

ONTARIO COURT OF JUSTICE
(South West Region)

BETWEEN:

HIS MAJESTY THE KING

Respondent

- and -

SAMER AKILA

Applicant

AFFIDAVIT OF DEREK SNIDER

I, Derek Snider, of the City of Cambridge, in the Province of Ontario, MAKE OATH AND SAY/AFFIRM:

General

1. I reside in Cambridge, Ontario with my wife and four children. I am 51 years of age (dob October 31, 1972). I do not have a criminal record.

Involvement psilocybin business/ organizations

2. I do not own, operate, or work for a business that grows, sells or otherwise does business with psilocybin.
3. I am a community organizer with Entheogenic Research Guild of Toronto (Ergot.ca) (over 700 members), KWCG Psychedelic Society (in the Kitchener-Waterloo, Cambridge, Guelph area) (hundreds of members across platforms) and the Toronto Psychedelic Society (connects thousands of people across platforms).


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Background

4. I was raised in the Catholic faith. I underwent all the traditional rites and even served as an altar boy. However, I found that organized religion often lacked the depth and substance I was seeking. The spiritual practices presented to me felt sterile and mass-produced. I wanted something more personal. My journey ultimately brought me to psilocybin, whose profound effects enabled me to transcend the limitations of conventional beliefs and develop a deeper, more authentic connection with my spirituality.

Early experiences

5. My earliest transformative experiences with psychedelics were due to an uncomfortably large dose of LSD at age 23. It was amazing and transformative, but it was too much. After that I would instead use psilocybin. I found with psilocybin it was easier to control potency making it more reliable and safer to work toward controlled integration and processing of the resulting reverent experiences. Further, psilocybin was more readily available as opposed to LSD. In addition, psilocybin experiences did not last as long as LSD which I preferred. I have done other psychedelics over the years, but psilocybin has been my most important teacher.
6. Early on, I would use psilocybin as a means to explore my mind, enhance my creativity, or simply for recreation. However, psilocybin tended to manifest spiritual elements whether I intended it or not. Even if I go in with an intention, it can result in a different, sometimes more profound learning. Through experience I found there was a spiritual impact from each exposure. This inspired me to seek more truths and discover other elements of life I had looked over, or willfully ignored in the past. It was with psilocybin I gained perspective on how the world around me operates, how we exist within it, and the agency we have to create and shape the world around us. I used psilocybin to

facilitate spiritual connection. Psilocybin served as a means of reintegrating spiritual practice into my life which has been important to me.

Spirituality, ego dissolution, empathy and mindfulness

7. I believe psilocybin is a sacrament and a divine gift. When I say it is a sacrament, I mean it brings me closer to God or the divine.
8. Psilocybin has reconnected me with the essence of my soul. I feel like I knew my soul, had lost contact with it, and then reconnected with it. It is psilocybin that allowed me to reconnect with my soul. I learned that my soul is part of everything. We are not separate from God. We are all connected to each other, to nature and to God. We are one.
9. With psilocybin, I am able to step outside my preconceived notions of self and the expectations that I felt scripted by others. I am able to let go of the idea that we need to be in competition. I am able to see the wisdom in cooperation.
10. Psilocybin also showed me that people should not have to subscribe to a religion to gain access to spiritual well-being. Instead, I came to believe that we all hold the key to our own spiritual well-being whether we are part of a formal religion or not.
11. My experiences with psilocybin helped me reconnect with nature and discover a deeper sense of purpose. Psilocybin has taught me that I need to have reverence for the land, its plant life and its animals. This fosters a sense of belonging and balance. This provides a foundation for personal and environmental healing. This healthy relationship with the earth nurtures both the individual and the planet.
12. Psilocybin allowed me to experience ego dissolution. It is through ego dissolution that I learned that we are all one. In this way, psilocybin brought me an enhanced feeling of interconnectivity with others and that reminded me of how important the human collective is. This is a big part of my path to self-actualization. Psilocybin helped me

realize that helping those in need and respecting all of nature, helps me. This has also made me more empathetic.

13. Psilocybin increased my mindfulness considerably. For most of my life I have been a contemplative person, with a tendency to obsess and ruminate. Psilocybin allowed me to be more in the moment and helped me let go of my obsessions. Psilocybin offered me an opportunity to step out of my well-trodden mental pathways and find a route that is better suited for the present moment. In this way, psilocybin gave me access to a form of mental "spring cleaning" of these mental pathways. For me that meant an opportunity to pause, investigate, and re-evaluate without rumination. I could reflect on what I need in my life and which practices or patterns were taking my power away. Psilocybin allows me to step outside of a rut.
14. During psilocybin experiences my empathy increases. I think I understand the perspectives of others. All of this enhances my sense of connection, community, love, acceptance, and healing. It reduces my self-serving motivations.
15. Each time I use psilocybin I re-examine my values and biases in an authentic way.
16. I have spent a lot of time thinking about, writing about and defining my spiritual beliefs. This is not something that I take lightly. It is profoundly important to me.

Other changes in my life

17. Psilocybin has caused me to view my purpose in life is to seek knowledge and help others.
18. In November 2013, I founded the Entheogenic Research Guild of Toronto (ERGOT) after I realized the only groups investigating the psychedelic experience were based in the United States. I value ERGOT's commitment to focusing on the spiritual benefits of psychedelics. I have pursued this activism because I feel psilocybin can be a profoundly

important tool for spiritual growth. In 2012 my wife and I adopted two young siblings. In 2013 my wife was pregnant with twins. I knew my obligations as a father would limit the frequency with which I could consume psilocybin, but the activism keeps me close to the lessons I have learned from psilocybin. Now, as a father of four, I strive to balance my responsibilities while cultivating a life centered on spirituality, community building, and an appreciation for the interconnectedness of all life.

19. Psilocybin has made me a better parent (I do not use psilocybin when I have child-care obligations). The change in my approach to life has made me a better parent because I am a more mindful, compassionate, and understanding caregiver. It helps me remember what it was like to be a kid. It reminds me that to be a parent, involves, among other things, meeting people where they are at.
20. Psilocybin has motivated me to try to help the downtrodden. Through my journey of self-discovery and advocacy, I have become motivated to spend time working with Cambridge Bridges, an association that works with unhoused folks and safe consumption. My 10-year-old daughter has witnessed this advocacy and has been inspired to start her own initiative that supports the unhoused population in our area.

Sworn remotely via videoconference by)
 Derek Snider in the city of Cambridge)
 Ontario, and the Commissioner Paul)
 Lewin in the city of Toronto, Ontario)
 this 6th day of June 2024.)

Commissioner for taking affidavits
 Paul Lewin

Derek Snider