

Cecil George

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CG: When I was in Trinidad I learned the trade of electrician. I used to live in Point, exactly, as a youth. I went to Point maybe when I was about seven years old with my father and mother, my parents. In fact to be exact, my father was a postman. They built a new post office in Point [Fortin] and he got transferred to Point to control the system. In those days that was postmaster general, what my father was. So in Point, and I don't know if it's because of my eyes or what, but this lady who used to live close to us just fell in love with me, thinking I was her son, just grabbed me from my mother. Any time school was closed she'd take me with her. She had two daughters and she'd take us to a place called New Village, and I'd stay with her all the time. She had me as her son. I used to stay with her more than my mother and father. I used to call her Tantie Elaine. She moved to England and she was supposed to take me to England. As time went, she got married and she got divorced, and she moved to Canada. After she moved to Canada, and she found out I was in electrical, she said, you're my son and I have to bring you to Canada. When she came back to Canada, she sent me up here on a holiday to see if I like it.

Q: How old were you then?

CG: I was about 19.

Q: What year was this?

CG: She came in the late '60s, maybe about '65 or something like that. She came there and asked me if I would like to come to Canada. So I came up on holidays. I came up here on holidays in 1971 – to be exact, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1971. I didn't like it because it was bloody cold. That was Toronto. I landed in Toronto at Euclid College. I'll never forget that place. I was living with her there and she decided, okay you're staying here. So I said, okay. She said, we'll go and apply for permanent resident, and that's what I did. I went and applied and was successful. At that time I met a couple of friends who I knew from Trinidad, who I met there. Earl LaPierre, he had a band in Toronto; I can't remember the name of the band, but it's a steel band. Because I knew

him in Trinidad I used to play with [4:49] and he used to play with [4:50]. His girlfriend used to live at Picton. He was scared to come to John John, because I was living in John John. I used to take him up to Picton to meet his girlfriend. His girlfriend and my girlfriend were very good friends; so we were friends for a long time. I started playing in his band. Actually, the name of the band was Impacts; the first steel band formed in Toronto was Impacts. I was one of the leading tenor players in Impacts, and that's where I started my career as an electrician. From there I went to school and all this. Just cutting everything short, I finished my school and I started working at a company called Philips Cable, a company that makes electrical wire. I was working with them for some time. One day the manager came to me and told me, come up in my office. He said, I'm going to tell you something. This company is too small for you. Your mind is too big for this company. I said, no, it can't be.

Q: Why did he think that?

CG: Well, because of what I used to do. I create things. I fix things that nobody used to fix. I said, this is a worldwide company, Philips Cable, they make cable for all over the world. All this cable you see, the white Romex cable, I was part of the team that created that wire. He said no, it's too big for you; you can't work here. There's a company in Alberta named Syncrude. They're in Toronto today and I want you to go tomorrow to get an interview to get a job with that company. He said, this company is too small for you. Syncrude is a huge company, much bigger than this. So I said, okay. He said, this is what I'm telling you. Don't tell anyone I told you that. He said: I'm the manager. So I don't want them to feel that I'm doing anything wrong. So I went for the interview and I was successful. I came back the following day and he said: how was the interview? I said it was good. The interview started at 8 o'clock and went to 10 o'clock in the night. He said: what? I said, yeah. I left the office at 10 o'clock at night. He said, okay well I believe you're going to get a job. About two weeks later he called me back up in his office and said, Syncrude called me and talked to me. Once they talked to me, you know you're going to get the job. I said, well I don't know. I don't even know Alberta, I never heard about Alberta. I don't know where I'm going, I don't know anything. He said, don't worry. When I reached home on the Friday I got a phone call from Syncrude. They said, Mr. George, you have the job if you want it. We'll send you a plane ticket and give you \$500 in your pocket. He said: are you

married? I said: no I'm single. He said, are you sure you're not married? I said, no, I'm single. He said, okay. He sent me a return plane ticket. He said, if you come here and don't want the job, you can go back. He said, we'll send you two tickets and \$500 as pocket money. I said, okay. I went to work the Monday back to Philips, and I went up to the manager and I said, I got the job; they gave me an offer. He said: good. I said, but I don't know where I'm going. He said, this is what I'm doing. He bought me long johns; I never wore long johns and didn't know what long johns were. He bought me long johns, he bought me some shirts, he bought me socks, he bought me gloves; he bought me a toque. He bought me every single thing I'd need for the winter. He said: when are you going? I said, well in two weeks I'm going to put in my letter of resignation and head out. He said, okay. The next manager, the other manager with whom I was a buddy, came to me and said, Cec, you got a job, okay. Go out there and show them what an electrician is all about. I said, okay, if you say so. The day to leave, he called me. One thing I remember that he said. He shook my hand and said, when you go up there, the way you shake hands--I don't want you to shake anybody's hand like that. He held my hand firm and he said, look at me in my eyes, and he said, that's the way I want you to operate. When you shake somebody's hand, hold it firm and look them straight in the eyes. That's still with me until today. I do that up to today. People ask me, how come you hold my hand so strong? But it's automatic, because I've been doing that for at least 30 something years. They sent me a plane ticket and I came up here. Somebody met me at the airport.

Q: In Edmonton?

CG: In Edmonton. I got on a small plane. About three of us were in a tiny little plane and I didn't know where the hell I was going, because it was about 12 o'clock in the night, and they took me to Fort McMurray, took me to camp. They put me in the camp and told me they're going to see me at 8 o'clock in the morning in the kitchen. I didn't know what a camp is; I didn't know what the kitchen was; I didn't know anything. I got up in the morning, because they'd put me in a little room. I got up in the morning and saw thousands of people. I was in shock. I'd never seen so many people in my life, everybody like ants going all over the place. I stopped a guy and said: please could you tell me where I could get something to eat? He said, you don't buy anything here. I said, what, you don't buy anything here? He said, no, follow me. He took me into the

kitchen and said, go up there and ask for what you want; they'll give you what you want, and you sit down and eat it and leave. I said, are you sure? Are you sure nobody is gonna put me in jail? I never lived in a camp before and I don't know. It was something new to me. So I went in the kitchen. I was kind of scared, but I went in the kitchen and told the guy I wanted some egg. But this sunny side up egg half-cooked, I wasn't into that. So I said, do my egg properly. If you want to burn it, you can burn it. So they guy looked at me and said, okay. He fixed up the egg for me and I went in and had breakfast. Then I went in a camp orientation and saw so many people, because it's a huge company.

Q: Around what year was this?

CG: That's in 1979. To be exact, the 29<sup>th</sup> of March, 1979. I'll never forget that day. That day, when I dropped off in Edmonton it started snowing and I was very cold. Going back to when I was in camp, we stayed in camp with orientation and they orientated me for three weeks. They tell you all about the mine and everything. I didn't know I would go to work in a mine. One day I was in the classroom with everyone, about 20 of us in the classroom, and the big joke was they're pointing out where everybody's going to work. I was the only electrician; everybody else was heavy equipment operators and millwrights and machinists. I was the only electrician.

Q: Was there anybody else of colour?

CG: Yeah, one guy from Jamaica. He was a heavy equipment operator. There were only two of us to get hired at that time. At the orientation the guy said, are you the electrician? I said, yes. He said, well you'll be working in the mine. I said, nope I ain't going and work in no mine. He said, yeah you'll be working in the mine. I said, no I'm not working in no mine. Anywhere I go, I want to see the sky. If I can't see the sky, I'm not working. I said, I have a return ticket; I'm gonna head back to Toronto. I'm not working in any mine. Everybody started laughing at me. The guy said, it's an open pit mine. I said, I don't care if it's open pit or closed pit. I didn't know what they were talking about, but I wasn't going where I'm not seeing the sky. You're not going to see me in the morning. So the guy said, okay no problem, we'll bring the manager. He called the manager for the mine, the electrical manager for the mine, and he came. He said, are you the

electrician? He said, come with me. We jumped in the truck and we drove to the mine. These things are huge; I'd never seen things like this before. He took me to the mine and showed me the dragline. He said, you see that piece of equipment there? He said, you'll be working on that. I said, where's the mine? He said, this is the mine; it's an open pit. I said, oh okay. He said: that's electrical. I said, I can't work on that, brother, no no. I said, you see the size of this machine? I said, the size of this machine, if you take that in my country, the country would sink. I said, this thing is so huge it's going to sink. He rolled in the truck with laughter. I said, yes it's gonna sink. He took me on the machine and my eyes were open, my mouth was open, because I couldn't believe. I'd never seen anything so big. He said, okay come off, and he took me back to the classroom. He said, do you still need a ticket to go back to Toronto? I said, we'll I'm going to see what it's like. I'm gonna see what it's like. He said, tomorrow we'll give you a toolbox and everything. I went in camp and phoned my wife, well my wife now, my girlfriend at the time. I phoned her and said, Marjorie, or I don't say Marjorie, I just call her Mom. My mother always called my sisters Mom and called me Boy; so I picked up the Mom. So I said, Mom, this place is crazy. I said, I don't know if I'm going to make it, but I have a return ticket. She said, okay, if you don't like it come back. The following morning I went in the electrical area and saw about 30 something electricians. I looked around, and I'm the only black guy. I said, holy geez. Some of them were chewing tobacco, and I'd never seen people chew tobacco and spitting all over the place. I'd never seen these things before. I'm looking at all these things and I'm saying, holy geez. They took me on the dragline, that's in April, took me on the dragline and give me all the tools. I went on the dragline and sat down looking around. I was so cold. I had on a lot of clothes, but so cold. I told them, no, I can't make it. So they put me in the cab with all the heat and they said, you stay there; don't come out. So that day I didn't do anything, because it was so cold. Well it wasn't cold for them, but for me it was cold. The following day I said, okay, I'm going to be prepared. I put on all the socks that I had, all the socks I had. I put on four pants, long johns, five T-shirts; then my coveralls and working clothes, my normal clothes. I was so big everybody started laughing. They said: where are you going? You can't do anything in all these clothes. I said, oh yeah, I can. Take me out on the dragline.

Q: What is a dragline?

