

## VERBATIM

### **Elizabeth Allakariallak Roberts**

My name is Elizabeth Allakariallak Roberts. I'm living in Iqaluit now. I originally was born in Resolute Bay. I'm one of the descendents of Johnny and Minnie Allakariallak who were called Echalook before and I'm from Resolute. Born and raised.

#### ***Question 1: How many brothers and sisters do you have?***

We were seven girls. The 8<sup>th</sup> one was adopted in Inukjuak before I was born. There were four boys, two younger ones were stillbirth, one was a stillbirth or one was born few months but deceased. A little older than me, both of them older than me. Two boys were born but the youngest one, he died not too long ago, in 2008. My only brother's in town, living in Iqaluit now. I think my mother survive all those seven girls and the two boys, amazing lady! Very interesting woman.

#### ***Question 2: How was your life in Resolute?***

What was the life in Resolute? Well, for me it was like not knowing what was going on. I didn't know there was anything going on. I grew up to understand that I was just another child who had to go to school, help my brother, bullied around by children and I, later on, like today, they still do that so didn't know that exist. And then I thought it was normal for children to see that families fight and that there was alcohol and there was not much place to go to. So I was in a very isolated place. An isolated place where I really didn't know where to go. Most of the time, my sisters were either around or whether they were there for me or I was there for them. Because I had to help my mother to help the people there.

My life was like: «where would I go and how am I gonna do this? » I found out that I hardly had any relationships with my older sisters. Sisters were leaving from one place to another at a different time and I didn't really got to know them when I was growing up. Pretty much I was growing up with my mother, alone. And our father was away most of the time. So I really didn't know how my father was in the picture.

The only things I remember, some of them are happy times, my sisters were around and there was musical going on in our house. Because my older sister Sarah was a musician, she played fiddle, my cousin Mark Patsauq was a guitar player, Georges was a guitar player too. So there was entertainment in the house, there will be time for entertainment. So those happy times, they were fun. My mother use to ask me to learn how to dance or jig. So I learned how to jig before.

So that kept me, I think, much pretty much alive and strong to be, you know, to be a jig dancer or someone. My life came over towards where I was gonna focus (and collect) what my mother ask me to do and what she has implemented me about life in general. Even though I didn't really like a part of it, because she protected me well. Imagine what your mom... My mother or imagine any mother would do with having seven girls and having to watch all these different types of lives that they went through, what they had to go through, just because they have a family in a small isolated place. Tough mother! She protected me from doing anything. Like I wasn't suppose to have any boyfriends or anything, you know have relationship with someone. Try to figure out (to this) day how is this work anyway because most of them were related to us. She was telling us that we were related to most of them. So we were just friends.

She was teaching me how to survive up there. And not telling me anything about the relocation. Nothing! She didn't say anything; it was not brought up to my attention. It was not an issue up there. I think it was like when I was 13 years I think. That's when I went to high school, here, in Iqaluit. Somebody came over to me at one point and they asked me: « Elizabeth, you know you have a Nunavik dialect. How would you have Nunavik dialect and you live way up there in Resolute?»

I said: «I don't know! ». That's when I went back to Resolute I asked my mother. I said: « Mom, exactly where are we from because somebody just asked me why I have this dialect and we live way up there? » That's when she starting opening up with me.

She said: «We are from Nunavik, Inukjuak». And then she started telling me that we have a lot of relatives there. What can you do when you are at the age of thirteen? What are you suppose to say? I was pretty stunned. All the bullying and what not and my personality made sense then. Everything started putting together, a puzzle, filling them up. She started telling the story that we were from here and what not.

### ***Question 3: How were the relations between people from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet?***

There is a family from Pond Inlet that went up en 53, before our parents went up. And then is another family that went there after our parents around 58-59.

At the time I was growing up they were together but they were always people on this side and people on this side but it didn't really bother me because my upbringing from my mother was to be the same with everybody. Fighting over each other, fighting... when alcohol came up it was even worse because they were fighting each other over... whatever it is. Which I didn't understand anything about it then... Until I ask my mother where we were from. Okay then! Why are you guys doing that? Why are you fighting over, over what? That's when I started working out and became a social worker.

When I was maybe 20-21 or around there, I started helping like... why are you guys doing this and why is everybody like picking on each other. What going on and help each other (on) work.

