

Brian Alleyne

Interviewed by Donna Coombs-Montrose & Don Bouzek (camera)

BA: My name is Brian C. Alleyne. The C is for Curtis.

Q: Tell me about yourself and where you were born.

BA: Well this last January I was 57. This last December I was 75, but I keep telling my children and my nephews and nieces I was 57. Their response was, now uncle, I think you switched the numbers. I'm so glad to know I'm a little dyslexic and not senile, because senility is what I'm running from. Anyway, I was born in Curacao. Now how did that happen? My mother was in transit from Aruba on her way home to visit her mother in Trinidad. On the way to the boat the car she was in was in an accident. She was seven months pregnant. It looked like nothing happened, but she did get a blow. When the boat pulled into the harbor she went into labor, so they had to take her off the ship and I was born in Curacao. Only time I have ever been in Curacao. Stayed there for three weeks because I was kept incubated and all that kind of stuff. I developed an abscess on the side of my head here where I got a blow. So they cut the abscess off and I stayed in hospital for three weeks, and I'm here to tell the story.

Q: Curacao is one of the...

BA: Dutch West Indies, yes – Curacao and Aruba and neighboring islands. They call them the Dutch West Indies -Curacao, Aruba, Suriname, St. Martin, those islands there.

Q: Where were your parents from?

BA: My parents are from Trinidad, both of them. Trinidad and Tobago. But they're just like me, they were adventurous. My father found himself working for Trinidad Leaseholds Limited (TLL), he was trained as an electrician in the refinery. My mother went to

Curacao, she was working with a family as a sort of an au pair, and that's where father met her and they got married in Curacao. But I only found out that recently.

Q: And now you're in Canada.

BA: That's it, I'm in Canada.

Q: When did you make Canada your home, and why? What brought you to Canada?

BA: Before coming to Canada I had gone to England for four years and I trained as a medical technologist specializing in biochemistry and microbiology. Antoinette was doing occupational therapy in London at the same time. Then we returned to Trinidad. We stayed a year after we were finished our programs and then we went back to Trinidad because in the meantime we had our first daughter, Glynes, born in London. Then we went home. We stayed home for one year. The amount of zigs and zags we got, I was communicating with all my friends. I had friends at UofToronto, at McGill and all that, so I was communicating with them by mail. The first thing my best man said to me, don't stay home there and rot. He says, come back out. He says, I know you can do well out here. We had done advanced levels together. He said, you'll do well out here. I used to get a magazine from the institute I was now a member of, and the advertised jobs all over the world, especially in Britain. I saw this job at the Royal Vic and I applied. Based on my training and experience, they hired me. So I just took that letter down to the Canadian embassy and in three weeks I had landed immigrant status for myself and Antoinette and my daughter. That brought me to Canada. That was in 1969. So we stayed in Montreal for 12 years and in that time I went to Sir George William University. I went to Sir George a year after the occupation at Sir George Williams.

Q: When was the occupation?

BA: It was '70.

Q: Did it have any impact on you?

BA: I was so close it wasn't funny. My buddy owned the restaurant next door, and that's where we prepared all the food. I was one of the guys preparing food for the guys who were in the sit-in, so that's as close as I got. That's basically it. Then I was in the very next physiology class that was formed, which was the site of the Sir George disturbance; I was in that class. Sir George is really what they call the bastion of racism. They had this professor who taught physiology and he just didn't want the little black boys to get out of hand. He knew all the little black boys how were in science doing physiology, their goal was to go to medical school. He said he was a self-appointed gatekeeper, and he gave nobody in that room more than a C. These were guys who were pulling down As and Bs in everything else. But when they to into physiology they're getting a C. You know if you go to Med school and you present with a C, it's no good. I was in the class the next year with Professor Abbot who took over that class, and I was in the next class. So it was a class under a microscope. I came out with a B out of Abbot's class, so I was ok.

Q: So that whole experience had an impact on you?

BA: It had a very big impact on me. I knew a lot of the guys, most of the guys were in residence there and I knew them. As a matter of face, my friend who is now a physician today, he was one of those guys who was agitating against getting a C because he was a very bright guy. But when he wanted to go on the sit-in the guys told him, you stay out. He had just opened a restaurant with a friend, right next door to Sir George. It was called Caribbean Coal Pot. I came to Montreal alone, I'd left my family in Trinidad. I spent most of my evenings in the Cool Pot just hanging out with my buddy. So I did everything – I helped cook, wash, serve, the works. That was my introduction to Montreal.

Q: So it was a gravitation to students like yourself from the Caribbean?

BA: From the Caribbean. I met so many guys I went to school with. Sir George had at least 12 guys who I knew, if not at Queen's Royal College, at St. Mary's. But most of them were in commerce, they were doing B.Coms. Most of those guys are at McGill or Sir George universities now, but they were fellows that I knew. One guy who grew up right in the same alley with me, Jeffrey Gellineau, he was one of those guys who was there too.

Q: What brought you to Edmonton?

BA: After living in Montreal, first of all I was trying to go to, my goal was to go to medical school when I came to Canada. I went to McGill with my British training and I asked whether they'd give me credit for it and they told me no. That has a story with it too; I'll tell you in a minute. So I said, look, I can't waste any time, so I enrolled at Sir George and did a B.Sc in BioChem as my major and Comparative Anatomy as my minor. I got going with that so I finished that. When I left Sir George I was hired by Frank W. Horner the day after I graduated from school. I applied and as soon as they looked at my background they were looking for somebody just like me. They had a, Frank W. Horner is the company that makes Graval, it's a pharmaceutical firm. They were just in the process of putting out two new products controlling blood sugar. But they cannot release the drugs until they have done what they call bioviability studies, and they wanted somebody to pick up that research. The guy who was in charge of bioviability studies was due for his vacation and they told him he couldn't have his vacation, because they wanted to finish the bioviability studies and have the results to Ottawa. It was all part of the process for approving the drugs. I had a strange experience. I put my application in at Frank W. Horner on a Thursday. The Sunday night the human resource officer came to my home and asked me if I would come for an interview on Monday. When that happened I said, Antoinette, I'll be working next week. He saw my background, he saw what I did. So I went to Frank W. Horner. I came in, and most of these guys who were doing recovery studies, the best recovery they were getting was 85%. The first batch they gave me to do I had a 90% recovery. They said I made a mistake. I said, no I didn't make a mistake. . . .

[Sir George...] Do you know it was one of the things National Film Board never tackled. It's being done now. Selwyn is doing it, he's the producer. He had the idea 45 years ago. It took him 45 years to get to it. He said it's something he always wanted to do. He got the opportunity last year, 45 years later.

So what they did next was they took pure standards and they gave me then to recover. I had a 95% recovery. Then I told them, listen, I can tell you why you are not getting better recoveries than you did. They said, what do you mean? There's a flask called an Erlenmeyer flask, it's shaped like a cone and it's used for separating organic solvents. They were using it like that and shaking it like that. When you do that it gets froth. Some of the substance gets trapped in the froth. The correct way to use the Erlenmeyer flask is in a circle. I knew that, I worked in a lab and used all this equipment. So I actually taught them how to use the Erlenmeyer flask, and everybody's recoveries went up. Right away they told the guy, Roland, whose vacation was suspended, you can go on your vacation, this guy can do the job. So that's it. I stayed with Horner for one year and I left.

Q: Horner was in Montreal?

BA: In Montreal, this was all in Montreal. Still talking about my Montreal experience. So that was Montreal, that was in my fourth year in Montreal. I had gone back to Sir George and did a full undergraduate majoring in biochem. My fellowship in medical technology got me nothing at McGill. I had a strange experience. I was in the biochemistry lab and a little English guy came in and said, I know you. He says yes, we were in microbiology at Thomas Smith together. I said, really? I said, what you doing here? He said, I'm just finishing a masters. I said, what? He left London with a professor to open a microbiology lab in Uganda. That professor then came to McGill to head up the microbiology department, and he brought him with him. So his credentials were accepted, he got into graduate school at McGill, and he only had an associateship, and I had a fellowship and they told me no credits for it. That's another part of the immigrant experience. But when I met him and he told me this I said, what? I told him the story and he said, you gotta be crazy. He said, they accepted my MLS and I did a masters, finished a masters and worked in microbiology with the guy I came from Uganda with him. He is

now a professor at Memorial University. I've met him. I felt I was shortchanged. I wasted, not I wasted, but I had to spend three years picking up an undergraduate when I should've gone on. But if you don't mind digressing, if you wanna hear how funny things are.... I go to McMaster to do a masters, I subsequently went to McMaster and did a masters in epidemiology. One day they said, have you been up to the biochem lab? I go up to the lab. Tony Bailey, the guy who was my classmate when I was doing my biochemistry in England, and he was in charge of the lab at McMaster University. What was he doing? He was just trying to get into the same masters degree I'm doing, he was just auditing the first year to come in and do it. So I said, twice, look at that. So anyway, that's part of my immigrant history story. So I met Tony, and Tony and I were very good friends. We went to school every day, we did night school, we did the biochemistry training at Kent. We used to drive out there, sometimes it's ??????. So I know Tony very well. When I met him he asked me what I'm doing. I told him, I said, I'm not trying to get a masters in that program and look we end up the same place. Then I told him the story how I went to get there. No regrets, but that's the experience I had. So that's what I did. So I worked at McMaster, I did a masters degree. I left my home in Montreal and moved to Hamilton and took two years to do my masters, left my wife and kids. I used to go home every three weeks. Every second week I went home and when I was writing my thesis I went home every third week, weekend. So that's it. So I did the trek. When I finished that, the first day I was Mc, the guy who was my preceptor for the major course at McMaster University was Dr. Walter Spitzer. He was my preceptor for the design I was doing. He got to know me very well. When I went to see him I walked in and he said, do you have an idea what you're gonna do for your design? I said yes, I said I just found it on your table outside. He had a table with lots of papers. The focus of the McMaster program that I did was using epidemiological methods, you had to learn epidemiology, but the focus was to use those methods for evaluating healthcare systems. That was the purpose of the program. I saw a paper that dealt with trying to develop a complete diet for newborn babies that could be given intravenously. The three food groups are protein, carbohydrates and fats. They succeeded in finding protein that could be given intravenously safely. Carbohydrates okay. But they had never succeeded in getting a lipid that completed the diet. I saw this paper that was talking about the things