CG: The dragline is a big huge crane. It's a crane, but it's huge. It was the biggest crane in the world at that time. So I went there and they told me, no Cecil. They called me Cec. You have to take off some of those clothes. So I took off the socks, because my shoes couldn't go on. I had so many problems. They started undressing me and taking me and putting me back inside and outside of the dragline, back and forth from hot to cold, just to acclimatize my body, until I got it. Then you're on three months probation. After three months if you don't like the job or if they're not happy with you they send you back. After three months they called me in to interview me to see what I was doing. When I walked in the office the manager told me, you want to quit now? I started laughing. He said, you don't want to quit? I said, no; I think I've got the hang of it. I wouldn't quit. He said, okay. He said, first I think we're going to be telling you, we're very happy with your work, very happy. He said, we're going to give you a raise. This is the raise you're going to get. He said, this is going to be a big surprise. We're going to make you lead hand. I pulled back like this and said, lead hand. I said: I just got here. There's 30 something electricians and I'm the last guy that got hired. How can you make me lead hand? He said, yes we're going to make you lead hand. He said, I'm going to give you ten guys to work under you. Well, I started getting paranoid. But I knew the equipment pretty well and I was very creative. When I went on the dragline and called out the ten guys that had to work under me, they said, what do you know? I said, well I'm lead hand. They said, lead hand? How could you be lead hand? I said, yeah, I'm lead hand. They said, we're not going to work for you. I said, what? They said, we're not working for you, buddy. They gave me a brand new vehicle, a Jeep or Toyota, I can't remember the name, but it's a little Jeep. I drove back with the Jeep and I told the manager, I said, those guys don't want to work; they refuse to work under me. He said, go back and you discipline them and if you want to, fire them. I said, no, I'm not doing that. I can't do that. I'm new here, I can't do this. He said, follow me. He said, leave your truck; jump in my truck. We went to the dragline and he said, who doesn't want to work for Cec? Nobody said anything, because he was ready to fire them. He said, okay nobody? Okay, that's it. He took me back, I jumped in my truck, and when I came back everybody started working for me. Nothing I could do at that time. They were working but it was giving me a lot of pressure, a lot of pressure. I had so much stress. I used to drive – this is no joke what I'm saying – I was young at the time, 20s, I drove way out in the mine – you could drive very far, it was a huge place – and just cry and cry. When I finished crying, I'd come back, dry my tears and come back on the

machine, and if I'm okay look at what they're doing and walk around with my pad and take little notes. Then they decided they're going to put me on the technical part. They were computerizing the dragline to monitor the dragline--how it moves; how much load it takes. Some guy in the States invented it. It was called a datalogue, one of the first type of computers coming to monitor everything, how much load it's taking, how it's shifting, and all. This guy came from the States because he created it, and he came to install it on the dragline. They put me to work with him. I worked with him for about three weeks installing the equipment in the machine. I was the one to take all the VHS tape, some huge tape you plug into the machine and take all the information. Then I would go and download it on a computer in the office. The guy asked me when he was leaving to go back if I wanted to go to the States with him. I said, no. He told me, he said, you're one of the best guys I ever worked with. I still have his card today, and it's a lot of years. He gave me his business card and he said, any time you go to look for a job and they want somebody to recommend you, give me a call. He said, you're a very good electrician. You don't know how good you are, but I haven't seen many like you. He gave me his card and I still have his card today, still have it today. He left and he wished me all the best. I worked with Syncrude there for 2-1/2 years, and while I was there the place was small, not many people. I wasn't married at the time; I was single. All my furniture in my apartment – I was living in a Syncrude apartment – was a tenor pan, a double second, a table and a chair and a bed. That was my furniture. I decided I'm going to start a steel band in Fort McMurray. I said, well I don't know many people. The Trinidadian I knew was Peter Corcoran. I knew him and I kind of encouraged him, because he never played pan. But because he's from Trinidad, he would like to play pan.

Q: You brought your pans from Toronto?

CG: From Toronto. Yeah, that was my furniture. I brought it with me. I was living there and I told them I'm going to start a steel band. While we were there he said, you sure you can? I said, oh yeah. I don't have any place to practise, but we're going to start a band. I said: I'm going to call you when I get everything. They used to have a little bus company in Fort McMurray. This guy, I don't know what part of the Caribbean he was from, but he was Canadian and his parents, his mother or father, was from Canada. He had a bus company. Because he had this Caribbean

connection I went to him and said, geez, I want to start a steel band and I don't have any place to practise. Could you give me your bus garage? I can leave the pan here and we can practise here. He said: no problem. I started a band and we started practising and I taught Peter. I taught a guy by the name of Greg. He was living in Edmonton; he passed away. A guy, I can't remember his name, but he's a policeman in Edmonton right now. He was about nine years old at the time I brought him in the band. I said, I'm going to teach you all how to play pan, and we started the band. Fort McMurray used to have a little festival, and we'd play in it. Then I decided to get married. I got married, and my wife moved to Fort McMurray. About a year after, I saw she couldn't handle it. We had problems, because when I got married Fort McMurray had just had one grocery and a little hospital. She had to go and see the doctors and we had to fly her to Edmonton; a plane had to fly her back and all this kind of thing. So my daughter, who is Danielle, who's in a steel band right now, she was born in Fort McMurray. When she was about a year old, I said, I'm moving to Edmonton. I said, I don't know Edmonton but I'm moving to Edmonton. I had a friend who brought me to Edmonton once, a guy from India named Harry Dipsing. I'll never forget his name, a very nice guy. He was an electrician too and we used to work together. He was on the same crew with me. He was from India and I was from the Caribbean. So we got to know each other. Because we all look like the same people, we became very friendly and he brought me to Edmonton. When I came to Edmonton I said, maybe I'll come to Edmonton and live one day. After I spent 2-1/2 years at Syncrude. . .

Q: Was that the length of time you stayed in Fort McMurray, 2-1/2 years?

CG: Yeah, 2-1/2 years. I started telling my wife. I said, I think I'm gonna move to Edmonton and open a grocery store. She said, are you going to quit your job as electrician and go and open a grocery store? I said, yeah. She said, you have a well-paying job here, lead hand supervisor position, and you're leaving that? I said, yeah. I said, the reason I'm going to Edmonton is I want to go and get my Masters, and I can't do it in Fort McMurray. Fort McMurray doesn't have the facilities for that; they're too small. She said, well, when I married you I made some vows; so let's go. So I decided to come to Edmonton. I looked for a place to rent to open a store. I ordered stuff for the store, and found an apartment in Clareview. We moved on a day when September was coming and I saw it was getting cold. I said, this winter isn't going to catch me

here no more, not in Fort McMurray. I went in and I told them I'm leaving. I went into the office and I said, that's it for me; I'm going. They said: you're going? I said, yeah I'm leaving; it's too cold, I can't handle it. They said, are you sure you want to leave? I said, yeah. They said, okay, but you're going to come back. I said, no, I won't come back; I don't turn back. I said, my mother always told me when you turn back that it's bad luck. So I don't turn back. I said: I'm moving forward. They had a party for me, which surprised me. They had a going away party for me and they gave me a big plaque. I still have it. They treated me very, very nice, very nice. I left and came to Edmonton and opened a grocery store and started selling a lot of grocery meat and a lot of West Indian Trinidadian. On Whyte Avenue and 96 Street--that's where the store was selling grocery stuff for people that come from the Caribbean. There were two stores in Edmonton – that one on upper Whyte Avenue, by the name of Soul Shack, and my store was Sunshine Food Mart. We used to sell West Indian food. Then I decided to bring Black products for women, like lipstick and hair products and all these things, because they didn't have these things in Edmonton. I started bringing in Ebony magazine and Essence magazine. We were the first to bring these things in Edmonton. Then I started getting competition with the Black products from London Drugs. I couldn't keep up with them, and they put me out. They're bigger than me; so they're buying and they could determine the price they get. So they were cheaper than me. But I still was bringing in stuff and selling to people who support me. My daughters were getting big and had to go to school.

Q: You mentioned that people used to hang out in the store.

CG: Some Trinidadians. Frank Santiago, Moses; a good friend of mine they call Lennox, in Winnipeg now. George. They all used to come and hang out in the store. I remember when I started thinking about Cariwest. I told Natalie at the time, because I was going to school – working in the store, going to school, and also working in a coalmine in Edson. I was working in a coalmine in Edson, going to school to do my Masters, operating the store.

Q: What were you doing your Masters in?

CG: Electrical. Doing all of these things at the same time. Then I was thinking about the carnival. For about two years I watched Klondike Days, and they had a band at Klondike Days. Andy Edwards used to have a carnival band in Klondike Days, bringing Mas and things. They used to come play, but then the parade was too fast, because the Mas dancers have a slow pace.

Q: When was this?

CG: In the early '80s. I decided because I had the steel band already that I would start a steel band in Edmonton here with Earl, three kids.

Q: When did you start the steel band? Before 1984?

CG: Oh yeay, because the [40:10] was 40 years, so whichever it is they calculated it. But I didn't know, but they say 40 year; so it's close. So I decided to start Cariwest. So I started bugging people in the city, going to the city and bugging them day in, day out. I had no transportation so I used to walk all the time. There's one thing I regret--I forgot the name of the guy who was in charge of Parks & Rec. I can't remember his name, but I used to see him every other week. He'd get sick of seeing me. I said, I want to have a carnival in Edmonton. I want to have something in Edmonton for the West Indian people. I said, I have a steel band; I want to have a carnival.

Q: Where did your steel band practise?

CG: We used to practise in all kinds of crazy places. We used to practise in a little garage in Sherwood Park; that's where we used to practise. Then we came and got Anna and Roxanne and a cousin I can't remember. She's living in Calgary; she just called me recently and we were talking. We started the band here. Because of my knowledge in electrical, for wintertime what we had, we went and got a construction heater, those heaters that blow heat. In the garage there was no heat; we had this construction heater blowing heat when it's cold, and in summertime we'd play. That's where we used to go. One day we were playing for the school on Jasper Avenue, Ramsankar, we were playing there, just four of us. This professor from the

university, I can't remember his name either, he came to me and said, I like your band. I said, thank you. He said: I'd like to hire your band one day. So my eyes opened, because this was about the first engagement we had. I said, really? I don't have any business card. I don't have anything. I said, I'm gonna get a pen and put my number on it. He said, no. You know what? I want you to come to my house tomorrow, Monday you need to come to my house. I said: where do you live? He said: I live close to the university. He gave me the address. I said, okay I'll be there. What time? He said come about 8 or 9 o'clock. I said: I'll be there at 8 o'clock. I didn't know what he wanted, but maybe he wanted to hire the band, and if he hired the band maybe we could charge \$100. So he had me sit down in his house, made a cup of tea for me and said, you know what I'm going to do for you? I'm going to make you some business cards so you can look professional. I said, what, business card? He said, yes, give me all the information and I'll make you some business cards. I was so happy. I left his house, I went back home, and I draw a maple leaf with a hand, hand drew a maple leaf just the way I wanted the card, and I took it back for him. He made me the business card. I still have one of the business cards today, I still have it today, with the maple leaf as I drew it. I laugh at it now. I laugh at it now. But I look at it and I say [45:12] business card with Trincana. This professor at the university did it for us.

Q: Was it Craig?

CG: No it wasn't Craig. He made me the first business card and I used to play for him, play anywhere he wanted and music he wanted played. After that he was sick, and his wife called me and told me, your buddy is sick. I went and looked for him and a couple days after, he passed and that was it for him. But I used to go and see his wife all the time; but she's in the beyond now. She's gone now. They had a house by the university. I kept on with the band and kept on pushing for the carnival.

Q: You went to City Hall?

