



Inquiry into hate in the pandemic: Hearing transcript

Transcription prepared by BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner

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Presenting organizations: Centre on Hate, Bias & Extremism & Organization for the Prevention of Violence (Evolve Program)

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BCOHRC¹ attendees: Human Rights Commissioner Kasari Govender, Barb Ryeburn, Sarah Khan

Please note that third-party personal information has been removed from this transcript.

[Introductory comments by Human Rights Commissioner Kasari Govender not included in transcript.]

Brad Galloway: Perfect. Well, thanks. thanks a lot for inviting me in.

I definitely see the need to foster more discussions surrounding this. And obviously there's been some key challenges that we've all been recognizing over the last couple of years particularly in in my line of work looking at hate incidents and hate crime, and things like that. it's been a tough thing to get through.

It's been a tough time to look at these different things, because, you know, we're at a point where throughout the pandemic it's been very hard to understand for Canadians generally speaking, what's been going on so. and then this adds to it even more so anyways with that being said I'll give a short intro, and then I've actually sort of put together a presentation directly surrounding the questions that you guys had provided me because I think that it was a good guide, and I've definitely added some things as well.

So, I'm Brad Galloway I'm working at the OPV as a case worker which is the Organization for the Prevention of Violence which is located in Edmonton. I work directly there with people and families who have individuals who are looking at leaving violent extremist movements, particularly right-wing extremist groups.

And I also work with families who have loved ones or friends that have become involved, and they're looking for advice or ways to help their loved ones.

I also work at the Centre on Hate, Bias and Extremism, which is located in Ontario Tech University, in Ontario in Oshawa, and there I work with an esteemed group of colleagues doing research, outreach, and particularly surrounding hate, bias, extremism, and particularly with my interest in these things online, to

¹ BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner

offline right wing extremist movements, like social media and hate, all of that kind of thing. And lastly, I also work in the United States for Life After Hate. Where I also do some work is with individuals who are looking to leave violent extremism, particularly right-wing extremism. And I've been working as a consultant as well, talking about these things broadly with media and doing outreach in my own community.

Yeah. So, with that, I'll move onto discussing some of the more I guess individual or personal details of what led me to all of that work that I was just describing.

So, I you know I often start with just describing how anybody and anyone can end up in these movements. It's not it's not just for one social background or one economic background. It can be anybody. I grew up in an upper middle-class family in Toronto, and had a good childhood, and you know, sort of moving into my adolescence. I faced a lot of different issues, and it was just growing up like any other kid does. However, I ended up trying on different lifestyles for size, getting involved in some petty criminal activities, getting involved in gangs, getting involved in drugs and that kind of thing, because I kind of wanted to be different than the family that I was in, you know, didn't want to be part of the certain social culture stuff that they were doing. I wanted to get into skateboarding and snowboarding, and in heavy metal music and all that, and I was sort of against the grain from what the expectations were.

Later in my adolescence, I ended up meeting a trusted friend, which is a key piece of about radicalization. All these types of things, and how he told me about belonging, friendship, unity, all the things that I was looking for. I was lost in a lot of ways, as a teenager, as many teenagers feel sometimes. And he, this guy recognized that, and told me about this movement, there was no prerequisites. It was just you had to be a white person and yeah you could come hang out.

So that's where I ended up, you know, just one night in a bar of meeting this guy and I would spend time meeting with those groups in Toronto for about 2 to 3 years, and then it kind of got, the ideology got more serious. The different things I was seeing were a little more, you know, organized, and things like that. But it was still a pretty loose movement of people until I moved out to the west coast of Canada, and began meeting with some people that had ties to the United States, a group that called Volksfront, which was founded in the Oregon prison system in the mid-1990s.

And one thing led to another where I became a member along with several other Canadian people, and they afforded us a chapter of that group up in the Vancouver area for a number of years. That group was really focused on this idea of like a white ethnostate separate from the Pacific Northwest, basically - Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, and creating this ideal white homeland, with ideas of some of the extremist groups from the United States had sort of come up with this idea and they were continuing with this, that was sort of the conscious ideology behind it all. Racial identity, not necessarily as much of the outright sort of neo-Nazism stuff. It was more about white separatism, white protectionist stuff, like preserving the race that all that kind of stuff.

