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TS: I was born in Edmonton, Alberta. My father moved out here in the '70s from Sainte-Rose, Quebec. Mainly it was an economic concern. The FLQ was happening at the same time around the '70s; however it was mainly for jobs. There were not a lot of jobs in Quebec. So he came out here. My mother is from Little Grand Rapids, Manitoba, which is a First Nation in northern Manitoba in relation to Winnipeg, east of Lake Winnipeg. It's a fly-in community. She too came out to Edmonton around that same time. My parents met each other living in an apartment building somewhere downtown; I'm not sure where. They hit it off, how people do. I was born at the Misericordia Hospital, January 16th, 1983. We lived in Castle Downs area for a little bit around Edmonton, but that was very early on in my life. We then moved over to Mill Woods. Mill Woods is kind of where my memories start to manifest. As far as Mill Woods goes, I'm not sure how much I need to get into it. Would you like me to talk about my elementary? I guess my first elementary school that I attended was Crawford Plains Elementary School. I attended there from kindergarten to Grade 5. I'm not sure how much of this is relevant, but I will carry on. For Grade 6 I think my dad had got some kind of promotion at work, and we moved to a different part of Mill Woods and I attended Sakaw Elementary School for Grade 6. We were very on the fringes of Mill Woods when we lived down there. For junior high from Grades 7 to 9 I attended Ellerslie Elementary Junior High. At that particular time it was kind of a farm school. A lot of rural kids got shipped in to there. But myself and the other people in that southern Mill Woods area were kind of shipped farther south and we all attended school down there. So we attended school with a bunch of farm families I guess, farm kids, acreages. After that, for high school I attended W.P. Wagner School of Science and Technology, as they touted it. I think at that particular time they were going through kind of like a rebranding issue. I did not know this when I started attending it, but I guess Wagner was kind of synonymous with a vocational school. It was kind of where people learned trades or were introduced to this idea of manual labour. It kind of made sense once I learned that several years down the road, just because Wagner was located right within the industrial section of southern Edmonton. I didn't know that at the time. So I attended there for Grades 10, 11 and 12. I almost attended Strathcona but I didn't. I had a football incident where it was just--I don't really need to go into that. But anyway, after high

school I was a little bit directionless. I didn't have the grades to attend university. My parents really encouraged me to attend university. So I went through the steps. I think I was kind of one of those individuals that just wanted to get them off my back – attend university, go through the steps. But all of my friends after high school went to the trades, and I just kind of figured that I would eventually kind of do that. But I just had to just get this one little obstacle off my back. My parents wanted me to attend university. They had never attended university; so it was kind of like a goal to see their children do better than I guess them. Initially, when I attended university, I attended for one year. But at that particular point there was another interviewer who had kind of talked about he tried to – maybe we need to cut this out, but maybe we don't – he had talked about getting into trouble in high school. I kind of got into trouble as well. Not as much as him, but a little bit here and there. So I wasn't really prepared to go to university when I . . . So anyway, the first time that I went to university I think I took some kind of, before my ability to get into university I had to do some upgrading. So I went to Grant MacEwan Community College and upgraded, I think it was, my Math and Chemistry. Then I applied for university and I was accepted. So I went into the program of Native Studies for a year. But I think that at that particular point I was still young. I had graduated high school when I was 17; I was a year younger than everybody else. I had started a year earlier, and I was a little bit immature. Quite frankly, I didn't really think of university as a very important part of my life. How that has changed is pretty significant. But I didn't think of it as very engaging. I went there and I didn't attend classes. I didn't really strive for success, I suppose, in university. I just kind of had gone through most of high school getting by with what I could do naturally. I didn't try in high school. I was in the top level of the classes. Like I wasn't taking the 13, 23, 33 stream, I was taking the 10s, 20s and 30s. But I didn't really need to try, and I was able to get through it. At university I put in the same amount of effort, which was hardly any effort at all; but the marks that I received were problematic. I personally didn't think they were problematic. I was just trying to pass. I really didn't think that it was an issue. So here I am in some of the courses getting above 50s and in other courses not doing so well. I didn't really care. I didn't even attend. Then one day I was called into the Indigenous Services Centre and the person who was there said, you're not doing good. They kind of laid it out there. I knew I wasn't doing good. They said, look, at this particular point in time there are two options. You can really try to change things around, but at this point in time it's probably not going to happen. If that's the case, the university will

probably kick you out. If you ever want to go back to university, that's going to be difficult. That's going to be part of your permanent record. The other option is that you withdraw from university. To me at that particular time I was like, yeah sure, I'll withdraw. I didn't really care. I just had other things that were more, well some tragedies that happened in high school or right before high school kind of desensitized myself to everything. I didn't really care about myself. Can we pause for a minute? So they suggested that I resign from school and I said, fine. I decided to do that. I remember the drive home. I drove down 109 Street going south back to Mill Woods, or no, Aspen Gardens. Between sometime after high school my family moved to Aspen Gardens. I recall that ride back in the 1995 Mercury Sable that I got into an accident. I might have to remove that from the transcript. The car that I got into an accident with was a station wagon. Anyway, that's another story. But I remember feeling this sense of relief that I wasn't going through the steps that somebody was trying to make me go through. There was this optimism of possibility. When I got home and I explained to my family what had happened, they didn't take it as well. But they understood the circumstances and they were supportive. They essentially said, well, if you're not going to university and you're this old, you're going to have to get a job. So, one of the first jobs that I got was just working at a gas station. It was something quick and easy. The application process was super-fast. I applied and basically a day or two later they sat me down and had an interview. I think that's what it is, a high turnover rate in those types of occupations where the amount of money that they offer is not a lot as a gas station attendant. I met my first girlfriend there. She also worked there. We broke up later. I can't even recall how long we dated; it's such a long time ago. I realized that I wasn't going to be a gas station attendant forever. It didn't fit. It didn't coordinate with what I felt in my heart of hearts what I was going to do. What that was at that particular time I had no idea, but I knew I wasn't going to be a gas station attendant. It felt like one of those jobs that's not a permanent position. It's specifically designed for younger people as they're trying to sort out what they want to do, just a little bit of scratch in the pocket. One of the things that had been happening at that same time is my dad had also been going through some changes in his life, and he decided to start a company with a partner, which was an oilfield service company. What they did is they repaired, remanufactured, and then also built positive displacement oil meters. Along the pipelines at certain intervals they have stations where they want to check how much flow of oil is going through the pipeline. They did so at that particular time in the early 2000s. . .

Oh by the way, I graduated high school in 2000 so this whole transition to university was in like 2001 or 2002, around there. It's been a while. I kind of lost my train of thought: the positive displacement meter.

Q: Your father was going into that business.

TS: Right. The technology of the time, and still now 23 years later, it's all mechanically done. It's all mechanically measured. Despite the technology and sensors it really comes down to mechanically measuring volumes of oil as it passes through. So that's what he did. Because he had just started the business, I thought that he might show a little bit of nepotism and hire me. So I asked him if I could be part of it, and he said no. He said no, I had no experience, and he didn't want me. I was like, okay. Well that was a shock to me. I guess I understood. It was really strange to me. But he said, no, if you have the experience. I said, okay, and I kind of carried on looking for jobs. I was a little bit kind of aimless and directionless too at that time. When we were going around the industrial area of south Edmonton he saw, like he drives down 75th/66 Street and he saw an opportunity to work at National Oil Well Varco manufacturing gas meters. So not necessarily oil meters. So I guess what had happened was because he's in the industrial area, he worked just actually right near W.P. Wagner School actually. I remember when I went to high school, after high school I would sometimes walk over to his work. In high school I'd see all the--he was a manager at that particular time. Before he started his own company with a partner, he was working as a manufacturer of a particular section of a company. I'm not sure if I can mention their name or not. But I do remember just being around all the fellows that were under his training. They were all involved in instrumentation, fixing these mechanical meters. When the patent of the positive displacement meter which was created by Smith fell by the wayside, that's when he and a partner decided to try to do a go of their own. So they manufactured parts in Canada on the west coast, had some local shops do some milling, and they were able to kind of basically create these positive displacement meters. That shop, his first shop, was near Wagner. We lived in Mill Woods at that time. So he would always kind of go back and forth. Well actually I don't know if we lived in Mill Woods. Now it's starting to get murky. We're talking a while back now. So anyway, he saw that there was an advertisement, a big old billboard: wanted, gas manufacturers or whatever. So he told me about it and I said,

okay I guess I'll apply. So we got together a resume with my one line of working at a gas station, and submitted it. I was a young individual, and they were just looking for people to assemble these gas meters. What I didn't know about my dad, before he had started working where he had worked and what he was working on, which was the positive displacement oil meters, he actually also worked on these gas meters. So, before the interview, before they called me for the interview, he sat me down and talked for hours about these gas meters. I had no idea what they were, and he would draw me little diagrams. I think they were called Daniel gas meters. The operation was pretty simple. There's like an orifice plate with a particular inner diameter, and as gas passes through it, passes through the orifice plate, and only a certain amount can pass through at a particular time. Bing bang boom: that's how you measure gas. He explained to me the fundamentals. There are in-line gas meters where there's just an orifice plate that you, the whole line has to be, well it's been a while. Anyway, there are different designs. One is a simple design. The other design is one that you can switch out the orifice plates on the fly, and those are called the Daniel meters, I'm pretty sure. But I could be wrong, it's been awhile. Anyway, he basically gave me a crash course in these words, these phrases: instrumentation, orifice plates, and all this stuff. When I had the interview, the guy that was the manager of that department – his name was Ken, I wanna say his last name was Spang, but I could be wrong – we talked and he was impressed. He was so impressed, in fact, that by the time I had finished, he suggested, hey look, you seem to know a lot about this stuff. Rather than be an assembler, I can offer you a job to be the calibrator to calibrate and to QC these instrumentations of these products that we make. It's more money. I was like, wow; no, I'll just assemble them. I don't know why I decided that. I don't know why. To this day I can't for the life of me understand now why I would turn down a job that paid more money and that would eventually turn out to be easier. Once I got inside the manufacturing plant, man, the quality control people, all they had to do was stick a fricking measurement device inside of the pipe and measure the inner diameter of a pipe. To assemble these things you had to lug them around; you had to pick them up; you'd have to grind the inside of them. It was just a whole different process. I had no idea what I was getting into. So he looked at me funny when I said, yeah, I'll just be an assembler. He was like, okay. So he let me be an assembler. I worked at that job for a little bit. Inside of that place, National Oil Well Varco, I assembled gas meters. There was a team of about maybe five or six assemblers, one quality control person, and there was a hydro-test station too, and there were a bunch of

