



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Winnipeg, MB

Day 2

April 14, 2023

EVIDENCE

Witness 3: Diedrich Wall

Full Day 2 Timestamp: 03:01:37–03:40:21

Source URL: <https://rumble.com/v2i6qmk-national-citizens-inquiry-winnipeg-day-2.html>

[00:00:00]

Shawn Buckley

So now, if that's it for questions, I would like to call our next witness, Mr. Rick Wall, who is attending virtually. And Rick, can you hear me?

Diedrich Wall

Yes, sir.

Shawn Buckley

Okay, so first of all, I'll ask if you can state your full name for the record, spelling your first and last name.

Diedrich Wall

Yes, sir, my full name is Diedrich Wall, D-I-E-D-R-I-C-H, last name is W-A-L-L. Most people call me Rick, but that is my full name.

Shawn Buckley

And we'll call you Rick, because that's what you're comfortable with, and I'll ask you if you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Diedrich Wall

I do.

Shawn Buckley

Now, Rick, you're almost being provocative today because you have a Canadian flag behind you. And I never thought I would, as a Canadian, where my inside voice will say, "Oh, boy, that's kind of an act of rebellion, a Canadian flag."

But you have some interesting involvement in what I'll call the Trucker Movement. So let me just introduce you, and then I'll ask you to explain your story and what happened. But my understanding is that you are the owner of a trucking company in southern Manitoba. And your company does a lot of cross-border shipping since 2009, but you've been running the company for 11 years now.

Diedrich Wall

Correct.

Shawn Buckley

And that you became very involved in the trucking protests. Am I correct about that?

Diedrich Wall

Yes, sir.

Shawn Buckley

And in January 2021, you started getting involved in anti-mask rallies in Winkler.

Diedrich Wall

Yes, sir, correct.

Shawn Buckley

And then for the first couple of months of 2022, you became involved in the Freedom Convoy?

Diedrich Wall

Right.

Shawn Buckley

But you were actually involved in what might be the very first cross-border blockade on January 17, 2022. You were one of the organizers of the first blockade. We'll talk about that later, but I'm just introducing you right now.

Diedrich Wall

Correct.

Shawn Buckley

Okay. But before we get to the trucking part of this, I want you to share with us something that happened with you in an outdoor church. Because my understanding is in May of 2021, you got involved in an outdoor church. So can you share with us your experience there and what happened?

Diedrich Wall

Certainly can. I'd just like to take a quick opportunity to say thank you to the entire team at the NCI. I feel extremely humbled that I was asked to present or to share my story here today. And just thank God for all of you people on the Commission that you guys are donating your time in doing this. I think it's an extremely important part of Canadian history, so I commend each and every one of you for doing that.

Again, I'm a God-fearing father of three, and the last couple of years have been rather interesting to say the least. But yes, my journey in the freedom fight, well, I guess I became quite leery early on when the pandemic first started. There wasn't much scientific proof or anything at that point on which way was maybe the right or the wrong approach on this whole thing. But my critical thinking got the best of me early on.

Early in 2021, a good friend of mine organized the first freedom drive within the Winkler, Manitoba area. And I started helping and participating shortly thereafter. And then in early May of 2021, at this point, churches and everything were locked down. And of course, we as Canadians, or I guess like-minded people such as myself, felt extremely violated that our constitutional rights to worship freely were now officially stripped from us.

And so, we thought it'd be a good idea to organize outdoor church worship services. You know, "what's the harm in that" was our thought process during that time. But this was, of course, when the implementation of the outdoor gathering size had decreased to five, I believe it was. Outrageous to think that, that you're only allowed to gather with five people outdoors. But, yes, it was during that time.

So we organized— The first one was on May 5th, correctly. It was just at a public park. We made sure we stayed off— Like there's a big stage in the city of Winkler where we conducted this. But we stayed off public property, except for the fact of the actual grounds that we were at.

[00:05:00]

We stayed off the stage. We just kind of set up our own little setup and had somebody come out to bring a message, sang some praise and worship songs.

