



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Red Deer, AB

Day 3

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EVIDENCE

Witness 11: Jennifer Curry

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[00:00:00]

Shawn Buckley

Our last witness of the day is Jennifer Curry. Jennifer, can you state your full name, spelling your first and last name?

Jennifer Curry

My name is Jennifer Curry, Jennifer Lynne Curry, J-E-N-N-I-F-E-R-C-U-R-R-Y.

Shawn Buckley

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

Jennifer Curry

I do.

Shawn Buckley

Jennifer, you are nervous on the stand today.

Jennifer Curry

Yeah.

Shawn Buckley

And the nervousness is part of your story isn't it.

Jennifer Curry

It is, yeah.

Shawn Buckley

You used to work in the oil patch, you were a safety representative, you would basically lecture up to 400 people at a time and not be nervous.

Jennifer Curry

No. I knew what my job was.

Shawn Buckley

Right, okay. So I just want people to understand that when you're nervous today, that's part of your story. You used to be able to present in front of people without being nervous.

Jennifer Curry

Yeah.

Sean Buckley

You are an assistant manager at a bar?

Jennifer Curry

Yeah.

Shawn Buckley

And you also have a cleaning contract for a building for Service Canada?

Jennifer Curry

I do.

Sean Buckley

And it's because you were a federal employee that was part of why you decided to get vaccinated.

Jennifer Curry

Yes.

Sean Buckley

Can you tell us what was going through your mind before you were vaccinated? Because my understanding is that you had a lot of anxiety about it.

Jennifer Curry

I did. I have a couple of nurse friends. One of them had tried to tell me not to take it, and she was scared for me. I had another friend that worked in the hospital and says, "Try to get it, Jen, because there's people that are hurt." I felt pulled from both sides. I didn't want to get the shots because I was scared. I'm not scared. I was terrified.

Shawn Buckley

Okay, and now at the end of the day, why did you get it then?

Jennifer Curry

I wanted to travel with my family. I couldn't think of another job that would pay as good as this job—that I had to get rid of—to keep that pay, I would have had to completely change my career. I would have had to find a babysitter for my daughter. This job allowed me to pay my bills and pick up my kid from school. And it was very important that that's a big part of my life, of spending time with my child.

Shawn Buckley

Okay, so that's the federal job with Service Canada.

Jennifer Curry

Yeah.

Sean Buckley

So it paid well, and it gave you a lot of flexibility as a mother.

Jennifer Curry

It sure did.

Sean Buckley

Okay, so really it was for employment purposes that you decided to get the shot.

Jennifer Curry

It is, yeah.

Shawn Buckley

So my understanding is it was in October of '21, October 23rd, you get your first dose of the Pfizer vaccine?

Jennifer Curry

I did, yeah.

Sean Buckley

Can you share with us what happened afterwards?

Jennifer Curry

We went through a drive-through centre in Swift Current, where you have a van: door pulls up, you pull your car in, and you don't even have to get out. And they come over. You sign your paper. Tell you what could happen. If you have problems, come back.

Shawn Buckley

So do you recall what they told you could happen?

Jennifer Curry

It could be an anaphylactic shock, allergy, or it could be— Some people have problems with anxiety, so it could have had variable issues that I could have been dealing with. And they let me know that to stick around for a bit afterwards.

Shawn Buckley

Okay, so carry on.

Jennifer Curry

My partner and I decided to leave about 15 minutes after I had the shot. We felt okay. I was driving home, and a couple blocks away from home, my face started to feel tingly and I slowed down. And my honey was, "What's going on?" I said "Something's wrong with my face," and I said, "I don't know." And I had such numbness by the time I got home. So within five blocks, my whole face went numb. And then it started to get itchy. And that night I had to tell myself that I'm going to be okay. And I was so scared because nobody could tell me what was going on.

Shawn Buckley

So when you say your face was numb, can you describe for us what that was like?

Jennifer Curry

Very much so. So you're at the dentist, and you get your shot. And you're coming out of the dentist and you sort of feel it a little bit, but it's still puffy and swollen. And you can touch it but it doesn't feel like you're touching your face. And it was itchy because it was tingling, kind of like you were sleeping on it with your foot.