that people were trying. What had happened the first time they attempted to extract lipid they used cottonseed. That is what created the problem why it failed on this side of the world, because in the cottonseed shell is a toxic substance. When they give the babies the lipid, they all died. But they didn't know that. Across the pond the Europeans, Scandinavians, used soybean and prepared a lipid and it was working. So then that made them look closely at why was the lipid from cottonseed not working, and that was it. So I designed a randomized control trial to determine the efficacy of intra-lipid for feeding newborns. One of the things that was happening at McMaster when I was there, that was just the point where the scientific community decided they could not introduce new things into medical practice by just using it and it works. But after thalidomide they realized they can't do that anymore. Thalidomide was a very successful drug to prevent morning sickness, but they didn't do the long term follow through. It worked a hundred percent. All women who took thalidomide, their morning sickness was cured. But the babies were affected, they were born without limbs, limb buds. So a lot of the babies were born without hands or without legs. So after that, any new intervention coming in had to meet the standard, which was a randomized control trial, and that's what I designed. So I got to know Walter Spitzer very well. I tell you all that because at the end of my first year he moved to Montreal and became the head of the department of epidemiology. I finished my Masters degree and I came back and my phone rings one day. Walter? Yes. I hear you're back in Montreal, what are you doing? I said, I'm looking for a job. He said, come and see me. Next day I was working at McGill. He knew me and he picked me up right away. That led to a very interesting and exciting experience I will never forget. Walter hired me to coordinate a study in northwest Quebec. It was the first time that an epidemiological study was used as part of a legal defense. The Crees in northwest Quebec were attempting to sue Domtar for polluting their waterways and damaging their lifestyles. In Quevillon, which is 400 km from Val d'Or, there was a paper mill town, the only thing there was a paper mill. They used a strange alkaloid plant and one of the electrodes has some mercury. The Crees were ready to sue Domtar, claiming that they were damaging their waterways. Domtar hired McGill department of epidemiology to conduct an epidemiological study. The design of the study was very simple, case control. They looked at all the Crees who lived close to the mill. We had a

questionnaire in Cree and we had blood samples and hair samples taken and they had a full neurological examination. Then when we finished doing the Crees close to Val d'Or, to Quevillon, we then went miles away to where Crees live in Senital and did the same studies on the Crees, same number of controls. For every person we did, we did 200 and something in Quevillon, we did 200 something in Senital, to show that anything we are seeing is worse closer to the pulp mill or further from the pulp mill. But one of the things that we did for that particular investigation was we spent a weekend in Beaumont developing a protocol when we were going into the bush for the study. We had neurologists from McGill, neurologists from McMaster University – it was McMaster-McGill joint study. I was hired by Walter to coordinate the study. When I say coordinate the study, I did everything under the sun, even cooking for my crew. It was that kind of study. When we first went up to Quevillon there was a logging camp, and I did all the things I learned on the go. When I got there and I went to the hospital, the person in charge of that hospital was a nun. The nun, I walked up and I said to her, I'm from McGill and I'm going to bring two Atco trailers up and I would like to put it at the back of your hospital. I want to arrange for an electrician to come and run power, and that's where we're going to run our clinics from. There was a kitchen right at the back of the hospital and that's where we could feed all the clients from that the morning. I had to buy all the equipment from California. I had to figure out what's needed to do a neurological examination. I had to hire the staff, and particularly I had to hire two nurse practitioners. We got one from Canada and we couldn't find another one who was available. But somebody knew of a nurse practitioner who was trained at McMaster but had to go back to Massachusetts. I hired her; I phoned her and hired her. But here's what I found out. When I went to Quevillon into where the kitchen or dining room where they would eat, they had a cordon bleu chef from Paris. This guy, to keep his skills up, used to go pick blueberries and make fresh blueberry tarts and all this kind of thing. My kids feasted on that. When I went up to Quevillon I told Walter, I said Walter, I have a family, I can't be up here in the bush from July to September, I've gotta go home on weekends. He said, we can arrange that. But when I got up there and I saw there were empty cabins and there was a big kitchen with a chef cooking I called Walter and said, let's change the plan, I'm gonna bring my family up. So Antoinette and the kids came up and spent the whole



summer in the cabins there, fed in the kitchen. They put a steak on the plate for the men that could feed my three children. The guys were well looked after. But I tell you all that because what did I find out? That was a pipeline to get chefs for the hotels in Montreal. You bring them in because you advertise for a chef in Val d'Or. If you had advertised for a chef in Montreal proper it would be difficult to bring him in, you have to pick from chefs in Montreal. But if you advertise in Val d'Or, after three weeks and nobody applying they let you go overseas to fill it. I used the same technique to bring the girl from Massachusetts. So that's how I learned everything. I hired staff, I brought the trailers up, I coordinated everything, I set everything up.

Q: How long did you stay in Montreal?

BA: Twelve years, we lived in Montreal for 12 years. But I tell that study, it was an important part of my life coming straight out of McMaster. When I came out of the bush a lawyer came and handed me a letter. I was not allowed to talk about this study, report anything to anybody. The letter was a sort of a muzzle basically. But the plus side of it, I was the person, if we go to Court I was the person who was going to have to get up in court and provide what they call continuity of evidence. I knew where the samples were taken, I knew where they were after they were taken, and I delivered them to the specialist measuring the samples in London. I was the guy who did that. I went to London, I went to Sweden as well out of that, because I was the guy who was jockeying the specimens. The hair samples were analyzed in London. Domtar was also very interested in acid rain and acidification of the lakes, so we went and saw the consultant, the guy who was specializing in doing work with that in Sweden too. So it was a wonderful time for me, took over a year. I spent from, I was in the busy period from July until the end of September. The study was published subsequently, there was no problem. There was one little bit of protocol. If we found anything wrong with anybody that needed urgent attention, we were to pack them up and send them to Montreal General and have it attended to. The first guy that we found a serious problem with was the head of the Cree's father, Billy Diamond. His father was an out of control diabetic. To make a long story short, the symptoms that the Crees were experiencing had nothing to do with

mercury poisoning, it was out of control diabetes. Mercury poisoning has a lot of symptoms that resemble those that are associated with chronic diabetes – particularly the neurological sensitivity in your fingers, loss of feeling and things like that, then the thorough examination that they do. That's exactly what they do looking for mercury poisoning. So he was a classical case, he was an out of control diabetic. We flew him down, it took a week to control his blood sugar, stabilize him, send him back home. But the best moment for the whole survey, I had a team of 40 staff and I have never seen people so nervous the first morning when we were just set up and we were waiting for the Crees to come in to participate in this study. Billy Diamond walked in with the whole band of natives with him. Oh by the way, we were never to use the word natives, that was one thing. We always called them First Nations. They all came. Billy Diamond came up to me and gave me a high five, hi brother, and everybody exhaled. The rest is history. But anyway, that was an exciting experience I had. So I came to Montreal, I worked in Montreal. I ended up at Dawson College back into biochemistry again. I was a clinical instructor at Dawson College, and I did that for three years.

Q: That was part of the 12 years?

BA: Yes it was. But all in the meantime I was applying to medical schools. I got accepted, I was short listed at Buffalo and McMaster. I was short listed at McMaster for two years. Every time I was not picked they told me it was because of my age. I was 28 when I was applying to medical school for the first time and they said, too old, too old, too old. But after I was short listed the second time at McMaster, Fraser Mustard wrote me a letter with a pen by hand and he told me I was batting for you, I was on the committee and tried to select you twice; I like your background. If you give up going to medical school, why not come to McMaster and do a graduate program at McMaster? We have these fantastic programs. We have a new program called epidemiology which is a postgraduate medical and you qualify to come in. I applied to McMaster and that's how I did epidemiology. So I stayed at Mc and did the epidemiology and went back to Montreal. While I was working at McGill I was working on what we call soft money, that is, I was an associate assistant professor. Assistant professor meant that my position is

predicated on if we get money, you're on. You apply for grants, you get, you're on. I said, well I can't live that way, I have a family, I want to get in a solid program. So I started looking again and I saw a position in Alberta advertised and I applied. The same day that they offered me the position in Alberta as epidemiologist for the department of occupational health and safety, the same day Walter succeeded in getting me moved up to become an associate prof. I had the two letters in my hand; I chose Alberta. That's why I'm here, that's what brought me to Alberta. That was in '78.

Q: When you came to Alberta did you come directly to Sherwood Park?

BA: Yes, I was the vanguard. I came in November and my job was to find somewhere for my family to live and my children to go to school. I had a fantastic realtor, her name was Regina Mashinski. Every morning this lady used to come up in her little Mustang and pick me up. Everybody in the building – I was staying on 105<sup>th</sup> – they thought this woman was dating me. Every Saturday morning she'd pick me up and we'd go out and spend the day. But she was showing me properties in Blue Quill, in St. Albert, and we came to Sherwood Park. Very nice and I knew her husband, he worked in my department, he worked in occupational health and safety. That's how I got to know Al Mashinski. In the end we narrowed it down and I said I wanna choose Sherwood Park. I didn't like St. Albert one way into the city. You're driving in the morning you're driving into the sun, you're going home in the evening you're driving into the sun. I didn't like that, so I said it's Sherwood Park for me. I chose Sherwood Park. I went to the schools. My eldest was registered at Sherwood High, I registered her there. I registered my second daughter at Pine Street. I found a daycare for my son, Mt. Cakes, by the church. I bought a townhouse in Great Oaks – 114 Great Oaks. I had them deliver all the appliances, because we needed new appliances. I knew I needed a new bed for my daughter; I bought the bed so I had a new bed and four new appliances in the house, and I moved in. I gave up my apartment. So I was in this big empty place, and I bought a little black and white TV. That was where I stayed until the family came in July the next year.

Q: Did you find Sherwood Park a welcoming place?

BA: Very welcoming, very much so. I had an objective when I came to Sherwood Park. I'd been around in Montreal long enough and when I came to Sherwood Park I had said to Antoinette, I want to get involved with some kind of committee in Sherwood Park, on some board or something. I wanted to understand how the system works. I realize there was a system in Montreal but when you're not involved you know nothing about the system. So I joined the FCSS board. I served on the board for one year and they made me chairman the next year.

Q: What is FCSS?

BA: Family and Community Social Services. I served on that board and then the mayor was terminally ill after my first year chairing the board. They don't normally have a chairman running for two years, but the mayor came and asked me if I would stay on for a second year. So I served on the FCSS board for two consecutive years. But what I did learn, I learned the system – how municipal boards operate, the resources that are available to organizations. That is the key thing I wanted to find out. I only wanted to find that out for my own interest. In the meantime, Selwyn picks me up and tells me he's moving to Vancouver and he would like me to come and serve on the Cariwest board. That's how I got involved in Cariwest. But I said to Selwyn, look how funny this is. I just found out how the system works from chairing FCSS for three years, and they put me on Cariwest. I got involved with Cariwest, which allowed me to look at what Cariwest was doing and not doing, and to be able to help them. But after I was on the board one year Selwyn left for Vancouver and then I became the chairman and I served as chairman for nine consecutive years. I was in my tenth year when I left. I left because my wife decided to do overseas consulting. Ralph Klein was pruning the civil service and every department that had the name service attached to it was at risk of being chopped. I was in the medical services branch that was cut. I took a package. My wife's firm wanted me to join them. I told them, not for local work but I'll go overseas. We did overseas consulting from that day until I retired fully a couple years ago. So we traveled a lot doing healthcare consulting.

Q: When Selwyn encouraged you to join the Cariwest board, what position did you have?

BA: Just as a board member.

Q: This was when?

BA: 1990 or '91, either '90 or '91. I could confirm the exact date for you, but I'd have to check.

Q: So between you and Selwyn and other board members, did you make changes in Cariwest?

