

Statutory Declaration

I, Gunner, Mabel, Mistissini, 1935 

(Name, first name, address, birth date)

I do solemnly declare that,

The interview takes place with Louise Coonishish Gunner who is acting as an interpreter for her mother Mabel Gunner who is not able to speak English.

Benoit Théoret: You told me that you felt like it is not going anywhere.

Louise Coonishish Gunner (daughter of Mabel Gunner and sister of François Gunner (person deceased in the fire of his house in Mistissini): She (Mabel Gunner) even went to the police station 2 times to check where it's at.

Q.1: What is the event? What are we talking about?

A.1: There was a fire in my brother's house. We don't know where the fire started. There were six people inside the house when the fire started and only he didn't make it. He had 2 sons with a girlfriend and a granddaughter and his wife was inside the house when it happened. It happened at 5:30 in the morning, on June 28 2017. They told her... Well the fire started from outside.

Q.2: Who told her that?

A.2: The fire department. She also saw the fire because she lives next door from where the house was burning. She saw everything. She heard. There were 3 explosions.

There was 2 propane tanks outside and 2 explosions. That is when she woke up, open the window and saw what was happening. The house didn't burn inside. Just half of the house burned towards the kitchen area. They found the body in the bedroom. The fire department told her that the fire started from outside.

Declarer signature _____

Declared before me, _____

at _____ on _____

She was also told that there were 3 youth hanging outside from where the fire started. She mentioned that the lady she was sitting with, just now, told her that it was her granddaughter that was there. That witnessed.

There were 2 girls that witnessed that there were 3 young men hanging around my brother's house, where the fire started.

Q.3: Does she know the name of those witnesses? Can she tell me?

A.3: She doesn't know the girl's names but she know their parents' names. I know the girls names. It is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Q.4: Do we have all the story?

A.4: After those explosions when they found out that my brother did not come out there were a lot youth drinking near my brother's house. There was a lot of youth that run to the fire and she saw... (*Questioning Mabel Gunner*) this is where she could overhear the youth saying: "you did it, you did it." Accusing each other. The fire department came after the explosions but they were I guess slow. The fire was already big when ... Lot of people that were inside came outside and she overheard the sons saying: "Dad is still inside".

Q.5: Can she give an evaluation of the time it took from when she noticed that the fire was caught to the time that the firefighters were on the spot to intervene.

A.5: She cannot really estimate the time. Because she had to run outside. She saw it from her room and she had to go around the house to get to her son's house. But she is saying 10 minutes for her to get there. And she does not remember if the fire department was there because there were too many youth in that area. There were some trying to go in to help because they were drunk. So, they had to intervene towards the youth that were trying to go inside.

They took the investigation back home. They talked to her and took her statement.

Q.6: Eeyou-Eenou Police?

A.6: Yes.

She was not invited to take her statement. She was the one that went to ask the police. She even ask the investigator to see if the body was burnt after. She did that on the same day. The investigators came in (the community and to the burnt house) the same day to start the investigation.

X

Enquêteur

X

Déclarant

Q.7: The investigator was not from the Eeyou-Eenou Police force (EPPF)?

A.7: One of them was, but he had to call in the SQ. They also called in investigator from outside of the community. I don't know where from. But one of the investigator is from the community.

Q.8: Do you know the name of the investigator?

A.8: Dave Bergeron is a native. He works with EPPF but he used to work with the SQ in Chibougamau.

The following morning she overheard on the radio Dave talking about the incident. She calls it an emergency but I think that she means an accident. So she overheard Dave saying that the fire was not an (emergency) accident. She called the police for David to come and see her. Discussion between Louise and Mabel. She went to the police station. She questioned why Dave was saying that it was not an emergency and she knew that the fire was started from outside and somebody must have done it. And Here David was saying not an emergency but a criminal fire.

Q.9: David was interviewed on the local radio?

A.9: Yes we have a radio station in Mistissini. Usually after an emergency like that they will tell the whole community about it. This is what happened. It's to calm the population down.

So when she overheard she went to the police station to question why you said this. Why did you call it a non-criminal action knowing that the fire started from the outside and therefore somebody must have done it?

Q.10: What was the answer she received?

A.10: This is when she mentioned to Dave that 2 girls approached her telling her that they witnessed 3 young men hanging outside my brother's place before the fire. She also told him that it would be good because they couldn't sleep because of what they witnessed. She mentioned it to Dave to say that he should also consider organising help for these girls (witnesses).

Q.11: Do you have any indication whether or not the case is closed as of now?

A.11: Well, that is what I told Eva (Eva Longchap is support worker in Mistissini and presented me with Mabel and Louise): I wonder if this is the place to call to check. Because we don't have anything. The last time we heard was that they were doing an investigation. They were questioning the suspects (3 boys). That is the last that we heard.

X

Enquêteur

X

Déclarant

Q.12: When was this last information obtained?

A.12: The last time she went was in august. Dave wasn't in the office, so she met with Stanley Neeposh. So she asked Stanley where this is now. Where is it at? Is there an investigation happening? She will not be able to be at peace until she hears what happened.

Q.13: And the answer was?

A.13: Stanley told her that he had no info to give her at this moment. So she asked. Where are the investigators? Could they just call to inform where it's at?

Q.14: Does she have the phone number of the investigator?

A.14: She only has the general police phone number. No specific phone number to reach the investigator.

Q.15: What about the wife (of the deceased)? Does she have any information?

A.15: The wife doesn't have the information also. The first born son [REDACTED] keeps going to the police station asking: Where is it at? And there is no info given to him.

