



## NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Winnipeg, MB

Day 1

April 13, 2023

### EVIDENCE

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**Witness 9: Michael Welch**

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[00:00:00]

**Shawn Buckley**

So, Michael, can you take the stand? Our next witness is Michael Welch.

Michael, I thank you, you've been waiting patiently all day. I'll ask if you can state your full name for the record, spelling your first and last name, please.

**Michael Welch**

Michael Welch, M-I-C-H-A-E-L W-E-L-C-H

**Shawn Buckley**

Michael, do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth today?

**Michael Welch**

I do.

**Shawn Buckley**

Now you have been a radio journalist for 15 years.

**Michael Welch**

Yes.

**Shawn Buckley**

And my understanding is that you have your own show, and it's called "The Global Research News Hour."

**Michael Welch**

Yes. That's correct.

**Shawn Buckley**

Can you tell us just a little bit about the types of things that that show would typically cover? Let's not go into COVID. But pre-COVID, how would you describe the show and what types of topics would you be covering?

**Michael Welch**

Well, the show ultimately was kind of a merger: a merger attempt between an academic website, the Centre for Research on Globalization, or [globalresearch.ca](http://globalresearch.ca), and the network. Because my show, or rather, the radio station, which is a campus community radio station, so there's a bit of a difference there from the mainstream media. We tend to feature topics and investigations that tend to elude the mainstream media. We'll get into all sorts of subjects: focusing on a lot of the questions around 9-11, for example; focusing on a lot of the issues surrounding where the terrorists come from; where there's, for example, the claim that Russia had somehow influenced Trump and maybe helped him win the election. I mean, I'm not necessarily saying Trump is good or bad. But there are some questions there that didn't get asked. So all of these sorts of questions, typically following foreign policy or economics, financing. These are subjects that we cover, and we pretty much span the spectrum from the left to the right.

**Shawn Buckley**

Right. So your show would be covering things that the mainstream media wouldn't be digging into, and pre-COVID could be considered kind of, you're chasing leads that could be going against the mainstream narrative even.

**Michael Welch**

Pretty much. Yeah. That's what it says right at the outset. We investigate claims that are not addressed in mainstream media.

**Shawn Buckley**

And pre-COVID, my understanding is this wasn't a local show, and it's still not. But basically, your show is syndicated so that it's carried on a number of different radio stations across Canada and maybe even outside of Canada.

**Michael Welch**

Initially, it was just the station. But we expanded, okay, and we got other stations across the country. I think at its max, it was maybe 15 across Canada and a few stations in the United States.

**Shawn Buckley**

Right, so pre-COVID, your show is becoming more popular and more popular and more popular.

**Michael Welch**

Yes, that's correct. As far as I can say.

**Shawn Buckley**

Okay. So now, when COVID hit, am I correct? You didn't change your approach. You still would then be looking at issues that the mainstream media was ignoring. But there were questions that needed to be asked and looked into.

**Michael Welch**

Yes. With regard to COVID, I started publishing that sort of skeptical slant. Okay, let's take another look at, maybe, something like taking a second look at COVID, and I did a series of stories starting in September of 2020.

**Shawn Buckley**

Okay. Can you share with us some of the guests that you had on your show?

**Michael Welch**

Sure. I think my first guest, with regard to COVID, you mean?

**Shawn Buckley**

Yes.

**Michael Welch**

My first guest was Sucharit Bhakdi who is a very critically acclaimed doctor in Germany. He was, you know, published hundreds of articles. He was on a very prestigious board.

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But he was saying these things about— At that time, I mean, he couldn't say too much about the vaccine. But even so, what he was saying was that COVID is not as deadly as everybody's being led to believe. And then, there were quotes of the statistics to back him up. I mean, maybe for the very elderly, there's a little bit of a gap there. But you couldn't quite justify, at that time, that this is something that should be, you know, pursued as something and then have all this social distancing and everything else.

And we also had, who else? I had Mark Crispin Miller, who's not a doctor, but he's a media person specializing in propaganda. And I guess you could probably tell a separate story. But he was also saying, "Well, what is this, all this stuff that's coming out? It appears like propaganda." I had Meryl Nass; I had Jane Orient, who was the head of the American Association of Physicians and Surgeons. Peter McCullough came. You know him.

**Shawn Buckley**

Yeah, and some difficulty arose after Dr. Peter McCullough was on your show. Am I right about that?

