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Aqtuqsiinniq

I was little, maybe around five years old, when I started to think I was not a little baby anymore. I used to dream a lot while I was sleeping. It seems like I was dreaming nearly every night. I used to be scared of the dark, and during the night, I had mostly scary dreams. In the daytime, when I was going for a nap, I had mostly happy dreams. I used to dream a lot about wolves, dogs, or anything that had sharp teeth. A few times in my life I experienced aqtuqsiinniq, but not a lot.

Once, I had this aqtuqsiinniq at night, in my dreams. I was just walking and there was a dog in front of me, about five feet away from me, walking towards my right side. I was just walking too, minding my own business, and suddenly I saw this dog in front of me. As I was kind of scared, I told myself, “It’s only a dog,” but it stopped and looked at me with its red eyes and said, “You think I am not real.” I started to run right away, still in my dream, while the dog was just standing there. Somehow, I slipped and fell to the ground. The dog started to run towards me with its sharp teeth showing. I could not move a single part of my body. All I did was scream for help and watch the dog. It kept trying to bite me and I finally woke up lying on my bed. I was still unable to move, even a little bit. I was just breathing hard with my heart beating fast. About two minutes later, I started to be able to move, feeling a bit shaky and weak.

It was my first time experiencing aqtuqsiinniq and I will never forget it. I experienced this a few times after that. It was a bad experience for me as it must be for anybody who has gone through this. It felt so real in the dream. It makes your body unable to move for a few minutes.

Andy Ootoova
Dreams and Dream Interpretation

The way one perceives the world, and one’s environment, is in large part shaped by one’s culture. In many societies, dreams and visions are considered the link between the visible and the invisible universe. This is often the case in cultures that have or have had a shamanistic tradition (Perrin 1997).

The dream experiences of younger Inuit in contemporary Nunavut have never been directly addressed in the literature. Research into dreams has been conducted in other circumpolar countries, usually from a medical perspective which tends to focus on dreams in relation only to illness. This volume explores the knowledge and experiences of elders with that of younger Inuit, from both an anthropological and cultural psychological perspective.

Written accounts of dreams in traditional Inuit society are also uncommon. Anthropologists rarely paid attention to this aspect of Inuit culture. Knud Rasmussen mentions dreams occasionally in the reports published after the Fifth Thule Expedition in the 1920’s. Although much of Rasmussen’s work was used by other researchers studying specific areas of Inuit culture, his accounts of dreams in traditional Inuit society, surprisingly, remained unexplored. In this introduction we will present information and comments on dreams from the elders interviewed and also from other relevant sources.

It must be noted here that Pisuk and Ka&ak accorded, in general, a greater importance to dreams than did Agiaq. Whether this reflects a regional cultural difference between the Igulimmiutak Agiaq and the Kivallirmiutak Pisuk and Ka&ak or simply their life experiences, is difficult to assert and would require further research. The reader must be aware that the information and comments presented here reflect personal, familial and local conceptions or practices that don’t necessarily apply to all Inuit across Nunavut. This is a point that the elders repeatedly insisted on by underlining regional differences in each other’s discourses.

Part One of the book deals primarily with sleep, the body and the tarniq, as well as with death, burial practices, and the naming of children. It also introduces the biographies of Ka&ak and Pisuk.

As Pisuk describes it:

While we are alive our tarniq is just a pullaq, a bubble. When I die my tarniq will no longer be a bubble. It will become the way you see me. If you saw me in dreams you would recognize me. My tarniq will have the same appearance as my body but without bones. It will not have any substance.
The person’s *tarniq* belongs to an invisible world. According to Ka&ak, *siniktuq*, sleep, was also called *kujjaajuq*:

It’s a term for being asleep. It’s an old word. Most people today use the word *siniktuq*. Most people sleep during the night. Some people are able to see people sleeping as the *angakkuit* see them. They see them sleeping at an angle with only their head touching the bed.

Pisuk, who had this ability, remarks:

*Kujjaajuq* is a very old term in Utkuhikhalingmiut and Nattilingmiut. I think the term refers to the *tarniq*. It is when a person who is sleeping only has their head on the bed and their heels are up in the air. It is as though their bodies were stiff, whether they’re children or not. There was one child I saw sleeping, a young girl. I didn’t recognize her. She looked at me and she smiled. They say it’s not possible to *tirliaqsijuq* children, observe them without them being aware, because they know what you are doing. Since then I have tried not to look at people while they are sleeping because I want to have grandchildren. They say that anyone who has a tendency to *tirliaqsijuq* can have difficulty having children and grandchildren.
In the Iglulik area, Rasmussen (1929: 93) recorded a similar concept related by Ava:

“... when a man sleeps, his soul is turned upside down, so that the soul hangs head downwards, only clinging to the body by its big toe. For this reason we believe that death and sleep are nearly allied; for otherwise, the soul would not be held by so frail a bond when we sleep.”

Agiaq comments:

If a person’s tarniq were to leave the body while the person was asleep the tarniq would be able to see the body it had just left behind. The body would appear hollow, as if it had no insides. If the tarniq really did love its body and decided to return to it while the body was still asleep the person would be aware that that had happened. If the tarniq had really left the body behind the person would die. Our body is just a casing for our tarniq. The body is where the tarniq resides. The tarniq is a spirit without any substance. If the body were to die the tarniq would take on the appearance of the body and would be recognizable as that person.

This invisible state could be accessed through dreams. Accordingly Pisuk says:

When I’m dead and you dream about me, you will recognize me in your dream but my tarniq will have left my body. We will look like who we have been but without bones. I’m speaking as a Kivallirmiutaq, someone from KivalliQ. They say that if someone was sick it was because their pullaq was getting too far from the body.

Through one’s dream a tarniq that once belonged to a person now deceased could manifest its desire to live in the visible world again. Agiaq comments:

If in your dream a deceased person says that they are thirsty, this means that they want someone to be named after them. If their name is carried on, they will continue to be able to drink, to quench their thirst. Still today we follow this practice of naming, giving the name of deceased people who want their name given to newborns. If their name is not given to the child, then the child tends to be sickly.
Ka&&ak also remembers:

I used to dream of my husband’s deceased father. Apparently he wanted to be named. He wanted to be with his son. That’s why my children were dying. When I dreamed of him the last time, I dreamed of us passing by him between Igluligaarjuk and Kangiq&iniq. In the dream he was constantly busy. I would often talk about this dream with my husband. Because my husband and I were young we would listen to our parents and it would be up to them to decide what to name our children. I never told them about the dream I would have when I was pregnant. My husband said because none of our children carried his father’s name that might be the reason our children weren’t surviving. When we had our next baby it was given my father-in-law and my stepmother’s names. From then on our children continued to live.

As was recorded by the anthropologist Svend Frederiksen, the angakkuq Qimuksiraq, who was Ka&&ak’s husband’s paternal grandfather, explained:

The shadow, the tarniq, and the name are only one. (...) Children received names in order to have a tarniq (in Saladin d’Anglure 1997: 57).

The source of dreams may be connected to the tarniq, which is upside down while a person is asleep. Even though he sees the origin of dreams as a mystery, Pisuk however mentioned that: “Maybe through the eyes of our tarniq we are seeing what we are dreaming.”

In chapters four and five, Ka&&ak and Pisuk respectively talk about their lives. Both were given the ability to dream. Pisuk, while a teenager, was trained to become an angakkuq, but, as he stated, his training was stopped:

The angakkuq Nagjuk was very displeased with my uncle because he didn’t want me to become an angakkuq, so he told me I would be able to have dreams which would come true. I think because of that I have these dreams. Sometimes when I was out hunting land or sea animals, if I was having difficulty and not being successful, then I would dream of a rainbow. This was not just me, a lot of other people could find things out that way.

Although Ka&&ak didn’t follow her father Anaqqaaq who was an angakkuq, he told her she would be able to dream. One of the dreams she told was the following:
When my oldest son fell in the water I dreamed he was walking around in a hole. When I woke up I told my husband about my dream. I wondered why I had dreamed of my son. I thought maybe he had fallen in the water and drowned. The next day we indeed heard he had fallen in the water. Some dreams really do come true.

Part Two deals with many different aspects of sleep and dreams. The elders talked about different dreams, sometimes comparing them to other means of help an individual could access. In general, dreams were described as contributing to a person’s awareness and as being helpful in many different areas of life. The elders also talked about itilimaniq, sleepwalking, about the angakkuaq’s helpers, the tuurngait, and about dreams and shamanism.

Throughout the interviews, the elders compared dreams to contemporary items such as radios that allowed one to receive news from people living in other camps, or airplanes to spot animals on the land. Pisuk says:

I used to have many dreams, not a lot but quite a few. In those days we didn’t have any type of electronic communication. We had to depend on our own resources. We lived in tents and snow houses. Dogs were our principal means of transportation. Even now, if I was sleeping and I saw a
small rainbow coming close, I could use it if I went caribou hunting, but I
don’t have any need to anymore. I knew what that rainbow meant. We were
told to forget the things of the past, but I haven’t forgotten them. If we were
out somewhere where there were no caribou, and I dreamed about a little
rainbow, then I would know that we were going towards caribou. Sometimes it would be a one-day trip from camp, so we would have to
sleep along the way. We would be able to go where there were caribou
based on my dream. There were others who had more capabilities who
were able to see clear weather. I’m not trying to brag, but I used to see a
little rainbow. Because I never learned how to pass the ability to use the
rainbow on, I am not able to give it to you. If I had learned how, I could
have passed it on to you.

Some niriujaarniiit, premonitions, were described as a means of helping to find animals
for food. They could occur in dreams, as Pisuk explains:

Niriujaarniiit are not scary. I experience them quite often. For instance, if I
was going to go out to the floe edge, maybe I wouldn’t catch a seal. Maybe
I wouldn’t be successful. In those days we relied on country food. I’m not
that big a man. If I dreamed about a man with terrible skin that was brown,
and the man looked fat, then I would know that a walrus would be killed.
I’m not a good walrus hunter. I don’t catch that many. If I had a dream
about a woman who was beautiful, who didn’t smile, sitting down at the
floe edge, then I would know that I would get an ugiuk. In the past if you
were not successful at getting caribou you walked a lot. If I were to avuujijuq,
then my father or mother would say that I was going to see a caribou. There
were three types of niriujaarniiit that I experienced.

According to Agiaq, the importance of a dream largely depends on its veracity. The
dream might simply seem true. Agiaq insisted on this point:

Sometimes you can have a dream where you think you are awake. Those
dreams are easy to remember and talk about. Some dreams will come true
while others are of no consequence at all.

In this case, the difference between a true dream and a vision, a takutitauniq, is a matter
of degree, depending on whether one is asleep or awake.
For Pisuk:

When you are **sinnaktuamajuq**, dreaming, it seems like something is real, but **takuitiitaniq**, a vision, is even more powerful. People might think you are an **angakkuq**.

A dream that seemed true, was indeed true, and could inform one of future events. Pisuk added:

As Agiaq said, sometimes you have dreams where you seem to be awake. These can be dreadful. This summer I had a dream about four men in a boat. In this dream the boat had tipped over and it was resting on its mast. The wind blew it upright again, but it then once more tipped over. The first time it tipped over the four men managed to stay aboard but the second time it tipped over it was smashed against the rocks and the boat started to break apart. Two of the men were pushed ashore by the waves, but the other two were lost. As soon as I woke up I told my family about the dream I had. I told them not to talk about my dream with others, but I felt that there was probably going to be a boating accident that summer and two of the bodies would be found, but that the bodies of the two younger ones would not. Although I knew I was not going to be the one to cause the accident, I still knew that because some of my dreams came true, this accident was a real possibility. When you come to understand your dreams, you feel as though you are making predictions.

In some cases the interviews revealed concepts that are radically opposed to contemporary western ideas. An excellent example of this is the nightmare, which is often perceived as a negative experience, a bad dream, a scary dream.

For Agiaq, a scary dream could be a positive experience:

If you have a dream where you have been scared and you remember it, it could be useful. Some days you have dreams that you remember having had.

Pisuk didn't understand at first what was meant by “bad dream” in the interview questions. But in dreams, as Ka&ak concluded from her own experiences, the meanings are often the opposite of what they appear in the day life. Pisuk then explained:
I think I now understand what you mean by having bad dreams, *sinnaktuumarlangniq*. When you have bad dreams, you don’t want them to come true but they usually do. If I had a dream about people dancing, there would be a contagious sickness that would go around the community. If I dreamed about people playing ball, those who were very happy people would end up playing ball with something that would cause them a lot of grief. I had one dream where people were pushing others off a cliff. I would have this dream and think I was awake. It turned out there was going to be a sickness where many people were going to die. I started hearing Glad Tidings people in Kangiq’siiniq saying that they could hear the souls going to heaven. When you know the people involved you know that not all souls go to heaven. There are those that you envy, those that observe Sundays and go to church. Some might try to go up to heaven but they fall down the side of a cliff. I’m telling you the truth about this. Sometimes I dream about older women with a pinkish tinge. This means their *tarniit* are happy. They are floating around and they are happy. Then there are those who are being wrapped in anchor chain made of cloth and pushed off the side of the cliff to where they should be. Those people are the ones who will be able to help their children and their grandchildren much better.

According to Ka&ak a term close to “déjà-vu”, *tautuqquutuq*, corresponded to something that would allow an *angakkuq* to see another person’s wrongdoings when a *tuurnqaq* enabled him to see them.

*Qavoangniqsaujuq* was another type of dream, related to wrongdoings that were not disclosed. According to Pisuk:
Qawangnisaajuq is when you are dreaming while you are awake. Someone says they are dreaming about another, and brings up something the person is embarrassed about. I don’t know how you would say it in your dialect. Some people had things they were not able to talk about and someone else would try to help them by bringing up what they were embarrassed about. When a tuurnqaq is strong, and is a good tuurnqaq it will make itself appear as a person and will say what the other person is unable to talk about. I have had some people come to me and say that they were having dreams about me. I would kakillaaqjuq, have shivers.

In desperate situations, people who were lost on the land have also used dreams, on rare occasions, in order to find their direction. The elders also recalled using a qinnngarniq, a shouted prayer, as well as Christian prayers.

Agiaq also indicated that dreaming of an elongated grave or of a hunting tool that had broken were interpreted as signs that something bad such as a relative’s death was going to happen. Ka&&ak added this was also true when one saw a person whose body seemed elongated.

Amongst many aspects of sleepwalking, Agiaq and Pisuk underlined the fact that those who experience itillimaniq see things that others don’t. According to Pisuk, the experience of itillimaniq could also contribute to someone becoming an angakkuaq.

Tuurngait, the angakkuit’s helpers, were able to appear through dreams and could be useful. According to Pisuk:

... they’re real. You can feel them. Helpful tuurngait can wake you up. I can’t explain this very well, unfortunately. Some tuurngait are able to wake you up. We didn’t have telephones, or two-way radios back then. The tuurngait were able to tell us through dreams where there was game. I talked about the little rainbows that I used to dream about. I’m not sure if it was Nagjuk or my grandmother who gave me this ability. I don’t have that dream any more because things are much easier today. We have powerful outboard motors and Hondas and Skidoos, so we don’t need to use some of the things that we used to.

But if tuurngait were able to act as helpers when they appeared in dreams, they were also sometimes dangerous. In the chapter about tuurngait, Agiaq relates how, in one of his dreams, he had been touched by a tuurnqaq and subsequently lost his strength. Ka&&ak states:
My parents said when people were asleep at night or when there weren’t any people walking about, the tuurngait were more active. If they were bad tuurngait and the person who was sleeping was unaware of them, they could make the person sick. The tuurngait would differ from each other. The good tuurngait would help people.

While for a person, being given a name was equivalent to receiving a tarniq and thus a life force, inuusiq, receiving a tuurngaq provided someone with additional strength, knowledge and abilities that could lead one to be recognized by others as an angakkuq. According to Pisuk, some angakkuit had tarniit as helpers, although most of the time they had tuurngait. He further explains:

What I have heard is that sometimes when a person dies their tarniit, their souls, don’t go anywhere. When that happens a tarniq can become a tuurngaq, an angakkuq’s helper.

Mary Kakee, from the Kangiqsualurjuaq area, Cumberland Sound, where traditions might have been different from the ones known to Pisuk, Ka&ak, and Agiaq, relates how she almost became an angakkuq at the time she started to have her children. While she was on the land looking for moss, she saw a polar bear lying in the snow.

I just decided to go ahead, and I went behind the bear, and it looked at me. The bear looked around and opened its mouth, and gave a big roar. At that, I fainted. This was in the morning on a fall day. (Kakee 1999: 66-68)

When she woke up at the end of the day, the place looked disturbed as if it had been the location of a big fight. She didn’t tell anyone about her experience, and a couple of years later returned to the same place and went to visit her brother-in-law.

When I got there, my brother-in-law told me about his dream, about a bear and a person. He told me that he wanted to find out what it meant. That was when I got scared, because it was me that he dreamed about. As he got to his father’s place, he told me to come in, and started to tell what he had been dreaming about. He said a woman was sliding down a hill, and she was also a bear. I had no choice but to tell him the truth, and I said, maybe it was me in his dream. That was what it was like, he said, when I told him what it was like.

This was the time when I started to have a bear cub in my dreams, which belonged to me and I kept it right beside the tent to let it grow up. I found out that this was the thing that kept me able to do the things I can do.
With this, I thought I started to see the land and the camps from above them. (...) I started to have this feeling that I can beat them all. Since they were beating me a lot, now I thought that I had turned the tables. (...) I dreamed about this bear now and then. It grew up as I kept dreaming about it, and it gave me the ability to do anything I wanted to do.

I used a lot of strength trying not to become a shaman because my father didn’t want me to turn into one of them (...) Get it off me, get it off me, I thought, wishing this ability to be a shaman to let go of me. A year later I dreamed about this bear again. By this time it had really grown into an adult. I found that it was the last time I was to dream about it. The bear was not really white, but it was yellowish, and it was really poor. I knew this bear was not my pet anymore, and since then I never dreamed about it again.

About the ability to see people’s tarniit while they were sleeping, Pisuk comments:

Sometimes you are able to rise up out of your body in your sleep. I didn’t know I was not supposed to do this. I was able to start looking at the community from above and I’d go and see people. They looked like they were upside down when they were sleeping. I hadn’t known that this was tirliaqsiuniq. Afterwards, when I was told it was tirliaqsiuniq I was told I was not supposed to do that. If I hadn’t talked to someone about this, then this ability would have become stronger. It would have been bad for me and for my family members.

On the training that could have led him to becoming an angakkuq, Pisuk says:

Qimuksiraq’s brother Nagjuk, Kalluk’s father, wanted me to become an angakkuq. He told me that after three days I would start seeing tuurngait. My akkak thought that I might use my powers to remove people’s tarniit, so he didn’t want me to be an angakkuq. I reached the point where I was able to see the tuurngaaq that the angakkuq was going to fight. After my uncle told me I was not going to be an angakkuq, I didn’t see them anymore. I became just an ordinary person. But there are some things I am not so ordinary about.
The angakkutq Nagjuk was very displeased with my uncle because he didn’t want me to become an angakkutq, so he told me I would be able to have dreams which would come true. I think because of that I have these dreams. Sometimes when I was out hunting land or sea animals, if I was having difficulty and not being successful, then I would dream of a rainbow. This was not just me, a lot of other people could find things out that way.

According to Pisuk:

Some of them were not made into angakkuit through dreams. My father wanted to make my sister into an angakkutq but she was scared. She didn’t want to become an angakkuq. She is only concerned with prayer now.

Those who were made into angakkuit could be stabbed by a knife or something sharp and yet they wouldn’t bleed. I keep telling you that you here, both male and female, are the right age to become angakkuit. Some were made into angakkuit by being stabbed with a knife or by being shot. They say that even though it might look like an actual bullet it belonged to the tuurngait. The angakkutq would shoot the person, drag them out and then start walking with them. When they re-entered that person would then be an angakkuq. Those that were being made into angakkuit didn’t have this happen through a dream. They were awake. Everyone would see this happen, both adults and children alike.

An important ability of the angakkuit was to be able to travel, to other camps and other lands, or to Takannaaluk or Nuliajuk, ruler of the sea mammals. The concept of the angakkutq’s travels was consistent with the concept of sleep and dreams that was expressed by the elders. During sleep a person’s tarniq was in a fragile equilibrium between the body, associated with the visible world and daylight, and the invisible world, associated with sleep time, and night. The tarniq could allow a person to have glimpses of this universe through dreams. Agiaq explains:

You asked if angakkuit used to be able to travel. Yes, they could even go from Iglulik south to Kivalliq, to Baffin Island. They left their bodies behind because their tarniit were taken by the tuurngait. Even though they were just tarniit, they could see clearly.
Pisuk also mentions that:

I haven’t seen this personally, but they say that those who were very powerful, such as Qimuksiraq and Qijuk, would bring their bodies with them.

These abilities are clearly, according to Pisuk, beyond the concept of the dream. Talking about *ilimmaqturniq*, Pisuk notes:

I don’t think they did it through dreaming. If I were to say I experienced *ilimmaqtuqtuq* while sleeping, I would be lying. I don’t think that you *ilimmaqtuqtuq* while you’re dreaming. You could *ilimmaqtuqtuq* and call it a dream, if you did not want to be considered an *angakkuaq*. I don’t think one should be ashamed of being an *angakkuaq*. Sometimes people become *angakkuit* in the same way that others become fervent Christians. You have to really work at it. If you are not earnest about it, you would not become an *angakkuaq*.

In order to prevent bad dreams from happening, Pisuk indicates:

Some *tuurngait* have birds, some of them have caribou we don’t see. Some of them have dogs. They have everything, even polar bears. The *tuurngait* even have people that look like us. The *angakkuit* would say they dreamed about these. They would be bright and become more and more light. They come from all over the place to help. They say that those who become powerful through their dreams make powerful *angakkuit*.

But as noted previously, *tuurngait* could also be dangerous. It was often because they were sent by someone or had been used in a negative way by someone in the past, that they kept on acting in the same manner. Pisuk explains:

Sometimes when adults wanted their young people to be successful in hunting, they would use *irinaliutiit*. They would also *ilisiqsijuq*, hex people. I can’t fully explain this. Sometimes I would have someone going after me, whether it was in a dream or not. Whenever someone was going after me, I knew I could protect myself.
Specific rules could be followed to protect oneself, after having being warned through a dream. According to Agiaq:

I have had a dream about something breaking more than once. I dreamed about my rifle breaking but I didn't give it away. I kept it. I believe I was wrong in doing that. Maybe if I had given it to someone else or thrown it away, my brother Ituliaq would have recovered from his operation. When they removed his lung, the doctors forgot to do something so he ended up dying. When I go back and think about this, I feel if I had given away the rifle he wouldn't have died.

I had a grandchild who I named after my brother Ituliaq. I also called him Tulugaarjuk. He too died. I dreamed that my brand new Skidoo had broken, so I sold it and got another one. I sometimes think because I didn't get rid of the rifle, the dream I had had about my brother was not removed. When I dreamed about my Skidoo, I sold it, but my grandchild still died. I think dreams about something breaking are true because this has happened to me twice. When you dream about something breaking, you should give it away immediately so you don't lose one of your siblings.

Also, a point on which the elders all agreed was the necessity to talk about a dream that is disturbing or thought to have negative consequences. Ka&ak states:

The elders always said you were supposed to talk about your dreams, especially if they were bad ones. I think it's still the same today.

Some of the younger Inuit had dreams that seemed true, in which a deceased relative or friend was telling them to join him or her. Sometimes these dreams could be recurring. If they were disturbing, according to Ka&ak:

(...They had different ways of dealing with it. We would be told to put something with a blade underneath our pillow. (...) They say they are very leery about this, even though they are just tarnit.

As Agiaq said, Christianity brought a variation to this last practice:

Nowadays, instead of putting something with a blade under their pillows, people will put a rosary underneath instead.
In the past however, Pisuk comments:

They say when a person starts dreaming about a deceased relative coming to get them, the family would get together to try to protect the person. This is true. If that person did not want to die, their thoughts could be helped by those who were alive. If a person continued to have that dream they would get together with their family. Then they would continue to live, even though they had had this kind of dream. I am telling you something I have heard, not something I have personal knowledge about.

Ka&&ak adds:

I have heard a little about this. If a person such as my son or daughter, or I, started dreaming about my deceased father or mother coming to get us, we would realize that there was something bad about this person. We would qinugijuq, order the person to leave. When there was a person who was qinugijaujuq, they used an irinaliuti against this person. This is what I have heard. I haven’t experienced this. I heard it from my parents. They would qinugijuq the tarniq of the dead person if they didn’t want it around.

Another relatively frequent threat was ilisiiqsiniq, hexing, which could be done by angakkuit. Pisuk recalls having discovered an ilisiiqsiniq that was put on him, and tells how he remained safe from it:

My father’s brother arranged for me to marry the daughter of his brother-in-law Kajjut. This had been arranged at birth but her father didn’t want me as a ningau a son-in-law, any more. He wanted somebody else. There was this young man who was very agile, who was very good at playing ball. He wanted him as a son-in-law instead. So he put an ilisiiqsiniq on me using an irinaliuti. I dreamed that he took a tube from an outboard motor and was blowing at me through it. I took the tube and bit on the end nearest to me and blocked it. I had teeth back then! I bent the tube and tied the end. I was in front of him.

In order to be protected against ilisiiqsiniq, people could use irinaliutiit, powerful words that were given to them which could send back a hex. They could also use a pittiriipauti, a shield that would protect them from the sight and the power of angakkuit. Pisuk explains:
I remember some angakkuit very clearly. People would say that even though some were really powerful angakkuit, they wouldn’t be able to get certain people. Maybe this was because a pittiriipasauti had been made for them. The angakkuit might want to go after a particular person but there would be something that made them unable to see. They weren’t able to get that person because of this means of protection. This person who was protected would not be an angakkuaq. They would be given this protection by their grandmother or someone else.

Agiaq continues:

When my father was a child, he would be woken up in the early, early morning by being whipped with an old woman’s pants. He would go out in the morning before any one else had gone out. That was his means of being protected.

According to Pisuk:

They were all different. People living in different places had different ways of doing this. My grandmother gave me a necklace made from the front teeth and the claws of a siksik. I didn’t like it and I asked my mother directly why she had given me something from an animal that has lice. She said my grandmother wanted it to be difficult for angakkuit to get at me and so she drilled the teeth and the claws and made them into an necklace and put them around my neck. I must have lost them one day when I was out playing. My mother regretted their loss but my grandmother told her not to worry about it.

My grandfather used the bill of a tuullik, a yellow billed loon. He wore it around his neck. I think it’s okay if I tell you this story that I heard from my father. Around the end of June, when the ice was rotting, Qulittalik wanted to kill my grandfather Miqqulilik. He was coming out of his tent when Qulittalik put a bullet in his rifle because he wanted to kill him. Everybody was watching this. Miqqulilik seemed to start folding into a piece of ice. There was some seaweed there and he just disappeared into it. Qulittalik started heading home because he couldn’t get him. He took off in his boat and then he saw Miqqulilik walking to his tent. He knew he was not going to be able to get him, so he didn’t even try again. They say that those that had a means of protection were dangerous to go after. That’s what I have been told.
Because of all the different means of protection people could have, hexing was seen as a very dangerous practice. Pisuk states:

They say that those who would ilisiqsijuq, would start to lose their children, one after another, when they were not equal to the person they were trying to ilisiqsijuq. Then, their children would start getting sick and would die. I did not even like hearing about these things because you could end up with very few children. Those who did not ilisiqsijuq had many children that were helpful. Someone who would ilisiqsijuq would be ignored by their children and none of their children would amount to anything.

Suicide is a significant issue causing great concern in contemporary Nunavut. Interviews conducted with younger Inuit in the city of Iqaluit indicated that some might attempt suicide after having dreams in which a deceased relative was "asking this person to join the deceased person" or "coming and trying to get them." The students agreed to ask the elders about this specific question, as well as about their perceptions regarding suicide, even though this was for many of them a difficult topic to discuss.

As previously noted by Pisuk, after a person’s death, the tarniq continues to live. If the tarniq doesn’t go anywhere, it becomes a tuurnqaq. The behaviour of the tuurnqaq is generally seen as erratic because it can be good towards the living but also negative or dangerous.

Rasmussen (1929: 201) reported in the Iglulik area that:

After death, they [people who hanged themselves] do not pass to Takannaaluk or to the Narrow Land, nor to the Land of Day, but to qimittut nunaanut the Land of the Hanged, where souls go about with their tongues hanging out. This country is nearer to the land of human beings generally than any other region in the Land of the Dead.

Agiaq also spoke about dreaming of a relative coming to get someone:

I don’t know how to answer this. If I was to dream that my mother wanted me to commit suicide because she wanted me to be with her, maybe this would be because my mother was in a place she didn’t want to be.
One of the students learned that his grandmother, after who he is named, committed suicide. During an exchange with the elders, where some students were talking about their own dreams, this student told about a recurring dream he had. The advice of the elders and their recommendation that the student tell this dream to his father, allowed him to understand the meaning of his dream. I wish to thank him here for allowing his experience to be shared in this book.

Of course, the elders didn’t have answers for all the students’ experiences. They did, however, advise that they should talk with people they feel confident with.

Pisuk also indicated that the meaning sometimes belonged to the invisible world:

I’m not very good at making sense out of dreams. If I’m not given the answer from outside myself, then I’m not able to provide an answer.

Sometimes also, appearances are misleading. Just as one should be very careful about examining a tuurngaq before accepting it during a shamanistic initiation, Pisuk said about dreams:

From the time they are young some people claim they have dreams, and as they get older they become more capable at understanding them. Those who had been told they would be helped by their dreams are still helped today. Some dreams are deceitful and don’t come true.

In cases where a dream couldn’t be understood, Pisuk and Kaaqak mentioned that people were able to consult an angakkuq. The angakkuq was given the meaning of the dream by his tuurngait. People could also consult with the elders.

The truth and reality of a dream isn’t limited to individual criteria but include the individual’s familial and social history as well. Part of this history belongs to the invisible world where elements such as deceased people, animals, or the location in which the dream action takes place, can be interpreted as symbols of individual, familial, social, and historical significance.

The interpretation of the dream provides the individual not only with a link to the invisible, but more generally, with a renewed connection with its global environment. In some ways, the invisible constitutes for the individual a unique toolbox composed of
commonly shared symbols and beliefs, which through the interpretation of the dream, blends with personal stories and experiences. Through its interpretation, the dream thus provides the individual with a strong connection to the community, and to the world at large. Acting as psychoanalytical and sociological triggers, dream interpretation is able to reach the individual in his or her inner world by turning it into a highly social one.

Part Three of the book focuses mainly on uqumangirniq, which is also called aqtuqsinniq in the North Baffin and Kivalliq dialects. This section is composed of interview sessions with the elders on this topic, as well as extracts of the interviews that were conducted in Iqaluit with younger Inuit in order to prepare for the interviews with the elders. It also includes an essay by Samuel Law, describing uqumangirniq from a psychological perspective.

Preparation of this book

In the materials recorded by Nunavut Arctic College students for previous publications, the topic of dreams appeared occasionally in some of the elders’ discourses. The dream experiences of students in the Inuit Studies Program prompted discussion between Susan Sammons, Alexina Kublu and Marja Korhonen, instructors with Nunavut Arctic College, and Samuel Law, a psychiatrist at the Baffin Regional Hospital and Stéphane Kolb, an anthropologist who had completed graduate studies at Université Laval, which ultimately led to the formulation of this project.

From January to April 2000, exploratory interviews on dreams were conducted with Inuit from 15 to 45 years old, originating from different Nunavut communities, who had been living for several years in Iqaluit. The two interviewers, Samuel Law and Stéphane Kolb, paid particular attention to uqumangirniq, which was described by the majority of the interviewees as a particularly strong experience. Those interviews helped both the instructor, Stéphane Kolb, and students of the Inuit Studies Program to prepare for a special topics course on Dreaming in Inuit Culture held during the fall of 2000.
Three elders, Agiaq (George Kappianaq) from Iglulik, Pisuk (Felix Pisuk), and Ka&amp;ak (Salomie Qalasiq) from Kangiq&amp;iniq, were invited to participate in the course. The students conducted the interviews over a period of two weeks, in a classroom which was made as comfortable as possible. The students were Lorna Arnakak, Josie Arlooktoo, Aksatungua Ashoona, Selina Kisa, Johnny Kopak, Simeonie Nutaradlaluk, Andy Ootoova, Trina Qaqqasiq, and Kilaja Simeonie.

During the week preceding the interviews, the students were introduced to the available literature and invited to discuss their personal experience and knowledge of dreams. This helped the students to select related topics of interest to them. The students then worked in teams to formulate the questions they wanted to ask the elders about their chosen topic. The teamwork helped provide a cooperative and constructive work atmosphere, allowed exchanges both within and between teams, and helped to avoid as much as possible the duplication of questions. The students reworked their questions each day with the assistance of the instructor in order to adjust to the evolution of the interviews.

Sessions focusing on the elders’ life stories helped to relax the tension when topics such as uquumangirniq or suicide had just been dealt with. As a biography of Agiaq has already been published in another volume of this series, we preferred to explore his knowledge and experience rather than repeating already published information. This volume, therefore, contains only biographies of Ka&amp;ak and Pisuk, although much...
information complementing Agiaq’s biography will be found throughout the different chapters. The reader is encouraged to consult Volume 2, Living and Surviving on Our Land, for Agiaq’s life story.

All interviews with the elders were conducted in Inuktitut. They were recorded in Inuktitut and in English, without interruption, thanks to the amazing simultaneous interpretation provided in the background by Alexina Kublu. The importance of excellent interpretation and translation cannot be emphasized enough and we are very grateful for the excellent work that was accomplished here at day’s end over a two week period.

The onerous task of transcribing the Inuktitut interviews was accomplished with much skill by students in the course. The English version was transcribed by the much-appreciated work of Noel McDermott and Susan Sammons. We want to thank Roberta Roberts and the students in the Interpretation and Translation Program of the College for the much appreciated help they provided in keyboarding the manuscripts. Nancy Kisa did a fantastic job in proofing, and editing the Inuktitut manuscript. Marja Korhonen and Noel McDermott painstakingly proofread the English version.

We would also like to thank John MacDonald from the Iglulik Research Institute and the Inullarit Society for the material from the Iglulik Traditional Knowledge Database that was provided for the preparation of this project.
Finally, we wish to thank Alexina Kublu and Susan Sammons for revising the Inuktitut and English versions of this book, as well as for their confidence and dedication to the project.

Stéphane Kolb
Samuel Law

Footnote

¹ In Inuktitut and French in the original.
Part One

The Life Cycle
Sleep

We are going to be asking you questions about sleep. When you were young, did anyone ask you if you had had a good sleep?

Agiaq: No. No one never did that. I don’t recall that.

Back then, when you were young, were children told to go to sleep early? Was that important?

Agiaq: Yes. We were told to go to bed early so it wouldn’t be difficult to wake up. That’s why they wanted us to go to sleep early. If we started being too rambunctious sometimes we would be given a slap on the bum and told to go to bed.

What did you do to get a restful sleep?

Agiaq: Especially when we were suffering from snow-blindness, we were told to go to bed early and to sleep a lot. When you have a good sleep your eyes heal more quickly. In the spring, if you stayed awake you would be prone to snow-blindness, so we were told to go to sleep early.

When you became an adult did you sleep right through the night or did you wake up periodically?

Agiaq: As an adult I would want to stay awake but whenever I had snow-blindness I had to go to sleep early. In the spring I couldn’t sleep when I wanted to, when the sun started to shine, and there was warmth in the air.

Do you feel rested after a long sleep?

Agiaq: Yes, with sufficient sleep the body is rested and you are not lazy to do things.

Do you become more rested when you’ve had a deep sleep?

Agiaq: Yes. You wake up more rested after a deep sleep. You wake up more during the night when you are sleeping lightly and you don’t wake up as rested. Sometimes we would be woken up by our parents when we were still sleepy.
As an elder are you still able to get a solid night’s sleep?

Agiaq: Now, as an elder I have difficulty falling asleep. I remember family members I have lost and other things go through my mind while lying in bed trying to sleep. This is not very comfortable. Also, when we would go hunting we were told not to travel when we were sleepy. We were told to get to land and try to rest because the dogs could start walking without being guided and we might fall in the water if we fell asleep on the sled. One time, the dogs stopped at a big hole and when I woke up I was about to step off the qamutiik into it. After that I slept in an iglu and had a good sleep. This happened in the spring when we were out hunting on the sea ice. We needed meat for the dogs and had to hunt as much as we could. We always had to listen to our parents and do as we were told. One time, two of my companions fell off the sled into the water because I had fallen asleep. I had tried to stay awake but I woke up and the qamutiik was tipped over the edge of the floe ice. My companions were in the water but I managed to remain on the ice. It is a very scary experience to wake up and find your companions in the water.

Did this happen because you were overtired?

Agiaq: Yes. We were heading home without having slept at all because I wanted to get home. I was the oldest of the group and I was in charge. That was the reason my two companions fell in the water. When we got home we didn’t tell anyone because I knew I would be scolded. Looking at myself back then, I would say that I was very disobedient in those days.

Are you saying we should listen to our parents and sleep when we need to?

Agiaq: In July you shouldn’t operate a boat when you’re sleepy, because you might hit a piece of ice. This happened to someone before. He hit a piece of ice, and his companion fell in the water and was never found. They were heading home when this happened. The elders usually know what to do in order to avoid danger.

Did children go to sleep early?

Agiaq: Some stayed up late, others went to sleep early. As long as we did not put ourselves into dangerous situations they did not reprimand us much. We were cautioned not to stay awake late at night in the spring in case someone would fall into a crack.
Why is it that adults wake up earlier than children?

Agiaq: Maybe as you get older you need less sleep. When you are young you want to sleep a lot, but when you are an elder you need to sleep less.

Is sleep different now than it was back then?

Agiaq: It is different nowadays. There are so many more distractions, like going to school. I also think the types of food people eat today affects their sleep. People are more lethargic and don’t have the same type of sleep. Those that are self-disciplined are able to control their sleep better than those who aren’t. Some want to give in to their sleep. It is a fact that when you become used to sleeping a lot you tend to sleep much more. Even when you are an elder and out hunting, it is possible to have control of your sleep and wake up early in the morning.

It seems that the more you give in to your sleep the harder it is to wake up. Do you know why this is?

Agiaq: It is not just with sleep. It seems that whatever it is, the more you give in to something the harder it is to take control of it. So it’s just another part of life.

Is there a difference between sleep without dreams and sleep with dreams?

Agiaq: Sometimes when you are scared in your dreams, you want to get out of them. Sometimes you wake up and then go right back to your dream. It seems when you have a dreamless sleep, you are not aware of having slept at all. Your sleep seems to be so much shorter.

Nowadays people sleep in separate beds in separate rooms. Do you think people used to sleep better when they all slept together on one bed platform?

Agiaq: Some people really breathe deeply when they are in a deep sleep and others can’t go to sleep because of it. When we lived all together in one room in an iglu or a qarmaq you would hear people snoring, especially adults. When they were in a really deep sleep you would hear them snoring deep in their throats. Even though we were told not to laugh, sometimes it was hard not to do so.

Is it different now because people sleep in separate beds in separate rooms?

Agiaq: I think so. Because we don’t all sleep in one bed now I think it’s different. Even little children are able to sleep in a room all by themselves.
We usually sleep for around eight hours. Sometimes we want to sleep longer than that. Why do you think that is?

Agiaq: I think sometimes sleep tends to be heavy. It is at those times when you want to sleep more. When you wake up your body seems tired and you feel lethargic. You don’t feel rested. Sometimes, when you are really tired you catch yourself falling asleep. I think sometimes people do that.

When people sleep, can they control when they are going to wake up?

Agiaq: When people are not in a deep sleep, if they have to help to get ready for hunting, or if they are going to go out hunting themselves they can wake up. They can wake themselves up if they know they have to get up.

Can you tell us more about the time when you were overtired and two people fell in the water?

Agiaq: That was a scary experience. My mukaq fell in the water. We had someone else with us. My brother also had his brother-in-law fall in the water at the floe edge.

Did that happen to him because he hadn’t slept enough as well?

Agiaq: Yes. He was very sleepy and he was trying to head home. While he was travelling his brother-in-law fell in the water. The current flows back and forth. Sometimes it’s outgoing and sometimes it is inflowing. It seems to flow under the ice. He was travelling by dogteam when his brother-in-law fell off the qamutiik. They didn’t have a boat with them. They had been travelling and he had fallen asleep. When he woke up my brother couldn’t see his brother-in-law on the qamutiik. He had fallen in the water. His arms were still outstretched but he was being sucked under by the current. He took his whip and managed to wrap the tip of the whip around his brother-in-law’s parka and that’s how he managed to pull him out of the water before he died. It can be very dangerous to travel in the spring if you are sleepy. People end up having accidents in these types of situations.

It is more dangerous to travel by Skidoo than by dogteam because if the dogs fall in the water they can pull a qamutiik out. A Skidoo is very dangerous because if it falls in the water it sinks and drags the qamutiik down with it, especially if the water is deep.
When you were out alone on a dogteam in the spring, if you fell asleep would your dogs head to the floe edge?

Agiaq: No. They would travel along the floe edge. They wouldn’t know where they were supposed to stop, so they would just continue to travel along the ice. They would basically travel in a straight line to where they thought they should stop. When you are down at the floe edge sometimes the ice is not that solid. There are small kangiq&uit, indentations along the shoreline. The dogs would follow along the edge, and the qamutiik would siqqit, and end up falling into a small kangiq&uk.

I don’t understand what you mean by siqqit. You said that the qamutiik would siqqit.

Agiaq: The qamutiik would tilt in the water. Therefore it would end up at an angle and the people would be dumped out. The dogs would keep moving so the qamutiik would end up being pulled out.

When a person is sleeping is it possible to tell whether or not they are in a deep sleep?

Agiaq: When a person is in a very deep sleep it is very difficult to wake them up. You can shake them, but if they are in a really deep sleep they are difficult to wake up. If the tarniq had left the body they wouldn’t wake up again.

When a person is in a deep sleep are they closer to death?

Agiaq: People say this is true. If you were to jolt them awake this could be dangerous to them if they were in a deep sleep.

Is it possible to dream when you are in a really deep sleep?

Agiaq: I think so. Sometimes dreams are very fleeting. When you wake up you don’t remember them.

Does this happen when you dream while in a deep sleep?

Agiaq: Maybe that’s when this happens. Sometimes you can have a dream where you think you are awake. Those dreams are easy to remember and talk about. Some dreams will come true while others are of no consequence at all.
Pisuk, when you were a child did your brothers and sisters ask you whether or not you had had a dream?

Pisuk: Sometimes they did. Because we were children we didn’t dream every day. We wouldn’t always talk about our dreams, but sometimes we would. Because we were children sometimes we would just laugh at our dreams. I don’t know if any of my brothers and sisters have the ability to have dreams that have meaning. They concern themselves with prayer and praying and they don’t want to have anything to do with dreams or shamanism, especially my oldest sister. When I was younger I would have dreams that I believed in, although some of my dreams would be ones we just laughed at.

What do you do to make sure you have a restful sleep?

Pisuk: As we become older we dream less and less. When you are younger you dream more. You are just the right age to learn about this. Whenever I’m asked a question I try not to lie. When I answer I sometimes add things that I have heard to what I know. I am not always able to base my memories on personal experience and that’s why I add what I have heard.

Now that you are an elder, are you able to sleep through the night without waking up?

Pisuk: I myself have never had many scary dreams. I have become an old man and I only have ordinary dreams. I think you young people have a much more demanding lifestyle now. I too was young like you. I too missed my mother like you. I too experienced a time before I had a wife. I very often hear people say armarulik, little woman, trying to put women down, but that really grates on my ears because women all over the world make things happen whether they are Inuit or qallunaat. I too came out of a woman. If I seem to be capable of fixing a motor or whatever, I always remember that I came out of a woman. At no time should we put women down.

Did you sleep better when you were young or do you sleep better now?

Pisuk: It seems the same. The elders used to tell us that we shouldn’t be idle. In the larger camps we would be told to wait until other people went to bed, so that we would go to sleep at the same time as everyone else did. They wanted us to live to an old age so that our children in turn could start looking after us. For example, if any of my children give me a boat or a Skidoo, although I seem to be the head of the household, they are the ones who are looking after me now.
Did children go to bed earlier back then?

Pisuk: I don’t know if children were more active. I was not a model child. One time I found a whip that belonged to an adult and I started playing with it. I was very young. I found it to be a very comfortable whip so I started playing with it. I was asked, “Who does that belong to?” I said, “I don’t know. I just found it on the ground.” Then I was told, “It belongs to that person. Put it down.” So I went to put it down. I don’t know if children today are more active than they were back then. My father, my mother and my grandmother would make comments about some people. They would say, “This person is going to be an offender. That’s why they stay up late in the night.” These people would get others to go along with them. I believe my parents and my grandmother were right when they said that someone who is old enough to have a wife should not stay up late into the night and go around visiting. What I am telling you is not just my opinion. This advice comes from a long time ago.

Did they say that if they misbehaved as children that they would misbehave as adults?

Pisuk: Yes. It was said that children who misbehaved were those that were dragged around by their parents at all hours. I believe this. For example, a child who lost his father too soon would be taken care of by a grandmother. In the spring when the ice would break up she would take him out fishing when he would rather be out seal hunting. He would be reduced to tears because his grandmother controlled his life too much. When he became an adult he wouldn’t be a good person.

Have you heard of people falling asleep even though they didn’t seem to be sleepy?

Pisuk: When we were young we were told not to sleep during the day. We would be told if we slept during the day we would be awake during the night. I envied others who were allowed to stay up late at night. I wasn’t allowed to do this. Even my brothers and sisters stayed up later at night than I did. Those who stayed up late into the night would sleep during the day and ended up with a lifestyle that wasn’t good. I felt sorry for them but I couldn’t do anything about it.

We have choices. I can go home and rest or stay up late into the night.

Pisuk: I tried to listen to what I was told because my parents wanted me to have a good life. My grandmother would tell me to listen to my parents if I wanted to live well. I’m not saying that I always listened, but I think what she said is true. We should listen to the people we are supposed to.

Sleep
Sometimes my brothers and sisters say I am saying these things because I am getting old. My youngest son tells them, “You don’t know his mind, so stop saying that.” My son takes my side. One of my brothers would say, “He says things that are of no use at all.” That brother died in a fire. I have another brother who ended up in jail. He came to me and said that he had had time to think about my ideas and that he was going to try and follow them more. You shouldn’t say things to people to scare them, only to help them. Even though I am an elder, I hear things that upset me.

Are there different types of sleep? For example, someone who sleeps deeply and someone who sleeps lightly?

Pisuk: I think so. Some people have difficulty sleeping. My parents used to ask me why I hardly slept. They wouldn’t be pleased with me because I didn’t sleep that much. If I went to sleep early I would sleep around three hours. That would be enough for me. I’d have around three hours sleep. Now that I am an elder I sleep a lot. I can now stay asleep until the time I should wake up, but when I was young I was not able to sleep a lot. I found it very tiring to sleep for too long a time. If I went to sleep at midnight I would sleep for around three hours. More than three hours would be too much. My grandfather said if someone tended to sleep too much the person would go hungry because their families would be sleeping instead of hunting. Because I didn’t want my parents to go hungry, I would wake up early. There were times when I slept well. But my mother would often ask me, “Why don’t you sleep more?” My father would tell my mother, “That’s the way he is. You can’t do anything about it.” Now that I am an old man I sleep a lot. I stay awake until two or two thirty. I have seven grandchildren that live with me in my house. After they go to sleep, the night seems very long, so I sit around and watch television. When I go to sleep it is around two. My sleep hasn’t changed that much. I still don’t sleep during the day.

You said your grandmother made you that way. How did she make you that way?

Pisuk: In Kivalliq we call our father’s mother our anaatsiaq. She made me like that. She said I was not going to sleep as much as my mother or my father. I believe that words can be used to shape a person’s character. If you were to get a grandchild and were to say to the newborn, “I used to sleep too much in my youth. You are not going to be like that,” then that’s the way they would be. The grandchild would be like that.
Could you shape the child’s character in other ways?

**Pisuk:** We weren’t taught these things. These aspects of our character were shaped for us. There are things that aren’t human that everybody can see, like *ijiraq*, and other things such as *tuurngait*. I am not an *angakkuq*. When I was young I didn’t know what *ijiraq* were. When my wife was pregnant with my youngest son I saw one. I was on my way home from checking my fox traps and there was this woman at a house. I heard that you were not supposed to flee from them or you might die or come close to death, or end up experiencing hardship. My mother and my father, who I loved very much, were in failing health at this time. I told my mother I thought I had seen an *ijiraq*. My father wanted to know what exactly I had seen. There is a place near Kangiqsualujjuaq called Kinngarjuaq. The *inua* of that hill wants to be seen so it makes itself able to be seen. My father asked me if I had fled from it. I told him I had not. My father told me that it wouldn’t make me sick. When my father’s brother had seen it, he fled from it, and almost died. They say that when you see it you are not to flee. Then you would be fine.

A student tried to ask about different types of sleep, but she was not able to make herself understood very well. No one has just plain sleep. For example some people are light sleepers and some people are deep sleepers. Could you talk a bit more about this?

