

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

English Transcript Volume 42

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

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My name is Simeon. I was born on March 26, 1968, across the river from here.

I want to begin a story of Davis Inlet, what I experienced, what I saw about when the policy was imposed upon us that we should follow. I want to tell the story my grandfather, John Poker, always tell us when we're in the country, about the freedom in the country and how good it is to live on the land.

One of the things that I heard from the Elders when they tell their stories about the freedom in tundra and the freedom in the country, people didn't depend on communications, when they try to – like a telephone or radio bush or anything that's being transmitted to another community. They had their own communication system, that is a shaking tent.

[Dialogue between S. Tshakapesh and Interpreter Nuna in Sheshatshiu-aimun.]

And my grandfather was so proud of that story every time he tells. When he tells a story, I can visualize it, what he was talking about, because he was so into it. He believed that. That was the culture, of Innu culture.

And he talks about survival on the land. Although he said it was very hard, very challenging, very demanding to survive and raise kids, Innu children on the land. He said it was very challenging because they had to feed their camps, hunt caribou, porcupines, anything that they can eat, like wild game. My grandfather said it was always there because we respect the animal spirits, and every time the Elder sings his drum, that's how we hunt, that's how we know where the animals are.

And that was a way of life as Innu. That was our culture, our identity, who we were as Innu people. But now I'm gonna go back. That was our culture. We truly respect that because we were Innu, our ancestors were nomads for thousands of years. We survived on the land. We didn't depend on doctors, surgeons, lawyers, social workers, RCMP, judges, teachers. Our people, our ancestors managed to stabilize us as Innu people and their people and their peers at that time.

One of the things that I want to point out that we had our own laws – Innu laws. We had our own way to deal with problems, and today, somebody is dealing with our own lives, and that is a policy.

One of the things that I want to point out, that I know a lot of people will not believe that, that I'm losing reality, which is not. I seen it happen during the fall like this, when a fish has been caught on the river or on the ice, we were prohibited to take the fish outside, but to eat it inside.

And if you disobey that, take the fish out, then the animal fish master will punish us. Then there will be no fish caught. Those were one of the rules that we have to follow, and I seen it done. My grandpa always insist: Don't ever take the fish outside during the fall; you always got to eat it inside.

And that animal master's name is Missinak^{u} – his animal master's name is Missinak^{u}, that's what the Elders call him. And that's why we gotta please him, in order for us to catch more fish. If we don't respect the fish, take it outside, then that's it. You won't caught any more fish.

And each animal has their own – there is a spirit of an animal master, like caribou and porcupine. All of animals have their own masters and they're really powerful because when a shaman performs a shaking tent, you can hear the animals go into the shaking tent.

First, they made a sound, like if the geese enters the shaking tent, they will make a goose call and then he will be start talking Innu. And that's how powerful what it was in the old days, and it was true. My grandfather used to talk about it a lot.

And, today, I want to stress that we are Innu. We are very different from non-Innu people, like modern society today. We have our own principles. We have our own values, language, ceremonies and

spirituality. That was our culture, and we still believe that today as Innu people.

We still practise the values and the beliefs that our ancestors believed. And the culture is still there, I know. The ceremonies, we still perform like Makushan, the sweat lodge. One of the other things that our Elders – I know my grandfather told me – is that if I ever pass, he said, you always make an offering for me. Like if you have a tea, pour it on the stove or in the fire and a little bread; make an offering to me if you ask something and I will give it to you.

And I truly believe that, and I have done it many times. When I'm struggling when I hunt, I usually offer an offering, and that's one of the powerful ceremonies, too, that we still communicate with our grandfather's spirit because that's what our grandfathers wanted. You offer tobacco to them or Mishtapeu, the great spirit with the Innu people.

The reason why I share that today because it's a fact and it's true. Because when we were living in Davis Inlet, me and my wife, we used to have a therapist from Sept-Îles. She flies in once in a while to do counselling. And one day –

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Psychologist.

S. TSHAKAPESH: – psychologist. One day she was stuck in Davis Inlet, the snowstorm wouldn't stop and my wife here told her friend – she stayed with us – I'll make an offering for my grandfather. And I don't know what my wife did. I think she made an offering asking grandfather to make weather clear, and I'd like my wife to share that story because it's our culture, we believe in it like non-Native people believe the law, like the criminal law, and that's how we take our ceremonies and our beliefs and our values as Innu people.

