

VERBATIM**Lizzie Amagoalik**

We lived north of here, when we first heard about the relocation plan in 1952. Then in 1953, my older sister's family were relocated. Two years after we were first told, we were relocated.

We lived up north, not here. I remember when my father being informed. I was seventeen then. In 1954 my sister was already in Resolute. When my father was getting informed, they didn't want us to hear. We were big girls. I was seventeen then.

The Constable and his interpreter came to ask my father. I clearly remember what the nasty Constable said as he spoke through the interpreter. I remember and can retell them.

My father... We just believed every word then. « You will be relocated to Simeonie's place. » « You will go by ship in this summer. » « You will go to a wonderful land, with plenty to food to eat. » « It has all kinds of foods and it is very pleasant. »

My father was told that that we would depart on the C.D Howe. They did not want us inside the tent. It was spring. I was just outside the tent, listening. That's why I know. The Constable came with a very important matter.

When they sent us out, I decided to eavesdrop. I wanted to know what they were going to say. We were very happy. C.D Howe was going to take us to a wonderful place of no hunger. We would join my sister who was already relocated. The plan for our relocation was set. Many Inuit asked why we even had to leave.

My father had been told how great the land was so he had agreed. We were terrified to have to leave our relatives behind. We four sisters had the capacity to remember. We were happy for the chance to see our sister, besides the Constable had said it is a wonderful place. It had lots of wild game.

After he was informed, my father... was of two minds. He didn't want to leave his brother, but his eldest daughter had already been relocated. Being of two minds, his body began to suffer. It may have been due to worry and stress. He had already agreed but he was very close to his brother and sister. We moved here for the rest of the year, to wait for our departure date. He became very ill and acquired a disease. Although he already had an illness, we were relocated by the C.D Howe.

He may have been in stress about leaving his brother. He often became ill often, probably due to stress. He was probably of two minds. We prepared to leave even if he in that condition.

The great teacher looked after us. (She was) the very first teacher who came to Inukjuak. We were under her care.

Inuit would ask my father why we had to leave. He thought too much. He was of more than one mind. He began to suffer illness. The nurse told him he had an illness, but we were still compelled to leave.

So we went in 1955. We left in July 1955 by ship. We were truly Inuit then and we were not even used to seeing white people. We did not consider the days, the hours, the quantities... But that has consequences. Like when we are asked about specific dates...We don't remember. When we left we had the manner of Inuit and not white people. We didn't deal with dates, the hours, the 1900's designations. During the relocations, we were Inuit. We didn't even have pencils. We had our Inuit ways of designating. That was our reality.

Time came for the awful relocation. My aunt, my father's sister... I cry easily when I speak. My father, his cousins... They all wept. We boarded the C.D Howe, to sail for the fabled land. Even the dogs howled for us. We crossed the Hudson's Bay to Fort Churchill. We thought it was very far, far away.

My father was already saying: «Where the hell are they taking us?» We arrived terrified at Fort Churchill. We had never gone anywhere before. My two sisters had tuberculosis and they had to leave for the hospital. We were a whole week at Fort Churchill.

My older sister had already gone before us. We left Fort Churchill on the C.D Howe, after it picked up more supplies. We had been there a week.

We went onward. I loved my father. It seemed I couldn't go anywhere apart from him. We two used to travel by dog-team all the time. When my father said, we four sisters... three sisters... Our little brother was still too small to comprehend.

« Now we are going to go so far away. »« I wonder if I will ever see my brother and sister again. » I would hear him say those words. We were still in the waters of the Hudson's Bay.

Then we finally departed the Hudson's Bay. Then my father said: « I think we will all die over there without our relatives. » I listened to every word he said.

We kept going toward the terror. The nasty Constable had told us that we were going to a wonderful land of plenty.

When we hit the ice and we were amazed it could be like this in summer. We went from Fort Churchill to Coral Harbour, then to Iqaluit. From Iqaluit, we were told that we would sail through ice and rough waters.