CG: I used to go there all the time. Well it wasn't City Hall at the time, it was Park sand Rec. This guy who was in charge of Parks and Rec, I used to go to him all the time, every time. His secretary knew me like we were neighbours, because I used to be there all the time, all the

time. I said, I have to get carnival in Edmonton, must get it, must get it. I used to go and tell the kids in the band, we're gonna get carnival here one day, I said, because I don't give up. They said, are you sure? I said, we're gonna get carnival. This Klondike Days isn't cutting it. George used to come and tell me, he used to come in the store all the time, harass me and tell me, are you getting it? I said, we're going to get it. He used to come all the time and I said, we're going to get it one day. Charlene just asked me. She said, you gonna get it? I said, someday we gonna get it. One day I went to the office and he told me, Cecil, I'm going to surprise you. He said, do you want the carnival? He said, you've got it; you've got it. He said, when do you want to have it? I said, not this year, next year. I said, next year in July long weekend, the Canada Day long weekend I think it was, I said we're gonna have the carnival. I just take a deep breath and I said, thank you very much. But he said, listen, you have to form an association. A lot of people don't know this, but I'm telling you now. I formed the Trinidad and Tobago Association to have the first carnival. I went to Heritage Days when I got the carnival. Charlene was there; I'll never forget it, and I told Charlene, we got the carnival. She said, really? When? I said: next year is carnival; we're having carnival. She said, are you serious? I said, yes, we got it. She said: you got the carnival? I said, yeah, but we have to form an association. So I'm going to form the Trinidad and Tobago Association. I called Kenneth Jacob, Osborne Walker, Keith Hines, myself and Earl – that was the five of us.

Q: Earl who?

CG: Lois, I think is his name, Earl.

Q: From where?

CG: They're all Trinidadian. They came in the store and I said, we're having carnival, and we have to have a little meeting. In the store? I said, no. Keith Hines said we'll go have it in his basement in Mill Woods. I said, no problem. We went to Mill Woods, formed the association and voted for our president at the same time. I was done forming the association already. I did everything. I said, we have this association and I'm declining to be president, but kind of keep me in the back. So the first president was Earl. Earl was the first president of Cariwest; well, it

was Western Carnival Association. Earl was the first president, and he was the president for the carnival also.

Q: Is he still alive?

CG: I think so. He was the first president and I was the vice-president. Then, after that, we had the first carnival. It was crazy. It was craziness.

Q: This was 1984?

CG: Yeah, whichever year it was, we had the first carnival. We started at the stadium and came on 107 Avenue, no 111<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 101<sup>st</sup> Street. We came down here to Diamond Park; that's how we used to go. But all the things I would do in the carnival--I went back after the first carnival to repeat for the following year, because you have the permit and everything. Park and Rec did everything for me. They got the police permit, they got the liquor license; they got everything that I had to get. I didn't get anything, I didn't pay a cent. I said: I don't have money to pay anyone. So, the following year, the guy in Parks and Rec said, this carnival is gonna go far. He said it should be separate all by itself rather than to be the Trinidad and Tobago Association. I said, really? He said, yes. He said, separate it. I said, okay. I went to the guys and told them, we're gonna form an association for the carnival. They said, well, what are we gonna call it? I said, well I haven't come up with a name already, [53:06] and we called it Western Carnival Development Association. Okay that's it, Western Carnival Development Association. That's where it came from.

Q: What about the development?

CG: Well, what I said, why I came up with that name, was I wanted the whole west to develop as one carnival. I wanted everybody from B.C., Calgary, Winnipeg, the whole west of Canada to get together in Edmonton. That's what it was. Bands, Mas came from B.C., Winnipeg steel band: that's what it was. The whole of the west used to get together in Edmonton, the whole of the west. So it was really nice. But before the carnival came, I forgot to say this. I had a [54:22] call

in Edmonton about all the carnival thing. I said, I want to have a blocko. Well it was new to everyone; nobody knew what a blocko was. But I decided the steel band, and we had a band called Plus One.

Q: From Toronto?

CG: No, they had a band called Plus One with Earl and Fidea and these guys. So I decided to have a blocko in Edmonton here. Well I went to Parks and Rec again. I said, I want to have a blocko. They said, what's a blocko? I said, a blockorama. What's a blockorama? I said, we rent a block; we take a block and have music and everything. So he said, what? Blockorama, blockorama. He said, okay. Well I went home and my phone started ringing like crazy: The Edmonton Journal, the Sun, the TV people. What the heck is a blockorama? Big article in the paper about blockorama. They gave me the middle of the city; it's developed now, I think where Bank of Nova Scotia is. The Bank of Nova Scotia is downtown by Jasper. They had a big area there. I can't remember the name of it. I think there's a restaurant there. They had a big open space and they said, take that and have your blocko. I said, good. That was Labour Day the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September. I never forget that. I don't remember the year but I remember the day. That year this guy was the boxing heavyweight champ, a Jamaican guy. He was the heavyweight champion of Canada. Berbick, I can't remember his name right now. But he was the heavyweight champion. So we had this blockorama and I had Kokomo from Fort McMurray to come down.

Q: What is that?

CG: Kokomo is a DJ; I brought him from Fort McMurray. And Lance Jack from Edmonton here. I never saw people so happy in my life. What I did, I had a food-eating competition. I made my wife cook some pilau and we had a food-eating competition. That was a big joke, big table line. I'd give you a little plastic fork and I'd break off some of the teeth from it so it just had about three teeth on it, and that's what they had to eat with. I put a lot of pepper in the food but I never told anyone anything. Everybody lined up. Most of the people were the white folks. When they started to eat, people started bawling and the snow cone guy there had to give everybody snow cones free. It snowed that day too; it snowed, cold. But it had a lot of people; it was good.

It was so good, it was repeated the following year. The Cariwest came and took over. So I stopped having it. But the blocko was really nice; it was really nice.

Q: When did Cariwest come and take over?

CG: Well after that, from that then I started to get Cariwest on the go. But I forgot that part. So when Cariwest developed, I still had it written in my book. I drew out the route on a piece of paper. Everything was drawn by hand. Everything was drawn by hand: the route was drawn by hand, everything I did. Everything, I drew it by hand.

Q: You've always been an excellent artist.

CG: I don't know about that. Most of the T-shirts, I did it. All the T-shirts were my drawings. The Cariwest logo is my drawing. Cariwest logo, that's my artwork; that's my personal work. I remember the second year of the carnival. The City called and told me, we can't give you a permit for this carnival anymore; we might have to stop it. I said, why? They said, we might have to stop it. I said: holy smoke. I said: you can't stop this. He said, well I'm gonna tell you why. I give you a name there, Lennox. Lennox, he's living in Winnipeg now. Lennox, what Lennox did, he drinks a lot. They City was taking pictures at the parade, and I didn't know. Right on Jasper Avenue and 100<sup>th</sup> Street or 101<sup>st</sup> Street, he started peeing on a post. They said, we can't have that in the city. I said, well I didn't know that. How was I gonna know that? I didn't know. So they showed me all the pictures. I was shocked. I said, holy geez. They were on top of a building taking pictures. I said, no you've gotta give me a break. They said, okay one more break. After I left the office I called Lennox to come to the store, and I sat down and I talked with him. He said sorry, it wouldn't happen again, blah blah blah. I said, okay.

Q: He's in Winnipeg?

CG: Yeah, in Winnipeg now. Then, since that, I applied for a permit with the City, but I never paid for it. Never paid for anything; never paid for anything. Then one day Park s and Rec told me, why don't you apply for a grant? I said, okay I'll apply for a grant. So I took it upon my own

and I applied for a grant. I applied for \$300. I got the \$300, and with the \$300 I only spent \$100. So I gave them back the \$200. I spent \$100 and I give them back the \$200. I give back the \$200 because I didn't want any problem. They said: you are bringing back the \$200? I said, yeah. I only spent \$100 out of the \$300 you gave me. They said, okay; they took it. What I used to do, every event used to pay for itself. When we gave the dance, the dance would pay for itself. We never used to pay for rental; we never used to rent anything. The first place I rented to have the carnival king and queen show was in Hawrelak Park. The theatre we used to rent there, and when we went there it paid for itself. Everything we did used to pay for itself; everything we did used to pay for itself. That's why I never was really into the grant thing, because I always wanted the carnival to sustain itself. One year we decided we're gonna bring Crazy; so we brought Crazy in. I'm gonna tell you, he's one of the best entertainers ever, to me, that ever came to Edmonton. We had him in Churchill Square; this was a big joke. At that time, Churchill had a children's corner. Uncle Crazy. He had all the little kids, like my daughter, all big women, they all came up on the stage and he's singing, Uncle Crazy. The Churchill Square went crazy. The police came to me. You looking for me? No. Cec, come come, I think they're gonna fight down there. I said, where? I said, no, no this is no fight; no, no; it's party time. I said, don't worry; don't worry. The following day the chief of police called and I went to see him. He said, is there any other festival like this in Canada? I said, yes Caribana in Toronto. He said, okay. He said, I'm gonna send some of my men down there to watch Caribana. He said, this festival here is gonna be as big as that. So he sent his guys to Toronto and they came back, and when I went for the permit everything was hunky dory. From that day on, we never really had problems in Cariwest. I brought different people in, asked different people to come in. It kept on growing and growing and growing. I watched it live; my daughter sent me a link, and I watched it before when I was in Trinidad, and it blew my mind. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. The way I used to do it and now a different generation came and was doing it a different way. It was amazing.

Q: How long did you stay as vice president?

CG: Vice president, one year. Then I was president because Earl could not. I just worked my way in as president and I stayed as president until I got tired and brought in Selwyn and then Jean. I knew Selwyn from home. Selwyn and I, I and his younger brother were very good friends. I used

to be in the house all the time. Selwyn was a schoolteacher. So I knew Selwyn from home. When I came here I met him and we talked. Then, I told him, I said, Selwyn, I'm the president and I can't. I used to have him as a judge. He used to be a judge every year, he and Craig, Richard Craig. Another lady, she was a pharmacist, I can't remember her name. She had a pharmacy up on 97<sup>th</sup> Street and about 150 something Avenue, somewhere way up in a mall.

Q: Clareview?

CG: Not Clareview, way up on 97<sup>th</sup> Street. She used to be a judge. There used to be three of them used to be judging every year. Then when I went and tell Selwyn, I said Selwyn, it's too much for me.

Q: When did you hand it over to Selwyn?

CG: I can't remember. I had to tell Selwyn, help me out. He decided to come in, and he's the one who came up with Cariwest. One day we was down in the pan yard, because that's where we started meeting, down in the pan yard down here. He asked me, he said, let's change it and call it Cariwest.

Q: He didn't like Western Carnival?

CG: Yeah, short form. Let's call it Cariwest, because it's Caribbean people and let's call it Cariwest instead of Western Carnival Development Association. That's the association that ran Cariwest. I said, alright, that's fine with me. That's how it become Cariwest, from Selwyn. He kind of changed the look of it and everything with his professional knowhow. I used to be with him all the time kind of guiding him and telling him where we're going in all of these different things. While doing that, I was still going to school. Then I went and took my exam and was successful as a master electrician. Time goes on and my daughter got big and I was running the store, running Cariwest, running a small electrical business.

Q: You had your own business?

CG: Yeah, electrical business, store business, Cariwest business.

Q: How long did you have the store?

