



## NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Quebec, QC

Day 2

May 12, 2023

### EVIDENCE

(Translated from the French)

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**Witness 4: Lynette Tremblay**

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[00:00:00]

**Samuel Bachand**

Good day. Samuel Bachand. I will be acting as the attorney for the Commission for the purpose of your testimony. Madame Lynette Tremblay, could you please spell your name in full?

**Lynette Tremblay**

My first name, L-Y-N-E-T-T-E, Tremblay, T-R-E-M-B-L-A-Y.

**Samuel Bachand**

I'll swear you in. Madame Tremblay, do you swear to tell the Commission nothing but the truth?

**Lynette Tremblay**

I vow to tell only the truth. Moreover, I can add right from the start that I've already been part of two documentaries in Quebec, *COVIDENCES* and *CHSLD: je me souviens*, in which I talk about the same subject: the death of my father, then my reaction toward the way governments treat seniors, which I find absolutely, unbelievably awful.

**Samuel Bachand**

So the skeptics will be able to compare testimonials.

**Lynette Tremblay**

They'll even be able to see photos because I could have brought photos, but they're already available in the two documentaries.

**Samuel Bachand**

Very well. So I don't need to tell you to speak slowly to help the translation.

**Lynette Tremblay**

Yes.

**Samuel Bachand**

You're here to tell us about the circumstances surrounding your father's last days in CHSLD [a nursing home or long-term care home]. So what I suggest you do, as we did on the phone in preparation, is tell us all about it: date by date or period by period, chronologically, very calmly. And then where I need further clarification, I'll interrupt you.

**Lynette Tremblay**

Excellent. So listen, it was at the beginning of the pandemic in 2020 and my father was in a CHSLD. In this CHSLD in Montreal, there were no cases of COVID. It had even been mentioned in the media. And then overnight, I think it was in March, the COVID alert was triggered. And then I was informed by the director of the centre—

**Samuel Bachand**

Who triggered the COVID alert?

**Lynette Tremblay**

The government.

**Samuel Bachand**

What COVID alert?

**Lynette Tremblay**

They were saying, "We can't see our elderly anymore, it's dangerous." I didn't see my father for two months.

**Samuel Bachand**

Just a moment. When you say, "The government says 'you can't see them,'" how were you given this message? What form did it take? Did you receive a written document? Did you watch a press briefing, et cetera?

**Lynette Tremblay**

For me, it was because I used to visit my father regularly and then I was denied access. There was an employee I paid to accompany my father, to take him out. He was no longer allowed entrance. And then, from one day to the next, I was told that "from now on, starting Monday, Public Health is going to be in charge. They're going to go into the CHSLDs," and they were going to test people.

**Samuel Bachand**

To the best of your recollection, approximately what date is this?

**Lynette Tremblay**

March 2020.

**Samuel Bachand**

Okay. When you say: "I was denied access," who was denying you access? On what terms? In what way?

**Lynette Tremblay**

Well, on the phone, because I called often. I remember coming back from vacation and wanting to go see my father, but it was on the exact day I got back that the measures were implemented and access was denied. They were doing Zoom, WhatsApp, so we could see our parents and talk to them, and then we were forbidden access.

**Samuel Bachand**

Who were you talking to on the phone when you got the message that you were barred from the CHSLD?

**Lynette Tremblay**

Well as I said, it was in March, maybe the end of March. The director of the centre herself said to me, "Listen, Public Health will be coming tomorrow." But I said, "There are no cases; why are they going there?" Then she said, "Well, that's it; they're coming to check." And then she said, "Tonight, I'm doing rounds." I thought it was weird that she was working on a Sunday night. She said to me, "I think your father has a fever." I said, "Oh really!" Then she said, "I'm going to test him for COVID." But I said, "No one had anything last week." It was a centre that had apparently been completely free of infection.

[00:05:00]

So she said to me, "Well, I'm going to test him; he has a fever." I didn't say much, but the next day, she told me, "Ah, your father's been tested, and he's got COVID but he's asymptomatic." I thought, "That's impossible!" Look, this is a virus that's supposed to kill, that suffocates you, that knocks you off your feet, that makes you contagious. How can you be asymptomatic?

