



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

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Day 2

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EVIDENCE

Witness 10: Anita Krishna

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[00:00:00]

Kassy Baker

Hello?

Anita Krishna

Hello.

Kassy Baker

Hello, Anita. We're on right now. Can I please get you to state and spell your name for the record, please?

Anita Krishna

Anita Krishna, A-N-I-T-A, last name is K-R-I-S-H-N-A.

Kassy Baker

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

Anita Krishna

I do.

Kassy Baker

Very good. Now I understand that you're here today to tell us about your termination from Global News from your position as a control room director. Is that correct?

Anita Krishna

Correct. Yes.

Kassy Baker

Before we get into that, I would just like you to tell us a little bit more about yourself. Can you please describe your education?

Anita Krishna

I have a bachelor's degree in Radio and Television that I got from Ryerson University and I've taken other college courses, but I have a bachelor's in Radio and Television from there.

Kassy Baker

And how long have you been working in journalism and broadcasting?

Anita Krishna

Twenty-five years, long time.

Kassy Baker

Can you please tell us about your work and duties as a control room director?

Anita Krishna

Okay, at Global News, I was a technician, I was a control room director. So what that means is when you're watching your newscast on TV at home, we are making the TV happen, so that's part of my job. The producers line up a show, and we all work out of a rundown: the software that we used there was called ENPS [Electronic New Production System]. So they build the show, and what we do is we run all the elements in the show technically. We roll the opening, the big dramatic music that says, "Tonight, on Global News," and then we do all the camera moves and decide what the look is, whatever the top story is. Let's say it's about a mudslide blocking traffic on a highway or something, then I put in pictures of the mudslide, things like that. If we're going to reporters live on the scene, I make sure that's technically all good to go.

My job is preparing the technical execution and executing a show. But I work in a newsroom, so I work alongside all the directors, or sorry, all the producers and stuff. So even though I'm in my own world kind of lining up, kind of technically figuring out the elements I'm going to use for the show, I'm listening to what's going on in the newsroom. And I've done that type of work for 20 years or so.

Kassy Baker

And how long have you been working for Global specifically?

Anita Krishna

Since 1997, that's when I started there and I worked there for a few years. There was a period of time, right around 2001 and '02 that I started working at other stations. So I was just freelancing around different stations in Vancouver. I worked for CTV and I worked for City TV and worked for Global and Shaw, kind of all at the same time. So yeah, so I did that. Then I got married, and then we moved to New Zealand and then we came back here in 2007, and then I started working again. I picked up a little bit of work at CTV, and then I went back to Global.

Kassy Baker

You were working for Global in this position when the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in 2019. Is that correct?

Anita Krishna

Yes, I was a director of newscast when COVID-19 happened.

Kassy Baker

So what did you observe about the virus and how it was reported in those early days?

Anita Krishna

Oh, well, I mean, obviously in 2019, you know, it seemed to be a thing that just was happening over there in a different country. You know, here we go, it's another SARS type-of-thing. And you know, we're just waiting; nobody was really freaking out too, too much about it then. When it hit big was March, like 2020. I remember I was working at Global National, I was directing that show, March 11th. And oh, boy oh boy, like, yeah, that's when the hysteria really, really hit hard I would say.

Kassy Baker

Can you give us an example of this hysteria, as you've called it?

Anita Krishna

Well, the funny thing is, is that— Okay, working on Global National, some of the headlines that we were running that day on the 11th is like, we had reported that “The WHO declares the coronavirus a global pandemic.” This is like just in our headlines, right?

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And then we ran a little clip of Trudeau saying, “We're going to give Canadians everything they need,” you know, “don't worry.” And then we ran another clip saying, Patty Hajdu. And then before we got into that, we said, “Are Canadian hospitals going to be able to cope?” And then we went to this clip of Patty saying, “Oh, about 30 to 70 per cent of the population could get it.” Then we ended it by saying, “Social distancing, what you need to know about keeping your distance and flattening the curve.” And so that was in one minute, we had outlined all those things—all those things like panic, fear, just trying to scare everybody when I could see that nothing was really happening yet, like nothing had happened.