welders. Basically what would happen is as far as the labour process goes, it would all start with the welders. The welders would basically attach the part of the meter that actually does the measuring to solid pipe and attached to the pipe's flanges. That was a job to assemble it or to weld it all together. From that particular point, the meter would be taken over to the grinding station. In order for the gas to flow effectively through the pipe the welds that had penetrated in through the inner diameter of the pipe needed to be grinded down. That was one station, and there was a person that used to work at that station who's also Indigenous. His name was Ray. He was the grinder. After he had finished grinding the things and honing it out – honing is just smoothing it out even further with some oil – it would be brought over to the quality control person. The quality control person would make sure that Ray did not grind out the weld too much, because if it was, there was a certain tolerance down to a thousandth of an inch that Ray needed to get those welds to. If that passed, then he handed it over to the assemblers. The assemblers: we would assemble it. There were a bunch of little components involved in these Daniel meters. Once we assembled it we would give it to the hydro station, who was just one person; his name was Jamal. Jamal would hook up a whole bunch of these pipes that six people were giving him, these gas meters, and he would cap them off at the end with flanges. Then he would shoot a whole bunch of water inside it and he'd pressurize it. He was making sure that there were no leaks and everything was good. Afterward, if it passed that test as well, it was then taken over to a person named Hong, and he painted it. That was the final step. He would prime it gray and then somebody would take it off of his hands. I kind of forget the process afterwards. I think that he either gave it to the warehouse staff, who were a separate division of National Oil Well Varco, or we had our own internal deliveries that were arranged. That was the process. I didn't mind the job. I had a rough idea of what needed to be done. It was nice that my dad had given me that knowledge; so there may have been a little bit of nepotism in that sense. He wasn't doing things for me, but he primed me with the knowledge. When I was assembling things, it was really easy for me. We had a foreman who kind of watched us. There were a couple of us who assembled things. It was great. I worked there for about a year. Then everything started to slow down in Alberta. I recall this one time where I'm just working away doing my thing and our foreman, his name was Lenny. Lenny was a good guy. He did a lot of dirt biking. All of a sudden he was like super pissed, which was odd, because he was a good guy. He grabbed his whole toolbox, which was one of those rolling units, and he just grabbed his toolbox

and took his toolbox and was out; he was just gone. I was like, wow that's weird. I'm just kind of obliviously kind of carrying on work. Then as I was passing by Hong, who worked maybe about 50 metres away from me at the paint booth, I said, oh did you see Lenny leave? He was like, yeah he got fired; we're all fired. I was like, what the hell? He's like yeah, I'm fired, you're fired, we're all fired. I was like, what? Nobody's told me about this. So Hong had told me this and I was surprised. About an hour or two later Ken, our boss, comes in and he has a meeting and lets us know that National Oil Well has decided – we might have to remove National Oil Well's statement – National Oil Well has decided to do away with the division. So now they're going to start to wrap things up. Ken fired a whole bunch of people, well laid off I guess. He laid off Hong, he laid off all the other assemblers, he laid off Jamal, and he laid off the foreman. Ray was already gone by that particular time. I think Ray had a little bit of difficulty. There was a joke. He was around before the manufacturing division became the manufacturing division of National Oil Well. National Oil Well actually bought out a company and brought all their employees over and all the salesmen too. The people who were the assemblers when it was the other company came over and became the salespeople, and they trained the new set of assemblers. But anyway, Ray was, I think, part of that crew that had come over. At that particular time I didn't quite understand what the big deal was. But people who knew him before called him Payday Ray. I had no idea why until the first paycheque rolls around and then he was gone for three days. Then he'd come back after three days. I guess he had a little bit of a drinking problem. He would get his paycheque, go on a little bender, and three days later he would show up. At that particular time when they fired everybody, he was also fired. The only people that they didn't fire out of that crew were the two salesmen, whose names were Terry and Ken (not Ken the manager, another Ken), and then myself. They kept the welders but there were three people out of that entire group that used to be seven or eight, I can't quite remember. I guess I could do a tally in my head if you give me a second. But what had happened is the salesmen then became the assemblers. They got actually pushed back. If they wanted to keep their job, if they wanted to be part of the cleanup – because they still had product, they still had inventory that they had to deal with – they became the assemblers. My position was bumped and I became the grinder. I was the one who received the pipes from the welders and I had to sit where Ray sat. To be honest, I didn't mind it. I didn't mind it for a couple of reasons. First off, I've always been very, what's the word that I'm looking for, meticulous when it comes to detail. I think a part of me is

also, I do art in my spare time now. I've always been kind of meticulous with detail. All I had to do was polish out those little grinds. It was such a loud device that I was sitting next to, that I could actually bring in a radio and just blast that thing. I was real young and I was, yeah this is great – I can listen to loud music, I'm using a power tool, and I'm just doing the job. I did Ray's job. They kept us on but they also started to rehire people, temps. They hired temps; they fired the full timers, they rehired temps, so there were two temps that became part of the team. It was really interesting. I, at that particular time didn't, even though I didn't mind grinding, it was a very difficult job. These meters that we were manufacturing ranged from two-inch pipes, two-inch inner diameter pipes to 24 inches. Some of them we had to use large cranes. Some of them were 10 feet long, two feet diameter, just large gas pipes. I had to use the crane for these larger ones but for the smaller ones it just took up too much time. There was too much inventory to get through to hook everything up, to lift up 75 pounds or to lift up 100 pounds or 125 pounds. It just made sense to hand bomb them. So that particular job I just started picking up these pipes and throwing them onto my grinding station, and afterwards I'd pick them up and throw them away or pass them to the QC. It was a really physically demanding and taxing job. After a while, after seeing the people that they had hired to be the QC and to be the assemblers--well they didn't hire assemblers--, I started to get a little bit annoyed. Here I was, one of the veterans of the back shop, and I was doing the worst possible job. I would bring it up to the salesmen, who were the assemblers, and they were like, yeah we'll get you on assembly again. But they never did, because they didn't have any power. I realized at that particular point they got demoted to assembly because they didn't have any power in that job, despite the presentation that they were some type of authority. They had nothing; they had no say in that company. It wasn't their choice to do what they did. So they just kind of pandered: oh you know, eventually something will happen. And something did happen. We hired some temps and boy it was really interesting. One of these temps that we hired, I was like, this guy should be a grinder. They said, you know what, you're right. Let's make him do this. You can do the assembling, but you're gonna have to teach him. So I said, well okay I can teach him. I explained to him the criticalness of the clearances and the tolerances that we were working with. While he was doing that, the grinding, I was doing the finishing, like the final product of grinding, which was honing the pipe with oil. There's another machine that we inserted inside the pipe, and basically it's like honing the cylinders of an engine. It's very similar. It has a stone that breaks away over time. As I

explained to him the criticalness of it, this guy was probably in his mid-30s, felt a little bit older when I was young. Everybody feels old when you're young. He just was kind of a jackass. He was just like, I know everything, I know this, I know that. Just one of those guys, a bullshit artist. I explained to him the situation about how to grind these pipes. He's like, oh I got it; I know how to do this. He starts to grind the pipe, and he's grinding the shit out of these pipes. I'm saying, hey man, you gotta think about your tolerances. He's like, oh you know, it's okay, and he carries on. I'm two feet beside him and I'm just honing these pipes afterwards, pushing in and out this big large drill, this big large drill, going like this for eight hours a day, just like this. I kept reminding him that day. He was going really fast. Now I was able to go as fast as him, but it took me a little bit of time to get up to that speed. He was just motoring through these. I was thinking, Jesus, well whatever. It's not my company, I don't care. I'm just gonna hone whatever he gives me. So I kept honing whatever he gave me, and for about three days or so he just was cracking through these things, just going through all this inventory. Then the one QC person – his name was Knut, this old fellow, he was also from the old company that came in – he finally got to the guy's stuff. He had a big pile of meters that he had to get through before that particular point, because I was pretty darn fast as well. But I was meticulous. When he got to those meters that the person had done, all of them did not pass. He had ground the inner diameter so much that they were unusable; you could not use them. He had caused \$30,000 worth of damage, and he was out the next day. Ken fired him just like that. So what happened is I went back to grinding. I did some grinding and I carried on in that position for a while. Everybody knew the writing on the wall that this division was gonna be eventually closed. They had asked us to stay, and how they convinced us to stay was to say, hey, once this division is closed, if you stay to the end we'll give you a little bit of a bonus. I think it was a thousand bucks or something like that, which was a lot of money back then when I was young. But also we'll try to get you a job in the warehouse doing shipping and receiving. So I was like, yeah, sure. So I carried on with that shitty grinding job for quite a while. Finally, after everything, well what had happened is it became a job where the salesmen who were the assemblers started going back to the office. Myself and the one temp, his name was Orest Sawchuk, he was an elderly fellow. Well again, everybody looks old when you're young. I would say he was probably about 40s or so. We were in charge of assembling it from start to finish, so from the grinding to the quality control to the assembling to the hydro testing it was just us two. We did it all. Knut did as well,

but Knut was, I can't quite remember what happened to him. He either left or. . . He shared the job with us. He just couldn't keep up and we had to get things out. I think that I was also QCing at the same time he was; Orest was also QCing alongside of him. We were just kind of playing fill the holes in the leaky ship. Whatever needed to be done got done. Then that job just kind of vanished; it was done. They had finished up all their inventory and they were done. At that particular point, they had found a position for me in the shipping and receiving section of National Oil Well Varco. I had to go through another interview with the warehouse manager, and it went well and I became a shipper/receiver. That job was particularly not very memorable. It was basically we supplied products to different national oilwell locations across Alberta mainly, a little bit of Saskatchewan too, Swift Current. So it involved me receiving an order saying we need a couple flanges, a couple of these, a couple of this, a couple of that. Then I would travel on this big forklift, a stand-up forklift, and I would go through this big warehouse and just drive around on the forklift. I would be up in the air 30 or 40 feet with a safety harness picking things. Then I would package them up and we'd send them out. I enjoyed that job because I was young and didn't really mind it. I didn't quite know what I was doing yet. But there was an opportunity that had opened up where the manager of the warehouse was actually leaving. She was leaving that job, and her right-hand person was going to become the manager. Her right-hand person had been occupying a quality control job, an inventory quality control job. When he became the manager, I went up to him and said, look, I know that this is opening up. I expressed some interest in the job and he said, okay, that's good, go know. I'll keep that in mind. I said, thanks. At that particular time they had hired on another shipper-receiver that was doing the same duty as me. This guy was, I didn't really like that guy very much, for other reasons, but we just didn't get along. What had happened is he also expressed interest in this particular job. I figured because I had the veteranship--I'd worked for National Oil Well for a year, I'd worked in the gas manufacturing department and was doing good at my current job-- that I was kind of a shoo-in. No one else was interested in it other than this one fellow who had worked in another warehouse. But what had happened is the fricking guy was unsafe. While he was doing a job, he was picking up a valve that was probably 80 or 100 pounds. This 80 or 100 pound valve was inside of a crate with other 80 or 100 pound valves. When he lifted it up he somehow managed to hurt himself where it fell back down, because he didn't lift it up correctly, and he ended up severely injuring his hand. He was bleeding and kind

