

# TEXT

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqvQoYVJAXQ&feature=youtu.be&t=1h13m27s>

01:13:35

Ah... drin tl'an gwiinzii. Shoozri' Brandon K'i' K'avihchik vaazhii. Van Tat Gwich'in t'ihch'uu i. Old Crow gwats'at t'ihch'uu.<sup>8</sup>

Um, good afternoon, my name is Brandon Kykavikchik. I'm Vuntut Gwitchin and I'm from Old Crow. Um, what I did for you today is a little different than your regular speeches, ahh, I've done a ton of them at this point, I'm getting kinda bored of them,so, um

1:14:04

I did something a little different this time.

So what I want you guys to do, is to imagine that we're up in Old Crow, at the top of the Yukon. And we have omniscient powers- we can float above the landscape, we can rewind time, we can fast-forward time, we can re-position ourselves, we can do whatever we want basically.

I want you guys to imagine that I'm there with you. I'm not standing up here talking to you, I'm with you. Because we're all in this together we're on the same battlefield together. And I'm tired of standing on these stages talking to people. I want you to imagine I'm in it with you and I'm experiencing it with you for the first time, just like you guys.

So I call this ,ndoo tr'eedyaa"; that means we move forward. A journey with our caribou brethren.

(breathes) 1:15:04

This journey begins in present day northern Yukon 140 Kilometers. above the arctic circle, where the tundra is a connected fabric covering the landscape and the permafrost ist the foundational flooring that holds it all up. At this time of year, in this part of the world, the sky turns to a pinkish orange and silvery hue as the sun sets late in the evening.I

Imagine that we as a group are hovering over this arctic landscape with seemingly omniscient powers at our whim. We float high above the modern-day town of Old Crow, Yukon. We turn ourselves so that we face Crow Mountain, and we begin to hover toward it. As we fly over crow mountain on the way to Crow Flats, we realise that it's not evening, but mid-day. Below us is a large expanse of lakes and feeder creeks, all connected to Crow River, which connects to the Porcupine River, which connects to the Yukon River, and so on, and so forth.

The wetland we are flying over is called "Vuntut" and "Gwitchin", and is where my people get their name from. We come upon a large lake, and begin to descend on it. As we get closer to the lake, we begin to see tiny spots all over the lake. One side of the lake in particular is absolutely trampled with these spots. Descending closer we see that these are tracks from a caribou herd that has recently trampled an entire shoreline of this fairly large lake.

As our gazes sharpen, and the edges of our pupils expand and contract, we begin to make out other elements of this ecosystem. There are other types of animal tracks, many of them. The tracks are all criss-crossing each other like Los Angeles road infrastructure.

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8 "Drin tl'an gwiinzii" (pronounced: *drin klan gweenzee*), "shoozri' Brandon K'i' K'avihchik vaazhii" (pronounced: *show zree* with a glottal stop at end), "Van Tat Gwich'in t'ihch'uu" (pronounced: *vuntut gwichin dih ch'ew*), "Old Crow gwats'at t'ihch'uu" (pronounced: *gwu ts'ut dih ch'ew*). All "apostrophes" are actually glottal stops. Meaning: my name is Brandon Kykavichik. I am Vuntut Gwitchin. I am from Old Crow.

All of a sudden we see movement. It's not an animal but a human. He has shut down his snow machine and is walking past the trampled area toward a well worn track. He walks along the caribou trail, examining every detail, like the story of this animal's final hours had been written out in the snow. He takes his rifle out of its beautiful, beaded casing, and sticks the stock of the gun into the hole that was made by a single caribou's right hoof.

He moves the stock of the gun around in it and taps it against the northern side of the hoof print. As he taps it we can hear that it is hard and crusted. He points north to his fellow Gwitchin hunters that are caught up in the chase, just like he is.

He points north and says to take out a map. He puts his finger to the map. "They're going this way! To the farthest end of Schaeffer Lake." He says, as he jumps back onto his Skidoo and takes off.

He follows the tracks northward, to the northwestern edge of Schaeffer Lake in Crow Flats. There, the caribou wait for their brethren. One of the hunters has a faint memory of the moment, as if- as if it had happened before. The memory was more like residue though, little bits of consciousness left over from a dream, or premonition.