BA: How that came about, well Cariwest, the Edmonton community has a lot of resources. At Grant MacEwan they had what they called board development courses. When I was thrown in as chairman I took advantage of that. I got the board to sit down, a woman and two men, they came and they did an assessment of the board, what the responsibilities of a board are. They looked at the bylaw and it needed some work. That was the first place we identified. We had no clear mission statement, no clear objectives. We had a bylaw but it needed working up. So that's where I was able to help develop some structure for the organization, because we worked extensively on the bylaws. Has he seen a copy of the bylaws? Well if he hasn't, he should. That's it, but there have been one or two minor changes, but I think the bulk of the bylaws are still here. Yes this is it. So we developed the mission and objectives, that was a key thing – I chaired the board that moved them on to that. I had a good idea what was going on. So then I turned my attention to trying to find funding for Cariwest. I applied, the first time I applied to Alberta Foundation of the Arts, they said we are not a festival. I wrote several letters and made several presentations to argue that we are a festival. I said, the one thing I'd realized by that time in Edmonton, downtown was a very active theatre, the Citadel. I enjoyed a lot of theatre. I'll tell people, Athol Fugard, the guy who wrote Master Harold and the

Boys, he's a South African playwright. Every single play that he wrote I saw right at the Citadel live, and I enjoyed it a lot. But I argue that it's a theatre town. If you look at my festival, the main argument I had for them, I said, you look at Cariwest. We have the three elements of theatre: we have costume, we have music, we have dance. As far as I'm concerned, we have three elements that I think would feed the theatre community here, because it's costume, the three elements of theatre. After that and when I applied the next year we got our first grant from Alberta Foundation of the Arts. One of the things I'd made a decision and insisted that the board do, stop calling us just a carnival. We are Edmonton Caribbean Arts Festival. Since we were Cariwest everything was just a carnival, so after that you see in the bylaws where we're Edmonton Caribbean Arts Festival, because I had to stick the name festival in now to get them. I realized we also had a problem with the word carnival. One year we were trying to advertise for Cariwest. The AMA had a carnival, the Eskimo team had a carnival – all occurring at the same time using the word carnival. Here we are at Cariwest trying to advertise Cariwest carnival. So we couldn't call ourselves Caribana but we were looking for a name that we could substitute for something like Caribana. So once I made the decision we were a festival, I wanted the name. I had a friend who I met, he lives just down the road here, he owns a print shop. I spent time with him and we went through. First of all we had to choose a name, and when you choose a name you have to go through the register and see there's not the same name that's being used somewhere else. The first name we chose, and I went to his place and we chose it – we chose Carifest. We were told we couldn't use that name, it was already used by a group in Montreal, Carifest. So I sat down with Emil and we looked at what names we could come up with. There was a competition for two names – Carijam and Carifest, Cariwest. It was Carijam and Cariwest. I chose Cariwest. The reason why I avoided Carijam, I said you know what will happen, if we call it Carijam the Jamaicans will say it's theirs. I chose Cariwest because it was a contraction of carnival and the west, and that's how the name Cariwest came about. Cariwest is not copyrighted but it's a brand. The brand Cariwest should only be written in minstrel font, and it's fire engine red. If you're using those two colors and the font, that is the brand, Cariwest, which is carnival in the west. You'll see in the bylaws that we stated that the intention was to hold a festival like Caribana in Edmonton called Cariwest. We got it into the

bylaws because all that came together at the same time. But that's how the name came about. The reason why I chose to try to get members to think of Cariwest, not as a carnival only but it's Caribbean Arts Festival. We have a lot of Caribbean arts that feed into carnival.

Q: Why is that important to you?

BA: The arts? Because we have a lot of Caribbean art. My thinking was at the time, somewhere somehow we could end up showing off Derrick Wolcott's work. Look at how much theatre in Edmonton. One good day we could start doing Caribbean arts. Derek Walcott has a play called *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, fantastic play. There's so many different things that comes out of the Caribbean that could end up and serve us through. The other thing that I found out as I had started writing grant applications, there was always a focus on what is Cariwest. What I tried to point out to them, Cariwest is a, the focus of Canadian government is to promote multiculturalism. I think that I felt and I promoted that Cariwest is an excellent vehicle for fostering the merging of cultures. This was me and my naïve narrowed thinking working here, but that's what I was thinking. Then I had an opportunity to go to a conference in Connecticut. Tony Hall, the old buddy, was very active in that. The University of Connecticut was attempting to stage a carnival, and the purpose of the carnival was a vehicle for community development. When I heard that I said, what? That's exactly what I've been telling them all the time here. But it is a natural vehicle that fosters different cultural backgrounds to come together; it fosters that. you don't need to be a member of, you don't need to love jazz to come and play in Cariwest. You don't have to like folk music to play in Cariwest. You just like a good time, you come to Cariwest. It's a fun thing. You come in, you enjoy the music, you enjoy the food, you come to Churchill Square once a year, you don't need to rotate, you taste Caribbean dishes. Caribbean food becomes exposed, people get to know about Caribbean foods, they know about different cultural aspects. But I'll tell you what blew my mind when I saw what they were trying to do in Connecticut. They set up in a square and first of all the Irish group came and played a jig and they danced. They had different cultures coming and doing a demo of what their culture base is, and this was all

going to culminate with a carnival, a parade around that same square Saturday morning. Two things happened. The last thing they were going to do was in the square that night was a steel band. There were a lot of West Indians on Connecticut or people involved with the carnival living in Connecticut, so they had a steel band ready to play. The steel band played one tune and as they were starting the second tune the police came and shut them down. Bylaws for the square, after 10 o'clock no noise in the square. We were after 10, the steel band came on after 10. So they didn't do their homework and do that, so that was the first oops they had. People didn't get to enjoy the jump up, because the next tune they were going to play with a big jump up; they didn't get that. The next morning they were parading around the square outside of the square, and they were halfway through and the police stopped them. Where's your permit? They didn't get a permit for putting a parade on the street. The police were very understanding. The police said, if you want to stay on the sidewalk around the square you can. They didn't just close it down. So the parade was just held along the square on the outside. But I point that out because the next morning on Sunday morning they had a postmortem of the carnival. I hogged the floor because nearly every question or issue that came up, I told them we had solved that problem in Edmonton already. When I came back to Edmonton there's a magazine called "So You're Going to Carnival". I wrote a story, a piece, together with Gene Waldrun, who was the president at the time, and we submitted it to the magazine and it was printed. I have a copy of the magazine I can give you to take with you when you're going. But I'll tell you for example when I got up to start off with they asked, what was your postmortem. I said, let me tell you. You made two mistakes. You didn't do your homework about the square and the noise bylaw, and you didn't go and get a street permit. I said, we have a carnival in Edmonton in August and we have the permit for the street January. When we went to 124<sup>th</sup> Street we used 124<sup>th</sup> Street square, that square in the back on 127<sup>th</sup> Street. We realized it was going to be a problem because a lot of people live close to the square. So one of the things we did is we had a leaflet we dropped in every mail box alerting the people there's going to be some inconvenience, there's going to be traffic, parking might be a problem on that day. So we sensitized the people so they'd be aware because all these people coming with all the music and making all this noise and you can't get nowhere to park, you get the mumblings. So we anticipated that.



Q: Why would that be an issue in that environment?

BA: It's that something new. It's noisy. They're not accustomed to seeing so many people at that little square with a big steel band coming in and crowds in costumes. So we anticipated it was going to be disruptive. I was going to point out that that is anticipating and being aware of the milieu you're working in, make the people aware. What are we really going to say? Some people find our music noisy and loud but we can't do anything about that, that's part of the carnival.

Q: So jumping up is significant to you?

BA: Well they're jumping up talking about that. One of the discussions came up and they asked, why do we have to go on the street and do this parade? I learned from that discussion. Carnival or the whole carnival experience is, as Chalkdust calls it, a ritual of rebellion. That's what carnival is. The steel band emerged out of rebellion in the sense that after the war, World War II. . .

After the war they didn't want any parades on the street, we had unrest. Remember you still had your residues of freed slaves and they had banned drums. The people were so inventive. When they banned the drum they took bamboos and cut them to different lengths, and that started what they called tamboo bamboo. Have you ever seen a tamboo bamboo band? Well I was lucky where I live in Belmont outside The Savannah on Jerningham Avenue I saw a bamboo tamboo band. Then if you're parading on the street and you have a dustbin and you want something to beat, you should take the dustbin and run with it. So this idea of taking something just to get rhythm, that was part of the jump up on the street. But what I discovered in the discussions, taking to the streets is an act of rebellion of trade unions. That is what I learned in Connecticut. Taking to the streets and demonstrating is a, finally I'm gonna show you, I have a right to demonstrate and vent my feelings on the road. So when you think of how carnival came about in the sense that carnival as we know it in Trinidad mimicked their masters. They saw their masters used to have the costume balls and the minute they start they can parade on the street and play

their music and put on costumes like a mas, but they embellish it and mix it with their African beliefs. Africans have a lot of fertility rites that they go through. In Egypt for example, they have a fertility rights dance that takes place in Egypt just before the growing season. But what is unique about that is men dress as women. Not only do they dress as women, they emphasize a big bump as if they're pregnant. But it's a fertility dance and that was an African thing. I used to always wonder why so much men always trying to play women on carnival day. A lot of men dress like women, but that was a bit of the African thing. When I read about it, that's a festival they have in Egypt, and men dressed like women. Everything that has a phallic symbol, that's part of the thing. But that's what it was. What I'm saying is that in Trinidad carnival as we know it, they were imitating the oppressors. Why I can use the word oppressors is because while I was running Cariwest I made friends with the people who run the German carnival. They invited me to the German carnival, reception at the German club on 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue. When I saw what went down there, Donna, I could pick out all the pieces of our carnival in the German carnival. The German carnival is a carnival, it is a carnival like ours. But they were imitating their oppressors, which are the Prussian army. So you see all the women in these beautiful little bikinis but they were in a jacket that has epaulets like an army costume. Their emphasis is to take pieces of what the oppressors had and to wear it in their carnival, so I saw that. The next thing I was shocked when I came out, a guy came out, he's a town crier, but what is he doing? He is talking about all the comments, all the things that happen in society during the past year. That's exactly what a calypsonian does. When I started seeing all these pieces I said, it's funny how these little pieces that are present in the German carnival I could go and identify in the Trinidad carnival. But we don't have a town crier, we have the calypsonian who will sing and tell you all the comments that occurred in the year. I'm here in Canada and if I want to know what comments are now in Trinidad I'll wait until the Calypso Tent and I'll listen to it and all the scandal that went on. It still exists, it's still alive, it's still a means of communication. So the carnival, the music, the costume and dance, and the sense that people who are oppressed always tend to parody their oppressors – that's basically what I saw. Why do you think we have king and queen? Because they used to see the masters in these beautiful balls. If you think about it, why do we have a king and queen in a band?

