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**Shawna Snache**  
**Rama First Nation, ON**  
**Rama and Georgina Island**  
**28 yrs.**

### **Super Scones**

**January 15, 1966**

Case: 656-CWS-ANFN

Caseworker: M. Trudell

Location: Aanishnaabek First Nation, Northern Ontario District

#### **Case Summary:**

After visiting the home of Morris and Ava Manitoo of Aanishnaabek First Nation in Northern Ontario I am certain of the fact that the children of that marriage, one ten year old male child Sonny and one seven year old female child Margaret should not remain in the care of their parents or community but should be placed in foster care immediately until more permanent stable placements can be arranged for both of them. It is my recommendation that the children be placed separately so that they may have a seamless readjustment period.

I make my recommendation based on the fact that living in the three bedroom residence on the reserve with Mr. and Mrs. Manitoo is Mrs. Nanboozhoo or "Nan", the seventy-eight year old maternal grandmother to the children. She doesn't speak English and practises non-medical healing that is suspicious. I believe her to be an additional stress on this family that already has difficulty providing the basic human necessities to the subjects of this report and investigation.

Mr. Manitoo works only sporadically, mostly on construction sites. When work cannot be found he often leaves the family for weeks at a time. He may be on alcoholic drinking binges when he is absent from the home. The mother, Mrs. Manitoo, has had some previous success singing with a local country and western band but is now unemployed and is seen as a trouble maker in town.

Although both children attend the schoolhouse on reserve Child Welfare Services of this Province does not believe the minimum requirements have been met and that they are both behind their white counterparts academically.

The children are quiet and lack basic social skills when communicating with adults, and have never been vaccinated nor to a dentist. They also lack Christian faith as no one from this family attends service on Sundays according to the pastor though the church provides a hamper to the Manitoos every Christmas.

In my professional opinion I do not feel that Mr. and Mrs. Manitoo nor Mrs. Nanboozhoo is capable of caring for the children in a manner consistent with the rest of societal standards. Therefore it is my recommendation that both children be removed from the home as soon as possible without prior notification given to the family to avoid any attempts at hiding the children.

**CC: Mr. John Chretien - Department of Child Welfare Services  
Central File**

I hug my little sister closer to me. She's crying. I do not understand what's going on other than the police have showed up at our house, along with a zhaagnash kwe I've never met who keeps saying words like "unfit" and "it's for the best". What doesn't fit? I wonder. Our mother is packing bags with our belongings and telling me that we're going on a trip with this lady and that I should be good and look after my sister Margy. Dad's on the trap line. He's been gone a couple weeks. I wonder where were goin'. My Ma and Nookmis don't look too happy but they got quiet when the police man said "warrant" and "arrest". This doesn't feel right. Something big is going on but no one will tell me and my sister is scared, I can feel it, she's crying for mom. Nookmis whispers in my ear "Don't worry, everything will be alright. Remember what I told you." as we get lead to a car waiting outside. I trust my Nookmis. Everyone does. She makes good medicine and we hardly ever get sick. She tells us good stories and speaks to us in our language.

Margy and I get taken to town. She's stopped crying, she's just hiding in my shirt now. I've never been more confused. Not even when I was learning algebra at school. This is worse. I can feel it in my stomach that something is changing for us but I don't know what. The lady offers us donuts and warm juice. Yuck. I shake my head for both me and my sister. She takes us to an office and sits us on hard chairs to wait while she "processes" us. I hope it ain't gonna hurt cause if they try to hurt Margy someone's gonna get it.

I watch this lady, Mrs. Trudell she says her name is, make a phone call. "Where are we and what's going on?" I ask. She shushes me. We wait some more and then we are told to gather our things. Someone else will be taking us to our new home now. "We don't need a home" I tell them, "We have one". I am ignored and we are gathered up again and we go for another car ride. This time they take us to a farm with a long driveway. It's a big ugly house in a field. No animals that I can see though. We are shuffled up to the house where we wait for the door to be answered. It's cold. A big white man opens the door and he is told that until they can find another placement for me I am to stay with this family along with Margy. Now I'm ready to cry. There must be some mistake. We don't live here; we don't even want to stay here. I want to take my little sister by the hand and run, but I don't where we are. Instead I squeeze and she squeezes back.

Once inside the worker who brought us here sits at a yellow kitchen table with the man who answered the door, and his wife. She tells lies about us and our family and they sign some papers together. When the worker leaves the wife shows me my room and puts my stuff inside. I'm told to stay and she takes Margy and leads her away to another part of the house. I can tell because I stand listening for my sister, feeling her fear. There are three beds in this room, all lined up along one wall. There is a window with chipping paint. I sit down on the last bed, hugging the bag that my mother packed for me, and finally, I cry...

When I unwrap myself it's almost dark outside. I hear the sounds of children and I peek out the window. There are two boys about my age coming up the long driveway. I see a long yellow school bus winding its way away. A figure appears in the door way and I am told to get dressed up to go outside. "Where's my sister?" I manage to ask, though I'm frightened of the big white man. "Get outside and start the wood." Something in his stance and his voice tells me I'd better listen to him so I get dressed. I'm sent outside where I notice the boys I saw earlier already splitting and piling wood. I'm shy but eager to have something to do.

