



## NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Regina, SK

Day 2

May 31, 2024

### EVIDENCE

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**Witness 2: Lorrie and Boyd Harrison**

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**Kassy Baker**

Welcome back. I'm Kassy Baker, and I'm here with our next witnesses on day two of the National Citizens Inquiry in Regina. Hello, can you please state your and spell your names for the record, please?

**Boyd Harrison (Speaker B)**

My first name is Boyd, B-O-Y-D. Surname is Harrison. H-A-R-R-I-S-O-N.

**Kassy Baker**

And who do you have with you?

**Lorrie Harrison**

Lorrie Harrison. And that's L-O-R-R-I-E H-A-R-R-I-S-O-N.

**Kassy Baker**

And can you tell us where you reside at this point?

**Boyd Harrison**

In Regina, here.

**Kassy Baker**

Now, do you promise to tell the truth during these proceedings?

**Boyd Harrison**

Yes.

**Kassy Baker**

Very good. Now, just by way of introduction, I understand that you're here to talk to us today about your experience trying to travel during COVID and during the pandemic measures. Just before we begin with that, can you please each describe your background, your education, and your work experience?

**Boyd Harrison**

I retired in July of 2009 after 30 years policing in the city here. Then I worked for a while as a special counsel with the Provincial Government, and then in security with our, at the time, Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, which became the Saskatchewan Health Authority.

**Kassy Baker**

Good. And Miss Harrison?

**Lorrie Harrison**

I'm a retired nurse. I retired in 2015 after 40 years of a broad clinical area. I've specialized in everything from nursing ethics to infection control to a little smattering of everything. So, yeah, that's my background.

**Kassy Baker**

Very good. Now, at this point, I'm going to get you to describe your experiences with cross-border travel. I believe the incident that you're going to describe for us happened in January of 2022. Is that correct?

**Boyd Harrison**

Yes, it is.

**Kassy Baker**

Very good. But first of all, can you tell us where you went? And I believe that the story is mostly going to pertain to your return. But if you can start from the start of your trip, that would be great.

**Boyd Harrison**

Okay. Basically, as a bit of a preamble, Lorrie and I travel quite extensively in the US. We cross the border a number of times each year just for vacation and travel-type purposes. So when the border opened up—I think it was November of 2021—for land travel, we decided to drive down to Las Vegas in January. So we left on January 3rd. We were down in the Las Vegas area, but prior to going, we wanted to follow the rules. So I printed off all the information we needed from the Government of Canada website, printed it all off.

We were both fully vaccinated. We each had four vaccines at the time. So part of the rules were, at the time we had to have a PCR test done within 72 hours of returning back to the country. So we had that done on a Tuesday evening before we left Wednesday morning to drive back. We got back to the border Friday, early afternoon. I'd better back up here. Before we left we also downloaded the ArriveCAN app. So we filled all that in, and I just

followed all the rules that were put on the website, got up to the border, and the border agent we dealt with refused to deal with our ArriveCAN app.

**Kassy Baker**

If I may just interrupt you for a moment here just before you delve into that experience. You had noted that you were required to test, you said 72 hours before your return to Canada. Is that correct?

**Boyd Harrison**

Yes, that's correct. And you had to be at a recognized facility because they were quite stringent on the documentation. And I think, as I recall, it was like \$125 or \$150 for each of us, U.S., to get the test done.

**Kassy Baker**

And before you arrived at the border, had you received the results of that test or those tests?

**Boyd Harrison**

Yes, we did. We received it via email the second day after our travel started.

**Kassy Baker**

And what were the results of that test?

**Boyd Harrison**

They were both positive.

**Kassy Baker**

So, in fact, the test showed that you had COVID, correct?

**Boyd Harrison**

Yes, it did. And the Monday before we had the test we both kind of had the symptoms of just kind of malaise and a bit of fatigue. And then Tuesday it was drastically better, but it was still tested positive Tuesday evening when we had the test taken.

**Kassy Baker**

And so this was Tuesday evening when— What day did you arrive at the border?

**Boyd Harrison**

The 14th of January.

