

Milton Elsworth Zaiffdeen

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MZ: I was born in Trinidad and Tobago, specifically the island of Trinidad, 1943, December 1st. I'm the oldest out of eight kids that was alive; my mom had ten.

Q: Did your dad work in oil?

MZ: The Texaco refinery, which was the most comprehensive in the world at that time, was just across the road from us. Their compound, their fence was maybe 150 yards from our home.

Q: In your community, did most people work there?

MZ: The qualified personnel worked all across the board at Texaco. Then the younger kids, or the not too qualified ones, worked as "yard boys" in the mornings and used to go in the later afternoon and early evening and caddy for the white folks that run the refinery in those days. Or the ladies would be servants for the white community. It was a happy medium.

Q: How did you get into the banking industry?

MZ: After I graduated we were just about getting independence from the British. Things were changing, but very slowly. I graduated and I was head student at the college. Not for academics – for personality and activities overall. The bursar of the college had a big bank roll in the Barclays Bank, so he knew the manager and took me down personally. They interviewed me and I got that job. I was excited, because I'm a country boy in a city setting. When I walked in Barclays Bank that day, my first day, I felt almost like a janitor. Most of the people in the banking system in those days were either foreign whites, local whites, or light skinned people like Chinese and mixed. I was the first; I broke the ice – first brown person to be on staff for the head office of 68. You can imagine that feeling. Well, that start started to change rapidly.

Q: So you were the only person of colour in the bank at that level.

MZ: I was junior, very junior level. But my bank soon realized after they had a big contract with cane farmers who were mostly brown and some blacks, that these people didn't trust a bank; they kept the money at home. But they had to carry a bank " Passport Card" to collect their paychecks from the sugarcane industry. They came, and after collecting the money they'd look for me and come to make sure I verified the amount of money they got was what it said on the paper. They couldn't read and write. They'd put a thumb print. Most were senior ladies, but they had some money. They had a [5:02], which is a head garb, full of \$100,000. They came and look for me and say, "please come can you count this for me please?" I want to make sure they didn't steal anything. Then I'll count it and I'll assure them that it was right on, they weren't cheated. Then they'll pull out a handkerchief with a little bit of money and say, here, take this. I refused, of course. I said, no, it's my job, I enjoy it. I formed a bond with them. My management at the bank noticed that and realized we'd better get some more local people, brown and black. They were all white and light skinned, so I sort of formed a trend there, and we got more and more people like myself to work in the bank industry. My dad worked in the oil refinery. He was in photography and magazine and safety. My sister was one of the youngest senior staff at Texaco, and she was making more money than I was. I was being trained for a bank manager's position, and my younger sister was making more money as a stenographer/secretary. So I thought, this is not right. Money was the name of the game, so I jumped ship. I spoke to my dad, I wrote the Texaco entry exams, apprentice exams, I passed it, and the rest is history. My money tripled just as a trainee.

Q: What year did you start as a trainee in Texaco?

MZ: 1963.

Q: As a trainee, what did you do?

MZ: Texaco Trinidad had the most rigorous and comprehensive training program in the world in oil and petroleum refining. Needless to say, our British system of education was second to none in the Caribbean, unlike the States and Canada. We did all facets of, we wrote British exams,

Oxford and Cambridge exams. Very comprehensive program. Then in Texaco we did a rigorous one year training, one month in every facet of the oil and gas industry in the refinery.

Q: Can you give some examples?

MZ: Yes. We had to go through the Welding program for a month, the Electrical Department, the Instrumentation program for a month, the Pump and Compressor department, the Power Plant, the Refinery and Research Labs and the Pipefitting department. We had to write an exam and possess a fair knowledge of these things. We got little bits of pieces of everything before we could go on to the next area. Once that was completed, we went to almost every refinery operation unit for a quick review of what was happening in those units. Then the selection committee selected us or placed us where they thought we would do best. They put us on your own personal unit where we did a three month training, classroom and onsite with the operations people. After writing a final exam and they assign me to an Operations Unit and you became a Junior Operator. The most that brown and black guys could get in those days were Senior Operator level. But when it comes to superintendent or managers, we were blanked. This is the colonial days in operation. It's changing, but very slowly and not fast enough or not high enough.

Q: Were the trainees locals?

MZ: Yes all trainees were locals.

Q: The trainers too?

MZ: A couple white guys, but they were local. The big, big bosses were foreign.

Q: Was this an apprenticeship?

MZ: It was considered an apprenticeship. Classroom/Field Training with exams every month for about a year. Even in my group we had black, brown and white locals training to be operators.

That was a prestigious, in Trinidad that was one of the most prestigious jobs, to be an operator in the oil and gas business with Texaco.

Q: So you became an operator.

MZ: Yeah.

Q: For how long were you an operator?

MZ: I was there from '63 to '66. I could see we couldn't get as far as we'd like to, so I thought if I were go to overseas and study I could go back home with a Chemical Engineering degree. That was my hope, that I could become one of the first brown or black superintendents. That's something you couldn't get in Trinidad until you study abroad and come back. That was my plan. It never worked; I never went back home to work and live. I assimilated in this society and the rest is history.

Q: What does an operator do?

MZ: The everyday running of the refinery, the unit, whatever comes in and whatever you process. You have some production, you have the main product. We made JP4, which is Alkylate for the Airline Fuel Industry. That was our primary product, and we had a lot of sub products like propane, butane, things like that. The entire refinery is all interconnected. You're bringing the crude and all the final products. We'd send all the products to different plants and they will reprocess it to produce other stuff, and they'll send some of their stuff to other plants. It's all intertwined as one big happy family. People always think that oil and gas is making gasoline for cars, but without oil and gas the world can't run these days. All the plastics and the plastic bags and computers, car parts and everything is oil and gas products.

Q: What about bitumen?

MZ: At one time of course we were lucky in Trinidad, we had the biggest natural asphalt lake in the world, so we could ship it all over the world. But the bitumen, which is a base product, after you take everything out of the oil and gas, the dark base product was dumped as waste. But with technology, I worked and assisted in the Commissioning/Start-up of the second gasification complex in the world in Italy. We took the bitumen or the asphalt, which is heavy oil which was no good to anybody, and we gasified it and used it for cogeneration and made electricity for the Italian grid. That shows all the diverse things that comes out of oil. Nothing goes to waste.

Q: Tell me about how you came to Canada.