[Dialogue between S. Tshakapesh and R. Tshakapesh in Sheshatshiu-aimun.]

R. TSHAKAPESH: Hello.

I'm Ruby Tshakapesh. Born in North West River, raised in Sheshatshiu; lived in Davis Inlet 1989 or '88, maybe.

In 2014, I think, or 2015, we had workshops training in counselling, and the psychologists were a part of the programs that was provided for the trainees. And one of them was a psychologist from Sept-Îles. She stayed with us. And she's been coming to the community every month and she stayed with us.

[Dialogue between S. Tshakapesh and R. Tshakapesh in Sheshatshiu-aimun.]

And there was also a psychiatrist; she was from Alberta. She stayed with us too – both of them, the psychiatrist and the psychologist for a week.

The psychiatrist got stuck in Davis Inlet and she started to cry, because the weather wouldn't clear up, and I just looked at them. I didn't say anything at first. [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

From the family background, my great-grandfather was a shaman. He performed shaking tents. He provided for the community. He showed the people where the animals are. He performed shaking tents. His son was my grandfather, Edward Rich. Edward Rich was my mother's dad. I think that family were mostly providers and a strong family where our ancestries come from.

It's a big family and when I did an offering, I call out to my grandfather. I did the tobacco. I burned the tobacco, and I asked my grandfather and my great-grandfather to bring in good weather, because this non-Native woman was crying and needed her family. Would my grandfather and my great-grandfather help this woman today. That's what I said when I did the offering.

And an hour later the weather changed, and the lady was so happy and the plane came and she had an opportunity to go home with the help from our ancestors.

S. TSHAKAPESH: So there you have it, the story of the offerings and the belief that we had, and our Elders encourage us and insist us to do and honour them.

So it's a proof, the fact that we still practice our culture and our beliefs in our ceremonies as Innu people. And for a long time, we are going to keep that ceremonies and our culture because we are different people. We are Innu and that's the way it's gonna be.

We may not become shamans, but we respect our culture, our language, our beliefs, our ceremonies, our spirituality as Innu people. The culture is very lengthy and what we do as Innu people when we are off the policy, there's so many things that people here don't even know about it. We could write a book. We could take days after days sharing our culture with you guys.

But these are the stories and the facts that I'm telling you here are true and who we are as Innu people. We are very different. We were raised different; we have a different beliefs. We have a different culture, language. We are Innu and we are humans. Innu means human.

So we'll go back to the first contact. The Europeans came to our shore, according to the Elders that told the story – I wasn't born yet – probably the late 1600s or early 1600s when the Europeans came to our shores. The missionaries came, then the Hudson Bay came, fur trading. According to the Elders, the story, it was a really good life before the contact. After the contact, our lives were a mess.

As far as I can remember, I think I was in kindergarten or five years old, I believe, I was in Davis Inlet. And the move happened in 1968, and I was only very small at that time; I was an infant. I could see my mother was holding me on a picture and there was a tent outside, and my mom told me that's you, that was during the move. She said: Our house wasn't ready, that's why we stayed in the tent.

When I was attending school in kindergarten at five-years-old age, I was very anxious to go to school and I quite remember, as if yesterday, my first day of school as a kindergarten and I was so looking forward and I didn't realize I was entering a snake pit. That school was run by Roman Catholic church – a Roman Catholic school.

At Grade 1, I started become mature in school, like starting to listen and starting to see things differently. Because I remember talking through my own language with other students, my fellow students, in Innu and the nun came to me and shouted at me and said speak English. And he start hitting me with the long ruler and I still remember that. And I know I was holding my hands like this, and my hands were hit by a ruler until my hands were really red and couldn't handle any more of the beating.

I wasn't the only one got the beating. There were some students who got the beating as well. I was so afraid and scared and I told my parents, said I got beat up in school because I spoke my language. I was asked to speak English, which I don't know how to speak at that time, English. I was very careful not to speak Innu anymore because I didn't want to get the beating.

I could remember quite well that there was a sentence written on the board by the nun and I believe she wrote: sir, madam, excuse me. Those we were asked to say, to repeat. That's how we learned English and if we made a mistake, we got the beating, if you don't say it right. I was really scared. I was really terrified and scared in school, and I didn't wanna go to school.

