



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Vancouver, BC

Day 1

May 2, 2023

EVIDENCE

Witness 2: Vanessa Rocchio

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Wayne Lenhardt

Our next witness is going to be Vanessa Rocchio. So Vanessa could you give us your full name and then spell it for us and then I'll do an oath.

Vanessa Rocchio

My name is Vanessa Rocchio, V-A-N-E-S-S-A R-O-C-C-H-I-O.

Wayne Lenhardt

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

Vanessa Rocchio

Absolutely.

Wayne Lenhardt

Thank you.

Your testimony is going to revolve around an injury that you suffered from the vaccine. So could you give us a little bit of background to begin with? What type of work do you do? Have you ever had any health problems?

Vanessa Rocchio

I was a realtor until I had this issue. I didn't have any health issues as far as heart. I had a couple of knee replacements, but that didn't have anything to do with my heart. And then in May 2021, I had the Pfizer vaccine and 12 days later, I ended up in hospital with a heart attack.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay. Were you required to have that shot for your work or you just decided to?

Vanessa Rocchio

It wasn't mandated, but I guess I was coerced. My partner had to have it for his work, and everyone in the office was seeming to get it. You couldn't go in the office without a mask, vaccinated or not, and I mean, you were even asked to stay out of the office. So I got the vaccine, and I know I shouldn't have, but lots of us did.

Wayne Lenhardt

So that happened May 4th of 2021, you had the first— Was it the Pfizer?

Vanessa Rocchio

It was the Pfizer.

Wayne Lenhardt

So you had your first shot, and then you had difficulty on May 14th. Correct?

Vanessa Rocchio

That's right. My partner took me to the ER after suffering— I had gone to the gym the day before this incident, and I worked out with a trainer. But I hadn't been at the gym for some time, and I didn't do a heavy workout with the trainer. It was a light workout. And I just talked to her before I came here, and she said, "Vanessa, it was a light workout." After the workout, I went home. The next morning, I got up and I ached everywhere. From head to toe, tips in my fingers, everything ached. And I blamed it on muscle pain because of my workout.

That afternoon, I went to visit a friend and we were talking about the aches. She's very fit. And she said, "Vanessa, this doesn't sound like an ache from a workout. I don't know what it sounds like, but it's too serious. You need to go to the hospital." As soon as she said that, I had a centred pain in my chest. It didn't radiate, but it didn't go away.

I went home and my breathing was very shallow. And I went home and said to my partner, there's something wrong. Maybe if I hadn't been to the gym, I would think I had COVID or pneumonia. And he immediately put me in the car and we went to the ER.

They put me on a halter monitor, an ECG, and they did a blood test. I waited in the ER and within 90 minutes of that centred pain coming, everything was gone. All the aching was gone, I could breathe properly, the centred pain was done. So when this test came back, I went into the ER doc and I said, "I'm fine, right?" He said, "Actually, you're not fine at all. Your troponin levels are off the charts and that says heart attack." I thought he had mixed up charts. He told me I shouldn't go home, so I didn't go home that night. I stayed there for four days. They left me on the halter monitor. There was no change to my blood pressure or my heart rate, nothing.

On the fourth day, they sent me to Royal Jubilee Hospital for an angiogram. The angiogram showed nothing. In fact, the cardiologist said it didn't even look like it happened. I went home, but they still had one more test they wanted to do.

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Oh, and I couldn't drive. And I guess that's normal for what happened to me.

So I went home. Two weeks later, they did a cardiac MRI. And between the time I had the angiogram and the cardiogram, I still thought that there must be something wrong, even though the angiogram showed nothing. Because I had to have this other big test, I was worried. It showed nothing.

And through all of this, I found out that even the ambulance drivers weren't having the COVID shots. And it was an interesting ambulance ride because the young woman that was with me in the ambulance said, "I'm not telling you this to scare you." Sorry. A 68-year-old woman who had been under her care two weeks prior had had a stroke. She was fit. She had no comorbidities prior to the stroke, and neither of the ambulance drivers were getting that. And their story, although it didn't scare me then, it made me angry.

I don't think that I would have thought that this was— Maybe I wouldn't have even thought this was because of the vaccine, because I didn't think it was from the vaccine in the beginning. But I asked the internal medicine doctor whether this could be from the vaccine. And this was early on. He looked me straight in the eye and he said, "I wouldn't disagree with you." And I said, "Will this be reported?" And he said, "It will be reported, but it will be brushed under the rug. No one wants you talking about it. They don't want me talking about it, and everyone is brainwashed." And that was early on. He's a doctor that left the country because he refused to get vaccinated.

Wayne Lenhardt

Let me stop you and just fill in a few details. Where were you living at the time?

Vanessa Rocchio

I live on Vancouver Island in Duncan, so halfway between Victoria and Nanaimo.

Wayne Lenhardt

Correct. So that's where the first attack happened so you went to a hospital in Duncan and then after that you ended up going to a hospital in Victoria.

Vanessa Rocchio

Yes, because we don't have the equipment in Duncan to do angiograms.

Wayne Lenhardt

Correct. And was it the doctor in Victoria or in Duncan that said you're not supposed to talk about this?

Vanessa Rocchio

Duncan.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay.

Vanessa Rocchio

Sorry.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay. I'm sorry. Go ahead. I appreciate it.

