

**NAME OF PROJECT:** *Italian Canadians as Enemy Aliens: Memories of WWII*

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**NAME OF INTERVIEWEE:** Emanuele Cosentino

**NAME OF INTERVIEWER:** Joyce Pillarella

**NAME OF VIDEOGRAPHER:** Adriana Rinaldi

**TRANSCRIBED BY:** Krystle Copeland

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**PROJECT NOTE:**

**Please note that all interviews have been transcribed verbatim. The language in this transcript is as it was provided by the transcriptionist noted above. The project staff have not edited this transcript for errors.**

**ABSTRACT**

Emanuele Cosentino was born in Montréal to a Montréal-born mother, and a Sicilian father. His father Giuseppe arrived in Montreal through Halifax in 1923 to join his older brothers, whom had arrived in Canada in 1908 and 1913. Emanuele's father was one of four boys in the family, and his youngest brother came to the country in 1949. Giuseppe Cosentino started a family construction business called "Giuseppe Cosentino & Family" in 1924, where he worked with his brother, Emanuele; both of these men would be arrested as enemy aliens in 1940 and 1941. Emanuele's uncle worked as a brick layer during the day, however his passion was for music and he dedicated much of his free time to a band he started in 1922, "Cosentino's Band." As bandleader he played for the Queen during her visit to Montréal in 1939. Giuseppe Cosentino was arrested one night in 1940, and was taken away by the RCMP along with his war medals from WWI and his hunting rifles, but was returned home the following day along with his belongings. The following year at their father's funeral on a February day, the police arrived to arrest Emanuele. In this interview Emanuele recounts that his uncle told police in the

church, "My father died...he's right in the front there. If you want to wait after...the funeral, I'm going to give myself up." Apparently the police had been searching for him for some time, however there had been some confusion around his identity since he worked as a bricklayer during the day, and as a bandleader at night. He continues to explain in the interview that his uncle did not wear a black shirt as bandleader, but that the musicians in the band did.

#### **INTERVIEW**

**EC: Emanuele Cosentino, interviewee**

**JP: Joyce Pillarella, interviewer**

[Title screen]

[Fades in at 00:00:10]

JP: K, uh I'm Joyce Pillarella and I'm interviewing Emanuele Cosentino. And it is June 18, 2011.

K? Okay, so why don't we start off with um, your family, where'd they come from in Italy, what did your father do, when did he come to Canada? Do you want to start there?

EC: Well, my father was born in Sicily. At the uh, Cattolica Eraclea and then he lived in uh, in uh [unclear]. Then he came here in 1923 after...after the war that he had in, in with France, so he came over here. And uh, he uh, disembarked [debarked] at Halifax. He took the train and he got into Montréal where his brother used to live before he came in in 1908.

JP: Okay. Pause. [Camera fades out at 1:18.8 and back in at 1:20.3] What did your father do, did your father serve in World War One?

EC: Yes. [Nods]

JP: Yes so he did—

EC: 84 [unclear] years and in uh, in France, in Italy and in France and he came back home in uh 1918.

JP: And what did he do in 1918 in Italy?

EC: Then he went uh, he was a carabinieri for the Italian Police force and uh in his uh town, and then a few years after with the Fascists uh mixing it up again with the uh [laughs] [he was] started a war and my father was a police man and so he left and he came back to Montréal, or he came here to Montréal to meet his brother.

JP: 'Cause his brother was already here in Montréal.

EC: Yes.

JP: In Montréal, right?

EC: Yes, he had two brothers. [Nods]

JP: He had two brothers.

EC: He came here in 1908.

JP: What's his first name?

EC: [Salvatore] and then his, his second brother came here in 19-4, 1913. [Nods] And then he came here in 1923. And his fourth brother came here in 1949.

JP: And the names of the brothers?

EC: Yes, well the second one his name is Emanuele, he was a teacher, and then my father, Giuseppe, and the last one came, Diego in 1949.

JP: And where did they settle when they came to Montréal?

EC: They all settled in small Italy. My...all my brothers were, all the four brothers they always lived in the small Italy. Uh, from [Degaspe] Street, [Almo] and uh, [Degaspe, Espalade, Waverly] they always live around the church. Which they uh helped to build and uh...and be part of the uh community.

JP: And your grandfather came over afterwards?

EC: Yeah, in '26 he came here. Uh what is with my grandmother and my aunt Angelina.

JP: Your grandfather's first name is?

EC: Uh, Carmello.

JP: Carmello. And uh...when he came over here, what kind of work did they do?

EC: They were construction worker. My father was a cement finisher, his uh, brother Emanuele was a bricklayer and the oldest brother [Salvatore] was a [plaster man] 'cause in Italy they were contractors. They were what you call in Italian, [Murator?].

JP: Si.

EC: So that's why they came here, and that's...my father had his own company when he came here, and I think he had his company from '24 to '29.

JP: Oh here.

EC: Construction here. In Montréal. [Nods]

JP: What was it called the company?

EC: Uh Giuseppe Cosentino and uh Family you see, in those days the family was always there for...my uncle and my father worked together. Not [Salvatore]. Salvatore worked for a company, a different company, but my uncle and my father worked together.

JP: So—

EC: In construction.

JP: Giuseppe Cosentino, your father...

EC: Giuseppe and Emanuele worked together—

JP: And Emanuele worked together in the company.

EC: And my uncle he worked for somebody else, he worked for a guy, I think his name was— first was Jimmy Jes[t]. He worked for Jimmy Jest, that came from New York to Montréal, making the [pylons]. Then they lived there for a few...for a while in the States, but mostly in Montréal.

JP: When they came here were they boarding? With other families?

EC: Uh...he was boarding with a young man in the States he-they used to call him uh, [Moravito, Antonio Moravito] and uh, he finally he married my uncle's...he married my aunt. [Laughs] So they, by *procuration* [by proxy] So they got married in uh like that, and my aunt Antoniette, the oldest one came here from Italy in must be 1909, 1910...I couldn't tell you exactly when. But I know he came here in uh, when he was working for Jimmy Jes[t].

[5:51]

JP: So they, they got on their feet right away. They started working because they came here and they were skilled.

EC: Yeah, they were skilled uh yeah, tradesmen.

JP: Yeah.

EC: So that's why they, they didn't have that much uh trouble finding work because they were uh already as they came in they started working in construction jobs...it wasn't like today. In the 40s, in the '49, they had a little bit more time to get used to it because most of the people came back from war and they took back their own jobs, and uh but they didn't, they all worked

[together]. They all worked, the four of them, they, I don't think they ever missed a day's work except in Depression. Well, everybody was out of work then, right?

JP: And you were born in what year?

EC: I was born in 1933. In the "Small Italy". [Nods]

JP: You were born there.

EC: Yeah.

JP: And what was the neighbourhood like in the 30s?

EC: Well we had the different people, we had the Jews, we had the uh, Polish, we had the French, we had the English people, we all got along together and we had the Frenchmen, so uh...we played outside, we went to school. The Itali— Italian went to Italian school, the French went to the French school and the English went to the English school. And the Jewish well they had their uh synagogues. [Laughs]

JP: Yeah.

EC: That's it.

JP: And what was the neighbourhood like, was it a fun neighbourhood [unclear]—

EC: Oh yeah...[white, white] people uh talked to each other no uh...no fuss, no--nothing unusual. [Shrugs] When we had a party everybody went down and they...because we were the

last house on the corner on the, on the street, and everybody just uh played there and uh, played uh baseball, they played hockey together and uh because most of those people, they were good people. I can't say anything wrong about them, because we were all friendly.

JP: And what uh, the school that you went to 'cause you went to—

EC: Went to school...*Madame de Defence*

JP: Madame--Okay. [Unclear]

EC: Now the first and second year that was the nuns. Girls and boys together, and then we...we changed schools, went to [unclear] which had the French name but it was the first name of the school was [unclear] and until the ninth grade and then uh, I went to a private school to learn to be a secretary and a few other thing and then it didn't work so I went working for a few companies and then I went in construction with my father. Then uh, we'd uh every year work for the railroad for 20 years and then opened up my own company and then kept on going until today, so...

JP: So you finished school you went, you finished high school and you went to private school—

EC: Yeah, but I was working. Then I went to uh Montréal Technical--

JP: When did you start working?

EC: I-I was working in construction but I did everything. I work in paint, I work in mirror, every let's say uh...I work in construction from '49 to '51, and after that, well I went to work for this railroad and I tried to be a tradesman and my eyes deceived me because the first test [laughs] if



you had the eye glasses they won't accept you. But uh, my days were finished over there because they told me I had to wear glasses and the first test had to be without glasses. Then I stayed as the, I worked as a carpenter at the railroad. I worked as a carpenter until '69 and then well they started laying off men, and instead of being laid off, I quit. [Laughs] And I went somewhere else working. And I went and worked for a company, they're called [Piper]. They used to be [bolt-clamps?] and tinsmith[?]. I was a tinsmith. Worked there a few years and then changed again. And then, one year well I [unclear] I says I have to go on my own and then I had a small company on my own and I just left and never turned back.

JP: When, when did you meet your wife and what year--

EC: I met my wife in 1933. [Laughs]

JP: Where? Where did you meet her?

EC: Because my grandmother and her father came here on the same boat. So my uncle, he was a music teacher, and they used to go there and uh, 'cause all their brothers used to play for my uncle. They were young then. That's where I met her in 1933. And then, well when we had the procession, the Italian procession they used to go to her house and their brother used to come and be at my house and then when I met her when she was 18, so we got engaged and we got married. [Shrugs] We've been married for 57 years.

JP: Nice. What church did you get married at?

EC: Sainte Isabel de Portugal

JP: [unclear]—

EC: That was the Italian church in Saint-Henri. Well it was a French church but uh most Italians they used to go to that church in those days.

JP: And your uncle uh, that was in -- cause you mentioned now your uncle was a teacher and—

EC: Music teacher.

JP: Okay. And this is your uncle, uh we use the names because otherwise we're going to get—

EC: My uncle Emanuele.

JP: Okay. So uh, he was ah, he taught music. What did he teach in—?

[10:30.7]

EC: All kinds of...all instruments. All instruments from accordion to uh piano and right up to [unclear] trumpet, trombone, uh...drums anything you can imagine. He was a teacher. He was a real teacher, cause he started when they were seven, seven years old. Six, seven, eight, nine, and until they were uh -- some of them they didn't want to keep on going, but most of the kids, they kept on playing because lots of people they played for him. He had a 75 piece band at the end.

JP: Where did he teach?

EC: He teach in his house. Most of the time in his house. And—

JP: He was also a brick layer?

EC: Yeah, he was a bricklayer uh in the daytime, and that was a hobby for him. He never-never made any money playing for-for music. What he made he separated against the people and sometimes they had a few dollars, sometimes a little bit more. Sometimes they-they weren't paid but mostly that's what he did, it was a hobby for him.

JP: And so, so at this point we're in the 1930s uh the band, the uh...when did he start the band? What was the name of the band? How did it start?

EC: He started uh in 19...the thing was 22 or '21 or '22 if I'm not mistaken. But my uh, uncle he had a policy that uh, when a father would bring the children to learn to music and he would tell him, "You're responsible. If he doesn't show up...you're responsible" [points] because he says, "He won't come by himself, you have to push him to come in. Because if you bring him and you're there with him, he's going to play. If you're not there, he's not going to play." [Shakes head no] So that was his policy...and uh he was, he had, he went to a company name [Marrazza?] they used to rent--the uh, the instruments. And uh, but they wanted to sell the instruments to the young boys -- we were eight, nine, ten. And my uncle asked them to--if he could have a contract with one accordion on the side. And try it. If they don't like it, well, you rent it. You don't have to buy it. And I don't know what happened and he went to [unclear]. He had lots of instruments that he needed so he would rent them to them, and if they loved to play, they would buy it. That was their choice and not my uncle's choice. My uncle, he didn't say, "Well you have to buy this", to make money." My uncle... [Makes cutting motion with hand] that was secondary. Money was secondary for my uncle. He died poor. He lived a nice life, but he wasn't rich. He died uh, like everybody else, you know, spending just his money what he had but—

JP: So, when did he actually form the band?

EC: Well, he formed the band in 19--, I think it's toward the, the one—the picture I have is 1924.  
And when he started his band—

JP: And it was under what name, the band?

EC: Cosentino's Band.

JP: It was just Cosentino's Band, yeah.

EC: Yeah, and then he had two. He had the young band, [Juventus] and then he had the big band.

JP: Juventus.