The leader of the hunting party stops his skidoo a ways away from the herd. He knows it's best to walk into the timbre with snowshoes. They adorn themselves with their hand-crafted hunting snowshoes, and tie their beaver-fur mitts behind their backs on the strings 'specially made for the purpos, and they walk into the timbre, rifles in hand.

When the leader gets out of the timbre and into the meadow the caribou are feeding in, one of the caribou gets his scent, and gazes curiously toward (h)'im. They look at each other for a few, brief seconds, before the caribou turns its side toward the hunter, and gives itself to its brother.

1:18:54

. . . . .

1:53:51

I will end this with a saying I got from Myra Cho, that means big Myra in English  
She was my Grandfather's stepmother.  
She said this in 1979, when she was ninety-five years old.

“Shicheii, yeenoodai',  
ndoo tr'eedyaa gogoontrii,  
ndoo tr'eedyaa doonch'uu”

Grandchild, long ago we moved forward through much difficulties.  
We carried on, that's how it was.  
We carried on, that's how it was.

Brandon Kyikavichik - Speech from: *Porcupine Caribou: Celebrate and learn about the herd – Part 3*

*notes – Gwitchin Pronunciation:*

All "apostrophes" are actually glottal stops. Please refer to You-Tube link, or email the composer/ publishers/ old crow ministry of heritage with questions.

# STAGING

The staging and direction of the speakers is to be developed in the rehearsal process. The actors are to learn the text from Brandon Kyikavichik (see p. iv-v).

Excerpts of this text should be spoken intermittently and spontaneously, very short or longer segments, regardless of which station the actors are at, a recurrent theme or thread in the piece.

The actors are supplied with an audio-visual installation. The staging should reenact a process of discovery, reflection and absorption of information about the Vuntut Gwitchin people and the community and geography of Old Crow.

In the course of the piece the actors should move between the different installation stations, in a similar way to how the music from the ensemble changes from different but related or conflicting material.

## 4 Stations:

- 1) Laptop
- 2) Record player and books
- 3) Dance floor and animation
- 4) maquette of a forest (how to build a caribou fence)
- 5) Cassette-Tape-deck (Gwitchin language course)

### 1) *LAPTOP*

At this station the actors can simulate internet searches, choosing between a google-map search, wikipedia and online resources. The searches have been prepared (movies). Their actions will trigger the playing of these films.

While they are researching they might talk to themselves or comment to each other subtly and non-theatrically.

### 2) *RECORD PLAYER AND BOOKS*

At this station the actors can sit down, pick up a book and read, or play on the record.

The record should be stopped and started, carefully raising and releasing the needle, so that only excerpts (up to 7" at a time) of the music can be heard intermittently. The actors may also choose to adjust the speed of the record.

The actors may choose to read out loud.

### 3) *CASSETTE Tape deck/Gwitchin Language course*

At this station the actors can play the tape, on which Vuntut Gwich'in words are articulated, and their translations.

The words can be found at the FirstVoices Vuntut Gwichi'in Welcome Page:

<http://www.firstvoices.com/scripts/WebObjects.exe/FirstVoices.woa/6/wa/enterLanguageArchive?archive=28c8579bc775b814&wosid=0jj2unuCjxbDC1iVD6lwqg>

The actors are to play the tape, stop it, repeat the word. Each word will be repeated three times before another word is introduced.

### 4) *DANCE FLOOR and animation*

At this station the actors can step onto the dance floor and follow the animation of dancing steps, or the intermittent videos of Gwitchin step dancing.

While they are dancing, they can comment, correct or instruct each other.

To prepare for this, they can watch and learn the dance steps on the following videos:

“Hankerchief Dance”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMpqD5NxSac>

“Old Crow Dance”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nko2kRKnZAE>

First Nations Gwich'in+ Yukon Honor Dance:

clip 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03NBhjnOpU>

clip 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wstchQ523Dc>

clip 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEylfeZqrQM>

“Midway 25 017 Adult Jig”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEbctcl2AGY>

“8 couple Dance”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wiox4fYhxXI>

“Gwitchin Gathering 2008”– jump to about 5:20:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETbpffdX8fo>

