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A Tale of Two POEC Submissions

It's been a saying forever, that it's always harder to write a short letter than a long one, and very much one that experience has given me no choice about recognizing as true. So when I first read the instructions from the "Public Submissions" page for the Public Order Emergency Commission (POEC, AKA Rouleau Commission) late in August 2022, I knew I was in trouble. Because the crucial guideline said:

Typically, submissions will be 1 or 2 pages, up to about 5 pages. You may provide supporting materials, if any, as attachments.

This was more than worrying. There was no way I could let this opportunity pass. Given any chance at all to share my views with the Commission examining the circumstances leading to declaration of the public order emergency declared in Canada on February 14th, 2022, there was no way I could stand not doing it. Not respond to an actual *invitation* to comment on this first invocation of the *Emergencies Act*, as what might just be the most egregious abuse of power in Canadian history? Not happening. If I didn't get my views on the record about this one, I'd regret it the rest of my life.

But I couldn't do it in one or two, or even five pages, from a standing start. I also couldn't do it by just stepping through and answering the page or so of questions the site suggested I might consider in composing my response. I'm not going to reproduce those here. If anyone wants the official version, it should still be around at <https://publicorderemergencycommission.ca/share-your-views/> for a while. Probably not forever, as the option for public comment closes on October 31st, 2022, but for the purposes of this record, it doesn't matter. Reading this, you'll be able to tell which ones I addressed. I had to start somewhere, and the pool of questions offered as starting points wasn't bad. It covered the ground, lining up decently with ideas I'd seen discussed in a mailing from the Canadian Constitution Federation, which was my first specific advisory that this window of opportunity was open. CCF Litigation Director Christine Van Geyn also put out that content as a YouTube video entitled "*The Trudeau government's use of the Emergencies Act was illegal – now YOU can do something about it*" at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxKR5uD4yqc> which I'm linking here as still worth a look. It's a good presentation for anyone to hear out, when getting ready to do anything similar.

I'd known it was coming. For about two weeks I'd been struggling to organize my thoughts and cut through to what I wanted to say, and it hadn't been going especially well.

So I started writing in earnest, feeling completely intimidated. I mean, I *can* write. I may not be anything like comprehensively well read, or obviously all that well educated, but I'm at least widely read, and have been rated most of my life as capable of being articulate. I've also written more, across ~37 years in two careers, than any other two people I know. I've been rated highly effective for at least half of that. No question, I *can* write. But I'm slow. So slow. Painfully slow, to a point where writing this, right now, I'm not even going to try to be articulate about it.

For the time being, at very least I was going to have to pretend that I wasn't facing that page limit.

Over the next month, writing pretty much every hour that I was awake—so call it six weeks straight—I came up with the document that follows. Call it my “before” submission, as at the night of October 27th, 2022. I still plan to use this if I can, as the basis for an affidavit I will offer the JCCF legal team now representing the truckers (Freedom Corp) at the POEC, as well as back during the protest itself. I gather they have been collecting affidavits from Ottawa residents about their experiences during the protest, and I hope it can still support that.

My POEC Submission: BEFORE

To the Public Order Emergency Commission:

I bring my comments to the Commission as someone “involved” both as an observer of protest activities across Canada in January and February 2022, and a supporter of the Freedom Convoy 2022 protest in Ottawa. As such, I was deeply and personally affected both by these protests, and by the invocation of the *Emergencies Act* against (specifically) the Freedom Convoy 2022 in Ottawa.

In the interests of brevity, I will begin by summarizing my perspective as best I can.

-oOo-

The Freedom Convoy 2022 protest in Ottawa was before all else a legitimate protest as provided for—at least in theory—under our Constitution.

However disruptive and traumatizing some residents of Ottawa's downtown core may have found it, that does not change the fact of its being legitimate as the biggest, most spontaneous and broadly grassroots human rights protest in Canadian history. Perfect? No. But never an insurrection. As the convoy organizers speaking for it stated more than once, there was no intention to overthrow the government, or to remove any elected official. As key spokesman Ben Dichter said on more than one occasion, “That is what elections are for.”

What this protest was, was an unprecedented response to the unprecedented authoritarian overreach of both the Federal and provincial governments into abuse of citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms, since declaration of the COVID pandemic in 2020. Its specific focus was on calling for a clear plan to end all Federal and provincial COVID mandates, including the removal of vaccine passports and the ArriveCan digital tracking app. In the looser “street” consensus of participants, it was a call to end all mandates and restore Canadians' freedom of choice in making their own medical decisions, along with full rights to keep those decisions private.

The protesters who came to Ottawa had committed from the beginning to be peaceful, and they held to that commitment even when violence was brought against them.

In refusing to seek out protest leaders who had come in good faith, engage with them to explore who the protesters were and why they had come, and pursue constructive dialogue with them, rather than pre-emptively dismissing them as a “small fringe minority...holding unacceptable views” the government was wrong.

Reflexively denying their rights as citizens to protest and to be heard—choosing instead to deny them any legitimacy and proceeding to condemn and vilify the entire movement as racists, misogynists, far right extremists, white supremacists, swastika-waving [Nazis], violent insurrectionists and repeatedly, foreign-funded domestic terrorists bent on overthrowing the government—was wrong, and profoundly unCanadian.

The government’s refusal to recognize that in the protest’s continued peacefulness there was ample evidence of the truckers having come in good faith to express Canadians’ grievances, was wrong.

Its equal refusal to recognize that in the unprecedented outpouring of so many ordinary citizens’ love, gratitude, and support for the truckers, they had reason to understand how so many of us felt they were a last hope for representation of our needs and interests, was equally wrong.

Invoking the *Emergencies Act* against the Freedom Convoy 2022 protest in Ottawa, was an unwarranted response to a situation which not only could have been resolved by other means, it was in progress towards being resolved by other means.

There was no national emergency. The sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity of Canada were not under threat. With reference to the protest in Ottawa they never had been, and by the day the *Act* was invoked, if any of the requirements for its invocation had ever been met by any of the other protests ongoing across the country, this was no longer true. By February 14th, where blockades had not already ended, provincial premiers were all dealing well, within their capacities and authority, to bring the rest to peaceful ends.

We know now that none of the law enforcement agencies involved had requested invocation of the *Act*.

We know now that when “consulted” on the morning of February 14th, a majority of seven out of ten provincial premiers did not support use of the *Act*. Premier Kenney of Alberta, and Premier Stefanson of Manitoba both are reported to have requested it not be applied in their provinces, where they were both close to being successful in ending the blockades affecting them.

The government chose to go ahead with it anyway, apparently not even excluding the provinces requesting to be excluded from its application.

Eight months later, I still find it hard to sum up the impact of the next ten days while the *Act* was in force—in particular, the *Economic Measures*—beyond calling it devastating. Terrifying, terrorizing. I might call ministers’ messaging about the measures they were pursuing only inept—sloppy, lacking in clarity where it was needed, and profoundly disturbing in its delivery—but inescapably, for me what they communicated most strongly was malevolence.

My account of that experience lies below, and as a testimony of fear, it isn’t something I can summarize well. Best I can say is that by the end of day February 17th, 2022, I could only feel our government was showing itself to be unscrupulous: willing and even eager to implement tyranny, and determined to make as many of us afraid, as possible. The violence it progressed to in the next two days could only harden my reading of this, and that remains solid to this day. In the face of such abuse, trust is no longer an option. It is erased, it is *gone*. Every hideous possibility becomes not only imaginable, it must be weighted as probable. There are still plenty

of days when it just makes me want to *run*—pack up and leave, sell everything, take every dollar I can scrape together, and flee to any place on Earth where I might hope to live feeling less controlled, less threatened, less continually at risk of ever more elaborate new mandates and restrictions, and in less danger of finding my fundamental rights overridden whenever any level of government decides to do it.

So where do we go from here?

For me, the most frightening thing about use of this *Act*, is that in the end, I have no certainty it could have been stopped by anything in law. In theory, it might have been. In theory, the Senate having the power to refuse its ratification might have done it. There have been rumours that the Senators *didn't* support invocation of the *Act*, and that that fact being communicated to the Prime Minister may have been what led to its being revoked. I would like to believe that. But there's an equally credible story out there, that its revoking may have had more to do with bankers reporting their systems being overwhelmed by demands from hundreds and thousands of ordinary Canadians looking to pull out as much of their money in cash as fast as they could, and where possible, get it out of the country as fast as they could.

I suspect that in the end, the requirement for this Commission to review whether or not this *Act* should have been invoked at all, may be the only hope we have for this abuse being acknowledged. It must at least go down in history as a hideous misjudgement which must never be repeated.

Going forward, I think that any institution which has supported the government in its actions, must expect to be seen as complicit in its aims.

Our state-subsidized media have rendered themselves beneath contempt as biased liars, shameless in amplifying government propaganda.

Our ability to trust in our banking system has been deeply shaken. Now we know:

- Any assets we place in the care of our banks can be frozen without warrant or warning, any time they may be told by the government that we are “designated persons”.
- Any contracts we may have for credit services or insurance may be suspended.
- We may be forced into default on our financial obligations.
- Even if we have any option to ‘negotiate’ our way out of such penalties in time to avoid financial ruin (*not* something anyone can have any confidence about, at this point), we must expect that going forward our records will remain marked,
- and there is no reason not to expect our transactions may end up being monitored on a continuing basis.

It's impossible not to fear that ways may soon be found to make us all “designated persons” subject to routine violations of our financial privacy, exploiting all our financial institutions as government or police agents. Personally, I think immediately of digital ID.

For many Canadians now, our police are also not to be trusted. I don't personally agree with that. I'm confident there are still a great many decent and competent individuals serving in law enforcement across the country, and I have a lot of sympathy for the dangers, difficulties, and lack of support they often face. But I do understand others' fears having become a lot broader now, and as I don't plan to surrender my rights to express dissent through peaceful protest, I can't swear I'll never find myself sharing them.

I haven't much faith in our Charter these days, either. No one seems willing or able to defend it.

Knowing now that the government's decision to invoke the *Act* also involved overriding without consultation the plan for its de-escalation which had been negotiated between the Mayor of Ottawa and Freedom Convoy 2022 leadership, there is no way for me to find any of this excusable. At minimum, it represents a complete failure on the part of the government, to engage in anything resembling proper disputes resolution.

