

Anishinaabe Bizindamoo Makak

Episode 20: April 20, 2023

Erik Redix (ER): Boozhoo Anishinaabedoog. Miskwaa Anang indizhinikaaz. Migizi indoodem. Odaawaa zaaga'iganing indoonjibaa. Gichi-Onigamiing indaa. Ingikino'amaage Ojibwemowin Gichi-Onigamiing.

Boozhoo! My name is Erik Martin Redix. My Ojibwe name is Miskwaa Anang. I'm a member of the Eagle clan from Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe Reservation in Wisconsin. I currently live on the Grand Portage Reservation and work as the Ojibwe Language Coordinator for the Grand Portage Band. Welcome to *Anishinaabe Bizindamoo Makak*, a program featuring Ojibwe first speakers telling stories in English and Ojibwemowin, the Ojibwe language.

For this episode, we are joined once again by Maajiigwaneyaash, Dr. Gordon Jourdain. He speaks with me about the element of humor in Anishinaabe storytelling, explains the origin of the Ojibwe name for Lac La Croix, which is *Negwaakwaan-zaaga'iganing*, and we reflect back on our first radio interview in 2013.

Gordon Jourdain (GJ): *Mewinza!* (Laughter).

ER (1:17): The first episode of *Ojibwe Stories*, *Gaganoonididaa*, aired on KUMD, and you were the first guest, and we talked about rabbit snaring. And so, I want to thank you for that.

GJ: Yeah, I like, I like being able to put things on for the record, you know, in different kinds of media. Initially, as a first language speaker, I didn't want to get recorded, but as the years went on, I didn't know why I had that notion in my head, but when I came out of Lac La Croix and started to see like the condition of Ojibwemowin language and also the effort that younger people were putting into acquiring language, I found it comforting to be able to do that. The conundrum that I experienced in my life, in my own mental processes, all those people that allowed to be themselves to be recorded, already made that decision, that it was okay to do that, and I didn't realize that until later on in my in my life, that, hey, somebody already set the precedent. I don't have to worry about doing it now.

So I feel comfortable with that. Of course, that's not to say that there are some things that shouldn't be like ceremonial things. There's a place for those kind of things to happen that those are normally within the sacred lodges. So I'm really happy to be able to participate what we're doing. And over the years, I've seen my evolution as a contributing person to the shared knowledge of our people.

ER (3:06): No, that's wonderful. *Miigwech miinawaa!* Yeah, it's been great. We recently had our fifth annual Oshki Ogimaag Storytelling last month, and it was a great event, you came and did some great stories, interesting stories, but also some funny stories. And I wondered if you could talk just a little bit, maybe reflect a little bit about humor in our *aadizookewin*, in particular, I think the crowd really liked the diyaash references.

GJ: Oh my gosh! (Laughter). I try to always be careful and make it a wholesome family show, but fully knowing that there might be younger people in there. But you know, in our

culture, we talk about those things, particularly in Ojibwe speaking families, it wasn't something that we'd never found strange to talk about body parts and the things and the noises that come out of them. (Laughter). So it's part of it's part of who we are. And as Anishinaabe people, we talk about spirits too. We talk about them readily with children. It's not something that's changed to us. But I always think about our great uncle, Wenaboozhoo, and all the things that he must have went through, because he was one of the first human beings that was created and placed on the Earth. And, of course, he had all these different questions about how life is like for to be in that form. And he asked all the questions for us long before we had our own thought patterns. And he always had a dichotomous situation all the time, so he had good things, and then on the other side, he'd have really bad things happen to him. What that teaches us is to be accepting of our fortune and our misfortunes at the same time that we can't be a perfect person. And Wenaboozhoo showed us that too, that, you know, life sometimes is going to be extremely serious, and at times it's going to be really, really funny. And those are the kinds of things that you know that he went through. Sometimes he would, he would have a lot of things to eat, and then he'd be starving the next, the next few days. So that kind of stuff. It's he was the one that showed us what it's like to be a human being.

Another idea that I understand now that I'm acquiring more knowledge from my elders is we were created by our Creator because our Creator wished to know how it's like to be a human being, and of course, the Creator will never be that one. So the Creator created Anishinaabe so that we could come here and experience what it's like to be a human being, and through those things that we experience ourselves because we are created in the image of the Creator, the Creator can feel those things that we do to our bodies, the words that we use when we talk to people, our responses to different stimuli in our daily lives, our laughter, our sadness, our anger, all those things the Creator has the opportunity to feel what it's like to be human through us. And of course, the teaching of about respecting yourself and the people around you that are affected by all those things that we do should be a way of teaching us how to be humble like the Creator. But that's a struggle in itself, too, you know, daily we walk, not the straight, the narrow, but we talked about before, we go back and forth like this, like a pendulum, and go through all these different things in our daily lives. And one of the things that is critical to our misfortune is to have humor and kind of like laugh and kind of make ourselves feel good about things, no matter how difficult it is.