So, in that sense I found it. I know this sounds kind of weird, but I found it a little more palatable than some of the stuff I was seeing in Toronto. That was like just sort of street-based gang skinheads that kind of stuff where it was just a lot of you know what would seem like needless meetings, a lot of beer, drinking and partying, and just outright like overt racism, where a lot of times this group would put that kind of behavior down and would say that you know that type of behavior wasn't you know, necessarily beneficial to this ideal race or this ideal homeland that they were wanting to go after so yeah, within this there was a lot of different ideologies, though, So there happened to be a lot of fighting within the group.

So often I get asked about this and it's like well, what about the violence to people in the community, and all that. Well, there's so much ego and within these groups that it ended up that these groups end up sort of imploding and in fighting themselves more than they want to fight others.

Yes, they have the ideologies. Yes, they have. So, when we talk about intervention points for our law enforcement professionals, things like that. I often talk about this part as like when there's a shift in



leadership, or when there's a shift in these groups where they're fighting. That's a good intervention point for law enforcement to get involved and start asking questions because it can shift it up, shake it up some more. And that actually started to happen. So then I guess the RCMP, and other security groups, they started investigating the group. That that had sort of come about in British Columbia because it had started to expand like in Alberta. And then it ended up in 11 countries around the world, the group that I was in. So I could see where the worry was grown. There was a lot of you know. What is this? What's the next steps for this group they were things were growing, even though there was a lot of infighting going on.

And there's a lot of violence internally, looking back, that all of the violence and the hate and the ideology, and all of this stuff was like really exhausting so that I found throughout this movement it started to you know starting to think about what about if I wasn't in this right? There are thoughts like that, and how would you leave. How would I if that was the case, what would happen? Would people come after me, what all those things look like.

So, I ended up having my first child was getting married. During this time, all of these things were stacking up to like a really good, you know, basis to try to go have a different life. So, it was either the movement or family. So, on that day I think it was 2011, I figuratively called it in and said I'm done with this, and let the group know that I was, that that would be it.

However, that's not the end. People talk about this all the time, and about how you know radicalization, or how do these things happen? Well, none of those are linear processes. So, it was 4 years of just really, you know, awful circumstances in a lot of senses like just trying to work through who I was. What I did for the last 13 years of my life, which was, you know, some of it where I processed through therapy. Some of it was processed, or just talking with my wife, and some of it was learning about empathy for my kids.

So, it was going back to school, and I had a criminology degree. It was trying to make those reattachments. I had lost all of my career and potential jobs. I, at one point, was working at Vancouver International Airport as a manager, and that was sort of like a real career job. And I had lost that thankfully while I was in the movement. That means our people were doing their jobs and their due diligence on security background checks. But it, that really sort of caused an issue where I was like. Now, what about what about work? What about all these different things that people would need?

So, what does that leave you with? So, I took some odd jobs, but I think going back to school was the highlight of keeping me attached to pro-social community-oriented stuff. So, yeah, After the movement I sort of led. With that I ended up meeting with some academics.

I think, in 2015, 2016 I also met with a founder of Life After Hate, I think he's already been in to talk with you guys. So, from there I realized that there was maybe some work that could be done to educate or to help others understand what these groups were about.

You know, and just looking back at like the different times where you know, during the movement that I had felt like you know, I received empathy, or I had received treatment from communities that I Don't think I should have gotten you know a fair treatment from, and they did all of these things, sort of led to "Well, how can I help now?". I think I owe the community. How can I atone for those things that I was involved in, and the things that I organized while I was in those movements? How can I tell people about it, and about the risks, about the harms that these groups are doing? What can I do? So yeah, it was. It was a friend of mine who works in law enforcement, who ended up saying, like you should reach out to these folks at this Life After Hate. So, I ended up meeting with them and these academics that I got involved, with which now I work with the director of, Dr. Barbara Perry at the Centre on Hate, Bias and Extremism. So, I, you know, was afforded a lot of chances by society to bring me back around.