I could see the stress take its' toll on my father. He was ill when we left Inukjuak. He was always ill and would say: «When will we return home?» It just kept getting more terrifying as we went and my father's expressions grew darker and darker. We went through ice during the summer and rough waters.

We finally landed at Pond Inlet through the ice. We sailed from Pond Inlet to Clyde River, where we couldn't land. We were normally allowed to disembark and meet the local Inuit. The C.D Howe still unloaded supplies from and to the ice. Inuit were fetched by helicopter to get x-rayed.

Thereafter we were told we would then cross through ice and rough waters toward our new land. We he heard that, my father said: «We will all die there, without seeing our relatives ever again.» We just cried in secret. We were terrified.

Then through the ice, we finally approached land. My mother said: «Why didn't I get left behind, when you all boarded the ship?» Everyone was famished for real food. We were a long time on the boat. We sailed all night and into the day.

We saw land. We were happy. We were going to disembark. We had heard it was beautiful. It was snowing but in was summer. There was so much ice and it was terribly cold. It was utterly different from our land.

We disembarked. Our belongings were much reduced. Some of it had been dumped somewhere else. It was snowing so much. They landed us on the bare shore. It was so chilly. The C.D Howe left after unloading. My mother began to weep. She said she wanted to go home. « Why didn't I just stay on the ship? » She was so hungry and wept. No wonder, we had no country food for a long time.

We were utterly terrified. Remembering our beautiful land, we landed on rubble. It was even painful to walk on. We landed in the snowfall. There was no vegetation. We tried to pitch the tent. My ill father tried to help but he would have to stop and rest inside. It was our only shelter. Our poor little wood stove had nothing to burn. Nothing for us.

My father sat outside. We had a drink of water and struggled to pitch our tent. We helped each other the best we could, but my father had no strength. When he said: « What shall we eat? » It only caused more despair. We arrived and there was nothing. Nowhere where we could hunt for food. We were terrified to the end of despair. No source of water. There was no creek. Our land, this place...

Although we arrived at my sister's we were told the only water we could get was from the shore and only by finding salt free ice. Each instruction only revealed more terrible reality. We had no more sense of living, only the feeling of despair. Thinking was in chaos.

It was our reality and my father was exhausted. He was ill. My mother had a child so she was barely able to help. We, the sisters could work but only by direction from others.

Even more despair was in store for us. The awful Constable forbade us from wondering, when all we wanted to do was look for something to burn. Our baby brother had no milk. He was bottle fed. We were cold and hungry. It was still morning. The ship had already left. We had no chance of going back.

We couldn't wander anywhere. We were stuck in the tent and our water would freeze so quickly. We couldn't call our relatives. We had no telephone. We had nowhere to turn to. Forsaken on the planet. The government which took us there forsook and forgot us. They had not even stuck to the plan for us.

We had never been told the specifics. Not to date anyway. These plans were never told to us. We learned this vaguely from the apology event last fall and without specifics. I really want to know what the plans were for us. The plans which the government neglected to tell us.

We only learned this in the fall. It had never been revealed to us before. I will settle down only after I know what they are. This has been on my mind so I'm really grateful for this film and interview. But I forgot to say some things. I have three main concerns. I want to take my time.

My oldest sister, my best sister... she boarded the C.D Howe in 1953. We heard about her even before we left here. She almost starved to death. As a result, she would never regain health. She eventually died even after 5 years of medical care down south. She never regained her health after she almost starved. She had nothing to eat. She and her child were near death when they were found.

Someone came to their room when they were at deaths door. How is it that they had said we would never be hungry again. The government promised us no hunger. When will they remember? I think and think and hope someone would ask me. I have no one to talk to.

My sister's story has never been told. We have been interviewed so many times but we have so many things to say. My older sister almost starved to death when she had her first baby. She and her child were wasting away on the bunk. They were found at the verge of starvation.