**Kaak:** People sleep differently. Some people need to sleep for a long time and others don’t need much sleep at all. Some people wake up at a reasonable time in the morning while others wake up very early. When we were young we would be woken up when it was still dark because they would start travelling very early in the morning. Some people are able to wake up early.

I have a child named after me, but I didn’t want him to be like me. As a result, he stayed up late into the night and slept in the day. When he got older I told him if he maintained those sleeping patterns it would be difficult to get a job. I told him when he became an adult he would need to start waking up early. He is like this because I have a tendency to wake up too early in the morning. I am like this because as a child I was woken up early in the morning and made to go outside. In addition to not wanting to wake up early, I also didn’t like being female, so the child that is named after me is male.

Are people who don’t need much sleep considered to be *sinnakittut*?

**Kaak:** Yes. When someone is *sinnakittuq*, they don’t need much sleep.
How does sinnakittuq differ from sinnakisaktuq?

Ka&ak: Someone who is sinnakisaktuq does not sleep very well, they wake up easily during the night. They have difficulty having a restful sleep.

Is there a difference between sinnakittuq and sinnarluktuq?

Ka&ak: Sinnarluktuq also refers to someone who doesn’t sleep a lot, but this is because the person has difficulty falling asleep.

Is there a difference between sinnarluktuq and sinnarluaqijuq?

Ka&ak: Someone who is not feeling very well or is in pain and therefore is not sleeping well is said to be sinnarluaqijuq.

Can you tell me about sinnariktuq?

Ka&ak: Sinnariktuq is when a person is in such a deep sleep that nothing will wake them up. When you try to wake them, they respond to you verbally but don’t wake up.

Pisuk: In the days when I used to go out hunting, I liked to go with someone who was sinnakittuq, someone who didn’t need much sleep. Those who need a lot of sleep have red raw eyes when you wake them up before they have had enough sleep. If parents, out of a misguided sense of love, don’t wake up their children when they are young, they have difficulty waking up early when they are older. We were told this by our parents. Those people who have the ability to wake up early become leaders.
Can you tell us about tarniit?

Agiaq: Yes. I can tell you about tarniit because I too have a tarniq. We all have a tarniq.

What happens to a person’s tarniq when the person is sleeping?

Agiaq: If a person’s tarniq were to leave the body while the person was asleep the tarniq would be able to see the body it had just left behind. The body would appear hollow, as if it had no insides. If the tarniq really did love its body and decided to return to it while the body was still asleep the person would be aware that that had happened. If the tarniq had really left the body behind the person would die. Our body is just a casing for our tarniq. The body is where the tarniq resides. The tarniq is a spirit without any substance. If the body were to die the tarniq would take on the appearance of the body and would be recognizable as that person.

Have you ever heard of a tarniq leaving a person behind while the person was sleeping?

Agiaq: If the tarniq left a person while they were sleeping they wouldn’t be able to wake up again. They would seem as though they were sleeping even though they were dead.

Pisuk: I haven’t heard that exactly. The angakkuit could be left behind by their tarniit. I was told by someone at the Catholic mission, a Catholic bishop, that we shouldn’t start believing in prayer so fervently that we forget about our bodies.

Do you know of anyone who died while they were sleeping?

Agiaq: I have heard about this but I don’t know anyone this has happened to.

Can you tell us what you have heard?

Agiaq: They say that a person who has died in their sleep looks like they are still sleeping. Afterwards they find out that the person is indeed dead.

What happens to a person if the tarniq goes back to the body?

Agiaq: The person that appeared as though they died in their sleep would come back to life.
Where does the tarniq go when a person is sleeping?

**Agiaq:** The tarniq stays with the body. If the tarniq left the body behind the person would die. It is the tarniq that keeps the person alive.

**Pisuk:** I don’t really know about this. I think when we are sleeping our tarniit need to stay with us. That’s why we are alive.

Can you tell us about tarniit?

**Pisuk:** I can tell you a little. While we are alive our tarniq is just a pullaq, a bubble. When I die my tarniq will no longer be a bubble. It will become the way you see me. If you saw me in dreams you would recognize me. My tarniq will have the same appearance as my body but without bones. It will not have any substance.

Even though I’m male I don’t have much facial hair. I never had. Because I am old my hair is sparse. When I’m dead and you dream about me, you will recognize me in your dream but my tarniq will have left my body. We will look like who we have been but without bones. I’m speaking as a Kivallirmiutaq, someone from Kivalliq. They say that if someone was sick it was because their pullaq was getting too far from the body. The universe and the earth are controlled by a powerful being that has a bird. An angakkuq would be able to send this bird to bring back a tarniq that had gone too far from the body. When that happened those persons whose tarniit had been retrieved would live to an old age. They had to confess to their wrongdoings before the angakkuq could help them. Not all of them did this. I have seen the tarniq of a person who has just died. If you touch it, there really aren’t any bones. Some of you might have experienced what I am talking about.

Did you say that the angakkuit had tarniit as well, or did I misunderstand what you said?

**Agiaq:** Everyone has a tarniq.

**Pisuk:** Everyone has a tarniq, whether they are an angakkuq or a child.

Did people have tarniit before there were priests and ministers?

**Agiaq:** Yes. There have always been tarniit. People are unable to live without tarniit.
Has this always been known?
Agiaq: Yes. It has always been known. If an angakkug were to put a tarniq into my hand it would look like a bubble. If someone had a tarniq in their hand and burst it then the person whose tarniq it was would die.

Where would the tarniq go after the bubble was broken?
Agiaq: If it was broken and disappeared it would not return. If I were an angakkug I would have to have compassion towards people. If I were to put a tarniq into the palm of my hand so it could be seen, I would have to be very careful with it, because if it were to burst this would be really bad. Everybody has a tarniq, even young children. After a body has been put into the earth the body will decay and go back to the earth. The tarniq will continue living and have the appearance of the body that it had.

Pisuk: When the angakkug Aqaat was sleeping, another angakkug caused the glass in his telescope to break. Aqaat decided he was going to take revenge on the other angakkug. He waited for the other angakkug to fall asleep. It was a number of days before the tarniq of that other angakkug finally went to sleep. When it did he took it because it was just a little bubble, and put it in a rifle barrel. The angakkug shot the rifle and made the tarniq disappear.

If the tarniq was experiencing hardship would the body feel it?
Agiaq: The tarniq has its own ability to think. When our tarniq has bad thoughts it affects our bodies adversely and it could cause us to die. If we start following the bad deeds our tarniq is asking us to, our thoughts seem out of control. I could do things that were bad for me to the point that I wouldn’t fear death any more. Our tarniq is also able to tell us to do good things. It is also able to help us.

Do our tarniit try to protect us while we are on earth?
Pisuk: They are what make us alive. A tarniq is like a bubble. All of us here have a tarniq within us. If our tarniq left our bodies they would stop being bubbles and would take on the appearance that our bodies have. That’s what they would look like. They would no longer be bubbles. If you were to dream of me you would recognize me, but I would not have any bones. That’s the way tarniit are.

Do our dreams come from our bodies or from our tarniit?
Pisuk: I think some come from our tarniit. That’s why we seem to be awake during them. Nobody has ever told me about this but that is what I think.
Sometimes we have scary dreams. If my dreams are from my tarniq, and I was killed in my dream would my body die?

Pisuk: I don’t know. Some dreams are just dreams.

I dreamed this morning that I was stabbed in my dream. Then I woke up and I felt sore.

Pisuk: Some people end up with an illness when that happens.

Do tarniit sleep?

Pisuk: They probably do.

If they sleep, when do they sleep, during the day or during the night? Do they sleep when the person’s body is asleep?

Pisuk: When powerful angakkuit were feuding with each other, one angakkuq would wait for the other angakkuq’s body to fall asleep in order to attack him. When the one angakkuq fell asleep, the other would grab his heart.

Would the tarniq try to stay awake and keep a vigil so that the angakkuq that eventually ended up falling asleep wouldn’t be attacked?

Pisuk: There was one angakkuq that had killed many people. Another angakkuq waited until she fell asleep and took her heart and gave it to a dog that had eaten human flesh before. When the other angakkuq woke up she tried to get her heart back from the dog but was unable to do so. She lived for a year without her heart. She passed away exactly one year later.

That wasn’t the only angakkuq whose tarniq fell asleep was it?

Pisuk: Most angakkuit tried to work with each other and help each other. If there was a bad angakkuq who was known to have killed people then he would be attacked. There was one angakkuq who had started to kill a lot of people. He was out bowhead whale hunting when his penis was castrated by a bowhead whale and he became a female. He was such a powerful angakkuq that he was even able to give birth.

What was the name of that angakkuq?

Pisuk: I have heard the name of the angakkuq whose heart was removed but I forget her name. The name of the angakkuq who turned into a woman was Paumiarjuk.
When did this happen? Who was the angakkuaq related to?

**Pisuk:** I can't provide you with all the information you have requested because I don't know where she was from.

**Who did you hear this from?**

**Pisuk:** I heard this from my father’s brother. At the time he told me about this, he said it was exactly what happened.

**Can you tell us about people sleeping upside down?**

**Kaanak:** For us the term for sleeping upside down is *kujjaajuq*.

**Do you think it is the tarniq that is upside down?**

**Kaanak:** This is just another way of saying that someone is sleeping.

**Do their feet have pillows on them?**

**Kaanak:** No. This is just another way of saying someone is sleeping.

**Could you explain the term kujjaajuq?**

**Kaanak:** It’s a term for being asleep. It’s an old word. Most people today use the word *siniktuq*. Most people sleep during the night. Some people are able to see people sleeping as the angakkuit see them. They see them sleeping at an angle with only their head touching the bed.

**Was the tarniq upside down while the body was lying flat?**

**Kaanak:** Yes. That’s the way it was.

**When I slept yesterday was I upside down?**

**Kaanak:** Yes. Your tarniq was upside down.

**Could you explain kujjaajuq further?**

**Pisuk:** I haven’t seen it happen very many times. *Kujjaajuq* is a very old term in Utkuhikhalingmiut and Nattilingmiut. I think the term refers to the tarniq. It is when a person who is sleeping only has their head on the bed and their heels are up in the air. It is as though their bodies were stiff, whether they’re children or not. There was one child I saw sleeping, a young girl. I didn’t recognize her. She looked at me and she
smiled. They say it's not possible to *tirliaqsijuq* children, observe them without them being aware, because they know what you are doing. Since then I have tried not to look at people while they are sleeping because I want to have grandchildren. They say that anyone who has a tendency to *tirliaqsijuq* can have difficulty having children and grandchildren.

*Whenever we dream, is our tarniq aware of our dream? Can our tarniq be part of the dream?*

**Ka&ak:** Yes it can. Shortly before he died my father was living with us. He said, “I had a dream. My body was here but my *tarniq* was far away high above me. I’m not going to live much longer.” He said, “Panik, I love you. My only daughter, I want to be sent to Churchill. I don’t want to be here when I die.” He didn’t want us to have to deal with his body after his death. I acknowledged what he said. I went to the Nursing Station. He died the day after he was sent to Churchill.

*Do people know when their tarniiit are getting further away from their bodies? Do they want their family members to know when this happens?*

**Ka&ak:** They want their family members to know they’re going to be leaving their bodies soon. Their bodies remain on earth after their *tarnit* leave. When people become elderly they can really feel when they’re going to leave their bodies behind. They will tell their wives, their children, or their grown up grandchildren. That’s why my father told me his *tarniq* was leaving his body. He was letting me know that he was going to die.
Death, Burial Practices, and Naming through Dreams

Death

Before Christianity what happened to a person’s tarniq after they died?

Ka&&ak: Just like people today, our ancestors too had tarniit that were good and bad. Some people were good and some people were bad. They didn’t have wood but they buried the bodies anyway. They didn’t put them in the earth. They just put stones around the body. My mother told me that her grandfather Qakuqtinniq, who she was named after, told her that although he was an angakkuaq, he couldn’t prevent his daughter’s death. He told her when his only daughter died and they put her on the ground, he looked upwards and said, “This is my daughter and I love her. I don’t want her body eaten by wild animals. I would like her body fetched.” For five days they were not supposed to eat, and when the five days were up, they went back to her gravesite. He had said he wanted her body fetched. The skin that she was wrapped in was there, but her body was totally gone. Her whole body had been taken away. Wild animals used to eat the bodies of people who were placed in a grave. This was before Christianity, before Christian prayers. My mother said her grandfather made this happen. His daughter’s whole body was taken away. My mother heard this directly from him.

Can you add to what Ka&&ak has said, Agiaq?

Agiaq: The body was placed on the ground. Some were surrounded with snow blocks. Not all bodies were surrounded by stones.

Did you hear what happened to their tarniit?

Agiaq: Their tarniit did not disappear, they continued living. If the person had been bad it was said he went down below. If he had lived a good life the tarniq went up in the sky close to earth. That’s what I have heard.

Pisuk, can you add to this?

Pisuk: I don’t think everybody went down to Satan in the days before Christianity. The angakkuaq Qimuksiraq had seen his wife and his aunt and uncle, who had died years before. When he saw them they were in a well-kept iglu and his wife was tending to the qulliq. They had everything they needed. He saw them quite some time after they had died. Even though they had not been wedded in church, those who were good remained
together after they died. Some people did not disclose their wrongdoings before they
died. Some people only partly disclosed their wrongdoings. If they kept some of them
hidden, when they died their tarniit were taken by tuurngait. I believe this. I heard about
something that happened from my father and Louis Taapatai. It was a very clear night.
They saw what looked like a qamutiik going up high in the sky until they couldn’t see it
any more. The cross pieces that were higher were much brighter. What they were seeing
was what was to come when Christianity was brought by priests and ministers. The
brighter ones would be the ones closest to heaven after Christianity came. In the days
before Christianity arrived, the tarniit went up to the sky but to a place that wasn’t as
bright. There was one person who went up, who was so joyous, that he was humming
because he was reunited with his wife. He did not want to go back down to his body.
He did not want to go back to his children. There was another person who thought the
man wouldn’t come back so he brought him back.

Do you think the same thing happens to other people today?

Kaak: If they had been good, they would go to the place where there is joy. Those
who had not been good went down. My husband told me about a dream he had. He said
he had fallen into a deep hole. He kept on trying to climb out of the hole but was unable
to do so. He started thinking, if he prayed he would be helped. He turned into a
mosquito and climbed up out of the hole. He said the hole he fell into was an awful
place. He had this dream when he was becoming incapacitated from his illness. During
that time he started disclosing his wrongdoings. He was able to understand, even while
still alive, about the life he would have in the future. He wanted to go to a more joyous
place. This I understood from my husband.

Some angakkuit wanted to hang on to their powers. Their powers started to
diminish with the introduction of prayer. The pittailiniit that are attached to Christianity
are different than the pittailiniit imposed by shamanism. The Christian way of life is so
much more comfortable.

What happens to the tarniit of those who die today?

Agiaq: You mean with Christians? I don’t know, but based on what we have heard,
those who are baptized are said to go to heaven. We don’t know this. We have only
heard about it. There are others who are said to go to purgatory before they go to
heaven. This is all I can say.
Burial Practices

When they were being buried did they put the person’s personal effects with them?

Kaalk: Unfortunately, I don’t know. I never saw what was put onto a grave.

Agiaq: Yes. They would bring things to the grave. I have seen things that were put on someone’s grave. I looked at these things with my father. One was a knife made of antler. There was a harpoon head, pegs that were used down at the aglu and something that looked like a comb there as well. I’ve seen those things at a grave site. I don’t recollect looking at any other ones. There were hunting implements and a bow drill there as well.

If people had not let it be known ahead of time who were to receive their things, were they placed on their graves?

Pisuk: I too have seen things at a grave site. When we would go inland I would travel with my uncle and my parents. Once we travelled by a grave site and there were things there. We went around the grave. My father put something there and he gave me something from the grave in exchange. He told me that nothing bad would happen to me because he had placed something on the grave in exchange to protect me. I have that item to this day. I will probably give it to one of my grandchildren who I feel is good at keeping things. If I had known what I know now in those days, I would have been more aware.

Agiaq: Those of us who are our age experienced the way things used to be done, but we weren’t old enough to be really aware.

You told us about being given something from a grave. Can you tell us what you were given?

Pisuk: My father gave me a rifle butt. He rolled some tobacco into a cigarette and took a match and tied it to the cigarette with sinew and exchanged it for the rifle butt. He gave this to me and told me to hang on to it. I have this rifle butt to this day. My uncle also told me to hang on to it.
If I were to take something from a grave, what would happen to me?

**Pisuk:** We were told not to take things from graves. We had to give something in exchange if we did, even if it were something small. You were not to take something from a grave without leaving something in exchange for it.

*Would it be okay if I took something as long as I left something in exchange?*

**Pisuk:** Yes. Your life wouldn’t be affected by this if you did that.

*What would happen if a child were to take an object from a grave?*

**Pisuk:** I don’t know. Perhaps if a child were to do this, we grandparents should try to ascertain where the child got the object from. Then we should take it back, or take something back to the grave in exchange for it. I’m sorry I’m not very knowledgeable about these things.

**Agiaq:** We don’t want to mislead you, but there are some things we are not really sure of.

**Naming through Dreams**

*Can someone who is deceased tell us things through dreams?*

**Agiaq:** If in your dream a deceased person says that they are thirsty, this means that they want someone to be named after them. If their name is carried on, they will continue to be able to drink, to quench their thirst. Still today we follow this practice of naming, giving the name of deceased people who want their name given to newborns. If their name is not given to the child, then the child tends to be sickly.

**Pisuk:** I also have heard what he’s saying and I believe it. The tarniq of a person who has died is unganiq, feeling attached. I have heard this from my uncle and my mother. You can dream of a relative or friend who has died, and in your dream the person will say that they’re thirsty.

**Ka&ak:** I haven’t heard much that’s different. That’s what the innait, the elders said. If there was somebody close to you, a friend or relative, the tarniq of that person didn’t want to be parted from you. Therefore they wanted to remain with you because they had affection for you. That is true.
When a baby is given the name, does the tarniq feel better?

Ka&&ak: Yes, when you give the name of the person who wanted to stay with you to the baby, and you start calling the baby by that name, then the person that the baby’s named after feels much better.

When my daughters and I started dreaming about my deceased son, we gave his name to a child because we kept on dreaming about him coming home.

Sometimes you dream about a deceased person talking to you and telling you things but when you wake up you can’t remember what they said. Why is that?

Ka&&ak: I think sometimes we are made to forget our dreams. Sometimes it’s quite a while later that you remember a dream that you had. Perhaps, sometimes we are made to forget our dreams as soon as we dream them. There are other times when we wake up and remember what we have dreamed. Maybe whoever caused you to have a certain dream makes you forget.

Agiaq: If a person talks to you in your dream, then you should give that person’s name to a child. My wife has done that. She learned what to name a child through her dream. People talked to her in her dreams and she seemed to be awake at that time. One dream was about my angajurnguq, Qupaaq. That baby carries the name and still treats me the same way. Because we were friends we used to jokingly aqsaaraqtaq, join our forefingers together and pull. When the baby is not cranky he will crook his forefinger at me.

Pisuk: If you dream about someone who has died this can be very meaningful for some people. My daughter used to get pregnant and miscarry after. I thought that maybe she was lisisiqujauj by someone from Naujaat because she would miscarry. Akallakkaq was a nickname of mine. Because I wanted my daughter to be able to carry her pregnancy to term, I told my wife I wanted the baby named after me, when my daughter became pregnant again. My daughter has a qallunaat husband. I didn’t want to say that I had had a dream about naming the child so I hoped that he would have a dream. He woke up my daughter who is a heavy sleeper and said, “Wake up. I had a dream about a boy who wanted to be named Daniel.” He then said, “Our baby’s going to be named Daniel.” The baby who I call Akallakkaq is now named Daniel.
People die in different ways. Is it possible just by looking at someone, to tell if they are going to die accidentally?

Ka&ak: I don’t really know. I can only tell you what I have heard. Now that we are Christian, there is a saying that if you become too fervently religious, He whom we believe in, will come and get you before you have committed a great sin. That’s why some people die when they are young. If they became very religious and their extreme religiousness was going to become fanatic, then they were made to die before they were lost. My son, who drowned, was very religious. He became extremely religious. He started knowing things that nobody else knew about. I warned him that he might die prematurely. He died when he was still young. He was trying very hard to help other people. I’m telling you what I have heard.

Pisuk: What she has said is true. I have been told by two Catholic priests that even if I believed in religion, that I was not to become too fervently religious, as this might cost me my life. I was not to change my denomination and I was not to go overboard with religion either. To this day I can’t forget this. I go and pray with others and go to funerals but I try not to go overboard. I was told I was to pray, but not to ignore everything else in order to do so. I was also taught not to steal, or lie.

Have you heard that if an old person dies they come back as a child?

Pisuk: I have only heard about having to name a child after someone. When we do this we bring comfort to the person who had died. It might not be the same person, yet we treat the baby as though it were the person. We’re comforted by that as well. My daughter has a baby named after my son, and I am greatly comforted by calling that baby irniq, son. That baby calls me ataata, father.

Agiaq: I have not heard of this at all. I have only heard about naming a baby after someone. I have never heard of anyone returning as a baby. I don’t think a tarniq would go back to being a child, when the body that they occupied was no longer living.

Have you ever heard of babies being named through dreams?

Agiaq: Yes. I have heard of babies being named through dreams. I have heard of people dreaming about someone wanting to be named. Sometimes we create those thoughts on our own. Because that person still wants to remain on earth, they want a name. When we dream about them, we will name someone after them without giving it a second thought.
Have you heard about people hearing those who are deceased in their dreams?

Agiaq: I haven’t heard about this.

Pisuk: When I was young, but not that young, whenever I had an inkling that something was going to happen I would hear a voice from above me. I couldn’t see anything, but I would be given thoughts. Different people have different thoughts. Some people ilisirmiaqtuq others because they are jealous of them. Some people are given protection. They say that those who go after other people out of envy can end up killing themselves and their families as well. I was always cautioned not to have bad thoughts about others out of envy. Here in Iqaluit for example, if there was someone who was a very good hunter and he became known and he was able to provide food for his family, someone might become jealous of that person.
Could you tell us a bit about yourself?

Ka&ak: I’m from Kangiqsiq now. My Inuktitut name is Ka&ak. Nowadays, as is the way with qallunaat, I carry my husband’s name Qalasiq. He is now deceased. I also have a name in English. It is Salome.

Where did you get the name Salome from?

Ka&ak: It was the name that was given to me when I was baptized by the priests.

Who were you named after?

Ka&ak: Pisuk’s mother’s mother wanted me named after her. She told my parents when my mother was pregnant with me, that she wanted me to be named after her.
Whether you were a boy or a girl, were you going to be named after her?

Ka&&ak: Yes. When she said she wanted me named after her, my parents knew I was going to carry her name. That’s how things were. When an elder came and told you something, even though you were an adult, you had to listen.

When you were born did you have a sanajji?

Ka&&ak: Yes, they said I did, but I didn’t know her. Iqiutinnuaq, who had Maniilaq as a husband was my sanajji. She shaped my future. I’ve heard part of a story about this but I don’t know all of it. She gave me socks. She took part of her clothing and made me socks out of it.

Where were you born?

Ka&&ak: They say I was born near Igluligaarjuk, towards the mouth of the inlet near Qamanittuaq. It was definitely in the middle of nowhere because they were travelling when my mother gave birth to me. Because they were travelling, a little iglu was built for her and that’s where she gave birth to me.

What year were you born?

Ka&&ak: I was born in 1931.

Were you born in the summer or in the winter?

Ka&&ak: It was in January I think, in deep winter. I grew up around Igluligaarjuk. It was only when I was old enough to have children that I moved to Kangiq&iniq.

Who were your parents?

Ka&&ak: My mother was Qakuqtinniq and my father was Anaqqaaq. My two brothers and I are the only ones who are still alive. My brothers are Ollie Itinnuaq and Thomas Sammuq. Ollie is the oldest. Ollie’s sister, who died, would have been my angaju. Thomas is the youngest.

Were you close in age?

Ka&&ak: My mother didn’t have her children close together. My husband was three years older than me. I think my angaju was around the same age. I had grandparents whom I never saw. They say that they were from the Arviligjuaq area. I have heard that my father’s father was Itinnuaq and his mother was Siqiniq. My mother’s mother was Qaaqaaq. She was also called Suvaksiuq. Kumaksiutiksaq was her father. I never knew them.
Who did you hear about them from?

Ka&ak: I heard about them from my mother and father. They talked about them so I knew about them.

How many grandchildren do you have?

Ka&ak: My oldest child is married with four children. My next has two children. Her sister, my daughter in Yellowknife, has one child, and then I have my grandchild Laura.

How many children did you give birth to?

Ka&ak: A number of them died. If they had all lived there would have been thirteen of them. Two of them were adopted out. One died as a baby. One of them who was adopted out lives in Qamanittuaq, and has two children.

Did you have your children close together?

Ka&ak: Yes. I had them too close together. I gave birth to one after the other. My second youngest child was the same age as my oldest granddaughter. My two youngest daughters and my granddaughter played together as children. My two youngest were so close in age that sometimes I would amaaq them together. Other times I would amaaptuq one of them and carry the other.

Were you having children at the same time as your daughter was?

Ka&ak: Yes. My oldest daughter had her daughter while I was pregnant. This granddaughter has a qallunaaq father.

Did your parents have any brothers and sisters?

Ka&ak: Yes, but I didn’t know any of them. My father had a younger brother. My mother didn’t have that many relatives. She had a lot of cousins but she didn’t have many siblings. She had a stepsister and a lot of cousins. Like my mother, I did not have sisters. I was not raised as a girl. I was raised as a boy. Because I was the only daughter I lived the way I wanted to. I had my own dogteam and a qamutiik and I would go trapping. I had my own trap line. I know those aspects of life well.

Was it because you were named after a man, or was it because you were the only girl that you could do as you pleased?

Ka&ak: It was because I was the only daughter that they let me do what I wanted to. There were chores I had to do though. There was no store-bought material back then.
We had to make our clothing from skins. My parents would work together on the skins while I would go and check my trap line. Even today we only work on skins we are going to use. We didn’t have just one set of clothing; we had to have more than one pair of mitts and one pair of kamiik. Today if we make one pair of mitts, that’s fine. It wasn’t like that back then. People were constantly sewing. If there was a pair of mitts that got damaged, they had to be repaired. People would make igluit out of snow. If one pair of mitts got wet there had to be another pair available for someone to put on. There had to be an extra pair of kamiik to put on, especially if they went down to the floe edge. All the things they would need to travel with would have to be ready. They would have to take material to patch kamiik soles with, in case they needed it. They would always have to have sinew that was braided available. There were a lot of things they needed to have.

Fashion show during a break. Model: Aksattungua; designed and sewn by Kaq&ak.
Perhaps that’s why you are still very agile?

Ka&&ak: I have always been like that. I have never been able to just stay put, even today. I can’t just stay put when I feel like I should be doing something. The only time I stay in one place is when I’m sewing. I even find sewing tedious because I feel I’m sitting in one place too long. My daughters and grandchildren look at me and tell me to relax for a while. They say I look like I am getting tired. Because I didn’t grow up like that, I can’t be like that today. We were raised to listen to our elders. We would be told what to do. We would have to get up and go out first thing in the morning to check what the weather was like. We had to check which direction the wind was coming from. After we re-entered we would be asked questions about the weather. Even though there would be no reason to hurry, we would be told to go out as soon as we were awake. That’s what we had to do. We were also told not to listen to bad words, and to things that weren’t good. We were told not to listen to adults when they were conversing with other adults. We were also told not to say bad things about other people. We would be told many things, not all of them nice. Sometimes we were scolded and told to listen to what we had been told. As children there were times when we did not listen, so our parents would scold us to keep us good, even after the arrival of the qallunaat.

Ka&&ak, you said you were raised as a boy. Did you also have to hunt for your parents?

Ka&&ak: Yes. Sometimes I too would go caribou hunting. In those days we would pisurajaktuq, go caribou hunting on foot when we were inland. We would camp in one place. I would go walking with my older brother when there were caribou close by. I would go with him and my father. They would take me hunting. I would also help them caching the meat. We were told not to just stay put. We were told to keep busy.

I would help my father. When we would go to Igluligaarjuk for Christmas, my mother would make clothing for the trip. My father would help soften the skins. While my brother was out hunting I would be out checking traps. In those days we depended on fox pelts to buy store-bought items such as tea and biscuits.

They would even go as far as Qamanittuaq. The term for going to a trading post is qangmalliqtaq. They would qangmalliqtaq all the way to Qamanittuaq. They would travel from one area to another by dogteam.

After you got a husband, did you continue to act like a man?

Ka&&ak: Yes. There were still some things I continued to do. I had a dogteam even though I stopped hunting with them after I had a child. I found it very hard not to go out with them. But I had to raise my children, and I had to listen to what I was being told, to stay home and raise my children.
When you had to stay home instead of hunting, did the days seem long?

Kaanak: Yes, they seemed very long. My husband would seem to be gone for a long time. The first time I had to stay home, the day seemed so long. Even after we had our children, once we had food and clothing, I was able to travel, to go hunting with him. We didn't go out to work then. We had things to do, like sewing clothing. It was only quite a while afterward that I started to work outside the home.

Do your children and grandchildren know you were raised as a boy?

Kaanak: Yes. They know this. I wasn't very good at sewing. Even after I had a husband I wasn't very good at this because I was raised as a boy and I didn't learn to do these things very well.

Once you had children, did you have to learn these things?

Kaanak: I did learn them, but I didn't enjoy spending time doing them. I enjoyed doing things as a boy and going out hunting instead, but I had to follow what I had been told to do.

You have daughters. Were any of them raised as boys?

Kaanak: Yes, the one who lives with me was. But now she spends her time babysitting so she doesn't go out hunting much anymore. When she was a young girl we had her going out hunting and such. Even now she would like to go out, but she has to look after my granddaughter’s children.

Did you know any angakkuit back then?

Kaanak: Yes. My father was an angakkuq. I always knew from the time I could remember, that he was an angakkuq. I can tell you about him. When I was a child we would travel. Once, while they were setting up a tent I went for a walk to pick berries. I saw this large person. The person seemed very large and I went back to the tent. We had pitched our tent near a grave.

What kind of clothing was the person wearing?

Kaanak: I don't recall what the person was wearing, but the clothing was very white. When I returned to the tent, I had a nosebleed which continued through the night. I started to black out from loss of blood. My father said that an inuviniq, a dead person, was trying to go after me. He said he was going to go and get the inuviniq because it's tarniq was still around. He was going to go and kill it. He fought with the tarniq. Since
he was my father, and I grew up with him, I saw him fighting with things more than once. The angakkuit only used their hands. They didn’t use a weapon. My father had his tuurngait helping him. He hadn’t slept at all throughout the night. The next day he killed the tarniq. I saw what he did. My father had blood all over him, real blood running down his arms. He killed the tarniq. When he had killed something, he would be like someone who was drunk. The angakkuit did not have their senses then. My mother would blow in his ears until he would regain his senses. Then he would clean his hands with urine. After he killed the tarniq, I became better and we started travelling again. That is the first real time I remember my father performing shamanism, when he killed that tarniq.

**Why do they have to clean their hands with urine?**

**Ka&ak:** That was an iliqqusiq of theirs, something that was handed down to them by people who lived before.

**Did they wash the blood off with someone else’s urine, or their own?**

**Ka&ak:** Somebody else’s.

**Were there things you were not allowed to do because your father was an angakkut?**

**Ka&ak:** Yes. I was never to akiraqtuqtuq, say bad things about other people, especially elders. I was never to talk back to an elder because they say the mind of an elder is very strong. If I try to better or argue with an elder, because the mind of an elder is so strong it could make me sick. These were the things we were told. I was taught never to talk back to someone who was much older than myself. This was a major piqujaq that we had to follow.

**You said you saw an inuviniq, a dead person. Was it out of fright that your nose started to bleed?**

**Ka&ak:** Maybe it was because I was frightened out of my wits that my nose started to bleed. I don’t remember some parts of it, because I was so young.

**You didn’t end up with a nosebleed because you fell?**

**Ka&ak:** No. I don’t think so. We unknowingly pitched our tent too close to a grave. I think either my mother or my brother noticed me and brought me to the tent.
Was your father a good angakkuq? Was he scary at times?

**Ka&ak:** He was not as bright as my mother. My mother would tell him, “Don’t use your powers against anyone.” My mother would constantly remind him not to ilisiirmiaqtuq. It was my mother who cautioned him. My father would teach me things because I was his only daughter and he loved me. My father would sometimes try to use his powers against others. He would try to teach me to do bad things. One thing he taught me was to take the dried skin of a lemming and hang it upside down. I could use that as an ilisiirniaruti, something to hex people with. He tried to teach me these things but I wanted to listen to my mother. My mother told me I was to tell her whenever he tried to teach me bad things. There were a number of things he wanted to teach me but I wanted to listen to my mother instead. She always cautioned me about ilisiirmiaritq, hexing people. She said it would shorten my life. If I used my powers against someone and they did not die, my thoughts would come back and kill me instead, or go to my children, and my children would die. These were the things I was told. We were all told these things by our parents. These were major piqujit. We listened to the things that we were told. Some people just ignore these now.

Back then we had to listen to our parents more. Because we listened to them, we believed in what they said. None of their words were written, but we had to listen to what we were told. If we didn’t listen to our elders’ words then we would be doing things that were not right. There was a difference between being scolded and being told to correct our behaviour. We would also be told how we were supposed to act.

Did your children know your father was an angakkuq?

**Ka&ak:** They have heard about this. My children were still children when my father died.

Do your grandchildren know?

**Ka&ak:** Yes, they already know that my father was an angakkuq.

Do any of them ask you questions about him?

**Ka&ak:** Yes. My granddaughter Laura often asks me questions about him.

Was your father not allowed to go hunting?

**Ka&ak:** I have heard that angakkuit were not supposed to hunt that much, but my father did go hunting. The animals caught by different men had different uses. The meat
my father caught was given to those who were sick. He would hunt because he had to participate. Sometimes it was hard to get anything because of the scarcity of animals; they would go out seal hunting but they wouldn’t get any.

_Did the angakkuit used to pull in seals?_  
Ka&&ak: Because they hunted at the _agluit_, they would get seals. They totally relied on seals for everything. They were the only thing they had for heating, and for mitts and _kamiik_. One time they weren’t getting any seals at all. During that time they tried to find out what was causing this. They wanted to know why they had difficulty getting seals. One time, and one time only, even though we had some meat to eat, there was no oil for heating. My father was going to try to get the hunters to get a seal. After they left, my mother said, “I’m going to try too, because we have to have fuel for heat.” I just said yes because I didn’t know what she was going to do. My mother faced the wall and she said an _irinaliuti_, an incantation a bit similar to an _ajaajaq_. She faced the wall on her side, and started making some noises and talking a bit. They were out hunting the whole day and when they came back in the evening they had caught a seal. My father said they had caught a seal quickly and my mother said, “_Aii_.” The next day my father asked my mother if she had attempted an _irinaliuti_. She acknowledged that she had. She had made an _irinaliuti_ to help them get seals.

_Did you understand the words?_  
Ka&&ak: Some of them were understandable.

_Have you had only one husband?_  
Ka&&ak: Yes. It has been a full year since my husband died.

_Is it okay if we ask you questions about your husband?_  
Ka&&ak: Yes.

_How old was your husband when he died?_  
Ka&&ak: He was three years older than me.

_Did he die of old age or was he sick?_  
Ka&&ak: He was sick. He couldn’t swallow anymore. He had cancer in his stomach.
**What was your husband’s name?**

**Ka&ak:** Qalasiq was just a nickname. It was not his real name. His real name was Inuqqaaq. He was named after my father-in-law’s father. His real name was Inuqqaaq. His name in *qallunaatitut* was Denis.

**Was it scary when your father was practising shamanism?**

**Ka&ak:** I wasn’t scared, as I didn’t believe that he was actually an *angakkuq*, because he was my father. I would see him and would think he was just doing things. He would visit when my husband was out training in Ottawa. One time he came to visit me in Kangiqsiq. I put food on the table for him. He sat down and I gave him tea, as I often did. He said, “Panik, you don't believe I am an *angakkuq*. I’m going to show you something.” I thought, “I wonder where he heard that from.” He put his hand over his mouth. When he removed it, there in his hand was something walking. It was a *mingguq*, something like a beetle and it was walking in his hand. I never believed him before. I looked and there it was walking about on the palm of his hand. He said, “You don’t believe me, so look at this.” He gave me his hand, and I looked at it. He put his hand over his mouth again. He opened his mouth and I looked to see where the *mingguq* was. He didn’t seem to have swallowed it. It just disappeared. I believed more then, after he showed me this. Up until then I always thought that he wasn’t really an *angakkuq*.

There were two occasions when he showed me something. The other time there was what appeared to be a child wearing caribou clothing. Its face looked like a *qallunaq*. Apparently he had a *qallunaq* for a *tuurngaq*. That was the other thing that he showed me. It was small.

**You said that your father had tuurngait. One of them was a qallunaat. Do you think it had been a minister?**

**Ka&ak:** It was not a minister. It was from a time before there were ministers.

**Were there angakkuit everywhere?**

**Ka&ak:** Some people were made into *angakkuit*, but only when they wanted this. My husband was Qimuksiraq’s son’s son. He was a very powerful *angakkuq*. Qimuksiraq had wanted to make my husband into an *angakkuq* but because he was young, my husband didn’t want him to. That’s why he did not become an *angakkuq*. He did not want to be an *angakkuq* at all.
Did you regret that he didn’t become one?

**Ka&&ak:** No, not at all. We were very young and didn’t know much about *angakkuniq* then. But he did know that if he were to become an *angakkuq*, there were *pittailiniit*, prohibitions that he would have to follow, such as not eating heart or head. Because of that, I didn’t want him to become an *angakkuq* because I like eating these things. For those reasons my husband did not want to become an *angakkuq*.

**Do you think pittailiniq and tirigusungniq are still being followed?**

**Ka&&ak:** They could be, but because younger people don’t know them they don’t follow them. There are still some who follow them. There are some things that could be followed but young people don’t do this anymore. They listen to what they are taught in schools by *qallunaat*. They listen to their words more. This is what they hear.

**Do you think the angakkuit who said they let go of their power, really let go of it?**

**Ka&&ak:** Yes, when the priests didn’t want them to be *angakkuit* any more, they let go of their powers. Not all of them totally let go of their power. Some still kept a part of it. Even today there are still some who have knowledge.

When you were sick, you were cured by an *angakkuq*. When you were cured, was there anything you weren’t allowed to eat?

**Ka&&ak:** Yes. Those that had been cured by *angakkuit* were not allowed to eat heart and head. You couldn’t even break a leg bone if you had a bone that had been cured by an *angakkuq*. My brother Ilinnuaq had many things he had to follow because he was cured by an *angakkuq*. Even though he had a *qallunaat* father, there were many things he had to follow. Nobody could borrow his clothing. I have never borrowed any of his clothing at all. I have never even put on his mitts as I was not supposed to. Even after we became Christian and Catholic, even today, we still follow this. Even though it’s been a long time since our parents died we still follow their words.

Are you still affected by their words?

**Ka&&ak:** Yes, we still feel them today. They weren’t just about *angakkuniq*; there were other things we were told to do that we still follow.
What would have happened to you if you had used his clothing?

Ka&&ak: If you were to do something you were not supposed to, such as wearing a person’s clothing when you knew it should not be worn, this would affect your health.

Were there people that didn’t listen?

Ka&&ak: Yes there were. We had to listen to what our parents said because they were more knowledgeable than we were. My mother Qakuqtinniq, was raised by her grandfather, who was an angakkuaq. She would tell me stories about him.

If you didn’t know you weren’t supposed to borrow his clothing and you put his mitts on, what would happen?

Ka&&ak: I don’t think anything would happen if you didn’t know there was a tirigusungniq against it, if you did it out of ignorance. Back then they used to have sanajit. His sanaji had been an angakkuaq. Itinnuaq was the father of Uqaqtuq and his siblings.

How would the sanajit shape a person? Would their words be very strong?

Ka&&ak: Yes, their words were very strong. Some of them were not ordinary people, they were angakkuit. Maybe they would be giving one of their tuurngait along with the words. Maybe that’s what made the newborn so strong.

If I were an angakkuq how many tuurngait would I have?

Ka&&ak: I don’t know. They could have a lot of them. Some might only have a few. Some tuurngait could be bad. These bad tuurngait were used to go after people. They said the ones that were used to do bad things became accustomed to this, especially the ones that were used to ilisiiqsijuq people. The angakkuit would use their tuurngait to go after the tarniq of the person they wanted to kill. I heard this from my mother. My father had that little person that I saw and a small animal, one that had the characteristics of a dog as his tuurngait. He also had a muvaq&iq, a little jellyfish, as his tuurnqaq.

Was your mother also an angakkuq?

Ka&&ak: No. she was not.

Can you tell us what kinds of things your father did as an angakkuq?

Ka&&ak: I’ll tell you what I remember. When someone was sick the angakkuit would help them. Even if the sickness was in another dwelling the angakkuq would be given something for his tuurngaq to help heal that person. This object was used to help heal
them. The angakkuq's tuurngaq would help the sick person to get better. Sometimes the sickness would not be the fault of the sick person. It could have been caused by the wrongdoing of the parents. If the person did not disclose their wrongdoing right away, the angakkuq could still see what they had done. Some people were able to state the wrongdoings they had committed immediately. Some people would be ashamed to state their wrongdoings, but the angakkuit could make these be seen. Sometimes their wrongdoings would cause someone else to be sick, such as their child. It was not just the angakkuit that were able to heal the sick. There were other means of help available. Irinaliutit could also be used. My father healed me by using an irinaliuti. These too could help, although they were rarely used. When this was done the angakkuq didn't use his tuurngait. My mother also used irinaliutit. it was a kind of singing, kind of like an ajjaajaa. Both of my parents had knowledge of things that I was unaware of.

Were the angakkuit's helpers tarniiit, the souls of dead people, or were they tuurngait?

Ka&&ak: Some of them were tarniiit, the souls of dead people but most of them were tuurngait. My father had a little qallunaaq that he used as a tuurngaq that was a tarniq, the soul of a dead person.

The one that he called a dog, was it really a dog?

Ka&&ak: The dog's name was Siggulik.

Did he name it Siggulik?

Ka&&ak: I don't really know how the tuurngait got their names, but they all had names.

Since your father was an angakkuq was he able to give you his powers as an angakkuq?

Ka&&ak: Probably. But I never believed he was an angakkuq. I never believed that his powers were real. It turns out that he really did have powers but I didn't believe in them for a long time. It wasn't until he actually showed me that I started to believe.

Could the angakkuit give their powers to their children?

Ka&&ak: Yes. I know he gave some of his powers to my oldest brother. Although he was not his biological son, he loved him. He was named after his father Itinnuaq. He
didn’t give me any powers, because I didn’t believe in him so he didn’t want to leave me any. He would tell me that I would learn about things through dreams. When I would dream something, it would happen. That’s what my father told me.

Were dreams used to predict the future?
Ka&&ak: Yes some dreams would come true.

How were dreams used? Could they be helpful?
Ka&&ak: When my oldest son fell in the water I dreamed he was walking around in a hole. When I woke up I told my husband about my dream. I wondered why I had dreamed of my son. I thought maybe he had fallen in the water and drowned. The next day we indeed heard he had fallen in the water. Some dreams really do come true.

How would the angakkuit get their tuurngait?
Ka&&ak: Maybe some people became angakkuit because they went through extreme hardship. I have heard that my father received his that way. My mother had had another husband and my father had shared a wife with another man. The other man kicked him out. This was an extreme hardship for my father. He was very young at the time. After having gone through that hardship he started becoming an angakkuq. His mother had been an angakkuq as well. Maybe she gave her powers to him.

When a person became an angakkuq would they experience tiredness like ordinary people?
Ka&&ak: Yes. They would get tired just like us. Some of them were able to fly. My husband’s grandfather Qimuksiraaq used to fly. They say that this is called ilimmaqtuqtuq. There was a time when he wanted to go from the Aivilik area to the Igluligaarjuk area. He had gone there ahead of the others using his tuurngag. He had met up with another angakkuq who was also flying. This other angakkuq was a Qairnirmiutaq from around the Arviat area. They were both flying in the air when they met each other. The Qairnirmiutaq flew over Qimuksiraaq. Since he was above him, Qimuksiraaq felt his presence, and he wondered what to do, because the other angakkuq was speeding on ahead. He caught up with him. Then the other angakkuq circled him and swooped down on him and caused him to fall. Afterwards, the other angakkuq came back and Qimuksiraaq went up in the air and made him fall. He was about to leave the other angakkuq behind on the ground and then he started thinking, “That one didn’t leave me behind,” so he went back to him. When both were back up in the air they went their separate ways. He headed home to Arviligjuaq and the other one went in the direction of Arviat.
What do you think they met each other for?

**Ka&ak:** Maybe they were testing each other’s powers. Afterwards, Qimuksiraaq went home. They later moved to the Igluligaarjuk area by dogteam. Although the two angakkuk had never actually met in body, when they saw each other they recognized one other.

**Was it possible for ordinary people to see them fly?**

**Ka&ak:** I have never actually seen an angakkuq fly. Maybe others who had this ability were able to see them flying. Qimuksiraaq was able to do this even when he was an old man. He would travel by air to check his trap lines. His wife was also an angakkuq. When she knew that he was travelling by air she would start singing about him. She made a song about her husband because she knew that he could fly.