ER (7:56): I was wondering if you could maybe give a little synopsis.

GJ: Yeah, *onjida!* That's a word my grandmother would always use when I asked her questions. She would say, "*Onjida!*," that's just the way things are. (Laughter).

Ayaa goda kina gegoo ogii-ozhitoon a manidoo, memindage gii-wiingezi kakina gii-ozhitood eyaagin iwidi nakake giizhigong, ogii-ozhitoon ge owe aki, kina gegoo omaa giizhaa ogii-atoon nakake omaa akiikaang ge-onji-minobimaadizid a'aw waa-anishinaabewid.

Ogii-kikendandaan dash ge manidoo he'ii gaawiin a'aw oga-kikendanziin ezhi-ayaad awiya anishinaabeyiwid, Mii dash gaa-ozhi-ozhi'aad iniw anishinaaben. Mii sa imaa nakake gewin ge-onji-kikendan a'a manidoo aaniin ezhi-, enaadizid awiya anishinabeyiwid.

Miinawaa dash aa'aa goda wenabozhoo gaye wiin gigii-kino-, gii-kino'amaage a'aw anishinaabe. Ingoding igo giishpiin noondawadwaa awiya gii-aatisookewaad ayaawag goda wiinge weyizhitaagoziwag gaagiigidodm wiindamaagewaad aaniin gaapi-ezhiwebizigwen a'a wenabozhoo.

Noojimowin dash imaa onjise awiya baapidm paabi'idizod. Memindage paabi-idizod awiya anishinaabe. Noojimowin imaa onjise magad gaawiin, gaawiin ganage awiya apane ji-ayaad goda ji-gwayakwendang, ji-gwayakosenig iw obimaadiziwin awiya.

Geget idash igo aa manidoo kina gegoo gaagii-ozhitood ogii-misawendaan gewiin aaniin nakakeyaa ezhi-ayaagwen awiya anishinaabeyiwid, Mii dash gaa-izhi-ozhi'aad ini anishinaaben. Mii dash imaa nakake wenji-kikendang awe manidoo aaniin enaadizid awiya anishinaabewaadizid.

Ezhichigeying entaso-giizhik, ekidoying aabajitooying ini gaagiigidowinan, ezhi-naanaagadawendamang gaye, miinawaa wegonen dinawa menikweyin, wegonen miijiyin gegoo, aaniin ezhi-gaganoonad a'a giij-anishinaabe, aaniin ezhi-naanaagadaweniman kakina gegoo omaa gaagii-atood a'aw manidoo, mii imaa wenji-kikendang weweni aaniin nakake enaadizid aw anishinaabe.

Nashke dash giishpiin, wiikaa go geniin baamaa wiikaa gii-ani-kikendaan gii-noondawag awe akiwenzii gaagii-, gaagii-naadamawid ji-nisidotamaan he'ii midebimaadiziwin, mii bijiinag gii-kikendamaan geniin ga-inaam-, ge-inaaba-, ge-inaabandamaambaan i'iw nimbimadiziwin.

Mii dash iwe nakake mashkawendamaan aaniin nakake ge-izhitoowaan i'iw niwiiyaw miinawaa ninaanaagadawendamowin, ninde', aaniin nakake ge-gaganoonagwaa ongo niij-anishinaabeg. Mii nakake wenji-kikendang awe mandoo enaadizid awiya anishinaabeyiwid.

Mii dash wenji-manaajitood i'iw, wenji-manaaji'idid igo anishinaabe. Mii ge gaa ikido awe gaagii-a, gaagii-ookomisiyaan mindim-, midimoowenh, kakina aapiji ogii-ozhiitaa'aa' i'iw odanishinaabema' a'aw manidoo. Kakina gegoo gigii-maamiinigonaan nakake gebi-inaawadaasoying wiipi-dagoshinang omaa nakake.

Wii-paabaamikaweying gegiinawind omaa nakake mide-, mide-akiikaang weweni ogii-ozhi'aan. Ogii-ozhiitaa'aan iniw odanishinaabeman a'a manidoo. Mii dash gaa-ikidod awe nookomisiban mii wenji-manaaji'idid a'aw anishinaabe. Wenen, wenen inikakwekamig ge-, ge-inaadizipan iwe nakake ji-manidowaadizid, ge-aanawenimaad iniw, ge-aanawenimaapan iniw wiiji-bimaadizan.

