



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Red Deer, AB

Day 3

April 28, 2023

EVIDENCE

Witness 1: Christopher Scott

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[00:00:00]

Shawn Buckley

We'll call our first witness. Chris, can you come and take the stand for us this morning? Just so those online know where I'm standing, I can hardly see the witness, you see a little tuft of hair there.

Chris, can you please state your full name for the record, spelling your first and last name.

Christopher Scott

Yeah, Christopher James Scott, C-H-R-I-S-T-O-P-H-E-R J-A-M-E-S S-C-O-T-T.

Shawn Buckley

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

Christopher Scott

I do.

Shawn Buckley

Now, as I understand it, you are the owner of the Whistle Stop Cafe.

Christopher Scott

That's correct.

Shawn Buckley

And what town is that in, and what's the population of this town?

Christopher Scott

The Whistle Stop Cafe is in Mirror, Alberta with a population of, last Census: 502. But I think we're about 520 now.

Shawn Buckley

Okay, hey, so it's growing.

Christopher Scott

Growing, like a weed.

Shawn Buckley

When COVID hit and the lockdowns started, my understanding is you had only owned this café for six months.

Christopher Scott

That's correct. I spent the previous close to 20 years in the energy industry as an oil field worker. And I decided that due to constant government interference in my industry, I was better off doing something like owning a restaurant where the government wouldn't abuse me as they had in the energy industry.

Shawn Buckley

And just so you guys know, there's some foreshadowing going on here. So tell us, did that work? Were you able to avoid bureaucratic interference in your business life?

Christopher Scott

No, as a matter of fact it put me on a collision course to meet the biggest bully I've ever faced.

Shawn Buckley

Okay, now my understanding is when they first locked us down and told businesses to close, like restaurants, that you actually did comply, and you did close the Whistle Stop Cafe.

Christopher Scott

I did. We complied with all the rules. I mean for the most part we went along to get along with the attitude that, you know, it's not going to be forever. We'll just get through it, and we'll just comply even though we knew it was wrong.

Shawn Buckley

Now, while locked down, while we had these restrictions, my understanding is that you started hearing stories in the community that mental health issues were on the rise. And you just made a personal decision that you should try and find something to do to help. And can you share with us what you did to try and kind of help the community that was suffering mentally because of the lockdowns and other conditions on us?

Christopher Scott

Of course. One of the blessings, and the curse, of being the hub of a community is that you hear a lot of stories and people share things with you. And one of the things that we heard very consistently was people were going stir-crazy, families were stuck without anything to do, like kids weren't doing sports, tensions were high, instances of domestic abuse were on the rise, mental health issues were on the rise, suicides were on the rise.

All of the things that don't generally take the spotlight because number one, it's uncomfortable to talk about or look at, and number two, it's just not prioritized in our society to deal with those things. But we're hearing them, and so I was thinking: well, how do we do something while following the rules—because nobody wants to get in trouble with the government, right—that will help people get out and do something with their family, have some sense of normalcy, and not get in trouble?

I don't know where the idea came from, but I ended up buying an inflatable drive-in movie screen and a projector—not much different than the one that's right there—and an FM transmitter. I set the inflatable movie screen on the roof of the Whistle Stop Cafe and then I invited everybody to come out, while following the rules. Like park six feet apart, and follow physical distancing, and wear the silly breathing barriers, and the whole nine yards. And we had hand sanitizer. We had enough hand sanitizer we could have run a Co-gen [Co-generation] plant on it.

And we offered free movies so that families could come out and do something. And the first night that we offered the movie, there was about five or six cars. I decided to do this five nights a week. We did a Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. The second night there was 30 cars, and then the next week there was 100 cars.

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And it became this tiny little bit of relief in this beautiful province of Alberta, where people could come and be kind of normal, and do something so that they could break the monotony of the mandates and restrictions. And it was all fine and dandy until we got on the radar of the bureaucracy. They actually shut us down because they didn't have a specific set of rules for that type of business.

Shawn Buckley

My understanding is eventually, after a large amount of bureaucratic effort, they came up with some rules and you were permitted to continue.

Christopher Scott

That's correct. We could offer drive-in movie services while following the rules, and people did. They were really good about that. I mean we had line-ups outside to come in and get popcorn. People were actually standing eight feet apart on their own without being asked, so it's not that people didn't want to follow the rules, they just wanted something to do. They did allow us, but one of the conditions was nobody was allowed to use the restrooms.

Shawn Buckley

Right, okay. Now, so you're complying, and how is that affecting your business economically?