If this use of the *Emergencies Act* is ruled valid, every government in future will have the power to declare emergencies and crush any peaceful protest, any dissent, that they decide to interpret as threatening to them.

With respect to the *Act* itself, what seems to be more important than its contents is that it has been possible to bring to bear the measures it enables—front and centre, the *Economic Measures*—against citizens engaged in free expression on fundamental matters including coerced violations of individuals' bodily autonomy, loss of their rights to medical privacy, and unreasonable withdrawal of freedoms to travel and earn a living. Essentially, as part of a process of rejecting their concerns and rejecting them.

If there is any choice between changing the contents of the *Act* to make its provisions less severe, and changing the conditions which must be met for an emergency to be declared, I think our priority must be the latter. We need to stop this *Act* ever being invoked again, to suppress legitimate protest.

Internationally, Canada has won the attention of the world, everywhere the story of the Freedom Convoy protest has reached, and if we leave governments out of it, I think it's given most of the world a more positive view of ordinary Canadians than it may ever have had before. Use of the *Emergencies Act* against it, though—that's another matter.

I would say that in the world court of public opinion, Canada now stands substantially disqualified as a free country. Still a vast, beautiful, resource-rich nation with what should be world-leading potential, but it's now understood as a country where if you protest anything, and the Prime Minister doesn't like your opinion, you can have your bank account frozen. A country where police-state tactics are now an option for assaulting legitimate protesters. We've gone from being a country seen as run by an unserious fool, to one in the grip of a vindictive, creepy and dangerous narcissist. An actual would-be dictator, and now an especially hypocritical poseur, running around making fatuous speeches about how other countries should cherish democracy and civil rights, while assaulting Canadians' freedoms at home. Which, in the end, as at least a few people from abroad have correctly pointed out, we must ultimately call our own fault.

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What follows is my best effort to answer the questions posed in this Commission's invitation to comment.

Background: Why I was involved

When word of the convoy's progress towards Ottawa reached me, the week of January 24th, 2022, it held out a possibility of hope for something that at that stage, I had gone beyond being able to feel any hope for.

From August 2021, I felt I was watching a descent into Hell on the part of both our Federal and provincial governments and far too many of my fellow Canadians, against which, alone, I could have no hope of offering any effective resistance. I might protest every way open to me! Write to my MPP, my province's premier, my MP, government ministers, key members of the Opposition, provincial Senators, newspapers, seek out the like-minded at rallies or meet and sign petitions online—but with no hope in the end, of anyone paying attention. Fearing that if anyone did, it could only be to chastise me as some kind of far-right extremist or selfish anti-vaxxer. Or apparently—if one listened to Prime Minister Trudeau—one of "those people" also to be dismissed

as racist, misogynist, anti-progressive and anti-science, whose very right to be “tolerated” might soon be in jeopardy.

My problem was that by mid-August 2021, when for my own reasons I accepted my own second AstraZeneca jab, I was becoming deeply uneasy about the intensity with which all COVID vaccines—and only COVID vaccines—were being promoted in this country.

I knew by then, from following developments based on UK and other international research, that vaccinated people could still become infected with COVID, acquire as high or higher viral loads than unvaccinated, and transmit their infections as readily. Available vaccine products were simply not stopping transmission of the virus as had been hoped. Whatever individual benefits there might still *be* to being vaccinated, we were *not* going to vaccinate our way out of this pandemic.

I also knew by then that the experimental vaccine products were not nearly as safe as touted, for everyone. For months I had been reading about people experiencing neurological and clotting problems, and ones with long-controlled autoimmune conditions facing unexpected reactivation of their illnesses, related to the injections in much the same way as to acute COVID. Now we were seeing healthy young soccer players collapsing and dying in play. Adverse events reports in the US VAERS system had shot higher than for all other new vaccines introduced in my lifetime, and we were beginning to hear the voices of vaccine-injured people in numbers which far exceeded those which I knew since the 1970s had been enough for other experimental vaccines to be pulled from the market. It all added up to a disturbing signal of risk which must be exposed to the public in the interests of informed consent, and everyone left free to make their own medical decisions about them.

And yet everywhere around me, the intransigence of every public health authority, everyone in government, every commentator in mainstream media, and far, far too many ordinary Canadians expressing themselves in social media and online newspaper comment stacks, was rising.

- Everyone was to be either vaccinated, or vilified. No exceptions, no exemptions.
- Natural immunity wasn't recognized either.
- Despite the deficiencies of vaccine products making vaccine passports useless from a public health standpoint, these were in the works everywhere as an all but explicit pressure tactic to “increase uptake”, and would soon be implemented in every province.
- Everywhere, “no jab no job” mandates were being declared and soon swiftly enforced, so that anyone not complying was cut off from their employment without consideration.
- Anyone who expressed hesitancy for any reason, was being pilloried without mercy. Everywhere, media commentators seemed to be crowing in vindictive glee that “time's up!” and anyone still unvaccinated should just be seized and jabbed by force—or else, on top of all their vax passport-enforced restrictions, fined or even jailed. Denial of health care, and possibly even having their children taken away from them, were also offered as possibilities.
- And there in the midst of the Federal election, we were facing a continuous and shocking spew of hateful rhetoric against the unvaccinated from Prime Minister Trudeau himself, capped with his commitment to new Federal mandates which would deny even remote workers any choice to remain unjabbed if they wanted to continue employment, and announcing the shutting down of both foreign *and* domestic travel by air, train or ferry, to anyone who did not comply.

For me, this was a living horror. All these abuses of our fundamental rights and freedoms, in the name of a virus that by the end of 2020, in its most virulent form, StatsCan had been able to report as being next to no risk to anyone under age 70, with over 90% of deaths occurring in those over 80? Wholesale overriding of our constitutional mobility rights? Medical segregation of anyone less than fully vaxxed? Denial of anyone's

employment? Wholesale denial of informed consent, which I now knew to be including the punishment of any doctors granting exceptions to masking or vax products? Looking around me, I could only think we were playing through the 10 stages of genocide at speed (see Figure 1 below) and were well into stage 6.



Figure 1: The 10 Stages of Genocide

Going forward, it seemed my only course must be to refuse to live other than as restricted as an unvaccinated person, and protest what was happening, any way I could find to do so.

By January 1st, 2022, I was beyond any hope of effective protest. Almost every authoritarian measure that had been threatened had been implemented, and of what remained, not only had nothing had been ruled out, Federal mandates were being extended and made ever more strict. It seemed as though nothing any of us might do stood any chance whatever, of ever bringing an end to the abuses of the relentless restrictions and mandates to which we were still subject.

So when I first read online about the convoy coming, what I first felt was wonder. Wonder that anyone might have found a way to mount a protest to all this, too big to be ignored. Wonder at its having been truckers first roused to action. First against the new mandates being enforced on them, but following what coverage I could find, as every video showed more trucks, more people, more people with flags lining overpasses for hours in what couldn't have been colder weather, and crowds of all ages turning out at every stop to celebrate what they were doing, and offer every support they had to offer—clearly this was speaking to all our interests. Everyone I saw was clearly moved by it, as was I. After six months desperation, it held out at least a possibility of hope.

I first heard about the convoy's GoFundMe campaign when media reported its being paused at around \$5 million: impressive, but unable to see how this was being organized, or how, when, where, by whom and to whom it would be distributed, I wasn't immediately moved to contribute.

On January 26th word reached me of Chris Garrah's "Adopt-A-Trucker" campaign on GiveSendGo. This being a separate project to provide local logistical support to connect the incoming truckers with things like hot showers and laundry, accommodations and shuttle services, it read to me as a smaller scale humanitarian operation—funded to about \$36,000 at the point when I became aware of it. This seemed more worth supporting, especially now that I knew it wasn't only truckers coming, but in some cases families as well. So on January 27th, I made a donation of \$110 through GiveSendGo: \$100 to the campaign, and \$10 for processing costs.

On The Ground and Online Monitoring: What I experienced

Saturday, January 29th, 2022, I made my first visit to Wellington St. I wasn't entirely without apprehension about it, but also felt strongly that being here in Ottawa, on the ground as a citizen, it was important to go see for myself what was going on.

This was crucially because, following on the Prime Minister's keynote address on January 26th dismissing the protest as that of a "small fringe minority...holding unacceptable views", the focus of mainstream media was already very clearly on playing up any negative incidents or reactions they could find, and blowing these up as large as possible, into generalized smears of racism, far-right extremism, insurrectionist ambitions and violence, directed against everyone involved. I also expected they would be able to find at least some material to work with. Given the sheer size of the convoy, and the speed with which it had grown from all directions as it came, there seemed no hope it would not have attracted at least a few genuinely "fringe" individuals along the way—people its leadership would not necessarily be able to anticipate, and might not be able to keep from either acting or expressing their views to the discredit of the majority. I felt it was important to make my own assessment of who and what, in the main, the protest had ended up representing.

Walking the length of the encampment on Wellington St. that day, from east to west and back, I was almost immediately at peace with what I saw. I grant it was noisy! Horns were blowing continuously, and I was certain this could be no joy for anyone living within earshot. That part of it, it seemed to me, must end quickly, or it would destroy any goodwill in the neighbourhood. But that wasn't going to happen that day. In the moment it read as a raucous celebration of having arrived, that wasn't about to be denied. It also wasn't deterring the thousands of ordinary people come to witness it.

Crowds were thick everywhere I walked along Wellington St, and on the grounds of Parliament Hill. I saw lots of happy people, all ages and races, lots of families with small children, at least two groups of native drummers, and more Canadian and Quebec flags than I've ever seen together anywhere for an event. The whole thing had more the air of an exuberant winter festival than anything else. People were lining up to thank the truckers for coming, sharing stories about where they were from, hugging each other, talking animatedly about their experiences during the pandemic, and their hopes that all mandates might soon be ended.

The disposition of trucks and other convoy vehicles was orderly, lined up in three lanes along the street, and the fourth lane left clear for through traffic. Sidewalks and intersections were also clear. There were a lot of police around, patrolling in groups or standing by observing what was going on, but they also seemed at ease with the situation: as I observed it, this was a peaceful and lawful protest. I did not see anything resembling violence or criminal activity involving either convoy members or supporters. Moving through the crowd as an older woman using a staff, I also found everyone to be respectful and generous in helping me cope with the churned-up snow then covering the north Wellington sidewalk.