Shawn Buckley

Right, okay. So you've got this face that's numb. Is there anything else going on that first night?

Jennifer Curry

I started to get itchy at about right after supper time. The itching started to be more all over the body. I started to feel tightness all over and fullness, like my body was puffy. I had a hard time sleeping that night because I felt like things were crawling on me. I thought there was a hair on me,

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and I made people look to make sure that I didn't have a bug on me. The scratching gave me so much anxiety because I felt like I looked like a freak. And I lost work because I had to stay home because all I could do is scratch.

Shawn Buckley

So literally you're scratching yourself so much that you're marking yourself up.

Jennifer Curry

I did.

Sean Buckley

And so it would then be too embarrassing for you to leave the house.

Jennifer Curry

When I put on a facemask, it would activate the numbness more, and it would be itchy. So I couldn't even wear a mask to my bar. I couldn't wear a mask. It made me feel like I wanted to—pardon my saying—rip my face off. It was that bad.

Shawn Buckley

Okay. And when you're describing about things crawling on you, you use the word bug. So at times it literally feels like there's bugs crawling on your body?

Jennifer Curry

Yes.

Shawn Buckley

Was that just a single part of your body or was that—

Jennifer Curry

All over. There was one time at work, I couldn't get my gloves off, and I had a scratch. And I know that the scratches, if you do get them— They'll be okay, but if you don't, they'll start to crawl. And one of the scratches was on my eye. And I couldn't get my glove off and the scratch went behind my eye. And I almost wanted to stick my finger in there and rip it out because it was so, so much!

Shawn Buckley

I think we'll just slow this down a little bit because I think that some people don't understand what you mean that the scratch will move. So can you just kind of slow it down, and explain what you mean, and then go back to the story about the eye?

Jennifer Curry

Okay. So the itching that I would feel would make me think that there's something crawling, so I would start to scratch it. It would be in the same place mostly, but then it would move. Always though my face would be itchy all the time. So if I didn't try to stop scratching my face, and put socks on my hands, and took a lot of the allergy pills that I was given; but they weren't working. I didn't know if it was an allergy or not.

Shawn Buckley

Okay, so when you're telling us that story at the bar. So you're wearing gloves, and you start to get an itch close to your eye but it's moving. If you don't scratch before it moves, the itch will just keep moving.

Jennifer Curry

And grow, yeah.

Shawn Buckley

Okay, and so that itch goes behind your eye—

Jennifer Curry

Yeah, it did.

Shawn Buckley

—and so you can't scratch it. What was that experience like?

Jennifer Curry

My bosses were in the other side of the bar and they heard me crying. And I had to tell them what happened and if I could go home. They could tell that I was very distraught. I couldn't stop crying that day. It was pretty bad. That was the day I phoned 8-1-1.

Shawn Buckley

Right and that's about three days after your—

Jennifer Curry

Yeah.

Shawn Buckley

So you find that you're so distraught, you're crying at work in the bar.

Jennifer Curry

Mm-hmm.

Shawn Buckley

Had that type of thing ever happened to you before?

Jennifer Curry

No.

Shawn Buckley

Okay, and the reason I'm asking that question is just so that the commissioners understand that the mental anxiety is brand new.

Jennifer Curry

Yeah.

Shawn Buckley

So you didn't have anything like that before the first shot?

Jennifer Curry

No.

Sean Buckley

So that in itself is a new experience in reaction to the shot?

Jennifer Curry

Yeah.

Shawn Buckley

Okay. So you told us that you ended up calling for help. Tell us what happened.

Jennifer Curry

The ladies on 811 were very concerned. They asked me what shots that I took, what my symptoms were? And they were very concerned when I told them that my whole body was numb. And they said that I need to go to the emergency. And if I would like to go right away, that they would call an ambulance. And I said, "No, I'm okay. I can go." But it was them that told me to go. I wasn't sure.

Shawn Buckley

And I just want you to also share with us because you described your face being numb, but you would experience numbness over your entire body.

Jennifer Curry

Yeah, I had. When I'm cleaning sometimes, I'll put my phone up in my shirt so it doesn't fall out. And I had pinched the side of my breasts, and I didn't feel it. And that's how I knew that it was going down all the way to my feet. And I started touching my body everywhere and I got really scared because I thought it was going to go away and not get worse.