Christopher Scott

Well, in a short period of time, just like most other businesses, it took me from a positive cash position to a negative and declining cash position.

Shawn Buckley

Okay, now you ended up opening on January 24th, 2021. And can you just share for us kind of what things were happening before then, that led you to open?

Christopher Scott

Sure. So as many people will likely remember— The election prior to this, we elected a government that we had a huge amount of faith in. And the premier, you know, we thought he was going to come and save us. It didn't turn out that way. In December, I watched him actually apologize to businesses for choosing which businesses were essential and which were not, basically choosing who lives and who dies in business. And they said they'd never do it again.

And I watched our premier say this, and I thought, yes, this is the guy that we elected. This is the guy that's going to get Alberta through this. And a few short days later, he returned to TV and said he was now locking us down again and closing businesses again. "But don't worry because this time it's only going to be 30 days (of a two weeks), and then we'll just get back to normal because we need to protect the healthcare system."

Now that phrase "protect the healthcare system," that struck me as odd right from the beginning, because as I looked around at all the healthy people around me, protecting the healthcare system seemed like a strange thing to ask for. If we wanted to protect people, we should be talking about protecting people's health. We should have been encouraging people to focus on their health, and make sure that they could handle sickness by focusing on their health.

But it was never about that. It was always about protecting the system. And I had a big problem with that. So the 30 days came and went. Deena Hinshaw, the Chief Medical Officer of Health, came on TV and she said, "Well, you know, we need another week. It's not quite working yet. We need you guys to stay closed for another week." And I was livid. I was livid, and I said to myself, when Jason Kenny shut us down again in December, that after this 30 days, I was going to protest this by opening.

Thirty days came and went. Another week came and went, and Deena Hinshaw returned to the airwaves. And she said, "Well, we can't let you open yet. And we really have no end in sight." And it was at that moment that I realized that number one, this was not about protecting people's health. This was not about keeping people safe. It was about control.

And if it had been about keeping people safe, the level of incompetence from our government to go on the air and say that they had no idea or no plan, that was not okay with me. At this point we had heard some devastating stories of what happened to people and their families; businesses were being lost; the damage was unbelievable. And so I decided that I was going to exercise my constitutionally protected Charter right to protest. And I opened my restaurant in protest of government policies that were not aligned with what our rights as Canadians are.

Shawn Buckley

And that happened on January 24th, 2021.

Christopher Scott

That's correct.

Shawn Buckley

So what happened after you opened in protest?

Christopher Scott

Well, I have got to say, being the only restaurant in Alberta open, you're very busy.

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We had a lot of customers. We ran out of food consistently, but something else happened. I opened in protest partly because of what was going on around me and what was happening to other people. But to be perfectly honest, the motivations were more selfish because I was put in a position where it was either fight or flight. I was either going to lose my business or I was going to stand up and do something about it. And so I did that mostly for myself.

I protested mostly for myself. But as people started pouring into the café and they saw somebody standing up—they saw somebody protesting these mandates—they started sharing stories with me that completely changed the way I look at the world, the way I look at the government, and the way I looked at myself. I was forced into a position where I had to accept the fact that if we don't stand up and do something and be an example for other people that also need to stand up, nothing will be fixed. It'll never end. And so you know the authority, of course, tried to— They dropped the hammer of God on me.

Every agency in the province was on me: daily or every other: daily visit from the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], and from environment to public health inspectors. Constant threats, constant intimidation: "Oh you're going to lose everything. We're going to take your business. We're going to take your food-handling permit. You're going to lose your liquor licence. You're probably going to lose your house."

As a matter of fact, the second time the Chief of Police, Sergeant Bruce Holliday— The second time he spoke to me, he came with the health inspector. And as the health inspector left Bruce and I, to go find some things to cite me on, which they didn't, Bruce leaned in close and he said to me, "You know, I admire you standing up for yourself, and I admire what you're trying to do, but you've already made your point. You should just close and follow the rules because you cannot win against the government."

Shawn Buckley

So I just want to make sure that I'm clear. This is the Chief of Police?

Christopher Scott

Yeah, Chief of Police.

Shawn Buckley

So it would be an RCMP officer?

Christopher Scott

Right.

Shawn Buckley

So the officer actually supports, ethically, what you're doing, but is communicating to you that as a citizen of Alberta, you don't have a chance of standing up against the government to basically have a right to protest.

