



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Truro, NS

Day 3

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EVIDENCE

Witness 11: Kirk Desrosiers

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[00:00:00]

Ches Crosbie

Mr. Desrosiers, do you affirm that you will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Kirk Desrosiers

I do.

Ches Crosbie

Thank you.

Criss Hochhold

Can you please tell us your full name and where you live.

Kirk Desrosiers

Kirk Desrosiers. I live on the South Shore, Northwest Cove.

Criss Hochhold

What was your occupation?

Kirk Desrosiers

I worked for a company called Admiral Insurance. I was a facility specialist for just a little over 13 years now.

Criss Hochhold

What does that mean, facility specialist?

Kirk Desrosiers

Dealing with the property itself within the building, contractors, vendors, health and safety, IT support and ergonomic assessments.

Criss Hochhold

Okay. And you were a volunteer in your community?

Kirk Desrosiers

I do lots of volunteering in my community, yes.

Criss Hochhold

Okay, but particularly, do you volunteer as a volunteer firefighter?

Kirk Desrosiers

I do, yes, for District 1 Blandford.

Criss Hochhold

I want to talk a little bit more about your volunteer firefighting. As a volunteer firefighter, for you specifically, what was your role? What were you doing there as a volunteer firefighter?

Kirk Desrosiers

Well, a particular role like that is a lot of extensive training and a lot of studying and learning about the equipment and the apparatuses on the fire trucks, and a lot of dealing with the medical calls and learning about medical procedures.

I was studying for the MFR, medical first response.

Criss Hochhold

Okay, excellent. Within that capacity as a volunteer firefighter, not only did you receive a lot of training, but did you suit up and attend calls, fire calls and calls of that nature as well?

Kirk Desrosiers

Starting off, I was just still training. I wasn't a full firefighter, but I would wear the gear and do drills and training exercises.

Criss Hochhold

Okay. For those training exercises that you did, when you say full gear, what does that mean? What do you mean the full gear? Does that mean you get the helmet, the mask?

Kirk Desrosiers

You get the helmet, the full wardrobe, the tank, the scuba gear they call it—all the apparatus, all your equipment.

Criss Hochhold

How much weight would that be?

Kirk Desrosiers

Well, it's a little over 75 pounds.

Criss Hochhold

Seventy-five pounds, so you'd have to be in pretty good physical condition to strap on this apparatus, suit, and then conduct exercises and that as well?

Kirk Desrosiers

Not so much physical—I guess in one aspect you would have to be physical, but strong. Because, like I said, depending on the extra equipment that you have to carry, depending on the type of call or emergency you have, it could be overwhelming.

Criss Hochhold

So in order to become a fully qualified firefighter, you said you had to undergo testing. Was there a test you did in 2021 in order to, you know, proceed in those qualifications?

Kirk Desrosiers

Yes, in order to be a volunteer firefighter, you have to go to a doctor and do a full physical assessment to make sure that you're mentally and physically able to carry out your duties.

Criss Hochhold

What's the test comprised of, the physical?

Kirk Desrosiers

Like, check your heart. Measure the stress on your heart, do little treadmill tests; make sure that you don't have a hernia, any things like that. They check your blood pressure and make sure that it's normal and make sure that there's no issues with, like, breathing.

Criss Hochhold

What was the result of that test?

Kirk Desrosiers

I was good. Perfect.

Criss Hochhold

Clean? Clean bill of health, good to go?

Kirk Desrosiers

Filled out all the forms, gave me the clean bill of health, sent it off to the firehouse.

Criss Hochhold

And that was in early August of 2021?

Kirk Desrosiers

It was, yes.

Criss Hochhold

Ok. So you were fit for duty.

Kirk Desrosiers

I was fit, yeah.

Criss Hochhold

Then you gave some consideration to getting vaccinated shortly after that, is that correct?

Kirk Desrosiers

Well, not shortly after that. For the longest time, I was sort of speaking against it. I didn't think it was safe enough. I was really terrified and nervous. I didn't want to put that in my body because I just felt it was too soon to take something like that without extensive testing. So I tried as long as I could not to take the vaccination.

[00:05:00]

Criss Hochhold

But you decided against it and you did take it?

Kirk Desrosiers

At the end, yeah, I did. It was mostly due to peer pressure, the media, the medical doctors: everyone was telling me that I have to take it.