of in shock, which may have been, well whatever. But because he was injured, he could no longer be a shipper or receiver. So he got that job. That's where they put him. I was fricking pissed off. The guy injures himself and he gets a promotion? That's how it works? Okay, I guess. So I didn't want to be part of the shipping/receiving unit after that. An opportunity came up after about a year to become a delivery driver, a driver. I would drive around the industrial section of Edmonton and I would basically drop off all these orders that I had once previously been picking. Sometimes we shipped them out to different locations, but we also had local customers. So I was driving around a delivery truck like an overhead Mac truck with an overhead cab with the bed – just an open bed truck, open flat deck truck. I did that for a year, and it was great. At that particular time they had bumped up all our pay and I was getting paid \$18 an hour. I was being paid \$13 an hour when I was an assembler. So a \$5 raise, this is great. I drove around and it was a good job. It was decent because I just stuck around the industrial area and waited for somebody to call and say, you need to pick something up over at this location, and I would do so. When I wasn't, I would just kind of twiddle my thumbs and I'd read a magazine and I'd sit in a parking lot at Cinema City 12. I'd have a nap sometimes, and I'd just wait for somebody to call. It was great. It was great during the summers and was okay during the winters as well. But at that particular time I realized that this was not my end goal. I don't know what it was, but it was definitely not with National Oil Well Varco. I saw how they treated me at that particular time and I thought, this is not worth it and I'm not quite sure how I'm going to get out of this funk. It was a funk. I didn't have an education at that particular time. Who would want me? I had some experience, but who would want me? So for that year that I was driving, I also started attending a community college, Grant MacEwan Community College, at night. I was working during the day and doing university work at night. I didn't quite know what I wanted to do, but I was just taking Arts courses because they were university transferrable credits. It was always in the back of my mind, okay, maybe I'll go back to university. So I took a range of courses. I took Sociology, Psychology – any kind of Arts course that there was a possibility. I didn't take History though, which is a funny thing. When I got my grades back, I was starting to pass everything. How do I choose? Is it about passion? Is it about interest? At that particular time it was pragmatism that informed my decision. I saw, hey I'm getting better marks in Psychology than I am in any other course. So when it came time when I had 40 credits or so from the community college, and went and applied to University of Alberta

again I applied for a Bachelor of Arts with a major in Psychology. It just so happened that my minor was Sociology at that time, because that was my second best course. That was how I chose my course. My parents still were, despite me being in my early 20s, still influential and encouraged me to do university; so I did. I applied for U of A and I was accepted. I let the people know at National Oil Well that I was going to be stopping work in September and going back to school to take a Psychology degree. And I did. I went back to U of A and I did Psychology, but at the same time I didn't do a full course load. At the same time, I decided that I had enough experience, and my dad at that particular time, I think he needed some workers. So I started working for him while I was doing my Psychology degree. I was juggling work and school again. Honestly, I felt that still university was not something that I was going to pursue. I honestly thought that I'd get this stupid degree that they're still harping on me to get, and I'm going to get out of there and become a tradesman. At that particular time my friends had become tradesmen or were well on their way. They're in their second or third year and they're talking about the nice fat paycheques and the work that they do. They took a lot of pride in it, being part of the unions, the Steelworkers Union or some kind of union office very close by. One became a sheet metalist; my friend John became a sheet metalist. My friend Josh became a pipefitter; my friend Blake became a welder. This was all the people I'd grown up with in high school and here they were, in my mind, two or three years ahead of me. I had to get this stupid degree done first; then I would become whatever. I'd use one of their contacts: hey, you know, let me become a sheet metalist or whatever; help me become a sheet metalist. So I did university. I did that course, and at the same time I was working with my dad. Working with my dad was difficult at times. He had been a manager for quite a long time, since the beginning of the '90s or maybe the early '80s. Here I was new but with experience now; so I had a little bit of my own independence. I had a little bit of knowhow on how assemblies go and I had my own ideas on efficiency. I would talk to him about it. I'd be like, hey, I think we could do it this way. He's like, no, do it this way. I'm like, well I think you're wrong, dad. No, do it this way. We got into a lot of arguments about these processes. I'm pretty sure that he was wrong; even now I'm pretty sure that he was wrong about them. They're just like the minutia of work, how to get something done. For instance, inside of these positive displacement meters basically it's a big vessel with walls that are perfectly cylindrical. Inside you have these plates that are made of aluminum – thins, as you call them. They spin around the inside of these positive displacement

meters. Because it has to capture oil and measure oil, the tolerance level between the edge of the thin and the interior of the positive displacement meter has to be within a certain amount. There's a certain amount of slippage that's allowed. How do you get those thins to be perfect is a little bit of a process. We weren't dealing with the perfectly manufactured thins from Smith Meters anymore; they were creating their own. There's some hiccups when it comes to the processes; so we would have to basically file them down to spec. I had a particular way of filing them down, and he suggested a different way. I was like, well I don't think that's the efficient way there, man; I just don't. We would get into huge arguments about this. It wasn't a big company or anything. There were, I think at most, with the exception of me, maybe four other individuals. These individuals were not his son, but his son had ideas. We would get into huge arguments about this stuff, and it really kind of affected our relationship outside of work as well, just huge arguments about these processes. That's what it was; I was going to university at the same time and doing that. University just didn't matter too much. I was able to finish. So to kind of go over to currently I guess, maybe I should say what I am now. While I was working for my dad, I was still at the University of Alberta. I was going pretty slow through that because I didn't really care, and I was doing some industrial work and getting paid some decent cash at that particular time with my dad. Not the best; there definitely wasn't nepotism involved. But not the worst, either. It definitely was comparable to my last job over at National Oil Well. But anyway, so I'm getting close to finishing the Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Psychology and a minor in Sociology. Because of the electives that they have at university, and maybe this is a case for why electives should happen, I had to take a Classical History class. I had to take something in the History Department, some kind of history class. So I opted for Classical History. When I took the class, it was just like a 100-level class, nothing fancy, just a general overview of classical Roman history I think it was. I forget the name of the professor. At that particular point in time all the professors were just nameless people that I just saw each day and had no idea what their names were. I didn't see them as peers or anybody; they were just there. Anyway, I was sitting in this class and in my mind I was thinking, okay, how many credits do I need to finish this? It was a winter session; so it was starting in January. I was doing the math and I'm like, okay if I pass all of my courses this semester, how many credits are needed? I would need six credits to graduate. I'm thinking, well okay, I guess I'm gonna have to take a summer course or something. I don't want to go back into the September again. I didn't want to go back and do

another semester or half a semester, even though I probably could've. I didn't realize it though. I understood university as like that type of curriculum: finish in June, convocate in June. I never realized that you could convocate at other particular times, because I was ignorant of university. I didn't know anybody that attended; none of my friends attended. It was kind of really actually a very solitary experience. I didn't really like talking to people because I looked at all these university kids and I'm thinking, my god, you guys are so lucky. I didn't want to be there, I didn't really want to know anybody there. Anyway, I was in this Classical History course. Kemezis maybe was his name; Adam Kemezis, now that I'm thinking. But I could be wrong. All of a sudden a graduate student does a presentation, asked the professor's permission to give a presentation. It's like, hey does anybody here need six credits? My ears kind of perked up from the back of the room: well I need six credits. Does anybody here like classical history or like the idea of getting those six credits in Rome? Yeah, I kinda like that idea. In my head my wheels were spinning and I was thinking, okay, imagine doing my last six credits in Rome. That would be the perfect send-off to university; see you later, University of Alberta. My last great hurrah, time in Italy. Anybody want to spend a month in Italy? I said, yeah, this is great. So the person explained that there was a 400-level Classical History course that was being offered in Italy with two professors, Dr. Steven Hijmans and Dr. Andrew Gow. I thought to myself I didn't know who these people were, but the graduate student explained the process to everyone. The process was you would have to have a recommendation from a professor and you would have to write a letter of intent. They wanted that; that was part of the prerequisite for the course. I thought to myself, okay I have no professors who I know. Initially I had no idea how this idea of asking for letters worked. I was like, well okay I'm in this Classical History class; I'm just going to ask this professor, who I don't know from Adam or from Eve or however that saying goes. I went up to him and said, hey, I'm actually thinking about doing this. If I do this, could I receive a letter of recommendation? This was one of the courses that had like 90 people. It wasn't an intimate 15 students – 90 people. He said, well frankly I don't know what my letter would say because I have no idea who you are. I was like, oh shit, well okay, I guess I'm gonna have to think about a letter of reference. My last Psychology class I took was with a professor whose name escapes me now, but he was a very interesting individual. It was like a robotics psychology class. We got to play with Lego and we did computer coding. I distinctly remember him walking around in a full suit, and he would have an espresso cup and he would just kind of sip his cup all the time. I

did really well in his class, because I worked with mechanics before. This whole creating a robot was pretty easy for me as somebody who was kind of steeped in technical instrumentation. So I asked him and he said, yeah, okay. I said, great. So I had my letter. He said he would do it, and then I had to write my own letter. At this particular point in time, I liked classical history sort of. I knew a little bit about it. I didn't know a lot about it. Most of my experience was probably watching Russel Crowe in "Gladiator"; it just looked cool. So I was talking with one of my down-and-out friends about this and he was saying, oh you know, you just gotta play up your passion for it; fib a little bit. I don't even know if I have access to that letter anymore. I probably could find it somewhere maybe. But no, maybe not. University of Alberta email I think kind of deleted everything from a particular point recently. So I did the letter, and it was the first time that I signed off anything with 'thank you for your consideration.' I signed it, and I didn't know if that was how you do letters. But I received word back from the professors saying, okay we agree that you can come to Rome with us, but you have to take another class. You have to take a Classical History class in the summer. It's a three-credit 300 level class, but it should kind of prep you for that 400 level. I was like, well that kind of defeats the purpose. I'd have three extra credits that I don't need. I was actually just going to say no, never mind. But I decided at the end of the day it still seemed like a good send-off for university, see yah later, once that was done. So I accepted and I took that course and I passed it. Then I went to Rome. That's kind of when it all changed for me. It all changed for me because these were eight-hour class days. We would basically walk to a location inside of Rome and the professors would give a comprehensive account of the history in that particular area. All of the individuals who were there, maybe about ten or so, they were all classical historians majoring in Classical History. I was kind of like the odd one out. I didn't really understand; it wasn't my specialty. Hearing these people talk, hearing them talk about classical history, I realized how out of my element I felt. I was just like, wow, these people are like young whippersnappers and here I am just kind of tagging along. I knew that I'd pass, but I wasn't really trying that much. But anyway, the way that the course was structured was that we all stayed at a convent, a nun convent, with the professors. After our day of lecturing we would have dinner, and we would have dinner up on the roof of this convent. We would break bread together, students and professors, and we would chitchat a little bit. It started to break down the barrier of seeing these professors as more than just these faceless people who will never be meaningful or like I just don't care for. That's maybe not the right word that I'm looking

for, but that I'm empathetic for, that I had empathy for. But it started to happen. What I had begun to notice when I was taking that course, and I don't mean to throw anybody under the bus, there were only sometimes that this would happen. But the professors would ask questions to these other students. These other students were probably a little bit hung over, because we were allowed to drink wine; we were all over 18; well, I certainly was anyway. And they wouldn't respond to these professors. It got to the point, maybe two weeks in, where I started to feel embarrassed. These professors would ask a question to these people who were supposed to be these passionate young whippersnappers full of energy, and they would just let these professors ask these questions and they wouldn't say anything; wouldn't even try, even if they were getting it wrong. Because we had begun to have shared dinner and have this kind of more social atmosphere, I felt embarrassed and I just started to pipe up. It started off with questions that I kind of knew the answer to, but at the end I just felt a little like I'm going to take a stab in the dark, because I don't care. What are they going to do? Grade me on my answer? It's about participation. So I would become a little bit more open. I guess that that 300 level class, that primer class, came in handy. We were talking about structures of old Roman buildings, and I remembered them. I visually recalled the structures, and I think it had something to do with just my memory of visuals. I was good in art and I kind of remembered that, and I would doodle them when I was studying them. So I just kind of felt more open, obligated to answer. But at a particular point it wasn't an obligation, I was just kind of having meaningful conversations with these professors. Whether or not the other students in the class were listening or paying attention, I didn't care. I was interested in talking with them. This is how it happened for a while. It doesn't seem like a long time, but when you're with somebody eight hours a day for a week, that's several hours that you're with people. We were at the convent and they said, we'd like to speak to you for a quick minute. So they brought me into the kitchen room and they said, you know, I don't remember their words particularly, but they said that they think I have a good analytical mind for history. I think I might have been a little bit tipsy at that particular point and I was like, oh wow, okay thanks, very flattered. They said, we think that you might have what it takes to become a professor at university. I was like, wow. I'm pretty sure I was drunk. I might've been a little tipsy. The first thought in my mind was, wow this is quite the strategy, fellows. You guys are trying to increase the History Department's quota of students or something like that. They said, no, this is real; this is something. I said, well I'm

