



## NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Red Deer, AB

Day 1

April 26, 2023

### EVIDENCE

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**Witness 6: Tracy Walker**

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[00:00:00]

**Shawn Buckley**

Our next witness is Tracy Walker. Tracy, can you state your full name for the record, spelling your first name and last name?

**Tracy Walker**

Yes. Tracy Walker, T-R-A-C-Y. Walker, W-A-L-K-E-R.

**Shawn Buckley**

Tracy, do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

**Tracy Walker**

Yes, I do.

**Shawn Buckley**

Now, you are a hair stylist. You've been doing this for 36 years.

**Tracy Walker**

Yes.

**Shawn Buckley**

You're also a mother of two grown kids, and you have two grandchildren.

**Tracy Walker**

Yes.

**Shawn Buckley**

Now, you're here today to tell us about some economic things that happened to you with regards to the COVID lockdowns. My understanding is that you had a studio in your house in 2020 when the COVID pandemic hit.

**Tracy Walker**

Yes.

**Shawn Buckley**

Can you tell us what happened once the government locked us down in 2020?

**Tracy Walker**

Well, it's very obvious. If you're in a self-employed position where you're mandated that you cannot work—that and my husband, as well—it put a very huge impact in my life. I am a diabetic, so let's keep to work.

I work out of my home. I had a private entrance: a door locked from my household, its own bathroom. So, there was absolutely no one that would be in my household. So it was a private everything. I only was taking, at that point in time, one to two clients a day, depending if there was a family. So if there was a larger family, I would allow all of them to come. But generally, I would keep it pretty casual. But then when the lockdowns came in and I was not allowed to work, I really was at a loss. Both my husband and I were at a loss of what to do and how we were to maintain just the basics of our lifestyle, not necessarily our "lifestyle." Because we really didn't have much.

**Shawn Buckley**

Can I ask, was your husband able to continue working when the lockdown was imposed?

**Tracy Walker**

He was also shut down for a time being because well it was an office environment. And until they established that they brought all the equipment— He was able to work out of my home. Except for, I'll get to my next point, where we did not have a home for a time being. And I'm not too sure where you want me to go with that.

**Shawn Buckley**

Well, actually, tell that story because you obviously did have a home. You had a hairdressing suite in your basement.

**Tracy Walker**

A beautiful home. No, it was on the main floor.

**Shawn Buckley**

That was isolated from the rest of the house. What happened to that?

## **Tracy Walker**

Well, I actually— At the exact same moment that we were in this, “What do we do?” Sheila Gunn Reid from Rebel News had put out [iwillopen.com](http://iwillopen.com). or [stayopen.com](http://stayopen.com). and said reach out to us if you are not going to stop working, and you’re going to try and work through this. So I reached out to her. Unbeknownst to me, I was the first one that did. So the next morning, I actually got a call. Instead of watching Sheila on my phone, she was in my house. And so we had an interview about that very thing, where— I had bylaw officers come to my house because of that, sadly. But not sadly because I got literally phone calls from across the world: France, Italy, all through Canada, all through Canada, for the support in this.

Now, I had reached out— This is when the government had offered the mortgage deferral program. And so, I reached out to my broker and said that, “Really, we’re at a loss of what we can do, and our options are nil and none. So, I’m going to have to apply for the mortgage deferral program.” And she said to me that, “I’m sorry, the government did not state anything about brokers. It only applies to banks and credit unions. So you are responsible for your payment at the first of the month.”

[00:05:00]

And I’m like, but I have no income. My husband has no income. There is no subsidy coming from anywhere. She told me that I would have to do whatever I could to get this payment. Otherwise, your house is going to be going into foreclosure.

We were not in any default. I think, maybe two years, we were late one payment, if I want to bring everything onto the table. But only by a couple of days. Like it was not even a long period. It was just a couple of days. So there was no real just cause for them to deny us grace of any sort. I explained this to her. She said that, “Simply, it’s not my problem.” She goes, “You see, I work for the company, the broker company, not for you. I am here to collect the money for them. It is your problem.” And I said, “Well, the last I checked, it was the world’s problem.” And she said, “No, it is your problem only.” And within a month and a half, we were served with foreclosure papers. In a month and a half. There was no recourse. There was nothing.

So in this time that they put our house up for sale, we had to find ourselves a new home. And I was there for 15 years. So it’s not like two or three years in this house. It was a long period of time: grandchildren growing up, as everybody knows that’s had a home for any length of time. So expecting it to be my retirement home, in my home that I was going to live for the rest of my life in.

Then, we could not find accommodations because I have two big dogs. We could not find accommodations, so we were actually homeless for almost two months. We lived in our trailer. And my husband got this special smart hub that we could use for that area that he could continue to work from his computer, and well, remotely. So, we were off grid for that length of time. And again, begging the broker company, if we could, please— We will pay to stay until we can find a home. They said, “No. You have to be out by a certain date.”

