

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

English Transcript | Volume 26

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

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Recess

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: [Recording in progress at start of recording] – and, so, Nympha, whenever you're ready.

N. BYRNE: Mm-hmm.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Thank you.

N. BYRNE: My name is Nympha Byrne. I'm a mental health and addictions worker in – here in Natuashish. And I also work with LCC, Labrador corrections, work with our – the men over there, the men who are in jail. It's the Innu and Inuit men.

I just wanted to share that the – three weeks ago, there was – about 3½ weeks ago, I had a phone call. This was in Goose Bay. I had a phone call at 6 o'clock in the morning. And it was a young woman who had two children and she was beat up and she was trying to take her children out of the – it was in a hotel – out of that room where the – the family were there. And she was – when I went up to see her, she was sitting in a lobby by herself with no kids and, she said, that that family didn't wanna give her her children – to her. She's trying to take them out of there, but they won't let her take the kids out.

So, I went in – I know the lady very well. So, I went up and knocked on the door and there was people – one of the person was drinking on the floor. And the guy was there and the woman and the child was sleeping. So, I told them, I'm gonna take the kids out. And the lady said to me: I don't like people who take sides. So, I didn't care. I took the child and walked out with the child in the – what do you call those, where you put the babies, you know, for the car –?

P. RALPH: Car seat.

N. BYRNE: Car seat, yeah.

So, I had my car. I took the baby out and they won't give me the other one. So, I know there would have been something going on if I did take the other one, but he was asleep.

And while I was in a hotel, I talked to that person who was in the front desk and I told her what – I told him what happened and then the other – the lady was already talked to him about what happened but it – he didn't listen. He didn't hear what she was saying. She was blaming her for all the stuff that – she must have been the one doing that, the fighting.

And I told him to call the cops. He didn't call them. I thought he called them, but he didn't call them. So, I went back to him again and I said: I wanna see your boss. I said: I wanna talk to your boss. And, he said, he did call the cops right away. And the cop called and, he said, the child is asleep, 'cause they already talked to the people upstairs. He said: The child is asleep; I'm not gonna wake up the child 6 o'clock in the morning.

I was there about an hour waiting for that guy to call the RCMP to come up and remove the child out of that – out of the room. But he never came back anyway. Even the cop called, he was yelling at me over the phone, saying: I'm not gonna wake up the child at 6 o'clock. But it wasn't 6 o'clock. It was 7 o'clock; I was there for an hour. And I would not move; I wouldn't get out; I would be right there with the woman who was waiting for the child to be brought over to her, so I can take her.

So, the cop was very rude, and I said to myself: Why is that cop doing that, like, talking to me like that – you know, I thought they're supposed to be looking after the women, the women come first, like, you know, there was a violence in it. And it really bothered me because I said: They don't

care. The cops don't care. If somebody get hurt – if a woman get hurt, they're not gonna care about them.

And then later on, I – you know, and after I said – I said something to the cop, but I forgot what I was saying to him, but I said, the child is in there, I'm not gonna – we're not gonna leave. But anyway, he came – I said something to him, and then he came right away. Like, you know, not even 10 minutes, five minutes he came. And he went up to the room and he said: I'm gonna talk to this guy; I know the guy. I know the family, he said. 'Cause I guess he'd been in one of their community.

So, he went – he was there for a while, waited about 20, 25 minutes. And then he bring the child, the little boy back. So, I have my car seat and everything, I put her in – put him in there. So I got the mother and the children and I just took her to the airport to see if she can get on. I said: I'll make a reservations. So when I went up there, he said there is no room, only 12 o'clock – 12 o'clock, that's their only flight that they can go in. So, I tried to find money where I can – somebody could help me to pay the ticket for her to go home.

So, I got the ticket; Germaine Benuen paid for the tickets. I was so happy when she called. She messaged me asking me who was that woman. But I ended up telling her, but the thing that really bothered me was the cops. You know, a cop to say that I'm not going to get the kid up, what if there is more violence in there? What if the child got hurt? And this same woman today – I was talking to her yesterday. She went to the CSSD and the guy is taking that boy home. The guy – she told me everything what happened. She said: He is really rough handling the young boy and now they paid for the ticket for him to take the boy to the other community. It happened yesterday.

I was really bothered by that. I said, she said they don't listen to me; I have no voice. They're not going to say anything to me. They're not going to believe me. 'Cause he was – when he told me – she told me about that, how he was rough handling the boy, I said to myself, he's going to hurt him if he's – 'cause he's drinking. These people are drinkers and the mother here is not drinking. She's trying to take care of her children, but I know she's having a rough time 'cause there's two little ones.

