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FULFORD

Could you tell me this story and explain to me what it means afterwards?

BIRD

In my language or in English?

FULFORD

Both.

BIRD

Both, ok. Ok, let me try with out looking at that...

FULFORD

Ok.

BIRD

... without looking at that part...

FULFORD

... Ok, so...

BIRD

... Cause I don't want that...

FUFORD

Ok, I understand.

BIRD

The way I hear it myself. It says, *CREE SPEECH*...[needs translation]...

BIRD

Is it on, or is it not on?

FULFORD

I can't figure out why this why this little button is not...

BIRD

... I indicated that it is...

[BEGINNING]

FULFORD

Sorry to do this to you again.

BIRD

Do it again.

FULFORD

Ya.

BIRD

CREE SPEECH... [needs translation]

FULFORD

Can you tell me that story in English now? I'm going to move you a little closer. That's one of the reasons it wasn't... it wasn't doing it. That's good. Now your good and close.

BIRD

And it's something like this. It is something... it is something like this.

When the first human being appeared on earth... came to the earth, was that these two people, the man and woman they were there somewhere, somewhere in the land where we don't know for sure exactly where it is, but they were there. And noticed that there is a land down there, the land that is so beautiful. And they so wished to go and see that land. So there was a... there was a giant spider who noticed that they were longing to go there.

So he said to them: "Do you wish to go and see and live in that land?"

So the people say: "Yes, I wish we could go there and see that land."

So Ehep, which is spider says, a giant spider says: "I will help you if you do what I say. I will lower you down with my string. But you will have to sit in here in this sort of basket," but it is actually like a... like a nest. He says, "I will lower you down in this nest, but the thing is you have to do, is you... have to do is not look at the land even when you are think you are getting closer. You must not look down until you touch down to this land. Because if you do that, if you look at it before you hit the ground, you will not be happy. You will have to suffer to live in that land, even though it's beautiful."

And so they got on, agreed not to look. So Ehep the giant spider lowered them with his nest. And so it go down and down, but we don't know how far it is, but it seems to be far away and it took some time to lower them into this... it is the land. It's more like the earth, sort of. So they... they so eager, they're so excited. And when they think that they should be there we should see it, wondered what it look like closer. So they went down, they look, they look over the side and notice the land. And it was just that moment that the string that hold them up sort of let go and landed on the ground forcefully. They didn't get hurt really. But what ah... what Ehep has said to them that if they should look down that they would not be happy on that land and that they would be suffer, in order to live there. And that was the end of the story.

FULFORD

Can you interpret that and explain to me as an adult person what you think that story means, the lessons are in it?

BIRD

The way that I hear about this... there are many storytellers. They have many kind of storytellers. This person or decide this... one of them... some of them, just simply just tell you that. And they just lead you there. And some of the Elders, if you ask them what does it mean, so they will try... they will interpret it for you. And this is one person that I... that I heard... I didn't heard him... I heard it through him, through the other Elders. At least they have explain it this way.

The time... the time went... the man and his wife... the man and his wife were some place... some place in a different existence. This is where they were. And they wanted to experience the other part of the land or whatever it is. And they wanted to see there. They wanted to go and see and visit the world and even to wish to live there.

And they were just saying: "I wish we could go and stay there. And see what it feels like" - because it was so beautiful. Because they didn't know how to get there, they just simply couldn't get there - but this Ehep is a giant spider, will help them that way, because he have a string. He could bring it anywhere at all.

So he says: "I will help you to get there if you want. This is my string, put it in the basket."

So the people say, "OK, Nice."

They were so eager to get on. But the thing is, they say that you know... they interpret this is that in world that they were staying.... It's not the material world. It was some other dimension of life. And this basket that they were suppose to get on, it was... it was material they use in creation... part of creation that they have to go through this thing in order to get to that world. And they have to be lowered with the string. And the string they say is, it's represented when a kid... when a child is born. That he is coming out with the pass to this. You know the cord that gives them there life. And if they open... if the kids is born and if they open their eyes, they would get hurt. The eyes would be sore and they would get sick.

And that's why the instructions said and when somebody's a midwife or whatever it is.. the lady. The first thing they do is when the child is out they have to clean her eyes first so the liquid won't get in there, so they won't suffer. And this is why they say do not look down at until you touch the ground. And if open your eyes and look there you are going to suffer. And this was part of it, the interesting that... to teach... to teach a person, always assisting the lady that is delivering the baby. The first thing you must do is make sure it comes out and clean the eyes first. And the nose and the mouth before it start to scream. Otherwise it's sometimes there is... something maybe infection might take place. So that's part of the suffering thing that they were to avoid. One of the things that they surveying. The person who tells you do not open your eyes before you... do not look before you get down there. It's an invitation that we just don't get to live in the world so peacefully. Because we just have to earn it sort of. So we have to suffer to have everything. Otherwise of these people who have... to have listened to this Ehep, could have waited until they hit the ground and life would have been much different. And much easier. And this is what they say. That's what it means. That's part of it... that's one interpretation of that story.

FULFORD

Now, ah... when you hear or tell a story like that and you think of how to interpret it, what do you look for? What are the signs to look for to find your interpretation? What in that story gives you hints as to the right interpretation?

BIRD

Well the way the Elders do it is they... I guess they live for so long and I guess they understand the life. They create some stories because of what they understand the situation in life. I think they understand my... really understanding, it's they interpret it. Because many years ago, as soon as the human begin to come into consciousness. They know that this life is not all there is. They know that the original life someplace we originate from. But that's what they usually call Great Spirit. Because we originate from the spirit world, they say and we came here. So we make a short journey in this world and then we have to go back and see where we came from.

Where is that, nobody actually understand. Nobody actually can say this is where we are going, but we have to only temporary sort of journey in this world and then go to the end and then back where we came from. Where was that? And then they say its a creator's world. It's not this material world, it's a spiritual one. So the reason why they use this a... they create this legend of Ehep is lower the people.

There is another legend that is connected to this giant spider... connected to the mystery. Ehep is a mystery thing, because it has power to change things so to do the things are still a mystery some people. Like for example, it has... the Ehep is a... is a spider. You can see sometimes when he lowers his self from someplace you don't know where he is attached something. You just see him here and you see him make something out of nothing because you can't see his web. His web is stretch and everything. And no one understands exactly how does he make that line. And it's strong enough to lower him down and to go up with it. So that is the mystery put into this story and make it much more ah... not just a simple story to understand but to make you think to understand something. So then they say when the child is born, he's attached from somewhere and has to come out in this world. Only then after he has discarded it is he now a person. That's another part of trying to understand this sort of thing. It's a being materialized in this world. And the thing that has to go through in order to do it. And it's a very simple way, just like a child born with a cord attached to the mother.

So that's part of it, the interpretation. There is some more to it. Ah... another one is that... and other part of the interpretation is that "How did they do that?" Ah... I'm lost. There are something there that I remember. How did that work? Just a moment, it's going to come back to me. Hmm?

That's something that... that I remember. That fascinate me study on the spider web, it stretches and the spider can make it disappear. As if it he retracts it and so... elastic or something. And it's strong for him and also for baby who's attached with this stuff; it's a life line. And when you cut it you separate the child and they are by himself. So they interpret it as that the mother and the from her body is supposed to be.... Represent the Great Spirit, who is actually giver of life. And when you come to this world you are actually separated from that world into that material world. And another thing... another reason is that they... so are giving what you are suppose to be on your own for a little while. That's not yourself, that's that you. You're not, you're not, you're not... that's not exactly what you live for. You are here for a little while and you still have go back there. But the woman body and the womb also that way you came out of this and were soulless. Before you can come out, within this body, but sometimes they call it the Great Spirit or the Creator.