**Kassy Baker**

The 14th. So can you please just describe your interaction with crossing the border at that point.

**Boyd Harrison**

Okay. As the website says, you were to use the ArriveCAN app, present the QR code to the agent at the border so there's no direct contact between them or us. We arrived at the border, and the agent at the window refused to accept the QR code, but demanded we physically present her with our passports. So we obliged. And then we went through the usual preamble of the questions, you know, where you've been, how long you've been, so on and so forth. She got to the point of asking, have we tested positive for COVID within the previous 180 days. I responded, "Yes."

**Kassy Baker**

And what was her response to that?

**Boyd Harrison**

She said, "When?" And I said, "Tuesday." And there is an extreme change in behaviour, shall I say? She's quite panicky, really just kind of rattled, and stepped back and got a bottle of some sort of disinfectant, I assume, and a rag. And she's wiping down all over the window, the counter, her computer screen. She just went on a rampage of cleaning in the little cubicle.

**Kassy Baker**

And did she speak to you during this time? Or what were you expecting to have happen at that point?

**Boyd Harrison**

At that point, I wasn't sure what was going on because she was just doing her cleaning. Then she came back and basically said that she has no idea what she's to do because they've never experienced this. So she directed us to park in the rear of the kind of parking area in behind their office, and she'd have to have someone from Public Health Canada call and to make sure that we kept our cell phone on.

**Kassy Baker**

When we discussed this in our preparation for this examination, you mentioned to me that initially you were concerned, perhaps that you would not be allowed to return. Is that correct?

**Boyd Harrison**

At that point, no, because I printed off all the documentation from the website, and it has a list of procedures of what to do if you arrive at the border positive.

**Kassy Baker**

Okay, so you received a phone call from Public Health. And then what happened during that conversation?

**Boyd Harrison**

He introduced himself and told us that we weren't allowed back in the country.

**Kassy Baker**

Okay. And how did you respond to that?

**Boyd Harrison**

I said, "Well, that's odd, because I printed off the documentation from the Government of Canada website, and that's not what it says at all. It has these guidelines what to do." His response was, "Well, yes, he would let us in, but it's a \$10,000 fine per person."

**Kassy Baker**

And what was your response to being informed that there would be a fine?

**Boyd Harrison**

I think I just said again that, "Well, that's not what your website says, and we're following your rules." So then he said, "Well, he will let us go this time with a verbal warning, but only this once."

**Kassy Baker**

And so what else were you told regarding next steps upon your return to Canada?

**Boyd Harrison**

He told us that to remain in our vehicle, not leave, and that he would be discussing further actions with the border agent that we'd met with previous.

**Kassy Baker**

And were you left in the vehicle during this time?

**Boyd Harrison**

Oh, yeah, we were in the back. It was like January 14th. It's a little chilly in Saskatchewan.

**Kassy Baker**

And so how long in total were you waiting for further direction?

**Boyd Harrison**

I'm thinking we probably waited about 15 minutes prior to his call and then a discussion with him, and then another maybe five or ten minutes for the agent to come back, and then we had a further discussion with her, with her instructions.

**Kassy Baker**

And what were the instructions that you ultimately received?

**Boyd Harrison**

Firstly, she had a whole ream of paper and two boxes which she explained were more tests we had to get done virtually with a lab representative from, I believe it was Life Labs out of BC or something of that nature. It was Life Labs. Anyway, and went through some documentation of how to take the tests, what they have to do, and that we had to quarantine for ten days after entering the country.

So then he had a discussion about, you know, we were entering back into Saskatchewan, which at the time the rules were quarantine for five days after the symptoms start to subside, which would have meant we'd had to quarantine for three days after we got back. So I said, "I appreciate there's different jurisdictions between Provincial and Federal but," I said, "to me, the virus is the same. It doesn't differentiate between two jurisdictions."

**Kassy Baker**

So you were sent home with a lab test, correct? Or test to send to the lab, is that correct?

**Boyd Harrison**

Yes. Yes, exactly.

**Kassy Baker**

So you went home and followed the instructions. Can you describe the instructions that you were given regarding the tests?

