



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

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Day 2

EVIDENCE

(Translated from the French)

Witness 9: Évelyne Therrien

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[00:00:00]

Chantale Collard

Hello. Chantale Collard, lawyer and prosecutor at the National Citizens Inquiry. I see you on the screen, but I'm going to look towards the camera. So we have Madame Évelyne Therrien. Hello, Madame Therrien.

Évelyne Therrien

Hello, Madame Collard.

Chantale Collard

Can you hear me well?

Évelyne Therrien

Yes, I hear you well. Do you hear me?

Chantale Collard

Yes, very well, Évelyne Therrien.

Évelyne Therrien

Do you see me well or am I cut off anywhere?

Chantale Collard

No, I see you very well and I think the audience can see you very well too.

Évelyne Therrien

Okay, good.

Chantale Collard

So first of all, we will proceed with your identification. Can you state your first and last names?

Évelyne Therrien

Évelyne Therrien.

Chantale Collard

We're going to take the oath, the solemn declaration. Do you solemnly declare that you are going to tell the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth? Say, "I affirm it."

Évelyne Therrien

I affirm it.

Chantale Collard

So Évelyne Therrien, first of all, thank you on behalf of the Commission for coming to testify. I know these are not things that are easy to say but by sharing them, other people will surely recognize themselves in your testimony and will feel less alone. So thank you, Évelyne Therrien.

First of all, can you tell us about your occupation? What are you doing right now?

Évelyne Therrien

As of now, I've been on long-term disability for six years. In March 2020, I was on disability and living in my dad's house. My mother was in intermediate residence because of her Alzheimer's. So that's both my current situation and my situation as it was in 2020.

Chantale Collard

So if I understand correctly, Madame Therrien, you were already on disability. And at that time, did you have a job? And for whom did you work at the time of your disability?

Évelyne Therrien

Before my disability?

Chantale Collard

Yes, we could say around 2020, I imagine that you were on disability from an employer? You worked before? Who was your employer?

Évelyne Therrien

It is TD Bank. And the TD Bank insurer that pays me the disability pension is Manulife.

Chantale Collard

All right. Can you tell us your primary motivation for coming to testify here, at the Citizens Inquiry?

Évelyne Therrien

I would like people who are searching to have access to information about what has really happened since 2020 and the real consequences of what governments have done, so that when people search for it the information is available.

Chantale Collard

Regarding this information, we will talk about your experience. We'll go in chronological order. You are vaccinated. How many doses of COVID vaccine do you have?

Évelyne Therrien

Two doses.

Chantale Collard

You have two doses. Can you tell us about your first injection? What state were you in? And were you open to that first dose? Tell us about the context of the first injection.

Évelyne Therrien

All right. I would like to say one thing first because it is important to me.

Chantale Collard

Yes, go ahead.

[00:05:00]

Évelyne Therrien

I found that in 2019, I was more spiritually and religiously empty. I felt that there was something wrong, that I was vulnerable to falling into fear, panic, manipulation in 2020. So I took the first dose voluntarily on May 4, 2021.

Chantale Collard

Okay.

Évelyne Therrien

For a very long time, I also had a very fragile immune system. So that played into my initial decision too. I had experienced a lot of infections, bronchitis, pneumonia.

Chantale Collard

What we call comorbidities, if you will. You had other previous problems.

Évelyne Therrien

Yes, that's it. The stroke was caused by celiac disease; and if it's not treated for a long time, if it's undiagnosed, well, it causes a great deal of damage to the immune system.

Chantale Collard

All right. There is a question. Before your first injection, at the time when you had said, "Okay, I'm going to do it," were you afraid of the virus?

Évelyne Therrien

I would say that at the beginning of 2020, I was scared. But by 2021, I wasn't as scared anymore. It was more blindness, overconfidence in the government. Because in 2021, little by little, I had started to do my own research. I hadn't done any research in 2020 but I started doing my own research in 2021.

Chantale Collard

When you say you did your own research, did you do your research before or after your first injection?

Évelyne Therrien

A little before my first injection.

Chantale Collard

A little before. You still went to get injected.

Évelyne Therrien

Yes. I hadn't done much research. It was little by little.

Chantale Collard

All right. But not enough to—

Évelyne Therrien

I was less fit and less healthy at that time. I didn't have much time to research either.

Chantale Collard

Did you have any side effects after your first injection?

Évelyne Therrien

No, I did not have any side effects.

Chantale Collard

Okay. And after that, you went on with your daily life. And you had your second injection. Can you tell us about your second injection? How did it go, what state were you in?

Évelyne Therrien

Well, I continued my research between the first and the second injection and I changed my mind. I didn't want to take the second injection anymore. I took it anyway out of desperation because I knew what my dad's reaction was going to be and how he was going to treat me if I didn't take it. Well, I suspected that it was going to be terrible and that probably I was going to be forced to move [out of my house].

