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

English Transcript | Volume 20

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

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[redacted]

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Stanley, welcome. Thank you for being here, and feel free to present your story, your experiences, whatever you wish to say to the Commission. Remember that Anne is interpreting too.

S. POKUE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

INTERPRETER NUNA (providing English translation): My name is Stanley Pokue. First of all, I'd like to tell you that I have never been apprehended by CSSD when I was young. My parents raised us as a family and I never – I don't remember being apprehended or someone to call on my parents, because my parents were good people.

I used to drink when I was living with my ex-girlfriend. I used to drink a lot; I caused trouble. My kids were apprehended. Somehow I thank CSSD for the apprehension of my kids, because of safety reasons I guess, and there's another side I regret – I have regrets.

When my kids were apprehended by CSSD, they were moved from house to house. We were allowed our visitations. But, in the first year they were apprehended, I didn't care about where they were. When they were in care, on the second time that they were moved to another house, one of my daughters was sexually abused at a home she stayed. My daughter told me this: A drunk came into the home and sexually abused her.

After she told me her story, then I began to work on myself, on my healing, to help my daughter. At the time, my two kids were at my aunt's house. I thought that it was a good place for them, where they were staying, because she was my aunt, but that is where the sexual abuse happened, in her home.

On the fifth time, when they were placed in another home, they were not well taken care of. They told us this: They wanted to leave the house. My kids were at a young age when they told me this. They were left in the room, abused in that home, but not sexually.

It's only when we visited them, they said that the people who were taking care of them pretended that everything was good, everything went well in that house. When they were placed in that room, that's where they ate, in that room. They were not allowed to use the bathroom, and they said they had to use the plates, the bowls to pee.

In the last house that my kids stayed, they had a lot of problems there, too. They were not allowed to use the bathroom. Sometimes they had to run to the bathroom and when they went there, often, the couple that they stayed with would have their room door open and they said they could see what they were doing. He is saying that they were making out while his kids would run by and could see all that. And when they were caught looking at the couple, they would be thrown back in their room and the next day, sometimes, they were not given food for one day.

After hearing the stories from my kids, they were placed house to house five times, and my daughter was sexually assaulted by a drunk twice. My son at that time was younger and he don't remember about the abuse incidents that had happened. When I heard this, I kept it to myself, and I got mad after hearing this from my kids. And then I decided to start on my healing journey. I asked my ex-girlfriend if she wanted to join me on my journey, and she did not join me.

It hurts me after seeing and hearing from my own kids. They still tell me about what had happened, and I get mad. The way I

looked at it in the past, I thought it was all in a movie. It is surreal to me. But it did happen; it happened to my kids, where they were placed. And I did not experience this, what my kids had experienced, in my past, when I was young, myself.

I have grandchildren; they too have been apprehended. I always caution my adult children to look out for them because of what had happened in their experience being placed in home to home. I care about my children and grandchildren, and I am trying my best to be the parent that I was supposed to be.

I also thank CSSD because I thought it was for the safety for my kids. And I do not thank CSSD for what had happened while they were in their care.

Today my kids blame me, and I accept that. I told my kids I would fight for them. I will talk on their behalf.

I really found it hard after hearing this for my kids. I never thought it would happen to them. I see that now, I drank a lot and did drugs. I never saw that coming, and I hope I never see it again happen. Not only to my kids. I know I have to accept it because it already happened, but it is what I am working on myself: to be a better person for my kids.

And the other thing is I'd like to mention is the fact that my kids were not taken outside. I worked hard for myself to get here, where I am today. Yes, my kids still have triggers. They're adults and they are – within them, and they tell me their triggers. I feel sorry for what had happened. May it not ever happen again to others.

And, in conclusion, I would like to thank you all for listening to my story. Hopefully something will be done.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Thank you very much.

Michael, you want to address the gentleman?

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Yes.

First of all, thank you for being here this morning and telling your story to us. It takes great strength to come to a place like this and to tell your story of the struggles that you've had during your lifetime.

I would have to add quickly, though, that it is quite admirable that you are continuing to work on yourself, and I think you've made great strides, from what you have told us this morning, and so certainly encourage you to continue with that. Part of what you're doing today is telling a story to us with a part of what we'll be sharing in our final report, and I'm very hopeful that positive things will come out of it.

So thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER QUPEE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Do you wany to say it in English.

COMMISSIONER QUPEE: English? Okay.

I just wanna let Stanley know that it takes a lot of courage to come forward and tell his story. And to let him know that he's not alone; that we're all here as support and to listen to his story and wishing him well on his healing journey. And, again, thank you for coming forward, for telling your story.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER IGLOLIORTE: Thank you.

Also, Mr. Pokue, the Commissioners have learned so much from you in what you told us. You're telling us to keep the children in the community. You're telling us that parents can change if they're given a chance. You're telling us we have to listen to what the children say to their parents about their experience and you're telling us that we have to make sure that whoever

takes control of child protection in this community for Innu provide safe houses, safe places for children. You have taught us a great deal.

Tshinashkumitin, Sir.

Let's take a break now for about 10 minutes.

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