***Question 4: You started working as a social worker at a very early age.***

Mom use to say: «Go check the kids. Go check to see if your sister is okay.»

I have to thank someone who help me to become one. She's a really nice person: Katie Kremer. She did so much for me. I'm so glad that she ever came around. She was my supervisor. Who ask me if want to become a social worker.

***Question 5: What are the consequences of the relocation?***

How can you put family into Resolute? I mean how could you put family into an isolated place where there was hardly any place to go to.

And the impact that it had in me and the impact that it has with the other generation. It had impact so much for my younger brother. They said men have more possibility for getting heart attack and minor attack or whatever attacks they have. And he was one of them, just one of the victims.

***Question 6: Was school a safe place?***

For me school was like okay what are we suppose to learn? It was very hard for me because I wasn't supposed to speak Inuktitut and maybe that's why my English is pretty good. Only after somebody told me your English is very good. Okay, all right. I guess it's good. The time we were in school, I used to get punished for speaking Inuktitut. And that was my languages that I (will) tell my mother or have conversation with my mother when I get home. You know I'm six years old, I think I was 6 years old or seven years old when I started finally going to school. They didn't have any school right away. They were teaching my sisters, the older ones in a small school here they decided that they were gonna use this building for a school.

And here was a lady who was from Pond Inlet, who was teaching them. But during my generations, I think in sixties, they started developing a federal day school over there. But that was like... that's part of the angriness or frustration that I grow up to be, to hate teachers. I hated teachers, I hated nurses, I hated RCMP's.

But since I been in Iqaluit, I start to do my healing and learn how to forgive them and let them know that it wasn't the people that are living today who are the RCMP's and nurses and what not. It wasn't them that were up there. It was the people that were up in Resolute. I've learn to forgive them.

When I told you that I was a social worker, and when I realized that it was okay for me to share these things, I had a lot of anger. I really had to deal with my lifestyle first. I was a single parent too so I was trying to grow up three children. That was hard enough for me and it was hard. It takes steps by steps. I think it was here that I really start focusing on my lifestyle and helping myself to heal. I started attending healing workshops. I started attending one on one healing workshops, wherever there was help. I was starting to trust people who I can to about how I felt, what I went through, how angry I was. When I did that, I noticed that I was able to speak well.

And the other thing in my childhood is when I was in school, when I told you we couldn't speak in Inuktitut. I lost my Inuktitut mother tongue language which was really bad for me because then I was struggling to try to figure out: «how am I going to communicate with my parents or my sisters or my brothers or anyone that matters in Nunavik or anywhere to have conversation with them». I was struggling to have conversation. Until I found my mother's reel to reel tapes. She used to record tapes when she was sending messages to my father who was in the hospital most of his time when I was growing up. And there was a tape there that had me in it talking in Inuktitut when I was very young. So I said: Yes I still have it!"

When I became a social worker - you cannot be a social worker in your community because it's very hard, but I was. I couldn't leave it and then I had a child. I had a child then that I had to bring up at the same time. I think she was born before I became a social worker. I was a single parent then. The father was francophone from Kitchen Ontario, where I guess he was young too so he didn't know where to start and how to be a parent.

We were struggling. We were young. I really didn't know what to do. There was alcohol problems there so people were just drinking and what not. It continues to be just drop in center kind of thing. There was a bar then. That's how they were doing up there pretty much. It makes me shiver.

***Question 7: Have you shared this story with your children?***

When I find out about myself, who I am after going to media communication program. That really helped me to analyze myself. Who I am and what I can do. The other thing is that my daughter helped me to start writing a journal, which I really did. And that helped me to develop myself, my self esteem and help me to understand. This is what's happening. That was part of my healing to writing it down. And I found out that in order for me to communicate with my children was by writing to them. That really helped a lot. I started to write them on what I went through, why they have three different parents, three different fathers and what I struggled when I was a social worker. It wasn't fun. It wasn't fun. I was just one of those people who just happen to be in a world where I was gonna be a person that will be helping people. My way of helping people is talking to them, counseling them, motivating them. Letting them know that it's okay, that you can't talk to me if you want to. I can listen. I was a listener.