I notice they are dark like me. "Boozhoo" I say and I start to pile wood in my arms. "Boozhoo" The taller one answers. "Don't let them hear you speak it, you won't get supper if they hear you. I'm Ernie and that's Randall. We're cousins. Do what the Zhaagnash tells you to do. His wife will feed you and he won't hit you. If you don't listen you'll be sorry." I nod and wonder about my sister...

Inside she is getting scrubbed down. The woman wasted no time and cut off both of Margy's braids. My sister is weeping, quiet tears down little red cheeks. "Quit your crying girl! You've got potatoes to peel then floors to scrub." "B-b-b-brudder" Margy whimpers.

I'm pooped when we finish the wood pile. My arms ache and my throat is burning. I haven't eaten since breakfast and I think about the warm juice and doughnuts we were offered earlier. Everything started out a normal day. We were getting ready for school. Was that today? It already seemed like forever ago. Inside the house we are fed cold dinner and sent to our room to do homework. I have no homework but I don't tell this to them. The other two boys pull out their school books and start their assignments and studying. They tell me I will be going to school with them in the morning, to the white school with the nuns. I just want to go home.

At bedtime I hear the younger boy, Randall crying into his pillow. When he pees the bed his cousin changes his sheets and helps him find clean pyjamas. They're just as frightened as I am and I ask Ernie if he knows why we're here. He says they showed up at his house one moon ago and his Nookmis was told to pack his clothes. He tells me that the same thing happened to Randall. I find out he is younger than us and he usually cries himself to sleep. Most nights he pees the bed but Ernie secretly washes his sheets for him so that Randall isn't punished again. "Don't worry". I tell the other two boys. "My Nookmis told me that everything would be alright". I tell them that we are going to be returned to our homes and our families. Randall peeked at me and so I continue telling them my story. "It might even be tonight, but Super

Scones are gonna come and get us and they are going to take us all home. They are going to bring us bannock and corn soup and get us the heck outta here!" I whispered. "Who's Super Scones?" they both ask me. "You never heard of Super Scones!?! They is Nish super heroes" I say. Both boys get big round eyes and I tell the story that was told to me.

A long time ago the Creator made helpers for the People because the Creator couldn't be everywhere at once. This one time my uncle was huntin' when he got in trouble in the bush. He got turned around when the wind changed direction and he travelled further than he meant to. He'd been out there for a long time and was almost out of food and his matches were wet. He prayed and that night a man and a woman came to him and lit his fire and made some tea. They brought food and dry clothes for my uncle and they helped him get outta trouble because once he had food and tea in him again he could find his way back to the hunt camp. He said the man and woman were called Frybread Frank and Mabel Moon and they told him great stories about our people. When he got a moose he wished to repay them for their kindness and invite them to a feast so he went back to the place where they last met and tried to find them again. They were never seen or heard from. No one recalls them but my uncle remembers them. He said they're Super Scones, Indian Super Heroes.

"Really???" They both say. "Really." I nod. "An auntie told me about them another time too. They have buckskin leggings and they drive Rez cars. They have super powers and work together. They can build fires instantly and make a snare out of hair. They never let you get hungry or lonely or cold. They make things right. The first Super Scone is Fry Bread Frank. He's the fastest of them all and can catch a deer or moose if you're hungry. And there's Mabel Moon. That's the baked scone that Nookmis makes. Only Mabel Moon can heal things and make you not afraid because she tells you funny stories and tickles your feet. And then there's Benny Bannock. He's the strongest and he has the best vision and can tell you what your dreams mean. Together they're Super Scones. And they help our people all the time. That uncle of mine said that all you have to do is put your tobacco down and tell the Creator that you need the help of the Super Scones and he'll send them to come and help. One time my sister and me was playing at the water and she fell in. I didn't know what to do so I jumped in after her. I got her out of the lake and they helped me know what to do to get the water out of her so she could breathe again. Another time, we didn't have no food left and Dad was out on the trapline. So I put my tobacco down and I asked Fry Bread Frank to help my Dad. He brought home a moose two nights later and we had a feast. Mabel Moon has helped me to find the ripest berries and the best fishing spots". Randall was no longer crying and he and Ernie were sittin' up in bed listening to my tales of my imaginary Super Heroes. I had pictures of them that I drew so I took out the drawings and I shared my hopes that we wouldn't have to stay in this strange place for very long. I knew that if I believed hard enough me and my sister would be going home. And so would Randall and Ernie to their rez and we wouldn't have to live here in this strange place like they said we would.

That night I close my eyes and dream of Super Scones. I knew they would come. They tell me to keep telling the stories about them so that I am able to help out brothers and sisters like they do. They tell me that I will be one of them one day if I keep doing good work and giving other kids like me hope and courage. They tell me not to lose our language, no matter what the white folks

say or do to us. And that night in my dreams we speak our language without fear of punishment. We speak our language and we laugh at our stories and I know that I have to be brave and take care of my sister and these boys, no matter what happens, cause I know one day we're going home.