

## VERBATIM

### **Louisa Sudlovenick Gillespie**

I was born in Inukjuak 1952 and we got relocated here in 1953. I was a year and a half, my mom was pregnant with my brother who was born that fall. We were in Resolute for a long time, I think I was eleven, I stayed here until then, until I had to go to the hospital.

In between that time a lot happened but it's exciting and scary thinking about it, but while we lived it, it was life. Being abused when I was three or four, around four or five, maybe younger because my mom was able to still carry me in her amauti, she wouldn't leave me with anybody again so when they went scavenging in the dump, she use to carry me on her back and she said: « don't move you're too heavy». So I remember that. I was very isolated, in isolation in a community of four families.

In 1955 my uncle and my aunts, I think there were three or four more families that came. And that was exciting for us, but to get there, my dad and the other men were told to lie to them and that was hard for me when I found out that that's what my dad had to do and what the other families had to do to tell their families, that it's good up here and to come up and join us. No wonder my uncle's wife was mad. She was very angry when they arrived here because she saw this place and discovered there was nothing here. Just imagine what she was thinking; how can they survive up here, there is nothing? One of the ladies talked about that about her family, how are they going to survive with a big family like that?

Around that time when they arrived I think just before they arrived, my mom, I can't remember exactly when but my mom had to go to the hospital for TB, she already had progress TB most of her life so she was already very advanced so with that she had to go to the hospital for a long time, she went to Brandon then, and I guess she was pregnant with a little girl and she gave birth after a couple of months there, but the baby didn't survive, so she's still there somewhere but I remember my dad saying they named her Betty. I don't know where that came from but probably a nurse or somebody they knew down there. And then maybe a couple of years later, my dad and two other men, uncle Simeonie and Amagoalik who was our teacher to survive up here, their wife were also long term so they end up going down for visit.

I think they were gone for two weeks, that's when my mom got pregnant again and we had another little sister. But she end up staying with foster parents, and even though my mom brought her back here when she came home after five years, she didn't consider us part of her

family, she didn't consider my mom as her mom, just a lady she went visit at the hospital once a week, so that was hard for her. I was excited because finally I have a little sister I can carry on my back, I always wanted that, but she was already too big, so I couldn't do that. I think she was four and I was seven. So obviously she was too big for me.

Around that time when my mom came home my dad had to go to the hospital for TB also, that was the best year for Christmas because my mom saved us pop and I don't know if it's chips or chocolate bar that she saved for us for Christmas day. It was very exciting when she brought it out on Christmas day.

Shortly after that, maybe early spring, she started going to the bar with her cousin, maybe once a week and she use to look forward to that. I never understood what the bar was. That's about the time when the bar opened, there was air force base at the time and the base was closed to us, we weren't allowed to go near. But around that time, men were open to it first, I think before then but half a year or a year before then, and then they opened it to women and it seemed alright, it wasn't too dramatic, but eventually it became really bad, to the point where that's all the grownups lived for, going to the bar.

That summer, my mom went back to the hospital, this time to Edmonton, my dad came back. I think... I don't remember that very well, but maybe a year later...When my mom was here, before my dad went to the hospital, my mom gave birth to a little girl, my little sister Ann and that was the most exciting time for me because I had a little sister. My mom made an amauti for me so I was able to carry the baby, I was ten years-old.

Shortly after that my mom had to go back to the hospital and around that time they discovered that I had TB, I was eleven, a year later. I had TB so they sent mom home and they gave us maybe a month together, maybe not even, I'm not sure, but that was the last time I saw my mom. She was sent home with half a lung, maybe half a lung or quarter of a lung. She could hardly breathe; she could hardly move cause of the breathing. She tried her best to hide it, but I knew she was struggling. It was scary at times because she could barely move.

She would always go visit my aunt Edith who she was close to, so in order to go visit we had to walk maybe three or four houses away, to me that seemed really long because my mom had to stop every few minutes and because of that it took us a long time to get there.

Around that time I was told I had to go to the hospital. That was my first time flying on a plane, but it was a Hercules plane, it was huge and stinky. It was my first trip, I guess it was four hours from what I understand. While I was in the hospital my mom passed away, while she was here. My dad wanted me home but the doctor said they checked me out and they said I'm not ready to go home because the TB hasn't been cleared.

So it got to the point of being able to control it, then they were able to send me home with a lot of pills to help get rid of it and I don't remember much after that.

When we first got here there were people from Pond Inlet who were brought in I guess to help us to learn to survive in this climate, because we're from a warmer climate so we didn't know what this climate was like, so with Pond Inlet people we picked them up on the way up in 1953, I think it was the Amagoalik family and also Kautaq family who came in shortly after I think. With those families we got along well.

