



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

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EVIDENCE

Witness 10: Marcos Sobral

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Wayne Lenhardt

Our next witness is Marcos Sobral. Could you give us your full name? Spell it for us, please. I'll do the oath with you and we'll proceed.

Marcos Sobral

Yes. Hello, I'm Marco Sobral. M-A-R-C-O-S Sobral. S-O-B-R-A-L.

Wayne Lenhardt

And you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth?

Marcos Sobral

Absolutely. I surely do.

Wayne Lenhardt

Thank you. Okay, this is going to be a bit of a blitz through your university career, starting with your undergrad and going on to doing your master's degree. So let's set the table here quickly. Stop me if I get any of this wrong. In 2020, you are still an undergraduate at the University of Winnipeg, correct?

Marcos Sobral

Yes.

Wayne Lenhardt

And in 2021, you were accepted into the master's program at University of Winnipeg.

Marcos Sobral

In 2022.

Wayne Lenhardt

Oh, in 2022.

Marcos Sobral

Yes.

Wayne Lenhardt

Great. Okay, you had to finish your honours year. Was that 2021?

Marcos Sobral

The honours year would have been fall of '21 into winter of '22. Fortunately, we were allowed to complete it all online.

Wayne Lenhardt

Right. Okay. Then you submitted a thesis. You got a thesis advisor, I believe, in June of 2023, correct?

Marcos Sobral

About, I'd say, May or thereabouts, yes.

Wayne Lenhardt

You had a project you had to do in 2023, something called Knowledge Synthesis Project, correct?

Marcos Sobral

That came later, in the winter of '24.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay. And then you had a whole bunch of trouble with getting advisors and whatnot, and it seemed to relate to COVID. So perhaps you could maybe just go through that area and how it all developed.

Marcos Sobral

Sure, yeah. Thanks, of course, to you and the other council and the commissioners and, of course, all the others who are willing and able to testify, of course also to our good volunteers. And a special thanks to our Canadian truckers and everyone else who would not bend the knee to the sycophants in Ottawa and Davos. And for me, it all started: There was a personal journey that was extremely destructive, but academically, it all started in June of 23, June 8th approximately, when I had a great advisor who I very much admired and looked up to. He was a prolific scholar in my eyes. And I submitted my thesis proposal for my masters that I had been working towards for years, as we mentioned.

I had advanced degrees from the University of Manitoba in the past, but the truth and pursuit of knowledge has been sort of a singular obsession of mine, so I wanted to continue

and pursue it even further. And you had to get an honours degree to be accepted into the master's program. So I did. And when I submitted that thesis proposal—you know, I'm not a straight A student; I don't have all A's; I've even had a C+/ maybe once or twice—but I've never had my work ridiculed, and it was ridiculed. I was threatened to get dumped from my advisor, and I was told that he had no interest in doing anything about COVID, and nor would anyone else in the department.

And, you know, as everyone else here I'm sure early on could see a lot of the deception, misdirection, and lies that was going on, with especially mandates, I mean, it failed sort of every test of logic. The masking, especially the lockdowns, failed every test of ethics, every test of logic. I mean, if lockdowns worked, why did we do them? And if they didn't work, why did we do a second one? I mean, we could go on. So I wrote about that, and my whole first year of training was about how to do qualitative work, specifically interviewing people. And it was expected that my project would involve interviewing members of the community.

And so I thought this would be a great opportunity to present some research that I had done and see what the public thought about: What do you think about COVID? What do you think about, sort of, everything that's happened?

So it was basically just about something that had always had me curious, ever since early 2020 when I saw people descending into madness on social media was: How could you compel people to behave in ways they normally wouldn't? Why would someone do something, for instance, like take an experimental medical treatment that they normally wouldn't, that they don't want to take, and they actually, if you ask them, can't tell you coherently why they want to take it? And so this is what I had been sort of really inquisitive about. So I put that all into my thesis proposal that really just had to do with conformity, psychology, the experiments of Solomon Asch going back to the fifties, et cetera, et cetera.

Wayne Lenhardt

And at that point, at least one of your professors had written something about COVID hadn't they?

Marcos Sobral

Yes. And so that came a bit after I started asking for help. I wrote several emails saying, "Well, I don't understand. Please help. Please help me understand. I can see that you have published several articles on COVID. So have other department members. What's the problem?" And, you know, reflecting now with the benefit of hindsight, it's very clear why: because I did not conform to the prescribed narrative. And I think I've heard sort of confidentially told to me that I was viewed as a dangerous intellectual that had to be silenced, blackballed, blacklisted—and they went to great lengths to ruin me. And it's been twelve months of a sustained effort to do so, to this day.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay. So let's go through this really quickly. You had one of your advisors, I believe it was your advisor, that had done something on COVID. You made a submission that had something to do with COVID.

Marcos Sobral

Yes.

Wayne Lenhardt

And all of a sudden, they told you that they would not touch anything relating to COVID. Is that fair?