graduating. They said, well think about it, think about if you want to do this, because we think you can succeed. I said, well thank you. They didn't bring it up again. It's not like they harped on me. They brought it up one time. At that particular time I thought about it. At that particular time the economy in Alberta wasn't that great. I think it was around 2011 at that particular time. It wasn't doing very well. So when I got back to Canada I first talked to my family in Quebec, which consisted of my grandma and my aunt. My aunt was supportive. She was like, yeah choose what you choose. My grandma was also that way too. They weren't trying to push me in any direction. The choice had to be for myself. Then I went to Manitoba and was speaking to, I guess he was an elder of Little Grand Rapids. His name was Richard Grisdale. He also thought that it might be an idea. He said, do it if you want to. So I got back to Edmonton and I thought, you know what, let's give it a try. I still feel a little young. I think I was in my late 20s at that particular time. What is this? I'm gonna just become a tradesperson and I'll work? That was my goal before I had left for Rome. But when I came back, the jobs were drying up. Getting an apprenticeship: people weren't doing apprenticeships at that time. They were laying people off; they were trying to get rid of people. So it didn't make any sense to go into an economy where people were getting rid of their employees. I decided, what the hell. Okay, what do I gotta do? With the professors there who were on the trip, they advised me on how I could apply a lot of the credits that I had earned in my Bachelor of Arts to I forget the term that it's called, an after degree is what they called it, another Bachelor of Arts degree. But in this case it would be strictly, if I'm doing the History route, because I didn't want to do Classical History. They suggested I do History because it might be good to do Indigenous-related history. But at that particular point my identity was also a worker. There's a whole bunch of a confluence of factors when it comes to identity. I respected their opinion but I had to make the decision for myself. I said, okay, well thank you for your advice, and I took an after degree. It was all history courses. It was two years of only history, and I basically took as many history courses as I could. I took as many Canadian history courses as I could, and I had to do some other history too. I think I took a British history course with Jane Samson, an African history course with another professor whose name escapes me, but mainly it was Canadian history. Dr. Linda Kerr, Dr. David Mills, well maybe it was only those two now that I'm thinking back. Anyway, it was just all history. For those two years I decided to treat education as a career as opposed to just something to do to get my parents off my back. I really honed down how to create these documents that needed to be

created for history: how to write an essay. I took Cold War history classes. I took Canadian Sports History classes. I took Alberta History with Paul Voisey as well, Dr. Paul Voisey. I took as many history classes as I could, and I noticed how each professor now, well in my mind now they had names and now they had different personalities. They weren't just people who provided information. I could see the art behind being a professor and how to try to instill or generate interest in the topics that they were talking about. I started to see it as a craft. For a Cold War history class with Dr. Linda Kerr, I decided I wanted to kind of shoot; well I started to care a little bit more about these reports or these essays that I needed to do, these assignments. I wanted to take it a step further. I wanted to make an essay on primary sources. So I went to the Provincial Archives of Alberta for the first time. It was intimidating as hell, but I had to get it done. I asked, how do you negotiate the archives? The archivists there were very helpful. They said, this is the card catalogue, this is what you do, and started to remind me of movies that I'd seen in the past like Indiana Jones in a library with the little yellow cards. It was exactly like that. It was a Cold War history class. So I was looking for something related to Communism. It was real basic. I just looked up Communism in the Provincial Archives of Alberta card catalogue and I ran across some things that, actually it was kind of a bust. I didn't find the primary sources that I wanted to there, but I did stumble across some secret RCMP spy reports that were forwarded to, I think the title was Attorney General, who was the premier in 1930, Brownlee, before Aberhart. These spy reports, they're from the K Division of the RCMP; they were documenting the comings and goings of these coalminers in Crowsnest Pass. I thought it was cool. I said, oh shoot, I'm not going to be able to use it for this project, but maybe for a future project I'll be able to do exactly that. So I kept that little bit of information in my back pocket and kind of carried on. Took some classes with Dr. Frances Swyripa--Women's History class, Ethnic History class. Took some history courses with Dr. Eric Strikwerda, Social History of Canada, and did quite well. I was coming on my way. For two years I had done that and I worked on a craft. I was still young as far as my experience level went. But now it came time to do a Masters. I never had anybody in my life do an application for a Masters. I was floundering. I had mentioned briefly one time to Eric Strikwerda that I was thinking about applying to the Masters. He was kind enough to say, oh if you're doing that, why don't you--if you want I'll take a look at your application and we'll go from there. I said, oh man this is great, the inside track, a little bit of help on something I have no idea what to do. So my first application or my letter or my

research proposal, I was talking about myself. I talked about this is who I am. In this letter, I felt obligated to explain why the hell my grades were pretty atrocious before this all happened, before I decided to do this after degree. Even the beginning years of the after degree, they were difficult. I didn't know much about Scottish history. Why would I take a 400 level Scottish history class with Linda Kerr? I didn't know anything about that. So the marks were--at that particular time I thought they were okay, but whatever. In this letter, I was trying to mathematically explain why my GPA is all right if you look at the last couple of terms. I said, and I'm kind of interested in this project here about the Crowsnest Pass coalminers; maybe like a one-liner. I talked about myself and my experience, and then that one-liner that I'll probably do something about the Crowsnest Pass. Who knows, though. So when Eric got the letter he was like, yeah, this is okay. I think he was being kind to me. But he said, this is what they want to know about. They want to know about what your research is going to be. They don't care about what your transcripts are or your justification of why you feel that you didn't do very well. They want to know about your future, not about your past. So I said, okay. He said, try again, but really focus on this. So I elaborated a lot on the research that I had done. I went back to the Provincial Archives and read them more. I'd done a little bit of research on the historiography and knew what the heck that was at that time. I realized that the material that I'd come across, for whatever reason, wasn't really developed at all in the historiography. This treasure trove of RCMP spy reports just wasn't discussed. I was like, well this is an omission in the historiography. So I was able to kind of create this application or this research proposal and sent it over to Eric and he's like, yes this is it, this is what you've got to do. I was like, okay. At that particular point it wasn't like I chose that topic because I was interested in labour. It was a Canadian history topic, but it was just because I had access to this resource that I thought was really kind of cool. It was kind of doing things in retrospect, and I kind of thought about this in the Masters program after I was accepted at U of A. At the U of A I was different than all the other Masters students, because they were already interested in a topic. You talk to one student and he's like, oh I'm really passionate about European history with a focus on this. I wanna do something about gender history; I wanna do something about ethnic history. What are you doing? I'm like, well I found some sources and thought they were kind of interesting. There wasn't that internally propelled direction. I was kind of rudderless. I just found something that I found was cool. I researched what it was, I realized it hadn't been used, and it seemed like an interesting way to

go. So that's what I did. That's how I got involved in Labour history, I suppose. I wrote that Masters thesis. Eric suggested that. I asked him if he wanted to be like my supervisor for it. But I think that he was, I forget the term that they use, an instructional professor – a sessional professor at the U of A. He's like, I'm a sessional and I don't think that I'd be a good supervisor. I could, but I'm just letting you know. I said, okay. He said, I think that you should talk to James Muir. I'm like, who's that? I'd never even heard about James Muir before. He's like, well he studies Labour history. I'm like, Labour history? I guess so. Isn't this kind of Cold War history? Not Cold War history, but Communist history, that kind of thing, general Canadian history? Well it's kind of Labour history. So I sent an email to James, didn't know who he was. Dr. Muir: hello, hope this email finds you in good spirits; letter of introduction. He said, yeah, come on down. We had an appointment and he listened to my project and my spiel about my project a little bit. He said, yeah, that would be good; I would support that. I'm like, okay this is great. I was able to add that little line in my application at that particular point: I've met with James Muir and he has indicated that he'd be interested in being my supervisor. So that's what happened. He indeed became my supervisor. It was quite a process. I thought that I could write. I was never really strong in writing in high school. I was always good at Math and Physics and just understanding how things were put together. English, or as they call it in Alberta, Language Arts, I didn't understand it, didn't really care, didn't really think about the crafting that much. So for my after degree it was kind of a learning curve on how to create these documents. I did okay for an undergraduate, but when I got to the graduate level and I was working with James, I think he was kind. I showed him some of my writings. One of the courses that I did with him was for E.P Thompson, the 50th anniversary of *The Making of the English Working Class*. He had these assignments about reading Raphael Samuel's work from the *History Workshop*, and elaborate or explain what it is. So he saw my writing style. I thought I was trying to be intellectual at that particular point. I was really trying to just make it a little bit more confusing than it needed to be. I thought that at that particular level, that's how you do it. That's how you sound smart. That is how you present yourself to people for people to be like, wow I'm gonna remember him. James kind of walked me back from that; he walked me back from the academic jargon. He said, you know what, just read this. He gave me a book to read. It was called *Write, Rewrite*. I wasn't offended at that at that time, because I knew that this was a craft. I realized that I was just going on instinct. I had no idea how to really get down and hone the granules of what this work

involved. So I read that and he said, now read this one – another book called *Style, Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. Okay I read that one. Then one day I was walking by him. I remember he was walking through Hub Mall one direction and I was walking through another direction. I see him reading a book called *Syntax and Style*. He didn't see that I had seen him read that, but the next time we were in his office I mentioned that person. He said, oh yeah, that's a book I'm reading. So I bought that book myself and I still have it in my collection. I just kept acquiring all of these books that he suggested and also following my own kind of instinct and learning it as a process, this whole idea of, I think I've got the ideas but I need to elaborate and explain them effectively. I realized then that that particular part was also kind of editing. Editing itself is a profession in itself. So I learned about this person named Butcher, copy editing. It was one of the most expensive books I've ever purchased before. It was all about how to copy edit. I was treating the act of writing as not necessarily just prose of style. There's work that's involved in creating, and that's what I did. I respect that sort of work and I developed all of that. It's all still in my head. It was great to have done that. It was great for James to have offered me that type of knowledge. He could've been one of those supervisors that just spoon fed me edits rather than show me the material of why those edits are made in the first place. I felt very advantaged in that sense, because a lot of the Masters students who I'd been rubbing elbows with were these people starting from the outside in: oh I'm interested in ethnic history; oh I'm interested in this kind of history. They didn't have any experience. They were also running on cruise control, but they were just better at their cruise control than I was. I felt like I was still a little clunky. They were streamlining but they didn't understand what they were doing. They were kind of like spoon fed how to – well I don't know if this is too grandiose of a perspective. I shouldn't minimize other peoples' efforts to learn. But it felt like they'd already been good in English and they were just rinsing and repeating what they had learned in high school and honed as an undergraduate. I took it differently, because I wasn't paying attention in Language Arts in high school and I certainly wasn't paying attention to my English in Psychology. It was very late where I started to treat it professionally and when I started to think about it as a job; it was a job that people pay for. I didn't get that same impression from a lot of the individuals who I ran across in the Masters program and even in the PhD program afterwards. So yeah, the whole craft of writing, I treated it like a job. I understood that people got paid to do it. So in the back of my mind I was making contingency plans. While I did like the idea of becoming a professor and teaching

