



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

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Day 2

EVIDENCE

Witness 2: Terry Lachappelle

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[00:00:00]

Ches Crosbie

Good morning, Mr. Lachappelle. Do you, in the testimony you will now give, affirm that you will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Terry Lachappelle

I do.

Criss Hochhold

Good morning, Terry. I know we've already sort of mentioned it, but can you please give us your full name?

Terry Lachappelle

Yes, my name is Terry Lachappelle.

Criss Hochhold

Where do you live, Terry?

Terry Lachappelle

Right now, we live in rural New Brunswick.

Criss Hochhold

And what did you do for a living?

Terry Lachappelle

I'm a retired military veteran of 21-plus years.

Criss Hochhold

Where were you posted, Terry?

Terry Lachappelle

Six different provinces.

Criss Hochhold

Let's go with the most recent, or your last posting.

Terry Lachappelle

Right, CFB Trenton.

Criss Hochhold

Okay, so before moving to rural New Brunswick, your residence was Trenton, in Ontario?

Terry Lachappelle

Correct.

Criss Hochhold

What did you do for the military? What was your occupation or your capacity?

Terry Lachappelle

My occupation was MSE Op, Mobile Support Equipment Operator. Basically, a truck driver. I retired in mid-2018, and I started working on the base as a civilian in— Sorry, this is a little hard to say, but in 2020, as a public service.

Criss Hochhold

Breathe, nice and relaxed. It always helps to breathe deeply. Take a couple deep breaths, and we'll go from there, okay?

Terry Lachappelle

I'm good.

Criss Hochhold

Excellent. Terry, you retired from the military in 2018 and then took a public service position with the military. Correct, as a public service?

Terry Lachappelle

Yes, as a civilian.

Criss Hochhold

As a civilian. Okay. And then you left that job in 2020, you said?

Terry Lachappelle

In late 2020, yes.

Criss Hochhold

What precipitated that?

Terry Lachappelle

Well just about, you know, early 2019, early 2020, the COVID pandemic was happening. And I listened to a lot of different news outlets—not just mainstream media but also alternative news outlets. And I was hearing rumors and reading rumors about possible injection mandates for all public service employees. My wife also worked on the base as a public service employee. And I was watching that really carefully because I was worried obviously, right, what was going to happen. So between the two of us and my military pension, we were doing fine. I mean, you know, \$170,000 a year, roughly. We had a couple nice vehicles, nice home, completely renovated, you know, camper, pool, hot tub for my back. Everything was going good. Until I believe in September or October, it was announced from the federal government—you can look it up; it's still on their website—that yeah, indeed, you know, no jab, no job. So you either take the injection, or you'll be placed on indeterminate leave without pay for public service employees.

Criss Hochhold

And this would affect both you and your spouse?

Terry Lachappelle

Oh, huge. You know, when you have a comfortable life and we're just starting to get used to that, and then all of a sudden, poof, it's gone. So I saw the writing on the wall. I saw the deadline. It was there in writing. So come back a bit, I knew what was going to happen. I knew what we had to do because there's no way I could afford all of that, you know.

Criss Hochhold

So you've made a decision. It sounds as though—and please let me know if I'm incorrect—But you said you then received documentation from the military that says if you're not vaccinated by a certain date, that your employment would effectively be terminated.

Terry Lachappelle

Right.

Criss Hochhold

But you've made a decision not to get vaccinated, is that right?

Terry Lachappelle

Correct, because a lot of red flags. I mean mRNA is nothing new. I'm sure everybody in this room has looked it up, did a little research, whatever. It's decades-old technology.

[00:05:00]

And the first red flag to me was, why wasn't it ever brought to market before. And then the push, the push, I mean, coercion? Really? Coercion to take something that I don't want to take; to take a medical procedure I don't want to undergo? You know, like, you never buy the first model Tesla. You're going to wait till they work out some bugs first, right? And my backup plan was always, well if I'm wrong, I can always take it. You know?