The promises of the government of no hunger were nothing. I cannot make peace with this. This is my chief concern whenever I'm asked. Why? They said we would never be hungry up there. How could they ignore my sister as she was starving? Especially the awful Constable in whose charge we were. He would not even let us walk around.

When will we be heard? When? My mind speaks this always. This has never been heard by the governments. I am saying this for the first time.

Our men, when we were up there, were employed by prospectors and oilers. I went hunting with my ill father in winter, in the bitter cold because our men were working for prospectors and oilers. They were gone for almost a year, even more. They might have been making wages but we never saw it. Why were we treated this way? I want this to be known.

There were gone a long time. I was pregnant when my husband left. The child could walk by grabbing objects when he finally returned. We have not seen his wages yet. We never knew how much money they made. That is how our men were treated by the prospectors and oilers.

We have been treated this way and then with silence. When they ask us, we tell them. There is no follow up result. This has been done to us. Who can help us? I'm asking even to this day. I wonder if these interviews will disappear also. Will they disappear after taking this interview? That's what on my mind.

Back to our experience... My father and I used to hunt seals by dog-team. I went with him all the time. I was the only son, but I was a girl. We were all girls as our only brother was still small. We hunted by dog-sled even in the blizzard. My father could barely walk. For three years, we hunted. Then our dogs only hunters, our only suppliers, our only providers, our only means were killed by the RCMP. They didn't even inform my father.

Then we were defeated and raised both arms. We didn't know what ski-dooes were. We didn't know what would transport us next. We had no dog and no way. Then my father said: « It is true. The government brought us here to die. » It was the bleakest time.

We were in despair. We would never see our relatives again. We were always without our men who worked with the white men. With this treatment, who will come to our aid? Who will be our champion? We've been planted somewhere which we had never known. It's so far away from Inukjuak!

There was no food there, nothing of our normal diet. There were walrus and polar bear. We were not accustomed to eating them. Not even the narwhals. We didn't have these kinds of whales. We didn't know if one could eat polar bear. We normally didn't have walrus meat. We never ate those things. We were from Inukjuak. These were only things we had to catch up there. We were gaunt then. We were so famished. We got TB more often and had to be medically evacuated more often.

Did the government hear of or not hear of those things? After the awful Constable had left some other Constables began to inquire sporadically. I had a daughter who died up there.

She was with my mother who had two white visitors. Visitors used to come to do interviews. I got so angry when my daughter told me: « Inuit are just like dogs. They just do whatever they are told. » I heard that is what the white person said.

It just enraged me further. My sister had almost died of starvation. My ill father was always hunting. We were always left behind by our providers. There were no caribou and we didn't know where we could fish.

We were accustomed to eating only fish and waterfowl, like we have here. Then I came to a place of even greater grief. I was my father's only son and I was obedient to all his words. I had one child when this greatest grief came. My hopeless mother used to weep when she got famished. She cried: «I want to go back to Inukjuak.» It seemed she did not care if she just abandoned us.

There was no recourse. We didn't know where the people who were responsible for us were. Whenever we made inquiries, we were always told: « Only the government knows. They moved you here.» The only news we got were about the passing of our aunts and uncles away back home. We couldn't go to them as we had no finances. We were under great burden; a life of cease less burden. My father was ill and my little brother too small to be of any help.

Inuit who shared our community had different traditions. They were foreign to us. Fellow Inuit but we could not relate to them. We could not understand each other. Even when my father spoke to them, they couldn't understand so they would just leave. We had no community.

We were in great grief and couldn't go to our relatives who had lost loved ones. After much grief, we returned to Inukjuak in 1979. We didn't see even a single relative we had been so attached to. They all had passed away and the younger ones didn't know us. They didn't know that we were related. So we were stranded again. Inukjuak Inuit used to say: « We don't want to hire High Arctic people.”

Our children had to go to school as strangers. They were told: «We don't want damn High Arctic people. » Now that we were back in Inukjuak, houses arrived for us. When they were built, we didn't get them. A big school was built when the High Arctic relocatees came back.