**Michael Welch**

Well, I had decided that I wanted to arrange a debate between the official story of COVID, with expertise in talking about it, and one of these, call them dissident doctors. So we'll put one against the other and see what falls out. But I realized that the person who would be having the more mainstream take, he just said, "Well, I think you should reconsider this Dr. McCullough. I mean, he's being sued in the United States." And then he basically— I was saying a debate. He was thinking, debating Trump, if you know what I mean, somebody who's going to interject. I mean, Peter McCullough is not going to be an unusual figure. He's not Trump-like, exactly. But I had to phone back Peter McCullough, and say, "Gee, sorry, I can't get you on because I can't get a debate."

I tried other people as well. And they were even worse saying, "Well, this guy is just, you know, it's Flat Earth Society." And Peter McCullough, given his credentials, I mean, pre-COVID, before he started giving his own testimony, he would be considered a really serious expert. But as soon as you step out of line in terms of COVID, you're smeared.

**Shawn Buckley**

Now can I have you clarify so that everyone understands what you mean when you say, "as soon as you step out of line on COVID."

**Michael Welch**

What I mean is that if you don't repeat the main messages of the World Health Organization, the CDC, and all the governments that are in charge, you're not credible. I imagine that would happen with Sucharit Bhakdi as well. It doesn't matter, apparently. I mean, it's so easy just to lose credibility. All you have to do is go against the mainstream narrative.

**Shawn Buckley**

And you had your own experience. So is it fair to say that in the 11 years before COVID hit and you're running this show and more and more stations are picking it up that really you had never had a serious listener complaint.

**Michael Welch**

I've never, I don't know. I mean, I suppose somebody might have complained, and they didn't tell me. But as far as I know, I not only was without complaints, I had a fair number of awards both within the station and nationally for my work. I was well respected as the news director for a few years. I think I was fairly well respected by our audiences.

**Shawn Buckley**

Right.

[00:10:00]

Now, can you tell us how that changed with you're running COVID shows and you're basically addressing issues like, "Is the vaccine safe and effective?" That's when it really changed for you, isn't it?

**Michael Welch**

It seems so. I found myself getting a lot of complaints. I don't know how many. But yeah, like staff told me I was getting complaints. I just talked to a colleague once, I just met out in a marketplace or something, and then he was— Good, friendly guy and everything. But he said a lot of his friends are saying that this guy's show is just not— It's pretty bad. Essentially, it seemed as if my show was going from one of the best shows on CKUW to one of the worst.

**Shawn Buckley**

Okay. And I just want to make sure I understand. So you'd basically had 11 years really of positive comments. You'd won awards; the show was growing.

**Michael Welch**

Yeah.

**Shawn Buckley**

And you hadn't changed the type of news reporting you were doing. You were always doing that digging that the mainstream wasn't doing. But now it's on things like the COVID vaccine.

**Michael Welch**

Yeah. I mean, I can only think, and I don't know if I'm stepping out of line by speculating here. But I think the people who were listening, like everybody, I suppose, they were so terrified by COVID and then seeing all the deaths in Italy and then there's all this monitoring of the hospitals and so many people are dying that they're scared. And then, here comes somebody, the authorities laying down directions: this is the way we move forward. And people say, okay, okay, okay. So when somebody comes out and actually tries to contradict that, I guess, you're going to see them as like the most malevolent form of life ever known, you know?

**Shawn Buckley**

Right. I'll ask our AV person, David. I've got an exhibit up on the computer. Can you show that? So my understanding is this is a news article from the *Vancouver Sun*, dated March 13th, 2021, and the headline, "COVID-19: Radio station at SFU temporarily suspends program linked to website with pandemic conspiracy theories." This is about your show, right?

**Michael Welch**

Yes, it is. And just to correct it, it's not the [ranked] *Vancouver Sun*, it's the *Vancouver Province* [sic] [*Vancouver Sun*].

**Shawn Buckley**

Okay. And then I'm going to scroll down a little bit.

So the first paragraph here, “as health officials battle the spread of pandemic misinformation.” And, so, you’re basically being branded as spreading misinformation for having guests on like Dr. Peter McCullough.

**Michael Welch**

True. Essentially, yeah, that’s it.

**Shawn Buckley**

Okay. And so what happened with your show and this radio station?

**Michael Welch**

Well, like after this came out?

**Shawn Buckley**

Yes, after this came out.