Just recently my younger one asked me when was it that grandparents were relocated? I said: «oh yes he's gonna try to discover too. So that was good. » They never asked me about this but my younger one started asking me, which is good. My mom wouldn't tell me these things because if she would have and us being tough kids up there. I would become pretty violent I guess, if I would have known then. Maybe that's why they didn't tell us anything in any of us kids, anything about what happened because if they did they would have been big violence I'd think up there. You have to know when to let your children aware of what your lifestyle was or how people treated you. Or you don't even need to tell how people treated you because it's past.

If they ask and if they are settled and they are mature then you can share it with them. They don't need to know. They will figure it out by themselves. They will ask me. You know I can share when I need to. If they ask me I'll tell them. Besides it's very emotional, it's painful, painful! It is.

I don't want them to know what I went through but at the same time I've always want to teach them the bestest thing that they can have in life in general and all these things that my mother taught me to be when I grow up or to be just in general life. I had to be and just kind of suffered out, suck it out or whatever. But it was pain, pain. The more I talk about it the better it will be for my health. Because it could have an impact on your health too. I don't wanna have... you know I'm very very lucky to have a good health.

Whatever what our parents went through and the impact in the lifestyles in here too, in that general area, it's nice to be here and live here but I really don't wanna be living here. I wanna live where my parents really were originally from.

Anywhere in Ungava. It's a beautiful place! When I saw them and I look at the land, and I see so many berries it's like wow! And you took my parents up to Resolute where it's isolated and all rocks! What were you guys thinking! What was anybody thinking? How can you take families from way down there to up there? That's kind of rude! Very rude! But I'm glad they apologize. I wish my mother might have heard it. But I'm sure she did, my parents. Up in the air.

My two sisters Rynnee Audla and Dora Padluk and our brother in law Simionie Amagoalik... You know they should be rewarded something. They should get a medal for taking care of people up there. The work they've put in building up snow igloos, building up shelter, having to take barrels for protections. The stories that she left behind. Those two girls had to be very tough. They were tomboy's kind of things because our father had seven girls right. He had only one son pretty much to himself to help him out hunting. So all the girls had to learn all this technique about hunting right to the point. He was taking me to traps you know, trapping, because I was he didn't have anybody to go with. So I used to go out into trapping with him, fox trapping.

I learned how they can kill them without misery. I got part of it and my sisters like what they went through. They must have been so relieved it's like what took you so long? I would have like

been able to go, be strong enough to go somewhere. Maybe they wouldn't have had courage to go out of there and just enjoy happiness like everybody else is doing down south or down here. Not being in fear anymore. They would have done that. I think they would have been happy to do things. When they finally were doing it, we were able to talk, we were able to share. We were like sisters again. All six of us girls we were in one place, under the same roof the first time in Salluit in September 2009 I think.

It was like. It was so cool. Being me, the youngest, and the oldest now was Lizzie Amagoalik, she was now the oldest. We were not friends you know we were like... We had a barrier, we had issues. She and I had issues. Those other girls will not argue with our older sister. I was the one who did. I was a tough kid you know. We just burst it. She and I just burst it. We got our anger. Because she was the mother of my best friend. Her only daughter was Eva. I grew up with her and I was angry at her for not taking care of her. That came out. She defended herself and I defended myself. That's the part where I guess my mother wanted us all to be safe. She needed us all to be safe and focused on what life is going on up there. And if my sisters were picking on each other or... open up they will be all fighting. That's what she didn't want us to do. We were being safe.

We are doing good. We are best friends. We become best friends. We are very good friends now. I had to get out of that house that (time) that happened. And it was where my other sister Mary was there. Where us girls were all in the same roof. So everybody was like leaving. When you leave Resolute, you leave for quite a long time because then they didn't have much planes that were there that had a schedule.

So we lost contact. The contact between sisters and sisters, lifestyle, up bringing or we didn't have it. It wasn't there. When we had that reunion thing with our sisters it was very good. It helped a lot.

Rynee was always around with me. Rynee and I were close because she was in the same shoes I was when our mother, she was protecting Rynee too I think most of the time. She was gonna be adopted before and that's Terry's mom. She was just happy that she was going up to Resolute, to another place because she didn't want to be in that general area where the adopted parents were still there. That was more fun for her than anything else. She was with mom all the time. She grew me up. Dora and her grew me up. My other mothers.