All the meanwhile, we had our Chief of Police not in uniform, off duty, with his personal vehicle. He parked close to the stage and monitored basically our every move and counted how many people attended and therefore got in trouble for it sometime later.

Shawn Buckley

So can I ask how many people would have come out to this event?

Diedrich Wall

If my memory is correct, I would say between 70 and 100 people. We did this two consecutive Sundays in a row. So both times, I think, it was probably pretty average between 50 and 100 people, or somewhere in there.

Shawn Buckley

Okay, and I just want to make sure that I understand. So you've got 70 to 100 people in an outside park, am I right about that?

Diedrich Wall

Correct.

Shawn Buckley

And they're singing hymns,

Diedrich Wall

Hmm, hmm.

Shawn Buckley

and they're listening to somebody give a message.

Diedrich Wall

Correct.

Shawn Buckley

So basically, they're listening to preaching.

Diedrich Wall

Yes.

Shawn Buckley

And the Chief of Police who's known, because this is a small town, is there in his private car photographing who's there.

Diedrich Wall

I understand your question. Oh, so you're asking whether he was in his private car taking photographs? Is that your question?

Shawn Buckley

Yes. Yes.

Diedrich Wall

Yes. In fact, that was the reason why he was there. He documented the event. Therefore, I guess, justifying them later on, fining all three of the organizers for these two events. We were all ticketed for each event. Ticket amounts were— They were for not complying with public health orders and they were for \$1,296 each. I received two of them.

Shawn Buckley

Right, so for your participation outside, singing hymns and listening to a sermon, basically over \$1,000 in fines.

Diedrich Wall

Correct.

Shawn Buckley

And this is in the town of Winkler, Manitoba.

Diedrich Wall

Yeah, it's actually a small city. It's considered a city, but yeah, in the city of Winkler.

Yeah, it was very saddening to witness this time, especially when it came to church-related things. I mean, you think we live in a country where we should have the right to worship.

And it was hard to put it into meaning, what those times are like. And again, when you guys play these clips in between of our public health officers and Premier announcing these measures— Those raw feelings come back. And yeah, it's still hard to believe that we went through that time.

Shawn Buckley

So can I ask you how it affected both you and your family not to be able to attend church? Because my understanding is because of the fines, you guys only did the outdoor church twice.

Diedrich Wall

Correct. Yeah, they made it pretty clear that any time going forward we were going to organize anything like this, that more tickets could be issued. So, and again, memory doesn't serve me well enough to know exactly if that was one of the only reasons why we stopped. Because at this point, I myself was in the same shoes as Patrick that just testified.

You know, you get to a point where you see how unlawful, within the sense of law, all of this was at this point. And where do you finally draw that line and say, you know, it doesn't really matter how many fines I'm going to get. I'm going to do what I'm convicted to do: what I feel God's leading me to do and what I know is true to do.

So I mean, again, I don't recall exactly what the reasons were why we quit doing the outdoor worship services. But at this point, we continued on and had consistent outdoor rallies in the city of Winkler, kind of like they did in the city of Winnipeg as well.

And that was ongoing. And again, even at those rallies, we had consistent police presence again, documenting, and so forth. But as far as tickets go, those are the only two tickets that I received throughout the entire duration of the last couple of years.

Shawn Buckley

I know that we've been asking witnesses what could have been done differently, and it seems to me clear that for protesting, the freedom protesters just had to get the Black Lives Matter people there and they would have been okay. But we live and learn.

Now you got involved in what I'll call the Emerson, Manitoba—the first protest on January 17th, 2022.

[00:10:00]

Can you tell us about how that came about and what that looked like?

Diedrich Wall

Yes, certainly. Shawn, you're breaking up a bit there, so I hope—

Shawn Buckley

And you were too, but you're better now. Are we okay on your end?

Diedrich Wall

There we go. Okay, you're just breaking up there a bit.

But yes, so basically, I run a trucking company, cross-border trucking company. So for our company, it's extremely important that we can cross the border. That is [inaudible: 00:10:32]

And me and my wife talked about it many times and prayed about the whole situation. If the time would come— I'm sorry, I seem to be breaking up here.