**Boyd Harrison**

Okay, first you had to register these kits, so Lorrie tried to do that. The website just kept going around a circle. So then I tried and I actually got a hold of somebody in person, and then she walked us through it. So we got them registered. So that was done with. Later on that afternoon we got home. So that process probably took about 45 minutes or an hour altogether.

**Kassy Baker**

And just to clarify, these were tests that you administered yourself? Or were they administered by someone else at this point?

**Boyd Harrison**

We each had to administer our own virtually in front of a representative from the lab so that they could, you know, confirm that we had taken the samples properly. And then we had to seal them in front of them virtually. And there's a four-step process of sealing them and signing off on documents and putting them into a sealed package for the courier to pick up.

**Kassy Baker**

And were there any instructions given with regard to the package as it waited for pickup?

**Boyd Harrison**

Yes. The border agent told us that not to get it exposed to heat or cold through refrigeration or anything, just to keep it at room temperature, basically. So then we got the samples taken, sealed them all, and then we had to call a specified courier company to come pick them up. So this would have been later on Saturday afternoon.

**Kassy Baker**

And when you were given instructions regarding returning the tests, what instructions were you given regarding their return?

**Boyd Harrison**

The test had to be taken within 24 hours of entering the country, and it had to leave our property being sent to the lab within the following 24 hours.

**Kassy Baker**

So you had 24 hours after the test was administered to arrange for the courier.

**Boyd Harrison**

Right. So that would have been if we had a test taken prior to mid-afternoon or late afternoon on Saturday, it would have had to been taken by the courier by late afternoon, Sunday.

**Kassy Baker**

And were you able to make these arrangements with the courier?

**Boyd Harrison**

No. We called the courier and the gal we talked to said that they don't work on the weekend and they pick it up Monday morning, and in the meantime, we're supposed to refrigerate it. So my response was that that was completely opposite to the instruction we were given by the border agent, so whom are we to believe? Her response was that that's how they do their business and they've been lots of them, and they never had a problem. So we followed her direction at that point.

**Kassy Baker**

So you sent the tests away. Did you have any further response or reactions with regards to getting test results back?

**Boyd Harrison**

No, it was picked up on the Monday, and I don't recall when. It was a few days later we got a response saying that, yes, we were positive, which we already knew.

**Kassy Baker**

So with regard to the quarantine, what were the next steps in the quarantining process?

**Boyd Harrison**

After we left the border, I called our son and asked him to go get some groceries because I said, "We'll be quarantined," which he did. So that part was taken care of. Tuesday, mid-morning, we had a knock at the door so went down to the front door, and it happened to be one of the guys I used to work with. He's another retired guy, and he's working for a private security company that were contracted to check on the quarantine people. So he came to confirm that we were in fact quarantining.

**Kassy Baker**

And obviously you were at home to answer the door, correct?

**Boyd Harrison**

Yes.

**Kassy Baker**

And what, what happened after that?

**Boyd Harrison**

Lorrie kind of had a conversation with him, and I'll let her speak to that. Other than that, that was basically it. We just talked to him and he confirmed that we were there. And at that point that was all we had to do with that quarantine at that point.

**Kassy Baker**

Very good. My apologies. So as individuals who had essentially done everything that had been asked of you, you had made every effort to follow every requirement to the best of your ability, to the best of your knowledge, that this was the experience that you had upon returning to the country. Correct?

**Boyd Harrison**

Yes, that's right.



**Kassy Baker**

Is there anything else that you think is worth mentioning that we haven't discussed at this point?

**Boyd Harrison**

Well, after our quarantine, I happen to run into another retired guy that I used to work with who had just got back from a 7-day tour of working at what they call the COVID camp. It's kind of a slang term for it. It's the basically in-custody COVID encampment in North Battleford. And basically asked me if I wanted to go work up there because they were paying very good money and they were looking for retired guys to go up and do security work up there for the in-custody people. But I respectfully declined for a number of reasons.

**Kassy Baker**

Very good. What do you think could have been done better by our government or by provincial or federal border authorities to streamline this process, or to make it more efficient and effective?