EC: Yeah. The young kids, because he had the young kids in the front and then he had the old timers, like we say, in the back [laughs] of the statue. When they used to bring out the saint, he used to be in the back with the big band, but they had kids playing in the front anyway. So they had the two, he had two bands. At one time he had two bands.

JP: That's nice, there was two generations.

EC: Yeah. Yeah. [Nods]

JP: And when the band started, what was the...what would be some of the events or some of the places--?

JP: All churches only, mostly church's procession. You know like [lists names on fingers] [St. Leonard], Notre Dame de la Defence, St. Anthony, uh La Madonna di [unclear]. It was always Italian churches or French churches with Italian people. Not-uh, it could be uh [unclear] that could be uh...in Saint-Henri, L'eglise Sainte Isabel de Portugal. It could be Mont Carmel downtown. Today it's a hospital [name unclear]. They turned it into a hospital for the old people. They played in Richmond, they played in Saint-Henri, Ville-Émard, played uh Ottawa, played Cornwall, they played...if there was a church, he was there. [Says with finality]

[15:05.6]

JP: I want to ask you—

EC: He didn't play for [unclear]. He didn't... [Laughs]. That's his primary thing was the church. This is uh...

JP: In the 20s and 30s, we would have had in Montréal in terms of Italian churches, I mean you're right, there was just Madonna del Carmine and—

EC: In downtown, yeah.

JP: [Downtown] and Madonna della Difesa as far as Italian churches cause the uh third one was [St Jean Bosco?] and that came up only in '49.

EC: That's right. That's right.

JP: So I, I yeah understand—

EC: In those days, you had Saint Vitalle[?]. Saint Vitalle was in the east end at [unclear] Ville. But most, there--there they had lots of Italians too, cause they worked for the uh, for the refineries.

JP: Oh yeah.

EC: See.

JP: Do you remember uh, the Italian neighbourhood? Around uh Madonna del Carmine?

EC: No, no, no.

JP: [unclear]

EC: I know—I know where it is, but uh, I, I, we went there just for the procession. Because we never went there in the...any time besides the procession. Used to be Saturday night and the uh, and the Sunday. Besides that [shakes head] my uncle maybe used to go, but I can't, I can't speak for him. I speak for when I was a young man that's because I, I followed the uh the band for at least uh 15 years. I quit in uh 1953 before I got married. Because then I got married and I said... [Puts both hands out to say no] I used to be with them, every--I used to be the driver. [Laughs] Cause they needed a driver.

JP: They--did the men make any money playing in the band?

EC: No, it cost—

JP: It was just a volunteer—

EC: [It cost them] more.

JP: It cost them to play in the band.

EC: He, he never charged us a penny. He never charged. My uncle never charged a penny to play in the band. [Says penny each time with emphasis using hands] And when he used to play for the band, he used to say the church was going to cost you 350 dollars, he would give the money to everyone and my uncle used to buy all the parts, he used to write every...all music alone at night with his mother and father and this guy...as far as music is a...it was a hobby and he enjoyed it all his life.

JP: He wrote all the music too.

EC: Oh yeah, he wrote all his music by hand. All by hand you see, every night. If he had—

JP: Marches?

EC: If he had 75 musicians, it would be 75 parts, trombone, trumpet, the, the, the big uh drums, the small drums the [unclear], the clarinet, uh...everything was made by hand in his bedroom. He had a [unclear] in the bedroom and he used to write there with the black ink and the pen, the old pen there, and all made by hand, I can show you the [unclear] if you want?

JP: I would love to see it. That must have taken a long time!

EC: That-that was his hobby. He never got married; he was single and he was a young man. He came in, he was 16 and he died he was 85 years old when he died. And that's all he did is write music. And uh...most of the time was free. Most of the time I say...99 percent was free.

Sometime he had to take money from his pocket and pay for having a musician. Cause the people used to come here and say, "I'm the best where I come from." Then when he shows— and then when he played well he was maybe the best there but here he was [shakes his head no]. But then he told him, "Okay, I'll teach you a few songs" and uh write his own music. But mostly what he did was take music and made it his way. Because you can arrange music for your liking. You can have, like they say, clarinet in the front, trombone in the back and somebody else would put trombone in the front and clarinet on the side, but him it was always the clarinet like uh Glenn Miller uh...they said I was [unclear]. He never made a cent from that, never. He played for the, for the D'Agostino Band, he played for Magello's[?] Band. But uh when he became a teacher, that's what happened.

[Pause and camera fades out at 19:23.0 and back in at 19:24.3]

JP: Okay. Um, okay, the other bands you were saying, that he was playing with.

EC: Yeah, D'Agostino's Band. He was a great teacher too, D'Agostino. He used to live on [unclear] street. And uh, I used to go to school right next door on [unclear] Street. And there was the Magello's[?] brothers. Their father was a teacher too. They used to live on [unclear] Street, and they were great players. They all played for uh Montréal Symphony Orchestra. All of them and they all married. Most of them married girls that used to play like the harp and all those things. But they're, they're great people...Johnny and all those guys. Gabriel were all clarinet players and the harp too, and all those things, so I met them all. So I know them all.

[20:08.6]

JP: Did they play at Shamrock parks as well and different parks?



EC: Uh, my uncle used to play there in Shamrock because they uh...at the [unclear] Park. My uncle used to play for the uh Molson brewery, every Wednesday in the park, all around Montréal, West Island, and the east end, uh, north end, uh south end where they had—they had the night concert, in the summertime, and he did that for many years, many years.

JP: And when the King and Queen came?

EC: Yeah, in 1939. They passed behind, well we used to live on [Esplanade] Street and he, they got off from, if my memory's good, from Windsor... cause I was young then, and when you're young many things you [?] forget. They took the train because they had uh railroad train special for them. So they went from Windsor Station to Park Avenue Station. In those days that was on Jean-Talon Street. And they uh, they took Park Avenue to around to Outremont and we were standing in the subway, the uh underpass on the [unclear] and they passed there and we were all on-on the sidewalk watching them go by and just waving. [Laughs]

JP: It must have been exciting—

EC: Yeah, in 1939.

JP: And what was your uncle's participation in—

EC: And my uncle played for them at the uh a l'hotel. I think it was the uh, uh, Ritz Carlton, something like that. But they had an open car, the railroad they had, the-the tramway, they had the open car. And he was in the open car and he played for the Queen in 1939 when she came here with the King George. The sixth.

JP: How do you think? How did that work out that they ended up picking your father...to be the uh...

EC: [Shrugs] well...

JP: That's quite an honour.

EC: Yeah, well my father came here in '20, in '23 and uh...that's how he met my mother because he was living on, on the uh, [Down] Street then I don't know how he met her but uh in those days they didn't have the tracks on the uh [unclear] we had— you had to go over the track and the...that's where he met her and he married her a year after so...he married her in 1927.

JP: When you grew up, what language did you speak at home?

EC: Italian. My mother was born in Montréal so she spoke in French so because it was mostly a French community and uh...she spoke French. She went to school. And uh then she started, she was talking in English because we had English people. And it was always this uh...university that we used to live in. 'Cause we had many cultures and everybody would, I would, my mother would buy spaghetti and give it to the neighbour who was a Polish, he would give her [unclear] and the other one...he was French he would make uh... [pork roast] and my mother would give her spaghetti and that's how it— and she learned, Jew— Jewish, Jewish language when she worked for a fur company, downtown. I don't remember the name but she learned how to speak uh...Jewish, and when she wanted to buy something she would speak Jewish. Got a better price. [Laughs]

JP: [unclear as EC laughs] that's funny. So international--food was the great connector.

EC: Yeah, yeah. My mother she-she didn't work long there. She only worked there a few years but she worked in uh fur and she enjoyed it but uh...

JP: So at home you spoke Italian.

EC: Yeah, then French—

JP: [unclear]

EC: --with my mother.

JP: French with your mother—

EC: Yeah, because outside where there was lots of French people so we learned French then we went to school. And in school what we had the first few years was in Italian and French and a little bit of English. And then we--when we went to the second school on the other side of the street, because one was on [unclear] and uh, the other one was on [unclear] street. Right, right uh side by side. So we started— we learn French, English, and Italian. So they...all the uh the prayers were in Italian, then in French, then in English. And you had the homework, three homework, Italian, French, and English. But we had French teacher, mostly they were Italian, but they were university graduates and in the morning was all French, and the afternoon was all English. And the next year the morning was English, and the afternoon French. In between that where we had always this Italian, but at home, but uh, it was a— that school was a university because we had three languages when we went up.

JP: You grew up feeling Italian or Canadian?

EC: [leans in closer to hear]

JP: When you grew up did you feel Italian or Canadian?

EC: I'm a Sicilian...descent. My father's a Sicilian.

JP: Oh, so you felt—

EC: My father's Sicilian and I'm a Sicilian from head to toe.

JP: So let me ask that question again...

EC: [laughs]

JP: Do you feel Sicilian or Canadian?

EC: Yes, no-no -- I'm a Sicilian. I don't care what the others say. My father was Sicilian and I'm a Sicilian. 'Cause we've only been, we've only been with the uh with Italy since Garibaldi, before that...so Sicily is Sicily.

JP: [unclear]

EC: We had five, six domination, we had the Spanish, we had the Greek, we had the [unclear] and all that. We all threw them out.

[25:41.4]

JP: [laughs - unclear]

EC: [laughs] The Roman Empire...the Roman uh empire that's where they used to go in the wintertime, eh? But Sicily it was not in uh France or in England or uh...it was all the way down there where it's nice and warm and uh where the beaches are brown...they're not white.

[Laughs]

JP: So, you grew up in the neighbourhood, I mean you were getting along with all the kids, um...as it was leading up to 1940, up to the war, um was there anything in the neighbourhood? If not—if not in your home, but in the neighbourhood that um...showed that the Italians were very present? Were there flags, was there music playing? --Through the processions? Were there any ways that it was very present, that the Fascisti were in the in Little Italy?

EC: No, not in my house. Not in our house—no--

JP: And on the street?

EC: No. On the street, no. Not in—not in that section.

JP: Or in little Italy [unclear- multiple speakers at once]—

EC: If you're talking about, around the church, where they have-- what's that [Down Street] maybe we had that, but we lived uh...in a place where, where only--there were hardly any Italian. It was only my family of Italian, and we were maybe five, six families were Italian. It was mostly my grandmother was there, all their—the sisters, all their children that was married lived there in that section. So we were about 30, 40 people. I have 33 cousin on my mother's side.

JP: Yeah, because five, six families for Italians translate into how many people, *piu o meno* [how much]?

EC: I have, I have uh...33 cousins. I'm the youngest one.

JP: Okay, so five, six families is what, we're talking like 50, 60 people?

EC: Yeah. But we're all living in the same place.

JP: Right.

EC: In a matter of uh, four streets by two. [unclear] And uh, from uh [unclear] to uh... [unclear]. There we had uh, all my family would live there and they were raised there. So, my father and my mother I think [1884] something like that, I'm not sure. But they just uh...it's a pattern. So uh, we didn't see no fascists around because my uncle never wore a black shirt. [Laughs]

JP: So how was it--like at home did your father have any, did your father have a black shirt?

EC: I don't remember...uh, yeah, because on that picture we see it, but my father he always had his overalls on. So, uh...maybe he had one suit. In those days you had one suit, for Sunday to go to church. But besides that, you don't have any.

JP: 'Cause your father had, your father did have [unclear]

EC: He may have—because on the picture that we have, he has a black shirt on.

JP: Okay.

EC: But my uncle never had a black shirt.

JP: Never.

EC: Never.

JP: And when he wore it like, what about the band?

EC: The band, they wore black shirt. [nods] But my uncle [shakes head no.] My uncle never wore it.

JP: What would he wear? Because [unclear]—

EC: Because he, he was not a fascist. Because my uncle was not a fascist. He hated [JP in background – unclear]-- he hated the fascist and he hated the communist. 'Cause he never wore it, because he always had the suit on. With a hat, a fedora hat. And uh...he never, he walked in the front, but always in the first row between the two players, the two musicians. He never—he never walked uh...four or five feet in the front. He was always in the middle between the musicians and the first row.

JP: Really?

EC: Yeah. [laughs] That's why I uh...when they came and picked him up uh...we were surprised because uh, we knew he had the band we never knew that the band— Well we knew, at my age, I was six and seven I'd see that they were all dressed in black, and even in the sixties we were still dressed in black, but my uncle uh, I never seen him with the black shirt on. [shakes head no.] Suits yeah, and I don't think I ever seen him with a black pair of pants. [laughs] When

you come to it, you see all the pictures I have, he had a suit on, sometimes he has a white shirt. But he never wore black. He never wore a hat. Like the police men, he never wore a hat. He always had a fedora on.

