

Willy Topkok.mp3

Speaker 1 [00:00:00] When I was a little boy watching the Inupiaq dances in town of Teller where I grew up. I was fascinated to see the older movies because they would move and dance with Henry, would come out and say, Who we see would want to move your head? They were dancing and the older people, I was more fascinated because they did the old traditional real dances. And so I would always watch. And now I'm 68 or not 69. So I'm still loved when I am a dancer. With him in our dance group were the dancers. Yeah. So it's a lot of fun and I love it.

Speaker 2 [00:00:45] So can you tell me a little bit about how you started dancing when you were young?

Speaker 1 [00:00:49] Well, when I was younger in our grade school, I would watch and they would always have dance performances over Christmas with special occasions, and they would invite us to dance. And these were usually the Diamede people from Little Diamede after school. And I've always been positive in watching and what we did not have the drum. We use the bath tub. Oh, yeah. And you put and stretch this walrus stomach on the frame of the drum and there would be four, three or four drummers on the drums. See the first recording? I have one. With a tub, you can have three or four drummers, usually the top of the drum, which would look like. Oh, wow. Rubbing. Yeah. Which is not. But it reminds me. This type of performance. It's fascinating. It's fun. And what I love and the Woman's Hour does they do things differently because they're all the time. And we do. a sign language when we are dancing for the audience the hour long pages. And we call it, you know, any of the groups like. For the motions of Thursday, dancing its own sign language.

Speaker 1 [00:02:41] I came down with about an hour to go. I don't have a hotel. I'm in for so far with air conditioning. Oh, and I tried to turn a where I finally got her.

Speaker 2 [00:02:53] But that's okay.

Speaker 1 [00:02:55] Yes, but that's a you call it soil of the soil. The drum only is dads, fathers and daughters. Yes. No, no, not. Or we're going to go dancing with the junior dancers. My mother is from Wales. My father is from Teller. Different. You know, I'm a charming one. There are a lot of money. Too much to run. Wow. Thank you. It's a cute distraction for everybody. A real problem. Yeah. When you consider using it.

Speaker 2 [00:03:46] It's very fascinating.

Speaker 1 [00:03:48] Yes.

Speaker 2 [00:03:48] So you would all be together as kids?

Speaker 1 [00:03:51] The in my village where my mother grew up because we were singing and dancing for the spirit world while we're looking to see my. Just for spirit. Mm hmm. When the missionaries came. Because Christianity. Now we have we have to church is Catholic and Lutheran we go to both churches because there's both the same Christian religion. And I would quote my grandmother's catholic. And I'm lutheren both my father, even though my father, his mother was Catholic, I would go to church and my mother in law churches, they were trying to stop the singing and dancing because we're singing and dancing for animal spirits. Right. And that's not what the Holy Spirit of the

Christian world. So they tried stopping it and they tried to stop it from singing and dancing. And that's when the missionaries went to go see. They would have a guard. You have a big culture, a big cultural people gathered for doing the work and teaching other leaders what to do. Hello. How are you doing? Fine. You? How are you? Then we began our drums. and do our singing and dancing, we have a guard? Maybe north of five miles from the judge because he sees the missionaries coming? He will. signal those are coming. Yeah. So the natives will hide the drums under the table. Well, under the ground because we got this little problem we had hide it or something pointed over and then we get our sewing material because there was a lot of people who would be pretending to show them how to sew, or partly because it was it was not Christian, because we were singing for here, for the raven, the walrus spirit, the whale spirit, you know, for all spirits. Now. I'm sure those are wonderful news too, because I am Christian now.

Speaker 2 [00:06:00] So what do you think of the animal spirit? Are they still a part of the dance?

