



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Saskatoon, SK

Day 2

April 21, 2023

EVIDENCE

Witnesses 2 and 3: Suzanne and Barry Thesen

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[00:00:00]

Louis Browne

Good morning, members of the Commission, ladies and gentlemen, and Mr. and Mrs. Thesen. My name is Louis Browne. I am a partner with the law firm Willows, Wellsch Orr & Brundige LLP in Regina, and I'm delighted to be one of the volunteer lawyers working with the Commission here in Saskatchewan. Mr. Thesen, Mrs. Thesen, good morning. I'm going to start with you, Mrs. Thesen. Can you please state your name and spell your last name for the Inquiry, please?

Suzanne Thesen

My name is Suzanne Thesen, S-U-Z-A-N-N-E, Thesen, T-H-E-S-E-N.

Louis Browne

Thank you, Mrs. Thesen. And would you prefer to swear an oath or solemnly affirm?

Suzanne Thesen

It makes no difference.

Louis Browne

Okay. Do you swear that the testimony you are about to give in this National Citizens Inquiry will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Suzanne Thesen

Yes.

Louis Browne

Thank you. And Mr. Thesen, can you please state your name and spell your last name for us?

Barry Thesen

Barry Thesen, B-A-R-R-Y, Thesen is T-H-E-S-E-N.

Louis Browne

Thank you. And Mr. Thesen, would you prefer to swear an oath or solemnly affirm?

Barry Thesen

Don't matter.

Louis Browne

Mr. Thesen, do you swear that the testimony you are about to give in this National Citizens Inquiry will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Barry Thesen

Yes.

Louis Browne

Thank you.

Mrs. Thesen, I wanted to start with you— Just because it is perhaps a little bit unusual, certainly in a court proceeding, to have two people testifying at the same time. Can you just please tell us, what is your relationship with Mr. Thesen?

Suzanne Thesen

Barry Thesen is my husband. That's it.

Louis Browne

Sure. And how long have you both been married?

Suzanne Thesen

Oh, we've been married about—how many years, Barry? Forty-some years.

Louis Browne

Okay. And then so briefly, we're going to get into it in details, but just in kind of 30 to 45 seconds: Why are you testifying with your husband here today?

Suzanne Thesen

Well, I'm here to help Barry. It's very difficult for both of us to be here. Barry was quite severely injured. And it's left him—it's very difficult for him to express himself and say what he wants to say. He can't find his words, things like that.

The reason we decided to come was because for every one of us that testifies, there's probably thousands that have a story to tell. I do have notes here and I am going to try to help Barry with his testimony.

Louis Browne

Sure. Thanks very much. We're going to get to the incident which brings you here today. But I just want to have a reference point because we don't know Mr. Thesen.

Can you just give us again a 30 to 60 second description of your husband in terms of energy, activities, and overall health before May of 2021?

Suzanne Thesen

Okay. I'll let Barry say a little bit about himself. What do you want to say, Barry?

Barry Thesen

I'm just a retired farmer and also a fuel and fertilizer company, agency I owned and sold. And that's what we did before we retired.

Louis Browne

Mr. or Mrs. Thesen, can you just tell us a little bit about how Mr. Thesen was before May of 2021, just in terms of his overall energy, activities, and health?

Suzanne Thesen

Barry was— Actually, he's being quite modest here. He was a large farm owner and he ran an Imperial Oil agency, which is a fairly large business. And he was involved in various committees and he was very active in the community. We had recently retired and so we were spending more time travelling.

[00:05:00]

We were spending more time with our grandchildren, and he was active and well.

Louis Browne

Excellent. Thank you.

I'd like to go through your evidence in time frames, okay? We're going to talk about certain time frames, what happened during those time frames, and we'll move on to the next time frame. Okay?

So, we've now covered before May of 2021. Can you tell us what happened in May of 2021, please?

Suzanne Thesen

In May '21, Barry had his first Moderna shot. And he didn't have a serious reaction, he had a few. And he's going to tell you what kind, okay?

Barry Thesen

We were uptown in Melfort and took the shot. And it made me feel not very good for about two hours or three hours. It wasn't real bad: I had a sore arm. Everything outside of that wasn't much problem.