Because it's the biggest piece in the band that they spend a lot of time on and one represents male and one represents female. That's what they used to see, imitating the masters again. So that's why I say carnival as it is, is a ritual of rebellion. Chalkdust has one of those that when you hear him talk about it, you know when you see women whine and how they'll be whining? Chalkdust tried to find an explanation for that. Chalkdust says that is the ultimate of women demonstrating their freedom. Cuz remember, the slave masters used to rape these women. What they're doing when they're gyrating and carrying on is saying, see when you used to rape me you didn't used to get no whining, but I'm free now, look what you couldn't get. That is Chalkie's explanation of why you have these women like to show of their sexuality when they're playing costumes. That's what has come down in our carnival and that's from Chalkie. I heard Chalkie say that and I was so amused, I thought that was so funny. But it makes sense. So those are some of the things if I have the thread I'm trying to share with you how I move in Cariwest.

Now to come back to Cariwest, so the things I felt I had a significant role in doing Cariwest – the bylaws, which give us a foundation, and a mission statement and a clear sense of what it is we're trying to do with this organization. The reason I was most happy that we had a clear set of objectives in Cariwest, when there was a hurricane in Jamaica everybody thought Cariwest should be taking the lead role in addressing that. I said, no, let the community do that. Cariwest does not exist to be the organ to do that, to help somebody. We can all give as individuals but that's out our mission and if we try to do everything for the Caribbean we will lose our focus and stick to our mission and objectives. Any time you find something new, does it fit into our mission and objectives? It does yes, if it doesn't no. That's how I operated, so it helped me that way. . . . I'm just going to try and give you the things that I've had others challenge with Cariwest, and the result. The first was the bylaws.

Q: I have a couple of questions in relation to that. I know under your mentoring Cariwest spent a couple years or at least one in Mill Woods.

BA: Two, two under my watch.

Q: Then it moved to 124<sup>th</sup> Street. What was the rationale for moving it?

BA: I will have to admit my role. I was a manager in the government service. I was president of Cariwest. The president's role is to lead. I was lucky, very lucky. I had a very good relationship with the guy who runs the Folk Fest, Terry Wickham. I had a very, very good relationship with Terry Wickham. I also had a very good relationship with a guy who ran the Fringe at the time. He's left, he went to Toronto. But anyway, I got to know some of the people who run the other festivals. I was never afraid to ask, how do you do this? I found out we weren't the only ones using, that's when I came to Churchill Square, but that's a different story. But I had a good relationship with Terry Wickham. I said to Terry, Terry, I have this festival that takes place in Mill Woods. I would like you to come down, have a look at it, and tell me how I could tweak it to get it to grow. He said, okay I'll come on Saturday and have a look. In the meantime, Glynes, my eldest daughter, was doing an MBA at Queens. She went to Queens right after the year she got married and had to leave her husband here because he was at U of A becoming a physiotherapist. So she went to Queens and did her MBA but she was doing everything she could so she was only going to spend one year in Kingston, that's the first year. When she went to Kingston in the first year she did every core course that's done at Queens and started looking for any extra. She needed two more courses – she needed a research topic and she needed one more course. She found out that U of A had a course in public administration that was not given by Queens, so she asked if she could do that here. The research project she did, she and a classmate designed a financial plan for a band in Winnipeg. So after her first year she was back home here because she could go to Winnipeg and meet the other guy and they would do the project, then she was going to U of A to do that. So one day she's talking to me and she says, we have a challenge, dad. I said, what? She says, there's a prof wants us to find a community group and develop a strategic plan for them. Or if we can't do that, create some dummy data and support it with a strategic plan for some organization. So I said to her, but Glyn, Cariwest is a community organization, want to use Cariwest? She said, I'll talk to my group. There were five students working as a team of five MBA students. They said, that sounds great.

So as chairman I went to the board and told them, there's these five students and I want to give the permission to use Cariwest and to develop a five year strategic long term plan. Number one recommendation when they were finished, but of course the first thing is they said we need a better financial system to keep monitoring our finances and all that. So that we did. But their recommendations, the first recommendation they give, we should consider re-siting the festival downtown. When I met Terry Wickham after he said, you've got a dynamite product, Brian, move it downtown. Congruency. The key recommendation was to move it downtown. As Terry Wickham says, you cannot take a subway and go to Mill Woods to go and see that. Downtown anywhere people will come from everywhere to come downtown where they can get to where the parade is gonna be and they can see the parade. But Mill Woods does not provide you with that. Not only that, every year for the two years I was in Mill Woods people complained we were making too much noise on the streets and they kept pushing us further and further onto little backstreets. So when they did that the second year I went to City Hall. I went to City Hall and said, it's a parade. We had a parade last year, now you want to put us way in the back where nobody gonna see us. The mayor was out of town at the time and the deputy mayor came and she opened the parade. They put us back on the street where we were the year before. The main thing why I wanted us to stay there is because we came through and came around Millborne Shopping Centre, and that was the perfect place to end the parade. But they wanted to put us in the little back street that didn't come near the mall or anything at all. But anyway, we went back and stayed on that street. After those two experiences where they were marginalizing us, putting us in the back where nobody could see us, then I get a recommendation to move it downtown. I start to look around. The first place I went to was 124<sup>th</sup> Street Business Association. I went to the board of 124<sup>th</sup> Street to make a presentation and I was shocked out of my wits. The members of the board had been down to the carnival, loved it, had taken pictures, they were showing me pictures of Cariwest, pictures that they took in Mill Woods. They said, we would love to have this festival on 124<sup>th</sup> Street. I'm going to make a presentation so they would consider it but they had already made up their minds that's what they wanted. So that's how we moved to 124<sup>th</sup> Street. We only stayed on 124<sup>th</sup> Street for two years because it started to grow and we outgrew 124<sup>th</sup> Street from the second year – congestion with the

parking. The little square is so small, we had use of the Westmount Community League hall and it's right next to the square. But between the two, we were too big for the square. Then we moved up to, what's the community next to the Westmount Shopping Centre? They got more room, where the planetarium is and all that. That's where we moved to, and 124<sup>th</sup> Street still funded us because the agreement we had with 124<sup>th</sup> Street, and all I asked them for was money, I needed money to improve my publicity and promotion. I told them, whatever you give me I will spend it one way. If I say it's Cariwest I know 124<sup>th</sup> Street everything. I had also discovered, because I met a man at the Journal, he passed away, Mr. Jagindra I think his name was, but he passed away, I found that out recently. But he explained to me how funding goes to corporations and to nonprofits. What costs profits \$100 will cost a nonprofit \$10. So that is how I was able to expand the marketing of 124<sup>th</sup> Street because there was always one Cariwest and 124<sup>th</sup> Street connection. If you look around early in May 124<sup>th</sup> Street still has, the symbol of it is a big sneaker, it's a walk. They go through all the galleries. They have a lot of art galleries and things, a gallery walk on 124<sup>th</sup> Street. Plus they're advertising, it was always Cariwest and 124<sup>th</sup>. The business on 124<sup>th</sup> Street responded so well to Cariwest. I went into Rosie's on 124<sup>th</sup> Street and they had painted a carnival costume on the wall. They were so impressed with the festival that they had a costume painted as a feature on one of their walls. I was shocked when I saw that. But anyway so we outgrew 124<sup>th</sup> Street, not the street, because we still had the parade going up 124<sup>th</sup> Street but it went all the way to Coronation Park, that park next to, I'm trying to remember the community league that's there. But we were working with the community league there and we used their facilities and the grounds. It had a lot more room, it was a lot better. But 124<sup>th</sup> Street was happy because the parade took place on their street. You know what 124<sup>th</sup> Street liked about our parade? There's a little bakery on 124<sup>th</sup> Street and the year we were on 124<sup>th</sup> Street he sold out every cake he had in that little bakery the Saturday morning. This is great, he said, business is booming. So the next year he was ready, sold out again. So the businesses supported Cariwest. To give you an idea for the record, they used to give me a cheque. I used to go to them, the second week in January I would always go to the board and say, yes we're going to do all our stuff again and we're looking forward to your support, and two weeks later they would give me a cheque for \$12,000. That's what I used for publicity and

promotion. As I said to you, remember I served two years on the FCSS board, so I was comfortable in making presentations to business association and negotiating things like that.

Q: How did that experience on the FCSS board help you to develop community awareness for Cariwest?

BA: Because I understood how things work in a community. I'll give you an example. One of the residues from my time on the board is the Country Clothesline in Sherwood Park. I was the chairman of the board when councilor Horsel, I think her name was, she was Hussein and she married Horsel, but she came to me and said, I have a proposal, I would like to develop a Country Clothesline; would you be willing to bring it forward on your board for me and take it to the county? So I led the parade. I talked it over with the FCSS board, they thought it was a great idea. I followed the proposal to the mayor, he said it was a great idea, and the board members supported it. That Country Clothesline is still in existence. It is doing so well in this community that they give grants to other nonprofit groups in Sherwood Park. What it is, people have clothing, household effects they want to get rid of, they take it to the Country Clothesline, they sort it, they wash it, they iron it, they hang it up and they sell it. They're always making money. Johanna's first job or first volunteer experience, she worked at the Country Clothesline one summer. So that's how it was. What I'm saying is I was comfortable. I got to know the mayor very well, Jim Common, that was his name. I had no trouble going and talking to Jim Common or dealing with councilors, or a councilor coming and talking to me. Although I was new I was beginning to understand how the system worked. Remember I'm a manager in government service, and the government had some fantastic programs that they send managers to. I did some fantastic programs in Banff, unbelievable. The one I remember most and I enjoyed most was a program called MLM – Management, Leadership and Motivation – fantastic course. You spend a week in Banff – no telephones, no phones, nothing at all. A lot of role playing, a lot of games. But all I'm saying is I got to understand the system and where you should look and how you could contact them. I had no problem saying I wanna go see the mayor if I wanted to go see

him. When they had the nonsense in Mill Woods I called City Hall and told them I want to see the mayor. That was nothing. I called the mayor; that's what they're there for, to help things that are taking place in the city. I found out, you know something I found out? Any time the City of Edmonton goes to sell Edmonton, if you don't believe me ask some of their promotional films, you will get at least one clip of the Cariwest parade. They show us that we're a festival town. But how could you take Folk Fest and show it on there? But you can show a little girl in a nice costume, and there's always a shot that come out of Cariwest that's in that promotional material. They want to say, we're like Toronto, they have Caribana we have Cariwest. So they would put that in. Then again this is a festival city, this is a festival city. If I can say it, it's not easy to pick up the Fringe and show it and convey, but it's so easy to convey what Cariwest is. You hear a steel band, you hear some music, you see somebody dancing, you see a costume – bam, two seconds, very impressive on a screen. So that is how we went to 124<sup>th</sup> Street. The West Indian community was not happy that we were moving from Mill Woods; they were not happy. But again as I said...

Q: Why?

BA: I think they had good reasons. They said, we have to pay for parking if we go downtown, we have plenty of free parking down there. It was convenient, they knew the area. A lot of them lived in Mill Woods so they were happy with that. But in terms of growth, we never had one business in Mill Woods sponsor anything for Cariwest, so again we had no give from the business community in Mill Woods. But if we wanted to move this organization forward, the thing that I recognized we needed – money. We had no real ways of fundraising and things like that. Again, that's another thing I accomplished on my watch. I got us a bingo license and I got us our casino license, and those have been two fundraisers that are still going on that helps Cariwest get some funds. There was also, a couple years ago the federal government used to give some money, and I tapped into that one or twice two, got some money from the federal government. I had a contact at the federal building on 95<sup>th</sup> Street; he walked me through that.