At that point, I'm not sure if there were—who had it? I didn't see anybody in my community that had it; I didn't know anybody that had it. Yet all these measures, these crazy measures and these fear tactics were coming fast and furious. And it was also right around that time that all the sports had cancelled, like the MLB, the NBA put their season on hold. The NCAA cancelled all their championships. It just seemed to be like—whoa, how did all these corporations or institutions, how did they all come to do this? Bang, bang, bang, like shut down, shut down, shut down, when we hadn't seen anything happen yet.

So my gut instinct was just telling me that this was like a massive overreaction but, you know, the horse had sort of left the gate already. Everybody was sort of in on this and nobody seemed to question the hysteria. Because, at the same time, we're also telling

people, “Children could get it. Children could test positive. If you’ve travelled outside the country, make sure you isolate; nobody, non-essential travel—” and all our clips of running people like Bonnie Henry saying, “This is going to get worse.” Well, I didn’t even see anything happen yet, so I just thought it was a massive overreaction. But everybody was just sort of going along with it.

Kassy Baker

And from your perspective, how did that reporting change over time, over the next several months that came to pass?

Anita Krishna

Sometimes an event happens and then you see the reaction. Now people can argue whether you see controlled events happening in news and then you see the controlled newscast. Sometimes that does happen, right? But for this situation, it was like nothing happens and then you see this kind of overreaction. Okay, so fair enough. So maybe at the time people were just being prudent and being cautious.

As time wore on, it just seemed to be that there were things that we were not reporting. You could easily find these things on the internet or find these things in other sources, but for some reason, our own newscasts were neglecting to tell people that perhaps the origins, like where this came from, was not the wet market. We actually just made people believe that it came from a wet market and never addressed this laboratory, the Wuhan Lab. Which was a big concern of mine because if you don’t know where this thing came from, how it came to be, how can you propose to know what it is and propose to stop it? So the fact that—

Kassy Baker

I was just going to ask, when you observed this, what was your reaction to the news being covered in this way?

Anita Krishna

Well, I just thought, how can we neglect this? How can we neglect to tell people this? How can we lead people to believe something which is not 100 per cent accurate? And we were leading people to believe things, about several things, that didn’t seem to be accurate, and yet we were not reporting this other side to so many pieces of this story.

Kassy Baker

Did you raise your concerns with your colleagues or with your supervisors and superiors?

Anita Krishna

Yes, yes, I did, I did, yeah.

Kassy Baker

Sorry, what was their response?

Anita Baker

I was raising concerns left, right and centre about absolutely everything. So let's see here, I had a meeting— I mean, as soon as you raised an issue, let's say you talked about the Wuhan lab. At one time, I said I thought this was a synthetic virus, in the newsroom:

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that did not go over well, people just ended up getting mad at you. Other things that I raised was why we were not telling people about medications that could possibly help you, right? All of a sudden, everybody had these very strong opinions on hydroxychloroquine, and they had already formed their opinions. But my opinion is, if it's something that could possibly help you, do you not have the right to try it?

My cousin ended up getting COVID and she takes hydroxychloroquine because she takes it anyway, because she's ill with something else. So she got COVID and described how awful it was for her, but that she got better in about eight days and she thinks she got better because she was taking hydroxychloroquine. She said, "I think that that made a difference, you know?" So I told this to an anchor at work. I said, "Hey, my cousin took this and she thinks she got better." And he just said, "Oh, she thinks she got better, eh; she thinks she does; she thinks she got better." Like he got mad about it, but why would you get mad? Wouldn't your answer be, "Hey, that's awesome. You know, I'm glad that that worked for her, maybe we should look into it. Maybe this is something we should do a story on."

I'll tell you something else. I brought up ivermectin to one of the assignment editors there, too. Because there was so much negativity going on in the newsroom and so much judgment of people that were questioning the vaccine and stuff at the time that you knew what you couldn't really even speak about. But you couldn't really even speak about drugs. So one time in the newsroom, I brought this up because somebody called up to say some story about how unvaccinated people were taking up beds in the Children's Hospital, like, "look at these unvaccinated people." And this one guy was just sort of saying, "Oh, what a bunch of idiots these people are." And then somewhere in this conversation, I had brought up early treatment. And I said to him, "What about ivermectin?" And he said, "That's debunked." He said, "That whole drug is debunked."

