



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Vancouver, BC

Day 3

May 4, 2023

EVIDENCE

Witness 3: Liam Sturgess

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Wayne Lenhardt

Okay, welcome back everyone. Our next witness is going to be Liam Sturgess. If you could just give us your full name and then spell it, and then I will do an oath with you.

Liam Sturgess

Okay, my name is Liam, L-I-A-M. But my full name is William Sturgess, W-I-L-L-I-A-M S-T-U-R-G-E-S-S.

Wayne Lenhardt

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

Liam Sturgess

I do.

Wayne Lenhardt

You got involved doing something fairly interesting and novel. Can you tell us how you got involved in doing something with COVID?

Liam Sturgess

Sure. So I want to be clear, I have stories of my own to tell, perhaps another day. I'm going to be focusing on the stories of others. But to get there, just a bit of background. I'm a musician. I grew up in West Vancouver. When COVID hit, I was very afraid. I thought a lot of people were going to die and over time noticed that didn't seem to be the case, thankfully.

Fast forward to just about two years ago, in May 2021, I happened upon a video on YouTube by a group called PANDA or Pandata. It was a presentation by a gentleman named

Nick Hudson where he was simply going through a number of things about the premise behind the declared pandemic that didn't make sense or were unanswered questions. Then that video disappeared.

I had never seen censorship in action so that clued me in that there were perhaps other things going on. Very shortly after, I learned about a group called the Canadian Covid Care Alliance [CCCA] and attended one of their first meetings. I learned that this was a group started by doctors, medical professionals, who were trying to make a difference in the fight against COVID by sharing accurate, honest, easy to access information to keep people healthy. They were working very hard and needed help. A call for volunteers was put out and I applied.

As a musician, not a trained doctor or lawyer or anything, I offered my services in media. So that's how I came to work with the Canadian Covid Care Alliance. I've done lots with various subcommittees and people from all walks of life, like the people you've heard from throughout the NCI, including people I got the chance to watch live here on Tuesday—Matthew Evans Cockle and Deanna McLeod, and many others.

One of the projects that came about became known as A Citizens' Hearing. The premise is very similar to the National Citizens Inquiry; in fact, I think, it was essentially a predecessor to this event. It took place June 22nd to 24th of 2022, in Toronto. I was asked to come to the event and act as secretary. That was the first flight I took after the travel mandates were suspended. So that was what led us to that event.

Wayne Lenhardt

You ended up producing a book if I'm not mistaken. So tell us how that developed.

Liam Sturgess

Sure. This is the book. I know it looks like I'm coming here to sell you all copies, that's not quite the focus of why I'm here. But as secretary, I got to sit alongside the panelists, which was that event's version of the Commission: Preston Manning, David Ross, and Susan Natsheh. And I got to take notes the whole time.

I wasn't specifically asked to write a book about it. But it was the clear, logical step as a way to collect as much of the information as possible into a format that was easy to give to friends and family or elected officials who maybe wouldn't open an email. So I benefited from the excellent note-taking, not just my own notes but others: Maximilian Forte, who is a professor out of Quebec, and Dale Anderson, another volunteer with the CCCA. Combining those with the video footage from the testimonies, I created this written form of the three-day event.

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Wayne Lenhardt

Were these just random accounts that you produced or did you have some criteria for choosing which ones you did?

Liam Sturgess

In terms of who testified?

Wayne Lenhardt

Well, you've got case studies in your book. I gather there's 60 of them.

Liam Sturgess

Yeah. I wasn't part of planning the event and I wasn't part of the process of choosing who would testify. Now everyone who testified, 100 per cent of their testimony are in the book, so no one was sifted out. And again, the range of people and the range of testimonies at the NCI, I think most would agree, none of them would be worth excluding. So that was very much the same process here.

Wayne Lenhardt

Could you give us a snapshot of what's in the book?

Liam Sturgess

Sure. I'm not sure if I'll be allowed, I'm hoping to read the names of the participants, maybe at the end. But interestingly, some of the people who testified at A Citizens' Hearing have now come and also testified here, which is very cool. But I did pick out a couple of stories that, as I heard them live, were particularly impactful to me, and I won't be able to fully represent them.