There is a lot more that goes with that. As I was working, I have my very best friend in the entire world. My mom and her mom were best friends, and they were pregnant with both my girlfriend and me. So we’re only a few months apart. But she’s a nurse. And she came in for her haircut. It was the day that I had the interview with Sheila. So it was exciting. I’ve never experienced anything like this. And I was explaining to her what I was about. And she basically told me that I was an anti-vaxxer, anti-masker, A-hole. And that I was the reason why this society is where they are. I have yet to ever speak to her again. So to lose a lifelong

friendship that's probably— Even though losing my house was very heartbreaking, but that was probably the most scarring in the entire world. And still to this day. And knowing what she must know now, she's a pediatrics' nurse. So I'm only going to assume that she must have heard something. But that I just wanted to add in there. I don't know if there's any more questions.

**Shawn Buckley**

There's a couple of things I wanted to ask you questions about. So you're living in the trailer. You're off grid. Obviously, you can't work anymore because your hair studio was in the house. And you told us you were a diabetic.

**Tracy Walker**

Yes.

**Shawn Buckley**

Am I right that you actually were in such financial straits that at times you guys couldn't eat and you had no insulin?

**Tracy Walker**

Yes, that is a fact. Yeah. So insulin is not covered, even when you have Blue Cross. And of course, when you're having no money and no means to work, our food was very minimal. But that's how you stay slim. No, just kidding. It's the worst way to get skinny.

[00:10:00]

It's the worst way. But yes, it affected both my husband and I. My husband lost 35 pounds over that time, and I lost about 15 to 20 pounds. But it could have been because I had to stretch my insulin, so that instead of the full amount, I would take portion amounts, which is so wrong to do. But it was the only thing that I could do to make it stretch till I could make enough money or my husband could make enough money to pay for some more insulin. So yeah, I was in dire straits for a while, and it did affect my health greatly.

**Shawn Buckley**

This would have been in Alberta, Canada likely in 2021?

**Tracy Walker**

That's correct.

**Shawn Buckley**

So you told us that after your interview— So you're still at your home, you haven't been foreclosed on yet, that you had visits from the bylaw officer. Can you share that with us?

**Tracy Walker**

So okay. Yes. So the foreclosure. On their end, it took a while for them to get the For Sale sign on my front lawn. But the bylaw officer that first came by— Of course, I was like, okay,

here we go. I'm going to jail. My client literally ran into the bathroom. And so he handed me a warning, not a ticket. It was a warning. But when I explained to him, and I said, "Sir, you have to understand that I have no other means to survive. I'm a diabetic, and I need— It's not that I'm doing this out of rebellion. I'm doing this out of pure survival. And I have no choice but to break the law." Or this mandate because it wasn't a law. And I clarified that with him that it was a mandate, not a law.

And I said, "Look at my studio. There is no way that I am more contagious or more at risking people than Walmart or Superstore." And he agreed. He nodded his head. He didn't say yes, but he nodded his head. And then, he had come back, probably three times since then. He was told that— He said, "Okay, so I have to hang this notice— 'Do not enter, forbidden territory,'" if you may, for lack of better words. And he said that, "I was supposed to nail this to your front door or to the door to your studio." Well, I have a glass door. So he looks at the glass door, and he looks back. And he says, "Apparently, that's not going to work." So he just said, "Here you go, I'm handing it to you. And just so you know, I'm going to be off for the Christmas months. And there will be another gentleman that's going to be stepping in. He's going to be driving in a black SUV. He'll be driving up and down your back alley and in your front yard watching for people to come and go."

Now, this is at Christmas time. As a hairdresser, that's the busiest money-making time. And all he told me, God bless his soul, he said, "Just keep your blinds closed and try and keep it as minimal congestion and all." And I don't have a lot of clients that come all at once, so it wasn't a big deal. So, I just carried on. And then I did get a call after Christmas from the same bylaw officer and said, "Thank you so much for abiding by the rules," which I didn't. And he said, "It was reported that they saw no reason for suspicion that you were doing anything wrong," and that he wanted to thank me for that. So I don't know if one talked to the other, and one said, just whatever. I don't know, but I had grace. And I'm very grateful for that.

**Shawn Buckley**

You were shown kindness.

**Tracy Walker**

I was shown kindness, I was.

**Shawn Buckley**

Thank you. Now I have no further questions. I'll ask the commissioners if they have any questions for you.

There being no further questions, Tracy, on behalf of the National Citizens Inquiry, I sincerely thank you for your testimony today.

**Tracy Walker**

Thank you for the opportunity.

[00:14:52]

**Final Review and Approval:** Anna Cairns, August 30, 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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