Canadian history in particular, I was kind of gearing myself up for just a safety net. The decision to purchase the copy editing book of Butcher for \$200, which in my mind was crazy at the time, was like this is just in case. Maybe what I can do is I'll be able to apply for copy editing at a journal or something. Who knows? So I carried on with my Masters dissertation. The courses that I took with James Muir, that E.P. Thompson 50 years was really profound. There were a lot of individuals who were in that course, undergraduates but also graduate students, and we just had a good dynamic where we actually listened to each other, where we actually communicated not only with the head honcho at the top of the table, Dr. James Muir, but with everybody else. It was really interesting, it was kind of like what you would hope for when you have those kind of sessions where there's only seven or eight students. You hope for the participation that you got; everybody participated in their own way. But anyway, labour history started to get more in my mind. When I was working on my Masters thesis, I had realized that I was kind of coming across from a perspective, because I wasn't steeped in a starting point of wanting to be passionate about labour history. Now this might be a little stereotypical, but I'm going to just say it. I think that a lot of individuals come from a point of like they were the son of a union man who was the son of a union man, and by god they're going to be the son of a union man too. With that sort of starting point, it's very understandable that the narratives inside labour history are like, well it's a little bit of a competition. There's capital on one side and there's labour on the other, and they clash. That's what I kind of conceived of as these narratives of labour history. Where I wanted to take my work or where I really wanted to focus on is not necessarily the tensions that were involved with that. Certainly that was present in the 1932 Crowsnest Pass strike, but there was internal class conflict between the workers. I was dissatisfied with some of the assessments that some of the workers who wanted to go back to work were considered scabs. They had been in the Crowsnest Pass as long as the other individuals. When they wanted to go back to work, why were they considered scabs? It's just a word, but it's a very charged word. So I tried to really examine that conflict and I think that I accomplished that. There were also some other dimensions. There were women in the strike as well. So I did my Masters and that's how I kind of proceeded on. It felt like labour history but it felt unlike the labour history that I was being confronted with very often, very frequently. That's what I did. I'm having a difficult time thinking about where I kind of want to take that. I guess I just felt a little leery about characterizing with too broad a stroke my conceptions of labour history. But those

were my conceptions. As I've gone further into the field, I realize that there are a lot of nuances, and people try to bring that nuance to the table. I'm willing to admit that I might've been wrong in my first assessment. As I carry forward I think that there is some nuance. So, to get back to it, I felt like James had prepared me for this idea of treating writing as work, and I just executed it. I knew what I wanted to write about. I had copious amounts of documents of these RCMPs as they spied on this community that was going through an economic crisis at that particular point. I knew what I wanted to write, and I got to writing it. I wish that I could say that I remember much about the writing of it, but it was just a job. It was still a step; the thesis was still a step that I needed to do in order to do my PhD and kind of carry on. I just kind of carried on; I got it done. I went to the Provincial Archives almost every single day just to look at those notes and to research coalmining, finding more primary sources related to that. Unfortunately, I didn't really find a lot of primary sources related to this topic, and maybe that's why this remained elusive when it came to the historiography of the topic. But what had happened is as I completed the project I had amassed all this information about Alberta coalmining from the 1920s to the 1940s. I was a stickler when it came to documenting what was where. Is this relevant? Most of the time everything that I came across was not relevant to the 1932 strike. But I had to record it, because I felt like in the back of my mind, why would I want to do this again? I wanna be efficient. Efficiency meant recording it. It might take a little bit more time instead of just looking at something and saying, no you can have it back in the archives. It takes a little bit of time to say, okay, what is this, and write down a brief description. I briefly did a description of the document; then I gave it back to the archivist. When it came time to do my dissertation, I realized I'd amassed quite a collection of Alberta coalmine information from the 1920s to the 1940s. What was particularly interesting to me at that time is I came across transcripts of a royal commission, the transcripts behind the, sorry, I should remember this. I've said it so many times in the past. The 1925 Alberta Coal Commission, that's what it was. It was about 800 pages; it was two 400-page looseleaf papers. Each was about 400 pages. I just started reading it. It was interesting for me to have a transcript of these coalmining owners talking about the coal industry. As I thumbed through it I noticed some references to these what they called gopher mines or gopher holes. It was just derogative. These big coalmine owners, these ones who operated large enterprises, were disparaging these smaller rural coalmines. I thought it was really interesting because I had never heard about this. In the historiography of coalmines, now

that I had been working through my Masters, I had not come across an iota of these small mines. I always considered the workscape of coalmines to be a corporation with hundreds of employees, and that was the only form of coalmining in Alberta, coalmining in Canada, coalmining worldwide, as a result of the need for that resource for industrialization. Never did I come across anything that referenced these small- or medium-size enterprises before, and I thought it was cool. Again, it was just kind of like thinking outside the box. What I've read and what seemed to be missing was this idea of what I kind of refer to as ma and pa collieries, or sorry, ma and pa shops. I've kind of coined a term now that I use in my dissertation. It's based off of microbreweries. I call them micro-collieries. I'm going to try to make that happen. When I came across it and I started to, there's a whole bunch of things that happened. But I still would visit the industrial area of Edmonton to visit my dad while he was working and I still worked there at the same time, but more during summer rather than during the courses. I would drive by the south Edmonton industrial part of Edmonton, and I'd see all of these companies, all of these buildings that were related to, if we're being honest, oil, somehow related to oil. In my mind I started to compare, well who's going to tell the story of all these people when it comes to the history of oil? When we think about oil now, 20 years from now, is the story just going to be about Shell? Is the story just going to be about British Petroleum and what they do--Fort McMurray, these big corporations and their relationship with their workers? If that's the case, then they're completely going to be missing all of these little service manufacturers, the people that provide oilfield services that take up a huge amount of space in Edmonton that are not Esso, they're not like Shell, but they have lives and they have experiences. I started thinking, that might be a good spin. If I apply that sort of mentality to these ma and pa coalmines, well maybe it is worthy of a study. So how do we get at these ma and pa coalmines? They're elusive in the historiography. So I had to do some digging around. By happenstance I came across files for the Mines Branch. The Mines Branch was the regulating authority that oversaw all the coalmines inside of Alberta as per the Mines Act, as per the legislation. The way that they organized their files is that if you operated a mine you had your own file. They have reams and reams of files on every single mine, and it's correspondence between these micro-colliery owners and the government. That's what I'm using for my dissertation. That's what I wanted to do. I resolved in my mind that I wanted to do that because I was thinking about my dad, who's been involved in the oil industry, and his partner, who'd been involved in the oil industry.

They're not going to get a history; they're probably not going to get a history. But there were some meaningful things that happened. I remember when I was working for my dad and I ended up doing my dissertation in Ontario. I had this big hammer that I used to use, and we used to call it the hammer of Thor. Afterward, after I was making the move, my dad and his partner had actually transixed it to like this board. It sounds kind of dumb, but it's work culture. It's not dumb; it's very meaningful to me, anyway. But they transixed it to this board and they put it up in the shop and said, Trevor's Hammer of Thor, and there it stays, the hammer that I used for all those years. I'd like it back, but I think they like to see it. So getting at the culture of these independent businesses made me motivated to try to get at some kind of history and try to tell the history of that. That's what I'm doing currently, I suppose. When I started the PhD program I corresponded with several labour historians. But it was James who suggested, after I told him what I was interested in – these small mines operating beside these large enterprises – and I kind of framed it, he's like, you should talk to this guy named Rob Kristofferson. He publishes a book about Hamilton during the industrial process, during the late 19th Century. I'm like, well that doesn't make much sense. But he's like, but it's about these artisan crafts people that basically went elbow to elbow with these manufacturers that were being formed, these mass production sites. They competed against these mass production sites, these workscapes. So I went down to Waterloo and I talked with Rob and got along well. I kind of explained the project; he was excited about it. I also went over to York University, because York had a reputation of having labour history, social history. So I went to Toronto and I spoke with them, and I spoke with Chad Gaffield at the University of Ottawa, because he was kind of a social historian more generally. I went down to University of Calgary and spoke with Nancy Janovicek, who is also a social historian. But at the end of the day when I really thought about it, it just made sense to go with Rob. He was in a very similar position when it came to trying to express a nuanced approach to the history of Hamilton and industrialization. He understood the goals that I had; so I decided to work with him. I'm sort of running a little bit out of gas. So, as far as the dissertation goes, I had a topic in mind and simply the matter was to get through the program. I already had the primary sources. I spent between my Masters and the beginning of my dissertation every day going to the Provincial Archives of Alberta and trying to copy down as much information as possible before actually going to Ontario, which is where I took my PhD at Wilfred Laurier University. In retrospect, it was good; it was also not good, in the sense that I

transcribed things because I was too cheap to photograph everything. I didn't understand why anybody would want to spend \$300 or \$400 to get things photographed when you could just go to the provincial archives and type, type, type. That's what I did for a good three or four months between that period. I grabbed all those sources. I worked through all the material that I could. I started my PhD program, did the courses. There's nothing really profound. At that particular point I was all geared up. I knew what I needed to do. I had the skills in order to get through this material. I understood how to read what needed to be read out of books. I understood how to elocute my ideas to professors and other graduate students. That was it. It was just a matter of execution at that particular point, and I did. At that particular point though, I also had to be a teaching assistant. I don't really have much memories of being a teaching assistant. I mean I do have good memories, but I don't know. It was like one of those things where it was just going through the motions at that particular point. I would lead tutorials with students. It was very valuable to me, but at the end of the day that was part of the program. Every once in a while when I'd speak to Rob or before I'd started, he told me how long it took him to complete his dissertation. I think it was like ten years or something, at that particular time still having no experience with a lot of individuals who had gone through the stream. I was thinking, oh my god, that's not going to be me, absolutely not. Speaking with James, he told me roughly around the same time, nine years or something; I kind of forget for James. But I was thinking in the back of my mind, that's not going to happen to me. Life gets in the way. I was like, okay, whatever, I'm going to get through this. So I do the dissertation, the first four years I'm a teaching assistant. During the summer months I go back to university and transcribe more, and I'm just working on it. I realized at the end of year four it's the first time that I actually get to teach a class. So I taught my first university class. It was a Social History of Modern Canada. I got to design my own syllabus. It was not something where I had a textbook. I got to choose what I wanted to talk about. So each and every week there was a theme. One theme was environmental history, one was obviously labour history, one was gender history, one was ethnic history, one was indigenous history. I designed it. It was a good course, I think. I think I would teach it again if the opportunity happened. But after that course that was the end. The money had run out. Now I was stuck in Waterloo. I was married; I got married in 2015. My wife had an opportunity to work over at Windsor for a museum, and we took it. So we moved from Waterloo to Windsor and we stayed in Windsor. She had an opportunity to work in--she was applying for everything

