



## NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Saskatoon, SK

Day 2

April 21, 2023

### EVIDENCE

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**Witness 14: Chantel Barreda**

Full Day 2 Timestamp: 10:08:30–10:22:21

Source URL: <https://rumble.com/v2jlxvm-national-citizens-inquiry-saskatoon-day-2.html>

[00:00:00]

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Chantel, if you could give me your full name and then spell it, then I'll do an oath.

**Chantel Barreda**

My name is Chantel Kona Barreda. So my first name is C-H-A-N-T-E-L, middle name K-O-N-A, last name Barreda, B-A-R-R-E-D-A.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay. Do you promise that the testimony you'll give today will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

**Chantel Barreda**

Absolutely.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

You were teaching at an Indian band in Lac La Ronge, I think, prior to COVID and then as it came on. Could you tell us what happened at that point?

**Chantel Barreda**

At the time when COVID began, I was teaching Grade 7. And we all had to go online. We finished the year kind of like that, doing homework packages and home visits. And then, at the beginning of 2021, we were back in the classroom and we had barriers, which were flimsy plastic. We had to wear masks and try to stay six feet apart. But if you know kids, that's not going to happen.

So things are going pretty good and then I got an email—well, all of us got an email. It was sent out on September 14th saying that they had a new vaccine passport mandate and that

it would be effective on September 20th. So we had six days to get all of our ducks in a row. The policy stated that if you did not get vaccinated, your employment would be terminated. And that's what happened to me.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Did they give you a time period to comply?

**Chantel Barreda**

Oh, they did, yes. I was given until October 18th to comply with the mandate, but I was not planning on getting vaccinated because I felt that it was an experimental procedure that wasn't a real vaccine. I like to do research, so I just noticed that the definitions started to change with what a vaccine is. Anyway, so things started to change and I thought, "Well, that's weird." And then— Oh, shoot, I lost my train of thought.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think your last day of work was September 17th.

**Chantel Barreda**

Right. My last day of work, physically, was September 17th. The mandate came into effect on the 20th.

So just to backtrack just a little wee bit, my daughter was also attending the school that I was teaching in, so she had just started Grade 7. And so we were suddenly out of a job and out a school as of that Monday.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay, so you were basically not working after September 17th. Did they call that a leave without pay or was it a termination?

**Chantel Barreda**

Yes, I was put on leave without pay.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay. So you were allowed about six weeks or so to comply then?

**Chantel Barreda**

Yeah.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay.

**Chantel Barreda**

I had till October 18th. In that time, I did end up getting COVID—I ended up getting very sick. But somebody saved my life and gave me some ivermectin and I'm here today. I believe strongly that we have an immune system, and a lot of the research was saying that only those really elderly or with comorbidities were really at risk, so I just kind of wanted to trust that.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

It was in October—I believe, October 18th—

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that you received a letter saying that they had terminated you, or you lost your job, something along that line.

**Chantel Barreda**

Yeah.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay.

**Chantel Barreda**

I received my termination letter. In the meantime, I started the EI process. I applied for EI. They changed that too, and so I was denied my claim. And then I put in a human rights claim. And I think that was changed too, so that was denied.

Things kept changing, including “the science.” Yeah, so there I was, no job. I had natural immunity because I just had COVID and recovered, and still not able to work.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Your daughter was going to that same school that you were working at, correct?

**Chantel Barreda**

Yes.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay, and what happened after you were terminated? Did she continue to go to that school?

**Chantel Barreda**

No. No, so I had to pull her out and I enrolled her in online school. So basically, for the rest of the year, she was stuck in her room by herself.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Right. And what grade was she in at the time?

**Chantel Barreda**

She was in Grade 7. I think our mental health at that point started to decline because I started getting the rejections from EI and the Human Rights Commission, and I started to lose hope.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

What effect did that have on your daughter?

**Chantel Barreda**

She became depressed. Well, we got her counseling. I'm not sure if that worked. I don't know.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

This is when it started that you couldn't go to restaurants or various stores if you were not vaccinated. Is that correct?