Booch igo o'o apane ji-kichi-apiitenimad a giiji-bimaadiz.

Mii dash i'iw kikino'amaagewinan iniwe, mii dash imaa wenj-kikendang aaniin nakake awiya. Bijiinag igo indani-gagi-kendaam gaawiin ingii-kikendanzin gii-oshki-

bimaadiziyaan, gii-oshkinawewiyaan, miinawaa gii-abinoojiinwiyaan, gaawiin ingii-kikendanziinan iniwen noomaya dash biijinag indani-naanaagadawendam aaniin nakake gaagii-onji-wiindamaagoyaan iniwen kino'amaagewinan.

ER (12:26): Miigwech! So I had a question about sugar bush. Now I don't know if I got wrong information here, but according to Wikipedia (laughter), the Ojibwe name for Lac LaCroix is Negwaakaan-zaaga'iganing?

GJ: Mii eta go gaa-izhi-noondawag ako aa nookomisiban Bepakwewidamook gii-izhinikaazo mindimoowenh mii iniw haa'aan gaa-omishoomisid haa'aan Wegimaawab gii-izhinikaazo a akiwenzii. Gii-ishwaaso-midewi miinawaa wendo-banizi-ogimaa mii-iwe gaa-inaabadizid a akiyenzii.

Minziwe gii-pabaa-ayaa naadamawaad iniw anish-, ojibwe-anishinaaben ji-, ji-ganawendaminid i'iw odakiim. Mii dash imaa nakake ogii-tazhindaan awe mindimoowenh nagaayaakwaan gii-ikido. Aapiji wiidog gii-kichi-michaa-kozidogwenag ingiw mitigoog imaa eyaawaad gii-ani-kakijiwan iwe inakakeyi'ii namekaaniwiziibi eyaag imaa nakake iwe, Gakijiwanong izhinikaade imaa eyaawaad ingiw anishinaabeg.

Gewiinawaa omaa gaapi-izhinizha'ondwaa ongowe nookomisiban. Mii gaana imaa he'iing gii-onji-, gii-onji-ikonizha'igaazowag imaa gaagii-ozhichigaadeg he'ii goda "Quetico Provincial Park" izhinikaade.

Megwaa go gii-biboong ayendaawaapan imaa, amanj apii gaa-ozhichigaadewgen i'iwe, i'iwe "park" mii imaa gaa-onji-ikonizha'ondwaa ingi-anishinaabeg. Gii-asweyaawag idash, gii-asweyaawanidiwag.

Gaawiin ge ganabaj gii-segizisiiwag. Mii imaa gaa-izhaawed he'iing Kijiwanong, giipi-izhaawag imaa Jiima'aaganing, miinawaa iwidi amanj ezhinikaadegwen i'i Mille Lacs, miinawaa dash imaa he'iing aa Kichi-onigamiinsing, miinawaa imaa he'iing Onamano-zaaga'iganing, miinawaa imaa he'iing aa Asabiikone-zaaga'iganing. Mii imaa nakake gaa-inaawanidiwaad ingi anishinaabeg gaapi-onji-maajaawaad iwidi. Mii dash gaa-izhinikaadang a nookomisiban imaa, zaaga'igan ayaanig nagaayaakwan.

So I know it's not spelled right on the maps. Whoever wrote it out, didn't spell it the way that I heard my grandmother pronounce that what it must have looked like. There must have been, oh my gosh, really beautiful there, in that area. *Nagaayaa* is there's like it looked like it stops and there's a barrier. It can't go any further than what it is and what that describes is the trees were so tall and beautiful, the pine trees, *Nagaayaakwaa*, you couldn't see beyond them. That's how big and beautiful they were done. *Nagaayaakwaani-zaaga'igan*, my grandmother. All that area right there, Quetico Provincial Park, long before they had any kind of logging there, it must have been just a beautiful place, because I spent a lot of time as a fishing guide going through all those lakes, and some of those trees are just amazing. And you can also see evidence of log shoots where, where they must have floated all those sacred logs away and just destroyed them all.

But when they were making the Quetico Provincial Park, the people that lived in that community that was there left in the middle of the winter. They were they were forced to leave in the middle of the winter. And a lot of the people went different places. Some of them went to *Nagaayaakwaani-zaaga'igan*, where is now called Lac La Croix in French, and some went to Seine River, Mille Lacs up in Ontario, Grand Portage, Lake Vermillion, Nett Lake. So they just dispersed. And left because they were removed by the provincial government of Canada when they were establishing that part.