So, I started a think about well, what if there were, you know, was programs that I could work in to help other people, you know, like Life After Hate was doing in the US. And in 2018 I was hired by their organization for prevention of violence in Alberta as a former extremist, a sort of mentor to work with



other folks who were leaving right-wing extremism behind. And yeah, so I've been working there for 4 years and that kind of thing.

So, I'll now move to some of the questions that you folks had posed. I'm sure you have questions about what I was just talking about, but I'll get into some of this now, so some of my experiences.

And when we talk about perpetrators of hate or what makes people want to do these things. Looking back on it, there's a lot of things. I met folks while I was in the movement that it was generational, like, it was like they were just taught about hate by their families, or they were, you know, they grew up in a clan, or whatever it was. You know, social learning. So, being around like relatives who are racist and building those ideological pathways early, early on, and then, you know, having it being normalized in their life, gives that opportunity for perpetrating both on and offline like sort of hate based stuff. you know when people feel ostracized and excluded, they often feel like, well now we're divided. I mean, we saw a lot of this stuff with the recent trucker convoy stuff that was going on.

You know people feeling like they're being othered or put in a group, and then it causes this vulnerability in themselves, and pushes people to the brink of doing things against these figurative enemies that they've created. One thing that I've really noticed though is that there's lack of a basic education or knowledge about general civics subjects that I think we can do better in the school setting early on you know. There's just a lot of the stuff the rhetoric I've been seeing over the last 2 years specifically just like you know, even surrounding just Asian Canadians and antisemitism a lot of the stuff that we've been seeing in that, like people don't understand what you know making some sort of comparison to not being vaccinated to being similar, as being somebody in the holocaust, like this is not basic knowledge and would, I think, prevent some of these pathways, these radicalization pathways.

But on the broader sphere this is a perfect inroad for this recruitment of these actual right-wing extremist groups. They look at this, and they're like, oh, cool someone made up another stupid conspiracy theory thing so we can get people involved, and that's sort of the intro point to get people to that point. So, they can open a conversation. and then they can talk about their group and what else they're doing, and all that kind of stuff you know often begins there and then. It leads people down this unfortunate trajectory towards actual action in the community, you know, often bred by fear of the other.

So, pandemic specifically a lot of the things that, and I pulled this sort of from some of the work that I've been doing, or the origin of the virus itself was like a big contributor towards a lot of the conspiracy theories being said like it's from Asia. So automatically, a lot of these groups then perpetuate that anti-Asian hate based on this stuff. So fear of where this comes from, I even saw some stuff online about like, you know, Wuhan, and it's like, oh, comes from a small town in China. I'm like that's 11,000,000 people that's not such a small town. Basic knowledge about places in the world. This is often you know when we are fearing something or fearing our own demise and things like that, these groups play on that, too, like you know, there's a fear, of like if you get the vaccine, you may die, or the government is doing things, so it provides another you know, place for a conspiracy theory to come in, and of course, from my perspective, I look at those.

As for recruitment fields for people, so a lot of this led to, you know, this reported rise in hate, or hate incidents like we saw in Ottawa allegedly. There were about 400 hate incidents over the first 3 weeks during this convoy protest. So, and some of those were, you know, colleagues of mine even reported, you know, being targeted for being a Muslim Canadian, or being an Asian Canadian. It was either sort of like physical violence or racial slurs directed at them for their assumed backgrounds. Things like that. It's almost like the ground was set, though in some ways, for that to be okay like because of what this whole freedom convoy had created like this whole platform for this and that it was acceptable which is completely you know the wrong idea for them to get from it. Push it into the mainstream and have it be more accepted in the community.



So yeah, moving on, moving forward past that the online stuff that we had been seeing was also really concerning, in a lot of ways online hate had increased. But you know, just on whatever it is, across social media, whether it be Twitter, Facebook, the mainstream ones, and then, like linking it into Telegram. A lot of these folks that were known sort of connect charismatic leaders in these places that were pushing a lot of these conspiracy theories about the pandemic, they end up being in these different areas of like Telegram and with huge amounts of followers, which was, you know, that makes it even that much more, because now they've got a devout sort of following online, and you know we saw surrounding this recent convoy. some of those folks that you know calling for violence like in the community, violence which was like obviously making it more concerning.