What put me at peace with it all was my immediate and powerful sense, as I walked that line of trucks, that *I knew these people*. Borrowing from a Facebook post I wrote later: "I've knocked around some very out of the way places, with a lot of rough, tough, working class people—like truckers, and farmers, skilled and unskilled tradespeople, bush pilots and police. The people about whom I've now seen comments in the independent press, to say that 'civilized' people, especially our political elites, don't know them and don't want to, tend to feel repelled and disdainful about, and at bottom, may fear. And yeah, I sort of get that. Often such people are strong stuff. When they get loud and plain-spoken and crude about anything, they can be unnerving. But they're also the backbone of this country. The ordinary working people who step up and make real things happen, who have been doing so consistently throughout the pandemic, and in my whole life, the crucial thing they've also tended to be, is profoundly decent. Reasonable, considerate, and as a rule, *not* violent. Over my lifetime pretty damn tolerant, and in the past 30-40 years...call it more open to being easy-going about matters of race, religion, and all sorts of personal or cultural quirks, than most of our grandparents would have been."

I went home that day with no concern at all, about any violence being offered from this protest. It was too clear in how broad a cross-section of Canadians had come together among the truckers, in their spontaneity and warmth between each other, and between them and that greater, even more diverse mass of ordinary people who had gathered to pour out their thanks and support, that this was no insurrection. It was there to express unity, and stand for all our hopes of seeing an ending to the excesses of two years worth of COVID restrictions. In its celebratory warmth, it was a *taste* of that ending, and it could not have been more joyous.

By the time I returned for a second visit on **Monday, January 31st** I had learned three additional things:

1) On a "Canada Unity" website (canada-unity.ca) which seemed to be somewhat involved with route planning for the convoy, I had found a link to a document named the "Combined-MOU-Dec03.pdf", This professed to be a Memorandum of Understanding between "Concerned Canadian Citizens" and others, and loosely, jointly, the Governor General and our Senate. This was drafted to be signed off first by a Mr. James Bauder, then a Ms. Sandra Bauder, and a Mr. Martin Brodmann. I had not heard or read of any of these people before, and reading the document, could only call it politically naïve to a point of being ridiculous. Confronted with it, I could only imagine any sensible negotiator handing it back and saying, "No. This isn't how the system works. Now, let's keep talking about how it might."

This document also referred to an "Operation Bear Hug Ottawa" convoy / demonstration, which did not seem to be a name anyone was using for the protest now underway.

2) Whoever the authors of this were, they did not appear to be part of convoy leadership in Ottawa. With no mention of them or this document by any of the leaders I had heard speaking to that point (ie., Ben Dichter, Tamara Lich, and Chris Barber, in their January 30th press conference) or as part of any "street" conversations I had heard during my January 29th visit, or any references to it in signs or banners on trucks, it wasn't clear at all where this fit, or if it even fit at all. In all the time the protest continued, I never saw, heard, or read anything to make me believe that it did.

3) I had seen messages on social media which did seem to be from people travelling with the convoy to Ottawa, to the effect that its goals were to protest peacefully, not seek any confrontations with police, and to offer no violence whatsoever. In one case the post was specific, that once the trucks got to Ottawa, no one protesting was to enter Parliament or any other government building, even if invited. The implication was clear, that there should be no room for confusion about this being in any way like the January 6th riot which had occurred in Washington, DC.

Monday, January 31st, I returned to Wellington St. around 1:40 PM. This time I walked from the direction of the Lyon St. O-Train station, east up the south side of Wellington St., then turned and came back down the north side.

That day there were only enough people on Wellington St. to form a small crowd around the boom truck which had become the main stage. There were fewer trucks as well, in the three or four blocks just west of Parliament. I saw a new group had arrived at the west end of the street, filling three lanes in the block just west of Bank St. This time the north lane had been left open. Enough vehicles of all types had left the group in front of Parliament, that in many areas there were now two lanes open. What caught my attention most strongly, was how clean the site was. After the number of people I knew to have been there the previous day, that was astonishing. Similarly astonishing was that the Wellington north sidewalk, thick with churned snow on Saturday, had been cleared to pavement. That made it much easier to walk, and I saw at least one man, apparently a trucker, still at work with a snow shovel. There was no garbage anywhere: at intervals, garbage bags had been tied up to fences and were clearly being used. Signs and banners were also hung and stacked neatly attached to fences, and all looked ready to be removed easily when the time came. Again, I observed lots of police, both patrolling in groups and gathered near the Bank St. intersection, but both they and all protesters still appeared calm about each other's presence. There was no sense of tension: it was still noisy, but as I observed it, this continued to be a peaceful and lawful protest.

Between **February 1st and February 12th, 2022**, I could not make time to visit the protest again in person, but did follow most mainstream and independent media reports about it. By February 2nd I was also regularly checking the videos posted on YouTube by the growing body of live streamers who were now wandering the area almost 24/7. During the day, while working on my computer, I would leave a browser window open on YouTube, streaming one or other of the views from downtown, including interviews with truckers and their supporters. At any hour of the day or night, I could go through their channels and find someone either strolling "live" through downtown, showing whatever was going on in real time, or a completed stream to give me a view of what had been happening within an hour or two previously. By February 5th, this would become an important way of reassuring myself that everything was still calm, once media reports suggested that police actions might be about to begin. But its most important aspect was that it allowed me to observe, randomly sampled around the clock, how consistently positive the protest was.

Everywhere I looked, people were smiling. Relaxed, open, celebrating being together, talking about feeling hope and often about being proud to be Canadian for the first time in a long time. A lot of families with children, for whom there were games, and by the second week play areas, truck visits, and bouncy castles. Lots of flags worn as capes and hung from hockey sticks. At first mostly Canadian and Quebec flags, later more from other provinces. Consistently, the crowds I observed could not have been more diverse, and no one seemed to be having any difficulties with that. Lots of people were telling each other their stories and hugging. Talking about their gratitude for the truckers' coming. Sharing food, dancing, singing the national anthem. There were tents scattered throughout the encampment, providing bottled water, hot drinks and all sorts of food, free to anyone wanting any. Soon there was usually also a street hockey game going on, towards the western end of the Wellington St. site.

In the daytime, the action at the "main stage" truck seemed near continuous, and the vibe of a winter festival continued. Sometimes raucous and yes, that could get "fringy" at times. Sometimes very religious by a secular festival-goer's standards, but that only seemed to reflect the reality of pastors and churches having experienced some of the most rigorous restrictions, and so feeling a lot of cause both to pray for and celebrate relief. Also factual: there was at least one long presentation from doctors associated with the 'Taking Back Our Freedoms' group, which shared information about COVID, research related to both the disease and vax products, and the obstacles they were facing from colleges of physicians and surgeons, to providing informed consent for their patients. [Note: most of their information I was already familiar with, and could validate from other sources.

See Note 1 – Due Diligence, attached.] Occasionally politicians spoke despite what I knew had been early requests from the Freedom Convoy 2022 leaders that they stand back and let the protest remain as non-partisan as possible. Not everyone who spoke was uncontroversial! But: the tone most often set was inspirational and celebrated how this event had brought so many disparate groups together, to speak their truth and stand up for the restoration of all our freedoms.

In the evenings, it read as more of a block party. It appeared that any time enough people collected in the area, someone would bring their music—electro-pop, bhangra, classic metal, country, and reggae were among the samples I heard—and an impromptu dance party would break out. Then, whenever the streamers passed through in the night, especially after the injunction against horns at night had brought relative quiet at nights, wherever they went the streets seemed orderly, peaceful, and surprisingly clean. There always seemed to be one lane in the street left clear for traffic, and sidewalks were not obstructed.

Something else I saw through those varied streams of independent coverage, only became more amazing with time. This was clearly the expression of a grassroots movement. It was nothing that showed any sign of being organized in any centralized or hierarchical way. Truckers had come with their trucks from all directions, and whenever anyone speaking for the convoy was asked how many there were, the answers were consistently that this movement had expanded so fast, they had no idea any more. They were running to keep up with it, keep it fuelled, supplied, supported and secure, but this wasn't like an event with a registration list. It had grown spontaneously, organically, out of a collection of often very independent and resourceful characters, and in the midst of what had to be three of our coldest weeks that winter, it was being held together at street level by an extraordinary process of co-operation among a stunningly random collection of practical and generous volunteers.

What I also witnessed through those streams, was more unity than I'd expected in both truckers' and supporters' expressed interests. From the key Freedom Convoy 2022 spokespeople, the message had been simple:

- A clear plan must be made, to end all COVID mandates and restrictions.
- The Federal government must remove the ArriveCan digital COVID tracking app as a requirement to re-enter Canada.

As distilled from the hours of streamed footage, it was a looser message, but speaker by random speaker commenting, the following themes repeated:

- There needed to be an end to all COVID mandates, from all levels of government.
- The denial of citizens' Charter rights to associate and assemble freely, practice religion, and to travel freely within the country and internationally, must end.
- As both vaccinated and unvaccinated people were still able to become infected and transmit COVID, there must be an end to discrimination against the unvaccinated.
- Similarly, there must be an end to vax passports which had served no legitimate public health purpose to begin with, and had been rendered increasingly meaningless by the emergence of the omicron variants.
- People must be restored their freedom to make their own medical choices, and keep them private.
- People must be allowed to recover their ordinary lives and livelihoods.

I noted there were far fewer references to COVID vaccines than I might have expected. When the subject came up, truckers usually commented that most of them were already vaccinated, and had been for months. Their issues were with the increasingly strict mandating of jabs being forced upon all of them, (plans were also in

progress then, to mandate these for interprovincial trucking as well) and now their sympathy for the losses and suffering they had witnessed through the thousands of ordinary Canadians penalized by mandates, coming to thank them for standing up to resist. It was time, individual speakers said over and over, for people to be free again, to live their lives.

It was also a secondary theme from both truckers and supporters who had come as immigrants from countries less free than Canada, that they had broader reasons to be concerned. A lot of people in that crowd had come from formerly communist countries in Eastern Europe, such as Poland, Romania, Belarus, Hungary, and Bulgaria. Others had come from Central and South American dictatorships like Nicaragua, Guatemala, Argentina, and Venezuela. There were Middle Eastern people from Iran and Qatar, and also from China, Thailand, and Vietnam—and again and again they reported that in the decades since they had come to Canada in search of freedom, and especially in the past few years, they were seeing things that were reminding them in troubling ways of the regimes they had fled. It was important in their eyes, to come and speak out about what they saw, in hopes of preventing our COVID-driven slide into tyranny continuing.