CG: I had the store for about, geez.

Q: Was it a family business?

CG: Yeah, family business. I had it maybe, geez, I didn't even think about that. Maybe about ten years maybe. I really don't know.

Q: Was it on Whyte all the time?

CG: No, I moved to 76<sup>th</sup> Avenue at one time, 76<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 96<sup>th</sup> Street. I moved it there.

Q: Same name?

CG: Yeah same, Sunshine Foods. I had to close it down because my daughter got big at the time and she had to go to school. Because I was living in Morinville she couldn't go to school in Edmonton. I couldn't let her go to school in Morinville because I'm not into the babysitting business and all this kind of thing. So I and my wife made a decision: let's close the store. We had to close the store, and that's why I closed the store, because my daughter couldn't go to school in Edmonton.

Q: Why did you choose Morinville over Edmonton?

CG: It's strange, because people ask me how come I chose Camuto in Trinidad. I lived in Camuto in the bush. I want to say I'm a kind of nature guy and I don't like crowded places. I want to say that; I don't know. I want to say I like quiet places. When I was looking to build a house, I went to Beaumont.

Q: You never went to Jasper Place?

CG: No, I went to Beaumont first. This was so funny, that we went to Beaumont. I called the person to buy the lot. When I reached Beaumont, they told me the lot was sold. I said, well I just spoke to you five minutes ago. The lot sold already? He said, yeah. I didn't say anything; I said, let's go. I turned around, came back. I said, let's drive north; let's go that way. I drove north and I bounced up to Morinville. I didn't know the place. We drove in there and I looked around and saw a new development, new area. I said, let's buy something here. At that time there were about 1,500 people in Morinville. No traffic light; everybody knew everybody. So we bought a house in a place called Sunshine. It was Sunshine again; so I said, hey that's my thing. Sunshine Lake; so I said, let's move there. So we bought a lot there and built a house. I was one of the first. We moved in and we're there up to today. Now it's populated. We've got traffic lights. We've got all kinds of things there now. But before when I moved there they didn't have anybody there. We were the only black couple in Morinville. My kids had problems in school. When they went to school they used to cry; I said, don't bother with that.

Q: What kind of problems?

CG: Well because they're a different colour. So they'd come home and say they got called this and that.

Q: Like what?

CG: You know, called them names, you know. I said, don't worry about that; ignore that. Then they grew up and the same kids they grew up with become very good friends with them. So they overcame that and they're doing well now. All of them are doing well.

Q: Were you able to access services in the area?

CG: Oh yeah, I didn't have any problem; we didn't have any problem with that.

Q: Just in school?

CG: Yeah. I remember once I was driving because I had a truck, a big Ford truck. There's the RCMP. So I was driving the truck and I reached the four way stop, in the middle of the city, the village. I stopped there and the RCMP looked at me. So I turned, whoo whoo, put on the light. He said, you live here? I said, yeah, I live here. He said, okay, follow me to the station. I said, okay, no problem. Pulled out in front, I followed him and got in the station. He asked me for my ID and I showed him everything. He said, you live 517 [1:18:12]? I said, yeah. He said, okay. I jumped in my truck and I went on, and I looked back and saw him following me. I pulled in my driveway and he went straight by. I knew I wasn't in anything. I don't smoke. I don't drink alcohol. I knew he saw the big truck and saw a Black guy he'd never seen in Morinville. At that time there were a handful of people in Morinville. So if you saw a strange person you were gonna feel, oh I never saw this person before. After that I didn't have any problem. Everybody got to know everybody. Even now I just came back and I went to see about my eyes and I walked in the place. When I walked in, the lady just looked on the computer and she said, how is your wife? I said, my wife? Marjorie. Oh she's alright. Everybody knows everybody. When we go in the grocery everyone in the grocery knows us... My last daughter was born in Morinville. Brie..... Now I decided to go back to Trinidad.

Q: Tell me about your steel band, Trinican, and about your teaching.

CG: When I started the band here, well I started the band in Fort McMurray, as I said earlier. When I moved to Edmonton I moved with the pan I had from up there, and I used to play the pan in the store. I told Earl that I'm going to start a band. So I started the band in Edmonton. I got to know Earl in Edmonton here. They all wanted to learn to play pan. So I taught Earl; I taught his daughters; I taught everyone. Roxanne, Diane, Valerie and Frankie, Tony – everybody that came in the band I taught, everyone. We have about a hundred people in Edmonton who passed through the band. They're all big women now but they all passed through the band. Some of them I don't even know the name. One lives in Calgary and one lives in B.C.

Q: And Lloydminster.

CG: Oh I know who you're talking about now. She used to play bass for us. She used to sing. Her name will come to me. I remember when she was tiny she came in the band. I said, you're coming to play the pan? She said, no. I said, well you're going to have to play. She was so scared of me, so scared, up to today she talks about it. She was so scared of me. I said, why scared? I'm scared of you. I said, no, no. Then Roxanne tried to play. I said, Roxanne, you ain't got no rhythm, you can't play. Just be a manager; see about the clothes or something, but you can't play. So Roxanne never really played but she always saw about the clothes, made sure the clothes were clean and the shoes were okay and everything. She was like the manager of the band.

Q: What was the name of the Fort Mac band?

CG: I can't remember the name of the band in Fort Mac. I can't remember the name.

Q: Did you create Trincan in Edmonton?

CG: In Edmonton. Also it had a guy in the band named, oh gee his name can't come to me now. But he was in the band too, he came and joined Trincan. I told him to play the double second. He moved to Saskatchewan.

Q: How do you compose the competition of a steel band?

CG: I can tell you how it goes. When I started the band I had three tenor pans. The three tenors used to be Diane, me, and I can't remember.

Q: You taught the other two people to play tenor?

CG: Yeah.

Q: How did you decide how to compose the steel band?

CG: This is what I had. You had two tenor players; you better go into tenor. I said, you go on this. The only person that came in the band was Nick's daughter when Valerie and Diane were babysitting her and they brought her in the band to play while they were babysitting her. She went behind the bass and sat playing the bass. I looked at her and said, geez, you got some rhythm in you. She was small and tiny. I said, when you go home you know what I want you to do? Go and tell your dad or your mom, I don't know them, but tell them to bring you here next week to play the pan. She looked at me like this and said, okay. I had to tell Diane and Valerie at the time. They were in the band and I said, tell the mother to bring her in the band. The following day they brought her in the band and she stayed in the band for six years until she got married in the band. All of them got married in the band. Then, another lady who came in the band was one of three sisters who played in this African banquet. Usually what I did, I usually bring people to play a song with the band. These three sisters came in the band. One is Titi. One is in Calgary right now. They came in the band and they played. When they finished playing and went back and sat down, I went to them and said, geez, why not come and join the band? Four sisters, it's four sisters. But three of them came. When they came I said, okay, I said, you go on bass, you go on double second, and you go on cellos. And they sat playing in the band. Titi is a big poet, right?

Q: She is an Edmonton poet laureate.

CG: You know where she started? You know how she started? I'm gonna tell you. We used to have a Mothers Day function. Every Mothers Day Trin can used to rent a limousine and go around and pick all the mothers from the band and bring them. We used to have a Mothers Day function, invite people, and come and eat and drink. I was playing a song and I wanted somebody to recite for me while I was playing the song. I couldn't get anyone. I said, Titi, please, please, I'm begging you, come and do this for me, just one time. You don't have to do it after this. I practised this song and I want to play to it by you reading this. She said, okay. I played and she was reading and reciting. Lo and behold today that's what she does. She's an engineer. She was on something at the university here last year.

Q: She won an honorary degree.

CG: She phoned my daughter to get in contact with me for me to come here. She wanted me to come to this; she wanted me to be there. Her mother and I and her father, because her mother. . . I said, I know why you married a Trinidadian. I know why--because of me. It's so amazing. I met a girl at the 48<sup>th</sup> anniversary from Ghana. I got them in the band once and Theresa is a doctor here now, I don't know what kind of doctor, but I know she's a doctor. I brought them in the band as kids. She'd seen me there and she called me. She said, you don't remember me. I said, holy. She showed me her two kids and a husband. I said, look at that. But that's how the band developed.

Q: You were choosing people from Ghana, people from Nigeria.

CG: Oh yeah, even in Fort McMurray I had Native people in the band playing. Because of the Native, you wouldn't believe this. Because of the native people in the band, that pan stick you have here was created. . . .

Q: Oh we're rolling again – continue where you left off.

CG: Oh okay I can't remember.

Q: Let's talk about the composition of the steel band.

CG: It had tenors, it had double tenor, double second, guitar, cellos.

Q: Do you imitate musical instruments?

CG: Yes. We have four cellos, high bass, six bass, and nine bass; that's 12 bass. But we just went to six bass. But our band was composed of tenors, double tenor, double second. We had cellos,

we had guitar, and we had high bass, and we had a six bass and a five bass, which is a high and a low bass. So we had that in the band.

Q: Where did you get your instruments from?

CG: All the instruments used to come from Toronto. We used to have a tuner named Oolwong. He used to do our pan.

Q: Does he still?

CG: No, now we [1:34:35] so we usually bring a guy from Trinidad. He's a new generation pan tuner, a younger guy. He usually comes up here and touches up the pan for us.

Q: And the composition of the band?

CG: It's the same. I don't think they have any double tenor anymore but the band is almost the same amount of players, which is pretty good. My daughter is keeping it together, keeping the culture together, which is very nice, very very good. Even she's more known in the pan world than me now today. It was shocking to see the amount of pan. The TV station phoned and interviewed her, which was tremendous. She has a show on Instagram called All Things Pan. She interviews pan players from all over the world every Monday. When I'm in Trinidad and I meet any well-known pan men, the top pan men, I talk to them and they say, where you from? I say, Canada. Oh, you're from Canada. I say, you know Danielle George? Oh yeah. All Things Pan. I say, that's my daughter. Oh everybody wants to take pictures with me, everybody. Even in Toronto, I was in Toronto and this lady invited me to come and showcase my pan six; they were buying pan six from me. One of the girls who bought a pan six from me, I introduced myself and they all were so amazed because I was one of the early players from Toronto with Impacts. They all say, well Cecil, you're history.

Q: Was that the band that used to play at U of A campus?

CG: No. That was Afropan. Impacts was first. Afropan come from Impacts. When Afropan split, when Impacts split, Afropan formed and Trinbirds formed. Earl Lapierre formed Afropan and Ian Jones formed Trinbirds. I went with Trinbirds, and Afropan was two different things.

Q: The same community?

CT: Yeah, same thing but we were practising at a different place. When I was in Toronto I would tell the kids and them about it. They all were around me taking pictures. They never know all these things you know. I would tell them about Impacts and Earl Lapierre. So that's where the pan goes. Then I came to Edmonton and started my journey trying to spread the culture with the steel pan. My daughter took it over, taking it in a different range. I created the pan sticks; she was on the show side of the pan. Now I see in Trinidad that they're pushing the pan a lot more now, a lot more. I don't know if you're familiar with Google, what Google did with the pan. They spell the word Google with the pan, and they had steel band music playing behind. So, when you open Google, you see this animation between the pan, and that was the word Google. The double O was two pan and the music was played I think by Boogsie Sharpe and someone else.

