

## VERBATIM

### **Susie Harrison**

I'm Susie Harrison, I was born Harrison and my grandparents took me away from my mother and tried to change my name to Patsauq, same name as my brother, but when I found out that I was illegally taken, I went back to Harrison, moved back to Montreal from Inukjuak and since then, I've been there.

Three years now, it's been three years, actually this month; first time I came here was June 23rd I think, yeah three years ago. It's hard to actually get back to the way I remember it when I was little, 'cause when we left I was about six years old, so I remember bits and pieces of you know the life we had over here. It was actually a good life, until my dad came back. Cause he was a pilot. When he was home he was angry a lot and drinking a lot and you know he would hurt my mother so nobody was really happy all that much. So as soon as he was out of town it was like party time, game time, you know everything was like for fun, with games and we go on the beach and you know up to knee high and playing in the water and you know it was fun.

I had a great time with my mother anyhow but that was when my dad came back.

And the parts that I do remember a lot is when it was winter time, like on the dark season time, us little kids we were not scared of anything. We'd literally walk out of the village and we'd go to Mexican Hat or to the base or to the rivers and we're all just kids, there was no adult supervision and nobody was scared of Nanooks, no bears no nothing, we had fun anyhow. We did practically everything just to enjoy our time, that much I remember anyhow.

#### ***Question 1: What were the adults doing?***

Most of the time they were working and the ones who weren't working, they were drinking so it was us kids most of the time. I had fun with it anyhow; we learned a lot of stuff out there instead of being in school. In school, you're just stuck in a house. You don't see nothing but numbers, but outside, oh my goodness, you see so many things, you learn things in life that you have to know to be able to survive in the middle of nowhere. Learned what I could eat on the ground so it was good for me, I had fun anyhow. I think I had more fun out there than at home.

There is nobody upset, nobody screaming out there, it's nice and quiet. All you see is the animals and the animals don't give you a hard time if you don't bother them. You know, if you

watch them you could actually learn what you are able to eat because they eat only the safe things. So I'd be trying all sorts of different things and it was good. I had fun anyhow.

***Question 2: When did you learn about the relocation?***

I didn't know anything about it until my grandparents moved back to Inukjuak, when they took me with them. They used to tell stories about, they were picked up in Inukjuak and Puvirnituk, by the ship, I think it was the C.D. Howe. They had to go through like big waves and everything and they just dropped the people on the point, they just dropped off a whole bunch of plywood and two by four so they can make their own houses. That's pretty much about it. They went through hunger because there's barely any animal they're used to eating up there and there is barely anything over here and they went through famine a little bit, but a lot of people survived anyhow. They started learning how to hunt for the polar bears and the seals, the fish they knew how to do but they didn't know where to find some, so the people from Pond Inlet and Grise Fiord were moved over here too and they started showing them how to hunt around here where there is nothing.

***Question 3: What was the relationship like between the people from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet?***

I think there is still a lot of negative feelings about it because they're from totally different district areas and when they actually mingle together they couldn't understand each other so they had a hard time. They had a hard time mingle with each other and start being neighbors and everything, it took many years for them to actually start learning and understand each other.

Well, in Inukjuak and Puvirnituk they have more animals, animals are more free to actually... you don't have to go very far to find some animals, but over here, like Pond Inlet they have to travel so much distance to actually hunt so they have... so from these people and Northern Quebec, Inuit, when they started mingling together, they started showing them how they can find animals, through tracks how far it might be and how far they might have to travel before they can stop.

When my grandparents took me to Inukjuak from here, I had no friends and I couldn't speak the Northern Quebec inuktitut language, because they're different dialects. So most of the time I spoke English, and I've been speaking English since I was two, so it was actually easier for me to actually try to communicate. But kids didn't speak English at all so you know, so I had a hard time trying to make any friends for a while and they used to tease me and say: « You're a little whitey, stay away from us! ». So I had a really really hard time. So I forced myself to learn to

speak their dialect and once I learned how to speak to them I started to make friends here and there, but not very much though, I was more a loner then anything. I'm still a loner, but I mingle more then I use to.