**Do you remember this ajaaja?**

**Ka&ak:** It was similar to an ajaaja but it wasn’t. It was not a pisiq either. This was the song of Qimuksiraaq’s wife Pangakkaq. I remember part of it:

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Silarjuup liimma  
The wide world

aullajaarmanga  
seems to move me

ingirraqsurarmanga  
seems to travel fast for me

Aqairainnarmanga  
For he keeps on moving the air for me

Ajaajaa
Ajaajaa
```

She created that song when she found out that her husband Qimuksiraaq had the ability to fly. They were my husband’s grandparents. His father was their only biological son. One time when they were in Igluligaarjuk, Qimuksiraaq had left in a bad mood. His wife went searching for him and that is when he found out she was also an angakkuq. When he had just gotten out of sight she came upon him when he was placing a skin on the ground to sit on. When he noticed her standing beside him, he said, “You’ve arrived!”
to which she replied in the affirmative. Because her husband still didn’t really believe in her powers he said, “Go back home and get some tea because I’ve run out.” The story that is told is that since it was summer she went back to the tent and picked up some tea and brought it back to him. He believed in her powers after that. Both of these people had really strong powers.

You mentioned that your father was an angakkuaq and that he did not give you any power, but that he gave you the ability to dream. How old were you when you got this ability?

Ka&ak: That I remember. I was fifteen years old then for sure.

What were your thoughts when he told you this?

Ka&ak: I didn’t think much about it then because I was young. I do remember wondering what kind of dreams I would have. I wondered if what he was telling me would come true or not.

Do you still have dreams about things that will happen, today?

Ka&ak: I don’t constantly dream, but I do have dreams that come true.

Are your dreams related more to you and those close to you, or to other people as well?

Ka&ak: I try to make sure I don’t have bad thoughts towards others. When I have dreams about other people, afterwards I hope that nothing will happen to them. Whenever there are people who are grieving or going through hardship, I try to go to the family. I try to bring food. I don’t do this for everyone, but I try to help out. I try to bring them something small, something that would be of help.

Can you tell us your children’s names?

Ka&ak: Of my children that are still alive, Joan Alaingaaq is the oldest. Then there is Selina Minngariaq, named after my stepmother.

Who is Joan named after?

Ka&ak: Joan is named after my stepmother Alaingaaq. The next one is my son Gary Tiinnaq who lives in Winnipeg.
Why is he named Tiinnaq?

Ka&ak: Tiinnaq was an old person who wanted him to be named after him.

He wanted to be named while he was still alive?

Ka&ak: Yes.

It didn’t matter to him if it was a boy or girl?

Ka&ak: After Gary was born the old person wanted to be named. After Gary, there is Mary Anqaqaq named after my father. The next one is named after my late husband’s father, Tinnua&uk, Juti. The youngest, who lives in Yellowknife, is named Qilaq.

Is she named after the Qilaq that used to live in Igluligaarjuk?

Ka&ak: Yes. I forgot her baptismal name. I don’t call Joan by name. I call her panik, daughter, I don’t use her actual name. I don’t have a tuq&urausiq for Selina. I just call her Selina. I occasionally call Gary irniq, son. I periodically call Mary ataataga, my father. I only call Juti, Juti. My youngest, who is my favourite, I call my nutaraq, my child.

Your late son Charlie, who was he named after?

Ka&ak: He was named after Pangakkaq. He was also called Putulik. I had him after I had my oldest daughter Joan. I called him irnira, my son. He used to listen well. He never answered back, even when his father was scolding him. His father used to tell him to treat other people well and tell them that he loved them. People used to be comfortable around him because we advised him to be approachable. We used to tell him to be kind to people so they would be kind to him. He used to listen to us. When he used to answer, “yes,” it was in a positive way. The others would answer “yes” but they didn’t always mean it.

Have a lot of your children passed away?

Ka&ak: Quite a few. Kanajuk Kablalik adopted one child that died. There were two other little boys and a little girl that also passed away. The two little boys had bad colds. One made it to Churchill and passed away there. The other one died in the nursing station in Kangiqsiq. The dream I kept having at that time started coming true. I used to dream of my husband’s deceased father. Apparently he wanted to be named. He wanted to be with his son. That’s why my children were dying. When I dreamed of him the last time, I dreamed of us passing by him between Igluligaarjuk and Kangiqsiq. In the dream he was constantly busy. I would often talk about this dream with my
husband. Because my husband and I were young we would listen to our parents and it would be up to them to decide what to name our children. I never told them about the dream I would have when I was pregnant. My husband said because none of our children carried his father’s name that might be the reason our children weren’t surviving. When we had our next baby it was given my father-in-law and my stepmother’s names. From then on our children continued to live. My stepmother really liked me. She never did anything bad to me. When she was leaving for Winnipeg, for what turned out to be the last time, she cried because she didn’t think she’d see me again. She said, “I’m sorry you and your father are going to go through mourning because of me.” I’ll never forget her saying that.

She had been in the hospital in Igluligaarjuk before she left for Winnipeg. Whenever I go to Winnipeg I often think about trying to find her grave. My real mother died in Igluligaarjuk. I found her grave but the cross disappeared, and after that I didn’t know which one it was. I know that my father’s grave is in Churchill. It has a cross with his name on it.

_Sammuqtuk’s late daughter, was also named Alaingaaq. Was she named after your late stepmother?_

**Ka&ak:** She and my daughter both have the same name. Sammuqtuk and my mother were cousins. I really miss my stepmother. She was a stranger because she had been an Uqqurmiutaq. She became my stepmother when I was very young. She was always very good to me. I never wanted for anything, especially food. That’s why we named our daughter after her. Her father really loved her because she was named after his father was well. My husband was very close to two of our daughters, and to the grandson who is living with me. When my husband died I didn’t know how to handle my grandson. He was deeply unhappy so I made sure I didn’t add to his grief. That really helped. My other children also worked at this with me.

_Is he Selina’s child?_

**Ka&ak:** No. He is my daughter Mary’s son. He lives with me. His grandfather really loved him. He lived with his grandfather as he grew up. He would sleep with his grandfather when he first started getting weaker. When his grandfather got really weak he asked him to start sleeping by himself. He would make his bed right beside his grandfather’s and watch over him. My heart really went out to him because he would try to watch over his grandfather with me. His grandfather would tell him not to cry and to listen to his words. He told him never to cry when he was outdoors. He said he
wouldn’t, but after he passed away it was quite hard for him for a while. I would let him do whatever he wanted. People that have deeply loved someone, go through this. I have a better understanding of this now.

When one of our children who hadn’t been sick was taken away, it was really hard as well. My son Charlie drowned while helping Search and Rescue look for someone that was lost. He loved people. I used to tell him to help others. He was out helping people when he drowned. His death really hurt because he wasn’t sick and this happened unexpectedly. It was really hard. I was really taken aback when this happened. I didn’t even know what I was doing. He was my favourite child. Even my husband said he was giving up on me. He didn’t know what to do or what to say to me. That’s what he told me. These things really can be overwhelming.

I got help through prayer. Our house was full of people coming to pray. People would bring food even though I wasn’t even thinking of eating. Afterwards I really appreciated the help. I was really thankful afterwards. I often had my son on my mind. That is why I was often sick. I kept this inside and didn’t talk about it.

After my husband died I finally started talking about it. I was alone and I’d sit down and then I’d start pacing. Because I was in so much pain I’d sit down again. I sat down and I started praying and I clearly remember saying, “Jesus, I have kept my son with me. I kept him in my thoughts. I don’t want to hang on to him anymore. I’m giving him to you. I don’t want to hang on to him anymore because this is causing me too much pain. It is causing me my health. I am asking for your help. I am asking you this through prayer with all my heart.” When I said this, it seemed that the pain was lifted from me immediately. To this day I remember this feeling. Although I still think about and remember my son, I’m not hanging on to him like I did.

I was told by someone older than myself, that if I went to see the location where he died I would feel better; my mind would be more at ease and I would feel lighter. He said I would have better thoughts about that place after that. He also told me that if I totally put my son’s fate in God’s hands, I would feel better. Once again, after having done what this elder had suggested, I felt deep emotion. Since last summer, although I still think of my son I don’t feel as much pain. It turned out that my mind was causing my body to deteriorate.

I too had heard that when the mind was in turmoil the body could deteriorate. Now I really understand what this means. When we think too much or keep too much inside we can ruin ourselves. This I have learned. I feel better after saying this, because it is something I have been wanting to say.
You would be told about things that would happen through dreams. Now that we have electronic means of communication, maybe we don’t dream as much anymore.

Ka&ka: Even though we have these things nowadays there are still some people who continue to dream. Even though young people use phones and such, I know there are still people who continue to learn things in dreams. This is the way it is.
Who were your parents?
Pisuk: My mother was Kukijaut and my father was Inuksuk.

When were you born?
Pisuk: I don’t know for sure, but my birth certificate says June 19, 1932. I’ll be seventy next year.

Do you have any brothers and sisters?
Pisuk: I have four sisters that are still alive. Four of us are old enough to receive the old age pension. The youngest still doesn’t receive it. One of my brothers died in a fire. He was a heavy equipment operator. He was a much better hunter than I was. Originally there were ten of us. I lost a lot of other relatives in the fire that my brother died in.
What are the names of your brothers and sisters?

**Pisuk:** Of my sisters, the oldest is Elizabeth. She didn’t have any name other than Elizabeth, so the police wrote her name down as Elizabeth Aliaanit. She is married to Pierre Qarlik. Then there is Mary Isaluk. My other sister is named Alice. The youngest of my sisters is Bernadette Inukpasugjuk.

I am the oldest. Victor Aluurniq is next to me. Then there is Louis Ulliaq, then Matthew Kanaaq, then Joseph Inuksuk. Henry Suviisaq is the youngest.

What is your name in Inuktitut?

**Pisuk:** Pisuk is the name I was given. I’m named after my father’s mother. Her name was Ittuq but she wanted me to have her other name which was Pisuk.

Where were you born?

**Pisuk:** I was born in between Igluligaarjuk and Qamanittuaq on the north side of Chesterfield Inlet. That’s where we were all born, except for Victor Aluurniq and my brother who died in the fire. Victor Aluurniq was one of the first to be born in Iglugaarjuk.

Who were your father’s parents?

**Pisuk:** My father’s mother’s name was Ittuq. My father’s father was Ulliaq. He was also called Miqqulilik. My grandmother on my mother’s side looked like a qallunaaq because her biological father was a whaler. Salome Kaikak is named after her. Her husband was Inukpasugjuk, who my youngest sister is named after.

What is your wife’s name?

**Pisuk:** Qarasaq Olivia, but she is also called Iqaqsaq.

How many wives have you had?

**Pisuk:** My uncle scolded me and told me there were men younger than me raising children. He told me he didn’t think I was much of a man. When he told me this I hopped on the police boat when they went up to Naujaat to go walrus hunting to go and find a wife. I did this without my father or my uncle knowing about it. I was gone two or three months. The girl I married was sixteen years old. We were married in church. She was very young at the time. I was a man that no woman wanted as a husband because the father of the woman who I was supposed to marry hadn’t wanted me as a
son-in-law. Because I was not considered a good catch, I was really considerate with the
girl I had married. We didn’t have sex for two years until she felt ready. She is eight
years younger than I am. It turns out I did the right thing being considerate of her.

*How many children and grandchildren do you have?*

**Pisuk:** We have had nine children. Five have died, two little girls and three boys. My
oldest child drowned. My daughter would have had an older sibling but she became the
oldest and she has three brothers. I have four adopted children who have since grown
up. I have my seven grandchildren who are living with me, who have no father. They
are my oldest child’s children. My second son has five children that are all adopted. My
third child has three children, two boys and a girl. They are all old enough to be in
school. My youngest son has given two of his children to his in-laws to adopt but he’s
kept four others.

My adopted daughter lost two children but she still has two sons and a daughter.
All together I have around twenty-two grandchildren.

*Do you and your siblings all have the same mother and father?*

**Pisuk:** Yes. We all had the same mother and father. We never had a step-parent. My
father was alone for two or three years after my mother died and we looked after
ourselves. We didn’t consider ourselves as orphans. Anytime we have a loss we miss the
person afterwards. We were old enough to look after ourselves after this happened.

*Who named you when you were born?*

**Pisuk:** My father’s mother wanted me to be named after her because I was the oldest
and I was a boy. They say that she had a song she would sing to her *tuurngaq* when she
was sick. This was her song:

Unaginnaliqpangmanga
Vying for attention

Surutibili ungatimni
That which causes deterioration, just behind me

Makisatigiliqpakpit
Are you what will heal me,

Qangattauraalugli
Bird of the powerful one.
After she sang it she was able to get better. Because I am only her atig, I don’t have anything I can use to make me better. I only knew one of my grandparents. I didn’t know the others. One time she wanted me left behind so she could teach me an irinaliuti while the others went inland caribou hunting but because I was old enough to cache two or three caribou, my father didn’t want me to be left behind, so I never did learn that irinaliuti.

Did your parents know your grandmother wanted to teach you an irinaliuti?

**Pisuk:** My mother agreed but because I was old enough to help my father he wanted me to go with them. My grandmother and I both cried because we wanted to stay together, but my father wanted me to go along so I had no choice in the matter.

When you became an adult, when you were going through a hard time did you miss your parents and your grandmother?

**Pisuk:** It is usually my grandmother that I miss when I’m experiencing hardship. One time I was down at the floe edge and the ice piled up on us and I lost my hunting partner. Another time I had my two older sons, and three of my grandchildren with me. We had caught two walrus.

We had been at the floe edge and were heading home. There was a lead that was getting even wider and we were rushing to get over it when I fell in the water. Because I was not meant to die then, I survived that incident. I was in the water and there were little white krill hitting against my body and I saw them as though they were mosquitoes in the air. I think they wanted to feed on me. I couldn’t get myself out of the water. It was my sons that got me out. Because of their abilities, they were able to get me out of the water.

I heard a voice that said that because my grandchildren were not yet able to look after themselves, I had to stay on earth. I had to go back. Perhaps I was about to die at that moment. After I heard that voice my son pulled me up with a harpoon line. My grandchildren were there as well. My oldest, and my daughter’s son and the two who became fatherless continued to hold this harpoon line. When they realized that they had me, they pulled me up and managed to get me out of the water. There were two people who had ended up in the water with me. One of my sons had managed to climb out of the water. I didn’t see my other son Qinnguq and I wondered if he had drowned. It turned out he was one of the ones who was pushing me up. I turned around and smiled at him and then he smiled at me and pushed me up. I told him to try to get out of the water. He got himself up because he was more agile than I was. Since my sons were out...
of the water they lifted me as if I was a child. If I had been alone I would have been nothing but bones down at the bottom. Because I was meant to have a long life, I am still alive.

I tend to forget things so I can’t really tell you anything profound. I can tell you things that I have heard. Qimuksiraq’s brother Nagjuk, Kalluk’s father, wanted me to become an angakkuq. He told me that after three days I would start seeing tuurngait. My akkak thought that I might use my powers to remove people’s tarnit, so he didn’t want me to be an angakkuq. I reached the point where I was able to see the tuurngaq that the angakkuq was going to fight. After my uncle told me I was not going to be an angakkuq, I didn’t see them anymore. I became just an ordinary person. Nagjuk was angry and he said I would be able to protect those that were close to me, my wife, my brothers, my sisters, and my children through my dreams. I’ve used this from time to time. I sometimes think I would like to be able to dream more. My uncle stopped me from becoming an angakkuq. He had tried to do the same thing to my father, who was his younger brother. He was unable to stop my father from becoming an angakkuq, but he did prevent him from becoming a powerful one. Because I was a child he was able to stop me from becoming an angakkuq.

Can you explain the term pilijaijuq?

Pisuk: It is taking away somebody’s ability, somebody’s power. I can’t explain it that well. That’s the term we use in the Kivalliq. Maybe here you would say pijunnailliquijijuq, wanting someone to no longer have ability.

You said when you were fifteen years old an angakkuq wanted to make you into one. Can you talk about that?

Pisuk: When Nagjuk was attempting to make me into an angakkuq, he only had me naattiijuq, observe a period of waiting for three days. During this time I was not to eat or drink. I have heard of different ways that people were made into angakkuit.

One way is for the person becoming an angakkuq to have their shirt brought to the nest of a peregrine falcon and tie it down so it doesn’t blow away. You had to make sure that it was placed front-down, draped over the nest. The potential angakkuq was not to eat or drink for five days, although they could sleep and carry on their regular chores. After five days, the person would go to the bottom of the hill where the nest was located and if they had been chosen by the tuurngaq, the shirt that had been left at the nest would float down to them. The person could either wear the shirt or put it over their shoulder. Then the tuurngaq itself would swoop down with the cries of a peregrine falcon, only much louder. You were not to flee, for if you did, you would leave your tuurngaq behind and you wouldn’t have long to live. A person who becomes an angakkuq...
in this manner becomes a more powerful angakkuy and has less tirigusuusit to follow. The peregrine falcon is the most important tuurngaq to have besides the bird of the most powerful one. When an angakkuy has a peregrine falcon as a tuurngaq, the sounds of a peregrine falcon can be heard behind the talu, the blind. The cry, which is extremely loud, can be heard and the angakkuy cannot be overpowered.

This was a better way to become an angakkuy because you would not have to go through tirigusungniq. An ordinary angakkuy would have to go through one day of naattiiujuq if they were to heal someone who was sick. That’s the way it was.

My cousin’s son ends up in jail quite often. Because he got tired of always being in jail he decided to try and become an angakkuy. Two or three days passed and then he started hearing voices. He started screaming, and acted as though he was trying to break stones. He was trying to flee from what was frightening him. He went to get the shirt that he had placed in the peregrine falcon nest. He has a cabin outside of Kangiqsualujjuaq at the bottom of a hill. I often tease him and ask him if that was the hill where he was trying to become an angakkuy. Although he can be very scary towards his wife, I am not afraid of him.

How old were you when you started remembering your dreams?

Pisuk: I think it was when I became old enough to remember what I was being told. We didn’t have anything to read. We didn’t have anything written. We would be told stories. When we were old enough to start remembering those, then we started to be old enough to remember our dreams.

If you are male or female you can start having dreams about an invisible lover. If you don’t want that unseen lover, you need to tell someone you are comfortable with about this. Otherwise that unseen lover will keep on coming back. I am old enough that I can tell you about this. I had an unseen lover and therefore I didn’t get a wife right away. At night this woman would come to me. She would come to get meat from her husband. I would become very joyful when she would come to me. There was a woman I was supposed to marry, but because her father didn’t think I was good enough, we weren’t allowed to. I didn’t get a wife for a long time after that. That’s when I ended up with my unseen lover. My wife is a lot younger than me, but she has never had any difficulties swallowing the caribou and seals that I caught. She has never treated me as if I was incapable. Although my unseen lover gave me joy, it was more in my head. I never actually saw her. That’s the way it was. There are some people that seem that they aren’t capable of doing anything. But once they are not around others they are really skillful. Some people are like that. They die before their abilities are recognized by others.
When you started remembering your dreams did you tell anyone about them?

Pisuk: I was very quick to talk about things. Sometimes you are able to rise up out of your body in your sleep. I didn’t know I was not supposed to do this. I was able to start looking at the community from above and I’d go and see people. They looked like they were upside down when they were sleeping. I hadn’t known that this was tirtiaqsiniq. Afterwards, when I was told it was tirtiaqsiniq I was told I was not supposed to do that. If I hadn’t talked to someone about this, then this ability would have become stronger. It would have been bad for me and for my family members.

We were also told not to grieve the loss of someone we loved too much. If we wanted to have a good life we were not to grieve too much. The person we were grieving for was not going to come back. That’s not to say we shouldn’t grieve, but we shouldn’t grieve too much. People were also not supposed to express their grief while they were alone.

Can you tell us more about sinnaktuumaniq, dreaming; and takutitauniq, having a vision?

Pisuk: A lot of times I tell you things I have heard, but have not experienced personally. I really enjoy having questions being asked because you want to learn. When you are sinnaktuumajuq, dreaming, it seems like something is real, but takutitauniq, a vision, is even more powerful. People might think you are an angakkuq. When I was around fifteen years old the angakkuq Nagjuk was trying to make me into one. I reached a point where I was able to see tuurngait. He told me after three days I would be capable of doing things on my own. My father’s brother did not want me to be an angakkuq so I didn’t become one. My dreams weren’t as strong after that. During those three days I was able to see things that others couldn’t see, but after that I became an ordinary person like everyone else. There are some things I am not so ordinary about.

Can you tell us about the feelings you had when you dreamed?

Pisuk: The angakkuq Nagjuk was very displeased with my uncle because he didn’t want me to become an angakkuq, so he told me I would be able to have dreams which would come true. I think because of that I have these dreams. Sometimes when I was out hunting land or sea animals, if I was having difficulty and not being successful, then I would dream of a rainbow. This was not just me, a lot of other people could find things out that way.
After you had a dream, who would you talk about them with?

**Pisuk:** I used to have this dream when I was young, when we were living along the shore. If I dreamed that there were going to be caribou, and there wasn’t a rainbow in my dream, I would dream that the tide would be high and that the land would be low. This too was a dream that a number of angakkuit had. Then I knew that there would be a lot of caribou. I would have that dream and I would know that wherever we were living we would have an abundance of game. Some people don’t pay enough attention to their dreams. It seemed that the ones who followed their dreams were the more successful ones. Nowadays, there are so many things that make our lives so easy we don’t follow our dreams as much.

Even back then some people didn’t believe in their dreams. They would say, “Oh, this is just a dream.” They didn’t have any means of social assistance back then, whether welfare or family allowance. They would occasionally get some money from fox pelts, and helping to unload the supply ship, but they had to rely on hunting to survive. In those days they would know where there were foxes. They would go to areas where they knew there were owls. They wouldn’t know about these things through dreams. They would actually know them from experience. In the summer if there were a lot of ermine this would tell them that there would not be a lot of foxes. The foxes would be rabid and the wolves would be hungry that year. If they saw a lot of ermine in the summer they would know this. They wouldn’t learn this from dreams. There were some people who weren’t aware of these things. The ones who were told about these things and carefully watched for them were aware of these things. Sometimes people didn’t want to disclose their abilities. They were reluctant to say anything because they thought they were the only ones who knew something.

**Did some men not disclose their knowledge because they wanted to be the only ones who were successful?**

**Pisuk:** Some men were like that. If they got four caribou they would say that those were the only caribou they had seen, even though there had been others. Anytime I was asked about caribou, I would tell which direction the caribou tracks were and how many caribou I had seen. I had been told never to lie about what I had seen. Because people would know I would tell the truth, my children would be believed as well.

**How did your dreams affect your life?**

**Pisuk:** I never wanted to have dreams. I was told that I shouldn’t want to be able to dream because any kind of desire I had would be bad for me. People also said that if there was a person who was mistreated, that person would have dreams as a means of protection.
Agiaq: I am really happy about what he is talking about because he is reminding me of things I had forgotten. I find it very hard to listen to people who, when they are being asked questions about something, talk about religion instead. I am very happy to listen to him because I understand what is being said. This is going to be written and other people are going to learn from this.

Pisuk: When you have children you need to be aware of them. When your baby has two or three teeth, those little aavrujait in the water, that are sort of brown, that have long tails, that are sort of yellow and live in ponds, squish them on the baby’s teeth and rub them on the gums. The child will swallow this paste. If your child is to become an angakkuq then tusks will start coming out, and the child will become a very powerful angakkuq. Sometimes the tusks would come out and then they would retract.

Another thing you could do if you wanted your child to be a powerful angakkuq, was to take your baby’s shirt and put it in a peregrine falcon’s nest. You had to fold it and make it look like the child was sitting in there. As this child started growing, they would become one of the most powerful angakkuit there are. They would be able to ilimmaqtuqtuq. This was possible. There are those of us who know about this who have not carried on this practice. The next year when the peregrine falcon would come to nest again, the bird would just use the shirt as nesting material. That’s why an angakkuq would be able to fly like a peregrine falcon or an owl. This is not related to dreams. You would be made into an angakkuq if your parents had done this for you. I think anybody can be made into an angakkuq.

Are male or female angakkuit stronger?

Pisuk: Women who became angakkuit by themselves tended to be more powerful than men. They had more knowledge about more things. Takannaaluk, who we call Nuliajuk, she too is a woman. Because I am not capable, I don’t go to her, but if I was capable I would.

Were some angakkuit more powerful, depending on where they were from?

Pisuk: There were powerful angakkuit all over. Sometimes there would be one angakkuq, sometimes there would be two that were very powerful. Sometimes one angakkuq would be overpowered by another angakkuq from elsewhere. I’m going to tell you what I’ve heard about angakkuit being overpowered. I have told you how to shape a child into an angakkuq based on what I have heard, although I never did this with my grandchildren.
Have your dreams changed from the time you were young?

Pisuk: Yes my dreams have changed since I was young. I’m not as aware of my dreams and I don’t pay as much attention to them as I used to. It seems that as an elder I should pay more attention to my dreams but I don’t do that. To me, my dreams are now just ordinary dreams.

When you are younger are your dreams stronger?

Pisuk: I can only tell you what I know. Elders that pay attention to their dreams seem to be more sensitive to everything. I think if we elders started paying more attention to our dreams it would be too much for us. You who are here are the right age to pay attention to your dreams. It would not be as hard for you to pay attention to your dreams or to become angakkuit.

Now that you are older you don’t dream as much?

Pisuk: It seems like I should be more capable, but I am less able. They say that as we grow older our powers lessen. Maybe because I am older I am not as able as I used to be.

Is this true for everyone?

Pisuk: Not everyone loses their power.

Do you tell your grandchildren your dreams?

Pisuk: I wasn’t a person who dreamed a lot. I only talked about the few dreams I was able to remember. I tell my wife and my sons about them. I don’t tell anyone else.

I have one daughter-in-law who tells me about her dreams. Of all my daughters-in-law she has very powerful dreams. She is about the same age as you are. She has really poor eyesight, so I wanted to help her because of her handicap. I wanted to give her the ability to dream. When she started dreaming she would tell my son to tell me about the dreams she was having on a daily basis. She was able to see all aspects of our life. I began to think that I shouldn’t have given the ability to dream to someone who told about their dreams so quickly. Then she came to me and said that she couldn’t dream anymore. I got angry at her because she was beginning to think she was too powerful, and too able. Then I wanted to empower my youngest daughter-in-law with this ability.
Are you saying if you have dreams, you are not supposed to talk about them or that you should only talk to one person about them?

**Pisuk:** You should tell them to someone who you trust. I think it’s okay to talk about your dreams but not to just anybody. You shouldn’t go around visiting from house to house telling people you had a dream, but if you had one person you were comfortable with, then it would be alright to talk to them. People also say if you keep them to yourself too much, that that too is not good for you. You shouldn’t just keep things to yourself. You shouldn’t not talk about them, but you shouldn’t just tell them to everybody either.

I have had dreams from the time I was young but I didn’t talk about them. I was confused as to whether I should talk about them or not. I thought that someone would think I thought too much of myself. Up to today, I find it difficult to talk about my dreams with anyone other than my mother.

**Pisuk:** Some people *itiillimajuq*, sleepwalk when they are young. You should not wake up someone who is *itiillimajuq* roughly. If a person is walking in their sleep you shouldn’t wake them up. Let them continue to sleep. Just make sure they don’t come to any harm. You shouldn’t jar them awake roughly because when they become adults they will become powerful *angakkuit*. I haven’t known this to be done, I’m just telling you what I have heard.

**Who are the Aggurmiut?**

**Pisuk:** Those of us from the Kivalliq call those from Ivujivik, Aggurmiut.

The *angakkuit* were able to do many things. The priests and ministers said they were bad, but we Inuit who have heard about them are never going to forget them because they could also be very helpful. The ones that didn’t use their powers to kill were helpful. They helped a lot of people who would otherwise have died from sickness. If I were to go to an Evangelical or Anglican or Catholic church service, even if I really wanted to be made to see something, I wouldn’t see anything. I was able to see Qimuksiraaq’s *tuurnqaq*. It was in the shape of an Arctic hare. He would go and get it from outdoors after we heard the sound of it moving on the ground. He held it in his arms and brought it inside. It was alive. The tips of its ears weren’t black at all, just like a *qallunaat* rabbit. He would put it in his parka as though he was going to take it with him. Nowadays, when I go to church and I want to see something, I don’t see anything at all.
I am Catholic, but if I wanted to see something in church I wouldn’t be able to. We had an angakkuq who was very powerful that had polar bear teeth and yet was a member of the Catholic church. He wore a cross. He carried a rosary around his neck. He went to church on Sundays and in the early mornings, and he took communion. If shamanism was really bad, I don’t think he would have been able to take communion. That’s why I think that shamanism has some good to it.

There was an old woman named Qavijak. She was married to an old man named Nuqallaq who lived in Igluligaarjuk. Qavijak, who was an angakkuq, was able to qukaaqtaq, fade from view, and then after that she would enter through the door.

Is it scary to see an angakkuq perform?

Pisuk: No. It is not scary at all. In fact it is very interesting to watch an angakkuq perform. Once you confessed your wrongdoings to an angakkuq, the wrongdoings were left behind. The angakkuit would fight with whatever was the cause of the sickness, and you would see blood afterwards. When you start being able to see things in your sleep from the realm of the angakkuit it is very euphoric. There is no fear attached to it. If an angakkuq had seen something you had done, and you were not ashamed of it, then you would disclose that wrongdoing. That angakkuq would not bring it up again. If I were to be very religious and even cry out in prayer, sometimes there is no one to help us. The priests and ministers, and the leaders in the church are not like the angakkuit. None of them are able to help heal you. I have heard people from the Glad Tidings church go on the radio. They say, “Let us pray for so and so who is sick.” If someone would say to a member of the Glad Tidings church, “Let’s go visit that person who has cancer,” they wouldn’t be able to heal them. If the angakkuit were to deal with them they would be healed.

I mentioned that angakkuq Qavijak. One time I was sick and I wasn’t getting any better. This was after there was the Grey Nuns hospital in Igluligaarjuk. Qavijak cured me, and then she said, “If you want to die, eat a caribou liver or heart.” From then on I believed in her words and I have never eaten caribou liver or heart. Sometimes, I could have thought, “Those were just words,” but I believed her. I didn’t want to die. Not wanting to die, I have never eaten caribou heart or liver to this day.

Later, some people told me that because I was a Christian I should leave what I had been told by the angakkuit behind. They told me I should ignore what I had been told. Those people ended up dying. Maybe some of you young people think what I am telling you is just words. You should give your children words that they should follow. For example, you should tell them in order for them to grow up and be an elder, that in order to recover from a sickness, you shouldn’t eat this or you shouldn’t eat that. Sometimes I tell you more than you have asked.
Dreaming and Being Aware

Importance of dreams

*We want to learn about dreams. Were dreams important in the past?*

**Pisuk:** I will tell you what I know. Some dreams were important and others were of no use at all. You are not my sister, you are not my daughter, you are not my daughter-in-law. All of you are young but you are not that young. Johnny is also not that old, but also not that young. Because of your age, if I wanted you to dream something, I would be able to make this happen. Agiaq and I are old. If we had given our cane to one of our grandchildren, after we died the cane would be put under their pillow after they fell asleep and would be removed again when they woke up. The cane would be a means of giving the child the ability to dream. If there was anyone who wanted to kill you, then this could be used as protection as well. That’s what I was told by my mother and father. So dreams were of use.

*What dreams have you had that were important to you?*

**Pisuk:** I used to have many dreams, not a lot but quite a few. In those days we didn’t have any type of electronic communication. We had to depend on our own resources. We lived in tents and snow houses. Dogs were our principal means of transportation. Even now, if I was sleeping and I saw a small rainbow coming close, I could use it if I went caribou hunting, but I don’t have any need to anymore. I knew what that rainbow meant. We were told to forget the things of the past, but I haven’t forgotten them. If we were out somewhere where there were no caribou, and I dreamed about a little rainbow, then I would know that we were going towards caribou. Sometimes it would be a one-day trip from camp, so we would have to sleep along the way. We would be able to go where there were caribou, based on my dream. There were others who had more capabilities who were able to see clear weather. I’m not trying to brag, but I used to see a little rainbow. Because I never learned how to pass the ability to use the rainbow on, I am not able to give it to you. If I had learned how, I could have passed it on to you.

*Can you tell us more about dreams?*

**Agiaq:** You can believe some of them, but others are of no use at all.
How is it you can believe in some dreams and not others?

Agiaq: You can believe dreams in which you feel completely awake. Sometimes you dream and it seems that you are awake. Dreams that you forget as soon as you wake up don't have any meaning.

If you had a dream and you remembered it, would this dream be of use?

Agiaq: If you have a dream where you have been scared and you remember it, it could be useful. Some days you have dreams that you remember having had.

Why is it that we don't have helpful dreams like yours about rainbows anymore?

Pisuk: As Agiaq said, sometimes you have dreams where you seem to be awake. These can be dreadful. This summer I had a dream about four men in a boat. In this dream the boat had tipped over and it was resting on its mast. The wind blew it upright again, but it then once more tipped over. The first time it tipped over the four men managed to stay aboard but the second time it tipped over it was smashed against the rocks and the boat started to break apart. Two of the men were pushed ashore by the waves, but the other two were lost. As soon as I woke up I told my family about the dream I had. I told them not to talk about my dream with others, but I felt that there was probably going to be a boating accident that summer and two of the bodies would be found, but that the bodies of the two younger ones would not. Although I knew I was not going to be the one to cause the accident, I still knew that because some of my dreams came true, this accident was a real possibility. When you come to understand your dreams, you feel as though you are making predictions.

How did you become more capable than us?

Pisuk: When you start being aware of your dreams, then you start seeing things that might happen in the near future. You can learn this from your dreams.

Did the boating accident happen after you had forgotten about your dream?

Pisuk: Yes. I had forgotten about it until I heard about the boating mishap. Then I remembered my dream. The people in my family that I had told it to remembered it.
Nowadays, when we live so far apart from one another, is it possible to find out if anything is going to happen to any of our relatives through our dreams?

Ka&ak: I don’t exactly know if you could be made to dream if something was happening in your family. Today our families are all over the place, living far apart. Your brothers and sisters live elsewhere from you. If you dream of something happening to them it would probably be true. Your dream would probably mean something was going to happen. What we are talking about is not something new. These are things we have heard from our mothers and fathers, who in turn heard them from the people before them. Those of us here know less than they did. I myself tend to talk about things that I have either heard about or experienced. I know for a fact that dreams can come true because of the dream I had when I lost my son. Prior to that I didn’t really believe in dreams. When I was given the news my son had died, that’s when I knew that dreams could come true.

Good, bad, and recurring dreams

Why do you think people had bad dreams in the past?

Pisuk: From the time they are young some people claim they have dreams, and as they get older they become more capable at understanding them. Those who had been told they would be helped by their dreams are still helped today. Some dreams are deceitful and don’t come true.

Ka&ak: Sometimes people do have bad dreams and these bad dreams do come true. That’s what I heard from my parents. Those who had bad dreams would often have something bad happen to them or to someone else. That’s the way I understand it. A person who is dreaming can be helped through having a good dream. Part of a dream can be good and part of it bad. When you hear adults retelling their dreams it seems that something has actually happened, even though it was just a dream. My mother would sometimes tell me about her dreams.

Can you tell us more about having recurring dreams?

Ka&ak: When you have the same dream over and over again it is not a good dream. If someone tells you that they are having a recurring bad dream, if you were to say you didn’t want that recurring dream to be with that person any more, that could end the dream. Whenever anyone had a bad dream and told someone about it, then the person who they told would say they didn’t want the bad dream to stay with that person any longer.
Would it be the person who was having the dream who would say this?

Ka&ka: If it was a young person who was having the same dream over and over again, then an older person could say they didn’t want that child to have that dream anymore. Then it would go away.

Can you tell us more about having the same dream over and over again, night after night?

Pisuk: I think I now understand what you mean by having bad dreams, siinaktuumarlanguq. When you have bad dreams, you don’t want them to come true but they usually do. If I had a dream about people dancing, there would be a contagious sickness that would go around the community. If I dreamt about people playing ball, those who were very happy people would end up playing ball with something that would cause them a lot of grief. I had one dream where people were pushing others off a cliff. I would have this dream and think I was awake. It turned out there was going to be a sickness where many people were going to die. I started hearing Glad Tidings people in Kangiqsiqniq saying that they could hear the souls going to heaven. When you know the people involved, you know that not all souls go to heaven. There are those that you envy, those that observe Sundays and go to church. Some might try to go up to heaven but they fall down the side of a cliff. I’m telling you the truth about this. Sometimes I dream about older women with a pinkish tinge. This means their tarnit are happy. They are floating around and they are happy. Then there are those who are being wrapped in anchor chain made of cloth and pushed off the side of the cliff to where they should be. Those people are the ones who will be able to help their children and their grandchildren much better.

I was trying to ask you if some people have recurring dreams?

Pisuk: I don’t know. Qaaq’s father Nagjuk was trying to make me into an angakkuaq but my uncle didn’t want me to become one. I had been told that within three days I would be able to fly and would have a tuurnaaq. I started seeing the tuurnaaq the angakkuaq was fighting with. He told me that I would be able to fight it in three days. My uncle didn’t want me to be an angakkuaq. He didn’t want my father to be an angakkuaq either but there wasn’t anything he could do about it. My father had a pittiriqauktu, something within him that made it difficult for others to get at him. Because Nagjuk became angry, he called me his saki through his name. He called me his najaarjuk. He said if my najaarjukuluk was not going to be an angakkuaq, at least he would be able to dream. Maybe that’s why I was able to dream.
Could a recurring dream be lifelong?

**Ka&&ak:** Yes it could be. You wouldn’t have to have it all the time. You could have it occasionally. It could start happening from the time you were a child.

**Pisuk:** I do have the same dream from time to time. Whenever I have this really good dream, I think, “Oh, I am going to get money today.” This happens when a woman kisses me in my dream. I don’t recognize the woman, but when I have this dream then I know I am going to get money I wasn’t expecting. Everybody dreams about something they are embarrassed to tell people about. You know about such dreams.

**Ka&&ak:** I am going to add to what Pisuk said about being embarrassed about dreams. I’m not embarrassed to talk, but I restrain myself because I don’t want to talk about something I don’t know enough about. I often tell you about things I have heard, but not experienced personally. I too have dreams that come true. I too grew up with elders. Sometimes when I have dreams they come true and sometimes they don’t. My niriujaaqtuq, my sign that something good is going to happen, is when my eye twitches. It means I will see someone I have seen before but haven’t seen for a long time. Also, if I have an extremely happy dream I know that something not as happy is going to happen. When I have a dream that is not too pleasant, I know that something pleasant will occur. My dreams seem to be the opposite of what will happen.

**Daydreams and night dreams**

**Ka&&ak:** Ukkijjuq is when you are daydreaming, and staring off into space. This is when you are staring at one place and you are totally oblivious to the things around you.

**Do you only dream when sleeping?**

**Ka&&ak:** Yes. I only dream when I’m sleeping.

**Is there a difference between isumannguarniq, daydreams and sinaktuumaniq, night dreams?**

**Ka&&ak:** The piqqusituqaq are still around but because we are not using them, they don’t seem to exist anymore. Because we are ignoring them, we are not aware of them. Sometimes what we are talking about still occurs. Even young people dream and they can talk about their dreams. Even though they have just had a dream, they can have a dream that is totally accurate.
What are the differences between daydreaming and dreaming at night?

**Pisuk:** Sinaaktumaniq is night dreaming and isumannguarniq is daydreaming, which happens when a person is awake. Sometimes a person would say they were starting to have a dream when they were awake. I have seen this. They would be awake when they would say they were starting to have a dream. Sometimes this would be embarrassing because this dream would be about you and they would tell you something about yourself. When what they said was quite accurate this would send a shiver right down to your bones. My grandmother did this to me once. I can't really recall what she said, but it was something I was embarrassed about. If I did anything embarrassing I was to talk about it and then it couldn’t be used to put me down. I’m going to end up dying without having qavoangniqsaujuq. Sometimes people will have things they have to say but they will die without having said them. If people continue to keep things inside, that they should have talked about, then their children and their grandchildren end up becoming the same way. I have known of this happening.

What is qavoangniqsaujuq?

**Pisuk:** Qavoangniqsaujuq is when you are dreaming while you are awake. Someone says they are dreaming about another, and brings up something the person is embarrassed about. I don’t know how you would say it in your dialect. Some people had things they were not able to talk about and someone else would try to help them by bringing up what they were embarrassed about. When a tuurngaq is strong, and is a good tuurngaq, it will make itself appear as a person and will say what the other person is unable to talk about. I have had some people come to me and say that they were having dreams about me. I would kakillaaqtuq, have shivers.

When something is happening and you seem to have experienced it before, or have dreamed about it, what is this called?

**Ka&ak:** I understand what you are talking about. We have all experienced that. Ordinary people don’t hautuqquqtuq but an angakkuq will see things that their tuurngaq has made them see. The angakkuq will see it as if it actually happened. Sometimes when a person has committed a wrongdoing then the angakkuq would see it. If a person becomes embarrassed and is not able to talk about it, the tuurngaq will have the angakkuq actually see what was done, and help the person be able to talk about it. The term for this is hautuqquqtuq. The tuurngaq makes the angakkuq see.
Is there a term for when you suddenly remember what you have dreamed?

Ka&ka: The angakkuit had all kinds of dreams. They didn't just dream ordinary dreams. The angakkuit would have dreams their tuurngait made them have. Those who lived before us had many abilities. They lived through many things. They really put their abilities to use. We don't really use these any more.

If I had a dream I remembered and I didn't talk about it, what would happen to me?

Ka&ka: I don't know. The elders always said you were supposed to talk about your dreams, especially if they were bad ones. I think it's still the same today.

Agiaq: The angakkuit don't only seem to see, they actually see. If I had done something wrong, and an angakkuq started telling me he knew about what I had done, and I disclosed it, then the wrongdoing would be removed. If an angakkuq said this and I didn't disclose it, the angakkuq would get you to see it. If you had committed a wrongdoing, the angakkuq would tell you about it, and if you didn't disclose it your body would suffer physically because of it.

Pisuk: If you had a dream about something I had done, I could say to you, “I never did that,” I would remember it again on and off afterwards if I hadn't admitted it. I would start becoming ill because of it. If someone said they had a dream about me, for example, if I was not supposed to break caribou leg bones, and somebody dreamed I had done this, then I would kakillaaqtuq, have shivers, because I had done it. I would admit what I had done, so I wouldn't become sick over it.

Niriujaarniq, premonitions

Before Christianity, did people believe in dreams more?

Agiaq: I think people believed in their dreams more, especially if they had a dream in the early morning. These dreams were more believable than those you had late at night.

Can you give an example of a dream happening in the morning that might come true?

Agiaq: These dreams often were about hunting for food. I guess that was often on their minds. They dreamed that they would find caribou in a certain location and they would believe the dream was true. If they had a dream that they were going to see animals, they would believe it.
Is the term used for that niriujaarniq?

Agiaq: Yes. That is called niriujaarniq. When someone felt a twitch somewhere, for example, this would mean something was going to happen. When the skin on the body twitched that would mean that someone close to you was going to die. That is still true today.

Is it possible to have a dream that makes you think about your life, so that you conduct yourself differently in the future?

Agiaq: When you had a dream about something, you believed in it. If a person dreamed that they saw an animal in a certain location, and then went to check out the location, they would see the animal they dreamed about. That was in the days when they relied on animals for food.

If someone dreamed about a neighbour getting an animal, would that be a sign this would happen?

Kaanak: Sometimes I would find things out that weren’t from my dreams. There were times when I would know in my body that something was going to happen. There are different ways of knowing there are going to be animals around, such as having your ears ring. This is called aviiujik. Your ears could ring or your eye could twitch. There are different types of niriujaarniit.

Were there many different types of niriujaarniit?

Kaanak: No, there were not really that many.

Were there things that would portend good news and those that would portend bad news?

Kaanak: Yes. Some were good and some were bad. Some kinds of niriujaarniq would portend good news such as your ear ringing, or your eye twitching.

Did it matter if the ringing was in your left or your right ear or the twitching was in your left or your right eye?

Kaanak: I don’t know much about this. Maybe it would matter more to those who would go hunting.
Have you ever had a niriujaarniq that you dreamed about come true?

Pisuk: Niriujaarniit are not scary. I experience them quite often. For instance, if I was going to go out to the floe edge, maybe I wouldn’t catch a seal. Maybe I wouldn’t be successful. In those days we relied on country food. I’m not that big a man. If I dreamed about a man with terrible skin that was brown, and the man looked fat, then I would know that a walrus would be killed. I’m not a good walrus hunter. I don’t catch that many. If I had a dream about a woman who was beautiful, who didn’t smile, sitting down at the floe edge, then I would know that I would get an ugiuk. In the past if you were not successful at getting caribou you walked a lot. If I were to aviujiujuq, then my father or mother would say that I was going to see a caribou. There were three types of niriujaarniit that I experienced.

Can you add to this?

Agiaq: In the days when we relied on animals for food, niriujaarniit was very useful. In the days when I would hunt, if I dreamed about this woman, a beautiful woman, then I knew I was going to get a bear. When I dreamed about that woman I used that as a niriujaarniq. If my middle finger were to twitch, I used that as a niriujaarniq for caribou. If it twitched or was tingling then I knew I was going to get a caribou.

Would what you dreamed about come true?

Pisuk: In the days before snowmobiles, when we went hunting we relied on niriujaarniq. You can go great distances today but back then we only had dogteams. We were told not to over-tax our minds because this wore down our bodies. Sometimes we wanted something so badly we dreamed about it and would think that it was actually a niriujaarniq.

Have your dreams changed over time?

Ka&ak: I think they are still the same. For a person who is able to dream dreams that come true, they are still the same these days as they were back then.

Dreams and orientation on the land

Some people could find their way home when they were lost. Did they get directions on how to get home in their dreams?

Agiaq: When someone was lost they would be blown away! [laughter] Being lost is very serious. It can be very hard and very difficult. I myself have been lost twice. It was very
scary. I was totally lost. You look at the land and it seems one solid level, even when you are in an area that has high points. You can even be lost when the weather isn’t bad. It can be very scary when you don’t know where you are.

**Would you be given directions in dreams when you were lost?**

**Agiaq:** I didn’t receive any directions through dreams. One time I was lost in the summer. During the summer when you were lost, even if you walked all day your kamiik wouldn’t get holes in them. In the winter when I was lost it wasn’t scary because I wasn’t near water. The only fear I had was of hypothermia.

**Can you add more to this, Pisuk?**

**Pisuk:** I too used to hunt in the summer and in the winter. I have never really been in a situation where I was lost. In the winter when the moon is full and you are walking you can sometimes get disoriented because you don’t know where you are going. Those who are lost don’t just get lost; they are made to be lost by something. When my youngest son was old enough to have a wife, he got lost in a blizzard. He was travelling by Skidoo and had lost his qamutiik. He had an idea where he was, but he wasn’t sure. He didn’t have his knife or his stove because he had left his qamutiik behind. This was in January when it was quite cold. He should have known where home was when he ran out of fuel, but the blizzard was quite strong.

He had been told by his grandfather to try to get to the coast if he was lost. He dug himself a hole and lay down against a piece of ice. He was lost for three days. My father had said that my son, who is named after him, was not to be searched for if he became lost, because the next time he was lost he would be even more lost.

My oldest son who was still alive at that time said, “My brother is going to get weaker and weaker.” I told him his grandfather had said his brother was not to be searched for when he was lost. I told him that his grandfather did not want me to go looking for him so I didn’t go out searching. When my son was found by my son-in-law, he was in shock. I blew in his ears and patted him on his shoulders. I told him his grandfather had said that he was going to be okay after this. When he was lost I was very emotional, but I remembered his grandfather’s words so I didn’t go to search for him.

His mitts were all covered with ice. They had totally frosted over but his hands weren’t frozen. His wrists were red but he was okay. One custom that Inuit used to follow was that if a man came back from being lost his mother would put her nipple in his mouth even after he was an adult. After my wife put her nipple in my son’s mouth,
he seemed to come out of his shock. He said, “How am I?” He said his ears were beginning to *ivulaaq*, to thrum. When he got back to himself he was full of joy. I said he was probably very thirsty, so his mother gave him a cup of water and he felt better.

He had quite a story to tell afterwards. My son said that after he had sought his third shelter someone came to him and gave him a knife. He recognized it was mine. He was told, “I have brought this to you to use for your comfort.” When he woke him up he said, “You are too young. It is not time for you to leave your life. Your children are young and you still have to live.”

My son had been woken up by his grandfather. He told him he had to go back home. That’s when he was given the knife. He told him he should start walking before he got too cold. His grandfather wanted him to get home that day.