**Michael Welch**

Well, like it said, they suspended the show. I had written them a letter to sort of help them with the process and decide, like while they were trying to figure it out, I’d send them the basics: it’s based on solid science; this is what it’s all about. Michel Chossudovsky had put out— There was a bit of a glib about a CBC article that was dissing his thing, and I tried to correct that in case there were any doubts. And the astonishing thing is I hadn’t heard anything back.

**Shawn Buckley**

So, David, can you pull up the exhibit, computer again? My understanding is this is your letter.

**Michael Welch**

That’s right.

**Shawn Buckley**

And we will enter it, it’s already entered as an Exhibit, it’s WI-6. And the news story is Exhibit WI-6a so that people watching and the commissioners will be able to see it. But I just want to scroll down to something you said that—

I think it was your third point. Oh, nope, nope, just wait. Yeah, so the first full paragraph on this page if you don’t mind, I’ll read it. Because I think,

[00:15:00]

what it reminded me of is that saying, “First they came for the Jews, and I didn’t stand up. And then they came for the Christians and,” et cetera, “and then when they came for me, there was no one left to help.”

But my understanding is you got no reply from this letter. But I just want to read so that people who can't see it clearly understand one of your points.

And you say:

But ultimately what I would like you to carefully consider that you are being targeted by forces who will take down voices based on smears appearing in the media, such as allegations Global Research is a part of a Kremlin operation (?) And if you do take down Global Research News Hour because of its association with Global Research, who will be next? Will Canadian Dimension Radio or Canadian Foreign Policy Radio, or any other successful media running effective anti-NATO content be next? Consider that the long haul of this enterprise places the station on a track that ultimately requires them to fully conform to the direction of the mainstream in terms of meaningful conversations.

And can you explain for us what you're saying there? What your concern is? Because I think you're saying something very important about censorship and conforming.

### **Michael Welch**

We talk about freedom of speech. To be clear, what we're talking about is to be free to have freedom of dissenting speech: I am free to say something that you don't like; you are free to say something that I don't like. What we're talking about here is efforts to distract from that or to get around that by simply saying, "It's misinformation, it's disinformation and, therefore, we should get rid of it."

There are too many examples of information—I mean, there's stuff that they say is disinformation or misinformation. But it's pretty clear that dissenting views, they should be heard, get out in the open, and then let's debate it out in the open. It's simply not acceptable to have one group of scientists talking about COVID and vaccinate, lockdowns, and social distancing, and all that, and the other people are absent. As we mentioned before, they don't appear. And there are legions of these doctors out there, and I made a point of trying to talk to them to get the other side. We're going down that road of freedom of speech, and we can't let that fable of disinformation—of anything that goes against the government narrative—prevail. It's got to get out in the open. And that's fundamentally what I have to say and what I'm trying to demonstrate as a part of my job in my role as a journalist.

### **Shawn Buckley**

Right. And had you ever experienced this type of thing before where there was pressure on you to conform with a government narrative on any topic in your career as a journalist?

### **Michael Welch**

Like I said at the outset, one of the reasons I came to the radio station in the first place is because this is a place where I can ask these questions, and I'm wide open to go wherever I like, as long as it's carefully measured. So no, I didn't. Now, it's different. And I don't know where this is headed. Hopefully, it can be stopped, perhaps through an inquiry like this one. But I don't know.

**Shawn Buckley**

And just so that things are clear, this station did drop your show.

**Michael Welch**

Well, they said it would be withdrawn temporarily, and that was two years ago. So it looks like it was a permanent.

**Shawn Buckley**

Right. So CJSF in Vancouver has dropped you for two years now.

**Michael Welch**

Yes.

**Shawn Buckley**

And some other stations have dropped you, also.

[00:20:00]

**Michael Welch**

Yes.

**Shawn Buckley**

And then for the first time, the Board of your local station on this issue, basically, made it clear to you that you have to be careful.

**Michael Welch**

I heard from, I think, it was the Chair of our Board. I mean, I met her outside, and we were just having a conversation. But then at the same time, the conversation got kind of serious. And she looked me in the eye and said, "We've got to be keeping with the government narrative. All the doctors are saying that, all across the board." And she's trying to say, "So you're going to align with these policies, aren't you?" And I basically said, "No." But I mean, yeah, that's definitely something that's pretty sharp on our mind.