[30:02.7]

JP: What did it mean that he stood with the musicians?

EC: I don't know why he did that.

JP: But that's interesting that you noticed that...

EC: Yeah. 'Cause I was, I was carrying the satchel with all the music so when one [partition] was finished, I used to pick up all the books and give them the new books. [motions turning the page with his hands]. That was my job. I learned music from A to Z, but it was not, it was not in me. Beyond the [stand], I'd seen the people dance on the floor...I'd rather be on the floor, with the people than-than sweat on the bandstand. [laughs]

JP: And you're, so okay, so your father Giuseppe participated in the band?

EC: Yes and my uncle [Salvatore] participated in the band—

JP: And your uncle [Salvatore] was in the band.

EC: Yes.

JP: Uh, your uncle Emanuele was the leader of the band—



EC: The leader of the band. [Nods]

JP: He, he wore a suit, but the band wore the black shirts.

EC: Black shirts. Yeah. All my brother in laws, my brother in laws they were in there too. I had two brother in laws; I had cousins that played there...black suits. But I never-I never seen my uncle wear a black suit, never.

JP: But I guess they would, would they—

EC: [unclear] all the golden ornaments that they had and the medals and all that, my uncle he wasn't for that. [For] him music was a hobby and when he died, he was writing music when he died. So, but he didn't, he didn't do—I don't know why they picked him up because it was ah, he was a brick layer. He was working in construction. He was a brick layer, so...it was very hard for, when he got arrested it was very hard because he had nothing to do with it. He can be a band leader eh, and you can go down to uh ...any uh, musician and they would play for him. [shrugs] He doesn't have to be uh...like I don't know uh, fascist to be a band leader. But some of them they figured he was a, a fascist, so there's nothing you can do. So they picked him up and they, they uh put him in the Petawawa.

JP: You were there when they picked up your father?

EC: Yeah.

JP: Do you want to tell me about what happened that day?

EC: My father they picked him up at night and they went in the house and uh...they asked him his name, he gave his name. Then uh...they went through all the drawers. They picked up medals. My father had medals from war time. They picked up his guns and everything. And they brought him in and they said, "Well, you're arrested as a fascist." And he came back the next day. He came home the next day.

JP: And what was your reaction? You were there, you saw this happen?

EC: Yes.

JP: But the guns, like, like you said, he was a hunter--

EC: Yeah, my father was a hunter. So they brought, they took the two guns, well, they were rifles right -- they were hunting rifles. So they brought them in and uh, the next day he was back home. And uh, they never bothered him again.

JP: And you watched this happen? Your mother watched this happen?

EC: Oh yeah, we were all standing up when he came in at 11 o'clock at night.

JP: At 11 at night?

EC: Yeah, because we were sleeping and my mother woke us up. When the guys they came in, we didn't know who they were eh? They don't—

JP: [They didn't identify themselves?]

EC: Yeah, but to my father, not to us. When you're six years old, you're seven, you're eight, I was six, six...I was eight, my sister was nine, my other sister was 11, and my brother was with my grandfather. So uh...they didn't my grandfather they didn't— my father was, my grandfather wasn't a musician. So my uh, my brother was down at my grandfather when they come to pick him up. So that's why they didn't bother him. So, but they—they picked my father at 11 o'clock at night and the next day he was home.

JP: Did your father argue with them?

EC: No, never.

JP: [unclear]

EC: No, because my father was, my father was in the army. He knew what it was. When he seen them, it was— I didn't see nothing on their shirt, but then he must have known that they were MPs [Mounties]. Because you know, days before, they say, "We're looking for the fascists." And he was expecting, but he never talked about it, never.

JP: But you knew...how how did you know, that there was talk in the neighbourhood? That uh [unclear]...

EC: Well, I mean lots of people were talking that the fascist the black, the black shirts. But when you're six or seven years old, what does a black shirt tell you?

JP: Nothing. It's a black shirt.

EC: You know and in those days they were talking [unclear] between then, they used to, the Calabrese used to talk one way, the Sicilian was talking the other way, and if you were talking Sicilian I would understand, but if you don't talk Sicilian...[laughs].

JP: The dialects got in [unclear]

EC: Yeah, in those days, yeah. Like it still goes on in Italy. The dialect. When they don't want you to understand they speak their own... [laughs] you know? Maybe your mother too, when she was here.

JP: [She start speaking -- unclear]

EC: [laughs] You know.

JP: That's funny. That's funny.

EC: So, but he came back the next day and I remember uh, one day, he went down and they brought him back, they gave him back his rifles.

[35:08.4]

JP: So that night, they...your mother, what was her reaction?

EC: She cried. What can you do?

JP: And you?

EC: She couldn't do nothing.

JP: You were crying as well?

EC: Yeah, sure. Everybody was crying and we were living on the second floor and everybody was crying. We lived there for uh, five, six years already and everybody was crying. Dad was gone, and who would feed us, huh? That's the only thing is...and the next day he came right back home.

JP: And when he came back, what did he say?

EC: Nothing. Not a word. My father was a mute. He didn't say a word. He never talks about the army. He never talk what he did. If he killed people in the, you know, war...he never, he never spoke of that, never. My father was a peaceful man. That's why it wasn't good for him to be a carabinieri as the war became a carabinieri and he wasn't made for that because my father was a peace man. My father...he never shout at no one. Scream or something...[shakes head no] He did his day's work, he came home, and he went, when they had the small club on St. Lawrence—they call it Canadese Italiane (?) he used to go there, play cards with his friend, come back home at nine, ten o'clock. Go back to bed in the morning go to work.

JP: Did your father go to um...I guess as a child do you remember your family going to Casa d'Italia?

EC: Yeah, we used to go to Casa d'Italia; because we used to go there for eh Christmas. For uh...Christmas party. We used to go there often. [nods] But uh, at the end, after the war...uh it stopped a little bit.

JP: But before the war [unclear]. Did they have the Befana fascista that gave gifts to the children?

EC: Yeah, but they never...I don't remember, she didn't play there. They used to practice uh...at the uh, we used to have the, they used to call it uh [Boston Room] at Shamrock. It used to be a bus terminal before. Many years back, and they used to have the...the baseball, the soccer ball teams, the baseball teams at Casa d'Italia. And uh, a few of my friends they played for them. But they used to practice in the cellar. And then they practiced at Dieni's in his club. Then they used to practice at my father in law's place. Different place, but never uh...uh, but they used to, they didn't— they didn't wear those shirts in those days. They only played in them when they were going in the procession, that's when they used to put the black [unclear] shirt. Besides that nobody had the black shirt.

JP: And um...when you went to school...and your father came back the next day, did you hear in the, in the subsequent weeks, that followed, did you have friends who had their fathers picked up by the RCMP?

EC: No, no.

JP: So you didn't, so you never talked about it after?

EC: No.

JP: Did you— it was a [mute] point that—

EC: That's right. My father says, I don't belong with those guys, but he was a musician. My father was a musician so uh...you know it's very hard not to play for your brother, huh? So...

JP: So now it's, okay so now before we get into what happened to the band, um, I just want to kind of stay on that date. So now your uncle, Emanuele, he got picked up also?

EC: Yeah.

JP: And he was...

EC: He was picked up; he was picked up uh, because my grandfather died. My grandfather died and uh...in the, he was [well they had the ceremony and] they used to put him in the [in the parlor] in those days. They used to--you were allowed to put the dead people in the house. So he was, and he was living right in front of the church. Above the Galati [?] restaurant. He used to make the cakes [the patisseries]. He was living on the second floor and so he went to church and he told them that my grandfather died and uh...

JP: I'm sorry...your grandfather died what day?

EC: Uh, in February 1941.

JP: Okay. So this is after when he had come back?

EC: Yeah.

JP: '41. Your grandfather died.

EC: Yeah.

JP: Okay, okay.

EC: So my grandfather died 1941.

JP: Yeah.

EC: So the church, the priest said he went to church and they told him that the father—the father of the uh...leader of the band...Mr. Cosentino died, so they had a few [spotters] there -- the uh RCMP -- so they just went there and picked my uncle up.

JP: And they took?

EC: Then they left him. Then my uncle told them, he says, "My father died." He says, "He's right in the front there." [nods in direction of front] He says, "After the--if you want to wait after the...the funeral, I'm going to give myself up, so..." So that's how they picked him up. If they had searched the [unclear] that so, and so died, that was the father of the teacher, they would never have known. Because nobody knew who he was. [laughs]

[40:25.3]

JP: Okay. That's so fascinating. You're, you're—nobody knew [where] Emanuele was because he was working in construction.

EC: Nobody. Yeah, because [unclear]—

JP: [unclear] so that meant that he had different job sites every day--

EC: Yeah. He probably—



JP: Am I right?

EC: Each time somebody would stop him on the side of the road, he told them "Give me your papers" and he would show them his paper [pretends to hold out papers in hand] and he had papers that say well he's a brick layer. [shrugs] But he wasn't known. He was known as a music-  
-a music teacher by many people, but uh...uh, the RCMP didn't know he was uh—they were looking for someone but they didn't know who.

JP: But the RCMP when they went to look for your uncle...

EC: Yeah.

JP: They never found him.

EC: Not the, well [unclear as JP tries to cut in] yeah, but you have to be careful I don't know if they were looking for him...

JP: Oh, okay.

EC: But they told me they were looking for him for a long time, so my uncle he says, I've been here for many years. He says, he knew, he says, we were looking for a teacher. But my uncle he was a bricklayer.

JP: Oh, so this is where the confusion may have come...

EC: Yeah. See.

JP: 'Cause they were looking for one occupation...and...

EC: And my uncle he was a bricklayer. That's how he made his money. That's how he survived.  
[JP in background unclear] Because he had his father, he had his mother. He has a sister and  
their niece. When they came from Italy, so he had to pay for the rent, he had to feed them and  
everything. So he says, I can't get married, he says now that I have my family with me. I can't  
get married. So that's why he stayed single boy, so...until he died. So...

JP: So that means...oh now I understand. So, then when your, when his father, your  
grandfather, died...

EC: Yes.

JP: and they were just, they had him in the house, like you said.

EC: Yes. That's right, yes.

JP: And [I know] the location, it's right across, directly across--

EC: It's right in front of the church.

JP: Right in front of the church so I guess there was a lot of people there because people were  
coming to pay their respects, and the RCMP showed up.

EC: No, I think the RCMP, they were there before.

JP: They were just present—

EC: Because every, every Sunday they used to have people—they used to go into the church and looking for uh, people that they think they are maybe fascists or they weren't fascists...

JP: Oh, like spies.

EC: Yeah, like spies.

JP: They were spying.

EC: Because they were looking for like the guys, lots of guys they--they didn't find. So when the priest got up and he says, "We have the—" bad luck to say that uh, "the father of the Italian band, the teacher died", so...

JP: The priest said that in mass....

EC: Well there was the [unclear].

JP: Right.

EC: So that's when he said that so...

JP: And then the RCMP...

EC: This. Close in and then [motions moving in with both hands] but they give him, at least they were good enough to give my uncle a chance to uh, bury his father before he says, "I'll be ready." So when they went there they, a few days after, he was ready. He was waiting for them,

he had his suitcase ready and my grandmother stayed alone then. My grandmother was nearly 75, 70 odd years, in those days, and she was all alone because you know.

JP: So, at this point, they gave him the respect of burying his father.

EC: Yeah, yeah, that I have to give them that.

JP: They gave him that respect.

EC: Yeah, yeah.

JP: He buries his father...his mother, 75 years old, is alone now.

EC: Yeah.

JP: Because her son just got picked up by the RCMP.

EC: That's right.

JP: And he went quietly...

EC: Yeah, he didn't say nothing. My father took care of his mother. He was married. But my grandma was all alone. She had no one with him— with her.

JP: But she kept living upstairs then by herself.

EC: Yes, that's right.

JP: Because you were, where you were living was, you know it was a bit away. It wasn't very...

EC: Well, it wasn't far.

JP: It wasn't far, but there was a walk. To get...

EC: Well yeah. That's right. My mother used to go uh, my aunt even. That's what I say, they were living in the same place so, if it wasn't my uncle, it was my mother, it was my father--was my uncle [Salvatore] used to live next door. It was his wife. And the kids, the kids used to be there. My brother was there, but he wasn't working my brother, in 41 my father, my brother was 13 years old.

JP: Do you remember at all which...I know it's really difficult cause you were very small, but how your grandmother was dealing with all this?