In this story, the mother is the creator; that was descended from the creator; that mystery. That's one part remember about interpretation. It's very different Elder who try to explain differently. It's not rigid, it's very flexible. It is only after I grow up this old man explain that way, because I understand the child being born and all that stuff. But when I was little I didn't know. So they explain that to us. Just make it into small Ehep sort of story. We still have a question about where? What would happen if they didn't look down. What will happen then. They could have just enjoyed the world and there would be know suffering and nothing, and then they would go back to the creator, to the big spirit.

FULFORD

So this is like Adam and Eve?

BIRD

It almost sound like that. Ya.

FULFORD

Ya. So we would never die or suffer if...

BIRD

That's what it sounds like.

FULFORD

And they make the one big mistake.

BIRD

Ya that's the same. Sometimes I was sitting down and I say, how could they ever found a word like that, to translate it; interpret the thing like that. And it was there before the European came. It was there. The same... I'm thinking about something else also. Do you remember another the legend that I... that I... hear so many times was the shaman who would believed that he would live or die. He knows that he's not going... he's so sure because he has the power to merit he shouldn't die. Because he was doing the right thing having this connection. You know doing the right thing. You the know the power he has assimilate everything because he believed the world... another power of the world. And he says he wouldn't die. He would simply taken up, whole body and everything. And there comes such string. That string would be lowered to him and would be taken up. And whatever the reason that string didn't reach to him is where I don't remember what was the interpretation.

There's one thing... one story... one legend tells you how a person come involving a string and from up and into here. Another story tells of a person who has been here believed that he should not ever die. And he was simply go another one... another world or whatever it is.

FULFORD

So tell me about this idea of a string then because it's in both stories. Why is this such an important symbol?

BIRD

A string is only used as a... symbolically because we are tied to another world. You... in this world that's not all there is. People believe that. There is a creation. There is a Creator. There's a... we have to go back to the... where we have been created from. So string is one of... only a symbolic thing that,... the web... the spider web is a very flexible and strong everything.

The string is a life that can be very powerful and strong if you do the right thing. And if not you can be very weak also. And the same string... the same pull, the string is used to lift you away from here to go back to where you originally came from. So the string is only the... it's a connector which lowered down and suppose to pull you up again after, when you listen to those stories. So there's that idea, you are only come temporary, but you need something to pull you back. It's a faith maybe or believing, strongly believing in Great Spirit that you would.

So there's no heaven in our story. There's no heaven for our Omushkego people, but there is... there's a... what you enjoy in the world will be similar to what you going to get in the next world.

Like one old man said. I ask "what does heaven look to you?"

You know, I say, "as the Christian people said."

And sometimes they said there will be a new Jerusalem, that would be so beautiful and they all try to relate it to the... anything that is very valuable today in culture. Always try to use gold and all those objects to be beautiful, for their qualification of God.

What about our world, you know, different setting.

So he says: "The world that I think of is because it is said so give us the hints and the stories and also Christianity seems to be that way."

He says: "The world that you enjoy here, the world that you really like enjoy... enjoy in this world, is the one that you have that intensely in the next world."

So if you have this hunting, you enjoying hunting and surviving and successful, that's what you're going to have up there.

In other words he says: "Happy hunting ground."

Something like the White people were trying to put that in hey? But that's about it. So these matter. That is what the string is related to. To this... to the... different story tellers explain different things, as I said before. But they get together, trying to put it together.

FULFORD

I have another question. It has to do with this idea of coming down on as string and being born, in *CREE SPEECH*...in your language. There are two words, which are built on the same root.

XXNi TahweirnXX Ni... which seem to give that idea of coming down and being born. I'm puzzled in a way because it doesn't seem that those words actually appear in the legend and yet the legend seems to make that connection. Between coming down on a string and being born. Which, you seek, connecting those words. Can you tell me about those words and can you tell me how one level knows that that is what the legend is about and yet those words themselves don't necessarily appear in the actual story?

BIRD

XXNech-stub-hen-y-goneXX is a word. **XXNech**, the lower. **Nech-stubXX** ... with the string. **XXNech-stub-henXX**. So when you are born, you are lowered into the ground from this string that's attached to your mother. It's a string *CREE SPEACH*... That is to say that you are lowered and you come, you begin by being lowered from this... and then attach. *CREE SPEACH*... But the small kid is born by **XXMitawagoXX** *CREE*. Actually he is lowered with this string. That's only the connection there is. The world of Nech... *CREE SPEACH*... There is that word, if you are interested. Just the word. Yes. But the actual interpretation is... that thing that happen so some one could be born, eh. Because there is a spiritual connection that's what there's having to make to say half story because you don't see the string of Ehep, but it's there. But in actual life, the spider, you can actually see a very light sting. And when you see the... baby's born, he is connected. But somehow you cannot just go on being connected. It has to be disconnected. It's necessary to do that.

FULFORD

So what's that group of words, like **XXNech-tow-ey-goneXX** and ah... the other word that is too longer for my weak mind to remember, **XXNech-cow-pecXX**...

BIRD

XXNech-stub-hen-y-goneXX

FULFORD

XXNech-stub-hen-y-goneXX

BIRD

And Ahab says: "**XXCanni-stab-hen-dinowXX** or I will lure you... it. With my... with my net, you know with my string."

So when you say *CREE SPEECH*... And then they were lowered with this... this string. And then there was that condition that they should not look first before they hit the ground, otherwise they would suffer.

FULFORD

Now it seems that at one level, this story... at one level is an explanation why all these ideas are included in a family of words. There is string involved in many of the kinds of lowering. Lowering a canoe down rapids. Lowering something on a string, being born, bring connected with the cord.

BIRD

Oh ya, you talking about just the word **XXNech-stub-hen-y-goneXX**.

FULFORD

It seems like the whole group of words that are built around that in some way tell you about many parts about that story. To understand the interconnection of those words at a certain level is to understand some of the ideas in the story.

BIRD

When there was like a... **XXNech-stub-hen-y-goneXX**. That's only one way of using a string for some action that is important to... in order to... for this occasional story. For them in order to touch down into the land. But there's also... in the real life, we use the word **XXNech-stub-hen-y-goneXX** to... to attach the string to something... you know for the safety, or for safe keeping.

You are like ah... like a canoe he had mentioned. If you want to go down the river, here is the big rapid and it's not safe to go down in with the canoe. So you decide to use the string to attach and lower it slowly into the calm water. So here, everything else is connected... everything else is involved. When the child is born, he is lowered and the first there is water. And he has to come out with water. So he slowed with this, still attached to water... and first bottom then he comes. If sinking then they use this string, the name one... one situation, you know to lower your... it is safer for you to be attached to this... with the string, so the canoe can go down to the calmer water, otherwise you could be just smashing your canoe when you are down. You would not be able to go through if you be inside the canoe. So there is something. **XXNech-stub-hen-y-goneXX**. So there is a word that goes with that name *CREE SPEECH*...It's a safety. It's an insurance that you get to one place. **So XXNech... Nech-nitawohXX** for everything is that.

FULFORD

I get the feeling as I ask questions and you answer that I'm thinking... trying to understand a certain group of words and you are thinking trying understand the experience of a people and that it's natural enough that those words would be a part of that experience and tell you about that experience. Or as in my way of thinking, write or wrong, I'm looking for the answer in the words rather than the in the bigger thing, the life. How do connect the language... the words and the language, the stories and the experience of life? How do you connect all those things together? Because they all seem to fit together. Can you tell me how they fit?