Criss Hochhold

When you said coercion, can you tell me a little bit more about exactly what you mean by that?

Terry Lachappelle

Well, when the government announced that you either take it or you get placed on leave without pay for basically forever, I talked with my wife and I said, "You know, we got to sell everything. We have no choice because I can't afford this." A military pension isn't very big, right? So we had to sell the house. We went down to one vehicle, sold the motorcycle, sold everything. I mean, a lot of stuff I couldn't even take with me, the movers wouldn't take. Luckily for us, we did make a little bit of money on the sale of the house, so that kind of tied us over for a little while. We hired some movers. We moved back to southern Ontario, back to Niagara. Ended up in a small—maybe 550 square foot—apartment on the third floor. Big difference. It's not something I really want to wish on anybody. I mean, it might have been easy, just take it, carry on with my life but no, no.

Criss Hochhold

You felt that, based on the research you've conducted and the information available at the time, that it wasn't safe for you to take to continue employment? Rather than potentially the prospect of losing your home, your vehicles, everything that you've built up? Because you had quite a long, lengthy career with the military.

Terry Lachappelle

Right, well, based on what I was reading—I watched a little bit of mainstream media, but I tried to stay away from it—a lot of other alternative sources. I never take anything I see online at face value. You have to kind of read between the lines, use a grocery store method, take what you need, and leave the rest behind.

The stuff I was reading was just like, wow. No, I don't even want to take a chance on this right now, so I'm going to wait. I'm going to see what happens. Unfortunately, I didn't have time to wait, because the date was on the wall, November 1st, and then on November 15th, you're being placed on leave without pay. So we did what we had to do. And it was really like a punch in the face. You know, here's an organization I worked for half my adult life. Okay, when I was in the military, I was medically released. I kind of understand that, I mean, you get to a certain point in life where you can't do what you used to do. So yeah, I couldn't do the soldier thing anymore. That's fine. You know, I understand that. And there were some benefits there for me on retirement. But this, there's just basically nothing.

They're taking away two full-time incomes and replacing it with nothing. I mean, we all know what happened with CERB [Canada Emergency Response Benefit]. I didn't even want to go near that, because I knew they'd come back to get it. It's 'the government after all, right?

Criss Hochhold

So it sounds like your overall experience with the military up to this point has been rather favorable. You enjoyed your career with the military?

Terry Lachappelle

For the most part, ups and downs. Well, like any job, right?

Criss Hochhold

Absolutely, absolutely. But overall, it was pretty good until these mandates came into effect and then you had to make a life-altering decision. Why did you choose to move from Ontario to rural New Brunswick?

Terry Lachappelle

Well, before we moved to Niagara, we looked for an apartment in and around the Belleville, Trenton, even as far as Kingston. No way I could afford an apartment on a military pension. I mean they're eighteen hundred, two thousand dollars a month. That's basically my military pension, right? So there'd be no money for food, there'd be no money for bills, there wouldn't be anything. So we did manage to find a small apartment in Niagara that was just over a thousand dollars a month. So we rented that while we tried to figure out what we were going to do. And I contacted a veteran friend of mine in rural New Brunswick, and he said, "Hey, why don't you come and look around here? I'm sure you can find something. The prices are still reasonable." So I did. I jumped in the car. I came to New Brunswick. I looked around. I found a spot. My mortgage broker made it happen.

[00:10:00]

It was a miracle, really. So just based on my pension, we qualified for the property because I said, "There's no way this is going to be taken away from me again." You know? So any other little job that my wife could get, or I could get, or something like that, it's just a bonus, right? And that's how we ended up in New Brunswick, sixteen hundred kilometers away from my father and my brother.

Criss Hochhold

Did you have any family in New Brunswick at all?