EC: [shrugs] She lived, she lived until she was 85 [laughs]. She died in '49. She died in 1949 so you know, she had, well, everybody was around. It was a family, it was a very tight family. So everybody was around, so if it wasn't one it was the other. And she died in 1949 so, she died in bed in her house. Like we used to do before, instead of in the hospital. So...

[45:11.0]

JP: And, the, the, to pay the rent and all that, I guess it was the family—

EC: My father, my father, her other son—

JP: The food—

EC: Yeah, and she had a daughter, she was married too. She used to live out here on [unclear] Avenue. [nods in a direction to the right] the uh...Angelina used to live there. So, he used to go there too and all the kids used to go there. [shrugs] My cousin [Ivo], Mary, my brother and me, we all went. And the uh, my uncle [Salvatore], he had five, six kids and they were there too...at least five. Two girls and they went. And my uncle came back. My uncle [wasn't] gone for seven or eight years. He came back and he stayed with his mother.

JP: When he was gone, what did your dad say to you about it, or how did your cousins or...brothers, sisters, like your family, how did they explain the disappearance of your uncle--?

EC: Well, they knew, they knew...they were all about the same age eh? We were all about the same age. But they, they knew he was gone for Petawawa but nobody... [they didn't make a fuss]. Everybody says "He's gone. He has to do what he has to do. That's all there is to it. We don't talk about that anymore." It was like it never happened. [says while making a cancelling out motion with hands] It's the first time, I, I talk to you guys like this in a long, long time because it doesn't, it doesn't [go] in the family. As a defeat. It goes as something good. It's not something bad uh...worse is the Japanese when they got caught. You know, that was worse and okay you see, you lose your freedom, but uh sometimes we have to lose something [when it's just like this] but we never questioned uh this and that. And they never talked about it. In my house—

JP: At school did the priest, the nuns--

EC: Not at the school, nobody. Father Maltempi in those days and then we had [Father] Evangelisti used to come to my house and eat with us just like he was a...the best priest I ever seen. You know.

JP: Maltempi

EC: Maltempi and Evangelisti. [nods]

JP: But he went, he ended up getting picked up?

EC: Yeah, but just the same. You know, he never...I mean if you went to church they never, nobody I don't remember anybody talking about that. I used to sing in the church. When I was a young boy, the choir, and I never heard uh...you know this and that, this and that. You see that there was a frame—at the time of, of time that nobody said nothing.

JP: The whole Italian community?

EC: We got caught and we got caught. Then, later on Capobianco, he started slowly you know, said this and that. And then they gave money to uh, to the Japanese; they gave money to the other one. And uh, if my memory's good I read in the paper Mr. Capobianco, he says we don't need that. So that means that you forget and you forgive. Once you forgive, you can't come back. You know. Once I say now, "Look, you stole five dollars from me. And now you don't want to give it back to me, but I forgive you, so you don't owe me nothing anymore." [laughs] I took it like that. Not in uh...but my father never [never talked]. Not from 40 years in France and he had [unclear] the Italian never see. Even my grandfather he never said a word about uh war. [shakes his head no.]

JP: That's, that's kind of that generation though, eh?

EC: Well, it was, everything was secret then eh?

JP: [unclear] personality but—

EC: The Italian, they were mostly secret. Uh...I don't know why. But uh, I don't want to say that they were afraid or what, but they were good workers, never missed a work day. But uh, [comes a time] that uh, when you want something uh...you pray to help you but uh...we had, I had lots of friends that were French and I could give my arm for them, because I know they're good people. You know some people you don't like...my father worked for French people all their life. And they were always good. If you, some people don't get along, they don't get along. You know?

JP: And when your, when your uncle came back did he talk about it with your family—

EC: No.

JP: He did the same thing your father did?

EC: Same thing. [nods]

JP: He stayed quiet?

EC: Quiet. Never—not a word. I know he worked there, because he was a brick layer, and the...he was repairing a few things, the walls and things like that. [unclear as JP cuts in] And he wrote music at Petawawa.

JP: So while he was there he was doing [unclear]



EC: He wrote, he wrote music yeah. [nods] Because that was his, he had nothing to do, so...he had his pen and he...but he was, he was with the uh, the only thing he said is they had lots of German officers there...in, in uh Petawawa. Lots of German officers. And they were gentlemen. They were this, they were that all this praise for them because always well dressed, always you know, so that I can tell you. The rest... [shrugs]

[50:21.4]

JP: [What happened to] that music that he wrote in Petawawa—

EC: I don't know...I don't know what he did with it. I don't know.

JP: And there was a band. That was in Petawawa. He made it [unclear]—

EC: I don't think so. I didn't hear nothing about that. He never, he never took—

JP: [I've seen a picture of the band] that's why I'm asking.

EC: No. Uh, he never talked about it.

JP: No, eh?

EC: No, I know that he wrote music for the uh...there was a story. Now I don't know if it's true or not or if [it's a lie] there was a story that somebody he uh, he said that he was a teacher, a music teacher, a musical teacher. And uh, and some of the Germans--officer asked him to write a few paragraphs. But uh a few bars. And they see that he couldn't. So, my uncle asked him a few questions and they told him that they would like to, and my uncle wrote the music for

them. A few bars. And he says, you're the teacher, not him. That he told me. [says while pointing index finger.] He was talking with my father, he says, that I remembered, the rest now if it's [true] or not...I don't know. [says making a cancelling out motion with both hands] I can't confirm because I wasn't there.

JP: Right.

EC: I can't confirm. But very seldom did he sit down at the table to talk about that. My father and my uncle, they were like two mutes. [shaking head and leans in closer to the camera]. You know, you didn't know what they were doing you know.

JP: So, of the two, your father was obviously a very peace-loving man...

EC: Yeah, yeah.

JP: Like you said, he didn't even want to be a carabinieri.

EC: No, no. My father, he got--he says "I've had enough of this and I'm going."

JP: And uh...your...

EC: My uncle, the music teacher, was there already.

JP: Your uncle he wore the black shirt—

EC: Yes.

JP: No— he didn't wear the black shirt. He was in the band.

EC: Yeah.

JP: But the band wore the black shirts.

EC: Black shirts. Yeah. [nods]

JP: And he was arrested.

EC: Yeah.

JP: Did your uncle have any he, he didn't, did he care for fascism or [for him it was just—]

EC: Well for him, to him, what he wanted...He says the Italian people here he wanted to— they want to play music I'm going to teach them but in Italy in 1911...he used to take the teacher's place. When the teacher, when the uh when the band leader he would, he would go, I don't know where. But he would give the baton to my uncle and in 1911; he would be the band leader. He was 16 years old. So, that means that at 16 he could have— and you can see in the picture [points to other room] that's what he wore, the black shirt.

JP: That's what he wore?

EC: He had the black shirt because he was a musician [nods].

JP: In Italy?

EC: Yeah. And everybody had to wear the [suit.] And even the teacher had the black [suit]. But him he was only having the black [suit] when he took the teacher's place.

JP: Right, so it must be [unclear]—

EC: Because in the picture I have—

JP: the uniform you had to wear —

EC: [nods] That's right.

JP: [to do that activity]

EC: He was born in [1895], so he had the uh...16 years old. But then he had the black shirt. I got to show you the pictures. He had the black shirt on.

JP: Well, what it sounds like to me, it sounds like he had, he wore the black shirt when he was doing an activity that required [him] wearing it.

EC: Yeah, but in Italy only.

JP: In Italy—

EC: Not here.

JP: Here he wore the suit that was more like the band leader's suit?

EC: Yeah. A men's suit. [laughs and nods]

JP: Yeah, a band's—

EC: A man's suit. [corrects JP]

JP: A man's suit.

EC: Yeah.

EC: Then if you're...like if you're a band leader, and you have someone come and go to let's say [unclear], and you have a teacher and he's in the audience, and you say "We have the teacher Mr. So and So. Come up and give us a song." He would go [there] and he would give them a song. But he never wore a black shirt. [shakes head no] I don't remember it. Well, look I'm [78] years old. And he died in 1985...he died he was '85, 19, 1980s. And I never seen him with a black shirt on. Never.

JP: Why do you think they arrested him then?

EC: I don't know. I don't know. [shaking head] I don't know. They— because he didn't make no money with the music. You know, and most of the people didn't know he was a music teacher.

JP: So, he was a brick layer. He was a musician. He was writing by hand...

EC: Yes.

JP: For up to a 75 piece band.

EC: Yes. [nods]

JP: The music sheets.

EC: Yeah.

JP: At night. That doesn't leave a lot of time.

[55:01.3]

EC: Yeah. [Let's see] if the, the songs that he was playing, it was a song for church, the song. It was not the uh...rock and roll and that. It was only song for music. I remember that the [unclear]. He wrote music for them. My brother played the accordion, my sister played the accordion, and uh, he wrote song, and I think it was 30 or 40 songs that he sent [unclear]. And...he didn't want any price. Not because the music wasn't good. Because in those days, the nuns what they did belonged to them. So, all the [prizes] went to the nuns. And my fath—my uncle, he didn't like that. Because usually when he used to write a song for someone he would give it to them as, as a gift. He never asked them a [copper] not even a cent. And uh...he got mad and he says, he sent it back and he says "I want my music back." And so they sent back the music. But usually, my uncle was a religious man and never would he have done that. [shakes his head no] You know, he says "It's impossible that all the teachers in province could make one song for the church" for the [unclear] he says, "It's impossible." But they were all the prizes were goo—were winners were all nuns and priests so, he got mad and he got them all back. [pause] And my uncle he was a very [unclear]. He should have been a priest.

JP: Yeah.

EC: Yeah. But as a teacher, [shrugs] I think for me, he was the best.

JP: It sounds like he was a man who was very passionate about music—

EC: That's right—

JP: And, it was [unclear]—

EC: No, he didn't go for the popularity. He went for, he went for something that he needed to, you know, in his life, that's something he needed in his life. 'Cause I know lots of musicians that they played for him and they tell me. And even, there was a—we went to a funeral almost four— three weeks ago. And uh...after the funeral we went to the wake. And one of our friends, I've known him for 70 years years, he says, "Did you know I played uh music with your father— with your uncle." I says, "Not you?" He says, "Yeah. I played the clarinet." Now, this guy's 83 years old. Now he tells me that he played for my uncle. And we...we see each other every week [laughs] if not every month you see. [Says something unclear to someone in the room.] He says, "I don't understand", he says [shrugs.] "I played for your uncle". Because Frank [unclear] was with us. He says, "His uncle was a music teacher." [points to the right] "A good one". He says, "I played music for him." I says, "Not you?" "Yeah. I played with your uncle. He taught me how to play the clarinet." [nods] And [Sam Capozzi] played for my uncle, and he told me one day [Sammy] says "Your father— ", he says "your uncle" he says, "he was heaven on earth for me." I said "What for?" "Well", he says "I went in the army. But" he says, "I used to bring with my clarinet" he says "I used to bring them to Windsor Station, they would get on a train; they went to war. And I would go back home." He says to me, he says "He's like uh...saint." Because he went to war. But uh [laughs and smiles] not overseas he was over here. [laughs] These are things I can tell you. The rest I can't... [shrugs]

JP: What do you think [shhh] um...what do you think the band meant....to the Italian community? What do—

EC: Ohhh....

JP: What do you think it represented like [unclear]—

EC: Oh.

JP: For the people in the neighbourhood.

EC: Yeah, but the Italian, the Italian they, the music is heaven for them. In Italy the, the...there's music all over the place. It's the best music you can get. There's none...there's no uh [makes a sweeping motion of finality with hands]. They love music. In Italy, here, they love music, the Italians. It would be filled up with all Italians on [unclear] street [looks to the window] and the fireworks and all that. If you went...everywhere—wherever he went— he had people [unclear] full, and he would play at the, [looks to window] on the Wednesday at the park it was full. He always managed to bring the people to hear his band play.

JP: What did it— what did it remind him of? The Italians, like when they would come, like to listen to the band, the marching band...

EC: Well, when my uncle—

JP: What did [it] give them? Like at that time there in the neighbourhood...



EC: Well, my uncle he won the uh bronze medal and the uh silver medal from the uh Prince Umberto uh Coronation in Italy, a marching band. So, he, he won lots of diplomas at— he came second and third for uh, when we used to have the contests. But the Italians they—they loved music. All the Italians loved music. It's, it's part of your--your soul. They're born singing...they die singing. You know, I sing every day. Sometimes you tell me you sing too much, but that's the thing [shrugs and looks over to someone in room]--there's something that the Italians they have...the others doesn't have.

[1:00:23.6]

JP: Is there a song you could sing for us?

EC: Oh, [of my father?]

JP: No.