Q: That was in August.

CG: Yeah, because August is pan month throughout the world. That's why they phoned my daughter here and interviewed her, the TV station down here, because that whole month was everything on pan.

Q: You mentioned the indigenous involvement in Fort McMurray.

CG: I was in Fort McMurray playing when I sat in the band in Fort McMurray playing. We were playing on a stage and I had a couple of Native girls playing in the band.

Q: How did you bring them in?

CG: Well, Fort McMurray is a Native community and whoever in the community is interested in playing I bring them in.

Q: So you'd go out and invite people?

CG: Yeah, if they're interested in playing, come. So they came and I taught them. We were playing on a stage.

Q: Was it also an introduction to them to Caribbean culture?

CG: Yeah, that's basically what I did trying to push Caribbean culture, Trinidad and Tobago culture number one, and the love for pan. We were playing on the stage and her rap stick unravelled. I was playing up front because I was playing the treble pan, and she came up front. I said: go back while I'm playing. Don't come now; go back. She went back and the song finished. I went and wrapped the stick for her and we continued playing. After the function I decided, I said, geez somebody should come up with a stick that can't unravel. So I said, I'm gonna think about it. Years afterwards I came to Edmonton and started a band, and kept talking about that all the time. Dez, he's part of the band today, he went home for carnival and he brought a stick for me, which is, what's the thing that's kind of a tube and you tie around your arm when you're having blood tests? A tube over a stick of wood, and he brought it for me. I looked at it and started playing with it and said, no I don't like this. I said, I'm gonna come up with something. So I started working and trying to get it. Then I said, seriously, let me work on this. I was working in a coalmine in Hanna... I was working in a coalmine here too.

Q: Hanna was the next one?

CG: Yeah.

Q: Was this for Syncrude?

CG: No, that's for Alaska. I was working there and I decided I'm gonna come up with a mould. I start talking to the machinist of making a mould for me. I drew it out and said I want to make something like this. He said, no, no, you can't; you don't know how to do it. He showed me little tricks and I said, well I'm not a machinist; I can't do this. I finished work and on my days off I came to Edmonton and I went to NAIT. I knew this instructor, a Trinidadian guy, and I asked him, I said, geez I want to make a mould. I don't know anything about a mould, but I want to make a mould and this is what I want it to look like. He told me, okay. He started making different moulds and I said, no, no. He made all different kinds. I said no, no, no. Then one day someone told me about a machine shop on the south side on 34 Avenue and about 93<sup>rd</sup> Street. I went there and saw this German guy. I sat down and talked to him and explained to him what I want. He said, oh yeah, he could do it. I said, you sure you can do it? I said, make one for me, just one; not two, one, because I don't want to pay for something and it's no good. So he made this one mould for me. I went home and measured and I looked and looked and I said, okay. I paid him and I said I'm coming back. I don't know when I'm coming back but I'm coming back. I started phoning around for chemicals now to make the rubber. Because of my knowledge in working as supervisor in the electrical field, I know how to make contact with different companies. So I phoned Dow Chemical and said I want to speak to somebody who knows something about rubber. They put me onto this engineer and I started talking with him. I said, geez, you know, I'm trying to make this, and I want to make my own rubber and it must have this amount of bounce in it. He was asking me some technical question I couldn't answer. So I said: could you send me something? From Buffalo, I was speaking to him from Buffalo. He said, okay; I'm gonna send you something. I said, I don't have any money. So don't charge me any money. He said: no, I'm not going to charge you. We talked on the phone and he explained to me how to mix it. I mixed; I made the full stick. I sat playing with it. Poof, the stick broke. I phoned him back and said, no, that's no good. He sent me back some other chemical. I mixed again, no good. He sent me back the next chemical. I said, this look alright. So I mixed it and played with it and then I decided, okay. I sent two of my sticks to Toronto – I sent one to Earl and I sent one to Ian Jones. They said it's good but it's not really what it is. I said, I think it's good. So I called Earl Lapierre in the Cayman Island. I said, Earl, I made some sticks and I want you to try it with the band. He was teaching pan in the school. He said, okay. He said, what do you want for the sticks? I said, man, I sent you the sticks. You give me what you want. So he bought the sticks from me. I said, holy

smoke; that makes me feel good. He bought the sticks, used them. I said, you think they're okay? He said, yeah, I think they're okay. So I went to Trinidad with a couple of sticks. I was on Frederick Street walking on Frederick Street and I saw a little girl, [1:47:58] family. The little one, I have her tenor sticks. I said, play with this, I don't know if it's good. The mother looked at me. She started playing with it. I said, I don't know but when I come back next year I'm gonna come to you and ask you how the sticks operate. She said, okay, and I left. When I came back, I started using the sticks and I wasn't happy with them. So I decided to make another rubber. At that time I quit the job and I got the job at the Convention Centre and I was working at the Convention Centre. I stopped with the stick because I ran out of ideas how to make the rubber. I couldn't get a different mix. One day at the Convention Centre they had a cake-making competition. They built cake and they got into competitions and all this kind of thing. The big chef there came to me and said, Cec, I see you're making all kinds of things; you're always creating something. Can you make this cake move? I said: I can do anything you want. What do you want the cake to do? Tell me. He said: I want the guy to come down here; I want this cake to move this way. I said: it's done. He said: how much money do you want? I said: ones are not coming out of my pocket. This is what I want. I want this, I want this, I want this, I want that, buy this, buy this. They bought everything. I went in my office, sat down, and I was making the gadget. We're now in the kitchen and we sat operating the cake to do what it's supposed to do. I sat down watching the cake that they made. I said, geez, how do you make this cake? He explained to me. I said: where do you guys get the stuff to make the cake? He told me. I said, give me the address. I went there and I started talking to the people there, explaining to them what I want to do. I started buying different chemicals from them, going home to test it out. For 20 years, 20 something years I was doing that – trying, going home, coming back, going home, coming back, trying different things. Then one day I went and I got the right mix. I think it was the right mix. I mixed it and I said: this is it. I took it home again and I went to this guy they call Johan Chuckaree. He's one of the top players in Trinidad; he played with [1:51:16], Indian guy. I went to him and said, Chuckaree, here's a pair of sticks. He looked at them, touch them on the pan, and that was it. The following year I went back and went to him again. I have the same sticks again; I went in. He said, you're the guy who gave me the sticks last year. I said, yeah. He said, well I was looking for you. That stick is real good. Could you give me [1:51:53] instead of buying it from him. I said, okay. I gave it to him. That was about five years ago. This carnival will

make it five years. He told me, the sticks are good. So now I started going around and he started telling people about the sticks. People started coming and all the top players started coming to me for sticks, calling me for sticks. I was in Trinidad, before the Covid I went down.

Q: Can you explain what the sticks are?

CG: The pan stick that plays the steel pan, the sticks that play the pan. I went down with those sticks four years ago just before the Covid. I went down with about a hundred pairs of tenor sticks, hoping that they would sell. It blew my mind. I went down after carnival. People started calling me because I had a card, and when I sell you sticks, I give you my business card. People started calling me for sticks. So I said: what? Everybody started calling me for sticks, and in no time at all I was out of sticks. All the sticks were gone. So I told my wife, I think I found it; I got it.

Q: The hundred pairs of tenor sticks you took down, are they specifically for tenor pans?

CG: Yes. I make them for all the pans. Each pan has its own stick. I have tenor sticks, I have double tenor. I'm the only person has sticks for tenor, double tenor, double second, quads. I'm the only person who has sticks for every pan, the only person. No one else. People use the same sticks they're using for double second; they will play a double tenor... I went down and I will be making, they're still burning the drum on a big fire, packed wood. No. What temperature is the pan supposed to heat at before you start? They don't know. I said, that's strange; you should know the temperature. He said, why do you ask? I said, because I'm going to make a conveyor system. He said, you are going to make it? I said, yeah, I'm going to make a system, and I'm going to come and test the temperature. With my sticks, I can tell you I'm the first person I have weight; when you pull the rubber, I can tell you how much, how far you can pull it before it bursts. The bounce per square inch, I can tell you how much pressure it can take, everything with my sticks. How much moisture is in the [1:56:07]--everything was made for me. When they make the [1:56:06] I call them personally to test it before it was made with a certain amount of moisture in the wood when they cure it. It wasn't a piece of wood that I just go to Home Depot and cut. No, everything is prepared, every single thing, everything. I'm the only person. I have two different types of rubber, I have two different types of wood, two different types of weight.

I'm the only person who has that. I have heavy weight. I have light weight. If you're playing a soft song, I have a stick for that. If you want to play the pan hard, I have a stick for that. I'm the only person to have that. I have sticks with certain grip, the grip.

Q: The grip would be on the hand?

CG: On the hand, you hold it not to slip out. I have different things. So the stick is all planned and prepared for the pan man. . . . Well the majority are women. What I'm going to do now, I'm going to make a stick for what you call the hitters. The hitters are the guys who play for about six or seven bands for Panorama. You see them in this band. They call them hitters. They used to call them missionaries at one time. Now they call them hitters. They'll go from band to band; they aren't tied to any band. So I want to make a special stick for them and put on it "hitters." So that's where I'm heading right now, heading in that direction with the sticks. I'm going down now and I'm going to go to the TV station to do an interview; I'm going to be doing that. At one time I didn't want to show my face. Now, a lot of people in Trinidad call me the stick man. Stick man? But that's how it goes.

Q: When you were teaching pan at Grant MacEwan or anywhere else that you taught, could you talk a bit about that?

CG: When I was here in Edmonton again a lot of people approached me. A lady at Grant MacEwan approached me. One day we were playing and she said, geez, you have something unique here. I see a lot of kids in the band. Where did they learn? I said, I taught them. She said, well I'm in the administration at Grant MacEwan. Could you come and sit down and let's have a chat and see if we could work out something that you can teach pan at Grant MacEwan? I said, yes, that'd be great. So I came in and sat down and talked with her, and she just fell in love with me and told me, this room, bring your pan here, and we will advertise the course in the book. I brought the pan there in the room and they advertised it, and the first year we had about 10 or 15 players. Some of the players came to the band. The following year it was the same thing. We even had an old lady who came. At graduation time we brought in all the parents and we had a little concert. The only thing I'm sorry about is that I didn't make a certificate for them. But the

course went pretty good for two years. I wouldn't tell you how it stopped, but it's a long story. It's a very long story how it stopped.

Q: Is that the only place you taught pan?

CG: Yeah, I taught pan just in Grant MacEwan.

Q: In Fort McMurray?

CG: Not in school, just in the pan yard. What we were trying to do here with Ramsankar, because he was big in the school board, was I was trying to introduce it in the school. We tried, but what the school board said was that for me to teach pan in school I have to be a registered teacher. Without that, I cannot teach pan in school. So that went through the door. We tried for years and years and years and years. I went to Ramsankar's school and played lots of time, but we never got it.