So further after that I was really actually thinking hard about this last one. So in this sense of you know what contributed to me no longer perpetrating hate. It's a tough question, but I think a lot of this is built in empathy, and us understanding like other Canadians for what they feel is going on in the world. I mean we've seen a lot of different things over this last 2 years. We've seen the stuff down in the States with the insurrection. We've seen pandemics, we've seen this convoy we've seen a rise in hate incidents.

We've seen all this stuff going on but how do we want to foster dialogue that helps create a safe space that we can talk about this. That's something we're doing here. We're trying to learn and try to get together to see what we can do about this. But in my experience, it was the exhaustion of hate, and what that does. Negativity feeds shame, it feeds guilt. it feeds all these different things. And for me, while being in the groups, there was an ideological fallout because of some of the things that I had experienced within the movement. The long and short of that is, my life was saved in 2000. No, so I guess it would have been 1999, by an Orthodox Jewish doctor, even though I was out there on the street, perpetrating gang-related violence and ended up in the hospital. And then the doctor walks in, and surely enough he's an Orthodox Jewish fellow, and he doesn't mention anything about me being who I am at that time wearing a bomber jacket, and boots, and being a neo-Nazi skinhead kind of type. The empathy, the well-being of me as a human being was set before anything that he probably wanted to say. And I actually felt like he shouldn't serve me, that's how I felt when I saw him. I'm like there's no way, I don't deserve this. And that would happen several more times throughout the time that I was in these groups. So, it made me think about the ideology. It made me think about what am I doing? Why am I doing this? If I'm receiving so much from everybody else.

Like I described working at the International Airport. There were, I think, white employees. There were a minority too and pretty well everyone I was working with on my team, the management team, was an ethnic minority of some sort, and they were my friends. I considered them my friends, even when I was in this movement. So, I had these separate sorts of feelings going on.

And I think then, also the distrust within these groups. A lot of them didn't follow the ideology they were just there for the whatever, and you know many of them had broken all of the ideological rules that were supposedly within these groups. So, I just felt like it was all turning in on itself anyways so what's the point of this? And then family, of course, said what's the future going to be with this group. It's going to most of if not all end up in death or worse prison.

Oh, I just see there's a message there. I'll wrap up quick here. so still 5 more minutes before we were hoping to move into questions so perfect.

Okay, so yeah, that piece I mean it's just I think having people that you care about, and they care, again that empathy piece, and how do we leave. Not giving up on our people in our world.

And, you know, when law enforcement and security services encounter people, I'm happy to report now that there are programs that people can, you know, be referred to in that pre- criminal space but after too, those who are reintegrating the people who get out of jail or prison for doing things these are human beings, too, so I know we often see them as terrorists, or violent extremists, or whatever it may be.



But what's the alternative to helping them - not helping them and then what? What do we see for Canadians? What's the answer there, right?

So, yeah with suggestions or recommendations I always say this: there's no golden ticket answer here to how to deal with violent extremism or hate crime or hate incidents, but building out better prevention programs - I know it's very hard from a policy level to look at prevention and say, how do we evaluate that? What actually works? So, we're trying - we know the OPV released a report about the first two years about what we did, the program did, and its effectiveness. So as a prevention and intervention program, we are really trying to share out what the work looks like, what we do, and how it's effectiveness is rated, both trying to quantify stages of change, stages of exit from these groups, or reintegration.

But I think the primary, secondary and nursery programs are essential to this, to being able to get ahead of this with education. So anti-racist training building programs across sectors, digital literacy. As I suggested earlier, civics. I think we miss out on a lot of that. And there's a lot of folks out there that I hear from that I'm like you know they don't know a basic thing like the Prime Minister doesn't determine what the Covid regulations are provincially. They just use blame rather than looking and trying to seek facts.