**Samuel Bachand**

Okay. Was it the director who told you, in the first conversation you mentioned, not the second, that you couldn't access the facility, or was it someone else?

**Lynette Tremblay**

Well it was the centre's rules. I can't say exactly.

**Samuel Bachand**

Who told you? I'm trying to find out who told you that you couldn't go. You told me approximately when.

**Lynette Tremblay**

There was a ban that applied to all CHSLDs in Quebec starting on a set date.

**Samuel Bachand**

Who at your father's CHSLD told you about the ban? Who told you, "You can't come to visit"?

**Lynette Tremblay**

It could have been the administration or the person who answered the phone. It could have been reception because everyone had the same message.

**Samuel Bachand**

So it wasn't the director in the first conversation. It was another employee you can't identify.

**Lynette Tremblay**

I can't say exactly. Except that, when we got there, there was a policeman. And I'm telling you, even if we had tried to get through, it would have been impossible.

**Samuel Bachand**

I understand.

**Lynette Tremblay**

So that was my experience. She told me, "We've done COVID tests, and your father is positive but asymptomatic." And then I called every day, and I realized that every day, there was a different doctor on my father's floor and on every floor. Every day, they changed doctors with the result that none of them knew the patients.

**Samuel Bachand**

How exactly do you know that?

**Lynette Tremblay**

Because I phoned every day and asked, "It's a new doctor! Why isn't the regular doctor answering?"

**Samuel Bachand**

When you called every day to find out who the doctor was, did you talk to a nurse? To an attendant? Who were you talking to?

**Lynette Tremblay**

No, I talked to the doctor! Because I demanded to speak to the doctor.

**Samuel Bachand**

All right.

**Lynette Tremblay**

And then, I didn't believe it. I even asked the doctor, "Are you going to give me the proof of the positive test; I want to see it." He never gave it to me but he said, "Ask the nurse, ask someone else," and then that person over there— It was like something out of *Asterix*.

**Samuel Bachand**

The house that drives you mad in *Asterix*.

**Lynette Tremblay**

Yes, *The Twelve Tasks [of Asterix]*. So everyone passed the buck. I never got the test. And then they told me that patients who are COVID positive are going to be put in the cafeteria. I found that absolutely absurd.

**Samuel Bachand**

Was it still a doctor who was telling you that?

**Lynette Tremblay**

Yes, was the doctor. He said to me, "Public Health is in charge of all that." Then I was told, "The patients will go to the cafeteria for two weeks and then we'll check on their condition." I called every day. I'd say, "Is my dad okay?" He'd say, "Yes, he's fine, he's eating well, he's asymptomatic." And I'd say to myself, "So he's not . . ." Then what I realized was that because it was new—there was no vaccine yet and the tests were new—they were practising on the seniors. Because he told me that he kept testing them until the test was positive.

**Samuel Bachand**

A doctor told you he was testing patients.

**Lynette Tremblay**

Yes, he said, "We tested several times." Also I was friends with people there, we knew each other, and the daughter of another patient told me, "My father had some kind of pneumonia and then they tested him three times until the test came back positive."

**Samuel Bachand**

Over what period did they test it three times?

**Lynette Tremblay**

Oh, they were testing either the same day or within a few days—very, very quickly.

**Samuel Bachand**

Okay. Have you heard from other people, for example medical staff, that it's common practice to test as often as necessary over a short period of time until a positive test is obtained?

**Lynette Tremblay**

I know that some people have been tested three times before testing positive. I've been told that. But listen, it's been a while.

**Samuel Bachand**

I know, I'm trying to . . .

**Lynette Tremblay**

I can't say who or when.

**Samuel Bachand**

You're sure.

**Lynette Tremblay**

That's what was needed. When a patient tested COVID positive, all treatments were halted. In my father's case, he had a large bed sore and needed to sleep on an elderly care air mattress. The sore had been caused by neglect because they left him lying down too long.