BIRD

I can't really explain that in a simple word. The only way that you can understand them if you have experienced life. It's the only way. The kid don't understand those things if you tell him. It's only the mature person, adult person who could understand it, you know the life situation and about the story. A person have a human became to emerge to have being lowered from the... from above... wherever that above is. Don't think they actually explain that, but they say well... the explanation is that the understanding is that you only temporarily stay in the world. And you not... when your body dies it's not the end of you. You are still a person and you go on. So this is the... the big thing. This is the... this is suppose to be something that you have to understand and look for it and it's not going to be scary to die, I guess. Maybe that's one of the thing. *CREE SPEECH*...

So it's a... there's many, many words that connect together.

FULFORD

It's these connections. Sometimes words, certainly in English too can sound similar or the same even and mean completely different things. There doesn't seem to be any real connection. Ah... road, a place where you travel and a rowed, I used a pair of oars and I rowed up the river. I don't think there is any obvious connection in English between road and rowed, there might be but it's not so obvious. And I know that that's true in **XXIne-mu-nenXX** to, but there seem to be things that connect words in your language, which don't seem to work quite the same way in English. I'll give you an example of what I'm thinking about. Now, you have a word... I think... for icicle, which is something like a... **XXNea-squash-ekaXX**. I think I left a little piece out in the middle. There's an I-see(?) or something in there. **XXNea-see-quea-quashXX**... or something. I don't know. Can you tell me your word for icicle is and maybe we can get around this?

BIRD

XXNee-wes-ecoXX.

FULFORD
Ok.

BIRD
XXNee-wes-ecoXX.

FULFORD
XXNee-wes-ecoXX. That's it. You don't necessarily have to put the stick on the end **XXAk-ticXX**, doesn't have to hang from it, it could, but it doesn't have to. So **XXNee-wes-ecoXX**, that's the word I'm thinking. Ok. So in that word I see **XXEcqoXX**, there's the ice, I can see it, **XXmaskwamiXX**...

BIRD
CREE SPEECH... Now it's describing not only ice, but a process of creating ice that you naming it, **XXNee-wes-ecoXX**. And that's just you are naming this creation by watering it again, you get ice...

FULFORD
But it works...

BIRD
But it does... it means... it means just like it hang and it's from up and below.

FULFORD
Exactly.

BIRD
XXNee-wes-ecoXX...

FULFORD
I see **XXNee-wes-sinXX**. It could be an old balloon that's popped the air... the air is going. I see **XXNeo-hee-gaXX**, strips of fish or meat hanging on a drying rack as the water comes out of them. I see... there's another word which has to do with very shallow river, which has **XXNee-weyXX** or **XXNee-waXX** in it. And all of these things have to do with something shrinking and often water coming out of it. That's a very interesting group of things to connect. Meat or fish, **XXNee-hhe-gaXX** drying. Something hanging... there's another one. I just happen to have it open here, so I will look. So... actually I don't. It's on **Mitew**. But... there are... Well actually it's here too. I think I wrote something about it. Ah...

BIRD
XXNee-wev-oteyXX is hanging.

FULFORD
Ya! That's it! And if you used it inanimate it would be like a dry leaf hanging on a branch, ok. There's something about, **XXNee-weyXX**, which tells me, as you said, a process or quality, or even a shape, or all of those things together.

BIRD
XXNee-wevXX is also flint. **XXNee-wevXX**

FULFORD
Of course, because there the same kind of thing hanging there. All right. Now in English, very few words work that way. But interestingly, I started with that word, "Icicle" and I said, is there anything that is like that in English. And I went popsicle. I said, ya, it works the same. Pop. Soda pop. And the "icle" from Icicle. So you see this sweet juice, the shape of an icicle, frozen. It's... to my mind, it's a little bit similar to how those words in Cree with **XXNee-weXX** fit together.

But then I said to myself, but isn't it interesting, this is a commercial product. It's not... and then I thought about it a lot, and I said there are words like this in English but most of them have to do with the names of things you buy and sell. And the person who makes it, or buys it, or sells it is trying to create and image in the person's mind of what this thing is through the name. But most of the English language doesn't work this way most of the time. But Cree, or **XXEnimeunXX**, or **XXMusqua-meyXX** seems to work this way much more. And I'm trying to understand that a little bit better. How it is that your language connects in a much more descriptive way with the things, you can almost see them more, or taste them, or see... there's a strong sense of the thing when you know it's name. Why do you think that is?

BIRD

But this is what I was going to explain. But it's there. I really couldn't find right word to explain, but it will come to me later. If I remember I will write it down. Ok? And I will phone you. Right now I just... you have exhausted my mind power.

FULFORD

Well, let me show you what I'm working at and I'll do some talking for a while and then maybe you can think about it. Or what you think about it.

So since I came back I have been working at trying to make connections between different words in your language. And the idea is maybe this will help me learn it. I'm sure it is actually is doing that. It may even be preventing me from learning how to speak this properly. But it's very interesting for me. I enjoy it a lot. And so... here we go. Too many papers floating around.

I started with this little book. Out of frustration, trying to learn the words and finding that people were getting frustrated with me not understanding or catch on very fast. And now I have just went through this little book. And now I have a filing cabinet here. And it's filled with all sorts... for instance, I'm up to "P" now. So if I reach into "P" I have a whole lot of words and some of them have paperclips holding them together. Now this is the first kind of pass before it gets on to there. Ok. And so I wrote all of these words out and I tried to transcribe them using an orthography, which made a little more sense than short "A" being a "U" and long "A" being an "A" and long... I used a different kind orthography, which, at least made sense to me.

And so I re-transcribed all of these words and I would start seeing that some words, even though they may appear in different parts of the dictionary seem to fit together. So let's see if I can find it... ok, ya. Here's the first group of words. So they're words like **XXPop-pal-lowXX**. Ok, let's see if we can find some more. Ah... **XXPop-pop-bewinXX**. So there's "A-Pee(?)" in there and there's a kind of a... ok. So he's crouching down. I haven't looked at this so I'm not sure what it's going to sound like. **XXPut-tas-toowellXX**. To fall on top of someone, I guess. So I guess I see ya, I don't know if this is right, but... **XXAusta... AustoXX** to place. And then whatever this **XXPaw-ko PawtXX** is. I'm not sure, if I'm getting this right.

But anyway, then I drew little pictures sometimes like over here, trying to figure out what's going on. Has something to do with someone going to one place to another, like **XXPop-pan-noXX**? Maybe? Or it has to do with... to looking... overlook. **XXPut-taXX**, **XXPut-ta-po-mayoXX** like **XXWapaXX** in there. **XXUppaXX Put-ta-pomayoXX** to overlook something or look above something. And this other one, **XXPut-tuk-te-woXX** to crouch down. Ok.. so I'm there? I don't know exactly going on there, but I tried to get an image of that. And then **XXPaas-se-payXX** ok? So you got **XX Paas-se-payoXX** I guess. Is that in your dialect. He flies just above the water?

BIRD

XXPaas-se-payoXX

FULFORD

Ya. That would be...

BIRD

XXPaas-se-payoXX

FULFORD

You got **XXPaas-se-payXX**. So I guess the **XXPayXX** is from **XXNik-PayXX** or **XXNik-PeeXX**, water.

BIRD

XXPaa-pa-seXX.

FULFORD

Ya.

BIRD

XXPaa-pa-seXX is when something is skinny.

FULFORD

Exactly. Exactly. It seems to have some quality of being above. And these other things seem to... I don't know if they connect, but this one **XXPaap-ta-ti-mayoXX** to over look something.

BIRD

XXPaap-ta-ti-mayoXX.

FULFORD

Ya. Maybe there's a connection, I don't know. So I was looking... so here's another one. **or** **XXPaa-kiXX**, **Paa-cowXX** it's swollen.

