

# tracking nayagnir: a shaman's encounters with murder, western law, the lomen brothers company, and knud rasmussen

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*Dedicated to Margaret Lantis, Nakaar Howard Amos, and Nussaalar Muriel Amos*

## abstract

Like most stories rooted in history, the one that follows is woven from threads of fact and interpretation, contains gaps that may never be filled, and can only be understood by examining several layers of cultural and historical context. Its genesis was the introduction of reindeer to Nunivak Island in 1920. Tensions related to that event caused a local shaman to be kidnapped and removed from the island by the Lomen Brothers Company in 1923. Archival, genealogical, and ethnographic data amplify the story and reveal how traditional beliefs and customs of the Nunivak people were involved. Its compilation here was inspired by Knud Rasmussen's 1924 visit to Nome at the end of the Fifth Thule Expedition and his unlikely meeting there with a group of Nuniwarmiut, the Indigenous people of Nunivak Island.

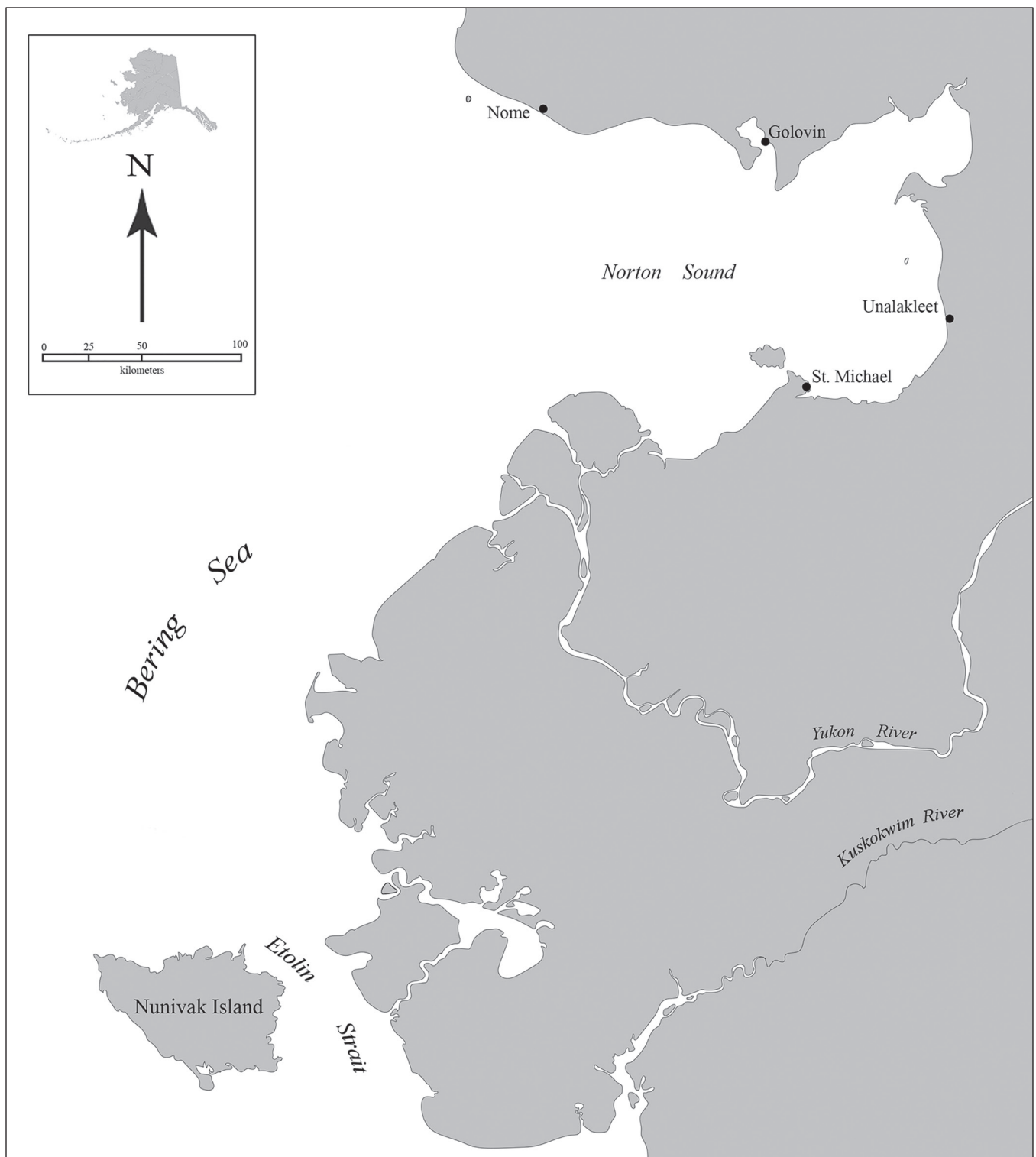
## introduction

The European discovery of Nunivak Island occurred in 1821, when two Russian naval expeditions paid brief visits. Another Russian expedition arrived in 1822 and spent about four days trading with the local people (VanStone 1973:15–19, 58–64). More than 50 years elapsed before the next known European contact with the Nuniwarmiut (William H. Dall in 1874), and subsequent contacts were highly sporadic up to 1920. Thus, for more than a century after their first encounters with Europeans, the Nuniwarmiut continued to live a traditional lifestyle, unencumbered by Western laws or institutions (e.g., see U.S. Congress 1939:20347–20348 [Henry B. Collins letter to Carl J. Lomen, February 26, 1932]). Shallow waters surrounding the island and a lack of solid pack ice in Etolin Strait in the winter (Drozda 2019:203–207; Griffin 2004:116) prevented travel between the island and the mainland for six or more months each year, mak-

ing Nunivak one of the most isolated areas in Alaska through at least 1935 (Collins 1928:155; Curtis [1930] 1970:xvi; Lantis 1946:156, 161; 1984:209; Rasmussen [1927] 1999:349–350; VanStone 1989:2, 42).<sup>1</sup> That isolation helps explain why the Nunivak dialect (Cup'ig) is so divergent from those spoken by mainland Yup'ik populations (Amos and Amos 2003; Jacobson 2012): the differences are so pronounced that some people believe Cup'ig is a separate language (Drozda 2007:102–105; Hammerich 1953; Jacobson 2003:vii–viii; Pratt 2009:132–137).

## enter the lomens

In late September 1920, the freighter SS *Ketchikan* sailed from Nome to Golovin, where it took on a cargo of 197 live reindeer and then headed toward Nunivak Island (Fig. 1). The ship arrived at Nunivak in stormy, icy conditions that forced it to stay offshore and led its crew to drop the reindeer overboard one at a time, leaving them to their fates.



*Figure 1: Study area. Map by Dale C. Slaughter.*

Only 98 reindeer made it to shore; the rest drowned, some of which were so frightened they tried to climb up the steel sides of the ship (Lomen 1954:175–176). Ten caribou bulls captured near the Yukon River village of Kokrines were transported to Nunivak and added to the reindeer herd in July 1925 for cross-breeding purposes (Lomen 1954:177). The introduction of reindeer to Nunivak was a joint undertaking of the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey, the U.S. Bureau of Education, and the Lomen Brothers Company (a Nome-based trading and reindeer herding enterprise)—but it was a totally arbitrary action with respect to the Nuniwarmiut. They were not consulted about it so never consented to the action (Pratt 1994), which flowed from the Lomen Company's claim for Nunivak as its grazing ground (based on its status at that time as “public domain”). The fact that Indigenous people occupied the island was evidently irrelevant because they were not considered to possess any legal rights of “ownership” to Nunivak.