and anything under the sun related to the heritage sector. I was doing my dissertation; that's how it was. She applied to a job in North Battleford to work for an art gallery. It was kind of not necessarily heritage-related, or at least we kind of understood it as that. It was further away from her ultimate goal. But you know what, it was a part-time job that she had at the end of the day for the museum. So, when we thought about it, she was offered the position over at North Battleford to be a senior gallery assistant. We said, should we take it? We had moved away from Alberta and the west and the prairies for four years and we thought, you know what, why not? There's nothing that's really kind of good for us in Windsor. I had been trying to find a job in Windsor for a while. It is not the type of place that you're going to find a job. It was very difficult. I was applying to things but I was also doing my dissertation. It just wasn't great. So we decided at the end of the day to go to North Battleford. That was about January 2020. There was some kind of virus going on in China, very peripheral to what we were deciding to do at that particular time. So we managed to organize it where we would get to Saskatchewan and she would start her new job at the beginning of March of 2020. So we packed up everything;; we packed up our cats and all of our little knickknacks that we'd got. We put them inside a U-Haul storage pod at Windsor, and we took our little red Mazda up and over Lake Superior and we drove 3,500 kilometres to North Battleford. We got to North Battleford. In January when we knew that this was happening, I had actually flown to North Battleford to arrange a house where we're going to stay when we touch down. She was working, and it just made sense. I found us a house where the rent was really good; it was super-cheap. For \$1,000 we had a house. We were paying like \$1,200 for this super-cramped apartment in Windsor that had windows that were about two feet by two feet. It was like a modified old Victorian home. But we were in a crunch to get to Windsor and set up shop there for her to do the job. So we were taking anything and everything. We applied; they said yes. We're like, okay, we'll take it. So, when we left, we left in March, at the beginning of March. We touched down in March and our house is there and we start to get settled in inside of North Battleford for her job. I'm going to carry on with my dissertation. I thought it was great, because it's closer to Alberta if I need to make a cannonball run to Edmonton to look at the Provincial Archives. Then all of a sudden March 9th hit and the WHO called it a global pandemic and everything shut down. So here we are in this new town. The job that my wife had got was now being delayed because of the pandemic. It was a public facility, and they didn't want anybody around of the public. So we got

there, she lost her job; I didn't have a job. We were just kind of like, well what are we gonna do? We twiddled our thumbs in North Battleford. All that energy and all of that momentum that you get when you touch down in a new place – you meet your neighbours, you get to know the lay of the land, the institutions. Couldn't do none of that, because it was shut down. Everybody wanted to stay to themselves, and for good reason, limit your social circles. It wasn't a time to be gabby gabby or whatever kind of moniker you want to attach to socialization. That's what happened. So I worked on my dissertation. We used CERB. She got her job back in September. At that particular point though, we were playing a little bit of catchup. Economically speaking, it was still a little bit difficult. So I decided to look for a job in North Battleford. I applied to a lot of jobs. I applied to everything that I could find that was posted on Indeed. I applied to banking positions for TD Bank and CIBC. I had an interview with one of the banks; honestly I can't remember which bank it was. But it didn't feel like the right fit. When I got the interview for the bank, the first thing that the person said is, I have 20 minutes; so this is going to be an interview of 20 minutes. I was like, wow. The etiquette right there was out the window. You're just going through the process now. You don't even care who you're talking to if that's how you're treating the situation. I'm not going to jump through hoops. I am myself and I think that's good enough. So it set off a bad taste in the interview, and I didn't get the job, obviously. But I kept applying. I kept applying but nobody was hiring, and I didn't understand why. I had this resume, I realized I had a whole bunch of educational experiences, professor at a university. But I realized you gotta play to the audience a bit. So I kind of threw that at the bottom of the resume and started to bring up my manual labour things – working at Flow Measurement Solutions as an instrumentation technician, working at National Oil Well Varco, gas station attendant, these kinds of things. I just needed something; we didn't need a lot. I had my dissertation; this was only going to be a temporary thing. Nobody was hiring anything. There was one place that I got a call back other than that interview that I don't even recall with the bank: Walmart. Walmart was looking for people. At that time I didn't really give a shit. I just wanted some money. We needed to kind of recoup what we had lost. I have no reservation about, I still don't, I would probably still work there, well I don't know if I would work there now. But I had no reservation, no humility. I was humble enough to be like, I'm just here for the cash. You need me to pick up something and put it somewhere else; I can do that; heck yeah, I can do that. So when I was speaking with the individuals, god sometimes in my mind I just don't know how it works. They

had suggested, well we've got a couple of options for you. During the interview, I laugh because I treated it seriously; it's a job interview. So I put on my best dress shirt, dress pants, just very professional looking. I walk inside of Walmart and I realize that, boy oh boy, I am overdressed for this job opportunity. But I don't care; I just kind of went with it. The person who was interviewing me said, okay, well we have a couple of openings. We can either have you somewhere in one section, and I can't remember the section--it didn't really interest me--, or you can work as the meat guy. You bring the meat out from the freezer. She said, nobody likes that job. I was thinking to myself, why wouldn't people like that job? Here you are during the summertime, it's hot out; why wouldn't you want to go into a freezer to cool off every now and again? To me it made perfect sense, just like the sense that it made for me not to be the calibrator that just had to measure the inner diameter of a pipe as opposed to picking up this hundred pound thing and flinging it onto the station and picking it up and taking it off and doing that all day. Sure yeah, I'll do that. She said, okay. Well that meeting that I had was on a Thursday. She said, well you start on Saturday, in two days. Okay, that's great. Then I went over to Lynne to tell her the good news. I went over to the gallery and I said, Lynne, I got a job. She said, oh that's great; what is it? Well the meat guy; I'll be the meat guy over at Walmart. She said, the meat guy? I'm like, yeah, well it's a job. She was supportive. But at that particular time it just was kind of by happenstance that her boss had been there. Again, I have no, well I'm humble. I had no humility about it. I told her, yeah I got a job at Walmart. She said, well what else have you applied for? I was like, well I saw this other position as a tutor and I applied for that with this person named Eleanore Sunchild; she was looking for a tutor. She said, oh I know Eleanore; she's a lawyer. I said, oh, I didn't know that. She's like, well let me make a call here. So she got out her phone on that day and she either did a text message, or no she called Eleanore. Eleanore picked up, and I kind of remember the conversation: oh, you should look at this guy's resume if you're looking for a tutor for your Grade 6 son. Eleanore was like, yeah, okay, sure. Tell him to come in tomorrow at 1 o'clock for an interview. So this is great. I thought, okay, well it doesn't matter; there's no stakes. I've already got a job lined up for the next day. So I google where Sunchild Law is, and I couldn't find the location. Then I talked with Eleanore and said, hey I don't know where I'm going here for this interview. She's like, oh it's right near the Riverside Gas Bar; so we'll see you there, south of the city. So I said, okay, sounds good. So the day comes; the Friday comes. I google what she told me, Riverside Gas Bar, and it's actually showing that I

go north of North Battleford rather than south which she suggested. So I decided to just follow Google Maps. I get to this Riverside Gas Bar north of North Battleford and I'm looking around like where's this law office? I have no idea where this place is. So I go to the Riverside Gas Bar and say, hey I'm looking for Sunchild Law. I thought it was around here. They're like, that's not here. I was like, well what do you mean? It's not here, sorry. That's basically the explanation that they gave. I was like, okay. Now I'm a little frantic because part of me thinks that being on time for an interview is kind of a necessity. I had timed it so that I would be about five minutes early. When I get to the location, it's not the location. Now I have to phone Eleanor and I say, Eleanore, I don't know where I am. I tried to google exactly what you told me, and it brought me to this location and they're telling me you're not here. She's like, oh no, I'm south; you've got to go south past Battleford. Oh okay, I'm going to be a little bit late. She said, okay, whatever. She was nonchalant about it but in my mind I was like, this is the worst kind of first impression you could possibly ever make, being late. There are some things that I guess my dad taught me that I remember, and being late for something is very not good for etiquette when it comes to employment. So, as I'm going through North Battleford, I cross the river to get to Battleford, and I'm going south and looking around Battleford and expecting to see a building, Sunchild Law. I'm kind of worried, because now I've passed through Battleford and now I'm back into the country just south of everything. I'm like, well this is ridiculous, I don't know where this place is. So I stop at another gas station and I say, hey, do you guys know where Sunchild Law is? The attendant was like, no I have no idea. I start to get a little bit kind of annoyed: are you serious? You don't know where Sunchild Law is? It's one of the law offices. They're like, no. But thankfully, there is this fellow who was indigenous. He says, I know where it is. So I turn around and there was this patron and he's like, okay, so this is what you do. You just follow that highway down and you follow it and keep going down that highway, and the highway is going to crest. At the top of the crest you're gonna go a little further, and then you're gonna take a right when you see a sign for the meat shop. I'm looking at this guy like, are you crazy? You can't give me an address? He's describing how to get there in a way that I've only heard one time before, and that was when I was actually an Indigenous Labour History coordinator when I was trying to get directions to a fellow named John Chief Moon's house. Somebody told me to take a left and a right and go down a little bit, and you're going to travel past some Texas gates. I had no idea what a Texas gate is; I had to google what that was. I went too far and I remember stopping

somebody that was First Nation coming the other way on the gravel road and I said, hey I'm looking for John Chief Moon. He says, oh that's my dad; it's just back there. I was like, oh perfect. Anyways, it was one of those kind of instructions. It was just so weird. But I put trust in it and said okay; I'm going to follow this. I didn't really know what a crest of a hill was. I was saying, what is a hill crest anyways? I started thinking about my Masters actually, because of Hillcrest Collieries, and I got a little distracted on that. Anyway, so I go down the highway and I go up this hill. Oh, that's the crest; okay, that starts to make sense. Then I go a little further and I see the sign, the Meat Shop – literally a sign that says Meat Shop. I was like, okay. I take a right here and then I find it. I find the place late, but she knows that I was going to be late. I get out of my vehicle, and at that particular time I had put on a little bit of weight that I had not been used to. I was finding it difficult to wear my belt, so I bought some suspenders. As I'm walking up to the door I open the door and Eleanore is there. She's oh welcome; let's have your interview in the back office. So I'm like, perfect. As I'm walking to the back office, for whatever reason, I had a wardrobe malfunction and the back of my suspenders popped up. So here I am walking behind this person, and the suspenders pop up and my pants start to fall down. I'm like, oh my god. So I'm like, Eleanore, excuse me. I'm sorry. Do you have a washroom? It just so happened that we were walking right by the washroom. She said, just right there. I'm thinking to myself as I get in the bathroom and trying to adjust these suspenders, this is the most horrible impression. First I get there, didn't even go to the washroom beforehand, and here I have to do this interview. She has no idea. She maybe thinks I took a shit in their bathroom or something, I don't know. Anyways, I sat down with her. The job was for being a tutor for her son, who was in Grade 6. She asked me about my experience and I told her a little bit about the PhD and what I'm doing. She explained to me what she was doing at Sunchild Law. She was working on Indian day school claims, assisting her community with that. She explained what it was and she asked me a very pointed question: how has colonialism affected your life? I'm like, wow okay. I wasn't expecting that, but I guess I'll try to come up with an answer. I started talking about the history of colonialism. I was talking about how it affected my mom in her decision on what to do when, and how I was born in Edmonton, and a lack of really meaningful connections because she had opted to segregate herself from the reserve and to go out on her own. I have several aunts and uncles; she comes from a family of nine or ten siblings. I should know the answer to it, but there's so many. I could list them off but I think that's a little tangential. She didn't accept the