Our adopted child was quite small then. He asked whether or not to bring my knife to him and I said, “Never mind about it for now.” Maybe if my adopted child had taken the knife something might have happened to one of my grandchildren instead. I was very thankful. I don’t know of any other incidents about someone being lost.

Was it your grandson or your son who was lost?

**Pisuk:** It was my youngest son. He was twenty five miles out when he became lost. We were awestruck by the story he told us. When he got to this cabin, he knew whose cabin it was, he broke in through the back and made some tea. When they found him he had nothing on his feet because he had taken his *kamiik* off. He was only wearing new socks made out of sheepskin. He had put his .22 rifle barrel downwards into the snow. The searchers saw his footprints and thought he had nothing on his feet. When he was around seven miles away someone saw him. He was near Harry Subgut’s tent frame. Ukaliq and my son-in-law brought him home.

You said people who are lost out on the land are made to be lost. Can you explain this more?

**Pisuk:** I think so. I’ll use the *angakkuaq* Nagiuk’s younger son Ulliaq as an example. He had a tendency to get lost. Someone was envious of his capabilities. Whenever he went out on the land it would all look the same and he would have difficulty getting back home. My father did something for him to prevent him from getting lost.
What did your father do for him?

**Pisuk:** My father put on his *angaluit* and started talking. He said, “You will no longer be like this.” He told Ulliaq that he would no longer keep getting lost because he had removed the cause. It was really noticeable afterwards. He didn’t get lost as much.

Can you tell me about the Iglulingmiutaq Ipeelee Inuksuk?

**Ipeelee Inuksuk,** from Iglulik, related the following experience:

“Once while travelling to Nirliviktuq we made camp between Maniittuq and Angmaarajjuk. Taqaugaq told me to go and get some cached meat to use as dog food on our journey. I think I must have had some difficulty in getting the meat out, for by the time I had completed my task a storm was starting to blow. We were camped right in the middle of the sea ice in an area devoid of landmarks. I was lost and could not find our camp. I knew that if I continued onwards I would bypass it – so I stopped and made a windbreak. [Here I spent the night.] I would fall asleep and then, waking, would get up on my feet to warm myself before going back to sleep again. Each time I got up I would check the dogs to see that they were still in their harnesses.

I heard someone say to me [in my sleep], *“ıglusi takanna uqussimniitappuq! uqummuttiaq ingiragvit ıglusinnut angirarunnputut!”* (The direction of your camp is right on your lee side; if you just go downwind you can get home!) I could not see the person who told me this, nor did I know who or what it was... When I awoke it was dark. I thought about the words that had been spoken to me but I did not act on them immediately because of my doubts. I went back to sleep. It was getting light when I woke up again. Standing up, I saw that the weather had cleared ... and there, not very far away, was our camp, downwind from where I stood! This was not the only time I was given directions in my sleep. Should other people have similar experiences I would advise them to do as they are told.” (A. Inuksuk 1990, IE-164, in McDonald 1998: 186)

**Agiaq:** Maybe he was made to dream by something that was *niviuqtuaq,* something that was trying to care for and protect him.
Have you ever heard of anyone else who received help while they were lost?

Kaakkak: My husband was up at a lake around Kangiqsiniq during a blizzard. He was going around in circles and he didn’t know which way to go home. He thought he might continue getting lost, so he stopped. He had been going around and around even though he knew his home was close by. He thought that something was making him lose his way, so he sat down on his qamutiik and he talked to his grandfather Qimuksiraq. He told him he thought something was making him get lost. He asked him to fix his mind so he could go home and see his children. After he said this, he set off again, and he immediately saw the tracks which would lead him home. He didn’t tell anyone about this right away. He talked about this sometime afterwards. Those who say they have been helped are indeed telling the truth, especially when they are in a dire situation. There are iqajuqtiksait out there. You can be helped by prayer, but there are also other ways that you can be helped. Even nowadays this holds true. I know this, not just as a story, but from hearing my husband talk about it first-hand.

Do you think some people were helped through their dreams when they were lost?

Kaakkak: My father told us about this incident. He was a person who would become lost quite easily. He had been out caribou hunting for a number of days. After he had cached his caribou, he was heading home when a fog came up and he couldn’t see anything at all. He had headed in the direction of the river. Because he was getting more and more lost, as he had everything he needed with him, he decided to set up camp. While he was sleeping he was told he was going in the wrong direction. He was told his home was in the opposite direction, so when he woke up he followed his dream. The weather was clear. He climbed up on a hill and he looked through his telescope to see where he was. His dream had in fact been true.

Qinnagarniq, shouted prayer

Agiaq, have you heard of anyone being helped while out on the land?

Agiaq: Yes. My father-in-law Ukumaaluk had Iqipiriaq’s telescope. He was travelling by dogteam. When he was going past an aglu, the qamutiik tipped over. He dropped the telescope he had been holding into the aglu. His dogteam continued on. When the other person heard that, he said he ran back to the aglu. Of course, the telescope was sinking. Ikipiriaq yelled, “Kingutiga, my telescope!” The telescope started going upwards and he was able to get it.
Was it because he shouted out in earnest, that he was able to do that?

Agiaq: When they would shout out in earnest they were able to do that. I’ve done that even though I am a Christian. We were out caribou hunting and became surrounded by ice. We were travelling by boat. Our boat was full of caribou meat and we were in dire straits. We were desperate. We had managed to get up on top of some nearby ice. All the ice that was around us was very close together and would break up as the pieces hit each other. I knew my grandchild thought we were lost. There was one piece of ice that was very very white. It wasn’t old ice at all. We tried to pull the boat to that part but it was too heavy, so my grandson unloaded the boat and we carried it over. He carried the meat afterwards. The ice that we had climbed up on was kind of melted by the other ice and we lost some of the meat that had been in the boat. We were on a piece of ice that was higher up so we knew it wasn’t going to break up right away. It was a fairly large piece of ice. My older son was with me. He thought we should pray. My grandson told his father the way he thought we should go. We tried to follow where there was the least ice. The ice was grinding and breaking up. Thoughts of my mother came to me. I had heard a qinngarniq, a shouted prayer from her and I decided to qinngaqtuq. I shouted out to my mother. I remembered her words. I remembered her saying that if I became desperate to think of her. I thought of my own mother instead of thinking of the Virgin Mary. The ice that was all jumbled together parted, and there was space for us to continue our travels.

When she was sick with the sickness that would cause her death, when she was no longer able to get up, she started seeing two people. When she told me she was seeing two people, because I was Christian I said, “Maybe you are seeing Satan.” Maybe it wasn’t Satan. Maybe they were my father’s relatives. I remembered her words even though I thought I had forgotten them. A way seemed to be made for us and we were able to get to land.

Pisuk: Some people seem to be helped that way.

Agiaq: The ice was breaking up against the boat but nothing happened to the boat. My son rushed to get through the ice. There were people who would use qinngarniq when they were in need, and they would be heard right away.

I don’t understand what you mean by qinngarniq?

Agiaq: If I were desperate, I would be said to qinngaqtuq if I were to yell aloud for help from someone. In my case I turned to my mother. Since she was my mother, I turned to her as if I were a child. As soon as we were passed the opening that had been created, the ice went back again.
Pisuk: I understand what he is saying. That’s what we would do when we were desperate.

Prayer

Ka&ak: I’m going to tell you about something I experienced. It was in the spring when the ice on the lake started cracking. I went out on the ice, after having left my grandchild on the shore. I said I would be back for her soon. I went further out on the lake and as I had my fishing rod with me, I started jigging before I scooped the water. The piece of ice I was on broke and I started slipping into the water. I couldn’t get my footing and I fell in.

I remembered my father telling me that if I ever became desperate to think of him. I told myself I shouldn’t think of him and instead I started to pray to Jesus. The surface of the lake seemed far away, but I started going upwards and got out of the hole I had fallen into. When I got to the surface, I started praying again. It seemed as though something underneath me had lifted me up. I ended up on top of the ice. It seemed as if I was very light, even though the clothing I wore was soaked which should have made me heavy, and I was wearing boots that were full of water. When I got out I was totally dry, even though I had been down at the bottom of the lake for a while. I was really amazed at this. I think my prayer was heard then. When I started going up from the bottom of the lake, it didn’t take me any time at all. When I was at the bottom of the lake, I had no idea where I was supposed to surface, yet I managed to surface right at the hole.

I’m a bit fat, I’m not that light. It seemed that I was being pushed by something beneath me. As soon as I got out, I touched my clothing because I thought I was soaked, but my clothing was completely dry. This is an experience that I had personally that really amazed me.

My grandchild came to me by Honda. When she came she asked me immediately what had happened. She wanted to know why my face was so pale. I said I was okay and suggested we go home. I totally forgot about this after I got home. I only remembered it some time later. I can’t swim. The time I fell in the water, it was cold and icy. Yet I was alright. I can only say that I have been helped. Because I found this incident so awesome, I planned to talk about it, but when I got home I forgot about it completely. When I remembered the incident later, after I talked about it, my family cautioned me not to go out on the ice alone anymore.

How did you feel after you talked about it?

Ka&ak: After I talked about it I realized that I had been helped. To this day, I believe I was helped.
Have you told your children and grandchildren about what to do if they become desperate?

Ka&ak: Yes. I told the grandchild who lives with me about this when I was alone with him. I have told all of them. The oldest one is the one for whom I have been writing down the things I remember. I sometimes think I should keep the things that I know for her.

When you get home will you continue taping and writing?

Ka&ak: I think so. I think it is necessary to do this because young people today don’t really know how their ancestors lived. Nowadays people go to work. They go to school. They are not learning the Inuit way. We hardly see our children at all. They are in school all day. We only see them at the end of the day when they have finished school. That’s why they don’t know what we know. When you have them with you, you are able to make them understand things.

Dreaming of an elongated grave or person

Why do we dream what we dream? Is it because we have been concerned about something, or because we are in a certain state?

Agiaq: Before we go on to something else, I would like to say something. I dreamed about my first wife’s sibling. Maybe I won’t be able to talk about it. This is not something for entertainment. You need to know about it, but it should not be used for pleasure.

This past summer my children and I went to where my first wife was buried. I was unable to go to her grave because it was not close to shore and it was on a rise. At that time, I thought that if her grave looked elongated then something was going to happen to one of her siblings. All summer long I meant to ask my daughters about this but I’d keep forgetting to do so when I’d see them. I don’t know, but maybe if I hadn’t forgotten to ask, what happened wouldn’t have happened. It was only afterwards that I finally asked my daughter about it. When you look at your sibling’s or your spouse’s grave and it is elongated you know something will happen to your siblings or to your spouse’s siblings. It was only after the boat sank that I was able to talk to my older daughter about this.

I know that faith is the greatest thing there is. Sometimes it is very difficult because God has given us life and when we reach the end of it we die. I’m not trying to say that religion is bad. When I was young I used to think that shamanism was bad but nowadays I don’t say that anymore.

Sometimes when you see a grave and it seems elongated you should see this as an omen that something bad is going to happen to someone close. That is another way of
knowing that something bad is going to happen. The time I learned that my second son was going to have a really bad accident, that’s what alerted me. It was a way of knowing that something bad was going to happen.

**Can you tell me more about the grave seeming to be long?**

**Ka&ak:** Yes. They say the grave will seem elongated. If you see a person and they seem larger than they are, that too is indicative that something bad is going to happen.

**Agiaq:** If ordinary people seemed as if they were larger, you would know that something bad was going to happen to them. What she said is true. What I am saying is also true. If you see a person, whether a grandchild or a relative like that, then you know that they do not have long to live. When you see someone and they seem so much bigger, you know that they are not going to live for long.

**When you see that, can’t you do anything about it?**

**Ka&ak:** You can’t do anything about it. There is nothing you can do.

**When you see a child’s face, can you tell if they have had a bad dream?**

**Ka&ak:** If they tell you about it, then you know. If they don’t tell you, then you don’t. You don’t know what they’re feeling; you don’t know if they had a dream. There are some people who do not talk about their dreams. My grandchild that lives with me, is named after Qaaqu. I tell him if he has dreams to tell me about them, but he only does periodically. I keep on saying to him, “Tell me as soon as possible after you have had a dream”. There are different kinds of dreams.

**Passing on the ability to dream**

**Pisuk:** Because my youngest son really believes in my dreams, I told him, “When I am going to die I will give you my ability to dream.” But I said I didn’t want to die yet, so I didn’t want to give it to him now. He said, “I don’t want you to die either, so I don’t want you to give me this just yet.”

**If you are a person that dreams, is it possible to give your ability to someone?**

**Pisuk:** I think so. Perhaps when you are about to die you can. I don’t want to dream about myself dying. I think it would be very scary to do so.
Ka&&ak: Sometimes your dreams can be completely accurate. Those that wanted us to be able to dream gave us that ability. I have told you that. Maybe we weren’t just given this ability in dreams. Perhaps angakkuit are able to give us this ability.

If you wanted to pass on this ability to your son, would it be possible?

Pisuk: Yes. It would be possible if you had thought about it ahead of time. If you hadn’t mentioned it to anybody then it wouldn’t happen. I am basing this on what I have heard. It is not something you talk about lightly. I am trying to tell you what I have heard.

Can you explain more about an elderly person giving their cane to a grandchild? Why was the cane placed under the child’s pillow?

Pisuk: The cane was put under the pillow when the child went to sleep. It would be removed and put away in the morning. They say that was done to enable a person to sinnaktujujuq, have strong dreams.

What did you mean exactly when you said sinnaktujujuq, have strong dreams?

Pisuk: In the days before there were nurses and doctors a person with strong dreams could dream about what was causing a person to be sick, and was thus able to help others.
Itillimaniq: Sleepwalking

Can you tell us what you know about itillimaniq?

Agiaq: Itillimaniq can be scary. I too used to itillimajuq and I would see others itillimajuq. They seemed to see something that was not there. Some people who are experiencing itillimaniq can be frightening, especially when they have their full strength. Whenever I would itillimajuq too much, I would become very scared. It would seem like this thing was coming at me and I would have my hands raised, but I wouldn’t be able to grasp anything. I would be very scared.

Sometimes itillimaniq makes no sense at all. One time I seemed to be totally awake in a tent. There was a stick and I placed it on my mother’s shoulder. I was trying to climb the stick but I would slide back down. Maybe that’s not quite what I was doing. I don’t believe it was real. I’m trying to help you understand itillimaniq, but I don’t know any other way to explain it. I think it is like you are having a bad dream that makes you scared. You seem to be seeing things that aren’t there.

Do all people experience itillimaniq?

Pisuk: I stopped experiencing itillimaniq when I was still a child.

How would you know what you had done?

Agiaq: Even though I would be dreaming I would know. I would be made to know by something bad. I would seem awake even though I was asleep. I would see things. Do you smoke?

Yes.

Agiaq: You could end up eating a cigarette, thinking that it was food.

Was it embarrassing when you were itillimajuq?

Agiaq: No, it wasn’t embarrassing at all.

Is what you think you were dreaming the same as what somebody would tell you that you were doing?

Agiaq: The person who told you what you had done didn’t see you in your dream. They wouldn’t have known what you were dreaming so they wouldn’t know all of it. They would only be describing what they had seen, such as if you had been crying.
Did you ever see someone who was experiencing itillimaniq? If so, what was that person doing?

Agiaq: The person I saw who was experiencing itillimaniq was very scary. Even just seeing a person like that could make you scared. That person seemed as though he was seeing something. We were out hunting in the spring. We were travelling by dogteam and this person had been sleeping. Then he got up and started to itillimajuq. He seemed to be seeing something that made him frightened.

He didn't feel ashamed after?

Agiaq: He didn't know what he was doing. You can't be embarrassed over something you weren't aware of doing. One spring my older brother caught a caribou. They had gone to the top of the hill where he had caught the caribou and they became sleepy. Inuksuk, Qumangat’s younger brother, Qumangat, my father and my old brother had fallen asleep there. It was not quite July so the caribou weren’t in herds yet. My older brother was experiencing itillimaniq and had started travelling inland to a place we call Kinngarjuat. He was quite a big boy by then. This is the Kinngarjuat on the other side of the Melville Peninsula.

They came back to our tent looking for him. It was maybe the day after the next that my brother arrived back on his own. He had had my father’s mittens on his hands and that is what saved him from getting lost. It seemed that he had used the mittens to help him return. After we had spent the winter there, we went to Anangigiarjuq in the spring.

If someone told you what you were doing when you were itillimajuq, would you remember your dream?

Agiaq: If someone told me about my actions while I was itillimajuq, I would remember the dream that I had.

Do you dream about people you know or about people you don't know?

Agiaq: I rarely dream about people I don’t know. I usually dream about people I know.

When you are itillimajuq, are your dreams scary or are they pleasant?

Agiaq: Because dreams are not part of real life, you shouldn’t pay attention to them. You should concern yourself more with hunting and working and trying to learn the rules relating to these. I don’t consider dreams to be meaningful. They don’t have any use at all. Sometimes when you talk about them they can be a means of entertainment.
When you dream, do you dream in colour?
Agiaq: No. My dreams are not in colour. You cannot see colours in your sleep.

Why do you think that your dreams are not in colour?
Agiaq: Because they are not real.

Have you ever heard of someone ending up in a dangerous situation while they were in a state of itillimaniq?
Agiaq: No, not at all.

Has anyone who was itillimajuq ever died?
Agiaq: I’ve never heard of that.

Do people seem to itillimajuq more in the spring, summer, fall or winter?
Agiaq: People usually experienced this more when they were children. Children would itillimajuq at any time of the year, especially when they were overtired. That’s when they would tend to itillimajut.

Pisuk: I have never heard of an adult experiencing itillimaniq. Maybe, if a person was an angakkuq they would itillimajuq. Maybe, but I don’t know.

Do you think that we experience itillimaniq when we sleep with too much clothing on?
Agiaq: No. A person can experience itillimaniq even when they are naked.

Do you think the tides or the full moon have anything to do with this?
Agiaq: Although I understand what you are asking, there is no point to it.

You’ve never thought of that?
Agiaq: If a person is experiencing itillimaniq, and then they don’t want to, and they experience itillimaniq again, it is just scary.

Pisuk: It is only those who have a physical or mental handicap that are affected by the full moon. I don’t think that itillimaniq is affected by the moon.
Why do you think we start to itillimajuq?

Agiaq: I think when children have been too active before they go to sleep, they become tired and they tend to itillimajuq.

Do you think it was because they were too active?

Agiaq: Yes. Even when they fall asleep their bodies are still active. It is quite scary to see an adult itillimajuq. It is a long time since I have experienced itillimaniq.

What kind of facial expressions do people who were experiencing itillimajuq have?

Agiaq: They have all kinds of facial expressions. Some of them were uumilaatituq, had the expression of someone about to cry, and therefore their faces would look distorted.

The ones who are uumilaatituq, the ones who were about to cry, would their eyes be closed?

Agiaq: Sometimes their eyes would be wide open. Sometimes these people would even be running around.

Do you think animals experience itillimaniq?

Agiaq: I think not. Because they are not human, I don't think we should be concerned about them.

Which gender experiences itillimaniq more?

Agiaq: Maybe little boys do.

Do you think this is because they are more active?

Agiaq: Yes. The ones who were more active would tend to itillimajuq more in the days when we used to spend a lot of time outdoors. Things are different now.

Do we tend to itillimajuq more when we go to sleep early or when we go to sleep late?

Agiaq: I think when a child is overtired, if they stay awake too long and are sleepy, then they tend to itillimajuq more.
If a person wakes up from a state of itillimaniq were they wide awake or did they remain sleepy?

Agiaq: They were wide awake, because they were jolted awake by fear. They don’t want to go back to sleep, but unfortunately they have to.

Do you think people would itillimajuq more during the night than in the early morning?

Agiaq: Yes. In the past, some boys would itillimajuq when they were out on the land hunting. They would be travelling at a time when they should have been in bed, so they were awake past their bedtime and became overtired.

Do people snore when they are experiencing itillimaniq?

Agiaq: No, because their sleep is different from normal sleep. Sometimes when we hear someone snoring, it seems to be painful to their throat.

When someone is experiencing itillimaniq does their tarniq leave them for a while?

Agiaq: No, not at all. If the tarniq were to leave the body, the body would not be able to survive and stay upright. The tarniq is what keeps the body alive.

Do you know if itillimaniq occurs more or less now than it did in the past?

Agiaq: Maybe in the past they would go out hunting more often. We were more aware when someone would itillimajuq. We don’t see that as often anymore. Maybe it was because children would stay up past their bedtimes and they would become tired. They would have chores to do such as untangling the dogteam traces. Being overtired might be one of the causes of itillimaniq.

Can you tell us a personal experience or a humorous story regarding itillimaniq?

Agiaq: We had been travelling in the spring and my wife became overtired. She took her pipe and put water in it and then she sucked in the water. She sucked the water in, and then she spit it out during an itillimaniq. I think she did this because she was thinking about smoking while she was sleeping.
Did she wake up at all?

Agiaq: No. Not at all. Maybe she had the intention of smoking her pipe after she woke up. When she started to itillimajuq she took her pipe and dipped it in a pail of water and then sucked on it. You could tell by her face that the taste was awful. She was qakkittuq, disgusted with the taste. She didn’t talk about this for a long time after, maybe because she was embarrassed. She didn’t talk about it when she woke up. It was quite some time later that she finally talked about it. It must have tasted awful.

If someone is experiencing an itillimaniq, should you wake them up?

Agiaq: Yes you should. You should try to make them aware of what they were doing, just in case they fell in the water, but you shouldn’t jolt them awake.

You didn’t have to wake them up by throwing water at them?

Agiaq: No. You should try to wake them up gently. You should be careful with them. If you try to jolt them awake you frighten them, and they become more scared.

Do people not know what they are doing?

Agiaq: Yes, because they are not in control of themselves.

Is this because they are not doing it on purpose?

Agiaq: Yes. Something bad is making them itillimajuq.

Do people who are in a state of itillimaniit tend to become stronger?

Agiaq: No, I don’t think so.

After someone experienced itillimaniq, what did their body feel like?

Agiaq: They felt weaker. After they woke up, and they fell back asleep, they would sleep really well.

Was this because when they were experiencing itillimaniq their body had been so active?

Agiaq: Yes.

Why do you think some itillimaniit are scary?

Agiaq: I don’t know why.
Do you think it is because the person sees something that is very scary?
Agiaq: They see something that to them is very real, something that we can't see.

Do our minds make us itillimajuq?
Agiaq: Yes.

Do our minds make us see what we are seeing?
Agiaq: Yes. Maybe just like the angakkuit, I would be able to see things that no one else could see.

Have you ever heard of an angakkuq making someone itillimaniq?
Agiaq: Itillimaniq has nothing to do with angakkuit. A person would make themselves do this. It would happen when someone was overtired.

Was it mainly children who would experience itillimaniq?
Agiaq: Yes. It is very scary to see an adult itillimajuq.

You haven’t heard of anyone getting into a dangerous situation when they were itillimajuq?
Agiaq: I’ve never known that to happen.

If I were an angakkuq and I wanted to make an adult embarrassed, could I make them itillimajuq?
Agiaq: Only if you didn’t value the life of your children. You wouldn’t be affected. If it didn’t matter to you that your children would start to die, then you could do it. They wouldn’t be around to look after you, if you had done something bad to an elder on purpose.

If I did something bad to an elder on purpose and I was an angakkuq would all my children die at once?
Agiaq: They would not all die at once. Their deaths would be spaced out and you would be the only one left. It wouldn’t happen all at once. They would die one after the other. When you had come to terms with the death of one child, you would lose another.
There was a time when my daughter was itillimajuq and I was trying to wake her up. She took my hand and would say, “Ataata, look at that! Ataata, look at that!” She was very scared. Did she do that because she was seeing something?

Agiaq: Yes. The ones who are itillimajuq do do that. My sister Pairngut used to itillimajuq quite a bit. She too would see things. I have never seen an adult itillimajuq. I never saw an angakkuq using his powers to go after people. They were not to do this. I think those who didn’t have much sense would use their powers to go after others. If a person was a young angakkuq and used his powers to sujuqtuq, to cause pain or embarrassment to an elder, then his children would be affected. His children wouldn’t all die at once. It was only when they were coming to terms with their grief that they would lose another child.

When I was a child around four years old I experienced itillimaniq. My sister told me afterwards what I had done. She said I came out of the room and I appeared to be totally awake. I went to the porch and I picked up my father’s kamiik and I peed in it. She said when I finished peeing, I went back to bed. You said earlier that someone who was itillimajuq should not be woken up abruptly. Could you tell us more about this?

Pisuk: I am telling you what I have heard. If there was someone who was itillimajuq you shouldn’t wake them up roughly. You shouldn’t slap them. Someone who is itillimajuq, has a sapunniaqti, a protector that you can’t see. Maybe there is something protecting them.

Would people who had experienced itillimaniq become angakkuit?

Pisuk: I have a grandchild who turned sixteen this fall. She still experiences itillimaniq. I heard from my mother’s father that if someone was itillimajuq you should leave them alone. You should just watch them to make sure they don’t go out. My wife and I take turns watching over her. She doesn’t do this every night. We see her itillimaniit as being meaningful. Some children’s itillimaniit aren’t just ordinary itillimaniit. This happens if the person continues to do this into their teenage years. They are usually around five or ten minutes long. That grandchild of mine has always been my favourite. Maybe in the past she would have become an angakkuq.

Agiaq: People from different communities have different ways of doing things. For example, they have different ways of hunting. Even though they would do the same things, they would have different ways of doing them. That’s the way it is. I talked to
you about *itillimaniq*. I told you about the time that I put the piece of wood on my mother’s shoulder. I hadn’t actually placed it there but I thought I had. I was trying to climb it, but I was having difficulty because it was slippery. Maybe it was my *tarniq* that was trying to climb. The time that I was experiencing *itillimaniq* this was removed from me by an *angakkuq*. The *angakkuq* who did this told me he was going to send away the cause of my *itillimaniq*. Maybe it was too strong and he had fear for me. That’s why he removed it.

I was grateful that he removed the cause of my *itillimaniq* because I was very scared. Maybe if it had been too strong, it would have affected my future. They say that whatever has no substance but is like smoke, is very strong, whether it be good or whether it be bad. When it comes upon us it is very scary. No matter how scared you are you can’t get away from something when it is trying to test you.

*Why do you think that people *itillimajuq*?*

**Agiaq:** Soon after my wife had died, it was in the spring, my mother tested me, and found my resistance. It was very strong. If I was an *angakkuq* I might have another *angakkuq* testing my strength. Takannaaluk’s minions go everywhere. Because they don’t have bodies they can go into anything. That’s why we should not *akiraqtuqtuq*, do bad things or say bad things about other people too much, because we could put ourselves in a dangerous situation.

**Pisuk:** I don’t know who causes this, but I don’t think it’s caused by human actions.

*Have you experienced this yourself?*

**Pisuk:** Once for sure, but probably a number of times. It’s something strong within you. It is something very difficult to handle. If you were to walk you wouldn’t be aware of this, if you were talking it wouldn’t make sense. Maybe something is making you talk, making you do this. I haven’t experienced this often.

*Is it embarrassing sometimes?*

**Pisuk:** I would envy other children who would not *itillimajuq*, but I didn’t have any control over it.

*When those who were *itillimajuq* wanted to go out, would you allow them to do so, or just keep an eye on them?*

**Pisuk:** When people are using mind-altering drugs I don’t think they are *itillimajuq*. You have to worry about people who have taken mind-altering substances. I have a brother
named Aluurniq who used to *itillimajuq*. Maybe somebody tried to *ilisiirniaqtuq*, place a hex on him. There was one time he went outside stark naked. They say that he was being made to do this by a *tuurngaq*. My uncle who was an *angakkuq* took him home. Although he was an *angakkuq*, my uncle wasn’t that powerful. I’m going to tell you about it. You know what a *tuuaq*, an ice chisel is. Nowadays, they use modern tools but in the old days they used chisels. He said this ice chisel would prevent people from becoming sick. The chisel would become upright and lift off the ground. Then there would be blood. He would say he had chased away the cause of the sickness. He wasn’t that powerful an *angakkuq* like Qimuksiraaq or his brother Nagjuk or Qaviajak. My uncle and my father, who was also an *angakkuq*, but not that powerful, would make a tiny little *pana* out of antler, which would drip blood. Because they didn’t like touching blood, they would use this knife instead of their hands.

**Would you ever see anything when you were *itillimajuq*?**

**Pisuk:** When I was experiencing *itillimaniq* I would see this pinkish, greenish thing that was moving. I would flee from this because I didn’t want it to touch me. I would be scared because it was more powerful than I was. I have not experienced *itillimaniq* very many times.

**Was it ever enjoyable?**

**Pisuk:** *Itillimaniq* is always scary. Even when I tried to reach this thing it seemed so large, I was unable to do so. I was very scared. It seemed like the sky was coming at me. I would try to keep it away from me. I would try to slap it but my arms were too short and I couldn’t. It would come to me and I would find it very scary. If I was going to explain the sound, in terms of something that belonged to *qallunaaq*, I would say it had a sound similar to the clanging that you get from a ship. Maybe there are different kinds of *itillimaniq*.

I felt that the sky was coming closer. It was scary. Maybe that which belongs to the powerful one does not mean to scare us, but you still feel very frightened. I think those who are seeking too much knowledge are made to suddenly find out. I’m not trying to scare you but those who try to get too much information are given a jolt of knowledge. Even if you are not seeking this, if you experience it, it is very scary. I think it can happen to anyone, even if they are a doctor or a lawyer.

**Were you afraid of people who were *itillimajuq*?**

**Pisuk:** It’s hard not to be afraid of them. When you are not experiencing this yourself, you can’t really understand what the other person is going through.
Have you ever known of someone doing anything dangerous when they were itillimajuq?

Pisuk: Not at all. Although the person who is experiencing itillimajuq is frightened. I have never heard of anyone being in danger.

Agiaq: He has said what I also know. Nothing bad will happen. No one has died from this.

Pisuk: My younger brother used to itillimajuq when we were out hunting. It is from him that I know he had a helper. Over time he stopped experiencing itillimaniq. We were not to make an elder angry. This was because the anger of an elder has no end.

You said that a person who tended to itillimajuq could become an angakkuq. Do you think they would start seeing what was to become their tuurnqaq when they would itillimajuq?

Pisuk: I can’t answer. Maybe Agiaq could answer that better.

Agiaq: I too can’t really answer that. However, I know about this black thing that would cause my brother to itillimajuq but he wouldn’t accept it. I experienced something else. Something wanted to show me things in the Bible but I didn’t take it. Because I am supposed to disclose these things I am talking about them now. They are not a cause of embarrassment. They are something we went through. They are not going to disappear.

If two brothers were sleeping together and they both had a tendency to itillimajuq, would they do this at the same time?

Agiaq: I don’t think my brother and I did this at the same time.

Pisuk: I have also heard about what he has said. My wife and I did not know this but my two sons, the middle one and the youngest one, would both fly like Super Samu’. Somebody told them that if their mother and father didn’t mind, they would become more powerful. Whatever was talking to them said, “It is I who am making you fly.” My wife and I didn’t know about this until they came to us together, and the youngest said, “Qinnguq and I have been flying. We were told that if you don’t want us to fly we won’t do this anymore.” We told them to do what they wanted. Maybe something was trying to take my children.
Were their bodies actually flying?

**Pisuk:** Yes, I think they were actually flying. Maybe it was their tarniik that flew and their bodies stayed put.

**Would you like to add anything else?**

**Agiaq:** I have not experienced this personally. You sometimes heard about people who were able to fly. That was very important to Inuit in the past. It was because of our ancestors that we are alive in the present. They were able to survive hunting animals in very cold weather. They would even hunt in icy water that was freezing.

There was an area that angakkuit could go across the ocean to where there were qallunaat. Only their tarniiit would go, accompanied by their ikajuqtit, their helpers. Their bodies would remain behind as empty casings. It would be their tarniiit that were travelling. The angakkuit could even go up to the moon. It was only much later that qallunaat started seeing things through scientific exploration. Some angakkuit were wise enough to know these things.

**Footnote**

1 Super Samu is a comic strip character. Being an angakkug, he is able to fly.
Tuurngait

If you dream about animals talking what does it mean?

Agiaq: If I dreamed about an animal talking, I would believe that that animal was being made to talk, but I don’t really know much about animals talking. I know they can talk to angakkuit. If you don’t have a means of understanding what animals say, they don’t seem to be able to talk.

Did the angakkuit talk to the animals?

Agiaq: Some of them did. There were many things that could be used to help angakkuit. Anything at all could be used. Even aarrujait, little things living in ponds, could be used as helpers. It is only when the angakkuit are being helped, that they have powers. If an angakkuq really wanted to help another person they could use anything as a helper. They could get power from many things. They couldn’t do it on their own.

Was it only the angakkuit that were made to see things?

Agiaq: Not being an angakkuq, I have never seen a tupilaq. If I was not an angakkuq, and I was to see a tupilaq I would see it as something very tiny. It would only be if I was an angakkuq that I would see it for what it was. If I saw it with my own eyes, I would see it as something small because I wouldn’t know what I was looking at. I have never experienced or seen them. I don’t know much about them, so a lot of what I am saying is just based on what I have heard. Even a tiny little creature from a pool could be strong enough to overpower something.

Did they do this while they were sleeping or were they awake?

Agiaq: The angakkuit were able to do this through their tuurngait. No one has ever done this through dreaming.

Can you tell us the difference between tarniit and tuurngait?

Pisuk: What I have heard is that sometimes when a person dies, their tarniit, their souls, don’t go anywhere. When that happens a tarniq can become a tuurngaq, an angakkuq’s helper.
Do these tarniit only become tuurngait if they belong to an angakkuq?

Pisuk: Some of them became the tuurngait of angakkuq. I often use Qimuksiraq’s tuurngait as an example because gallunaat have seen him. I have seen his tuurngaq myself. The tips of a rabbit’s ears are black up here, but down south the tips of rabbits’ ears are all white. One time when I saw such a rabbit, I mentioned it to someone and was told it was one of Qimuksiraq’s tuurngait.

When you see tuurngait in your dreams are they real?

Pisuk: Yes, they’re real. You can feel them. Helpful tuurngait can wake you up. I can’t explain this very well, unfortunately. Some tuurngait are able to wake you up. We didn’t have telephones, or two-way radios back then. The tuurngait were able to tell us through dreams where there was game. I talked about the little rainbows that I used to dream about. I’m not sure if it was Nagjuk or my grandmother who gave me this ability. I don’t have that dream any more because things are much easier today. We have powerful outboard motors and Hondas and Skidoos, so we don’t need to use some of the things that we used to.

Have you ever seen a tuurngaq?

Agiaq: The first one I saw when I was a young boy. The second one I saw up close much later. I found it really scary. When we were alone in the iglu without our parents I pretended to sakajuq. This tuurngaq came into the porch. It had a greenish aura about it. I could see its hair. I was really afraid, so I stopped pretending to sakajuq and got up on the bed and wouldn’t come down. I was imitating this sound that an angakkuq makes when he is beginning to sakajuq. Some angakkuq just seem to talk. Those were the only tuurngait I ever saw.

Maybe that tuurngaq you saw was waiting to become yours?

Agiaq: This happened when we were still living in Salliq, when we were in the Amittuq area. That’s where I saw it. Because I became afraid, I stopped pretending to sakajuq. It was in the evening and the porch was dark.

You were in an iglu?

Agiaq: Yes. The other time I saw a tuurngaq was when I was an adult. I was so afraid I was shaking. I was about to start crying out in fright.

Pisuk: Yes. This is true. You end up getting shivers and being filled with fear. I was about to cry out in fear but I held back my scream.
Agiaq, can you tell us a bit more about tuurngait?

Agiaq: The *tuurngaq* that I saw in the porch must have belonged to someone. I had to be protected by an *angakkuq* after this because I lost the strength on one side of my body. I was still a child but I was old enough to remember.

**Why did you need to be protected?**

Agiaq: I didn’t know why. My grandfather Tulugaarjuk was the one who protected me. It is because he protected me that I am still alive today. I had no strength in one side of my body at all. My grandfather, who lived next door, made me better when I was sick. That’s what I remember the most. Maybe the *tuurngaq* that I saw did belong to someone. It was just after I saw it that my health started to decline and I lost all my strength on one side. It was at that time I was saved by my grandfather. I think the reason why I lost my strength was because it belonged to someone. The other one I saw must not have belonged to anyone.

**Were you without strength for a long period of time?**

Agiaq: No. I think it was only from one night to the next day. I was able to see but I couldn’t move.

**How old were you?**

Agiaq: I must have been four or five years old. I was old enough to be aware. By today’s terms I wouldn’t have been old enough to go to school yet. I didn’t even think about school back then anyway.

**When you saw it was it scary?**

Agiaq: I was not scared at first but I must have been crying out. I didn’t notice I was crying out at first. I could see it moving back and forth in the porch. It had passed beyond the entrance, and there was an aura around it. It was because of the aura around it that I was able to see it clearly.

**When you lost your strength, did your family members know this was being caused by an angakkuq?**

Agiaq: My grandfather, being an *angakkuq* himself, knew this because I was his grandson. He heard my voice and he rushed to me. I was absolutely without strength. He picked me up and carried me. He made the person who had done this to me become sick, and he died. Because I was his grandchild he protected me and the person wishing
to harm me died. Although the body died, the tarniq would survive. My grandfather Tulugaarjuk sent the tuurngaq that was in the porch back to the person who was trying to harm me and he died. That’s how he saved me. Angakkuit are not to be taken lightly. Even if you consider yourself a true Christian, you are not to make fun of them or take them lightly.

*Did you ever find out why that person was trying to harm you?*

**Agiaq:** Apparently he wanted to take my strength as his own. Because he was sick, he wanted to get better.

*When your grandfather saw you, do you think he was quaqsaaqtuq, shaken up? If you hadn’t been helped would you have died?*

**Agiaq:** Yes. I would have died. Maybe my grandfather returned my tarniq to my body. The name of the person who did this to me was Tamnaruluk. The person who is named after him lives in Arviat. I saw him this autumn.

*If he had taken your life, would your life have been added to his?*

**Agiaq:** Yes. He would have become well.

*Couldn’t he have taken the life of an animal instead?*

**Agiaq:** If he had given his sickness to an animal this would have been very dangerous because we do not have the same flesh. Their bodies do not work the same way as ours.

*Do animals have tarniit?*

**Agiaq:** Some people think they do. No one knows for sure. The angakkuit’s tuurngait were able to bring images of animals.

There was one angakkuaq that killed an animal just before dark but he didn’t cache it until the next morning. One of his tuurngait would not leave the carcass because there were wolves coming around wanting to eat the meat that he hadn’t cached. The next morning when the angakkuaq was walking towards the carcass to cache it, there was once more a wolf there. He screamed at the wolf to try and scare it away but the wolf wouldn’t budge. The tuurnqaq that had stayed with the carcass went back to the angakkuaq. Then it went to the wolf. The tuurnqaq was holding something that had horizontal stripes. It was the tarniq of the wolf. When the tuurnqaq let go of it, the tarniq went back to its body and then the wolf fled.
Was the tuurngaq holding the tarniq of the wolf?

Agiaq: Yes. The wolf’s body was just lying on the ground. Some people say that animals don’t have a tarniq. When the tuurngaq took the tarniq to the angakkuq and the angakkuq told it he didn’t want it, then the wolf’s tarniq went back to its body.

After the tarniq went back to the body did the wolf get up?

Agiaq: Yes. After that the wolf fled without eating any more of the meat.

You said if an angakkuq got sick he was not to give his sickness to the animals.

Agiaq: You were never to make fun or mistreat any animal, even tiny little ones. They are not of our flesh but you must take care of them because they tend to pay us back. That’s why they say there is danger if you mistreat them. The land animals have a protector as do the sea animals. Those of us who have human flesh cannot control them. We seem to try to deal with them but we can’t. It’s only on the surface that we do that.

You said your grandfather was the one who found you when you lost your strength.

Agiaq: He heard my voice. That’s why he rushed to me.

Were there only the two of you there then?

Agiaq: He was living with us. He was my mother’s father. There was my mother and father, and my grandfather and us children.

We are going to be asking you about the time you were affected by the tuurngaq. Stephane thinks this happened in a dream.

Agiaq: If it was a dream, I don’t think it was an ordinary dream. I think this actually happened. I was aware of what was happening. It was only because it really happened that I lost the feeling on one side of my body.

What was it that woke you up?

Agiaq: I don’t recall being woken up. Morning came and I still had the same awareness.
Have you heard of a tarniq being taken away by a tuurngaq?

Ka&ak: I haven’t heard that, but I have heard that a tuurngaq could kill a person’s tarniq. If an angakkuq was jealous of someone they could attack the tarniq, and make the person’s body sick. They would become sick because their tarniq was being attacked.

Agiaq: I have never heard of a tuurngaq taking a tarniq. But I have heard about an angakkuq who almost killed four people by removing their tarniit. His stepbrother caught him. After his stepbrother arrived he didn’t unload his sled. He just rushed into the iglu and caught him. He wanted to get there before the bodies died. The angakkuq was unable to walk, so he was just sitting there on the bed. He asked him, “What are you doing with them?” The angakkuq answered, “With these?” He had taken the tarniit of the children who were staying with them. Their bodies were there as casings, because they didn’t have their tarniit. After he had been caught, the disabled angakkuq sent the tarniit back to the bodies. But I have never heard of tarniit being taken away permanently.

Have you ever seen a tarniq being removed by an angakkuq? What happened to the body?

Agiaq: I think it was Aaglakti who did this.

Pisuk: Qilaq, Taututiaq’s husband, was his younger stepbrother. He used his tuurngaq to remove the tarniit of the children who were unaware of what had happened. He was holding the tarniit. He would have ended up with the female one as his wife if the other three died. My parents told me about this. Qilaq caught him, and so he had to let the tarniit return to their bodies.

Have either of you ever heard or seen a tarniq being taken by a tuurngaq?

Pisuk: I have never seen this personally. My sister was adopted by my uncle and his wife. The first time I saw a tarniq was when my father, who was an angakkuq, was helping her. It was small and very bright. He had it go down over and over. Then it went behind him and became part of her body and she is alive today.

Could they get tuurngait from anywhere?

Ka&ak: They had their own tuurngait.

Did they name their tuurngait?

Ka&ak: Yes. They named their tuurngait. They had names.
Were they recognizable? Were you able to tell who they belonged to?

**Ka&kak:** Yes. If you knew who had what *tuurngait* you could recognize them. You would know who the *tuurngaq* belonged to.

**Pisuk,** you told us about an angakkuq who was trying to give you a *tuurngaq.* What was that *tuurngaq* called?

**Pisuk:** I don’t know what the name of that *tuurngaq* was. It was a little bird that belonged to the all-powerful one that controlled the universe, the earth and the sky. The *angakkuq* that tried to give it to me said he was unable to use it even though he was a very powerful *angakkuq.* He requested my father’s assistance. It was only if my uncle agreed, that he was going to give me that *tuurngaq.* The bird was a *kiggavik.* The *kiggavik* had belonged to the *angakkuq* Qimuksiraq. Qimuksiraq had two birds that he used for *tuurngait.* One was a *kiggavik,* a peregrine falcon, and the other was an *ukpik,* an owl.

*Did the tuurngait appear more when the angakkuq went to sleep?*

**Ka&kak:** The *tuurngait* all varied. There were some that were good and some that were bad. That’s what we have heard about them. The *angakkuit* say that the *tuurngait* that tended not to be good were darker and the good ones tended to be brighter.

*Did the tuurngait appear more when the angakkuq went to sleep?*

I have heard that I was named after someone who had been killed by a *tuurngaq* at night. They would try to *ilisiqsijuq* or touch someone to make them have some kind of disability.

**Ka&kak:** Yes, some of them do that. Some people had their *tuurngait* go after people they didn’t like. They varied. There were good ones and bad ones.

*What characteristics did the good ones have?*

**Ka&kak:** The good ones used to heal people who were sick, and they helped the people in the camp.

*Were those who could have bad tuurngait embarrassed by them?*

**Ka&kak:** The *angakkuit* had more than one *tuurngaq.* Some of them were good and some of them weren’t. Maybe the *tuurngaq* who went after people because they had been ordered to do evil, remained evil.
Did you say if they had done something bad, they remained bad?

Ka&ak: Even today people vary. Some people try to help others. Some people are not that good. If a person had poor health, we were not to laugh at them or make fun of them. If you were young and healthy and you laughed at someone, when you became older you would end up being the same way as the person you laughed at. We have often been told not to laugh at someone older than us who had any kind of disability. We were told to listen to our elders. We were not to answer back to those who were older than we were. They say that even though a person’s body gets weaker as they get older, their mind gets stronger.

We hear that the ways of the past aren’t followed as much these days. Do you think they are still valid today?

Ka&ak: Yes. If there is someone older than you, you should never put them down or treat them badly. I was always told not to try to be better than others, whether older or younger than myself. I am telling you things that were told to me by elders.

I would like to ask about qalugiujait, little knives and ulus and such that were made for sakaniq. If a person was an angakkuaq, were they tied on to a belt?

Pisuk: Yes. Those were qalugiujait. Long thin caribou fur from the neck area could also be used. Real angakkuit, the ones that had tuurngait, had qalugiujait. They say that their belts were made to shake sometimes; they were made to shake by their tuurngait. I am telling you something I have heard from my uncle but not seen.

He said that Taliriktuq wore a qalugiujait. They were at a place called Qikiqtait. They went to a whaling boat. It was on a Saturday. He left his qalugiujait behind when he went on board the ship. This person on the ship had given him metal for a harpoon because he said he had heard that he was an angakkuaq and that he wanted to get an arviq, a bowhead whale, during the summer. He asked him to make it possible for him to catch a whale. Taliriktuq said he had left his qalugiujait behind and he asked if someone could go and get it for him. They heard rattling. His qalugiujait were rattling on their own. The whaler who had given him the metal, heard this. Taliriktuq told the whaler he would get a whale after the ice left. The whaler wanted to get a whale so badly that he started to disclose his wrongdoings just like an Inuk. The angakkuaq had told the man who wanted to kill the whale that he would get the one he wanted with ease. It had been very easy to kill, but it had been very difficult to tow, so he went to ask the angakkuaq why this...
had happened. Taliriktuq told him that he wanted them to be able to kill the whale quickly, but take a long time to land it. Although the water was calm and although there was another boat helping them, it took them three days to tow it to shore.

Ka&ak, have you heard about qalugiujait?
Ka&ak: Yes. I have heard about them.

Have you seen them?
Ka&ak: I have seen the ones that belonged to Uquqtuq. I have seen ones made of pukiq, white caribou fur, with fringe.

What were they used for?
Ka&ak: The angakkuoq wore them.

Were they different from aarrguat?
Pisuk: Yes, they were very different. My father had just one tiny little knife on his belt. He had used his panannnguaq to fight with the causes of sickness. He would use it to make the bad tuurngaq disappear. It was a tiny little knife made of antler. I remember seeing it.

Did the angakkuit have numerous qalugiujait?
Pisuk: I mentioned that my father had only one. He had a belt made out of caribou pukiq. He also had an ujamik, something he wore around his neck but he only had the one panannnguaq. There was also an angakkuoq from Qamanittuaq who had knives as his qalugiujait. In between the knives there were animal shapes. Since qalugiujait pertained to tuurngait, some angakkuit did not like to wear them.

Did the angakkuit get more qalugiujait as they got more powers?
Agiaq: Yes, they were a means to show they had power. I have seen this. Some of them had numerous items on their belt; they didn’t have just one. They could be made out of anything that came from the earth. They would even be made from different types of wood, hardwood and soft wood. The angakkuoq all had different abilities. What Pisuk said was true. I would like the people who come after us to know about this.

Did the angakkuit make these objects for their tassi, their belts?
Agiaq: I’m not sure if they made them themselves or not.
Did the tuurngait make them?

Ka&&ak: The tuurngait didn’t make them. They had to be hand-made. A tuurngaq would not make such a thing. Nuvaq&iq was one of Qimuksiraaq’s tuurngait. It had stolen some bullets from someone, but unfortunately the bullets the tuurngaq stole did not fit Qimuksiraaq’s rifle. The people who went out used up these bullets and then came back. My husband remembered this because Qimuksiraaq was his grandfather.

They would travel by dogteam. Qimuksiraaq had had a small box that he kept his bullets in. He had a new qamutiik cover that was made of canvas. All his equipment was tied down on the qamutiik. They stopped for tea during the day. He checked his equipment and his box of bullets was missing. He knew he hadn’t dropped it. He tied up his qamutiik and he backtracked. He searched for it but he couldn’t find it. Then he saw it way up on a hill. He saw it quite a distance from his tracks. He hadn’t gone that way.

It wasn’t just Qimuksiraaq that lost items. Quite a number of other people lost items as well, and would find them in different places. One of my daughters had a camera that she kept on the shelf in her bedroom. She couldn’t find it anywhere. Nobody else in the house would have taken it because they knew she really valued it. It was quite some time later she went into her room and found her camera in its rightful place. This daughter is named after Qimuksiraaq. Maybe his tuurngaq still steals things.

This tuurngaq would steal things?

Ka&&ak: Yes. Maybe his angakkuaq had wanted him to do so. The term a tuurngaq used to refer to its angakkuaq was tivuarnaq. This is all that I know about this.

Pisuk: My father said that the tuurngait told the angakkuit what to wear. The angaluit could be worn over both shoulders, around the neck and around the waist.

Could a tuurngaq more easily attack your tarniq when you were sleeping?

Ka&&ak: At night-time the tuurngait were more active when people stopped moving around.

Did the tarniit also sleep?

Ka&&ak: I don’t know if they did.
Do you remember any pittailiniit or tirigusungniit that were related to the night?

Ka&ak: I did not follow tirigusungniq, so I am not aware if there were any that related to the night. I knew some that were related to eating meat. If a woman had just had a baby, then there were some things she was not allowed to eat. There were some things she couldn’t touch. Also, there were some men who were tirinngataqtaq, the meat that they caught wouldn’t be eaten by some people, while the catch of others could be eaten by everyone.

In the summer when it was light all the time, did the tuurngait not come around as much?

Agiaq: They seem to be more active during the night whether it was in the summer or in the winter.

Ka&ak: My parents said when people were asleep at night or when there weren’t any people walking about, the tuurngait were more active.

What did the tuurngait do at night?

Ka&ak: If they were bad tuurngait and the person who was sleeping was unaware of them, they could make the person sick. The tuurngait would differ from each other. The good tuurngait would help people.
Dreams and Angakkunngurniq; Becoming an Angakkuq

What happens if you are are chosen to be an angakkuq?

**Pisuk**: Not all of you will be able to become angakkuit. Maybe some of you will. Some of you will think you are just dreaming but your powers will grow. If an angakkuq wanted to make someone who was not that old into an angakkuq, and they didn’t want to be, then they wouldn’t be forced to. If an angakkuq considered a person to be a good candidate, it would be up to the person to decide if they wanted to be one or not.

*Can you tell us more about this?*