My dad and Amagoalik as co leaders but after the 1955 group came in there used to be a lot of hostility between the two groups, that's what I remember, I don't remember much of the first two years, I was only a year and a half. But I remember the ship coming in for 1955, other families coming in, seems like sometime after that the Idlout and Kalluk (Kudluk) came because I didn't understand why we kept losing people who were supposed to be here to help us, but what I remember is the Kalluk family, the family that came with the Idlout family, Idlout family I guess was asked to come and help us cause we were really struggling here and there wasn't much we could do to survive on our own, we didn't know the place.

Years later I heard that because they don't know the place, they don't know where to go hunting, they don't know what's available, where to go fishing. The nearest place where there was caribou was long ways away, so they would be gone for days and weeks sometimes. So they brought in the Idlout's family. Apparently he was supposed to come in a year before that but he had other things he had to do. But when he came in he came with Kadluk family and because, I don't remember that time very well.

There was a lot of hostility between some Inukjuak people and the Pond Inlet people, mainly with the Kadluk. So we stayed pretty well divided. I didn't know much about what was happening 'cause I was isolated in an isolated community. I didn't talk to too many people. The only person I talked to was my dad. And I remember only his desire to go home, to go back home and to bring his family back, closer to family to take care of us, to help us.

But he kept being told, well try again next year, maybe in two years. Maybe in two years. That went on for six years. That used to devastate me when he would be all excited, maybe this year they'll let us go. Maybe this year, 'cause I would be at home and he would be going at the meeting and he would be all excited, maybe this year we'll go home, we'll go back home, we'll go back on the big ship and to me that didn't really make any sense because I don't remember that trip, I don't know what back home is, to me that was home.

***Question 1: Did your father ever feel at home in Resolute Bay?***

I don't know. I know he worked long hours. I think around the beginning he was a guide to the RCMP to go from here to Grise Fjord by dog team sometimes, to go to Ellesmere Island even go to the site, the weather station up there. So along the way he met some Greenlanders, Greenland Inuit, so he used to talk about akuq, to us it means, "Akuq" it's the long tail for the amauti, Akuqitoqs, they had really short ones, so that's what that means. And because my world is so tiny it didn't really sink in until years later what he meant by that.

And then eventually, one time he was told that he wasn't supposed to connect with those Greenland Inuit anymore because they were from another country. Don't forget it was the cold war. During the cold war we were keeping very close eye on the community. A lot of that meant nothing to me. I remember going fishing in Resolute's lake, that's just over the lake from our community and we would be fishing away in the spring and we could hear jets flying by and that became normal for us 'cause there was an army base, an air force base.

My situation was, I am relocated to Resolute, okay we're isolated, so to me that was my world. And then in that isolation, I was isolated into that house alone, so twice I was isolated, so I didn't know much what's happening, until much later. I think it never really phased me you know relocation you know, we were moved here. It didn't mean anything to me 'cause my world was here in that isolation, alone in the house.

I met my husband in 1978, 79 and then my husband got transferred to Churchill, Manitoba. I went to Churchill before then at residential school, but this time when I met my husband we went to Churchill, he was posted there. Around that time, I would talk to my brother once in a while, Allie, he would tell me about relocation, this and that and the other thing and it still didn't mean... I didn't really want much to do with Resolute around that time, I had left and that was it. I didn't stay connected.

I started drinking when I was going to school in Fort Smith after residential school. When I was going to, upgrading in Edmonton, that's when I started drinking and doing drugs, I got introduced to drugs there. I tried everything, everything and most of them I didn't like but some things I liked so that kept me high. But anyway, when I came back here after school...When I was in Edmonton I had a baby and I gave him up for adoption, he was born in 1972. When I came back here after that I met my husband here. When we left Resolute that was it for me, so I didn't stay in contact until 1993 that's when my brother said he wants to pay my way up to do a healing conference for relocatees. Okay so we got moved, we've been hurt, still that didn't really sink in.

It takes long for me because of lack in proper growth. When you're growing you need stimulation. I didn't have any of that, I didn't learn a lot of things. I had to learn what it means to have some kind of emotion; I shut down, so I'm really relearning my emotions, well maybe for the first time a lot of them. It's amazing some of those feelings.

From Churchill we went to Regina Saskatchewan for eight years and then we went to Barrie, Ontario and around that time I start to have interest in my family a little bit and wanted more connection. And my brother again said: « You know, we're going to Inukjuak. They're flying us down, they're chartering a plane from here to Inukjuak to go meet relatives. Why don't you go with us?». « Oh that's sounds good», so he paid my way here and we flew the next day I think, to Inukjuak.

That's when I first met families. It started to sink in, we moved from here, we weren't just this few people, 'cause here family didn't mean anything. Family is just people who hurt you and every time you start to trust them, they hurt you again. I had a cousin who was like that, who hurt me often, she bullied me relentlessly because of, because...When you're a young person and you see your parent devastated, hurt, you get that compassion for that parent and she was like that to her mom. And she blamed my dad 'cause her mom blamed my dad. So she took it out on us.

