



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Saskatoon, SK

Day 3

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EVIDENCE

Witness 2: Jody McPhee

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[00:00:00]

Dellene Church

Our next witness is Jody McPhee. Good morning, Jody.

Jody McPhee

Good morning.

Dellene Church

Please state your name and spell your first and last name for the record.

Jody McPhee

Jody Lynn McPhee, J-O-D-Y M-C-P-H-E-E.

Dellene Church

Thank you. Jody McPhee, in your testimony here today, do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Jody McPhee

I do.

Dellene Church

Thank you. Jody, unfortunately you lost your dad to the COVID vaccine. Can you tell us about that?

Jody McPhee

On May 22nd, 2021, my dad went to the local grocery store pharmacy for his second dose of the COVID vaccine. He then went around the store and purchased T-bone steaks, asparagus, and ice cream sandwiches. All of which he did not get to enjoy because unfortunately, within 45 minutes of the injection, he was dying. He managed to drive himself home for the last time. He was hospitalized that night. And sadly, six days later he succumbed to his injuries.

At that time, I was working on a project in Weyburn, Saskatchewan. My mom had called and said, "He's not talking anymore." I said, "What, he's not talking anymore?" I couldn't imagine that. She said, "You should come home."

I went to work. I tied up some loose ends. I said, "I'll be back." And I made my way to Yorkton. Upon arrival at the hospital, I didn't even know if I was going to get to see my dad. I wasn't one of the people on the visitors list. I waited in the entrance to the hospital while they called the ward to see if I was able to see my dad. I had called my mom to find out where exactly they were because I was going to see my dad regardless. My mom said, "I will come and get you," and she made her way down the hallway. I ran to embrace her. She was about to lose her husband of 47 years. Hospital workers were screaming at us, "social distancing!" I responded, "This is my mother and I will embrace my mother any time that I want." Fortunately, the doctor allowed me to go in to see my dad.

I got there. He clearly was not well. I took his hand. I said, "Dad, I made it home for you." The doctor came in and said he was dying. At the time, I didn't believe it. He had survived so much I didn't think a needle would take him out. Either way, the plan was, I was going to go home. He wasn't expected to survive the night. They had actually told me I could bring my dog into the room. So I went to my mom and dad's house to get my dog and to get my clothes and I didn't even make it halfway across town and my mom said he had died. I feel like he waited for me to get there and then he waited for me to leave.

Upon his death, my immediate response was to warn people. In hindsight, I see how naive I was because no one wanted to be warned.

My dad's death was belittled and denied by friends, family, my employer, my Prime Minister, my Premier, my MLA, and my Member of Parliament.

Dellene Church

Jody, did the medical staff acknowledge that your dad's death was a result of the COVID vaccine?

Jody McPhee

There was a conversation at the time that it was a vaccine. They questioned when he had had it, they questioned which one he had. It was then reported to the— I don't remember what it's called, where they report the adverse reactions. It's actually reported by the doctor and the pharmacist who had administered the shot.

Dellene Church

And was any information given to the family, on making a claim, about compensation?

Jody McPhee

Yes, there is actually a claim for compensation right now. They've requested further information at this point. So we're just— It's just taking time at this point.

[00:05:00]

Dellene Church

So next for you, as a result of your dad's death from the vaccine and your faith, you had made a decision not to be vaccinated.

Jody McPhee

Right.

Dellene Church

Unfortunately, your private employer put in a vaccine mandate at your work. Can you tell us how that process works?

Jody McPhee

So I had basically— I had a difficult experience happen at work on September 21st, where I was bullied and harassed by a member of management to the point where he had screamed at my coworkers that they were to get away from me because I was going to make them sick. I asked for help that day from my employer and I did not get it. I ended up in the hospital. I ended up with a diagnosis of adjustment disorder with a heightened state of anxiety and depression. I ended up off work because of that for four months.

While I was off work, the company did mandate a vaccine on their workers. I knew about it because I still had friends that worked for the company. They were informing me what was going on and I was also having discussions with different management within the company as well.

I had been approved to return to work by my doctor and I also had a religious exemption letter from my pastor. I submitted both, I believe it was the same day. I'm not sure, I might have submitted one and one day and one the next day. With my religious exemption, I asked the HR director— I actually asked, I didn't want to be religiously persecuted for my beliefs and I just wanted to be treated the same way Jesus treated the people, with love and compassion. I actually asked for that and instead I was persecuted. I carried the cross up the hill. I mean, I was fully prepared for what was to come.

So it was not only denied, it came with a letter telling me that my relationship with Christ, along with my vaccination status, would cause a considerable amount of undue hardship to the company. They would lose income. They would lose business. It would be disrespectful to the other employees. They even went as far as to tell me that their clients and their business partners had requirements in place that would not allow that exception. So it was denied.

That response was promptly followed by an email saying that my employment of seven years was terminated. The email was signed by the HR director on behalf of my manager, who I had actually— It's interesting to note, I had had an employee review just months prior, where he told me that I was consistent— In writing actually, he said I was a

consistent contributor. My work was always exceptional and he was looking forward to all of my success in the coming year with the company.