**Pisuk**: I can only tell you what I have heard. If you wanted to become one and you approached an angakkuq, if the angakkuq agreed, that could also happen. I have heard of this.

**Would an angakkuq go up to someone and say, “I want to make you into an angakkuq?” Or would the person approach the angakkuq first?**

**Agiaq**: My mother was an angakkuq and my younger brother was as well. My mother was not made into an angakkuq by a person. When she started becoming an angakkuq, she started being able to see things. Around midnight, when it is darkest, she would see a light from the east and after she was in bed it came closer. Then she saw an old ship. The ship came to her while she was on land, and seemed to anchor close by.

Two qallunaak from the ship came to her. The qallunaak came into the iglu, and went right up to her. They told her that they wanted to be with her, to help her. One was the ship’s captain. He was without a body. When he went back to the ship his clothing was shaking in the breeze. It seemed his whole body was shaking with joy. Then the other one left. They were gone a while. They came back again another night. The captain was wrapped in light as bright as day but only she knew about it. The captain and the mate came to her again, but this time by dogteam. When they were with her she felt euphoric. When an angakkuq found out about this, he stopped her so she went to a place with no people.
Why would she go where there were no people?

Agiaq: The two that were her helpers were sent away by the angakkuaq, so she went where there were no people, away from earshot to lament their loss. I don’t know if they ever came back. Because she was ilirasuktuq, intimidated by this, the powers she was beginning to have disappeared.

They say when you start to become an angakkuaq you see light, and brightness, the same way as Christians who say they are encased in brightness. We Inuit believed in angakkuit.

Do you think angakkuuniq was good?

Agiaq: Yes. It was good. Your father who was sick was cured. There was a good aspect to angakkuuniq. They were able to cure sick people and they were also able to help locate game. They were discouraged from using sakaniq when they were trying to locate game. They used qilaniq for this.

Pisuk: I would like to add something. There was one time Qimuqsiraq was without bullets. I have only heard this. The women were without tobacco and needles. Nowadays we see little kamiik on key chains. He asked that little kamiik and mitts be made and said he was going to get a ship to come on the third day. He was going to trade what they made for the things they needed.

They were inland. The moon was full. It seemed as bright as day. The light from the qulliq was dim. They could hear the sound of a ship anchoring. He said he was going to go trade the mitts and kamiik that the women had made. He said when he returned he was going to be holding the things that they needed. He wanted people to grab the things right away or they would disappear. He told the men as soon as he came back they were to grab him by the upper arms, and grab the things he had with him. So as soon as they heard him coming, the men grabbed his upper arms.

They could hear things falling down onto the floor. Needles and bullets and little packages of tobacco. Needles with white eyes, bullets that were blue.

My wife calls me Pisuk. Last summer there were new bullets at the store. She bought some and said, “Here are some bullets. The tips are blue.” My wife gave me the bullets. I said, “These are like Qimuqsiraq’s bullets because they have blue tips.” I was so filled with excitement that I could hardly wait for the store to open the next day to buy more.
Were you like a child who was excited about something?

Pisuk: Yes. It was at a time when I had money. I kept asking, “When is the store going to open?” I was really anxious to go and get those bullets. I kept the bullets in front of me the whole day, showing them off to people who came in.

In the days when people stopped being as aware of things, there weren’t as many angakkuit as before. But I did see some of them like Qimuksiraq and his brother Nagjuk and Qimuksiraq’s wife. His wife seemed to be quite ordinary like the rest of us, but his wife also had the means of knowing things that weren’t talked about. She would say to someone, “You’re life hasn’t been all that good.” She had the bird that belonged to the all-powerful one as her tuurnqas, so she was able to see people’s wrongdoings. I too used to have lovers.

My mother told me I was never to go with a woman against her will though.

When someone is becoming an angakkuq, when do they first start seeing their tuurnqaq, in their dreams or while they are awake?

Pisuk: I don’t think I will be able to answer you. Some angakkuit really used their tuurngait as helpers. They could use them to make their feet swift. In the days when we would travel by dogteam, the angakkuit could be as fast as caribou. Some of them could actually fly. There is a place around a hundred miles from Kangiq&iniq. There are lakes there. Whenever Qimuksiraq would need to go and find out where there were caribou, he would leave and come back in one day. He would come back before the sun had set. You know how far a hundred miles is. He would go that far. Ptarmigan are very fast. He said he would push away ptarmigan because they were so slow they were getting in his way. He said, whenever he wanted to walk really quickly, the ptarmigan would get in his way so he would hit them with his walking stick. He said the rifle he was holding would be whistling. Some of them would be really helped by their tuurngait. I’m telling you the truth. That’s the way it was.

Agiaq: I too have heard how powerful an angakkuq Qimuksiraq was. He was able to go across the ocean in a short time. What he said about Qimuksiraq was true. When he would try to find out where the animals were, he would be very capable.

Would those who had a disability want to become angakkuit because they wanted to become more able?

Pisuk: I have heard that Qimuksiraq had a stepfather when he was very young. His stepfather would leave him behind and he would eventually catch up to them after they had built their iglu and had finished eating their meal. Maybe a tuurnqaq felt sorry for
him and took pity on him so he became a powerful angakkuq. He had an adopted son who was actually his grandson. It was his daughter’s son. He is the only one of his immediate family still alive.

If they were very young orphans, and something felt sorry for them, would they become angakkuit?

Pisuk: From what I have heard, those who are mistreated have something that feels sorry for them and therefore they become quite powerful. I too have children who are fatherless. They are my grandchildren. We don’t experience hardship like we did in the past, because now we have social assistance and there is family allowance, but their mother doesn’t want to take care of them so their grandmother and I are trying to raise them. We try to make sure they are not without food, and that they are not without clothing. When we get the family allowance we try to give them some spending money. I have been trying to raise them well. I don’t want to die. We are told we are to look after orphans. Mistreating orphans and drowning were the greatest dangers for children.

If I started becoming an angakkuq, what would the feeling be like?

Pisuk: I have heard there is a tuurngaq called Ulluriasugjuk. If a tuurngaq wanted to kill you, it could physically do so. I heard that Ulluriasugjuk had gone to a young person who was becoming an angakkuq, and that she had mistaken him for a bad tuurngaq and fought with him. That was in the days when they kept harpoons by the door. The tuurngaq took the harpoon and harpooned the young person who was becoming an angakkuq. This young person died. No one could heal him. It turned out that the tuurngaq had been coming to assist him, but had mistaken him for a bad tuurngaq. Some people ended up getting themselves killed because they didn’t try to find out in advance whether the tuurngaq would be trying to help them or not.

Do you know if children who are mistreated are still protected by an unseen being?

Pisuk: Yes, I look after my grandchildren. I have a son who mistreats them. His brother tells him he shouldn’t be mistreating these children, that children shouldn’t be abused. He would say, “You should be giving them something no matter how small it is, instead of abusing them.” There is something that will protect them even if it doesn’t do so right away.

The father of these children appeared to my son who told his brother not to abuse these children and said that he didn’t want his children treated so badly.
Those who were going to be made into angakkuit, did they have dreams that would come true?

Pisuk: I’ll tell you what I know. Some of them were not made into angakkuit through dreams. My father wanted to make my sister into an angakkuq but she was scared. She didn’t want to become an angakkuq. She is only concerned with prayer now.

Those who were made into angakkuit could be stabbed by a knife or something sharp and yet they wouldn’t bleed. I keep telling you that you here, both male and female, are the right age to become angakkuit. Some were made into angakkuit by being stabbed with a knife or by being shot. They say that even though it might look like an actual bullet it belonged to the tuurnuq. The angakkuq would shoot the person, drag them out and then start walking with them. When they re-entered, that person would then be an angakkuq. Those that were being made into angakkuit didn’t have this happen through a dream. They were awake. Everyone would see this happen, both adults and children alike.

Agiaq: What he is saying is the way it happened. To an ordinary person, a rifle or a knife is scary. If someone continued to be sick, an angakkuq could take an unloaded rifle and make bullets come out of it. The angakkuq didn’t always do this in the dark. He could have the qulliq lit. The angakkuq would pull the trigger and after a while bullets would start coming out. He would wound the person and then the sick person would be taken out. Then they would come back in.

If I was going to be made into an angakkuq and I talked about it, and had a dream about it, would I be chosen to become an angakkuq?

Pisuk: I’ll tell you what I have heard. Sometimes I seem to be knowledgeable about things but I am only telling you what I have heard. The angakkuit would search for someone, either male or female, who they thought had the potential to become an angakkuq. They would ask them if they wanted to become one. If they didn’t want to, they didn’t have to, but if the person accepted, they would start making them into an angakkuq.

What kinds of traits were they looking for?

Pisuk: I don’t know. I can’t answer that. If I were an angakkuq and I wanted a person to start dreaming, then the person who was going to be made into an angakkuq would be able to see similar things. The other elders can probably add to this.
Ka&&ak: I can, but I don’t know all that much. Pisuk and I were children together and what he said is true. The angakkuit did not make a person into an angakkuq just through dreams. I never actually saw someone being made into an angakkuq. There were rules involved in this. They had to naattiijuaq for a number of days while they were being made into an angakkuq. There were certain things they couldn’t do during those days. I heard my parents talking about this but I never actually saw someone being made an angakkuq.

You said your uncle didn’t want you to become an angakkuq. What happened after he told you this?

Pisuk: After he told me he didn’t want me to become an angakkuq, I could no longer see tuurngait. I had a lot of anger towards my uncle. I used to think that I wanted my uncle’s tuurngait to become mine. My father died before he did. I think that their tuurngait died with them because even though I wanted their tuurngait, their tuurngait never came to me.

Are you saying that when an angakkuq dies, his tuurngait die as well?

Pisuk: Maybe not all of them. If they wanted someone to have their tuurngait, if they were to say to someone, “When I die my tuurngait will become yours,” then that would happen.

Ka&&ak: Both he and I had relatives who were angakkuit. My father was an angakkuq, but I did not believe this for a long time. My disbelief was out of ignorance. He would say that he was going to give one of his tuurngait to my brother Itinnuaq. I always remember him saying that. I don’t remember him saying anything else. I don’t think he wanted to give me one at all. He wasn’t going to make me into an angakkuq because I didn’t believe in him.

Why didn’t he want to make you into an angakkuq?

Ka&&ak: Maybe he knew I did not want to be an angakkuq. He only gave me the power to dream. That was the only power he gave me.

Were you quite young when you started dreaming?

Ka&&ak: Yes. I started dreaming from the time that my father gave me this ability. One time I was down in the hospital in Winnipeg. I had a takutitauniq, a vision, but it wasn’t connected with shamanism. When I woke up I could see a qallunaaq man standing there.
He was wearing all white clothing. He had a beard, but I could see his face. I tried to recognize him but I couldn’t. He wasn’t quite like someone who was alive; he was so clean and so pure.

I started trying to move my fingers as I was wondering if I was awake or not. I started trying to move my hands and I realized I was awake. But yet, I could see this man and I wondered what it was I was seeing.

I had put my prayer book under my pillow and I had fallen asleep praying. What I was seeing was similar to a picture of Jesus, but this man was real. I started getting this feeling that this person was not a doctor or a nurse. I was alone in the room. I could see him out of the corner of my eye but when I turned around there was nobody there. That was one takuitauniq that I experienced that I can’t forget to this day. I think of it quite often. His robe was down to his ankles and it was very white. I talked about this with my husband and my grandchildren. There are times when I remember this clearly. I believe I was made to see this.

**At that time were you really sick?**

Ka&ak: I was very sick. I couldn’t eat anything. Because of the hardship I was going through, I fell asleep praying, and then I had this vision.

**Did you get better after you had this vision?**

Ka&ak: Yes. A priest came and told me to continue to pray. It was after this that I was able to sit up and walk around. I think if I hadn’t seen this I would have died.

**Can any of you tell us more about how people became angakkuit?**

Ka&ak: I think some people became angakkuit because they had been orphans and had been mistreated. They had gone through a time of hardship. I am basing this on what I heard from my mother and my father.

**Why were they made into angakkuit? Was it so they would become powerful, or so people would be scared of them?**

Ka&ak: Maybe because they were often hungry and they needed help, their deceased relatives wanted to help them.

**Can you tell us about nagliktauniq?**

Ka&ak: If someone was going through a lot of hardship and was being mistreated and abused, if they had such a hard life, they would be nagliktaujuq.
Was it tarniit that would help these people, or were they helped by angakkuit?

Ka&ak: It was not the angakkuit. It was the tarniit of deceased people that could see what they were going through; that would know that this child was going through extreme hardship.

I don’t really understand what nagliktauniq is.

Ka&ak: It is when a person has a hard life and the tarniit feel sorry for them, and come and get them. They leave their body behind to die.

Can you tell us anything further about nagliktauniq?

Agiaq: We usually feel pity towards little children. If an orphan is made to go hungry and goes without clothing, maybe some entity comes to them to help them.

Pisuk: Both of them have said it well. Those who are orphans, without a mother or father, or those that go without, or those that are abused or mistreated, are nagliktaujut. Some of those that are nagliktaujuq just disappear. Some of them would remain. Sometimes the person who mistreated them would realize that there was something special about this child, and then start being good to the child. That person might start abusing his wife and children instead, and start raising the child better. He would realize that if he continued to mistreat the child he would die. Because he was afraid of dying, he would start being good to the child.

Would they be nagliktaujuq only by a tarniq or by other people?

Pisuk: We all have tarniit. I think it is the tarniit of deceased people who are helping them. That’s why the people who were mistreating the child would suddenly start being good to them after.

I’d like to ask about the unikkaaqtaq about Kaugjagjuk that we have all heard.

Ka&ak: I don’t think he was helped by an angakkuq. He was a mistreated orphan. He was mistreated from the time he was young. Every time he would go inside, there were two women who would pull him up by his nostrils. That’s the unikkaaqtaq I have heard. He would be outside a lot. Something came to him and he thought it was a person. It started whipping him and Kaugjagjuk became bigger.
When he became an adult he took those two women as his wives. When he came in, he would beat whichever woman said something first, because those two had beaten him when he was young. This is what I have heard.

**What did he make them say?**

**Ka&qak:** I can’t remember what it was that he made them say. I forgot some of this unikkaaqtaq. Maybe because I have had so many things on my mind I have forgotten parts of it. I have heard it was the spirit of the moon that whipped him.

**If you dreamed about something and your dream came true, did that have anything to do with becoming an angakkuq?**

**Pisuk:** I don’t know.

**How were they made into angakkuits? How were they chosen? Were they chosen because of their character? Were they chosen at birth?**

**Pisuk:** A person begins to see what is going to be their tuurngaq. I have heard of one person who was going to be made into an angakkuq that wasn’t because he was too talkative. He had already been given a tuurngaq but the angakkuq who had given it to him didn’t want him to be an angakkuq any more. This man had difficulty walking. He would crawl. He had reached a point where he was able to see a tuurngaq, but because he kept talking about what he had seen, he was not made into a full-fledged angakkuq. The tuurngaq that he had been given was named Kusugaq.

**Did they give powers to someone based on their character traits? Did they try to choose someone who did not have a quick temper, someone who had a good disposition?**

**Agiaq:** I think there were different levels of angakkuits. Those that had powers that were not given to them were more powerful angakkuits.

**Angakkuits and the meaning of dreams**

**Were angakkuits capable of telling you what your dreams meant?**

**Pisuk:** Some angakkuits would have a necklace made of caribou fur. When you don’t see angakkuit perform very often you find it very interesting. When an angakkuq told you about your wrongdoings, he would know exactly what you had done. Once you disclosed your wrongdoings, the angakkuq would forget about them.
When someone was sick, was an angakkuq able to help a sick person through their dreams?

Agiaq: I didn’t see many people being healed by angakkuit, but I did see some. I found it very interesting.

Pisuk: I’m going to add something. We gathered together last spring for a workshop when Alexina Kublu was interpreting. We had a qilaniq session.

Could you explain what you mean by qilaniq?

Pisuk: A person or object would be given weight by a tuurnqaq. My youngest son wanted to enter the building we were in. There was a young person with him who was fatherless. That young person has always said and done bad things to my son. Because he is fatherless, and because he has a wife but they have only adopted children, my son didn’t want to retaliate. He told my son that if he entered he would die. My son started laughing. Then my son saw this woman that he didn’t recognize standing beside his friend. These two people became drunk. Although this woman was menstruating, they still had sex anyway. This is what my son saw. He just laughed at his friend and left him. Although my son saw this, his friend had never disclosed it.

Have you heard if a person had a bad dream about someone, then that person would have to give something to the relatives of the person he dreamed about so that nothing bad would happen to him?

Pisuk: I have heard a bit about this. They would do this so that nothing bad would happen. Another way of making sure nothing bad would happen if someone had dreamed about them, was to consult with an angakkuq. Some people don’t always know what their dreams mean.

When someone dreams a dream that is not a regular dream, and that person is not able to understand it, then they could tell it to an angakkuq or someone who was able to give meaning to the dream. The person who had the dream would be made to understand it; for example if they had dreamed about their children or grandchildren.

Agiaq: If you dream about an article breaking whether it be a knife, pocket knife or binoculars, if you don’t want something bad to happen, you should give that object away.

Ka&ak: Those of us who live in different places do different things.
How does an angakkuq give meaning to a dream?

Ka&k: When a person who had a dream wasn’t able to make sense of it, then an angakkuq could try to understand what it meant. Only if he was asked to, he could try to find out what kind of a dream it was, whether it was about something bad or something good. If the person who had the dream could make sense of it then it didn’t matter, but if they couldn’t understand their dream the angakkuq could try to help find out if it was a good dream or not.

If the angakkuq were to find out the meaning, would he tell the person?

Ka&k: The angakkuq would use his power to help the person.

Stéphane would like to know how the angakkuq would find out the meaning of dreams.

Agiaq: I don’t know.

Ka&k: If the person who had the dream was not an angakkuq, then the angakkuq could find out the meaning if he was asked. The angakkuq would not try to find out the meaning without being asked. Only if asked, he would try to find the meaning.

How would the angakkuq understand?

Ka&k: He would only understand if his tuurngait gave him the meaning.

How would the angakkuq find out? Would he spend a number of days trying to find out himself, or would he be told by his tuurngait what it meant?

Ka&k: He would not just wait. If the angakkuq felt he could use his tuurngait to find out, he would do so right away. If the person who had the dream didn’t know what kind of dream it was, the angakkuq would not wait to try to find out the meaning because the person who had the dream would want to know right away if the dream was bad or good.
You said you had the ability to understand your dreams and the ability to dream about things that would come true. It must have been really scary to have a dream you knew was going to come true. If you dreamed, for example, of a relative who was going to die or something like that, what kind of things could you do to prevent these things from happening? Did you just have to accept that something would happen because you dreamed it?

Ka&amp;ak: I had dreams in the past that I did not always fully understand. It was the dream I had about my son dying the next day that really affected me the most. He was really close to me. It was very hard, very emotional, very difficult to handle. I started praying afterwards that I didn’t want to have this kind of dream again.

The reason why this affected me so much was because he was my favourite. I have a couple of other sons but I favoured him from the time he was small. It was very difficult to have dreamed about him.

From then on, because he had been a religious person and had turned to prayer, I wanted to be like him. I didn’t want to dream any more so I started following him, in prayer. He was religious and I started wanting to follow that part of his life instead. I didn’t want to dream anymore.

When you were dreaming, was it only your dreams you could understand or did other people ask you the meanings of dreams as well? I understand that you had the ability to have dreams that would come true, but did you have the ability to understand the dreams of others? Did people ever came to you because they wanted to have their dreams interpreted?

Ka&amp;ak: I have heard about people who have gone to someone to consult with about a dream they had, but no one has come to me. If someone had a dream they couldn’t understand, they would probably go to an angakkuaq, but no one has come to me.

Do you remember anyone coming to your father to have their dreams interpreted?

Ka&amp;ak: I don’t recall if anyone came to my father to consult about their dreams. The time my father almost died, he fell asleep during the day. He was sleeping but he couldn’t wake up. He was making noises. My stepmother was lying beside him and tried to wake him up with her voice, but she couldn’t wake him up at all.

My husband and I were young then. It was before we had children. I told my husband to try and wake my father up. He went up on the bed and he shook him and...
tried to wake him but he couldn’t. Even though my father was being shaken he wasn’t waking up, so I told my husband to blow in his ears and in his mouth. When we did that he woke up.

Sometime later, he said that in his dream he had harpooned something that looked like an *ugjuk*. He was pulling it but he couldn’t get it out of the water. It was pulling him instead. He thought he wouldn’t have woken up from that dream if his son-in-law had not blown in his ear.

After reflecting on it, he thought that something that he saw in his dream had been trying to get him instead. Maybe he could understand this dream because he was an *angakkuq*. I didn’t experience this personally, but this is one case that I definitely know about.

*Can you add more to this, Pisuk?*

**Pisuk:** The only thing that I have heard is that if a person didn’t have a good dream and didn’t know where it came from, and was the kind of person whose dreams tended to have some meaning, then the *angakkuq* would start trying to find out why. He would start consulting his *tuurngait*.

*Were angakkuit often asked to find the meaning of a dream?*

**Pisuk:** I’m going to use myself as an example. When I was young, if I was not supposed to break stones and I did, and I had a dream some years later, and talked with an *angakkuq* about it, if it was not dangerous, then I would feel much lighter and happier.

*Would you like to add to this, Ka&ak?*

**Ka&ak:** My father told me that if I had a dream, I would be able to discern the meaning of whatever dream I had. I’ve never had to have any of my dreams interpreted.

*Has it been like that since your father told you you would have the ability to understand your dreams and the ability to dream things that would come true?*

**Ka&ak:** What I dream doesn’t always happen. When I have dreams, some come true but not all of them do.
Pisuk, you talked about seeing a small rainbow. I don’t understand what you meant. Was this a dream you received from an angakkuq?

Pisuk: I was a bit scared when I first started dreaming. Then I got used to it. After my uncle did not want me to be an angakkuq, I didn’t know the meaning of my dreams any more. I had a dream about the tide being very high and flooding and because my uncle was an angakkuq, he wanted to find out the meaning. We gathered together that evening. He said that the dream I had that frightened me meant the tide was going to be very high and cover quite a bit of land, but because the caribou is a land animal that meant there was going to be a lot of caribou that winter. After that, when I had the same dream I could figure out the meaning. In those days we had no means of electronic communication. We relied only on dogs to hunt. We needed to use all our energy to go hunting. Afterwards, whenever I would have that dream, I was thankful that I did.

Why did your uncle not want you to be an angakkuq?

Pisuk: It was only after he died that my mother told me that perhaps it was because he was jealous. His adopted daughter, who was my sister, was not going to be an angakkuq, and my brother Aluurniq, who he also adopted, was not going to be one either. Uussai, who was adopted as well, was also not going to be become an angakkuq. Maybe that’s why he didn’t want me to be one. I can’t tell you anymore. That’s the reason my mother gave to me.
Out of the Body Travel;
Sakaniq, Nakkaaniq, Ilimmaqturniq, and Ikiaqqiniq;
and Travel Over Distance,
Qiluriaqsiurniq

Agiaq: You asked if angakkuit used to be able to travel. Yes. They could even go from Iglulik, south to Kivalliq, to Baffin Island. They were also able to go to the land of the qallunaat. They were able to fly, but without their bodies. They left their bodies behind because their tarniit were taken by the tuurngait. Even though they were just tarniit, they could see clearly.

Did the angakkuit travel because they were requested to do so?
Agiaq: Yes, angakkuit would travel long distances. They could go to different camps where people were experiencing hardship or hunger. They didn’t do this just for fun. They did it because they were in earnest. The term for this is ikiaqqiniq, travelling between the earth and the sky.

What would happen to the angakkuq’s body while he was ikiaqqijuq?
Agiaq: The angakkuq’s body would be at the back of the tent and would be covered with a skin. It would not really be sleeping. It would be a body waiting for its tarniq to return. The tarniq could go to Kangiqsivviq or Arviat in no time at all, and afterwards, come back to its waiting body.

Would the body just be waiting for the tarniq to return?
Agiaq: Yes, just as though it were a casing. They say that, because it is true. When the tarniq was taken by the tuurngag down into the ground, this was called nakkaaniq. There would just be a hole. They never bumped into anything. It was very dark and then they would reach another place that was in the ground. There was a little bit of light, so they could see.
Where would they be going when they went down into the ground?

Agiaq: The ones that would nakkaajuq say that inside the earth there is another dimension. Ilimmagtutuq is going to another dimension in the sky. They could go to the aqarsniiit, where there were people playing kickball. Ikiaqqijuq is travelling over the land.

Was it because they were playing kickball with a walrus head that they were called aqarsniiit?

Agiaq: We were told not to whistle at the aqarsniiit. Maybe it was because we could be hit with the walrus head and be decapitated. Those are the kinds of things I heard, even though we were told not to listen when adults were speaking amongst each other. Maybe they were wrong in telling us not to listen. If we had been allowed to listen, we’d be able to tell you more. They would tell us to play outside. If we happened to be somewhere people were talking about these things, they would tell us to go outside.

I don’t understand how the tarniit were able to travel without falling?

Agiaq: The angakkuk’s tarniq was only able to travel because it was being guided by his tuurngaq. There is a little hill with inuksugak that I have been to where two angakkuk met. One was from Iglulik and the other from Aivilik. These two men were cousins. When they met each other they both built inuksugak. It was their tuurngak that built these. These still existed when I was young. I have heard that they met each other at this hill and after they built these inuksugak, they both returned home. I don’t know exactly where they are located, but they are near Qukiuitalik. Because they were really powerful angakkuit, they were able to do this.

Do you think they are still standing?

Agiaq: If I saw them again, I would still recognize them. At the point, from there to Qariaq, at Umiq’s, [looking at map] there is a point. It is called inukpaujaqtalik. There is a stone there that looks like a person when you are far away from it. There was a woman that was heading up to Iglulik when her husband was killed. She was so full of despair that she turned into stone. That is why it is called inukpaujaqtalik.

The stone inukpaujaqtalik looks like it is anaqtuq. When you are passing in front of it there is part that is raised off the ground, so it looks like it is standing. They say that she was so full of despair that she couldn’t go on anymore and that she leaned against the stone and became part of it. To this day people continue to tunilliaqtuq, leave offerings of little things such as matches, tobacco, or pieces of meat or blubber at that stone.
The woman who was full of despair, was it her body that became stone or was it her tarniq?

Agiaq: It was her body that turned to stone.

Who was this person who turned to stone?

Agiaq: It is called inukpaujaqtalik, after a woman. The stone had been a real person. This happened a long time ago, so I don’t know her name. I can’t tell you exactly when this happened. This woman was from Iglulik.

Do you know any other stories where human beings turned to stone?

Agiaq: No, I don’t know any others.

Is the inukpaujaqtalik the only story you have heard about?

Agiaq: No, but that’s the only one I’m sure about.

Pisuk: I have heard of a dog that turned into stone called Kappianaqtuq. I think it is older than the stone that is called inukpaujaqtalik, which is not that old. Whenever there is going to be an abundance of game it seems to be looking in a certain direction. Whenever there is only going to be game near the rock it seems to be looking down. Whenever the stone seems enlarged, with its head looking up, there will be a scarcity of game in the area around it. When its head was looking up, people were discouraged from spending the winter in that area. This is all I have heard regarding this.

Where is this stone dog located?

Pisuk: It is located between Qamanittuaq and Igluligaarjuk, on the north side of an inlet.

When people go to this place, do they tumillaqtuq?

Pisuk: I have taught my sons whenever they are passing by to throw a little bit of tobacco or meat in its direction. We do this in accordance with what we were told by our grandparents. We also do this to ensure we will have a good life.

Could you explain the term tarniraqaqtuq, when the tarniq wants to leave the body?

Pisuk: I can only tell you what I have heard. The angakkuq would perform sakaniq behind a blind and he would leave his body behind, when he went down to Takannaaluk, who we call Nuliajuk. His voice would start getting further and further away and he would
leave his body behind. The Inuktitut term for leaving one’s body means, “leaving one’s bones behind.” When you couldn’t hear his voice anymore his body would stop moving because he had left it behind. His tarniq would go down there to find out the cause of sickness if he was unable to find the cause himself. If a woman was menstruating and had done something or eaten something she wasn’t supposed to, and had become sick, the angakkug would find out what she had done. Those who had done something or eaten something they weren’t supposed to would become sick. In those days, we didn’t have doctors and we had to rely completely on the angakkuit. The angakkuit’s tarniiit would leave their bodies for a while. When the angakkug wanted to go back into his body he would stand on his left patella first. Then he would go back into his body behind the blind. This is all I have heard.

Who made the tarniq return? Who touched the left knee?

Pisuk: His tarniq would touch his left knee. It would step on the angakkug’s left patella and would return to where he started off, where they had been performing sakaniit.

Can either of you add to this?

Agiaq: I totally agree with what he has said. I find it to be truthful. We have heard these things, even though we have not experienced them. I too tell you things I have heard.

Ka&ak: There is one thing I would like to add. The tarniq is like a bubble.

Agiaq: I’m going to add something regarding Takannaaluk. If people were experiencing hardship such as a scarcity of animals, this was caused by someone’s wrongdoing. If I was an angakkug I would go down to Takannaaluk. Her dog would be there. I would go into her iglu. Her father would be there, underneath his polar bear skin and he would poke his hand out from underneath the skin. The daughter would tell her father, “Pullaliuvuq, he has a pullaq, a bubble,” which in this case would mean that he was an air breather, so her father would pull his hand back underneath the skin.

Did you say pullalik?

Agiaq: Yes. She said pullalik because he still had a body.

Pisuk: We are not telling you to become angakkuit. We just want you to know what went on before your time so that the people who come after will also know about it.
You said the tarniit of those who would perform sakaniq would leave their bodies for a while. Would their bodies be dead or just sleeping?

**Agiaq:** The body would be left behind. It would just be lying there behind the blind. The body was not sleeping. Although it was alive, it was not aware of what was going on around it. It was only when the tarniq returned to the body that the body regained awareness. Maybe this was if the person had led a good life. I’m not going to say anything more about this because I am not really certain, and I don’t want to make a mistake.

**Pisuk:** I was told never to tirliaqsijuq anyone if I was ever to become an angakkuq. Since I am not an angakkuq I have never tried to do this. There were some angakkuit who would try to hide their own names.

**Agiaq:** They would try to hide their own names. If I were to see a tarniq, it would be like the body of the person it belonged to, but it would look healthy.

**How did they hide their own names?**

**Agiaq:** It was possible to hide their true name. Because they didn’t want anyone using their name to tirliaqsijuq them, they did this. There were those who would tirliaqsijuq someone in their sleep.

**If someone were to arrive and I didn’t want my name known, would I just not say it, or would I use another name?**

**Pisuk:** Even if you used another name, an angakkuq could find out what your real name was, and would know that you were lying.

**Ka&&ak, can you add to this?**

**Ka&&ak:** I haven’t heard much about this. I have heard that there were some who would tirliaqsijuq, because they wanted to know the true character of a person, or to find out what kind of life they had. That’s really all I have heard about this. Sometimes, when an angakkuq would tirliaqsijuq, they would be found out.

**What would happen to the body of an angakkuq while he was sakajuq? Would the tarniq leave the body?**

**Pisuk:** I haven’t seen this personally, but they say that those who were very powerful such as Qimuksiraaq, and Qijuk would bring their bodies with them. One of them had
the shape of an ukpigjuaq, but I don’t know which one it was. One of them was an ukpigjuaq, a large owl, and the other was a nauja, a seagull. One was flying over the other when the one above touched the other with a wing tip. He fell to the ground as a body and he couldn’t get up again. The other one managed to stay aloft. He returned to help. When he swooped down on the one on the ground, he went back to being a bird again. I forgot the name of the one from Qamanittuaq, but I think it was Qijuk. When he fell, he fell as a body. Because his home was so far away, he was in imminent danger of freezing, so Qimuksiraarq swooped down on him and then he became a bird again. His body seemed to disappear. When they saw each other again they recognized each other. They had their human bodies when they met.

Ka&ak: I already talked about this story. Qimuksiraarq was an angakkuq. We were related to him. I can’t remember the name of the other one. We were told he was from the Arviligjuaq area. That story has been told over and over again. They met each other in the air. The one who was coming from the Kivalliq area was overhead and touched him briefly. Qimuksiraarq fell to the ground immediately. The other one circled him for a while swooping over him. After that Qimuksiraarq was able to get back up in the air again. When they were both up in the air Qimuksiraarq did the same thing to him. He went above the other angakkuq and touched him and the other angakkuq fell to the ground. He was just going to leave him there and was starting home when he started thinking that that person had not just left him behind. He decided he had to go back. He swooped over him and they both ended up back in the air. They flew together for a while and then they both went their separate ways and headed home. Some time later Qimuksiraarq travelled to an area by dogteam and saw this other angakkuq. It was the first time they had actually met, but they recognized each other. This was when Qimuksiraarq was travelling south to the Kivalliq area. The term for travelling to the Kivalliq area was kivavaqtuq. I have only heard about this. I did not witness this myself.

Would they be able to recognize who the tuurngait belonged to?

Pisuk: I have never seen anyone ilimmaqtuqtuq so I can not tell you much about it. My uncle said when they would ilimmaqtuqtuq their toes would be tied with a rope. Their hands would be tied behind their back. I am telling you what I have heard. Different communities had different ways of doing things. The angakkuq would say, “Halalala, Halalala,” and then there would be the sound of a snap and the angakkuq would bounce up into the air. The ropes he had been tied with would be all that was left. They would sometimes even fall in the shape of a ball or the shape of a bear. The angakkuq’s inner coat that had been beneath him would rise above him. There would be no one inside the atigi; the inner coat would be suspended in the air. My uncle told me about this. I am telling you about what I have heard, not what I have seen, so I can’t add more to this.
Ka&ak, have you heard of ilimmaqtuniq?

Ka&ak: When they would ilimmaqtuqtuq, the angakkuit would fly through the air.

Did they do this in a dream?

Agiaq: I don’t know. Maybe they actually did it. Sometimes you can have a dream that’s real. Maybe he can make more sense of it. Ask him instead.

Pisuk: I don’t know. I don’t think they did it through dreaming. If I were to say I experienced ilimmaqtuqtuq while sleeping, I would be lying. I don’t think that you ilimmaqtuqtuq while you’re dreaming. You could ilimmaqtuqtuq and call it a dream, if you did not want to be considered an angakkuq. I don’t think one should be ashamed of being an angakkuit. Sometimes people become angakkuit in the same way that others become fervent Christians. You have to really work at it. If you are not earnest about it you would not become an angakkuq.

I have heard that angakkuit had the ability to go from one place to another.

Agiaq: I’ve heard of angakkuit trying to be better than others, not because they disliked each other but because they were competing with one another. I told you about the ones that built the inuksuk. That’s the only time I have heard of angakkuit going from one place to another. If I were a dead angakkuq that was bad, and I wanted to use another angakkuq’s body to have sex, and the other angakkuq agreed, then it could do so.

Are sexual desires not only of the body?

Agiaq: I have heard it is that way.

Is it the same for women?

Agiaq: It doesn’t matter if it is a male or a female, both have sexual desires. That’s the only way to procreate.

Sakaniq and children’s games

You talked about pretending to perform sakaniq when you were a child.

Agiaq: Yes. We were alone in the iglu without our parents. I did this twice.
I didn’t quite understand what you meant by sakannguarniq?

Agiaq: It is pretending to perform sakaniq. Some angakkuit say, “Halalala,” and then start bending down to perform sakaniq. When I was pretending to perform sakaniq, I had a feeling of euphoria. I saw what appeared to be a large bird head. It was large and it had the colour of the sun turning green in the spring when it is setting. It was so bright it was as though the sun had set but it was still light. I became frightened so I didn’t want to do this at all anymore. I didn’t want to go into the porch.

Pisuk: I too as a child pretended to perform sakaniq. My mother scolded me about it. She told me about an orphan without a mother or father. I don’t remember if it was a girl or a boy. When the adults would go to the qaggiq their children would be left alone at home. That child was pretending to perform sakaniq with other children. When they were sakannguaqtuq there was a tuurngaq called Anautalik that hit and killed the other children. The orphan told the adults what had happened and said he wanted to avenge the death of the other children. He put a pot of water on the qulliq to boil. There were ropes attached to the pot. When the water had come to the boil he went out and he started to sing an ajaajaa. When he went back in, an anautaq, a snow beater, belonging to Anautalik the tuurngaq started to follow. The anautaq started to follow people around on its own. The orphan fled from the stick, weaving in and out amongst the adults. The men had their knives out. Then Anautalik came in. The tuurngaq was as wide as an adult bearded seal. The orphan had told the adults when it was time for them to use their knives he would let out a yell. When he let out a yell, the ropes attached to the pot were pulled and the boiling water fell on the tuurngaq. Then the men stabbed it. By working together the people got rid of the tuurngaq Anautalik. This is a true story.

Ka&ak: I never pretended to sakajuq but I did see people who actually did this.

What did they do when they performed sakaniq?

Ka&ak: The angakkuiq would take on a voice that was not his. It would be the voice of his tuurngaq. We could understand part of what he was saying.

Was it scary to watch someone performing sakaniq?

Ka&ak: I have watched it twice and I was scared. My father performed sakaniq twice in my presence.
Do you know if people in the past, such as your parents, ever pretended to sakajuq?

Ka&&ak: I didn’t have grandparents because they died before I was born. My father would actually sakajuq; he wouldn’t pretend to do so. When he would get ready, this was in the days when we wore caribou clothing, he would have his socks on and then he would tighten his kamiik very tightly. This is one of the things he would do when he was preparing to sakajuq, preparing to fight a tuurngaq, probably because he wanted to be light on his feet. He didn’t fight them on his own. He used his tuurngait to help him. That’s how he was able to defeat another tuurngaq.

Your father and his tuurngaq would fight against another tuurngaq?

Ka&&ak: Yes, they would.

Pisuk: Qimuksiraaq and his brother Nagjuk were the ones that I actually saw. They would actually perform sakaniq. They were two brothers who lived in Igluligaarjuk. They would try to send away the causes of sickness. Nagjuk had one song. It was the song from the unikkaaq from Kaugjagjuk. The other one had a pipe. One of them sang an ajaaja and the other one put tobacco in his pipe so that he could help his younger brother. I could see Nagjuk’s index finger becoming red. It was dripping blood. Nagjuk was much more active than his brother. Two people went up to Nagjuk and blew a quick puff of air and patted him on the shoulder. When they turned the lantern on, his hands were full of blood. He rinsed his hands with my uncle’s urine. They said it was tuurngaq blood. This was very interesting to see. They would perform sakaniq when they were trying to determine the wrongdoings a person had committed. When someone admitted to the wrongdoings they had done, the angakkuit would forget about them afterwards. They enjoyed assisting those who were quick to admit their wrongdoings.

Sakaniq is not something one should take lightly. It was because I was a child that I pretended to do this. I can’t tell you whether or not my parents did this. It was something that was very serious. We were actually told not to make fun of it. When my mother heard me pretending to sakajuq she told me I was going to be killed by Anautalik. She told me never to do that, so I never tried it again.

If I had no idea about sakaniq, and I was to pretend to do this, would a tuurngaq come to me?

Pisuk: I don’t know. Maybe these other elders will have a better answer for you.
Agiaq: If you were just doing it for fun, you would never have a tuurngaq come to you, but if you were pretending to do it, it could.

*If I was really to sakajuq and I had a tuurngaq come to me, would the tuurngaq do anything to me?*

Agiaq: The *tuurngaq* wouldn’t do anything to you if you were to use it to help others.

Ka&&ak: You were not to do this in fun. *Tuurngait* know when you are making fun of them. An *angakkuq* would know this even if he hadn’t seen you do it. If we were doing this, they would say to the person who was making fun of them, “This is what you said. This is what you did.” If the person didn’t want to admit what they had done, they would show the person what they had done. They would even make the person who didn’t want to admit what they had done see what they wanted them to see. We were always cautioned by our parents not to make fun of things. We were not to make fun of animals, even the smallest ones. This is what our parents told us. They told us this would affect our life, or the lives of our children, so we had no choice but to listen to them.

I would like to ask more about sakaniq. You said you watched your father do this. Did they have special clothing they would wear when they would perform sakaniq?

Ka&&ak: He wore his regular clothes. He took his outer socks off and turned the inner ones inside out.

**Why do you think he only wore his inner socks?**

Ka&&ak: I don’t know. Maybe he wanted to be light-footed when he was fighting a *tuurngaq*.

Ka&&ak, when you watched him, what did he do when he started?

Ka&&ak: When he was going to *sakajuq* he didn’t handle meat. He would observe the things he had to abstain from.

**Did it take a long time to perform sakaniq?**

Ka&&ak: It didn’t take too long. From what I understood, he did it because there was something bad that was going after us and he was going to get it.

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*Dreams and Dream Interpretation*
Could you feel if something bad was present?

**Ka&ak:** The angakkuq’s tuurnqaq would make him be able to see. Not being an angakkuq, I don’t know this personally. I have just heard this. He was able to see things with the help of his tuurnqaq.

Was this when there was something bad around?

**Ka&ak:** Yes. His tuurnqaq would assist him. The angakkuq as a mere person was not able to deal with this. That’s why he needed the assistance of his tuurnqaq.

Did he do this through sakaniq?

**Ka&ak:** Yes. It wouldn’t be done indoors. He would have to go outside. When they were going to frighten the tuurnqaq, they would go out to where the tuurnqaq was. He had to fight the tuurnqaq with his bare hands. He was not to use a knife or any other weapon.

Would he perform sakaniq alone?

**Ka&ak:** He wouldn’t be accompanied by anyone; he would have to be alone. When he finished this ordeal he would have to be helped because he would be senseless. He would not be in a normal state. He would be like someone who was drunk. They would have to blow in his ears to bring him back to his senses.

When the angakkuit would perform sakaniq would there be a lot of noise?

**Ka&ak:** They would make noises. They would make sounds.

Those people that would blow in his ears, were they told beforehand to do this? How did they know what to do?

**Ka&ak:** The knowledge was passed on from their mothers or by others who knew about this. That’s how they would know what to do.

Did the angakkuq ask people to blow in his ears in advance, or was that done to all angakkuit?

**Ka&ak:** That was done to all angakkuit.
Can you tell us how long it would take an angakkuq to get ready to perform sakaniq?

**Ka&ak:** I don’t remember. I just remember him getting his clothing ready.

Do you remember how you felt when you saw this for the first time?

**Ka&ak:** I remember wondering what he was getting ready for. I wondered why he was doing this.

Was it because he didn’t do this often that you wondered what he was doing?

**Ka&ak:** I was quite a young child then, so I didn’t really look.

**Agiaq, can you tell us more about the time you saw a tuurngaq?**

**Agiaq:** I feel that I was saved by my daughter. She said there was another person present, a woman who was made sick by a tuurngaq, and then sent away. She was just a child, barely talking. She didn’t seem to be in an altered state. She said that a tuurngaq had entered her. “The one that I talk about, that I seem to see, I see on a hill. It seems to be trying to get at you with a whip.” My daughter said she was going to send away the thing that was trying to get me. She is named after my mother Uviluq. She said these things when she was not of an age to say them. I was in pain. I was sick. I couldn’t do anything. Her mother could see her. She took a little knife and she went to the outer porch. She started stabbing at the iglu with this little knife. That’s how she said she made it go away. I know this from what my wife told me. She said she wanted to send Usuktaaq’s son’s wife, named Ulaaju, away.

You said the iglu had been punctured by the knife. Did this make you better?

**Agiaq:** She was trying to get at what was making me sick. She was old enough to start walking around outdoors. I don’t think she did this alone. I think she was niviuqtaujuq by her grandmother. She was named after my mother and my first wife. I became unable to walk. My whole left side was without any strength. I was only able to go outside crawling. I was sent down to the hospital in Hamilton. The doctors knew what was wrong with me. It was probably only because the doctors had additional help, that they were able to deal with me. I am not an angakkuq so I don’t really know. I do not ijuqtuq, make fun of them. Even though I say I am a Christian, I still believe in them. I think of them as my fellow people.
Did you ever see Angutimmarik sakajuq?

Agiaq: I was old enough to remember him, but not the things he was doing. We moved away when my father became old enough to hunt on his own. My father Kappianaq was not an angakkuq.

When you were young did you used to try to avajuq?

Agiaq: It was very scary to avajuq. When we were children we would try anything at all. I didn’t do it to kill myself; I just wanted to experience it. Once I started tingling all over. I was trying to take off what I had used to avajuq with. I almost lost my senses. Another time, I think I was unconscious for a while, and I never tried it again because I was too scared. I thought I could kill myself doing this, so I didn’t do it any more. I also didn’t repeat it because my mother scolded me, and told me never to avajuq again.

Pisuk: I have heard of people that would avajuq. Because I was afraid that I might die, I never tried it so I can’t tell you anything from personal experience. I was very scared to try this. I have heard that some people would try to avajuq, and they would end up strangling themselves. I’ve never tried it. I’ve only heard about it.

What happens to those who avajuq?

Pisuk: They cut off their breathing. I was too scared to try. Anytime I get sick I start thinking that I’m going to die. I was not going to try to kill myself when I wasn’t even sick at all. Because I never tried to avajuq, I lived to be an old man.

Where did you learn about avaniq?

Agiaq: Young children were doing it; it was through peer pressure. The other children were doing it, so I tried it.

Was it because you smelled something that you regained consciousness?

Agiaq: Yes. I was beginning to pulamittuq, lose my senses. I seemed to smell blood.

Have you seen someone avajuq?

Pisuk: No. I have never seen anyone doing this.

Agiaq: My mother did not want me to do this because I could end up killing myself. She scolded me quite harshly regarding this, so I never tried to do it again. It is not good for you. Because my mother told me not to do it, I didn’t try it again.
Would some people die when they would avajuq?

Agiaq: It must have been that way. We were told not to try it. My mother said it was dangerous and there was a possibility it could be fatal.

Did you sing as a child?

Agiaq: I didn’t sing, but I did play games with other children.

Ka&ak: We played with rocks. Sometimes we would get store-bought toys but when we were out on our own we would play with rocks. I still have rocks that I gathered and played with as a child. I tell my grandchildren that this was the type of thing we played with as children.

How about you, Pisuk?

Pisuk: I would play with other children. We played ball. We played attaijarniq which is catch. We also went sliding. We didn’t have any qallunaat toys. Anauligaaq, which is kickball, were the kinds of games that we played. I think children all over played those. Those were really the only games that we played. I saw children playing with rocks. I don’t remember any other games that we played.

Ka&ak: Small boys also played with bows and arrows. They had bows made out of caribou ribs, strung with sinew. We would also play ajaraaq. Those are the things we played.

Qiluriaqsiurniq

Pisuk, can you explain what qiluriaqsiurniq is?

Pisuk: If I was travelling to a place that would take many days to get to, and I had the ability to qiluriaqsiuqtuq, I could get to where I was going the same day. My uncle, who had that ability, wanted to teach me, but my grandmother didn’t want me to learn. He was going to teach me to qiluriaqsiuqtuq. My grandmother didn’t want me to use this because if I depended on qiluriaqsiurniq it would affect my ability to walk. That’s why she didn’t want me to learn this.

I would like to ask you if only an angakkuq was able to use a qiluriaqsiuti?

Pisuk: I’m not quite sure. I think it was a form of irinialiuti, an incantation. Because my grandmother didn’t want me to learn it, I had to listen to her. I have heard of people who had the ability to qiluriaqsiuqtuq.
Agiaq, have you heard about qiluriaqsiurniq?

Agiaq: A little bit, but because I have never used it, I don’t know much about it. I was told that if I wanted to get the ability to qiluriaqsiuqtuq that I was to make a raven fall, and catch it before it touched the ground. When you had this ability you could cover ground in one day that would have taken others two or more days. If I wanted to arrive at my destination in that short a period of time, I was not to look back at what I had traversed, if I used this.

You said you had to catch the raven before it touched the ground.

Agiaq: Yes. If I was to use my qiluriaqsiuti I would repeat the words if I wanted to go an additional distance.

Was it possible to know which people had the ability to qiluriaqsiuqtuq?

Agiaq: No. I never knew who had this ability.

We heard that those who used qiluriaqsiutit had bad legs if they used them too often.

Agiaq: This is what I have heard. You were not to use this ability lightly. If you had that ability you were only to use it when you really needed it. It was those who misused that ability who would have their ability to walk affected.

Ka&&ak, can you add more to this?

Ka&&ak: I can’t add more to this. I have only heard about it. I have never used it. I don’t think this was used often because of the fear that it would affect your ability to walk. I haven’t heard much about it.

Have you heard if anyone who used a qiluriaqsiuti travelled with a dogteam?

Agiaq: Not at all.

Ka&&ak: Not at all.

Pisuk: I haven’t heard that either.
Was it only used if you were travelling on foot?

Agiaq: You only used it if your destination was quite a distance away. They said that the land would fold. You would use your qiluriaqsiuti to make folds in the land.

How many folds did they make in the land? Did they make just enough to travel to their destination in a day?

Ka&ak: Yes. The land would be folded over so that it just took one day.
Dealing with Dreams: Prevention and Protection; Ilisiiqsiniq

Prevention and protection

Pisuk: My younger sister Alice has dreams that seem to come true.

Is there anything you can do to keep dreams like that from happening?

Pisuk: I don’t dream that much any more, but even those who are older than I am can still dream. Some angakkuit have birds, some of them have caribou we don’t see. Some of them have dogs. They have everything, even polar bears. The angakkuit even have people, that looked like us, as tuurngait. The angakkuit would say they dreamed about these. They would be bright and become more and more light. They would come from all over the place to help. They say that those who become powerful through their dreams make powerful angakkuit.

Do you have ordinary dreams?

Pisuk: When I was young, sometimes I would try and find out the importance of my dreams and sometimes I wouldn’t. There were times I would have humorous dreams. I wasn’t really aware of my dreams when I was young. When I was young I dreamed a lot.

Back then did people dream more? Were dreams important?