Shawn Buckley

We can hear you fine here.

Diedrich Wall

Okay, awesome. So we basically said, too, when the time would come for the truckers to take a stand, we were not going to take a back seat. And again, there was talk about the vaccine mandates being imposed on the truck driver, which again we have to remember: The truck drivers were the heroes throughout the entire duration from when COVID started up to this point. You know, willing to go where nobody else was going to go. And so, they basically went from hero to zero pretty quickly.

And now, when they had basically imposed the mandates, I think, on most industries at this point, it was time to [inaudible: 00:11:27] truck drivers as well, for those that had chosen for whatever reason, some very obvious reasons at this point, to not get the vaccination.

And again, we told ourselves that if that point came, we were going to take a stand. And when it was announced that on January 15th, '21, Canada would start to implement drivers needing to be vaccinated or have a negative PCR test upon arrival or, otherwise, would need to quarantine for 14 days, and also, could likely be ticketed.

With that said, within literally a couple of days, and a bunch of help from a whole lot of people, we were first. We called it a slow-roll protest at the Emerson— That's the Manitoba-U.S. border on highway 75, just south of Winnipeg, and that was on January 17th. We arrived there at 3:45 a.m., if I remember correctly, or maybe it was 4:45 a.m. But it was very strategically planned: we know how busy that port is when it comes to truck traffic, and Monday mornings are always the busiest.

So we did that very strategically, and of course, our plan was to basically abide by all traffic laws. We had no intentions of blocking the road. We just basically wanted to slow traffic down and come out with our flags and signs, and basically, show our dislike with the decision the government had made for truckers at this point. And so, that's what we did. We basically showed up there and we started— When I say “slow-roll” for those of you that don't know what that is, it's just literally going basically as slow as a big rig is going to go, low-gear idle. You're walking faster than that. So that's what we did there on January 17th.

Shawn Buckley

So basically, you backed up the traffic probably for miles. Can you still hear me?

Diedrich Wall

Oh, now I can hear you, Shawn.

Shawn Buckley

Okay, so I asked, did you back up the traffic for miles?

Diedrich Wall

Yes, certainly did. It was very effective. We had a lot of support out there from our supporters. And it was pretty interesting to see how many truck drivers that were basically caught in a slow-roll taking up a lot of their day were very supportive as well. Of course, there was some that were very upset, rightfully so. They didn't understand what was going on there. But, yes, we definitely accomplished what we set out to do.

And I mean, the event caught media attention globally after the first couple of days. And it was the start of the trucking movement. While I have to state that the Freedom Convoy to Ottawa, this was already in full stages of planning. I had no participation in planning for the Freedom Convoy to Ottawa.

But we just saw it was important to do this protest at the border on January 17th, literally, two days after they imposed this mandate for the truckers on the Canadian side. We thought it was strategically important to do it at that time.

Shawn Buckley

Now, you didn't plan the Ottawa trucking protest,

[00:15:00]

but you did have your trucks participate. Can you tell us about the participation of the trucks from your company?

Diedrich Wall

Yeah, for sure. So yeah, we were very much involved, not in an organizing aspect of it. But again, I go back to what I stated earlier that me and my wife prayed about it and thought about it long and hard and our involvement, our company's involvement, because we all saw what happened to a lot of people that participated. And I'll get into that a little bit later

and to what our involvements ended up costing us. But in that sense, we were content with the fact that we could literally lose everything.

It was a pivoting moment in the whole movement, I feel, but we just felt totally at peace with it because I go back to stating what I said earlier. You know, it felt like a true conviction that this is what we needed to do. And no matter what the outcome would be at the end of the day, we would still feel good about that decision because we followed the path of what's true and right instead of just sitting back and—

Shawn Buckley

I'll just interrupt you, but if you can, because we've got some time constraints, if you can tell us about your participation, what your company did.