Terry Lachappelle

I have some cousins around Sussex and St. John's, and my one veteran friend there, not too far from us. And there's other veterans in Fredericton, and I think there's a few in Moncton. That's going way back to my Army Corps days, but yeah. Everybody's so far apart out here, though. It's like, "I'm going to go visit, my friend, Rob. Oh wow, he's 45 minutes away!"

Criss Hochhold

Well, yes, sir, in the Maritimes, we tend to have some distances. Terry, I know you've talked to us, and you gave us a glimpse into your financial situation when you went from a combined income of about \$170,000 a year, benefits from the federal government working for the military, to roughly \$35,000 a year. And you reluctantly had to move from Ontario, where your immediate family is, to a place where you really have no immediate family, which is a significant distance away.

Terry Lachappelle

Right.

Criss Hochhold

How are you dealing with that—if I may ask—emotionally? How is your mental health because of all this as well?

Terry Lachappelle

Well, how do you deal with it? Day by day. I mean, what do you want me to say, right? You do what you got to do to get it done. My rock is over there, my wife, right?

Criss Hochhold

Absolutely. And I can appreciate that very much so. Since moving to New Brunswick, have you had contact or have you seen your immediate family, like your dad? When was the last time?

Terry Lachappelle

No, not since. It takes money to drive, you know, from New Brunswick to Ontario, and I have to do it in short hops. I almost threw my back out just driving here today. But I wanted to be here.

Criss Hochhold

I appreciate you being here.

Terry Lachappelle

Because this is so important.

Criss Hochhold

It is, absolutely.

Before moving to New Brunswick— I'm sorry to have to go there again—but not having contact with your dad, or at least a physical presence with him prior to moving to New Brunswick, how often would you spend time with your father?

Terry Lachappelle

Almost every day. That was really the whole pull to move there. It was one of the only places, we could afford to rent; it was also to spend time, you know, with family. Trenton is about a three-hour drive, so it's a six-hour round trip. Being right there, I mean, I could just go knock on his door and say, "Hey come on over," you know, "for breakfast."

Criss Hochhold

Alright, so you went from a lot of contact to actually zero contact.

Terry Lachappelle

Zero. None.

Criss Hochhold

None at all.

Terry Lachappelle

Well, other than maybe, you know, a Facebook conversation—

Criss Hochhold

Right.

Terry Lachappelle

A video conversation or a phone conversation, yeah.

Criss Hochhold

But certainly, no quality time, so to speak, in person. Like you would have before, like we'd like to do with family.

Terry Lachappelle

Correct.

Criss Hochhold

Do you have any other family in Ontario that you had to move away from as well, aside from your father?

Terry Lachappelle

My brother, my daughter, a lot of friends, acquaintances.

Criss Hochhold

When was the last time you saw your daughter?

Terry Lachappelle

Last time we saw her was when we left. That would have been mid-August, roughly mid-August of last year.

Criss Hochhold

Of 2022?

Terry Lachappelle

Yeah.

Criss Hochhold

So about seven, eight months—seven months, roughly.

Terry Lachappelle

And if it wasn't for my brother helping us move, I don't know how I would have done it. Couldn't afford movers, right? So U-Haul wanted \$6,000 for a truck. I'm like, "no, I can't do that."

Criss Hochhold

After everything you went through, what I do want to know—and I think potentially the commissioners as well—is, if you had to do it over, would you reconsider? Would you take the shot?

Terry Lachappelle

Wouldn't hesitate. I'd do the same thing all over again.

Criss Hochhold

Do the same thing.

Terry Lachappelle

Because I had no choice.

[00:15:00]

Criss Hochhold

Because earlier you mentioned coercion a bit, where your quote-unquote "choice" was take the vaccine or lose your job,

Terry Lachappelle

Right.

Criss Hochhold

That you didn't see that as a valid choice.