So, what does that look like? That's on us as Canadians to teach folks and help people to understand what they're looking for, or else they're going to go to YouTube for the experts, and I know that's where people end up. Everybody probably knows somebody somewhere or heard from some family member who's somehow got attached to some kind of weird thing online over the last two years.

So how do we help? How do we get in front of this stuff? Some of it is educating ourselves, so we can help others. And things like that just on a basic level, but obviously on a broader spectrum. We want cross-sector involvement into this, and not just the reactionary devices that we have in the law. Enforcement is necessary, but we don't want to get there.

I'll end off there, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

Commissioner Govender Thank you so much, Brad, so interesting and useful to hear from you. I'm going to get started at the end here with my questions, just building on what you've just told us, can you tell us a little bit more about digital literacy? What do you mean by that?

Brad Galloway: Your basic person who comes to a computer and looks at it, and if they see my example about YouTube, they think oh, because Bob on the YouTube video said that Covid Isn't real or Covid was made by Asians, well, that's true. Well, they don't know where they are getting this information from. So being able to go in, fact check and look where information comes from, building out programming about that. I think folks at Media Matters, I think that's one of them, they do some great work around that, having discussions about sourcing. OPV actually released a thing to about fake news, and the whole scale of where you know what is trustworthy news, what is not. Anybody can say they're doing journalism or news, but like how trustworthy is that news coming from? That kind of spawned out of a lot of these conspiracy theorists. Sites like Info Wars push people to these conspiracy theories, and they get wrapped up in there.

But on a broader spectrum, digital literacy is about if we're hearing from so-and-so, even like fact-checking, like who is that person, going to Google and putting their name in - checking if they are a doctor? Do they study viruses? Who are these people? A lot of people just don't know that stuff. They think that because that person made a video, that must be it. Having just general knowledge of like, okay, I know that what's considered the mainstream media by a lot of these extremist groups is often considered as the enemy. Well, you know if we're going to get news. we're probably going to get it from CTV, Or the CDC. or one of these those types of places that's known as a trusted news source.

Some of these other sources that we see, and some of the things that I see are Rebel News or things like that. We have freedom of expression and freedom of speech, they're free to say these things, but that's not fact checked information.



It's, you know, the peer reviews all that kind of thing like just general knowledge, that's how the research process takes place, and that comes back to the education piece in digital literacy, if we taught it earlier which I'm really happy to report that the school district that I'm in is working with middle schoolers on this stuff, which is amazing to hear about. So, throughout our school districts in BC. But it's definitely something they are doing so it's good to hear about. I have some colleagues that are really working on this out here. That's some good news.

Commissioner Govender: You mentioned a report about building better prevention programs - are you able to send us that report?

Brad Galloway: Absolutely.

Commissioner Govender: I had a question, just sort of building on something you just implied. I'm curious if you could set the stage for us a little bit - we've heard from a few folks who have left extremist movements - how big is that community of people who have left extremist movements?

Brad Galloway: So, dating back to about 2011, I think it was the Summit Against Violent Extremism in Dublin. A whole bunch of former extremists showed up there, and I think there were about 350 formers from different backgrounds. Whether it be religiously motivated extremism to far right to, you know, Al Qaeda. I would assess there's probably about 50 really active formers. There are about three of us in BC. There's probably another one or two in Alberta, there's probably a number of them in Ontario, probably another five to 10, and then there's probably a few in Quebec as well that I know of. But it's sort of become a North American model like between Life After Hate and some of the prevention and intervention programs throughout Canada. There is OPV. There is Shift in BC. These programs are sort of interconnected, but they need to be connected better.

Commissioner Govender: So how do we interventionally deal with this?

Brad Galloway: We've talked about a federal hub of some sort, I don't know how that would look. It gets kind of tough because provincially we deal with things differently. I see it as a small enough hub, a small enough group that people are all interconnected and share common connections like Life After Hate seems like, so that there aren't separate little pockets.

I think some of the formers who work with OPV and work with Life After Hate are sort of working in the same dynamic, because there's not just a massive amount of formers. And there's a lot of formers who are out there just doing outreach as opposed to actual interventions - they're telling their story and doing that kind of stuff. But they're not actually working physically with clients on a daily basis.