Since the reindeer were the Lomens' property, they sent Paul Ivanoff (Fig. 2)—a 26-year-old Inupiaq from the Norton Sound community of Unalakleet—to Nunivak to oversee their interests (see also Sonne, *this issue*). He was accompanied by his wife, May, who was then pregnant with their first child. Notwithstanding the redeeming traits he possessed (see U.S. Department of the Interior 1931:36–37 [Statement by Carl J. Lomen, fourth hearing of the Reindeer Committee, February 24]), Ivanoff immediately became the face of the Lomens on the island, thereby earning the resentment of the Nuniwarmiut—most notably that of a shaman (*angalku*) named *Nayagnir*.<sup>2</sup>

The reindeers' introduction marked the beginning of sustained Euroamerican contact for the Nuniwarmiut. A school-teacher arrived on the island in 1924, and the Lomens' political machinations helped pave the way for designation of the “Nunivak Island [wildlife] Reservation” in 1928, which facilitated the 1935–1936 introduction of muskoxen—another action that occurred without Nuniwarmiut input

or consent (Griffin 2004:107–112; Pratt 1994). Finally, the ultra-conservative Swedish Evangelical Covenant Church—with which Paul Ivanoff was closely affiliated—established itself on Nunivak in 1936–1937. Throughout this period, the colonial parties driving the changes treated Ivanoff as the de facto “spokesman” of the Nuniwarmiut (Griffin 2001:82), further deepening some of the local resentment felt toward him (Lantis 1960:107). But the reality is that Ivanoff was an English-speaking Native *outsider* whose position with the Lomen Company gave him considerable influence. He surely cared for the local



*Figure 2: Paul Ivanoff, 1927. Courtesy Dennis Griffin; no archival source known.*

people and probably felt he acted in their best interests, but Ivanoff was deeply loyal to the Lomens and very much a company man.

Ironically, the isolation that long buffered the Nuniwarmiut against contact-induced social and cultural change worked against them once non-Native enterprises and institutions took root on the island: those entities had no competitors and operated with little or no outside scrutiny. One example is the central event of this story.

## frontier justice

On August 19, 1923, the Lomen Company ship *Nokatak*, captained by John Hegness, sailed from Nome on company business for Nunivak Island. Six days later (August 25) it returned with a special passenger, identified by Carl Lomen (1923 [August 25 entry]) as “the outlaw Eskimo who has terrorized that island for years. I phone the Marshal’s Office and the man is removed from the *Nokatak* to the Federal Jail.” The “outlaw” was the shaman *Nayagnir* (Fig. 3), whose presence on the Lomen ship was the result of being kidnapped—as explained in an affidavit from Captain Hegness recorded nearly a decade after the fact (June 18, 1932). Hegness stated that he went to Nunivak in July 1923 to deliver supplies and was approached by local hunters who, through their interpreter Paul Ivanoff, warned him to be careful of *Nayagnir*. He was told that:

Niuganok [*Nayagnir*] was on the warpath, that they, and the other natives or Eskimos on the island, were deathly afraid of him, that he had taken possession of a large part of the island, and would not permit any of the other Eskimos to occupy it; that he was insane and dangerous. (U.S. Congress 1939:20238–20239; Affidavit of John Hegness)

Hegness also said the hunters requested his assistance in removing *Nayagnir* from the island and told him the Revenue Cutter *Bear* had recently been to Nunivak with a warrant for the shaman’s arrest but failed to apprehend him. When *Nayagnir* later showed up at the *Nokatak* hoping to obtain ammunition, Hegness snatched him, then transported him to Nome. Although Hegness said he acted on his own initiative, his employer fully supported the kidnapping.<sup>3</sup>

The Lomens’ efforts to justify the kidnapping were somewhat suspicious, but a previously written account by Paul Ivanoff was probably a key factor. Ivanoff (1922)

claimed *Nayagnir* had repeatedly threatened him and his family; vowed to kill and eat the Lomens’ reindeer; terrorized and oppressed other Nuniwarmiut; was known to have murdered two people on the island; and exhibited signs of insanity. Some of the alleged actions by *Nayagnir* predated Ivanoff’s arrival to Nunivak.

The Lomens’ implied purpose for kidnapping the shaman and removing him to Nome (Fig. 4) was to protect the Nuniwarmiut from a dangerous man, a person Carl Lomen repeatedly referred to in his diaries as the “Bad Man of Nunivak” or the “Crazy Man” or “Our Wildman.” The 1923 arrest and jailing of *Nayagnir* in Nome were based on Carl Lomen’s allegation that he was insane (State of Alaska 1923a). That complaint was entered into

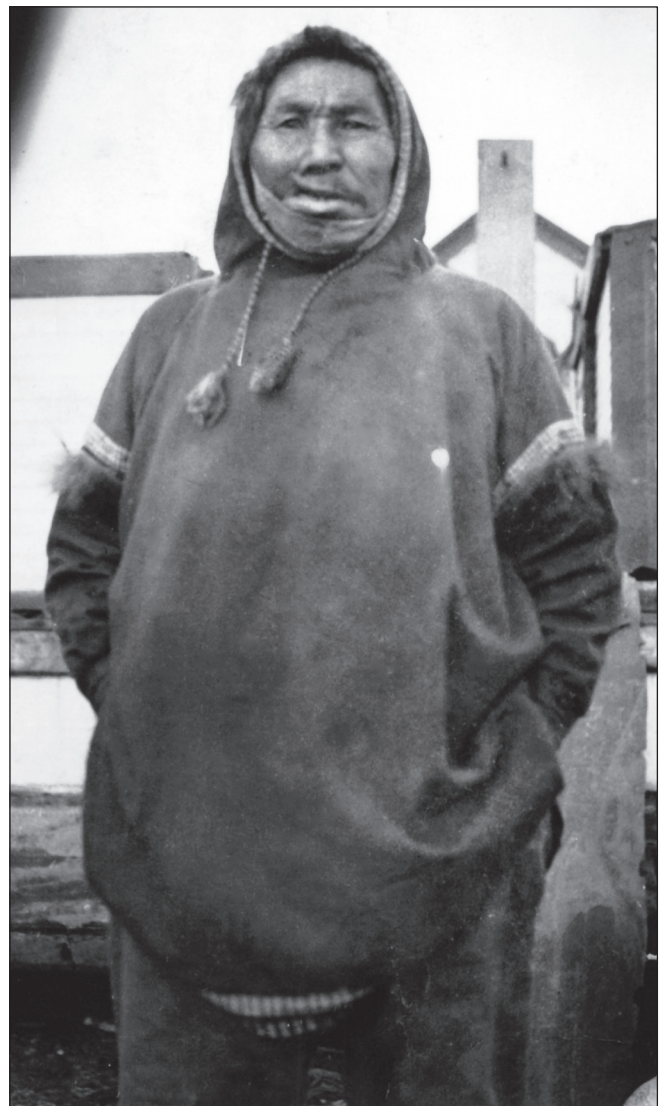


Figure 3: *Nayagnir*, Nome 1924. Alaska State Library, E.B. (Duffy) O’Connor Photograph Collection, ASL-P422-30.





Figure 4: Nome street scene, with courthouse and jail indicated, June 1925. Image no. NMP-82-37-20. Courtesy Carrie M. McClain Memorial Museum, Nome.

the court records on August 30, 1923. *Nayagnir* was held for observation for two weeks, after which the charge was dismissed and he was released. But he was arrested again that same day (September 14) on a new complaint filed by Carl Lomen, which claimed *Nayagnir* had committed larceny by stealing three pounds of lard, 33 cans of milk, and other property from the Lomen Company storehouse on Nunivak (State of Alaska 1923b). Four days later, the U.S. Commissioner in Nome concluded *Nayagnir* was guilty of the charge and “admitted him to bail, to answer in a sum of Two Thousand Dollars.”<sup>4</sup> Even in the unlikely event that *Nayagnir* had the means to make bail, he could not have done so while imprisoned 300 miles from his home. The result is that he remained in jail for more than a year without a hearing. Oddly, the most prominent person in the Nome legal community at that time is conspicuously missing from legal records about the case, but it is improbable that he was not involved in some capacity. That person was Carl Lomen’s father, Gudbrand Lomen—a long-time attorney who in 1921 was commissioned as federal district judge for the Second Judicial District in Nome.

