

SYNOPSIS :

THE LAW OF SILENCE IS WEAKENING

Photography by

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Whereas we are witnessing to the slow disintegration of the American Indian communities, marked by a very high infant mortality, a chronic unemployment and self-destructing violence, some portions of hope appears on the horizon.

Photojournalist Marc-Andre Pauzé will report in depth from various Canadians indigenous communities, searching for signs of hope. This feature is the first of the series.

628 Km north-west of Montreal, Canada, lays an Algonquin village of 250 inhabitants: Winneway. The Anishnabe, as they call themselves, is a native community battling against serious social problems. Among them, sexual violence stays behind doors. In spite of many self-destructive habits, very few victims talks even if there is at least 26% of sexual abuses in the native communities, according to "Statistics Canada", while the "Aboriginal Psychosocial Interventions Research Group" says a rate of 50 to 80% is more realistic.

Cultural and value loss, poverty, unemployment, breaking in tradition, lost of traditional language, use of drugs and alcohol, are among the social issues that are the root of violence in the native community.

Nevertheless, a few women, as Eva Moushoom and Rosalyn Mathias, are starting to talk in their healing process in order to break the cycle and protect younger generation. But are we ready to listen?

Breaking the law of silence is not an easy task. I met Eva for the last time in May 2009 on the side of a road in the village. Her black hair cascading under an American "Marines" cap. She told me that she was in legal procedure to support her 17 year old daughter ... who had been aggressed...too. The words just fell out of her mouth as she tried to control her anger.

"Somebody from the community intervened in court trying to stop the procedure, she told me. He does not have the right to do that and he will not stop me. This is why I am proud to have shared my story with you. It is necessary to speak."

After a few minutes, she moved on. I looked at her walking away, her back slightly hunched. I said to myself: "I have to return here and listen to her again".

Eva was found dead on the same street side, on August 10th, 2009....

The Quebec Provincial police has not done any investigation and the Coroner's Office assured me that there has not been any autopsy....

Officially, she was just another native woman who died from "drugs and alcohol" abuse.

Minawag kika wamin Eva (see you later Eva)