**Boyd Harrison**

Well, I mean, Laurie can speak to a bit of it here in a minute here. But for me, my thoughts are just that, firstly, there's really no need for all this. I don't see a need for it at all. I mean, it kind of goes along with what Dr. Lawrie spoke about earlier on. But really, I guess the most simplest thing to do is, if you have rules in place, follow them. But, I mean, there's really no other way.

And so, for us trying to get back into the country, the website said one thing, the border agent said another, the public health guy said another. I mean, everyone you go is just different. Oh, then we're getting emails, what, every second day changing rules of what they needed to do. So at that point, we'd already gone past what they were recommending.

**Kassy Baker**

And Ms. Harrison, I understand that as a nurse, you had some experience in, I believe, public health measures during your career. What do you think could have been done differently to make this process more effective?

**Lorrie Harrison**

I'm going to go back a bit. When we were crossing the border and we were talking with the crossing guard to begin with, it was rather interesting because I noticed that the PPE that she was wearing was incorrect. And of course, I had a further conversation because I am trained in PPE. In fact, I was responsible for onboarding all of the people for Saskatchewan Health Authority in clinical quality and professional practice. So I'm well aware of what the requirements are.

And I had said to her, I said, "Well, you're wearing the incorrect mask." And she looked at me, "Well, we don't have those masks. We had those masks, but they're all outdated." So she was just wearing the simple paper mask. And in reality, she should be fit tested for an N95 mask that closely fits your face. And of course I told her, I said, "You know, when we cross a border, we don't want anyone else to get sick from us. Why weren't they following their regulations?"

And of course, even with the ArriveCAN, it was right there, you know. But she said, “Well, they didn’t have that operational. They weren’t given the proper equipment.” So OH&S [Occupational Health & Safety] is kind of popping up in the back of my head and thinking, “Okay, why aren’t they following those standards?” And my thoughts are in regards to how they could have changed things was the fact that back in—well, they’ve had in 2020, or when was it—the SARS fiasco, they had a plan, a pandemic plan back then. And I’m aware of that through the Canadian Nursing Association.

And ethically we’re bound as nurses to do no harm, just like doctors and that, ethically and in informed consent. None of that happened. None of that happened. And even in regards to education. Were people in this room, were they properly educated in regards to how to really use a mask? Aren’t you all done that in OH&S? So that’s kind of where I’m sitting back with.

**Kassy Baker**

OK. Well, on behalf of the National Citizens Inquiry, we’d like to thank you very much for your testimony. I don’t have any further questions, but are there any further questions from the commissioners?

**Commissioner Drysdale**

As someone who’s educated in the use of PPE, whose responsibility is it? How does the responsibility for using the proper PPE—obtaining it, wearing it, being trained for it—who’s responsible for that under the legislation?

**Lorrie Harrison**

Under the legislation in Saskatchewan? The OH&S Act states that it is the employer’s responsibility to educate the person or the person who maybe require certain safety measures. But it’s also the responsibility of the person who is employed to ask for the education and to do the education. So it’s a two-fold thing.

**Commissioner Drysdale**

So in your opinion, had the border agent, Border Services Canada, satisfied those requirements, understanding that’s a Saskatchewan requirement, but did they meet those requirements?

**Lorrie Harrison**

With the type of mask she was wearing? She had the training, but she did not have a proper fitted mask, and they did not provide that even with the ArriveCAN, which is supposed to prevent as much contact. They didn’t follow that, and it wasn’t provided to them.

**Commissioner Drysdale**

And that was in, I’m just checking my notes, that was in November of 2021. What was the date on that?

**Lorrie Harrison**

Actually, it was January 13th or 14th of 2022. And I believe that's around the same time when the truckers and the mandate and when they had to have the ArriveCAN app up and going for the truck drivers crossing at the borders.

**Commissioner Drysdale**

I mean, the reason I ask that is because, of course, the pandemic was declared in 2020, March of 2020. So this was almost two years later and the government was not providing their own employees with the proper masks.

**Lorrie Harrison**

Correct.

**Commissioner Drysdale**

Thank you.

**Kassy Baker**

All right. Thank you very much for your testimony.