In September 1924, a grand jury formally charged *Nayagnir* with larceny, which meant a hearing would finally be scheduled. Eleven other Nuniwarmiut (nine men and two women) arrived in Nome on September 18 to serve as witnesses in the case (Fig. 5; cf. Alaska-Chukotka Connections title page, *this issue*): they had been transported on the ship *Trader* and accompanied by Irving Bird, who (with his wife, Helen) had arrived on Nunivak three months earlier to establish the island’s first school (Griffin 2004:118; Lomen 1924 [September 18 and 23 entries]). Ivanoff evidently accompanied the witnesses, too, because he was also in Nome when the hearing occurred. Transcripts of the hearing have not been found, but a September 22 entry in Carl Lomen’s 1924 diary states: “Grand Jury bring Not a True Bill against our Nunivak Island ‘Wild Man.’”<sup>5</sup> In other words, *Nayagnir* was acquitted. He was not actually released, however, until about mid-November (see Lopp 1933)—several weeks after the witnesses had left for Nunivak aboard the schooner *Teddy Bear* (Mayokok 1955).



*Figure 5: Nuniwarmiut witnesses in Nome for Nayagnir's 1924 hearing. From left to right: Qungurkar (Tony), Nayirer, Iralur, unidentified woman, Yuvgerak'ria, Cuukar, Pugta'ur (?), unidentified man, Aguyal'ug, Qayarkil'ngur. These identifications (except for Pugta'ur) were made and/or confirmed by Nakaar Howard Amos and Nussaalar Muriel Amos, with help from other Nuniwarmiut elders. Another known witness not pictured here is Naryartur. Alaska State Library, E. B. (Duffy) O'Connor Photograph Collection, ASL-P422-31.*

## knud rasmussen and serendipity

This brings us to the Fifth Thule Expedition (FTE) and Knud Rasmussen's "serendipity." Rasmussen (1999:339) arrived in Nome on August 31, 1924, and was still there when the Nunivak witnesses arrived. Thus, as a direct consequence of the Lomens' kidnapping of *Nayagnir*, 12 Nuniwarmiut were in town at the same time. As detailed by Birgitte Sonne (1988; *this issue*), Rasmussen seized the opportunity by arranging to interview most of them about the Nunivak mask system and spiritual world. Rasmussen began interviewing six of the witnesses (whom he identified by name [Sonne 1988:27–28]) while *Nayagnir* was still in jail, but the shaman became involved after his release. In fact, Sonne's study of Rasmussen's notes on the interviews convinced her (Sonne 1988:38–40) that *Nayagnir* should be identified as the chief informant. The sessions yielded substantial information about Nuniwarmiut spiritual beliefs and ceremonies, including associated drawings, and later, as commissioned by Rasmussen, wooden masks carved by the Nuniwarmiut and shipped to the National Museum of Denmark. Ivanoff was instrumental in facilitating the entire process.

Rasmussen, whose mother was one-quarter Greenlandic Inuit, learned Kalaallisut as his first language (Cole 1999:xii–xiii; Rasmussen 1999:xxxii; see also Harper and Krupnik, *this issue*), and his fluency in Inuit was a tremendous asset to the FTE. Significantly, the Nuniwarmiut were among the first non-Inuit-speaking Eskimos Rasmussen had encountered and he could not understand their language;<sup>6</sup> thus, his interviews with the people required a translator, Paul Ivanoff (Rasmussen 1999:349). It is unclear whether Rasmussen and Ivanoff communicated with one another in Inuit or English (or both), but either way there is cause to doubt that in 1924 Ivanoff was fluent enough in the Cup'ig language of Nunivak to accurately translate complex, specialized knowledge presented orally by elderly Nuniwarmiut. Even fully fluent, expert, elder Yup'ik language speakers had serious difficulty comprehending Nunivak Cup'ig (see Pratt 2009:132–137). Ivanoff was a young man whose Native language was Inupiaq, which is even further removed from Nunivak Cup'ig than are Yup'ik dialects.<sup>7</sup> The available evidence indicates there were no English speakers among the Nuniwarmiut in 1924 (Rasmussen 1999:349–350; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1920; see also



U.S. Congress 1939:20347–20348 [Henry B. Collins letter to Carl J. Lomen, February 26, 1932]), and it is unlikely any of the Nuniwarmiut spoke Inupiaq.

This does not mean Ivanoff's translations were flawed, only that they should be viewed with caution. This recommendation is consistent with a prior observation by Margaret Lantis (1946:224 *n*122), who had personal knowledge of Ivanoff's abilities as a translator for Nuniwarmiut people. As Sonne (1988:10–11) noted, Rasmussen was wise to encourage his informants to create drawings for him, which he used as the basis for questions and answers (see Appelt et al., *this issue*). That approach had to increase the accuracy of the data obtained. For a separate reason, the following remarks by Carl Lomen are also relevant here:

Paul Ivanoff is the only Eskimo that I know that can converse with those Nunivak people. The Eskimos of the Nome section do not understand the Eskimos of Nunivak Island....Nobody can understand those Eskimos. (U.S. Department of the Interior 1931:37 [Statement by Carl J. Lomen, fourth hearing of the Reindeer Committee, February 24])

These remarks raise the question of how effectively the Nome authorities were able to, or wanted to, communicate with *Nayagnir*. A statement by Rasmussen (1999:383) may answer that question: “[*Nayagnir*] was forbidden to speak his own language in prison, and as he could not speak any other, he did not speak at all for a whole year.” In addition to language problems, *Nayagnir* lacked an understanding of Western law and had no legal representation. As the author eventually discovered, however, *Nayagnir* was not totally ignorant about Western law: a decade before his kidnapping, another event had caused him to be arrested and incarcerated in Nome.

## western law reaches nunivak

From 1905 to 1913, the chief deputy marshal in Nome was a man named Reginald Thompson. In 1954, he published an article about one of his “most harrowing assignments” while holding that position: “a trip to Nunivak Island to arrest an Eskimo who was wanted for murder” (Thompson 1954:16). Thompson traveled to Nunivak aboard the *Seddon* but did not indicate what year the trip took place. The murder reportedly resulted from the ac-

cused having become enamored with the wife of another man, whom he shot and killed “sometime during the previous winter” (Thompson 1954:16). Thompson's account referred to the accused murderer as “the chief” and did not provide his name; but details from other accounts (Lantis 1960:32 [nos. 19–20], 40 [no. 19]; State of Alaska 1912a, 1912b) confirm the man was *Nayagnir*.<sup>8</sup> When the *Seddon* reached the village where the accused was said to be living, “a youngster” identified as the murdered man's son pointed out his father's killer. *Nayagnir* was promptly arrested, put on the ship, and taken to Nome. According to Thompson (1954:31):

Toward spring the trial of the chief came up in Nome, but he was not convicted. The witnesses would not testify against him, through either fear or sentiment. On his way back to Nunivak Island in the summer, however, he was killed. It was rumored that he had been murdered by relatives of the man he had killed.

The account closed with a statement that the *Seddon* was lost in a storm “just a year later” (Thompson 1954:31). Alaska shipwreck reports indicate the *Seddon* “founded [filled with water and sank] in Kotzebue Sound [on] August 15, 1913” (Good and Burwell 2018:494). The report on the *Seddon*'s loss delimited the timeline for *Nayagnir*'s first brush with Western law, thereby enabling me to locate related court records. My interpretation of Thompson's account indicates the murder *Nayagnir* was accused of committing occurred in the winter of 1911–1912, but court records suggest the possibility of an earlier date.