ER (16:52): So that name, *Negwaakwaan*...oh, so it's, it's changed from, the original name?

GJ: Yeah, I'll write it down. That's how my grandmother called it, *Nagaayaakwaani-zaaga'igan*. She described it he could come in, in the canals, and he could see how tall the trees were, how beautiful it must have been then. *Nagaayaakwaa*. I think whoever was making the maps and things, didn't really understand what the name of the lake was, and wrote it in English.

ER (17:35): *Negwaakwaan* means a maple tap, right?

GJ: Yeah, it does, yeah.

ER: But is that something that happened a lot in as you were growing up in Lac La Croix? Or was that further south?

GJ: I just remember that my mom and her sisters were doing that. In fact, that's how I learned when I was a kid was with my mother. I remember going across that river...Namakan River goes right downward, where the where the people would have their village, they have houses on each side of the river, now there's a bridge that goes across. But I remember in this time of the year, in the spring, when school was out, I wanted to play with my friends, but then I had to go with my mum across her across the river. We used to paddle over there, and she had taps out, and she would, she would be collecting maple sap, and I would be helping her. And in the meantime, I'd be just really lonely, because I could hear all my friends playing across the river, and I could see them playing and having fun and laughing, and I had to go be with my mum to learn how to do that. But now I really appreciate that, because now I know how to do that stuff. Yeah, I'm not sure if any of my friends that I grew up with do.

ER (19:06): So now in your role that you have with the LCO schools. What kind of things do you.... is it a similar type, you know, things that you do? Is it different at all?

GJ: The way that the trees are tapped?

ER: Yeah!

GJ: You know, I can't remember that far back when I was that young. I don't know how my grandmother or my mom did it. All I know is that I was there, and it's just like a really faint memory. I was able when I came back, when I came to LCO, like 20 years ago, I started

learning about, about a lot of different things that I thought I had forgotten about. So I appreciate being living over here, because there's a lot of things that brought things back when they walked out of the school system in Hayward, and they made that conscious decision to not lose any more of the Anishinaabe ways that they have here. So it's, it's pretty good the way they have it here. So I'm proud to be able to have come here, relearned all the things that I thought were, you know, erased from my memory, and be a part of a progressive Ojibwe community that way.

ER (20:38): I'm guessing one difference too, is that on a typical year down there, you're maybe start with some snow, and then midway through, it's there's no snow, whereas, like, probably when you were growing up in Lac La Croix, and certainly here in Grand Portage, there's a lot of snow.

GJ: Yeah, yeah, we have a lot of snow up here this year, and I remember in Lac La Croix, we, oh my gosh, it was just like mounds and mounds of snow playing in the making tunnels and sliding and getting stuck in the snow with your snow shoes and all those kinds of things.

ER (21:18): This was three or four years ago, one of my son Aanakwad's friends, came out with us, and, you know, we were busy and all trying to get ahead of the dark, collecting all the sap, and all sudden they were just quiet for like, 20 minutes. Well, here that kid got stuck, like he had jumped it off kind of an incline, and the snow was so deep, he was just straight up stuck. And this is when they were, like, probably 10, 11 so we had to pull them out. We're like, how come you didn't let us know sooner? You know? So the last thing I'll ask you about kind of comes back to this misinterpretation of this, or the way things get changed anyway...names get changed and whatnot. So this town in Ontario, when I drove from Thunder Bay to Fort Francis, is the is the idea that this town is called out of *adikokaan*, like abundant caribou or something like that?

GJ: It's called Atikokan in English. I asked my grandmother, I always asked her a lot of questions all the time. We always traveled together. Everywhere I went, I took my grandmother with me, and I would ask her a lot of things along the road. That's where I kind of learned that place names of different, significant Ojibwe place names along Ontario, right into Manitoba, into Minnesota, and all those different places that the kind of information that she learned from her grandfather. And I asked her specifically about this one, and she said, "*Ogii-mikaanaawan okanan* of an *adik*, and that would be the woodland caribou. I guess there used to be a lot of them around that area. But because of, I don't know what it is habitation, I guess, people moving in, they kind of moved out, or they killed them all off, or they just migrated somewhere else. *Adikokan*, the bone of a caribou.

ER (23:45): Oh, bone! Okay, gotcha.

GJ: It's a caribou bone. Yeah, that's what I got from her.

ER (23:53): Could you give us a quick synopsis of that in Ojibwe?