BIRD

Primal(?)...

FULFORD

It's like it swells up. Ok? Ah, **XXPaa-ki-pee-tawoXX.**

BIRD

XXPaa-ski-pee-tawoXX.

FULFORD

Maybe. Is it in your gums, in your teeth? This one says he has the sweating of the gums.

BIRD

XXPaa-ka-pee-tawoXX.

FULFORD

Ya. So we "bit" in there, "bit", ya. And **XXPaa-KaXX** a swelling, swelling of the teeth or...the gum

BIRD

I know, I know...

FULFORD

Ok. So there's some quality of swelling that comes in there. I don't know if these fit, but I just trying to how I tried to think of it. Ok. And then ah...**XX Paa-Pa-Ka(?)** or **Kaa-Pa(?)** as in **Paa-ka-see-mayo(?)** or **Kaa-pa-see-mayoXX.**

BIRD

I put it in English.

FULFORD

It means to boil someone. To boil someone, or something. I don't know if this makes sense, but the **XXSee-mayoXX** or something, lying like that maybe, I don't know. And **XXPa-kaXX** or **XXKa-paXX** I'm not sure what that is. Ah... then there is another one, **XXPaa-ka-taowXX** or **XXKaa-pa-taowXX**.

BIRD

XXKaa-pa-taowXX? That means boiling it. **XXKaa-pa-taowXX**

FULFORD

Ok. Now this one interests me a little bit because it seems like maybe they are different dialects here. But one is **XXPaa-KaXX** and the other is **XXKa-PaaXX**. And it's like you are taking the pieces in whatever dialect and maybe they've been switched around. So that interested me. Then what do we got here? **XXPaa-ka-haaXX** Ah, like **XXPaa-hak-tawonXX** or **XXPaa-hak-tiwayo**.

BIRD

XXPaa-hak-toonXX.

FULFORD

XXPaa-hak-toonXX Ok.

BIRD

XXPaa-hakXX do as he please "bow". Two of it also the same. Almost the same.

FULFORD

So what is the **XXPaa-kaXX** or **Paa-ka-haXX** in playing ball. Is that... what does it tell you about that? Is that telling you something about the shape of the thing? Because you got...

BIRD

XXPaa-ha-ka-soonXX.

FULFORD

Ya.

BIRD

XXPaa-kaowXX

FULFORD

Ya.

BIRD

Swim?

FULFORD

Ya. That's it!

BIRD

So the guy is playing something that is well.

FULFORD

Swollen up, exactly! So you see what I was up to here.

BIRD

Ya, ya, ya...

FULFORD

Ok. So then there's another word, I don't know if this belongs with it or not, short "A". So it will be **XXPaa-KaXX** to hit something. Like the guy who is hitting the old people...

BIRD
CREE SPEECH...

FULFORD
XXPaa-ka-ho-goXX ok. A heart beat, guess.

BIRD
XXPaa-ke-ho-goXX.

FULFORD
Ya. Ok. So, like we call it in English, a pulse. Ok. Ya. what other one's do we got... well then... lots of ones the... Here's one, **XXPaa-quXX or XXPaa-pa-qu. Paa-pa-qu-nawoXX**. To... to blister or to peel something. Ok. Sort of connected with swelling, sort of connected with that shape, ok. So what I was trying to do is get a sense of, Is there some sort of shape or movement which may be connecting different groups of things together? I have no idea. So this was the first step. After I had gone all through this and written all the words out, which would start with the same... out of the same syllable, or out of the same first two syllabics. Ok? So then I would just put the paper clip and think, well I will come back to that some time. So then you get all this big bunch of them. All together with...

BIRD
They be all there.

FULFORD
Ok. So the next step you take one of these things out and you sit down on the computer and go up here. So ok, so let's put it in. This one I did with **XXNik-paXX** that's the one that interested me, so if we go back in the way that I reconstructed this, I guess I'm looking for your advise or something in someway.

BIRD
My advise...

FULFORD
I'm just trying to explain all this... long winded thing to you. So let see if we can find a...

BIRD
XXPaa-ka-ha-hoXX

FULFORD
Hidden. Hit the nail on the head.

BIRD
XXPaa-ka-ta-saysoXX Do you remember that?

FULFORD
Is that a bird?

BIRD
Ya.

FULFORD
...the one where he...

BIRD

...that's the name of it...ya. The one that is hard to find.

FULFORD

That's the one.

BIRD

Ya. Hard to find.

FULFORD

So there's something to do with swelling in that. Really?... A ball? Or is he moving around like, **XXPaa-pa-moy-tayXX**?

BIRD

I think it's a little bit like that. No, it's a sound that he make, I think.

FULFORD

That could be too.

BIRD

XXPaa-pa-ka-ta-tesXX

[END OF SIDE 1]

TAPE TRANSCRIPTION: LOUIS BIRD ORAL HISTORY PROJECT – 90 MIN.

Date Transcribed: December 27, 2002

transcriber **Brian Myhre**

Date Recorded:

Recoding NO.: CRLS # 24 (Bird #2008) Side 2 of 2

“EHEP LEGEND”

BIRD

I still couldn't figure it out myself. It's a thing that you do... this bird is doing something. Whether it is a sound he make or whether he is running. Also tells you... *CREE SPEECH*... Is a person... and not necessarily swollen.XX **Paa-pa-gay-egosown**(XX that's somebody that has muscle, not just the flesh.XX **Paa-pa-gay-egosownXX** **XXPaa-pa-gay-egosownXX**.

FULFORD

Bulging, we'd say. Like bulging muscles.

BIRD

Ya, ya. XX**Paa-pa-gay-egoXX**. XX**Paa-pa-gay-egosownXX**. So this bird is not just swollen. He's compact for something, hey. But he makes a sound, the way he makes is also included there.

FULFORD

Exactly.

BIRD

The one who make the sound,XX**seewonXX**.

FULFORD

Well there are a lot of small birds that are XX**Mey-sownXX**or XX**Ay-sownXX** at the end. Ya.

BIRD

XXMey-ka-sownXX **XXMey-ka-sownXX**. **XXPaa-pa-sownXX** he makes a sound. **XXPaa-pa-sownXX**. **XXPaa-pa-soXX**... He has the same thing as almost like **XXPaa-pa-gay-egosownXX**. **XXPaa-pa-skruXX** is a pheasant, or yes... here in this pheasant. He's next to the spruce grouse, hey. So he's... he makes like [sound] pa,pa,pa,pa...And that's what the Pa-Pa is. He makes the sound as... has to do with a rapid movement. And the sound of it is what you are trying to describe. But what exactly there is... I never heard myself, and the people who name it. It describe... and it also describe that he has a powerful movement.

FULFORD

Because he's strong. He's swollen up, he's muscular.

BIRD

Ya, ya. XX**Paa-pa-gay-egosownXX**. XX**Paa-pa-gay-egosownXX**. And all that stuff, hey. There you go with the Pa(?). **XXPaa-pa-gay-egosownXX**... I can't think of any word, you know, using that word.

FULFORD

Sure.

BIRD

Because this is what **XXPaa-pa-gusXX** is going to say then. But **XXPaa-pa-gusXX** would say when you get that...

FULFORD

Big belly, no big hard-on.

BIRD

[laugh]

FULFORD

That describes it, to some people.