Through the week from **January 31st to February 7th**, it was hard for me to see how this situation might unfold. There seemed no hope of constructive response from the Federal government, which was not only disdaining to recognize the protest as legitimate, but becoming more elaborate in condemning it as an expression of domestic terrorism rooted in white supremacist racism and/or swastika-waving Nazism, predominately foreign-funded and aimed at violently overthrowing the government. Tinfoil-hat conspiracy theorist seditionists! Based on anything I had seen, as an assessment of the majority of people present, this was nothing short of wishfully delusional. It was interesting that the protest seemed to have generated enough dissent within the CPC caucus, to have finally resulted in Erin O’Toole’s ouster as party leader, but unclear where that might go. Evidently not to any more than careful recognition that this many frustrated citizens might have a right to protest and be heard, while continuing to be firm that no illegal acts by individuals should be tolerated. The provincial government seemed to have gone silent. At the municipal level, Mayor Watson was in hot pursuit of the convoy’s funding, and could claim some success in disrupting that, after apparently representing to GoFundMe, with Chief Sloy’s support, that this all added up to being an “aggressive and hateful occupation” presenting “serious violence” and conducting illegal activities.

By **February 4th**, I was becoming concerned, as messaging from police was becoming mixed. In the earliest interview I had seen, Chief Sloy had sounded commendably calm. He had even stated in response to a question about the dangers of this turning into anything like the January 6th riot in Washington, DC, that while he understood the concern expressed, this was Canada, we were a peaceful country, and our protests didn’t go that way. A few days later he could report there had been no riots, injuries, or deaths, and charges only for routine traffic violations and horn honking, and had noted that the situation needed a political solution more than a policing one. By the 4th, he was sounding more stressed about needing up to 1,800 officers to deal with the situation, and making statements which others were interpreting as politically authored, based on his apparent acceptance of the political and media language now in use, about the protest being an “occupation” by “aggressive and hateful” forces bent on violence and overthrowing the government. There was apparently a long list of Twitter posts I did not see (I was not following Twitter at the time) suggesting that severe consequences would soon be visited by police on the protest. This stood in troubling contrast to a report that also showed up on the 4th, in *Blacklock’s Reporter*, noting that police data showed Centretown street crime had fallen sharply since the convoy’s arrival. It also did not align with both the positive comments I was hearing in livestreamers’ conversations with protesters, and the direct evidence I could see in footage showing police patrolling around the district. These both indicated that dealings on the street between the truckers and police were continuing calm and professional. So on the street this still seemed to be recognized as a lawful protest, but behind the scenes, a more toxic political narrative seemed to be taking hold. For the time being, I could only hope that conditions on the street might continue to better represent the truth.

My main hope at this stage was that if the situation could remain as stable for enough additional days, it might become impossible to hide that the political and media narratives being pushed were false. Throughout this period, both politicians and media seemed obsessed with painting the protest as directed at producing some kind of “January 6th event”, some sort of violent seditious uprising backed by foreign funding, which wasn’t credibly supported then, and would be shown within a week or two, by such sources as FINTRAC, the RCMP, and CSIS, not to have been valid at all.

In the meantime, as a resident of Ottawa living half an hour’s drive from the downtown core, I was noticing that no one outside the downtown core seemed to even be aware this was going on.

Side Note: Protests elsewhere in Canada

It took a day or so to find out about the blockade protests that had begun the same weekend the Freedom Convoy 2022 arrived in Ottawa, ie., those at the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor, and in Coutts, Alberta. I wasn’t aware of the Emerson, Manitoba blockade until it broke up around the 15th. I might have seen one report of other “freedom” gatherings at border crossings in BC, but those all sounded to be smaller, roadside affairs. I was at first confused about how the Windsor and Coutts protests related to the one in Ottawa, and it took until February 6th for me to understand that these were separate actions, originating with unrelated groups. These were pursuing their ends by very different means than the convoy in Ottawa, and weren’t co-ordinating, or even in contact. These added new concerns for me, that both protesters and police involved in these actions could be much more at risk of harm. Blockading borders seemed a much more dangerous proposition: the greater their power to disrupt commercial traffic, the greater the pressure must be to bring them down. I could only hope that these could be resolved without anyone from either side being harmed. But: it was also more difficult, especially in the case of the Coutts protest, to stay current with what was happening. There were a few livestreamers and one or two drone pilots monitoring the Ambassador Bridge, but in Coutts everything was down to two journalists from Rebel News. So: I worried, I did my best to stay informed, but the focus of my attention remained on the Ottawa protest.

Week 2 in Ottawa

Through the week of **February 6th to 13th**, it became harder to read what was happening. More was happening. Moves and counter-moves were apparently running faster on several fronts and there was a less complete flow of information about most of them, through any sources I could still respect.

GoFundMe having made its decision to return all Freedom Convoy donations to donors, most seemed to have immediately donated again through GiveSendGo, but donations for both “Freedom Convoy 2022” and “Adopt-A-Trucker” campaigns were frozen through court action on February 10th. For me that was worrying, as it seemed it must jeopardize the protesters’ ability to pay for such things as fuel and food, which they could hardly do without. I had lost track by then, of their being so well supported with donations in kind, that it hardly mattered if crowdfunding was lost.

Mayor Watson had declared a state of emergency in the name of “serious danger” which still didn’t seem to be supported by anything real. Following this, through the cameras of witnesses I watched the February 6th police raid on the convoy’s Coventry Road supply depot, during which they seized fuel. There were later reports there had been arrests, confirmed on Twitter by lawyer David Anber. The last I heard, later that night, was that anyone caught bringing in food, fuel or other supplies would be arrested. That gave me more immediate cause for alarm, because it was still very cold and it would surely be a serious problem if trucks couldn’t be run to

provide heated shelter. Fortunately, it seemed that a judge agreed; within a day, from somewhere an injunction was granted, and the fuel was returned.

By the time that happened, hundreds of supporters had spent at least a day trolling the police by running around downtown with red and yellow gas cans. A few might have been carrying diesel, but most seemed to be either empty or filled with water or soft drinks.

In and around these antics, rumours were circulating of preparations for possible police action. These were all bits and pieces, impossible to evaluate from where I was sitting, as there seemed no evidence to back any of them up. More police were being brought to the city. Raids and mass arrests might soon be expected. By the 10th, there were rumours of buses being lined up to the south on Bank St., ready to transport prisoners once mass arrests began (checked out and shown false on the 10th, by at least one livestreamer) and at different times, different sites were reported as being prepared to become processing centres for those arrested.

On February 7th a video was posted which suggested that however cheerful the protest on the street still seemed, convoy organizers were beginning to feel strain. First was an “Urgent Late News Conference” posted to Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LauraLynnTT/videos/307557681434831> at which Tom Marazzo acted as spokesman for a group of key volunteers, two doctors who I understood from other sources to be associated with the ‘Taking Back Our Freedoms’ group (Drs. Alexander and Hodgkinson) and Tamara Lich, who was present, but not presenting.

On February 8th, I saw a much briefer appeal titled as “Freedom Convoy Asking All Call Veterans For Assistance” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FwKcgni-upl> made by a Mr. Eddie Cornell, evidently a veteran in company with two others. He made a very low-key request that any veterans who might be able to come to Ottawa and “support this action...put yourself in harm’s way, again”, “stand to” or “stand up in your community”. Not violently, he emphasized, not in any sense of violence or insurrection, but in a peaceful manner “come forward and stand up for your country and hold the line.”

By the 9th, word was out that the *Emergencies Act* might soon be invoked, and I saw another press conference presided over by Randy Hillier, to discuss the implications of this. This didn’t seem to have any connection to the Freedom Convoy itself, as none of its leaders were present, but with the lawyers he had on hand, it was at least informative.

Informative, and worrying. I was twelve when the *War Measures Act* was invoked during the October Crisis of 1970, and knew that to have been controversial then, even in light of the FLQ having carried out a many months long series of bombings, thefts, and other violent acts, before its kidnapping of James Cross and Pierre Laporte, and Mr. Laporte’s murder. Based on what I had seen in person and online, there was no way I could see anything in the present situation which could even come close to being as bad. Just possibly something might be made of it in relation to the border blockades, but not in relation to the protest in Ottawa.

So I did what I felt was the best I could do: pulled a copy of the *Act* from online, and started reading. By the close of the next day, I had one email ready for my MP, and another going to each of my provincial Senators, each bearing witness that based on anything I had seen or heard, in person or remotely, point by point the conditions which must be met for its invocation were *not* being met by anything the Freedom Convoy was doing in Ottawa.

Sunday, February 13th, about 9:45 AM, I returned to Wellington St. for what I expected must be a final visit. Again I walked in from the direction of the Lyon St. O-Train station, east up the south side of Wellington St. When I came to the intersection of Lyon and Wellington St., I was surprised to see that, apparently under police supervision, at least three trucks were moving *into* position on Wellington. Some of those which had been there

previously, had moved out. There were also fewer trucks lined up west of the intersection, than previously, and the south lane was now open for traffic, where the north lane had been, before.

My walk east was uneventful; it was early enough that not many people were around. At Elgin St. I crossed to the War Memorial, then walked east to the intersection of Rideau St. and Sussex Drive. After circling that area, I returned to Parliament Hill. I paused for a pancake breakfast sponsored by the PPC, wandered around taking more pictures of the still modest crowd, and about 3:00 PM, my camera battery running low, I continued west, planning to walk to the end of the line of trucks. That took about half an hour. Along the way, I met two different groups of people drumming and dancing, watched a little street hockey, and added my signature to Big Bear's Unity Cup 2022 For All Canadians, celebrating the hockey. I had seen this on several livestreams earlier in the week, as a brilliantly shiny construction made out of large and small garbage cans: it was ending covered in a rainbow of signatures, as was the banner next to it. Finally, returning to the corner by the Lyon O-Train station, I stopped for a snack at a tent running a wood-fired pizza oven. As during my previous visits, everything I had observed had been orderly.