Commissioner Govender: People who are exiting right?

Brad Galloway: Yes.

Commissioner Govender: And this relates to another question I had about your own story. Did you feel at the end that you had to go through a journey? Did the movement try to pull you back in?

Brad Galloway: Yeah, they do that. They try to prevent you from getting to your greener pastures. That's just like gang exit programs we hear about, the gang will come back - are you sure you don't want to do this one more thing? It's just the same kind of strategy. And so some of the gang exit research is pretty valuable to try to understand when people are in that vulnerable space of leaving, just as much as the prevention and intervention programs want to keep you in that program, the gang will be trying to say you know you shouldn't be with them. So they can disengage from whatever group they're in, but then it takes time to do that.

Commissioner Govender: But I think you've given us more context in terms of building empathy, and some of the relationship pieces. I'm going to just look through my notes for a second, and we only have a few minutes. So, Sarah, if you want to jump in there.

Brad Galloway: Thank you for your questions.



Sarah Khan: Thanks so much, Brad. this is very helpful. Do you know much about which hate groups or what hate groups are operating currently in BC? Or is the problem now self-radicalization on the Internet?

Brad Galloway: A bigger problem is the interplay between those things. Groups are always going to be an issue, and the trouble is that we can ban Proud Boys, we can put them on our list but the Proud Boys are going to go join something else. That's what I've been seeing. I mean, we just saw this at the Coutts border, Alberta with Diagonal, the accelerationist group that was involved there. That kind of stuff has been happening in BC, with these sorts of militia-style trainings. There are some other accelerationist groups, too.

But you know, they'll come up with a name just like when Blood and Honour was put on the list, they're going to go do something else. They got involved in the Asatru Folk Assembly, which is firmly rooted in BC. They've all sort of gone into this is Asatru Folk Assembly, which uses Paganism. They'll say it's about religion, not about hate, but if every single individual is in it who used to be in Blood and Honour, and that group is rooted in the United States. A lot of it is rooted in the US, and the groups can stay online because the US doesn't have the same hate laws like we do so. So yes, people are being radicalized online.

This is an unfortunate consequence of the times that there have been a lot of people sitting at home isolated during this pandemic, and as platforms go online like these, as soon as we shut down platforms it's like playing whack-a-mole, we see another one emerge. This is something we need to be a little more vigilant about. It's working with big social media companies to try to understand what the policies in Canada are - why is it that some individuals get on these platforms and are able to stay on because they're the ones that are sort of radicalizing these other folks. I don't really believe in self-only radicalization. It's always someone else that they're watching, these charismatic leaders that are making these videos and posting them online.

It used to be music videos that were really popular. That's still there, but it's kind of moved from the mainstream platforms down to like [redacted] and others. As soon as they get removed, they'll find somewhere else to their to put their stuff. But you've hit something though that's very, very important to talk about, and that is this idea of lone actors, of people who are isolated and sitting there. And how do we monitor these folks.

Sarah Khan: What are some of the preventative measures that we can take in the pre-criminal space to deal with these types of things?

Brad Galloway: Some of the things I've heard of are that if they're caught up by our intelligence agencies or police. Get them to turn in their firearms willingly. Would you like us to continue investigating you, or would you like to just turn in your firearms? Maybe you know peace bonds, things like that. Prevention organizations to talk with folks and get information about being in these groups. So that primary prevention stuff. Having information sharing, and I know this is tough, between law enforcement, NGOs who are working in this space. and respecting the ethics and boundaries of that provincially.

So that's another challenge - these people move around so much, they're very nomadic in the sense of like they might be in BC today, and then they might go to Halifax and then they might go to Toronto, and then how do we give them services. That's why I was thinking of this Federal hub of having social workers and psychologists and all those people, they have to be licensed in each province, and that becomes challenging to do prevention in the right way.

So, I know I've expanded a little bit too much on that. But anyways, hopefully, it's helpful.

Commissioner Govender: Very helpful, thank you. Okay, I don't have any other urgent questions given that we're at time. Sarah, did you have anything else?