Speaker 1 [00:06:04] Yes. Even though. My best friend is from Little diamede and he was out on the ice. Diamede is ice normally 20 feet thick. Yeah, but very strong current under it pretty solid, but it's slushy, so you have to have to make sure you're walking on solid ice. So my friend did not have any fell him not too far. is a polar bear on the polar bear would sit and watch. And normally a polar bear will come and attack and eat. But the polar bear only sat and watched my friend from Diamede. He pulls himself out. Normally you would have died of hypothermia, but you get home to his house and will protect him for a little time. So he survived. When he go back home, he is catholic and thanked our lord Jesus Crhist, but. [singing and drumming]. He Also sang for the polar bear spirit because one of polar bear spirit saved his life, Oh, he's sings for the polar bear spirit even though we are Christian. We still sing for the spirit, we have stories of we're hunting for walrus on the ice, and sometimes our relatives from Siberia. We was posted to work, but we do not consider them the Soviet Union. These are relatively unfamiliar, so we're speaking the same language. So we tie albums together, enter the boat, and we get out of trouble. I'm working with the folks on the drums.

Speaker 2 [00:08:02] Under the table in case the missionaries.

Speaker 1 [00:08:04] Oh, yeah, we just. The missionaries. And we're singing for the walrus spirit cause we have walrus harvest we also we thank lord jesus christ for providing us with the walrus we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ we also because we also [singing and drumming] are walrus here for I believe our newspapers are very good. You get beautiful to the part of the world to going, Yo, hello? But he was telling me, even though we are christians, yeah, we're still doing our old traditional beliefs. And he's my best friend. He's the one who called me your knickers. Don't look. Not so exhausted. We're taking place in Boston. We're going to go to Russia. Siberia. If you want to come with us, come with us. Because my grandfather was born in Russia. So he come because grandfather was born. My mother's father was born in February. And this has become a business. And because we speak the same language, so we can go visit. But I did not go because they said that instead of summer, all of this, you have to play with them. And I said I might even met with Putin. So.

Unidentified [00:09:40] You know, we are going.

Speaker 1 [00:09:44] To find all of life. So we had some problems that.

Speaker 2 [00:09:51] You know, it's best.

Speaker 1 [00:09:56] This is quite close. Yeah. He's often tells it like, Oh, wow, but these are beautiful. Well, now that it's. Silvano almost certainly touches from, you know, all their spirit even though we are all of Jamie is cattle. All King Island was my village. Huh. Thank you for that. Yeah. You're welcome to try them on, if you like. You just. I hope. So it was fascinating.

Speaker 2 [00:10:48] Yeah, it's very fascinating.

Speaker 1 [00:10:50] To see because when our relatives draw so we're speaking the same language. And we didn't know portable since we're only 27 miles from Russia's big dynamo. That's the Soviet Union. They can pick up our radio frequency so we could speak English. Were speaking our language. We played on the radio, Okinawa or something. My mom will never go to Siberia. No. We have always hunters from our little village. Come and join us. We have our homes in our Southern relatives or Siberian relatives on the other side can also pick a radio frequency. And these are our relatives and then we to their communist government as well. So they get on the phone, they call Moscow, the Soviet Union, saying American Eskimos are having their festival with Siberian Russian Eskimos on American water. And we forgive our relatives in Siberia for trying to tell us how, even though we are because we're relatives. So we forgive them. We have to forgive because some of our stories, you know, from Russia to Siberia and what we used to captured by them and then say who?

Unidentified [00:12:09] So my relative became familiar.

Speaker 1 [00:12:16] With the frequency of medicine known in daily medicine made from 1000 you're sick away the symptoms. And during his ceremony, with the drum was still the chief was still sick. This is a chief. So he'd go see another medicine woman. He would have medicine. Woman. Medicine? It was a minister. Woman. It's a witch. It was a medicine man. Witch doctor is the government's powers. Yeah. So he go see a medicine woman. She gives her choice in a way, and do the ceremony. So he go well, but never get well. So he goes on Steamboat to Rose, Alaska, our village. He goes on Medicine Man. Oh, he's still sick. He goes and gets a woman. Tell you. But you know nothing. So that the man, the telephone doctor in Alaska. That's a large city or a peninsula. You have to come to know. See, doctor. Doctor knows this white man. He knows everything. So, Chief Wolstenholme. I want to go home. You stuck in know me. One month, two months, three months. God, brother. I want to go back your time. Like music, which had gone bad weather. So what does she do? He goes in three. The movie then went off to war. I didn't mean to offend you. I mean, were you Russian? No, I don't mean to offend you. Because the German is in a uniform long trench coat, black leather Germanotta is a white man speaking in broken English with accent in the movie. And when Warrior said, We want to involve a bit better, we see walruses legally. So we get water, but we forget to take the compass. And when we're captured or not see someone, we look around. What do you do to laugh? I've got nothing because he just looks nothing like a lot of people. He is a white man, also Russian speaking, broken English with an accent. So reminds the truth of what we know as German Australia. And the Russian is a white man speaking the same. You know, speaking perfect English doesn't have much to do with an accent. So he calls him to remind him of the movie. I'm the Nazi someone. Someone. You do like all of that for the ship. If you go on the ship, your stuff, it's going to take you 4 to 6 months. Even if we told, you know, within the Washington DC they came up. Did you have the power to do about. It takes 4 to 6 months. Yeah, but then you come back. But that's how long it took you.

