**Interview: Jess Succamore (JS)**
**Interviewer: Sean Griffin (SG) and Ian McDonald (IM)**
**Date: February 24, 2018**
**Location: Jess Succamore's home**
**Transcription: Cathy Walker and Jane Player**

**JS** [00:00:30] I was christened Frederick Haydyn Succamore on the seventh of December, 1931 in North Woolwich, England; that's in London, just in the dock area. My family called me Dave. You did one of those "you got to call it after your father" kind of thing.

**SG** [00:00:50] Right.

**JS** [00:00:53] All my family still refer to me as Dave. My brother Tom, he still referred to me as Dave, and everybody else does, except when they come to Canada. The guy I come with, Jack Barry, christened me "Jess". He had a nickname for everybody.

**SG** [00:01:10] Hmn.

**JS** [00:01:11] He had "Bum bum" for one guy. He had "Timber" for Bill Woods. "Lugs hindle" because he was hard of hearing. He had a nickname for everybody and I was called "Jess". After Jesse James, I was quick on the draw, you see.

**SG** [00:01:17] Oh, I see.

**JS** [00:01:24] Everywhere I went in Canada that first year, I would go and he'd be referring to me as Jess and I would say my name, but it would be Jess. That's how "Jess" started. I've never been able to get caught up on what they call me, never. That's the long and short of that part of it.

**SG** [00:01:46] That's quite a history for a name. In itself a long name.

**JS** [00:01:50] In itself it's different, anyhow.

**SG** [00:01:51] Did you have any, you had siblings, I presume?

**JS** [00:01:54] I had a brother, Tom, who was two and a half years older than me and I had a half sister. My mother died when I was, she was just 40 and I was just 13 and a half years old. She died the result of cancer of the lung in war work—cancer of the lung working with a degreasing agent. She never smoked or drank. That had an effect on me like any kid does. Then me and my dad become very close. My brother left Lancashire where we were raised, to go back to London where we were born, and that's that.

**IM** [00:02:44] What did your father do for a living, Jess?

**JS** [00:02:46] My father. He worked at all sorts of jobs. He was the first guy to ever drive a Caterpillar in Britain, by the way. They got it off the boat and nobody could move it and he drove it. He was a crane driver first after being a blacksmith's helper (striker in the old days, swinging the hammer). He worked at various jobs and then he went to work for the Royal Ordnance Factory known as the Woolwich Arsenal, for which the Arsenal Football Club is named, which very few people seem to know. That was in South Woolwich, just

across the river from where we were born. He started to work there, I think, just shortly after or just before I was born. He worked there right up to his retirement age.

**SG** [00:03:35] He presumably would have had union affiliation there.

**JS** [00:03:37] Well, he was—my dad was one of the, I think he was the head convenor as they called it then for the union.

**SG** [00:03:46] What was the union?

**JS** [00:03:49] Oh, God, I don't know. I did know that at one time. It was a union there that he was active in it, by the way, right up to the time he died, which I didn't know—we never discussed that. My earliest recollections of actual unionism would be at that time, the fact he used to go around and collect dues by hand. He had a little book, just like the insurance collectors used to come around in the old days—come round collect sixpence and you know write in the book.

**JS** [00:04:26] My first recollection was everywhere we went. I remember we went to Jackie's, my friend Jackie Spencer's father and every time we went there to collect the dues he'd always come out, and he always had something 'Fred this isn't happening' because my dad's name was Fred. He'd say, 'Fred, listen, what's wrong with this?' I remember, I can't remember the exact words I used, but I said to my dad, 'God, what's with all these guys?' They were all beefing, kind of thing.

**JS** [00:04:54] He says, 'Son, workman's got very few rights in this world. One of them is the right to beef. Never do anything to take away that right.' So that was my earliest recollections of unions. You know, what being a representative of a union was.