Q: This has been your mission too, to entrench your festival downtown and to grow it.

BA: Yea. The idea of downtown was, growth did occur from moving it downtown. More people to go see Cariwest, the turnout is bigger. I know that because many of my friends from Progress, they don't miss Cariwest. After they knew what it was all about I pass and see them at the side and I just have to pass and touch them because sometimes I'm wearing a costume. They all like it, especially if they have children, they love to take their kids down to see the parade. The Journal has given us good coverage. I have a clipping where they interviewed a woman and she said this is the best festival she'd ever seen here or in Montréal. I had another clipping, the Journal covered a woman from Russian and she said she was just downtown with some friends visiting from Russia and they saw a fantastic parade for free. All that was in the Journal. The Journal interviewed people who saw the parade; the public and crowds like Cariwest parade. So I'm just trying to give you the sequence of events with the parade and how did we leave 124<sup>th</sup> Street. We had some board issues, that's what I'm gonna call it. That is, there were members on the board who felt they wanted to run the board. They would do that by voting as a block or different ways. But it came to loggerheads. One year we went to an AGM meeting and we walked into the meeting and saw a whole bunch of people and we didn't know who they were. What happened, there was a member who wanted to be president of Cariwest. So he got nominated and we voted, and he beat me by one vote. But you know when you're finished with the president you say, nominations for vice president, then for secretary and for treasurer. But after he got in, having stacking the votes, we spent all evening on nominations for vice president, and nobody would stand up. So we stayed there and went through that rigmarole for hours, the we passed a motion to reconvene because there seems to be no confidence in the person who was nominated as president. Nobody else wanted to stand for vice president. So of course we came back the next year organized, because any time there's commess, the numbers, it's the largest AGM I've ever been to. Everybody came out and everybody had a say. Needless to say, the first thing that happened was a motion was passed and no confidence in the person nominated, that motion was carried and he had to vacate the position. Then there were

fresh nominations and we reconstituted our board. But of course there were people who were disgruntled. One of the members of that group – I don't call names and I don't want to put that on record – one of the members that has passed away since, they started what I call mischief. They wrote a letter to the Parks and Rec, Roger Gevney. I had become very good friends with Roger. As soon as the letter arrived on his desk he called me and said, I've got something to show you. I go across, he showed me and I explained to him what happened. He said, so where do you want me to put it, circular file? I said, it's up to you. He put it in the garbage. Next letter arrived on the desk of the 124<sup>th</sup> business association. The letter stated that they don't know how we're gonna put on a carnival this year because that group or the group of people who were disgruntled said they won't participate. If they're not participating I don't see how we can put on a festival. We did put on a festival. But 124<sup>th</sup> Street said what he intimidated them with in his letter was that they might be wasting their money because there might be no carnival, so they did not give me the cheque. Meantime all this time the manager of the business association downtown had been buzzing my ear, when you bringing your festival downtown? I knew him, we used to jog together at the Kinsman. Every time he said, when are you bringing your festival downtown? So I went and saw him and he said, alright bring your festival downtown, I see what funds I can get for you. They're not as generous as 124<sup>th</sup> Street but they've always given us a little money. They gave me some money in the past. But that's how we moved the festival down, that's how I moved the festival from 124<sup>th</sup> Street to downtown. I had a wonderful but terrible experience. When the festival was over the day after I moved Cariwest downtown, the band of disgruntled guys, I was leaving with my wife to go and get my car and come home and I see the whole crowd coming. I say what, are they coming to beat me? No, they were all coming to congratulate me and shake my hand and tell me, boy, moving that festival downtown is the best thing that ever happened to Cariwest. Rather than continue with their fight they were congratulating me with my move to downtown. So again, rituals of rebellion, out of the rebellion we moved downtown and that's where we have been; we've been a fixture downtown. It has not been easy downtown. Downtown everything you see, you see downtown how they close the street in front of City Hall now. I asked them to do it, they can't do it. I said, close the side streets so we could use – no, we can't do it. The next year Taste of Edmonton came,

they closed off, and since then they have always closed them off. I asked them, that was my request when I went to City Hall. I said, when we come downtown I'd like you to do this. They said, no we can't do it. They're doing it now. You know what they were afraid of closing off the streets? Little ladies would call and disturb them at City Hall saying it's interfering with their public transport. That's what you hear from City Hall. But anyway, they're doing it now and nobody has died. It's very nice the way it is. It's a big square across there and ambience if you like. I'm involved with another group, the Progress Club. I run a thing called Construction Downtown Enterprise Square. The Taste of Edmonton has come to me and want me to move that to join them. See so that's the way it goes. They think it fits perfectly with what they're doing, so we're in negotiations right now. But to come back to Cariwest, that's how we moved. I'm just trying to fill you in on how we moved from downtown, from 124<sup>th</sup> Street to downtown. I think I told you how we initiated the bingo license, which pays our rent, and the casinos, which gave us some funds that we could do some planning with. Those things helped, they didn't hurt at all.

Q: You mentioned Selwyn Jacob in passing. I gather between both of you there is some consciousness about why this festival is important to develop and sustain. Could you go back to your relationship with him and how you fed off each other or how he transferred this responsibility to you?

BA: Well I'll tell you. If you look at carnivals, which is the bedrock of all festivals, that carnival, that costume and parade on the street, that is the bedrock of all what we do. But I'll tell you some experiences I had that kind of made sense for me. One of the problems I always had was getting trucks to put the speakers on and to lead the bands with the music. Woodcroft Community League is the league we moved to. We moved from 124<sup>th</sup> Street to Woodcroft Community League. When we were at Woodcroft after the bands came in and the crowds were there, the Sunday afternoon I went down to the grounds, lots of people meeting and greeting. I didn't know you were in town, no I was in Winnipeg and I came across... A lot of people were meeting friends. I met this guy Robert Modeste. Robert was there and Robert turned to a group of guys and says, you guys always, all you could do is talk and run down things, you see what this guy do for

you all? He said, where would you be this evening if we didn't have Cariwest today? They said, I'd be home watching TV or something. Which you prefer? They said, prefer this. He said, yet still every time I meet you all you're all always pounding this guy. This is the guy who runs Cariwest but you all never seem happy. He was saying, well look, give him some help. I said, funny you should say that. The biggest problem I have is trucks. He said, really? I say, yes. He said, well after this year don't worry, I'll look after that for you. I didn't know he was in the trucking business. He said, it bothered me, I saw a truck and the people didn't even wash it before they bring it to the parade. He said, I'll look after trucks for you. I went to see the trucking company, they have a green colour, you know the name of the company? I went to the company and met a guy who loved Cariwest. This guy believes in reconditioned cars and he's involved with that group. They have the cars that they rebuild, Camaros and all that. But he was one of those and it works out that he likes to put on a tshirt. So he said, I will get a tshirt, truck and work on Saturday, we coming in the parade. From that day Robert knew him and between he and Robert we solved all our truck problems. But that was one insight I got because Robert was pointing out to him, you are glad something like Cariwest happens in your community. It's the one time of year we all meet and greet. Not only people who are here, people come from Winnipeg. At one time we used to go to Winnipeg, we used to go to Vancouver. So people come from Vancouver, people come from Winnipeg, friends meet each other who haven't seen each other for years. So it brings us together who are members of the Caribbean community who are in the prairie provinces. They look forward to coming to here and meet and greet. That was one insight that I got. . . .

Ok I was just finishing the story, what was I talking about? Oh the trucks. The things that gave me insight into what carnival means, why we do it. It being a way of people from the Caribbean meet and greet, that is one thing that it does. The other thing I think Cariwest is good for is for fostering and doing just what they try to develop in Connecticut, for bringing about cultural exchange, integration of cultural groups. Cariwest and Canada is supposed to be the most about multiculturalism, Cariwest is an ideal vehicle. You see what's happening Toronto now? When you look at Toronto carnival now you see more white Canadians than black people playing mas in Toronto. That has to happen in Edmonton too. It hasn't happened yet on a scale that I would like to

see it happen, but it will happen. We have a unique thing where we have a member of City Hall, Michael Phair, who got into a costume and has never gotten out of a costume. He likes the flamboyance, he likes the idea of what the carnival does. Believe it or not, this was an election year for a new council, I think everybody who was on City Council who was running for office played mas this year. Several of them did if not, quite a few. Michael Phair wasn't running, but I saw Sohi and all in a costume. So I'm saying that people at the Friday night show, the mayor was at the Friday night show and several of the councilors were there. So I'm say that they come out. In other words, they have constituents that want to support them so they come out. They do support us too, you know what I mean. So that tells you that it has struck a chord with the powers that be. The City we now accept us as a festival and we can get funding from them when we apply; they think it is meeting a need in the community in some form or fashion. That is the plus side of it. But again, to answer your question in terms of if you look in broader terms, if you look at carnivals, carnivals exist where there are clusters of ex-slaves. That tells you there's a connection to Africa and the cultures of Africa. You see little residues of it. I used to be in Trinidad and I watched Trinidad carnival, and a lot of the things I saw in the carnival didn't make sense until I see it as part of an African festival somewhere. Like the fertility festival that they have in Egypt where men are dressing up like women and have phallic symbols left right and centre, that's part of that costuming. There are a lot of what we would call primitive or African rituals that are still there. It's evident in the music; I'll come back to that in a minute. The music that you hear in calypso and reggae could trace itself all the way back to Africa, as a musicologist will show you. It's the same thing. But the only difference is where the carnivals occur. New Orleans, the backbone of that is jazz. But jazz has African roots too again. It leads to an evolution of something that they never knew would happen but people wanted their rhythms and the native people had their spirituals. I watched a program the other day where they pointed out that all the negro spirituals can be played on only black keys. Did you know that? I got a story on TV that pointed that out. All the African rhythm, because African music has a different basis and structure than European music. But the guy showed how the structure is built on black keys, that was one thing. Nearly all the negro spirituals could be played on the black keys only. It takes a musicologist to show you that

things that are happening there have a source, African origin. Again, and I had this discussion with people a hundred times, they always wanted me to talk about the Mardi Gras when it was on 124<sup>th</sup> Street. I said, it is Cariwest, Edmonton Caribbean arts festival. But they wanted it to be Mardi Gras because they figured the Europeans would understand that. A lot of people think because they hear Mardi Gras that carnival comes from Europe. Chalk Dust has shown that without a doubt it all comes from Egypt. A lot of the things they were doing in Europe with their carnivals came from Egypt. The point I wanted to make is that everywhere that they had clusters of freed slaves or ex-slaves has a carnival – New Orleans, Brazil, Trinidad, the Caribbean. You might be aware of this, you know Bahamas have a carnival? It's slightly different but it has a lot of the same ritualistic things that we have. So Trinidad carnival is unique in the sense that they didn't have the drum, they developed a steel band. The steel band is a unique instrument and it's unique to our carnival. We dance the calypso and in Brazil they dance the samba and in New Orleans they have their favorite New Orleans jazz that they enjoy. But all of those things is people striving to hold onto something that was taken from them when they were brought and slaved to different places in the world that they didn't know. But in spite of that, Haiti has a lot of the voodoo traditions and the things that are associated with large populations. So the whole idea is it's people trying to hold onto vestiges of cultures from where they were taken that you see us play this out every year and we will do it. People look at the costumes and they will be shocked to know that after the carnival we throw the costumes away. Why would people do that? Somehow it satisfies something in them. In Trinidad before they started preserving some of the big costumes, they used to break up the costume at the carnival and start all over. One thing was taboo in carnival, you don't play the same mas every year, you have to do something new every year. That still goes on. So when people see these big costumes on the street, what little awards we give them for bringing these costumes. It's not to compensate them, they're not doing it for the awards. Yes it's bragging rights, I won the queen or I won the king. But if they got nothing and they did it when there was nothing, because before Cariwest as we know it on the streets here now they used to have a little thing in Diamond Park in the early days before I got here, as I've been told. But it has grown. But it's part of that people struggling to hold onto vestiges of what was theirs, is why I think carnivals exist in the