As I got older and moving to grade after grade, I remember when I was in Grade 3, where my English was a little bit improving, so I could communicate with the teachers better than at the very young age. But I learned the hard way, I was beaten because I was an Innu. I couldn't speak English because that wasn't my mother's tongue, as English. And gradually I pick up more English and more English every grade. I started to understand more. I started to use

manners, the manners that I was asked to learn very hard.

And one of the things that we were punished every time we speak Innu. One of the words, the sentence said: I must not speak Innu. We have to finish the whole scribbler writing that stuff, and we had to stay after school to finish it if we don't finish it. Otherwise, we would get the beating, and I quite remember: I must not speak Innu. I still remember that today.

At Grade 5, I remember the three of the boys and me, myself, we requested if we could use the washroom and there was work needs to be finished in the class, we didn't finish it. We were dying to go to washroom and one of our teachers said: No, you're not going to washroom because you're not finished your work. I remember wetting my pants on the chair and two other boys did the same thing. And the teacher saw the urine coming from the chairs and we were beaten really good – really good.

And he send us – there was a nun there who came into our class and she grabbed us by the ear like this and pull us to the corner and she gave us two bibles. I was holding a bible in the corner like this and while I was holding the bibles, I remember she was hitting me in my back. She asked me not to drop the bibles. I didn't wanna drop the bibles because I wanted to stop her hitting me. They were telling me: If you drop the bibles, you're going to get more beating and you're going to stay longer so I didn't wanna drop them.

It was very hard to learn in school, very difficult to concentrate because constantly I worried about, to get a good beating. I tried my best, very best to listen and obey what they're saying and I did. That was in school. That was in school. I wasn't the only one who got a beating and I wasn't the only one who peed my pants, urinated my pants. There were other boys who did the same thing, and I saw the beating. Even the girls would get a beating as well.

I remember one girl who her pants was pulled down and hit right in the bum by a teacher – a male teacher – with a stick. So we were in the front, and the teacher was in front of us and make us to see her being beaten in front of us, and we were frightened. I was scared. I was really, really scared.

And I remember the superintendent of Roman Catholic church, every time the teacher said: Well, the superintendent will be here. And I forgot his name – I remember his name quite well and – [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken]?

R. TSHAKAPESH: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

S. TSHAKAPESH: – Jerry Butler was the superintendent of the Roman Catholic Church and every time the superintendent was coming to Davis Inlet, we were asked to clean the boards, to clean the desks, to the mop the floor spic and span and act like normal kids; so we were asked to use manners.

We were frightened; nobody ever talked back to the teachers or to the nuns. That was a horrible experience we went through.

When my late parents said: Well, we're going to go to the country in the fall, like September, I was really looking forward to going to country because I didn't wanna go to school. Because if I go to school, I know I will be abused in there, which that part I didn't like. And I'm always very, very happy when my parents say, well, we're gonna go in the country all winter. And I was very, very happy. I knew that I was safe, that I would be safe.

I didn't really take it seriously on education at the time at the very young age, but as I reached 13, I started to take it really seriously because I saw what happened in the church. I remember that the priest, when I was young – my parents always were asked to go to church, not to miss it, and I remember Father Pirson, he was always shouting in the church while he provides service, and the Innu people were really scared of him. The community was really scared of him. He had authority, and I could

see the faces on my parents, that they were really scared. He was shouting all the time. Like he was a really, really powerful figure, and people were really frightened of him.

The priest was acting like RCMP, he was acting like a doctor, 'cause he used to treat people and the boys and girls when they're sick, went in the house. He had all the power and people, the community members really listened to him because he was scaring a lot of people, I think, because the way he promote religion, and our culture was no good. And people believed that, and people were frightened of him.

Because I remember the priest saying that every time, when my parents try to go to country, my dad would go seek – that he let him know that we're going to country and I remember quite well saying – the priest said, well if you go to country, you're not going to receive family allowance. And that was the only income that my parents had; they had no income at that time. I mean, the employment was so poor at that time in Davis Inlet.

So life changed over the years after years, and I could see also the RCMP play a major role infringing our rights. And I remember the people are really scared of RCMP because they were told not to hunt ducks, not to get gull eggs or duck eggs or hunt ducks, and if they hunt ducks and they will be arrested and take the boats and guns and everything and get arrested and go to jail. The people were very scared of them, of the RCMP, and people couldn't hunt. There was no employment in Davis Inlet, only a very few jobs were around, and people didn't know what to do. And some people went to the country and stay off on Davis Inlet just to get away from that threat.