**SG** [00:05:11] I presume, a positive recollection.

**JS** [00:05:13] Oh, yeah.

**SG:** [00:05:15] Right.

**JS** [00:05:17] It was the same thing. My dad at that time, I remember like earlier, I suppose it wasn't directly with unions, it was about social conscience. We lived in North Woolwich and there was a Japanese mission, a Sikh mission and various missions for the seamen. All these come in the docks, and happened just down the bottom of our street.

**SG** [00:05:41] Was this in London or Lancashire?

**JS** [00:05:44] In Lancashire, no, sorry, sorry.

**SG** [00:05:44] In London.

**JS** [00:05:50] In North Woolwich, in London.

**SG** [00:05:50] OK.

**JS** [00:05:50] I should explain that. I remember guys with turbans and carrying an old sewing machine. My father said, 'See that guy?'

**JS** [00:06:01] 'Yeah.' He said, 'He's going to take that back to India.' He said, 'We throw that stuff away. That guy,' he said, 'will work and he'll make all these wonderful metal things out of it.' He said, 'Stuff we throw away, these guys.' He said it like some people would mock, 'See, look at them guys carrying that bloody junk around.' My father explained to me how industrious people were and how they could make things out of nothing, literally. It always impressed me the way he explained those sort of things to me.

**JS** [00:06:35] Grew up with all different people walking around there and it was quite common. He always taught me that racism was the biggest problem of mankind, you know, at that time. Them early days, I can remember that and I would be only about six, seven years old then and I remember that early. To get back, I should explain that when the war came, we was evacuated from London. Churchill that's done a lot of good things during the war. One of them was that he shipped all the kids out of London, all the Greater London, all the kids. My brother and I were bundled up. Pillowcases, everybody had pillowcases, stuck in extra shirt and pants and whatever it is, and the gas masks. We were taken up to the corner of the street and the buses all come up, took all kids down to the railroad station somewhere, and put us on a railway. We went out to Swindon, which is southwest of, directly west of London and to the west country there. I remember going to Swindon and all the kids saying, 'swindles, swindles', you know, that's all I can remember.

**JS** [00:07:53] Then we went from there on a train to, went north of there, about seven miles to a little village called Highworth, magnificent little place. Here again, that was just as the war was breaking out. I saw a cow for the first time. I saw the animals, horses. The only horses we'd seen in, where I grew up was we went to the zoo one time. You see the big Clydesdales, kept pulling the brewers' graze, usually. I fell in love with a bloody cow.

**JS** [00:08:35] Looking at this Jersey cow with the big eyes, it was something I'd never seen before. It was a whole different thing. I had a marvelous time, as a kid being in the countryside and that. I could talk for hours on that but I won't do that.

**JS** [00:08:53] After a while, about ten months or a year near as I can recollect, my father got his work transferred from the Woolwich Arsenal to up north in Lancashire to the filling factory, they called it. That'd be explosives, the biggest one in Britain at that time. Just filling the armaments with gun powder.

**JS** [00:09:17] He was working on experimental department up there. We first of all, told that we were going to go because being relocated up north where there's no bombing or anything, that we was going to be relocated up to Wigan, first of all. We got this message that we were going to Wigan. We'd heard of Wigan Pier; that was the butt of a lot of comedy shows. Wigan Pier, they would refer to it, but I never knew it was kind of like the Blackpool Pier, Wigan Pier, we didn't know the difference. Where my dad wrote from was Beach Avenue. Somehow we had in our minds Wigan Pier, Beach Avenue. We were going to the seaside.

**JS** [00:10:09] We went up to, what? Went in a house and the back yard. We was part of a pub like this and the pub was there and our house was joined to it. The back road wall was here and that was a colliery rook, the waste of old coal mines. The slagging, that's where it started.