Caribbean and why they exist where there are ex-slaves. You could chain them, you could enslave them, but you cannot kill that spirit and that memory of something that was important as part of their culture. It stayed alive a little bit. I'll tell you a little piece, another one that's very African like you see in a lot of African cultures, Moko Jumbie. Why is Moko Jumbie always in carnivals? Moko Jumbie is those costumes or things on stilts, stilt walking. Randall Fraser went down to Cocorite and took a course in Trinidad. He went down there and went to the Moko Jumbie school there, then he came back here and was doing costumes for the games. The costumes he built were fantastic. They were all based on using carnival methods and adding the Moko Jumbie to it, which is a carnival bit again. So you see how pieces fall all over the place. To show you how you don't know where it is going to go, Peter Minshall used to make costumes. Peter Minshall was the first person who married puppetry, costuming and mas player. It stunned the whole world. Peter Minshall has been hired in France to make costumes for Bastille Day. He did the opening for the games in Barcelona, Atlanta. He was a carnival costume maker. I'm still waiting until we can get the composite students to come in and learn the costume making, to be part of a carnival parade. Students who are involved with theatre at the U of A, they have a drama school there, BF fine arts. Get them involved so they could come and bring a band and the students while doing their undergraduate work get involved with carnival and they can do the research. I had an experience. I was in England at the time. I saw a band by Wayne Berkeley and I'm watching a story that was taking place somewhere in Europe. Then I say, look, it's a parade of the flag wavers. I said, but I've seen that. It had penetrated my consciousness, I didn't even know where in Europe it was. But it was based on imitating a festival, Flag Wavers of Sienna, it takes place in Sienna. I'm watching and I said, look, that's the mas play I saw in Trinidad. Look at what Alvin, not Alvin, the guy who died, a Trinidad mas maker. Bailey, George Bailey. Before I went to England I knew what was going to take place outside Buckingham Palace because I saw all those costumes. Remember George Bailey had a chariot with the queen inside waving and all that? George Bailey played that mas. There's a guy called Strassa used to play a mas every day. He was a one-man band and he used to play what we'll call like the fellow on the penny with the trident. He used to play that fellow and sit on a penny. He would take different pieces and he would make up the

costume. I used to make it a business to find him just to see what he's playing this year. Have you ever seen him? So you don't know where the carnival will take you, what pieces of the carnival will do. But as I said, it has elements of so many things. Look at some examples of what has come out of Cariwest. One of the questions that came up at a conference in Connecticut was how can we get a university involved in carnival? I told them, we've done that already. Again, there was a girl who was a friend of my daughter; my daughter did a degree in music first and this girl did a degree in musicology. She came to Glynnes and she said, oh I love that Caribbean music and I want to do a paper where we look at it. She followed Tropical Fever for a whole carnival season and she wrote her Masters, the role of a new culture or culture extraneous to Alberta, how it integrated itself and how it exists here in Alberta. She chose to look at Tropical Fever and how they play their music. I learned so much about calypso from that girl. She interviewed me. The steel band, a lot of their pans were aiming to imitate strumming instruments, so the second band strums, the tenor band plays a tune but it's a strum. They have two beat. She was able to look at the music and how the band plays music. She was amazed not one of the guys had a sheet in front of them when they were playing music. Most of them still play by ear, just like the pan men in Tropical Fever. They play their music and they rehearse and rehearse, and when you hear them play you believe they have sheet music, but not a sheet music on the stand when they're playing. All of these things she brought. I said, well that music is innate so it comes out. So I was able to point out that I was aware of one student who had approached Cariwest to use the resource of Cariwest to do her Masters thesis in musicology, and she completed it and she has a paper and I think there's a copy of that paper in the archives. If it isn't, let me know and I'll try and get a copy for you. In passing, one of the things that I started off when I was at Cariwest, every festival I took a handful of all of our material and I took it to the Archives. I did that because my second daughter became a photo archivist with the City and I found out that that's where you put things for organizations that exist. The people who go on past and have material and minutes and things like that, you don't know where they are. When they moved on they throw it away. No, you don't throw it away, take it to the archives and they will file it. We have a file number there. I still try to do that. Since I left the board I used to still always go and file the main poster you use, the little booklet



you make, and drop it off at the Archives. That's what the Archives are for. When I went and started doing that, you know what I discovered? Every cricket match that was played in Edmonton at Victoria Park, you want to know who scored, how much runs and who bowl out who? They have all of that at the City Archives. That's what the Provincial Archives exists for. So I initiated doing that, getting Cariwest stuff into the Provincial Archives. So I think I've given you a sense of how I got involved, but I didn't tell you how I got involved with Cariwest. I should tell you that story. I came out to Alberta because I got the job with the Government of Alberta. I was hired as the first epidemiologist in the Department of Occupational Health and Safety. I was here on a Saturday night, I put on my clothes, I said let me see what the city is like. There was a fete at a church on 100<sup>th</sup> Street. I stood outside watching the crowd then I hear, Alleyne, what are you doing here? It was Selwyn Jacob. I knew Selwyn at school. Selwyn was at QRC, he was a year behind me. I was a year ahead of Selwyn at QRC. As a matter of fact, I was the Lance Corporal in the Boy Scouts and he was one of my Privates. That's how far back I go and how long I know Selwyn, just for the record. So I knew Selwyn. So I told him, I just took a job here and I'm going to be here for a while. He said, well good timing. Then next thing I knew he invited me to a Cariwest meeting and the next thing he tells me he's going to Vancouver and he wanted me to stand for President. The next thing you know I was in Cariwest, so that's how I got involved in Cariwest. I came on just when Selwyn was thinking that we need to look at the bylaws. That's when we used the resources that are available from Grant MacEwan where they had board development sessions. Then we sat down as a board and we put together the mission, the goals and the bylaws. The bylaws has some interesting things, and I'll address one. Since I wrote those bylaws the definition of a member in good standing has changed and we had to amend the bylaws. You cannot be a member, you had to be a member in good standing, you have to have paid your dues and you have to have been a member of Cariwest at least six months before the AGM. If you see a lot of people coming and joining six months before, watch out, somebody coming to change. But you'll get that forewarning. So we amended the bylaws so that the bylaw used to be that a member in good standing is a member who has paid his/he dues. We modified it so that a member in good standing is someone who has paid the dues and has been a member of the Western

Carnival Development Association at least six months before the AGM. So we had to amend that bylaw. There was an issue that came up time and time again when we wrote the bylaws, and that was the attitude of people from the Caribbean being worried that if we grow this organization the white folks will come and take over everything. We addressed that in Cariwest bylaws in the following way. To be a president of Cariwest you have to be born in the Caribbean or had a parent who was born in the Caribbean. You have to have had that Caribbean connection to be a President of Cariwest. In that way at least we are assuming that if you're the head of Cariwest you will protect the interests of Cariwest. That's the only way I dealt with that. I had another interesting experience. When we first put out the first bylaw and brought it to the first AGM so members would be aware what it is, I had that one of the aims of Cariwest was to promote development of steel band and calypso. A Jamaican got up and said, well what about my culture? So you'll see now we have calypso, steel band and reggae, and other music that comes out of the Caribbean. We changed the bylaw to make it more inclusive. We were so focused on Trinidad carnival, calypso, but the Jamaican guy got up and said, what about my culture? So we addressed that in the bylaws. So that is the bylaws. Now when we used to have these raucous annual general meetings, I have a judge in Sherwood Park who is my friend. He's a judge of the Queen's Bench. That's some of the things you get to know being on FCSS's board, you got to meet people. I asked him one day, because we had a New Year's Eve dance and he came to the dance. So I asked him if he would mind chairing an AGM for me so it's not me defending and dealing with the crowd and everybody wanting to talk at the same time and all that. So I asked the judge, and he came. But the first thing he asked me for before he said he would, he asked me for a copy of our bylaws. He said to bring it to his chambers. So the first time I ever went to court up in a judge's chambers was when I took the bylaws to him. I'm not calling his name because I don't want it to go on record, but I have a judge friend and he came. The meetings were so efficient. But what amused me was the first time he said, I'm Ukrainian. You think you have bacchanal here? Same thing with Ukrainians, we fight and carry on. But I'm here to make sure we have some order. That's how he introduced himself. He said, by the way I've seen some of you but I wouldn't like to mention on the way what circumstances, but I've seen some of you before. A very nice guy, he's a very nice guy.

When I meet him in the grocery people want to know, who's this guy? He's still a very good friend of mine.

Q: Do you think this reflected the passion people have for their organization?

BA: The love for what it is. People find it has a spirit. When people come and see the parade they'll go away talking, did you see that, did you see that, and did you see that beautiful costume? And the music, it gets to you. One thing that happens and that is always reflected is that we behave as though we are free. We are free. That freedom of expression that comes with being part of a carnival, you can't buy it. It is there, that *joie de vivre* that you bring with you when you play mas. When you put on a mas', a mas' does something to you. You are no longer Donna when you put on a mas', you're a masquerader. A lot of inhibitions go away. You see it when you see those little Canadian girls in Toronto in a costume, they're just as good as anybody on Charlotte Street. They dance and 'wine' to the music like anybody else. So it gets to you. My dream really would be that we have every community league in Edmonton bringing out a band every year. That would be my dream, because we'd have more bands than we could handle but then we would have a major parade. I can tell you there are community leagues that would love to have something like Cariwest. I'll tell you why I know that. There was a woman that I knew and she used to play with Osmond. She told me, after I started playing mas with Osmond my winter goes fast because I spend all winter making my costume. There are community leagues that have beautiful halls, beautiful facilities which I consider underutilized. If they had something like building their costume to be in that parade every year, it would be a fantastic use of community leagues. And it would do just what I think Cariwest aims to do – bring people of all cultures. To be a member of community league you don't have to be a West Indian, you can be Ukrainian, Chinese, whatever. But you could come and enjoy and participate in this Caribbean style festival, no problem at all. I was watching a Cariwest parade from upstairs in a building on 124<sup>th</sup> Street and there were a lot of young people watching with me. They said, my god, look, they're having so much fun. The girl said, I wish I could play but it's only for people from the Caribbean. So I corrected her, no, Cariwest is for everybody. If you like a good time

and you want to find out who making costumes, you go and register with that group, you buy a costume and you are in. That's all that's required. We don't ask for your birth paper, where you come from, who you are. You just say you want to play mas, you pay your fee and buy your costume or you make a costume or you can embellish a costume, and you're in. But again as I say, this woman told me how winters changed after playing mas with Osmond, because she spent the winter making her costume. She came out and pranced around the place. That's what it's all about. Any other questions that I need to answer for you?