I remember the RCMPs, when they talk to the people. I remember they talked to my grandfather: If you hunt, you will see a magistrate. And that was the word I never forgot, and I was wondering who was the magistrate. And I never knew the magistrate, and I thought it was a big boss or a big – someone is gonna punish you. And that was always the threat that I heard from the RCMP when I was growing up, you will see the magistrate, and I didn't know who the magistrate was.

And people were really frightened about those threats and it was devastating growing up in Davis. I seen a lot of abuse from the departments like Social Services, from the Labrador health clinic. I seen people were just so terrified of these people, like the departments, because my people believe they were right what they were saying and they were terrified, they were afraid to go to jail, they were afraid the children would be taken away and they didn't know what to do.

I remember that quite well. Because growing up, I thought about it and I told myself, this is not right. This is totally unacceptable, I said to myself when I was in Grade 9. And I told my teacher – it was Sister Joan – I said, I'm going to get education and do something. And I did. I went to high school here, and both of my parents committed suicide in 1984. I don't know why they committed suicide. Maybe they couldn't handle the threat. Maybe they were tired of it 'cause we always have to be outside of Davis Inlet. And I can't really say what really transpired, what made them do what they did, end their lives.

Today, at the present day, a lot has been talked about that our rights were not recognized and every time we try to stand up, our actions were invalid. I'm very disappointed that none of anybody from Human Rights or any other advocacy for Innu people, Aboriginal people in Canada to aid us when we need it. I'm disappointed that nobody came to aid us when we're struggling.

As young people, my peers and others, got educated and understand about the system, challenged the policy. We wouldn't be here today I think if the stand that we took when the NATO was taken from Davis Inlet and Sheshatshiu, and challenge the NATO, and that's when the Labrador Innu people were proud and strong, believe that they can fight. Because we had leaders who were educated, like Ben Michel, Daniel Ashini,

Gregory Penashue and David Nuke, Peter Penashue and others from Davis Inlet.

So it hasn't stopped. We fight – because I can only imagine what my grandparents, my parents because they couldn't speak English – they couldn't communicate with these people at the beginning. They don't even understand what they're saying, so I assume they were very, very scared, and I was, too. When I was in school, I was very scared because I didn't understand.

So God only knows how they felt when they don't understand. Because both of my parents or my grandparents didn't have any formal education. Probably didn't know ABC or one, two, three. Probably just a sign language, I don't know. Because I knew they don't speak English. I know that for sure because my parents didn't speak English at all.

So that must be 10 times harder to communicate with these people, with these Indian agents, because it was hard. I saw it and I felt it. I live it. It's in my blood – it's in my blood.

One of the things that I saw was people were really scared when there's a speedboat come from the cove – the RCMP had a really big speedboat – when they see a speedboat coming around the cove and right away they hide their guns, they hide their wild meat and ducks and everything. That's how they were frightened. And I saw that, and I was really, really, really mad when I saw my parents, my father hiding the guns and hiding the food away from – just that speedboat came in, they assumed that it must be RCMP. A lot of people did that in the community.

And today I still feel that because of the policy – like my son here, Thunderheart, he was in the system. He's gone. He committed – he took his life. I only have a memory and a little crystal that I can look at his face, smiling. And that policy that destroyed our people and then another generation came around. And to me, that's intergenerational trauma, and who's gonna fix that? The grief, the trauma, all the stuff that we lost and all the violation of our rights – our constitutional rights as human beings within this country of Canada. How do we fix it? How is Canada going to fix it, with the abuse, taking away the language, taking children away, killing children.

Like I said, every time we kind of stand up our rights, and the stand that we took was always invalid 'cause I know we were taken as just savages, animals, because we lived on the land. And that's how the policy looked at us. Even when Newfoundland joined Confederation, we were not included. We were excluded. It took years after years, people had to go to jail to recognize – both levels of government – to recognize our rights under the Constitution.

And it was very hard to fight. The leaders who fought are gone and our communities are dying very fast, very fast. We must've lost at least 50 people within three months or four months. We buried our young ones almost every two weeks by suicide, by drug overdose. Trying to escape the misery that we faced within reservations.

I am disappointed in Canada and Newfoundland, they're still practising that colonialism, assimilation, trying to obey their laws, their way. We cannot follow their ways; we are very different people. We are Innu, we have our own ways, but we are stuck in two worlds. Trying to live with the policy and trying to live as an Innu people is very difficult.