**SG** [00:10:32] I see.

**JS** [00:10:33] Just a hundred yards down, that was what I was laying here. That was the pub. Down here was a canal, that leads to the Liverpool Canal. Fifty yards past that was the River Douglas, which is an open sewer. We were kids. We thought we were going to the seaside. That was a bit of a comedown, but we was there for about ten months, I think it was. My father bought a house in Chorley, which is about nine miles north of there, closer to his work. That's where I was raised, basically.

**JS** [00:11:13] I think in retrospect, when I look back being born in one place and people speak in one way, you know, the real Cockney, and then going out there where everybody talked real slow and the drawl, and then going up to Lancashire where my dialect is more now and meeting different sorts of people. I look back now and I think what a rewarding experience that was and how it makes you more acceptable and understandable to different people. I didn't know that going through life. It's only in retrospect I can look back and I think, Jeez, you know that and I was always taught to be tolerant of other people. My dad's influence on that. People are different and you've got to respect that.

**SG** [00:12:01] At some point here, you took apprenticeship training.

**JS** [00:12:04] Here's another thing I should explain. When I went from school in London, I was just like about seven years old at that time. I just got in school and I hated school. For some reason I didn't like school. We went from there to Lancashire and it was not like regular school because we were just put in a church basement and that. Then they'd take you out. I loved the walks out in the countryside and that was there. It was only there just getting used to that, remember, that we moved up to Wigan.

**JS** [00:12:43] Wigan was the toughest place I've ever seen all my life. You went to school and you'd have a—I first went to St. John's School and a guy comes up to me and says he's got clogs. People wearing clogs, I never saw that before. They weren't fully wooden. They were just like wooden soles and leather tops and quite common in Lancashire all through that time. A guy come up to me and he says, 'Give me them pencils.' You know, I had some pencils in my thing. Well, I'm not going to let him take my pencils, you know. He says. 'One, two, three, cockworthy; Thou wants fight, come to me; Six, seven, eight, daring fate. I'm come for thy chicken.'

**JS** [00:13:33] What that means is. One, two, three. I'm the cock holding you. If you want to, I'll fight. The ritual was, which I didn't know, never heard of it before, when he said, 'I'm talking now chicken, I'm the cock, you're the chicken.' He would tap you and you'd tap him and you'd tap one another harder and harder and finished up fighting. So the guy taps me and I said, 'what do I do next?' Hit him back, so bang I hit him back, and that was all over.

**JS** [00:14:07] That was my introduction to school on the first day in Wigan. It was strange. I found out then they would fight and use the clogs. Man, they'd kick you in the shins, in the ankles and stuff like that. We were foreigners, you know, treated because we talked different, looked different.

**SG** [00:14:24] Yeah.

**JS** [00:14:28] We had that same a little bit when we went to Wiltshire, but not as much as we did when we hit Lancashire and everywhere we go. Then we was only in Wigan for a short while and then we moved to Chorley. We had to go through the same ritual again everywhere we went.

**JS** [00:14:48] I just got going to school in St. George's in Chorley, and I was asked to sit, what they call a scholarship. The school system was there, you went to the public school. If you wanted to go to university you had to transfer to grammar school. You could only go to grammar school if you passed a scholarship.

**SG** [00:15:07] Right.

**JS** [00:15:10] I didn't know nothing about that. I was told I was supposed to be smart and I could write a scholarship. Remember, my education had not been consistent. I'd gone from one place to another place to another place. I knew I was in the fourth place, but I'm still only what ten years old, ten, eleven, ten years old. I take the scholarship. I took the bloody scholarship, but I had to take the one from London because civic politics, I don't know what the hell, it seemed crazy to me. I didn't understand it, but all the kids from St. George's were going to grammar school and all the ones in Chorley had already gone to grammar school and I'm still sitting my exam because I'm in a different time slot for London County Council. I passed the scholarship and then they took me to the grammar school.

**JS** [00:16:07] I think that in retrospect, I look at this again, that when I got there, for example, in French lessons had already started. I didn't, I missed the part where they said like "le" and "la" the difference was between the feminine and the masculine.

