Today is December 7, 1999. Hello, hello. This is Peawanuk, Ontario. I am living in Peawanuk, Ontario, a small community of about 200 people, the Omushkego people, the Cree people. My job is, just to record, the stories about our old people, our elders who have died, in which they talk about their culture, from their ancestors, and their ancestors before them. It is called, I think in English, the oral history, passed down by mouth, one generation to the next. Whatever these people know, they have passed down to their children, and their children after. Many of the stories that have been passed down, are now beginning to diminished because we don’t have any more elders. Excuse me, I’m sorry, today is December 7, 1999, they have had their new year.

Now, I was reading a novel called Mysteries, by, they’re English stories, yes. According to European individuals, there are 7 wonders in the world in their culture. Now, what about the other people, who consider themselves a nation, for example, first people of southern North America? What about them? Are they, are they, record their mysteries, their own history, their own version of history? How do they kept their history? Do they have anything they can, they can, they cannot understand? What were they? Or it, now let me mention a few. First, let us consider their legends. Their legend in orally. Their ways, in keeping histories by tradition, that’s oral stories. Yes, legends. In the first peoples legends are supposed to be their history, more like human history. To them, before the European came, actually, the Omushkegos are one of the First Nations who managed to hang onto their kinds of, stories, legends. And then, they’re contained total First Nation culture, and its’ record of its tradition. In the spoken words, this is very important. I mean to say, it is not stated properly, but it requires a certain standard, a terminology must be suit to the intent, certain event would bring out the proper atmosphere before we can be, it can’t be affected, that is a legend, or even the oral story.
Let me explain. Supposing there is a late fall season, and there is starting to snow. Let’s say in the Hudson’s and James Bay coastal region, where usually late October and first week of November, there is a snowstorm, a gust of strong wind, with thick, fluffy cloud of snowstorm so that’s the kind of a condition. If it’s very bad, went up to 60-70km/h, and strong and heavy snow, this kind of a deal, then this geographic region will bring out the shaky mood to the people, almost like a fear within them. I suppose because of the changing conditions, the atmosphere brings some kind of fear in the soul of the human. Animals notice, animals show this. This condition would bring out the story of the Pakaakaaskokan, Mr. Skeleton, or Mr. Bones, the legend of Bag of Bones. That’s what I call the legend, Bag of Bones. The wiihtiko story, or stories would be topics in the evening, at this time of the season. Skeleton being is not a wiihtiko, as per se, but wiihtiko, usually, he is in the form of a human or animal, but Mr. Skeleton, is not, is not fully human being, only partially. Why? Well, human wiihtiko needs to eat. He has stomach. Mr. Bones do not have stomach to fill. Was he a real skeleton being, or was it just a make-up story? Story for kids perhaps? It’s impossible to believe such story, but it’s interesting, still is today.

For me, these old stories, fascinated me, because I am trying to relate them to something that is there still, the mystery is still there, still there. Let me stick to the skeleton story because it is not only a skeleton that has been associated with story. Let me explain.

Storm, skeleton, sound, also spoken sound, sound but it’s hollow sound, a metallic sound, like a loudspeaker in outside. These are the things that are involved in this story. In this story a skeleton actually speaks! The language, any First Nation language. Its voice is described is like that, it had a metallic sound, sometimes it sound, it described as a hollow sound, hollow. If any human, First Nation heard this sound, it sends shivers down to one spine. It’s not funny, actually scary. This kind of scare is not the kind we can hide, or run away from, from it, so it’s been recorded. When it, when everyone hears it, gets scared, chills right down to the bottom, or the end of the spine. Now let out all the time, no, not all the time, the sound would come from the ground level, but also up there, up in the atmosphere, so it has been heard, and experienced by many Omushkegowak. Whatever it was, nobody is able to explain. Nobody explained
logically, this has been one of the mysteries of the Omushkego in the Hudson and James Bay area.

I have heard the story, many times, many different ways, by many persons. I have asked few elders, who says my own Grandmother, about this character, skeleton. But never get satisfactory answer. There are three different kinds of stories about this skeleton story who can be seen by human, spoken to it, one’s own language. It can be heard, but not seen. It would make sound as speaking, but not understood, it can be heard, but not seen. It could make sound as speaking, but not understood. It can be heard, but not understood in Omushkego language. When it heard, not seen, it usually be scary, or the same effect, and they shall hear the chills, that chills the soul, at first. Now, there was a story about two men. This is a legend, who found skeleton stuck on top of the tree, and so forth and so forth. This part of a little story has been told many times, for the children and for the adults, amongst the elders. And amongst the elders it has been still a very mystery, not one person have ever agreed if that is the explanation to what they said, and it has been remained. It seems these two men who were able to speak to Mr. Bones asked, asked their future, in their own language, and Mr. Skeleton speaks in Cree, or Omushkego language. So it has been said.