answer. I was like, well what do you want me to say? We talked about it more and I can't quite remember the conversation but I think she was a little impressed when I did start to talk about history more in general. She was like, what was that legislation? On my resume it said familiar with some statutes and legislation, comfortable with reading that--because I was. It just so happened that she asked me what was the legislation that created the subsections and the sections that we see in the prairies, like the patchwork sections. I was, well that's the Dominion Lands Act. She was kind of impressed by that. She said, okay you're hired. So I was like, this is great. She hired me to be a tutor for her son, who was a young person. I'd never been a tutor but I'd been in university. I've taught university students. A lot different than teaching somebody who's 13 years old, as I came to find out. But as I started to work there with her son at the law office, she asked if I wanted hours doing paralegal work. I said, yeah sure, why not? I guess she kind of saw the value in what I was doing there as a paralegal, and I was asked to work on day school claims. For me it just involved the proofing of material, the proofing of these day school claims. I worked there as a paralegal from that point on. About half way through that semester for her son, we just stopped working at that. She just realized that maybe I just wasn't a good tutor. I'm going to say it was me, okay? And I became a full time paralegal. From that particular time, I think it was September of 2020, I worked until July of 2022. I went and proofed and was witness to about 900 narratives of abuse of Indian residential school students. It was tough. Sorry, not residential school students, Indian day school students. It's something that I had not really heard about before working there. I had heard about residential schools before. I understood what they were. Once I understood that day school students were essentially kids that went to school who got abused on reserves but went back home each day, it just kind of struck me as odd that there's no reporting about this at all. I remember when the residential school Truth and Reconciliation Commission was around, and there were survivors talking, there were events. Nothing like that inside of Canada. It really kind of bothered me. Here I was proofing these documents, and I could see what was happening. It was just as bad as what happened at those residential schools--maybe not during the night, but definitely there's a lot of back rooms and places that abuse can occur inside facilities. That's exactly what happened. It was work that was very, well it was really kind of sad and I think that it affected me a little bit.... As far as helping people goes, it was good but it was tough work. At the end of the day, it was tough just to kind of deal with it I suppose. It was a really stressful job. I think that at this point

in time it might be good if you want to know a little bit more about that, you might need to ask me questions. It's a topic that I'm okay to be open with, but I don't know if I can kind of be the leading hand on that. When I first started, I didn't know a lot about day schools. The concept though, what I understood was that they were places where Indigenous students went after residential schools were beginning to be phased out. The same spaces that residential schools occupied were then occupied by day schools. Rather than boarding students there, some residential school sites became day schools and kids were bused in and then bused out back to their reserves. There were also day schools that were formed on the reserve as well, and kids went. It's the concept of the school. It's an elementary school; it's for young kids. You go there during the day; you leave by night. My experience in elementary was not like that though. I guess the narratives of abuse, it's sad how typical it became. Inside of the day school settlement agreement there's different levels of harm – it goes from 1 to 5. Each level of harm is related to a compensation amount. A level 1 claim, for instance, is if you attended a day school, just attendance, if you were verbally threatened, these sorts of issues. Nothing physical. If you weren't physically touched but you were intimidated, that's a level 1 harm claim. A level 2 claim, if I'm using my memory correctly, well I can't quite remember level 2. The thing about Sunchild Law is Sunchild Law assisted people with the higher levels of claim. We typically focused on individuals who had level 3s to level 5s, because it was more important for them to share with a lawyer their experiences so that way the lawyer could insure that the points that needed, well I don't know how to... They could ask the questions that were needed for the person to share. A lot of people who didn't receive legal assistance in the day school process, they wrote their narrative but a lot of them kind of, maybe it was like a self-defense mechanism, would kind of ride roughshod over the harms, the sexual abuse. Oh yeah I was sexually abused there too, and that's it boom. That just wasn't enough. The government, in order for them to compensate individuals, needed a little bit more information. It was the lawyer's job to guide them through that in a very, I guess, therapeutic way. I was not part of those conversations, because that was the lawyer's job. Eleanore had been working with individuals who had gone through the residential school process, and her team had been people who understood what was going through the residential process, the lawyers there. So they were already kind of prepared to kind of open the shell of these individuals who experienced trauma in these places, these institutions. That was their job. My job was, once they had, what's the word I'm looking for?

They took notes afterward. My job was to proof that narrative afterward; my job was to proof it. These higher level claims that we focused on at the office were, levels 3 and levels 4 were related to physical abuse. If you were physically abused one time over at the day schools and you had long-term mental impairment, you had a level 3 claim. If you were repeatedly abused at these day schools and you had long-term impairment, you were considered a level 4 claim. If you were repeatedly sexually abused, you were a level 5 claim. If you were only sexually abused one time – like this is the level of depth that the government were going through when they created this. If you were, for instance, only sexually abused once and it caused long-term impairment, then you were a level 4. If you were sexually abused once, but during that abuse you were also physically – this is what they had done, distinguished sexual abuse from physical abuse. What they were looking for I think is if you were sexually abused once and then you received physical abuse during that time, then you were also a level 5 claim. It was very comprehensive. I'm sure you could find the form which would describe it in a lot more detail. But this is why it was so difficult for people to write about it without somebody asking the questions that needed to be asked, because they would ride roughshod over it. They wouldn't talk about it. I think that when we would get calls about people and they would say, well why do I need a lawyer, my understanding is if you have a problem with your car and you've never worked on a car in your life, you go to a mechanic. This is like a legal matter. This is something that the Government of Canada has drafted, a settlement agreement. Despite how they try to portray it as an easy process – oh you make a claim and that's it – this is a legal matter and you should be getting legal advice when doing this. That's what I kind of elaborated on the phone to people who wanted to know what we were doing. But that was it. We didn't go out there. Sunchild Law was not in the business of being like ambulance chasers. It was just by word of mouth; it was by reputation of what she did for residential school survivors. That's what her clientele base was. A lot of the residential school survivors were day school survivors as well.

Q: Go ahead. I think you know the question I was going to ask.

TS: Well I guess you know it didn't sit well with Sunchild Law as far as practise goes to. At the end of the day the law firm is still in business and the law firm needs to make money. It is the way of the world. The compensation level for a Level 1 claim is \$10,000. It didn't make much

sense for Sunchild Law to assist a Level 1 claim when a Level 1 claim just simply had to acknowledge that they were there by doing a little checkmark on the claim form. Five percent was the rate, so it just didn't make sense. They could do that themselves; they could checkmark it themselves. We had individuals who came in who really couldn't remember abuse, but we just sent in the stuff. We did not represent them. We explained to the claims administrator that Sunchild Law did not represent these people; we're just doing this as a courtesy because they came into the office. The reason why it was created the way that it was is I think that there was a little bit of concern that the process of the residential schools that the survivors needed to go through was kind of invasive. It had the appearance or it could have the appearance that it was unsympathetic to what people were going through, because they were being interrogated by lawyers or by the Crown, whatever kind of representative the Crown had as far as that process goes. At the end of the day, it was somebody trying to share a story and then you have somebody on the other end trying to poke holes through it. I think that one of the good things that came out of the residential school process, despite how problematic that kind of scenario is, is that they said, we're not going to do that with day school claims; it just is not right. The claims process was people provided narrative of what happened to them, and that's it: that's the extent. But that still is a little bit tricky to do on your own. First off, people are exploring these emotions that they probably kept suppressed for quite a long time or that are still present and they're still suffering from. They have to write a coherent narrative that a claims administrator is going to review and then assess at a certain level. Even if you say, I believe that I'm level 5, and you talk about all the times that you were physically abused, well Level 5 is not about physical abuse. But in that person's memory, they were physically abused and oh, by the way, and I was sexually abused. That's the difficulty when people just sort of string together a narrative without legal consultation for a legal matter. That's what Sunchild Law hoped to kind of prevent. When you do that, if you submit a claim and you say, I was Level 5, what'll happen is the claims administrator will review the narrative and they'll say one of two things. Either they'll say, yes, we accept your claim, or we don't think that the material that you provided coordinates with the level that you are. We actually think, upon review of your material, you're this level. Do you want to accept this level? You check yes and then we'll send you your compensation. But if it's no, then you're going to have to prove to us more why you think that you are the level that you say you are. I can only imagine, as somebody who's not part of the

day school process, that if you put your heart on the line to develop your narrative and then you get the government saying, no, you're not a level 5, you're a level 3, that could be incredibly retraumatizing, I guess. That can be just spitting in your face. I can only imagine how that feels to experience those things and somebody's saying, no, not good enough. That's I think one of the scenarios that Sunchild Law was working to avoid, where people are not going to feel that way, a smooth process through and through. When I worked at Sunchild Law, I started to think about what we had to do. When I worked at Sunchild Law, I started to think about our position kind of as a shield. There's a whole bunch of little bureaucratic stuff between the claims administrator and the law firm. Some of the stuff we'd have to share with the clients, but some of it was unnecessary. At the end of the day, they didn't need to know that the claims administrator thought something. I'm not sure where I'm going with this, but I kind of felt we were kind of like shielding them from all this kind of aggravation. I think that's kind of what happened. It's just sad; sometimes it was sad.

Q: You found it difficult.

TS: Oh yeah.

Q: Just say a word about that.

TS: When I was working, I guess I had a little bit of a shield myself. I had spent a lot of time treating copy editing as a profession. When I looked at the words on the page, I could kind of divorce myself a little bit from the fact that this happened to an individual. I wasn't sitting in the room hearing somebody talk about that. I'm getting a little misty-eyed.

Q: Why was there such widespread abuse?

TS: When we talk about this and why things happened, I think we have to think about the scenarios. Predators exist in this world; pedophiles exist in this world. If you are a pedophile, I think you're probably more apt to try to put yourself in a situation that is easier than more difficult. How do you do that? You confront your victim because they are a part of the

population that's widely disregarded, that's considered less of a citizen than others. If a pedophile does something at a public elementary school inside of a city, I think there's just more of the believability factor that somebody might say something to their parents and their parents would go do the course that you'd think parents would do. Over at day schools, if somebody gets abused, they go to their parents. But their parents have also been abused, because that's what they know. Then, what do you do? You just kind of chalk it up that your treatment as a citizen is less than a teacher who is also a citizen but is a pedophile. I think that predators were attracted to these remote locations. They could do what they did, and the repercussions or consequences were not as salient as if they had done it elsewhere. We're talking about an exploited part of the population. In that regard too, when we talk about residential schools or day schools, the teachers there, respectfully, I don't think that the cream of the crop rose as far as the teachers' skills. We talk about sexual abuse, but let's consider the idea of physical abuse for a moment. If we consider the idea of physical abuse, what usually happens? What prompts a teacher to physically abuse a child? I'm thinking frustration; I think that a teacher who is just frustrated. What teacher is more apt to become frustrated with their pupils--a cream of the crop teacher, or maybe a teacher that didn't get top marks to become a teacher? I think that the day schools and schools on reserves attracted less of a calibre of a teacher, and when they are confronted with little kids running amok, not listening as much, or showing disrespect or what they perceive as disrespect, how does a less competent individual react? With violence: I think that's why you see a lot of violence inside of day schools as well.

Q: The claims you had to review were mainly in the Level 3 to 5 range, right?

TS: Yes. They were typically either repeated sexual abuse or repeated physical abuse causing long-term mental impairment.

Q: And it had an emotional effect on you. You left that job.