**SG** [00:16:26] Right.

**JS** [00:16:28] I had no concept of it, it was all synonymous to me. I didn't know the difference. I missed that part. In algebra I missed the first, why they using symbols. I'm getting into the situation where I'm starting on about the second or third rung of the ladder. I always hated school because I didn't know.

**SG** [00:16:49] Yeah, right.

**JS** [00:16:52] When I did ask questions, people would look as at you though you're bloody nuts, like an idiot. I never thought too much of it at the time because I was a very strong-willed kid, stubborn as hell. It's in later years I look back and why did I dislike school so much? Because actually I do like learning and discussing things and a very inquisitive mind still. That had an effect on me there. To finish, it was the product that had gone.

**SG** [00:17:23] Where did you make the jump to apprenticeship here?

**JS** [00:17:27] When I went to the grammar school, I finished it and I got a chance to go to work at Harwell, which is the atomic centre in Britain. I was really good evidently in sciences and stuff like that. I passed a special test they gave around to all the schools and they picked a select few to go to Harwell. My mother died during this period and it was very traumatic. She was in the house there. She was supposed to last about six months. She lasted about two and a half years.

**SG** [00:18:04] She had cancer?

**JS** [00:18:05] Yeah. I was very close to my mother, what happened was that—I don't want to lose my bloody train of thought here. What was you on there about?

**SG** [00:18:23] Apprenticeship.

**IM** [00:18:24] Apprenticeship.

**JS** [00:18:24] Apprenticeship. When I left school, I decided I'll go down to the Labour Exchange to look for a job and somebody says, oh, somebody's looking for an apprentice sheet metal worker, so try that. I went out to go out to this place and they hired me. Because of my education—everybody else left school in them days at 15, I was 16 and a half when I left grammar school—they credited me with a year because the apprenticeship in them days was seven years you had to do apprenticeship. I went to work in a little place called Farnsworth's.

**JS** [00:19:06] It was run by three guys that had worked together during the war on aircraft and stuff of that nature They opened a sheet metal business. Of course, after the war, all these cotton mills and all these different factories that had lain idle everything except for war work, the munitions, they all had to be renovated, air conditioning, the duct work and all of that. There was a plethora of different jobs to be done in the sheet metal industry and other industries too. I took to that and I done a lot of—I was very fortunate in that there was only about a dozen people there that worked in it. Every one of them, the guys, the three guys that run it, they picked all the best talented workers that they knew from these places. George Tomlinson was a marvelous template maker and Harry Platt was a bloody good guy. Initially, they were the cream of the cream. There was the three bosses that were all, two of them spoke, taught at night school, you know, classes for the City and Guilds stuff and all of that. They were very quick to stop everything and show you, explain things. We learnt how to do all the layout work and triangulation and stuff of that nature. It was interesting in that way. I worked there. Just before I come to Canada, my mother had died, as I say, and I was really getting really fed up. I didn't know what the hell—which end was was up.

**JS** [00:20:58] It was interesting, because a national pastime in Britain at that time was stealing lead.

**SG** [00:21:05] Oh, really?

**JS** [00:21:05] Oh, yeah. It was hilarious. It was, as I say, a national pastime of the old English movies. They often referred to that, and most people it would go over their head and wouldn't know what they were talking about. After the war, lead, the price of lead was there. There was all these old buildings that had been left to rot and they were going to be left to rot. They all had these heavy lead flashings.

**SG** [00:21:32] Right on the roofs.

**JS** [00:21:34] Everybody'd go up and steal the lead, go and weigh it in for a shilling a pound. I was working for about sixpence an hour and a pound of lead was worth two hours' work. We got into that and that was stupid. We got caught, like everybody else did. I'd just quit the bloody job just before it, finished my apprenticeship. Long and short of it was that's when I met up with Jack Barry, the guy whom I come to Canada with, and his father owned a scrap business. That was how I got to know him.