Q.16: I understand that the communication is good in between Mabel and the wife of the deceased?

A.16: Her name is [REDACTED] Yes the communication is good with her and with [REDACTED] also. Yes they always contact each other for support.

Q.17: Do you expect [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to inform you if anything new comes in?

A.17: Yes she is expecting them to tell her about any update. She mentioned that she told [REDACTED] that she will go to the police station again. That's when [REDACTED] told her: "If you go, I will go with you this time." But they haven't went yet.

Q.18: Do you know any organisation or person that you could turn to when you are not satisfied with the police services?

A.18: I don't know anyone or anywhere to contact.

Q.19: Contact is one thing but also to complain about the way the investigation is conducted or the way the communication is established with the survivors?

X

Enquêteur

X

Déclarant

A.19: No, no one told us to whom to complain or where to complain. That is why we asked when we heard about this inquiry at the presentation (CERP). Is this where we are going to call if we want to make a complaint? Nothing was given to us, if we needed info or to complain.

Q.20: I understand that any of the police officers like Dave or Stanley Neeposh didn't refer to a complaint system. Or a place or a phone number to call if you were not satisfied with the service or with the way things are going?

A.20: She asked info and nothing was given to her. They asked her why she didn't bring anybody with her to the police station when she went. They asked her why you didn't bring your daughter, your son or your grand-child when you came. So, she didn't want anybody to get more hurt. That's why she went to the police station alone. She doesn't know why they asked her that question but she knows why she went there alone. In the family there is a lot of anger. She wants to prevent an anger escalade. We are waiting. My nephews and nieces they hear on Facebook accusations and speculations. There is a lot of anger within them. Whether or not justice is going to get involved.

Still today she has anger because she lives beside where it happened. She has that anger wandering what happened. She is getting impatient. Like it is going to be 7 months pretty soon. She wants to put things at peace. The house was demolished in December 2017.

Q.21: Did she have any contact with someone from the justice department?

A.21: Nothing. That's why we want to know where it's at. Like the local police is just waiting. Who is going to confirm what happened.

Q.22: Let's assume that Dave Bergeron is the principal investigator for this case. Do you know who is boss is?

A.22: Just recently they have a big system with the 9 communities. They changed the police system. So I would not know who the boss is but I could get that info.

Benoit Théoret: I would suggest that this could be a next step for Mabel and you maybe to ask the question (to Dave Bergeron) about who is his superior. Ask for his phone number and check with this person to start with.

Louise Coonishish Gunner: Ok. The investigator's superior. It's going to be from outside like Chicoutimi.

Benoit Théoret: And after that if you want to call me and tell me what the answer is.

X

Enquêteur

X

Déclarant

Benoit Théoret: You could probably ask the same question to him that you asked to Dave Bergeron. To ask why you can't get any info from Dave Bergeron or Stanley Neeposh, on the evolution of the investigation. Is the investigation still going on or is it terminated? If it's terminated. What is the result? If it's not completed what is the reason? Maybe why is it still open? Why isn't it finished yet?

Louise Coonishish Gunner: What are their procedures to close a case?

Benoit Théoret: You could ask them the question.

Louise Coonishish Gunner: I'm sure we would receive something in the mail you know.

Q.23: As of now, did CAVAC intervene with Mabel or with members of the family of the deceased?

A.23: No.

Louise Coonishish Gunner: She wants to ask a question.

Her question is: If the investigation is closed and they know that there are suspects so the suspects are never going to receive consequences?

Explanations on the justice process given by Benoit Théoret.

Louise Coonishish Gunner: Mabel asks if there wasn't going to have accusations towards the suspect. Are we going to be informed?

Benoit Théoret: The crown prosecutor will probably organise a meeting with the close family to inform them about the motives of the decision not to drop charges on the suspects. The explanation, I guess, would be made in such a way to prevent the identity of the sources to prevent any possibility of retaliation or any kind of conflict.

Louise Coonishish Gunner: That's what we are afraid of. Like something to happen. Especially the boys with their alcohol drinking. We are always afraid something might happen while we are waiting for information to come. We are always afraid that while intoxicated the youth could retaliate. The younger ones are mad and angry right now towards the youth that are suspects. The grieving is stalled.

X

Enquêteur

X

Déclarant

Q.24: What is the name of the victim?

A.24: François Gunner. He worked with the court system, as a translator. Date of birth: December 28 1956 not sure.

Q.25: Mabel Gunner: The accused (suspect) admitted to her mom, that he did it. The mom told her sister and the sister told Mabel. Where you would be at if somebody told you this? He admitted that he started the fire with the propane. The suspect admits and it isn't going anywhere. What would you do?

Benoit Théoret: I don't know. I could lose control.

Louise Coonishish Gunner: She got that information 2-3 weeks ago. She told [REDACTED] [REDACTED] said he was going to go to the police to give this information. The self-declared suspect is friend with [REDACTED] and told [REDACTED] that he is the one that lighted the fire.

Q.26: Do you think that [REDACTED] brought this information to the police?

A.26: [REDACTED] told Mabel that he is going to wait for her to come back before he tells the police. [REDACTED] wants to go with Mabel.

Louise Coonishish Gunner: I will inform the siblings or the children of my late brother that we came to meet with CERP.

Consent to bring this story toward the commissioner is granted by Louise Coonishish Gunner and Mabel Gunner if ever CERP could not reach Louise Coonishish Gunner or Mabel Gunner after the present meeting.

X

Enquêteur

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Déclarant