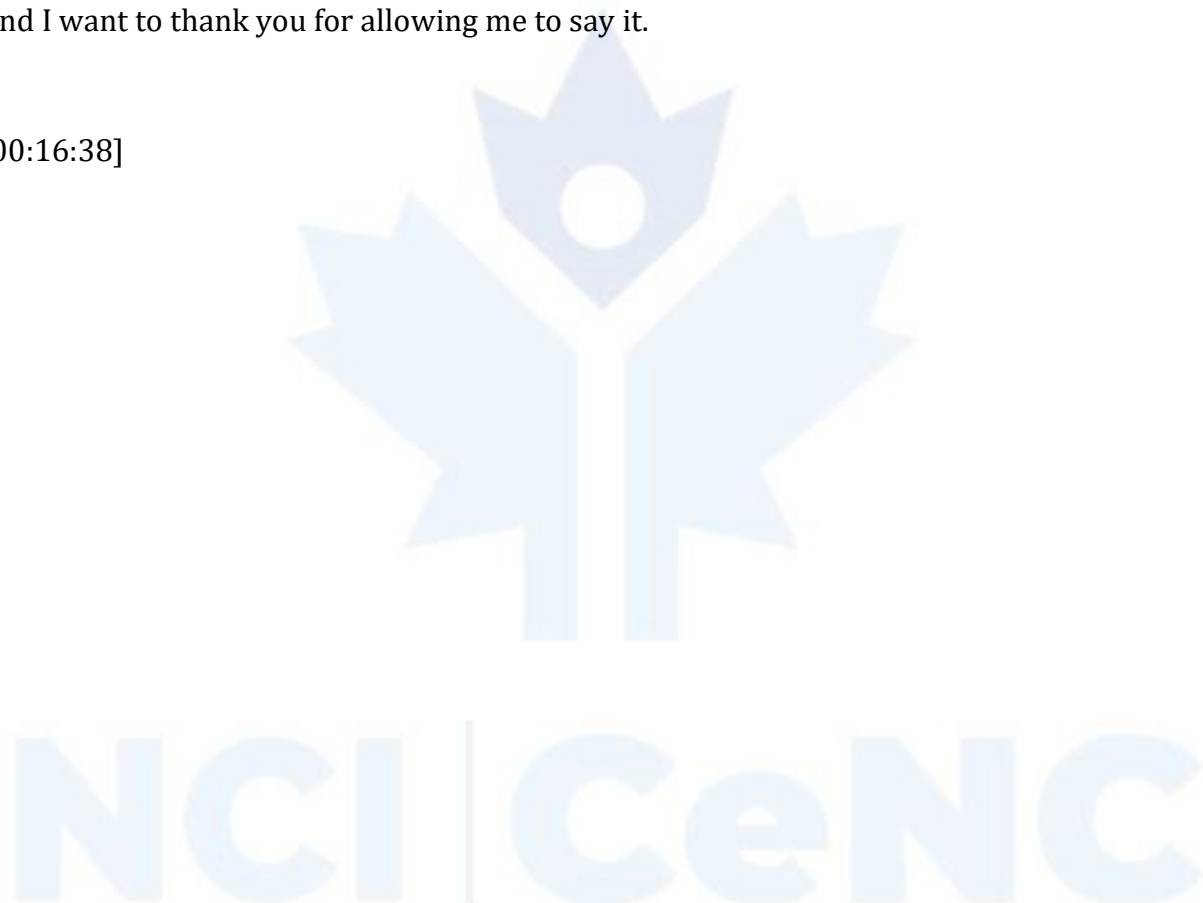
Are there any other questions from the commissioners? Okay.

Okay, on behalf of the National Citizens Inquiry, thank you for your testimony today.

Elodie Cossette

And I want to thank you for allowing me to say it.

[00:16:38]



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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