Shawn Buckley

At the hospital they basically told you that this was just an allergic response?

Jennifer Curry

They could see that my anxiety was very high. They assured me that some of this could be anxiety.

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That I could be making myself numb, or I could be doing this. So I didn't know how to retaliate to someone telling me what's wrong with me, if they didn't listen to me. I just didn't feel like they were.

Shawn Buckley

Okay, and you're having an experience like you have never had before in your life.

Jennifer Curry

No.

Shawn Buckley

And somebody's telling you that it's just caused by anxiety. Right?

Jennifer Curry

Yeah.

Shawn Buckley

And you were feeling anxious, but you had never had an issue with anxiety before.

Jennifer Curry

Not like this. No.

Shawn Buckley

Right. Okay. So you'd felt that you weren't being listened to.

Jennifer Curry

No.

Shawn Buckley

So what happened? You did leave the hospital. Did the symptoms persist?

Jennifer Curry

Very much so. By day seven you could start to see the scratches all over my face. And the cognitive, the memory, started to get kind of shaky here and there. I wasn't able to remember things anymore. And it was a lot of stress, a lot of troubles.

Shawn Buckley

Can you give us some examples about the memory issues?

Jennifer Curry

As a waitress or a bartender at a bar, it is very essential to be able to remember prices and drinks, and how many in a row, and fancy frou-frou things on the cups and stuff. I would walk up to a table of ten people, not a problem, and write down, not even write down their drinks, but just put it in here. And now I walk up to a table of four with a pen and pad because I don't think I'm going to remember by the time I get back to the bar.

Shawn Buckley

So a significant change in your memory.

Jennifer Curry

Significantly.

Shawn Buckley

Right. You ended up getting your second shot on November 13th, 2021.

Jennifer Curry

Mm-hmm.

Shawn Buckley

Why did you get your second shot, being that you had had so much trouble after the first shot?

Jennifer Curry

Thank you for asking that question because a lot of people did. I was feeling so much stress, so much itchiness, so much anxiety, so much segregation from my family for making me feel that I was crazy, that if I took that second shot and it made me worse, that it would be okay if I died because I wouldn't be suffering anymore. And I wouldn't hate myself for wrecking my life. So if I had the shot, it didn't matter cause I was already hurt, and if I died then I wouldn't be scratching my face off anymore. Sorry to say that.

Shawn Buckley

So you're actually in— A part of you was hoping that the shot would kill you.

Jennifer Curry

Yeah. Everybody told me that it was in my head, and that I needed to just wait—calm down—it would get better. And it never did. And I had to deal with that, and people that made me feel less of myself.

Shawn Buckley

Now, what happened after the second shot?

Jennifer Curry

I had to take the second shot at the hospital, and I had a triage nurse ask me questions. It was crazy. She's like "Well, why are you getting your second shot?" She goes "You have symptoms or you had symptoms?" I say, "No, I'm having symptoms." I say, "My face is numb right now." And she was really "Why are you getting your second shot?" I said "No one will give me an exemption." So while I had the second shot sitting there, the effects didn't happen as fast as the first one.

Shawn Buckley

I'll just stop, because I realized that you had attended at a walk-in clinic, and Dr. Savoy would not give you an exemption.

Jennifer Curry

No, she didn't.

Shawn Buckley

So there was a couple of things going on. Part of you wanted an exemption, and part of you wanted to get the shot, basically to end your suffering.

Jennifer Curry

Yeah.

Shawn Buckley

Okay. And I'm sorry I interrupted. So you get the shot at the hospital and you're starting to describe for us what happened.

Jennifer Curry

They gave me a period of about 45 minutes to make sure that I didn't have any anaphylactic shock or any other troubles or get worse. I thanked them for their time, and I got out. As I was driving home, my body started to feel stiff and numb a little bit again. And then the anxiety set in. So how much was the anxiety? How much was the shot? Everything all happened all over again. A week of home from work. And I couldn't stop scratching again,

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and I hoped that it would go away.

Shawn Buckley

Right, okay. So it's the same symptoms, but it's they're actually stronger this time aren't they?