Q: Unless it's a registered program, there are too many restrictions.

CG: Yeah, too many restrictions. You had to be a registered teacher to play with the pan, teach pan in school. So that went to the wayside. But other than that, everything...

Q: You said a hundred players have passed through the door?

CG: Oh yeah, lots of players passed through. Some of them I can't remember, who went up in politics, doctors, lawyers. Now they are, but before they were just kids in the band. Some of them I pass them on the street. But they know me; so they don't pass me at all. The 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary people calling me and I'm like, who are you? They're over me now, big kids. But what I enjoy and what I look at: I have a picture. I don't know if I can find it but I know I didn't want to throw it out. I personally used to have a lot of things here community-wise for the youths and for the community. I used to have track and field race. I used to have Sunday

morning soccer. I used to have a Christmas party for the kids, giving toys out. We used to have a lot of different things.

Q: Why were these things important to you?

CG: When I came to Edmonton I found the western community was too far apart and weren't close to each other. Joe didn't know Harry and Harry didn't know Joe. Just by having that, I see it now today; I can see the future in it. I see my daughter talking to people who their father was involved with. They say, dad, tell me who's that person. Oh, you know this one and that one. They're all together now, the same set of kids, all together. Now I saw a thing on Instagram, Trincan family. I look at this girl, I think you know her. She just went to Trinidad and I think she's back now. She's a doctor, Iana. I remember two of them, she and the next girl. I think the other one is African. I can't remember. But I came back just before Covid when I came back here, and I walk in the band and they all stood up and looked at me. They didn't know who I was because Danielle didn't tell them anything. Then Danielle turned and told them, that's my dad. It was like Christmas. They all ran and jumped, came and hugged me up. It was so amazing. I saw Iana and her husband in the band. She had her little baby in the crib and [2:07:43] pan. I stood up and I looked like this. Second generation, I said, this is the next generation, two generations. I remember Peter; now his son is in the band. I'm coming and these little cradle things pack up with his teether in his mouth. Now he's a player in the band. He picked up piano, playing piano. I stand up and look. They're all bigger than me. I stand up and I looked and I said, geez. It's so amazing to see that generation, and I hope it continues. I remember an interview, I don't know what TV station had it, but they were talking about Cariwest. It was around Cariwest time, and the TV station was on the street talking to different people. They stopped this little girl and they asked her, what do you think about Cariwest? She said, you don't know what this means to me. She said, I'm Canadian, my parents are Caribbean, and this is a Caribbean flavour that I'm getting. If this wasn't here, I would never know about this. She said, this is me; this is my heart. She said, thank God for the person who started Cariwest. It was amazing that I sat down and heard she said that on the news. That one thing that she said, that one person that I brought joy to her life made me feel fulfilled. I remember my daughter again in Morinville. She can't even remember, because I think she was six years old when she was playing in the band. A doctor in

Morinville had a contest in the school in Morinville. He was the only doctor in Morinville, Chinese guy. He said, in the school any child who could come and bring something that they learned from their parents' country will win \$2,000. My daughter went and played the pan, at six years old. She won the \$2,000 and was in the papers. The doctor said – and that's how strong I feel culture is – the doctor said, I'm a doctor, he said, but one thing I regret is that I didn't learn something from my parents from back home. He said, that's the only thing I'm missing from my life. He said, I regret that and I will keep regretting that until I die. He said, that's why I had this competition, to show how much I miss culture from my parents. He said, they never taught me anything, only school, school, school. He said, I'm a doctor but that doesn't mean anything. He said, the culture is what's important. He said, you don't know what you did. He said, you haven't got the slightest clue what you did. If you heard my daughter talk about pan, she always cries. The guy who made the pan made a pan especially for her free of charge and sent it to her here without her knowing it. She didn't even know he sent anything. He came up here, tuned the pan, and he was so amazed with what she did. He went back and made a pan, made keys with her picture on it, put her picture on it, put it in a box, and mailed it here. When she opened it she couldn't believe it. She started to cry. These are the things that a lot of people don't realize about how much culture is to the person. I like culture a lot. I was telling my wife there's nothing that they do in Trinidad that I never do. I was involved in every single thing in culture. I play pan, I dance, I beat drum – you name it, I do it. I stick fight. I do everything. Look at my daughter here, going down to stick fight and come back here. The school board hired her; she does school in Calgary, Edmonton. Both of them stick fight, jump and wave. You wouldn't believe jump and wave; she teaches it in school where they play basketball with the country flag and play soca music. She went down and learned this dance and she is all over Canada now, all over Canada dance, all over. She doesn't work for anybody. She owns her own business doing that, and it's all culture. Now she says she got that from me, but I doubt it. . . . That's basically what it is. I hope that the culture will go further. I'm in Trinidad now and I know eventually I'm just kind of holding back from being in the media.

Q: Is your pan business based there or here?

CG: What I intend to do--I'm in a place right now and in the house I have a section where I'm going to be making the pan, in Trinidad. What I'm gonna be doing as we speak, I'm gonna be teaching my grandson and others to make the pan sticks – how to mix the stuff, what to do, and what not to do. What I notice, to ship the sticks from here is cheaper than shipping them from Trinidad. It's too expensive from Trinidad to ship it out. But if you're shipping it from here, it's much cheaper. So I'm going to have it in a way that my daughter who lives here can see about North America and I'm going to deal with the Caribbean. Trinidad alone is huge. When I go down, I want to get into the school system. That's basically where I'm going as soon as I go down. The carnival thing fever has stopped. I want to get into the school system, every school, especially the girls, especially the girls. They love the pan. So I want to get into that and sell them my sticks and so on. I have a lot of different things I'm gonna make. I'm very creative. A lot of things I can do that a lot of people don't know. A lot of things I can do because of my electrical background. I made something back home.

Q: What about the traffic light you made for Cariwest to control the king and queen competition?

CG: That's basically what I wanted. That's why I made the traffic light. I worked at the Convention Centre and I said, geez I have to make something. I went and shopped around and found the material and I decided to make it. If I were here it would've been something different, operated in a different way. But everything has a beginning. I decided to create a lot of different things. I want to, but my focus now is on the pan stick, because it is the sticks that a lot of people are complaining about, especially the tenor sticks. A lot of people are complaining the sticks don't last. My sticks last a long time. I find my sticks last too long; that's what I find. I went in the police band just before the pan final, and I sold two double second sticks to a girl about five years ago and they still have the sticks. I went to them and said: what kind of madness is this? Why should I buy new sticks? What's wrong with this one? It's still good, nothing wrong with it. So I said, okay. Chuckaree is still using the same sticks I give him from way back, still using the same thing. But what can you say? You make a product and now it's just to get it worldwide. It started gradually. I sent some to Jamaica, sent some to California, sent to Sweden, sent to England. So it's coming; it's coming. A guy called me from Boston. He said, somebody

gave me a pair of sticks and they gave me your number. He sent a picture and showed me the sticks and said, I want this; I want that. I sent it to him. The only thing that was kind of giving me a headache was the Instagram and all these fancy things. People sent a message for me and I didn't know. My daughter called me from here and told me, there's a message for you. I said, where? On your phone. Then I have to go and she had to tell me how to get in for me to answer the person. Sometimes I tell her to answer them. She will answer them for me and I tell her what to tell them. They have access to it because they set it up for me. But I intend to blow the market with my sticks, and that's my big intent, to provide the sticks of choice. By the time I come back here next time, I may be a different person.

Q: It's a very creative name.

CG: The name, you wouldn't believe how the name came. When I made the first stick I was so happy when I took it out of the mould, and I went up and showed my wife. I said, geez look, this is fantastic. Fantastic. What about Pantastic? And that's how I came up with the name. Now it's a word everybody uses. In Trinidad people use everything pan: Pantastic. But I came back with Pantastic and I was in the pan yard. We were practising.

Q: The pan yard is where you go to practise?

CG: Yeah, in the pan yard we were practising. Anna watched the sticks and she said, oh, you spell Pantastic with a c at the end. She said, why don't you put an x at the end? Take out the c and put an x. Good idea, so that's what I did, I took out the c and I put an x and I made the x to be two sticks. Then I used to have the Pantastix right down by the hand and I sent it to Ian Jones and Ian Jones said: why do you put the stamp down here? Move it up to the head. I moved it up to the head. So, with all the feedback I got, I made it to be something positive. I sold a guy a pair of sticks from UTT, because in UTT they use my sticks a lot, people from UTT, because they have a pan. University of Trinidad Tobago. This guy was using my sticks there and he said, geez, your sticks are nice. I play classical music, not a plain panorama. So I listened to him and said, okay, just play classical music. I will use the sticks to play panorama too. So I came up with a different rubber. So now I have rubber for classical music and softer music. I get the same feeling from

the same wood from Chuckaree. When I first gave him the sticks he said, it plays nice mellow songs, but when it comes to panorama, you need rocking music: hit the pan. So I made a stick for that. So I have that and if you need weight I have weight now. So that's basically where I'm going. So hopefully it catches up and the pan will change to people going and cutting a piece of wood and tying a rubber around. You don't do that for playing drums. You buy a drum set and you buy drum sticks with it. So that's where it's at, and hopefully everything will be fruitful.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to say?

CG: My inventive part of me, because I did two things here in Edmonton that no one knew about. The first thing, I was in Hanna, and in the museum in Hanna there was an electric car. That car, the person who created that car maybe in the '40s I think it was, '40s or '50s, it wasn't working. They wanted it working, but the guy who created the car died. My manager was at a big function. Managers like to feel good, and he was at the function. He heard about the museum. Hanna is a small place. He said, oh boy. He stood up in the function and he said, oh I can get that car fixed. He said, I know somebody who can fix the car. So he came to work the following Monday and said, Cec, there's an electric car in the museum. I want you to fix it for me. Electric car: I never heard of electric cars. So they put the car on a tow truck and they brought the car to the mine. He said, this is it; fix it. I said, okay. He said, you don't have to do anything at work. Any money you want to spend just tell me, and you can buy the part and put it in. Don't do anything; just work on the car. The small town manager wanted to feel good. So I got in the car and tested the car, tested this, tested that, checked the LCR and all this, checked everything. I went to him and said, okay. I don't know anything about electric cars, but it's electric. Once it's electric, I'm gonna fix it. I phoned California and asked for the parts; they had them. I said, I want to order this; I want to order that; I want to order this. They sent it down for me from California, shipped it down for me. I started working and it took about two weeks. The manager came and said: how are you going? I said, alright. In my mind, when I turn the key I'm waiting for the engine to turn on. But I forgot that I'm working on an electric car. So I sat down in the car and I said, geez I changed everything, I tested everything, I repaired what I had to repair. I turned the key and I said, geez, this car is supposed to start. Why is it not running? It's supposed to work. I now got out of the car, and by getting out of the car, my foot moved and hit

