



NCI | CeNC

NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

**EVIDENCE
TORONTO HEARINGS**

NCI | CeNC

**Toronto, Ontario, Canada
March 30 to April 1, 2023**

ABOUT THESE TRANSCRIPTS

The evidence offered in these transcripts is a true and faithful record of witness testimony given during the National Citizens Inquiry (NCI) hearings. These hearings took place in eight Canadian cities from coast to coast from March through May 2023.

Raw transcripts were initially produced from the audio-video recordings of witness testimony and legal and commissioner questions using Open AI's Whisper speech recognition software. From May to August 2023, a team of volunteers assessed the AI transcripts against the recordings to edit, review, format, and finalize all NCI witness transcripts.

With utmost respect for the witnesses, the volunteers worked to the best of their skills and abilities to ensure that the transcripts would be as clear, accurate, and accessible as possible. Edits were made using the "intelligent verbatim" transcription method, which removes filler words and other throat-clearing, false starts, and repetitions that could distract from the testimony content.

Many testimonies were accompanied by slide show presentations or other exhibits. The NCI team recommends that transcripts be read together with the video recordings and any corresponding exhibits.

We are grateful to all our volunteers for the countless hours committed to this project, and hope that this evidence will prove to be a useful resource for many in future. For a complete library of the over 300 testimonies at the NCI, please visit our website at <https://nationalcitizensinquiry.ca>.

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NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Toronto, ON

Day 1

March 30, 2023

EVIDENCE

Opening Statement: Shawn Buckley

Full Day 1 Timestamp: 00:39:54–00:56:14

Source URL: <https://rumble.com/v2fgrx6-national-citizens-inquiry-toronto-day-1.html>

[00:00:00]

Shawn Buckley

Commissioners, my name is Buckley, initial S. I'm attending as agent this morning for the Commission administrator, the Honourable Ches Crosbie. I do apologize that we're starting a little late today, we had some technical difficulties. I would like to address the people that are attending online, just to describe the NCI to them, and then I would like to inform you of how we're going to proceed today. And then just turn it over to you, if you have any comments before we call our first witness.

So for those that are watching online and are not aware of the National Citizens Inquiry, we are a citizen-organized and -funded group that just had this vision of marching across the land with a set of independent commissioners to inquire into how all levels of government handled the COVID-19 pandemic, with a view to getting to the truth, and with a view to permitting ordinary Canadians to tell their stories and start a healing dialogue in this nation. We are totally citizen-funded; we have no large donors or anything like that. It costs us probably about \$35,000 per hearing. So I'm going to invite everyone online to visit our website and to donate and keep this marching across the land.

I'd like to just turn then, Commissioners, to the witnesses that we have for you today. We have a set of expert witnesses that are quite diverse. We're going to be dealing with some medical issues today. We are going to be dealing with some scientific issues. We're going to be dealing with some drug approval issues with a particular regard as to children. We're going to be calling an economic expert today.

Some of the evidence that you are going to hear from these experts you are going to have difficulty believing; and the difficulty is not that you don't believe the experts. You're going to find the evidence difficult to believe because you do believe the experts are telling the truth. More importantly, we have a host of ordinary Canadians that have been brave enough to take the stand. And I have to report to you, Commissioners, that we had a number of lay witnesses back out of testifying out of fear. And that in itself is real-time evidence of the fact that, in Canada, people are still afraid to basically speak out against the government narrative, even if it's just sharing their own experience. And I hope you understand that the witnesses that have backed out from testifying had applied online to

the National Citizens Inquiry website seeking to qualify as a witness. They got through—we get so many applications that only handful get through our initial sorting process. They got through that process and each one that backed out had been interviewed at least twice by two different interviewers, and then late at the day: they were too afraid to attend today, and on the next two days, to give their testimony, because they were afraid of retribution. Some were afraid of losing their job, some were afraid of social pressure from their families and friends. And again, that speaks as evidence of just how divided we are.

And that got me thinking, because some of us have thought—you know, we've been divided into camps of the vaccinated and the unvaccinated, but I think it's more nuanced than that. I think it's really a division between people that trust the government and trust the mainstream media, that are supposed to be competing with each other, but surprisingly speak with one voice in echoing what the government's position is. And so we have a group of Canadians that trust the government narrative, and we have a group of Canadians that are skeptical of the government narrative. And what has flown from that is that those that trust the government narrative have tended to become vaccinated and those that don't trust the government narrative have tended to avoid vaccination where they could. And so when we think of the camps of vaccinated and unvaccinated, again I think it's more nuanced than that.

And I came to a realization as I was preparing to call witnesses for these proceedings, because I was interviewing witnesses that were vaccinated.

[00:05:00]

And I was interviewing witnesses that were unvaccinated. And the thing that struck me was how absolutely identical they were. I'm going to ask everyone watching to have an open mind because actually having an open mind is a decision. And if you have ears to hear, I'm going to ask that you hear. Because I think it will help us heal going forward if we understand that we actually have all had the identical experience.

So let me speak about the experience of the unvaccinated. I understand there's a whole myriad of experiences, but I think it's fair for us to say that a large number of people that we would call unvaccinated, or a large number of people that wanted to be unvaccinated but became vaccinated because they had no choice, they were coerced: this group believed that the vaccine was dangerous. They believed it was dangerous to themselves. They believed that it was dangerous to their loved ones. And when I say dangerous, I'm referring to literally an existential threat. I mean these people believed that they might die or be seriously harmed, or their loved ones, like their children, might die or be seriously harmed if they took the vaccine. Now, normally in Canada you wouldn't worry about having to take a treatment that you thought might be dangerous to you. But what happened was, the government did everything at every level—did everything that they could, with the aid of the media, to coerce the people that did not want to take the vaccine into taking it. And the vaccinated participated in that coercion.