Now let me speak freely. This story about Mr. Bones is one of the, as I said, is one of the mystery amongst the elders, but it is one of the fascinating story for the youngsters. And it has been applied in many ways of the story to be useful with the First Nation culture. It has been used to tell the children not to eat snow, in the first snow. And not to drink ice cold snow, snow-cold water early in the fall, the first fall of snow, because something there has been said ages before, that sometimes when people traveled at that condition, if they get caught out away from the home ground, or away from their homes, and they happened to get stuck out in the bush by themselves, and usually don’t have much, do not have much to make a fire with, and they begin to get thirsty and usually the younger people, younger person would start drink the snow, even slush, and it has been said. There is some people who are not, who did not make it home, and they just simply didn’t make it home, they die somewhere or they just simply got lost, perhaps maybe to storm, or maybe there is a storm so cold. So it has been said that if a persons drink that is ice snow water especially at the first frost, you will be in the wiihtiko. That is
a scary statement. So the children that are teach not to drink water, or ice water were, were, was there, that scary sound. And they actually, actually what it means is that, the children were told not to drink ice cold water outside during that time because when you switch the condition from the warm water drinking during the summer and fall, there has to be adjustment in your body, so they said if you drink ice-cold water all of the sudden in that season, you will develop sore bones. And it has, it has been experienced by such actions, many youngsters get the sore bones which really kills them, and then later on, develop, what we call today, a bone disease, or a virus, the joints sores and everything. So this is where the reason, one of these make-up story what it is. It’s so useful for the benefit of the children. And it also been useful for the young people that begin to travel in the wilderness by themselves for their survival so they must never drink ice cold water when they are hot and they are sweating, because they would just simply, cannot walk on, because of the sore bones. It’s affect their, it’s affect their metabolism they call it, you know, the stamina they keep. It’s sort of kills the, the mechanism in their body. And they got the very sore bones, and usually, they have also mentally disturbed, not crazy, I mean it, they don’t, they can’t think right because of their suffering. So that’s how strong the story is used, how good it is. But the story itself it sounds great, it sounds sort of very scary but it’s not enough to hate the story.

Now, I have listened to the two elders, talking about the same story. They were talking, one person, an elder was saying it has happened. And he disagreed. And the other one said: “No it’s not, it’s not real.”

So here is a disagreement between the two elders. One said, they’re not argue, they’re not fighting, they’re just simply truly expressing their change of opinion, difference of opinion. One that says it’s real, he is saying that there is actually a mystery which cannot be explained, and it is said, it has been there, and the time ever since these people lived on earth. And it’s not known, where it come from, and what it is. The other elder says: “No. It cannot be.” He says: “It is cause, or created by human.”

And then, their, their idea was exchanged between the two as I listen, one says: “It is the cause by the shaman. The shaman causes these things to appear. You know, maybe to, maybe just to show off, or maybe just to antagonize someone, or maybe provoke someone to get mad. Or, because most of those people on those days before the European
came, most of those men especially, had developed each his own style of shamanism which they require for their survival.”

Let me come to this thing, what I say. In a white man’s world, they have seen it in the movies, we have seen it, and we have lesson to it in our stories, books, written about it. There have been stories about people, European who are expert fencers that using the very sharp knife, which is really sharp and they call it fencing. It’s very tricky, and needs some expert handling, and people challenge with that stuff, and sometimes they use that to kill, they mean to kill. And sometimes a person will think he’s good at it, always challenge the other person to make him mad so he will have to defend himself. It’s very obvious there. And then there’s another, another thing, about the cowboy, the fastest gun. Okay, there is the legend of the fastest gun, there’s always the young people who try to beat him, just because they want to make a big name for themselves. Reminds of, you know, typical movie style. Anyway, it’s a similarity there. When shamans grow up to be elders, they control their shaman powers, and when the youngster comes, like a 25 year old young man, who really is, doesn’t know how to control his powers, always challenge the elder shaman. Sometimes, he lost his life, sometimes the elder have enough patience not to bother him, he knows that he can kill him anytime. But the thing is, there is that bothersome. There is that thing there that bothers you all the time, and you know what it is but you want to do anything.

And this is what this guy, one elder was saying, he says: “It is human, a man created mystery, something, you know, Mr. Bones. He’s created by man’s imagination, shaman’s imagination.” But the other elder also determined to express his opinion, he said: “No.” He says: “These things are to be explained, the one that is made by shaman. But this character that we are talking about is no man, not even shaman can beat that.”

It’s different, because it’s not understood. And it remained a mystery amongst the powerful shaman. But they even have tried to contact it, but it would not contact them. They can do with anything else, that they get used to in this earth. They can form the strong wind into being in their mind, they can form the thunder in the Thunderbird, they could form the Polar Bear, as their partner in this Omushkego land. All these they can do, but this Mr. Bones is something they could never, or Mr. Skeleton, whatever you wanna
call it, they could never control it. So, that is one of the remaining questions that never been explained amongst our wise elders.

To be honest, to be honest with myself and to person who listening to this tape recording, I would like to say that I have asked many elders to explain that to me as best as they can, or to tell me it was real, it is real being. But when I say: ‘What does it come from?’ they could not explain. Today our elders that are, that have talked about it, are mostly believe, they mostly believe that it is a creation by the shaman, or a shaman, or any other shaman. Because shamans sound like that, they didn’t create what they conjuring, conjuring, conjurers, maybe you can call them, if you want specify them. But they are amongst the, they are very expert on these things, they can, they can, they can do many things.