EC: No, no. I won't sing. My father used to sing with my mother. My father used to sing the uh...uh, [Scrivermi]. That's his song. He used to sing that with my mother. All the time. And then we wondered why my father would...

JP: Why?

EC: Why--My father when he was in Italy he had a girlfriend. And uh, he asked her to marry him. And she says no. He says, "I'm going to America." She says, "Go to America". [She] says, "I'll never get married." [shaking head] So my father says, well, he says "I'm going". He says, "I don't know what I'm going to do." She says "I'm not going to get married. You're leaving, I'm not getting married." So my father came here and he gets married. [nods] He have kids. So in the

[looks to the side of the room] in the 60s, in the 60s, [someone off to the side says "about that"] we're in [the] country. So my cousin, or my father's niece, married a gentleman from Italy. And uh, he told my father he says, "My cousin is coming over from Italy." He says--we were up in the country, in the Laurentians. She says, "I'm going to bring her next Saturday. She's going to spend the weekend with us here." So my father's sitting on the couch, front [gallery] in the country, and this young woman she's about five feet two, five feet one...not too, not too tall and my father's six feet. So she's walking along on the street. And she looks at my father and she looks at him again and she keeps on talking. She's with my cousin there. Her cousin, so uh, she comes back, she says, "I know that man." So, he says, "It's impossible." He says, "That's Mr. Consentino." She says, "I know." [nods] She says, "His name is Giuseppe." He says, "How do you know him?" She says, "May we go and meet him?" He says, "Alright" so they crossed over. And uh, went to, they went to the house. He says, my cousin, he says, "This is my cousin, from Italy." She says, "I know you." So he says, "I don't remember." She, she says, "I told you one day ...I'd never marry. I was his girlfriend." That's why he was singing the song [points to JP] [Scrivermi]. 'Cause it's a song, you know [Scrivermi]...

JP: [unclear.]

EC: See? So that's what my father says..."That's why you were singing those songs." He says yeah. He says, "I left her there". He says, "I never went back." [shrugs] [JP: Wow]. See, so these are the things that you can't forget. [laughs] You know.

JP: Um... [camera fades out at 1:03:09.9]

[Camera fades back in 1:03:11.6]

JP: Um, let's go back to uh...your uncle, Emanuele. How did he end up coming to Canada?

EC: Well, he came, he came with uh he had to bring down his sister in law. Because uh, her husband came here— [his] brother came here in 190—08 and uh, and he used to send money to his wife. And the father, the father in law used to take the money and give the letter to my aunt and after a few years well somebody met him in Montréal and told him that he knew his wife in uh Italy. And my uncle says, [unclear]. He says, "I'm sending them money every month." And he says uh, "The father in law takes the money and she hasn't got nothing." He says "Okay I'll bring her downtown" and they went to the marine board and they sent them a ticket - one way, from Italy to Montréal, no--not refundable, except in Montréal. And my uncle...my grandfather told my uncle that Emanuele that he had to with his brother's—his sister in law to bring them on the boat. Bring them over here. And uh...that's how--he says "Come back in the fall". So, he never went back. [laughs] So...

JP: And he was able to bring his wife to Montréal.

EC: Yeah. His sister in law.

JP: She came here.

EC: That was his sister in law. [nods] So he brought her...

JP: Oh it was his sister in law.

EC: Yeah, [nods] sister in law.

JP: [unclear] sister in law?

EC: Yeah, because that was the—the oldest brother [Salvador]

JP: Okay.

EC: So [she] was married too, so...

JP: Okay.

EC: [So instead of] sending her all alone so he says to his son, and he was playing music then. And he wanted to be a music teacher. And uh, he landed up here in Montréal and uh, and he never went back so... [shrugs] that's why they—

[1:05:02.3]

JP: Yeah, because Emanuele was a bachelor.

EC: Yeah, he was a bachelor yeah— [nods]

JP: [unclear]

EC: Yeah. And he was younger.

JP: [unclear]

EC: Yeah, he was only 16.

JP: Right.

EC: And my uh sister, and their sister in law—my aunt was 21 so, he says, we put them on a boat, by the time she gets there, you never know what's going to happen. So he says, if there are two they are always...uh there's a difference between the two and so that's how he came here and he stayed. He never went back.

JP: And this thing about his arrest is kind of strange um...first of all I mean uh...there was reference that he gave gold to uh, the Ethiopian cause. Is that possible?

EC: My grand—my uncle can't give them gold because [he wasn't married.] He had no gold.

JP: He had no gold.

EC: He, he had the money that he worked for but uh... most of the money went into the music. He bought, he bought music, he bought sheets of music from [unclear] I don't know how many sheets he used to buy, cause--

JP: So—

EC: -- a 75 piece band; you need lots of sheets because he had uh...lots of musicians. And uh, he never charged a cent to no-one.

JP: So he never gave gold? He uh, he, he played for the Queen so he wasn't—uh anti-British.

EC: No, no, no, no. He was, he...the only time that he wore uh eh uh, black shirt is when he was in Italy. 1911. When in the band then, everybody had to wear the suit and the teacher, his teacher used to wear a suit. And that's the only place I ever seen him with a black shirt on. But

not that I see it with my eyes, but on the pictures. That's the only time uh, I seen him wear a black uh shirt and pants. And he used to wear these; what do you call it? -- horseman's pants.

JP: Oh yeah.

EC: You know. With the big baggies on each side. Because that's the only picture I have of him over here. [looks to his right] –

JP: [unclear]

EC: Yeah. [nods] [Now this one—this one] that's the uh the Pope's uh...detective. They wore it down to the bottom. But then they had -- they call it uh...it's not a uh—*moi je l'appelle les uh, les pantalons bouffe*.

JP: Yeah. I know which one's you're talking about because—

EC: Because it's only on the behind, because when you sit you spread out and [motions crossing legs?] you need lots of space. [laughs] [Unclear—your pants].

JP: So he wasn't anti-British because he had the honour of playing for the Queen.

EC: *Mais oui*.

JP: He didn't donate gold. He wasn't married and he didn't have any gold to donate. Uh...he wasn't a member of the fascio.

EC: No. [shakes head]

JP: Or any of the fascist organizations.

EC: [shakes head no]

JP: Um... [pause]...it's odd that he, though he, didn't have any of those elements you know...

EC: No. He didn't have any of that. [shakes head no.]

JP: All he did was play in his band and—

EC: Play in his band on the weekend, on the weekend only.—

JP: And the band wore the black shirts, he didn't—

EC: Friday. Yeah. [nods]

JP: But the band must have been uh, associated as a symbol of *fascismo* to the Canadian government.

EC: Could be, could be. [nods] Yeah.

JP: [And him being] the leader—

EC: Yeah.

JP: They would have assumed...that this man--

EC: Because uh, he always wore a play suit. He never wore uh—

JP: So everything uh towards his, in terms of his arrest. Any kind of evidence against him was all really assumptions on their part.

EC: That's right—

JP: Because in reality—

EC: That's right [nodding yes]—

JP: This man uh...

EC: That's why most--many people, they were surprised. That he was eh uh, he was arrested because he-he nothing to do with it. Eh? But he was the leader and you know—

JP: So—

EC: A lot of people, I know lots of people they were real fascists. You know, the-the doctors and lawyers and notaries, they were real fascists. But uh, my uncle...I never seen him go to any association. No meeting. I never seen him go to a meeting.

JP: So, in the period from 1940, June, June 10th 1940, when the arrests came down [on both of them]—

EC: Yeah.



JP: And Emanuele Consentino was arrested in '41 because...we're going to discuss that—

EC: Yeah, yeah.

JP: Um, in that one year period...did the band continue playing or [did that stop]—

EC: I couldn't tell you. I couldn't tell you. 'Cause lots of people, they got scared. See. Like uh, like uh I know people they—they took the Mussolini picture and put him in a bag and put him in ah...hide it away. But uh we never had the Mussolini picture in my house. Never. My uncle never had a Mussolini picture in the house. [shakes head no].

JP: People were hiding things?

EC: Yes. In those days, yes. [nods]

JP: Like, would uh— how would uh, like you saw [unclear]--

EC: Well, like if you had a picture of Mussolini in your house they would arrest you right away. 'Cause it was a symbol that you were not a communist—a fascist is like a communist, eh? So uh...lots of people, my father's friends they had that now, and they just put it away. They didn't want them to see it.

JP: You saw that in your friend's home.

EC: My father's uh...he had a few friends, even relatives that they knew, that they...but on my mother's side, I never seen a fascist—a Mussolini in the room of my [mother's side] uh...on my

uncles and all that. They were never touched. [shakes head no]. Nobody ever went--My uncle and my father went—music teacher, but the rest. They were never bothered.

[1:10:31.0]

JP: And when that happened, when the arrests started to happen...'cause you said that when you grew up you got along with everybody—everybody was nice to you. Um...and you also just mentioned that there was a fear in the community once the arrests started [unclear]—

EC: [unclear]—

JP: How did that affect the relationships that you had?

EC: They, they, they just like— everybody was mute. Nobody talked on the street that we're going to be arrested...this and that. Never heard anything like that.

JP: So...Yeah. Did it, did it divide the community or anything or did it bring it closer together—

EC: No, I don't think so, but they had a few, a few people maybe [they were divided] but uh not ours because they're weren't, there weren't not many. Her she got uh what...700 in Montréal. [extends hand to the right] And they were, [unclear] some in Saint-Henri, some in Ville-Émard, they were all scattered all around. It's not that there were 700 people in the same community.

JP: Right.

EC: Like in Italy you have a small town, sometimes there's three or four hundred right there, here they were all scattered all over the town. It was--this is a big town. Anybody can get away

because we didn't have the people we have today. In those days we had uh...not that many Italians. In 19--some came in 1908, some came in after the war in 19 [unclear] *cent quatre vingt dix* [1910] a few came, and a little bit came after the war in '14, '18. Then '49 and then '50, the explosion happened in the 50s and 60s. But before that [shrugs] you could count them on your [unclear]--one of the Italian schools, and most of the Italians they went there or they went to English school. All my friends they went to English school. Our families all went to Italian school. But everybody that I know that my friends that they used to play with us, but they all went to St. Michael's.

JP: Were you uh...ever in uh, *balilla* for the kids uh, did you ever participate in any of those associations?

EC: No, I-I belonged to the CYO, Catholic Youth Organization, when I was young, and uh...I uh used to be in the choir and used to sing at the church but besides that uh—

JP: Your father never put you with the...uh *balillas*?

EC: No, no. He never did. My father was not a sportsman. No—

JP: They had that group that would meet, you know. Like, it was like the Italian [unclear]—

EC: Yeah, but they had a small place on St. Lawrence. But they were only a few, maybe 10, 15. [Le Canadiens Italienne uh...] but that's the uh...they play cards. There were maybe 20 people. But uh, uh, [unclear]. Cause the [people in those days] they didn't have the [motions holding money] you know, it's not like today, today you have credit cards. In those days you, you...

JP: You just worked.

EC: [nods] You worked and uh, 12 hours a day and uh...you know at 15 cents, 20 cents an hour by the time you get home and you know, everything was cheap then but [just the same] you know.

JP: There wasn't much time to do anything--

EC: No. No. My-my father we made a little bit more money because being in construction he had more money to— [unclear] they used to pay more than if you worked for a company piece-work, five cents an hour, seven cents an hour. [shrugs] And he had maybe 35, 40, 47. But in the winter time you didn't work.

JP: That's it; he had to save his money.

EC: He had to work in the summertime. If he didn't do enough in the summertime, well you had potatoes all winter. And carrots.

JP: Did he have a garden as well?

EC: No, my father no, never. [shakes head no] My father [could plant a tree] better than a potato plant. [laughs] My father, he never had a garden, never. He had uh...chicken, and uh...rabbits. That yes, *les lapins*, no? He had a few in the summertime, then when the winter came he went outside, we used to take the eggs in the summertime, in the wintertime we would kill them and eat them. That's all. No, no, it's not like today in those days. My uncles on my mother's side they were farmers. Them they made gardens, but on my father—I never seen my uncle make a garden, my father and all my uncles on my father's side...they never had gardens. They don't know what it is. But my, my mother's side they had big gardens. There was a tree and they would plant all around and uh. Besides that...uh, but like them, I don't know

them enough to--cause my grandfather he left in 1926 for Italy. He left my grandmother and went back to Italy on my mother's side and he left six girls and four boys...So he says, "I'm going. He says, "I've had enough of this place here, it's too much snow." Even me...I was mad at my father when he brought in his father and his mother because I told him...they have 72 degrees in Sicily. And here you have 8 months of snow, like today, 8 months of snow in those days--October and November used to snow until April, May.