The said Niuganok in or about the month of September [1911] and within three years last past...did wrongfully and unlawfully and feloniously, being of sound memory and discretion, purposefully and of deliberate and premeditated malice kill with a gun, loaded with powder and lead, one Asurona, a human being. (State of Alaska 1912a)

Deputy Marshal Thompson's arrest of *Nayagnir* took place at *Mikuryarmiut* (“Megomeagmuk”) (see Fig. 6) in September 1912, following which he was transported to Nome with three witnesses from the same village: “Mrs. Atsorona” (the widow) and her sons “Iuksuk” and “Niak” (State of Alaska 1912b; Thompson 1954:30–31). The four Nuniwarmiut were subsequently detained in

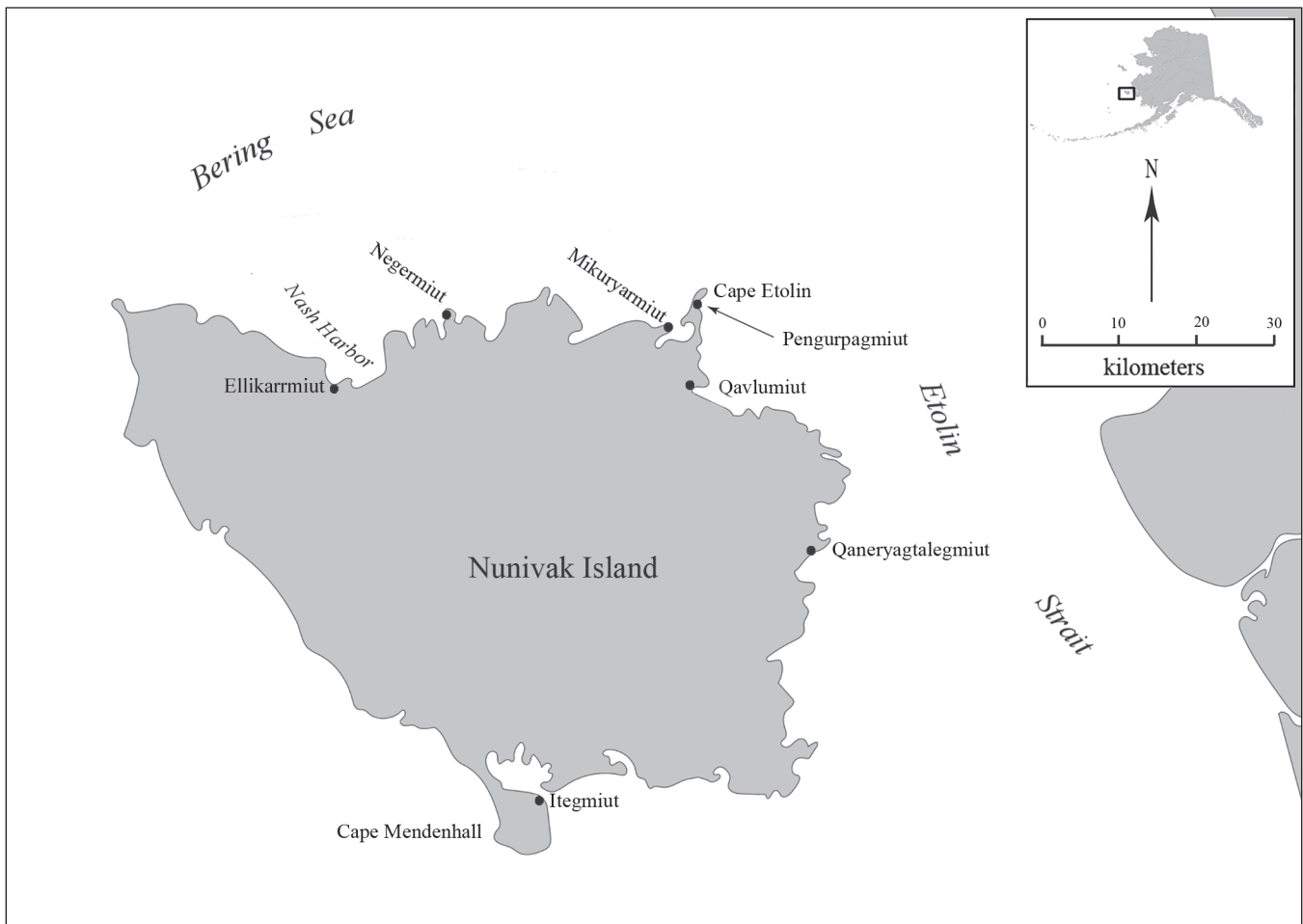


Figure 6: Nunivak Island with locations of places mentioned in text. Map by Dale C. Slaughter.

the Nome jail for 58 days. They were discharged on November 13, 1912, when *Nayagnir*'s trial concluded with his acquittal. The witnesses evidently testified during the trial and *Nayagnir* made a statement regarding the charge against him, but records of that testimony have not been found. This means *Nayagnir* could not have been murdered in the *summer* of the same year he was acquitted, as Thompson (1954) reported. If he actually *was* murdered shortly after his acquittal, however, then the *Nayagnir* known to Ivanoff and the Lomens in the 1920s could not have been the same man. But he was. This discrepancy is explained below.

### identity struggles

The impressive works of Lantis (1960) and Muriel Amos (2018) on Nuniwarmiut genealogy provided an opportunity to try to fully identify the witnesses and murdered man named in the 1912 court records. This effort was fraught with challenges (e.g., Amos 2018:vii; Fienup-Riordan

2000:142–143; Lantis 1946:235–239, 256) and offered many opportunities for errors.<sup>9</sup> Three factors further increased the difficulties: (1) court records provided variant names for each witness; (2) a family of eight enumerated in the 1910 Nunivak census includes the two sons but the name of the woman identified as their mother does not match the court records' name(s) for the widow/mother; and (3) the reported names "are very much influenced by Yup'ik," which frustrated attempts to formulate Cup'ig pronunciations and spellings (Amos and Amos, pers. comm., 2 July 2020). The latter is not true of the name reported for the murdered man ("Asurona"), which was readily converted to Cup'ig (*Ac'urunar*), but it does not match the name of the husband/father ("Annaingagah") in the family enumerated in the 1910 census.

As Amos (2018:viii) previously noted, it is often impossible to decipher the phonetic writing system enumerator Lo Lo Bales used to record Cup'ig names in the 1910 census. Bales was undoubtedly assisted by an outside interpreter—someone with little or no prior experience with



Cup'ig. The spellings of Cup'ig names reported in the 1912 court records are more reliable: they were rendered by a Yup'ik man named Phillip Andrewuk, who served as the court's translator (State of Alaska 1912b). Despite these issues, analyses of personal names from the sources just described and reviews of Nunivak genealogies and biographies (Amos 2018; Lantis 1960) led to Cup'ig identifications for the murdered man and the witnesses. They are *Ac'urunar* (murder victim), *Aanarang* (widow/mother), *Nayirer* (elder son), and *Lursug* (younger son) (see Table 1).

During the 1910 census, the murder victim and his family lived at *Pengurpagmiut*, on Cape Etolin along the island's northeast coast and near *Mikuryarmiut*. That coastal section was also the home area of *Nayagnir* (who lived in both *Negermiut* and *Mikuryarmiut* at different times), so he surely knew the family. Proximity and familiarity certainly would have simplified carrying out the murder, which reportedly unfolded as follows: "[*Nayagnir*] had concealed himself in his rival's igloo, and as the husband was crawling through the narrow passage into his home, the Eskimo chief shot him through the head" (Thompson 1954:16). The site of the murder has not been determined, but at the time of his arrest six or more months later *Nayagnir* and his wife lived in the same village as the victim's family (Thompson 1954:30–31), *Mikuryarmiut*.

The only other information concerning the murder is from the biographical account of *Caq'ar* ("Christine" 135D), recorded by Lantis in 1946. The pertinent com-

ments are quoted below, with spellings of personal names corrected to conform to the modern Cup'ig orthography.

*Mellaar* (my father's sister's son) and *Massualug*, son of *Tanriag* and brother of *Pantung'an*, were out in kayaks fishing one day when I and my mother were out picking celery. *Massualug* accidentally shot himself in the leg. I saw them bring him ashore. Just then a ship came. Three or four men and a woman in reindeer fawn parka came ashore. That was the first time I had seen such fur. (This was before the Lomen reindeer had been brought to Nunivak.) The white men and the woman opened *Massualug*'s leg and removed the shot. But he died later.

They had come to get him because *Nayagnir* when on trial in Nome had accused *Massualug* or implicated him somehow. But when they found *Massualug* hurt so badly, they left him. When he died, people wrapped him in a tent and took him out on a high place. (Lantis 1960:32 [nos. 19 and 20])<sup>11</sup>

This incident probably occurred near the village of *Qaneryagtalegmiut*. Lantis (1960:40 [no. 19]) estimated it happened in 1917, but 1913 is a more likely date, since the people who came looking for *Massualug* did so based on the November 1912 court case. At the time of his accident, he was married to *Qunquss'in* (279B in Lantis 1960:198 [Gen. V]; see also Amos 2018:4), a daughter of *Aanarang* [52A] and *Ac'urunar*, the man *Nayagnir* is believed to have murdered.