[00:10:00]

So when treatments were halted, they said they didn't have that bed. The patients weren't even given vitamins C or D. When I demanded they at least give my dad vitamins C and D, the doctor said, "Oh, that doesn't work, it's not necessary." I said, "Well, I want you to give him some and I'm going to come and check. If you don't, I'm going to take it to him. Then I want you to give it to him." And that's what I did. I brought in a little box of vitamins which they never gave him. They put the box aside and gave it back to me after my father died. The box was intact.

In the end, the patients apparently didn't stay down there for two weeks. I think it was because the system did not work. I was told, "We're moving them back up to the bedrooms; your father is okay." And then, I wanted to see him, I wanted to see him. He said to me, "He's fine, he's fine."

I'll just take a look at my notes, in case I've missed anything.

And then, at some point, a new doctor phoned me. He said, "Ah, your father's a bit weak, maybe you could come and see him." So I rushed off to see my father and went to his room. There was a woman lying in his room and it was all converted and identified by the lady's name. We paid for this room; it was ours; it was like his home. And I arrived and saw a

woman lying in the bed. Then I said, “It’s not an air bed, it’s all decorated, it has photos.” It was clear that this woman had been there for a while. Then she said, “No, your father’s not here; he’s in that room.” Then I went to see him but I said, “What kind of room is this? It’s a hard bed, it’s empty, there’s no name with his picture! Where are his clothes, his TV, his personal belongings? Where are his things?”

They didn’t answer me. When I went in, I can’t even tell you the protocols I had to go through! We had to enter through new access corridors and dress up in face shields and a mask. I thought, “Is this theater, vaudeville, or what?” It was incredible to me. I thought, “They can’t be serious, they’re trying to scare everyone!” I was outraged by the circus. What’s more, they’d brought the military into the centres. I said, “What on earth are you doing, bringing in the military? People are already scared! They’re going to see the military come in. What you’re doing is appalling!”

**Samuel Bachand**

Who summoned the military—or the possible presence of the military?

**Lynette Tremblay**

Ah, it wasn’t just possible, it was credible: the military was there. The military was there apparently because the employees were so scared of COVID. They [the employees] were paid—I think they got the CSP [Canadian Emergency Benefit] which paid more than their salary—and they all left.

**Samuel Bachand**

Okay. Did you see the military with your own eyes?

**Lynette Tremblay**

Yes, I saw them. Fortunately, they weren’t dressed in military garb. Then I realized they were there to help.

**Samuel Bachand**

How did you determine that they were military personnel?

**Lynette Tremblay**

I asked them.

**Samuel Bachand**

Okay, then what kind of response did you get to the best of your recollection?

**Lynette Tremblay**

They were all nice.

**Samuel Bachand**

What words did they use? Did they say, “I’m Sergeant what’s-his-name”?

**Lynette Tremblay**

No, I didn't go into detail about that. All I cared about was seeing my father. I didn't ask any questions.

**Samuel Bachand**

But you're certain that these people told you they were members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

**Lynette Tremblay**

Yes.

**Samuel Bachand**

On what date did your father die?

**Lynette Tremblay**

May 5, 2020.

**Samuel Bachand**

What was the cause of death?

**Lynette Tremblay**

Well, that's just it! Because, when I went in on May 4, 2020—the day I realized they had changed his room—I realized he was being given some kind of solution; apparently, they were giving additional medications to patients who tested positive for COVID. And so I took some photos, then I said to my dad, "Dad," and it seemed that he heard me. I thought, "He's completely drugged." I still didn't know what was wrong with him.

So that's how it all happened from my perspective: the room; how he was treated; how he looked; his hair was all dirty! It was as if they'd abandoned him. When I saw the director I said, "How can people be treated this way? My father's hair is all greasy and dirty! I don't even know whether you are changing his—" It's unbelievable!

[00:15:00]

When I returned the next day, they told me, "You can't stay longer than five minutes." I replied, "Listen, I haven't seen my father in two months; I'm going to spend as much time as I want with him." Then one of the nurses freaked out at the doctor when she saw I was taking photos. She shouted, "She's taking photos! She's taking photos!" And I'm thinking, "What on earth is this charade?" So what? I was taking photos. Next he said, "You have to leave right now." So I left.