Chantale Collard

At that time, were you living with your father, Madame Therrien?

Évelyne Therrien

Yes.

Chantale Collard

All right. So you didn't want to take it because you had learned some information, but you went to take it anyway. What was your main reason?

Évelyne Therrien

There are no good reasons. I think I could have fought it. I think it would have been very, very painful. It would have taken me a long time to move out of the house because I'm slow; I was slower then, I was in worse shape.

Chantale Collard

Can we say that you took it out of social pressure and not because, well, "I am immunosuppressed," or—

Évelyne Therrien

At that point, no. By the second injection, I was no longer worried about the virus or my health— Well, up to a point, but I understood that the injection was not a solution, but the opposite.

Chantale Collard

Okay, but you went anyway. On what date did you receive the second injection?

Évelyne Therrien

July 1, 2021.

Chantale Collard

So as of July 2021, you had received two doses. Following this second dose, did you have any side effects?

Évelyne Therrien

Yes. For three weeks following the first day of the injection, it was: diarrhea, a lot of muscle pain, headaches, very great fatigue, and a lot of sweating, chills, hot/cold.

[00:10:00]

I couldn't sleep much and I couldn't do all my daily activities and my father had to take over the cooking more during that period. I couldn't do my daily chores.

Chantale Collard

How long after the injection did these effects begin?

Évelyne Therrien

It started on the first day.

Chantale Collard

The first day.

Évelyne Therrien

Yes. Then it seemed to calm down; it was better. Then, perhaps one or two weeks later, I experienced an esophagitis—in any case, the doctor calls it esophagitis. It is pain in the throat and the top of the digestive system, which makes it difficult to eat and swallow. So after a few days of that, I went to consult my doctor.

Chantale Collard

Your family doctor?

Évelyne Therrien

It wasn't my family doctor but it was my family doctor's clinic. They gave me antacids for two months and I can't remember if they gave me an antibiotic or not. Anyway, I took the antacids for two months and after that I was able to stop them and never took them again.

Chantale Collard

What I am hearing is that you started having side effects the day after [the injection]; they continued; you went to the medical clinic. Did you ask the attending physician to report these side effects?

Évelyne Therrien

I only did six months later, in the winter of 2022. Because initially, in the summer of 2021, I was convinced that no doctor was going to give credence to it. I knew the context; and also, I have had a long and difficult medical journey. I know doctors. In my twenties and early thirties, it was very, very difficult. So I didn't expect any doctor to take me seriously. And I saw the context of the television news too: even at places like Radio-Canada [the CBC], it was announced that the second dose had more side or unpleasant effects. So I pretty much

thought that nobody cared about me or nobody would care about me. Six months later, I decided it was my duty to try. My family doctor reacted exactly as I expected.

Chantale Collard

What was her reaction?

Évelyne Therrien

That was in the winter of 2022; it was January 2022, I believe. She told me that it was not the doctor but the patient who had to fill out the form. So I looked for the form on the internet. I don't believe it was the correct form because it was just a form for general drug side effects. So I posted this to the Government of Canada, the CAEFISS [Canadian Adverse Event Following Immunization Surveillance System], I think it's called.

She also told me—because I had asked her for an exemption for the third dose—to go and take the third dose and that she had had no unpleasant effects aside from the first day. Then she also told me that there were several other patients of hers who had come to her asking for exemptions—because things had happened to family members due to the injections—but that, no, she wouldn't give an exemption and she couldn't give an exemption.

Chantale Collard

Basically, you wanted an exemption for the third dose.

Évelyne Therrien

Yes.

Chantale Collard

Now, what will also be important to know is— You spoke of your father.

[00:15:00]

At that time, you were at your father's house: between the second [dose] and your request for a waiver of the third dose. What happened? Explain that to us.

Évelyne Therrien

In December 2021, they started pushing the third dose really hard in TV media. I refused to take it. It caused huge conflicts. My father was extremely angry; he called me every name in the book. And he was really extremely angry on a daily basis, and extremely insulting and unpleasant. In December 2021, I considered moving out. But I changed my mind in the end because I saw that it was submitting to the government's strategy of divide and conquer, in order to cause the most possible destruction. But then, in January and February—

Chantale Collard

That was in January 2022.

Évelyne Therrien

Yes, that's it: January–February 2022. I started taking all sorts of actions and made a credit card donation to the Freedom Convoy because I wasn't able to get to the demonstrations. I can't drive such long distances since the stroke.

Chantale Collard

When you donated to the Freedom Convoy, you were still at your father's house?