the gas pedal, and the car moved. I said: what? It's working. So I sat down back in the car, and I pressed the pedal in the garage and the car moved about six feet. I put it in reverse. It moved six feet back. I said: I fixed it, man. So I opened the garage door and drove it outside and drove in the mine and came back in. I went back in the office. I went up to the manager's office. I said, I've got good news and I've got bad news. He said: tell me the bad news first. I said, I've got the car working. He said, what's the good news? I said: I got the car working. He ran downstairs. I said, get in; turn the key. He said, you got this thing working? I said, yeah. Sit down; put the seatbelt on. He turned; we started driving. That guy nearly mashed up the floor of the car. He started stomping up and screaming and bawling, calling the next manager and got them in the car and drove around. They called the Hanna newspaper and they got a picture of the car. Now the car is working and they're going to drive it to town, posing for all the pictures. The girl said, where's the guy who fixed the car? The two man posing are going to be put on the front page. Where's the guy who fixed the car? Way out in the mine they called me on the radio. Cec, you're wanted in the shop. So I jumped in my truck and I drove up. They said, we want to interview you. Who? Papers, the Hanna paper. I said, okay. They asked me about the car. I said, what the hell is this? They put me to stand up with the two managers and take the pictures. Then they made me drive the car to the museum. I drove it in the museum, they congratulated me, and gave me this and that, and I left. Then the manager came to me and he said, you know, there's a science project in Canada. He wanted his son to enter. He said, but I want you to build something for him so he can enter it. So, I said, no problem. I said, what do you want to build? I said, you tell me and I'm gonna build it. So I sat down and talked to the son and he was telling me, you know what, you can't come up with anything. I said, I'm gonna tell you something. I say, you know people are dying in the garage all the time. They start the car and die in the garage and they die in the car and all this? I said, I'm gonna invent something that when you start your car and carbon monoxide develops in the car, the garage door will automatically open. He said what, you can do that? I said, oh yeah I can do that. So he went and told his father. I told them get a sheet with all the stuff I wanted. They went to buy it; I bought some here in Edmonton. I went back in the mine and I built it. Installed it in the garage, started the car, and the garage opened. He entered it and he won in Alberta and went to Ontario, to Toronto. The father asked me if I wanted to go with him. I said, no I don't want to go. I said, you're the father; you go. He came third in Toronto with the invention. So that's two things I did. I made a cake move here

and came to California with it, and then I made a next thing for the Convention Centre that went to Sweden or Denmark or something like that, and came second with it. But I never went anywhere; they never took me with them. I don't know for what reason. They told me that there wasn't enough money to take me, but I know differently. But I still helped with what I know. IPEX, I'm gonna tell you this. IPEX is the people who make the PEX pipe. If you go in a house today and you see a pipe that you get your water through that comes down a tubing, they call it PEX pipe. I was one of the guys involved in that. When they made the first 42 inch PVC pipe, I was the electrician who did all the setting up for the machine. I was the guy. In Athabasca, on a crane in Athabasca, there's a big crane there. At the time, it was the world's biggest crane that took the log off the truck. I was the head electrician on that. There were two of us, two guys. I was the guy who did that. They offered me a job at Athabasca after. I refused it. But I gave them all the information that I had. I had a book with everything that I did and how I did it and how it came to pass. I gave it to them free, never charged them a cent. They offered me all kinds of offers. I turned it down. I said, no I don't want it. Never take it.

Q: Why?

CG: I don't know, I don't know. I don't know, I just didn't take it at the time.

Q: Did you patent anything?

CG: No. Once you're working on something within the company: that belongs to them technically. I did a lot of things at Syncrude too. I make a testing board. In all the mines I went I made it myself, a testing board to test different things. When I was at Ipsco, you might know Ipsco, but it was a pipe company that was on 75<sup>th</sup> Street that make steel pipe. I was one of the creators there. I used to do all kinds of crazy thing there. They offered me a job to move to Winnipeg when they closed down here, but I refused. When they were disconnecting all the machines to take to Winnipeg, I was the guy who did it. That guy wanted me to sabotage the equipment. I said, no, I'm not gonna do that. Because they said, with the knowledge I have, if I do certain things, nobody will be able to find out. If you go to Ipsco right now, there is a thing that tests the pipe while you are making the pipe. I did it. I had to do all of that, to test while the

pipe is coming out, to test the quality of the pipe. To cut the pipe to a certain length, I did it. There's a lot of things I did, a lot of things I did in Alberta, a lot of things. But what can you do?

Q: Recognition didn't matter to you.

CG: No, I'm kind of low key. I never liked to be shown up. I'm always in the back. I'm gonna tell you something. Right here in Edmonton they were running a fibre optic line from Toronto to B.C. They were making a splice right in the middle of the city, right before you come down Macdonald Hotel there. Right there they were making the splice. I was part of that. I was the coordinator for downtown, for right down there by the Convention Centre. I was the guy who did most of the planning, I and the manager. He used to take me with him, because there wasn't a question I couldn't answer. When we went to a meeting, I was sitting down with him.

Q: Was this concerning the splice?

CG: Yeah.

Q: What is a splice?

CG: What it is about is you're running cables. When you're running cable, the cable only makes a certain length. They wouldn't make a whole length of cable that goes from one end to the next. So you have to make splices. When you're making that splice, you have to do a lot of coordination because a lot of things have to shut down, and you have to be on time with everything. So we went to a lot of different meetings with people from the States, people from all over. This was no little thing. We had to shut down a lot of banks downtown here; we had to shut down a lot of businesses. That was 1 o'clock in the morning. So we had to plan that and have everything back up by 5 o'clock. So we planned everything and then everything turned out okay. When they finished and went in a meeting, one of the guys from the City says, where are you from? I said, why do you ask me where I'm from? I'm from Saskatchewan. He said: you have an accent. Where are you from? Are you from Jamaica? I said, I'm looking at stupid? Everybody started to laugh. So my boss said to me, why did you say that? I said: I'm not that stupid. He

said: where are you from? Tell me where you are from. I said: I'm from Trinidad and Tobago. He's a pretty smart guy. Well they turned back on power 4:30 in the morning and everything come up. I called all the bank managers and everybody to check their vault and everything. Everything was closed up but nobody drove past [2:44:04]. But it took a long time to coordinate it. I was involved in that. I sat down there shirt and pants and everybody was jacket and tie. But I never told anybody what I do or my capability and what I can do and what I do. I just work and say [2:44:34]. I'm just an ordinary guy, just laid back. They used to call me the golden wheelbarrow when I was in Athabasca, because the cranes and those, nobody can fix the cranes. I'm the only guy who used to fix the cranes. It's so strange. I was in the electrical union and I left. I left the union. I went to the union for a purpose because you could work when you want and leave when you want and go on holidays. I always wanted to go home and come back and stay as long as I wanted, and with my pan sticks and all of this. So I joined the union. When I was at the union I wasn't treated the way I should. I think one reason is because I never told anybody what I have or what I'm capable of. When you get on a job, like my first union job, I got on the job and we started working, and they brought a guy from the States to make a splice again, high voltage splice, something a thousand volts. That is like surgery. They brought him here, flew him from the States to come to that refinery. I was there and I had just joined the union. I see you fly a guy here to make splice? I said, I can do that. They said, you can't do that. I said, I can do that. They brought the guy and the guy sat down and started explaining to everybody what he was gonna do and how he was gonna do it. I said, I can do all of that. He said, well what can they bring me here for? He packed his suitcase and went back, and I did all the splice then after that. So then the guy said: where did you learn all this? I said, I don't know where I learned it but I know it. So I started doing all the high voltage splice in the plant. I had just joined the union; so it was a permit. When they're laying off, you're the first person that gets laid off. So they started laying off. They laid off all the guys and kept me. So the union guys were mad. How come they're keeping you? Because I'm not a member yet, I'm just a permit. So I'm the first to go, but the guy kept me because the boss of the mine, I was kind of protecting him. I can do all the work. All the technical work I can do it; so he kept me there.. I was the last person to walk off the job, and he took me with him. He said, I'm gonna take you with me, anywhere I go. I said, no no. I've got a next job to go to and it's Syncrude. I was at Syncrude and the manager was looking at me and said, you know your stuff, because you're fixing everything.

Then I went to Athabasca and that's where I said, that's it; I'm done. I went to Athabasca and when I reached there they gave me the worst job, to paint.

Q: What did they hire you as?

CG: As an electrician. But they give me an apprentice job, like when they weld the bracket you paint it. So they gave me that job, to paint the bracket. I said: what? But I didn't care, because I was getting paid as a journeyman. So the apprentices asked me, what year apprentice are you? I said: I'm a second year apprentice. I'm more qualified than the manager. I have my Masters; they have no Masters. They're just journeymen electrician. I bypassed that a million times. I am the first Black in Canada to have had a professional electrician ticket; I'm the first person in Canada to get that status. I'm a professional electrician. I'm supposed to put letters behind my name; I don't. I went to Athabasca and they made me paint. Two days I saw three electricians – the boss, the supervisor, and two electricians – trying to fix a crane. I was painting and I looking at them. Two days, three days passed. The third day brought the paint can and paint brush. I went up to them at lunchtime and I said, I see you're all trying to fix the crane and you couldn't fix it. He said, yeah, it is giving us problem. He said, do you know anything about cranes? I said, ah I don't know, but maybe I can take a shot at it and see if I can fix it. They said, when? I said, well during lunchtime, because after lunch I gotta go and paint behind the welder. So they went for lunch, I went for my tools, and I came up to the crane. I fixed the crane in about 15 minutes. I went down in the lunchroom and when I entered the lunchroom about 15 electricians all started laughing. Ah, you gave up. [2:51:36] I went behind them, pressed the button. Crane move, crane do this. You fixed it? Yeah, I said. Yes I fixed it. What was wrong with it? I said, I don't know but I fixed it. The boss man went and told the manager. The manager called me, and brought me in the office. He said, take that coverall off, take those boots off, put on clean boots, drop all your tools. He said, now I'm gonna sit down and talk with you. I told him who I am and what I am and what I'm capable of. He said, let me tell you this. From today, he said, I'm going to make you a supervisor, and you are going to be fixing all the cranes in Athabasca. He said, you are working for this company and so we are gonna charge the other company. When you go and fix it, they will pay us. I said, fine with me. I went out and they gave me ten guys to work with. Again, they didn't want to work for me. That's in Athabasca Pulp Mill up there. They didn't want

to work. I went to Frank Santiago. Frank Santiago was the supervisor on that same job. I went to Frank and said, Frank, I have a problem. I said, they just made me supervisor and there are ten guys and they don't want to work for me. He said, fire them. He said, go back to your manager and tell him, and fire all of them. I said, okay. I went back to the manager and said, they don't want to work. They say they're not working for any Black man. He said, fire them. I said, oh boy, I can't do that. He said, come with me. I followed him. He fired three of them. The other seven decided to work and he gave me three new guys. After that job I quit the union. I walked in and told them I'm done. I don't want to work for no union: too much discrimination. I can't handle that. None of them were in my shoes, none.

Q: Which union was it?