Criss Hochhold

Okay. So you went and got your first shot. How long after your— I'm going to put it in context for time: How long after your firefighter physical tests did you get the first shot?

Kirk Desrosiers

The first vaccination was August 16th, and I got my physical August 17th.

Criss Hochhold

So very, very closely together, obviously.

Kirk Desrosiers

Yes.

Criss Hochhold

Just for the record, the lot number would have been— This is a Pfizer vaccine?

Kirk Desrosiers

It was Pfizer, yes.

Criss Hochhold

Do you have the lot number in front of you?

Kirk Desrosiers

The lot number for that one was FA9099.

Criss Hochhold

Now, before you received the vaccine, who administered it for you and where did you go?

Kirk Desrosiers

The first one I got was at the drive-thru setup over in Dartmouth, at the Dartmouth Hospital.

Criss Hochhold

And do you remember who gave it to you? The person?

Kirk Desrosiers

I don't, unfortunately, no.

Criss Hochhold

Okay, well, that's okay. Whoever administered this to you, did they warn you about potential risks, side effects, benefits of getting the vaccine?

Kirk Desrosiers

At the time, they briefly said some stuff. I couldn't really remember. I don't know if I was just panicky or scared; it just happened so quick, and then they told me just pull over and stay in the parking lot for 20 minutes while someone looked after me.

Criss Hochhold

And how did you fare after the first shot? Any issues?

Kirk Desrosiers

No issues, no symptoms, nothing. I was perfect after that. Like it didn't even happen.

Criss Hochhold

Wow. And then you decided to get a second shot as recommended.

Kirk Desrosiers

Yeah.

Criss Hochhold

When was that?

Kirk Desrosiers

That was on August— No, sorry that was September 13th.

Criss Hochhold

So roughly a month after the first shot.

Kirk Desrosiers

Yes.

Criss Hochhold

Give or take a few days. And that was also Pfizer?

Kirk Desrosiers

It was Pfizer, yeah.

Criss Hochhold

And do you have the lot number in front of you?

Kirk Desrosiers

That one was FA9091.

Criss Hochhold

I'm going to ask the same thing as well for your second shot. Where did you go get that?

Kirk Desrosiers

That one was at the Superstore.

Criss Hochhold

And who issued that to you? Who gave you that?

Kirk Desrosiers

Unfortunately, I don't know.

Criss Hochhold

Was it a pharmacist?

Kirk Desrosiers

It was a pharmacist, yeah.

Criss Hochhold

He was the pharmacist at the Superstore.

Kirk Desrosiers

It was, yes.

Criss Hochhold

Did the pharmacist talk to you about potential risks or harms or benefits of the vaccine?

Kirk Desrosiers

No, nothing at all.

Criss Hochhold

Did you have to sign a form?

Kirk Desrosiers

I did, yeah.

Criss Hochhold

Do you remember what the form said by any chance, or did it lay things out for you? Or was it just a consent form to receive?

Kirk Desrosiers

It was a consent form for them to administrate it.

Criss Hochhold

Yeah. You don't remember how many pages there were or what the consent form said?

Kirk Desrosiers

I do believe it was just one page. But it was mostly, they were like, "Sign it or you're not getting it." Like, "We got to hurry up and move along," kind of ordeal.

Criss Hochhold

Okay, thank you. Did you have any issues after the second shot?

Kirk Desrosiers

Well, after the second vaccine, everything was the same as the first. Everything was going good: no signs, no symptoms, everything was okay. Except on September 22nd, and that would have been a Wednesday, because I woke up and I was really kind of out of it. I wasn't feeling right, and I thought it was just because I was overworked at my job and doing the training. I was just tired and sore. I was having trouble breathing. I was like, "Ah, it's the middle of the week. I'll just push through and see what happens." But I remember waking up that day and it felt like someone was sitting on my chest.

Criss Hochhold

Did you do anything about that? Or what did you do after that?

Kirk Desrosiers

No, I just played it off as, "Oh, I'm just getting run down with everything I've been doing at my company and at the firehouse." So I just thought, "Oh, I'm probably just getting a cold," or I was thinking, "Oh, maybe it's symptoms from the vaccine." Maybe it was like, if you get a vaccine you get like cold symptoms, I didn't really know. But that day, I just drank a French vanilla just to warm up my lungs to try to help myself to breathe.

Criss Hochhold

You know, Kirk, I'm just going to back up just a moment here. There is one question I'd like to ask as well, just in regards to the conversation you had with the pharmacist.