**SG** [00:22:10] That was the connection.

**JS** [00:22:11] Yeah, that was the connection. He was an old Croker and a Jacklin, but his father was an interesting character. The reason Jack wanted to come to Canada, his father had come to Canada as a young guy and he worked for Al Capone, running rum

across Lake Ontario. I didn't know this of course. I didn't know anything about it. I only found this later on. He went back to England for a while running rum. He went back there and started the scrap business. Jack, my friend Jack, wanted to emulate his father. Everything his father did, he wanted to do, so he wanted to come to Canada. I didn't know anything about that.

**SG** [00:22:53] Right.

**JS** [00:22:56] One night I'm out playing darts having a pint, my brother happened to be in the same pub, which was very unusual. We never drunk together or nothing. He was with his wife-to-be then. He said Jack was saying how he was going to go out to Canada in a couple of weeks time. I never thought nothing about it, Canada. We were playing darts, all having a few pints and, 'Look,' he said, 'He's looking for somebody to go with him because the guy that was going to go with him, a fellow called Alan Benson, had decided to become a policeman.' My brother said, 'Why don't you go with him?' 'Yeah, sure, I'd go anywhere.' I never give it a bloody thought. Then he was saying, so my brother gets talking to him. My brother was just coming out of the army then. He'd done his national service. My brother was thinking of emigrating either to Australia, South Africa or Canada. He's all keen for Jack to go to find out what it was all about. That's the long and short of how I come to Canada because I could go into lengths for about another half hour telling you about it. The fact is, just two weeks later, I finish up on the boat coming to Canada, rig arrived here on November the fourth or the sixth, I can never remember. I think it was the fourth, but I thought it was—I always thought it was the sixth, because that was the same day that we set up the Canadian Electrical Workers' Union. I thought all but ten years to the day that we set up that.

**SG** [00:24:30] This was the time when a lot of young men were leaving Britain to come to Canada.

**JS** [00:24:34] Yeah, they were.

**SG** [00:24:36] Why was that?

**JS** [00:24:40] In retrospect, here again, the old saying about 2020 vision. Yeah, great. I looked at that and I saw like when you look at "Downton Abbey".

**SG** [00:24:55] Mm hmm.

**JS** [00:24:56] And "Upstairs, Downstairs", some of them, which I kind of looked at.

**JS** [00:24:59] Right.

**JS** [00:25:00] I realized that they were very good in the sense that people come back from wars, the First World War and the Second World War, what they had before, they put their bloody lives on the bloody line. They weren't going to put up with this bullshit. That's why we got National Health. That's why the Labour Party threw Churchill out after being a great victorious leader during the war. I think that spirit was still there. In other words, after the First World War, I think people got over their "Yes, sir. No, sir. Three bags full." kind of attitude. That become more and more prevalent, I think, in retrospect, when I say it is in retrospect, when I can look back and see that change. That's why I think there's a lot of people.

**SG** [00:25:48] You felt that yourself, too?

**JS** [00:25:51] Yeah, to something there I just didn't see myself doing what everybody else did. I give you an example why I can say that. I used to walk down to school or ride my bike to work or whatever. If you went down Hindley Street, past Hindley Street or any other one of the streets down there, the Leyland Motors whistle would go, big horn or whatever it was for the Motors, and one would go, then 15 minutes later, another one would go.

**JS** [00:26:28] When that bloody horn used to go, you could walk down the street and you'd see all the doors open, and people would come out and they'd have their little tin cans under there, their thing and that, and walking down there. I'd see the guys waiting for the bus, the miners. Bang, they all walked down to the thing. They had their little Tommy tin under there. It's something to me, I never wanted to do that. I wasn't going to be regimented. I didn't want to work for anybody else. I didn't, just, something in me and as I say, I knew that then. As I got older, I never wanted to be regimented. I never wanted to work for the time clock and stuff of that nature, Even when I went to work at Lenkurt years later, everybody would be saying, 'Wait, wait, now at the back.' George Brown and I was the only two, and we were at the bloody clock, at the time it went, we were the first ones to clock in and out. Never did give a bugger about what anybody else said 'Oh, you can't leave your bench' so that's, screw that.