Oh yes, shamanism it’s not, it’s not one level, it’s many levels, in many styles, many branches. One of the most important branches of shamanism is, is shaking tent operation. A person who is gifted to operate or to use shaking tent can almost get the information he likes, can almost do anything. There are very few things that he could not do, could not do, or answer, which was then, in their world, which was questionable. But it has been said by the elders and the elders before that, even the shaking tent could not explain what that is. It’s just simply could not explain. There’s a story that one time, one expert shaking tent operator was asked to set up a tent and ask this thing, because somebody has been reported seeing such thing. And then, they wanted to know what is it? Who caused it? Is it a shaman who caused this to scare us? So apparently their expert was, was consented to set up the shaking tent and summoned to Mr. Skeleton to explain himself inside, from inside the shaking tent. But, he did come in, the Mr. Skeleton, whatever we, Pakaaskokan did come into the shaking tent, but did not explain where does he come from. But it says it’s not, “I am not conjure of person,” he says: “I am being, I am me.” So only from that story, did the people stick to their idea, that is totally different history, and that is cannot be explained. People have tried to explain about if he is part of the Creator, or is he some form in that? No, no they, Mr. Bones didn’t say he is. But he did not explain what he is. And this was one story that was so fascinating, that people have tried everything to try to understand what that is, but they never did.
Now, that’s one part of the story that I want to put in here. And there’s another story that I want to add to this thing, so you maybe able to find it interesting. They are many mysteries amongst the Omushkego people and also Omushkego speaking people that have lived here, the First Nations. They know they covered the land, right across almost Canada. They are Cree-speaking, they call them, Cree-speaking, and they call them by the experts, they call them Algonquins. What shall we say? Instead of saying Algonquin, we can say the Omushkego-speaking people, because that’s where the original Omushkego came from, from this area, from Omushkego land, and then they sort of spread, according to the history, our oral history.

So, the Omushkego people were the experts of shaking tents. There, that’s their main, main use otherwise, they don’t need nothing. They don’t have to have a rituals or anything. They just simply establish themselves, so sufficiently, they don’t need to have material stuff to express their, or to practice their beliefs.

Now, let me get back to this Mr. Bones. This skeleton that I’m talking about has been proven to some people that it does not, it is not a dream being, it’s not the conjure person. It is by itself. Has nothing to do with shamanism, it had nothing to do with anything. But it can explain, it can do things. Can explain the future. But the question is, why the appearance? That’s what the Native people have been so mystified. The appearance of it, it has no flesh, but the bone. But it has the lung, and it has the heart that is pumping, and it has a voice box. And it travels in the atmosphere. And whenever it travels, it seems to be talking and mourning and sometimes right down scary! But why are these actions? This is what people have always wanted to find out.

But when it does in that ugly mood, when it’s going by, whatever, if it’s ugly mood or not, it usually sends the chills and fear down to the human body. It is not agreeable to human. But sometimes, it does get caught, as they say, when it travels too low in atmosphere into the treetop, it can get caught, because it’s, it’s a skeleton. It can still get stuck in a tree. So they, it’s a logic for a Native people to think there’s no question to that. But if it has so much power, if it has so much knowledge, then why doesn’t he have the power to release itself? That’s what they’re talking about, that it has no muscle. When it travels, it just sort of click, click, up in the atmosphere. No power in its arm, or legs. So, the way it sounds, this Mr. Skeleton, the way it sound when it talks, it
has a metallic voice, it has the echo as if you speak to someone inside a big hall. And it has that echo hollow sound when it speaks. And it has strong effect on that sound. Makes people scared or chills. Sends chills through the body. But once they see it, it’s alright. They know that is, that’s where the sound came from. But if they don’t see it, it’s even worse, they say.

But why is this thing traveling in the atmosphere, and why does it travel so slow sometimes? And why different people think it’s same sound they hear when it travels out in the atmosphere or out atmosphere, because it doesn’t appear where nobody see. But it seems to travel very fast, whether it’s way out there, or right on top of the ground. But every time when somebody hears it, those who have, they always feel it before they hear it, and they know exactly that’s him, yeah, that’s Mr. Bones. That’s what they think, right away. There’s no question to that. Soon as they hear the sound, they know it is. As soon as they hear the first time, they start to get the fear, then the second time, that’s when the chill begin to come into their body, and when it gets overhead, that’s when it’s just numb, and the voice seems to just to touch in the center of your being. The voice, it’s very powerful, and then when it passed by the, at the seat your being, and it goes to the side, and then the fear begin to creep, the fear begin to release you.

And it’s very fast, the sound, and the next one, he usually only, seven sounds. The first to be 180 degree sound, and the other one is 45 degree, and then 90 degree and then 45, and 180 degree on the other side. So, it usually travels from the northwest into the southeast mostly that direction. But, when it gets to 45 degree path, that’s when the fear begin to leave, and the paralysation usually happens at 90 degree up, and then when it gets to the 180 degree, the sound just usually barely audible, and the fear will be gone then. But the residue of the fear will remain to the body of the person, and that is a mystery. Why? What is it? And it has been said. It is the same voice, the same voice that is associated, that is associated to the skeleton being, or Mr. Bones, or whatever you wanna call it. Pakaaskokan is what we call that in our language, in the Omushkego people.

So, I’d, I don’t know for sure. It is only in this part, only in this Omushkego land that I have heard, that it has been talked about this, such thing. I haven’t heard it any other place, I’ve traveled across Canada almost, but I haven’t heard it from the other
tribes. And so, there was one mystery that Omushkego did not, were not able to explain, and it has remained a mystery.

Now, after completing all this story, there are, it has been existing all the time, from the time that we cannot remember when it begin. As soon, as long as the people lived here, they’re have always aware of this thing. So, here is the second part of the story.

