INQUIRY RESPECTING THE TREATMENT, EXPERIENCES AND OUTCOMES OF INNU IN THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

Transcript | Interview | Private Session

Commissioners: Retired Judge James Igloliorte, Dr. Mike Devine and Anastasia Qupee

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C. URQUHART: My apologies.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: No apologies needed.

Everything is set up, Curtis was in here.

C. URQUHART: Perfect. Did they –?

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: They got her ready.

C. URQUHART: They got it all ready to go.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Yeah. J. P., it's a thrill and a pleasure to have you here –

J. P.: Mm-hmm.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: – and thank you for your patience. I know –

J. P.: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: – that we have set you aside at least once when you wanted to be here.

J. P.: That's all right.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: You can introduce yourself to us by telling us your full name, your date of birth, who your parents are, anything that you want to say about yourself.

J. P.: Okay.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: And then you can go into whatever it is you wanted to tell the Inquiry.

J. P.: So my name is J. P. I am 29 years old; my birthday is January 24, 1994. My father is [father], and my mother is [mother]. My mom is from Postville, my dad is from here. And growing up, I didn't take school seriously or anything like that, I was always skipping, and I got in – heavily into drugs and alcohol, when I was young. I started using when I was 12 years old.

And – so fast forward to the age of 16, I find myself pregnant. So – but at the time the drugs had made me lose my mind. And I didn't – it's hard to explain, I'm sorry.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Don't apologize.

J. P.: Okay.

So people know that I lost the baby, right, so – but they don't know how I lost it. I knew that I'd be considered, like, mentally unfit to be a mother. And – so what I did was, I started hitting myself in the stomach. I didn't – it's not that I didn't want the baby. I did. I just knew he would be – well, I knew the baby would be safer in heaven than in the system. 'Cause you don't know how they're gonna be treated there.

Yeah.

I was crying the whole time I did it, and then the next day I started hemorrhaging. Yeah. I'm kinda surprised I didn't need to go to the hospital, but I don't remember everything of going through the miscarriage because I think it was too traumatic. I just remember there being blood. And I know of other women who have done similar things.

So because I didn't want the baby to be taken away, I chose to give it to God.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Yeah.

J. P.: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Can we ask you some questions?

J. P.: Sure.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: You don't mind?

J. P.: I don't mind.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: What is it that you knew or felt that your child would have to endure if it were taken by the child support – child protection system?

J. P.: Well, probably he would be moved around a lot from different place to place. Some places might be good, other places might be bad, and I knew the child would suffer abuse in some way, whether it be sexually, physically or mentally. And it took me a long time to get better from my illness, so I wouldn't have been able to look after him or her.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Can you tell us about your healing journey?

J. P.: Yeah.

I started going to church. I was baptised RC, as a baby, but my mom grew up – grew me up going to different churches, like Pentecostal, Salvation Army, things like that.

But I know the baby is really happy where he is, but – I guess I think it must be a boy, 'cause I keep saying he.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Mmm.

J. P.: Do you want to know the – what I named him?

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Sure.

J. P.: [Name.]

Yeah.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Lovely.

J. P.: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Anything more that you'd like to tell us?

J. P.: He would probably be, like, 14 by now. 'Cause I was 16 for – I'm not good at math.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Yeah. Well, you're right.

J. P.: Yeah.

That's all I have to say.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: No, it's very –

J. P.: If you have any more questions –

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Yeah, no, it's very lovely of you to come and tell us something so deep –

J. P.: Mm-hmm.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: – but at the same time, we admire your strength.

J. P.: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: And so happy to see that you've been able to get through this time, even though life was very difficult for you.

J. P.: Yes. It was.

Thank you for recognizing that.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: No, it's wonderful.

Caitlin, anything you want to add?

C. URQUHART: Just sort – to echo what the Commissioner has said. Thank you for being vulnerable and sharing something that it sounds like you haven't shared before, so –

J. P.: No, people know that I lost the baby, but they didn't know how I lost it.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Yeah.

C. URQUHART: Yeah. Yeah.

J. P.: Yeah.

C. URQUHART: It's really an honour to be –

J. P.: Mm-hmm.

C. URQUHART: – to be here, to be a witness.

J. P.: It's nice to be heard.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Good.

And so do you find yourself a healer as well, do you find yourself supporting your friends, people of your own age, or are you still receiving mental health for the trauma that you suffered?
J. P.: I have PTSD, so I always hear things that are not there, and I do get a weekly injection for my psychosis. It helps a lot.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Yup.

Well, I'm here to say to you that I know that within yourself you're going through a lot of turmoil, but for us, looking at you and listening to you –

J. P.: Mm-hmm.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: – we're grateful for your honesty, and we're grateful for your strength.

J. P.: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: And we want you to feel as if you can come back –

J. P.: Mm-hmm.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: – and make any other presentations. I know we're rushing you, I know that –

J. P.: That's all right.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: – we're leaving you 'til the last minute, but it's not our intention to say: That's the only chance you've got. In fact, we will say to you, if you're moved to come and add any more, please feel free.

J. P.: Okay.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Right. Well thank you so much.

J. P.: Thank you too.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Yes – and during lunch stay and have lunch with us.

J. P.: Yes.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Good.

C. URQUHART: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Thank you very much.