Jennifer Curry

Yeah.

Shawn Buckley

So you had the numbness again?

Jennifer Curry

I did. It was right away. Stress can do a number on people's bodies. I didn't know if I did it to myself when I was struggling with the answers that I was getting.

Shawn Buckley

Right. Your itching is back.

Jennifer Curry

It was, yeah.

Shawn Buckley

It never really left, but it was stronger now.

Jennifer Curry

It was— I remember standing in the shower crying because the droplets of water were making me itch. And I didn't know what to do because I needed a shower. And my honey came in, and he twisted the things, it was less pressure and I could actually have a shower without crying. It was so detrimental to my soul that it was wrong. And I was having problems and nobody, nobody really listened. It was really hard. The scratching on my face. I wanted to rip my face off. I wanted to shave my head so I wouldn't feel any hair touch it. It's an immeasurable amount of— I don't know, it was awful. It still is.

Shawn Buckley

And what about your memory and your ability to think?

Jennifer Curry

My cognitive has slowed down big time. I will have a conversation sometimes with someone and then I'll forget where it was going to or what it was leading to. And I will have to get them to repeat themselves so I can remember what I was trying to tell them. I have to— I have missed my little girl's "muffin-read" thing at school because I forgot all about it. I have to have stuff, sticky notes, everywhere just to remind myself. And for my job right now, I worry that: Did I get all the garbage cans? Did I wash that one spot on the sink that I always forget? My memory has affected me now, very much so.

Shawn Buckley

And so you find you have to go like at work, go and check. Did you clean this? Because you can't remember even though you had.

Jennifer Curry

Yeah, yeah. I make lists now so that I don't forget things.

Shawn Buckley

So this has had a tremendous impact on your mental health: your mental stability.

Jennifer Curry

It is.

Shawn Buckley

And then, what about the anxiety that started after the first shot? How has that been after the second?

Jennifer Curry

I had a doctor. I think it was eight weeks after the November 13th shot. And I was crying when I went to him because it seems like there was a period of quietness. I've always been numb right from day one, but there were times where it wasn't so bad. But I had a flare or something. I didn't know what it was, and that's what sent me back to the doctor. And he was the one that was concerned, and "What do you mean your face is numb? Let me see. Are you okay?" And he's the one that sent me to the neurologist. It was at that point where if someone didn't listen to me, I was going to start screaming at everybody. I'm sorry if that was the wrong question. Did I answer that for you?

Shawn Buckley

No, no, you were answering it just fine. So you ended up going to the hospital.

Jennifer Curry

Yeah.

Shawn Buckley

And the doctor was surprised that you were describing having a numb face.

Jennifer Curry

Yeah, for that long as well. Because anxiety can make people have numbness. But I was numb for three months.

Shawn Buckley

How has this affected your energy levels?

Jennifer Curry

That's a big question for me because I am a very physical person. I'm a tomboy. I'm a farm kid. I used to work in the oil field picking up 200-pound men and dragging around the corner if they bugged me. I can't pick up a couple cases of beer now without stopping and

having a break. Every single step I take on a stair, I have to make sure I'm stepping right. And I have to stop, if there's many stairs. I'm tired a lot, and I like to sleep at home, and it's hard.

Shawn Buckley

Now, you're actually counting the days. Can you tell us how many days that you've been suffering?

Jennifer Curry

Five hundred and nineteen today.

Shawn Buckley

And why are you counting the days?

Jennifer Curry

That was the day that I changed my life. I had a choice. And I didn't say no. I didn't fight.

[00:20:00]

And that's when everything changed; it's never going to be the same again.

Shawn Buckley

Are the doctors giving you any hope?

Jennifer Curry

Yes. They have given me a couple of MRIs [Magnetic Resonance Imaging], which led me down to the road to more neurologists and a lumbar test. They weren't sure how to deal with me after several trips back to the hospital. They had put me in contact with an MS [Multiple Sclerosis] clinic because I was showing signs of MS. And I was waiting for them to investigate more and do some more tests.

Shawn Buckley

And can you describe for us the symptoms that they were thinking suggested MS?