Pisuk: To me they were. When I became an adult some dreams were very important to me. Sometimes when adults wanted their young people to be successful in hunting, they would use irinaliuti. They would also ilisiiqsijuq, hex people. I can’t fully explain this. Sometimes I would have someone going after me, whether it was in a dream or not. Whenever someone was going after me, I knew I could protect myself. I talk about these things now, but maybe if I had talked about them back then, my dreams would have been of more use. The things I talk to you about, I think will be useful to you. I didn’t dream every day.
What can you tell us about dreams that come true?

Agiaq: Sometimes you have dreams that seem completely true. I know I had a dream that was really true. Even now, when I remember it, I believe it. It was basically a dream in which I lost my strength. I believe it to be true because the part that was touched lost all its strength. I have found some dreams to be true even though I don’t dream a lot.

What is it about dreams that makes them real?

Agiaq: When you have a dream that seems to be completely true it seems real. My wife had a dream the year before last. My mother’s brother lived in Arviligluaq. He was younger than I was. Whenever he was in Iglulik he would come and visit me. He would say he wanted to see his nephew. After he died, we had a grandchild and named it after him. My uncle’s name was Inuksaq. When one of our children was pregnant, my wife would aqaqtuq the unborn baby and call it Inuksaq.

Before the baby was born my wife had had a dream about my uncle. He was trying to say that he wanted to be with his nephew, but his nephew couldn’t seem to understand. When my wife woke up she told me about her dream. She said it seemed like she was awake. We named him after my uncle Inuksaq.

Ka&&ak: Dreams can be true. They are not just something trivial. If you think that you have a dream that is really meaningful, believe in it. You shouldn’t forget about it. Think of it as being indeed true. I too have had a dream that came true. In my dream my son was a small child. I kept telling him, “You’re going to fall in the water. Come over here! Come over here!” I was yelling at him. He became aware of me just as he fell in. The place where he fell in was so shallow you could see the bottom. I dreamed that I walked along the bottom and I went to my son. It turned out that my son was indeed going to fall in the water the next day. Sometimes you are told something that is about to happen in a dream. My father told me because I was not going to be an angakkuq, I was going to be able to rely on my dreams. I always remember what my father said. He told me to believe in my dreams. Even angakkuit should believe in their dreams. I believe some dreams are true because I have experienced this myself.

Agiaq, you said if you dreamed about something breaking you should give it away if you didn’t want something bad to happen.

Agiaq: Yes. I have had a dream about something breaking more than once. I dreamed about my rifle breaking but I didn’t give it away. I kept it. I believe I was wrong in doing that. Maybe if I had given it to someone else or thrown it away, my brother Ituliaq

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would have recovered from his operation. When they removed his lung, the doctors forgot to do something so he ended up dying. When I go back and think about this, I feel if I had given away the rifle he wouldn’t have died.

I had a grandchild who I named after my brother Ituliaq. I also called him Tulugaarjuk. He too died. I dreamed that my brand new Skidoo had broken, so I sold it and got another one. I sometimes think because I didn’t get rid of the rifle, the dream I had had about my brother was not removed. When I dreamed about my Skidoo, I sold it, but my grandchild still died. I think dreams about something breaking are true because this has happened to me twice. When you dream about something breaking, you should give it away immediately so you don’t lose one of your siblings.

We have heard about people who placed an ulu under their pillow. Why was that?

Pisuk: I have never done this. I was never given an ulu as a child. Women used to wear tugirrutit, pieces of wood with strips of caribou skin wrapped around, that they wore in their hair. I heard that people could use this and a cane also. An old person would say to a young one, “This is going to be your cane. Don’t lose it or give it to anybody else.” An elder would give it to their grandchild or their son or daughter, and then they would put it under their pillow. This would really enhance their dreams. We are trying to be truthful about what people used to do. This was a way of enhancing your dreams. If you were given an object like this and you dreamed about somebody, you would have the ability to find things out like an angakkuaq.

Kaak: You mentioned an ulu. Based on what I have heard, anytime you put a blade under your pillow, this would protect you from something unseen. You would put it under the pillow with the blade away from the person. This was a way to protect yourself or someone else from sickness. You would either put it under your pillow, or under the pillow of someone you wanted to protect.

Did the blade have to be sharp?

Kaak: No. It didn’t have to be that sharp. As long as it had a blade, then the unseen thing would be afraid of it. This is what I have heard about this.

Agiaq, would you like to add to this?

Agiaq: I can’t add more than what I have already said.
If you had a dream in which you seemed to be awake and you didn’t want your dream to come true, would you not talk about this?

Agiaq: If I had a dream in which I seemed to be awake, I would have to talk about it right away. Sometimes you have dreams you plan on talking about it, but you forget about them. When you have a dream when you seem to be awake, you don’t forget about it at all.

Ka&&ak: When you have a dream when you seem to be totally awake, you have to talk about it immediately. It is better that way.

Pisuk: What they are saying is true. When you have a dream where you seem to be awake, or you are not completely asleep and you can still hear things around you, you don’t forget that dream. Sometimes you can have a short dream which you don’t forget. I’m going to use myself as an example. I dreamed about Tatty’s son. I had a dream that he was in a boat that was moving. The place where the sewage runs off is usually an open area. I dreamed that he was in a boat over there. I could hear my grandchildren in the background and I wondered to myself, “Why am I dreaming about him?” Since my grandchildren were being rambunctious, one of them bumped into me and I opened my eyes. I wondered if something was going to happen. I knew it wasn’t going to happen to us. I told my wife about my dream. She asked me about it, and I told her I had just had a dream about Tatty’s son. The boat he was on had flipped over on its mast. He didn’t die in the dream but the one he was with died.

The next day Tatty’s son was playing with Nuluk’s daughter. We heard that they had been playing with a rifle and that Tatty’s son had shot her. These things happened. I started thinking, if I hadn’t dreamed about it, it wouldn’t have happened. But we don’t make these things happen. Some people laughed at my dream. My youngest son Paul Pisuk, said, “Aittaangugaluaq, Oh, how very unfortunate.” We don’t make these things happen. He was the one who believed me. The others just laughed.

There was a man who had recurring dreams about a dead person telling him to come. His mother told him to put a knife under his pillow and he did, but that dream continued. Is it possible that the person who was having these dreams had been hexed by the dead person’s father because he didn’t have any other sons and was jealous of him? The mother of the man who was dreaming wanted to protect her child so she brought together her family members to speak to the deceased woman he had been named after.
Pisuk: They say when a person starts dreaming about a deceased relative coming to get them, the family would get together to try to protect the person. This is true. If that person did not want to die, their thoughts could be helped by those who were alive. If a person continued to have that dream, they would get together with their family. Then they would continue to live, even though they had had this kind of dream. I am telling you something I have heard, not something I have personal knowledge about.

Ka&&ak, can you add to this?

Ka&&ak: I have heard a little about this. If a person such as my son or daughter, or I started dreaming about my deceased father or mother coming to get us, we would realize that there was something bad about this person. We would qinugijuq, order the person to leave. When there was a person who was qinugijaujuq, they used an irinaliuti against this person. This is what I have heard. I haven't experienced this. I heard it from my parents. They would qinugijuq the tarniq of the dead person if they didn't want it around.

Would an ulu be used as protection? Would it be the same thing?

Ka&&ak: They had different ways of dealing with it. We would be told to put something with a blade underneath our pillow.

Was this so you could have it in your hand if you woke up?

Ka&&ak: No. You would just have it under your pillow.

When the tarniq came would you threaten it with the object that had a blade, or would it just not come because it knew you had this object under your pillow?

Ka&&ak: They say they are very leery about this, even though they are just tarniit.

Why? Was this because the blade could cut them? Have you heard whether the person would cut the one who was trying to ilisiqsijuq?

Ka&&ak: I haven't heard that. Maybe Agiaq knows more about it.

Agiaq, have you heard about putting something with a blade under your pillow?

Agiaq: Yes, but never having done it, I don't know much about it. I have heard of something with a blade being used for protection. Nowadays, instead of putting
something with a blade under their pillows people will put a rosary underneath instead. For example, if there is a child that cries in their sleep, they will put a rosary underneath the pillow. That which comes from down below can sometimes appear good. If a person started having bad dreams, they could also put something with a blade under their pillow.

**Do the rosary beads that you put under your pillow have to be blessed?**

**Agiaq:** If a person experiences fear in a room, they can use a rosary in the same way, to chase away something bad. That’s the only way I can answer your question.

**If someone was trying to ilisiqsijuq someone else, would that cause the person to aqtuqsittuq?**

**Agiaq:** An aqtuqsinniq can be caused by many things, not just by attempts to ilisiirniaqtuq.

**If you saw something that looked good, but wasn’t, were you told how to deal with this?**

**Agiaq:** If I were to see something that looked very good, and I started believing in it, it could also have come from that which was from down below, that which is not good.

**If I were to see a beautiful woman or handsome man, depending on my gender, when I was out on the land, how would I deal with this?**

**Agiaq:** I can’t really answer that. The one below, could also appear as a beautiful woman. I can’t answer that. I haven’t really experienced this.

**Could God come to you in your dreams?**

**Agiaq:** No, not at all. It would only be things from Takannaaluk that we would see. That’s what I think.

**Hasn’t anyone ever experienced a dream that has come from above?**

**Agiaq:** If I were to say that I had received a dream from God, I would be lying. It would probably be from the opposite direction. For myself, I don’t think dreams come from above at all.

**Kaanak:** I have always thought if someone were to experience something from heaven, that they would lose their tarniq immediately.
Pisuk, this question is for you. If in a dream someone kept beckoning you to come, and kept on saying, “Come and be with me, leave behind those who are with you,” if you didn’t have anything under your pillow, what other things could you do?

Pisuk: I’ll try to answer you. I am telling you things I have only heard about, even if I sound like someone who has experienced them. If the person who was dreaming recognized a tarniviniq, and kept having the same dream and it started affecting their life, then the family members would get together because they would know that this person’s life was being endangered. Either the family members would try to help the person to stay alive, or they would rely on the assistance of an angakkuaq for this. If this person had a dream, even if it was the same dream over and over again, but it didn’t seem that it was dangerous to the person, then it didn’t matter as much. As my fellow elder said, some people would seem very beautiful in dreams. They could seem very good and yet not be good at all.

If a tarniq kept on trying to get a person, would they flee to another place to try and protect themselves?

Pisuk: My youngest grandchildren, who are fatherless, both played with an unseen child on separate occasions. My wife and I would hear them playing with another child but when we would go and look, there wouldn’t be anyone there. I have heard if a child is being sought after by a tuurnaq, it would take the form of a playmate that only they could see. If your child made their unseen playmate cry and you could hear that child crying, then you knew that the child had not been overcome by the tuurnaq and would not lose their life. Both my wife and I were very relieved when we heard a toddler crying both times this occurred.

What do you think they used to overcome this tarniq?

Pisuk: One of my grandchildren said this baby kept trying to take everything away, so he got fed up and hit it on the head with a toy truck, and that’s what made it cry.

If you are reminded of anything that would be of use to us, we would appreciate it if you could tell us.

Ka&kas: Nowadays, we use the cross. It was not that long ago that my cousin Aggak’s wife Sinisiaq died. One time she was trying to go indoors but she couldn’t get in. My cousin’s wife was trying to open the door but she was unable to do so. There was a cross made of metal and she yelled, “Somebody give me the cross.” She could feel that the door was no longer being held and she was able to open it. I believe you can also put a
cross under your pillow and it would be helpful. What Agiaq said was true. Obviously, some of us present have experienced tarniit that tell you to come. In the past things were much more difficult. People tried to have more protection against that which was not of the flesh.

Can you tell us more about the use of the cross?

Ka&&ak: Yes. Nowadays we don’t rely on angakkuit anymore. We tell people they can only be protected by the cross. Even though there are still angakkuit, we don’t follow things connected with the angakkuit any more. We only rely on the things from the church.

Do you think that that tarniq that was holding the door is still around?

Ka&&ak: I don’t know. I can only tell you what Sinisiaq said, as she has since died. There are people that think there are tarniit around, even today. It is just that some of us don’t experience them. Maybe it is because we are not as aware of tarniit as much as we used to be.

Was it a male or a female tarniq?

Ka&&ak: It was the tarniq of a young boy.

Did the family members meet together after this incident?

Ka&&ak: Yes. The family members met together to discuss the reasons why that tarniq was bothering others.

Pisuk: I remember when the tuurngaq that was trying to kill me was around, my brothers and sisters couldn’t see it. Even my father and my uncle who were angakkuit couldn’t see it. Because my grandmother had given me siksik teeth, the teeth of a ground squirrel, to protect me, even though I wasn’t wearing them anymore, perhaps that’s what protected me. When my father and my uncle went to find the tuurngaq, they sent it away. I’ve never felt it since.

Did you also use rosary beads?

Pisuk: Yes. I also put my grandmother’s rosary beads under my pillow. My mother tried to keep my grandmother’s rosary beads, but one of my brothers lost them. Even though my mother regretted losing them, it couldn’t be helped.
**Ilisiqsiniq**

**Pisuk:** Some angakkuit used their powers to go after people. Successful hunters were not to make their abilities visible. When we were young, anybody who had abilities wouldn’t show them. Whenever young people were alone, they would put their abilities to use. The angakkuit would go after those with ability, using animal tuurngait such as bearded seals, or wolves. These animal tuurngait would appear as though they had bodies. Some young people were protected from this through dreams. They could see what was happening. Then could even see who was going after them. I myself have had this happen to me. An angakkuq was trying to kill me with what appeared to be a wolf. Whenever I was about to fall asleep, this wolf would try to bite me, but it was unable to do so because I told an angakkuq about it. I told him that the wolf that was trying to bite me had become bothersome and I wanted to do something about it. The angakkuq told me that he thought the wolf that was coming to me was sent by a person, so I shouldn’t do anything to the wolf. He said he thought the angakkuq that was going after me was quite powerful. The angakkuq handled this tuurngaq himself, so I was saved. Maybe if I had tried to deal with this myself I would have been killed.

We talked about itillimaajuk earlier. I have a niece who is now old enough to bear children. When she was a young teenager in Igluligaarjuk she started flying around when she was itillimaajuk. A number of people were chasing her around but were unable to grab her. If she had not been grabbed she would have been lost.

When you have teenagers of your own, don’t be too harsh with them. If you are displeased with them, scold them to correct their behaviour, but don’t keep bringing the same things up later. If you treat them well and don’t scold them too much, they will listen to your words more.

I can tell you about something else I dreamed. Last year I dreamed my youngest son, who is named after my father, went down to his aluminium boat. I too have grandchildren who are now adults. I told them to go out and help their uncle. Someone had put sanitary napkins in the boat. I knew that somebody was going after us. It was a form of ilisiqsiniq. Because I am an elder and I was not going to be affected by it, I took one of the sanitary napkins that was in the boat and I turned it around before putting it into a garbage bag. I didn’t leave it there very long before I put it in a garbage bag. Because I knew that someone was using that sanitary napkin to go after us, and because I turned it around, this attempt at ilisiqsiniq would utirviujuq, bounce back to the person or the relative that had left the sanitary napkin. They say even though someone isn’t an angakkuq, a person has a protector. If there is ever a sanitary napkin placed on something that belongs to you, whether it’s a tool kit, a boat or a qamutiik, don’t be squeamish about it. Turn it around first, before you throw it away. In that way you are protecting people close to you. I know that this is true.
Was the sanitary napkin bloody?

**Pisuk:** Yes. If it was put on something you would use for hunting, it would affect your hunt. We were told we were not to *ilisiirniaqtuq* if we didn’t want to lose any of our family members. You can tell the ones who *ilisiirniaqtuq*. They are the ones who seem to have a lot of mishaps occur within their family.

**If someone was trying to go after you, how could you tell the difference between that and a sanitary napkin that had just been left on the ground?**

**Pisuk:** If it was on a Skidoo or on a *qamutiik* or a boat and it was not your wife’s or your daughter’s, then you would know it was a form of *ilisiirniarniq*. When you know that, then you have to take it and turn it around. You don’t need to leave it for long. Don’t be squeamish about it. This will reverse the *ilisiirniarniq* back to whoever was going after you.

**What do you mean by *ilisiirniaqtuq***?

**Pisuk:** It is when someone is attempting to hex you. Don’t be squeamish about it, just take it. You can always wash your hands. You can throw it away afterward. This summer this happened more than once. I put many sanitary napkins in the garbage. You could also use a bird. Someone could put a dead bird in the boat. I think the Kivallirmiut tend to *ilisiisiniq* more than the Iglulimiut. People are still doing this, and if you don’t know much about this, it can be very scary. Because I know about it, I can feel it happening. I am becoming an old man.

**How long have you known about this? Did you learn about this as a child, or when you were older?**

**Pisuk:** I was told by my grandmother that these types of things would happen. If I happened to see a sanitary napkin I should ask my wife, my daughter or my daughter-in-law if it belonged to them. If it didn’t belong to any of them, then you knew it belonged to someone who was intending malice towards you. You needed to turn it around so the *ilisiiniarniq* would bounce back to the person who sent it.

If you placed a hair from a deceased person on someone’s footprint then you could affect that person’s ability to walk. If you see this happening, you should spit on the hair and this will bounce back to the person who has done this. I think the Iglulingmiut had much more power but they are reluctant to talk about it.

**Agiaq:** I can remember one time when I was sleeping, that an *angakkuq* was trying to get me. The *angakkuq* was far away on top of a hill. I lost the strength on one side of my
body. The angakkuq touched me and that’s why I lost the strength on that side. This happened to me while I was dreaming. The angakkuq was on top of a hill and I could see her. It seemed as though I was asleep. She had been holding her whip and she took something from the ground and tied it securely to the end. She was still on top of the hill. She lashed her whip on the ground in front of her. I was beginning to be pulled towards her so I moved out of the way. She did this again and the ground I was on went towards her once again, even though I knew that I was in bed. She started whipping faster and again pulled the ground closer to her. She was trying to have me move towards her. I moved away again. I think I was just sleeping at that point. I was sick. Then she once again tied something to the end and started whipping faster, so fast. I tried to move aside but she touched me with the end of the whip.

*How many years have passed since then?*

**Agiaq:** Many, many years. My daughter Iqqittuq was just a baby then. She is now forty-three years old. I have a daughter named after my mother and my wife. She said that she did not like the one who was trying to get her uiksaq, her future husband, so she sent it away.

**Pisuk:** My father’s brother arranged for me to marry the daughter of his brother-in-law Kajjut. This had been arranged at birth but her father didn’t want me as a ningau, a son-in-law any more. He wanted somebody else. There was this young man who was very agile, who was very good at playing ball. He wanted him as a son-in-law instead. So he put an ilisiiqsiniq on me using an irinaliuti. I dreamed that he took a tube from an outboard motor and was blowing at me through it. I took the tube and bit on the end nearest to me and blocked it. I had teeth back then! I bent the tube and tied the end. I was in front of him. He was trying to continue to blow. After that he ended up with a bad leg because this bounced back to him. I told him that he was the cause of this. My knee became inflamed and I had difficulty walking for a while, but he became very sick from this and died about two years later.

I was taught never to *ilisiiqsijuq*. I was not allowed to do this. They discouraged those with quick tempers not to use them even more. Some people who would *ilisiiqsijuq*, could have what they attempted bounce back on them and could end up with their family members dying. Some people who would have the *ilisiirniarniq* bounce back at them, would fight their own tuurngaq and not be affected by it. When those that were powerful found out that someone was going after them, or started losing family members, they would kill the other angakkuq. I have not been taught how to *ilisiiqsijuq*. I’m just telling you what I have heard.
If I were an angakkuq, could I ilisiiqsijuq someone through a dream?

Ka&&ak: I have never done this to anyone, so I don’t know. If there was someone who you had those kinds of thoughts towards, you’d have to be aware of what you were thinking. They have to be your own thoughts, not something you were dreaming. If there was someone you were not pleased about, someone you said bad things about, then you would put an ilisiqsiniq on them.

Have you heard of anybody who was ilisiqtaujuq, hexed?

Ka&&ak: I have, but I wasn’t really aware of it because my mother didn’t want me to hear about people who would hex others. She did not like it at all. She did not like the fact the people would try to ilisiqsijuq others. She didn’t like having people trying to kill others. My brother Itinnuaq knows a lot more than I do because he is older than I am. He knows about angakkuit. He knows more about what my father did, even though my father was not his biological father. His biological father was a qallunaaq who worked with my father. My father wasn’t as good as my mother, so my mother had to keep an eye on him.

Whenever an angakkuq felt that there was someone who was better than they were, or had more ability than they did, they would try to go after them. If there was someone who was a good hunter, then often an angakkuq would go after him. My mother would tell us stories about that. My mother said her first husband, Kumaksiutiksaaq was killed that way. He lost his mind. My mother had been out on the land with him. It was just their family out there. He kept on asking for a knife but they wouldn’t give him one because they were aware that he didn’t have all his senses about him. He kept asking for a knife and then one evening he found one. He had closed the iglu door with a block of snow. Then he got on the bed. He put his arm around my mother and told her he was going to stab her. My mother didn’t say anything because she was afraid of the blade. My mother was quite strong. She took the knife and she and her mother-in-law fought with him and stabbed him in the stomach. Some of his intestines came out. Because he stabbed her, she has a scar.

Ka&&ak, have you heard of people trying to protect themselves from someone trying to ilisiqsijuq them?

Ka&&ak: I haven’t heard that much. I have heard that irinaliutit could be used as a means of sending back ilisiqsiniit.

Pisuk: If a person tried to ilisiqsijuq someone who had a pittiriqsauti, a means of protection, even if they had killed a lot of people through ilisiqsijuq, even a child could
protect themselves against them. When you live in different places you sometimes hear different things, though sometimes what you hear is exactly the same. There are probably others who know more than I do.

Agiaq: What he is saying is the way it is. Maybe if you were the one trying to ilisiiqsiujuq, it wouldn't be enjoyable if there were those who had a means of protection. I have heard that those with pittiriqsauti could protect themselves from somebody who was going after them, through dreaming about it. Sometimes my father would say that he would know about someone who was going after him through his dreams. He said he found out that Takannaaluk was going after him in a dream. She had to go back down, and when she did she let the water splash. He had been pre-warned about this. There were three large waves that came back up on the land. When one of my father's grandchildren talked about a dream he had, there were three large waves that came up on the land and pulled some things on the shore back into the water. I remembered this was similar to what my father had said.

Do you think there were ever any angakkuit who went after a person in their dream accidentally?

Pisuk: I remember some angakkuit very clearly. People would say that even though some were really powerful angakkuit, they wouldn't be able to get certain people. Maybe this was because a pittiriqsauti had been made for them. The angakkuit might want to go after a particular person but there would be something that made them unable to see. They weren't able to get that person because of this pittiriqsauti. The person who was protected would not be an angakkuq. They would be given this protection by their grandmother or someone else.

Agiaq: When my father was a child, he would be woken up in the early, early morning by being whipped with an old woman's pants. He would go out in the morning before anyone else had gone out. That was his means of being protected.

Did you say he was whipped with an old woman's pants?

Agiaq: Yes. The woman was not that old. She was middle-aged.

Were people given pittiriqsautit at birth?

Pisuk: They were all different. People living in different places had different ways of doing this. My grandmother gave me a necklace made from the front teeth and the claws of a siksik. I didn’t like it and I asked my mother directly why she had given me
something from an animal that had lice. She said my grandmother wanted it to be difficult for angakkuit to get at me and so she drilled the teeth and the claws and made them into an necklace and put them around my neck. I must have lost them one day when I was out playing. My mother regretted their loss but my grandmother told her not to worry about it.

Agiaq, did you want to add to this?
Agiaq: It was okay if the pittiriqsauti fell off on its own. You were not to worry about it if nobody was aware when it fell.

Would the lost object be searched for?
Agiaq: No. They didn’t search for it.

Were those who were given a pittiriqsauti told why it was given to them?
Ka&&ak: I don’t know much about this. I’ve only heard about it. My brother Itinnuaq was given a pittiriqsauti. Uqaqtuq’s father Kamingmaalik, gave him one so that nobody would be able to get him. Some people are quick to dislike their fellows and they tend to ilisiqsijuq without much cause. My brother was given this means of protection so that if someone was to ilisiqsijuq him, the person would find it difficult, as though they were hitting a stone. That was the meaning that was given to this.

Was this given to him by an angakkuq?
Ka&&ak: It was not just angakkuit that could do this. It would be given by someone who had knowledge about these things, not just by an angakkuq.

How strong was the pittiriqsauti? Did it last for many days or just for a short time?
Ka&&ak: I don’t know. I can’t answer this question.

Agiaq: Maybe you don’t understand. It would be given to a child by an old woman or an old man. For example, in the early morning before anyone had walked on fresh snow, from the time the child was small to when they grew up, they would be told to get up and go outside, so they would have protection.
Would the child be told why this was being done?

Agiaq: This was the manner in which a person would be woken up. It was done so that if an angakkuq went after someone they would be protected, even though they themselves were not angakkuit. Some angakkuit will go after others, even though they have no reason to do so.

What happened if somebody went out ahead of him?

Agiaq: I don’t know.

Pisuk: My grandmother told us to go out, even when we weren’t ready to wake up. Before anybody else went out, we were told to go out. We were to be the first to step on the snow. Even though we were scolded about this, it seemed that when we were living on our own, we had an easier life. I can say that I’m thankful that my grandmother raised me. We were told to go out before anybody had stepped on the snow.

Agiaq: It was a means of protection. If we were the first to step on the snow, even before our neighbours did, it was as though we were stepping on moving ice, and that it wouldn’t take long to be successful. They were shaping our future for us in order for us to have an easier life.

Did going out to the porch have any meaning? For instance, not wanting something to come into the iglu, or was it just what they had to do? Was it just a maligaq, being whipped with a pair of qarliik or was it a means of protection? Did a person have to accept this?

Agiaq: Yes. My father had to follow what he was told to do. We are telling you the things we have heard.

Were there other ways of protecting yourself from an ilisiqsiniq?

Pisuk: I don’t think I can answer this well. I’m just going to tell you what I have heard. They say that those who would ilisiqsijuq, would start to lose their children, one after another, when they were not equal to the person they were trying to ilisiqsijuq. Their children would start getting sick and would die. I did not even like hearing about these things because you could end up with very few children. Those who did not ilisiqsijuq had many children that were helpful. Someone who would ilisiqsijuq would be ignored by their children and none of their children would amount to anything.
Were there any other things that could be used as a means of protection?

**Pisuk:** My grandfather used the bill of a *tuullik*, a yellow-billed loon. He wore it around his neck. I think it’s okay if I tell you this story that I heard from my father. Around the end of June, when the ice was rotting, Qulittalik wanted to kill my grandfather Miqquilik. He was coming out of his tent when Qulittalik put a bullet in his rifle because he wanted to kill him. Everybody was watching this. Miqquilik seemed to start folding into a piece of ice. There was some seaweed there and he just disappeared into it. Qulittalik started heading home because he couldn’t get him. He took off in his boat and then he saw Miqquilik walking to his tent. He knew he was not going to be able to get him, so he didn’t even try again. They say that those that had a means of protection were dangerous to go after. That’s what I have been told.

Was he protected by the bill of the bird?

**Pisuk:** Yes. You probably know what *tulliit* are, the largest of the loons. He had the upper and lower beak strung together as a necklace. This was called a *kangiruq* in Nattilingmiutut. If anyone tried to kill him he used them as protection. I’m telling you all that I have heard.
Suicide

In the past, when you were children, did you hear about people committing suicide?

Ka&ak: No. We never heard about people committing suicide. In the time before there were qallunaat, I never heard of this happening.

Agiaq: I heard from my mother about someone strangling themselves. I have heard of others as well.

Pisuk: I have heard of two people strangling themselves. I forget one of their names but I remember the other’s.

Was that person an elder?

Pisuk: Yes, that person was an elder. His name was Ujarasugjuk. He died by strangulation. He had been sick for a long time. He gave an object to Niviattiat, who was a powerful angakkuq in the Iglulik area, to cure him. Niviattiat started to sakajuq and he started seeing things he had never seen before. Niviattiat told him about the woman he had raped at knife point, but Ujarasugjuk denied this. They were in a tent and the tent started to shake. Then it seemed to become full of snow. He had threatened his daughter-in-law with a knife. Ujarasugjuk had asked the angakkuq to cure him. There were other people present. His daughter-in-law started to cry and removed her pants. She said she had only given in out of fear. Ujarasugjuk admitted to having done this. That night after everyone had gone to sleep, he went to the place that would become his grave and he strangled himself.

Do you remember the name of the other person who committed suicide?

Pisuk: I forget who the other one was. I think it was a Nattilingmiutaq. Her only son had gone towards some caribou in a qajaq. She saw him capsize but couldn’t help him. The mother went to her neighbours and told them she was going to strangle herself. They tried to dissuade her but she killed herself afterwards.

Agiaq: I think that this happened in the Aivilik area in a place called Qariaq, at the north part of the bend.

Pisuk: I can’t remember any other suicides.
Agiaq: Nuvak’s first husband, Sivaniqtuq’s father Patiraq, shot himself while they were travelling. Maniilaq, the one that took his wife, didn’t have long to live and Ikpanaaq became her third husband. Do you understand?

Yes.

Agiaq: Maybe we were living at Iniktuq then.

Did he accidentally shoot himself?

Agiaq: No. He shot himself on purpose. He didn’t want to share his wife with Maniilaq. He thought his wife was going to be taken away from him by Maniilaq and that’s why he shot himself. Patiraq, Maniilaq and Ikpanaaq were all young. Tiriaq was a girl, as was Suruurniq. They were travelling north when he killed himself.

One of Johnny’s great-grandparents and Ululijarnaat were among the people there when Patiraq was buried. We too were travelling north but we stopped before we got to where they were. Our mother said there was darkness ahead. She knew that there was something bad that had happened. She didn’t want to continue travelling on to Iglulik and so we stopped. This was before we were Christians. We spent the summer there.

You asked about suicide. Suicide is not new. I heard from my mother about people who strangled themselves. Johnny’s grandmother strangled herself. I told you about the man who shot himself. Attaqtaaq’s husband hung himself as well. I can’t tell you the details, but suicide is not new. People did commit suicide in the past. For example, some people were sick for a long time and just got tired of it. They would take their own lives. Nowadays we talk about how many suicides there are, but suicide is not new.

Was that my father’s mother that committed suicide?

Agiaq: Yes. My mother told me about this.

Were the number of suicides as numerous then as they are today, or was it a rare occurrence? Was it elders that usually committed suicide?

Agiaq: It was usually elders, but it happened rarely. I think that nowadays because everyone has so much, elders do not kill themselves any more.

Do you think these elders were assisted in committing suicide?

Agiaq: I don’t know.
Would they hang themselves with rope made of ugjuk?

Agiaq: They also used rope from seal skin. They could use rope made from caribou skin, but it broke easily.

Was Arraq helped to commit suicide?

Agiaq: From what I have heard, people helped him kill himself because he asked for assistance. I can’t tell you much about this, because I wasn’t living there then, and I wasn’t told about it in person.

Where was Arraq from?

Agiaq: He was from the Iglulik area. We lived in a lot of places around that area. We didn’t stay in one place until we were brought to Iglulik by qallunaat. We stayed in places where we could hunt. He had had an argument with someone from Tununirusiq. It was after he returned home that he did this.

Was that person he argued with an angakkuq?

Agiaq: Yes. There are still angakkuit today. Amarualik was still an angakkuq when he was an elder, even though he had become a Christian. I don’t want to add more to this in case I make a mistake.

Ka&&ak: My husband’s grandmother was named Qalalaaq. Her husband was from the Nattilik area. He was a very proud, vain man. He was ilisiiqtaujuq, and he became sick with a bad back. He told his wife to put a piece of rope around the top of the tent. She did not want to go along with his request because he was her husband, but he started threatening her so she finally gave in. That’s when he strangled himself. I heard this from her. He was sick for a long time and was in a lot of pain. He couldn’t sleep any more.

Are you comfortable answering questions about suicide, Agiaq?

Agiaq: I don’t feel I can prevent it. Those who try to prevent suicide don’t know what is in the minds of people who want to kill themselves. I feel they only just talk about this with each other.
Are you comfortable with us asking you questions about this?

Agiaq: I don’t know what to say. One of my great-grandchildren committed suicide. There are people that try to prevent suicides but suicides still happen. There was a suicide that happened quite recently in Iglulik. I don’t know what to say about this.

Ka&&ak: We too have suicides in Kangiqsigmiq. When you don’t work in this field you don’t know what to say.

Do you think that those who talk about suicide kill themselves less than the ones who just do it without having talked about it first?

Agiaq: Those who keep on talking about doing it, tend not to kill themselves. The majority of those who actually kill themselves haven’t talked about it beforehand. I don’t feel that talking about this is going to be useful in helping to stop this.

Do you think that some people commit suicide because they feel they are being called by someone who is already dead?

Agiaq: I don’t know how to answer this. If I was to dream that my mother wanted me to commit suicide because she wanted me to be with her, maybe this would be because my mother was in a place she didn’t want to be. I can’t really answer this. If someone is able to give a better answer, please do.

Pisuk: I honestly can’t answer this. The ones that have committed suicide are not here to listen. When we get back home, if we talked about this on the radio, I don’t think it would help. I don’t feel I am able to answer this. I have no advice and no answers to give to prevent suicide.

Agiaq: If a person has made up their mind to commit suicide, if they have reached a point when there is no turning back, then they are going to commit suicide. You don’t know what to say. Some people who commit suicide have not let it be known that that’s what they want to do.

If a person was told in a dream to follow a dead person, do you think this would be because that person was unhappy?

Ka&&ak: Those who have been unhappy for quite some time, who are unable to change their minds, who don’t talk to anyone about this are the ones that commit suicide.
Do you mean they have been thinking about suicide for quite some time?
Ka&&ak: Yes.

Do you think it is because they are obsessed with committing suicide that they start dreaming about it, saying that they have been told to come?
Agiaq: I don’t know. I’ve never heard about this. Maybe some of them do say that. Maybe some young people are embarrassed to talk about it.

In the past do you think there were people who dreamed about someone wanting them to commit suicide?
Agiaq: I’ve never heard of this.

Pisuk: I’ve never heard about it either.

In the past did people dream about someone who was deceased telling them to follow them?
Agiaq: I’ve never heard of this.

Ka&&ak: In the past people wanted their relatives to live. When they were dying, they wanted their children to continue on. They didn’t tell them to follow them. They wanted them to live.

Do you think it is people that are very discontented that commit suicide?
Ka&&ak: Probably, but I never really knew anyone who committed suicide because they were discontented.

Pisuk: It seems that we are unable to answer this. I have a grandchild that hardly ever goes out at all. The others will be active and go out but this one is like a dog that is leashed. He attempts suicide a lot. We have had him talk to a psychiatrist. We tried to find out why he had suicidal thoughts. If we let him do what he wanted, he would do nothing but eat and sleep and smoke cigarettes and watch television. When he starts acting like that, maybe this is when he gets suicidal. I don’t really know how to answer this.
If I had a dream and I saw my father in a really beautiful place, and he was asking me to join him, do you think it would really be my father that I would see?

Agiaq: I don’t know. I’ve never heard of this.

Pisuk: Some people’s deceased relatives niviuqtuq them. They try to protect and defend them from anything happening to them. I think those are the ones that think they are being called, but they want to continue to live. As you become older, you become less trusting.

Agiaq: I have had dreams about my wife. I have never had the same dreams about my mother and father. In my dream she didn’t want to be touched. I dreamed of her being outside a house. She was wearing white and she didn’t want me to touch her. She did not want me to come. I seemed to be awake when I had this dream about her. She died in the spring and it was towards the fall that I had this dream. I have never dreamed of anyone telling me to come.

I have a question but I don’t know how to ask it.

Ka&&ak: Don’t be afraid to ask. You don’t have to be afraid of us. Ask us questions. If we don’t know the answer, we’ll tell you that we don’t know.

Pisuk: We try hard, but we don’t want to tell you things we are unsure of.

Agiaq: We don’t want to go beyond the truth and add things that aren’t there.

My partner committed suicide. After he did this, I had dreams about him. In my dreams he would tell me he was alive. Because of my dreams I didn’t really believe he was dead. I started phoning people and telling them that I no longer believed he was dead. He never told me to call anyone, but I would find it maddening because in my dreams he was still alive. Why did I have these dreams? What do they mean? If you are unable to answer, it is okay.

Ka&&ak: There is a meaning to your dream but we don’t always know what the meaning is. Maybe he was thinking of you when he was dying. Sometimes they say that even after someone is dead, their thoughts are still around. I don’t really know the meaning of your dream.
Pisuk: I’m not very good at making sense out of dreams. If I’m not given the answer from outside myself, then I’m not able to provide an answer.

Agiaq: I too can’t answer this. We keep being told that even though the body is dead, the tarniq is still alive. Maybe he wanted you to stop thinking about him so much, for you to know that you would see each other’s tarniq again because the tarniq never dies. That’s the only meaning I can give you, even though it doesn’t make a lot of sense.

Ka&&ak: The tarniq continues to live. That’s what we have heard. Because of that you had dreams about him. I’m not able to provide you with a better answer. Even when we become elders, we are not always able to answer you. That’s why we sometimes don’t say anything.
Exploring Our Dreams:  
Dialogue Between Generations

When we started these interviews I had a dream I wanted to tell you about. I had this dream last year. In my dream I was back home. When a man who was close beside me made a sound, I looked up to see if there was anyone walking down the street. The man said to me, “Tell that person to come.” Because he was so insistent, I told the woman who was walking down the street to come over. When the woman came up to us, the man who was beside me asked her to sit down. It turned out that as soon as she sat down he started stabbing her. When he started stabbing her I woke up very shaken and I immediately started to worry that there would be another murder. Shortly after I arrived in class, I mentioned to my fellow students that I thought there would be another murder. One of my classmates asked me why I had said that. I said that I had just had a dream about it, but I had no idea where it would occur. Three days later a woman was killed. Maybe I was supposed to help her, but because I didn’t know who she was, she was killed. I was told this was going to happen in a dream, except the people that were involved were not the ones I dreamed about.

Kâ&ak: That’s the way dreams are sometimes. The dream will happen but it won’t involve the people you dreamed about.

This was the first time I ever had such a dream.

Pisuk: I would like to comment on what you’ve been talking about. It is quite a burden to have a dream where you learn something is going to occur. Even though you don’t want it to happen, and even though you didn’t make it happen, some people are going to think that you did. It is best to tell your dream to someone right away when you wake up. At first, when people start hearing you say such things, especially younger people have a tendency not to believe you. When one of you has a dream like this, people are not going to hold you responsible for what happens. You should talk about it right away. You will feel better after having done so.
From the time my wife was very young she would wake up and say that a certain person had just died. It is because of that that I am afraid to have her dream about me. Even though she doesn’t want it to happen, she has always known if someone has died. I have never known her to have dreams where she would predict other things.

People who have dreams where something will happen, don’t make it happen. These types of dreams have always occurred from the times of our grandparents and great-great-grandparents.

Agiaq: My wife doesn’t like it when the skin on her shoulders starts to twitch because she knows we will be hearing unpleasant news about someone. Whenever she says she has had a twitch, we feel sad but we can’t do anything about it.

Pisuk: We have no way of being of assistance.

**If someone had a dream about losing their teeth, what would this mean?**

**Pisuk:** I don’t know.

*There was one woman who had a dream about two human shapes. One was yellowish. There was one shape that was going inside her. She thought she was dreaming, but seemed to be awake. One of them was pushing her. She could feel it pushing. What did that dream mean?*

**Pisuk:** When some people are dreaming, they are dreaming about something that is actually happening. When I was young, I used to feel that there was a hand on me, but I couldn’t see it. It might have been a tuurnngaq. Whenever I would hear the voice of someone talking, it would warn me that something bad was going to happen. This was not because I was an angakkuq.

*If human shapes were going into a person in a dream, do you think they were tuurngait or tarniiit?*

**Pisuk:** I don’t know. I understand the question but I can’t answer it. I’ll use myself as an example. I was sick once for around two years. I was told in a dream that my tarniq was getting too far away from me. That was why I was not feeling well. In this dream it got on the back of a bird that looked like a seagull. I saw something that looked like high hills. Sometime later, I saw the area around the Fox Four Dewline site on television, and recognized it as the place I had been. The seagull swooped down. I could see my body sleeping. It touched my body slightly. I could feel the air rushing past my face. Since then, although I still get sick, I feel much better.*

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**Dreams and Dream Interpretation**
When did this happen?

Pisuk: This happened around 1970.

There was a person who had a dream about his late father wanting him to come and join him. When he started to believe this, he attempted to kill himself. There are others who had dreams about what they described as monsters, really scary things. What I think about this now, after hearing you talk, is that they might have been tuurngait. Sometimes people don’t have access to elders that are knowledgeable about these things. Sometimes they don’t even have access to elders at all. Sometimes it is very difficult for young people to express themselves to older people or to elders about these things. I think this is one of the reasons why it would be important to have something written about dreams. Even though we don’t intend to have an answer to everything, and even though we don’t intend to give solutions, this could help to prevent suicide. This might have an influence on those people who have really strong dreams that they can’t explain, even though it might be a small one. Even though it is a small thing it might be very helpful to them.

Most of the young people I was talking with really didn’t seem to talk much with elders. I would like you to comment on this. Do young people talk to you about things like that?

Ka&ak: My children tell me about their dreams occasionally.

Pisuk: My son and my daughters-in-law will sometimes tell me about their dreams. When you become an elder this becomes gratifying. I am leery about my youngest daughter-in-law dreaming about me, even though she is my daughter-in-law, because she often has dreams that come true. I always listen to her dreams, especially when I haven’t seen her for a while. She is the youngest of all my daughters-in-law, but compared with the others her dreams are the ones that come true. Whenever she says she has had a dream, it all too often comes true. I don’t know why this happens.

Do young people tell you about their dreams, Agiaq?

Agiaq: Not at all. I think my grandchild who lives with us did tell us about a dream he had, but as usual I was not paying attention. Not having heard what the child said, I can’t give any meaning to the dream.
Ka&&ak, if I had a dream, who would be the best person to tell this dream to? Would it be someone who was accustomed to dealing with dreams or to a minister?

Ka&&ak: The person should talk to someone they are comfortable talking with, whether it is an elder or not, especially if the dream seems odd to them.

In the past was there a special person that people would tell their dreams to, or were they just discussed in the home?

Ka&&ak: When we were children we would tell our dreams to our parents because they asked us to.

If your parents couldn’t understand your dream would they go and ask an elder about it?

Ka&&ak: I don’t know. Since elders always have more knowledge, that was probably what they would do.

Pisuk, can you add to this?

Pisuk: If I had a dream that caused me to be scared, I was told to tell someone about it who would take it seriously and not just laugh about it, even if it was to another young person. I was told to always tell someone about my dreams shortly after I had them, even if they were ordinary dreams. If I did not talk about my dreams, they would come back even stronger a few days later. Because of that, I would try to talk about my dreams as soon as possible. Whenever there weren’t any elders about, I would talk to young people about them, whether they were boys or girls.

We hear about people who have been given the ability to dream. They might not have a dream for days or weeks. Is it possible to recognize who these people are?

Pisuk: I think so. I too used to dream. Because I don’t have examples to give you other than my own, I don’t have much of an answer. After I told a young person about my dream, I would talk to my parents about it, but at a much more relaxed pace.

Do you think young people see tuurngait in their sleep?

Ka&&ak: I don’t know.
Pisuk: Yes. Sometimes you can tell someone is really scared when they are sleeping. They are not ittilimajuq, sleepwalking, but you can tell they are scared. When they tell you about their dream, just talking to them, just hearing your voice can be helpful. You should tell them not to be afraid in their dreams anymore or give them some small thing such as a pencil to put under their pillow. This seems to cure this. Then they seem to have a much calmer productive sleep.

This is not a question. I’m just going to tell you something. When my brother was young I was awake, alone at night cleaning the house and I had a strange feeling, so I started looking around to see what the cause might be. It turned out there was some type of presence in the house. My brother who had been sleeping, came out and although he was very sleepy, you could see that something was wrong. He came to sleep on the couch instead. I asked him what was wrong. He said nothing was wrong and tried to go to sleep. He was beginning to fall asleep again, so I shook him and again asked him what was wrong. When he realized that I was prepared to really listen to him, he told me that he had seen something in his bedroom that was black with red eyes that was calling him to go outside. My brother was seven at the time. He told me he had asked it if it was God. Then the thing started to twirl. As it was twirling it started shrinking and it disappeared into the corner of the room. The floor where that thing had twirled was scratched. Do any of you know where those things that ask you to come, take you?

Pisuk: I haven’t really ever heard. If there is a person who is asked by another person if they have any meat and they deny that they do, then when that person dies and finds this out through their tarniq, the person who has been lying ends up with tuurngait coming to them. I will use a person by the name of Arnaqtaaq as an example. She was my father’s uncle’s wife. There was a widow who had a child who asked for some food. There was a lot of summer caribou that had tunnuq in her storage shed. This woman Arnaqtaaq said there was no meat and killed a puppy and fed this to them. The little boy who had been hungry named Uqattlaq later told my father and my uncle that he was going to put that woman through a hard time, even after he was dead.
I have this recurring dream in which I am all alone in a deep hole which I cannot get out of. I wonder what this dream means?

Ka&ak: I understand what you are saying, but never having had a dream like this, I am not really able to answer. My husband had a similar dream where he was in a hole that he couldn’t get out of. There was no possible way of him getting out of this hole. When he was telling me about this dream, he said when he was stuck in the hole he started thinking he was never going to be able to get out. Suddenly, he became as tiny as a mosquito and was able to climb up out of the hole onto the ground.

I have had this dream ever since I was young. I don’t have it all the time, but I still have that same dream still today. I’ve always wondered what it means. When I am having this dream I’m not scared or lonely; I am just unable to get out of this hole.

Ka&ak: Because I haven’t had a dream like this I don’t know what to say.

Agiaq: If you repeat your dream exactly as you remember it, someone could tell you the meaning, but I personally am unable to give meaning to it.

If someone has a dream about something that was to happen in the future, how could they prevent this from coming true?

Agiaq: I don’t know. I’m not the person you should be asking this to. If I tried to answer, I might not be telling you the truth.

Ka&ak: I have no idea how to do so.

Do you think angakkuit and other people had things they could follow to prevent such dreams from coming true, to protect the people involved?

Pisuk: I might not be correct, but I think some tuurngait had a means of drilling into the earth. Of course the hole that they drilled was not visible. By doing this, they made a pit for tarniit to fall into. It would not be visible to us, but the hole would be such that the tarniit would not be able to get out again. If they dreamed that they fell into a hole, then they would be stuck in that hole. If it was an angakkuq that went after people, who had become accustomed to doing that, then that became their means of killing people. I’m telling you something I have only heard about.

Was it the tarniq that fell into the pit or was it the actual body?

Pisuk: It was probably the tarniq.
You have talked about a pit being made to catch a tarniq. You have touched upon Johnny’s dream about being in a hole he can’t get out of. Do you think someone has trapped his tarniq and that’s why he has this recurring dream?

Pisuk: Maybe it has to do with the trauma his father had to go through when he was a child. But because whatever was trying to get him was unsuccessful, he is still with us today. This is all I can tell you. I try to tell the truth because I want to return home safely on the plane.

How can I possibly stop this recurring dream that I have?

Pisuk: Telephone your father and talk to him about this. If he were to give you his opinion, even though you might not understand it, I think this would help, because your father was not just an ordinary man. I think he would be more able to put an end to the dream that you have.¹ I myself won’t be able to help you.

Agiaq: Do what Pisuk has told you to do. Talk to your father by telephone. The fact that you continue to have this dream means that whatever is trying to get you hasn’t got you yet.

What is the meaning of dreams where a person seems to be falling and falling without ever touching the ground?

Ka&&ak: I don’t know.

What is the meaning of a recurring dream where you are trying to go from moving ice to land? Although there is danger, you manage to cross over the water by jumping on small pieces of ice. Can you picture it?

Ka&&ak: I think it means that there was something dangerous that you had to go through in the past, but you managed to get through it safely.

Footnote

¹ This student did call his father who explained to him that he was named after his paternal grandmother who committed suicide by hanging herself before Christianity arrived. His father explained that this was her way of letting her grandson know about the consequences of suicide and that he was never to consider this no matter how bad things got.
Part Three

Cross Perspectives on Uqumangirniq and Aqtuqsinniq
Elders’ Perspectives on Uqumangirniq and Aqtuqsinniq

The questions we are going to be asking are about aqtuqsinniq, and uqumangirniq. Is aqtuqsinniq, or uqumangirniq different than dreaming?