BIRD

Well, that's being carried away. Carried away with the words. [laugh]

FULFORD

So what I... I do, many days, is I sit here and go through a bunch of words like this without any damn thing about this language, which is very frustrating. But it's a mystery. And maybe I... I... make lots of mistakes, but anyway I will... see... I will show you the steps. So the first step is from here to here. The second step is from here to here. So I get a word like, **XXNik-taw-welXX** ok. So I put it in and then the next one word, the inanimate, **XXNik-ta-humXX** ok. And I will work my way through the words which seem to have that in it. And in the process of doing that I'll see ok all of these word have **XXNikXX**. Then some of these others have a little bit different, like ah... I don't know if you have this in your dialect. **XXNis-su-tiwayoXX**.

BIRD

XXNe-shu-tawXX.

FULFORD

Ya, **XXNe-shXX**... ya, that's right. You have an "S". Ya. So I am saying to myself that's interesting because the **XXNee-shaXX** and the **XXNik-taXX**... same kind of move... but there's a little difference in the sound. Ok. So then what I try to do... I try to make this monstrosity of a thing up here. Ok. Which tells me... there are a whole bunch of words. Now usually there's a number which I'll put in this whole pile of words.

Ok. And if I want to look for all the words that begin with this, I just have to type that number and everything which got that... now that's easy for... at the beginning. But with a normal dictionary, it's very hard if you want to see words that have that in the middle. Ok, maybe there won't be any with this in the middle, but we'll give it a try and see. So I'm to look for N-22. So there're not any, that I've entered. No. So this one... for some reason it only comes at the beginning of words. So we will go back again and... so all the words that begin with this monstrosity... so there are bunch of words that can begin with Ni, Nit, Niche, Nisa, and they all seem to... So... you create this monstrosity. And in this monstrosity which can be any number of things and you get eighty-seven words. What would be some of them? **XXNi-chi-panowXX** ok. We will go through a lot of them and see what we can... **XXNon-nay-son-nis-suenXX**. So... I'm not sure what I've done with... **XXNon-nayXX**... ok. So what I said was with this is it looks like **XXNon-niXX** and **XXNitXX**, ah... what is that? We won't worry about that one, that's too complicated.

So there are a lot of **XXNon-nayXX** words that seem to mean "dangerous" of unpleasant or something. Let's get pass those. Ok.... Here's another one. **XXNi-ta-ka-humXX**

BIRD

XXNe-ta-ka-humXX

FULFORD

What does that mean to you?

BIRD

It means lowering the sail.

FULFORD

Exactly. Ok. So there's a... ok, now. **XXSay-kaXX** That's interesting, ok? How do you get the Ka in **XXNik-tay-ka-honXX**? So pulling it apart. Ok. So... God. What a complicated... So there are going to be some other words that have this in them. But anyway. Ok, it looks like it's a very short form of **XxNa-ka-sti-mona-skitXX**. Well isn't that what you use for a mast? Or a sail? **XXMa-kast-ti-moanXX**?

BIRD

XXMy-sure-na-pikXX. My-sure-na-pikXX.

FULFORD

XXMy-sure-na-pikXX. Do you have any words like **XXMa-kast-ti-moanXX**?

BIRD

No, not in our language.

FULFORD

Not in your language.

BIRD

Not in our dialect, no. But there is... that's what it means. **XXMa-kast-ti-moan-apiXX** That's what it means. It means that. Say the mast.

FULFORD

So I was trying to figure out where... ok, **XXNik-ta-ka-humXX**. So **Nik(?)**, that's easy, it's coming down.

BIRD

XXNik-ta-ha-mayoXX...

FULFORD

Ya. So what's the **XXKa-humXX**? Or, ok... that's what I'm getting at. It's something.

BIRD

[laugh]

FULFORD

Ok, so does it come out of... I ask myself **XXNa-ka-sti-moonXX**? Ok, that's what I'm getting at. So you got of...go well... it's word for sail, bringing it down. So what's the word for sail and then it's just a little piece of that it looks like. Ok, looking for the Ka(?) in that, ok. So maybe I'm right, maybe I'm wrong. Here's another one. **XXNi-ta-sayoXx** that's much easier, ok. That seems to be **Asik(?)** to blow, eye? Ok. So they are always **XXNik-ta-stonXX** Ok. All these interconnected words. **XXNi-ta-chee-waelXX.**

BIRD

XXNi-ta-chee-waelXX.

FULFORD

So we got a **XXWat-chiXX** in there, eye? Ok. So all these... ok, **XXNi-ta-che-panowXX.**

BIRD

XXNi-ta-che-panowXX?

FULFORD
XXNi-ta-che-panowXX.

BIRD
Ok.

FULFORD
Ok, like the riverbank goes down. Ok. So...

BIRD
XXNi-ta-che-panowXX. *CREE SPEECH...*

FULFORD
So there's a whole bunch of these words which have **XXNitXX**. **XXNit-ta-ka-saoyXX** goes down the ladder. Ok. Here's an interesting one. **XxNi-ta-skeoXX**

BIRD
XXNi-ta-skeoXX?

FULFORD
XXNi-ta-skeoXX.

BIRD
XXNi-ta-skeoXX is a... my God... I don't know if that's the right thing.

FULFORD
What do you think?

BIRD
XXNi-ta-skeo XX is a... does it mean that?

FULFORD
Says it descends to earth.

BIRD
Ah, ya...

FULFORD
Comes down to earth. There is a very interested word connected with that. **XXNi-tas-ka-mikXX.**

BIRD
XXNi-tas-ka-mikXX?

FULFORD
XXNi-tas-ka-mikXX. Now that's very interesting. Do you have that word in your dialect?

BIRD
XXNi-tas-ka-mikXX.

FULFORD
Well that's like the whole story about the spider, right in that word, to my mind. Ok. Because it's got the idea of descending right on the earth. That's being on earth. **XXNi-tas-ka-mikXX.** Ok.

BIRD

That's why it's... that's why you say, are you sure it's there. Because it's exactly what I say...

FULFORD

It's what I mean.

BIRD

It's where you get the word from.

FULFORD

Ya. So this whole process of looking for these words that seem to be interconnected, trying to take the little pieces and pull them apart and then suddenly you get an image in your mind and you go.. my God, that's like the spider. And then you go... that little word is like a tiny crystal and out of that crystal is this whole thing that grows out of it. That's why I said what do you think comes first, the chicken and the egg. The word or the story, of the experience of life and it's all interconnected. You know. But I find that in your language, there's a sense of interconnection which just doesn't exist anymore.

BIRD

Is that right?

FULFORD

That's what I find. Maybe it exists in English, but I just can't see it. Because it's my first language.

BIRD

You didn't notice... Perhaps it's the same thing with me. This thing.. I didn't know that. I never really. I guess I just didn't bother. Because it's so automatic. You know, it's there, but I just didn't notice. When you start asking, I said... Is this that?

FULFORD

Now the next step, putting this all down and taking each word apart and putting it together and saying, back three-thousand words ago I didn't understand what this little **XXPapXX** is in there. Now I think I understand what it is and you go back and you find all the pieces and bit by bit you crawl ahead. And you crawl your way through this and this. Ok. And this thing starts coming together. So what you get is this... this... monstrosity up here.

BIRD

Ok.

FULFORD

And you get all of the things that are created out of this monstrosity. And out of each of these I created a whole bunch of words. Each ones of these creates usually on the average about ten words. Ok. And so I'm half way through and I have all of this mess. Ok. Now were up to the end of "O". Ok. So we got forty-one pages of these families, I call them. Ok. And many of them have these little like **XXNik-ta-ska-nayXX** And you go... and sometimes the way they interconnect. So I take a look at some of these. Let's see if we can find a few... well there's one. So out of this group, ok. So we got a whole bunch of words in here. **XXO-poXX**. Ok? It can mean a liquid, but it also seems to mean an in-and-out motion. So let's find "A"-9, that's this family. So I'm going to go "FIND" [referring to computer]. And I'm going to type in A-9. And it's going to tell me all the words that begin with... so there's **XXO-poXX**

BIRD

XXO-boXX

FULFORD

XXO-boXX So we've got a paddle or a shovel, **XXO-bosXX**.