MZ: My boss at Texaco, who was German background, white of course, called me into the office one day. I thought I was in trouble. He introduced me to his nephew, a 17-year-old kid. Nice kid, not too educated. My boss said to me “ Milt, can you do me a favour?”Of course you’ll do anything for your boss because you want to keep working. He says, “I’m going to introduce you to my nephew and he’s going to spend three months with you; teach him everything you know on your shift”. I said, no worries. We formed a great relationship; he was nice to work with. I taught him everything I knew, and he disappeared. He was willing to learn but he wasn’t that sharp, that bright, as far as I was concerned. Six months after, we were called into the office for a big celebration and we were going to be introduced to our new superintendent. Lo and behold, it was this kid. I thought, this is not right. We trained this kid, he didn’t have the knowledge, and he’s going to be my boss. So that and the fact that most of my friends were leaving to go to Winnipeg or Toronto or whatever to further their studies, I was pretty happy with being home. I was playing music, I was partying, making some good money. But I decided I’d better get out of here because there was no room for moving up. So that episode triggered me to leave Trinidad. Of course I had an affinity for Canada because I went to a Canadian missionary college. Thirdly, the reason I came to Alberta was I knew it were considered the oil province, the oil capital of Canada, so my chances of getting a summer job to pay for my schooling would be greater. I didn’t have money to just come up here and go to school. I had a better chance, instead of going to Toronto or Montreal. So said, so done – I was able to pay for my schooling.

Q: What were you taking in school?

MZ: Chemical Engineering. That's another story. First I had to boost my marks, upgrade my marks. So I went to Alberta College. My first summer I didn't apply to the oil and gas business, I worked with the City of Edmonton telephone company installing telephone banks all over the city, which was very interesting. The second year, I went to university. I passed my upgrade. I saw a notice at the Hub building or the Civil Engineering building saying that Celanese – or it was Chemcell in those days, it later became Celanese – was coming in to interview potential people for summer job. So I applied. My interview went like this. Your resume speaks for itself. We're not going to ask you any technical questions. When can you start? I said, as soon as school is done, for summer. So that started my career in Canada, Alberta, in oil and gas. This was a petrochemical company, Celanese. Their plant in Edmonton does not exist anymore.

Q: So you were supervisor for primary and secondary oxidation and hydrolysis and other things?

MZ: Yeah, I started as a summer student. After the second summer I was called into the office and they said to me, Milton, we're losing a lot of people through attrition because most of the old guys are retiring and some died. We need trained people, and you have such good knowledge and background. If you take a year off from your Chemical Engineering program, we'd move you from a summer student or a junior operator to a senior operator. In those days senior operators were mostly guys 30 or 40 years in the business; they grew old with the business. My money would jump from \$600 a month in those days to \$1,600 or \$1,700. I thought, good. That probably was a mistake on my part, because once I started receiving big money, I was learning, but I never went back to university. I qualified myself going through the back door. Life takes different turns. You have to have some breaks to be able to do what I did.

Q: You spent some time at Celanese?

MZ: Yeah, I spent about seven or eight years and I became a Senior Operator. The nice thing about my training, they were able to put me in any of the eight or nine units they had. I was a good source of information and operational skills. I was assigned to one units but if they were short in an area they just said, Milt, can you go over there and help?

Q: In what capacity? Were you a coordinator?

MZ: In this case operator, strictly operations.

Q: Did you do any supervision at Celanese?

MZ: Yeah, if a supervisor was on holiday, they ask you to take over. But I'm the kind of person, although I'm a supervisor, if a guy's having trouble loading a rail car with chemicals, I'd go down to his level and help him. I think that was a good trait that I had. I wasn't scared to go down to any level to help anybody.

Q: After Celanese, did you work at any other petrochemical company?

MZ: If you look at the resume, most of my work, were petrochemical related.

Q: In Fort McMurray or in Edmonton?

MZ: After Celanese I went to Texaco Canada as an operator. It was supposed to be a temporary job. They wanted people with skills to mothball, shut down, clean and mothball a Texaco refinery, because it was going to be sold to Chile. They were going to break everything down, ship it to Chile, and remount it. So they wanted it done in a reasonably good fashion, not junked. It was supposed to be three months but it took about nine months to do it. I did my job and I was lwel liked.by my co-workers and bosses. It's personality and knowledge combined in one. I was liked to the point that when they shut down 150 people were going to lose their jobs. So they brought in psychologists and people like that to deal with people losing their jobs. They brought in human resource people from all the surrounding plants to interview us with

potential to get jobs. So I got a job. I worked the last nightshift at Texaco and I finished at 7 in the morning, and at 9 o'clock I was up at Redwater in the world's biggest ammonia complex; I got a job at an ammonia plant. I was three months trial and I stayed there for seven or eight years.

Q: That's Texaco?

MZ: No, from Texaco now I'm at Imperial Oil, Esso Chemical at Redwater. That's ammonia, that's fertilizer and related products like Urea and Ammonium Nitrate. So my horizon was getting wider and wider. I moved from oil and gas, well this is oil and gas too, but petrochemical and now I'm into ammonia. With that, you learn to make acetic acid, sulphuric acid, and nitric acid. You have to use these in processes, so you make your own. So different plants, different types of plants which are all intertwined. It's chemistry but on a big scale. Instead of in a lab, it's in a big site.

Q: How many people worked there?

MZ: Between operations and lab and HR and maintenance, 500. Big complex.

Q: When you came here from Trinidad, were you alone? You didn't have wife or children?

MZ: No, I was single. I came at 22.

Q: Did you have any experiences with discrimination?

MZ: I didn't know anybody. There was somebody I contacted in Trinidad who I knew was in Alberta; unfortunately, he wasn't in Edmonton. He made a phone call to some friends. He never got a reply, so when I landed at the airport here I wasn't sure if somebody's going to meet me. But lo and behold, I saw an old car coming and there were two brown guys in it. They asked me, are you Milton? I was happy as hell. They introduced me to two houses that housed students from the island. One was able to take me on a temporary, basis one guy was willing to share his

room with me, otherwise I had no place to live. Then from that house I moved to the other house that was more in demand, and I eventually became the head of that house.

Q: Who was it?

MZ: Andra Thakur, who's a PhD, now retired.

Q: From Trinidad as well?

MZ: No he's Guyanese, this house was eight or nine people, and at one time I was the only Trinidadian. Everybody else was Guyanese. But I was the leader of the house. I was the only one working.

Q: Who owned the house?