Kassy Baker

Sorry, and just to be clear, this was a colleague in the newsroom or in your work environment, correct?

Anita Krishna

Like a senior colleague. The reason that this is important is because this man helps shape the newscast. This man decides what goes on our newscast, particularly the big ones, the five o'clock and the six o'clock. And he's calling people—I mean, a lot of people there were calling people names, like covidiot and stuff like that. But then when I bring up a drug, he says, "That drug is debunked." And I said, "What? What do you mean the whole drug is debunked? You know, what are you talking about?" I said, "Did you not see that big, big study in India?" And he said, "That's debunked." That's all he could say was "that is debunked."

But to my mind, at that time in Uttar Pradesh, there was like 241 million people. They barely had any COVID because they had been using ivermectin. So that is a story. That is something that we should at least be looking into. And even if you don't believe that that

medication works, you still should be talking to doctors, talking to somebody who might have taken it and gotten better. And you should be showing that side of the story. Then you can show the other side, of someone saying, “No, it doesn’t work.” But you have to show both. And the problem is with him saying that this isn’t even a thing— And right after he said that, my boss sent me an email saying, “Anita, you need to stop talking about COVID.” So I wasn’t even allowed to talk about this.

But the dangerous part of it is, these are people shaping your newscast. By them not telling you that there are medications that are not “horse medications,” you are doing a disservice to the public. People have the right to try it because they might get better if they try it. But if you hide that information, I mean—that is misinformation. That is 100 per cent misinformation coming from Global News in Burnaby. I can attest to that.

Kassy Baker

You’ve touched a little bit on the vaccines already, but as we’re all aware at this point, they were rolled out in early 2021. Can you describe the coverage that you saw regarding vaccines and vaccinations specifically?

Anita Krishna

Sorry, one other thing I wanted to say about that is we also ran stories making Joe Rogan look like an idiot for taking ivermectin: that was done on purpose and that is wrong. That is wrong and it just led people to believe that.

But vaccine. Well, yeah, I mean, the vaccine was like a religion.

[00:15:00]

All we did was constantly run stories of, okay, “Look at this person in the hospital, this person who made a bad choice and didn’t get the vaccine. Oh, they ended up in the hospital.” It’s like all our stories were slanted to that. Everything we were saying was “pandemic of the unvaccinated. If you’re unvaccinated, you’ll be holding everybody back.” And that we now know isn’t true.

Kassy Baker

I apologize for interrupting. In your experience, have you seen any other event reported in this manner?

Anita Krishna

I’ve never seen an event in my life where you cannot go to someone to talk about it like a senior producer, like a news director, and express your concern. They would be open to your concerns. If you had a news tip to give someone, they would at least take it on board. They wouldn’t say, “No, no, no. Stop talking.” I don’t know how many times there I was told to stop talking about something. So there’s an absolute reluctance to provide accurate information and to cover things that you should be doing that could help you. All there was—what I would say—was propaganda that didn’t speak up for people.

We would do things like on the 5 o’clock news where we would just say, “and sadly, another business has shut down due to COVID.” And we were not actually holding anyone to account saying, “Is what we’re doing fair?” You know, when people are using plexiglass

and sitting outside and you can go up to the counter and order, but you can't have a waitress come to you, or you've got to mask—you know, all the things that didn't make any sense. We were just shoving it in your face like it was something you needed to accept rather than questioning, "Is this really making sense for a business owner, for this person's livelihood?" We never stood up for the people. We just, as far as I'm concerned, shoved propaganda in your face.

Kassy Baker

Thank you. Now as an employee, I understand that Global did institute a vaccine mandate at some point. Can you describe the circumstances that led up to that and describe what the mandate required from you?

Anita Krishna

Well, they just pressured a lot of people to get vaccinated, and they'd make you fill out forms and they'd always want to know your vaccine status. And a lot of people were quite upset about that because we were trying to say, "Hey, we have a right to privacy." The people who believed in the vaccine just willingly went with it, as if they're in the good club. And the people who were reluctant and hesitant, "Oh, well, you're in the bad club," you know. So I didn't really even fill out the forms. And it should be noted that I didn't even get fired for not taking the jab. I got fired for speaking up.