Awake again in the early hours of the 14th, I heard the blockade at the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor had ended. Then I heard there had been developments at the one in Coutts, involving the RCMP having flushed out a cache of concealed weapons, and ended in pursuit of someone who might or might not be one of the protesters. Then from somewhere, I picked up word that there would be a meeting with the provincial premiers in the morning, to make it official that the *Emergencies Act* would be invoked. Time to sit down and write yet another urgent email to my MP, saying in effect: "I have heard this. If this is done, it will be wrong. Please, any way that you can, raise your voice against this!" I went back to bed knowing this would be useless, but I had to try.

February 14th was when, for me, things got a lot more personal.

The first thing I learned after waking, was that the GiveSendGo website had been hacked. Someone claiming to be the hacker was exulting noisily all-over social media, and being especially gleeful about already having sent out his file to lots and lots of regular media outlets.

By mid-morning I learned the hack had dumped the entire database of GiveSendGo campaigns, so undoubtedly the 'Adopt-A-Trucker' campaign to which I had donated would be part of it. By the time I tracked down a link to the file, word was out on social media that donors were already being doxxed. I couldn't get to a copy of the file myself, but a page posted on Twitter was enough to tell me that if I was in it, at minimum my 'online-nickname' email address was there, and my postal code. Possibly the name on my credit card, and if I was really unfortunate, possibly my credit card number.

In the midst of this, I hardly noticed the mid-day announcement invoking the *Emergencies Act*. By then it wasn't news. I could only feel sick about it, fearing the violence it must now allow the government to unleash upon the protest. Police, and perhaps even military? There had been a story days earlier, about Chief Sloyly having hinted military might be needed, to which military authorities had replied it wasn't within their jurisdiction. But could they refuse, now? Against people I was sure would not resist, this was proceeding straight to a "last resort" solution without ever having been open to anything else. I still wanted to hope there might be any chance of its not getting through Parliament that evening, but knew that as long as the NDP supported the Liberals, it could only pass.

So: the federal government would have its powers to help disperse ongoing blockades and protests for 30 days, and given NDP support, surely for any renewal periods the Prime Minister might wish. I had no faith this would be time-limited, at all. Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland was announcing measures to reduce funding to the

protests, which would include the broadening anti-money laundering measures to crowdfunding platforms, and also cryptocurrencies.

Again, I can't do any better than to offer the end of a Facebook post I wrote that evening, about my visit downtown on the 13th:

Right now, I've never felt more sick. I can only keep telling myself that I know this isn't over, I know it isn't over yet, and right now, what I need to do is sit tight and not get underfoot of anyone who's anywhere near preparing for whatever comes next. Wondering how soon my bank account may be seized, for my writing letters of protest to my MP..

I didn't add, "...this past year," but it crossed my mind. Because I wasn't just thinking about the letters I'd written against invocation of the *Emergencies Act*. Back in the summer of 2021, I had emailed my MP at least twice, to protest the Prime Minister's relentless demonizing of unvaccinated Canadians. I had told her either that I couldn't or didn't want to believe that all Liberals thought this way, and had in the end pleaded, "*Is there no way to rein this man in?!*" Should I perhaps now be afraid, that if *that* protest ever came to his attention, between that and my fatal donation of January 27th, I might also very soon be a candidate for ruin?

I spent the 15th writing another round of letters to Ontario Senators, pleading that when the invocation came to them for ratification, they please stop it. The blockade of the Ambassador Bridge having ended the night of the 13th, and that at Coutts by the evening of the 14th, and no other protests anywhere else in the country appearing to be beyond the ordinary capabilities of local law enforcement to handle—nothing of anything still happening in Ottawa could justify it.

During breaks from that, I continued to watch for new information about the GiveSendGo hack, and check every hour or so through my bank's website, whether any unexpected charges were showing up on the credit card I had used. When none had, by the end of that day, I was cautiously hopeful that my credit card number hadn't been released (I gather now, it had not been) so it was possible to become calmer about that.

It was now even harder to get any sense of what was happening with the protest downtown, and I will not try at this point, to trace through what I did and didn't learn regarding it, over the rest of that week. After Chief Sloy's resignation on the 15th, much continued to look the same in livestream videos, but there were plenty of indications that there must be police action against the truckers very soon. Nothing I could do anything about, and the information beginning to come out about the freezing of bank accounts suggested I had better start thinking more about the risks I myself might be facing.

Whatever Finance Minister Freeland had said on the 14th about the bank accounts of convoy supporters being frozen, had been worrying enough. That such measures would be taken against people who were no more than protesting within what were supposed to be our Charter rights, was terrifying. Shocking and disproportionate: it read for me as a hideous overreach into the suppression of dissent.

Eight months later, I think now that for me, that's when this government became a regime. Not just mistaken, not just having got it wrong, but unscrupulous and vindictive in pursuing its delusional ideas. So ready, in its determination to interpret everything that was happening in terms of a Canadian "January 6th moment" that it wasn't, that it was threatening to set us up for something that felt very much at risk of becoming a "Tiananmen Square moment".

If it seems unreasonable that I was discounting the government narratives being spun about the protests being foreign influenced or funded, that came in large part from having on several occasions checked in on both the GoFundMe and GiveSendGo websites while their 'Freedom Convoy 2022' campaigns were running. Each time,

scanning long lists of donors' contributions and messages, I had seen that most were under \$100. The majority were either \$50 or \$20, or something in between. It was a pattern far more consistent with these being the gifts of private individuals, than anything else. All those people standing out on the overpasses waving flags as the trucks passed. All sorts of supporters commenting from all over the world, who I was seeing in livestream chat queues. Larger donations were few, and I'd only heard of a handful that had made it as high as thousands. As would soon be confirmed by representatives from both GoFundMe and GiveSendGo, then by FINTRAC, and even the RCMP, this was people giving their own money, which should be their own business. Roughly 85% from Canadians, nothing to suggest either money laundering or funding of terrorism from anywhere. GoFundMe would by March report the highest donation it had seen was \$30,000.

What began to be reported on the 15th and 16th made it clear that all our major banks had been co-opted as government agents. Reading the *Economic Measures* "duty to determine" section it sounded as though their role would be to "determine on a continuing basis whether they are in possession or control of property that is owned, held, or controlled by or on behalf of a designated person". It sounded as though a "designated person" would begin by being anyone named on a list supplied by the RCMP, and the banks' first task would be to shut these down financially. But it didn't appear that they were to stop there. If they were also shutting down associated business accounts and those for any person "acting on behalf of or at the direction of a designated person," which was likely how spouses were also being hit, how much additional investigation were they volunteering? Searches of credit card transaction databases, perhaps? Searches for payments to the GoFundMe and GiveSendGo crowdfunding campaigns? And if yes, surely they would be responsible for reviewing those records, for as long as those campaigns had run. If they were, then I would surely very soon be in trouble.

This not being anything I could confirm or deny, I had to move on. If this were starting with lists from the RCMP, how were they deciding who would be on them?

It would come out later that the first key source was a short list skimmed from a Global News story about convoy leaders, but at that point, with nothing specific being said, I very much doubt that I was the only person to think there was one very obvious source that would likely be used: *the records from the GiveSendGo hack*. Use of stolen data to support charges might be illegal, but under the circumstances, I would make no odds on anyone caring about that. It seemed certain that if authorities had it, they'd use it. If it was obtainable by mainstream media as the hacker had promised, it must surely have been given them by then.

So, it might take a day or two to get from the postal code they'd have, to my address, to a name to give the bank, perhaps tracking my 'online nickname' email address through my ISP, to get my real name, but after that? I needed to prepare as best I could.

Each day, I started getting out as much cash as I felt I could do without triggering any 'unusual activity' warnings from my bank. Late afternoon the 15th, I pulled my "usual" 3-weeks \$400 in housekeeping cash. Morning of the 16th, another \$400. Not much of a reserve, but as much as I could afford. It would cover at least a couple of months' worth of the property taxes I'd have to pay for the new tax year in March. I had a handyman doing some work for me that week, and I started writing a cheque to him each day, keeping him paid to date, and telling him he'd be my canary in the coal mine. If he had any problems cashing my cheque each evening, I'd need to know at once. I also went through my finances and started lining up bills to pay. No mortgage, thank God. I'd managed to pay off my house just before retiring in 2020. House and car insurance first. They weren't due for another month, and it might not count if my insurance ended up being cancelled, but if there was any chance that *didn't* happen, at least I wouldn't have to worry about defaulting on insurance, for a year. Each morning, I started very carefully using my credit card to pay just one bill, and then paid off the card. Each transaction was a test: would it go through, or would I get a notice saying my accounts were now frozen?

I only heard months later, about how on the 16th, between 5 and 6 PM EST, all our big five banks suffered an hours-long outage, “blocking access to online banking and e-transfer services”. Bank run, anyone? As I read later in testimony from Martha Durdin, CEO of the Credit Union Association, before the Finance Committee on March 17th, “There was some degree of panic among some Canadians that their accounts may be frozen. Many Canadians made significant withdrawals from credit unions as a result, sometimes in the hundreds of thousands and on a few occasions in the millions of dollars.”

To which I would say “*Some degree?*” How about a significant degree? I’ll just bet we pulled enough to scare the banks as they deserved. If anyone wasn’t pulling out anything, it was probably because they didn’t have it to pull. This and another quote from the Finance Committee, about how this could “have significant effects on our Canadian financial system, including the drifting of deposits from banks to other financial instruments that are not Canadian deposits,” (MP Greg McLean, of Calgary Centre) struck me as massive understatement. *Drifting?* The whole affair was making *me* feel intensely, as though I’d like every dollar I had out of the banks as soon as I could get it, and needed to learn as soon as I could, what my options might be for getting all my investments out as well. Out of this country! Offshore anywhere, anywhere at all, that I might be able to feel a chance of never being denied access to them.

It was on **February 17th** that all hell cut loose, in terms of the government’s messaging from Ministers Freeland and Lametti.

I’m no longer sure which I saw first. I believe first came a clip of an interview between Attorney General Lametti and Evan Solomon, in which he had been asked something along the lines of, “Who *should* be worried about having their accounts frozen?” To which Mr. Lametti replied:

“I think if you are a member of a pro-Trump movement who is donating hundreds of thousands of dollars, millions of dollars, to this kind of thing, then you ought to be worried,”

This was appalling. It was an answer clearly meant to inspire fear, and his tone bordered on flippant. A legitimate question! A chance to clarify and reassure anyone who might be uncertain (like myself) whether they were about to become a candidate for personal ruin. This was clearly meant to make all of us afraid about giving money...not only to any cause the government might not like, but this made it sound like one could be condemned for supporting *anything the government might fantasize as objectionable*. Parsing through it, it seemed nothing less than insane.