MZ: Oh we just rented it. An old guy called Mike Hochuk, old Ukrainian guy, had a home at 11083 – 88 Avenue. We rented it, and he was happy. My entire bill for a month with food and rent was about \$50, because it was a communal effort to cook and eat and even drink; \$50 a month, that's cheap. You can't do that any more. Times have changed; 57 years I've been here.

Q: So you were at Esso?

MZ: Yeah, up here. At this house most of the boys worked in the trains as porters. I was the only one making, if you want to call it, big bucks. These boys made enough money to get by, but I was the only one able to keep the house going.

Q: Do you remember the names of any of the porters?

MZ: Yeah. First of all, we had porters from Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg. They all did the CN Rail western run to Vancouver. A lot of times they had layovers in Edmonton, so they'd come over to the house where they were fed, communal, play cards, drink together, party sometimes.

Locksley Campbell is one; he's in Regina. Jang and Kelvin Harrysingwere from Winnipeg, AndraThakur from Edmonton, Ken Singh, who is back in Trinidad. Anthony Nanan, he went back to Trinidad. Then we had guys like Ramish Bhambani, who is Dr. Rambani now; he's from Pakistan. He lived with us for a while. Morris Bowen from Weir Bowen, he owned the biggest law firm in Edmonton. He's from Barbados. So these are some of them.

Q: So after Esso you went to Irving Oil Refinery.

MZ: From Esso, I was laid off from Esso. In the early '80s the oil industry went down to almost zero. No matter how good you were, because they were unionized, you had to let go the younger people, the guys who didn't have seniority in age or education or background. In union the older you were, the more senior you were. So I was laid off. I couldn't find a job if my life depended on it. Irving Oil contacted me in New Brunswick, so I had to leave my wife and four kids and fly out to Irving Oil on a contract basis. They wanted to keep me. They wanted me and my wife and kids to uproot and move to New Brunswick. But my wife had a Masters in Special Education teaching school for the deaf, and the kids were all in music lessons and all that. I couldn't uproot them, because socially I think it was going downhill. Alberta was the place to be, money-wise. The people were nice and friendly out East, but the ability to make money was not there. If I could sell my house here for a million bucks I could buy something just as good out there for \$350,000. So I didn't want to move, I just contracted. I did that for a year and I got a big break to go overseas after that. But Irving wanted me to move and work in their plant.

Q: And your family was still here.

MZ: Yeah.

Q: After New Brunswick, what happened next?

MZ: We went there boxing night to New Brunswick. This is a strange world for me now. Most of the operators that they took on the same basis like me, were from Alberta. Alberta didn't have work anymore. Irving was willing to hire guys on contract, fly us in, 24 days in/8 day out. They

gave us apartments, they gave us cars and food, paid for everything and paid us good money, then flew us back out 24 and 8 – 8 at home, back 24.

Q: What was happening to the oil industry here at that time?

MZ: Nothing, nothing was happening. It just went downhill. There was no demand for oil in the '80s. We weren't diversified here in Alberta enough. China was buying oil but they were buying a lot of cheap oil from Venezuela. In the States I guess there's a contentious issue. The States still think that our oil in Fort McMurray is dirty oil, when they're buying Arabian oil, which is more dirty in blood money. Our oil is clean. Our environmental responsibility here in Alberta is great as far as environmental polluting the atmosphere, compared to the United States. But the States is the biggest consumer in the world of oil products. If they're not buying from you, you're in trouble.

Q: What makes the oil clean or dirty?

MZ: Clean is environment. Pollution is one. Environment is one, and the other one is politics.

Q: But the oil is extracted from the ground, right?

MZ: Yeah. When we say dirty oil, we're not talking about actual dirty. Dirty oil, a lot of it is mining. They figure when you dig up the dirt and take the oil out, you don't put it back as it was before, which is wrong. So they call it dirty oil. Then the pollution is involved.

Q: Isn't it processed, isn't it refined?

MZ: Yeah it's refined, the oil is refined. Dirty is not, what's the word I'm looking for? . . . There are two ways of getting oil from the ground.

Q: In the media you see terms like slurry or pits, you see references to processing. So it's extracted, and it doesn't go through the same kinds of processes that they think should be done? How does it go from dirty to clean?

MZ: Oh it's not dirty in the sense of the word dirty.

Q: From crude oil.

MZ: There's two types of crude extraction. One is mining, which is Fort McMurray in the north. Most of it is open pit mining, getting it from the oil sands. In Alberta is called the oil sands, that's a form of extraction. But then there's also drilling, where you get the crude in liquid form. But you have to separate the H₂S, which is deadly, and other things before you put it in the fractionating column to process it.

Q: The fractionating column?

MZ: Yeah. You have to break it up. You just can't take oil and throw it in your gas tank. It has so many parts to oil. You have heavy cut, lower cut, medium cut, and then the top cut gasoline is probably on the upper end. They have lube oil, which is a little heavier. You can take that and break it up or react it with catalysts and change the whole complexity of it to use it for something else. So it's diverse like you won't believe. A lot of people don't know that. They just think of oil as gas for cars. When you don't know, you don't know. The normal average Joe would not know that, that almost everything is made with oil. That's why it's so much in demand in the world.

Q: What other industries depend on oil?

MZ: Petrochemical is a by-product of oil and gas. Power, electricity for your homes is made from the use of gas. Your plastic, which is so big in the world right now. Parts for cars, chemicals. I was reading today. I worked in an alpha alcohol plant in China. Alpha alcohol is a by-product of

oil, and it's used for the perfume industry. Nobody thinks of that. You add it for the sweet smell to all the stuff; it has a flowery, sweet smell. So it's endless.

Q: So we can't do without oil?

MZ: No, not at this point in time. There's no replacement. The replacement would be running cars but you still have to produce electricity. You have to use oil and gas to burn it to make steam to run turbines to make electricity. So you still have to use oil and gas. The big tossup now is electric cars will be cleaner. Well you still have to burn stuff to make the electricity. The exhaust from an electric car is almost nil, but to produce electricity you still have to burn stuff. People don't realize that. So I think in our lifetime we can't get away from oil. Hydrogen production now is becoming a big one. You can make hydrogen from sea water, and that's going to change the world. I hope we see it in our lifetime.

Q: Have you ever worked in Fort McMurray or anywhere else?

MZ: From Irving Oil I got my big break to go overseas. I went to Thailand and China and then Thailand and Mexico, then Russia and Uzbekistan and Italy, India. But in between, every time I came home from a project I would get calls, because I'm fairly widely known now in the industry. If you work with ten guys in a certain part of the world and the project is done, these ten guys now go back to their homes and find jobs in different parts of the world.