And I will end my presentation here and I have a video that I want you guys to see what Canada has done. And it will add up, that story that I told you. And that was my experience growing up. I've been a chief a number of times, nine times. I fought for my rights; I fight for the rights of people. We wouldn't be here if I wasn't fighting for an Inquiry. I fought for this Inquiry to happen because I want to know what went wrong, what happened.

Why are children dying like this and how come there is no communications between us with the departments and governments and the Innu. And we need to find out what

really happened; what's happening, in us, with our children? Our children are very, very, very vulnerable today and still I know a lot of people still are scared with Social Services. They still have that fear.

What if the Innu people apprehend a white child and take him into the country? How would the white parents feel about that, knowing that their children are apprehended by Innu and their children, the white kids, are taken to the country to live in the tents? Now imagine how those white parents feel. Would they feel grateful that their children are safe? And this is how we feel as Innu parents when our children are apprehended; thinking at nights, is my child safe? What are they doing to our children? They're being institutionalized. They're being looked after, they're being closed in the rooms? Are they being beaten?

Those are the kind of worries that we, as Innu parents, think with our Innu children. If you reverse that situation with non-Native people and parents with us, how would they feel, do you think? Would they feel safe? Would they be worried? Would they be constantly thinking about their children because the Innu got them captured and put them in the country? Are they safe? Are they being sexually abused? Are they being beaten? Those kind of stuff. They would ask the questions. Right?

Now imagine how I felt when my son was in the system. How do you think I sleep? How do you think, is my son okay? Those other things that we have to fight. It's unreal. Something needs to change. Somebody needs to be accountable. There is no healing unless there's justice. If there is a justice in Canada, why can't us, as Innu people, get justice for children and for us, as Innu people?

I may not last long because my health is very declined. I may not get the chance to speak publicly to talk about what happened to my son. Because I had close calls, too, but I'm anxious to say my statement or my say, what I experienced, and I really want to ask questions why – why were we not notified when things were happening with our son?

I'm gonna talk about that when the time comes. I know my son was beaten out in the West and he was beaten by staff. He was knocked out unconscious and he wasn't responding, according to the witness, and they rush him to the hospital in Regina. I didn't know about that. I didn't. The Newfoundland social workers didn't even consult us, as parents, that our son was rushed to the hospital, he wasn't responding.

I learned it after I buried our son, Thunderheart. A letter came from Facebook and the witness wrote to me saying, Simeon, did Thunderheart ever get justice? And I said: What are you talking about? He said: I'm going to write what happened. And I have that in my possession with my lawyer, and he wrote exactly: Thunderheart was beaten, unconscious, rushed to the hospital. He came back; he wasn't the same.

So these are the things that I wanna find out, why? And who's going to be accountable for that? Who's going to be accountable? Will there be justice? I already requested the criminal investigation. Do you know what the letter came back, the investigation? It says insufficient evidence.

I mean when a witness stated that they beat him up and that's reasonable, probable grounds to lay information, when there's a witness, but the RCMP said insufficient evidence. They got away with it – they got away it.

Thank you and if you wanna take a break before the video, I want you to watch the video and listen what these people say. They talk about Davis Inlet, old Davis Inlet, Sheshatshiu, Natuashish. You watch it, what I'm saying. It only adds up, what I'm saying, and these are people who are saying it are non-native people – professionals, university-degree people. You listen and learn from them. That's heavy to carry that burden.

Thank you for listening and [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken].

Thank you very much for this. And if you guys need a break before the video while I still talk to the technicians and all that stuff?

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Yes, thank you very much.

We'll take a break, watch the video after, and then any follow-up comments the Commissioners have, we'll have after the video.

Thank you.

Recess

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: I guess I'll start again where we just left off, start at the end. And just a couple of comments about the video that was just shown.

First of all, I had seen the video before, some time ago. But it's been no less impactful on me than the last time I saw it. It's a difficult story to hear. On a positive side, it presents a very concise summary, if you like, of the challenges for the Mushuau Innu.

So moving on to what you had to say this afternoon, for Simeon and Ruby, I just have one, I guess, question for clarification because you talked about when you had – I call it forced settlement – in Davis, and when you wanted to go into the country, the priest said: Well if you do that, you'll lose your family allowance. One of the things I was wondering, did people also receive other benefits then? Did they get like social assistance, welfare or whatever, and would they lose that also?