**Table 1: The murder victim and three family members (witnesses at the 1912 trial in Nome)<sup>10</sup>**

Cup'ig Name	1910 Census	1912 Court Records	Genealogical Details
<i>Ac'urunar</i> (court records) <i>Arnarayar/Aanayagar</i> (census)	Annaingagah (est. age 40); resident of "Kanobukmuna" [ <i>Pengurpagmiut</i> ]	Murder victim: Asurona	Unidentified in Amos (2018:4) and Lantis (1960 [Gen. I]); but first hus- band of 52A and father of 354D
<i>Aanarang</i> (court records) <i>Alirkar</i> (census)	Alika (est. age 34); resident of <i>Pengurpagmiut</i>	Widow of victim: Mrs. Atsorona (var. Arakanatan; Arganatkan)	52A in Lantis (1960:195 [Gen. I, V]); <i>Aanarang</i> B in Amos (2018:1, 4, 21). Mother of 354D and third wife of <i>Naryartur</i> (349A).
<i>Nayirer</i> (census and court records)	Nyaeck (est. age 18); resident of <i>Pengurpagmiut</i>	Son of victim: Niuk (var. Nyuk)	354D in Lantis 1960:199 [Gen. I, V]); <i>Nayirer</i> D in Amos (2018:4)
<i>Lursug</i> (court records) <i>Inqsuge</i> (census)	Inksuk (est. age 4); resident of <i>Pengurpagmiut</i>	Son of victim: Nuiksuk (var. Inksuk; Nyuksuk; Iuksuk)	Unidentified in Lantis (1960 [Gen. I, V]) and Amos (2018:1, 4, 21)

## law and social control

*Nayagnir* openly opposed the Lomens' occupation of Nunivak Island, so was a source of resistance against them (Griffin 2004:110). The Lomens' response was to kidnap the man and have him jailed in Nome, apparently on any charge that would work (U.S. Congress 1939:20111 [Statement by E. B. O'Connor]). The obvious motivation was to remove *Nayagnir* from Nunivak and keep him off the island for as long as possible. The success of the plan stemmed from the power of the Lomen family and the support they enjoyed in the Nome legal community.<sup>12</sup> In 1928, Alaska Territorial Delegate Daniel Sutherland summarized the *Nayagnir* event as follows:

[The Lomens] brought this chief [*Nayagnir*]—kidnapped him, brought him up without process of law, to Nome, showed him the power of the Lomens and the glory of Nome, and then returned him to the island. He and his people to be vassals of the Imperial Lomen Empire. (U.S. Department of the Interior 1931:41 [Statement by Daniel Sutherland, March 6])

But according to William Lopp (1933), commissioner of the Bureau of Education, the Lomens did not return *Nayagnir* to Nunivak. Instead, after his acquittal, Nome district attorney Fred Harrison—probably in league with the Lomens—had intended to “maroon” *Nayagnir* in Nome or at another mainland location. Delaying his departure from Nome until the onset of winter ice conditions in Etolin Strait was one way of doing so. On November 11, 1924, at Carl Lomen's request, Lopp went to the Nome jail and “discussed with Nyugannuk [*Nayagnir*], through an interpreter [Ivanoff], the advisability of living in some village on the mainland for one or two years, in accordance with the old Eskimo custom. But he said ‘No’” (Lopp 1933).<sup>13</sup>

Remarkably, *Nayagnir* gained passage on a ship soon thereafter and made it back to Nunivak despite the lateness of the season. Lopp's letter also contained another important piece of information:

After these five islanders presented their case, we [the Bureau of Education] no doubt told them we had no authority in such matters but would pass it on to the District Attorney. This was my first contact with the Nunivak Eskimos. Paul Ivanoff was their interpreter. I am satisfied that Paul and the island feared Nyugannuk. (Lopp 1933)

That someone within his bureau had taken the matter to the district attorney is indicated by Lopp's (1933) remark: “the District Attorney knew that no Bureau of Education official had authority to remove natives to some other locality.”

These comments imply that (1) some Nunivak witnesses had expressed concerns to the Bureau of Education about seeing *Nayagnir* returned to Nunivak, and (2) the Nome district attorney requested or encouraged the bureau to prevent *Nayagnir* from going back to the island. In fact, this effort may have started months earlier: in January 1924, Carl Lomen had personally called on “Dr. [William] Hamilton—Bureau of Education re the Bad Man of Nunivak” in Washington, DC (Lomen 1924 [January 5 entry]).

The last shaman Rasmussen encountered on the FTE was *Nayagnir* (“Najagneq”), whom he met “in the streets of Nome, as a fugitive in a strange place” (Rasmussen 1999:382; see Fig. 4). It is unknown if Rasmussen attended *Nayagnir*'s hearing while in Nome, but he provided commentary about the event, stating that “opinions were divided as to the rights of the case [against *Nayagnir*]; some declared he was simply half-mad, and a danger to the community; others regarded him as fighting on behalf of his people against the whites, and against those misguided natives who supported them” (Rasmussen 1999:382–383). The evidence includes support for both viewpoints, and it seems likely the Nuniwarmiut themselves had mixed feelings about the man.

The charges filed against *Nayagnir* in 1923–1924 identified the Lomen Brothers Company as the aggrieved party. As the company's agent on Nunivak, Ivanoff almost certainly selected the Nuniwarmiut who served as witnesses at the 1924 hearing. In addition to the six witnesses identified by Rasmussen (*Naryartur*, *Pugta'ur*, *Nayirer*, *Cuukar*, *Iralur*, and *Qayarkil'ngur* [*Atakuil'ngur*]<sup>14</sup>), three other witnesses (*Aguyal'ug*, *Yuvergal'ria*, and *Qungurkar*) have been identified by researching Nunivak genealogical data, the 1920 census (U.S. Bureau of Census 1920), and archival photographs (Amos and Amos pers. comm., 30 April and 4–5 May 2021). A concerted effort was made to determine possible kin relationships between *Nayagnir* and those witnesses (Table 2): only three witnesses (*Naryartur*, *Pugta'ur*, and *Nayirer*) appear to have had relatively close kin ties with the shaman. The most interesting result of that effort was the discovery that one witness (*Yuvergal'ria*) was the daughter of *Ac'urunar* and sister of *Nayirer*—the two men *Nayagnir* was accused of

Table 2: The shaman and nine identified Nuniwarmiut witnesses at the 1924 hearing in Nome