“I think if you are a member of a pro-Trump movement...”

- *and who was going to get to decide “**pro-Trump**” (!?) with reference to crowdfunding support for Canadian projects supporting Canadian protests focused on Canadian issues?*
- *based on **what?!***
- *and what evidence could conceivably be accepted, to disprove such a fantasy?!*
- *and just how long might any victim of such an accusation be left sliding into ruin with all their assets frozen, while struggling to prove their innocence of such a bizarre charge?*

“who is donating hundreds of thousands of dollars, millions of dollars, to this kind of thing...”

- *and how was any smaller donor supposed to interpret **that**? If it was to say that smaller donors need not worry, then that needed to be stated as a simple reassurance, not slid out in such an oblique and grudging way!*

I might feel at risk and scared by this, but at least I was in a position to keep a roof over my head and enough bills paid, to buy a month or two in which to fight, if I was targeted. I could only too easily imagine how terrified anyone without such resources must be. Likely much less capable under stress, of wringing out any hint of reassurance from this. Which I was *doing*, but then, who was to say I wasn't imagining it?

"then you ought to be worried."

The punch line. And before God, his tone couldn't have been any more dismissive or snide.

Later, I would hear this exact same self-satisfied answer given in response to an MP's question in the House of Commons, about whether a frightened old man among his constituents—afraid he would soon have his bank account frozen, for having donated \$50 through GiveSendGo—should fear. No reassurance at all, to find oneself potentially at the mercy of anyone so freakishly judgemental.

This left me feeling that this government wanted people afraid. Looking sideways in each direction and back over our shoulders in future, before even *considering* giving money to any cause the regime might not like. Stripped of any certainty, that even if a donation might be allowed at the time it was made, it wouldn't be retroactively criminalized and made a basis for smearing and stripping us of everything.

Then I was treated to Minister Freeland's presentation for the day, and anyone reading this will just have to forgive my failing to go back and trace through it second by second, to confirm either the exact context or the exact words she was speaking. I react to it much as to videos of the twin towers in New York falling, back on 9/11/2001. I cringe away, unable to stand witnessing it again.

The gist seemed to be her reporting what was being done, in terms of freezing people's bank accounts and credit, disrupting their loans and mortgages, cancelling insurance on trucks, and—first problem, it was still vague. The initial focus might be on convoy leaders and the truckers in downtown Ottawa, anyone with a vehicle that could be connected to the protest, but she had nothing to say about how fast that was proceeding, or how wide the net was to be thrown. There was still no information about what information was being used. Only that some accounts had been frozen, and more would be. That pursuit of anyone involved was going to go on for months. And reading her papers, she was grinning. And giggling. And tittering, seemingly out of control in sheer delight, as the threats poured out of her. Not only exulting in her new, extended powers under the *Act*, to cut off crowdfunding and cryptocurrency as well as all regular financial assets, but she seemed to be saying, in even greater delight, that the changes she'd made were going to grant her the same powers she'd enabled under the *Act*, as part of everyday legislation going forward. Warrantless freezing of bank accounts? Crushing of crowdfunding and seizure of cryptocurrency wallets? People were going to be hunted down for any participation in the convoy protest, fined, and jailed. Insurance would be cancelled, vehicles seized, businesses ruined, and there was a subtext of sheer delight in it that seemed to be saying, "I'm so happy! *titter* giggle* It's so wonderful, I have all these new powers, and I'm going to use them! *giggle* *titter* *grin!*

I still see this speech clipped and memed quite often online, and the memes often end, "THIS IS EVIL".

Still no word about any scope in time for this. That suggested it would reach as far back in time as she could push it. Then came the punchline: anyone who'd donated as much as \$20 to the convoy was eligible to be hunted down and punished, *giggle* *titter* and for me the subtext practically screamed "I have all these new powers now, and I get to punish!—*and punish!*". It couldn't have been any more creepy and terrorizing.

The next coherent thought through my head was, that if she was going after everyone who'd donated \$20 or more, what source was there likely to be for that, *other* than the hacked GiveSendGo data? Illegally obtained

be damned, was I about to trust this gleefully grinning, tittering horror to be ethical about anything that was so clearly delighting her?

I could only feel I was done. Five times done for my perfectly legitimate \$100 donation, if the threshold for punishment was going to be \$20.

I got up from my desk and walked away, feeling as though I'd been hit upside the head with a brick. Complete shock. What in God's name was I going to do? I spent at least the next hour walking from room to room in my house, trying to imagine.

Was there any way I could possibly have enough time, to shut down my life here, and just *flee*? My home might be my best-loved place on Earth, the property I'd bought as my 'retirement home' in 2015, and up to then hoped to spend the rest of my life cherishing, but at that point, every instinct was screaming "*RUN!*" I did have a passport, renewed in 2020. I did, at the time, still qualify as fully vaccinated, and no matter how unwilling I felt to betray the commitment I'd made, to live under the same restrictions as an unvaccinated person until such time as those should all end, facing this level of threat, it seemed I must consider it now. As an older single woman with little family left, none local, and no one to fall back on for help with even just keeping my property secure for a few nights if I were arrested, it felt like that must now be something I consider. But where could I even dream of going? Never a happy traveller, and with next to no international experience, I'd no idea where or how to begin. By then it was late in the day, and it seemed the only sensible thing I could do right then, was go to bed and hope to carry on in the morning.

It would be February 20th before I would be able to meet with my financial advisor—a meeting we had set up weeks previously, to draft my tax return—and would find out from him that at some time during the next two or three days, the information had been released, that only donations from February 14th and onwards would be prosecuted. I should be fine, he assured me. He also noted that he thought the banks had at least a little discretion, not to pursue smaller donors. I can't say it made me feel any great deal better, to feel that I might be ending up "safe", given so many other people wouldn't be, but at least I could feel it would buy me time to decide my next best moves.

Up to that night of February 17th, I still had some hope that the stalemate downtown might continue.

When I woke on the morning of **Friday, February 18th**, the first thing I saw was that overnight, most of a foot of snow had fallen. That gave me hope briefly, that this might be a quieter day. Then I tuned in to the 'Newsly Canada Live' channel, because its duo of streamers were walking in "live" into the Red Zone at the time, and as they crossed Laurier Avenue, saw a line of tow trucks on the street in front of City Hall. The assault was under way.

Best I way I can sum up that day, is by going to the 'dayfile' I wrote that evening:

From about 2130h Friday: I'm beyond words, at the moment. Sitting here somewhere between numb and terrified, trying to weigh my own best options as I look around at the world outside my Internet window.

Almost two hours later: I'm still mostly sitting here shaking my head. This was another too-early morning after only about five hours sleep, when I started out considering going back to bed, but didn't. I was still toying with the idea when I casually checked in at 1130h, to see how things were going downtown—I mean, after a foot or so of snow down, who was going to be doing what, in that?—except clearly the police action against the protest was now in progress. I ended up mostly sitting hypnotized by the livestreams until about 1730h, when exhaustion set in. Crashed until about 2015h.

I sat there for another hour or so in a kind of a numb state, then went back to bed again.

My next entry: Saturday, February 19th turned into a repeat: up too early, I didn't head back for bed when I'd have done better to do so, and once again spent the day following livestreams from downtown. Still mostly the 'Newsly Canada Live' channel, alternating with 'NightTimeInterviews' and later 'ZOT'—not the regular young man, who got arrested on Friday, but a young woman I gather is his sister, who'd been alternating with him to extend their hours of streaming, for the past couple of weeks. She advised in passing that her brother was released this morning, but had no time to say more, from her place in what was by then a dense crowd. Later on I spent some time with Viva Frei's somewhat belated walkabout...

Again I sat there for a while, then added a few more lines:

I feel it's time for me to put my affairs in order and prepare. I don't know whether it's to be arrested or to flee. It'll depend on how fast the authorities get to me.

It just makes me want to get the hell out of this country and take my money with me.

In short, for me the invocation of this Act has been terrifying, and the fact of it remains so, because I have no certainty of its being stopped by anything in law. In theory, it might have been. In theory, the fact of the Senate having the power to refuse its ratification could have done it. But would it have?

Tell the Commission what changes you think the Commission should recommend in terms of the *Emergencies Act*, or further areas for study or review.

With respect to the Act itself, having read it, I am acutely aware that I am not in a good position to critique its contents. I am not a lawyer, and do not have a sufficient understanding of the history or rationale for any of its provisions, to be certain of being constructive in any changes I might suggest. I am also not sure that the provisions of the Act are the problem.

What seems to be crucial here, is that it has been possible in this first invocation of this Act, to bring to bear the extreme measures it enables—front and centre, its *Economic Measures*—against citizens engaged in free expression on fundamental matters including coerced violations of individuals' bodily autonomy, loss of their rights to medical privacy, and unreasonable withdrawal of freedoms to travel and earn a living. To be blunt about it, this Act has been invoked as part of a process of rejecting their concerns and rejecting them. The government proceeded in a straight line from vilifying the truckers (and by extension every citizen supporting them) to its legislative and regulatory “nuclear option”. This, based on what has amounted to wildly overblown and fearful classist fantasizing, and elite rejection of anyone not agreeing with them, as unworthy of respect or attention. At minimum, a complete failure to engage in anything resembling proper disputes resolution.

If this invocation of the Act is ruled valid, it seems to me that as others have said, “the glass has been broken”. A precedent will be set enabling every government in future the power to declare emergencies and crush any peaceful protest, any dissent, that they choose to interpret as threatening to themselves.

For me, this terrifying prospect makes the question not so much one of changing the measures the Act authorizes, as setting more exacting requirements for its invocation. We may say the bars are set high for that now, but obviously not high enough, because this government has wilfully hopped right over them!

So, what can we do about it?

Can we require that before declaring an emergency, government present to Parliament the hard evidence of competent analyses from law enforcement, security services, and/or military intelligence reporting, CSIS, and probably also FINTRAC, of the circumstances it describes as constituting a national emergency? Can we require that these present at least some agreement and evidence of real threats? More than “rhetoric”? Because we really have got to do better than what appears to be no better than biased elites spinning up slanderous narratives based on equally biased media fantasies and sensationalism.