TS: I did. It's kind of strange how things worked out. In January of 2022 I noticed that there was a job posting for a position working as a historian for Parks Canada. So I decided to apply for it. I didn't hear back for months and I just figured okay, well I shot my shot. I didn't get it, whatever;

I'll just carry on with what I'm doing. The day school was wrapping up. The deadline of the claims was July 13th, 2022. But anyway, I was kind of carrying on. A week or two before the deadline I received an email from my current boss saying, hey I notice that you applied for this permanent position at Parks Canada. At the moment, the competition is carrying on and it's going to take a long time because there's a lot of applicants. But in the meantime, we have this opportunity to work on a contract basis as a historian. I knew that the day school deadline was approaching in a couple weeks; so it made sense. It's like, okay, sooner or later things are going to close up as far as the day school process goes; the section of Sunchild Law that focuses on that is going to reduce down again. So I accepted it. I said yes; I'm interested. I spoke with my boss and they explained to me what they do. I let Eleanore know that I was going to be taking this opportunity, and she was all right with that. We're still very good colleagues. We still get along well; we talk. She was happy for me. She knew when I started that my goal was to be a historian. So this coordinated a lot more with that aspect as opposed to being an office manager. From being a paralegal, I actually got promoted to office manager and was salaried for the very first time; I was not working by the hour. Then I started working for Parks Canada in September, September of 2022. What we do is we deal primarily with the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. That's a board that reviews submissions or nominations of historic events, of historic sites, and historic people. It's our job as historians to provide reports of these events or sites or people to the board so that they can make an informed decision whether or not they would recommend that individual, place, or site as a nationally recognized entity. Then the minister would decide, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change would decide whether or not they would like to recommend that or not.

Q: Talk about your involvement with this Indigenous Workers project and why it is important.

TS: I don't exactly know what happened on ALHI's end as far as their decision to reach out to me in the first place, but I think it might have something to do with the notion that when there was a Canadian Historical Association conference in Toronto that I attended, because I was still doing my dissertation in 2017. When I had attended I for the first time laid eyes on Alvin Finkel. Everybody was like, look at that guy, that's Alvin Finkel over there. I was like, well that's interesting. I thought to myself, I'm studying labour history too. I don't think a lot of people

study labour history anymore; I thought I would say hello. I introduced myself to Alvin Finkel. I think we might've talked about how I was working with James Muir. I knew that James was associated with ALHI and I knew that ALHI was associated with Alvin. So I thought that that's how I'd say hello and start the introduction. We just got to talking about history and what we're doing, and that was that. I left that place. I was satisfied with CHA because I got to speak with Alvin, but I also spoke with a bunch of other labour historians. There was one individual, boy I wish I could remember. So yeah, at that CHA meeting I said hello to talk shop a little bit with Alvin Finkel and other people, and I just kind of chalked it up as that. I left, and I think it was summertime. So I went back to Alberta and was doing a little bit of work with my dad but mainly Provincial Archives work. I received a call when I was outside in the shop. I receive a call from I think it was Alvin. My goodness, I can't quite remember. It might've been James, though. But they had told me that ALHI was starting a project called the Indigenous Labour History Project. The reason why the project had begun is there was kind of a look back at the records or the interviews that the organization had done, and they had noticed that there was kind of a little bit of a disparity as far as the type of individuals who were contributing to these narratives of working inside of Alberta. It tended to skew towards, unintentionally, union people and non-Indigenous people. They were open to try to balance that a little bit. I thought it was interesting because I think that Indigenous people in general sometimes get this kind of stereotypical bad rap where Indigenous people don't work and they just kind of, well, they rely on the social welfare of society. That to me wasn't my experience with my family; that to me wasn't my personal experience. Since high school all I had done since that time was work and go to school, and most of the time at the same time. I understood that there were a lot of individuals out there who were Indigenous people who were just kind of doing their thing, as I had been doing my thing just trying to make a living. I think that they probably would also appreciate that, because there is a little bit of, well I don't know. I'm getting a little bit talked out, to be quite honest.

Q: During this interview you haven't referred much to your own ethnic background, and I'm wondering why that was.

TS: Well I guess I was, it felt to me, I wanted to be part of, well I wanted to be in history. What's the way that I'm going to phrase this? It was kind of a political reason why I chose not to do Indigenous history. At that particular point in time, when I looked at or when I considered what kind of history was being done inside of the faculties of history or the departments of history, I saw a lot of people participating in that field. I thought, you know what, they're already doing good work there; I don't know if I can contribute anything more to that aspect. I felt comfortable and confident in what other scholars were doing. I think that they were doing things. I didn't see a way that I could add perspective to that. What I did think that I could add perspective to is maybe an Indigenous perspective on documents that were related to labour history. I don't know if my decision to look through the lens that I did at the labour strike that I worked on my Masters, or I don't know if the lens about micro-collieries, the decision why I decided to choose that, stuck out to me. But maybe it's contributing an Indigenous perspective to potentially a non-Indigenous topic. I thought that that was new and I thought that that was a way that I could contribute. I had personal history with being an Indigenous person. In my spare time I study Indigenous history where I can. I've obviously got a lot of different things on my plate. But it was a personal passion and it's a personal interest, and I keep it near and dear to my heart and the people around me. Like I said, I think that that field is already being done. But as I've been coming to find out, there is a little bit of disparity when it comes to Indigenous history professors doing Indigenous history by Indigenous people. I always thought that it was already going to be done; it was an obvious thing that was going to be done and that is being done but maybe not as much now that I've kind of been more immersed in that material. So it was a little bit of a political decision. I didn't want to piss off any Indigenous scholars. I didn't want to be a one-trick pony, an Indigenous person doing Indigenous history from an Indigenous perspective. I wanted to mix it up a bit, and that's how I felt. To be quite honest, I don't know if it comes across, but my identity, while it is Indigenous, it is also a worker. I don't want to toot my own horn, but I feel kind of like I thrive in that sort of situation.

Q: When you described your own personal history, none of the Indigeneity came out in your description of your own experience as a worker.

TS: Just to rebound off that for a quick second. The idea of whether or not I've been discriminated against, I don't know. It's tough for me to say whether there's been formal discrimination. Was the decision for me to go to the grinding station rather than any other of the workers, was that a reason why? Was I getting paid less than other workers, and that's the reason why I was kept on while everybody else was fired? Could that have been a reason that I didn't know? There's this uncomfortability talking about wages with people. It's supposed to be like a private topic. Maybe I was being underpaid. I certainly didn't experience discrimination from my dad. Maybe it was more of a generational thing, an ageist sort of discrimination where he knows best because he's been doing it for 20 years.

Q: What about when you went to school and mixed with all the school kids who came from farms?

TS: No. It's tough. I wasn't friends with a lot of people back then. I had my own things that I was doing. I didn't have a lot of friends because I was playing football; football was on my mind. That was what I did. The few friends that I did have were mainly due to the geography, the people that lived near me. I wasn't friends with all of them, though. There was this one incident at U of A that was really weird to me at that time, and I guess I can share it. I was taking a French class and there was this teacher there that was doing their PhD; so they were kind of a sessional teacher or whatever. She was not from Canada. There was this exercise that we had to do where we had to participate with other people. I remember this woman who I had to participate with in a group; there were three of us. It was something about acknowledging; the conversation had turned to acknowledging that Indigenous people were on the slant, something along that term. This woman was French-Canadian I guess, growing up in Alberta, so no Quebecois but part of those early settlements out west. She said something that was, I knew that she messed up, she really messed up. She's like, man I just hate those Native people. I was in the group, and when she realized what she had said, literally there's only three of us, and her jaw dropped. She didn't quite realize what she had said. For the group I had turned my chair around to be part of the group, and I was just stunned. How do you respond to something like that? So what I did is I just stopped and didn't say anything. I took my chair and turned it around and just stood there. I was shocked and my wheels were spinning. What do I do? I'm kind of angry. If this were a guy,

would I say something? How do I resolve this? I still have to do the French lesson here. The teacher is conducting her class; she has no idea what's just happened. I just had no idea how to react. I didn't want to yell at her, because I thought that an Indigenous man yelling at a frankly kind of smaller woman, the optics were not there. In my mind I'm thinking, well what is the strategy? What can I do? So, at the end of the day I was like, okay well I guess I just gotta draw attention to it and get the hell out of here. So I kind of just, while the teacher was teaching, they stopped for a moment and I just kind of just banged on the table. Everybody looked over. I was like, you know, I said something like, you know, I just can't take this; I just can't take this. There was an individual who was beside me, this other woman, who looked at me and she was like, Trevor, what the hell are you doing? Like getting all pissed off at me. I guess I could understand. She was not part of the group of three that I was in. The person to the left of me understood what the heck was going on. The person behind me, who had made the comment, understood what was going on. Everybody else had no idea what was going on in a class of like 20 or so. I said, I just can't take it. I said something about calling attention during this group exercise I have to work with somebody for this project who just told me right now to my face that she hates Native people. I can't take this. I got up and walked out, and that was it. So I left. You know what? I decided that strategy for me was more about making her feel uncomfortable and making that person who said that to me feel uncomfortable by continuing to remain in that room with 20 people who were now thinking, what's wrong with that girl? Why would she say that? I guess what had happened is I was mad. Afterward I sent an email over to the professor and said, you know what, sorry for doing that but this person said that and I just couldn't blah blah. I was supposed to be working for this group project. What do you want to do? I waited a day; no response. I waited two days; no response. I waited three days; no response. Then finally I followed up and I'm like, are you going to acknowledge this, acknowledge what happened? She told me, I was waiting for you to calm down. I'm thinking to myself in the back of my head. I sent you an email. I didn't go to the office; I didn't go into your office and start yelling at you. I sent it in a format where I'm trying to figure out what the hell to do with the rest of this class, because this is obviously, I still have to take the class. I was forced to work with that person afterward. But anyway, so this is what happened. She sent me that email that says, I was waiting for you to calm down. I'm thinking, well fuck you. I talked to my supervisor at the time, I talked to James. James said, well you know, maybe you should go to the ombudsman or some kind of

department that's capable of handling that over at the University of Alberta. So, I did. I went there and I told them this story. They said, you know what, we appreciate you coming in. I said, I don't want to bring this to godly levels of newspapers or whatever. I didn't want a whole bunch of attention on it, but I wanted to share this. The person said, well thank you for coming in. It makes your story more believable because you don't want to be on a soapbox about this; you want to resolve this. I proceeded to tell them what had happened and I proceeded to tell them about how the professor just said, well I was waiting for you to calm down, through an email. How could you read my text that I was angry? So they took my statement, my perspective on it. Nothing happened, because well I didn't want anything to happen. I was just annoyed; I was just annoyed at it. I think what I sympathize with with the professor is that they weren't from Canada. They didn't know the history of Indigenous people and the relationship with school, and maybe being considered for a long time a second class citizen, not being able to vote until 1950. There's a just a laundry list of historical context that was completely devoid of that person not from Canada, and they handled it in that way and I didn't want to get them in trouble. But I did want them to know, and that was the way that I got them to know. I still had to work with that person afterwards. I guess at the end of the day that person, before we proceeded on with our French groups, they did apologize because I think that they were feeling a little bit like an asshole. The strategy that I used must have worked, because it made them feel something. It made them feel like they were the ones that were wrong. All those people inside that room understood what was happening. I even forgave that person who told me, what the hell is wrong with you? They had no idea what was happening. That was my only real experience of discrimination that I can recall inside of the university.

[END]