Christopher Scott

That's right. And you know, the ironic thing is, he was right. A citizen cannot win against the government. I was put in a position where to fight the government, and to stand up for my rights—and after realizing what was happening, the rights of people around me—where the outlook is grim. I mean, you retain a lawyer in this province for something like this, and they want \$25,000 from you upfront, before they even do anything. It costs \$10,000 to prepare a piece of paper.

And somebody like me, there is not a snowball's chance in hell that I could stand up and do that on my own. But something amazing happened. A lady by the name of Sheila showed up at the Whistle Stop Cafe, and she's a reporter for *Rebel News*. And they had a program at the time called Fight the Fines, and they were crowdfunding so that people like me could actually stand up against the government.

So with their help, I went from a 100 per cent assured loss to, "We actually have a chance to do something now." Thousands of people, probably millions of people from all over Canada chipped in. And they stood up with people like me who were trying to stand up against the government. And all of a sudden that truth that Sergeant Bruce Holliday had said to me, that "you can't win against the government," that truth changed to "you can't win against the government, but 'we' can win against the government" if we stand together and start speaking some truth.

And we unify around the truth and move towards doing what's right; we can actually win against the government. Because that's the one thing that stands the test of time, is truth, and the truth is that what was done to us was wrong. The bureaucracy that did what they did to us did it in error, for whatever reason. It doesn't matter why they did it, but it was an incorrect path. And we're seeing that now.

I mean, we've heard testimony from everybody, from Lieutenant Colonel David Redman, who wrote the plan on how to deal with this, and watched it thrown out the window

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in lieu of following Deena Hinshaw and Cabinet's advice. We heard from him. We've heard from people that have been devastated by this, to the point where they've lost family members to suicide because they couldn't see any hope in continuing on in this country.

In this free country with free healthcare, where if you have a mental health issue you should be able to phone a doctor and get some help before you fix it yourself by ending

your own life. But we lost those things because the bureaucrats failed to uphold our civil liberties, our rights and freedoms that are guaranteed to us under the Constitution. And now, as I hear people testifying at the NCI: these are stories that I've been hearing for two years. As people flooded into the café, it wasn't just a café and a gas station in a dusty little town, anymore. It became this place where people went to because it was a symbol of freedom and hope because somebody was doing something.

Shawn Buckley

Now, Chris, it's my understanding that not only people from Alberta came to the Whistle Stop Cafe because it was this signal of hope, it was this little beacon of light in the darkness, but actually people came from other provinces to the Whistle. Can you share with us that? Because that, I think it's important to understand, that just you taking a step created hope.

Christopher Scott

Yeah, we've had people from all over the country show up there. There were people driving 8-12 hours to come and have a burger at the Whistle Stop Cafe, because they believed in what we're doing. It wasn't what I was doing. This was a conscious decision that I made after speaking with my family, and my friends, and my staff.

It was never just me. If it was just me, I would have fallen flat on my face a week after it happened. This was a "we" thing. It was dozens of people, hundreds of people even, volunteering to help through the physical parts of it. And thousands and thousands of people helping with the financial part, it was never a "me." It's never going to be a "me." It's a "we" thing. And that's why I think it's so important that people pay attention to what's going on here.

Shawn Buckley

If I can focus, because I just think you're saying something here that is tremendously important. And before we move on— Because even just going back to you buying that inflatable drive-in screen and holding those drive-ins, you explained how maybe there were five cars the first time, and then more and more, and all of a sudden, it's an event. Because it gave people something to do. And it would have helped with mental health.

That was an example, Chris, of you doing something, just deciding to do something. Do you see? And I'm just making a point of this because you set an example of how you can make a difference. It's not just you, but other people could make a difference. If you just go, "Wait a second, we have a problem here, what can I do?" and you came up with this creative idea. And you pointed out *Rebel News* that had made this decision: we've got to have crowd-funding, so that people have an opportunity to stand together against the government.

Because, as you pointed out, it can't be done alone, and I think we're all very proud of *Rebel News* for doing that. But they made that decision to do that, and then you and your team made a decision: "No, we're going to protest because we have to," and you're giving us examples that I'm just emphasizing because small groups of people making decisions make a difference.

And I think there will be a lot of people participating in your testimony today that heard about the Whistle Stop Cafe, and it gave them a little glimmer of hope that somebody was standing up while the rest of us were all cowering in fear. And so I just wanted to

emphasize that you making the decision, because it's the point you're making now, isn't it, is just people making a decision can make a difference?

Christopher Scott

Yeah, and as much as it pains me to do so, I can steal a quote from Hillary Clinton, and say "We're stronger together," and I'm not talking about what she was talking about, when it comes to stuff like this. We are absolutely stronger together.