[1:15:43.3]

JP: How was the house heated?

EC: In coal. Wood and coal. I used to break the wood and bring it upstairs, second floor; [the coal]. And that's why in the morning I used to make the [cinder] go back at night and bring up the wood and [put it on for the night] and—because we used to live close. Well we lived in about a quarter of a mile there.

JP: So you used to take care of the furnace?

EC: Yeah.

JP: For your grandmother and your mother —

EC: [nods] I used to go there at night and we used to make the cinder and then bring the leftovers upstairs and then bring a few [quarts] of wood.

JP: How [easy] was it to make cinder?

EC: When you have, when you have the wood from the fire, and you put the coal on top...you're good for five, six hours not touching it. But lots of wood they don't, they don't uh...disintegrate completely. 'Cause now it's like charcoal. So underneath the thing I have uh...a handle...you shake them up [churns right hand] and it falls into a tray. So you pull up the tray and then in the back there you have a screen, and you put on the screen, so all the leftovers that's not really burned...you start a new fire with them. So you have coal, which the gas is gone, and you have wood like charcoal, and that's what you start the new, the new fire for the next day. 'Cause it used to be 100 degrees when you used to go to bed. And it used to be maybe 55, 60 when you get up in the morning. It's not like today that you get up and it's 60—70 and you go to bed at 70. Those days you had the long pants. Long underwears and you know at 5 o'clock in the morning, 6 o'clock when you had to get up there, you're you know you like to have your beer before... [laughs]

JP: Did you have hot water in the house?

EC: Yeah, well, it's not uh electric, it would be with the uh...the coal and wood stove. They had pipes that go though the stove. And you had the uh...it was not a cylinder it was [rubs forehead while thinking] the water front on the side of the stove. And the part where you go in and you have the fire. But you had no water, no hot water in the summertime. You had hot water in the winter-time. Didn't have none in the summertime. You had to—

JP: [unclear]

EC: Because unless you start your, your stove. But you used to go to bed 95, 85, 95 in the house. Get up in the morning, 55, 50, 60. All depends on how much [stove] uh, how much coal you put on the fire.

JP: And you had an ice box?

EC: Yeah. 25 pound icebox on the weekend. That's the only time you had the, they had uh...what do you call uh...meat. Besides that, you had lettuce and all things like that, potatoes and carrots and uh...you still had meat but uh when your block was finished after two days you had to buy another one. It cost three cents. Three cents a block of ice, 25, 25 uh square. [Measures a small block shape with hands] 25 pound square. On the weekend we used to carry that. 300, 400 on the weekend. 'Cause some used to buy two...some buy one. Put the uh paper...uh newspaper on top. So that it takes more time to uh cool off, to--to evaporate. So, and when he brought the next piece the next day, take all the paper, but it on the side [laughs], put it--because they had to put it back in the ice box. [laughs] Uh...

JP: So, the story you said about your um...uncle. The way the RCMP kept uh... [unclear]—

EC: That's how they found him. If it wasn't for that they wouldn't have found him. They would have maybe they would have found him but I don't think that they were really looking for him. That's, that's my opinion. Because if, if you're...he played for the Queen. If you play for the Queen and the Queen is at war uh...it's not hard you have his picture. Put his picture on the paper. Well, he never had his picture in the paper. This is what I don't understand.

JP: That's true...they could have found him if they wanted to on June 10th.

EC: [shrugs] That was the Italian band that was playing there. It was not the Irish band. It was not the English band. It was the Italian band that was playing on the street car. They had an open car. [Waves arms out wide]

[1:20:00.7]

JP: And they would have had pictures of that.

EC: You, you—he was right there. Everybody was there. Everybody was there. So, I don't know, I don't know why they couldn't find him. [shrugs]—

JP: That's a really big mystery. So then, from 19— from June 10th 1940 to 1941, you said it was about August?

EC: Yeah. [nods]

JP: Yeah, August 1941. That's a pretty long time. They had a year to find him if they wanted to.

EC: [shrugs with arms out and nods] Yeah. See.

JP: [Do you think something happened that made him...?]

EC: Maybe being a band leader like I said that [unclear]. Being a band leader in the, in a plain clothes...on, on the street car. He could have been uh somebody that you bring from outside. Like a teacher—

JP: They didn't even realize that it was—

EC: Bring from outside. [waves arm in] That's what, that's what I think happened because [in the east end] they were looking for somebody that usually a band leader is dressed and uh...uh dressed just like the musician. But him never. Never, he brought his own suitcase with him you see. He brought his own music. So, he looked like, he looked like maybe like a [spy]. [laughs]



JP: I wonder, I wonder, I guess this would be hard to ask, but I wonder when they, when the Italian band played for the Queen...I wonder if they were wearing black shirts?

EC: I couldn't tell you.

JP: I don't—

EC: I couldn't tell you because the only picture I have is that picture there [points to his right]. But I mean if they wanted to arrest him, they could have arrested him then. But, nobody, nobody got arrested then. Only started in 1941. Did they arrest anybody before '40, before '40? When did your grandfather got arrested?

JP: It started June 10th, 1940. That's the first day.

EC: Okay. Well that was in 39 so maybe they didn't bother to look in the books. 'Cause—

JP: At that point, maybe, maybe they didn't consider them [unclear] threats—

EC: Because [they] had the pictures. And because they had their pictures. They had everything. [shakes head]

JP: So that, that day in 1941 with the funeral, Father Maltempi—

EC: Or Evangelisti, one of the two.

JP: One of the two. You're not sure which one. `

EC: Yeah.

JP: Okay, one of the priests.

EC: Well they told him that these people that the father of the [unclear] died. That's when they picked him up. There were two in the back lane, there were two in the front of the house and there was some inside. So uh...

JP: They were surrounded.

EC: Oh yeah, they, they uh...you couldn't go far, I tell you. You couldn't go far.

JP: [Were you] there that day?

EC: Yeah. [nods] I went to the funeral.

JP: Right. And you saw the uh, RCMP?

EC: Yeah, they were tall guys. The RCMP they were...they were...

JP: Were they in uniform or not in uniform?

EC: Uh, I couldn't tell you because some of them they were and some they were not. So you couldn't say who was who, no, so...I can't say exactly.

JP: And I guess the people on the street were all looking, were all watching.

EC: Well I mean, they were surprised uh, but it was too late. It was too late. Because there was only the family that—because we—because nobody said nothing to no one. We didn't put it in the paper. We kept it, we kept it lower...

JP: You didn't— it wasn't even announced in the paper that uh--?

EC: No—well see, was living right in front of the-- [laughs and holds hand upright]

JP: But I guess there was a reason why it wasn't put in the paper.

EC: I don't know but... see it wasn't in the paper. [shakes head no.] [Unclear]. [Unclear] was a funeral parlor on St. Lawrence. [Unclear], he's the one that made the funeral for my grandfather.

JP: But I guess, it probably means that they must have wanted to be off the radar, they wanted to stay away from the public eye...

EC: I think so. Yeah I think so. Like I say, some of them they knew we were going to be arrested in the 40s. But they didn't know, they didn't know when or where. And they didn't know who. But they were looking for the band leader, that's for sure. 'Cause the band leaders were the only ones dressed up as the fascists.

JP: And is it possible that if he had been stopped and he was showing, showing uh...he'd shown...

EC: The [paper] that he had, yes, the paper that he had.—

JP: It wouldn't have corresponded.

EC: [shakes head no]

JP: Because his papers—

EC: No, no.

JP: --always said brick layer.

EC: Yeah. He [went right through] [waves hand up]. Everybody went...they asked him. They stop him on the street. He say here [holds hand out motioning to show something]. And it was certified by an officer of the army what he had...the paper that he had. Because they arrested him once before. And he told them, he said "I'm a brick layer."

JP: Oh, he was picked up before?

EC: Because, because of the name. He was working in construction...because of the name, they picked him up. He says, "I'm a brick layer...I'm not a, I'm not a, music teacher." So they say okay. Because he went there and he says look, he says, "Every corner I do they arrest me." He says. Three, four times they arrest him. And he says, he says, "I'm going to fix that up right away". So they, he signed the paper and when the [Mountie] says to him, "Eh? Paper", [motions showing the paper] Okay, [unclear] and away he went. Hmm. [quietly laughs]

JP: So they had stopped him before...

EC: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. Before, yeah, a few times yeah.

[1:25:00.2]

JP: But he...was [unclear]—

EC: He would show the papers [holds hand out]. Say I got the papers signed by [unclear]. And says, “Okay, go”.

JP: So, for them it was just another person with the same name?

EC: That's right, with the same name. But there was only one in Montréal, and me, there's nobody else. Cause he had no kids. [shakes head subtly]

JP: So, in that case, maybe that's why he wasn't [either], that may explain why they didn't want to publicize the funeral because he already knew that they were looking.

EC: Yeah. Because uh--

JP: And it was only because in the church that they said it was the [head of the family]--

EC: [laughs] Then they picked him up.

JP: --that they actually made the connection.

EC: But if they went into the church, his name was right there. [points up the the ceiling or high on the wall]

JP: Yeah, what...explain that to me, why does your name appear in the church?

EC: Because when he, he uh, give a donation to the church when they build it. In the 19...15, 14 or 15? He uh, twice he give them money. But as you get into the church, Italian church on the right hand side, there's a plaque there [a marble plate(?)] [makes a rectangular shape with hands] and his name is on there, that he give money. His name is there. It doesn't say band leader, but right underneath, his name is still there and it says, music...but they didn't... [shrugs]

JP: And that was, and that plaque was there before 1940.

EC: [*Mais oui*]—

JP: So all they had to do is take notes.

EC: *Mais oui* but [shrugs and points up] his name was there. Everything, they had everything to pick him up, why didn't they pick him up...I don't know, I don't know. [shrugs] It's funny, the, the, the...unless God made him uh... [laughs] Huh? But he used to go to church every day. Every week he used to go to church. That's [makes slashing motion with right hand] he didn't miss one Sunday—

JP: That's [unclear] he contributed money to the church.

EC: Yes.

JP: And he also contributed his time in the band anyway.

EC: In the band and in building the church - the church, the school.

JP: As a brick layer.

EC: And uh a la Maison d'Italie. They- they worked for nothing. For weeks, at night, weekends, [nods] for months and months. My two—

JP: That was all free time.

EC: All free time. My father and my two uncles, it was free time.

JP: Your whole family contributed to the building of—

EC: Yeah. Because—

JP: --the church, the school. [Unclear]—

EC: And the [Maison d'Italie]—

JP: [Casa d'Italia].

EC: [nods]

JP: They contributed a lot to the Italian community.

EC: They've got to get [points up] the uh [unclear].

JP: Uh...

EC: You know how much value? In the war time they wanted to take off the uh, Mussolini and they couldn't. [shakes head] So they put a tapestry on top and then after the war they had to take it down and they had to be careful not to damage the tapestry up there. [nods] That's worth a fortune.

JP: When you went into the church and you saw it covered for the first time...

EC: Well, I was six years old. When I realized that Mussolini was there with the Pope, and with the Jesus Christ there. But he was a great man in those days. In those days Mussolini he had-- maybe he was a bad boy, maybe he was a good boy, but uh he made lots of good to the country because he uh, if you had lots of kids you paid less tax. You know, he had the uh, he made lots of things that was good for the people, even today. The people that are satisfied with uh...but, he went on the wrong side. Here, you think that this guy here, he has three cars, you don't have none. That [may be stronger than you] but he should have stayed on the right side and it would have been alright. And if they won because the Sicilians opened the door. If it wasn't for the Sicilians...the war [wasn't going to be over.] [Laughs] You know, it's—people say if it wasn't for the Sicilians that they came in in '44...'42, '44...it would have kept on going and going. So that was a good thing. That [a good thing] Sicily made for the Italians. It was a good deed, for me. [laughs]

JP: [They] did a lot of good for the Italians...

EC: Yeah, well I mean they're not bad people. [People say they're this they're that]. They're good people. If you want to go in the mafia that's uh...it's up to you. Nobody forces you. It's like the church.

JP: Yeah.



EC: Nobody forces you to uh... Me I see, the [Muslims], they come over here and I tell them "No. I respect your version." Mine, the only thing I love is [free]. If you want to go to church, you go. If you don't want to go, you don't go. But you guys, you have to go on the street and bother people, then this is [shakes head]. God didn't do that, I tell them. [Unclear] In my opinion, anyway, he took 12 people and he says go. [Waves hands out to say go away] Do what you have to do. If you won't want to do it, don't do it. But they did it and we're here now today. So they don't bother me. [laughs]

JP: So how did you find out, because you grew up with your father, and your grandfather they were all mute? Uh, when they came back, they didn't talk about it. How did you start learning about Petawawa and how did you...