When the European came, when the missionaries came to teach, and this would, this would be about 1800, or 1685 thereabout, people always take the missionary people the most wise, and categorized them into a mitew, or shaman, because he speaks, he speaks the soul-part of a person, so they always regarded them as a most intelligent. So one day, the elders, you know, they were asking them, asking this priest, a Catholic priest, and they said: “What is it that we hear and we call it Pakaaskokan. What is that? How come is it so scary? How come it is?”

So they describe the thing to the priest, and then, of course, the priest has this opportunity to convince people about Christianity, how to convert them and what system he can use to convince them to change. This was a perfect opportunity. So, by, by his knowledge about the Bible and the history and the Old Testament, he connect this story to this at the beginning of the Jewish story where it says, after God created Adam and Eve they had sons, two, Cain and Abel. Well, the first murder on this earth supposedly happened then, because Cain killed his brother out of jealousy or whatever this, and, and he was condemned directly from God, the Creator. And he was condemned to live forever, and that everybody that sees him will hate him and want to kill him. That’s what the priest explained. So he says: “That could be the story that you guys experienced, because he, he was condemned to live on earth, to suffer all time.”

So apparently, Cain didn’t die yet, and he still remain. So, that is a satisfactory at least answer for the Native people, and at that time, they were beaten by the Christianity. They were, they were submissive then, because the priest has more knowledge, which they could not explain. That was a first win for the priest. And Christianity. Now, the rest of it I don’t have to condemn anyone, I’m not condemning Christianity, I’m not fighting it, cause I am saying that’s a true fact about the conflict between the Christianity and the Omushkego spiritual beliefs because the Christianity condemned their spiritual beliefs.
and practices at that time. And it was easy to do that because there was an opportunity right there that’s one of them. And it begin to catch on very fast, so that’s one of the reasons the Omushkego people were so easily converted into Christianity. They’re just, I don’t think it’s bad at all myself because if I were to explain everything about the originality of those spiritual practices, we would, I’m sure, everyone would agree. Maybe it is better for them to have been changed, for them, for us, we the descendants of these people.

Now let me get back to this other place, because I’m not satisfied with this stuff. I am inquisitive, I question things. I just, I’m not satisfied with the small answer, which I get from people when I’m onto something. I still think there is no explanation there about priest telling about this Cain, between connecting Cain to this Mr. Skeleton. I still think something else. Ever since that I have learned another language, second language, which is English, I have read many stories, many books, not many, not a thousand maybe a hundred or so. But I choose my books, I choose the material that I want to read, because I want it to make sense to our culture also. So this is the way it happens.

What I mean to say is, to make sense of our culture. In our culture, there are many things that are not explained enough for me to satisfy, like the mysteries that involve stories that have been told that are not fully explained why and how. And not having all the, all the people who knew the stuff, cause they have died already. There were answers for these questions, there were some. Not long ago. But since that we have left our culture, mostly, mostly, most of the things have gone now, so this is one of them, one of the questions that I have that could have been answered if I had lived maybe 50 years before I was born. But, after living for 64 years, most of the elders that know all of stuff have gone, died away, so there’s no chance of ever getting the answers that I’m seeking for about this story. My story, is it connected in this world? Is it the spirit? Or is it the shaman’s conjuring being? So, the conjuring being usually seems to have a body but not much body. Sometimes, it is very little or something that is living that’s in there, even if the thing looks like giant, or beast or anything. And it doesn’t exist very long, as soon as the conjurer decide to release the apparition, whatever it is, it just disappears, and whatever he uses to make it appear, substance it usually just very little left. Sometimes they say, that a conjurer, the shaman, would use animals, a small one, sometimes a mouse
or the smallest shrew maybe just a, or maybe he could use a smallest bird that is around in the Omushkego country, it could be just chickadee body or squirrel body or a mouse body or a shrew body or even worm in summer. He could use that physical body and expand it to make into a something undescrivable beast. So when his mind is releasing that, this stuff that he uses to stuff their eyes. It has been explode or gone into bits and pieces, very small volume remain. In the wintertime, it is very easy to see this, they say, those people who have seen it. The people who are do not investigate they just simply believe that such thing exists.

Now, these conjurers can have temporary substance to what they have created in their mind. But this thing, this skeleton which our Omushkego have mystified seems to solidify on its own, it seems to disintegrate on its own will, but nobody seems to control but by itself. It has all the power of the shamans, and the conjurers. So that’s how this, this was a mystery. That’s a little bit of explanation, but the next thing is, that I am going to say myself, is that my thinking, our elders long time ago have seen other things.