Louis Browne

Okay, great. And then let's carry forward then to what happened next that's relevant for the Inquiry. Can you tell us the date, do you remember the date that that first vaccine occurred?

Suzanne Thesen

I'll help him with that a little bit. He has a difficult time with events and time and remembering things.

First of all, maybe I can say that he was hesitant on getting this shot. The reason he finally decided was because he was trying to convince me to get the shot so we could continue our travels like we had planned. And also, his father was in a nursing home and in order to visit his dad, he had to get a shot. When I chose not to have my shot, that meant that I couldn't see him unless it was through a window. And after that, when he wasn't well, it was not at all. And I'll probably live with this for the rest of my life, but I was not able to be with him when he passed away, which was of course during COVID times.

Barry, he went for his second Moderna shot.

Louis Browne

Hold on a second. When did the first shot occur, please?

Suzanne Thesen

Pardon me?

Louis Browne

When did the first shot occur?

Suzanne Thesen

The first shot was in May, 2021.

Louis Browne

Do you remember the date?

Suzanne Thesen

Yes, I do. I think it was May 5th. And the second shot was in Melfort on May 10th.

Louis Browne

The second shot was on May 10th.

Suzanne Thesen

Yes, 2021, again.

Louis Browne

Okay, so when was the first shot? Sorry, when was the second?

Suzanne Thesen

It was May—

Louis Browne

Just take your time, Mrs. Thesen, just take your time.

Suzanne Thesen

Oh, sorry. May 10th, 2021, was in the mall.

Louis Browne

And what was that? What happened on that date? Was that the first or the second shot?

Suzanne Thesen

That's the first shot.

Louis Browne

Okay, so what we have then is the first shot happening on May 10th, 2021. Is that correct?

Suzanne Thesen

Yes.

Louis Browne

And where did that shot occur?

Suzanne Thesen

That was in Melfort and it was Moderna.

Louis Browne

And that's in which province? Which province are we talking about?

Suzanne Thesen

That's the first shot, yes.

Louis Browne

Which province did that occur in?

Suzanne Thesen

Which mall?

Louis Browne

It was in Melfort? What is the province that Melfort is located in? I just can't lead you, so just please tell us what province that's located in.

Suzanne Thesen

Oh, the province? It happened in Arborfield, Saskatchewan.

Louis Browne

Saskatchewan, okay. Thank you. So, please carry on. What happened after that? We can carry on to the second shot now.

Suzanne Thesen

His second shot was on July 13th, 2021 at 11 o'clock.

Louis Browne

Where did that occur?

Suzanne Thesen

That happened in Nipawin—again, Saskatchewan.

Louis Browne

Okay, thank you. And then, so what happened? Tell us what happened?

Suzanne Thesen

Well, Nipawin is about a half hour away from us. And the pharmacist did have him sign a consent and I have it here. I went and got it. And nowhere on the consent, first of all, does it say anything about side effects or injuries, possible injuries.

[00:10:00]

It's very basic. They did make him wait also 15 minutes and he started feeling unwell once he went back to his truck.

Should I let Barry say a little bit? I'll fill in if he has trouble, okay?

Louis Browne

Can we just understand, Mrs. Thesen? Were you with him in the truck?

Suzanne Thesen

No. I'm a substitute teacher so I was subbing that day, so I didn't see him 'til a little bit later on but— Should I let Barry say?

Louis Browne

Sure.

Suzanne Thesen

Barry, can you say how you felt?

Barry Thesen

I didn't feel too bad to start with. And it was probably maybe a half hour later, I started feeling really quite sick. And I just didn't know how to deal with it. I should drive home or what? And then I kind of backed off and just sat around for a while. And then, I went home, feeling a little better. By the time I got to home, I was really in bad shape. I shouldn't have been driving. When I got home, I got in the house. And I barely got up the stairs into the house. [To Suzanne] What happened then?

Suzanne Thesen

This is what Barry told me earlier and I wrote it down. He says he thought he was going to pass out when he was in his truck, so he had to wait in his truck for a little bit until he felt more stable. He was very dizzy, and he felt like vomiting. So after waiting in his truck for a little bit, he got home and by the time he was home, he was shaking uncontrollably. He said it was almost like convulsions. It was just, like, all over the place. He was sweating, almost like dripping wet, and yet he was very, very cold. He could barely make it up the stairs, and he went straight to bed.