Q: Catherine Cole and I are doing a project on the history Mill Woods, so I'd like you to talk a little bit more about the two years when Cariwest was in Mill Woods.

BA: It had the essentials of a place to meet and greet. There's a nice big open field next to the Park, that's where we set up. So a lot of people came in and that was it. So from that point of view the grounds was good, the grounds would work for a festival. However, as I pointed out, the parade route was, the aim was to get from there to around Millbourne Shopping Centre – that was the target. We didn't, I don't know why, oh I know why. When the parade went on the street there were people who complained it interfered with their bus routes. They couldn't catch the bus where they went and the bus was late, and City Hall gets those complaints. So that was the reason why they kept pushing us off the main bus route, which was the one that ran to Millbourne, to put us in the smaller side streets, which defeats the purpose. We don't want to be something in a little backstreet, we want to be on a main road where everybody can come and see it. So from that point of view, from that point of view Mill Woods was a negative for us in the sense that people complained it interfered with the bus routes and running of the bus on the day of the parade. The parade was an inconvenience for a day. But it's no different with the Grey Cup parade, it's no different than the Klondike Day parade. As a matter of fact we used to say, when they used to come and watch this parade, they're coming to see that Caribbean group with the steel band and the costumes. That's what I used to hear all the time and that was the point I made in terms of how do you start a carnival and that was how I addressed it. People ask, well how did you all start the carnival in Edmonton?

I was aware that they always put a Cariwest type group in the Stampede parade and they always put one in the Klondike Days parade. So essentially what was happening was that we simply piggybacked on what was there already and we were a hit. The parades were a hit in Calgary and then it was mainly the West Indian students going to University of Calgary or University of Alberta that saw that opportunity and that's what they did. The rest is history.

Q: When you went to Mill Woods, what drove that as a location?

BA: I met it there. I had nothing to do with choosing Mill Woods. That was under Selwyn's and his predecessors. Under my watch, two years.

Q: Was the community in Mill Woods supporting it?

BA: All the West Indian people in Mill Woods supported it. There were people like Milton Zaifdeen, Andy Edwards, a lot of people from the Caribbean who were living and still live in Mill Woods. I'm trying to remember the other guy's name, Bob Theroulde and Pete Spanie, Neville Alexander. Those are people who still live in Mill Woods, but they were people who were involved. Osmond is still living in Mill Woods and he brought out a band. Hummingbird Society is housed in Osmond's home, that's where all the costumes are made. So those are different things. So Mill Woods generally was a good place in terms of the ambience of the grounds, to have the vendors and the food and all that. So it was good for that. Where we had it was end of the parade and where we met on Sunday – it worked for that. But in terms of being welcomed on the streets of Mill Woods, we didn't get that full support. They considered we were interrupting and that we were a nuisance – that was the feeling we got. It wasn't difficult when we moved, especially when we were getting support from the downtown organization, and 124<sup>th</sup> Street played that role. Did I get your answer, sir?

Q: Do you have any final comments about Cariwest?

BA: I had a very small story, something that I did. I don't think it's done as focused as I used to do it. I used to go to schools. I made presentations at Grant MacEwan, I made presentations at Ardrossan School; they have a program called, not Heritage Days but cultural days or multicultural, call it heritage days. But I'll tell you about two that I always remember. My purpose for going to Grant MacEwan was I wanted to get the graphics department at Grant MacEwan involved in designing our T-shirts. I'll try and show you one of my T-shirts that I have from that time. The T-shirts that were designed under my watch were all done by the graphic arts students at Grant MacEwan. The first time I did it, I had had a T-shirt designed, I went to a printer and the printer wanted \$15,000 minimum for him to do the design and then to print the programs and T-shirts and everything. But I got around that by going to Grant MacEwan students. The students doing graphic design at Grant MacEwan are the people who do that type of thing. So I drew up, my presentation focused on playing a steel band piece of music. I had a tape of Trinidad carnival that ran for about ten minutes, and it was based on the steel band. The theme they were exploring in that video that I used was Swan Lake ballet. Berkeley brought that band out from Trinidad. So I have that seven to ten minutes video clip that I got from Trinidad, put it on VHS and I showed that. Then I talked about, then I played the steel band music, so the music and costume, and then I gave them a little history of carnival, how it came about, how the steel band evolved from the banning of drums. It was a ritual of rebellion, so they build these pans and all that kind of thing. Then they were oppressed so they made these costumes. I told them that basic story then I drew up a contract. The winning student, the design that I chose was given \$100 and they sell the rights of use of their design to me, to Cariwest. But I promised them one thing, and that was that their name will be on the design, on the poster that we put out on the T-shirts, but their name will always be on it. The runner up was given \$50. So for \$150, ten percent of what the printer was offering me, I got fantastic designs. And they had to give me their designs on a disc ready to be taken to a printer. I offered the winning student one thing. I said, when I have the design I will like to take you with me to the printer when we gonna print the posters. The girl who won it the first year, when she went with me the printer said to her, young lady, you did a beautiful design but let me tell you something, don't use those colors like that. There's a particular palette that you use, four colors that

you use to get all the colors you want. But she just used colors, but he was able to give her the finishing touches of what you do when you're designing in color for a printer or for anything to be printed. So she learned something right away. The other thing he told her, any time you're designing a poster never design it right to the end of the poster, always leave a half inch to bleed in. Not only that, nine out of ten times you design a poster, last minute you got a sponsor who want his name on the poster. Where you gonna put it if you design it the way you did it? So from that point onward she understood what it was design. That girl went on, she was Métis, she went on and she designed a poster for the aboriginal festival the next year; she won that, too. So she became efficient at doing it. The last time I spoke to her she had moved to Vancouver, she had finished at Grant MacEwan, and she went to Vancouver to study, oh my goodness, what is it, she was still in design... animation. She went to Vancouver to study animation, so that's where she was going. So my idea was, and that's one of the things I think helped Cariwest a lot too in the sense that when you're applying for a grant application and you can show that you've had a relationship with a college or something like that, they like that. So when we could talk about having a graduate student using Cariwest and we have students who designed the poster, that's good. The second thing that I made a presentation at Ardrossan. I told the kids if they listen well and carefully I'm gonna teach them a calypso and we're gonna sing it when I'm finished. I did. So I made the same presentation: the video, the music, and my talk. Then I taught them a little song called a lady had a monkey and she lent it to a lady and the lady went in the parlour to buy some bread, and she took a piece of charcoal and stuff it up the nosehole.... And the kids learned that and we went through it a couple of times and then my class sang that. The whole school wanted to know what was going on. But I know when I left the whole school was singing A Lady Had a Monkey. But it was fun, I enjoyed that nice moment that I had. But again as I said, my idea was to try and make as much connections with institutions outside. I haven't succeeded with, I haven't found the lead for community leagues yet, but that would be a nice one to try and get, get a lead into the community leagues and get to them to put a band. We have done costume workshops but it would've been even more effective if we had done them when we were inviting community leagues to come and learn to make costumes. But you can do it again. You don't have to send to Trinidad.

They have costume makers in Montreal, they have them in Toronto, you could bring somebody out. As a matter of fact I know my brother Lloyd just retired, an old costume maker. He did a degree in design at Montreal. He's a retired fellow now so if somebody wanted some guidance I could bring him out. They wouldn't have to pay for accommodation, he could stay with me. Those are the kind of things you can do. But there are people like that now. Our parents are retiring and are available, so you can get somebody to come out and do a workshop for you, not as expensive as going all the way to Trinidad.

Q: We're in the middle of negotiating with someone from Arizona called Fitzgerald DeFreitas.

BA: Oh he's good. He's good but he's a little too arrogant, that's all I can say. He's very, very good and he knows his craft. I know him well, we went to the same elementary school. I went to the same elementary school as Osmond, I went to the same elementary school as Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald is good. Fitzgerald and Osmond are still in two different worlds. Osmond is still using the materials that we used before. Fitzgerald has learned to use all of the lighter materials like what that guy showed us who came and did the workshop, where you stuck the shells of the costume, you get the mold and you put the thing and put it in the oven, you get the shape and you stick them together. It's lighter, so your costumes would be lighter. Geraldo Riviera, he passed away. Well again, Fitzgerald are using more of those modern techniques because he has worked in museums. I don't know if you knew that. So he has had to learn and has learned to use a lot of the new materials for building costumes, and he has incorporated them into his mas making. That's a good thing that he has done. But Osmond still works with some of the heavier material. He has been advised to break away from that but he won't listen. They used to live in the same alley. Fitzgerald and Osmond lived in the same alley. I lived around the corner, I lived on Roslyn Street.

Q: Was it a community of mas makers?



BA: Yea we all get branded with carnival. Carnival Monday and Tuesday, all the children running on the corner. I used to live on Roslyn Street. You go out onto Archer Street because you see all the pretty sailors coming down. They're going to meet the band and they're singing this song, . . . As kids I used to be there too, watching. They never stopped me from going to panyard. One of the things that happened to me, I went to college. When I finished I went to school. At that time college boys were not encouraged in the panyard. That is so funny, that used to be the way it was. College boys were not encouraged to go and hang out in the panyard.

Q: There was a stigma?

BA: Yea but no it's not the place for college boys. College boys are boys who are going somewhere. So I went to college. After I left Belmont Boys R. C. School, not that I didn't talk to Andy and those, but I went to college and they didn't. That's a whole world of difference. Selwyn and I went to one of the best schools in Trinidad, so that's where I met Selwyn. Look what he's doing, wonderful things he's done with his filmmaking. The school leaves a brand on you, it really does. Anything else?

Q: Could you talk about what your work was around OH&S?