But I think the Social Services are not doing their work. They're handing that child to the guy who was drinking and being violent when he's drinking, 'cause the girl told me that he had tried to take his life before, many times. And I don't agree what Social Services are doing right now, the CSSD.

I wanna go there myself and talk to them. It really hurts when I see women being hurt and even when the cops are trying to do – like, you know, doing all that stuff. And that's the young woman that's here right now. She's here. She don't know where to –

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I've been sober for so long for my young babies and the father has a bad drinking problem, and the social workers are not listening to me or trying to help me. They're gonna send my baby to that drunk's house. And I'm not doing anything, like, I'm sober and then the father is always drinking.

And he just showed one thing to the social workers where I got mad at him when he was drinking and I forgot what I said but he showed the social workers about where I got mad.

And my baby, he's – and he's scared of him. All those families, they're all drinking and being – always drinking. They don't do anything and I'm trying to go to treatment, you know, so I can get my son back into my care.

I don't know what to do and I don't know who to turn to, to help me and my son. My baby doesn't need him. There's not one sober person in that house where his dad is

gonna take him. I was the only one sober – sober one.

P. RALPH: Do you have a lawyer helping you? Is there – you don't have a lawyer? Have you asked for one? Maybe we should do that –

N. BYRNE: Jessica –

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm only trying to go to treatment. Like that's all I can think about to help me.

P. RALPH: The Commissioners aren't in a position to intervene.

N. BYRNE: Mm-hmm.

P. RALPH: But certainly, I can – you know, help her try and connect with some of the lawyers at Legal Aid.

N. BYRNE: Okay.

[Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Peter, I'm just wondering if there's some way that she can get some help or somebody to go talk to? The crisis team for some input or somebody to talk to –

P. RALPH: Yeah. I think that what she needs –

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: – in the community who –

P. RALPH: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: – (Inaudible) assistance that could –

P. RALPH: Right, which I think she needs it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The social workers know about the father, I kept telling them and just that one message about – that was months ago, maybe even summertime? And that's what he told him, and he said he was gonna do everything he can to take him –

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Was that on video?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: – to make me look bad.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Is that a video?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No, that's just like, on Messenger, on Facebook. He took picture and that was from months ago, and he made it look like that – like I just said that to him. But that was probably five months ago.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Mm-hmm.

P. RALPH: When we break here now, I can see if we can connect with Legal Aid –

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Legal Aid –

P. RALPH: – and see if they can help.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: – and/or somebody maybe Nympha might know in the community who are –

P. RALPH: Okay, so CSSD are obviously involved already.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: – (inaudible).

N. BYRNE: Mm-hmm.

P. RALPH: They've made – already made that decision that –

N. BYRNE: Mm-hmm.

P. RALPH: – the child is going with the father, so –

N. BYRNE: Yeah. They already bought the ticket.

P. RALPH: – you know, they only – right, the child's not out of the community yet?

N. BYRNE: No, he's still here.

P. RALPH: Still here. Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He's still here (inaudible) –

P. RALPH: Your child's still here?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: – 'cause I was begging the father not to take him. Then I had to hang on to him –

P. RALPH: Is he flying out today? Supposed to fly out today? Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He's not anymore because my newborn – my youngest one gotta go Goose Bay to get checkup.

P. RALPH: Right.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 'Cause he had a lump on his neck. But he's good now; he's okay.

P. RALPH: All right. Okay.

Well, maybe when we finish, we can go out and have a chat about this?

N. BYRNE: Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, maybe just – treatment is all I can think of to help.

P. RALPH: Yes.

You've been sober for a while now?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I've been sober for two years.

P. RALPH: Right. Fantastic.

Okay.

N. BYRNE: Okay.

P. RALPH: Yeah.

N. BYRNE: Yeah.

[Mushuau-aimun spoken.]

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And I need help, please.

P. RALPH: Yeah. Okay.

So that's –

N. BYRNE: Yeah, that's good.

P. RALPH: Yeah, okay.

I guess we can finish for the morning. And –

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Yeah, finish and follow up after this with what can be done for the woman.

P. RALPH: Okay.

Great, thank you.

N. BYRNE: Are we finished now?

P. RALPH: That's up to you. Is there anything –?

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Well, I wonder – this was the whole purpose of your – like, to talk about this case?

N. BYRNE: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Was there other things you wanted to tell –?

N. BYRNE: I'll talk later on. I'm – I just wanna take a break now.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Okay.

N. BYRNE: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Okay.

Thank you.