When I went to Inukjuak, I got introduced to a lot of people. They said they're my relatives through my mom, mostly through my mom 'cause that's where most of her family is. There were some relatives, yeah my dad's relatives too. They're a huge family and every time I meet somebody that she's related to, she's definitely your first cousin. « Oh okay, nice to meet you», and after three days of that I got overwhelmed, that was too much. One of the emotion I never had started to surface. That's how it feel to have families, someone who love you no matter what, unconditional love.

I never had that before. The only family I had here, they find ways to hurt you, turned out because they were hurting themselves. I used to blame them for my rough life, especially when I got drunk with somebody sitting in the bar or in the legion in Churchill. I would shared about when we were relocated I had no clue what that meant but that was the reason why I'm sad, I'm depressed, lots of excuses to be angry.

***Question 2: When did you decide to come back to Resolute?***

After I think it was 1978, 1979 I left here and I came back in... Actually in 2009, when I came back to stay. But I have come back to visit a couple of times, not very often in those thirty years 'cause I didn't want anything to do with families that just hurt you. After being in Barrie for a

long time, almost twelve years, my husband and I separated, we separated. It was largely due to hostility with our son.

During our stay in Barrie my son got into drugs and started drinking. He wasn't heavily into drinking, he was more doing marijuana a lot and it did something to him. Before then, he had been abused as an eight or nine years old. I didn't know that until much later, I saw the symptoms after. After we got separated, I stayed there for my kids, but we didn't get along. My son and I didn't get along. He would go into rage and he would threaten to beat me up and for a long time I would tell my husband, he said: « He'll be alright». He couldn't believe me.

And then one time my husband was home and my son went into that, because before he would never do that in front of my husband, so this time my husband was home and because my husband didn't do anything in my defense or to stop my son. I didn't feel safe to stay home, to be home. There wasn't much between my husband and I anyway for years, we were starting to drift apart way years before already so there was really no reason for me to be home.

When I first left home my brother asked me, am I going back home, to Resolute, I saw no need, no desire to come back to Resolute. Resolute reminded me of dark times, when there was a lot of drinking, the bar was here and there was lots of fights, rampant abuse, it was a dark time and I never wanted to go back. And then a year later my brother asked me again, the Lord has been working in my heart, it's time to go home. «No not yet, I'm not ready». I argue with God. «I'm not ready, I don't want to deal with all the issues that I had here», so my brother calls me and he says: « When are you coming back up?»

« Yeah, I guess it's time to go, time to go home again». I was ready by then, I was ready to go home, whatever I have to face. So in 2009, in July, I came back to Resolute.

It was good to see everybody on the surface, I was dreading everything inside, all the people I had partied with, all the people I got stoned with, all the people we had orgies and those sorts of stuff that goes with drinking and drugs. I was afraid to look at them I got brave and I became the one who felt, they're hurting too, the way I was.

They need healing too, like I did. 'Cause I went through a lot of healing. I went through a lot of prayers, I went through a lot of one on one counseling with pastors and ministers and stuff like that so, I went through a lot of healing and I start to see the need here. Before it used to be just a dark place but its light now 'cause I see different. I see they need me.

When I was still in Barrie, I started going places, conferences, healing conferences, things like that and learn to pray for people and start helping. And while I was in Barrie, before I left my husband, I used to go to a church, where they were teaching late pastoral counseling, so I took three years of that and that really helped me and that helped me heal, more, deeper,

emotional, a lot of emotional. I learned to face the abuser in my mind and say: « You have no more power over me, I have forgiven you, I have released you».

And I realized I'm not the only one who needs this. Resolute needs this. And when I came here... How do I start...? It's overwhelming. How do I start? There are so many who are hurting, so many who have been hurt and so many of those who have been hurt are hurting others.

And to stop this is educating them, but if most of them are not ready to face the fear of the past. So, I start with the young people; I end up with a job that gives me freedom to talk to student about healing and even about Jesus and tell them that they can be healed by him. You can pray 'cause in order to help people I use prayer, they give me freedom to do that. It's a beginning, it's a beginning to start changing minds, to change lives in Resolute.

***Question 3: Do you think the children of Resolute Bay have self-esteem problems?***

Very. Like the vicious cycle that we had, those who are hurting are hurting others, so they've been hurt a lot. They see, not all of them anymore, most of them still see the hurting parents, fighting each others, hurting each other and then they would get hurt, they would become vulnerable to the predator, I call it the predator, pedophiles, so they would get hurt. And that makes them lack confidence, 'cause you feel ashamed after that.

I can see because of the training and because of the experience I had, I can see by their actions, the way they are, the anger in them, who's been abused and who hasn't. Some I know for sure because some of them, maybe not necessarily themselves, maybe the brother or sister or an aunt or a mom would tell me that they have been molested.