BIRD
Oh ya.

FULFORD
XXO-pueXX same thing I guess. **XXO-po-kawoXX** Ok. **XXO-po-kay-oenXX** Ok. **XXO-po-ay-seonXX**

BIRD
Isn't word.

FULFORD
Is it. I don't know about that.

BIRD
Well you say, **XXO-po-ay-masitXX**.

FULFORD
Ya. But think about this now. Here's where these get very interesting. So we are on A-9. So let's look at this now. We got **XXO-poXX**... that's find some more first.

BIRD
O-po(?) is sitting down, eh? **XXO-poXX** **XXO-poXX** Or a paddle.

FULFORD
XXO-pueXX when we get back... ok... there are a whole bunch of things that may or may not be connected. A paddler... let look at these things... just these families and each one of these has these words like this in it. **XXO-poXx** at the beginning. **XXO-hoXX** like wash a whole at the end. Ok. It can mean liquid. But it also has this sense of in-and-out. In-and-out. That's what I was looking for here, something that had the in-and-out sense in it. Ah... let's see if we can find it... Ok. **XXO-po-tee-numbXX**. Now I know that's **XXpo-teeXX** in there too. Ok, it seems to have two things... that sense of **O-po(?)** and that sense of **po-tee(?)** inside. So it's like [sound] shhhseee, shhuuu. Ok. I don't know... let's see another one. Uhm... Ok, here's an interesting one. **O-po-XXski-wayoXX**, she goes to meet someone.

BIRD
Ya.

FULFORD
Ok. **XXO-po-ska-kay-o-winXX**.

BIRD
XXO-po-ska-kay-o-winXX.

FULFORD
Ya. Greeting party?

BIRD
Yes, yes.

FULFORD
Sure. **XXO-po-taowXX**

BIRD
That means passing each other.

FULFORD

Ya. Back and forth, like the tide. Coming in and out. It has the sense of back and forth. Turning it inside out. Back and forth. Let's get some more. Ok. This one is very problematic. **XXO-po-chi-kaXX**

BIRD

XXO-po-chi-kaXX. XXO-po-chi-kaXX. XXO-po-chi-kaXX.

FULFORD

Even otherwise, besides... besides...

BIRD

[laugh]

FULFORD

Ok. **XXO-pos-squa-tawoXX**. Ok. So you got this **XxsquaXX XXsquoXX** Spitting, but it's a shape thing too. Ok. So we can looking into look into this... ah... I haven't got to that family yet. So anyway... So there are a whole bunch of words in here. So what I do... maybe they're right, maybe... now we get back to **XXO-posXX** a paddle or shovel. Well, ok. Let's take a look at all these families.

XXO-poXX, no **XXO-poXX** in or out fluid or liquid. And at the end, like **XXWa-sha-hoXX**, ok. Sort of an open space or bay. **XXO-po(?) O-poXX**, long "A" and short "O". O-po(?) I guess. To go back and forth, or return. Ok. **XXO-poXX** to spit-out. **XXO-po-teeXX** to turn inside out. **XXO-po-einXX** sweat.

XXO-po-weeXX O-po... a paddle or a shovel. Has something to do with shape. Let us take a look at this stuff again. Because,... see if there's anything connected together. So we got sweat, or some other kind of excretion like roasting meat. Ok. Like most... something comes up like spit. But is that connected to liquid?

BIRD

XXO-peXX.

FULFORD

Ya.

BIRD

XXO-peXX.

FULFORD

Ya.

BIRD

XXO-peXX. XXO-peXX is a roasting, if you say **XXO-peXX**.

FULFORD

Sure.

BIRD

That means roast something.

FULFORD

Ya. Think about what it looks like when it's roasting and what comes out.

BIRD

Ya.

FULFORD

I don't know. It's sort of like it's sweating. Ok. So if I were to look at this and maybe I'm totally out to lunch, ok, there seems to be a whole lot of things. Some that start with a long "A", some with start with a short "A" ah. All of them have "P" and either "Po" or "Pwa" A "W" in there. O-pwa(?). Or O-po(?). Ok, now the "O" and the "W" are very close in the way that you make the sound. Ok. So a little change in the sound to what I'm beginning to see in this turns a little change in the meaning. So we got something that begins with liquid ok. It can mean to go back and forth, which liquid often does, giggle, slurp, lub, tide, going in-and-out. Ok. It can mean [sound] Hhppk! To spit out. There's some liquid in there and it's going out. Ok. **XXO-po-teeXX** to turn something like socks inside out. There's the Po(?) as in there's something inside of there.

Ok. We got **XXO-pwayXX** which is sweat or some kind of other secretion. Liquid again, coming out. Ok. Now we got this funny thing. **XXO-pweXX** which can be a paddle, which has to do with water. But, also we get into a quality of shape in there. So I don't know if these things are interconnected. But I start thinking. So let's get another one. Ok. **XXWan-naXX**. Ok, or **XXWan-neXX**. So there are a whole bunch of interesting ones. We look at A-19, find. [using computer]. Oops! So lets just have a look in here, see what words popping up. Ok. So there's this big, God awful monstrosity, thing at the top. Ok. Now what I think about this big, monstrosity of a thing. Actually has... has some quality of this... Ok. So let's see what we got in here. I don't know if we have this word, **XXA-naXX** or **XXWan-na-piche-kaohXX**. Ok. What is that? What do you see, **XXWan-na-piche-kaohXX**?

BIRD

XXWan-na-piche-kaohXX? **XXWan-na-piche-kaohXX** which means to tie things together. The way that they should be.

FULFORD

Ok.

BIRD

You bundle things together with a string.

FULFORD

Ok... what do you see with **XXWan-na-piche-kahnXX**?

BIRD

XXWan-na-piche-kahnXX? **XXWan-na-piche-kahnXX**?

FULFORD

Or, **XXWan-ne-piche-kahnXX**.

BIRD

XxWan-ne-piche-kahnXX is digging a whole. Where you dig a whole.

FULFORD

Sort of, ya... This must be plains Cree. It's a kind a... farming tool called a harrow. It's got things that you pull.

BIRD

XXWan-ne-piche-kahnXX. Oh ya, that's the same thing now.

FULFORD

Ok. Well how about **XXO-net-ko-tawnXX**?

BIRD

Hah?

FULFORD

XXO-net-ko-tawnXX?

BIRD

I don't...

FULFORD

What do you call a fish spear? You know what they look like? They got a thing like this with two barbs at the end and a big point. So that these two things go around the fish and... and when the spear goes through it, it grabs the fish. There's an Ojibwa word for sure, because I heard it. But there's also a word in here. **XXA-ne-ko-tawnXX** and they say it's some kind of fish spear. Ok. **XXa-ne-ko-nak-tekXX**. **XXA-ne-to-yak-tekXX** actually. **XXA-ne-to-yak-tekXX** is some kind of... the shaft for it. **XXAk-tekXX**. **XXA-ne-to-kanow-peXX** well there's lion(?). Then we got another one. **XXWan-na-he-killXX**. What do you see when you hear **XXWan-na-he-killXX**?

BIRD

I hear someone digging a hole.

FULFORD

That's it, it's a hole. Ok... **XXOne-na-queXX** or **XXAn-na-queXX**...

Maybe it's a plains Cree word... [using computer]

]long pause]

BIRD

I almost fall asleep. Did I sleep?

FULFORD

You were thinking.

BIRD

Anything else you find?

FULFORD

Maybe we should visit Joe. See if he's home.