Shawn Buckley

Now, you said that the police officer told you one person can't stand against the government, and you've told us it's true, but we together can stand against the government. Can you share with us the efforts that the government went through and are still going through, because you're still facing proceedings?

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So share with us basically all the steps that the Alberta government has taken to close a café in Mirror, Alberta, a town with a little over 500 people.

Christopher Scott

Well, as you mentioned, some of this stuff is currently before the court. So unfortunately, I have to decline to get into specifics. And that is out of respect for the proceedings that are still going on. But I will say in a more general statement that the government and bureaucracy: there is no limit to how far they will go to try and crush those who oppose them. I can say that I'm disappointed and, actually, I'm disgusted by some of the things that I've seen, some of the tools that have been used against me to try and get me to stop protesting.

Shawn Buckley

Now, do you mind if I go through some of them, just to kind of highlight for people? I know you don't want to go into details, but a lot of this is public. In addition to AHS [Alberta Health Services] visits and multiple tickets, how many tickets have you been— Or they weren't tickets, you were actually summonsed to court to face charges. How many times did that happen?

Christopher Scott

I lost count when I ran out of fingers and toes, but I think it was 23.

Shawn Buckley

Okay, so 23 separate summonses to attend at court. My understanding is that basically they got the liquor licensing authorities involved and pulled your liquor licence.

Christopher Scott

They did, yeah.

Shawn Buckley

They got Occupational Health and Safety involved to come and visit you.

Christopher Scott

Yes.

Shawn Buckley

They seized liquor.

Christopher Scott

Yeah.

Shawn Buckley

They went to the person that you had a contract [with] to allow you to even purchase the restaurant. So they went to a private person to try and get them to pull the café back from you.

Christopher Scott

They did.

Shawn Buckley

So they were trying to involve private sector people. They actually seized and chained the doors of the Whistle Stop Cafe to physically take it away from you.

Christopher Scott

Yes, they did.

Shawn Buckley

So that's just some of the things. That's not all, but just some of the things. They got an injunction against you. I think you can share with us the terms of the injunction and Jane and John Doe.

Christopher Scott

Oh, of course. So what's commonly known as the "Rook Order," was an injunction sought by Alberta Health Services against me, Glen Carritt, the previous owner of the Whistle Stop, and the Whistle Stop Corporation, in addition to John and Jane Doe in Alberta. And the Rook Order basically said that it was declared illegal to attend, organize, incite, or promote any illegal gatherings.

Shawn Buckley

Right. So because John and Jane Doe were included, that applied to every single resident of Alberta.

Christopher Scott

It did, yes. And that part of it was challenged in the courts. And it was challenged successfully, and that was removed. But the named individuals are still on there. Now, as a Canadian and as an Albertan I still believe in the Constitution. I believe in the Charter of Rights. I don't think it's perfect, but I think it was well intended, and as written, I think it should protect us.

And I stood on that, and I will always stand on the fact that my right to protest is literally my only recourse against government policy that I disagree with—aside from getting into politics and doing it myself. But that's my only recourse and that should never be taken away from me. So I engaged in a protest. As a matter of fact, I advertised it as the biggest protest Alberta has ever seen. It didn't turn out that way because the weather didn't cooperate, but there was a couple thousand people there. And I was arrested and incarcerated for exercising my Charter right to protest bad government policy.

Shawn Buckley

And my understanding is you spent three days in jail.

Christopher Scott

I spent three days in jail. I was subject to sanctions of \$30,000 in fines, 18-months-probation, a compelled speech portion where the courts ordered me to tell people what the government wanted them to hear before I spoke, and I wasn't allowed to leave the province of Alberta.

Shawn Buckley

So I want to make sure that people actually understand this compelled speech part of your sentence. When you were sentenced, in addition to \$30,000 and time served—and I understand you were also put on a year and a half of probation—but you were ordered to write text that the Court gave you publicly.

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So you were to make a public statement and basically read what the Court told you to read. So not only did you not have freedom of speech but you were compelled to give a speech that the Court dictated to you.

Christopher Scott

That's correct.

Shawn Buckley

Now, going forward, and I understand, and you've made clear, that there's things you can't talk about because there's still legal proceedings, you're still facing other sanctions that aren't finished. But going forward, what could you leave us with as kind of lessons learned and what we need to do, to do this better going forward?

Christopher Scott

Well, I see there's 10 minutes and 30 seconds left, I don't think that's enough, but I'll do my best.