The next morning, I came back and the director took me into her office with some employees I didn't know. She said to me, "You know, you had no right to go in there yesterday. Your father's not in mortal danger." I said, "Why did you move my father to another room? Why did you do this, and what's wrong with his arm? What did you do to him?" No answer. She said, "Oh, he's not dying, he's not in danger of dying. You have to leave." And then in the evening, at four o'clock, he died.



**Samuel Bachand**

During the period you've described, about how many doctors in total had you spoken to regarding your father's case?

**Lynette Tremblay**

For two weeks, let's say, there was a doctor every day.

**Samuel Bachand**

Okay. Before this COVID situation, what was the physician turnover like?

**Lynette Tremblay**

It was the same doctor every week. And he would visit patients who needed to see him and treat those who needed it.

**Samuel Bachand**

Before COVID, how frequently would you call and talk to the doctor? Once a week?

**Lynette Tremblay**

My father had no issues. He didn't suffer from anything. I used to go in person because it wasn't far from my house. I preferred meeting face-to-face.

**Samuel Bachand**

I understand. At this point, I'll leave it to the commissioners to complete this interview, if needed.

**Commissioner Massie**

Thank you very much for your testimony. I have a question about your father's health. How long had your father been in the CHSLD?

**Lynette Tremblay**

I think it had been two or three years.

**Commissioner Massie**

And you mentioned earlier in your testimony that he had bed sores, perhaps because he had difficulty getting around.

**Lynette Tremblay**

A person who's been lying in bed for a long time will develop bed sores. And they hadn't healed properly. When he went to the hospital because of this, she said, "Ah, he's going to die from that bed sore." I said, "What do you mean, a bed sore? You don't die from that!" She said, "Yes, you can die." But I said, "Bed sores are caused by mistreatment." At the hospital they agreed with me. It is necessary to use special dressings. After that was done, all went well. They put in drains but my father wasn't supposed to have any pressure on

the sore, so they prescribed an air bed. It's like water; it doesn't put pressure on the wound. And it healed very, very, very well.

**Commissioner Massie**

Was your father mobile? Could he get up, move around, or was he always bedridden?

**Lynette Tremblay**

At first he could. When he went in there, he was moving just fine. And then—you know, I don't wish to make an issue of it—they had given him a tranquilizer that I had cancelled. I ordered them to stop giving it to him because he didn't need it. But it caused him to lose mobility: his legs had gone limp. It was a very powerful drug that put him in hospital. The doctor thought he was going to die from it.

**Commissioner Massie**

Concerning your first visit in two months [of being denied entry], when you noticed that your father wasn't in his old room: Did you ever get any satisfactory explanation?

**Lynette Tremblay**

None at all. When I asked, "What is he doing there? Why did they change it?" None! It seems to me that my father was chosen, selected. In any case, I'll let you draw your own conclusions. Apparently, they put him there because they thought they'd only call me when he died. In my opinion, I wasn't supposed to see him like that, in another room and all that.

[00:20:00]

**Commissioner Massie**

And I'm curious: When you mentioned the day you went to the CHSLD to see your father and the director told you that your father was doing quite well, that it wasn't necessary for him to stay in that room for very long—what was it in her judgment, based on the doctors' examinations, that would allow her to tell you that?

**Lynette Tremblay**

When I went there, it was because the doctor for that day had said to me: "Ah, I think you should come see your father," except that I don't think the management had been informed.

**Commissioner Massie**

Okay.

**Lynette Tremblay**

And the next day, when I wanted to go back, it was the management who took me to their office to tell me, "You shouldn't have gone there; you shouldn't have seen your father; your father is in good health." Then the next day, when I saw him dead, well, I saw that they had rushed to wash his hair; it was clean. I know they declared him a COVID death. I'm sure my father didn't have COVID. We did not have the right to request an autopsy because when

someone died of COVID, autopsies weren't allowed. And that's that. It's unfortunate but he died in an atrocious way.

**Commissioner Massie**

Thank you.

**Samuel Bachand**

Thank you for your testimony.

**Lynette Tremblay**

Thank you.

**Samuel Bachand**

You are free to go.

[00:21:29]

***Final Review and Approval:*** Erin Thiessen, November 7, 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, and further translated from the original French.*

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

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