Because the Communist Soviet Union. Yeah, but one time, Chief, it's been. You should have been published. You run off? Yes. I want to go home. You can go. Good weather. Diomedes is only 125 people. That's a tiny village. Only school, one school, only one church cottage, no movie. So we go to school. Story time. You don't have to worry about German lost ruble. So he's because you know this movie inside now. Yeah. And the natives are fascinated with this native tutelage of our German after work. Then we were captured by the Russians. He refers to him as German Nazi. Because. Right. So he's a white man? Yeah. I don't mean your friend. I'm a storyteller if I'm a storyteller. I went to England in 2002 because I'm a Native American storyteller. I do storytelling also want to move to Central America. So our spoken word to surround this person as a storyteller because all over. So I went to England, then they gave me another ticket to go back. This is during college. I said, I'm sorry, I want to go back to England. I might just duck for.

Unidentified [00:16:54] You because it's a fascinating world. Yeah. She said that even.

Speaker 1 [00:17:06] The video for you there jumped up in some of us. Oh, well, they also showed a lot. Yeah, well, you know, your blond haired, blue eyed freckle. That's white, man. But my grandma is half like my father, even though she of what my grandma used to tell me. Somebody tell me what you understand about some of the women. And even those little white men are not the same as white men because they're also seen just like us. They are also seen through the lens of spirit, just like we often see. But. You will see. We also sing to the raindeer spirit. Yeah. So it's fascinating. What from sing to the raindeer, spirit.

Speaker 2 [00:18:09] Do you think. What would you say is the educational value of the songs and the dancing? What did they teach you?

Speaker 1 [00:18:21] It's fascinating. It teaches you our Our ways of life, right? Because I'll tell you, it doesn't tells you a story and you have to continue down there. Choose your own ways. of our singing and dancing, . Yes. So I'm hoping if we can continue to teach this in the future. Yes.

Speaker 2 [00:18:39] We'll keep the tradition.

Speaker 1 [00:18:40] Will keep going.

Speaker 2 [00:18:46] Do you think that the two the newer songs do the same thing? Or is it just newer traditions?

Speaker 1 [00:18:51] It's a new world, just like this young man, Roy and he majors also. Yeah. Unmistakable pressure to knock him out in other ways. He's got a song about chopping wood. Yeah, I say, go ahead. Go get with your song and dance. Because that's his song, your mother, your soul. Tom, you go to your room with dozens of songs. So it's fascinating. that's his own song. Yeah, a lot of time in our language. You can pick up some of our language so he knows what I'm saying.

Speaker 2 [00:19:24] Do you think that the songs and dances will help keep the language alive, too, or not?

Speaker 1 [00:19:30] Not so much, you know, because, you know, from my village, my, you know, we don't understand even our relatives in Russia, you know, speaking, Russian speaking. But they're also speaking another Siberian, Yupik, which is different. We do not

understand the Siberian weeping. We understand in the suburbs. I used to live in rural Siberia, but now there's more speaking Russian and they're learning the Siberian language is that there were the same people who sing and dance the same song, but. So. So different dialects and so complex and so much. So it's fascinating.

Speaker 2 [00:20:18] Who's very fast.

Speaker 1 [00:20:19] Hit the jump from underneath the plane or the Siberian in Russia and just move from underneath. What is your first name? David. David. Nice to meet you, James.

Speaker 2 [00:20:40] To meet you too. Here, I will stop.