Jennifer Curry

There's about eight symptoms that can be from MS. Cognitive is a big one, numbness, energy, loss of bowels, that's not fun, that one. Stiffness of the leg as well, double vision, blurry vision. Hot areas will make a person feel dizzy. So there's dizziness.

Shawn Buckley

But those aren't symptoms that you have.

Jennifer Curry

I have all of those.

Shawn Buckley

Oh, you have all of those, okay.

Jennifer Curry

I do. Yeah.

Shawn Buckley

So how has this experience made you feel?

Jennifer Curry

I have stopped hanging out with my family. Sometimes there's been a family reunion I missed because of this. Because I didn't want to talk about it. Because so many people would tell me that—this is very hard to talk about—so many people told me that it is just something— “You're going to be okay.” I tried to tell them I'm not.

Dealing with what I'm dealing now, I am very grateful to be here to share my story. So that the people that I couldn't talk to because I was scared, that you're going to find out this way what I'm dealing with. And I feel 100 percent better talking to you people in the last two weeks. You have made me feel so much better. Thank you.

Shawn Buckley

Those are the questions that I have here, Jennifer. I'll ask if the commissioners have any questions.

Commissioner Massie

Thank you very much for your very touching testimony.

Jennifer Curry

Thank you.

Commissioner Massie

Just to make sure I understand, you decided to get the second shot to convince yourself that you were not imagining things, that it was really due to the vaccine.

Jennifer Curry

I do.

Commissioner Massie

So you could actually make the case to people around you that were more or less saying that you're not really sick, you're just anxious, and you're making yourself sick.

Jennifer Curry

Yeah.

Commissioner Massie

Did you have an issue with anxiety before?

Jennifer Curry

No. I've seen a lot of things in my lifetime, and I've dealt with them very well. Dealing with something that was going against what I believed in broke me. And then when it did break me, it broke me because I knew.

Commissioner Massie

So why do you think that people around you had to really come up with the story in that? The reason why you were experiencing the symptoms was due to your anxiety; that it has nothing physical linked to the vaccine?

Jennifer Curry

Yeah. A lot of people in this whole world would say that the vaccines were good. That they believe there's not that many people that are getting hurt from it.

Can you repeat the question? I'm sorry.

Commissioner Massie

So yeah, my question is— Maybe I can rephrase what I was going to say because I'm trying to wrap my head around your situation. You were not anxious before. Now the situation creates a lot of anxiety because you experience physical symptoms. What do the physical symptoms or consequences of your anxiety, or they're coming from some other condition that we don't know— at the end of the day, because you didn't have these symptoms before—

[00:25:00]

why couldn't people see that there is a link with the vaccine?

Jennifer Curry

I believe that because people were scared to say the shot did it. That a lot of people like myself got pushed aside, so to speak. That we didn't get that recognition or validation that we were injured because the people that we were dealing with, doctors and nurses, weren't able to help us if they wanted to. I think their job was important, and they needed their job as well. So helping me out and telling me that this could be from the shot would make them have to write a report. And I think that that's why no one did. No one wanted to put their selves aside and say she was hurt because the symptoms were so all-over that they really weren't sure what it was.

Commissioner Massie

So are you improving a little bit, your health condition, or is it stable?

Jennifer Curry

On March 23rd, I was diagnosed with MS. And I know that many people listening and many people have told me that MS isn't caused by a shot. I would say that it never created it—but it did cause—the shot. I believe that I had anxiety, and I was so scared that I made my body go into a system of scaredness. I also looked into what the mRNA's [Messenger Ribonucleic Acid] job was, and it was to teach my immune system to fight. If you look up what MS is: your immune system is fighting itself. Maybe my connections got crossed. Certainly 17 minutes after my shot, I'm for sure going to think that it was a COVID shot that did it. I have to. I have never had any of these symptoms before in my life.

Commissioner Massie

Thank you very much for your testimony.

Jennifer Curry

Thank you.

Shawn Buckley

Jennifer there being no further questions from the commissioners, on behalf of the National Citizens Inquiry, we sincerely thank you for coming and testifying and sharing your story with us today.

Jennifer Curry

I'm honoured to be here and I'm happy to be a part of this. I appreciate your time. Thank you very much.

[00:27:36]

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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