***Question 8: How do you feel about the monuments and the healing process?***

I'm here. You are here. It's helping. It is! It is helping the younger generation. It is helping the younger generation. I'm so happy it is. I'm just hoping, like our mother. Our mother had taught us to be in a safe place, to avoid alcohol and drugs, avoid negative lifestyle. Keep going in with your family. Pay attention to your children. It was hard for me as a single parent to do that but once I was married it helped me a lot, helped them grow up. He taught them so well about how they are gonna be. My father was a lay minister. There was a bible involved, religion involved.

That helped us too to motivate our lifestyle. This religion was part of helping us, to keep us going.

I'm able to stand up for myself and defend myself. I can say I have constitutional rights. I do. But I didn't know that because it wasn't mentioned to my parents. My parents will say: « you have rights; people just can't do that to you. » So they'll protect us. That's the word that already written and it's already there and it's a law or whatever. We had laws too but we just didn't have it written down to show the society and the people up there that I had constitutional rights to lot of things. You just can't play around and think that I could be your puppet. No. I'm a human being too.

But my purpose was I guess learn to defend ourselves. I guess that's what life is and I'm hoping that my children and my grandchildren will be able to understand that life will be tough. Whatever you are here for is what you are here for. There are people to help you. You can survive it. Just don't be rude. Learn to apologize. Learn to be nice to people. Go on with your life. Do what you wanna do. Enjoy the best you can of what you can have. Don't leave people out there, like stranded. Don't ever look at people who are unfortunate just there. Help them out. Do something.

***Question 9: What happened during the healing week in Inukjuak?***

I struggle so much during the time I saw my sister Sarah Amagoalik, Jaypedee, Lizzie, Mark Patsauq. I saw them trying so hard to help people from the north. Trying to get something from the government. I saw them and I thought they need my help. I need to do something so I helped them out in that way. And I've been trying to let people understand in Resolute or in Pond or in Inukjuak to let them know that you can start, you don't need to be there, you don't need to be there if you don't want to be there. You don't have to struggle. I know it's still going on to Resolute. It's very tough to live up there. It's very isolated. You need somebody to be there, to talk to or else you'll go crazy. I almost went crazy there. It's bitter! Who do you go to now when you need somebody to talk to you? You want me to be a social worker? If you want me to be a social worker you have to find me something to go in, to get around with. It's hard because people attack you. There are people who get bitter. It doesn't become safe anymore.

There are people who need to learn to help each other and mentor them. Healing it's good, it is. But there are people that they are against it. There are always be good and bad. That's how it is up there.

There are just people that they are against it. «You just go on with your life» kind of attitude. Older generation. They're learning, they are learning that they'll be there. You heal anywhere. You already have done that. They have different ways, different methods of doing this.

Growing up in Resolute was part very depressing, very isolated. I survived it. I'm so happy where I am right now. I still like to discover and start making... do something write a book and what

not. Do something be part of it. Be part of a problem, learn to do that. Learn to help other people. Just, you know enjoy my life with someone. It was tough on my parents I guess, my sisters and brothers.

***Question 10: Do you have any advice for young people?***

If someone ask you to help other people, go ahead and do it. It might to scary, you might be struggling. And I tell those young people, I say you know when I was 12-13 years old I use to wonder like lot of things could happen. There is a lot of thing that are going in my head. I use to be so scared. I used to wonder what's going on. Do they have relationship? It's that how it works? Don't rush yourself. Take care of yourself. If you have mother, parents or somebody in your house help them, take care of them. If you have any questions ask and talk about it. Don't keep anything to yourself. Talk about it, talk about your lifestyle. Talk about what happened in Resolute. Talk about what happened in Iqaluit or in Pond or anywhere in the community. Talk about it! Don't keep it to yourself. Do something positive.

There will be ups and downs. It happens. Don't be angry at each other. If you are, try to deal with it by writing a journal, writing about it, how you feel about your brother, how you feel about your sister. Make it safe environment in your home. Don't take it on people. Don't take it on your friend, your girlfriend, you boyfriend or your partner. Don't take it on anybody. Life it's very tough. You can only do anything in your life, in the world, what's given to you. Get away from drug. Get away from alcohol. Get away from it. Even though you see people kids doing that, it's okay let them. Go to sleep. The next day will be better.