These things happened and the government ignored our needs. Our men, those who could, joined the work force. The people of Inukjuak kept saying: « We don't want High Arctic people.»

We were displaced again and could not see our former relatives. We arrived here to further displacement. We have gone through terrifying experiences since the government initiated our relocation in 1955. No Inuit have had our experiences. We didn't even recognize our relatives and they didn't recognize us when we came together again.

We had gone through all that. Now I'm over seventy-four years old and I am still asking those questions. These people who have come to do an interview won't prompt the government. We've been deceived so greatly by the government. We have no jobs. We have to eat and pay rent. Yet we have no resources. This is very true for those who were relocated and are now aged.

We can't work because they say we are too old. We have no resources. So we have to ask what more can be done for us? If the interviewers don't prompt action, nothing will happen.

One of the most infuriating issues came when we were already back here. Questions of why our relocation was so badly executed were asked.

We were interviewed by a professional from Ottawa. The person who said he would look for the government documents. We began to get reports of his findings. I heard really awful news, which I didn't like it. My mother, my sister, my father were all deceased. So the news came to me alone. Joannie was my father and he had all girls. So the government sent us away. This was their rational idea. The daughters could make babies for white men.

That infuriated me so much. I lost sleep over it. Can this kind of thing be done on this planet? Can it be done to Inuit? Why can someone say such things and then forsake us? How shall we try and continue after we are treated like that? My father had all girls. So the plan was we would make many children with white men. There were no Inuit men up there then. That's what the documents say. This was never revealed to us.

There are many things that infuriate me; it even affects me physiologically. It happens when I think too much. I don't speak English, so I have no one to tell. My children are not really accepted here in Inukjuak. All my great friends from here, I never saw them again. They are all deceased. I am alone. I can't work either as they say I'm too old. I really hate it. It drove me mad. Joannie's children, because they are all girls, will mate with white men and populate the High Arctic.

However if they died up there, then the government would be able to point to the Inuit graves as proof of inhabitation. That was the back-up rational for the government. Documents stating « This land was inhabited by our people » were found. We were used!

Our men used to work for prospectors up there. They mined for many, many years. Just like the other miners close by. The mining activities scared away the caribou and foxes. Our men worked those mines without skills. We never received any remuneration.

They just used us. The miners and those in Ottawa just used us. I cannot make peace with that. I've been told that I might as well discard this old stuff. No! I will begin to heal only after the government has settled with me financially.

I've been a puppet of the government through horror. Through horror. I was a promising young woman, in school at the best time of my life. I was relocated to Resolute Bay by the government. There was no school, no store and nothing to eat. I was in perfect health and at the height of my wonderful youth. I was sent away. My sisters and me... My father was sick. I cannot ever appreciate it. I will only come to terms when I feel my compensation is adequate. Our eight million dollar compensation was not for any personal use. The money has to make

interest but I'm trying to get it. Even now. I want the money and I wanted to be informed and consulted. I'm trying! I've asked Inuit to help me. I'm gaining small support as people become aware of our long plight. I'm gaining small support... People arrive too as they learn about our plight. I've also noticed that as people come to me, that I personally have to begin to come to terms.

I get furious. I even take it out on things and people. I don't really like it. I consider the experience of my mother, my father, and my sisters, which affect me. When shall the government come to my aid? It's always on my mind. These are my main concerns.

We had been promised when we arrive at Resolute Bay, we would be properly sheltered. We were also told that when we go back to Inukjuak, we would have adequate housing. It has never been the case. We are treated like servants. Like someone you can just steal and steal from.

I don't like it. Not ever. That's my lot. Yeah, my lot. I know when I got an illness, I was thinking beyond what my body could handle. The doctors discovered I had a disease. A doctor told me not to think too much. Some people die from the effects of stress. I try not to think so much but issues come by themselves. Accumulative stresses I've experienced. Now that I'm old.