Can we require that when provincial premiers are “consulted”, that their views and requests be taken properly into account and respected? That “consultation” should take place only on the morning of February 14th, and then disregard seven of ten premiers regarding it as unnecessary, seems very wrong. That it also seems to have been applied nation-wide even with Premiers Kenney of Alberta and Stefanson of Manitoba asking it not be applied to their provinces, where they were both close to resolving the border blockades affecting them, seems even more egregious.

Can we require that before any invocation of the Act to suppress any major protest, there be a well-substantiated request from law enforcement, that this be done? I.e., one that makes clear what they need it to do, which cannot be done under any other law of Canada?

I also have one question which I think it may be useful for the Commission to recommend be answered, after study if necessary. The first two lines of the *Emergencies Act* run:

An Act to authorize the taking of special temporary measures to ensure safety and security during national emergencies and to amend other Acts in consequence thereof.

I read this as saying that the Act authorizes

- (A) the taking of special temporary measures to ensure safety and security during national emergencies
- (B) the amending of other Acts in consequence of—either those measures, or the national emergencies.

(A) seems a reasonable statement of what the Act is about.

(B) reads to me as though this may be saying that while the Act is in force, the government of the day has the power to amend any other Acts it chooses, *without bringing these amendments before Parliament, without advance notice, and without public debate.*

Is this saying that this throws the doors open to any unscrupulous government, to force into our legislation any terms it may wish, if only it can manage to get the *Emergencies Act* invoked for long enough to order the changes. A day or two? A week?

Based on everything which has been done, for me this begs the question of *exactly what Acts may have been amended between February 14th and 23rd, 2022, and how?* I would submit that any changes made should be withdrawn immediately, and only allowed to return if they can get past full and proper review and passage by Parliament afterwards. Or, is it possible to say that the declaration of emergency being revoked without being ratified by the Senate, would render any such changes null and void?

I suspect that in the end, the requirement for this Commission to review whether or not this Act should have been invoked at all, may be the only hope we have for this sort of thing not happening again.

What impacts have the Freedom Convoy protest, and the use of the *Emergencies Act* against it, had on how Canada is viewed internationally?

I think it's fair to say that Canada has won the attention of the world, everywhere the story of the Freedom Convoy protest has reached, and I think that if we leave governments out of it, it's given most of the world a more positive view of ordinary Canadians than it may ever have had before.

The truckers of Canada, those of the Ottawa Freedom Convoy in particular, set a positive example for the world, of how ordinary people could stand up and peacefully make too much noise to be ignored, when faced with governments denying them and refusing to hear or address their concerns about pandemic restrictions with no end in sight. Their aims resonated with people around the world who were feeling similarly abused, to a point where "Canadian style" convoy protests emulating ours erupted in nearly every country capable of mounting them. Wherever they are spoken of, they are praised for bringing hope and inspiration. As the expression of a broadly based grassroots movement, producing the largest human rights protest in Canadian history, the Freedom Convoy's drive to Ottawa promises to go down in world history as an epic story of civil disobedience.

In a good way, it has represented our strength; our toughness and competent practicality in taking on things that are important to see done. It has represented our ability to carry projects through under the harshest of physical conditions. It has also represented the kindness, generosity, and good humour we can bring to the effort.

The use of the *Emergencies Act* against the protest, though—that has been another matter.

I could hesitate to say it's made anything much worse than it already was, because my reading has been that for some years now, as a nation Canada is already considered a bad joke. I could say it might not have done *that* much extra damage. Given that right now we seem to be mostly rated as governed by a pack of unserious incompetents obsessed with 'woke' virtue-signalling and the pursuit of meaningless photo ops—and also for being a bewildering, rather backwards outlier in terms of maintaining punishingly strict COVID restrictions long after they'd been dispensed with by other G7 and Commonwealth countries. One could be forgiven for wondering how much further we could be ridiculed. How much more embarrassed it might be we should be, over being an international laughingstock.

But thinking about everything I've seen and heard in my online travels this past eight months, I can't do that.

If it is ever confirmed that invoking the *Emergencies Act* has in any way represented an effort by Prime Minister Trudeau to counter *any* conceivable threat to either his reputation or that of Canada, arising from coverage in the international media of what transpired here last February, the irony will be monumental. Because for him, it's been ruinous.

We may not have seen much reaction from other governments regarding either the Freedom Convoy protest, or the invocation of the *Emergencies Act*. From the US, UK, and other Commonwealth or G7 members, the silence has been deafening. No surprise: most of these countries have abused their own citizens similarly enough since 2020, that they might expose themselves to charges of hypocrisy if they were to comment. Only a handful of the EU's MEPs have had it in them to speak out with any force about either: Christine Anderson, Mislav Kolakusic, and Christian Terhes.

https://www.rebelnews.com/interview_christine_anderson_reveals_why_she_scorched_trudeau_in_front_of_the_european_parliament

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WHQqWZLo14k> samples Christian Terhes

But make no mistake: in the world court of public opinion, courtesy of the *Emergencies Act* being used, I would say Canada now stands substantially disqualified as a free country. Still a vast, beautiful, resource-rich nation with what should be world-leading potential, but it's now understood as a country where if you protest anything, and the Prime Minister doesn't like your opinion, you can have your bank account frozen. Where police-state tactics are now an option for assaulting legitimate protesters. We've gone from being a country seen as run by an unserious fool, to one in the grip of a vindictive and dangerous narcissist. An actual would-be dictator. Still weak and shallow, a WEF poster child trying to impress his mentors as strong and decisive and steadfast, and now an especially hypocritical poseur, running around making florid speeches about how other countries should preserve democracy and civil rights, while denying Canadians' freedoms at home.

There's an edge to it these days, when I connect with online friends in Britain and the US, and people ask me how things going are in any of Chinada, Canazuela, or Canukistan.

Identification:

I am a single woman, 64 years old at the time I write this, a native-born Canadian citizen currently resident in the city of Ottawa, in the province of Ontario.

I have given the Commission my name as part of the email address from which I will send these comments. I prefer not to state it here, and hope it will not be necessary to include it in any record which may eventually be published. This is because I cannot be certain that any such record will never be used by anyone opposed to the protest, as a basis for doxxing and harassing me, or worse.

-oOo-

That was where I finished, twenty-two pages in. I had also added a page-length note about the sources I had been using for my information about all things COVID-related.

Note 1: Due Diligence

From March 2020, I did my best to "follow the science" as information became available. Not just our own Federal and provincial pronouncements, but the best international sources I could find, to learn anything I could about SARS-Cov-2, its spread and evolution through from the original strain to Delta, which was then rising in the UK and here. I wanted to know about

- the damage it did,
- the stratification of risks it presented by age and sex,
- treatments explored by front-line doctors,
- and the progress of research into COVID "long haul" syndrome.

As a side issue, I wanted to know what evidence there was or wasn't, to support mask mandates.

Once vaccine products became available, I wanted to know what their impact was as indicated by clinical trial results, research papers, and reports coming in from jurisdictions around the world which had launched vaccination programs either earlier than we had (eg., UK, Israel, Denmark) or gone into them with particular zeal (eg., Israel, New Zealand, or Gibraltar).

I'd made a point of sticking with sources and commentators who seemed sound to me, in terms of their background medical knowledge and expertise being traceable, such as:

- From the UK, retired Phd. Nurse educator Dr. John Campbell, an active supporter of all vaccines, as well as masking, distancing, and all other measures imposed through 2020-2021.
- From the US, online medical educator Dr. Mobeen Syed. His views also were vigorously pro-vaccines, masking, distancing, and other infection control measures.
- The physicians of the Frontline Critical Covid Care Alliance (FLCCC), led by Dr. Paul Marik and Dr. Pierre Kory, with an array of other senior doctors from the US, Brazil, and the UK. These varied in their points of view, but in 2020, in general they weren't against any public health measures in force, or more than occasionally sceptical about the new vaccine products.
- From the US, Dr. Bruce Patterson, whose research group IncellDx was leading the analysis of long-haul syndrome issues,
- and an array of other doctors from countries around the world—the UK, India, Australia, South Africa, Brazil—who had been facing down the virus since its emergence.

In short: no tinfoil hat types. No ranting anti-vaxxers or plandemic/scamdemic, COVID denying conspiracy theorists. Nobody who wasn't linking the research papers they discussed, or the statistics they reported, which usually came straight from official sources in whatever country they came from.

After August 2021, I added two more sources I found similarly credible:

- From the UK, Dr. Phillip MacMillan of Vejon Health, whose particular interest has been in the study of autoimmune effects associated with COVID.
- From South Africa, Dr. Shankara Chetty, a GP with an outstanding track record in treating COVID-19 patients (at the time I first heard of him through Dr. MacMillan's podcast, he had 7,000 treated successfully, with only 4 deaths, from the beginning of the Beta variant wave in South Africa).
- From the US, Dr. Vinay Prasad, a pediatric oncologist. He was and remains generally pro-vaccines, but at the time I became aware of him, was emerging an increasingly vigorous critic of US public health policies not being founded on proper research.

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In writing this, I had actually managed to forget that the submission guidelines had said:

Typically, submissions will be 1 or 2 pages, up to about 5 pages. You may provide supporting materials, if any, as attachments.

Or perhaps I hadn't quite. It took me at least two hours to stop detail-editing and click back through to that "Public Submissions" page for a final review just exactly how to submit my email comments. I'd remembered the part from the CCF mailing, that said I needed to make this very focused, and no longer than two or three pages if possible. That was why I'd added my "summarizing" section at the beginning. As a practical matter, I didn't begin writing that until I was about 2/3 of the way through. I'd at least understood there needed to be one. As with any long report, an executive summary. So I didn't panic when I re-read that line, but it definitely rocked me back hard, to realize I had at least another day's work to do.

First, my "summarizing" section would have to become my final submission, which might be the only part that would ever be reviewed. At about three pages, I might draw from the rest of the document to strengthen it a little.

I would want my “background” section to be there, too. Essential to be clear about my dismay over *everything* in that part of the story.

And I would need to support my “testimony of fear” reference in the summary. No going forward without making clear just how terrifying it was to face life under the *Act*, with no real hope for its being time-limited, after reading its sponsors as gleefully vicious and bent on terrorizing as many of us as they could. *That* would have to go in as a supporting document, trimmed from my account of the 14th to 24th, or at least to the 20th, when learning that I *might* be “safe” for the moment allowed me stand down from complete certainty of being next up for ruin.