Shawn Buckley

Well, no, and I think you've learned watching yesterday, that our time limits are not hard and fast, and I know the commissioners are going to have questions for you also. But you do have some lessons to share with us, and you do have some thoughts.

Christopher Scott

Yes, I do.

Shawn Buckley

I'm inviting you to share them.

Christopher Scott

I'll try and be quick. So during this little adventure that I found myself on, it's become necessary for me to read a lot. You know, we tell each other in the schoolyard when we're kids—when somebody asks, "Oh, can I use that?" or whatever. And we say, "Well it's a free country, isn't it?" We're conditioned to believe that we have these rights and freedoms. We're conditioned to believe that our forefathers fought and died for our freedom so that we wouldn't have to. And during the course of this adventure, I've realized that that's a lie.

Our forefathers didn't fight and die for freedom so that we wouldn't have to. They fought and died for our freedoms so that we would have the opportunity to keep them, and that comes with a hefty responsibility. And I learned this as I went through some legislation that was being used to try and stop me from earning a living, from exercising my civil liberties, including the right to protest; I learned that there is legislation out there right now, and Jeffrey Rath talked about it yesterday. I think Lieutenant Colonel David Redman, he alluded to it a little bit in his testimony.

There is legislation out there right now that allows the bureaucrats to strip our rights and freedoms away without justifying that they need to do it. And that's exactly what happened to me. Bureaucrats decided that it was unsafe for me to pour coffee and serve hamburgers, in a café with a capacity of 40 people that was generally maybe 10 to 15 people in there. They told me that it was unsafe for me to earn a living, and they did that without ever proving or justifying in a court of law, or with any scientific evidence presented in our province where this legislation exists.

And they used that legislation to strip away my rights. Now you might think, "Okay, well, we need that, so that if there's something that's going to harm the people of Alberta, we can step in and deal with it quickly, and I would agree with that. But if you look into legislation like the *Public Health Act* of Alberta, that is a very, very dangerous piece of legislation. And I'll explain why, better after this. But that legislation says that, and I'm going to paraphrase here; this is the best I can remember, "In fulfilling her duties to protect the health of the people of Alberta, the CMOH [Chief Medical Officer of Health] may at any time, as long as it's in good faith, take any steps necessary to do so, including seizing property, personal or private."

That means if the CMOH, or anyone acting under her orders to promote the health and safety of the people in Alberta, if they think that your house needs to be seized and used as a vaccination clinic, they can do that under the law. And you have no recourse except for to pay a lawyer \$50 or a \$100,000 and go to court. And two, or three, or ten years down the road prove that they shouldn't have done it. That's what that legislation allows. The wording is very specific in public or private; your private property is not off-limits.

As a matter of fact, we saw that during the pandemic. We saw people reporting their neighbours for having their grandkids over for Christmas dinner, on private property. We saw police showing up at people's houses and issuing them tickets for having their friends over. I don't mean to sound crass, but this can go anywhere from having a church service in your house, the police will be involved in that because it applies to private or public, to having a swinger's party in your bedroom.

The government can literally shut you down for anything that you do in your kitchen, in your bedroom, in your church, in your restaurant, in your café. Even more dangerous than this, now we have a federal government— We have Theresa Tam, the top doctor for Canada,

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alluding to the fact that climate change is one of the most serious risks to health.

Now, if climate change is a serious risk to health, and our health authority can take any steps necessary, any steps they think is reasonable, as Jeff Rath pointed out yesterday, in order to combat these things for our health, what does that tell you about what the federal government can do, going forward?

The federal government has said that, in their opinion, capitalism and liberties need to be dismantled for our health. And there's legislation that allows our provincial governments to do almost anything they want to us in the name of public health. Where does that put us as Canadians? There's another piece of legislation that can be used in the same manner, and Jeff talked about it yesterday. And that's the Civil Emergency Measures Act [*Emergency Management Act*], I think it's called.

Our government and our bureaucrats have unlimited power against us, and even worse than that, the judiciary that's supposed to protect us against these things has failed because that judiciary defers to those who are doing these things to us, as the experts, to justify their actions. The onus is on me to prove that my actions were justified in pouring a cup of coffee in my restaurant, and if I can't prove that, if I can't prove my innocence, I'll be fined into oblivion or maybe jailed.

Right now, we have four men who are jailed; they've been jailed for over 450 days. They haven't had a trial, they haven't had their day in court, they're innocent, and yet they sit in jail because they spoke against the government. They stood up for their rights. They're in jail because bureaucrats have decided that their civil liberties need to be removed to protect the bureaucracy. And this is the free country we live in, this is the free country of Canada, where Polish immigrants testify under oath and say that they're thinking of leaving this free country that they fled their home to—because they want freedom.