Vanessa Rocchio

So I think had that doctor not said to me that he didn't disagree my issue could be from the vaccine, I may not have gone the route I've gone with all of the crazy people. But my GP, the day I asked my GP whether this could be from the COVID vaccine, he said absolutely not.

Wayne Lenhardt

And that's in Duncan, correct?

Vanessa Rocchio

Yes. And my thought is that's why more people haven't come forward. Because they were all told that it wasn't because of the vaccine. That was their directive, don't tell anybody.

Wayne Lenhardt

So have you had any problems since that first heart attack?

Vanessa Rocchio

It took me eight months to get over it. I've never had heart issues, as I said, and I've never had blood pressure issues. I've always had low, both rates. After that heart attack, it didn't seem to matter what I was doing, and I kept a blood pressure monitor on a lot.

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It would go up to 190 over 70, and it was erratic all the time. Because I worked in a high-stress job, I couldn't go to work. And when you work alone, you have to be there.

Wayne Lenhardt

So you suffered some loss of income also during that first eight months. Fair?

Vanessa Rocchio

Huge, huge, and then I went back to work. And because it was real estate, the real estate market has changed, and everyone knows that there are a lot of realtors out there. The market changed, I hadn't been around for eight months and I just, I couldn't do it anymore.

Wayne Lenhardt

During our chat before you came on, you mentioned that you had asked for an exemption at some point. Could you tell us about that?

Vanessa Rocchio

The first person I asked for an exemption was my GP, and he gave me a dissertation about the very specific things that the Health Authority would give an exemption for, and he said, “You don’t meet any of that criteria.” So there was nothing I could do.

Six months after my attack, the cardiologist did a follow-up report. And I thought he was listening to me; I thought he believed what I said. And at the end of that conversation I said, “I want an exemption because I’m not doing any more vaccines,” and he said, “I can’t do that.” I had asked him, so I didn’t worry about it. I was, you know, six months in.

Wayne Lenhardt

You never did get the second Pfizer jab. Am I correct?

Vanessa Rocchio

Never.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay.

Vanessa Rocchio

So the same afternoon, the cardiologist called me back. He said, “Vanessa, I’ve pulled your charts. I’ve looked at everything, I’ve looked at your history, and I’m going to fill in the adverse reaction report.” I was elated because I thought I was getting an exemption. So I asked him for a report, for a copy of the report. He did send it to me, but the report said nothing. It didn’t blame the vaccine; it didn’t say it could even be possible. What it said was that he recommended that I ask my GP. Well, we already knew what my GP said and he said no.

I sent him a registered letter when I got that report, and I don’t know— I had to send him a registered letter to tell him how angry I was. But I was never given an exemption. And two weeks after I got that call from the cardiologist and got that report, I got a letter from the Health Authority—I think it was Island Health Authority—telling me that I was due for another vaccine as soon as possible. I didn’t go.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay, so I believe you said you had symptoms for eight months Did they then subside?

Vanessa Rocchio

Yes.

Wayne Lenhardt

Do you still have issues?

Vanessa Rocchio

No. I did a full protocol that was given to me I think by the CARES [Community Action and Resources Empowering Seniors] team because they did an interview with me. And I'm still on it: I still take heart things. But I go to the gym and I feel like— I know I'm better. I believe I'm better.

Wayne Lenhardt

And have you gone back to the work you were doing?

Vanessa Rocchio

No, I couldn't go back to that.

Wayne Lenhardt

I think I'm going to stop there and ask the commissioners if they have any questions.

Commissioner Drysdale

Good morning and thank you for coming today.

Can you tell me, when you got your first shot, what did the doctor or the pharmacist tell you about potential adverse reactions?

Vanessa Rocchio

They didn't tell any. It was funny. In Duncan, they had it set up in the community centre early on and I went in with my partner. I looked around and I told him I felt like I was an extra in a Margaret Atwood movie because everything was so eerie. I sat down with the nurse and she— And I know this now,

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but they didn't ask everyone whether they had any allergies. But they asked me. And when she got through the allergies, she said, "Oh, you're allergic to penicillin. We're going to ask you to stay for 20 minutes after the injection because we don't know the contraindications between that allergy and this vaccine." I looked at her and I had something playing in my head saying, "Don't do it, don't do it." But I didn't listen. But I looked at her and I said, "You don't know the contraindications between anything and this vaccine. So if you don't get it in my arm now, I'm leaving," and I left. I got the vaccine, whatever it is, and left. But they did not go over any contraindications, nothing.

Commissioner Drysdale

So you don't feel like you were given the opportunity to form informed consent?

Vanessa Rocchio

No, not there.

Commissioner Drysdale

I'm going to ask you one other question, and perhaps you do not remember but— With a lot of the witnesses that we've had in the past, they talked about how the shot was supposed to be administrated and they talk about aspiration. Do you know what aspiration means?

Vanessa Rocchio

Mm-hmm.

Commissioner Drysdale

Did they aspirate the needle for you? Do you remember?

Vanessa Rocchio

I think they did, but I wouldn't swear to that.

Commissioner Drysdale

Thank you.

Wayne Lenhardt

Are there any other questions from the Commissioners?

Thank you very much, Vanessa, for coming and giving your testimony today, on behalf of the National Citizens Inquiry.

[00:16:54]

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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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