They have seen those, the metallic things, that are, that appear sometimes like an object, maybe a balloon, maybe a disc, or maybe something. But sometimes in the form of fire at night and sometimes in the forms of flying object in a daylight time. So these things they have seen. But they never connected with the Mr. Skeleton, no they didn’t do that. And this is where my question, my, my idea come in, my, I think that’s it’s Mr. Skeleton and the shiny objects and the ball of fire is connected. Why else can Mr. Skeleton be able to go over the atmosphere in the faster speed than anything? Only the objects that are, has a shiny objects, or balloons or, or a “bladder,” which the Native people call it, these things can travel fast. Yes, they can disappear. They can just make a streak, streak of light, or they can make just very quick appearance and disappear those things, yes. Our elders have seen this but they, these also probably mystery. That’s mystified them so powerful, they, they never mentioned this. And they also talks about the sound, the, the skeleton sound, which they believe it is belong to the voice. That’s what mystified them, they just don’t have no experience, no matter how skillful and powerful the conjurer could be, or shaking tent operator, they never got a chance to explain that. Even the beings that within, the within the shaking tent, they just don’t want to explain, they know whoever speaks there. But they never want to explain.
Why is it so secret? Is it because human mind cannot understand? Is it because it’s, it would be hard to say, that you see his spirit only, or what you saw, is partially spirit, and partially not, or does it want to tell a lie? Maybe it doesn’t want to say these are the conjured things that you see, because it’s not true. So, that could be the thing. So, what makes me think about it associated with the metallic objects and the Mr. Skeleton is that I think these things even today are being mystified even in the modern day. They call them flying objects, and a lot of people believe there were such things. And other people think they’ve been abducted by those things. The same kind of subjects that people didn’t want to talk about long time ago, amongst the Native people, and it still is today. So that’s the thing that makes me want to connect those things, and try to find an answer for, an answer to my question. So, they are, that is a reason I want to, still have it in mind, there might be some answer yet, and I shall continue this subject on the other side of this tape. Tonight it seems like I’m coming to almost to an end of this string, I mean of tape recording. Ok, we’ll turn it over and start from the other end. This is very important for me, to try to put all of this into a recording so it will be there, and we can listen to, it can be transcribed into a written language later.

Hello, hello this is Louis Bird, there is the continuation of recording of the mysteries of the, the Omushkego mysteries, and the subject was Skeletons, or shall we say, Bag of Bones, or Mr. Bones. In our language, it’s Pakaaskokan. That was the main topic, but there are many other things that I have thrown in there, just try to guide our mind into a how do you, how do I keep someone interested? How do I, how do we get someone to be interested, and finally have some answer to what would be at least satisfactory for temporary, because it never has been, never will be, I think, by the people who have first recorded, our ancestors of the Omushkego in the James Bay know that. How far did this thing was known? By amongst the First Nation people, how did they explain the other tribes? So our Omushkego only have explained of saying, it’s a conjurer, a conjuring object by the other shaman. He says that the provocation for each other make to test each other how they know.

Okay, there is that opening statement. Opening remarks, maybe I should say, when you say, that provocation is the word. Let me make sure I understand what I’m talking about first. Okay, here’s the word that I have been using, provocation. It means
stimulating, exciting, inciting, provoking. So provoking is one, perhaps the word that I was looking, that I was looking for. It’s something to irritate someone, to make someone get mad and get to aggravate so much and then you will take offensive or be mad so he will do something. So, the word provocation will be the word, the, very close to what the word I was looking for.

So this is what the, what the First Nation Omushkego said it was about the appearance of the balloons, the shining objects, the “bladder,” balloon what we say in English, Native people will say, the fish air sac. I guess we seen some fish. I think those were suckers, the large ones, not the red suckers, but also the red ones. They have sometimes the air sac inside them. We call that balloon because when you put the air in, it, it expanded like a balloon. So, that’s what the kind of balloon they talk about, especially the one inside a fish, it’s white. And it’s just like a surgeon, surgeon’s glove, when you blow it, it shines, and white, and does transparent. So that’s what the balloon they were talking about. And that’s one appearance of this stuff.

And the other one is a ball of fire in at nighttime. Usually, usually it’s a two side, two kinds, three kinds of them. There’s a ball of fire that comes into the sky and it explode, that’s not the one we’re talking about. But they say that’s a provocation also from another shaman, for another shaman. And then there’s another ball of fire that comes, seems to come right down to the ground, and snuff out somewhere beyond the horizon, or before the horizon, so that’s another one. And some people say they have seen it come down slowly right into the ground and seems to hang there for a little while, and then finally just snuff out. So, al these things, the Omushkego shamans have said these are another shaman provoked act, in order to pick a fight or another shaman to try their, their power on them. But the thing is, when the shaman did get angered and bothered when he tries to contact this stuff, he doesn’t find nothing, no source, and that’s what scares you, scary for them. So there is one explanation about the Omushkego stuff.

Another one they thought about was when they saw this thing, in the, in the evening, or even during the night. They could see it moving, yes, what they, with the many different coloured lights, like a rainbow lights, and rainbow sort of appearance. And they say when it comes down to the ground, you can actually see the ground, and see the, sometimes it actually get down and sits there with the twirling kind of a lights and
sits there for a while sometimes, if a man or person is so scared which is usually accords someone, or just simply take off, take away from, get away from as fast as they can. Even the shamans sometimes, they just cannot, cannot do anything to it. Either or, in the other, if there wasn’t something else, if they know that this is shaman that is, has the power to do it, usually they able to overcome their fear, and simply face the fact and eliminate it by their own power, but it didn’t seem to work for the shaman to do that. They simply overpowered by it. So, no shaman is, is courage enough to admit his defeat by these things, they never tell. But they don’t even want to talk about it, because of it. And so, they describe these things sometimes they describe it and the ordinary master shaman but the ordinary people. They can describe this thing very, very vividly, but they say, never say much about landing and staying there and seeing things, no.

But, my own mother has seen one that she actually thought she saw a being inside there, these few beings, moving inside there. How? She never explained exactly. She didn’t draw, I was too young when she used to tell that, but then I get grow old she didn’t care much about this anymore, because she was so sure, this was only the old man, how do they call that, something that you see that’s not there, it’s just a, for what we can say from outside, is a superstition. That’s the only name that she also gave it, if this is just something that happened, you know, when this thing is coming to you it’s gonna be a bad luck. But, but that’s as far she goes, but my mother was not a shaman, she was a Christian.