A lot of them don't remember that, there are a lot of angry kids who don't know they have been molested 'cause that happened when they were so little, when they were babies. Because of Inuit culture, we are to respect and honor our elders, the ones who are older than us. When that person who we trusted hurt us, how do you deal with that?

They have to learn boundaries. School needs to step in, educate.

***Question 4: What are your hopes for the younger generation?***

I'm really hoping and praying that this next generation, maybe as young as ten, eleven, twelve, even younger, the ones who have not been promiscuous yet. Because they start really young when they've been abused like that, they start being promiscuous really young, that they will

choose purity, they will choose abstinence. To abstain from sex, to abstain from doing drugs and drinking and learn to live they're meant to, as happy children.

To become mature in who they are, to be confident in who they are and know the boundaries of how far they can go, learning to stop the person who's maybe drawing them to a place where they shouldn't go and stuff like that. To really understand boundaries. There's not enough boundaries here.

As long as I'm alive, I can talk, I can breathe, I can show them, I can talk to them. There's timing for everything. If you speak out of turn, they will just back away.

My three years here, two and a half, it's been trying, it's trying time, but I'm re-learning the community and they are re-learning who I am. It's not the same person who left. They're discovering that I'm not here to take anything from them.

I'm not here to hurt them, I'm might slap once in a while, bad word for down south, but it's good to slap instead of letting them hurt indefinitely down the road. It won't be a physical slap, it will more of a spiritual or emotional slap. Once they know I'm only here for their good, not hurt them eventually, I'm hoping they'll trust me enough, especially the parents, to trust me enough to help bring their child up.

***Question 5: How did the healing week in Inukjuak go?***

That was amazing! When I heard that they were going to fly us to Inukjuak for healing week, that was the best news to me, 'cause the people who have been relocated have been so devastated, they're hurting so much, they need to start healing and their children need to see that. Their children are hurting too. So when we went to Inukjuak that was amazing how when we land, we heard the stewardess told us that there will be bagpipers, wow that's amazing!

And when we opened the door we start hearing it, that electricity was so amazing. We all agreed that the oldest to go out first was Rynee Flaherty, she was the eldest of the whole group and the next oldest. She didn't understand all of what's going on but when she came out, 'cause she didn't hear all about the bagpipe, Mary was with her, her daughter, she said when they stepped out and the bagpipes started, they could feel the hair on the back of their neck standing up and we could feel it coming in. And the tears started to come because we know the whole community was there to welcome us. It was amazing. I think that's when I first felt the family. That's when I first felt that I had more than just this little community, even all those



years of reconnecting with my family of Inukjuak, that they do really loved us, they prepared this for us.

Another amazing thing was going to the land where we were picked up by the ship and praying over there and letting it go 'cause that was the beginning of the hardship. And letting it go. When Lizzie Amagoalik told me that when we were leaving the dock on the boat it was foggy, she said when they picked us up it was foggy too and electricity went through. That was a God moment that was healing for us, that was amazing.

When they did the apology in Inukjuak with the minister Duncan, I was listening to the news after about that, I was house-sitting and I was listening to the radio and I could feel another electricity, another wave, I cried my eyes out and I said: « Praise God he did it, they apologized!» And my uncle was still alive, Simeonie, he heard it, he was one of those that went down.

Dora was there too, that was amazing. Another thing that amazed me the most was a week later the prime minister came up here to talk to the military was here to encourage them but he made a special effort to meet with the relocates, original relocates, privately and he apologized to us in person. I felt very privileged and I felt so honored that he did that to us. I call him my buddy now, not to his face but, yeah maybe to his face once. Because he humble himself, especially to us in Resolute.

I was so glad that Larry was here at the time, that same day, he was in the same hotel that we were meeting and I called him: « You have to join us, the prime minister is meeting us, the original relocates». He was little bit grumpy at first and then he joined us. What a privileged that was to have the whole family there.

I'm just so glad that we are starting to speak. We are starting to share our stories, there is a lot more to share, a lot of alcohol and drugs and sex happening in my lifetime, maybe even in my mom's lifetime, my children's life... I'm glad my kids never got exposed to it, but they never got to know their family. They live in Barrie.

I'm very privileged and honored to share my experiences; it could have been a lot more, but trying to get people to know that this is real, it's not just a story, that everyone that's ever been in Resolute is involved, especially my cousins. Just because they were born here or born after relocation, I want them to know that this is their life. If there's anger in them and they don't know where it's coming from, this is one of the roots that bring that anger in because there's huge anger and fear here and it touches them all and they need to share their feelings. They

need to share their experiences, they need to share who they were and they need to listen to us and to their parents. I'm glad a lot of them got talked to, I'm just sorry my dad didn't get that.