[00:10:00]

Considering you were a volunteer firefighter—you know, pretty good shape, carrying heavy equipment, right? Potentially having a life—pulling somebody out of a house, of a car, operating the equipment. Given your age and your health, were you given then a personal risk assessment by the pharmacist? Like, to let you know of your chance of becoming seriously ill or dying should you contract COVID-19?

Kirk Desrosiers

Nothing like that, no.

Criss Hochhold

Nothing like that. All right. Because you'd be one of the fitter people really around in the community, at the very least, because of the duties you would have to perform. So there was no consideration given whatsoever.

Kirk Desrosiers

Nothing like that, no.

Criss Hochhold

Thank you. Now we're going to move forward once again. So you had all these symptoms that you kind of just chalked up to work-related: I'm stressed, a little bit of this. So you carried on and you went to work that day.

Kirk Desrosiers

Yes.

Criss Hochhold

Can you tell me more, just what happened I guess throughout the day, just briefly? And then what happened after that?

Kirk Desrosiers

Well, it wasn't just that day, it was over time. I just kept thinking, "Oh, it's a chest cold." And it was probably within two weeks time frame of going back and forth to work and doing my training. And I said to my partner quite a bit, "I got this chest cold in my lungs, but I don't have a cough." And we did some research—and she goes to a naturopath—about taking elderberry. It's supposed to be good for your lungs. So I tried that, and it seemed to be okay. But it was one of the last days at work, I remember: I was doing a lot of activity and it was all day. I was lifting stuff that's about 50, 60 pounds all day long. And then I just started sweating, and I felt a really bad pain. And I just couldn't catch my breath and I had to leave.

Criss Hochhold

Did you go to the hospital right after that because of how you were feeling?

Kirk Desrosiers

No, I went home and I just laid down, took a nap, and it seemed to be passing me. Except for the sore lung feeling. And I decided that night to go to the firehouse for training, just because it was mostly just learning exercises; it wasn't physical hands-on. So I was like, I'll go there tonight and learn some stuff.

Criss Hochhold

Okay. And once you got to the firehall, can you tell me what transpired there?

Kirk Desrosiers

Yeah, it was quite early as I got there, because I was still kind of overwhelmed a bit. But it was basically— We're just going around at the fire trucks and checking all the storage compartments. So if there was a scene where I was located, if one of the firefighters said, "I need the fire axe," I'd know to go to compartment 10 on the truck to hand it to him. So it was just cataloguing items on the truck.

And then we started to do the MFR—medical first response training. And the training that we're doing that night was checking blood pressure. And the first one was just the automatic, where you put it on, you push a button, and it just reads the systolic and diastolic pressure for you automatically. But I remember the fire chief that night said, "Well,

if you do get a medical call, what I want you to do first is use the manual—the one that you—”

Criss Hochhold

The little pump.

Kirk Desrosiers

Yeah. And I said to him, “Well, that’s good, Chief, but I don’t know anything about that or what to listen for, the blood coming or going.” And he goes, “Well since you asked about it, why don’t you be the guinea pig; you be the volunteer to sit up front and show everyone?” So I sat there and one of the EMTs put the cuff on me and his face just blanked out white. And he got right nervous. And I was like, “What’s wrong?” And he read it and it was 157 over something. And he goes, “That’s really high. What I’m going to get you to do is just sit in the corner away from everybody and just try to calm down, and I’d like to read that again.”

So it was about 45 minutes and then he came and got me and asked, “Can I do your blood pressure check again?” And the second time he did it, it was 187 over something and he goes, “That doesn’t seem right because you’re just sitting here relaxing.” And I go, “Well what do you think?” And he goes, “I got to get you to the hospital immediately.” And I’m like, “Oh-ho-ho, well, let’s not go immediately.” I said, “I have a pain in my lungs for a while. I think it’s just a cold and that’s interfering.” He’s like, “No, you could take a stroke or a heart attack at any second.”

So I remember Tami, my partner, came to pick me up and rushed me to the emergency room. I got there, we walked in, and they asked, were we vaccinated and stuff. And I was like, “yeah.” They took me aside.