BIRD

Do you want to go through it some more?

FULFORD

Well, what I need from you, having begun to explain this silly, long process... at some point I have to sit down with the people and say, "what do you say for making bread?" Ok. And make sure that this word, **XXAn-nah-go-en-ak-haoXX** is in fact right. And that it in fact begins "A" and then goes "Nah", "Goen", "Ak-hao." Ok, and make sure. Ok. And then what I have to do is get someone to say it properly. Because I probably can't. So that we find the word in here... [looking in computer] Where is it? Ok, say it for me nice and loud.

BIRD

XXAn-nah-goe-na-kaoXX. **XXAn-nah-goe-na-kaoXX**. **XXAn-nah-goe-na-kaoXX**.

FULFORD

Ok. So, so far I have 4998 words, probably about half-way. I have to get this and this won't sound right for each of them. [plays recording of above word].

But this doesn't record it... first of all... you are too far away. What I need... is I need to have a good speaker, first tell me this is the right word. Then tell me this is the meaning that we have. Then to say it properly. And then to put it all together like that. So that eventually, we get something, instead of looking so complicated as this, will look more like... well we can make it look like this in English [using computer]. Ok. Or we could make it look like... let's see. See if we've got it. Or an even better way... there's probably an easier way. Let's see. Or maybe something like that. Or we could have the whole thing syllabics. We could scratch out the English and just break it down into it's parts in syllabics, if we wanted and then if we wanted to find other words, ok... we just go [use computer: "find A-19.5, hit] So we got five. **XXAn-nah-goe-na-kaoXX**, **XXAn-nah-ka-nassXX**, **XXAn-nah-ka-na-kao**, **An-na-ka-na-quaoXX**. So you are doing it for someone else. **XXAn-nao-ko-wayo-wik-kimikXX**. Oh, well I'm missing A-ha-oh(?) in there. **XXAn-nao-ko-wayo-wik-kimikXX**. Or I can't say it.

BIRD

XXAn-nao-ko-wayo-wik-kimikXX.

FULFORD

Ok. So. And ah... so I need to... I have applied for some money. I don't know if I'll get it. I probably won't. To go out west and up north to get people to help me, first of all to split out what began as this, the *CREE SPEECH -I THINK...* **XXMishkegowin** XXdialects. Ok. I can think of one person I know out in Saskatoon who's a little bit like you. Stan Cuthand. There's at least the beginning of doing that out there on that side. So then I get these two strands of the... what began as this, ok. And the next... that step... so you get the voice on this, to correct this.

To make sure that I have the two dialects, ok. But underneath it all, I also need to... as a part of that, try to... have people... you know... sit down with me. Not necessarily apart of this step, but say, either this is like "he road a boat" and "he's on the road." These have no connection. These just sound the same, but they have no connection. Or sometimes... I never thought of it that way but, let me think about it. There maybe a connection, because what I see over and over again with these things, page after page after page. Like here's another one [flipping through papers]. **XXA-paXX**, **A-pa-he**, **A-pum-me**, **A-pee-ko**, **A-pee-ta**, **A-peeXX**. ok. **XXA-paXX** to disentangle or free. So there are probably ten words with that. **XXA-pa-hoeXX** to unwind or loosen. **XXA-pa-heXX** to untie or open. **XXA-pum-meXX** to turn. **XXA-pee-koXX** to untie. **XXA-pee-taXX** to unlock and **XXPe-sha-ganna-peXX** string or twine. They all seem to be connected with some idea, which holds them all together. Little change in the way they are said. A little change in the way they meaning. And many, many, many, many of these things work that way. It seems... it seems. So, sometimes when you see things that look like they fit together, you go, my gosh that tells me a lot about the way it would be natural to think in this language. Let's find another one, maybe. **XxOn-weXX**, **On-we-cheXX**, **On-we-toa(?)**, **On-wa-pa**, **On-way-nim(?)** as in **XXOn-way-nimo**. **On-wa**, **On-ney**, **On-ney-sko(?)**, **On-ney-skoXX**. So it seems like to lie **On-we(?)**, **XXOn-we-cheXX** what is that to you – words that have **XXOn-we-cheXX**? So there must be **XXOn-we-che-wayoXX** or something like that. Mean to not tell the truth.

BIRD

Yes, yes.

FULFORD

Ya. It's the same in English. To lie and to lye. Means like hiding. Where are you hiding? **XXOn-we-toaXX** so not to believe. **XXOn-wa-paXX** it's like, to see lies almost, you know, to find fault with someone. To see fault in someone. **XXOn-wa-pa-mayoXX**.

BIRD

I don't get that one.

FULFORD

Ok. Let's see if I can find that. So A-34. Ok, let's see... [searching]. Let's see what we can find. **XXOn-wa-pa-mayoXX**. Maybe it's plains Cree. And **XXOn-wap-ep-tamXX**. And according to this

it could be plains Cree and the guy could be having a bad day and not be listening carefully. It means to find fault with. Now I don't know if that's it. But if it means **XXOn-weXX** and **XXWa-patXX** together, then it would be lies that you see.

BIRD

XXOn-we-wa-pa-weeXX, it's the one that a... how do you say that? So said it a while ago. **XXOn-we-wa-pa-mayoXX** and **XXOn-we-wa-pa-mayoXX**. All you see the "l"s missing. **XXOn-we-wa-pa-mayoXX** it means he would over look someone. **XXOn-we-wa-paXX** means to over look.

FULFORD

Ok. He would be lying down and you'd be looking over them. Ok. So there's a very clear image in this of being **XXOn-weXX** and looking.

BIRD

Yes. **XXOn-we-wa-paXX** that's the one they use in the west, hey?

FULFORD

Must be.

BIRD

So ours is **XXAs-way-ap-amayXX**.

FULFORD

XXAs-way-ap-amayXX.

BIRD

But the only thing is says **XXOn-we-wa-paXX**.

FULFORD

Do you...

BIRD

That word **XXOn-weXX**. That word **XXOn-weXX**.

FULFORD

It's the name of a guy in one of your stories.

BIRD

[laugh]

FULFORD

It's a very interesting name, he's the cannibal, the exterminator. So you go, well isn't that interesting. It tells you maybe his method there.

BIRD

That's what I got that way. *CREE SPEECH...*

FULFORD

Now there's another interesting word that seems maybe, maybe not connected. Let's see if I can pull it up, oh boy... [checking] Ok. Do you have a word, **XXOn-wa-che-kaoXX**?

BIRD

XXOn-wa-che-kaoXX?

FULFORD

XXOn-wa-che-kao(?). Or **Own-wa-che-kaoXX**

BIRD

XXOn-nach-che-kaoXX?

FULFORD

Maybe.

BIRD

XXOn-nach-che-kaoXX is a... **XXOn-nach-che-kaoXX** is when you hide something. Or arrange something. Or ya, arrange something. **XXOn-nach-che-kaoXX**. **XXOn-nach-che-kaoXX**.

FULFORD

It seems... maybe it's in plains Cree, **XXOn-nach-che-kao-enoXX** means a prophet.

BIRD

Hmmm?

FULFORD

Now, it maybe that this one stands out, it begins with an "O" it may not belong in there. Ok. But all the words that he that in there seem to have some quality of being in a trance. So whether I did it right or wrong I went, ok, well, **XXOn-weXX** is this loop(?) down here., ok.**XX A-neXX** also to lay down. **XXA-ne-skoXX** [sound]. Ok. So I thought, Ok, well I wonder if this is a word in at least one of the dialects in there, On-wa(?) to be in a trance. Now I always assumed people were sitting and sitting like that. But could it be that when you are in a trance you are in a semi-sleep state. And when you are in a semi-sleep state you are out on your back. So this may not belong there, but you see the way of think that's going on here.