Cup'ig Name	Genealogical Details	1920 U.S. Census Details
<i>Nayagnir</i> ("Najagnek"—Rasmussen)	[378C]: brother of <i>Caniiral'ria</i> [146B]; husband of <i>Nuss'an</i> [389G]; father of <i>Akquar</i> [37B] and father-in-law of <i>Caq'ar</i> [135B] (Amos 2018:1, 37; Lantis 1960:200 [Gen. I, III, X])	"Nayaginek": lived at "Nigaramiut" [ <i>Negermiut</i> ] and was estimated to be 41 years old
<i>Naryartur</i> ("Narijartoq"—Rasmussen)	[349A, "Daniel"]: maternal uncle of <i>Nuss'an</i> [389G (the daughter of <i>Cingayaran</i> [165A] and wife of <i>Nayagnir</i> [378C])] (Amos 2018:21, 37–38, 98; Lantis 1960 [Gen. V])	"Nariagtok": lived at "Olevigamiut" [ <i>Qavlumiut</i> ] and was estimated to be 35 years old <sup>15</sup>
<i>Pugta'ur</i> ("Púgtaoq"—Rasmussen)	[315A, <i>Melurayaran</i> (Amos 2018:1; Lantis 1960 [Gen. III])]: son of <i>Nayagnir</i> 's paternal uncle, <i>Aperyar</i> [90A]. As a parallel cousin, in the Nuniwarmiut system he was <i>Nayagnir</i> 's "brother."	"Milugiaran": lived at "Itigimiut" [ <i>Itegmuiut</i> ] and was estimated to be 37 years old <sup>16</sup>
<i>Nayirer</i> ("Najëraq"—Rasmussen)	[354C, "Matthew"]: by his marriage to <i>Aanarang</i> [51A]), he was a nephew of <i>Nayagnir</i> (Amos 2018:51 [photo p. 68]; Lantis 1960 [Gen. III, VI, VII]). That is, the son-in-law of <i>Nayagnir</i> 's brother ( <i>Caniiral'ria</i> [146B]).	"Nayck": lived at <i>Negermiut</i> and estimated to be 27 years old
<i>Qayarkil'ngur</i> (sometimes also called <i>Atakuil'ngur</i> ) ("Atkuil-roq"—Rasmussen)	[96A, "Field"]: son of <i>Elluwag'ar</i> [300D] and <i>Nanapan</i> [360A]; brother of <i>Ayaksar</i> [30D] (Amos 2018:26 [photo pg. 59]; Lantis 1960:195 [Gen. II, III])	"Kayagkalingak": lived at <i>Itegmuiut</i> and was estimated to be 41 years old
<i>Cuukar</i> ("Sorqaq"—Rasmussen)	[170A]: brother of <i>Pantung'an</i> [417B]; maternal uncle of <i>Iralur</i> [186B] and <i>Panigkiun</i> [413B, "Amelia," the sixth wife of <i>Naryartur</i> ] (Amos 2018:25; Lantis 1960:201 [Gen. V])	"Sokak": lived at <i>Qavlumiut</i> and was estimated to be 40 years old <sup>17</sup>
<i>Iralur</i> ("Erâloq"—Rasmussen)	[186B]: son of <i>Pantung'an</i> [417B]; nephew of <i>Cuukar</i> [170A]; brother of <i>Panigkiun</i> [413B] and brother-in-law of <i>Naryartur</i> (Amos 2018:21, 25; Lantis 1960:196 [Gen. V])	"Eralok": lived at <i>Qavlumiut</i> and was estimated to be 21 years old
<i>Aguyal'ug</i>	[26B, "Simon"]: son of <i>Panikpiar</i> [403B]; brother of <i>Ayagal'ria</i> [111A]; father not identified (Amos 2018:52 and Lantis 1960 [Gen. IX])	"Aguyaluk": lived at <i>Qaneryagtalegmuiut</i> ["Kaneriagtaligamiut"] and was estimated to be 35 years old
<i>Yuvgeral'ria</i>	[541A, "Rachel"]: daughter of <i>Ac'urunar</i> and sister of <i>Nayirer</i> [354D]—the father and son <i>Nayagnir</i> allegedly murdered in 1911–1912 and ca. 1918; also the sister-in-law of <i>Massualug</i> [325A] (Amos 2018:4; Lantis 1960:202 [Gen. I])	"Uyvigalra": lived at <i>Qaneryagtalegmuiut</i> and was estimated to be 40 years old
<i>Qungurkar</i>	[288C, "Cook"]: father-in-law of <i>Nayirer</i> [354C], and father of <i>Tuqumal'ria</i> [484A], with whom Paul Ivanoff [ <i>Yuungar</i> ] had a son [ <i>Elluwag'ar</i> , 300B] out of wedlock (Amos 2018:15 [photo pg. 77]; Lantis 1960:202 [Gen. IX])	"Kungorkag": lived at <i>Ellikarrmiut</i> ["Tlekagamiut"] and was estimated to be 42 years old

murdering between ca. 1911 and 1918 (see below). She was also the sister-in-law of *Massualug*, the man *Nayagnir* reportedly implicated in her father's murder.

## shamanism

Rasmussen (1999:383–384) asserted that the witnesses feared *Nayagnir* too much to testify against him. But it is also possible that they supported his opposition to the Lomen enterprise on Nunivak, lacked knowledge of the theft he allegedly had committed,<sup>18</sup> or felt that even if

*Nayagnir* was guilty, he had already been punished by being jailed in Nome for over one year. In any case, the fact that *Nayagnir* was a shaman probably also came into play. Due to the supernatural powers they were believed to possess, such as the ability to fly, communicate with spirits, and miraculously heal wounds (Lantis 1946:200–203, 252), Nunivak shamans were feared, distrusted, and often accused of witchcraft (Fienup-Riordan 2000:155–157):

[A shaman] was thought to kill people by sending his spirit helpers to cause some misfortune to them, or to enter the body of the victim, causing



sickness...A person might claim with all sincerity that a particular medicine man had caused a death. (Lantis 1946:200)

A shaman also “made his own rules for social behavior” (Lantis 1960:170 [no. 10]) and “could take or discard women and children as he wished” (Lantis 1960:167 [no. 2]).

Ivanoff’s narrative about *Nayagnir* suggests additional reasons why he may have been feared by other Nuniwarmiut.

Nayaknik got a scar on the fore part of the right jaw, the upper lip is also [scarred]. Part of the cheek is also cut. The young man who later disappeared after that event had took a shot at him but eventually missed him a trifle. The latter was the son of a murdered father of whom Nayaknik had taken part. The trial on that murder case was taken in Nome, but Nayaknik was dismissed cause of evidence against him was not enough; but most natives there claimed he was one who did it. After since at Nome being tried in Court went home the natives claimed that he was different in his ways and very dangerous disposition which they saw they had to be very cautious in order to be on safe side. Very handy with his rifle and stocked well with ammunition. (Ivanoff 1922:1)

This account accurately describes *Nayagnir*’s appearance in 1924 (Fig. 3) and clearly indicates the shooting that led to his scars happened prior to 1923. Rasmussen’s description of the shaman follows:

His appearance alone was enough to create a sensation; among the well-dressed people, with fashionable shops on either hand and motor cars hurrying past, he looked like a being from another world. His little piercing eyes glared wildly around, his lower jaw hung down, swathed in a bandage half undone; a man had recently tried to kill him, and wounded him badly in the face. (Rasmussen 1999:382)

Ivanoff’s and Rasmussen’s quotes provide clues for answering two important questions related to *Nayagnir*’s earlier 1912 acquittal on the charge of murder: (1) If the Nunivak witnesses in that case refused to testify against him, why did they do so? (2) Why did the former deputy chief marshal of Nome believe *Nayagnir* had been murdered in 1912?

## blood revenge

Previous sources about the alleged murder(s) by *Nayagnir* reflect the perspectives of outsiders and the tenets of Western law, and failed to recognize that the Nuniwarmiut had their own system of law and social control. Among the Nuniwarmiut, when it came to murder, blood revenge was pursued. As Lantis (1946:249–250) explained:

The one social unit that passed judgment and meted punishment was the family. Just as the family was the economic unit, so it was the juridical unit. The community did not punish the murderer; the family of the victim did. Members of the victim’s generation, for example his brothers, were not normally the ones to avenge death. The eldest son of the murdered victim was taught from childhood that it was his duty to kill the murderer or possibly another man in the murderer’s family. Hence the offender felt reasonably safe until the boys of his victim’s family were grown. As for others in the community, they feared the murderer and avoided him as much as possible, yet lived and worked with him when necessary. (See also Nelson 1899:292–293)

No member of traditional Nunivak society was immune to blood revenge, including shamans, and “it was not possible to avoid revenge by any kind of payment to the offended group” (Lantis 1946:250). But whereas acts of blood revenge were typically carried out solely by the victims’ families, a more inclusive level of response could ensue if the murderer was a shaman. “It is interesting that here is the only situation in which the community as a whole or even a large part of it would decide that an individual should be eliminated, would plot and carry out his murder” (Lantis 1946:252).<sup>19</sup>

In this author’s opinion, the tradition of blood revenge provides the answers to both questions posed above. The witnesses at *Nayagnir*’s 1912 trial were “the murdered man’s widow and sons” (Thompson 1954:30–31). If they did refuse to testify against him, or did not specifically name him as the murderer, the family may have been determined to obtain vengeance on their own. I believe that sometime after *Nayagnir*’s release, the eldest son (*Nayirer*) tried to do so by shooting him, seriously wounding but not killing *Nayagnir*. When word eventually reached Nome that *Nayagnir* had been shot, it is easy to understand how people could have assumed he

was dead, especially given the seriousness of his injury. Ivanoff's (1922) statement that the young man who had shot *Nayagnir* "later disappeared" implies the shooter was himself killed by the shaman. The Revenue Cutter *Bear* reportedly went to Nunivak and unsuccessfully searched for *Nayagnir* in September 1918 (Ivanoff 1922), possibly in connection with the young man's disappearance. My identification of *Nayirer* as the young man who vanished after shooting *Nayagnir* is supported by his absence in both the 1920 and 1930 Nunivak censuses.