I had a wonderful life when I was still growing at my parents. I was growing in ability and happy. I didn't see it all. We left when I was eighteen years old. I didn't see all that potential. I didn't develop to my full potential but came into the domain of grief.

My father had a disease and my mother had one bum knee. I had to help them both. No one volunteered to help. My father was always asking: «Who shall help us?» « Who shall help us? » He was talking to no one, just himself. Fear came every time my parents were too stressed. I will only come to terms when Ottawa come to our aid. It was responsible for us. No Inuk, no Inuit have known our terrible experiences by the acts of the government. Through terrible, terrible terror. Through abject poverty. We've been through this. I thank you for coming to hear us. I want to be heard and see action.

I was married at twenty. We left when I was eighteen. I married at twenty. I got a daughter at twenty-one. That was then. Three of my children, Three that I bore have passed away and are buried at Resolute Bay. My children here are... Markoosie, Simon, Winnie, Joanassie, Lazarusie. Five are here. They are alive and fine. Their father passed away and is buried here. That's where we are at. They were all born up there. I only got married up there. They were all born up there. Three of them never came to Inukjuak. Five of them came back here. That where we are.

My husband's mother died when he was a boy. His aunt had returned to Inukjuak. He wanted to follow after his aunt. I had to agree, as he was my husband. I had to agree, so we came here. In 1979. My children don't seem to have taken to this land. No wonder, they grew up there. They are learning about this place. Very slowly. They are very frustrated. They always ask: «Why did you get relocated? » They also know about the behavior of their grandfather. They

remember. They act out in rage. Sometimes we act other than how we should live. It feels like we are in grief. We are in grief. Due to our children's maladjustment. They are slowing making friends in Inukjuak. They have yet to attain the lifestyle they should have already attained. They are figuring it out. Some days, grief comes their way. Our relocation by the government really devastated us. They thought they were of Resolute since they were born there. But we had to come back. Their father wanted to come back. We had to agree, as is our head. We came back and they just wasted away. They had no more friends. Youth who have had this experience can be a great burden. They are such great burdens as own offspring.

Then they had to befriend strangers. They had different traditions. It's a great burden. It makes one come to this conclusion. We were in the hand of the government, which just forsook us.

We have some support now. For me, we've been utterly devastated by the government. We were relocated and made destitute. They gave us no meaningful sign of remorse. They never once said: « Sorry but we have to do this to you. We need your help.» Never, not even once! The person they sent for the apology, never even talked to us. He never gave us no more than a glance. He spoke to the local council. After he made his apology, he presented something to his minions. I thought I was the only ones worthy of awarding. I thought I should be given something. When will we receive anything? When will we receive anything of value? A house... A car, a boat... anything.

I think about these. Something that will help us make peace. Even today. I do wonder if members of the planet get treated like we did? Are they treated like us when white people use them? With hard labour and no wages?

Were they treated like this? Without wages? Is our experience normal? It goes around in my head. We are in poverty, with no work. Even after our return. Forsaken by Ottawa. Someone said: « Don't speak about this anymore. We don't want to hear it anymore. » They said all those who were responsible were deceased. I think they were lying. I thought if they are all dead, I should be dead too. They told us those responsible had died. I wanted to speak all the more.

I even began to seek people who would help us. I've been seeking help from anybody or groups who might help us. Now we are beginning to see interest in our story. Although we are beginning to see some support but my needs for peacemaking have not yet materialized. To date we have nothing. I will only calm down when I have them. I can't thank the government, which relocated us. They devastated us. They cut my schooling and sent me to where there was no school. I can't work anymore because I haven't learned English. We were in school here when the government relocated us. It is one of the great issues I have. I thought the government wanted Inuit and white people to get educated. When they wanted to use people to work far away without wages, they took us.

My father had many girls, who could reproduce with white men. I'm extremely offended. I will say this again and again, whenever I'm interviewed. I want people to know.