BIRD

I think there's a word for things that... I think that maybe we don't say it right. I think there is such. No that doesn't come up.

FULFORD

No that's ok. So these are all little things, like this one. They're a whole bunch of things with **Chi-Chi(?)** in it. Things to do with the hands. Ok. So **XXMe-che-cheXX**, **XXMe-che-che-seeXX** is like stroking... oh not **XXMe-che... Che-che-seeXX** seems to be that moving, that movement, stroking movement. Ok. **XXChe-che-keXX** kind of a... ok. **XXChe-che-koXX**

BIRD

XXChe-che-kioXX

FULFORD

XXChe-che-kioXX rippling. Ok. **XXChe-heXX** it slips through your fingers? **XXChe-kaXX** as in **XXChe-ka-he-gaXX**

BIRD

Ya.

FULFORD

Ok. Chopping. **XXChe-steeXX**. So all of these things are connected to hands and fingers. Scratching, stroking, niggling isn't... it with teeth but it like [sound] pinching thing. That tells you something. Well isn't that interesting, these things are all interconnected it seems. Ok. This is the thing I've been doing. Ok. Whether it's right or wrong. This is what I've been trying to do. And to try to make sense of why this might happen, if it's in fact happening. Much of the time it might not be. Here's a whole lot of interesting... Most of them are short families like this **XXE-ka-tayXX**

Nothing in there. You know, to one side. Ok. But every once and a while you get a big one and you say why do all these words come out. You know. So you got **XXgoskaXX** and **XXgoskeeXX** which seems to be back and forth like a sawing movement and all this. **Kas-ka-wa-chi-kan(?)** that sort of a thing. But then there's **Ke-ska(?)** just kind of a gnawing or sawing movement. Or **Kees-ke(?)** you know. Or **Kee-Skay(?)** which seems to be a fluttering movement. **Keesh-kay(?)** which you like you said before, foolish. Does it mean, like we say a scattered brain [sound] never anywhere. But then there's an old one, **Kees-ke(?)** to guide, to teach, to recall. **Kees-kay(?)** to prophesize, be able to see ahead. **Kees-skway(?)**, **Kees-kee(?)** to persuade.

BIRD

XXKas-keeXX

FULFORD

Ya, I think so. K-1.8. Let's see if we can find it.

BIRD

Oh ya. **XXKas-KeeXX** it is. You know.

FULFORD

Ya. **XXkas-KeeXX** you almost make it...

BIRD

You manage to get your way or the way you want. You persuade someone.

FULFORD

Exactly. **XXKas-kee-cheXX** or **XXKas-kee-chaXX**. And then **XXKas-keeXX** or to portage.

BIRD

XXKas-ke-oh. Kas-ke-ohXX.

FULFORD

Ya. Now, are these things interconnected? A back and forth movement, a portage. Back and forth, earning something or profiting from something. Ok. It's like money going back and forth between hands, almost, I don't know. Persuading someone. Trying to see into the future. Prophecy. To be foolish. To flutter around. There all connected with a sort of kind of movement I think. So... whether I'm seeing this in my mind and it doesn't exist in this language that I can't speak, or it may be part of it does. I can't tell because I don't speak it. All I have is an ability to take things a part, see patterns, make sense of it and organize it. Useless sort of a skill, but I have it. That's all I've got. So I kind of... I've been doing this for eight months, or nine months everyday. Pulling it a part and then organizing it and then working it, until eventually I have this big thing in here. But I don't know if it is of any use to anybody, or even if it is right. So somehow, once I've finished all this mess, then find a way of correcting any mistakes or some of the mistakes in it. And then figuring out, well, if some of this is right, what do you do with it. What does it mean?

To my mind, it means your language is very descriptive and very much a part of the way things move, the way things are shaped. Moves in all sort of directions to tell you... make it meaningful. And the only place in English where anything remotely resembling that is advertising. Like Icicle, Popsicle. Popsicle, you get an image in your mind right away. But it's almost unconscious. It happens so fast, you don't think of about it when you say. But it does do that to you. Ok. But it's interesting that the only place that it happens in English is in advertising. Where you want a person to have an image of something, but your not going to spend a lot of time... and that has to do with money. It doesn't have to do with a connection with anything, other than money. That's the connection! Money! So I keep looking back here, this says something about a way of living and seeing in the world and when you get rid of it... this book and all of the words in it, and you throw it away and say, "let's do English now." You lose something. You lose

something that's much bigger than is in any book. You lose a whole world. That's what I'm on about with all of this.

BIRD

I get it. I get it.

FULFORD

I thought you might.

BIRD

I begin to get it.

FULFORD

It's an argument for doing something about... for the end of teaching of Cree, not just...

BIRD

And it something that hasn't been done as a thing. That's why it's interesting. I didn't know such a... so complicated thing. I mean it's so much work to do that. Paper work...

FULFORD

Well, it may or may not be. I mean you could probably have a better person than me working on it, but most of us people are probably busy doing other things with life. So you got this idiot called George who's decided for some inexplicable reason to do this. It's not even his language you know, and here he is doing it.

BIRD

You know this language person, like Margaret? People are so amazed about her work, which is almost similar to this. But it's for a different purpose, eye. And she's go at it and some people say how will she get... how does she get to do these things? *CREE SPEECH*... That's what they say. *CREE SPEECH*...

FULFORD

It's like your friend Oliver. He spends his time working on that fiddle. And someone like Margaret, in a different way perhaps myself, spends our life, or a good part of it thinking about something. They don't have to go out and cut the wood everyday. Or find food for their kids. My case, I don't even have kids.

BIRD

But this thing is... if I understand what you are doing.. what you call that, its ah... how do I call this thing... ah in English. *CREE SPEECH*... Can't find word to describe this thing. What is exactly there is? Why is it important? You see we may speak the language, we may use the language for granted, without doing how good the language is. So that's what it does different.

FULFORD

It would break my heart to see kids in the northern part of this province to through away their language so their kids would no longer have a connection with it. And at best would have to go to some damn place at the University of Toronto to get a very second hand understanding of something that could have been theirs, their birthright. I keep saying to myself, there's got to be a better way to teach... I watch some of these Cree language teachers up north, teaching the kids get bored. Partly because the kids don't care. Partly because the kids don't care. I can't drive the snowmobile very well, but I can play around with the engine and fiddle around with it and say... [sound] it doesn't make sense to you. Take it for a ride to see if it works any better. I don't know, maybe it won't. I just... underneath it all its... it began with a bunch of **Mitew** chants that I saw fifteen years ago and it went back to some kids in cash which did an awful lot drawing which made me think a lot. And then it made me think about this and that and the next thing... and

finally, here I am. Trying to look for the pictures in the words, or the movements in the words and saying it's amazing. They seem to be interconnected.

Now I'm not the only person that's thought this. Occasionally...

There are some other languages that hints this is going on. Japanese is one of them. They call these things classifiers. Whole classes of things are interconnected by a little thing that's stuck in a word that tells you, oh ya there's.... The Japanese classifier "hone", in it most common usage, classifies long objects, sticks, canes, pencils, candles, ropes, trees, hair, etc. Of these, the ridged long thin object are the best example. Not surprising the "hone" can be used to classify dead snakes and dried fish, most of which are long and thin. But "hone" can be extended which are presumably to other things. Martial arts contests with staffs and swords which are long and thin and ridged. Pits and sometimes pitches and baseball, the idea of the movement of the ball. Shots in basket ball, serves in volleyball. Rally's in ping pong. Judo matches. A contest between a Zen master and a student