**Pisuk:** When I dream, I do sometimes aqtuqsittuq. Sometimes when my ears start to hum, I am unable to move.

*Is uqumangirniq the same as dreaming when you are sleeping?*

**Agiaq:** No. It is not. My ears start to hum and I can’t move. There seems to be something I can’t see.

**Pisuk:** I am very scared when I have an aqtuqsinniq when I am dreaming. I start becoming heavier and heavier and can’t move.

*Can you tell us about your experiences with uqumanigirniq?*

**Pisuk:** Some people don’t just have ordinary aqtuqsinniit. I think some people are made to aqtuqsittuq by angakkuit and they don’t wake up at all. My grandmother told me when I was experiencing an aqtuqsinniq that I was to hold up my middle finger. There was one time I was in bed with my wife and I couldn’t wake up at all. There was an old man wearing caribou clothing. My wife and I have a double bed. This old man was standing between us and was smiling at me and reaching towards me. His face was healthy and handsome but it started to become older. He became ugly and he seemed to have lots of hair. Because I remembered what my grandmother had told me to do, I stuck my finger up at him. I seemed to feel him, and then he fell backwards and disappeared. I thought this had come from someone and I didn’t want to die. I started wondering, “Why are Tautunngi and Qabluittuq’s son doing this to me.” Then I thought, “I have hit his tarniq. Maybe he won’t live.”

Later on when the days started getting longer there was something like a balloon above his house. My middle son saw this. It looked like a balloon but it wasn’t because it was a complete bubble. It started coming towards the house and then it burst. During the night that man hung himself. When something bounces back to the one who sent it, this is called utirrivujuq. That’s why I have to tell you about this. Some people just don’t experience aqtuqsinniq. Some people end up not being able to move because someone is going after them.
Did you experience this only once or several times?

Pisuk: I haven’t experienced this many times. Maybe I would only experience aqtuqsinniq if someone was going after me. I have this means of protection from my grandmother, which is to stick up my middle finger.

What does aqtuqsinniq mean?

Pisuk: When you are sleeping and you are unable to move. You can’t stand up. You can’t move. That’s what we mean by aqtuqsinniq. It is the same thing as uqumangirniq. They say that some people do not wake up from aqtuqsinniq.

Is an uqumangirniq more important than an ordinary dream?

Pisuk: For me it is much stronger.

When you were growing up, did either of your parents or other people talk about uqumangirniq?

Pisuk: Yes. I would hear them talking about this. They would say that if you could see that someone was aqtuqsittuq you put a bit of spit on their pillow. That would get them out of it.

Did you hear a roar in your ears?

Pisuk: There seems to be a roar in your ears and it’s awful, but I can’t really describe it. I can’t really add more to this.

When you are with your grandchildren, do you talk to them about aqtuqsinniq?

Pisuk: Yes. I have talked to them about it, especially the oldest. In some ways aqtuqsinniq can be helpful. If you were to aqtuqsittuq you could see a nice looking man or woman that perhaps was a larniq. If it came to you and you were unable to move, it had sex with you, then you could end up with an unseen lover. If you enjoyed it and you wanted to keep this unseen lover, you didn’t tell anyone about it. You would have found yourself something pleasurable. Even if you didn’t tell an angakkuq about it, an angakkuq would eventually find out. I was not handsome and I did not show off. When girls started teasing me, I asked them if they wanted to get an unseen lover. They would say no, and would stop teasing me. I think some of them should have just said yes.
Based on your knowledge, could anyone experience uqumangirniq?

**Agiaq:** Yes. Everyone is able to uqumangiqtuq. Even though I am an old man I could experience this even if I didn’t want to. It is part of life. Some people get to a point where they almost give up, but they somehow manage to move. My first wife ended up with an unseen lover. Because she didn’t want to keep him she talked about him right away, so her unseen lover didn’t come back. You might be hearing about this for the first time. It’s okay for you to hear about this, so the generations after you will know about it. There are some things in our past that are important you know about, even though we are now Christians. This still happens. Priests and ministers only see people in the flesh, so they don’t know if someone is an angakkuq.

**Pisuk:** There are some priests and ministers that have a lot of knowledge. There are some that only have their knowledge from paper. They don’t have that much power. There are others that have power that is not nalliqtuutijuq, equal. You can’t really compare it. There was a priest called Mikilaaq [Father Lionel Ducharme]. There was an old woman who had a qallunaaq for a tuurngaq. When she missed going to church, he went to her and told her she had committed a sin. Then her tuurngaq punched him and he almost fell. The bishop told him later that he should not be scolding people who were so much older than he was. He stopped doing that after that.

**Do you think angakkuit would also uqumangiqtuq?**

**Pisuk:** They probably did, because they were human.

**If an angakkuq were to uqumangiqtuq would he lose his power?**

**Agiaq:** When an angakkuq would uqumangiqtuq this was because he was made to do this by another angakkuq who was trying to defeat them.

**When an angakkuq was in a state of uqumangirniq, would their tuurngait come to them?**

**Agiaq:** I can’t really answer. There are different types of angakkuit, those who used their powers to go after others and those who would use their powers to help. Some angakkuit who thought they were very powerful, would start using their powers to go after others. Perhaps if one angakkuq saw this, he might make his tuurngaq uqumangiqtuq that other angakkuq. I have heard if they used their powers to go after another angakkuq this could be dangerous, as it could bounce back at them.
If we tell our children about uqumangirniq, how can we tell them about it so they don’t become scared?

_Pisuk:_ If you were _aqtuqsittuq_ you could protect yourself by using your middle finger. That’s what I have told my grandchildren. I don’t tell this to the ones who are too young, that are still hyperactive. I just tell the ones who are able to listen.

_Would someone just be lying there and then lift their middle finger?_

_Pisuk:_ Once you lift your middle finger at what you see, then you can protect yourself.

_When you are aqtuqsittuq does your tarniq leave you for a while?_

_Pisuk:_ That’s why we say that some people don’t wake up again. I heard my father say once that a person who had experienced _aqtuqsinniq_ a lot died because of this. As I have told you before, you could end up with an unseen lover. You could keep it if you didn’t tell anybody about it. Some people do that. When you feel that whatever has come to you while you are in a state of _aqtuqsittuq_ is intending malice, then you would get rid of it.

_In the past was uqumangirniq a big problem?_

_Agiaq:_ To me, it is never going to stop being scary. I think when you experience this, you are scared every time. It is scarier when your ears hiss, as this means that there is something very close to you. When I was still a child, I thought I was going to die. I really wanted to move my body but I couldn’t.

_Ka&ak:_ When you _uqumangiqtuq_ it is scary because you can’t talk.

_Pisuk:_ I haven’t experienced _uqumangirniq_ very often. I told you about the time when there was a man who was about my age wearing caribou clothing. He was wearing a very thin sinew belt. He was not wearing his _kamiik_. He was wearing mitts made out of caribou foreleg. I thought maybe he had been sent to me. I was lying in bed and his face became uglier and uglier and he seemed to be getting closer and closer. He seemed to move. I went to push my middle finger at him and when it touched him, he disappeared. That was the last time I experienced this.

_Did those who experienced uqumangirniq have to be looked after well?_

_Ka&ak:_ Yes. You were supposed to wake them up. Some of them died in their sleep because they couldn’t be woken up.
What did they do?
Kaak: People would try to wake them up.

Were they able to wake them up right away?
Kaak: I don’t know. I’ve never woken someone up who was aqtuqsittuq.

Those that would tend to uqumangigtuq, would they tend to be suicidal?
Agiaq: I don’t know. I only know they are so scared they can’t move. I don’t think they are having suicidal thoughts.

Can you answer this, Kaak?
Kaak: I don’t know. I think they would just be scared.

Can those who are experiencing uqumangirniq have difficulty with their breathing?
Kaak: You have to breathe. Even when you are unconscious, you need to breathe.

Do you think it is dangerous for a pregnant woman to experience uqumangirniq?
Agiaq: I have no answer to give you regarding this.

Kaak: We don’t want to end up talking about things we really don’t know about.

Stephane wants to know how many times you experienced this.
Kaak: Maybe four or five times.

Do you think it happens in every community? Does it happen to everyone?
Agiaq: Even though we are from other communities, we can only say what we know. We can’t answer for those in other communities.

When you have a strong uqumangirniq is it quite scary?
Kaak: If you have a strong uqumangirniq it is quite scary. You feel hopeless. My father almost didn’t wake up from a state of uqumangirniq. He woke up because my husband woke him. It was quite a while before my husband could finally wake him up.
Do you think his tarniq left his body for a while?

Ka&amp;ak: Probably. When you are in a strong state of uqumangirniq, then you can’t wake up.

Stéphane has heard that when some people are in a state of uqumangirniq they can see their bodies lying on the bed.

Pisuk: Maybe that’s the way it is.

Ka&amp;ak: It is like that for some people. They can see their body while they are sleeping. My husband almost died. When he woke up he said he had been dreaming. His tarniq was up above his body. When it went back down to his body he woke up. He said he regretted waking up because his tarniq had started to ascend. We don’t know much about this because we haven’t experienced it. We can only tell you what we have heard.

Stéphane has heard that if one person in the family would uqumangiqtuq, other people in the family would as well.

Agiaq: That’s not the way it is at all.

Is it true that there are more people that uqumangiqtuq these days than in the past?

Agiaq: There seems to be an increase in number of people experiencing this, but this is only because we can communicate better with each other these days. You hear about things more these days too.

What type of sleep would someone who was aqtuqsittuq be in?

Ka&amp;ak: This happens when a person is dreaming. I have experienced aqtuqsittuq a few times. I seemed to be asleep but I thought I was awake. I was totally unable to move.

Would those who were aqtuqsittuq, and unable to move, try to move their body in some way so they could wake up?

Ka&amp;ak: If a person is uqumangiqsimajuq, in a state while they are sleeping or dreaming and are unable to move, it is possible to make them move. You have no choice but to try and wake them up. I have personally seen this happen to my father. He was sleeping during the day. My husband was trying to wake him up for quite a while. My father had
become unable to wake up himself. He would make a noise, but couldn’t wake up. It was only because my husband tried so hard to wake him, that he finally awoke. He almost died in his sleep.

*Do the terms uqumangirniq and aqtuqsinniq refer to the same thing?*

**Kaâk**: Yes.

**Pisuk**: Do qallunaat aqtuqsittuq as well?

**Stéphane**: Yes, some do.

*Is it possible to cure uqumangirniq?*

**Agiaq**: Absolutely not.

**Kaâk**: I don’t think it is possible to do so. We are always going to dream.

**Agiaq**: I don’t think it is possible at all to do anything about it. Even if you don’t want to *uqumangiqtuq* there is nothing you can do about it at all.
Individual Experiences and Views on Dreams and Uqumangirniq: Iqaluit Interviews

As part of the preparations leading up to the elders’ interviews on dreams, Samuel Law and Stéphane Kolb interviewed a number of individuals in Iqaluit on the subject of dreams in general, and uqumangirniq in particular. Uqumangirniq was chosen as a way of focusing on one specific area, within dreams, that is of interest to both the interviewers, given their backgrounds in psychiatry and anthropology, respectively. The interviews were conducted in English. The interviewees came from the community at large, ranging from students, friends, clients, colleagues, to on-the-spot volunteers. They gave consent to the interviews with an understanding that their stories might help somebody else in some way; for a few, they told us telling their stories was helpful for themselves as well.

These interviews became part of the base that helped to develop and shape the elders’ interviews. However, these interviews are not meant to be representative of the younger generation’s experiences and views on dreams as a whole, nor are they representative of the diverse cultural backgrounds of the Iqaluit inhabitants. They may be read as a window into these individuals’ experiences with dreams and uqumangirniq, thus allowing us a glimpse of the younger Inuit generation’s views and interpretations.

Juxtaposed with the elders’ knowledge here, these interviews not only reflect some current thoughts, but also give a sense of continuity. They are presented in edited form with introductions and narratives from the interviewers’ perspectives. As some of the interviews were conducted at times of hardship for some interviewees, all names in initials presented here are fabricated to maintain anonymity.

Interview ONE

Ms. A is an Inuit woman in her 40s, well-respected at work and in the community. She was born and raised in the Keewatin region and is married with two children. She had heard of aqtuqsinniq and had experienced this a couple of times when she was eighteen. Being brought up in a more southern Canadian way than most, she said her experience had helped her to learn more about traditional Inuit beliefs:
I had two aqtuqsinnik in one night. It was very serious. Nobody can help you. Maybe it was because I didn’t believe it. It is something spiritual. A friend told me that it is worse if you don’t believe in it. She was very angry at me for having such serious aqtuqsinnit because I didn’t seriously believe in them.

I saw a guy standing beside me. It was a friend who died in a plane crash a year before. When he was alive, he had really wanted to marry me. I didn’t want to marry him, and really, it gave me a lot of stress because I wanted to marry another guy. So I was scared when I saw him standing beside me in this aqtuqsinniq. I couldn’t move at all.

The whole thing was like a dream. It was very special and felt really real. [Afterwards], I slept with my mother. I laid close to her all night. I worried about going to sleep for many days, feeling very scared and frightened. I also had to have my sister in bed with me. We figured that if I tried to touch her when I had an aqtuqsinniq, or wriggled my toes, I would be okay — but it didn’t work the night I had my aqtuqsinniq, I woke up after I cried out. I also thought it was because I was sleeping the wrong way — I was sleeping on my back. Changing that didn’t help me feel better, either.

When asked about what she thought were other important issues related to dreams, she found child-naming the most personally relevant, helping her to keep close ties with Inuit tradition:

I learned that if you dream of a dead person, and if you are having a baby, you have to name the baby after the person. No matter what the sex of the baby is, the baby is dressed and brought up just like the person that was dreamed about.

For example, my daughter is named after my dad. She is now seventeen. Up to age ten, she was dressed and brought up based on what I knew about my dad. When she became a teenager, she was more on her own. She is now nineteen, studying in a university in the South.

I had to dress her to keep her as dry as possible, so she stays as dry as possible, because my father drowned. My daughter grew up scared to go on a boat. She hunted on the land only. For the same reason, she never learned to swim and she doesn’t like to touch water.

My daughter didn’t mind having a man’s name. Her name was more important. This is a tradition a lot of people still follow. If she hunts, she will always give her first catch to my mother, kind of like she [my daughter] is her [my mother’s] husband, because of the name. The family and
sometimes the whole town will have a feast with the food she catches. We have very little problem with gender change and names. Traditional names have little or no gender association anyway. It’s very important to us. It connects us, it is very easy and no problem. I know it is the same for kids today. Everybody accepts it.

My second child, a boy, is named after a woman neighbor. She died four years ago. Her husband used to come into our home frequently to see my son, to ‘check out’ his wife. This man died a few years ago too, and his kids moved away. When they come back to visit, they come over or call to check up on their ‘mom’.

Ms. A was both very happy and proud to relate this story to us. She appeared appreciative of the chance to talk about something that was very close to her heart. Before we finished, she added:

If I dream about my teeth falling out, it’s special because it means that I will lose something special. I have to give my ring or my watch or something else important to me away to somebody else, like somebody outside the family.

**Interview TWO**

Ms. B is a 14-year-old Inuit high school student living with her large family of two sisters, one brother, mother and grandmother. Born in Montreal, her parents separated when she was about three. She moved to Baffin Island when she was very young, spending time between two communities in southern Baffin. She was brought up mostly by her mother.

Ms. B considered herself a reasonably average teenager, like others of her age, but not a good student. She had friends, and a new boyfriend. She professed to not like school much, but believed that if she tried hard enough, she could easily do better. She talked courageously about her experiences with uqumangirniq, at times with pain, at others with the ease of a seasoned veteran of suffering that was beyond her young age. After one seemingly endless summer of frequent attacks of uqumangirniq, she had had no attacks for a few months. She felt better enough to talk about it. We interviewed her in the safety of her own bedroom. With her favourite music and stuffed toys close by, she seemed just another young student, talking in that young-student way, except her stories were anything but ordinary. She told us:
During the summer last year, I kept having them every night, for over a month — just couldn’t move. No vision stuff, though.

I am not sure when was the first time I had one. Maybe two years ago. I kept having them. Sometimes I can hear whispers. I can’t understand what they are saying, but I can hear them. It’s the devilish language. I asked grandma. I asked her — grandma said maybe it’s the devil’s language.

Later, the uqumangirniit got worse. She seemed to have developed frightening visual hallucinations as well:

When I have uqumangirniit, I have some visions. They are not very clear. I can’t really see them. I could if I really tried, I guess. They are more yellowish, clear, whichever. I don’t quite know what they are. They could be any color, clear, yellow, blue, white.

One time I woke up, I couldn’t move or say anything. I kept hearing things, and two human shapes, yellowish, were going inside me, one pushing the other, pushing inside me. I tried to say things, to yell, but I could still see them right next to my face.

Sometimes you just lie there, and try to move, waiting for things to happen.

Last time, about a few months ago, I had visions from out there. One came towards me, dog-faced. I tried to feel it... It was on top of me, I could feel it on my arms, feeling like being pressed, a dog-shaped thing.

I remember things well. It goes on for five or seven minutes. I have some sweatiness — I try to get out of it.

It troubled her a great deal trying to understand the meaning of these attacks. From a few people she had talked to, among them her father who told her it was ‘the devil trying to get you,’ she came to believe she was being punished by a greater force:

Some of my friends, and my grandma have experienced this too. I haven’t thought much about why it happened to me, but they say it is [the devil]. Anything can happen. You can hear voices screaming, inside your head. These voices can hurt you. My dad says the devil is trying to get you, or wants you to do something.

As well, she had another couple of observations to explain things, with some attention to a particularly difficult time she had had at school and at home, and attributed much of her misery in sleep to that period:
That was during a tough time — things happen at the same time. Sometimes it happens. Dreams are not ghosts, not hallucinations. Dreams can be about anything. I never have happy dreams, always about bad scary things. I am kind of blurry about them. It could be the full moon. The full moon makes whatever you have a little worse.

Sleep became an ordeal during that “tough time”. She ‘thought about suicide, but had no particular plan.’ Talking to her friends, her mother and her father helped. Though her friends had experienced *uqumangirnit* too, she learned that her experiences seemed more severe. Slowly, she became more familiar with the attacks. She figured out a reliable way to “get out of it”:

During the month when I had them, I was scared of going to sleep. I had no [boyfriend] to help me. You get used to them after a while and can tell when it is going on. It felt like something was coming down. I didn’t know why it was happening. It was just kind of confusing. You try to move your toe — when it moves, you get out of it.

When you get your movement back, you feel nice; it has gone away.

Concerned about the severity of her attacks, we asked her some relevant medical questions to make sure she was fine. She appeared to be, was not worried much, and didn’t feel the need to see anybody or get more help, confident of her new-found relief. Even during the depths of her attacks, she did not consider herself too depressed or anxious.

Probably as a result of her ordeal, she also tended to avoid thinking about or having dreams as much as possible:

I have no idea what dreams are about. I don’t think about what dreams are about. I don’t think they predict, tell fortune, or misfortune, or anything.

At the time of the interview, she was no longer too worried about the whole thing, happy in a new relationship, back to part of her usual self. She still didn’t get along with her family well, preferring to talk and listen to her friends:

I stopped worrying after a while. I think sometimes it’s because you are too nice, or too bad. It doesn’t bring me any good things [by worrying about it]. I like music, and listening to hip-hop. I like English. I like reading. I am reading The Chicken Soup series. I read many of them. The soul at work. It’s cool. When I am depressed or angry — I read a book and it goes away.
In retrospect, though greatly frightened at one point, she seems to have resigned herself to the experiences, and never thought about this being an illness or going to a medical doctor:

I don’t think this is an illness. I am pretty sure. It is just another type of dream — just worse! You get used to it, and just accept it. No. It is not related to superstitions, haunted houses, or stuff like that.

I don’t know if anything could help me deal with my *uqumangirniit*. I think a book about *uqumangirniit* would be helpful.

Before we finished, we asked what it was like over the last six months:

I have a lot fewer *uqumangirniit* when I am with my boyfriend — they don’t happen when I sleep with him. In the last two months I have not had any. I have been thinking about having kids. I do not like school at all. I have bad grades. But if I worked at it I’d get good grades. I am a couch potato. I don’t mind. I don’t think about it. Maybe it is the *tuurngait*? Maybe not.

**Interview THREE**

Mr. C is a thirty-something-year-old Inuit man originally from Keewatin. Via Yellowknife, he came to Iqaluit after the inception of Nunavut for continued treatment of his chronic mental illness. He first had an *aqtuqsinniq* when he was 16, during high school, when living with his step-mother, sister and brother-in-law. He recalled having three *aqtuqsinniit* during that period. He did not have any health problem or mental problem at the time. Later in his life, he started to suffer from manic depression, often involving fervent religious ideas when he was ill:

First time:

I was asleep, and then all of a sudden I could not move. I could not move anymore. Everything turned black. I was having a dream about something scary, a drowning-like scary thing. My mind was awake at the time. I also thought it was exciting although this didn’t mean I liked it.

I knew about *aqtuqsinniit*. People talked about them before. *Aqtuqsinniit* are dreams that happen every now and then. They don’t really mean anything more.

They have no particular meaning in life. I told my mother and my friends about my *aqtuqsinniit*. They say they happen, but don’t mean anything. I didn’t believe much else.
Second and third time:

I was still a teenager. It was also something scary, much the same thing. The third time was much the same, too. I guess all my friends didn’t think much of them and this helped. I never had them again. They don’t bother me.

I have had other dreams later in my life. Scary dreams when I was mentally sick. I dreamed that Jesus was coming back, and the whole earth started to shake. I woke up sweating. I believed that it was some kind of warning. This was ten years ago. [What did you do?] I didn’t do anything. I just prayed. Just prayed. It was a warning to live a better life, to stop sinning. [The warning] had nothing to do with normal dreams, it was more a message.

These days, I have no dreams. It’s alright.

Interview FOUR

Mr. D is an 18-year-old from a northern community on Baffin Island. He lives with his parents and three brothers. He attends high school and enjoys playing hockey in his spare time. He came to the attention of others as he became quite depressed and withdrawn after the suicide of a close friend. Inexplicably, he resisted any help for a long time. It became clear later that he had had a suicide pact with the deceased friend. As well, he had felt particularly responsible for his friend’s death as his friend called him on the phone (maybe to say goodbye) the night of the suicide. He blamed himself for being alive and for not being able to save his friend. He has had some fantasy of joining his friend in the “afterworld” and attempted suicide himself. It tormented him that he is still alive — some of his dreams reflect his guilt and distress. For a long time, it was difficult for him to tell others this story. He was helped by dedicated teachers and friends. At the time of the interview, he recognized that talking did help him to feel better and less guilty about staying alive:

I lost one friend and a cousin to suicide...They were about my age, sixteen and eighteen years old. I have had some uqumangirniiit and dreams that give me a lot of fear. I see black things, sparkling things, or people running around. I promised [the friend who committed suicide] that if he dies, I die too. I saw him in my dreams shouting. He took a rope to choke me. I said, No! I wanted him to know that I tried to hang myself seven or eight months ago. But I didn’t want to die. I was really sorry, but I could not talk. I woke up breathing really hard. I tried to think of something else. Even though I knew he couldn’t touch me, I was still scared.
My other *uqumangirniq* was later. I was dreaming about buying food, flour, tools. I couldn’t talk or move in this dream. I saw him [suicided friend] just staring at me. He did not talk. He couldn’t talk. Why couldn’t he talk? Then I dreamed he could be alive like me. I like the second dream better.

**Interview FIVE**

Mr. E is a 15-year-old high school student brought up by his grandparents. He has had some long-term problems with an estranged family, being “kicked out” by his abusive stepfather, and felt particularly rejected and wounded as his mother never intervened. He has some help from grandparents in terms of shelter and money but little else. He became frequently “mixed up in stealing and fighting, hanging out” in groups of other teenagers who are considered delinquents. He attempted suicide at age fourteen, likening it to his “option” to die. He often verbally threatened suicide, which usually indicated a high level of stress in his life. He would also profess that he “prefers to live,” but continued to struggle to come to terms with his family. He has been relocated to different homes many times. At the time of the interview, a very concerned social worker had located him in foster care at the home of a very well-regarded and charitable Inuit family. A little hope seemed to show in his face, despite his tough and hardened demeanor. He showed a softer and more vulnerable side after he became more comfortable. He was very guarded about his dreams, preferring to keep some things private; however, he did give us glimpses of his inner world:

My father died. My stepfather kicked me out. I dropped out of school and I mostly hang out with my friends. I still go to school, about two times a week when there is gym. My friends are older. I also hang out at the coffee shop. They put me in an alternative [justice] program and I sometimes spent time that way.

I talked to my father in my dreams for a year or two. He died about five years ago. I had this dream that I was in a wheelchair, handicapped, in a big building, full of chairs. Later I was standing, as if he had helped me out of the wheelchair. I woke up crying. I was sleeping when my father died. He died in the hospital after a short time. It wasn’t suicide, but I don’t understand why he died. I was afraid of going to sleep for a while.

You can have good things happen and bad things in a dream. Like seeing him [father] in heaven and things, when I die. This happens all the time, him watching me in the sky, guiding me. Sometimes I dream of people, I am not sure if its my father, asking me to kill myself. I end up crying and upset. I don’t trust things in the dream. I don’t trust anybody.
[Became visibly more upset] I don’t want to talk about dead people. I try not to think about things. It’s bad. I don’t dream much anymore. Don’t try to think or want to dream. I am more apart from those things. They are like torture. I don’t have to worry about this as much now.

On uqumangirniq, he offered a thought-provoking interpretation:

I was reading a book in this dream and it said you will be woken up, and the next thing I was woken up — that’s why I believe dreams can come true. I am scared just thinking about it.

I don’t really want to talk about uqumangirniit. I know what they are. I have experienced this. A cousin of mine has, too. It’s weird and scary. I don’t want to talk about this. You can’t move in a dream because you are dreaming inside a dream, and in that dream you are dreaming scary things.

Interview SIX

Ms. F is a 17-year-old high school student with three brothers; she lives with her aunt in Iqaluit. She was born and raised in another southern Baffin community. She moved to Iqaluit when she was young for her severe debilitating medical condition that renders her reliant on others for daily care — something she deeply resents. She dislikes herself as a result, and has developed a sense of bitterness towards the world in general as well. She has been grappling with multiple difficulties in making friends and getting people to accept her the way she is. In the last few years, she has had an increasingly tough time dealing with her physical disability, particularly as she becomes physically mature and the desire to have a normal romantic life has been met with largely a mixture of jealousy, pity and ridicule. She spends much of her time fighting to be as normal as she can, but often feels dejected and like giving up. She attempted suicide once, out of intense frustration and anger, as well as a troubling sense of curiosity. Dreams represent a refuge, normalcy, and a lost world. Particularly when she is down, she finds solace in her music, and sometimes, in her dreams:

I have had a hard time sleeping for a long time. I did not talk to people about it, kind of hard falling asleep, waking up a lot, and waking up really early.

I came to the hospital because I tried to kill myself. I tried to commit suicide because I don’t like myself, I feel bad about myself. People say, ‘Why don’t you smile more? Be yourself; don’t be so mean. Why are you so mean? Why are you not smiling...?’ I hate that.
My father passed away a long time ago. I don’t live with my mother because she has problems herself. I have this dream I remember a lot. In the dream I am walking with my father, like a normal person. I have had it a few times, each time the same. I remember it because I was normal, I could walk. The sky was bright and sunny. There were just the two of us. There were flowers and grass. We were walking, holding hands. He had happy expressions, like normal.

Another dream I had I was walking with my father. We saw a teenager. She was in trouble, like burning or something. I tried to help — a sharp voice says, “It’s too late, she is going to burn forever. Don’t try anything.” I woke up. I was really angry.

My other kind of dreams are usually like I am normal, walking, and having fun. When I wake up, I am nothing, like I have lost something. I have had uqumangirniit before. I could hear things in my sleep, but I couldn’t move. I tried to shout but I couldn’t, or nobody could hear me. That was a long time ago, maybe three years. I did not see anything, just black. I didn’t speak to anybody about any of these dreams.

My life is normal in dreams, but not in life. The voice in the dreams told me to live. But I want to see where I can go, to see whether I burn in life like the dream, or I end up being normal, in sunny and flower places. See where I deserve to be.

After a near-miss in her suicide attempt, she concluded, “I guess I have to live.” She told us more of her insight:

I guess dreams give me experiences. I live in my dreams more. I am more healthy in them. I listen to my songs — they tell me why to live, why I can be happy. I depend on my tapes to get on with life. They are very important. I hope to be happy again, to get on with life, live my life, even go through hard times.

My dreams never tell me directly to die, or to kill myself. But strange voices tell me things, and judge me. I don’t really want to talk about scary dreams. I want to be alone now. I don’t think having somebody to listen to will help. I tried to talk before. Sometimes people don’t listen.

Interview SEVEN

Ms. G is a 39-year-old woman with four children. She lives in a northern Baffin community, but works away from home in another community. Her mother died a year before, and one of her sons committed suicide several years ago. She has been feeling the burden of grief, hoping to ease the pain by leaving home for a period of time. While
away, she developed a great longing for her family and her community. She had bizarre experiences as a child, seeing and hearing things that others didn’t. She had outgrown these experiences until now, when they revisited her at a stressful time in her life. She had dreams that terrified her, bringing her back to some of the darkness of her childhood:

My sleep was not very good for a while. One day I woke up during the middle of the night, and saw a black human figure. I knew that was not a dream because I wasn’t sleeping. It was like my ex-husband. But I could not move. I could not yell. I also heard a loud noise, and felt pressure in my chest, heavy. It was hard to breath. And I was kind of sensitive to movement. I heard something walk. Then I felt really uncomfortable, like something was trying to get into my body. My head had a ‘blown up’ feeling.

I was so scared! I thought this must be a message for me to go to hell. I tried to move, tried to wake myself. I prayed very hard and eventually I was able to be normal again. I felt a little better, like I had won. It happened around the time when I woke up. I went back to sleep afterwards and it was okay. I call that an aquuqsinniq. It happened again another two or three times. I heard different things then, like nails, things dragging on the floor. It lasted for minutes. I didn’t tell anybody the first time. Then I told my aunt. She told me to be strong. I thought they were like nightmares, only worse. If you don’t talk about this, you go to hell.

I don’t understand it. Sometimes I feel like I know what’s going to happen, like I know the phone was going to ring, maybe because I dreamed about it already. Maybe it is a message to go to hell. I was told to talk to people about it, or you may go to hell. I was still feeling ashamed. People may think I am crazy.

**Interview EIGHT**

Ms. H is an Inuit woman in her 40s. She was born in a northern Baffin community, and lived part of her life in northern Quebec. She has four children of her own, and three adopted. She is studying to work in the justice system. Prior to that, she had worked in several different jobs in the service industries. She has been healthy and well after some difficult times in her relationships years ago. She is proud to be a mother of seven children. She is a devout Christian: “Jesus is my rock, in more ways than one.”

She talked to us at length about dreams and related material:
I have no personal experience of the ‘supernatural’ or ‘spiritual’ encounters. I know of people who have heard voices of people who have committed suicide — as if calling them to kill themselves. That’s ‘supernatural.’ I have had scary dreams though, like the devil trying to get me.

I have had uqumangirniit. I was paralyzed, I couldn’t move. I was yelling at the top of my lungs but no sound was coming out. I was being oppressed by this evil feeling. I think of it as being paralyzed in sleep, induced by nightmares or fatigue. It is a bad omen. Seems like every time a bad thing is going to happen, or a tragedy, I have an uqumangirniq.

We enquired on how she had formed this impression. She told us about tragedies that occurred in her own life, and in the community at large:

For example, in ’94 or ’96, in the [Iqaluit] whaling expedition, nine men died. I had this dream uqumangirniq at the time. Another one was in ’79 about two cops and two other men, four men, who went walrus hunting and drowned. One of the cops was a stepbrother of a stepuncle. I had an uqumangirniq before that. Another one was before a nephew committed suicide in ’83 — before that, I had a very deep, deep sleep. No dreams.

But it can be the opposite. There was another time, in Dec ’99 — my niece’s son, a fifteen-year-old, committed suicide. I slept really soundly, as if I was fatigued a lot.

My first uqumangirniq happened when I was fourteen, at my mother’s house. She died in that same house. A little later my grandfather died. So it was four times in total [something bad or tragic happened after I had an uqumangirniq.] I don’t exactly try to avoid it. No. But it weighs heavily on me. I wonder who will be affected, each time when I have an uqumangirniq. I can’t stop it. It is a bad sign to me.

In her stories, she comfortably combines Christian and Western beliefs and Inuit traditional interpretations, producing unexpected images and possibilities. At times, she seems to travel effortlessly between the spiritual and the mortal:

In ’73, when I was fourteen, I had my first uqumangirniq. Sometimes I had milder uqumangirniit. It was like a dream or something, but not a nightmare. The devil tried to get to me. It had no face, no shape. Evil. I couldn’t move, couldn’t run, like I was in a weakened state. I prayed:
'Leave me, in the name of Jesus.' It really worked. My words came out slowly. The devil tried to possess me, tried to come into me. The prayer stopped it.

Sometimes the evil presence kills the people I like and know in my dreams. I dreamed about a folk singer — I used to have a crush on him — he shook my hand. He would not let go, and gave me an evil smile. I knew then the devil had possessed him. Everybody becomes evil. Sometimes people are eaten up by worms and snakes in my dreams, like a Medusa — snakes for hair.

I have a safe spot in dreams. I go there to feel better. I had another uqunangirniq two months after I split up with an old boyfriend. Two years later he hung himself in jail. His presence is still there, in that house. They will hear noises there at night. The sound of an evil spirit is still there. An elderly man living there right now is scared. He [himself also] has a daughter who had died suspiciously — she was raped by four men and then killed. Suppose the spirit of that daughter is trying to come home.

We asked her how she came to learn the meanings and significances of her dreams, particularly about the image of Medusa she evoked earlier:

I learned about dreams and picked up what they meant from Christian teachings and things I learned in church, from reading stories about spiritual encounters, and from stories about Inuit culture.

I think Christian and Inuit teachings are alike in some ways. Like in this haunted house story a door was stuck in [another house] for a long time. People couldn’t open it. But I opened it by myself, when I was a little girl. An old man saw me walk inside. He knew there was something wrong [because I could have been hurt] and he ran after me and took me away. So he helped me. Like someone or something saw me in another world and followed me to help me, gave me strength and help from another side. It was like the Christian beliefs.

I read a book or heard about Medusa when I was in the fourth grade. I knew Medusa, then. That’s one of the qallunaat things I myself know. The man who helped me was a Christian thing, I believe, because God made him look to protect me. Another thing is the Inuit way, stories descended through generations — haunted houses, noises in the home, lights on without electricity, etc., these are the Inuit ways of understanding. My own reading is very important. I read like an outsider to another world. I had a ‘Haunted House’ book — it was about a couple living in a duplex with their
parents next door. They would feel evil, see pants flying in the air. It was a true story. You know, tabloids, and Unsolved Mysteries, make me believe these things do happen. So my beliefs are from all sorts of places.

We talked further about uqumangirniit, tracing her earlier experiences to those of others in her family:

The first time when I had an uqumangirniq, I remember thinking ‘so that’s what an uqumangirniq is like.’ I had heard about them before. I was hoping I’d never have another one. I didn’t speak to anyone. People said you had to move the pinky or baby toes. I woke up, drenched in sweat. I felt an evil presence in the room. My hair was standing up, my breath was cold.

My son told me that he had one — he saw it as the devil trying to get him. I have never spoken to an elder about this, or asked them what it is.

Her thoughts flowed freely, connecting her life with significant dreams and uqumangirniit. We realized she thought often about dreams, as they clearly played a part in her life. We asked her if she thought uqumangirniit were common, how her growing up affected her, and more:

I think uqumangirniit are not common, but I can’t tell. It’s not something to talk about, unless there is something scary to tell, maybe within the family.

I dream about a sealskin on seawater, and falling in. I dream that I need to keep away from the floe edge, keep the skin from touching the water — it’s like a warning to me that there will be hard times in the future. Like I was in rough water, being tossed around. In these dreams I was always brought ashore by my brother. That makes me feel good. I know no matter what happens, I can count on my family.

I was sexually assaulted as a teenager. I stayed out late. Did stupid things. I had a hard time growing up. I was ridiculed by my son and my partner about that part of my life.

In my dreams I look for a way to avoid the things and people I don’t like. I feel alone and depressed sometimes. I think of suicide. I was with [a boyfriend] for nine years. God tells me, “Thou shalt not kill, I put you on earth for a purpose; you are not finished.”

Dreams have to run their course; they influence you indirectly. Dreams affect your train of thought. They are like premonitions — the night my son was beaten up, I dreamed I was at the airport — it was a MedEvac — the plane tumbled in the air — the next day I got a call from the hospital, my son was in the hospital, MedEvac’d there.

Dreams and Dream Interpretation
When you have dreams so vivid, there is a reason why they are so vivid. I believe there is some meaning in them. I do.

At the end, we asked her to give us some of her definitions of some of the related topics. They helped us to put her stories into a more informed perspective, but the explanations nevertheless left unanswered questions:

Hallucinations are like when you are seeing things that are not induced by other people. Superstitions, uquasituinnait are like old wives tales, like you can’t knit when you are pregnant, or the umbilical cord would wrap around the neck of your baby; or you can’t chew gum or your baby will have a smudged and bad looking face. Some people say if you dream that somebody will die, that person will live longer. I don’t know if that is superstition or a message.

Interview NINE

Ms. I is an Inuit woman in her 30s, a single mother of a young boy. She has worked in Iqaluit for several years after leaving the Keewatin region. In her work, she is in close contact with southern thoughts and methods, which she learns with delight and respect. On the other hand, she values her Inuit identity greatly. She had made the difficult decision to send her son to live and learn in a smaller community, away from Iqaluit. She told us these thoughts:

Uquumangirniit are just part of dreams. I think this is related to sleep positions. Changing the position would fix it. I don’t think it means much. If I am enjoying a dream, I will go back to the same position, and sometimes it will come back.

I think some dreams have special meaning. They tell me where I am in life, like a warning, for example. Mostly good things. If I dream about somebody, it means I am going to see them in a couple of days.

If I dream about a particular animal, it is a warning. It makes me feel that I am connected with the land. When I dream of animals, I want to know what my dream means. Traditionally, dreaming of a whale meant death. Dreaming of a polar bear was the same thing. Dreaming of a wolf or a black dog meant something bad. A caribou was something else. There was no meaning to the seal, not that I know of.
If I dream of falling and I land on two feet, I don’t worry too much. This happens when I am obsessed too much. It makes life a little bit easier. I dreamed of seeing a superhuman being, flying. I think it meant I wouldn’t get hurt.

Dreams are important because we often don’t know where we are in life. Dreams help because they tell us that things are okay. Why do we dream? Because I don’t trust myself. You would dream over yourself. When you have more rational thinking skills, you use dreams less to help you, but still some.

What you think about dreams is related to your education. People are still using the traditional meanings a lot, because people still want to be connected with the past. For example, if you dream about a dead person when you are expecting a baby — it is a sign that the deceased wants the baby to be named after them. This is still practiced today. The newborn will take on the characteristics and qualities of the deceased person. Naming is a big thing! Totally. This is a way of connecting to our past, especially in our changing culture.

[People dream because the] mind doesn’t stop. Dreams sort through things, while we are sleeping, sorting through the day’s events. Traditionally, we think of dreams as a guide — people use dreams to guide them. More people used them in the old days to guide them in their travels. For the women, about childbirth. We use dreams to see the land.

Dreaming about seals gave me more respect from my cousin [who is more traditional], because my cousin took me more in; it was a sign that I was considering our Inuit traditions, and connected to the past. We are closer.

Interview TEN

Ms. J is an Inuit woman from Keewatin in her 30s, with four children, one 12-year-old, one 9 months old, and two others in-between who were adopted by her brother. She is in a common-law relationship. She had experience working at a health station as a translator. She came to Iqaluit to attend school. She has seven sisters and ten brothers, including stepsisters and stepbrothers. Her mother died a few years ago; her father is retired. She sees herself as a Catholic.

Unrelated to our questions, she related to us that she was depressed seven years ago (but was not psychotic), and was treated with an antidepressant medication. She did not like that experience because she felt it did not help. She believes counselling worked better. She added that she was counselled by a non-Inuit person, but that was
no problem. She felt understood, and it was easier to go outside of her Inuit community
to get help. Overall, her family is very supportive, and her relationship very satisfying.
She and her common-law husband, who joined us in the later half of the interview, told
us some of their thoughts on dreams.

We first asked Ms. J about her memorable and significant dreams:

Three or four months into my depression, I saw a person and heard a voice
in my dream. It said, 'Go on with life, there is a future ahead of you. You
have to know how to get over hard times; it's not easy to live in this world,
but try!' I thought it was very unreal, like a hallucination in a dream. I
started to come out of my depression. I remember another dream; in it there
were two more people, there was a triangle around them, white, peaceful. I
don't know what it meant, but I was not scared.

I remember a few important dreams in my life. One was dreaming
about my husband sleeping with another woman. Two weeks later, he
confessed. Another was twelve years ago, my sister-in-law had a stroke.
Two days after that, I dreamed of my brother being sick and I tried to revive
him. I woke up scared and angry, and found out later he was sick too.
Another dream was after dreaming about heart attacks and a bleeding nose.
My mother fell sick the same night. Scary.

I was scared of dreaming about sickness and accidents, because I didn't
know when and how my dream would really happen. How accurate things
are. I wake up really scared. I remember those ones. But I don't remember
the good ones as much.

We asked her whether she remembered any good dreams at all, not related to death and
sickness; it seemed to have brought up more unhappy memories, as well as a touching
one:

I try. I try to dream of being with my family, having dinner, the good old
days. But they don't come.

I avoid scary ones, but I still get them sometimes, like something is
chasing you, scaring you....I have another dream I remember a lot, related
to a cousin of mine who committed suicide. One night I dreamed that he
was trying to chase me. I felt it was all my fault for some reason because he
was chasing me. My brother came over to save me in my dream. My brother
said to him, ‘If you love her, if she is your favourite cousin, you don’t do that.’ That was how the dream ended. The next day, my mother woke me up and told me my cousin committed suicide, the night I dreamed of it.

Another dream I remember was last year, I dreamed about my mom being very upset because a cousin named her baby after her without her permission. I usually never dream about my mother, so I was concerned what it meant or what could happen. I called my family to see if something had happened. They said there was nothing, and said I was probably stressed, or I was unhappy — the answers didn’t satisfy me. It was still on my mind for a while. I was in Yellowknife for some visit and I specifically asked a nurse what she thought of my dreams. She said I was probably feeling lonely and missed my mother. I then talked to my husband and his family. I felt better, otherwise I would be more upset for a longer time. I think I was stressed and missing my mother at the time.

We enquired more specifically about uqumangirniq from both Ms. J and her husband. She told us:

*Uqumangirniq* is like dreaming at night, and you are awake, but can’t move. It is a dream that scares you. It is usually a nightmare, a very bad nightmare. I had a nightmare when I was fifteen years old. I woke up my mother. She told me not to have those dreams as they could kill you; they could stop the heart. She told me to go and get blessed — I did that, and never had them again.

The *uqumangirniq* I had was something a little different. I dreamed of a dog — a very ugly dog, chasing me and jumping at me — I was sort of stuck in the dream, half awake, and half dreaming. There was no sound in the dream. Something pulled me back into the dream. I tried to get awake, but I couldn’t move. I came out of it finally. My sister moved over to sit next to me to make sure I was okay because I was sweating, and my heart was beating fast. I felt really upset.

I know my dad used to have *uqumangirniit*. He told me it was Satan trying to come after me. It usually happened very quickly, and it would scare somebody pretty badly. He told me if it happens again to try to wriggle my toes — and I would come out of it.

I don’t know why some dreams are accurate; it is weird. I would like to talk to somebody about that. Mostly, I just speak up and thank the Lord because I am safe and there has been no problem.
Ms. J’s husband said something similar:

I have had three or four [uqumangirniit]. They happened two years ago. It was like a trance or a deep sleep: you are in a dream, your eyes are open, but you can’t yell or call for help. I don’t have any theory as to why this happens. I have talked about this to some other people. Sometimes I just forget about it. I had a vision in those dreams, it was like a person. It was scary. I also saw three or four big fierce dogs, crawling in the hallway. I couldn’t move or cry. I tried to pinch myself but I had no strength. I don’t know if they have any meaning. I don’t see any meaning in them myself. I know if it is bad enough, it can kill a person.

A dream I have heard about that is strange is about polar bear hunting. A few people were out polar bear hunting around a place that was an old R.C.M.P. fort. A long time ago, an R.C.M.P. officer got shot there and they closed down the fort. Most people don’t hunt around there because it is supposed to be haunted or something, but they did anyway. They camped around there and slept in the tent. That night, at the same time, all the hunters had the same dream about the R.C.M.P. officer’s ghost. They all got up in the middle of the night at the same time exactly. They told each other what they had been dreaming and were scared. They got out of that area right away and never returned there.

Interview ELEVEN

Ms. K is an Inuit woman in her 30s with three young children. She has been separated for close to a year. She was born in north Baffin, but lived in the south most of her life. She works for the Government and enjoys teaching part-time. She sees herself as an Anglican Christian.

At one level she appears to have little room for traditional Inuit dream mythologies; at another, she is a firm believer:

I never saw tuurngait, or had hallucinations or anything in my dreams. I don’t believe in spirits. I am not very traditional because I am very impatient. I can’t do things like sewing like traditional women do. I think I need to spend more time and talk to my children more. That’s what I think a mother should do.

But I think dreams are very important. If you dream about something, it is going to happen. Dreams keep us going. For [my first child], I dreamed my father came in and said, ‘You are going to have a son.’ He was bright, a
little bit of a face, talking. He said, 'Name it after me, everything is going to be fine.' That was my first child, fourteen years ago. He is going to be wise and strong, like my father.

We asked why she thought dreaming of her father and naming her child after him was important:

Because important people like your grandma or your father, if you dream about them, it is special. Dreams keep things that mean a lot to you. Some things are positive. Not all dreams are important, though. Like on television, dreams don’t happen in real life, they don’t come true. If I dream of a bad thing, I hope it never comes true.

Some dreams have more power. You can feel it. When you talk about them with others who also have had similar dreams it makes them more believable. With these dreams, if I dream of something bad, it is kind of bad.

I am not a superstitious person, like believing it is bad luck if you collect baby things before a baby is born. I just know if something is going to happen with some dreams. It’s something special. It’s not superstition.

You are supposed to not talk about any kind of bad dream — if you talk about it, it may happen, maybe a little bit of that, at least — kind of bad luck. For example, like a marriage when the people get divorced.

Elders say this and other family members tell you that. I have come to believe that.

We then asked her whether she thought people have control over dreams:

I think so. Like if you wish something will happen in a dream and it does. It works. Try to think, relax. But not bad dreams — they come and go, you can’t control them.

Dreams are a little bit spiritual, like somebody is trying to protect you. Dreams can come from ancestors, like my father — I miss my father, I think of him often, I look for reassurance from him, sometimes just his voice. He died of cancer. He also had asthma.

I know someone close to me who committed suicide. [Suicide] runs in my friends and relatives — they lived in [north Baffin]. I don’t know more family history because my family were relocated. It was my uncle’s daughter; the two of us were best friends. Twelve years ago, we were at [school] together. I caught her with my husband. That was not the only reason [why she committed suicide]. She had a bad marriage. She just hung
herself. There were no signs or indications beforehand. I felt responsible at the time. I felt really bad. I was not suicide[al] myself, though. I had an uqumangirniq, dreaming about her.

I was scared to go back to sleep, afraid of my dream, afraid of going through it again. Dreams will lead to that. I kept the whole thing inside.

I talked to a couple of friends later — only after friends talked about their uqumangirniit. I felt less scared afterwards. It was stressful at the time. I carry on a normal life now. I never came close to committing suicide all my life, I thought about it, but never tried it. I had a very mean stepmother until I was fourteen. That was the time I thought about it a lot.

Sensing a lot of feelings revisited, we asked how she understood or interpreted those dreams and her uqumangirniq after her friend committed suicide:

I was not good at understanding this on my own. I asked elders. I was so stressed out. It got to that point. People suggested that I talk about it, to get it out of my system.

An uqumangiq is different. It happens to you yourself, no one else is involved. You can’t do anything. In other dreams, others are involved. When I had it, it was like two o’clock in the morning — for half an hour I couldn’t move. I was breathing okay but I couldn’t yell. You see your body there, like your spirit is out of the body, watching the body, going further and further, but you can’t control the movement. I tried to shut my eyes, I still had no movement. I didn’t hear anything. I tried to concentrate to wake myself up. I finally did. In these things you really can’t move, or shout out.

One of [the people I know] talked about suicide more casually, more often; she helped me a lot.

When asked to estimate how common uqumangirniit were, she gave a different impression from our earlier interviewee (interview eight):

Uqumangirniit are probably common — but not many people talk about this. It was not easy for me to start talking about it. Two years later, I talked to my grandmother. I was just not ready before. I was afraid of not being normal, ashamed of the events that led up to it. I thought my friend’s suicide caused my uqumangirniq. I didn’t talk to anybody.

When I finally talked to my grandmother, she said it was because I ‘had too much on my mind, and I was keeping too much inside’. She knows some people who never give up [having too much on their minds] — their