And then, when I got home, I couldn't wake him up. I was quite worried about him. Off and on during the night, it was like he was laying still— Shaking a little bit but all of a sudden, again, he would start shaking uncontrollably with his arms flinging all over. It was like convulsing.

Louis Browne

And did you suggest anything to him at that point?

Suzanne Thesen

Pardon me?

Louis Browne

Did you suggest anything to him at that point?

Suzanne Thesen

I did not. I tried to wake him up, and then I thought, well, maybe he'll feel better in the morning. Then I fell asleep for a while, and then I'd wake up when he was shaking all over the place. Barry didn't get up 'til about 9 o'clock in the morning. So he slept a long time. When he got up, I had been up for a while. When he got up, it was shocking. His right side of his mouth was drooped. His body and shoulders were drooped. His eyes were wrong. They weren't right. They were unmoving. His arms just hung to his side. He was shuffling his feet, and he was walking very, very slowly, almost as if he was in a fog.

Barry told me— I asked him, how are you feeling? He said he felt weak and he felt like he had been beat up, like a car had run over him. He was extremely disoriented, couldn't speak. If he tried to say a sentence, it was wrong. It wasn't the proper words or the proper structure. He was finding it really, really difficult to process things. For example, I would give him a dish and I'd say, "Can you go put this in the fridge?" He would take it—and it was almost zombie-like. He would take it

[00:15:00]

and turn around in the opposite direction that he was supposed to go to, and start walking towards, let's say, the stairs. And then he would just stop, and he didn't know what he was supposed to do, where he was.

So simple things, like, for example, he'd say, "I'm going to bed." I would watch him head to the wrong room. He would go in the opposite room. And he'd look around in the room and he didn't know that. And then finally, he'd turn around and look again around, and finally, he'd find his way. I was just observing him.

That night and for the following few weeks—because this went on for quite a few weeks—Barry remembers practically nothing of those two weeks. When I went to bed he said, "Are you coming to bed?" I said, "Yes." He says, "Well, do you sleep here?" I said, "Yes." "Oh, well, that's nice. Okay." It's just that he did not know what was going on.

When he woke up, I said, "We should go to the hospital." I felt like it was probably a stroke or something. And he said, "No."

[To Barry] Do you want to say why you didn't want to go to the hospital?

Barry Thesen

I don't think I can say.

Suzanne Thesen

[To Barry] No, you can't? Okay.

Barry said he didn't want to go to the hospital because he was scared that he was going to be stuck there and I wouldn't be able to visit and he was going to die alone. My sister's a nurse and she came over and she says, "I'm not a doctor, but I think he had a stroke. You should go to the hospital." Barry again insisted, "No, I've had enough."

My opinion, I guess, was that the damage had been done and I was also afraid of him going in there and never getting out.

[To Barry] Do you have anything to add to that? [Nothing to add].

Can we skip to what he's left with now?

Louis Browne

I just wanted to ask you, Ms. Thesen— so we're in the very brief aftermath of the second shot. Right after the shot, you've described a number of your observations of your husband. But can you just identify: What was his appearance like? What was his face colour like at that point? Was it normal?

Suzanne Thesen

His face?

Louis Browne

Face color, like the color of his skin.

Suzanne Thesen

He was, like, ash white, ashy gray-white.

Louis Browne

Okay, sure. Thank you.

In and around that time, was there any interactions with your family physician? With Barry's family physician?

Suzanne Thesen

No.

Louis Browne

Okay. Why don't we go then to how we're doing today? How are we doing recently, lately?

Suzanne Thesen

Cognitively, and Barry can help me with that— I'll get him to talk. Cognitively, he says his brain is like it's in a fog all the time. And he finds it difficult to express himself, to make decisions. He can't say what he wants. And the weird thing is, he now has, like, visions, and he'll explain that to you a little bit.

Barry Thesen

It's just like the birds came into your house and they're flying around in there and it's not really— It's like a shadow of a bird. And it drives you crazy, I guess. Makes you just wonder what's going on. It kind of comes and goes, you know, it isn't constant.

[00:20:00]

Like the last couple of weeks, I've been feeling quite well, I thought. And before that it seemed like all it is, is like animals or birds or whatever. And they kind of flutter around and, I don't know. It's weird. But I also read where it's a problem.