Well, I need to ask you folks, "Where are you going to flee to?" because I've thought about it. Where are we going to go as Canadians in the freest country on earth? Where are we going to go when our freedoms, and our liberties, and our rights get stripped away from us to the

point where we need to flee to live our lives as we choose? There is nowhere else to go, not one place on this planet. There might be places warmer where we can escape this for some time, but unfortunately these things catch up.

And Shawn, he asked how George Orwell knew in 1949 how these things would happen. How it could be so prophetic? These books that he wrote: *Animal Farm* where the animals looked in the window and they couldn't tell the difference anymore between the pigs and the humans. The bureaucracy, those who were standing up for them, became the bureaucracy they're fighting against. How did George Orwell know that?

George Orwell was a democratic socialist. He knew where that led. He also liked history. And the one thing I've learned—aside from we don't live in freedom, we're only free when the government says we are—the one thing I've learned is that history will repeat itself over, and over, and over again. And we are no more enlightened today than we were 5,000 years ago. We still are subject to the same things: greed, lust, gluttony, all those things. The same things have been used to control us for thousands of years.

And you know what the number one thing is? Fear. Number two is hunger. Civilizations all over the world have fallen to tyranny because of fear and hunger, and that's where we're at right now. I'm hungry for freedom. I'm hungry to live my life as I was intended, to exercise my God-given rights that no government gives me. And the only thing I fear is the apathy that I see in Canadians and the media—the apathy and the fear that prevents them from taking a stand and doing something to prevent the things that have happened in history from happening again.

And that brings up another point. We have to stop looking around and looking for someone to save us. Nobody is coming to save you. I'm not going to save you; Danielle Smith isn't going to save you. No politician's going to save you, the only person that's going to save you is you. So before you start condemning a politician,

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or asking someone to do something for you, you need to look in the mirror and ask yourself what you're willing to do to protect your rights and freedoms. What you're willing to do to ensure that the lives that were lost to gain you the freedom that you have today, remains for your kids.

What are you willing to do? Are you willing to put \$10 in a jar? That's great! Are you willing to put your business on the line? Amazing! Are you willing to support those who are taking a stand so that they can continue to do it? Do it; do something; do anything! Because, as you heard yesterday from somebody who has lived it, there will come a day when you either look back and you say, "I wish I did something," or you look back and you celebrate the decision you made to do the work to ensure that the rights and freedoms that we're born with remain with us and remain with our kids.

It's not about a restaurant. It's not about coffee. It's not even about a passport to go in a restaurant and have lunch. It's about standing up for what humanity is supposed to be.

So we've got some pretty difficult choices, and I really hope that this Inquiry, I really hope that people pay attention to it, and they start to think about these things, because you know with what we hear of coming from the federal government right now, and knowing what legislation is there that can be used to accomplish what they want to do, I really think we're in the endgame.

Shawn Buckley

I think those are very apposite words that you're sharing with us. I'm going to ask the commissioners if they have any questions of you.

Commissioner Drysdale

Good morning.

Christopher Scott

Good morning.

Commissioner Drysdale

Can you tell me how you were treated by the mainstream media or the government media in Canada? Did you get a fair and balanced analysis of what you were doing?

Christopher Scott

Early on, I would say that it was more balanced and fair than I anticipated. But after a little while, I mean, they're like a pack of wild dogs, and they feed off each other. So I am a rebel and a scofflaw. This is sarcasm, by the way. I've been called a rebel and a scofflaw and an anti-vaxxer and an anti-masker. And the media has framed me as someone that just doesn't care about the rules. They've made the public believe that I wouldn't force people to provide papers to eat a hamburger, so obviously, I must allow rats in the kitchen.

Well, sorry, folks, but the only rats in Alberta are the ones that called the cops on their neighbours over Christmas. You know, there are some good folks in the media. There's a CTV news reporter that I actually would call a friend. And he's on side about a lot of this stuff. But unfortunately, speaking up and doing the right thing in those institutions is a death sentence for your career. So we can't count on them.

Commissioner Drysdale

How were you treated by the alternative media in Canada?

Christopher Scott

Better. Much better. Sheila Gunn Reid spent a week at the Whistle Stop Cafe sitting on the floor, doing the rest of her work in the corner while the police badgered people. And now looking back, I don't know if it was because of the fight, or the burgers. Because the burgers would be worth sitting on the floor for five days, but you know, I'm not even going to call them the alternative media, I'm just going to call them the new media. They have been very good at actually telling the truth of what people like me are doing, where no other media would.