**Chantel Barreda**

That's right. We weren't allowed in restaurants. We weren't allowed in certain stores. I started to get worried. I had to— I enjoy some wine, at times, and I had to get people to go buy me wine.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Where, physically, were you in the province at that time?

**Chantel Barreda**

Yes, I was in Saskatchewan.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Did you try to get another job at that point?

**Chantel Barreda**

Oh, yeah. I was applying for jobs anywhere I could. One thing: when you're applying for jobs in education, if you're applying for a job at a bigger school division, you have to fill out—I think it's a 26-page online form, it's called AppliTrack. There is a section in there, and it asks if you have ever lost your employment. And I have to say "Yes" and then I have to explain why. There's a little box there where you have to explain why. And I feel like once they see that—that I'm unvaccinated—that I'm discriminated against.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

What qualifications do you have in teaching?

**Chantel Barreda**

I have a Bachelor of Education and a Master of Education, which I just received.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

And, I presume, a teaching certificate from Saskatchewan?

**Chantel Barreda**

Yeah. Yeah, I've got a valid teaching certificate. No criminal record.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

And with those qualifications, you're still having trouble?

**Chantel Barreda**

Yeah.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay. What about health issues?

**Chantel Barreda**

I think the biggest thing is mentally. I feel like I was getting into quite a depression. I felt isolated, I felt alone. I lost friends. My relationships with so many people changed and disappeared, and it was a very lonely time.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay. Did you get any kind of employment at all after you were terminated?

**Chantel Barreda**

Yeah, I did get a job, and I didn't have to disclose my whole medical history.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Was that a permanent or part-time job?

**Chantel Barreda**

No, it's like a temporary contract, yes.

[00:10:00]

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay, so is it fair to say you were largely unemployed after this happened?

**Chantel Barreda**

Yeah, I've been unemployed. Except for last summer, which I was going to school.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

And is your daughter's mental outlook still rather dark, or has it improved?

**Chantel Barreda**

She's back in school, physically, and she's doing better. She's not stuck in her room day after day. And she's got friends, so things are improved.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay. Are there any thoughts you would like to leave us with respect to this whole scenario, and how things could have been better?

**Chantel Barreda**

For sure. The first thing is: When I tried to talk to my Chief and Council about what was going on, I got blocked and ignored. And I don't think if you're in a position of leadership that that's appropriate.

I would like for people to use their critical thinking skills and to stop being afraid to stand up for what's right. I try to teach my daughters to stand up for what's right.

And one other thing is that I tried following the science, but it led me to the money. And, so I just want to leave with Mark 8:34-38, which is: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul."

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay, I'm going to ask the commissioners if they have any questions now, and then I'm going to come back and I'm going to go through the documents that you're going to leave with the Commission in case they're useful.

**Chantel Barreda**

Okay.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay. Any questions from the commissioners? Okay, I think that's a no.

Okay, you have given me some documents, which I'm going to leave with the Commission. They include, on Lac La Ronge Indian Band letterhead, and you've labeled it "new policy," given to you on September 14th, 2021. And it's entitled Workplace COVID-19 Vaccination Passport Policy. You have some correspondence relating to your request for an exemption with HR. There's a Notice of Liability that you gave to your employer back then. There is a *Public Health Act* and affidavit—it's a Xerox of part of the *Public Health Act* and your affidavit with respect to vaccination. There is a Saskatchewan Human Rights complaint relating to violation Section 13.1, the right to education. There is your complaint form to the Canadian Human Rights Commission. There is your Termination of Employment letter

from the Lac La Ronge Indian Band. There's your Record of Employment from Service Canada, which you would need for unemployment insurance, and there's your Witness Release form. So those I will hand over to the Commission on your behalf [no exhibit numbers available].

On behalf of the National Citizens Inquiry, thank you so much for your testimony today.

**Chantel Barreda**

Thank you very much.

[00:13:51]



***Final Review and Approval:*** Jodi Bruhn, August 21, 2023.

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