S. TSHAKAPESH: Yes, the only income that our parents received was the family allowance and social assistance from Social Services. That was probably $200 every two weeks.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Yeah, okay.

S. TSHAKAPESH: Yeah, and that was the only source of revenue that the Innu people had. I can't speak for Sheshatshiu. I know, from stories that they said this is very similar part because of the lack of employment.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: Okay, well thank you for that because all I've heard is about family allowance –

S. TSHAKAPESH: Mm-hmm.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: – and I wondered well, should there be not some, so –

S. TSHAKAPESH: Mm-hmm.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: So that was so little monies to get. Okay, so that was my only question on that.

So I'd just like to say, first of all, thank you for both of you for coming this afternoon and telling your story. It is certainly, you know, good to hear from your knowledge and your understanding and from how you've lived your life and your connection to your parents and grandparents and how strong it is and how well you spoke about the culture.

I'd also like to thank you for bringing the picture of Thunderheart.

S. TSHAKAPESH: Mm-hmm.

COMMISSIONER DEVINE: For me – I'm not sure about Anastasia – for me, you know, the name is familiar but the face, now I can also – because I've looked at it many times this afternoon since your presenting. So I just wanna thank you for that and for your coming here today; much appreciate it.

S. TSHAKAPESH: Yeah, thank you for those comments and I want to thank the audience for watching and respecting the presentation that I have done here and, I mean, there's so much stories and so much happenings that I've not even talked about yet, but just a very little bit. Sharing as we did, like I said, it would take a long time to share those stories.

But mostly we touched on how our rights were violated as Canadian citizens, as humans. And that's the policy did really a number of damage to our people. And that's why we are here today with the Innu children, because the policy killed my son and the Newfoundland and Labrador *Child Welfare Act* took his life, because what they did.

Not only my son, I have a relative that her son also committed suicide. And my first cousin lost his son down on the Island. And my cousin also lost his son, Pone, outside of Natuashish, death.

So that's what policy does. Like the judge said in the video, we don't intend to involve the Innu people. We weren't consulted. None of this, the assimilation that our people knew about because they didn't speak English. And nobody consulted what will transpire in Davis Inlet. It was a disaster, a bad experience, and yet today we're still experiencing that bad experience with that policy.

Our children have been removed to Roddickton. It's still in the process, nothing changed, and parents are crying for their children.

I was reading on Facebook yesterday, I know a friend of mine, their children are in Roddickton. He's in foster care – going outside again. Like I said, what would they feel if we apprehend children, the white kids, non-Native children into the country? And looking at that statement, I mean, imagine what those Innu parents are feeling right now. The day their children have been flown outside of Sheshatshiu.

So something needs to change, and I wish our leadership can advocate more and request the buildings where children can be placed while their parents are getting healing. Because there's a lot of intergenerational trauma is happening here and who's going to fix that? The province? Canada? The department?

Like I said, when our son died – when he took his life – Social Services never came and said: Simeon, what kind of help do you need? Both of you and your family? What type of counselling do you need? Since we did the damage to your family. And we'll get to that when we cross that bridge, when I finally take the testimony on behalf of Thunderheart. You'll be shocked what transpired.

Like there was promises to communicate and work with us, and I bought into it, as my parents and my grandfather bought into when police came into our lives. Everybody in the community buy into it. And I bought into it. I should have seen that it was coming. I should have not agreed to it. I made a mistake. I made a mistake. My son would be alive if I didn't do that.

What's wrong with me; I didn't see it coming. They said they're going to work with us. Didn't happen. Only the tragedy took place and we lost our son, Thunderheart. I really miss my son. I can't handle it anymore. Especially at nights. I really miss my boy. I really miss him. I lost all my three boys. Vincent died last year because of Social Services constantly harassed him and finally their family broke up. Then he drank himself to death; he couldn't handle it. Now my grandson is in foster care. And I still feel that pain.

I wish you can feel that pain that I'm feeling – I really wish. And I want to find out what happened, what went wrong. I really miss my son, Thunderheart. I should never went there – I should never went there. I should have known better. Something needs to happen. Something needs to change. Very difficult – very, very difficult to talk about it.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER QUPEE: [Sheshatshiu-aimun spoken.]

I just saying to Simeon that I wanna thank him and his wife Ruby for coming and how organized that he was in preparing to speak and bring in his son's picture and watching that video. I think that it's something that

certainly we won't forget. It's in our minds and it's in our hearts. So I want to thank both of them for coming today.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]