[To Suzanne] How did that go?

Suzanne Thesen

Well, just recently, I saw that—because I thought it was so strange—it's one of the things that other people have also been experiencing. I don't know for sure, but another thing that Barry keeps commenting on is, like, there's people in our house. And then when we— Barry likes to set the table before we're going to eat. And almost every time, even yet today, he'll say, "How many people are here?" And I'll say, "Just you and I." "Oh, I thought there was more people." I said, "No, there's just you and I." And he keeps thinking that either his grandson's downstairs or he says he hears voices; he thinks people are here.

Another thing that is happening to him—now Barry will confirm that; he says that it hasn't happened in the last couple of weeks—for example, I will send him off to the neighboring town, which is, like, seven kilometers away to his daughter's place. And I'll say, "She's waiting for you for supper. I'm going to be away." And he will go towards that town and, all of a sudden, he will have to pull over and stop because he doesn't remember where he's going. He doesn't remember why he's going. He explained it as a total blank. He just goes totally blank. Then he, after sitting for a little while, sometimes it'll come back. But even then, he's very disoriented. He gets into that town and he doesn't remember where the house is.

Louis Browne

Mrs. Thesen, can you or Barry tell us: How's Barry's strength doing these days? How is his walking, his legs?

Suzanne Thesen

His walking now?

Louis Browne

And his strength, his overall physical strength.

Suzanne Thesen

He's extremely weak. His knees— He'll talk to you about the pain he has, like a constant pain. But his knees, he has to be very, very careful. When he goes up the stairs, quite often even holding on to the railing isn't good enough. He'll use his hands and put them on the steps in front of him one at a time. When he goes down the stairs, he goes one foot at a time, like a two-year-old where you go one foot, two feet at the same step, and then keep going that way. He's lost a lot of his strength, he's lost his appetite, he's lost weight, he has a very, very hard time with dates, events. For example, if he knows he has an appointment, I'll write it down on a calendar, and he has it on his phone. But every day he has me check to make sure, like, "When is my appointment?" I said, "Well it's still five days away." The next day he'll ask me the same thing, "When is your appointment?" and then I'll repeat that.

Barry also does that with other things. There's certain things that really bother him and he doesn't remember, so it has to be checked every day.

[00:25:00]

He wants to use the car to go uptown. He will say, "Are my plates good?" "Yes." "Okay. Is my licence good?" "Yes." "Well, how do you know?" "Because we checked the day before, right?" Then he will go to the car and get the registration and he'll bring it in. It's very difficult for him to process the expiry date, so he'll say, "Can you help me with this? What does it say? How long?" And I'll say, "You're good for six months." "Okay." Then the next day it's the same thing.

TV, he struggles with the remote, trying to find channels. I often go and set it up for him, ask him what he feels like watching. Paying bills: he has to depend on me for a lot now. So I pay the bills, I do the banking, even business, and his credit cards and debit cards are extremely confusing for him. He'll say, "I'm going to go get some money. Which card do I use?" I say, "If you're using the ATM, you'll just use your debit." "Which one?" "This one." So he'll go and use that card and then he'll come back and he'll say that it didn't work. I'll say, "Which card did you use?"

Sometimes he'll say he used the black card—the MasterCard—or sometimes he'll say, "I use this number." "Oh, that's for the other card." He still has a business card and he has a personal card and we have MasterCards. And for him that's a lot.

[To Barry] "Do you want to say anything, Barry? Are you okay?"

Barry Thesen

That's enough.

Suzanne Thesen

That's enough? I know.

Louis Browne

And Mr. and Mrs. Thesen, you're both doing very well. And we're coming to the end here. I just want to confirm something before I invite the commissioners to ask questions. Mrs. Thesen, everything we've discussed today occurred in the province of Saskatchewan, Canada. Is that correct?

Suzanne Thesen

That is correct. Both shots were in Saskatchewan and we live in Saskatchewan and have for a long time.

Louis Browne

Thank you. At this time, I do have maybe one or two more questions, but they're conclusion questions. I'll just invite the Commission if they have any questions.

Suzanne Thesen

We did end up going to the doctor. Do you want to know how it was recorded, his injuries?