I will tell about the acts of the government. They made up things about us. We were at home without concerns, when they approached us. I will not cease. Not until they offer us tangible apology offerings to those of us who were relocated. I will not cease. I will seek help as long as I'm able.

My descendants could also inherit any peace offerings I might get. They too will have to continue living. We can't be treated like this and made destitute. Why did the government do this to us? I truly want to know. I want to be fully informed at all times. I don't want the matter to be ignored. I truly want help. I know every experience we had.

Inukjuak has plenty of animals of many varieties, including things from the bottom of the sea. Up there, there is nothing. There are whales, polar bears, and walrus. That's all. I will only make peace when the government has given me a peace offering. All my life, I will lobby. We've been greatly deceived by the government.

We were in our homeland when the government came to us. They told us they would move us to a land of much game. I will never, ever forget the promises made to my father. We shouldn't have been deceived. We are humans too.

I am so grateful to receive the interviewers. I've voiced my concerns. I've had neglected to talk about my sister before and the matters related to my father. Also the matters of us girls, being sent up there to make children for white men. I'm so furious about those things and need to express them. I've said those things for the very first time. I know I forgot a lot of things but I got the main ones.

I will only make peace after the government apologizes to me and make me an offering. I can't make peace until then. My life was destroyed, totally devastated up there. My current state. ...? I thank you for this opportunity. I want my statement to properly presented and distributed. I don't want to be maltreated anymore.

My descendants will have to carry on. I want to leave them a legacy of being properly understood and respected by the government.

We have been put through an uncommon experience on the planet. Through terror. Why!? Why!? Why did they do these things to us? My mind asks this all the time. We all have this question about why the government used us so recklessly. We still have not been told exactly what we will gain tangibly for our being.

It's obvious, we have been deceived. We were told we would always have wealth, when the government took responsibility for us. There is no manifestation of their aid.

I'm really mad at those who said, we should speak no more about this matter. They said those responsible are deceased. That they know nothing of their working documents. They said these words when we came to Ottawa.

I've started looking for supporters and some people have begun to arrive here. I'm really grateful to those who will get our story out, if they are sincere.

If they are not sincere, I will not believe them. Many of us have given up, but I keep looking for help. It's true that they are ashamed before the world because of their actions. It's true they want us to cease and desist. When we were told such a thing, we began to seek for more help.

Looking for others who could inquire. That's when we began to seek help. We know of people, of white people who have greatly contributed who retire to wealth. How much more for us who were approached when we had no concerns? We were told that had to go to Resolute Bay.

How much more for us. We were given trails by the government. We ought to retire in wealth. Yet we were treated as inferiors. As victims who can be told to speak no more. It leaves me furious. We hear that individuals who have achieved great things retire in wealth. We have extra-ordinary experiences that humans are not brought through. Yet we are forsaken.

It goes on and on. I want my words to be heard. We have been put into great terror and our lives devastated. Our elders died from stress up there. No wonder, I say I will only calm down only after we have been truly heard.

One of my greatest issues which I need to state further is: there were numerous polar bear and fox skins. Our men spend many hours working for the mine. The many, many hours they worked at the mines, all that money. One polar bear skin was worth eight thousand dollars.

They have not been given to us yet. I want these moneys. My husband caught many polar bears. He caught many foxes. He used to work for oiler and the mine. He was never given his wages. He passed away so it's up to me now. I have to ask those who cheated him.

Even though we have heard that the awful Constable who was responsible for us has passed away, I will only make peace when these moneys have been given to me. We need money to make it today. I want this matter clearly understood.

It is one of the greatest swindles we've suffered. All those things had great value; a polar bear and fox skins. The miners and oiler pay well. The wages of our husbands were never given to us. «There it is » has never been uttered to us. I thank you for giving me this opportunity to say this. I will always expect them. We have been greatly swindled. I want them. In this world we need money. All humans need money. Even Canadians. It's one of the great deceptions we suffered from the government. It's large.

I thank you for this last chance.