EC: Because after, like me I'm a great reader. I read. I mean, I look on TV [unclear] uh...I read the paper and I read it every morning from the first page to the last page. Sometimes I read it twice in case I forgot something. Because uh...in my family I'm the only one that knows the stories. The others, you talk to them, they don't know nothing—

JP: How did you learn the stories?

[1:30:21.3]

EC: Because I was with the people. [nods]

JP: Which people?

EC: I enj— I enjoy my uncle with the music for 14 years. And we were there for 14 years. I started working at seven with my father in construction.

JP: And through the people in the band--

EC: In the band. [nods] And everybody in the...they were good-- Lots of them they had black shirts. They were never picked up. [shakes head no] Like [unclear] was never picked up he was a musician—

JP: How do you explain that? You're right—

EC: Because they weren't, because they weren't fascists. They weren't real fascists. We only had a few. But the Italian— they say well "Look here, I'm going to follow you." But really [unclear—speaks in French].

JP: Why?

EC: [Unclear—speaks in French]

JP: [responds in French]

EC: [Speaking in French]. So then you follow. You have the one in the front and "dah, dah, dah, dah, dah". But when something happens they run away. And you have those that follows in the back and never say a word. So my father always followed. He never, he was never in the union. He was [unclear- in French – to the effect that he had no union]. If my uncle were to go--went in the union, musician union, he would have been today known all over the world. But he wasn't for that, eh? He wanted to be himself for a few people, quiet, he didn't want to bother no one. [Unclear – in French]. Everything he did, he did it with his heart and he always give, and give, and give. So, uh they uh picked him up for nothing you see, for sure, they picked him up--

And they must have known that he was a good man, because they wouldn't have done what they did. They could have picked him up any day.

JP: And you said he went to Bordeaux after.

EC: Yeah. He finished his days at Bordeaux. My mother used to go there and pick up his clothes. And bring them back home and she used to go there once a week. But he didn't smoke, he didn't drink. So they had food there. And uh, she brought him a few things—

JP: Did they, did they ever explain to you after, why...

EC: [Shakes head no repeatedly] My uncle live with us from 1942...he used to come and eat at our house from 1942 until he died. He lived with my father from '42 until I think he died in 1985, something like that. He always lived with my mother and my father. That was a triangle [brings three fingers together in a grouping]. Anything that went among those three...nobody knew. They never talked. They bought houses here. They bought houses there. They bought cars. That was it. You eat what I put on the table. If you don't want it, go to the store...don't bother us. This is what you eat. It was a triangle. So that's why it was very hard to get in between that. [But me I was] the younger. Me I was the younger and if my uncle would put brick layer--he was put bricks...I would go and give him a hand. How to make the cement. How to make this. How to cut. My father was a cement finisher. I did the same thing. I worked with him, and my uncle Salvator, the same thing, I learned how to make the plaster. And then I went to school and then I went up, went up, went up, [motions moving up the steps] and then in construction I can do anything. Plumbing. Electricity. Nobody comes in this house here. All my daughter's houses and all my houses, nobody comes in. I do all the work. The only thing I don't do, I don't touch...if the plumbing has to go outside I don't touch. [Unclear] In electricity if it

goes in to the locks, an electrician comes. But the rest, nobody comes in my house. Nobody.  
And...[camera fades out when someone comes in the room]

[Camera fades back in at 1:34:04.9]

EC: Any more questions? [smiles in direction of someone in the room and laughs] [Woman says  
in background "we shouldn't disturb you."]

JP: No, it's okay.

EC: It's fine. It's fine.

JP: It's okay; um...I just went blank.

EC: We said too much now. [laughs]

JP: Yeah, I guess. You know, yeah, because you were talking about um, learning the stories from  
the band members. And how were those stories told to you? Were they told in funny ways,  
were they told in serious ways?

EC: Well with me, they hardly talked with me because you see--it's the groups. They got three  
here, three there - it's like any association you have some people that stick together. But, with  
the band I had my brother in laws - they were there - my cousins who were there. So I knew  
them, but we uh, once they had the music it was finished...everybody went home. 'Cause they  
had to work the next day. It's not something that uh...uh...it's a friendship but it's not really a  
friendship. It's only a friendship when you play music. After that it's gone. But if you have a  
quartet, you have a trio-quartet, or five uh musicians...you're more closely. [wrings hands

together] Because if the other guy don't play you can't play. 'Cause he...well the accordion doesn't play, well there they have five clarinets they have three trombones. And no one doesn't play [unclear] going to play [in this] place. So...

[1:35:32.5]

JP: But how uh...you were close with the band members—

EC: Yeah.

JP: I guess um...like when I asked you, how did you find out about the internment and what happened and everything, and you said you found out about it afterwards—

EC: Yeah well before—

JP: How did, how did the stories come to you. How were they told? Were they told uh...?

EC: In the papers. Mostly the papers.

JP: In the newspapers?

EC: Yeah.

JP: You found out.

EC: Yeah. [nods] Newspapers. They used to talk a little bit but not exactly what they used to do or the uh...they never told me what they ate. You know, it was so [mute.] My uncle never told

me we had this with my uh...and I know people they told me, well the food wasn't bad. But they didn't tell me what it was—

JP: But after the war when your dad came back and your uncle, well we know your father was only gone for 24 hours, but when your uncle came back [coughs] did you, did friends of his who had also been interned did they ever come over to the house? Did they talk amongst themselves?

EC: No. [shakes head no]

JP: No eh?

EC: They were, my uncle and my father, they were two men, two reserved men.

JP: And did you ask questions?

EC: No.

JP: To the people, to others?

EC: No, I asked—sometimes my father would talk with my uncle. But, not, not about that. Anything else but that. I don't know why, and even my other uncle, they wish that he never went, and he'd go to Petawawa, the oldest one. He never spoke about that. Never.

JP: And did...your...but you found out through the newspapers.

EC: Newspapers and the radio. Sometimes we used to go down to the Casa d'Italia and they used to talk amongst themselves. I was what 14, 15. Used to talk about this, talk about that. Among themselves in the, in the summer when they have the band go. You can hear Italian say "Oh-Petawawa" but that, I can't talk about. [Not] because it has nothing to do with me.

JP: But you heard, but [unclear]—

EC: [Unclear as multiple speakers talk at once]—

JP: In the stories, but that's how you learned about it, you listened.

EC: That's right, yeah.

JP: So you learned by listening--

EC: And I'm a great listener too, because I can-I can see if it's good, it's not good. But when you got 75 people talking on the street, it's not the same thing as if they're in a house having a drink and they talk, you know, like a human being. [coughs] Around there, you're there. He's screaming at the other guy over there. He's screaming up at this one here [points]. You don't know what they--you don't know. You look. And me I'm a quiet man, I don't uh...I have no [friends] eh?

JP: What do—

EC: [Victor] is my friend. But because [French]. But [Victor] doesn't come here once a week. I have nobody comes here once a week. Not even once a month. Because uh...I'm a funny guy. [holds hands up and then laughs].

JP: So, what do you think should have been done for these men?

EC: What could have been done for these men?

JP: No [your opinion] what do you think should have been done?

EC: Eh uh...it all depends what you... [*c'est depend en la vie*] what you, what you do. Uh, some people they, they want to show that they're somebody. And they can't get there so they're going to take all means to go where they want to go. I know lots of people...good people. I know bad people and to me they're all the same. Because I do what I have to do. My, my first thing I think about is my children, my grandchildren, my wife, and me. Now I have, I lost my mother. I lost my father. Now I have a sister, she's sick so I bring her with me. That's the only people I care of. The rest, to me...I'm a loner like they say in English. No, you need my help, I'm going to give you a hand, but don't exaggerate because *c'est fini*. [making sweeping movement with hands]

JP: Do you think the government should have done something for the people who had been interned?

EC: Yes, they should--they could. You know they could but [unclear while JP says something unclear] but they were scared eh? You know you--

JP: Who was scared?

EC: --they're always scared something's going to happen. So they're not uh...it's— today is not like in those days. Today you have means to defend yourself. In those days... [shakes head no] They threw Camillien Houde up in Petawawa. For what? Because he says don't sign your name



on for conscription? This is crazy. But, he was not allowed to say it. Because the [citizen] says you have to help the other, but you have to help the [other]. They're in war...they need your help. You have to go...that's what the States will do now huh? Like Kennedy says, anybody that needs our help, just ask. And now look...they had people in the States all over the world to [see] fighting for nothing. Losing people for nothing. So, they're going to say okay [pick the] people back in Italy. [They would have had 700 soldiers for war huh?] So, they interned them. They took a chance. They say, "Okay, look we're going to put them there. If they're good well they're going to [be considered] and they all made good citizens." Right.

[1:40:42.4]

JP: Do you think they were, any of them could have been a threat to Canada?

EC: I don't think so. I don't think so. [shakes head] I don't believe that. You need more than that. You need—you need one man with enough power like uh...and millions of dollars behind your back. Like Bin Laden. If it wasn't for his father that left him three billion dollars he couldn't have done nothing. [shakes head]

JP: That's a good point. 'Cause these men didn't have the money, right?

EC: That's right. You see. [Unclear] these guys because they had money, if they don't have money, they have no one. They have followers because— it's like a boxer. A champion boxer, he has parasites around him, and the good people they stay on the side. But uh...if he wins the championship, they're all around him and to see— everybody [buys] five dollars here, five dollars. And if he doesn't do it...it takes not even thirty seconds, and [they just turn their back and they're no good] go away...you're no good to me so...they made, they may--they may have saved lots of, lots of lives. Not here in Canada 'cause you could have just said, go, go back home

and don't come back. They had to go to war and maybe some of them would be killed. But here at least, they were here, you know. And they lived and then they enjoyed working again and it was a good life, you know. I take it that way.

JP: In other words, like they could have been deported to Italy and would have gone—

EC: That's right.

JP: --into war and anything could have happened.

EC: Yeah. You see my uncle he was a deserter, right? But they deserted—everybody was here before 1914, that didn't go back to the country, got “deserter”, to me. That's my opinion. Because if your country's in war, you get up and you go. And they're doing the same thing today. The Lebanese you see that...when they had the war, they had two nationalities. They came back here, "Oh, I'm a Canadian." And I'm not Lebanese anymore. They came back here. Why, because here there's no danger. But those that stayed there that got killed...Iraq is the same thing, so that's, that's the new generation. That's the evolution of the time. Now, people when they're scared, they move away. Those that stays, sometimes they get killed.

JP: Do you think the government was right then in picking up these men?

EC: But, but I don't say, I don't say they're right. They say, it's—if it's in the constitution...then there's nothing they can do. They have to follow the constitution. [nods] Like in the States. If you don't follow the constitution, you're dead. You know. At least that's what I think. We have, we have the law. The law says this is the law...if you go uh...go sideways one way or the other, you get caught. You know, on the street is says go 30, you go 50...you don't get caught. One day you go 32 and they catch you. What do you do? You went 32 you went over. You were lucky

seven times. Eight times, you pay. Eh? But lots of people they had no business there. They went. They didn't say a word. And those who had business there...being there, and they keep on [unclear] today, and they say they were right they shouldn't have been there. Those guys should have been there. You know. That's my, that's my opinion... [points to chest] I don't talk about the others, I talk about myself. When you do wrong, you've got to get up and say "I did wrong. I'm going to serve my time" and uh...then after try to stay and go straight. You know, that's uh life.

JP: Yeah, because people, like you said, in your family, who you don't have any evidence of them doing anything wrong.

EC: Eh.

JP: So...when they came out, I mean they lost something.

EC: Now, they lost their freedom. They lost some of them--see my father lost freedom--let's say, 16 hours. But uh...he was one of the lucky ones.

JP: Your uncle—

EC: Because he went [14, 18]. If my uncle would have been in Italy, in [14, 18]...he would have went to war, maybe he, they wouldn't have touched him. They would have did like my father – pick him up and [makes sweeping noise] send him back home. But...he didn't go to war. He didn't, [unclear – French, something about the uncle not being present in Italy during WW1, and his grandfather receiving the enlistment papers]. But when you're a deserter, well you have to have punishment. They have to punish you one way or the other, because you have to

defend your country. He didn't go back. So...and he was scared. He went back in 1960...first time he went it was in '66. He went with uh, uh, uh... Dieni.