Wayne Lenhardt

You're going to leave us a copy of what you have for the commissioners so they can read it or look at it at their leisure, I'm assuming.

Liam Sturgess

Oh, yes.

Wayne Lenhardt

But just give us now a brief overview of what you have.

Liam Sturgess

Sure. The range of people who testified, just like the NCI, there were professionals, experts in scientific fields and law. And then there were the people who were impacted either health-wise or career-wise, socially, by the various policies that have been implemented during COVID.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay. Were they just harms that were catalogued or did you have any experts like we do?

Liam Sturgess

Yes. Well, in terms of harm, there were certainly not a lot of benefits catalogued. But yeah, lots of expert testimony.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay, carry on.

Liam Sturgess

So like I said, I picked a couple that I thought were interesting. One was related to injury from frequent mask wearing. Do you mind if I summarize very quickly?

Wayne Lenhardt

Sure.

Liam Sturgess

This was a story of Janina Krienke and her husband Brian who shared the story of their daughter, Chloe, who, 14 years old, had just started in competitive cheer. Now my sister was a cheerleader, so I know from personal experience, cheers is tremendously intense, physically. It's quite dangerous as well, I think.

But basically, she was entering cheers during COVID. There were mask mandates in place, and she was made to wear a mask for the entirety of her high-intensity training. What happened is she started to develop tics that quickly grew into quite intense tics, like Tourette-like symptoms, and then extreme fatigue, sensitivity to light and noise, severe arm tremors. Then she began having seizures and then multiple seizures every day, began passing out. Long story short, it turns out that this non-stop wearing of the masks through this high-intensity training caused her body to completely retrain how it breathes.

She wound up with critically low CO2 in her tissues, and it was rapidly causing her to deteriorate. She wound up being able to learn how to breathe again once they identified this was the source of the issue. And happily, Chloe is now on her way to what seems to be a full recovery. I wanted to highlight that because I think the efficacy of masks is talked about a lot, or lack thereof. But the actual risks to health and to injury are real and significant and probably have not yet seen the full light of day. So I thought that was an interesting one to share.

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The second one I wanted to share was the story of a wonderful woman named Kelly-Sue Overley. The way the event was set up, we had a common area with food set out, plenty of tables and chairs, very friendly, like a communal space to meet and talk. And so I had sat down and this woman was there. We introduced ourselves to each other and this was Kelly-Sue. I didn't know why she was there. People were there for various reasons—simply to attend, to testify, to volunteer. We just identified the things we had in common. We had fun getting to know each other, and then I learned, she was there to testify about her severe vaccine injury.

She had taken the first dose, lost feeling in her leg, figured it was just her shoes being too tight. So she would frequently change her shoes, but it didn't get any better. Turns out she had a series of blood clots in that leg and then started experiencing strokes—it seems every two weeks or so, she would have a stroke, which is intense. And as I've heard others say, even in their older age, in their 70s, very active people who suddenly can no longer do the things they love, like running, or even driving in the case of Kelly-Sue.

But concluding her testimony, she had shared that she had one instance where she woke up on her couch at home and couldn't remember who she was, where she was, or as she put it, if she belonged to anybody. Luckily, a friend of hers came for some reason and found her and saved her from being trapped on the couch forever. But now she carries a note in her pocket that says you are Kelly-Sue Overley, followed by her address and phone number and the message: "I belong to somebody and I matter." I was struck by how—not clear—it was that she was suffering. I didn't know until she shared.

Wayne Lenhardt

Maybe at this point, I'll ask the commissioners if they have any questions, and then we'll come back. No questions? Okay. If you have one more interesting one for us, and I think then, we'll wrap up and we'll let the commissioners have a look at your book afterwards.

Liam Sturgess

Wonderful. So yeah, I do have one more that I'll share. And then I have one or two thoughts that I want to introduce.

The last one and it is upsetting. This was the story shared by Tania and Nicole Minnikin. Nicole, her sister Deana had taken the shot in 2021 and within, I think, a week suffered her first seizure. They then kept getting worse, and she wound up dying. But then Nicole, the second of the two sisters, she was pregnant at the time that she took the shot and that was on advice by her doctor. I won't go into the details. They're pretty upsetting of what happened to her body, and her son, Connor, wound up being stillborn. Very upset by this, she came to her doctor looking for support. But her doctor told her that—and everyone she talked to told her—it was simply not possible for the COVID-19 vaccines to have any effect at all on pregnancy. That was what she was told.