Kassy Baker

We're coming up to that right away. So on that point, I understand there were a few things that led up to your termination. But in particular on, I believe it was December 12th of 2021, you attended a rally or a protest that was held in North Vancouver. Can you explain what prompted you to attend this rally?

Anita Krishna

Working at Global was like working in a twilight zone during the pandemic. Everything that you thought would have ever made sense for choice, for freedom, for your health just went out the window. And at this point, I was very concerned because we were running stories telling pregnant women to take this jab, and I personally had run those stories on some of the shows I was working on where we had some doctors telling pregnant women to take it. In my lifetime, I don't think you would ever tell a pregnant woman to take anything experimental because I'm old enough to remember thalidomide. I just think that for pregnant women, you have to be so careful, you can't even eat certain cheeses and things like that.

Why would we be telling women to take this vaccine that's never even been tested on women? How dare we even do that? I was feeling actually sick about that. But as time went on, then you started to hear [about] miscarriages. There were these reports in Scotland and Waterloo. And it was very hard to get a sense of like, was this really happening? And of course, our newsroom isn't even following up on any of this. Then I heard about this rally with this doctor, Dr. Mel Bruchet, and he had done some stuff and he had some videos online talking about it. I really was really wanting to know—were people becoming harmed by this and are people losing their babies?

[00:20:00]

So I just went to this rally which, by the way, Global News should have been at because if you're part of the community, you should be covering this stuff. And they did not. They don't care.

Kassy Baker

Did you attend the rally on behalf of Global or as an employee or identify yourself as such?

Anita Krishna

No, I did not. I went just out of my own curiosity as a private citizen and I knew no one there. But when I got there, I recognized a cameraman that used to work at Global. But I went as a private, curious citizen looking for answers.

Kassy Baker

Now I understand that you ended up speaking at this rally, is that correct?

Anita Krishna

I did. I did.

Kassy Baker

Can you describe the circumstances that led to you giving this speech? Was it planned or unplanned? Explain to us what happened.

Anita Krishna

Totally unplanned. It was just unplanned. I went up to a lady that I saw. She was a nurse, and I'd seen her online in one of these videos because I'd been watching videos of Daniel Nagase and Mel Bruchet. I saw this nurse and I just went up and said, "Hi," and I said, "I'm really interested in what's going on here," yada, yada. I said, "I can't really stay too long" because I had to go back to work. And then she asked me where I worked and then I said, "I actually work at Global," and she was like, "What?" And she just grabbed me, didn't want to let me go. She's like, "We cannot get anybody from the news to talk to us." And I said, "I'm not here as, like, I'm not a reporter." I've always said that: I'm not a reporter. I'm just here because I'm just curious. Then I ended up speaking because I just thought, well, what the heck?

Kassy Baker

I understand that your speech is recorded and available online if anyone wants to look at it. We have not got it here today. But more to the point, I understand that the speech was recorded. Is that correct? And obviously it was if it's online.

Anita Krishna

It was recorded. So many camera phones and then somebody sent it to Global, and then I ended up getting in trouble. I ended up getting suspended after that for violating journalistic principles, and they still have not been able to tell me how I violated those principles. They have violated their own principles by not reporting on community events. They have violated their own principles by not showing up to the National Citizens Hearing

when it occurred in Langley, not even sending a camera or a reporter, not even doing a voiceover on something like this. Who is violating journalistic principles? I can only say they are, by preventing this information to get out to people.

Kassy Baker

So when you were suspended, can you describe the circumstances of that suspension and the terms of your suspension? How long was it? Was it with or without pay?

Anita Krishna

This one was three days with pay, just because they had claimed I'd violated the journalistic principles, of which they still have not told me what principle I had violated. Show me. They could never show me. I said, "What article in this JPP [Journalistic Principles and Practices] did I violate?" They weren't able to ever even tell me that. So that first one was a three-day suspension.

Kassy Baker

And I see that I missed something so I just want to go back and clarify that. When you gave this speech, I understand that someone introduced you and how did they introduce you?

Anita Krishna

Oh, they said I was a Global TV director, yeah.