Q: Were you working as a contractor?

MZ: Yes, overseas was strictly contract. So when these ten guys get to the plant and the boss asks them, hey do you know any good guys, we're looking for people. Then I'll get a phone call from them and they'd say, "Uncle Milty, I'm in Indonesia, do you want to come out and do a six month contract?" Six months always becomes a year or more.

Q: What would be your function during those six months to a year?

MZ: Because of my background I moved into building the plant, pre-commissioning, commissioning, startup training, and shake hands when everything's working good, then you leave and wait for another job. Meanwhile, I'm getting calls from north here, so we did Fort McMurray. But always Syncrude Oil has evaded me or I've evaded Syncrude. I did Suncor, Imperial Oil, Kearl Lake, I did Nabiye, Esso Chemical, Imperial Oil in Cold Lake. But always never Syncrude. Of course I did Scotford here, two big stints at Scotford upgrader in Fort Saskatchewan. That was a big job for me.

Q: What was your position?

MZ: The first time, I was safety and permitting. When building the plant was completed, after the Pre-commissioning/Commissioning stages, I was asked if I wanted to stay on as an operator. Then they moved me to a different part of the oil and gas business – water treatment. Without water a refinery can't run; you use water for cooling and everything. You bring the raw water from the river, you treat it to treated water, run it through for cooling for making power; water makes steam to run generators for electricity. Then we use the waste water after it's put into big ponds, we treat that and we put the water back in the river. It's cleaner and better environmentally than when we take it out where we take it from. That's an Alberta Government stipulation, so we did. That takes a lot of money and effort to do that. In some countries, they just throw the water back to the river and they kill, like in Uzbekistan the Syr Darya and Amu Darya rivers they say have the biggest sturgeons in the world, fish. Now you can't find them. These rivers flowed into the Aral Sea. This is USSR now. The Aral Sea now is uninhabited, nothing lives there anymore and it's dried up. It's the biggest blunder in the world of mistreating your water. You've got to look after every part, you just don't use it and throw away waste. I lot of people don't know that. I wouldn't know that normally as a human being.

Q: So this is an industry standard?

MZ: Yeah, in Alberta. We're very rigid with environment here. That's when I hear dirty oil in Alberta, I cringe. I don't like when they say we have dirty oil. But it's all politics.

Q: So people like you are responsible for making sure that there is clean oil?

MZ: In Fort McMurray we have areas now where they put back after extracting the oil, squeezing the oil out from the oil sands, we put back the dirt better than what it was before. We have buffalo herds going and feeding on grass and everything, just to show you that we're not polluting. Water treatment is a big part of the oil and gas industry. Waste water has to be treated and put back more perfect than when it was extracted from the river or the lake or wherever you get it.

Q: Tell me about your work up north.

MZ: It was more supervisory scale. You work alongside people from all over Canada who came here for the oil business. A lot of Newfoundlanders. Different aspects of the oil business. We weren't refining, we were getting the crude out to ship to the refineries. But before it hit the refinery it had to go through upgraders. When you get the oil up there, it's heavy. It comes from the oil sands. So we had to pump that down to Shell or Imperial Oil Refinery here in Edmonton. Syncrude had their own refining system. Everybody has, like Kearl Lake and all that, didn't have refineries. In order to send that heavy stuff down the big pipelines to Shell Scotford, we had to dilute it with something called solvent, and dilute it at 30 percent to make it pumpable. When it came down here in the big pipes, in the tanks, we had to extract the diluent from the crude and then we could reuse that, send it back up there so they could mix it again with the heavy stuff and pump another batch down. But you lose some in the process, so you're always making up. That's a part of the technology people don't know. Heavy crude, you just can't pump it. You've got to mix it and make it lighter, more like hot water but less viscous so you could pump it down.

Q: When you were in Canada, were you mostly based in Alberta?

MZ: Yes, Celanese, Texaco, Imperial Oil. I did a stint in 2017; I was called back to Redwater and did a stint there chemical cleaning, steam blowing and permit coordinator. Then I was asked to stay, but at my age getting close to 80, I thought, I can't drive from south Edmonton every day in

winter. So I made a deal with them. From May to October I'll contract. When that's done they called me in and said, "we respect that, that's the deal we made with you, and we're ready to move on to starting up and running the plants. We can put you to any plant you desire. We have eight units, so you can pick a unit that you can go in and help us with. Or do you want to say, that's it?" I said, "ya I think I'm good, I've had enough".

Q: The eight units that make up a petrochemical complex, are those the units you're referring to?

MZ: Yes, There's the Utilities/Off-sites, where you make steam and power. You do Nitrogen, you do Instrument air, and you do Electric Power along with storage/Tank Farms. So that's one unit. You have a Gasification Complex, you have a Catalytic Cracking maybe or a Hydro Cracker. You do Fractionation and Vacuum processing to make cuts. Then you do the Waste Water Treatment. You must extract the H₂S which is very deadly and you could extract sulphur, which is a big market also. Nothing is wasted.

Q: And that's just one complex?

MZ: Yeah, and they're all intertwined. One feeds the other. One unit processes as designed, extracting what they want, and they send it to the other one to re-process or as a bi-product.

Q: Then the downstream industries are separate?

MZ: Yeah. Upstream is the extraction or collecting crude, downstream is all the processes. Then you have sub-processes. I worked in Ethylene where you make Polyethylene from which you make the plastic.

Q: So upstream is the crude.

MZ: And upgrading it.

Q: And downstream is the processing.

MZ: Yeah.

Q: And that's how the basic operation is?

MZ: Yeah.

Q: You also worked a lot in, not ticketing, but authorizing. . .

MZ: Oh, permitting. Safe work permit has become big, especially in Alberta. In some of the countries, like China, Thailand, India especially, India and China, the safe work permit is almost nonexistent.

Q: Tell me about that.