Commissioner Drysdale

Mr. Buckley made an announcement this morning in his opening remarks about the passage of Bill C-11, which is the amendments to the *Broadcasting Act*. Do you have any comments about how those changes may affect your ability to access the new media, in your words?

Christopher Scott

Well, this is one of the things where time will tell. They say that they're not going to use this piece of legislation to silence media, but I don't believe it for one second. I mean, all you've got to do is turn on the radio and you hear the woke mob saying whatever they want, but you don't hear any conservative voices.

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And it's not supposed to be that way. The legislation was supposed to protect Canadian content.

And I was taught that as a kid. I remember going through that part of class and learning about how Canada protects Canadian music and the CRTC [Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission] is so great, and all that kind of thing, right? I think it might prove to make it more difficult to access that online. But one thing people have to remember is online isn't the only thing we have. The one thing that we lost over the last three years is the ability to gather in peaceful assembly. We still have that ability.

And Bill C-11 may just mean that we have to do more things like hold more events, and have more backyard barbecues, and get rid of that silly idea that it's impolite to talk about politics or religion. You know, the two things that affect everything. Politics affects everything in our life from before we're born, to after we die. Every single step of the way is politics. Religion affects everything else in our eternal lives. The two most important things in our lives. And yet it's considered impolite to talk about it.

So if we break down that stigma and start peacefully assembling, and having conversations again, we have the ability to share ideas similar to what they did in Poland with the Solidarity movement. I mean, it was all in people's houses and backyards. As a matter of fact, my great, great grandfather was one of the men who burned his guns, and he wouldn't fight for the Czar. And he was sentenced to hard labour in Siberia, and he wasn't released until, I think, the Czar had a son: he was so happy he released all the prisoners, whatever.

Anyway, he came to Canada and his stand against tyranny didn't stop here. He was issuing birth certificates and legal documents to people that the government said were second-class citizens and couldn't have them back then, you know? And it wasn't the media that changed things. It was people's willingness to peacefully assemble and do what they had to do, and share ideas that moved them and got them the rights that they were looking for at the time. And that may well be where we have to go in the future. And the bright side of that is there are places like, oh, I don't know, a little out of the way café where we love to have conversations with people and share those ideas.

Commissioner Drysdale

You mentioned in your testimony that you were arrested and that you were detained for, I think it was three and a half days.

Christopher Scott

Right.

Commissioner Drysdale

Did they handcuff you when they arrested you?

Christopher Scott

Of course.

Commissioner Drysdale

Can you describe what your experience was when you were detained, were you in the Remand Centre? Were you in a lockup? Were you in general population?

Christopher Scott

No, they left me in the drunk tank for three days.

Commissioner Drysdale

Can you describe that room for me please?

Christopher Scott

Oh, it was horrible! Well, there is a silver lining, and I'll talk about that in a minute. The drunk tank is a concrete room with a concrete bed, a stainless-steel toilet, which is also the sink, which is also where you get your drinking water from. The lights are on 24 hours a day. It's not a pleasant place to be. But they gave me a book, and I hadn't read a book in about two years, so that was nice. And the concrete bed straightened out my back, and I felt better when I got out. So there was a silver lining there. And I suppose if we're going to go through those things, we have to be able to find the silver linings in every tribulation. I was surprised to be stuck in the drunk tank for that long, because generally they bring you there, and then they move you to remand, and you have a bed, and whatever. But yeah, it wasn't pleasant.

Commissioner Drysdale

Were you violent?

Christopher Scott

How so?

Commissioner Drysdale

I'm just asking, if you were in handcuffs, did they put you in handcuffs because you were at risk of being violent?

Christopher Scott

No, they put me in handcuffs because they were scared of what I would do with my hands. But I think maybe next time they should probably muzzle me because my words are a lot more dangerous than what my hands will do.

Commissioner Drysdale

My last question has to do with your community of 500 or 520 people. What was their general impression? Were they supportive? Were they unsupportive? Was there a mixture? What was the general consensus there in the community about what you were doing because you were bringing attention to this small rural community?

Christopher Scott

Well, it was mixed. In the beginning, you know, it was exciting for most people, I think. There were of course those who had completely succumbed to fear, and they saw me as a vector of disease that had to be avoided at all costs because of what they were being told. In the end, after the dust settled, I think the community is probably split 50:50. Half seem to be supportive and agree with the position I took, and half don't.