It really hurt that he could say those things and then I wasn't even able to get fired with dignity. I didn't deserve a phone call. I didn't deserve a meeting. I basically got an email from a stranger saying, "Don't come back."

Seven years, you know, I worked—and it was seven years of sacrifice. I worked in construction. We worked away from home. We were on the road. We were doing an important job. We were essential workers. We worked all the way through the pandemic. We were building facilities to help feed the world. We were heroes. We were scared but we were going to work. I you know anyone that works away from home, you literally give your life to the company. We worked a four week on, one week off.

[00:10:00]

For seven years. And I was exceptional. I went from exceptional to worthless in just a matter of months.

Dellene Church

And you suffered a further indignity after you were fired. Can you tell us about that, about trying to return to work for your retrieving your belongings?

Jody McPhee

I wasn't allowed to retrieve my belongings. Right from the get-go, when I first went on to leave, I asked to retrieve my belongings. They told me that I was basically a danger to the workers. I don't— I don't know. It was, it was pretty awful. To this day I haven't even gotten my belongings back and I was fired over a year ago. I've tried numerous times, reaching out to different people in management on job sites saying, "Please can I get my things back." They respond with— I actually got an email, like, months after I was fired, telling me that I wasn't able to talk to anyone in the company without permission for any reason, without permission from the HR director. I didn't even work for them anymore.

Dellene Church

So your next involvement was with an application for unemployment insurance?

Jody McPhee

Right. So of course I applied for unemployment insurance. I was denied. I was denied based on the fact that the person who was making the decision felt that my faith and my religion was something that was in my head, which she actually said to me. I then waited a while. I mean, as a person, you're feeling defeated and you're feeling discouraged. I waited a while and at the very, very last minute I appealed it. And I'm happy to say it was approved based on my religious exemption. So I was paid the maximum amount of benefit minus five weeks, as I wasn't available for work for five weeks out of that time.

Dellene Church

And following that, you also have been involved now in a court application for wrongful dismissal from your employer.

Jody McPhee

Right.

Dellene Church

Is that still proceeding?

Jody McPhee

Right.

Dellene Church

Can you tell us about that?

Jody McPhee

Clearly, there's strategy involved and so I don't want to say too much but we are working towards getting justice. We have a strong group of eight. We're absolutely adamant that we will not waiver and we will not back down. We were all long-term employees, long-term loyal employees.

Dellene Church

And have you had court proceedings yet?

Jody McPhee

No. I believe there was an application to strike in play and then— We have a fantastic legal team. You just heard from one of them. We have a fantastic legal team and they're working hard for us. And we have complete faith and trust that this will work out in our favor. It has to. I mean, eventually good needs to prevail; it has to.

Dellene Church

So after your unemployment insurance benefits ran out, you've suffered severe economic consequences.

Jody McPhee

I actually didn't receive— I got my insurance benefits in a lump sum over a year after I was fired. So I mean, prior to that, it was the economic consequences. I didn't have a paycheck anymore. I had to cash in my savings. I had to stay with my mom; thank God. I mean, I had a place to stay. But I wasn't able to at that point anymore—I had just sold my home and then all of a sudden, I was fired. I wasn't able to secure another mortgage or even rent an apartment right away. My mom doesn't like it when I say this, but I was essentially homeless.

I wasn't able to work for several months and I'm still only working part time for myself. I am working for myself now. I'm not able to work for anyone else because I— This clearly, I mean, I don't have the work ethic of a person who gets fired. It's something that hangs over your head and I don't think I'll ever be able to work for anyone else ever again. Because of that fear and that damage that that's done to me.

[00:15:00]

Dellene Church

But the strength you've had— The hope today is that you didn't give up. You've gone through all these processes. You also completed online schooling during this time for a new profession. And you've recently opened your own business, you're going forward. You're seeing this through.

Jody McPhee

I'm going forward and I'm seeing this through, absolutely. One hundred per cent. I feel, it's so hard to talk about, but I feel like there's so many people out there that would have liked to have seen me hanging from a tree. But they don't get to win this, I do. Because I'm sitting right here.

Dellene Church

Is there anything else you'd like to share today?

Jody McPhee

Well, first of all, I'd like to say thank you for the opportunity. Thank you to everyone that's here today, everyone who's watching, everyone who's involved in making this happen. I feel like this is just the beginning. You know, I had been waiting for a platform to speak on and I believe this is it. So I'm incredibly grateful. I'd also just like to say something to my dad. I'd like to say: Dad, thank you. Thank you for giving your life so that I can live mine strong and healthy.

Dellene Church

And do you have any suggestions for what could be done so we don't face this again?

Jody McPhee

I think what we're doing right now, I think talking is important. And I know there's going to be days that we're going to be tired and those are the days that we're going to rest, but we don't quit. We don't quit. We don't back down. We don't waiver. And we just keep going. We just keep going. And I know personally, I've got to work on getting my carefree nature back because that was taken from me. I need to work on trying to believe that most people are good. I've got to try and get that back.

Dellene Church

I'll turn it over to the commissioners to see if they have any questions for you.

Jody, thank you for your courage through all of this and your perseverance. And on behalf of the National Citizens Inquiry, I'd like to thank you for your testimony today.

Jody McPhee

Thank you for having me.

[00:18:11]

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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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