Diedrich Wall

Absolutely. So we had nine trucks in total from our company that participated in the Freedom Convoy going to Ottawa. Only four of them went all the way to Ottawa. Five of our trucks went slightly, just a little ways into Ontario—Kenora, Ontario. It was a stopping point there, turned around and came back and started organizing for the next protest in Manitoba. Four of our trucks carried on to Ottawa and stayed there for the entire duration.

Shawn Buckley

Then my understanding is one of your trucks in Ottawa got towed at the end when the government marched in.

Diedrich Wall

Yes. I have to make a correction on that. The truck didn't in fact get towed, but basically what the enforcement group— I don't know what group confiscated these trucks, but basically what they did— The trucks they could drive out, they drove out, and the ones they couldn't drive, they towed out. Our driver's truck, they were able to get into it. Our driver still to this day doesn't know how they started it because he had both sets of keys with him, and he was not present when his truck was taken. I must also state that it was an owner-operator truck. The driver owned his own truck but leased on to our company, and yes, it got confiscated and was impounded.

Shawn Buckley

And there was a \$1,300 fine, I think.

Diedrich Wall

Correct. Yeah, that wasn't the exact amount but, yeah, within the realm of \$1,300. After a week of confiscation, we were able to get it out. But the interesting part was, it didn't just sit in the compound and we could just pay our fine and get it out.

This was a truck and trailer. They physically ripped the licence plates off of both power and trailer unit. And of course, I mean that's a registration to travel up and down the road, so we had to get permits just to get the truck back home. I thought that was a rather interesting—something that I don't think would have been necessary, but, yeah, it was just very unique.

And then, also, our permits to operate within the province of Ontario was pulled for an entire month.

Shawn Buckley

Well, maybe those people that took the plates off were some of these good Canadian ambassadors.

Diedrich Wall

That could likely be.

Shawn Buckley

Yeah.

Diedrich Wall

I thought it was interesting.

Shawn Buckley

Now you talked about a Manitoba protest. And this is an important topic because we're in Manitoba today, and people from Manitoba know about the Manitoba protest and it did get some media coverage in the nation. But a lot of Canadians actually don't know what happened in Manitoba with your protest and definitely internationally. Like internationally, everyone knew about the Ottawa one. And I think it's important for you to share in some detail what happened here in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Diedrich Wall

Yeah, certainly. So like I stated earlier, obviously my heart was set to go to Ottawa as well. I really wanted to go, but after doing some more thinking about it, we thought it was important to organize something in Manitoba because a lot of people couldn't go to Ottawa. It just wasn't feasible for whatever reason.

So we decided to stay back and organize another slow-roll, actually right back at Emerson. And again, this was strategically organized for the date of January 29th. This was when the Ottawa convoy was to be expected to arrive in Ottawa. So we thought it would just be uniform. Again, we're all in the same fight to do it on the same day to get back to the border at Emerson.

And this time, we were there for a longer duration. We were there from January 29th to,

[00:20:00]

I believe it was, February 2nd. So we were there for quite a few days. Same thing again, you know, just a slow-roll. We didn't block the road, but again, it was much more effective even this time than it was the first time. We definitely had our voices heard, we feel. So I'll just carry on here with how we ended up at the legislature building, if that's alright?

Shawn Buckley

Yes, please do.

Diedrich Wall

We were at the border slow-rolling until February 2nd. I believe it was on February 1st, I had somebody reach out to me from another group of organizers within the city of Winnipeg. They were saying that they were planning a protest there and they would love for the truckers to join them. So we did some thinking about that and thought it would be a good strategic move if we go to our local legislature building within the city of Winnipeg. And of course, it would be smaller scale, but, in a sense, the same thing as to what was happening in Ottawa.

So we took that opportunity to refocus our efforts and took a day off. But then on January 4th [sic], once again early in the morning, I believe it was at 3.30 a.m. or something like that, we arrived in front of the legislature building and set up the trucks. And the trucks that we had there currently, four of them, I think we came there with big rigs, and then the rest of it kind of just formed on Broadway and Memorial. The rest of it formed kind of like Ottawa, smaller scale. People started setting up, you know. We had people with food trailers come out, all kinds of things like that.