We moved there by the time I was six and a half years old. And I was there until I was eighteen. So, not so many years. But as soon as I turned eighteen, I moved to Montreal because I didn't want nothing about my father's side of the family. I had a hard life with them so I did everything possible to stay away from that place. So when I decided to come home I was like: « which home am I going to?». And I'm thinking my dad took me away from mother illegally, so might as well go back to Resolute. Since then I've been here.

I actually like it, it's peaceful, but you know it's so small, people are so bored, they tend to make a lot of rumors, but that's pretty much about it. Other than that, it's a good place. I wish we would still live in the old village though. I had a great life over there anyhow.

Because everything was like a game time, you know I was a real child at that time but as soon as I moved from here to Inukjuak I had to be an adult by the time I was seven years old. So I had no childhood over there. So when I have to think about the happy memories, the only place I can think about is with my mother in the old village. That was the only time that I was really happy. Since then it's been a really really hard life, I kind of stay alone. When I'm alone, nobody bothers me and nobody gives me a hard time, no lies, no nothing, so I just prefer to stay alone.

A lot of people they still having a hard time with me they keep literally telling me go back to where you came from, so I tell them straight out: « I am back from I came from, I was born here. You guys were born in a hospital out of town. I was born in our house». I remember being born, there were two of my grandmothers and my mother's aunt and my mother. That was it, there was no nurse, we were born literally in our house.

My mother she never really showed about any anger or negativeness, not with us around but with her and my dad alone, they had a really serious hardship and they weren't even happy with each other, so in a way it's a good thing that they divorced but he was actually better to my mother because all she did was to look after us kids and she had no job no nothing and she couldn't even speak English so us kids were her whole life. And when my dad took me and my brother away from her, I think she went on a nervous breakdown, she had a breakdown anyhow, she blocked out a lot of thing and she doesn't remember a lot of things and when I start telling her things that I do remember sometimes she's like: « Wow I don't remember that!». Everything that I do remember with me being with my mother, everything was like a really good life. But everything went upside down by the time I was six and a half years old. And I had to be an adult all of a sudden, I had to first thing in the morning six o'clock I would have to breakfast. I would have to make omelets, scrambled eggs, sunny side up, bacon, sausages and

pancakes and make a coffee and a tea. And I would have to make everything prepared before anybody wake up. And if there was one thing missing, my grandfather would beat me up. So I would have to stay in the bedroom for the rest of the week. And I barely ate.

***Question 4: Did the heavy drinking of the adult make life difficult for the children?***

I think it was actually better, because nobody was being hurt, nobody was being beaten and tortured and molested, kids were happier when they were alone, when they are all drinking. Everybody would be able to play outside and when everybody's leaving, the ones who were having a party, when everybody's leaving, us kids would go back inside, would go to bed.

***Question 5: Weren't you scared?***

Oh no, not me. My mother was too protective. Even though she was drinking, she would make sure us kids would be fine before she would be doing anything, so I think she's the best mother that anybody could find because with all the hardship she's been through, with all the beatings that she was going through and my grandparents were keeping her scared and everything, in her own way she made sure us kids were happy and we were not hungry and dirty and we were warm. So she was very protective that I know about.

***Question 6: What was your life like in Inukjuak?***

I wanted to be one of the kids, and all these kids are playing outside and my grandparents used to tell me: « You're not allowed to be outside », so I would have to stay in the house. And when there's going to be visitors when there is people coming for a visit, they used to tell me: « You have to go in the bedroom and stay quiet ». So I'd have to be in the bedroom until there is no more visitors at all. For about two years nobody knew that I was actually there. And I couldn't understand why nobody was supposed to know that I'm there with them. By the time I was eighteen I found out they took me illegally. That's why nobody was allowed to know that I was there with them.