The fact that *Nayagnir* was still alive in 1923 suggests the family of the two victims either decided not to pursue blood revenge or was just patiently waiting for the right opportunity. But *Nayagnir* was not destined to be a victim of murder or blood revenge (cf. Amos 2018:105). Instead, while hunting from a kayak off Nunivak's north coast in June 1927, he speared a walrus and was drowned when the animal's tusks punctured his boat's skin cover (Miller 1927; see also Griffin 2004:112).<sup>20</sup>

### a link to oral tradition

*Nayagnir* was someone most people probably sought to avoid. The evidence, though primarily circumstantial, indicates he committed murder(s) on the island and possessed an aggressive, unpredictable, and cunning personality (Rasmussen 1999:382–384). Several accounts (Ivanoff 1922; Palmer 1922) suggest *Nayagnir* took pleasure in provoking people, sometimes pushing tense situations to the edge before backing off and allowing things to calm down. Given these attributes of his character—plus his status as a powerful shaman—his confrontations with and defiance of the Lomen Company's activities on Nunivak were not surprising. *Nayagnir* may have been the only Nuniwarmiut who openly opposed the Lomens in the early 1920s, but his threats to kill the company's reindeer may have reflected Nuniwarmiut beliefs connected to the disappearance of the island's indigenous caribou herd in the late 1800s. Local oral tradition holds that mistreatment of the animals by Native hunters from the mainland and St. Lawrence Island induced the remnant caribou herd to vanish into the ground (e.g., Pratt 2001:37–39). Mentioning this same belief, a report about Nunivak herding activities in 1929 recounts the following:

During this last roundup work Paul Ivanoff and my assistants who understand the Nunivak lan-

guage heard some of the older natives discussing the animals; one saying:

"You see that one. Him caribou. Come back out of ground. Now we hunt caribou."

To which another added: "Yes they just like picture my father draw and show me of caribou long ago."

The natives fail to recognize or else forget that the caribou landed there [on Nunivak] and turned loose in 1925 are the same animals now having grown to great size. And also that the blood of these animals has wrought the caribou appearance of animals in the herd. Their own superstitious ideas seem more logical to them. (Miller 1930:12–13)

## discussion and conclusions

*Nayagnir* was obviously a complicated and troublesome person, but he impressed Rasmussen (1999:384), who described *Nayagnir* as "curiously gentle and friendly toward" him and "a man accustomed to finding himself alone against a crowd, and with his own little tricks of self-defense." An ethnographer experienced in working with Indigenous peoples, Rasmussen was uniquely qualified to effectively interact with the shaman. He may also have been the first "white man" to show a genuine interest in *Nayagnir* as a person—someone he wanted to talk with and learn from. In contrast, "the law" in 1920s Nome perceived *Nayagnir* merely as a criminal and possibly crazy person; it also forbade him to speak.<sup>21</sup>

On the FTE, Rasmussen's central purpose was ethnographic, so the presence of Nuniwarmiut in Nome was for him a stroke of good fortune. It was equally serendipitous from my own standpoint, as someone who—nearly a century later—decided to research the obscure legal case that created the opportunity for Rasmussen to meet the Nuniwarmiut. Since the comments about *Nayagnir* in *Across Arctic America* brought the case to my attention, Rasmussen has unintentionally contributed to unraveling a mystery he did not know existed.

My ethnographic experiences with the people led me to believe that present Nuniwarmiut elders would have some awareness of the 1923–1924 events involving *Nayagnir*, but his story was unknown to them until they heard about it from me. When relating the story to my Nunivak friends Howard and Muriel Amos, I noted that

*Nayagnir* had drowned while hunting walrus off the island's north coast several years after his 1924 release from jail. Muriel promptly said that must account for why he had fathered only one child, well below the average for men of his generation.<sup>22</sup>

Their keen interest in the story inspired the Amoses to assist me by consulting with other elders to seek out any remaining information about *Nayagnir* in the Nuniwarmiut community. Although most responses were fragmentary, their efforts yielded intriguing details regarding his status as a shaman, particularly those contained in the quote below.<sup>23</sup>

[*Cupegniral'ria* (177A)] stated she has heard about *Nayagnir* when she was growing up, but never saw him personally. She stated that *Nayagnir* was her relative.... She stated that *Nayagnir* was sent to Nome on several occasions, and each time he would return to Nunivak Island on his own. As he was heading home from Nome, walking, leaving behind his footprints [they] changed into some animal tracks, possibly a wolf. [We were] wondering how he crossed the Etolin Strait during the winter when there was ice and water. Later, after thinking about it, she suspected that he might have flown across the Etolin Strait. She also indicated that [her] brother, *Aperyar* [90B], also had the ability to elevate and travel. (Amos and Amos 2019)

Another elder, *Arnaracung'ar* [7A], thought she remembered *Nayagnir* once telling her, "If I return as an animal [a wolf or another] strike me on my nose and I will return as a human being" (Amos and Amos 2019). Last, *Panigarkar* [401A] recalled her mother *Pantungan* [417A] saying that "*Nayagnir* carried a gun and hid in a ditch" (Amos and Amos 2019).

The scant knowledge about *Nayagnir* held by present Nuniwarmiut elders is comparable to what might be expected for an epidemic victim who left almost no family behind. Over the years, the memory of his unusual life and intense opposition to Western agents of change on Nunivak were lost to his people. This account about *Nayagnir* probably would never have been compiled if not for Knud Rasmussen's intellectual curiosity and the fortunate timing of his 1924 visit to Nome. By extension, even though the FTE never reached Nunivak Island, it should be recognized for indirectly helping to illuminate some early direct impacts of colonialism on the Nuniwarmiut.

## notes

1. Margaret Lantis (1960:vi) observed that "Nunivak was about fifty years behind Nome, Unalakleet, or Bethel in acculturation" when she began conducting anthropological research on the island in 1939. For further details about Nunivak's contact history see Griffin (2001, 2004), Lantis (1946, 1960), Pratt (1994, 1997, 2001, 2009) and VanStone (1989:1–7).
2. In English, "Ny-ahg-un-ick" is a reasonable phonetic pronunciation of *Nayagnir*. As previously explained (Ganley 1996), in the anthropological and historical literature the term "shaman" has been used and defined very inconsistently. Its usage in this paper follows Lantis (1946:200–203). Italicized Cup'ig place and personal names are spelled in accordance with the accepted Cup'ig orthography presented by Amos and Amos (2003).
3. This was acknowledged by Carl Lomen in the following quote: "There has never been any trouble [with the Nunivak people] except with one man that we thought was crazy, an Eskimo who had been shot through the jaw and had to keep a cloth about his head. He had killed two men, first the father and then the son. I thought he was insane. One year we kidnapped that Eskimo and brought him to Nome. Finally after he had been under observation for some days, the Doctor told me he was not crazy—he was foxy.... I really thought he was insane and I was partly instrumental in having that man kidnapped and brought to Nome" (U.S. Department of the Interior 1931:38–39 [Statement by Carl J. Lomen, fourth hearing of the Reindeer Committee, February 24]).
4. The equivalent amount in 2021 dollars is \$30,825. *Nayagnir* reportedly was advised of his right to make a statement but chose not to do so (State of Alaska 1923b).
5. In addition to confirming the date of the grand jury finding, a letter to Margaret Lantis from U.S. District Judge Joseph W. Kehoe (1948) of Nome said research by the court clerk indicated "Nynuganuk" had "No record of former arrest for crime [or] on insanity."
6. "Inuit" is a linguistic classification that applies to speakers of Inuit languages and dialects (e.g., Iñupiaq, Inuktitut, Kalaallisut); it does *not* apply to speakers of Yupik languages (e.g., Siberian Yupik, Central Yup'ik, Nunivak Cup'ig, Alutiiq). Today the term "Inuit" is often used to encompass all "Eskimo" peoples.