[00:15:00]

And Tami, unfortunately, my partner, she wasn’t vaccinated then. And they almost physically took her out of the hospital and wouldn’t let her come in at all. She had to wait out in the car. And I first sat there after they kicked her out, and I was alone waiting for someone. Finally, the nurse came over and got me, and she put the blood pressure on me, and it read 212 over 137. And all I remember is getting thrown in a wheelchair, and they dragged me off to different rooms. The first room was the EKG, and then they rolled me down to another room and said, “We’re just going to put you on the monitor and check everything.” And then one of the nurses noticed, “Your oxygen level is, like, extremely low.” And I’m like, “Okay I didn’t know that it was low. I’m just doing my thing.”

So another doctor came in, and they were assessing the monitors that I was hooked up to. And one of the nurses was like, “Oh, you just got high blood pressure because of the work you’ve been doing at the firehouse. Once it goes down a little bit, we’ll send you on your way. You’ll be fine.” And I kept telling her, “Well, does it have anything to do with a chest cold?” Because I had pain in my lungs and it was getting quite severe. She’s like, “Oh no, that’s just because you’re doing extensive work, and it’s just your muscle’s sore.” And I’m like, “Well, a sore muscle doesn’t have anything to do with my breathing. Like, I’m having trouble breathing.”

So the other doctor that came in the room was like, “Oh yeah, we should look into it a little more.” And he’s like, “I’ll be right back. I’ll get you prepped for some tests.” Then another

doctor came in, and she was asking me some questions. And I was like, “Yeah, I had a pain—it was almost two weeks now. And it’s like I’m having trouble breathing, and obviously now I got the extreme high blood pressure due to it, which I never had in my life.” And she goes, “Oh, it fits the time frame.” And I’m like, “Doc, what do you mean time frame? Time frame for what? Me coming in tonight?” She’s like, “No, time frame for your vaccine.” And I didn’t mention anything then to the doctor. And I was like, “Well, what do you mean?” She said, “When did you get your vaccination?” I was like, “My second vaccination was September 13th.” And she calculated in her head for a minute and she goes, “Oh, that’s a few weeks off.” That’s right where—that lines up with what we see.

Criss Hochhold

What happened after that?

Kirk Desrosiers

And I’m like, “Well, what do you mean, what you see?” And she goes, “Well we’re seeing people with blood clots.” She goes, “Don’t be alarmed. I’m going to do some tests with your blood and just check.” And she said at the time, “We’re going to check for a coagulation agent in my blood.” So she drew my blood and I was nervous. Because when they took my blood before, it was in the cup pretty quick, the little tube, but this was like motor oil, like it was really thick. So I was kind of sweating nervous because of that.

So she came back with the tests with another doctor. And she’s like, “Yeah, we’re correct. You do have blood clotting agents in your blood.” And then she said, “Don’t worry about that. You don’t have to be alarmed. Such per cent of people have that, but it doesn’t affect them.” I’m like, “Well obviously I’m being affected in some way.” So she goes to the other doctor, “Let’s get you in a wheelchair and we’ll take you up to get x-rays.” So I went and got a chest x-ray and then I came back to the room waiting for tests. And then another doctor I never saw came in with two other doctors and they were talking amongst themselves looking at the chart. And they said, “Yeah, we find there’s some stuff in your lungs.” I’m like, “okay.” And they’re like, “Yeah, blood clots.” And then they didn’t really give any other information on that.

And then the other doctor that was late coming in, they were obviously having a little chat, he said, “We got to get a CT scan.” That’s where you inject the dye into your body. So again they threw me in a wheelchair and took me up there. And I remember as I was going up, I was thinking to myself, “Well, this is crazy.” Like, I was terrified. You go in somewhat not feeling all right, but it seems like it was getting worse as soon as I got in there. Because one of the doctors that was in the room was like, “have oxygen on standby.” And I’m like, “Oh my lungs are going to collapse on me. I’m not going to be able to breath.” But they put me back in the room. And each time I did a test, it was two hours. And then my cell phone died. So I was in the room for, all together, 15 hours without my partner and I couldn’t contact her.

Criss Hochhold

Fifteen hours. They were running tests.

Kirk Desrosiers

Yeah.

[00:20:00]

So, after the doctors came back into the room, the one doctor that wanted the additional tests— I can't really explain the words that he used, it's from memory, but he said—

Criss Hochhold

Summarize it for us.

Kirk Desrosiers

He said, "extremely large quantity of blood clots in both my lungs."

Criss Hochhold

So you went from having a clean bill of health, testing to be a volunteer firefighter, everything is great

Kirk Desrosiers

Yeah.