Now, that’s where this skeleton is associated with these things. So that’s a story I want to include to this one particular mystery about the Native people, their mystery. There was a story, not long ago, I think the European were already in the bay area. I think there was already a community in York factory, in York Factory, Manitoba and then there was already two in James Bay, which is Kashechewan, one of them. And then the other is Moose Factory, maybe perhaps the others down the east coast. Anyway, the people have experienced these things at that time, with those things. They have seen them, many times, they have seen an object that seems to hover, ball of fire, and usually manage to stop on surface of the ground, and then simply snuff out its light. And the person who saw that usually just took off and just don’t think about it, never even bothered to go and see. And that’s what happened many times.
I don’t know if I could associate the story with the object, but I could tell the story about the person who has seen some kind of a human, human form, but which is not human form, and it was similarly to the human form, but it’s, by the time he saw it was already decaying very badly. And it has a strange, he calls it, “skin.” He says, this being it’s just, only its skin it’s still in intact and inside it’s all, all this spoiled, and decayed. But he says it’s so horrible, he cannot even look at it. So, ever since that time, in that place, it’s called Wiihtiko Creek, it is a small creek. And this was around June 15, or thereabouts. The location is about, about 20 miles due northwest from Winisk, old village. The little creek is called Wiihtiko Creek.

When this man tell about this story, he was exhausted, he was disoriented, and he said he’d tell the story to the people that were camping already the evening. It was already sunset, so he says, if anybody wants to see it, they can go there right into that creek, and you can, to the water, and you see it for yourself. But no man, or nobody did, didn’t care to go there, because it’s in the springtime, it’s still water is lots, there’s lots of water. And they have just came across, they just begin, regain, regain their numbness from their legs, and they don’t wanna go back and walk halfway through that water again. So this was a story, so the man who described the thing, he said: “Inside, it’s just like a bone. But inside the skin of a human, you can see his bone inside.” What did he saw? What is it that he called? What did he say? He says: “Where the face should have been, it was only a hollow stuff there, and the body covered with a blown skin, like a pressure inside. And that’s about it. But you can still see through it,” he says, “and the smell.”

These were the things he actually described. So we don’t know for sure, many people tell different stories, but I hear maybe five different ways. Some people do not, figure they describe, some people do. Like any other story that cannot be fully described. So here is a story that seems, for me, my idea. I just thought about this thing when I saw first time in a magazine a jet plane and a test pilot the way he dress. He has the suit that is just like a skin, and it has many tubes. And some it’s just like a, just like a ball and hollow inside, there you don’t see his face, but you can actually see in there is something inside. This is the description that I, that I, think about when I listen to the story. But supposing it was a little bit different. So, after thinking that, where would this thing come
from? If it's not human, what is it? So, this is one of the mysteries of the Omushkego people.

When I started to tell the story, I wanted to explain only one subject, just one, and then tell a bit more stories on part of it, keeping in mind we are, our main theme is, Skeleton being, seems to associate other things, in the minds of the Omushkego people. And they wonder why, why can’t the Omushkego shaman understand? How come the Omushkego people who are so expert in shaking tent and finding the information instantly, how come these things they couldn’t? They have done almost everything that they want to find out about anything. They can ask question to weather, as human form, and they can make it into human sound. They can ask thunder, thunder, and they call it Thunderbird, and they can ask the northern, “Mr. North,” they say, and “Mr. West.” All these mysteries are male, it’s a gender, gender, whatever you call it. And they don’t have answers. So how come this Mr. Bone, how come they could not get it to explain something? Yes, they managed to get it in there, but thing is, to couldn’t make it tell them anything.

So, what did they, what did the Indian people know? Did they have the mind over matter? Did they, were able to contact the other source of mind out from the space, or from the atmosphere, or from another source? How did they know it’s still there? So, there it is, one mystery of the Omushkego people, but that’s not all, there are many other less ones. I think that was the highest one that I have taken, the most mysterious thing. Any others would be explainable at least, partially explainable.

Now, the next, the next subject is actually getting into the power of shaman, how do a person acquire such power? Some shaman, they say, in our stories, in our oral history, some shamans can, and will able to walk on water. Some able to travel in atmosphere, they don’t have to travel on the ground. Some people can, can perform, what is called in English, it is called, ‘Astro-projection,’ I think that is the right word. Which means, a man or a shaman, a powerful shaman, if he wishes to see something out there, let’s say 50 or maybe 100 to even 500 miles, if he lose people out there, his friends or maybe even enemy, and he wants to release his anger to them, or bother them, he is able to protect himself out there, instantly as he wishes. He can be seen out there, maybe not talked to, but be seen. He can do that. He can also be there himself, and aggravate the
person that he wants to pick on. His stuff, if the person he is pick on, if he doesn’t want outright kill him, he would intimidate him in many ways. If the other shaman is trapping, or hunting or something, he will prevent him of being successful, until this other shaman is so mad and attack him. That’s another way of provoking someone.

So these were, these were the stories about these shamans, these were the bad ones, these were the bad people, and it usually is the same, no matter how good shaman may be, he cannot resist forever, and when he gets to the point when he could not resist, then he would react in a very harshly and mercilessly, kill the person that bothers him. Or even give like an eye to eye, an eye for an eye. He can just really return the exact thing he gives him. Or sometimes, outright just killing him, just by his mind, mind in power. He can do that. So, a shamanism is not always the holy thing, it can be very, very evil. But there is a good side to the story also. A shaman can do very, very useful, can be a protection, can be a provider, he can be a defender, he can be a leader, or he can be a, whatever it is.