uqumangirniiit get worse and they are found dead in the morning. I heard that and it scared me. It’s about the spirit. Like the devil is trying to win your spirit, and you come to harm yourself to take the spirit away.

We asked whether she tried to harm herself, given her experiences. She revealed that:

For a long time, around that time, I didn’t care much about things. I didn’t harm myself, but I was emotionless, nothing interested me much, I was depressed for years. I was ‘fragile.’ I was really cautious and worried about what other people were thinking of me. My parents were drinking a lot more. I stayed numb for years.

But I was kind of lucky. I have a total of ten friends, all somewhat close, that have committed suicide.

She gave us some final thoughts on dreams, including a commentary on our interview itself, which struck a chord for us. It taught us to reflect a little deeper on our work:

I still think our contact with the white people will change things. If it happens, it happens. We should leave things as they are. Lots of white people ask a lot of questions, even about delicate things. This can ruin the precious things, and they don’t mean as much as before. The meanings are being tempered. The kids will have much less. I know all this history has been hard. I am not asking it to change too much. We are not really a lot better off than before. The kids will have less in the future if we change too much.
Uqumangirniq or Aqtuqsinniq: Inuit Sleep Paralysis — A Biopsychocultural Interpretation through Inuit Interviews, and Review of International Perspectives

“I am very scared when I have an aqtuqsinniq. I start becoming heavier and heavier and can’t move.”
(Pisuk)

“One time I woke up. I couldn’t move or say anything. I kept hearing things, and two human shapes, yellowish, were going inside me, one pushing the other, pushing inside me. I tried to say things, to yell, but I could still see them right next to my face. Sometimes you just lie there, and try to move, waiting for things to happen. Sometimes I can hear whispers. I can’t understand what they are saying, but I can hear them. It’s the devilish language. I asked grandma – grandma said maybe it’s the devil’s language…”
(Story of a 14-year-old Inuit student, Iqaluit, Nunavut)

Introduction
All humans dream. What the dream represents is open to interpretation. In western tradition, anthropologists and psychologists alike have struggled to find meanings for dream contents. For example, Freud believed that certain dream symbols have universal meanings cross-culturally; Jung believed that dreams reflected a “collective unconscious”. Contemporary psychological theories tend to steer away from generalizations, preferring to examine local themes and meanings that are rooted in the culture of the dreamer (Tedlock, 1994). Still, dream content differs widely from person to person; as a result, its interpretation varies greatly, making comparisons or conclusions extremely difficult.

Sleep paralysis, as a dream-related phenomenon, presents a unique opportunity. On the one hand, it is a pan-human experience, with consistent characteristics and
physiological findings cross-culturally, thus providing an even “ground-zero” for comparison; on the other hand, it is usually an intense and extraordinary experience, producing a rich legacy of interpretations that are different from culture to culture, thus acting not only as a vehicle for cross-cultural comparison, but also an excellent lens through which to examine and understand a particular culture.

_Uqumangirniq_ is such a vehicle and lens for the Inuit. We have had the opportunity of hearing what the elders have to tell us about dreams and _uqumangirniq_, and to pursue some community interviews from a younger generation. In this paper, we will examine the characteristics of _uqumangirniq_ and associated experiences, discuss the medical understanding, review some international findings, and finally, explore how these Inuit interpretations of _uqumangirniq_ can contribute to one’s understanding of Inuit culture as a whole.

**Descriptions of _uqumangirniq_**

While there is a rich vocabulary among the Inuit that describes different experiences related to sleep and dreaming, _uqumangirniq_ is tightly defined and consistently reported by different persons in the interviews. _Uqumangirniq_, or _aqtuqsinniq_, is often described as a frightening experience related to dreaming. It typically occurs as one wakes up from, or enters into sleep, aware of one’s surroundings, but unable to move or scream, lasting seconds to minutes.

The elders, in general, believe that _uqumangirniq_ is “much stronger” than “just dreaming”, emphasizing the inability to move and feeling scared as part of the experience. “...I am very scared when I have an _aqtuqsinniq_... I start becoming heavier and heavier and can’t move,” says Pisuk. The effect seems to be long term, as Agiaq relates that, “To me, it is never going to stop being scary. I think when you experience this you are scared every time. It is scarier when your ears hiss, as this means there is something very close to you.” Ka&&ak observes, “when you _uqumangiqtaq_ it is scary because you can’t talk.” Her father “almost didn’t wake up from a state of _uqumangirniq_...” Most of the community interviews described similar experiences. In fact, a few informants refused to discuss the physical experience in detail.

In addition, some other prominent associated features are described. Ears “hissing”, as well as a “roar” or “hum” sound preceding and/or during _uqumangirniq_ appear to be common in the elders, but the community interviewees did not mention or emphasize the sounds. Visualization also occurs, as Pisuk recalls: “There was one time when I started to _aqtuqsittituq_. There was an old man wearing caribou clothing... This old man was standing between [me and my wife] and was smiling at me and reaching towards me. His face was healthy and handsome but it started to become older...” At least two young interviewees reported seeing scary objects such as “yellowish... human shapes” or a “black human figure.”
Being able “to see their bodies lying in bed,” or “see themselves as if they were in a dream” during an episode of *uqumangirniq* is a significant experience for some elders. Coming out or waking up from an *uqumangirniq* with shortness of breath, sweating, and racing heart appear to be common.

With regard to techniques to escape *uqumangirniq*, as well as methods of protection, the elders and younger generation alike reported similar experiences. The techniques are typically taught by parents or elders, such as a grandmother’s advice to “hold up [the] middle finger” if experiencing *aqtuqsinniq*, or “wriggle a toe,” etc. Alternatively, to help others during their *uqumangirniq*, Pisuk advocates “put a bit of spit on their pillow; that would get them out of it,” along with shaking them to wakefulness. For prevention, some younger interviewees advocated telling other people about the *uqumangirniq* as soon as possible, implying that open discussion could dispel the condition.

Finally, not all regarded *uqumangirniq* as purely unfortunate. Pisuk relates a colorful anecdote related to *aqtuqsinniq*, possibly the only non-threatening or positive reference: “In some ways *aqtuqsinnit* can be helpful. If you were to *aqtuqsittuq* you could see a nice-looking man or woman that perhaps was a *tarniq*. If it came to you and you were unable to move, if it had sex with you then you could end up with an unseen lover…you would have found yourself something pleasurable.”

**Medical understandings**

According to the authoritative International Classification of Sleep Disorders (ICSD), sleep paralysis, in isolated form² (i.e., not as a part of narcolepsy³), is a form of “parasomnia⁴”: “[T]he isolated form is most likely to take place at awakening. Characterized by a sudden inability to execute voluntary movements, sleep paralysis episodes are usually accompanied by clear consciousness. Although capable of lasting several minutes, paralysis may be terminated by external stimulus, such as another person’s touch. Some patients learn to break an episode by vigorously moving their eyes” (American Sleep Disorders Association, 1990).

There are two related issues to clarify for a medical understanding of *uqumangirniq*. First, that *uqumangirniq* is sleep paralysis should not be taken for granted. Most of the earlier international reports on sleep paralysis had to establish this correspondence by matching the local phenomenon characteristically and physiologically to that of the medical condition. *Uqumangirniq*, as described by the elders, the community interviewees, and from an Alaskan report (Bloom & Gelardin, 1976), tend to confirm that it is sleep paralysis. Second, within cross-cultural psychological studies, those conditions that are unique and without western or near-universal equivalents are given the labels of “cultural-bound” syndromes; for example, the Inuit dissociative phenomenon of “*piblokoq*,” as reported in Alaska, and others (e.g. Koro⁶ Boufle Delirente⁷ etc). This “exotic” classification does not apply to *uqumangirniq*, as the
“cultural-bound” syndromes may involve a number of different possible western clinical explanations, have a variety of etiology, and a range of corresponding western diagnostic entities. *Uqumangirniq* appears to be distinct, consistent, and has a solid physiological basis cross-culturally; only its interpretations are highly “cultural-bound.”

Within sleep-related phenomena, given that the Inuit have a rich variety of related descriptions, it is also important to differentiate sleep paralysis from other sleep phenomena, for example, nightmare and night terror. Of course, the inability to move or scream, and the ability to fully remember the events associated with sleep paralysis is helpful in differentiating it from others.

Sleep paralysis itself is often accompanied by other psychological phenomena; for example, hallucinations – sensations of seeing, hearing, or feeling in the absence of an external stimulation — when falling asleep or waking from sleep sometimes are known to be associated. Although these hallucinations are common and non-pathological, when coupled with sleep paralysis, they can understandably add to the frightening experience, especially when one is not familiar with either. This is exemplified in the interviewee who saw yellowish figures which tried to “push inside” her, as she lay paralyzed.

Another sleep paralysis related condition is depersonalization — a form of dissociative experience that often occurs in a state of panic or fright. Depersonalization can also occur during periods of severe trauma or post-traumatic distress. Though terrifying and often incomprehensible, depersonalization is thought to serve some protective function as it allows victims to dissociate from the intense and overwhelming experiences. The interviewees’ stories about seeing themselves from “up and above,” away from the bed, illustrate this condition well.

Otherwise, there is no definitive knowledge about the course and causes of sleep paralysis. One may find comfort in that sleep paralysis often disappears over time (Fukuda et al, 1987), and by itself, has no significant reported relationship with any neurological or psychiatric disorder. Available research suggests that a disturbed sleep architecture, as a result of a disordered circadian rhythm, may be responsible for causing sleep paralysis. In particular, problematic transitions between REM-sleep and wakefulness, known as “REM-sleep intrusion into wakefulness” (Kaplan & Sadock, 1995), appears to be the mechanism (Takeuchi et al, 1992).

Circadian rhythm is a biological rhythm set by both internal (e.g. hormonal levels, body temperature, etc.) and external forces (e.g. presence and intensity of daylight and darkness, clocks, etc.) that help to regulate sleep and wakefulness cycles, relative proportions of REM and non-REM sleep, etc. Disordered circadian rhythm can be a result of crossing time-zones, working night shifts, or deprivation of usual
environmental clues for day and night, etc. Some researchers have suggested arctic “white nights” and long winter nights may contribute to disruption of circadian rhythm (Steel et al, 1995). By that account, sleep paralysis may be common in the arctic.

Other plausible theories to explain causes of sleep paralysis include excessive physical exertion, sleep position, stress, etc., plus another interesting but speculative one: a researcher proposed that significant changes in “ambient geomagnetic activity” might contribute to sleep paralysis, as he had found a higher incidence of sleep paralysis around the time of geomagnetic fluctuations (Conesa, 1997). By that theory, the arctic, with its proximity to the North Pole, hence high level of geomagnetic changes, may be a fertile ground for development of uqumangirniq.

Overall, because of its high prevalence and non-detrimetal effect, most researchers believe sleep paralysis is a physiological phenomenon, not a pathological one (e.g. Fukuda et al, 1987). This represents an important view that seeks to normalize this common phenomenon. As we will see in the Inuit interpretations, uqumangirniq is also regarded and accepted as part of natural events.

Review of comparative literature

Estimated prevalence and distribution

Sleep paralysis seems to be a quite common phenomenon, as indicated by the widespread knowledge and the high level of personal experiences among all the Inuit interviewees, elders and younger generation alike, contrary to the Western medical belief that it is a very rare condition. One elder summarizes: “Everyone is able to uqumangiqtuq. Even though I am an old man, I could experience this even if I didn’t want to. It is part of life.” In Alaska, a local survey found all sixteen interviewed had heard of the condition, and “some had experienced it” (Bloom & Gelardin, 1976). In the general literature, reported prevalence of isolated sleep paralysis varies greatly: from 4.7% in a medical clinical setting (Goode, 1962), to 60% in a remote Newfoundland community (Ness, 1978). Studies in Japan (Fukuda et al, 1987), Hong Kong (Wing et al, 1994), and Chicago (on African-Americans) (Bell et al, 1986), found a rate of about 40% overall. The large variance is likely due to methodological, definitional, and sample size differences (e.g., ethnography approach, vs. medicalized clinical survey, vs. questionnaire limited to university students, etc.). These reports also tell us the common age of onset of sleep paralysis is usually in adolescence. Gender distribution is variable from report to report.
International perspectives

Possibly the only direct account of the Inuit sleep paralysis, *augumangia* in Inupik, and *ukomiarik* in Yup'ik, came from two clinicians working in Anchorage, Alaska (Bloom & Gelardin, 1976). They sought to understand the condition through community interviews and anthropological literature. They learned that Alaskan Inuit believed sleep makes a person more susceptible to the spirit world, that the soul is more likely to leave the body during sleep, and that *augumangia* may be a state in which a spirit has entered and possessed the body.

The Alaskan report was the first to recognize that *augumangia* was a physiological condition with psychological importance and cross-cultural significance. While the theory may be very controversial, it was in keeping with the prevalent psychological thinking of the time. They hypothesized that the Inuit tendency to have *augumangia* was related to a “hysterical mechanism” that is a basic “Eskimo reaction pattern”, citing the *pibloktok* phenomenon and personal experiences of Inuit having frequent “dissociative reactions associated with alcohol use and breakthrough of anger” as examples. Up to the 1970s, the predominant thinking, under the psychoanalytic tradition, was that sleep paralysis was a form of psychoneurosis, betraying intra-psychic conflicts on issues of aggression, sexual fantasies, passivity, and dependency, manifested in the safety of sleep (Payn, 1965; Schneck 1969; Liddon, 1970; & Ness, 1978).

Though limited in details and access to interviewees, the report showed that the Alaskan Inuit beliefs were strikingly similar to the Baffin and Keewatin elders’ discussions here. Thus, what the elders relate here may be generalizable.

Around the world, there are numerous other reports of sleep paralysis in psychological and social sciences literature. The researchers Hufford (1982) and Ness (1978) studied extensively in Newfoundland a condition colloquially referred to as the “old hag”, a local term for sleep paralysis. Ness traced the etymology of “old hag” to the ancient English term “haegtesse”, meaning harpy or witch, suggesting a historical witchcraft association in the explanation.

Other cultures also have such similar spiritual underpinnings in their interpretations. In Japan, a condition called “Kanashibari” is equivalent to *uqumangirniq*. The origin of the Japanese term Kanashibari is from a homonym, meaning “the magic of Fudoh-Myohol, one of the gods of Buddhism” (Fukuda et al, 1987). Apparently, in the early history of Japan, Buddhist monks used the magic to “paralyze others as if binding them with chains.”

In another part of Asia, the Hong Kong Chinese have a long tradition of believing that “the soul of the person is vulnerable to the influence of spirits during sleep” (Wing et al, 1994). Sleep and the spiritual world have always had a close relationship in the Chinese culture, with the earliest documented records dating back to 403-221 B.C. Although there was no direct mention of sleep paralysis, the authors believed that the
early documents included a condition that resembled sleep paralysis in the “dreams of surprise.” By 30-124 A.D., there was a specific Chinese character in the earliest dictionary that specifically denoted the condition of “ghost oppression”, largely understood as “being oppressed by a ghost at night and paralyzed.”

On other fronts, Ness (1978) also reviewed and noted that many cultures have a particular name for sleep paralysis that is associated with a unique set of explanations: delayed psychomotor awakening (“verzogertes psychomotorisches erwachen”) in Germany; awakening cataplexy (“cataplexie du reveil”) in France; “night palsy” in nineteenth century United States; and “kokma” in the West Indies. As well, Hufford (1982) made phenomenological connections between the “old hag”, and the “Eskimo sleep paralysis” (from the Alaskan report), and the Filipino “aswang”.

One curious phenomenon that has received minor attention from individual reports, but seems remarkably consistent if the reports are viewed collectively, is the perception that one is being “oppressed,” “pressed,” “squatted on,” or “ridden” during the sleep paralysis. Some even have the sleep paralysis named after this quality: “the witch is riding you” among many African-Americans (Bell et al, 1986), and “ghost oppression” in Hong Kong, where more than half surveyed reported “a sensation of weight over the chest”.

This quality may also connect the historical notion of succubus and incubus, the European medieval demons that descend on women and men, respectively, possessing them and forcefully having sex with them (Jarcho, 1980). Though Incubi and Succubi are more known as sexual myths, and are synonymous with nightmares in current vocabulary, an often ignored element is that the victims were often described as horrified, paralyzed, feeling pressure on the chest, having breathing difficulties and pain during these episodes, unable to move or resist the advancement of the demons. Sleep paralysis may have played a role in the formation of these myths (Hufford, 1982, Cheyne et al, 1999).

Of some anthropological and historical interest, however, are methods employed by other cultures to relieve and prevent sleep paralysis. According to direct reports and inferences, international perspectives share some significant similarities with the Inuit. The Newfoundlanders practiced a number of ways to disrupt the “old hag” by touching or shaking the victim, calling the victim’s name backwards, or spelling the victim’s name backwards on his/her forehead. Many also reported that simply bending the victim’s finger or toe will disrupt the “old hag.” Newfoundlanders also reported prevention methods such as avoiding sleeping on one’s back, maintaining a healthy lifestyle with regular sleep, repeating a favourite hymn backwards to avoid a dream which might precede being “hagged,” and putting a Bible underneath the pillow. The last measure certainly has Inuit equivalents in using ulus or knives by the elders, and Bibles by younger interviewees.
The research on African-Americans also uncovered, through survey and literature, some colorful historical folklore cures used by early Americans, particularly African-Americans. These included: “putting a Bible under the head of the bed, catching the ‘hag’ in the bottle, laying a broom at your door, putting a fork under your pillow, tying horsetail on your wrist, putting a horseshoe over your door, saying ‘Lord, have mercy’, putting mustard seeds on the floor, putting red pepper on the floor, or putting salt on the floor, and using a sifter in various places,” etc.

It is notable that, globally, contemporary explanations of sleep paralysis both reflect the traditional interpretations and incorporate modern scientific notions. For example, some Newfoundlanders believed that the “old hag” might be administered by one person to another: “People can put it on you, like a charm... Do you know who it was ’agged ya?” Other Newfoundlanders believed that “stagnated” blood cause the “old hag”; as well, “old hag” is worse if the person sleeps on his back. Another attribution of cause was physical exertion, “You work hard and your blood gets thin, you push yourself too far.” Overall, the Newfoundlanders reported a combination of explanatory models, utilizing social-psychological (e.g., being hexed), and the biological (e.g., tired, exhaustion), in complementary fashion.

Elsewhere, in more recent international studies, working too hard, lack of sleep and stress were consistently the most common explanations given by the respondents in Japan, Hong Kong, and African-Americans in Chicago. However, a majority of these cross-cultural samples entertained concurrent explanations of some forms of supernatural forces, be they “Kanashibari” or “evil spirits,” or “ghost oppression” or “the witch is riding you.” Some interesting local theories are also of note. For example, given that most victims of Kanashibari started in their adolescence, the authors suggested that the Japanese education system’s stringent and highly stressful high school and university entrance examinations may be partially responsible for precipitating sleep paralysis. It is typical that students study until late night for a long period of their student lives.

Another remarkable finding is that in Hong Kong, when compared to those who had first-hand experience, those who did not experience “ghost oppression” themselves tended to believe the cause was related to spirit or ghost possession and saw the condition as a form of illness. It seems that those without personal experience might utilize more traditional interpretations, even in a modern society like Hong Kong. Thus, it is likely that both personal experience and traditional knowledge play an important role in demystification and conferring comfort. This is relevant for the Inuit setting, where a generational gap in knowledge is often an issue, as the society undergoes dynamic transition from a traditional knowledge-based one to that of a technological one.
Inuit interpretations

Elders’ interpretations and related thoughts

As the international comparisons testify, a variety of interpretations and understandings exist globally for sleep paralysis. Inuit interpretations of uqumangirniq, add to that body of knowledge and enrich the cultural heritage.

Though the elders are very cautious and prudent with their responses to questions to which they do not know the answers, they showed little if any reservation evoking the relationship of man, the supernatural and the spirit world, as manifested in the interpretation of uqumangirniq. They readily implicate angakkuit, or Inuit shamans, as one of the possible causes of uqumangirniq. “I think some of them are made to have an aqtuqsinniq by an angakkuq and they don’t wake up at all,” reports Pisuk. Given the prominence of angakkuit in the traditional Inuit community, as told by the elders here, inducing uqumangirniq seem to be just a part of their superhuman powers that are already at work in healing sickness, guiding hunters to animals, flying to their destinations, defending disfavoured and mistreated orphans, establishing the boundaries between the visible and the invisible, and maintaining the good-bad balance of the cosmic order, etc.

Uqumangirniq appears to be a means of fighting among the angakkuit themselves as well. Agiaq believes that when angakkuit have uqumangirniit, it was “because they were made to do this by another angakkuq who was trying to defeat them.” The principles of retribution apply to the powers of uqumangirniq, as “if they used their powers to go after another angakkuq this could be dangerous as it could bounce back at them…” This, along with other similarly vivid images, conjures up the complex world of shamanism.

The elders related many symbols in dreams and their useful predictive powers, whether for redirecting them to the right path in a snowstorm, or to locate animals. Uqumangirniq does not seem to participate in that function, but could be a means of power nevertheless for the non-angakkuit. Ordinary people can also discharge uqumangirniit to one another in ill will. For one, the elders believe uqumangirniq is a product of other people’s vengeful or malicious spells. After Pisuk had experienced an uqumangirniq, he recalls, “I thought this has come from someone and I didn’t want to die. I started wondering, ‘Why are Tautungi and Qabluituq’s son doing this to me?’ Then I thought, I have hit his tarniq…. Some people don’t just experience aqtuqsinniq. Some people end up not being able to move because someone is going after them…” Pisuk also offers some useful advice: “When you feel that whatever has come to you while you are in a state of aqtuqsinniq is intending malice, then you would get rid of it.” This sense of power to protect oneself does suggest that the ordinary Inuk is an active agent, participating in the shaman-centered cosmic world.
The elders’ sense of participation seems intimately related to their understanding of the tarniq, or soul, which everyone possesses. In uqumangirniq, like in sleep and dreams, one’s tarniq is more susceptible to the designs and influences of angakkuit or others. One of the dire fears is the potential loss of the tarniq, having it permanently separated from the body. This vulnerability is heightened in uqumangirniq, as one is literally physically paralyzed. In addition, as discussed above, depersonalization, the dissociative state where one could experience or see oneself from without, sometimes accompanies uqumangirniq. Few other experiences would parallel the intensity and dramatic effect of being simultaneously paralyzed and depersonalized to experientially illustrate the notion of the tarniq leaving one’s body. This further highlights the notion how knowledge is formed, as cultural beliefs, on the one hand, inform one’s interpretation of natural and supernatural phenomenon, and individual and collective experiences also shape the cultural beliefs on the other.

The elders also imply that the departure of the tarniq signifies death. “That’s why we say that some people don’t wake up again,” stated Pisuk. Pisuk recalled his father saying that a person who had experienced aqtuqsinniq a lot had died because of this. As a result, given the lethality of unmitigated uqumangirniq, the elders seem to agree on ways to help those who are actively experiencing this: “You [have] to wake them up. Some of them died in their sleep because they couldn’t be woken up.” Nevertheless, this view is not absolute; not all view uqumangirniq and depersonalization with fear. Ka&&ak recalls that her husband was disappointed that his perceived tarniq actually returned to his body: “My husband… said he dreamed that his tarniq was up above his body. When it came back down to earth his body woke up. He said he regretted waking up because his tarniq had started to ascend.”

Overall, while the elders are familiar and have techniques to deal with uqumangirniq, they consider it an inextricable part of life, as it can “absolutely not” be cured; “We are always going to dream. I don’t think it is possible to do anything about it [uqumangirniq].” The elders seem to be resigned to the presence of uqumangirniq. Their acceptance appears to both acknowledge the ubiquity and maybe even necessity of uqumangirniq, and allocate the healthy respect it demands from individuals, as uqumangirniq is unequivocally regarded as a product of a higher spiritual power. This is consistent with the more traditional views from other cultures, but also in high contrast to the general, more benign views of contemporary international reports.

**Transmission of knowledge of uqumangirniq and further thoughts**

Dreams, and in turn, uqumangirniq, though intensely private and personal, appear to be a highly communicated subject, according to the elders. They form part of the oral tradition. The contents of dreams (and uqumangirniq, to a lesser degree), seem to be subjected to a behavioral and ethical protocol similar to that of ordinary behavior. There
seems to be little separation of the two worlds, as the Western concept of the unconscious would otherwise allow. For example, the elders tell us that one is, like in daily life, forbidden or discouraged to dream of ill will toward others, and one needs to apologize for dreamed offenses, etc. In many senses, the dream world is part of social behaviour. As well, ability to dream in general appears to be a form of power, an ability to be passed on to one’s children. Elders talk about, reminisce, and have their lives guided by certain dreams. *Uqumangiriqt* is no exception.

As a result, the existence and experience of *uqumangiriqt* seems to be common knowledge, transmitted from parents to children, grandparents to grandchildren, including the methods and techniques of protection. Among the elders, there seems to be little mystery about it, despite its mysterious nature and spiritual interpretations. However, as deep-rooted as the traditional knowledge about dreams and *uqumangiriqt* is, there is a sense of loss expressed by the elders. They relate a palpable tension between shamanistic beliefs on dreams and teachings of the church, acknowledging the profound shift in Inuit beliefs in their lifetime.

At some level, the elders seem to be at peace in their own understanding of the spirit world, and as it relates to *uqumangiriqt*. At another level, they cherish the comparison of the shaman world and the Church. They compare *angakkuit*, priests, and ministers implicitly, staying in the empirical and mortal when viewing the priest and ministers, venturing into the supernatural and powerful in the case of the *angakkuit*. Agiaq perceives that priests and ministers can “only see people in the flesh.” Some may “only have their knowledge from paper. They don’t have that much power,” adds Pisuk. Whereas regarding the *angakkuit*, the elders revere the *angakkuit*’s ability to send their *tuurngaaq*, or shaman spirit, around to perform deeds and heal the sick, etc. It is in this world of the *angakkuit* that *uqumangiriqt* resides, fully participating in the magical senses. Unlike the physiological event itself that is beyond control of the individual, the interpretation of *uqumangiriqt* is fully rooted in and within grasp of the individual’s cosmic understanding.

With that understanding, the elders show us a glimpse of a sophisticated social system. The dream world, to which *uqumangiriqt* belongs, is just another dimension of that system — a system that governs their lives, with causes and consequences, where rule breakers will suffer the loss of protection or animals, where good people are rewarded with knowledge, truth and game, where good and bad spirits combat for supremacy, guiding and foretelling in hardship and in ceremonies. Sometimes they simply paralyze.
Interpretations from community interviews and related thoughts

The elders’ valuable review of the traditional interpretations of uqumangirniq has provided us a base from which to appreciate some of the changes in interpretations taking place among younger-generation Inuit. There are similarities and differences between the elders’ views and those of the younger people. The similarities are in their descriptions of the characteristics of uqumangirniq, their experiences of fright, and the evoking of a supernatural power to explain uqumangirniq. However, they also differ significantly. One significant difference is the nature of the spiritual forces. In contrast to the elders’ uniform references to the angakkuit, the younger interviewees reported little to no direct recognition or acknowledgement of shamanistic connections. The supernatural references centered on that of a “devil,” as in “the devil is trying to get you,” evoking a more ostensibly Judeo-Christian-tradition. There are other more Christian-oriented references or techniques, such as praying, and putting a Bible under the pillow for protection. This difference is not surprising given the influences and role the Church has played in the arctic in the last century (Tungilik & Uyarasuk, 1999). As well, the elders themselves alluded to the decline of their shamanistic beliefs in the age of Christianity.

What the younger interviewees also frequently focused on was that uqumangirniit were harbingers of misfortune. For example, the interviewee who had uqumangirniit before the suicide of her relatives, death of the hunters, etc., believed them to be morbid omens. These prediction-related interpretations evoke the elders’ stories on dreams foretelling fortune and locations of animals, but with a harsh twist, in which the occurrences are often only harbingers of personal or community tragedies. In that sense, uqumangirniq is used as a medium to understand personal and community events, moment of deep self-reflection, effort to account for the unaccountable elements of nature and man-made cruelty.

Several young interviewees mentioned suicidal thoughts related to dreams and/or uqumangirniq. These thoughts were not related to uqumangirniq in isolation. They mostly reflect the state of distress and hardship the person was already experiencing independent of uqumangirniq. For the most part, the benign nature of uqumangirniq is borne out in many of the interviews; for those already traumatized and burdened by illness, abuse, or loss, uqumangirniq seems like an extra hard blow to an already fragile and vulnerable individual. It is here where the greatest risk lies. In particular, those who did not communicate or share their experience with others appeared to have suffered the most.

In contrast, several young respondents, as a means of relief, advocated talking to family or friends to unburden themselves of the horrific experience. Often they received
helpful guidance and suggestions and coped relatively well. These individuals appeared to have fared well with the experience of *uqumangirniq*. Communication seemed very useful, as advised by the elders as well.

A number of community respondents alluded to a role *uqumangirniq* played in communicating with important persons in their lives who died. One student was tormented by images of a deceased friend, with whom he had a suicide pact, in dreams and during *uqumangirniq*. Another student pined for his deceased father. Dreams and *uqumangirniq* became a forum and part of the process that allows him to mourn, to metabolize the loss, and to heal. Others believed that they find *uqumangirniq* useful as a way to communicate with their dead family members, expressing their love and longing, and receiving guidance and strength.

Modern and scientific explanations of dreams are also evident in several of the younger respondents, much like the international reports. One respondent related that, on the one hand, dreams and *uqumangirniq* were simply a function of the “mind doesn’t stop,” a highly scientific explanation; on the other hand, she used dreams and dreamed symbols to guide her through life, helping her to connect with her history and culture.

Like other international reports as well, a number of the community interviewees connected their dreams and *uqumangirniq* to hardship and stresses in their lives, to sleep positions, to education levels, and to having “too much on the mind.” One young student was frightened with his *uqumangirniq* and said it occurred because he was dreaming inside of another dream; therefore when he woke up from that, he was still in a dream. His creative thoughts highlighted the rich, integrative, and very much uniquely Inuit variety of interpretations among the younger respondents.

**Conclusions**

At a time when technology and information are growing at a rapid rate, sleep and dreams remain areas that are largely little understood. Yet, there is endless fascination, as dreams are not only highly unique and private, but also a rich reservoir for folklores, myths, taboos, and cultural understandings. It has been an extraordinary privilege and opportunity to learn from the elders and the community interviewees.

We learn that the Inuit descriptions of *uqumangirniq* match that of the medical characterizations of sleep paralysis, and therefore is part of panhuman experience. We also learn that, like the Inuit, different cultures have traditionally utilized spiritual knowledge to interpret sleep paralysis. Some of those beliefs are still evident today.
The traditional Inuit interpretations of *uqumangirniq* utilize a shamanistic cosmology as the preeminent framework, the same cosmology that governs life cycles, meaning, and behavior of everyday life. *Uqumangirniq*, though personal and private, is often highly communicated and its interpretations integrated, through that shamanistic model, into the larger cosmic understanding of the world, lifting it out of the personal domain into that of the spiritual. Understanding that it is a supernatural power, beyond one’s control, may be useful to reduce the attendant fear and curtail the mental stresses one may have to endure otherwise in such a frightening experience.

It is evident that most cultures have moved away from spiritual or supernatural interpretation as the primary paradigm. It is easy to anticipate such a fate for the Inuit as well. What’s impressive, yet not surprising, is the strong presence and relatively central role Inuit traditional knowledge still plays in contemporary interpretations, as evidenced by the elders’ discussions and the community interviews, making this enquiry that much more relevant and pressing.

Nevertheless, the differences between the elders’ views and those of the younger respondents from the community highlight the social changes that are taking place. The interpretations of *uqumangirniq* become a microcosm and micro-reflector of that change. It is evident that traditional knowledge has changed and continues to do so, under the influences of Western, religious and secular thoughts. As the Inuit are propelled into a search for new identity and new meaning, there is a transitional period in which the psychological and social mooring power offered by the traditional interpretations is lost and not replaced by others, where one has neither traditional nor modern anchorage.

It is palpable that some of the younger interviewees were struggling with a startlingly dynamic mixture of traditional understanding and modern knowledge, which at times complemented each other, at others created conflicts; and at yet other times, there was a vacuum of any understanding, just apprehension and fear. The traditional knowledge on *uqumangirniq* told to us by the elders here helps to bridge that gap, its contemporary relevance more apparent. The knowledge on *uqumangirniq* and dreams in general is valuable in increasing recognition of traditional knowledge and its role in shaping the Inuit identity, as well as its role in bridging the generational gap. That shamanism is not practised widely anymore does not represent the disappearance of it from the collective psyche, nor its role as a powerful explanatory model. Younger people may be “acculturated” in many respects, but many also retain another “inner reality” largely informed by what the elders have related here.

This enquiry has been part of that process of filling a gap. As Agiaq says: “It’s okay for you to hear so you know about this, and so the generations after you can hear about them. There are some things in our past that are important that you hear about....”
Footnotes

1 Uqumangirniq and aqtuqsinniq refer to the same sleep paralysis phenomenon, with the former predominately used in the Baffin region, and the later used in the Keewatin (a.k.a. Kivalliq) region.

2 To further complicate the matter, other than “isolated sleep paralysis”, there may be a “familial sleep paralysis” that, like narcolepsy, has daytime excessive sleepiness, but unlike narcolepsy, is not associated with cataplexy, has more frequent sleep paralysis and an absence of the genetic marker found in narcolepsy (Dahlitz & Parkes, 1993). For the large part, most reported cases are most likely simple “isolated sleep paralysis” that are independent of narcolepsy or familial sleep paralysis.

3 Narcolepsy is a rare (2 to 9 per 10,000) disorder, a syndrome consisting of four core symptoms (a tetrad) that are part of sleep disorders related to REM. The tetrad comprises: 1) cataplexy, 2) excessive daytime sleepiness, 3) hypnagogic and hypnopompic hallucinations, and 4) sleep attack or sleep paralysis. Cataplexy is the most dramatic of the symptoms of narcolepsy, in which a person experiences anywhere from brief, almost unnoticeable muscular weakness in the face or limbs, to total postural collapse. If cataplexy occurs with sleep attack, the person loses consciousness as well. Narcolepsy is often triggered by intense emotional situations such as laughter, tear, or sexual arousal. (Kryger et al, 1994). However, only 11-14% of patients experience all four symptoms (Kaplan & Sadock, 1995), and about three-fifths (57%) of a series of narcoleptic patients reported sleep paralysis (Hishikawa, 1976).

4 A parasomnia is a sleep disorder that involves abnormal transitions from one sleep stage to another - in the case of sleep paralysis, it is a disorder of the sleep-wake transition. Other parasomnias include sleepwalking, night terror, and nightmare, etc.

5 An abrupt dissociative episode accompanied by extreme excitement of up to 30 minutes duration and frequency followed by convulsive seizures and coma lasting up to 12 hours. It is observed primarily in Alaskan arctic and sub-arctic Eskimo communities, although regional variations in names exist. The individual may be withdrawn or mildly irritable for a period of hours or days before the attack and will typically report complete amnesia for the attack. During the attack, the individual may tear off his or her clothing, break furniture, shout obscenities, eat feces, flee from protective shelter, or perform other irrational and dangerous acts. (See APA’s DSM-IV and Foulks, 1972).

6 Koro: a term, probably of Malaysian origin, that refers to an episode of sudden and intense anxiety that the penis (or, in females, the vulva and nipples) will recede into the body and possibly cause death. The syndrome is reported in south and east Asia, where it is known by a variety of local terms...

7 Boufle Delirente: a syndrome observed in West Africa and Haiti. This French term refers to a sudden outburst of agitated and aggressive behaviour, marked confusion, and psychomotor excitement. It may sometimes be accompanied by visual and auditory hallucinations and paranoid ideation. These episodes may resemble an episode of Brief Psychotic Disorder.
Typical nightmares, which are terrifying “dreams that usually awaken the sleeper from REM sleep.” In other words, the sleeper wakes up completely, remembering the frightening dream content, is oriented to the environment, and regains all motor control, unlike the paralyzed sensation of sleep paralysis, which is a state of partial awareness.

Sleep terror is characterized by a sudden arousal from slow-wave (deep sleep) sleep with a piercing scream or cry, accompanied by autonomic arousal (e.g. rapid heart rate, shallow breath, sweating, etc.) and behavioural manifestations of intense fear. Sleep terrors are different from nightmares as sufferers have it in the earlier part of their sleep, have no recollection of the content of the fright, and are more aroused autonomically.

Known as hypnagogic and hypnopompic hallucinations, corresponding to falling asleep and waking from sleep, respectively. They are sometimes experienced as part of narcolepsy.

Depersonalization, more commonly described in literature as having left one’s own body, or being able to see oneself from without. Another related dissociative experience is derealization—having visual perceptual distortions. Both are common features of a panic attack.

At a basic level, sleep architecture is normally organized into REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep and Non-REM sleep, with the two stages alternating one after the other in cycles of 70 –100 minutes, running typically 4 to 6 cycles per night.

Since REM-sleep is the state most associated with dreaming, and the state where the dreamer loses muscular tone, a rapid “intrusion” from REM to wakefulness may render the person in a paralyzed but dreamy state.

Inupik and Yup’ik are two common dialects among the Inuit in Alaska.

A description of “old hag” by Ness: “…they suddenly awake feeling unable to move or speak. This experience is reported to occur most frequently shortly after falling asleep. Concurrent with the paralysis, victims often feel as though a heavy weight is pressing on their chest. Some victims report seeing the figure of an animal or human astride their chest. People who have experienced the Old Hag insist they are fully conscious during the attack and can see or hear other people in the household. In spite of strenuous efforts to overcome their feeling of paralysis, they remain unable to move until someone touches or shakes them or calls their name. [They also] report profuse sweating and feelings of exhaustion when the experience ends. Victims say that an attack may be preceded by a dream…. The attack itself, however, is described as very different from dreaming in that the person feels that he is fully awake during an attack.”

According to the authors (Wing, Lee & Chen, 1994), the first book, about sleep and dreams, Zhou Li/Chun Guan, appeared in the pre-Chin period. This book recorded that “the government set up a type of imperial officers who acted as ‘dream interpreters’ and classified dreams into six types: Zheng-meng (dreams of normal daily trivialities), Si-meng (dreams of loved ones), Wu-meng (dreams while being half asleep and with a cloudy consciousness or daydreaming), Xi-meng (delightful dreams), Ju-meng (fearful dreams) and E-meng (dreams of surprise).”
An “unpredictable supernatural being” that is the spirit of a dead, unbaptized baby that haunts an area and attacks people in bed by jumping on their chest and clutching their throat, in St. Lucia in the West Indies. (see Ness, 1978).

A locally known mythical being that is identifiable with creatures of the European tradition: (1) the blood-sucking vampire, (2) the self-segmenting viscera sucker, (3) the man-eating weredog, (4) the vindictive or evil-eye witch, and (5) the carrion-eating ghoul (see Hufford, 1982, p.236).

Most international reports have spiritual-based interpretations that are held in awe and with respect. Of course, the similarity is more striking in the Alaskan Inuit, with one or two slight variations in that they viewed augumangia as a state in which a spirit enters a body and takes possession when the person is vulnerable, thus controlling the person, rendering him/her paralyzed. Another interpretation was that augumangia is a form of punishment, “[the] ‘good’ person would suffer from this condition less than the ‘bad’ person.”
If you would like to add to what has been said you are free to do so. Can you tell us in your own words how you feel about being interviewed?

Agiaq: We have been able to provide answers easily in areas where we have experience or have heard about first-hand, but in areas where we don’t, it is difficult to respond. Also, because we don’t know what other people think it is difficult to speak for them.

Ka&ka: I am thankful for having been interviewed so that our descendents will know about these things. Not only will they know about these things from what will be written, they will hear about these things from you who have heard these things as well.

Agiaq: I really enjoy it when I am asked questions that I am able to answer. I become very concerned when I am asked questions beyond what I know.

Pisuk: Because of the gravity of the topic, it is scary to start giving answers we are not completely sure of. When I came here I wasn’t expecting these types of questions to be asked. When I saw you, you all seemed very young to be asking questions. You even seemed to be too young. Because you were assisted in asking the questions that you did, it was very enjoyable. It is not only the words of us elders, but your questions that will remain as well. This will add to your lives. For this I am thankful. You too will have grandchildren and will be telling them these things long after we are gone.


**Aarrujaq**  
See Aavrujaq.

**Aattajarniq**  
A game of catch.

**Aavrujaq**  
(*Aavrujait* pl. [Kivalliq]) A brown pond creature that has a yellowish tail.  
[North Baffin] *Aarrujaq*.

**Aglu**  
A seal breathing hole.

**Ail!**  
An expression of fear.

**Aittaangugaluaq**  
An expression meaning, ‘Oh, how unfortunate!’

**Ajaajaa**  
Refrain often heard in *pisii*, traditional songs.

**Ajaraaq**  
A game in which string or braided sinew was used to make figures. It is also the name of a game in which shapes are made with the string or sinew while singing a song.

**Akiraqtuqtuq**  
To say bad things or do bad things to another person.

**Akkak**  
Father’s brother(s) or male cousin(s).

**Amaaqtuq**  
To carry a baby in the pouch of an *amauti*.

**Amauti**  
A parka with a pouch and a large hood for carrying babies.

**Anaana**  
Mother.

**Anaanatsiaq**  
Maternal grandmother.

**Aanaligaaq**  
Inuit baseball.

**Anautaq**  
A beater.

**Angaju**  
Elder sibling of the same gender as oneself.

**Angajurnguq**  
A spouse of an older sibling of your spouse.

**Angakkuq**  
(*Angakkuit* pl.) A shaman.

**Angakkuuniq**  
Shamanism.

**Angaluk**  
(*Angaluit* pl.) A shaman’s belt. It would hold his *qalugiujiut*, gifts made for his *tuurrngait* by those who needed his services. Also *tassi*.

**Aqaqtuq**  
To express through word or song one’s love for a child.
Aqsaaraqtuuk
When two people join their forefingers together and pull.

Aqsaq
Kickball.

Aqsarniit
The Northern Lights; the Aurora Borealis; the Ullurmiut; the people of the day who play kickball with a walrus head in the sky.

Aqtuqsinniq
[Kivalliq and North Baffin] A paralyzing nightmare where a person seems to be awake, but is unable to move or speak.
[South Baffin] uqumangirnig.

Arnaruluk
A derogatory term of address for a woman, used to keep a woman in her place.

Arviq
A bowhead whale.

Ataataga
My father.

Atigi
Inside caribou tunic that is worn with the fur facing inside.

Atiq
Name or namesake.

Avajjuq
Playing avaniq.

Avaniq
A dangerous game played by children where they would try to cut off their air supply by strangling themselves with something so they could experience a sense of euphoria.

Aviujjijuq
Having a premonition such as when your ears are ringing, that would warn you that something was going to happen.

Iglu
(Igluit pl.) Snow house. Also any dwelling.

Ijiraq
(Ijirait or ijiqqaq pl.) Human-like beings who show themselves as caribou. They are considered to be people that have died.

Ijuqtuq
To laugh at someone because of the way they look or because of something they have done.

Ikajuqtiksaq
(Ikajuqtiksaqait pl.) Something that would be there to help a person in a time of need.

Ikajuqtì
A shaman’s spirit helper; also called a tuurngaq.

Ikiåqqiñiq
Shamanic flight between the earth and the sky by an angakkuq.

Illimmaqtuqtuq
A spiritual journey through the air by an angakkuq.
Ilirasuktuq
To be intimidated.

Ilisiiqsiujuq
Putting a hex on another person.

Ilisiiqsiniq
Hexing a person.

Ilisiqtaujuq
A person who had been hexed.

Ilisiirniarniq
An attempt to hex another.

Ilisiirniaruti
Something used to try to hex people with.

Illiqqusiq
[Iglulik] custom, manner, habit [South Baffin, piqquisiq].

Innaq
(Innait pl.) An adult; an elder.

Inua
Spirit of a natural object.

Inuksugaq
[Iglulik] See inuksuk.

Inuksuk
A stone structure with many functions, such as serving as a beacon for travellers. It was also used when hunting caribou. Also Inuksugaq [Iglulik].

Inuviniq
A dead person.

Irinaliuti
An incantation.

Irniq
Son.

Isumannguarniq
Daydreaming.

Itillimajuq
The act of sleepwalking.

Itillimaniq
Sleepwalking.

Ivulaaq
A thrumming sound.

Kakillaaqtuq
Having shivers go down your spine.

Kamiik
A pair of sealskin boots.

Kangiq&uk
Indentation along a coastline or floe edge.

Kangiruq
[Nattilik] A necklace made from the upper and lower beak of a tuullik, a yellow-billed loon, which was used as protection against angakkuit.

Kiggavik
A peregrine falcon.

Kivavaqtuq
Travelling in a southerly direction.

Glossary
Kujjaajuq
An old term used in the Utkuhikhalngmiut and Nattilingmiut dialect for people who were seen sleeping at an angle with only their head touching the bed. The angakkuit would see people sleeping like this. Some ordinary people also saw people sleeping like this.

Maligaq
Accepted guidelines for doing things that need to be followed. Today the word is often used as a translation for “Canadian law.”

Minnguq
A land beetle.

Naattiijuq
A waiting period that had to be followed because of an injunction.

Nagliktaujuq
A person who was abused or mistreated that was being watched over by a protective force.

Nagliktauniq
Being protected and watched over by a protective force which helps orphans and those who were mistreated or abused.

Najaarjuk
Younger sister or cousin. Someone’s personal term for their sister or female cousin.

Nakkaaniq
A spiritual journey through the earth to Nuliajuk made by an angakkuit.

Nalliqtuutijuq
Something that is as good as or equal to something else.

Nauja
A seagull.

Ningau
Brother-in-law; man’s sister’s husband or son-in-law; daughter’s husband.

Niriujaatnuq
To have a premonition; when a person dreams that something good is going to happen.

Niriujaarniq
A premonition.

Niviuqtuq
Trying to protect and defend a loved one from something happening to them.

Nukaq
Younger sibling of the same gender as oneself.

Nutaraq
A baby or a young child.

Nuvaq&iq
A jellyfish.

Pana
A snow knife.

Panannuq
An imitation snow knife.

Panik
Daughter.
Pijunnailliqujijuq
[Baffin] Wanting someone to no longer have ability. [Kivalliq] pilijaijuq.

Piliqaijuq
See Pijunnailliqujijuq.

Piqqusiq
[South Baffin] custom, manner, habit [Iglulik] Illiqqusiq.

Piqqusituqaq
A very old custom or way of doing things.

Piqujaq
(Piqujaq pl.) Acceptable behaviour, or required ways of doing things.

Pisiq
Traditional song. Term now also used for hymns.

Pisurajaktuq
To go caribou hunting on foot while inland during the summer.

Pittailiniq
Refraining from doing something that was forbidden. Breaking a pittailiniq would result in serious consequences to the individual or to the camp.

Pittiriqsaauti
An object that could be used as a protection or a shield against an angakkuiq’s powers.

Pukiq
The white part of a caribou skin when it is used as trim for a garment; also an albino caribou.

Pulamituq
To lose one’s senses.

Pullalik
A person who breathes air; a term used by deceased people for those that are still alive. Term also used by the tuurngait.

Pullaliuvuq
“He has a bubble.”

Pullaq
A bubble. Also term used by the angakkuiq and the tuurngait for the soul.

Qaggiq
Large iglu used when people gather together; feast house.

Qakkittuq
Being disgusted with the taste of something.

Qallunaaq
(qallunaat pl.) A white person.

Qalugiujaq
(Qalugiujaq pl.) A gift that was made to a shaman, which he attached to his belt.

Qamutiik
A dogsled.

Qangmalliqtuq
The term for going to a trading post by dogteam.

Qarliik
Traditional pair of women’s pants; in modern usage a pair of pants or trousers.
Qarmaq
A sod house; also a snowhouse with the top covered by a tent.

Qavvangniqsaujuq
Dreaming while awake. Someone says they are dreaming about a person and bring up something the person is embarrassed about.

Qilaniq
A ritual to find out the cause of what was bothering someone. It could be used by both angakkuit and non-angakkuit. When the person's head or leg or an object became heavy, the cause of the problem was identified.

Qiluriaqsiuqtuq
Creating folds in the land so that distances traversed by foot could be made more quickly.

Sakaniq
A shamanistic ritual where the shaman’s tuurngaq or helping spirit enters him. It is used for healing and to escape hunger and misfortune.

Qinugijuq
To order a person to leave.

Quaqsaaqtuq
When a person is very shaken by something.

Qukaaqtuq
Fade from view due to distance.

Qulliq
The traditional seal oil lamp.

Saki
Mother or father-in-law, as well as your spouse’s aunts and uncles.

Sanaji
The term used by a female child to address the person who supported her mother’s back during delivery.

Sanajaq
Dreaming.

Qinngarniq
A shouted prayer used to help those stricken by illness, or used to locate wildlife or improve the weather. It was also used when people were in a dangerous situation.

Qiluriaqsiurniq
The ability to create folds in the land so that distances to be covered on foot could be made more quickly.

Qiluriaqsiuti
Similar to an irinaliuti; when these words were said a person would be able to create folds in the land and cover distances in half the time.

Sanaktuumaniq
Dreaming.
Siniktuq
Sleeping.

Sinnakisaktuq
A person who does not sleep well; they wake up easily during the night.

Sinnakittuq
A person who does not sleep well.

Sinnaktujujuq
Someone who has strong dreams.

Sinnaktuumarlungniq
Having a bad dream.

Sinnariktuq
When a person is in such a deep sleep that nothing will wake them up. When you try to wake them up they respond verbally, but they don’t wake up.

Sinnarluaqijuq
Someone who is not sleeping well because they were not feeling well or were in pain.

Sinnarluktuq
A person who doesn’t sleep a lot because they have difficulty falling asleep.

Siqqit
When a qamutiik would tilt into the water and end up on an angle. Any people on it would end up being dumped off.

Sujuktuq
To be hurt by another’s actions or words.

Takutitauniq
A vision.

Talu
A blind or a curtain.

Tarniq
The soul also described as a bubble. It is not made of blood or bone.

Tarniraqtuqtuq
When the tarniq wants to leave the body.

Tarniviniq
An old tarniq.

Tassi
Also tarsi. See angaluk.

Tatuqquuqtuq
When a tuurnqaq would make an angakkuq see a person’s wrongdoings.

Tivuarnaq
The term a tuurnqaq used to refer to its angakkuq.

Tirigusungniq
A system of injunctions that were imposed which people believed in and followed.

Tirigusuusiq
(Tirigusuusit pl.) An injunction imposed on a person which one has to follow.

Tiringnaqtuq
People who were following a tirigusungniq.

Tiriqsisijuq
When an angakkuq tries to look into the life of another person or other another angakkuq while they are unaware he is doing so.
Tirliaqsiniq

The act of an angakkuq trying to look into the life of another person or another angakkuq when they are unaware this is being done.

Tugliruti

A piece of wood with strips of caribou skin wrapped around which women wore in their hair. The hair was wrapped in one direction and the caribou skin in the other.

Tunillaqtuq

To make an offering or give a gift.

Tunnuq

Caribou fat.

Tupilaq

An evil spirit under human form, only visible to the angakkuit. It is like a pouch full of blood. For some people it is an evil tuurnqaq, for others it is the unsatisfied soul of a deceased person. It is also called nunarluk [Iglulik].

Tuq&urausiq

The way two people address each other through a kinship term; a term for their relationship through their names, or an invented term. Also tuqsurausiq, tuqturausiq.

Tuullik

A yellow-billed loon.

Tuuq

An ice chisel.

Tuurnqaq

(Tuurngat pl.) A shaman’s helping spirit.

 Ugjuk

A bearded seal.

Uiqsaq

Future husband.

Ujamik

Something worn around the neck.

Ukijijuq

Daydreaming and staring off into space.

Ukpigjuaq

A large snowy owl.

Ukpik

A snowy owl.

Ulu

A crescent-shaped woman’s knife.

Unganiq

Starting to long for a person.

Unikkaaqtuaq

A story passed from generation to generation.

Uqumangirniq

[South Baffin] A paralyzing nightmare where a person seems to be awake, but is unable to move. [North Baffin and Kivalliq] aqtuqsinniq.

Utitriujuq

Having an attempt at ilisiiqsiniq thwarted and sent back.

Uunilaatqtuq

A person whose face looks as if they are about to cry.
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