I'll say that again: the vaccinated participated in that coercion. There was tremendous social pressure. Business owners made it a mandatory requirement to have vaccination. We put pressure on friends and families that are still divided to this day. So understand from the perspective of the people that we'll call unvaccinated, you became a threat to them. They were faced what they felt was a life-and-death crisis for them and their families. And if you want to get people, especially parents, very concerned and very emotional, you put their children at harm's way. So they had the experience—and we're just talking about the experience of both sides, understanding the experience—they had the experience of

facing a life and death situation, where the vaccinated were putting pressure on them and their families, and they felt threatened. They felt fearful. And then resentment came, and then hatred.

Now, let's talk about the experience of the vaccinated, because it's identical, except for the belief. But the experience itself was identical. And again, I understand that it will be a whole range of experiences and belief. But it's fair to say that a large group of vaccinated persons believed that COVID-19 presented a serious risk to themselves and to those important to them, including their kids. And when I say serious risk, they believed that they were at risk of death or serious harm, or their loved ones were at risk of death or serious harm. They were fearful. This was their belief. And then along comes the vaccine, literally like a messiah: it was their salvation. And it was put forward as a salvation. We have this crisis. We have this threat of death and serious harm, but we have the solution. We have a vaccine. If only, if only everyone would take it, we would be safe. But there was this group of people who we called unvaxxed, which in itself is a pejorative term. Our Prime Minister had some more colorful adjectives that I won't use.

But we had this group, this tinfoil hat-wearing, selfish, conspiratorial group that would not play along.

[00:10:00]

We would all be safe if we would get the vaccine, if we'd all do it, but this group wouldn't. So this group, in the eyes of the vaccinated, posed a serious threat to their personal safety and the safety of those important to them, like their children. And they were fearful. They were afraid. They became resentful, and they became hateful. They had the exact same experience as the unvaccinated had.

I think it would bode us well to understand, as divided as we are, that we've all had the exact same experience, and we absolutely need to come together. And that's part of what this National Citizens Inquiry is intended to do. We've experienced, with witnesses dropping out, that this division in Canadian society, this need to follow the government narrative, is still strong. Not long ago, we considered ourselves a country that cherished free speech. But there is an area of speech—because we still have free speech in a lot of areas—but where we don't have free speech, where your speech has a cost, is if you are now going to go against or participate in any activity that goes against the government narrative. And I think we need to understand that as long as we take that position, we're going to remain divided. Because that's what's dividing us.

It's somewhat appropriate that our first witness this morning is a Mr. Rodney Palmer, who is a former journalist and is going to be speaking to us about matters of journalism. And before we get to Mr. Palmer, we're going to watch a video clip of some of the news that in Ontario we would have experienced. Just to kind of bring us back, back in time, back to remember why we're here at the NCI now.

But before we do that, before we go into that clip, I'm just going to turn it over to the Commissioners, in case they have any opening comments or directions before we proceed.

Commissioner Massie

Good morning, everyone. My name is Bernard Massie, and I'm a scientist by training. As I mentioned at the Truro hearing, I decided to get involved in this exercise for a number of reasons. But if I want to summarize, the way I would frame it is that we human beings live

in a narrative. And the narrative is a kind of low-resolution representation of nature and reality. And the further the gap between the narrative and the reality grows, it has major consequences on our overall health and mental health. And what I found over the past couple of years was that the gap was really, really seriously big. And with my colleague Commissioners, I decided to get engaged in this adventure to try to write a new narrative, which we hope will be closer to reality. And from there, we can build a new reality, a shared understanding of the world we're living in, and live in a better, I would say, harmony with nature and our fellow citizens. Thank you.

Shawn Buckley

And I wasn't requiring the commissioners to all speak if they don't need to. Just if you had any opening comments.

Commissioner DiGregorio

I'd just like to thank you for your opening comments and reaffirm that we are here to hear Canadians, and to follow the truth and the evidence wherever it leads us, and keep an open mind.

Shawn Buckley

If we can start with that video and just bring us back to some of the things that we witnessed in Ontario while we were going through the COVID crisis.

[A video clip was played with Global News footage announcing the first cases and deaths relating to COVID-19 in Ontario. Transcripts of the audio content are below.]

[Video Clip] Global News reporter

Thursday, he was taken to Sunnybrook, where he was quarantined. At a news conference late this afternoon, Health Minister Christine Elliott said all of this should give people confidence that the system works:

[Video Clip] Christine Elliot, Minister of Health

"The patient was detected and immediately put in isolation. Lab tests were conducted and at the earliest signs of a presumptive positive case, Toronto Public Health launched extensive case and contact management to prevent and control further spread of the infection."

[Video Clip] Global News reporter

Toronto Mayor John Tory said in a statement: "Toronto Public Health is continuing to work closely with provincial and federal health colleagues to actively monitor the situation and respond as appropriate."

[Video Clip] Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health

Today, also, I'm sad to announce that we've had our first death [inaudible] related to COVID-19. And that tells us that, you know, while we haven't had any so far, it is a possibility we have been expecting to deal with during this time. So it's not unexpected. But it's still a person, the family and friends, and have our condolences onto the family and that. Because it still is a loss. And sometimes in some of these large events, we lose track of that. We want to make sure we remember that. Also, the number of cases in Ontario has risen rapidly. And over the weekend, we noticed that the cases moved from—almost doubled from 70 to 80 up to 170. And that was a rapid rise.

[00:16:19]

Final Review and Approval: Jodi Bruhn, August 16, 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.

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