But the bad one, they are really bad. But how did they begin to be? They begin to train them, to train themselves when they young, when they very young, five year old. They usually are gifted people, and the most they ever desire to use is the shaking tent, if they want to use anything at all, that is, that is, let’s say, if it’s 100% of shamanism, that’s all that can be accomplished in 50% of the total of the shaman power. But a total shaman don’t need no object at all, just simplest strictly the mind power. Doesn’t need no objects, doesn’t need no. Quick reaction, instant reaction, it is usually devastating and powerful. It has total power, so that’s how the shaman developed.

These, the story that I am telling, has been told to me by many people, not only one person, at least 10 to 15 people, maybe more. But they’re all a little bit different. That is why I cannot name this shaman, says inside, but he didn’t say at all. The other one fill in the position, the answer, or complete the, the stories of the things that can go on. And then he tell them as a, as a lesson to them, I can arrange those things, so they, where the, event, what to take into the, the final. So that’s how I tell these stories. I could start off with one, one person, one elder to tell me when one of the things that I have already said, but she or he could not be able to complete, because there will be quite a bit missing there. Maybe perhaps, she didn’t have time, or he didn’t have time, or didn’t want the
time. So, that would be the problem. But, in order to save time, and also to try to put the
most important thing, in order, orderly manner, this is the way I tell the story.

I started off with the, with the legend called Pakaaskokan, that is the skeleton. It is
one of the mystery. So in order to be able to make it important, I had to include our First
Nation Omushkego, their what do you call this, shamanism. Can I call it, there’s no
words that can fully describe what it is, shamanism is the only word that I can use. I
could say conjurers, and conjury, or mitewin is the right word for me. It covers
everything. Mitew is a person who acts, who did, who conjures, who tries all that to have
control. Mitewin is, is that thing, how do you do it? How do you acquire the, how do you
begin one? Why is it required?

Well, it is required for many reasons, one of them is for defense system,
protection and provision and many others for the human needs. But it has to have a
control, controlling system. It has to be controlled, it has to be, it has to be controlled by
human, human intelligence. No one is supposed to have it control him, because once it let
you, let it control you, your mind is not working. Your mind will be just gone. You’ll
begin totally mentally retarded person, or even, you are even dangerous, because you
know quite a bit now, because you have lost control, you have, you could be very mean
person, very bad person.

That is what it requires, a well structured instruction by some advice, expert
advice from the people who are old, elders who have understand how this thing works,
and what will happen to prevent some mistaken, mistake, to prevent some disaster or to
prevent of a total loss control, you have to have a guidance, and when someone is
supposed to have it. But not everybody’ supposed to have it, only those who are gifted.
There were some ordinary people in time past, there were lots of ordinary people that
didn’t need to bother, but they had it in their system, they could just simply get it out if
they need it. But there were those who just actually interested and really enjoyed it, and
some people were use it for their own benefit. They misuse it too, and they were the bad
ones. But the good ones, we do not hear their, their action. They’re not in the story, only
the bad ones.

But it was necessary, it was necessary for a man to have it, for a woman can have
it too, but it’s necessary for you to have it so you can save yourself from the harshness,
uncertainty of the land where you live. Because you have to be on guard, just like the rest of the animals, animals do that. Caribous has the long legs and strong muscles to defend themselves, so they can use the speed to get away. And then there is wolves, who have a very dangerous being to be sick with rabies, they can kill you easy. You could actually fight them also. But there the seasons very strong and powerful, whether you managed to kill one and he can put his teeth on you, that’s it. And there is no vaccine, there is no medicine against it.

So, there is no Native people didn’t have any scientific discovery. They didn’t find something in thorough search or study of something, no. They didn’t have time to do that. They didn’t have psychology, or what is it called, psychiatry, it means to study the mind, why it works, no, that’s not necessary. All they did was to study the mind how it can be used to overcome the physical limitation of person, because you need more than physical powers sometimes, in order to survive in the harsh land, where the Omushkego have lived.

So they actually require at least among some, or if a person is by himself, he just necessary automatically apply it, especially those the young people who are homeless, who are orphan, they’re the ones who usually get full power, or full measure of such protection. And this is a gift from somewhere. The our ancestors, the Omuskego people, yes, they did understand the evil they did understand the goodness, they did understand, but the evil, to call it the devils, or the hell, no they didn’t have that. Why is it? They don’t know. None, not whatsoever the Omushkego have ever mentioned about the fire where the human souls are tortured and thrown out forever, no, they didn’t have that. They didn’t have no, no devils that teach them to be bad, no.

I mean, I mean in general, if they were 100 hundred people in the area, maybe one out of them would be bad. That is an ordinary condition. But if there is a famine, if there is a starvation, if there is a poor year, number of four years poor, and the land is poor, yes, out of a hundred there may be five cannibals to be starving. Not by their wishes, but by the, by nature’s force. Each humans will be forced to eat their children, if there’s no food. And once they do that, then they’re not normal, unless you can heal them, and someone can heal them, they can return back to the normal. Or, they can be all just died. And the rest the survivors can live on it. Now this, that is one of the reasons that the
shamanism has to be included in the life, but the shamanism can be very, very good, can be protection, can be good defense, can be an offense also, but the proper way, not for the, not for the individual satisfaction or pride, no.