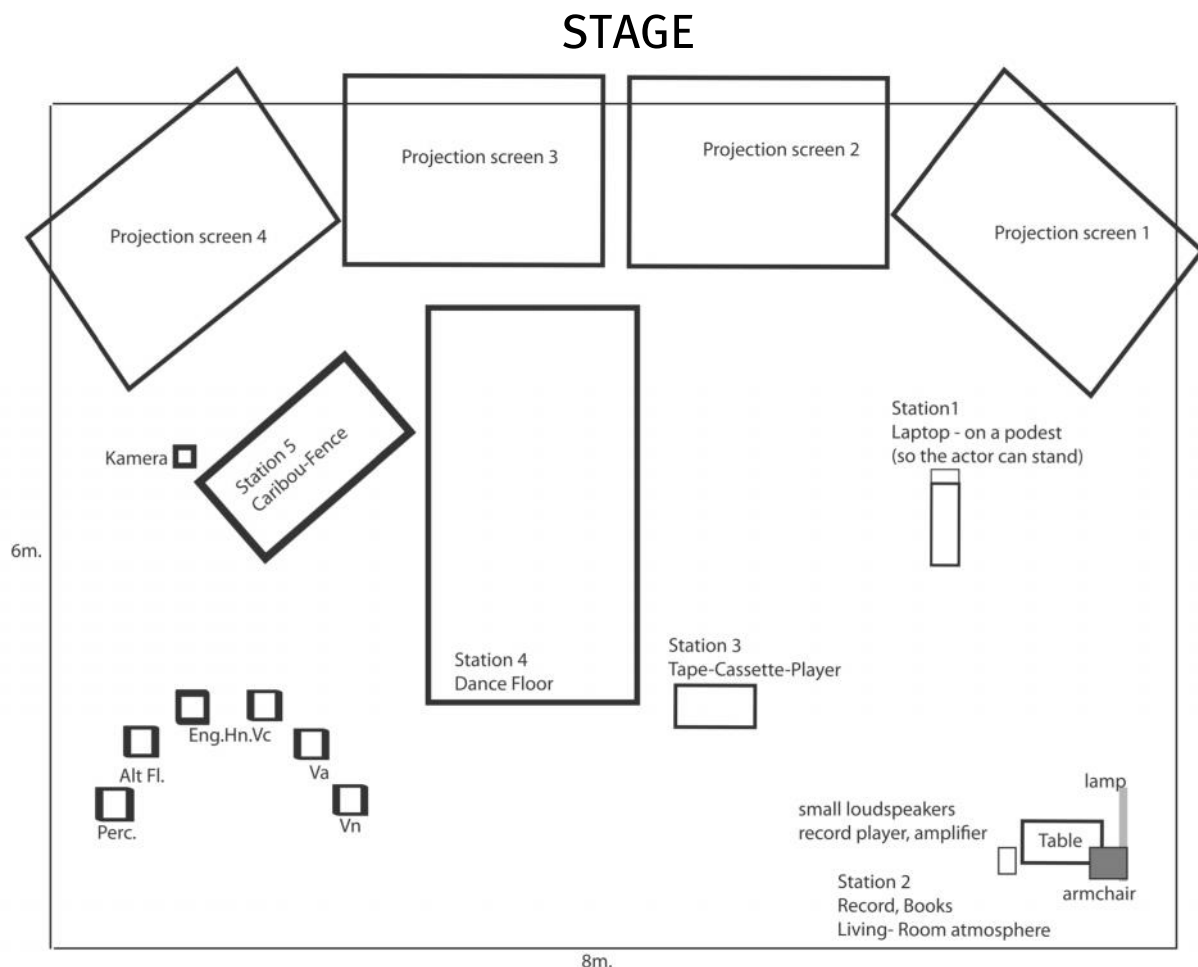
#### 4) MAQUETTE of a forest/Caribou fence

At this station the actors can follow the instructions of Brandon Kyikavichik in his film “How to make a caribou fence”.

<http://www.ourworldlanguage.com/2008/12/caribou-fence.html>

A similar maquette to that in the film – a small model of a forest – is on the stage. One of the actors can erect a caribou fence (small sticks to push into the ground supporting other sticks) and the snare traps, and finally lead the caribou into the trap, while the other actor handles the mini spotlights, following the actions and hands of the other actor.

To prepare for this the actors can watch the above link. The figure of the Gwich'in hunter will not be part of the installation, only the fence and caribou.



The stage design, including the placement of the screens, musicians and stations is a suggestion, and may be modified to suit the needs and visions of the designers and directors, or the limits of the venue and the conditions of the concert.