7. An interesting remark by Lantis is also relevant here. She reported that, even after Ivanoff had lived on the island for 20 years and spoken “Eskimo” with the people throughout, he was never aware of the Nuniwarmiut’s complex system of nicknames—because it was a “carefully hidden” system (Lantis 1946:237 n154).
8. These accounts also reveal that Lantis was not aware *Nayagnir* had been arrested and jailed in Nome on two separate occasions.
9. The quote that follows illuminates certain difficulties Lantis faced in her genealogical research among the Nuniwarmiut: “Because of the daily habit of teknonymy, free use of numerous nicknames, and reluctance to tell “real names,” to mention the deceased, or to talk about marriages that were disapproved, it was difficult to verify the genealogies. They were put together through a total of about fifteen months, with frequent rechecking of informants’ statements and of inadvertent revelations in other contexts” (Lantis 1960:ix–x).

Accurately determining individuals’ relationships to others was also complicated by the fact that sons traditionally inherited the “serious mutual aid partnerships” of their fathers (Lantis 1946:256, 262; 1960:114–116 [no. 13]); women and girls also had such partnerships (e.g., Lantis 1960:132 [no. 4]); and one man whose biography Lantis recorded stated he had serious partners of both sexes, having inherited the females from his mother and the partners’ mothers (Lantis 1960:122 [no. 66]). None of these partnerships are evident in genealogies. And: “Both men and women had a succession of marriages, three or four for most people, five or six for a few men” (Lantis 1946:159 n4).
10. The “personal numbers” shown in this table (e.g., 52A) were assigned to the individuals by Lantis (1960). She assigned personal numbers to all the named individuals in her genealogies, and they are the essential key to deciphering the associated genealogical charts (designated by Lantis as Genealogy I through Genealogy X). English names referenced to personal numbers are pseudonyms created by Lantis. To varying degrees, these features of Lantis’s genealogical work are incorporated in the expanded Nunivak genealogies presented by Muriel Amos (2018:vii–ix). At various places in the text, Cup’ig personal names are referenced to associated personal numbers as an aid to future researchers.
11. Personal numbers assigned by Lantis (1960) to the individuals named in this quote are as follows: *Mellaar* [“Lewis”] 308A; *Massualug* 325A; *Tanriag* 468A; *Pantung’an* [“Elizabeth”] 417A; *Nayagnir* 378C.
12. A March 1932 letter from Benjamin Mozee (reindeer superintendent) to the U.S. secretary of the interior touches on the Lomens’ power: “Soon after my arrival here Judge [Gudbrand] Lomen informed me that any government agent opposing them had always been dismissed or forced to leave the service” (U.S. Congress 1939:20102–20103). The family’s power was more broadly characterized by Daniel Sutherland as an “absolute political, commercial monopoly” (U.S. Department of the Interior 1931:41 [Statement by Delegate Daniel Sutherland, fifth hearing of the Reindeer Committee, March 5]).
13. The “Eskimo custom” referred to by Lopp was presumably banishment, a community action that might be taken in extreme cases to punish a murderer or inveterate troublemaker (Burch 1975:198; Ray 1975:247). It is unknown if the Nuniwarmiut practiced this custom.
14. No obvious kin relationship has been identified between the witness *Nayirer* and the elder son (*Nayirer*) of the man *Nayagnir* was accused of murdering in 1911–1912. Comparing Fig. 5 with a photograph in Amos (2018:77) convinced the author that *Qungurkar* (Tony [“Cook” 288C] in Lantis (1960:198 [Gen. IX, X]) was a seventh witness; current Nunivak elders later confirmed that identification. The witness *Nayirer* was the son-in-law of *Qungurkar* (Amos 2018:15; Lantis 1960:Gen. IX). Finally, comparing Fig. 5 with the FTE photograph shown on the Alaska-Chukotka Connections title page (*this issue*) verified the presence of Nunivak witnesses in the latter photograph, thereby proving that it was taken in Nome—not in Barrow, as previously indicated in the Danish Arctic Institute catalog.
15. His estimated age (35) in the 1920 census is an error: the 1930 census estimated *Naryartur*’s age at 61, and in 1946 he was reliably determined to be about 80 years old (Lantis 1960:3). In the 1920 census, his wife *Panigkiun* (“Amelia” 413B, in Lantis 1960:201 [Gen. V]) and a number of their children were enumerated with him.
16. This witness was misidentified by Sonne (1988:27) as a different individual: *Pugta’ur* 443A, in Lantis (1960:201 [Gen. V]). The mistake is understandable because she had to rely solely on the genealogical data compiled by Lantis (1960), who was unaware that

*Melurayaran* was also known as *Pugta'ur* (see Amos 2018:1, 103); the 1920 U.S. Census also was not yet available. Since *Pugta'ur* was *Nayagnir*'s "brother" (parallel cousin), it is also probable that he was responsible for the eight mask drawings previously attributed to *Naryartur* (see Sonne 1988:38–40). On a related point, the genealogical evidence (Amos 2018:1, 11; Lantis 1960:194–195, 198 [Gen. III]) indicates *Pugta'ur*/*Melurayaran* was a full-blooded Nuniwarmiut (cf. Sonne 1988:53–56).

17. According to an oral history account from Peter Smith Sr. (*Kalirmiu*), in the first decade of the 1900s *Cuukar* reportedly made summer trading trips to St. Michael and acquired supplies such as leaf tobacco and tea in sufficient quantities to satisfy the island's annual needs (Griffin 2004:92; Smith 1989). Similar information was evidently provided to anthropologist Molly Lee by Richard Davis (*Tekril'ngur*), a younger "brother" of Peter Smith Sr. But the article in which she presented that information (Lee 2000:6–7) probably overstates the actual extent of Nuniwarmiut trade at St. Michael prior to 1920 (see Lantis 1960:67 [no. 12], 69 [no. 12]; VanStone 1989:4, 39–40).
18. In testimony about the Lomens' actions against *Nayagnir*, E. B. O'Connor (U.S. Congress 1939:20111) asserted that the Nunivak witnesses at the 1924 hearing knew nothing about the alleged thefts by *Nayagnir* except for what Paul Ivanoff had told them.
19. There are at least two specialized words in Cup'ig that specifically link shamans and murder: *awulluksagute*- "to become aware of a shaman intending to kill people" (Amos and Amos 2003:57) and *ca-rayar*- "to attempt to murder (of a shaman)" (Amos and Amos 2003:74). In her research on Nunivak, Lantis (1946:202) heard of "one incident in which a shaman was shot. Whether the quarrel was purely personal or whether it had to do with the man's shamanistic activities could not be learned." She also was not told that the shaman in question was *Nayagnir*.
20. The circumstances of *Nayagnir*'s death are eerily similar to those of another shaman's that reportedly occurred 50 or more years earlier (see Curtis 1970:51–52).
21. I thank Pamela Holway for her contributions to several of the points made in this section.
22. Since the 1920 census estimated his age to be 41, however, other factors must also have contributed to his lack of progeny. That census also reported *Nayagnir* living at *Negermiut* with his wife ("Wesaar"

[*Nuss'an?*], 35), son ("Akkasg" [*Agoak*], 14), and daughter ("Kahortag" [*Qakurtar*], 12). Genealogical records indicate "Kahortag" was actually the child of *Nayagnir*'s brother's [*Caniiral'ria's*] daughter *Arnatqang* (Amos 2018:25, 27; Lantis 1960 [Gen. VII (14C, "Juliet")]). Presumably, *Qakurtar* had been adopted by *Nayagnir* and his wife. To confuse the matter further, *Qakurtar* is identified as female in the 1920 census and Lantis (1960:197 [Gen. VII (221A)]) but male in Amos (2018:25, 109).

23. Together with their Cup'ig names, the individuals mentioned in remarks about *Nayagnir* gathered by Amos and Amos (2019) are also referenced to the "personal numbers" assigned to them by Lantis (1960:193–202 [and Gen. I–X]) in her Nunivak genealogies.

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