Marcos Sobral

Yeah. Your submission is not good, and we're not interested in doing anything related to COVID.

Wayne Lenhardt

So you tried to comply with what they were asking for. But at that point, the doors seemed to start to close on you. Is that fair?

Marcos Sobral

It was based on material that they had told me about, the work of Stanley Cohen and moral panics. That's been a very well-studied phenomenon. And so I took that material, and that's what I used for my first thesis proposal. And they urged me to do a second thesis proposal with different material from Stanley Cohen based on a book called *States of Denial*. And so I did. And they said it had to be criminological because I was in the criminal justice department, so it had to have a strong emphasis on criminal justice.

And I thought, "Well, what better than the extensive criminal history of the pharmaceutical industrial complex," right? So these companies that have a prolific history for paying, you know, record criminal penalties for fraud, falsifying data, bribing physicians, they've paid tens and millions, and in some cases billions in penalties. And, you know, there was one paragraph there that was about vaccines because it's a significant issue, aside from opiates and everything else. And some professors were quite measured. They said, "I'm not interested." And others blasted me and said they didn't want to participate in an anti-vax project.

Wayne Lenhardt

And another professor that seemed quite helpful to begin with gave you a zero on a project.

Marcos Sobral

That also came much later.

Wayne Lenhardt

Oh, okay.

Marcos Sobral

So by now, at this point, it's probably July. I've submitted two proposals. I've been sort of laughed at, called names. And so I said, "You know, how about this?" I already had an award-winning proposal that the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council had

given me a research grant for. But, you know, it was something that I had done all through my honours thesis—it was my honours thesis—and I thought, “Well I’d like to do something different, but I have this as backup. Let’s just use this proposal and run with it.” Absolutely not, it’s not good enough.

And I did not understand for the longest time why. And now of course, again in hindsight, it had to do with, in the criminal arena, some concepts that are two sides of the same coin—which are coercion and consent—and about how even the Supreme Court of Canada has sent down rulings in 2010 about coercion and consent with respect to interrogation and false confessions—which a frightful number, thousands of them, have happened because they are invalid when someone has been coerced.

And so I discussed those trilogies of Supreme Court rulings, you might call them: the Sinclair trilogy, which is part of a different trilogy, the confessions trilogy. And, you know, it has to do with the right to counsel, the right to silence, and the term “voluntariness,” that was very much clarified. And so there were these factors, like police trickery, oppressive conditions, et cetera, that invalidated someone’s confession.

Wayne Lenhardt

And this is all in the Criminal Justice Department.

Marcos Sobral

Correct.

Wayne Lenhardt

So this is the kind of thing they do.

Marcos Sobral

Yes.

Wayne Lenhardt

Okay, I want you to tell us about two things. Number one, you were told that you were going to voluntarily withdraw from the university. And I want you to tell us about the 0% mark that you got that you had to appeal to get overturned.

Marcos Sobral

Yes. Well, you know, there are elements, without skipping too far ahead. That was my third proposal. I also did a fourth proposal that on August 31, after having spent weeks now, months, the whole summer virtually in my office toiling away, they said, “Sorry, you’re out of time. Your proposal is not good enough. Sorry, you’re out of time.” And they kicked me out of the thesis stream and took my masters away from me, yeah. And so I was devastated. I checked my email before I got in my car, and I thought I was having a heart attack. I called my doctor and, you know, he said, “No, you’re probably just having a panic attack.” And I was like, “What do I do?”

Anyways, so I sent an email to some of the senior department members, and I included the Dean of Arts, the Dean of Graduate Studies. And I said, “Please help. You know, I don’t know

what's gone wrong. Something has gone horribly wrong. You know, for whatever my part, I'm sorry. Please don't take this away from me. I just want to be treated fairly, you know, and I'm willing to work with anybody. I don't know what's going on, because that fourth proposal was 40 pages long. It had nothing to do with COVID." I did exactly what they told, and now looking back, they spun me around to keep me dizzy with a bunch of conflicting instructions that were impossible to meet, and I tried. I tried to acquiesce to everything they asked me to do.

And so they said, "We'll discuss it and get back to you." And so about early October, first week of October, I got an email from the registrar inviting me to an office, which I wasn't sure where I was going. I had applied for jobs on campus. I saw that he worked in the English Department. I thought, "Oh, they're going to offer me a job." And he had invited me to the security office where him and the head of security shut the door behind me and slid me a piece of paper across the desk that said, you're kicked out of school on account of your voluntary withdrawal. That was insult to injury. I knew that something horribly wrong had happened, and I excused myself from this situation. I said, "I'm sorry, I need to seek advice. I need to seek counsel."

I reached out to about, I'd say, ten or twelve local law firms to get some type of advice or representation, and they all told me that they could not assist or advise due to conflicts. So I had to get a lawyer from Toronto, who has been so great. And at my own legal expense, he made quick work of it, and within a day they had reinstated me. So I was back. But then they started saying that it was on account of behavioural issues, which I thought I reached. I said, "Who?" I had a conversation with the registrar. I said, "What are you talking about? This is crazy."