MZ: We are very rigid and we value human life. One instance is I had my interpreter 180 feet up on one of the overhead pipes like this, big pipe. There was a guy painting it, and he was up there hugging the pipe. He had something hanging around his neck and he was painting. He didn't have any lanyard, any rope, nothing, and he's painting. I said to the interpreter, I said, what's he doing up there? She said, he's painting. I said, well he has no harness, no rope, no safety equipment, no glasses, no hardhat, no boots. He had on slippers. She says, Mr. Milton, this is China. I said, what happens if he falls? Oh if he falls we have somebody else to replace him. We've got lots of people in China, she said. I said, you're kidding me. She says, here if three guys fall in a month, then the government will come and start investigating. I said, oh my goodness. Out here in Canada, Alberta especially, we have most experience. If you're caught without steel toed boots and gloves while you're outside working, safety glasses and helmet, there's zero tolerance and you're gone. So we make sure. Testing, most of permitting is testing the environment to make sure the air is clean for human consumption and there's no bad chemicals like H₂S, which is deadly. We have to make sure you didn't have carbon monoxide, make sure everything is burned to carbon dioxide. So testing is important. Sometimes we have

to go and test ourselves, but we have contract workers testing the environment where guys are working all the time. We are writing the permits based on the testing results or we just stop the job and make sure everything is good and guys are adhering to what they signed for. A permit is just a piece of paper telling them the place is good to work, but they have to do their part. If they see anything a little different to what's specified in the paper, they could be in trouble and we could be held responsible and taken to court, if we lose a human life or something gets injured because we're not doing our job. That was very stressful. If you caught anything, you're in charge of all the guys writing the permits. You have to be careful to make sure they're doing their job. The people receiving the permits, they have to do their end also. It's complex but it's doable. If a life is lost in the refinery, everybody's [1:00:58responsible DCM].

Q: In terms of the positions you've held, were you the permit coordinator?

MZ: Yes, coordinating, in charge of my little unit of permit coordinators, eight or ten guys doing the same thing.

Q: That would be for what employer?

MZ: I am, but I'm in charge of about ten guys doing the same thing.

Q: Who is the employer?

MZ: Oh, the employer is Shell or Texaco or Imperial Oil and also PetroCan. It's a junior management position. I still have a manager as boss, then a general manager of course.

Q: I think we've covered your resume up to the 2000s.

MZ: I never made it to a manager of a department and I think that's where the Chemical Engineering degree came back to bite me. With all the experience and knowledge I had, I would act as a manager but never was officially a manager. You've got to have a degree to do that.

Although I had more experience than my boss, he was still my manager because he has a degree.

Q: Tell me about how you would schedule a plant turnaround.

MZ: Well the first thing from my operation background even in Trinidad, this is Alberta now, when I was in Alberta. When you go in and relieve your operator, I initiated that here. They weren't doing it. When you relieve the guy who works nightshift and you go in in the morning, at least go 20 minutes before. He shows you his log – you write a log at the end of your shift. It's something ongoing because you never shut down, it's 24-7. If he's pumping a tank from one to another, from a rundown to a storage, you and him together should spend 20 minutes and walk through quickly. There's his log, but you don't know what situation. He wrote his log an hour ago, 20 minutes ago, and things are changing all the time. You should really go together on a quick view walkthrough of the site of the plant to make sure that tank is not overflowing or one's not empty and the pump has lost suction; it could create a fire. So you should do that. They never used to do that here. When you go to Celanese, the guy meets you just at the plant gate and he says everything's steady. You go in and he goes out, and he's gone. You can't discuss anything with him. They didn't have cell phones so you could phone him in his vehicle on his way home and say, hey I see things are overflowing here, how long ago did you start this process? So by rights you should really do a quick walk through and read his log and make sure you can take over. So that's a responsibility people didn't have here. We instituted it; we learned that in Trinidad, that you must, you should meet and greet. Here, you met the person you're relieving in the parking lot and he says, everything's steady Milt, and you go in and say, wow he said steady but things are overflowing and going crazy. You have to be calm, you can't panic. That's a trait you've got to have. Now you asked me something and I kind of diverted a little bit here.

Q: You mentioned rundowns.

MZ: If you're making products right in the plant that you can handle yourself, you can have one man running the whole plant. When you make a product, it comes down to a rundown tank.

You monitor that during your shift, and when it gets full you switch. You usually have two. You switch from the product going into that rundown into the other one, and then you have to pump this one into the bigger storage plant. That's where it goes out for sale. You don't take a rundown and then pump it for sale, you take it to the storage where the capacity is a million barrels or 500,000 barrels, and they sell so much. It's a step to the main product. In most plants, you go to a rundown and then to a big storage. Rundown is just transition, a holding tank which is easier to control and to get all your testing done for quality control.

Q: And this is what applies in Fort McMurray?

MZ: Everywhere, every plant, even Celanese or Texaco. You've got to have a transient storage capacity before you pump, and when it starts to pump you should check in and start going to the empty one. It's just a process.

Q: You've also worked with KTI.

MZ: There was a big explosion at Suncor, and they wanted to sue KTI, Kinetic Technology out of California, for the explosion. So KTI contacted me and asked me if I could go up to Fort McMurray on a contract basis for them and do some investigating, with Suncor's permission, to see why they should be paying for this Lennox furnace explosion. I did, and I had to write a report and send pictures. The whole furnace blew up, boom. But it wasn't KTI's fault, and they wanted me to prove it wasn't their fault, which I did. It was the operator's fault. He saw stuff going haywire and he didn't report it. He thought he could handle it himself. He died, by the way, in the explosion. He should've known to get help. He thought he could handle it. He was just trying to check. When you see things going haywire, get away or make sure you radio inside to say, hey I'm seeing this happening here, I'm seeing the flames are going crazy. Instruments fail. When you see instruments failing, you have to make sure you can adjust accordingly or else you take lives with you.

Q: You mentioned that the steam pressure is so strong it could cut you in half.

MZ: Yes, steam at one time, generally when I was new in the business, 600 pounds of steam was the highest pressure we went to. Now we go to 3,000 pounds. If you have a seam leak at 3,000 pounds pressure, it's a strong hissing sound. You hear it but you can't see it – it's not within our range. You could pass by a steam leak and be cut in half at 3,000 pounds of pressure, if it's a narrow steam leak. Water pressure could cut your foot off at 3,000 pounds. The water pressure we have here in our pipes is maybe 100 psi, so anything over 600 or 800 or 900, 1,500, 2,300 and 3,000 is dangerous. But we have to run it at that pressure to run the turbines and turn the generators to make electricity. That's why cogen is in play now, cogeneration.

Q: What is that?

