

Statutory Declaration

I, Watt, Robert, [REDACTED], Kuujjuaq, 1967-[REDACTED]

(Name, first name, address, birth date)

I do solemnly declare that,

I solemnly declare, meeting with Marie-Hélène Francoeur-Malouin, investigation agent from the Viens Commission, on July 12, 2018, in Kuujjuaq.

All my life, I've been very interested in getting into the health sector. Way before 2001, I actually started pursuing to get into medicine, so I studied in the University of Manitoba and got my science degree; I majored in biochemistry, and I minored in zoology. Every summer I would come here, knowing that was what I would pursue, so I would work for the hospital. I had just recently come out as a gay man, and when my fellow Inuit started to hear about the fact that I am a gay man pursuing medicine, a lot of my friends foretold me that if they ever got sick they would never come close to me because they wouldn't be touched by a gay man.

I started thinking seriously of my last year of medicine, whether I really wanted to get into medicine. I am one that does not like to provoke this kind of tension, I am one that does not like to provoke any kind of uneasiness, especially when it comes to people's health. They need to feel they trust whoever is taking care of them. I felt maybe it wouldn't be a good idea to get into medicine after all.

Over the years, I was still interested in providing health care. I was studying a management course at McGill's University, I had been working for the health sector as a communication officer prior to that, and I decided to go back to school; this was after 2001, I don't remember exactly what year. I went down to Montreal and I was studying, I finished my first year and was in my second year of studies when I got a call from the health director, the general director of the Health Board who said she was taking a year off, she said she might be pregnant and that she wants me to replace her. That challenge held my interest very much, so I still had maybe three more courses to take from my University when I moved here. I still have an apartment in Montreal, and I moved here.

Declarer signature _____

Declared before me, _____

at _____ on _____

For eight weeks into being the general director, there was an incident that was occurring. I was challenging the elected president in the Health Board because it was not right in regards to how they were handling going down south for example, when there was no need to be down south for a meeting, we could just have a conference call. I got removed by the Health Board, and so my life completely was chaotic. Several years later, three years ago when I came back to Kuujuaq here, my mom ended up having Alzheimer so I didn't want to leave her. Again, there was a great opportunity to run the health centre here. I was encouraged by the general director, who was leaving; she wanted me to apply very much.

Only to find out that a person from the health centre came to town and they did the interview process. They chose someone who didn't have a high school certificate over me. I don't want to be angry about this but it was a political choice, and the person didn't even last one month. What I'm feeling is that I've been blacklisted in the health sector, and it just frustrates me. Other sectors, I've never really had any problems, but this whole health sector within Nunavik, they are handpicking whom they want to hire. We have a very small human resource capacity within Nunavik, and they hand-pick who they want. Maybe it is also the fact that I am publicly gay, that I'm publicly out, there is some kind of tension maybe, from the Inuit perspective. One of the things that I find in the health sector is that it's very much been immersed with beliefs, religion, within the fundamentalists. I find that we came to be open-minded within the health sector, but when you have fundamentalists who are running the show, it is hard to truly be open-minded. They have issues with sexuality; their view is very one-sided within the health sector. I often wonder, is this why suicide is so prevalent, because they are not feeling that they are being treated with an open mind? That's basically what I have to say, I don't have any issues with other sectors of the public health that you are doing.

Q1: With the justice, police, social services, correctional services, youth protection?

A1: One of the things I could say as a recommendation for our society is that so many of my fellow Inuit are implicated somehow by the justice system and a lot of them cannot take on jobs that are related to working with people. There needs to be some kind of a pardon system put in place so that people could start feeling that they are having a fresh start. That's all I had to say.

X

Enquêteur

X

Déclarant

Q2: Lucy told me that you maybe know a lot of programs that are working well and that you can bring to the inquiry, maybe as a recommendation or something like that?

A2: I know that for example, the Ungaluk program that is in exchange, rather than having a detention centre they made some funds available for the next twenty-five years. In the beginning there was no real criteria put in place so a lot of the funds were used for hockey tournaments. I believe there is a criteria now in place, but I believe this program has a lot of potential if people knew more about it. There is a lot of information coming from each of those sectors, for example Youth Protection. There are a lot of workshops related to youth protection and the well-being of a child. These workshops are provided by the police force or by KRG are more or less approached by community members who can voluntarily participate. I've been an interpreter for these workshops and one of the things you notice right away, it's always the same people from the community that are going. When you look at it, these people are looked at as self-righteous fundamentalists, who have a lot of views and a lot of pull in the community, so many people don't want to attend these workshops in fear of being gossiped about. Gossip is very strong in the communities. When we are trying to give information on children's sexual abuse, on all those aspects, on children's safety, issues relating to justice, what are their rights, many people are missing the boat because these workshops are if you want to try it.

When you look at the municipalities, the majority of workers are working for municipalities and there are many employees working for the public sector in the community. Instead of being voluntarily, they should become like a course they have to take so they know their rights. "If you're going to be my employee, these are the courses, the workshops you have to take, and you won't lose money, we need you to make sure that as an employee you have all this information". A lot of times, I think that's what happening, a lot of those services are meant to help people, and they are doing the opposite because there is no clear fluent communication between the people.

Language for me has been a big issue. Quebec needs to understand that they need to be available to provide all three languages here. They have many government employees, if you call down south, they don't want to speak to you in English, and they only speak in French. That, right away, brings a barrier. That causes a chain reaction to a point where the service that is supposed to be provided will not reach the person.

Q3: Is it a problem here to have interpreters? I think a lot of elders only speak Inuktitut, so is that something difficult?

A3: We are lacking interpreters in all sector, especially in policing, in justice, and youth protection. We are touching on basic needs, the basic services that need to be provided. Communication is critical at this point, when you are being implicated by these various services. You have to make sure that persons on both sides are clear in what they are saying to each other.

X

Enquêteur

X

Déclarant

Q4: It's difficult to have an interpreter with you in the services here?

A4: Yes.

Q5: Do you have anything more you want to share today?

A5: Maybe it's because I look so white, I don't look like a typical Inuit person that I've never really endured discrimination or racism. Much like my sexuality, if I talk about my sexuality, they kind of.... I tend to observe more when it comes to the policing, the youth protection, the justice, but I've never been really engaged after 2000. I've been away a lot too, I've lived in Montreal and Ottawa for various parts of my life. When in Montreal, I would avoid having access to those services. Maybe it's a problem that I have but I don't trust a lot of the services. They bring you nothing but misery, once I go there.

La présente déclaration statutaire a été présentée par : téléphone

courriel courrier en personne à monsieur/madame

Robert Watt qui nous confirme

que son contenu correspond bel et bien à ce qu'il/qu'elle nous a
rapporté(e) en date du 12 juillet 2018.

Signature du déclarant : 

Date : 2018-10-18

X

Enquêteur

X

Déclarant