They made these false allegations that I had been overly critical of someone's project. I reached out to that instructor and I said, "It's October. I haven't been on campus since April. I've never heard of anything about this." I reached out to my peers; there had only been two of them in my classes. I said, "Hey you guys, we were friends, we've gone on field trips together." I said, "I'm sorry if I've ever been critical." "No, no, nothing, no, no, no." Just very passively asking, and no one would address it. The instructor wouldn't address it. They ignored my inquiries. And I thought, you know, I could swear even in the feedback that I got 100%. I got full marks on all those classes. There was no mention of anything in the feedback. There was even mention that I had not been critical enough, that I should have asked more questions.

So it was completely fabricated and manufactured. Needless to say, this whole situation has been extremely destructive for, you know, not just financially for legal fees, but for my own personal health. And so now I'm forced out of the thesis stream into the project stream, which means instead of the nine credits I would have got for my masters, I need to find those nine credits elsewhere in three classes: So one class I was forced to take online at Athabasca University that later I realized I had to go through the whole application registration and pay again more tuition out of pocket; four [credits], **another class on campus called Peace Building and Social Justice; and a knowledge synthesis project, which was worth another three credits, which is like a thesis project but smaller.**

So the online class went great. The other class, Peace Building and Social Justice, because I already had a degree in conflict resolution studies, it was a friendly, familiar department—on the very first assignment that was an essay outline, I got an F, which is very jarring and unprecedented. And so I invited the instructor to discuss it. And I said, "You know, is this like a 49 F or a zero F?" And he said, "It's a zero F." To make a long story short, I was forced

to appeal the grade, and it was overturned to a B+ thankfully. I found some justice there. But he trashed my work pretty well throughout.

I mean, I thought to myself many times: “Are you being unreasonable? Are you being paranoid? Are you being irrational?” But it becomes clear that over now twelve months has been a consistent pattern of collusion to make my life impossible and to ruin my reputation. And I’ve been full-time in academia since about 2007 or ‘08. My record is excellent. I have a very respectable GPA. Nothing of the sort has ever been alleged or accused of me of any type of behaviour issue before.

So with this knowledge synthesis project, I was appointed another advisor. And for my first draft I thought, “Okay, this time it was very clear to me that this was about COVID,” and I decided that I’m just going to write about COVID, and I’m going to make it about moral panics. And my advisor approved it again, this very well-studied phenomenon. And after my first draft, he said, “You need to remove all mention of COVID from your paper,” which was a single mention in the first paragraph.

And so for the second draft, I wrote more about COVID. I talked about the legal implications. I talked about the wholesale social destruction and the damage that happened. And it was impeccably and thoroughly and very-well cited. And then he said it was very problematic, my argumentation about COVID. And I would ask him, “How?” And I would get these very circular, incoherent replies that really made no sense. I said, “All I’m asking is, is COVID a moral panic? Does it qualify?” And a research question was a central, core, necessary component of that project. And he said, “You have to remove that research question. There’s no research question.” I said, “Okay, well, the guidelines also call for some type of justification in the form of a research question.” “There will be no justification,” they told me.

And so I completed the project in my third draft, and when I went to submit it, he threatened that there would be severe consequences. First he said, “I will not accept any project that has any mention of COVID in it.” And then I said, “Well, the project is done.” I can’t change the research question once I’ve done my research, which was 61 full articles with full attribution and citation of the author, the title, the year, and a direct quote from each article discussing moral panics. And it was the most—because I looked—it was the most heavily-cited masters submission in the last five years in the department. And he said, “You have to remove it all.” I said, “I can’t change it once the research is done and I’ve written up and presented the data. I won’t do it. I won’t change it. He says, “If you submit this as is, there will be severe consequences.”

And there were. They’re holding my degree hostage, and I’ve experienced nothing but intimidation, persecution, discrimination, ridicule, abuse. Even once I got reinstated, they retaliated and invited me to another closed-door meeting where they escalated these absurd, false accusations, and they even implicated other students, who—I don’t know if they realized that we were all friends—and I asked them, like, “You guys remember anything like this happening?” “No, what are they talking—?”

So, I mean, it’s been a nightmare. I love academia. It’s been sort of my main focus for a long time. Fifteen years I’ve been at it full time, and I’ve never experienced anything like this. And I want to be gracious and measured and diplomatic when I talk about these things, because these are people who I had a really good professional relationship with and who I admired, but they lost their minds. They lost their minds.

Wayne Lenhardt

Do you think it had anything to do with grant money in the department?

Marcos Sobral

So I can only speculate. But just like the pharmaceutical industry and media, large parts of academia are also captured and extremely corrupt.

Wayne Lenhardt

I think I'm going to stop there and ask the commissioners if they'd like to explore anything here. No questions?

Okay. On behalf of the National Citizens Inquiry, I want to thank you for coming and giving your testimony today.

Marcos Sobral

Thank you.