MZ: Cogen is a way of not wasting anything. You get double impact for your money. You burn natural gas into big turbines, that's heat and pressure, that runs the turbines that's connected to generators to generate electricity. But this is such a high pressure and temperature that you use water cooling into big heat exchanges to cool that high temperature. When you cool with water, you generate steam. The high temperature is exchanged with the water to make steam at a high pressure and temperature, and that now is injected into a second set of turbines. This is steam driven now. You have a natural gas turbine and you have a steam turbine to generate another generator and then you make more electricity. So you're getting two for the price of one. It's amazing that they can use the waste steam to run a second turbine. Then you go into the electric grid or make enough power to run your plant without buying from the electricity commission. If you make enough, you supply power to the government and you make some money. So this is how cogeneration is. You're making your products but you're also making some money with electricity.

Q: Was the bulk of your activity in Canada or abroad?

MZ: I'd say half and half.

Q: You mentioned several countries you worked in providing the same type of service.

MZ: But there we did a lot more commissioning or pre-commissioning, making sure it's built as it's supposed to be built with no leaks and all that. We have to go through it with a fine toothed comb. We start it up, commissioning, steam cleaning and everything, pre-commissioning and commissioning, and of course construction too, making sure it's built to spec. Then you pre-commission it, which is making sure bolts are not loose and all that. You have to go through and check all that. Then commissioning is bringing in the product and making sure there are no leaks, and starting up everything. Then once the final product is out, you run it for about two or three months and everything seems to be good, you shake hands. You train the operators how to run it. You shake hands and you leave.

Q: In which countries would this take place?

MZ: Thailand was my first job. We built the plant from grassroots, they call it grassroots. It means from bare ground, bare bones, built from scratch. Most of the plants were already built when you go in there to help train people or operate it.

Q: So in Thailand you were building a refinery complex?

MZ: From grassroots. All complex, yeah.

Q: Is that something that you'd see in Alberta?

MZ: I never built from scratch here. At the upgrader at Shell Scotford, I did the first upgrader and then upgraded the second upgrader. I went back from 2005 and in 2009 went back. I was lucky to see the second upgrader built.

Q: While you were doing this work, where's your family?

MZ: My family is home, but when there's no food to put on the table, my wife was working, but if you want to move ahead I had to sit down and discuss with her. Hey, I'm getting this chance to go overseas and the money is bigger. You could get away from paying some taxes because

you're contracting. But for the American companies I worked for, they were willing to send my wife and kids to visit me when they were off for summer. So they visited Italy on the Adriatic, they visited Thailand, they visited India, at all cost to the company, and put up at the fanciest hotels that I wasn't even living at. They had access to swimming pools and they lived great while I was working. They had a car and a driver who'd drop me to work and pick them up and take them all over the place, a local driver. So they lived the life too, but only short-lived – six weeks maybe, summer – then back here to go to school and work.

Q: Did you get involved in community here?

MZ: Community here?

Q: Here.

MZ: Oh yeah, Cariwest. I was one of the four guys, 40 years ago I think. I brought out my own Caribbean band. When I first came here we only had about 15 to 20 West Indians. That's 57 years ago. Now we have I'd say about 12,000 people, Caribbean and descent. That's a big jump. We started that Caribbean festival. First we assimilated with Klondike Days first of all until we branched on our own. Then I started to take airline tours of all the farmers up here in the winter when they weren't doing anything. They were glad to go to the islands and visit with me. I started doing that with Air Canada and British West Indian Airways.

Q: Why?

MZ: Just to promote my culture on the island. So many people and I became friendly, Canadians here, and they always asked me about the islands, what it's like. You're from the beautiful Caribbean, what are you doing up here? I say, come on down and see it with me. There's that, and then I saw the need for Caribbean music. I had the first Caribbean combo. I was the first to start a Caribbean combo here.

Q: What was it called?

MZ: Tropical Playboys. We became popular. We assimilated into society. We played for Ukrainian weddings and all over the countryside. Because of that, I started to put on dances and shows, because we had the band, to make some extra money for always moving ahead. Then I got into promoting and bringing all the Caribbean bands, big names. I brought Bob Marley here in 1978 and Byron Lee and Merry Men and Tradewinds and Sparrow and Blueboy and everybody. You must've heard about Milton a little bit in your travels, because you came here in the '90s.

Q: Yeah, I did hear. In fact I've written about Tropical Playboys as one of the pillars of. . .

MZ: Ya that's how it starts. It's amazing how community and culture and everything starts from scratch. It's changed quite a bit now.

Q: How were you accepted here in Canada?

MZ: It was tough. When I sat in the bus to go downtown early in '66 to go to Alberta College, as you walk on to the bus – and this is no offense to Albertans, they'd never seen brown and black people too much here – you walk onto the bus and you were the only non-white going to school in the morning. Half of the bus would turn and look at you. Half of that half were looking at you in a prejudicial manner: what the hell, I've never seen one like him. Then the other half were curiosity and that kind of thing. So you could feel uncomfortable. But you slowly got out of that. Now we're accepted. I walk around like a proud peacock as if I own the place. But at first I had my tail between my legs. I knew I was in a strange world and I had to accept. When it comes to food, we didn't have all these restaurants to choose from. It was either steak or Chinese food and pizza when I first came here. No Caribbean restaurant and Ethiopian restaurant, African and Indian. So that was an adjustment. I couldn't boil an egg when I got here. Being the eldest out of eight kids, five girls and three boys, a guy was never allowed in the kitchen back home. My grandmother and my mom were doing the cooking and all the sisters were being taught to cook. So I couldn't boil an egg. Now before my mom passed, which is a month ago, she said to me, you know, of all my kids you're the best cook. So over the years you learn, you make

mistakes, you still eat it anyway whether it turned out good or bad. I pioneered my family, first a sister and a brother and sister. Then my dad decided, hey out of eight kids, four in Alberta and they seemed to be happy, and I gotta move now. So he came up with the last four. Now they all came and got right into the Alberta society.

Q: Tell me about your brother's business.

MZ: My brother worked in the Continental Rubber Company. They do a lot of rubber lining for petrochemical. If a pipe has to carry acid or caustic soda, which are petrochemical products, instead of having it corroded with this stuff you've got to line the inside of the pipes with something to prevent erosion and leaks and all that. So he worked for them and then he opened his own rubber lining company. It was called Rubber World, and they were successful. He would fly to Newfoundland, New Brunswick, and then all up north on contract to line tanks and pipes.

Q: Did he own that company?

MZ: He's part owner; two guys opened it.

Q: When did he start that?

MZ: He started that maybe 25 years ago and it went on for about ten, then they finally shut it down.

Q: Any other stories you'd like to tell me?

MZ: Oh god I have a million stories, stories all over the world.

Q: Who recruited you to do these jobs abroad?