When Nicole brought this to her doctor specifically, he accused her of aggressive behaviour and told her that she had earned one strike.

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Which is just an odd thing to say to somebody, especially in such a dire circumstance. And furthermore, that she would need to take a second dose of the COVID vaccine in order to continue as a patient of this particular doctor. She did manage to get pregnant again, which is excellent. I have heard that perhaps that pregnancy also didn't work out, which is very upsetting.

I wanted to offer that the reason it was suggested that I come and present this report to the NCI was this event was sort of a predecessor to this one. And there will be, I assume, more events like this, maybe put on by some of the same people, maybe different people, hopefully, many different groups of people. What will happen, I think, is more and more of these stories will come out. And simply because of lack of time, just practically, not every story will always be able to be included again. I'm not sure a database of stories is strictly the solution. But I wanted to use this opportunity to keep some of the names of these people on the official record of the NCI to the extent I can be an ambassador for the 60 testimonies we had here and hope they can contribute to the NCI's larger mission.

Wayne Lenhardt

Are there any final questions from the Commissioners? Yeah, Dr. Massie.

Commissioner Massie

Well, thank you very much for your involvement in the CCCA and putting together all these stories. You've witnessed all of the testimony at the first hearing of the CCCA, and you must have spent a little bit of time listening at some of the testimony from the NCI.

My first question is what kind of impact can you measure from the first hearing that took place in Toronto last year? Have you seen something coming out of it that had made an impact around you or in society?

Liam Sturgess

Well, just strictly from my perspective, the fact that this National Citizens Inquiry is on right now is a tremendous sign that this worked at some level. Again, some of the same people who at least supported one, in principle, are supporting this as well. I think we may be successfully— This was a proof of concept. That's not all it was, but I think it had that effect. So in that sense, this is testament to this having been worthwhile.

I'm happy to say some of the people who testified have now gone on to, once again, tell their story in other formats, more direct interviews that have been widely shared and pushed out through the CCCA's media networks, for example. But I think more conversations are happening now, and I like to think we helped contribute to that.

Commissioner Massie

I guess my other question has to do with, when you look at the kind of testimony that people were willing—this was the first hearing if you want—were willing to come up with, we've heard from previous hearings that some of the witnesses would withdraw at the last minute because they were still afraid.

So do you sense now that the hearings we're having with the NCI has evolved in the sense that this kind of testimony, people are more willing to come up and are more willing to share their story because there was some precedent, if you want? Do you see a difference between the two types of hearings that are going on right now?

Liam Sturgess

I think so. It makes me think of something I've learned about called "the first follower effect." I can't speak to it much. But there's a video that's used as an example of this where you have—in a much more light-hearted context, it's at a music festival—and you have one guy who's dancing, and he looks like a fool. But he's having a blast, and everyone's not sure what to do. Then the first person gets up and starts dancing with him. And then, the next person, and the next person, and the next person, and then, very quickly, you have a flood of people. There's the festival, now.

So I think probably something like that is the case. You see somebody who becomes,

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then, a role model. Well, if that person was brave enough to do this, then I certainly am as well. Or even if I'm not sure if I am, perhaps now I'm willing to take that risk. And you see the narrative, the acceptable narrative, what you can talk about to larger audiences is, as well, becoming slightly more friendly. So it may be both of those things.

Commissioner Massie

Thank you.

Wayne Lenhardt

I think you are an example of exactly how just about anybody can get involved in this type of a problem and how they should. So on behalf of the National Citizens Inquiry, I want to thank you very much for your testimony and for your work.

Liam Sturgess

Thank you. I have one request before I go. Would it be acceptable for me to simply read the list, the names of the people who participated in the first one?

Wayne Lenhardt

I think we have a limited amount of time, so I think we'll just enter it and allow the commissioners to read your work.

Liam Sturgess

Fantastic. Thank you so much.

Wayne Lenhardt

Thank you.

[00:21:22]

Final Review and Approval: Margaret Phillips, August 25, 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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