Kassy Baker

So you didn't make this assertion yourself. It was offered by someone else who was also speaking at the rally. Is that correct?

Anita Krishna

Correct, correct.

Kassy Baker

Following the suspension what was your relationship like with your supervisors and your colleagues at work?

Anita Krishna

Well, I guess in secret there are a lot of people that supported me because a lot of people felt the same way: They felt scared. They felt nervous. They didn't want to take it. They felt completely violated and threatened and bullied by management at Global which—they turned into bullies instead of managers.

My relationship became strained with the people who disagreed with me who thought that I was becoming radicalized. So lifelong friends, we ended up just completely disagreeing. Like my little cousin, he's 24 now, he took a Pfizer jab; he ended up paralyzed in the hospital. I was still working at Global at the time, and this happened right after his Pfizer shot. He got Guillain-Barré syndrome. And I said to people at work, this is what happened to my cousin. One of my good friends who's an editor there, and he just said, "Well, what

pre-existing condition did he have?” That doesn’t matter. You don’t end up not being able to walk for nothing.

[00:25:00]

He wasn’t skydiving. Nothing happened. He took a jab. He can’t walk. Now we’ve heard many stories of things like that. So there’s just an absolute refusal to believe.

There are some reporters there that do and people that work there—they know what’s going on, but they’re not going to say anything because you’re really not going to want to lose your job. I should say, though, I actually was so concerned with maybe children getting hurt, I told my operations manager when he was telling me to be quiet, and I said, “I’m really worried about children and pregnant women. They’re the most vulnerable.” But prior to all this, the news director—I encourage anyone to contact the news director at that station if you have any questions as to the news that’s being presented to you—and I said to him, “I’m really worried about, like, there is very perverse incentives behind this vaccine. Are you not worried? How do you think they came up with this so quickly? How is this even possible?” And he just said, “All the scientists in the world got together, and when everybody gets together, then they can make this happen,” which is a completely nonsensical answer. And then at the end of it, he just told me that I needed to get vaccinated.

Kassy Baker

Okay. Now, I understand that you were in fact terminated. Is that correct?

Anita Krishna

Yes.

Kassy Baker

And what date were you terminated?

Anita Baker

January 18th, I believe.

Kassy Baker

So roughly, and just for clarity, that was about, not quite a month after the rally?

Anita Krishna

I’m sorry it was January 6th.

Kassy Baker

Yeah January 6th. So a few weeks really after the rally, is that right?

Anita Krishna

Yeah, yeah. Right around Christmas time.

Kassy Baker

Can you describe what led to your termination or the reason that was given?

Anita Krishna

I think they gave me three. They told me something in my termination letter, one of which was that I had violated a social media journalistic principle policy. I don't even know how. They've never even shown me what clause I've actually violated of that. And I had said, "Can someone ask the Provincial Health Officer why the casinos, liquor stores, and strip clubs are open and the gyms and the churches are closed?" which is a valid question. But they fired me because on my Twitter profile, it just said Anita, Global BC director. So I guess they felt I was putting them in some kind of disrepute by asking them that question. But it's a valid question.

Kassy Baker

Sorry just for clarity, can you repeat the tweet that you had posted in which you were ultimately terminated for?

Anita Krishna

I said, "Can someone please ask the Provincial Health Officer why the casinos, liquor stores and strip clubs are open and the gyms and churches are closed?"

Kassy Baker

And that was it? That was the last tweet? Okay and I understand that you were terminated "with cause" is that correct?

Anita Krishna

So they say. That's what it says on my—actually, it doesn't even say that on my termination letter. So if anyone knows a good lawyer, please reach out to me, but it doesn't even say that on my termination letter. But they will say it was "with cause."

Kassy Baker

Okay. Were you eligible to apply for EI or any other benefits?

Anita Krishna

No.

Kassy Baker

Okay. I actually don't have any other questions. Are there any questions from the Commissioners?

Kassy Baker

Okay, I believe that's everything. On behalf of the National Citizens Inquiry, I would like to thank you very much for your testimony here today. Thank you.

Anita Krishna

Well, thank you for having me. Thank you very much.

[00:29:02]

Final Review and Approval: Margaret Phillips, September 6, 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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