JP: Oh he went with Dieni--

[1:45:15.9]

EC: He went with Dieni. He had a castle over there so he, and he went up but he didn't go to Sicily. He went in Sicily in '39— in '69 with my father and my father was sick. He went to the hospital and then he met in the hospital, the veteran hospital...people that went to war with him in 1914—18. Then they, they met in the hospital and they says, "Hey, Giuseppe." He said, my father says, "Who are you?" They say, "Well, we were in the same regiment" They say, "We went there, there, there." "Oh yeah." And seven days after, he was here. A few years after, he was dead. And he didn't want to go back because he figured everybody was dead. He was 70, when he went there. He figured everybody was dead, but everybody was alive...he was dead. [laughs] You know?

JP: Is there anything that I missed, that I didn't ask--

EC: No, I don't think so. Maybe there's something that comes up. The one thing I'm going to do now...I'm going to make you photocopies of what I have, [points to his right in the other room] everything what I have and with the dates there. Like my uncle, I'm going to show you a picture after of my uncle, that 1911--

JP: Okay.

EC: He was a musician, all dressed in black with his hat.

JP: Okay, and then I'll show them to them in Toronto. And if there's anything that they would like to have digitized....

EC: You just have to tell me, you just have to tell me because...

JP: This is just to show them what you have...

EC: I'm going to show you everything and I'm going to have it done, then give it to you. Send it there and what they need, they can keep. What they don't need, they can send it back. If they want to keep everything, that's alright with me.

JP: Okay, and uh, is there any uh final remark you want to say like if you were to talk to a young person and something that they should know about that period of time in Montréal...and what would you tell a young person?

EC: Well, it wasn't—it wasn't bad. It looks worse than what it is. See even in Saint-Henri, it was looking—it was looking worse than what it is. None, none of his brothers went to war. Because the gentlemen, they worked for, it's [French] and they were doing uh, wartime work. They were doin' lamps for uh railroad. They were doing lamps for the uh...marine. They were working for the government, but instead of being up front, they work here and they had a good life. I mean, these guys here they, they had all the contracts from the railroads. From east to west, north, south. And all the boats that left here, they had to go there and get what they needed, lamps like for the mast, the stern, the harbour and this and that. We did all this. My, my four brother-in-laws, they worked there...shipping, receiving uh, foreman, building materials - they did that so they didn't have to go to war. But they were in war. Like those that went down to [unclear]. You know. I used to call them [unclear] but those that peeled potatoes all day long. And cook and clean the [unclear] so somebody had to do it. So they get the worse one or the one that

they didn't know what to do and they put them there. But, they served the army and everybody was happy in the end. So... [shrugs and laughs] I didn't go. I was too young. So that's why. But besides that well, we didn't have much—well, it started to pick up in '41 because from '33 from the day I was born— from '49 I was born in '33 in a shed. Uh...my grandfather used to own the house, but he had a shed because in those days we used to heat with wood and coal.

JP: What do you mean in the shed—

EC: A shed.

JP:-- you were born in the shed?

EC: Yeah, a shed like they have outside [points]—

JP: Yeah, and [unclear]—

EC: But it was a little bit bigger because my grandfather had his house over here, and uh...a bungalow, and then he had the, here he had his sheds that he put his wood and his coal and [lays out placement of each on the table with hands] and the chicken and the...and at the end it was like a garage, but it was made of tin. I was born there.

JP: How come you were born there?

EC: In that house. Because my mother got married and she had nowhere to go, so that's where I was born there.

JP: In that tin shed?

EC: Yeah, [and there were four of us.] I was the last one. So when it rained we had water.

[laughs, so does JP] When it rained we had water because it was leaking from the roof. So, and then we went and live on [Espelaide] and eventually we bought the house there on [Espelaide]...so we lived a few places. But not me, my brother, he lived on [Degaspe]—

JP: [And now your children are successful -- unclear as EC is still speaking]—

EC: My sister, my sister lived in the uh, in [Degaspe] too but I was born in uh, on [Espelaide] street. [Now in '66, '62...'67, '30]. [laughs] That was the shed.

JP: [unclear]

EC: All tin, all tin. [shakes his head] My grandfather used to make his Christmas tree, I didn't see it, but he used to put beer bottles as uh...*des boules de Noël*. [laughs] He had no money. But he owned the house there. He owned the house. Lots of kids but uh, lots of food, but uh lots of beer. [laughs]

[1:50:25.4]

JP: [laughs] That's wonderful. [pause] Do you think um...do you think uh...today, now that all is said and done, what can we do to honour these people and remember them?

EC: Only memory. Of course most of them, they're dead. We can only out of memory. You can make, you can build a monument you see, [to] their name, but besides that... [shakes head] there's nothing you can do. It's only memory for a few. If you talk to my sister she doesn't know ten percent of what I told you.

JP: Well I'm [unclear]...

EC: Because I go back to 1436. My, my family goes back to 1436. It's not from today. I have, we have a coat of arms. [points upstairs in the house]...that I can show you. And I have ah...my grandfather used to be the senator in Sicily from [Trapani] all the way to [Syracuse]. He was the, he was the man...the main man for all that section in 1436.

JP: Hmmm.

EC: So we had, my family we had [French – the barons] and today everything's disappeared. Because in those days you could sell your title for a few dollars. Well we lost, we lost, well you still have your dignity, but you can't go back to 1436. Here I go back [me] I go back to 1861. But from today—

JP: [The unification of Italy]—

EC: Yeah, I know, but from today though. If I go back there...I can go back. I can relate with my family since 1861.

JP: Who was in 1861?

EC: My grandfather. And my grandmother. Then after that I have a few. Like my grandmother's...my grandmother's mother's name, that I have, but I don't have the, I don't have the... kids and all that. But I'm working on that so, I went to uh, to Sicily and I'm looking for some of the people. I found some in, I found I have a cousin in France, in Germany, England, Argentina, Brazil...I have some in California, New York, uh...Dallas, Texas. I found them all and I have all their names and everything so...



JP: Wow.

EC: It's uh, I go back when I can find something [I go to there and I find it.] And five generations, six generations, still my cousins. Today, two generations and the third one doesn't count. That's the French people I tell them...that's the French culture. Italian culture... [waves hand] 40 years ago, 400 years ago, he's still your cousin. But I tell them we all have Roman, Roman blood eh? That's uh...they laugh when I say that. Roman, uh, you know they ruled the world for a thousand years— more than a thousand years so, everybody has Roman blood. [laughs] So, most people they're [all Italians]. [laughs]

JP: [unclear]

EC: Except Iraq with uh...Sadam Hussein. They have Muslim blood. [laughs]

JP: Mr. Cosentino, thank you so much.

EC: Okay.

JP: [I learned] so much from you.

EC: Okay, I laughed a little bit. If there's something you want to take out or...

JP: If there's something else that we forget--It's up to you.

EC: If I remember a few more things. [points to other room] But uh...

JP: You decide. But I think we're good 'til now—

EC: I think what I told you it's mostly my family; I have a little bit of on the outside. But most people when they come to see me because they need something. I tell them exactly what it is in my family besides that [them] they don't know. Because they uh...they're not interested. [shrugs]

JP: That's actually very—

EC: They're not interested what their grandfather used to do 1918, 1961 they don't know...they only want to know what's going to happen tomorrow. Nobody knows. [shrugs] You have to get ready. When you're over 70 you have to get ready, one day [lifts one finger] it's your turn. [Eventually we all have to go.] They going come to pick you up and you have to go. [nods and laughs] You know? You're born alone and you die alone. You don't bring nobody with you. And I don't think anybody come[s] back eh? People say "Oh, you come back." I don't think you come back. Because there's not enough people dead to make up for the ones that, that's born. Huh. When I was, when I was born there was 3 mill— 3 billion. Now we're 7 billion. Where do you think those souls—now you can't get the souls back. So...that's my [approach].

[1:55:02.5]

JP: That's it.

EC: And I'm a Catholic so...I'm Roman Catholic and I'm happy. Uh, I wish everybody could be like us, but you can't do it so...we let every religion do their time. Some they're good. Some they're bad, but it's not up to me to join them to, or me I stay with my pope--

JP: Well I think your family's given a huge contribution to Montréal. That's one of the reasons I wanted to interview you also. Because uh...besides building three of the, the strongest institutions we have here, like the church and the Casa d'Italia—

EC: That's right--

JP: and the, the scuola, here in Mile End and your—the contribution your uncle...and all your family members to the band, which really brought the community together and so many people enjoyed it. I mean he did a lot. He was a music teacher. And—

EC: Yeah, he did, he did--

JP: I think—

EC: [Unclear] teaching uh—

JP: Your family uh, uh, uh...is in so engrained in Montréal Italian history...

EC: Yeah.

JP: And that's why—

EC: Especially in "Small Italy". Cause after when they came, when they uh...in 49th uh...yeah 49, 50s, 60s, the new generation from Italy came, so well they came here to work and then they bought at St. Leonard. That used to be a French quarter before that [unclear]. They used to call it [unclear]. And then they changed to St. Leonard and then they had a French uh...mayor and he had [points at JP] "you have a company." "Yeah." And he says "What do you do - fences?"

Now you're gonna do fences here for St. Leonard." The guy used to say "No." "No?" [points to motion having to leave for answering no.] "You're not going to live in St. Leonard. Go home." So all the contractors they had to work for the city if they needed them. And that's how they became... [motions rising up with hands].

JP: Oh.

EC: Rich. Like they have today. Because all my [parents] are all there.

JP: I forgot to ask you, when did the band end?

EC: My uncle? 1961.

JP: And who took over the band?

EC: [Genti— uh Gentile] I think, it was his daughter.

JP: And but didn't, wasn't Gentile also in the band—

EC: Yeah, he was in the band but not in the band, he was outside the band. He Dieni, yeah Dieni—

JP: [unclear]

EC: Dieni, he had the band like this [makes a box shape on the table with fingers] he would play on the side. I never seen him play a tune. He had his trombone but I never seen him play.

JP: What do you mean on the side?

EC: On the side, he would never be with the musicians. Always on the side of the, on the side of the musicians. They would play; let's say there were six, six, six. [points to rows on table with finger] But he would be on the other side between the sidewalk and the band.

JP: Really?

EC: Not in the centre. Yeah, because he had to go here, he had the club, he had to go here, he had to go there...so he never played in the band. Always outside the band.

JP: And so then after...

EC: And then he had the club. People used to practice there. And uh, he was selling beer after like uh, everybody else and uh, and he had—

JP: So who took over the band officially after?

EC: His daughter.

JP: His daughter took over?

EC: Yeah, and then somebody else and then it disappeared completely. They still have it but uh— well I have all the music.

JP: [Is it the Dante] Gentile, that we have today.

EC: That's part of my uncle's band.

JP: That's what I was going to say, that's what what uh, what's left of your uncle's band.

EC: Well [if] there is some left. Because they were all old people in those days and most of them they're dead.

JP: I'm just saying that band is continuing—

EC: Yeah, they they try to but they can't do it. They can't do it. 'Cause they don't have—

JP: How's—

EC: They don't have a teacher.

JP: Oh...

EC: To have a band, even to have any musician...one, two, three, four, five, six, ten, 200...you got to have a band leader. That he has music and heart. If he doesn't have it, it doesn't work. It's not uh, today we have millions of the guitar players but [French] but they're not guitar players. Guitar players play with their five fingers and they hit off all the notes but then they go. Da-ding, da-ding, da-ding, da-ding [pretends to play the guitar by quickly strumming] and they sing, and they sing and they say [French]. [Shrugs] It's uh... [shakes head no]

JP: [unclear]

EC: That's why, uh, I work at [unclear] and sometimes they have uh concerts and they say [unclear]. [Unclear] they won't eh, this guy...last time we went I told [her] she said "What do you think?" I said, I if the band would play less loud you could hear the girl sing." [nods] She had a beautiful voice but I didn't hear nothing. I heard ba-bum, ba-bum, ba-bum, ba-bum, ba-bum, ba-bum, ba-bum. But uh...oh you know. I says the band; I say the player has to follow the one that's singing. But if you play higher than them -- you see [Celine Dion] sing and the band's sing higher than her? Huh? The band follows the singer. But them, the singer has to go after the, the band. So it's not good. So I'm a critic so [*ce n'est pas bon*]. So they look at me and sometimes she gets [unclear] [nods at someone else in room.] That, you know. When you've heard a band for so many years and you hear them play you can see right away someone has made something wrong. Because a note is a note and uh, you know, there's 128 notes. You can't have 129. 128. See that's all because uh there's black and there's uh white. There's more white than black, but when you double the black it makes it about half and half. [laughs] Huh.

JP: I think we're good.

EC: You want to see my father's hat? [moves to get up from chair]

JP: [unclear as camera fades out]

[2:00:55.7]

**[End of Interview]**