Évelyne Therrien

Yes. When he found out, he was very angry and he told me to leave his house.

Chantale Collard

He kicked you out.

Évelyne Therrien

Yes, that's it, he kicked me out. So as I am slow because of the stroke, it took me four months in total to move. So I moved in July 2022. It was four months between when he told me to leave and when I was able to move. During that period, there were times when he was rather explosive, when he was quite hateful. I was relieved to finally move.

Chantale Collard

Has your relationship with your father ended since you moved, or have you reconnected?

Évelyne Therrien

It is at the bare minimum. I go to see my mother once a week in a CHSLD and, since he goes to see her every day, of course I see him when I go to see my mother. Apart from that, it is very rare to see him and I've decided that I will never invite him to my house again. In any case, at the very beginning, I had invited him once or twice and I really thought he was too—I don't know what adjective to use. But his personality didn't change with the onset of COVID, he was already like that and it got worse over the years. It causes a lot of problems in general, even outside of the COVID situation, and it continues to this day. I still had conflicts by telephone with him: twice in the winter of 2023. So I will distance myself even more, I will withdraw as mandatary and as executor because I will not be able to work with him—or with my brother. My brother is really similar to my father. Less aggressive but it doesn't work at all, so I'm going to distance myself more.

[00:20:00]

Chantale Collard

Madame Therrien, I see that time is running out. But there is an important message: If your father is listening—currently, your testimony is being broadcast across Canada, around the world—what would you say to him?

Évelyne Therrien

I don't think I would have anything to say to him because I've tried everything and I know he doesn't believe in doing research on the internet.

Chantale Collard

If you spoke to him directly? Talk to him directly.

Évelyne Therrien

[Long silence.]

Chantale Collard

It's not easy.

Évelyne Therrien

What I would say would be really nasty and they would sound like insults even though they are true. I would tell him that I find him cowardly for not even being able to care enough about the side effects of my second dose to realize that there is something wrong; that the reality does not match what the government says; that what happened to me is not what the government says and what the government does. So I find him cowardly, and I find him insensitive, and I find him cruel.

Chantale Collard

Madame Therrien, you talk about yourself, you feel hurt.

Évelyne Therrien

Yes, certainly.

Chantale Collard

You feel rejected.

Évelyne Therrien

However, he didn't behave that way only with me. I found that, during COVID in general, his behaviour has been abominable.

Chantale Collard

It has affected you immensely, that's what I can see from your testimony. It takes a lot of courage to speak here at the Commission today. And as a final word, do you feel that there is a lesson to be learned and whether things could have been done differently?

Évelyne Therrien

One must not sacrifice one's freedom and integrity for an illusion of security.

Chantale Collard

Very good final words: “You should not sacrifice your freedom for an illusion of security.” We will remember these words, Évelyne Therrien. Thank you.

There may be questions from the commissioners, so stay online.

Commissioner Massie

Hello, Madame Therrien. Thank you for your testimony.

Évelyne Therrien

Hello. Thank you.

Commissioner Massie

My question is— I understand that it is a very tense situation, which is caused by your incapacity; you are something of a prisoner of your disability, which makes you less able to go out of your immediate family circle. Do you have people around you who can support you in this difficult tense situation, finding yourself perhaps without the support that you could have had from your father?

Évelyne Therrien

Since my move, I have been involved in support groups and in volunteering. So it allowed me to create some new links and new contacts. I’m in the Solaris groups. I volunteered for Réinfo COVID Québec. And then, what else was there? The Universal Exchange Garden. It allowed me to make a few new connections. I also have an unvaccinated sister who lives in Coaticook. She is very far away but it is at least moral support to know that she is aware. She also has a lot of difficulties.

[00:25:00]

She also has health issues. She has a job but is struggling. She’s not someone I can see on a daily basis, but she supported me a lot in the process with my father before my move—cheered me up, encouraged me. I also have a friend who is one of the few friends I have kept over the years. She too was very understanding. She did not want to be vaccinated and she got vaccinated under the threat of losing her job from her employer. She helped me through it all too, and I still see her. My abilities continue to improve over time. This allows me to see more people a little more frequently than before. That helps me too. I managed to see a lot more people in the winter of 2023 than in the fall of 2022. In that respect, it continues to improve. It’s not as bad as it could have been or could be.

Commissioner Massie

Thank you very much.

Chantale Collard

Thank you very much, Évelyne Therrien. I know that this testimony was not easy. You have a lot of courage. That’s also freedom: it’s having courage. Rest assured that your testimony will have echoes, hopefully, throughout the world. Thank you so much.

Évelyne Therrien

It was a pleasure. Thank you very much for the work you do. Thank you.

[00:26:36]

Final Review and Approval: Erin Thiessen, November 8, 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/>