Shawn Buckley

Can I just stop you? It wasn't just your trucks that were there. There were other truckers, there were like 40 or 50 trucks.

Diedrich Wall

Yes, sir, I think at the height of it, there was around 50 trucks and then, of course, a lot of other participants. There was one Saturday where a whole bunch of farmers came out and brought their tractors out; I mean, the boulevards were lined with the farm equipment, farm tractors. And yes, a lot of big trucks and a lot of local supporters came out throughout the duration of the protest there. It was an amazing expression of, not expression but it was just the whole event was just— I can hardly put it into words, you kind of had to be there. It was very interesting from an organizer perspective. It was a very unique and interesting experience. I can only speak on behalf of myself who went through it. I was one of the organizers there throughout the entire time.

So the continuation of the negotiations with the Winnipeg Police, they were awesome. I can't give them enough credit: they were very respectful to us, but they had a job to do. There were daily negotiations as to things we could and could not do. But I mean their strategy was to eventually get us to leave, which that ultimately did happen after a couple of weeks.

Shawn Buckley

Now was the protest peaceful?

Diedrich Wall

Yeah, 100 per cent. The only un-peaceful event at the legislature protest was what we believe was an Antifa supporter. It was somebody that did not support the movement, that basically came through the crowd with an automobile and struck several supporters that

were there at the event. That was a pretty scary moment that happened early on in the protest. That individual was arrested, I believe, if I remember correctly. I didn't follow the story too much afterwards.

But that was the only un-peaceful thing that I would have recalled. It was just like Ottawa, just a smaller version, all the stories you hear: People coming to support. Farmers coming out bringing fuel for the big trucks. Huge groups cooking food every single day for everybody. No, there was just more unity there than anything else.

Shawn Buckley

So it was really the community coming together in a joint protest to seek change.

Diedrich Wall

Absolutely. I'd like to also add, just to answer your question more thoroughly whether it was a peaceful protest. And someone might be able to correct me and remember this better that was at the event— The Chief of Police, after everything was said and done, deemed this to be one of the most peaceful protests in the history of Winnipeg. So we took some credit for that. And there too, we tried to do our utmost throughout these negotiations daily with the Winnipeg police to meet with what their ask was of us, at the same time, trying to hold the line and keep reminding them as to why we were there as well.

Shawn Buckley

Now, my understanding is the purpose of being down there was you guys were requesting a dialogue with the provincial government and Premier Stefanson. Am I correct about that?

Diedrich Wall

A hundred percent. That was our ask. We merely wanted a conversation with the Premier's Office, and we were denied that right the entire time.

[00:25:00]

And what was kind of painful about that, I'll make it really quick. I believe it was a week, or maybe two weeks, after we left the site that our protest ended, the Ukraine thing started. And of course, I respect everybody. I mean, I respect the Ukrainian people. They definitely had the right to do— Well, they gathered at the legislature building, basically.

And Heather Stefanson had no problem coming out addressing her concerns and her support for these people, which I think is awesome. That's great that she did that.

But we just thought as organizers for our event— We're Canadians. We're pleading for you to have a conversation with us. And our ask isn't anything complicated, right? We're asking to simply have our constitutional rights and freedoms back.

But yet, she had no problem addressing them when she denied our rights and ignored us the entire time we were there. I thought that was a pretty sad example of a public servant that's supposed— That's there for all Canadians, not just for a select few.

Shawn Buckley

Now, we've heard the same from some people that were at the Ottawa protest. We had Tom Marazzo indicate that at no time did any member of the federal government actually speak with them.

But at the end of the day— And I just thank you on behalf of Canadians and actually the entire world because you truckers woke us up. And at the end of the day, there were some changes made because of the actions of truckers like you. And I know you've thought about that, but it just seems to me that you guys exposed some things. Can you share with us what you think was accomplished?

