



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Winnipeg, MB

Day 3

April 15, 2023

EVIDENCE

Witness 11: Michael Vogiatzakis (Part II)

Full Day 3 Timestamp: 08:25:10–08:30:48.

Source URL: <https://rumble.com/v2idi8y-national-citizens-inquiry-winnipeg-day-3.html>

[Michael Vogiatzakis' testimony (Part I) can be found on Winnipeg Day 1, Witness 10, Full Day 1 Timestamp: 09:47:03–10:05:50]

Part II

[00:00:00]

Shawn Buckley

Welcome back to the third day of the National Citizens Inquiry in Winnipeg. Commissioners, we've called back Mike as a witness.

Mike, can you quickly just state your full name for the record again?

Michael Vogiatzakis

Michael Vogiatzakis.

Shawn Buckley

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

Michael Vogiatzakis

I do.

Shawn Buckley

And I've invited you back today to share one story that you hadn't been able to tell the other day. So can you just share that with us?

Michael Vogiatzakis

I was going to share a story the other day about a funeral service of a very young boy who was six years old. The restrictions that— They were 10 people. And as hard as it is as a human being, as a father, and just as a funeral director to do a young service, it made it harder when you'd have to turn people down at the door. And that day I was standing at the door, being a bodyguard for the government, trying to follow the restrictions and tell people that they couldn't come in.

And then a gentleman came to the door and said, "I want to come in and see my nephew." And I said, "Sir, unfortunately, we're at 10 people, I can't let you in." And oddly enough, that day, the police were sitting across the street where they sat quite often. And they were sitting across the street to see if we were following the numbers that the restrictions allowed and possibly fine us if we went over that. And I looked at this gentleman and I said, "Sir, I'm full, I just can't let you in." I said, "The police are across the street and I risk a chance of getting a \$5,000 fine." And this gentleman looked at me and he said, "What kind of man are you? What kind of man are you to turn me away from seeing that little six-year-old boy and saying my goodbyes?"

And I looked behind me where there was a mirror. And I looked directly in that mirror and I asked myself that question, "What kind of man am I to turn people away and take away their last right of seeing a young little boy and saying goodbye?" I said to him, "Sir, come on in." Not only did I do that, but I went out to the parking lot and invited the rest of the people in, the family members that were sitting in a parking lot. I said, "You can all come in. You can all come in and say your goodbyes, it's your right to do that. I'm not going to stop you from doing that." And they all came in.

Couple minutes later, just like I suspected, the authorities walked up to me, to the door, and said, "Well, you're probably going to reach a \$50,000 fine. That's how many people you overdid." And I looked at him and I said, "Sir, can I ask you a question?" And he said, "What's that?" I said, "Do you have children?" He says, "What does this have to do with it? You broke the law. We have a limit and you've passed it." I said, "Do you have children?" And he said, "Yes, I do." I said, "I have a little six-year-old lying in the chapel and the family needs to see him. They need to say goodbye." And I said, "Why don't we turn things around here?" I said, "If this was your little six-year-old that passed away, one of your family members, would you want me as a funeral director to stand here and say, 'Sir, you can't come in?'" And he looked at me dead in the eyes and said the F-word and walked away.

And that day I didn't get a ticket. And that day I didn't get harassed any further. But what I did do is allow a family to have closure, allow a family to see a little child, a little angel that left this world. And no family deserves to lose a child, never mind being told that you can't come to a funeral service. And it breaks my heart, earlier when I was listening to testimony about church.

As a funeral director, I could tell you right now to your face that when you lose a loved one, you need God in your life. That's when people are searching the most. That's when they need a pastor. That's when they need their family, their church family, to have a little bit of hope, to have some faith to be led into that direction, to ask questions, why? Why did this little one leave this world? Why do people leave this world? It's a pastor like Pastor Tobias and other pastors that deserve to have their church open. It's our rights as human beings.

Even Jesus wept at a grave. Jesus wept at a grave. We have a right to weep at a grave. We have a right to say goodbye. We have a right to go to church. It's our right to go to church and say, listen to the word because that word sometimes brings us peace. And if they would

have kept these churches open, I could assure you there would have been less suicides. I could assure you there would have been less drug overdoses. But instead, they opened up the liquor commissions and they encouraged people to buy more drugs. And they encouraged these kids to stay downstairs in their basements and play video games.

Trust me, I've talked to many of them where they've told me, "My kid is stuck in the basement, stuck in the world of the internet and playing games and smoking pot all day long." Is that what the government wants? For our future, for our kids? When I looked in the mirror that day and I asked myself, who am I? I encourage you today and as the days go on to look in the mirror and ask yourselves who you are

[00:05:00]

and what you're going to stand up for.

What I'm standing up is for the future generation, my kids, your kids, your grandkids, and the future. If we don't grab a hold of the future now, there's not going to be a future. Stand up for what's right. Stand up for what's in your heart. Life on earth is short and if we get prosecuted on earth, we have another life to live.

Shawn Buckley

Mike, I thank you so much for sharing that.

[00:05:38]

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.

For further information on the transcription process, method, and team, see the NCI website: <https://nationalcitizensinquiry.ca/about-these-transcripts/>