Criss Hochhold

to all of a sudden severe issue with lung clots and within weeks of receiving the second dose.

Kirk Desrosiers

Within two weeks of the second vaccination. Yeah.

Criss Hochhold

Within two weeks of the second vaccine. What happened after that? Did they do further testing? Did they put you on medication, what happened?

Kirk Desrosiers

No. After they showed me the test and told me that, my partner, she was panicking. Finally, she called every floor, every office, every room, and one of nurses came in said, "you Kirk Desrosiers?" I'm like, "yeah." "Your wife's trying to get in touch with you, and we'll charge your phone." So they charged my phone. I talked to her and she was upset and crying, thought I'd died because my phone died and I told her I had blood clots.

Criss Hochhold

No answer, yeah.

Kirk Desrosiers

But they kept me in for another little bit. And they said, "Oh, you're going to be fine in a couple months. Just take the blood thinners. We'll get you in touch with hematology; everything's going to be fine." And I knew it wasn't going to be fine because one of the

doctors that was standing behind that doctor was just shaking his head, like, couldn't believe that the other doctor was telling me it's going to be okay. But after I talked to my partner, she was concerned that it had something to do then with the vaccine. Especially when the doctor said, before I even mentioned it: "It suits the timeframe."

Criss Hochhold

So do you know if the physicians that you were dealt with or your main physician there, did they enter anything into that, once again, this vaccine reporting system, to CAERS?

Kirk Desrosiers

Well, that was it. Tami told me to talk to them and I had the phone on speaker phone. And I said, "Well, the doctor knew." And obviously, I put two and two together just like that doctor. Like, this has something to do with the vaccine. All of a sudden, I got all these blood clots. So I asked the doctor that told me to go for the X-rays and the CT scan, I'm like, "Are you going to fill out the adverse reaction, that I had a reaction to the vaccine?" And his words to me was, "It takes too long, we're not going to do that here."

So they didn't fill out anything there.

Criss Hochhold

Okay. We're getting a little bit short on time, Kirk. And there's a lot more that we would like to get to, but I need to shorten it up a little if we can.

Kirk Desrosiers

Yeah.

Criss Hochhold

This happened in September of 2021. We are now in March 2023, a year and a half later. What have the long-term implications been on you since that incident at the hospital till today?

Kirk Desrosiers

I'm taking Xarelto. It's a high milligram of blood thinner. The specialist said, where it is affected through the vaccination, they have no idea how long I'll have to take these blood thinners—if it's only for a short period of time or if I'll have to take it for the rest of my life.

Criss Hochhold

So your specialist made the correlation to your blood clots to the vaccine?

Kirk Desrosiers

Yeah. The hematology department at the Dixon building put two and two together, filled out the forms and sent it off to, I think they said Health Canada, something like that. But I talked to them. I gave them the batch numbers and stuff like that.

Criss Hochhold

Okay.

Kirk Desrosiers

But I'm also taking now, because of that, two different types of medications for high blood pressure.

Criss Hochhold

How has this affected your quality of life?

Kirk Desrosiers

Till recently, I'd have to say I didn't have any quality of life. Since October 19th on, I'd say for the first six months after that, my health deteriorated so bad I was bedridden for six months. Couldn't do anything. That affected my mental health. I ended up putting on over 70 pounds I'm still trying to get off me because I'm not being active. Because talking too long or walking too long or doing anything: It's too much on my body. I can't breathe. My lungs are on fire. I'm sore to this day.

[00:25:00]

It's like someone's sitting on me all the time.

Criss Hochhold

It's a long road to recovery.

Kirk Desrosiers

It is, yeah.

Criss Hochhold

Because we have your spouse coming up as well, I'll leave some of the questions that I would have for you in regards to the financial hardship, I will pose those to her instead. Okay? Thank you, Kirk.

Kirk Desrosiers

Thank you.

Criss Hochhold

I'm going to see if the commissioners have any questions for you.

Commissioner DiGregorio

Thank you for your testimony. Just one question, and I hope you don't mind me asking: How old are you?

Kirk Desrosiers

Forty-three years old.

Commissioner DiGregorio

Thank you.

Kirk Desrosiers

Yeah. Thank you.

Criss Hochhold

Thank you, Kirk.

[00:26:03]



Final Review and Approval: Jodi Bruhn, August 3, 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.

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