**JS** [00:27:32] When I worked up in the Yukon years later, they'd make a lunch for you, you know, we had to carry a lunch because we were working out in the bush. I'd always just take a brown paper bag. I could never take the tin can. Never would.

**SG** [00:27:44] Didn't want to be part of that I guess you could say.

**JS** [00:27:47] Something alien to me. The cookie cutter thing. I was always—no big deal. It's just the difference in our makeup.

**IM** [00:27:57] Jess, you missed your National Service?

**JS** [00:28:00] What happened there, it was hilarious because, you know, like most people back where I was from, National Service is something you never thought about. You were going to go in the army. My friends Billy Woods and Eddie Halliday just got in the army. I'm waiting to go in the army and we were all going to go. I tried to volunteer for the navy, but they wouldn't take me. Bloody, I had trouble with an eye. I don't know what I would have passed a medical anyhow because I was pretty blind in one eye, still am. What happened is, I didn't know that at the time.

**JS** [00:28:33] What happened is that when Jack Barry said to me, you come and we'll go to Canada. Of course, the next morning I wake up and he's banging on the door and I've got a hangover. He wants to drive to Liverpool to go to Canada House there to get a medical card for me. I thought, well, how am I going to get out of this? I said, I can't go, I've got to go to National Service. Remember this is, I got here in November 4th or 6th and when I arrived in Canada, my birthday was December the 7th, the following birthday I'd be 21. So this would be about three, four weeks before that. Three weeks before that. So I'm saying to him, 'Wait, I can't go. I've got to go to my National Service.' I didn't want to come to Canada. I didn't want to go anywhere at that time. You know, I never thought about it.

**JS** [00:29:27] When I went down to the Labour Exchange. Hopefully, I went in there to see that I couldn't go because then I could say to Jack, sorry, I can't go. I went in there and the guy behind the counter, he lived about three houses from me. I didn't know he worked there, but I only knew him to say hello to. He says, 'Hello, David, how are you doing?' I said, 'Oh well, I said, Jack, there is going to Canada in a couple of weeks,' I said, 'And he wants me to go with him.' 'Oh, wonderful,' he said, 'There's a lot of young people going to Canada these days. Oh, that's a very good idea.' he said.

**JS** [00:30:05] I said, 'Yeah, but I haven't done my National Service.' 'Oh,' he says, 'Well, have you got your call-up papers?' I said, 'No.' 'Well,' he says, 'you're free to leave.' I said, 'No, I can't believe that.' I said, because I knew I had my apprenticeship. I got deferred. You usually go in at 18. You deferred if you take an apprenticeship, till 21, and I said so I've got a week until I finished my apprenticeship before I have to do National Service. He said, 'Oh, no, no,' he says, 'As a matter of fact,' he said, 'if your apprenticeship, you only need work on 21. It'll be anywhere from three to six months before they contact you.'.

**JS** [00:30:44] Well, I was just crestfallen but I couldn't show it, so that's the long and short of it.

**SG** [00:30:50] Really.

**JS** [00:30:52] As it turns out, as I say, I didn't know at the time, but I most likely I wouldn't have passed the medical because, I didn't realize it at the time, I was nearly blind in this eye. I never even, never noticed it. The only time I'd ever realized later on when I used to box a bit, I used to get hit with big overarm rights. I can see better now because I've had some work done on it, not great in my eye, but I couldn't see, I couldn't recognize you, couldn't see anything with that eye there.