Terry Lachappelle

No, that's not a choice. That's no choice at all. That's, you know, that's like me telling you, "Hey, drink this or you lose your job." "Well, what's in it?" "I don't know. Just drink it!" "Well, what's it going to do to me?" "I don't know. Just drink it! It's safe and effective, I promise." You'd be like, "Yeah, I don't think so." I mean, what do you want me to tell you? It's almost beyond coercion. It's blackmail is what it is. Let's call it what it is. Because that would be blackmail.

And the harder you tell me to do something that I don't want to do, the more I'm going to push back. I'm that kind of guy. I'm a Taurus. It ain't gonna happen. I will push you. And to this day, people call me an anti-vaxxer. I've lost friends. I've lost people that just don't even want to talk to me anymore, right? I post a lot of things online, controversial things maybe. I've spent a lot of time in Facebook jail. I visited my daughter there a lot, too. Because, you know, that's where they put you when you post things they don't agree with.

Criss Hochhold

Okay, Terry, you've raised a very good point. And actually, I'd like to ask: you said you're not an anti-vaxxer. Now, when you joined the military— Do you have to take vaccinations typically, when you enter the military for deployments, things of that— So have you taken any vaccines while in the military service?

Terry Lachappelle

We'll go back to my childhood. I've had all my childhood vaccines. I did the needles parade right here in Cornwallis, Nova Scotia in 1985. They called it a parade, but it wasn't really a parade: jab, jab, jab, jab, back and forth. Before I was deployed, I couldn't even tell you what they were. They just said, "You need to take this." Okay. I took it. Because I knew they're just traditional vaccines; mRNA is a messenger ribonucleic acid, I believe it's called, and somebody can correct me if I'm wrong. It's not a traditional vaccine. And when I was posted to Ottawa in 2012, they noticed that all my vaccinations were expired. So they said, so you need to take them all over again. "Oh, and look, you've never had the Hep A, B, C, D, E, F, G." So I took all those too, without hesitation. I will put my vaccine booklet up against anybody's in this room, any day, hands down. Hands down, I'm going to win.

Criss Hochhold

So no hesitation whatsoever for all the prescribed vaccinations within the military up until the COVID-19 came in. And based on what you've said to us is that there simply—I'm going to paraphrase it—but simply there wasn't enough documentation and proof of safety for you to take a risk on an experimental vaccine. But you had no issues whatsoever taking any of the vaccinations that were required because you know they've been proven, and they've been effective, and they've been around. Is that correct?

Terry Lachappelle

Correct. Yep. Too many red flags.

Criss Hochhold

Thank you, Terry. I appreciate your time. I'm going to refer to the commissioners for any questions.

Commissioner Kaikkonen

I'm just wondering if there was an appeal process before the imposed deadline, if there were any other options that you could have taken?

Terry Lachappelle

Not that I'm aware of. I didn't allow them to put me on leave without pay. I just resigned. This was in mid-September. So about a month and a half before the end of October deadline.

Commissioner Kaikkonen

Thank you.

Terry Lachappelle

And just to add to that if I may. We do know people in the public service that have been placed on leave without pay. So it wasn't just something they might have done. It was done. And I personally know a lot of veterans that were released—dishonorably discharged—because they refused the COVID vaccines.

Commissioner Massie

Thank you for your testimony. I was going to ask exactly the question: In your assessment, what would be the proportion of people that refused to take the job? According to the people you know around you in the military, for example.

Terry Lachappelle

Well, there was a number floating around of approximately 900, 800–900 military personnel that were dishonorably discharged.

[00:20:00]

And coincidentally, some of them I know personally, and they were actually called back. And they said "No," you know, "you kicked me to the curb. I'm not coming back." And as far as the civilians, I only know of a couple, myself personally. I don't know the numbers on the civilian population, I wasn't there very long. I was there for less than a year when all this happened, so.

Criss Hochhold

Thank you very much for your time, Terry. I'm very grateful for you being here today.

Terry Lachappelle

You're welcome. Thank you. Have a good day.

[00:20:45]

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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.

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