Diedrich Wall

Absolutely. So the question was asked many times by a lot of people: What do you guys feel that you accomplished? What was your wins? For me it was pretty simple, as most will remember. During the protest time, different provinces started to announce that they were going to start lifting restrictions, including Manitoba. Before we left, they announced that they were going to lift the mask mandates, which we thought was huge. I mean, no credit to self or any of the organizers. I think most of us were all fairly like-minded: it was all a group effort. But the group effort, we believe, was a huge contributing factor to them announcing these mandates being lifted.

I strongly feel the mandates would have been in place for much longer had we not protested. Some of the biggest wins that I would take away from it: First of all, the corruption right down to the core from our local municipalities right up to the federal government that was exposed. I think many people did not realize how deep it went. I know for myself I didn't.

It was amazing, again, going back to Ottawa where the *Emergencies Act* was invoked, I believe for the very first time, for breaking up a group of peaceful protesters. I thought that was the definition of insanity in a so-called free country that we live in. So huge wins I would say was basically exposing the corruption.

And another one, just the unity that the government had worked so hard to try to break apart within Canadians for a couple years. We saw clearly that Canadians, when it just came human to human, we respect and love each other. We love our country, and there was such a massive movement of support for the trucking protests.

I thought that that was a huge win, just showing the world that no, Canadians don't hate each other. It doesn't matter which side of the aisle you're on, especially when it comes to the vaccine. I mean, that's been a disturbing conversation to me for the entire time. Respect each other for who you are as individuals, not for medical decisions you make, which the government wanted us to do.

So it was a sense of unity and bringing people back together. Again, those are a couple of the big wins. Again, like I said, we saw mandates started to lift and so we thought we accomplished much. And to this day, I mean, had it not been for the entire process of what the truckers did, I think we would live in some very different times.

Shawn Buckley

I think most people would agree with the statement, and I've heard people internationally say it to me, that watching the Canadian trucker movement actually was the first glimmer

of hope because we can't think of any other example where a group of people actually stood up to say no. And the fact that you guys accomplished something shows that actually the only way for us to get our rights back is for groups of people to stand up and say no.

Before I hand you over for commissioner questions—

[00:30:00]

But I just wanted it to be clear. You guys didn't end the protest in Winnipeg just because you decided to go home. It was made very clear to you guys, by the police, that they were going to move in and basically do what was happening in Ottawa.

Diedrich Wall

Yes, correct. So just trying to rethink here now what the date was. The date lapsed my memory. But yeah, there came a day where, again, this was just one of our morning sessions with Winkler police, just a typical negotiation session. And they did come in with a document basically stating that we had a day, I think it was February 22nd if I remember correctly, but that we basically had a day to get everything off the premises and have everything cleaned up or trucks were going to start to be towed. Same thing as was happening in Ottawa.

They stated the fact, as well, that the *Emergencies Act* was still in effect and that they would use it if needed. So yeah, we were definitely forced off the property; again, we all left willingly. There was no hesitation from anybody; as we stated earlier, it stayed peaceful from beginning to end.

Shawn Buckley

Thank you. And I'm just going to ask the commissioners if they have any questions for you, Mr. Wall. And they do have questions.

Commissioner Drysdale

Thank you for coming out this morning, Mr. Wall. There's a few things you said that I was curious about. I've heard testimony over the last number of days from folks like yourself who were facing making a decision, and they weighed whether or not they would speak up or whether or not they would take an action, perhaps make an arrest or break up a protest. And they weighed that against the loss of their income and their pensions. I think, Mr. Erskine, I believe it was, a police officer who had made that statement. And what you said, and I wrote it down, was that you and your wife discussed whether or not you were going to protest and you realized that you could lose everything.

Can you tell me what you meant by that? Is that what you really believed? Why did you believe that? And how did you come up with the decision that you were going to move ahead anyway?

Diedrich Wall

I think that's a great question and thank you for asking it. Basically, when I say that we could lose everything, I guess I was pertaining that we basically were putting our entire company on the line. And we employ about 40 people, so that's a pretty substantial number, and of course, we'd be putting all those jobs in jeopardy as well.