MZ: Let me start with New Brunswick. We got there around Christmas and all the Albertan boys, maybe 15, I recognized that they were away from home. The first thing I did in my apartment is invite everybody for a New Years Eve evening. Only boys. Drinks and food, I cooked. They all came over and we had drinks and I formulated a good group with the Alberta boys. Some I liked more than others. About three months after, one of the boys that I got close to left and returned to Alberta. He got a big job at Whitecourt, helicopter maintenance job. But I kept in touch. I phoned his wife at home every so often to find out how Jimmy was doing, and he knew that. We didn't have the cell phones but we had the home number, so the wife told him Milton phoned to see how you're doing in your new job. I got a call from him after about a year to say, Milty, have you ever thought about going overseas? I said, you know, I always interviewed with [1:28:00] to go to the Middle East. Because of politics and the Muslim environment, I don't know if I wanted to go to Middle East. He said, well here's your chance. You ever thought of going to Thailand? No, I'll be honest, if you don't know about a place it's hard to think you could just jump and run to Thailand. All I knew was they're Asian people and the ladies will dress in a crown and dance. I thought, do I want to go? That's when I coined a phrase, you never know until you know. My wife thinks it's crazy to say that "you never know until you know," but you gotta really go and see a place without formulating what it's like in your head. You always think you know about a place, but you don't. So he said to me, you are the only one I'm telling this. But we had one of our geologists went down to Georgia for a job interview for geological work, and while he was there in this interview room he saw a poster advertising for refinery operators commissioning startup of a grassroots plant in Thailand. So he phoned me right away and gave me the information and I sent him a resume, so I can give it to you if you want it. I'm in New Brunswick. I say, oh yeah give me the info, I'll put my name in. So I wrote the guy and put my name in, and lo and behold three days after I got a call saying, are you Mr. Zaiffdeen? I said, yeah. He says, you know, we're looking for ten people. We have four Americans, one guy from Wales, and we have four more from Alberta, and you are the tenth. Are you interested in joining us in Thailand? I said, yep. I phoned my wife right away and I made plans. They gave me a month and a half to give notice at New Brunswick, although New Brunswick wanted me to stay on there. So I gave my notice and I came home and spent a good month with the wife and kids, then flew to Thailand. That changed my whole life I'd say completely, working overseas. With my personality, with my background, with my love for life

and culture and people, I died and went to heaven. I fell in love with Thailand. From Thailand I went to China near the Russian border. Then from China I went back to Thailand and I went to Mexico, then Italy, then Russia and Uzbekistan. India was my last kick at the cat overseas. Every country I worked, I was well liked. I got right into the culture and the people. I have wonderful friends. I could go to any one of those countries and I'd have somewhere to stay or somebody to show me around. So that's a blessing. Unfortunately, it's been 25 years since I last went to Thailand, the place I fell in love with. That's on my bucket list, to go back and visit. I have people asking me all the time.

Q: Have you met any foreign contractors while working in Alberta?

MZ: We have a lot of people coming from all different provinces. We have a lot of foreign guys, but they've moved to Alberta – foreign background, from Indonesia and all that.

Q: From the Caribbean as well?

MZ: Yeah, lots of guys over the years. A lot of welders, a lot of pipefitters, a lot of millwrights and some operators.

Q: Any at your level?

MZ: It's hard to measure levels. You don't keep in touch, and some guys. . . I'm sure there were one or two that went higher than I did in management, but in different types of. . . Like Peter Kokaram, he became a manager but he wasn't operations, he was instrumentation. He went pretty high with Syncrude, held in high respect.

Q: Is he retired now?

MZ: Yeah he's retired. But he moved pretty high with Syncrude, well liked.

Q: Did you ever meet Eliot Bastian?

MZ: No. I know there's a guy, I can see his name, Rishi Sukhai. He's Trinidadian... I'd say we've had at least 40 or 50 guys. Every time I see them in a plant working, it's home people, I call them, and I want to go and introduce myself and say, hey I hear that accent, where you from? I see a guy with a little jacket in 30 below, a welder up on a pipe and he's welding. I could tell he's freezing, on one of my walkarounds. I says, hey where you from? That jacket is not good enough. He says, man, my company not supplying the big parkas like you guys have. So I came home the next day. I always have parkas at home because I work at different companies and they all give you good stuff to wear. I took it to him. They were \$400. I went and saw him there the next day, same jacket he had on. I said, hey this is yours. He said, how much do I owe you? I said, nothing, I've got a few of those at home. The guy is still, every time he sees me now... His name is Sealy. He's from [1:36:11] Sealy and Sharon, you probably met them. They were at my mom's funeral. He's a good friend of Cheryl and Peter. I couldn't give you his last name now; I could find out for you. Most of the people I know are pretty well retired now, because of my age. People are hearing about us. People hear about us now, even with the carnival. If I walk down the street the older folks will wave to me, like yourself. They young people heard about me but have never seen me, but the older folks say, hey, good to see you, like that. Times are changing. The young ones are born here out of Caribbean parents. They heard of the good times we used to have and the good times that's happening now, but they don't understand how it all started. So I take some credit for it.

Q: Do you think that, through the contributions of yourself and others like you, you have contributed to Alberta's economy?

MZ: Oh yeah. Number one, paying taxes. But yeah, we brought some of our ideas, and I found some good ideas overseas. We can't think that because it's Thailand or India or China that they didn't have some good ideas. It's just they worked with what they had with safety and things like that. But some of the ideas, when you have meetings here and bring it up, a guy would say at Shell or Suncor, hey Milt, that's a great idea, we should try it. And we did, how they treat the water or what kind of pumps they use or what pressures they should be using. Or some safety

ideas, although they never implemented it but they had the right way of thinking. You always learn from each other, whether good, bad or ugly. It's up to you to make it into good.

Q: Anything you'd like to add?

MZ: All I can say is I've got to give my wife credit for staying home with the four kids and making sure they got their education, and run the family while I was away. In some of the contracts, I was away for a year. I might get to come home for a week or two weeks. At least they came to see me sometimes. But that's a long time for a dad with four little kids to be away. I've got to give her credit, she's a strong woman. My kids are all now educated, not only academic but they know a lot about the world, thanks to me. They have the same general department – love people, love culture. They're all successful. Like I told you before, when you have four kids the chances of one going haywire is easy in modern times with negative influences in school, drugs and everything. So I'm lucky all are qualified and doing very well. I won't only say luck, but I'm blessed. It starts at home. I've got to take some credit, but the wife takes most I guess.