CG: 424 electrical union, very strong union. And I left. Once you work there you have a pension because you put in your time. So that's it. But I left the union because of that, otherwise I would've stayed in the union. But I had too many problems. When I was in Athabasca I didn't have problem with the managers. The managers loved me, because when I was in Athabasca I used to tell them on weekends when I have to play my pan I'm not working. The company was getting extra money from fixing the crane, and there were so many cranes and they're breaking all the time. Nobody knew about it more than me. Before, they had to bring out other people from outside to fix the crane, but I used to fix them. So, when Saturday come, I had to play my pan. I told them I'm going to play my pan. He said, here. Fill up his truck, fill it up with gas, let me drive to Edmonton, play the pan, and drive back. So then there wasn't time to get anything on the job done. The fellows used to ask ? this because you are getting everything. I said, well they're getting a lot of pressure. When they're paying me, the managers [2:57:09] because they pay you with an envelope they gave a cheque. So they didn't want the foreman to see my cheque.

Q: Because you were earning more than your foreman?

CG: Yeah. They knew that would've caused a problem. But the foreman didn't know what I know. He couldn't fix the crane. I was fixing all the cranes.

Q: What kind of cranes were they?

CG: The cranes that roll overhead. Any crane I can fix. I'm gonna tell you something what happened to me in Hanna. They were building a dragline there for Luscar, and I was the guy who was supervising the building of the dragline. They bring some guys from Texas to build the dragline. They buy it from Texas, they destroy it and bring it here, and building it back up here. So the company from Texas was building it here, and I was supervising the building, walking around looking, because I was the company eyes. They wanted to put up a Confederate flag on the top of the dragline. So the manager came there, because he was out in the mine. He came, he looked up and saw a flag. So he called me. He said, look up there, see that flag up there? I said, yeah, I see it. He said, is that bothering you? I said no. I said: I didn't see any paycheque on that; it ain't bothering me. He said: well let me tell you something. It is bothering me, so come with me. He said, who put that flag up there? Take it down or take the next plane back to Texas. In two minutes the flag was down. Next morning I come to work and saw all those Texas men watching. I was walking around and taking note and watching them taking notes. [3:00:08] But a lot of things happened with me in my working history. I had a lot of top positions and worked with a lot of big technical people from all over the world. At Athabasca when they were installing the two big generators, I was involved with the guys that brought it. They brought it from China and I was working with the Chinese, four of them. I was working with them and they told me, you're pretty good. That's where I learned to say chow san and ni hao ma. I learned that from them, two things, good morning and how are you. So that's a lot of things I did here in Edmonton. But Toronto was a different cup of tea and Trinidad is the next different thing. But I had a lot of excitement in my life and I did different things. I just invented a . . .

Q: Are you retired?

CG: Yeah, I'm retired. Well I'm retired but not retired. In Trinidad a lot of people ask me to do things, and it's according to who you are I will do it. I qualify in Trinidad to work as an electrician. I just produced my document there and they gave me a Trinidad license; I didn't have to go through anything.

Q: You're recognized there as a Master Electrician?

CG: No, that doesn't exist in Trinidad. I'm just an electrician, who could do anything. A Master here could do past what a journeyman can do. Here a professional electrician is a little higher again. I used to have Masters and all of that, and people used to see me at NAIT in the class. What are you doing? I said: I just wanted to look. But there are a lot of things that I pass on to my two grandsons. Hopefully they can take it. I already take them to the electrical union to get in the class to learn electrical. It's a start-up initiative. I don't know if they're going to go that way, but I have to sit down and talk to them. I see where the world is going. Just recently when I came back I went in an electric car and saw the operation of the electric car. It blew my mind. My son-in-law has one, and I went in it. It made me feel like getting back in electricity. It's my cup of tea. I told him, I'm not finished with this car. I'm coming back to take a look at it again. That's where the world is going.

Q: Scottie?

CG: Scottie's son. He's going to buy a truck now. He put in the order for the truck. I think the truck is coming sometime this year. Electric truck. And he's giving my daughter the car to drive. But it's amazing. If you don't have a computer you can't drive it. These are the things that an ordinary mechanic wouldn't be able to fix. If you get into the field of electrical technology/ electrician, you're good for life. Nobody can touch you with a pole. So I want to sit down and talk with them and see if they're gonna. But there's a lot of maths. That's the only thing bad about electrical. Lots of formulas, lots and lots. I eat, drink, and sleep those things. So now my brain is on neutral. I put it in neutral. I don't want to think again. But I still do in Trinidad because everybody has tanks in Trinidad, water tanks. What I noticed in Trinidad is they have the water tank and nobody knows where the water level is. It's a black tank. So nobody knows where the water is and when the water is finished or if the water is low or high. You have to climb up and look, with a ladder and climbing up to look. I said, no no. So I went and bought some electrical parts and I made a thing so you know where the water is. I

made two; I made one for my wife and one for her sister, and installed it for them. Oh, why don't you make that and sell it? I said, ah.

Q: So you can tell the contents without climbing it?

CG: Yeah.

Q: Can I buy one?

CG: I have to buy some parts to make one for somebody who I promised I'm gonna make it for them. It's a lady friend of mine that I got to know from owning the property. She works with the government and she got the road built for me. I promised her that I'm going to build one for her. But everybody saw it. My wife's sister saw it and she wanted one. So I went and built it for her. Things like that I could do, but when I get down there. . .

Q: What do you do as an electrician?

CG: I just improve on things. If I see something to make life easier, I do it. But that's all I do. With my electrical background I can manipulate things that I want done. I tell people, I'm building a house in Trinidad and I want you to come there when it's finished. It's going to be something. When I tell them I say, I have no water from the city and I want no electricity from the city. It's going to be a standalone house that maintains itself.

Q: You're going solar?

CG: Yeah. Then I'm gonna use rain water. I'm gonna filter it myself, and pump it myself, and do everything. I have a room almost as big as here just for electrical and water. Hot water gonna be run by gas, no electricity, just by gas. It's gonna be sort of creative. When you come you'll see it.

Q: ?

CG: Yeah, because that's what I do with the property. I don't spray any chemical there, no fertilizer, nothing. Everything just grows on its own; whatever I plant grows on its own. So that's what I'm trying to do. What I'm going to do there is have a place that schools can come and visit. People can come and sit down and have a cup of tea and some fruits and walk around the property and look at different things, all the different birds. We're going to have tons of different birds, a type of bird that comes from California to down there. It is leaving around April and will come back in September. I always look at it. They have so many different birds you can come there and look at. Different foods, different plants, so many different things, animals, deer, they're all there. The hummingbird will come right here, then fly away. I sit down and talk with them, and that's the life I like. What I want to do is make my pan stick and help people. A lot of people in Trinidad need help, technical help. I can do that, especially in the electrical field. A lot of people's houses burn down because of electrical stuff they did wrong. So what I can do I will help--that's all I can offer.

Q: Don has a couple of questions. . . I'd like to record the story about getting the pan into the armories.

CG: How I got the pan in the armories: I wanted a place to practise, for the band to practise. I couldn't get one. The mayor was Cec Purvis at the time. I decided to go into his office at City Hall, and I just went up. They asked if I had an appointment. I said, no, I just came to talk to him because I'm struggling and I need someplace to practise. I went in; he invited me in. I went in and asked him. I said: I have a steel band. He didn't know what the hell I was talking about. I said, a steel drum band, I explained to him, for Caribbean music. I want a place to practise and I'm struggling. I don't have anywhere to practise. I said: two things I don't have. I don't have a place to practise and I don't have money to pay any rent. So I told him, I need a place to practise. He said, well okay. You come and meet me in the morning and I'll see what I can do for you. Okay. I left. Next morning bright and early I was back. I said: I'm here. He took me down to the armory, drove me down. I didn't know where we were going. He took me down there and he said: this is the building. The building was empty. He took me inside the building and he said, what do you think about here? I said, fine with me. He said: which room do you want? I said: that one. He said, take it. He said, bring the instruments and start practising. Here's the key;

that's it. And that's how I got the place. I stayed there, Cec Purvis gone, whoever came. I never paid any rent. Then one day FAVA came in and Folkfest came in, but before they came in I even had Cariwest in there. I brought Cariwest in. Lancaster was in there bringing mas. I had a guy, what's his name, his sister is a hairdresser on 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Tony I think is his name. He does beat drum [3:15:00] I had all of them inside there. I had Wajoo in there also. But they all left. Cariwest left, Lancaster left, Tony left, Wajoo left, and I was the only one there. Then who came in? Folkfest came and then FAVA came. They were paying rent and I still wasn't paying anything. Then I went to them and said, geez, I want to pay something. They told me, okay, how much do you wanna pay? I said, \$100. I paid \$100 for the longest time until they decided. FAVA came to me one day and they told me, oh you have all this space and you're not using it. Can we have this little one right by you here? I said okay; take it. We had this one room here, and that's where we were until we moved out and they said they're fixing up the building.

Q: So the armories are no longer our official residence?

CG: Not here, no, because they're rebuilding, renovating it now. I don't know. I was talking to Danielle. When we were there we had an association and they were advertised as a historical site because that was where the army people used to be. So I don't know what became of it, what they're gonna do. But I remember when I first moved in there, that place technically could've belonged to the Caribbean people. When I first went in there, the guy who made me start Cariwest offered me that building. He said, the building, you can have it free, but the property you are gonna pay a million dollars for it, a million dollars. I said, oh boy. I went to Lancaster because he was into real estate, and I went to Andy. I said [3:17:28]. No, I just came here. I said, did your offer get [3:17:30]. Big property, all this parking, million dollars you can't go wrong. No, you are gonna be spinning your top in mud. I said, okay. We never got it and we lost it. So that's it for the armory.

Q: Show us the sticks so I can get some pictures.

CG: This is my latest invention. They are steel pan sticks; it's what you play the tenor pan with. These sticks are created by me. I made the rubber head myself; I mould it. I've been working on

this for the past 22 or 23 years, and now I think I've got it all pat now. Donna bought this. She can't play anything, but she bought this. The good thing about these stick is you don't have to know how to play the pan; it will play the pan for you. So you don't have to be a player. But this is my new invention. Hopefully in years to come this will be the stick of choice for all pan players. I have sticks for every pan, from the tenor right back to the high bass. I'm working on the bass right now. But I have for tenor, double tenor, double second, cellos, guitar, four cellos, tenor bass. I have six for every pan and I'm the only person to have six for all the pan. I have two different types of rubber: I have a softer rubber and a harder rubber. You can play mellow songs, and if you want to play hard you can play. I have two different weights also: I have a light weight and a heavy weight. The sticks are made out of hickory and maple. I'm in Canada. So I go with the maple and hickory. They're solid sticks with about five to six moisture content in the wood. The moisture is between five and seven, to be exact, moisture content. The rubber lasts pretty long. I have some players right now testing it out. They've been testing it for the past four or five years and it's still going good. So hopefully the players will get the sticks. If anybody wants the stick, you can get in contact with me. My name is Cecil George at 487-0857. I just have a Trinidad number, and if you want to call Edmonton it's 780-939-6658. Thank you for using my sticks, Donna. Thank you very much.

[ END ]