Sometimes it was so bad my grandfather used to beat me up if I didn't clean the house properly, because I had to do the breakfast. After breakfast, after everybody is gone, I could only eat the leftovers, so I'd be cleaning the plates as I'm eating them and I would have to do the dishes, after the dishes I would have to go upstairs, 'cause we lived on a two floor house and I would like to have clean all the beds, stripped all the mattress and everything and brush the mattress, make sure there is no dirt at all, not even a dust. And I would have to go outside and shake the blankets and put everything fresh back. It would have to almost like in a hotel.

Everything so neat, if there was one crease, a small crease, I would get punished for it. I would get a beating and locked up in the bedroom. So I would have to be super careful how I'm cleaning things and how I'm fixing the bedrooms. After doing all the beds I would have to sweep the floor and if there was one mark or a drip of water or juice I would have to literally wash the whole floor, not just that little spot. And I would have to polish the floor too. And that would be from six o'clock in the morning and I would be at it until two o'clock in the afternoon. And I would have one hour break.

***Question 7: You weren't going to school?***

I wasn't allowed to. When they actually put me back to school finally I went to grade three and they kept... and the teacher keep saying: « Susie Patsauq are you here? » and I wouldn't answer cause I know my name is Harrison. So I wouldn't answer and I kept telling the teacher I'm Harrison, Susie Harrison and the teacher and the principal called my grandparents and told them what I was saying and they took me off the school. And I've never been in school since.

***Question 8 :How did your grandfather treated you?***

Oh very bad. Sometimes I used to think that I was his second wife. You know he would have sex with me by the time I was seven years old until I left and I had to run away by the time I was fourteen years old. I would literally look for any person who would take me out of that house, so I was like boyfriend to boyfriend to boyfriend until I could move in with one of them.

I didn't want to be there at all, I kept asking my dad, because about two years later he finally moved there and I'd be asking my dad: « Can I move in with you?» and he would be like: « Why? They take care good care of you? » And I would be like: « Your father touches me and he beats me up » and he'd be so mad at me and start yelling at me. « Stop telling lies, you're telling lies so you can have attention» and I'm like « I'm your kid, why would I lie? » It was just really hard, between my dad and my grandparents and nobody was happy. There was no happiness nowhere, everything was like anger, just everything is negative. And if you're part of the family, you'd have to be a servant. You'd have to do everything, make me a tea, fix me a coffee, get me this, we need that, if there was a hole, I'd have to sew it up and if it wasn't perfect I'd get a beating for it too. That was really hard.

My brother was the only one so sometimes, when my grandfather would actually touch me and I would be telling my brother and he would be so hurt. He would literally take me out of the house when nobody was looking, take me out of the house and take me to an abandoned house. And he would literally leave me there for two weeks and bring me something to eat everyday. I even literally tried to kill myself, shooting myself by the time I was twelve years old.

**Question 9 : And your grandmother?**

She actually tried helping me a few times but she would get a beating instead so I would have to look after her for a week to two weeks because she would be in a really bad situation because my grandfather would be beating her. Every time she would try to help me she would end up in bed for a week to two weeks.

She knew about it... She couldn't do anything about it. Every time she tried, either she would end up in the hospital or in the house in bed.

**Question 10: Your brother was hiding you?**

Sometimes in porches, sometime in neighbour's porches, but the neighbours wouldn't even know I was there. You know he would go for a visit and before he would go inside he would say: « You stay in there, I'll let you know when I'm leaving ». So you know he would go for a visit and he would be there for a while and once in a while he would come out and bring me something to eat 'cause he's taking a snack or something and he would bring it out for me and when he's leaving he'd be like: « I'll be here first thing in the morning to bring you something to eat, stay here». So I'd have to stay in neighbour's porches! And the neighbours didn't even know that I was there. My brother was good at hiding me because he knows what's going to happen. As soon as somebody in the family sees me, and they would literally call at the radio station: « If anyone find Susie, send her home». So even the neighbours, as soon as they see me, they would take me home.