Q: Don, do you have any questions you'd like to ask? . . .

Just a couple. Keep talking to Donna. Do you have grandkids?

MZ: Yes, I've got six now, and more coming I'm sure.

Q: What do you want them to know about you and the people who came with you in the '60s?

MZ: We came from a menial background. I was lucky because my mom is half Scottish, so she was held in a little more higher esteem. This is the colonial days I'm talking about, the '50s and '60s. I was born in '43. When you landed in Canada it opened up your eyes: the standard of living, the lifestyle and everything. For a guy from the country, a village which is now a city, to do what I did and be able to travel and see other cultures and assimilate in society and have friends, it's quite remarkable. Like I say, you gotta have some breaks from higher up above, generally you gotta get some breaks in life. I've had my share. You create your own breaks by

your personality, by the way you treat people and they reciprocate. I hope my grandchildren, it all starts at home. My kids, I'm not saying they're all like me. But I'm sure they'll forward some of my general deportment to their kids, and I'd like them to continue in that trend. As long as they're family and the whole family trait is moving up in the world, slowly and steadily ahead, I'll be a happy man.

Q: What instrument do you play?

MZ: I played guitar a little bit. But my younger brother, who's so much more talented, was so much better that I dropped guitar and I played drums. I was a drummer. My forte was public relations, managing the band, and promoting it. I got jobs for guys from Trinidad here that were here illegally. I had them working five or six nights a week if they wanted to, to make more money. Then they were being sent home by immigration. I got a call from an immigration officer at the airport just ready to board and send them home. They were here illegally. I got a call from an immigration officer. They gave him the name, who's the guy that you guys know here, anybody? You need a lawyer. I jumped in the car and went down to the airport and spoke to the immigration officer. The first thing he asked me, are you a lawyer? I said, no sir, I'm just a concerned citizen and I got to know these people. They were brought here under false pretenses and now. . .

Q: Are any of them still living in our community?

MZ: Yeah. Menon, who still lives here. Ken is in New York now. But Menon and his wife, I'm sure he's a citizen now, but I got him and the guy at the airport was kind enough to say, take these people home and go down to the immigration office on Monday and talk to the officer. So they got a break there. I went to the mayor, who I knew personally in those days. I went to the convention centre and went to Mayfield Inn and West Edmonton Mall where I knew people from playing music and promoting. I got contracts signed from my band from them. That's where I started Tropical Fever. Contracts – some were really good, some were fictitious, some were padded a little bit to show immigration that these guys are here on a cultural mission. Alberta likes that, promoting culture. They also were making enough money, fictitious a little bit,

to support themselves and not go on welfare. When I was finished with them they all got their immigration landed, stamped. So in that sense I really helped families. I'm crazy but nice. I brought people from Thailand and I brought people from Romania. Not only girls or ladies, we brought guys too who I worked with in Thailand. A guy phoned me and said, hey how can I come to Canada? I said, send me all your experience and resume and I'll put something together. I must have helped ten families to bring them directly into Alberta. Some I'm still in touch with, some not really. Some have moved up, they own better homes and doing much better than I am, which is nice. I don't begrudge them. I am glad I contributed to their lifestyle.

Q: What kind of music did your band play?

MZ: Well it started with calypso and reggae, because Canadians recognize reggae more than calypso. But then soca came on, and that's getting recognized more and more. But for me to be able to keep the band going here in Alberta, unless it's the international students party at university, you play calypso and reggae and everybody is happy. But if we get called to play a Ukrainian wedding out in the country, people love the music but if you can't play something like, okay the new Red Red Wine, that song. I put a white girl to sing with my black girl in the front of the band so she could sing The Power of Love or Chiquitita (an ABBA song), then people feel at home. As soon as they hear something they recognize they say, god this band is great. Then you could give them all the calypso and reggae. Once they get up on the dance floor and they have a few drinks, they're fine. But you have to know how to get them up. I played music for the public relations manager of the Oilers, Bill Tuele, who was a radio announcer here. I played for his wife's birthday party at Yianni's Greek Taverna. I just visited Yianni in California when I went down. Anyway, so I formed a good relationship with Yianni; I used to play at his place. I played for Bill Tuele's wife's birthday party. Bill was there, he was PR for the Oilers. I got the Oilers Christmas party during the Gretzky era. I played at all their functions, I even played at the playoffs in the '80s in the hockey arena. Every time there was a TV break, the band would play for 30 seconds. I got to sit in the press box and have dinner and look at the boys play. It was great. So I've done a lot of crazy things but it afforded me some breaks here.

Q: Did you play out at the airport?

MZ: Yeah. We played at, what's the name of the big hotel downtown? We played at Hotel MacDonald for the Oilers Christmas party. My band didn't understand this, but they started up a Christmas party and Bill Tuele and Gretzky and all the guys and wives and everybody were there. It was Christmas time, and the boys started with a reggae. There was the dinner going on and I had to run up to the stage and tell them, hey can you guys start with something milder and cooler, and maybe more Americanized or Canadian, like The Power of Love, and gradually get these people involved? So said, so done. The manager of the Oilers must be thinking, what the hell did we get ourselves into? We can't just do this Caribbean stuff for them at Christmas time, Christmas party. By the end of the night, oh my god, some of the Oilers came up on the stage and took some equipment, like maracas and garachas and so on, and they're playing with us, which is great. You've got to get them involved. If you don't, they're in their own world and you're in your own world, and it's not a big happy family. That was my plan. So we had a 70 percent Caribbean entity to our music, but the rest was all international, and it worked. We have to realize we're in a different world, we're not "back home". That brought us success.

Q: What does the sharing of culture contribute to this community.

MZ: Not everybody can afford to go to the Caribbean on holidays like Barbados and stay in a hotel. But we bring it here to them. Then the islands benefit, because when people see the music, the pageantry, the liveliness of the parade, they think, man would I ever like to go down there and see it. My kids even said to me, dad, you started out here, you took us to Toronto to the Caribana, now we'd really like to see the mother of all carnivals. So I took them in 2012 and they played with Harts and they said, we've gotta do this every year, we enjoyed it. I said, hang on, dad's not that rich. It costs a lot of money and time and effort and energy – how about every second year? So we did '12, '14, '16, '18, '19, and then Covid hit and we just did 2023. I was blessed. This is my 81st year; it's not my birthday yet. But all four kids joined me at my roots. They made the effort – they have businesses and all that – to come down there and spend a week or a week and a half with me at carnival. It's a blessing.

[END]