Now, let me explain a little bit more the, the ways the Omushkego people have done and are capable to do in times when they had their own ways, their own culture, their own spiritual belief and practices. There were those who were able to use many things, there were those who are a multiple, powerful shamans, or there were those who have accomplished many, or should I say, there were those who hated to, perhaps we make dreams come true, dream visions. There are those who can do that. What I mean to say is that there are those who are able to do whatever they wish to accomplish. There are those who were able to use other things to do what they want, rather than using their own full mind power.

I was saying before this that some shaman can project themselves in a place where they want to be, that’s one way. There is another way, that is they can use animals, they could use birds, they could use fish, underwater creatures, and the birds that fly in the air. And the animals that walks on the ground, the bugs, the bugs that fly, the bugs that walk, the bugs that are, that are in water. They can use these, in many ways.

Let me tell an awful story about a shaman who uses the bug to kill his enemy. This is supposed to be a true story, it happens after the European came in. There was this, a young man, who usually bothered the strangers, he always provoking them, in order to get them mad, so they can go after him, so he will exercise his power, this kind of person was exist. So he met the strangers out there, some other location, and he insulted them by words. Even one time, he make fun of the elder one time. He threw a small bug into his cup as he was drinking, and he laughs and he startled him and he says: “Look at the bug in your tea!”

And the old man look at it, and he saw yes, but he was the one who threw it in. So the old man just pick out the little bug and put it out in the cup after that. And it so happened in about in a few, a few, a few “moons” later, I guess the term that was used then, this young person went out into his own homeground, and he was just has forgotten all about this. Then he went down to live and trap and all that in the fall, and one day he came home from hunting, and he began to feel that’s he’s being watched. This was in the,
in the fall, and it was early in the spring that he saw the stranger that he make fun of, and by this time, this stranger was far distance away, probably in his own homeground.

So, when he was, when he came home he has been bothered by something which he didn’t know what it is, but he knows he was bothered by someone. So he came home, he was going to prepare himself on how to defense himself, and he was very hungry and he ask whoever there that look after him to make a soup, make a soup for him from some kind of animal and he eat. When he was eating, he was just eating without watching and then just spooning, spooning whatever he eats, and all of the sudden one person saw a bug in his spoon that was running around. This is the underwater bug that usually run around in the water, and the kids, they say: “Look, in the spoon there is a waterbug!” And the man didn’t even know he just spoon it into his mouth watching the kid who’s speaking to him. And in goes the bug. In a few minutes, he just lean over to, in front of him, and vomit the blood, and on, and on until he died.

And when he died, people wanted to know what happened. And it’s just come in from outside, so they concluded that he must have strained his lungs because he walks too far, in the cold, cold winter. So there is a word for that. As they were preparing the body to take it out, and put it away, the bug was still in there, and that the ground in a bit of a something, some of the blood was holding and there was meat and all this stuff with it, and the same youngster came in and says: “Look at the bug. The bug that went into his mouth.”

And there was this bug, somewhere walking around in there in the blood, and went into the ground, disappeared. So there is that small item. But he did, a few moons ago, the young man, he had made fun of the elder, he had thrown the bug into his cup and tried to get him scared and startled him. The old man gently just put away the little bug, but he was already been insulted. The young man didn’t know that. So he died of his mistake. So, that’s one thing that the shaman can do, and this old man didn’t seem to be powerful shaman at all, simply gentle going old man. And it was believed it was him, who killed the young man in revenge for what he has done to him. So there is that unforgiveness and unforgiveness of each other, by having such power.

So that is one thing, that how is similar in today’s stories and any nationality, even advanced nationality, even the intelligent people use a poison to kill each other,
which usually just make a person collapse with poison. Or this is a similar story. And there are many stories like that. There are some, some that is much more powerful and much more dramatic, and much more scary and unpleasant, which today could never be possible at all, and no man can train himself to do that today. It may not be, it could be, but who would wants it? We all know today that the state of our minds’ development and many other things. We, we know that we should not kill a person so vividly as it sound. But they have to be some measure of justice or judgment. And that is why today, it’s applicable that kind of life, for the First Nation. Cause we have already left that kind of life, we have already, it’s already behind time, and it’s not necessary to exist anymore.

How would the world survive if everybody has a power to kill someone with a bug? Just by his own mind, or is it happen, or did it happen, or can it be done again. No, it’s, it’s not the thing to wish. Many elders who have understand the shamanism say today, maybe it is a good thing, it is past, because we don’t know how it’s going to be, if it was there. But it is one of the strangest things that I ever heard from the Omushkego elder is this. He says the past, what has happened was suitable at that time. And he says, the world is changing. Maybe the past is the past, and the new way of living may have to come. So that was a statement that I usually remembered by this elder who say that. I think it is true, maybe the past must be past by looking at many things that happens in the past. They wouldn’t fit to exist today, in the world the life goes today. It wouldn’t be nice to have it.

Well, that is all I am going to say about this for now. I may have, I have a lot more to tell. I have so many ways to tell about these things, which has been told to me by my elders, which has been, which I have heard amongst the elders, is another word. It’s not what they tell me, it’s how I hear them say it amongst themself, the elders. I have seen that. And now, I must say farewell, and thank you for listening to this tape. My name is Louis Bird, I am living in Peawanuck, Ontario. Today is December 7, 1999. Farewell.