Louis Browne

Are we talking about the VAERS [Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting] System?

Suzanne Thesen

Both. We went to the doctor first. There is one doctor that Barry trusts; his name is Dr. Fowler and he lives in Carrot River. Due to lockdowns we had to do a phone interview. And I asked Dr. Fowler—we had him on a speaker phone and so we did it together—to file the injury report. Dr. Fowler was extremely hesitant. He says, “You do realize that you’re the first person that has ever had an injury that I know of.” And I’ll say, “It doesn’t matter. I want this recorded. I want it sent away to—” Then he would say, “These forms are really long and difficult. It will take us a really long time. Are you sure you want to proceed?” I would say, “Yes.” He says, “It does appear like your husband suffered a stroke but maybe it was a coincidence, maybe it had nothing to do with it.” I said, “Please, we’re asking you to report the injury.” He did go ahead and he did finish recording it and we’re hoping he sent it away.

[00:30:00]

He did follow up and he wanted us to go see a neurologist. When the appointment came, when it came time for Barry to go see the neurologist, Barry refused. He said no.

Louis Browne

And we can maybe just pause there for a second. Why don’t we invite the commissioners to ask some questions, and then we’ll just carry on? I don’t know if the Commission has any questions, but if not, then I’ll wrap up. We’re good. You’ve answered all their questions. So my second last question for you is: In summary, in just 60 seconds or so, what would you like this Inquiry and Canadians at large to take away from your evidence today?

Suzanne Thesen

First of all, I don’t think Barry would have taken the vax, or the shot—I guess I would call it—if they would have properly warned him that there was going to be some possible side effects.

Barry’s always been fairly trusting of the institutions, and doctors, and the government. I just know he just thought it was just harmless, “We’ve always taken vaccines.” And another thing is the coercion that went on to get these shots. Barry probably wouldn’t have gotten that shot if he knew he could have travelled without the shot. And also, if you could go and visit people in the nursing home without the shot.

Louis Browne

We may have covered it and there may not be anything more to say, but I want to make sure that you feel you’ve had your day in court, so to speak. My last question for you: Is there anything else you’d like to share with us today?

Suzanne Thesen

We just feel this injury was totally unnecessary. It was preventable. This injury has changed our life forever. It's stolen our dreams and retirement plans. It's stolen everything from us. Barry is the real hero here—to be here today. This is difficult for him, to say how it's affected him and how it's damaged him. The world needs to know what it's done to people.

This has nothing to do with our injury, but I do have one thing as a teacher. Can I say something?

Louis Browne

It's your evidence.

Suzanne Thesen

I'm still substitute teaching, and I was on a leave for a few months. I was teaching in the Grade one and two classrooms, and what I saw was horrific. If you can imagine: In the middle of winter, when kids go outside to play and they have runny noses, and they come back and their masks are frozen on their face. In the classroom, they're wearing those wet masks. And if ever somebody came in the classroom, they were told to put their masks on. Put them up. Put them up. Another thing that's damaging, that not that many people talk about is: everywhere you go, they have these sanitizers. When you first get into the door, kids had to go and line up and get their temperature taken. They had to also squirt stuff, this sanitizer, on their hands. Kids' hands would get raw and they thought it was fun.

And then they would go in the classroom and there was one in the classroom.

[00:35:00]

Now I would discourage them. I would say, "No, you can't." But they only had to use them before they ate, after they ate, before they went outside, after they went outside, before they went home, after they came in the school. It was on and on. Then parents would also buy them sanitizers that they would put on their desk and use, like, 10, 15, 20 times a day. Then they would eat their sandwich.

Kids would come in an hour late and then they would say, "I'm late because I just had my shot." It was beyond difficult. I had to turn around and just get hold myself a little bit. I just kept thinking, what if that child gets injured like my husband? What if?

That's all I want to say.

Louis Browne

Thank you, Mrs. Thesen. I just want to make sure if Mr. Thesen has any concluding thoughts. If not, that's totally fine.

Barry Thesen

No, everything's good.

Louis Browne

Mr. and Mrs. Thesen, thank you very much for giving us your evidence today.

Suzanne Thesen

Thank you.

[00:36:41]

Final Review and Approval: Jodi Bruhn, August 21, 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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