I didn't want to come home, I would even say; «they're going to hurt me again» and they're like: «we have no choice». They were just scared of my grandfather because he was one of these dangerous people he was... I don't know he was just very angry so everything was like his way or no way at all. If it was not his way, well you know what you could end up on the ground.

**Question 11: Were your grandparents part of the relocation?**

They were original people that were moved to... my dad was already a pre-teen, when they moved here.

**Question 12: They moved back to Inukjuak?**

They were informed that they could go back if they want to, and I think the plane ticket was not paid or anything but they did have to pay for everything so they sold all their furniture. I used to ask them: « Why are you selling everything, aren't you coming back? » And they would be like:

« Well we are going on vacation for two weeks, are you coming? » I said « I'm not supposed to leave». My mother was in Iqaluit at the time, on a course. And I use to ask them: « Why are you selling everything if you are going to come back? » And they didn't tell me anything about me going with them. But they told me that Aipillie is going with them and I was all worried that he was going to be all alone and I'd be crying: « I don't want him to go». Then they started telling me: « Why don't you come with us, he won't be alone» and I'm like: « I'm not supposed to leave, I'm supposed to wait for my mother» and they're like « Oh she said it was ok, we already talked to her». I was like « Are you sure? Let me talk to my mom, I want to ask her 'cause I don't want to leave». But we left before she came back. It was hard to leave, but I was more worried about being alone because he's older than me and he has always watched out for me.

So when we moved over there, oh my God he had to watch out for me more then he ever did.

One time my grandfather was like doing his thing with me and I got so tired of going through that, 'cause I've been going through that since I was seven and by the time I was twelve years old I got so tired of it I literally went to the bathroom with a gun, I was going to shoot myself and my brother happen to walk in... And he'd be like literally crying, bawling and everything and he'd be like: «you're not leaving me, you're the only family I've got left», so I went like «okay» and I put the gun away.

Between me and my brother, the hardship that we were going through with our grandparents, it was just like just me and him, we're the only family, so we would be watching out for each other. When he would be having a hard time, I'd be helping him and when he knew my grandfather was going to be touching me or beating me, he would take me out of the house and make sure that don't happen. Since then I think we've always watched out for each other.

By the time I moved to Montreal, I was able to defend myself, so you know that's when I started showing my anger... So if anybody talked back to me I would like attack them and everything. I'd beat them up and everything and people would be like: « It wasn't that bad, why did you attack? ». «Well you know what, I've been treated really really bad all my life, nobody is going to talk like that. Try that again and I'll hit you again. » I got to be a bully.

I was angry at the world, you know because a lot of people knew what was going on in my life and nobody would do anything. So when I learned to defend myself I showed my anger to the world. And I made sure that nobody would touch me again and I'm still like that up to today.

I've got more patience and calmer and I can think before doing anything.

Nobody deserves to be treated like that, especially a little kid. Kids aren't supposed to go through that. Kids are supposed to be loved, that's why God gave people children, so people can learn to love their children, not treat them like they're animals you know. Animals are actually treated better than humans are, especially around here. People are like, wow, they literally have no feelings. They are like that because of all the things that they go through down here, between the relocation and everything.

Everything got jumbled up I think. And there was so much animosity against each other for a long time and some people they still keep up with that. Up to today. That I noticed. I've been here for three years and I still noticed that the Northern Quebec people and Pond Inlet and Grise Fiord people, part of the families they still have issues with each other.

I don't think it will ever end. After so many years, I think people have given up on that. Too many years going through all that. And even though some people they actually tried to mingle with each other, tried to be like neighbours, because you know they're neighbours and they have to be neighbourly you know, when some people tried that and that side of the people they have so many negative things to say to these people so, they sort of back off.

If it was my choice I don't think anybody would have any animosity about each other, I prefer everybody happy and be family because it's a small community and they're practically all family anyhow so they should just try to be happy. If I had my way, oh my goodness, nobody would be able to show their anger because there wouldn't be any.