Probably the line there

[00:45:00]

is the same as it would be provincially or nationally. We're divided, right? We heard things like "this is a problem of the unvaccinated." Lieutenant Colonel David Redman, he mentioned yesterday that the leadership, in this province and in this country, they did things that they should never do. They used fear as a tactic, and that fear has caused the division that we're seeing in towns like mine, and in the province of Alberta, and across the nation.

Commissioner Drysdale

You know, sorry, that was going to be my last question, but you mentioned terms and attitudes toward you, which were quite hateful. What was the source of that? Why did people think that? Why were they, in your opinion? What was feeding that in people?

Christopher Scott

In my very humble opinion, because I'm not a psychiatrist, there's a lot of reasons why people would not like me. Number one: I'm not likable. Number two: during this whole thing, a lot of people stood up, and they supported me. As a matter of fact, they supported me to the point where they helped me purchase the restaurant to remove the mechanism Alberta Health Services was trying to use to force me to stop protesting. They helped me buy it, so that that person was out of the equation. Some people didn't like that. They see me getting something that they don't believe I deserve, and they hate me for it.

Other people legitimately believe the narrative, in that I should have just followed the rules and done everything and protected everybody, and forced people to take a jab they didn't want to eat a hamburger in my restaurant—which I wouldn't do, by the way. My restaurant was open by then, and we were serving food again. I got my licences back, and the government decided they were going to bring in that vax passport. I shut down my dining room, because I was under bail conditions that said I had to follow the public health orders, and I wouldn't do it. I would never ask somebody for their papers so that I could pour them a coffee.

So I had to shut down my restaurant for that. And, you know, there are people, they don't understand that. Some people saw that as an inconvenience. "Oh, Chris, why wouldn't you just allow me to show you my vax passport so I can have a coffee here?" And the answer is

because it's not right. "Why would you not follow this part of the rules? You can be open, just only serve this select group of elite people that did what the government want." Because it's not right.

I'm not going to put my ability or potential to earn money over my principles, like that. And people didn't understand that. And so you know, they hate me for it. As a matter of fact, my friend Kerry, over there, and I, of all the things that could have happened to a guy that owns the Whistle Stop Cafe, we got hit by a train. Can you believe that? We got hit by a train, and on social media, the outpouring of concern was amazing. People were legitimately concerned for us and asking all the time how we're doing.

But there were some people that said things like, "I was so happy when I heard that. It's such a shame that you two free-dumbers didn't die." And that hit me like a freight train. The idea that in this country, where we're supposed to be free to disagree on certain issues, and our leadership is supposed to foster good relations between us, right? They're not supposed to divide us with fear. That we've come to a point where one side actually wants the other side to die because they don't have the same opinions. And it's no different in my town.

Commissioner Drysdale

Thank you.

Commissioner Kaikkonen

You alluded to the cost of court and what it costs for an ordinary citizen to fight against these kinds of government abuses. And I believe that there's a lot of people in this country who believe the same thing, that they'd like to fight on principle through the court system, but it's just unattainable, or they will lose all their assets.

What would you suggest in terms of recommendations? And yes, I'm aware that you're still in court, but what recommendations could you make, just from your own perspective that might make court more accessible to ordinary Canadians when they feel that they've been abused by government authorities?

Christopher Scott

Short of finding an organization that will help you crowd-fund, I really don't have any ideas. I mean, even a lawyer will tell their clients not to fight on principle because it's costly, it rarely wins, and in the end, you lose everything, and you gain nothing.

[00:50:00]

So standing on principle oftentimes means that you end up with nothing. One of the things that I don't talk about too much, but I'll mention it now, is part of the decision-making process for me to engage in protest, to use my Charter right to protest.

One of the decision-making process parts was that I had to ask myself, what am I willing to lose? Because it's very likely that I'll lose everything fighting the government. I've watched it happen around me numerous times. We've all seen it. And if you don't make peace with the reality that you will very likely lose the things that you find that you hold dear, like your property, for instance, you can't take on that kind of fight. So I had to very quickly have an internal conversation with myself and accept the fact that I would very likely lose the

things that I'd worked my life for. So short of doing that, and being okay with the negative outcome in that regard, and finding an organization that will help you with legal costs, there's really nothing else you can do that I'm aware of.

Commissioner Kaikkonen

Thank you very much.

Shawn Buckley

Chris, there being no further questions, on behalf of the National Citizens Inquiry, we sincerely thank you for coming and sharing with us today.

[00:52:01]



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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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