GJ: Mewinzha ingii-a-, apane ingii-pabaa-wiijiiwaa haa’aa nookomisiban. Mii go ingoji izhaayan gaawiin wiikaa ingii-naganaasii idi gaagii-, gaagii-endaayaang. Mii go ingoji wii-izhaad aapiji ingii-maajibizo’aa ingoding ge niwiizhaamaa.

Megwaa dash babaamibizowaang ingagwejimaa gegoo. Miinawaa dash indadiibaajimotaag gegoo. Ganash naa gewiin ogii-, ogii-nitaawigi’igoon ini haa’aan omishoomisibaniin megwaa gii-, gii-kiiwashizid hii-oshki-, gii-oshki-abinoojiinyiwid gii-kiiwashiziwidog, mii dash ini gaapi-naasikaagod gii-noond-, gii-noondaminid gii-kiiwashizid gaapi-izhi-naasikaagod iniw omishoomisibaniin Wegimaawab gii-izhinikaazo a akiyenziiyiban.

Mii dash ini, mii dash ini gaa-waawindamaagod gewiin a aaniin keyaa ezhikaadegin gegoon imaa Zhaaganaashiiwakiing, mii go ge imaa Kichi-mookomaanakiing. Mii dash geniin i’i gaa-izhichiged a’a mindimoowenyiban. Ingii-waawindamaag gegoo mii dash wenji-, nimirjimitawaa gaawiin niin ingii-ingikendanziin gegoo. Ingii-michi-minjimitawaa eta go gegoo gaa-enaajimod.

Megwaa dash imaa he’iing apiz-, bimibizowaang imaa a he’iing idi waanadaawangaang idapizomin mii dash imaa odenayens imaa ayaamagad “Atikokan” izhinikaade zhaaganaashiiwinikaadeg. “Aaniish wiin wenji-izhinikaadeg?” ingagwejimaa nookomisiban.

Mii dash gaa-izhichiged ako gaawiin igo memooch gegoo wewiib niwiindamaakosii. Mii go baamaa wiikaa idi animibizoyaang gii-maajii-dadiibaajimod, “Mewinzha wiidog,” ikido mii imaa gii-ayaawaad, gii-paataniinowaagwen ingi a adikog. Minziwe imaa gii-ayaadogwenag imaa endaawaad ingiw anishinaabeg.

Mii imaa gaa-ondanjigewaad ini wii-amwaawaad iniw adikon ingi anishinaabeg. Mii dash i’i gaa-izhi-, amanj gaa-izhi-ayawaagwen ingi, maagizhaa ge gii-maajaawag. Mii gaanash ezhiwebizid a’a awesiinh ongoji giishpiin bazhi’aasiwind geyaabi. Mii go bizaan ezhi-maajaad mii go ge ezhisege gegoo gii-bagwajiging gaawiin geyaabi gegoo imaa maajiiginzinoon ingoji.

Maagizhaa ogii-chaaginanaawaan ingi gaapi-tagoshinowaad waapishkiiwewaad ini adikon. Noomaya dash igo gaawiin geyabii gii-kikendanziwag awiya gii-ayaanid imaa adiko’. Gaa-izhi-moona’amowaagwen ini okanan. Mii dash ingiwe nakake nando-gikenjigewaad “scientists” gaa-izhinikaazowaad mii-ingi-gaa-kagwe-, gaa-kagwe-kikenimaawaagwen wenen odookanan iniw.

Mii dash izhi-kikendamowaad iniw he’ii adik-okanan ini. Adikogan inzhinikaade i’iw adik odookanim. Otigwaanigegan izhinikaade o’o nakake otigwaanigegan, onikigegan dash owe, okaadigegan dash imaa kikaading eyaag iniw okanan.

ER (27:27): So does it refer to a specific bone, or just any bone?

GJ: No, all the bones of a woodland caribou. And I was telling you specific, like the cranium is called *otigwaanigegan*.

ER: Ohhhhhhhh, okay!

GJ: Yeah, and *onikigegan*, but there's different names for all the different bones in your body. *Bebakaan izhinikaade*, *michichiniigan izhinikaade* radius, different names, because they call this *michichin izhinikaade*, in Ojibwe, the thumb.

ER: Miigwech! Here's to another 10 years! (Laughter).

GJ: Hopefully, I'll have to put *asemaa* out.

ER: Miigwech for tuning into Anishinaabe Bizindamoo Makak. Support for the series comes from the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe and the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. Our producer is Staci Drouillard. The theme song is performed by the Stonebridge Singers. Until next time, this is Erik Redix. Giga-waabamin!

Ojibwe Transcription by Gordon Jourdain