When I was a little kid, when we moved to Inukjuak, I used to find rocks of diamonds and I used to literally collect them and I made a plan, when I get older I'm gonna be rich and I'm gonna buy Resolute from the Queen, it's gonna be my land and everybody in the village are gonna be family, nobody's going to fight. If anybody wants to fight, I'll put them in a smaller community and they have to work it out by themselves without anybody else involved. I had a big plan when I was a kid!

I had so much pain and so much anger I didn't want to feel nothing. So I went to the drugs and the booze for the longest time. Amazingly my memory is still pretty good. I'm surprised. With all the drugs and the boozing that I went through and I started drinking by the time I was twelve years old and I've been drinking since. And drugs, oh my goodness. I started smoking weed and hash by the time I was eight years old, just so you know I wouldn't feel nothing. I want to feel dead inside. I don't want to feel nothing. That was my logic.

Right now, jeez I've got kids of my own, so I try to make sure they're happy, that they have a good happy life, that they have no hardship while they are growing up. With the people that, you know, I can see who are having a hard time, I try to help them out because I understand what they are going through, but it's really hard to actually talk about it to certain people so a



lot of people don't really want to talk to me about anything because they don't understand why I understand that. And when I start telling them just a little bit, when I start telling them I went through this and I had to do that, they're like: « Wow I didn't know». A lot of people who are actually dead now, they committed suicide because they went through a hard time and when I start thinking about that I go: « Why would they do that, they went through only half of what went through and I'm still alive». I went through like... jeez maybe 100% of the evilness and the badness and the negativeness.

***Question 14: Do you feel at home in Resolute Bay?***

I don't belong nowhere. I literally don't belong nowhere. That's the way I see it because everywhere I've ever been, I've never been welcomed. There always something against me. « You don't belong here», « you've haven't been here», « this is your family and we don't like that family». So it's really hard, where ever I've been, it's not a good place because no matter where you go, you have no place. You don't live nowhere, you're like a stray animal. You know, you're here, here, here, here...that's it.

Montreal is like my home because I practically grew up there. By the time I had my kids I was about nineteen years old, I got my own family there and I've been there for about thirty year, so it's more my home than any place.

***Question 15: Do you feel you've succeeded in breaking the abuse cycle?***

I've calmed down a lot since I've had my kids. You've got to grown up and calm down, think before you do things and think before you say things and if you are going to do things make sure that everything is going to be proper that way you don't get a hard time with anybody. You're gonna have to have a bit of extra of everything.

I try to talk about all these things that happened to me because I don't want them dragging me all over the place anymore. I need to be myself for once. The way I was suppose to be. The way god meant that I was supposed to be. Through all the... talking to people and facing few people that gave me a hard time, I've actually worked most of it out anyhow. Yeah. Now I see everything. Please, no negativeness around me please! And with the kids, they don't listen to their mothers, fathers or grandparents and I would literally tell, if I was a kid I would have to go through all these things so you better be happy and you better listen to your grandparents or your mother because they love you, they don't hurt you. So they're like «Oh I didn't know that». I say: « You know what? When you have your own kids, you're going to think the same things, so you have to start listening. » And my mother, she's like: « Wow, how come they listen

to you and they don't listen to anyone?» I'm like: « Because I went through so many things, I know how to talk to children, because it started happening when I was still a child».

Being a child going through that it hurt more than anything and the way I try to talk to kids it's like with explanations with how they're going to understand it. You know as a child how they think, how they would feel, so I sort of play with words, with how they can understand them. So they learn to listen and... my nieces and my nephews, oh my goodness they were like super spoiled, they wouldn't listen to nobody and everything had to be their way. And now, since I've been here, they listen, they try not to argue and whatever their parents are telling them, whether they like it or not they try to follow it. Mom is like: «I'm so happy you're here!»

Everybody called me the little devil, the dangerous one, highly dangerous, stay away from her. That's how bad I was. Now everybody is like, « Go see auntie Suzie, go see auntie Suzie» Everybody goes Auntie Suzie, where ever I'm going if any kid sees me they literally run "Auntie Suzie" and they run and give me a hug. I go "ohhhh..."