So I did that day’s work—about 6 hours—and then sent this:

My POEC Submission: AFTER

To the Public Order Emergency Commission:

I would like to begin by thanking the Commission for this opportunity to share my views. I bring my comments to the Commission as someone “involved” both as an observer of protest activities across Canada in January and February 2022, and a supporter of the Freedom Convoy 2022 protest in Ottawa. As such, I was deeply and personally affected both by that protest, and by the invoking of the *Emergencies Act* against it.

I am a single woman, 64 years old at the time I write this, a native-born Canadian citizen currently resident in the city of Ottawa, in the province of Ontario.

I am giving the Commission my name as part of the email address from which I will send these comments. I prefer not to state it here, and hope it will not be necessary to include it in any record which may eventually be published. This is because I cannot be certain that any such record will never be used by anyone opposed to the protests, as a basis for doxxing and harassing me.

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The Freedom Convoy 2022 protest in Ottawa was before all else a legitimate protest as provided for—at least in theory—under our Constitution.

However disruptive and traumatizing some residents of Ottawa’s downtown core may have found it, that does not change the fact of its being legitimate as the biggest, most spontaneous and broadly grassroots human rights protest in Canadian history. Perfect? No. But never an insurrection. As the convoy organizers speaking for it stated more than once, there was no intention to overthrow the government, or to remove any elected official. As key spokesman Ben Dichter said on more than one occasion, “That is what elections are for.”

What this protest was, was an unprecedented response to the unprecedented authoritarian overreaching of both the Federal government and provincial governments into abuse of citizens’ fundamental rights and freedoms, since declaration of the COVID pandemic in 2020. Its specific focus was on calling for a clear plan to end all Federal and provincial COVID mandates, including the removal of vaccine passports and the ArriveCan digital tracking app. In the looser “street” consensus of participants, it was a call to end all mandates, end the segregation and abuse of unvaccinated people, and restore all Canadians’ freedom of choice in making their own medical decisions, along with full rights to keep those decisions private.

In refusing to seek out protest leaders who had come in good faith, engage with them to explore who the protesters were and why they had come, and pursue constructive dialogue with them, rather than pre-emptively dismissing them as a “small fringe minority...holding unacceptable views” the government was wrong.

Denying their rights as citizens to protest and to be heard—choosing instead to deny them any legitimacy and proceeding to condemn and vilify the entire movement as racists, misogynists, far right extremists, white supremacists, swastika-waving [Nazis], violent insurrectionists and repeatedly, foreign-funded domestic terrorists bent on overthrowing the government—was wrong, and profoundly unCanadian.

The government’s refusal to recognize that in the protest’s continued peacefulness there was ample evidence of the truckers having come in good faith to express Canadians’ grievances, was wrong.

Its equal refusal to recognize that in the unprecedented outpouring of so many ordinary citizens’ love, gratitude, and support for the truckers, they had reason to understand how so many of us felt they were a last hope for representation of our needs and interests, was equally wrong.

Invoking the *Emergencies Act* against the Freedom Convoy 2022 protest in Ottawa, was an unwarranted response to a situation which not only could have been resolved by other means, it was in progress towards being resolved by other means.

We know now that none of the law enforcement agencies involved had requested invocation of the *Act*.

We know now that when “consulted” on the morning of February 14th, a majority of seven out of ten provincial premiers did not support use of the *Act*. Premier Kenney of Alberta, and Premier Stefanson of Manitoba both are reported to have requested it not be applied in their provinces, where they were both close to being successful in ending the blockades affecting them.

The government chose to go ahead with it anyway, apparently not even excluding the provinces requesting to be excluded from its application.

Eight months later, I still find it hard to sum up the impact of the next ten days while the *Act* was in force—in particular, the *Economic Measures*—beyond calling it devastating. Terrifying, terrorizing. I might call ministers’ messaging about the measures they were pursuing only inept—sloppy, lacking in clarity where it was needed, and profoundly disturbing in its delivery—but for me what they communicated most strongly was malevolence. My account of that experience is attached, and as a testimony of fear, it isn’t something I can summarize neatly. Best I can say is that by the end of day February 17th, 2022, I could only feel our government was showing itself to be unscrupulous: willing and even eager to implement tyranny, and determined to make as many of us afraid, as possible. The violence it progressed to in the next two days could only harden my sense of this, and that remains solid to this day. In the face of such abuse, trust is no longer an option. It is erased, it is *gone*. Every hideous possibility becomes not only imaginable, it must be weighted as probable. There are still plenty of days when facing this just makes me want to *run*—pack up and leave, sell everything, take every dollar I can scrape together, and flee to any place on Earth where I might hope to live feeling less controlled, less threatened, less continually at risk of ever more elaborate new mandates and restrictions binding me, and in less danger of finding my fundamental rights overridden by them, whenever any level of government decides to do it.

For me, the most frightening thing about use of this *Act*, is that I have no certainty it could have been stopped by anything in law. In theory, it might have been. In theory, the Senate having the power to refuse its ratification might have done it. There have been rumours that the Senators *didn’t* support invocation of the *Act*, and that

that fact being communicated to the Prime Minister may have been what led to its being revoked. I would like to believe that. But there's an equally credible story out there, that its revoking may have had more to do with bankers reporting their systems being overwhelmed by demands from hundreds and thousands of ordinary Canadians looking to pull out as much of their money in cash as fast as they could, and where possible, get it out of the country as fast as they could.

I suspect that in the end, the requirement for this Commission to review whether or not this *Act* should have been invoked at all, may be the only hope we have for this abuse being acknowledged. It must at least go down in history as a hideous misjudgement which must never be repeated.

In my view, going forward, every institution which has supported the government in its actions, must expect to be viewed as complicit in the wrong it has done.

I have nothing left but disgust for state-funded media: all major television sources, leading with CBC, CTV, and Global News, as well as newspapers such as the *Globe & Mail* and *Toronto Star*, have earned my contempt as biased liars, shameless in amplifying government narratives.

My view of our financial institutions has also become deeply suspicious, making me unwilling to do any more business with them in future, than I can't avoid. Now I know that any time banks or other financial service providers may be told by the police that we are "designated persons", they are not only authorized to freeze access to all our financial assets and credit without warrant or warning, but may volunteer to violate all clients' financial privacy in order to witch-hunt for additional candidates. It seems that even if we have any option to 'negotiate' our way out of such penalties in time to avoid financial ruin (not something anyone can have confidence about, at this point), we must expect that going forward our records will remain marked, and our transactions may end up being monitored on a continuing basis.

It's impossible not to fear that ways may soon be found to make us all "designated persons" subject to routine violation of our financial privacy, exploiting all our financial institutions as government agents. Personally, I think immediately of digital ID, which I know that the Canadian Bankers' Association is eager to implement.

For many Canadians now, our police are also now not to be trusted. I don't personally agree with that. I'm confident there are still a great many decent and competent individuals serving in law enforcement across the country, and I have a lot of sympathy for the dangers, difficulties, and lack of support they often face. But I do understand others' fears having become a lot broader now, and as I don't plan to surrender my rights to express dissent through peaceful protest, I can't swear I'll never find myself sharing them.

I haven't much faith in our Charter these days, either.

Knowing now that the government's decision to invoke the *Act* involved overriding without consultation the plan for its de-escalation which had been negotiated between the Mayor of Ottawa and Freedom Convoy 2022 leadership, there is no way for me to find any of this excusable. At minimum, it represents a complete failure on the part of the government, to engage in anything resembling proper disputes resolution.

With respect to the *Act* itself, what seems most important is that it has been possible to bring to bear the measures it enables—front and centre, the *Economic Measures*—against citizens engaged in free expression on fundamental matters including coerced violations of individuals' bodily autonomy, loss of their rights to medical privacy, and unreasonable withdrawal of freedoms to travel and earn a living. Essentially, as part of a process of rejecting their concerns and rejecting them.

We need to stop this *Act* ever being invoked again, to suppress legitimate protest. One thing that might help, might be requiring that when the provinces are consulted, their views and expressed wishes to be excluded, actually be respected, as they were not, in this instance.

Internationally, Canada has won the attention of the world, everywhere the story of the Freedom Convoy protest has reached, and if we leave governments out of it, I think it's given most of the world a more positive view of ordinary Canadians than it may ever have had before.

The truckers of Canada, those of the Ottawa Freedom Convoy in particular, set a positive example for the world, of how ordinary people could stand up and peacefully make too much noise to be ignored, when faced with governments denying them and refusing to hear or address their concerns about pandemic restrictions with no end in sight. Their aims resonated with people around the world who were feeling similarly abused, to a point where "Canadian style" convoy protests emulating ours erupted in nearly enough every country capable of mounting them. Wherever they are spoken of, they are praised for bringing hope and inspiration. As the expression of a broadly based grassroots movement, producing the largest human rights protest in Canadian history, the Freedom Convoy's drive to Ottawa promises to go down in world history as an epic story of civil disobedience.

In a good way, it has represented our strength; our toughness and competent practicality in taking on things that are important to see done. It has represented our ability to carry projects through under the harshest of physical conditions. It has also represented the kindness, generosity, and good humour we can bring to the effort.

Use of the *Emergencies Act* against it, though—that's another matter.

I would say that in the world court of public opinion, Canada now stands substantially disqualified as a free country. Still a vast, beautiful, resource-rich nation with what should be world-leading potential, but it's now understood as a country where if you protest anything, and the Prime Minister doesn't like your opinions, or doesn't like you, you can have your bank account frozen. A country where police-state tactics are now an option for suppressing legitimate protest. We've gone from being a country seen as run by unserious fools, obsessed with 'woke' virtue-signaling and the pursuit of meaningless photo ops, to one in the grip of a vindictive, creepy and dangerous narcissist. An actual would-be dictator, who runs around making speeches about how other countries should cherish democracy and civil rights, while assaulting Canadians' freedoms at home.

Which, in the end, as at least a few of my friends from the US, UK, and other G7 countries have correctly pointed out, in the end we can only call our own fault.

This ends my submission. Thank you, again.

-oOo-

I followed this with my "**Background: Why I was involved**" section pretty much unchanged from the longer document, except for three lines added:

And in the end, I have to feel it has helped. I'm confident that if the Freedom Convoy hadn't happened, we'd still all be facing the full slate of Federal and provincial restrictions, which we now know to have mostly been based on very poor science, and often none at all.