**Shawn Buckley**

So if there was one thing that you would like to see happen in the area of journalism going forward, what would you like that to be? Where do you think we've gotten off the rails where journalists like you are being basically pressured to follow the government narrative?

**Michael Welch**

Are you talking just in my journalism or journalism broadly?



**Shawn Buckley**

However, you'd want to answer that. You're an expert in the field; you've been a journalist for the last 15 years. So I'm really just asking for your insight, whether it's locally or do you think nationally, however you'd like to answer.

**Michael Welch**

I think that we have to be more open to other ideas, like I have been. I think we have to listen; we have to, in particular, we really, really have to be in touch with community members. Because I am a community broadcaster, and I think that local people should really take precedence, and we should listen to them. Like we've listened to a lot of fine people— I've listened to a lot of fine people today, and I think I have a colleague who's already collecting information for people to interview.

I remember talking to someone who had been vaccine injured. And she said that when she talked to a mainstream media person about— Is she going to get her story published? She ended up, he or she, I guess, ended up saying, "Well I can't because if I do, I'm going to lose my job." I haven't confirmed that. But I'm just reporting what that person says. Me, I don't think we should be fired for trying to do our job and reporting from actual people.

**Shawn Buckley**

Thank you. I don't have any further questions for you, Mr. Welch. I'll ask if the commissioners do. So the commissioners don't. Mr. Welch, on behalf of the National Citizens Inquiry, I sincerely— Oh, I'm sorry, I misspoke. One of the commissioners does have a question for you.

**Commissioner Kaikkonen**

Thank you for your testimony. Do you know if the media that condemned you in Vancouver takes funds from the federal government right now as part of the federal government's initiative to prop up media financially?

**Michael Welch**

Are you talking about the Vancouver *Province* [sic] [*Vancouver Sun*]?

**Commissioner Kaikkonen**

Yes.

**Michael Welch**

Oh, yeah. I haven't really looked into it to tell you the truth. It's quite possible because a lot of them are. But I don't know. I mean, the way it started in my view is that it started with an individual. The whole CJSF saga began with one individual attacking the station and talking to the program director and trying to get her to take that awful "Global Research" show off the air. And I think she even threatened to find a way of condemning him if they don't.

[00:25:00]

And so she went to this reporter, and then the reporter took interest and that's all. But, yeah, to answer you, I honestly can't say.

**Commissioner Kaikkonen**

Thank you.

**Shawn Buckley**

But in a way, and sorry, we have another commissioner question. But I just wanted to interject. In a way it's interesting. So here we have one media station, or *The Province* [sic] [*Vancouver Sun*], so a media outlet, basically complaining about another media outlet reporting. Like, when we all think about that, that in itself is interesting. Do you see what I'm saying?

I mean that would be like your radio station, your show, complaining about what some other media outlet is doing in order to create pressure for that other media outlet to drop a story or position. I mean, that's an unusual take in the absence of fraud or corruption, is it not?

**Michael Welch**

Yeah, I personally wasn't fond of it. I guess it's a bit of a conflict of interest. You know, it's not the way I want to be introduced to the people of Vancouver. But yeah, it's unusual to see radio stations going against each other that way.

**Shawn Buckley**

And I'm sorry Commissioner Massie, I jumped in.

**Commissioner Massie**

I was going to ask you: How do you see the future of this type of journalism in Canada or in other countries in the environment we're in right now? Because I'm not seeing a lot of news stations that are able to openly go counter-narrative and make a decent living out of it. Do you see that people will ask for it, eventually, and it will actually come back? Or is it going to be suppressed, like it is right now?

**Michael Welch**

I hate to be negative. But it doesn't look too good. I know that the campus community radio network, like it's the network of stations that arrange things. And even though we are charged with the responsibility to dig deep and find a different view of things, collectively, we seem to have marched pretty much in line. And so even myself and a few others who are countering the narrative, even in this network, it's more the minority than the majority. I find that things, so far, are not working in our favour. And even in internet media, there's these increasing tentacles of conforming to standard narratives. It's something that I had not thought would be possible five years ago.

**Commissioner Massie**

Thank you.

**Shawn Buckley**

Mr. Welch, I think that's it for questions. And again, on behalf of the National Citizens Inquiry, we sincerely thank you for your testimony and sharing with us today.

**Michael Welch**

Okay. Thank you very much.

[00:29:12]

***Final Review and Approval:*** Margaret Phillips, August 10, 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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