Sarah Khan: Well, I guess in terms of a burning question that I have given you've probably being quite busy over the last few weeks. Brad, have you seen a link between the recent convoys and white supremacist



movements you've mentioned, like Diagonal? Have you seen any other links that you think would be helpful for us to know about? And if there are any other links with BC.

Brad Galloway: So interestingly, I've found, unfortunately, in our interior in the Kelowna area. **Paul**, from a known white nationalist, has been planning to work with these convoy freedom people. I don't even know what this movement is called but it's tied and rooted with white supremacist actors. We've seen Pat King. There are very public court proceedings that are going on in Ottawa right now with people that are linked to right-wing extremism. The whole thing for them is that this is a place to financially get support out there for their groups, so many of them will latch onto this convoy, in the sense of great, we can go out there, even if it's just selling t-shirts at these protests. I've heard of these guys going out and selling merchandise at the even just anti-vax protests. This has been a really unfortunate fertile ground for our white supremacist groups. And the old hate guys who weren't getting much anymore during the pandemic, coming out of the woodworks.

This is a fantastic recruitment drive time for them, because they've got everybody selling on Amazon selling, pardon my language, but the Fuck Trudeau merchandise. So, these guys got on in on that, too. They make t-shirts, they make flags. That's making them money on a very specific ideology just directed at our Prime Minister. The anti-liberal sentiment is always there. But these guys who are specifically anti-Trudeau or these militia movements, the three percenters that aren't supposed to be around.

However, they seem to show up at Ottawa. It's definitely a very challenging time trying to monitor all of these different groups that are deciding to use this as their platform.

Sarah Khan: So why do you think, if you have time to answer, why do you think the anti-vax movement has been such fertile ground for this?

Brad Galloway: It links into this government control conspiracy theory stuff where they believe the government is implementing things that they're not supposed to be implementing, even though, as we know, you're still free not to take a vaccine if you don't want to when nobody's being forced to go get it. Yes, some of the things that they see too, like the whole anti-mask stuff. That's another idea of well, the government is taking control, they're making us wear a mask. And it fits more broadly into the real, heavy, old ideology of this whole idea that the Jews run banks and the Jews run government, and all of that.

They can't come out and say that, but they're using pieces and connecting all of these points in different conspiracy theories, utilizing the holocaust and anti-Asian sentiment. People are taking on certain parts of those ideologies and not really realizing that they're taking on extremist viewpoints.

I think one of the most challenging things has been the QAnon mindset – how do we deal with that? Because some of it just seems sort of like wackadoodle material, like nobody would ever believe that. But with 78,000 people following the alleged Queen of QAnon. that's a lot of people, it's a lot of followers. We have to be concerned about that and when it's being directed at government, and dissolution of government.

That's been tough thing to watch as well because it sounds like something that we should do, because people just sort of get on it because they just want to get back to normal. It's like get a better government again. What does that mean though - they're pushing the extreme into the mainstream. And the convoy - I don't want to say this - but it worked to a certain degree in that sense of pushing the extremist ideologies into the mainstream.

And I know it's been challenging for journalists. I've been talking to a lot of them lately and it's been like, how do we do this without being extremely beaten up for everything we say.

Commissioner Govender: Well, thank you so much Brad, so much to talk about here. I'm not sure if you would be open to doing any written submissions or answering any further questions. But would that work for you?



Brad Galloway: Yes I could delve a little deeper and give some more scientific background, and answers with some references and things like that to some of the work that I've been seeing on this which has been super important to follow as well. So that would be great.

Commissioner Govender: I would be really grateful for that, and we've sent follow-up questions to others, so maybe we could do that. Our deadline for written submissions is March 31st, so we can get those questions out to you as soon as possible. So, with that I will just pass over to Barb to say the last couple of comments.

Barb Ryeburn: So, I, too, would really like to thank you Brad for your participation in sharing what you have with us today, and thanks for agreeing to submit a written submission, that's wonderful. I've also posted a link to the online survey in case you want to share it. which is open and it's on our website.

Sarah Khan: And yes, thank you ever so much. We really appreciate it.

Brad Galloway: Perfect, thanks again.