But at the same time, we felt content with the decision, to the fact that— Like I said, I felt truly convicted. I felt a conviction from God, I'm a God-fearing man, that this was something that we needed to do. And the Bible teaches us that he will provide regardless, and so we felt we were going to be okay, whatever that okay looked like. If everything you know— Let's say, for example, that our participation would strip our rights to our registrations, licences, and so forth to be a trucking company, which it did within the province of Ontario. And I mean, there was many threats throughout the duration of the Ottawa convoy or Ottawa protest. So that concern was very real at that point already, and we knew going into it that there was a real risk of that happening.

Commissioner Drysdale

So I just want to be clear I understood what you were saying. So you were fully aware that you weren't just risking your own income, your wife's income, your family support, but there were 40 people working for you, which would have translated potentially into hundreds of people that would be affected by that decision. But you still felt the conviction to go ahead with this.

Diedrich Wall

Yes, sir, yep that's 100 per cent correct. And it wasn't without much consideration and then talking to our office staff. I mean, I can't think of one that wasn't supporting what we were doing.

And again, I felt it was a very bold move for a business owner. You didn't see many businesses, especially larger businesses— I shouldn't say you didn't see many, you saw lots of smaller businesses participate, but I mean it was a pretty bold stand to take. But again, my convictions were very bold, and there wasn't much question about it. And again, it was with the support of our office staff, which I am extremely grateful for to this day.

Commissioner Drysdale

My last question has got to do with your community in Winkler.

[00:35:00]

Winkler is a rural city in Manitoba; it's quite a close-knit community and it has a reputation for a faith-based life.

My question to you is— When you took the initial actions where you had the services, if you will, in the city park, how is that portrayed in the local media and how did that affect your relationship within the community of Winkler following that?

Diedrich Wall

That's a great question. So basically, our local media wasn't really much different than the mainstream media when any of these events were covered. So there wasn't much, and to this day, there isn't great support. I mean, some of the stuff that's happening to this day, they're starting to cover it a little more accurately, I feel, but there was no real support from the local media.

As far as support from the local community, it was absolutely huge. And you're absolutely right, I think Winkler's considered the Bible Belt of Manitoba, if not for Canada. And I truly

feel that these last couple years have really brought that out into light because the community like you said, it's very tightly knit. And yes, there's those that don't agree, which God bless them for it. We live in a country where we should be allowed to disagree with each other respectfully. But yeah, like I said, very well received by the community. There was never a sense of feeling that we really should stop doing this because the community just isn't supporting it and really rather have us not do it. So yeah, it was very empowering to continue ploughing forward.

Commissioner Drysdale

Thank you, sir.

Diedrich Wall

Thank you.

Shawn Buckley

And there's more questions.

Diedrich Wall

Thank you.

Commissioner Kaikkonen

Good morning. I just have a quick question about the service in the park, and I'm just wondering if you saw the Chief of Police at other points come out in his own vehicle, his own personal vehicle without a uniform, when you were doing the slow-rolls or any other moment in time? Or whether you felt that at this time, it was maybe your faith that was being targeted?

Diedrich Wall

That's a great question. I think with all due respect, I actually know this Chief of Police personally, and I'll be honest, I would consider him a friend. What he did the last couple years, I don't think was a nice thing to do to a friend quite honestly, but I do understand he has a role and a position, public servant duties that he needs to uphold as well. You know what? With all due respect, I don't think it was an attack on religion.

The Winkler police, they were very much monitoring all the different rallies. Like, we have so many different rallies within the city of Winkler and area. They were constantly monitoring us regardless of— And I mean, most of the other ones were just protesting against all the other mandates. So yeah, it was pretty consistent monitoring, regardless.

Commissioner Kaikkonen

Thank you.

Diedrich Wall

Thank you.

Shawn Buckley

Rick, it looks like the commissioners have no further questions. On behalf of the National Citizens Inquiry, I want to sincerely thank you for sharing your testimony with us.

Diedrich Wall

Thank you all so much and God bless each one.

[00:38:44]

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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