BA: Well the first thing I will tell you, I worked for Occupational Health and Safety for 18 years. I enjoyed working at Occupational Health and Safety every minute of the day. Here I was working for a government agency. When I came out here the first investigation I did was at a meatpacking plant in Lethbridge. The problem there was that there was a labour unrest with management and the union that was at the plant. In the midst of this the workers were complaining, something is wrong in this plant, too many people coming down with this funny fever and something. Then they'll get medication, get better and come back, then another guy going off. What was happening was that it was a zoonotic disease that was present in the meatpacking plant. A zoonosis is a disease which an animal has which can be transmitted to a man, a worker who is slaughtering the animal. brucella or brucellosis is one of those bacteria that is in animals. What was so

interesting about this investigation, I was straddling federal jurisdictions and provincial jurisdictions. Animal health is federal, the meatpacking plant is provincial, and there was a union in between. But anyway, I conducted the investigation and because it was a federal problem I could ask Ottawa to send me an epidemiologist in training to take all the blood samples, a doctor who is training to be an epidemiologist, who would take all the blood samples for me and who would administer my questionnaire. So I got that. The way I got that was that the director of communicable diseases at Alberta was Dr. Frank White and he told me that. He said, what you're doing is, so he said, okay. So I got a physician to come out, I had my design, finished the investigation. It went beautifully, I found out what the problem was. What had happened was the federal government has a policy that if one cow is found present with brucellosis, they depopulate the whole herd. That's how they control it. When an animal has brucellosis their meat is still good for human consumption, it doesn't affect that. One of the procedures on all carcasses before they come out for human consumption, they're refrigerated for 18 to 24 hours. Every carcass is refrigerated, and that kills every brucellosis in that animal stone dead. But anyway, I did the investigation and found out the problem, why it was occurring, all that kind of stuff. I finished my report and I left it there. I get a call from Frank White. He says, Brian, did you publish anything from that piece of work you're doing? I said, publish? He says, man that was such a nice piece of work you should publish it. That's when I climbed onto the rollercoaster. Every piece of work I did for Occupational Health and Safety I published. I published over 19 papers while I worked there. And not in Mickey Mouse – every time I published it was in a refereed journal. I went to a conference, I went all through this province from Lethbridge to Fort McMurray, into every radiator shop. We were looking to see if workers were working with lead soldering, fixing radiators, if they were at risk of lead poisoning. I finished that investigation and I went, I presented that paper at a conference in Miami. Beautiful crowd, lots of questions, everybody was interested. I had a good reception to the piece of work I had, lots of questions. People asked me for copies of the report. Six months later I get a call from the University of Alabama from a Professor Dylan. He said, I attended your workshop. He said, that was a very interesting piece of work you did there. He says, I'm putting out a book on heavy metal poisoning and if you wish to extend it I'll include it as a chapter in

the book. I said, I'll do it, and I did it. He published the book, it's a chapter in the book. This is while I was working for the Government of Alberta. So I'm saying that after that everything I did in Occupational Health and Safety, I published it, the reason being that I was in a unique position. Everything I was doing was population based, not sample, because I was using Workers Compensation records. So when I say I look at all the claims for hearing loss in Alberta, it's a population based study because it's all the claims. So I realized that was an asset. But I had a lot of fun with it, I enjoyed it. So that was my role in Occupational Health and Safety. I was lucky enough that I published a paper in the Journal of Occupational Health and Safety. The feature editors, the editorial on the article, was on my paper and it was written by the guy who was the head of, Dr. Attley. So the feature editorial plus my paper was the meat of that journal, so that was good. That was on a study on, what was I doing, that was with hearing loss among sandblasters. I went looking for silicosis because sandblasters use silica. I didn't find any silicosis but I found a lot of hearing loss among sandblasters, and I published that paper, Hearing Loss Among Sandblasters. If you see them sandblasting, the guys have on a big hood. It's like making noise and you're inside a bell. When I look at the study, most of the guys who were doing that were under 25 years of age. Most of them never worked in that job for more than five years because they began to be aware that their hearing was being affected. I published that paper too, so I had fun with that one.

Q: You mentioned that with the Klein cuts in the early '90s that was cut away. It strikes me that the role of government used to be to create objective scientific knowledge that people could draw on, and that process has somehow become politicized so that it's been cut away.

BA: I keep saying to you that I published 19 papers on work I did for the Government of Alberta. Now I will share one story with you, you can edit it out if you want. I looked at Workers Compensation Board, I was working very closely with the staff there. They wanted to know when they have a claim for hearing loss, hearing loss is a permanent disability. Once you can show it as occupation related they have to accept it. If it's an occupational disease and it happened because of where you were working, you

immediately get a pension because you have permanently lost your hearing. Not that you can't hear, you have suffered hearing loss, so you can hear. But the big joke is you can hear but you can't hear when she say yes. So that's the kind of hearing loss you suffer. They're trying to determine the cost of hearing loss. I looked at it, I said, what have you done before? What they had done before, they would simply say, well we had ten claims last year, we spent \$1 million or we spent \$10,000 so it's about \$1,000 a claim. They were simply dividing what they paid out in the year by the number of claims in the year. I said, that's erroneous, that information doesn't make sense. A claim for hearing loss is a protracted process. They have to get your occupational history to show that you're in a noisy position. They have to have your hearing audiograms done to show that you've suffered a loss. When that claim comes through Occupational Health and Safety it can take anywhere from one to five years to be resolved, especially if you're working in an environment where they don't have good occupational records of what the noise level was. They can only come to the company as it is now. You have no idea what it was ten years before, if it was noisier or less noisy. But if you come there where it is now and you measure and say, yes this is a noisy place now, but was it noisier before or less noisy? You don't know. So you have to tease all that out to decide. So I told them, let me have a look at that. What I did was I said, I'm going to take a cohort, so I want to go back to all the claims that came seven years ago and I'm going to follow them through until they're all resolve, and then we're going to figure out what it costs you. That is a better measure of what it's costing for claim of hearing loss. The particular year I looked at that hearing loss claim there were only 80 claims in that year. But for that particular cohort that I followed we got what I call a more elaborate measure of what it's costing for claim of hearing loss. When I looked at that problem and look at how much hearing loss claims are coming, when you consider all the claims that came to WCB, hearing loss claims were less than 1 percent, less than .1% of the claims that came. So you could dismiss them and say, oh it's only a little bit. But I showed them that, yes this year you have 80 and if you accept only 50% you have 40, but you've given those 40 men a pension. Next year you'll get another 80 and only half, so now you have 80 men who have a pension. I said, do you realize you're developing an exponential curve here? So when we project that out it's millions of dollars of cost for the compensation board. So they had to sit

down and come up with a new policy. So they said, we cannot deny it's an occupational injury, yes it is an occupational injury. Yes it's a claim, we're going to settle the claim, but we have to look at how we're doing it. But if I'm a millwright and I'm 50 years of age and after working all those years I'm at the top of my game, you could give me a big block of metal and I could build you a nice valve. I have my skills, I could machine something out of a piece of metal for you brilliantly although I have hearing loss. So what they look at, and they said, you know, we will accept hearing loss claims but we will not give them a pension, we'll give them a lump sum, because they have suffered a social disability. They can't hear when she say yes but they could make a valve out of a piece of metal. So his ability to earn has not been affected, his ability to hear has, and that affects him socially. So they pay him a lump sum for that loss, that's it. You're no longer building that exponential curve, so by doing that they save themselves billions of dollars down the road. So you see how it led to a policy change? That supports the idea that some of the work I was doing could lead to a policy change which changed the way they finally deal with a claim for hearing loss. I could tell them, if they pay me a pension now I've earned it because I saved them millions. So that's occupational health and safety. But the funny thing was, I attended the study sessions where the decision was made. Ralph said the government was getting out of the business of being in business. The new mantra was government's role was to set policy and direction, which is correct, this is what government should be doing, set policy and direction. When I came back from that workshop I came back on Friday afternoon because I went to the planning session at the Derrick Club. My deputy minister come and said, Brian I want you to summarize this for me, summarize what happened down there and I'll ask Leah to help you, she can do the typing. I said ya fine. So Leah and I went and had supper and we came back and ?. So when I was finished I said, Leah, I'm going to put what I call a piece of litmus paper in my report; I'm going to leave out something. I said, if they tell me put it back in our department is toast. All I concluded was since the government was getting out of the business of being in business, every department that had the name service after them was at risk of being cut. He cut left right and centre. So service, that's how they determined it. If you were a service branch you were at risk of being cut. The government sets policy and direction, they don't need service. So I was providing a service, I was providing an

epidemiological program to monitor workers' health, and I was in the medical services branch. That's exactly what they did. They cut me, they cut the physician, two nurses, they cut the department. So who is doing that function now and providing the kind of information I did on which they could make policy change? I don't know. But I know I did some wonderful work which I'm proud of. You can Google me and look me up and you'll see how much work I did. But I tell you, all in referee journals so I'm in Google, you'll find me there. A lot of hearing loss, sandblasters, that kind of stuff. So I had a good time. I enjoyed it, I enjoyed it a great deal. It was useful work, interesting work, never the same thing every day. A deputy minister would go to a conference, come back and say, Brian I went to a conference and they said they're having a lot of lead poisoning and so on, do you think we have a problem like that here? I said, I'll take a look. I had a good time. I had a group of staff and we met and did sandblasters from tip to toe. We did radiator shops from Lethbridge to Fort McMurray twice doing government work. That's fun, I like that. It's what I was trained to do. In the meantime I was running Cariwest in the evening. So did I give you some information? But I'll give you a concrete example. I said I have left a body of work and you can Google me and you'll find what I did; most of it is there. My nephew is doing is PhD and he called me last year and said, uncle, you've published a lot. I said, you're checking up on me boy? He says, I was Googling some stuff and I see B.C. Alleyne, occupational. He said, you published a lot. I said, a little bit, a little bit. But he discovered that I published. So I said I know if you look you can find it. One of the nicest papers I did, which I did very quickly and I just spotted it. We were looking at hearing loss amongst truck drivers. When I looked there was one guy in the whole bunch, asymmetrical hearing loss. Truck drivers, the noise is the wind when they're driving. There was one driver who had loss in this ear and it puzzled us. So I talked to Dr. Dufrane of the Compensation Board. Before coming there he worked for CN. He said, I bet he was a train driver. He said, they ring the bell on this side. And it was. But anyway I sent off that paper, Asymmetric Hearing Loss Amongst Truck Drivers, and every big truck manufacturer from Japan to wherever sent me a request for a copy of that paper, just because it was so interesting, asymmetric hearing loss among truck drivers. These little things come up. We were just looking at all the claims for hearing loss. . . .

Q: Was there any highlight in your history as president of Cariwest?

BA: One of the things that I accomplished as president of Cariwest, I had applied to the lottery fund for money to buy a complete set of pans, and I got the grant. If I remember correctly it was \$55,000 to buy this set of pans, and I bought them from Toronto. I know they were in Cariwest when we moved office, but we know where they are and I think we should keep track of those pans. They belong to Cariwest. I still have a dream to have Cariwest, to have steel band at the U of A. You may not know this but in the United States there are several universities that are using the steel pan as a percussive instrument. All the students in percussion want a big pan, and it's very popular. But I can tell you the most successful programs is the one in Illinois, MIT and Alexis are the two people who run that one. There are some in Virginia, there are some in New York. Why it has grown, pan is an instrument for providing musical education. They found out that a lot of people who play pan can't even read music. Steel band is one of the only instruments when you play it you play it with your whole body, you dance and play it. Kids love it. They have a pan school in Japan. Winnipeg has a program where they were teaching pan at the University of Winnipeg. I don't see why we can't have one at University of Alberta. As I said, if we succeed in using that small nucleus of pans that we got from the lottery funds, that would be a very good use of the pans. So it's still something I'd like to be involved with and help with, do the legwork or go talk to the people; I'm willing. I used to know a lot of people in the department of music because my daughter did a degree in the faculty of music. It's an opportunity we should seek to explore when we can.

[discuss pictures on wall]

[ END ]