**SG** [00:31:20] So you came to Canada and you worked in a number of places and whatnot.

**IM** [00:31:23] In what year was that?

**JS** [00:31:25] 1952, when I come to Canada.

**JS** [00:31:29] Got off the boat in Halifax. I find out that Jack says, Oh, this friend, another guy that we knew, he knew better than I did, was coming on the boat, he'd come over on the Georgic, a boat called the Italia was coming over. Now, remember, nobody flew the Atlantic in them days. It was all liners. He said, we'll wait for him there. Well, I didn't have any money. We were only allowed to fetch about five pounds, I think it was. I think I spent it all on the boat. We get up there and the only people there to greet us was the Sally Ann and so they were very helpful. My buddy had some money in the bank in Montreal. He'd had it transferred there because we were headed for Montreal. But, we get off the boat in Halifax and the Sally Ann says, 'Well, why don't you—we could put you in the immigration place, you know.' 'So what's that?' They said it's down where people jumped ship and all that. They'll put you up there, so they made arrangements for us. We went there and we waited for a week for this other guy to come from our home town, meet up with him.

**JS** [00:32:50] That was when I first met a couple of guys. They were CSU guys, Canadian Seamen's Union, and they were talking and they're talking to us and we're chatting away. I would only hear say listening to them, because I didn't know, it's a new country, I was 21,

just short of my 21st birthday. That was the first—these guys were talking about the union, and they got put in there because they jumped ship or something, something like that, a ship dispute or something. They were held in there until something took place, I don't know. That was my first discussion and they were really nice guys. They left a bit of an impression on me at the time. I didn't know the Canadian Seamen's Union, I didn't know what that was, except it was the Canadian Seaman's Union. I didn't know the fight that was going on that period of time.

**JS** [00:33:46] We waited there for ten days. Then we, when Peter, he come over. We went from there to Montreal; stayed in Montreal for about six weeks; got a job there, a little place called Unique Steel, just on the south bank of the St. Lawrence. We lived in Longueil, it's just down the road. Walked down there, got a job there, and worked there until it was so bloody cold.

**JS** [00:34:23] We go to Toronto to be warmer. We had no concept of Canada and we just had no concept. My buddy said, 'You see these photographs of these people from Toronto and Windsor all in on their patio, dressed in shorts and that'. We thought we'll go to Toronto, it's warm. Yeah, big deal. We got there and we froze down there too.

**SG** [00:34:50] Now I want to jump ahead a little bit, to you to where you wind up in Kemano working on the transmission towers.

**JS** [00:34:57] What happened, we left there, went to Toronto. I went to work at A.V. Roe's building the safe 100s. I got on as a sheet metal worker there. I met a guy called Ken Gregory. He was from Bolton, just near where I was in Lanchashire. He said he was going to leave to go to work up in Labrador, Goose Bay, big construction work for the U.S. base there or something. He said, 'Why don't you come up there?' 'What are they doing?' He said he's got a job as a rough carpenter. My brother was a carpenter. My dad in a rough bit did a bit of carpentering. He convinced us, there'd be no problem, because he didn't know one end of a saw through another and he was going.

**JS** [00:35:45] We'll try that, so we went. We got in our little panel truck we'd bought and drove up to Montreal, and went to see about getting to Labrador. As we go to the employment exchange, it was down on Notre Dame Street in the west end of Montreal. The old Commissionaire, an old Irish guy says, 'What are you looking for, a job? 'They're hiring for jobs in Kitimat,' he said. 'If you'd done any ironwork and,' he said, 'They're really paying, $2.40 an hour.' $2.40 an hour, Christ I'd been working for about $1.25, what's this? So they said, 'Well, that's so,' he said. 'Well, go and see about that.'

**JS** [00:36:34] Here we're going to go with Gregory to see if we can get hired in Goose Bay, we finish up going up there. We got interviewed by a representative from Morrison & Knudsen, a big construction company, built Kitimat. We didn't know where Kitimat was. I knew where B.C. was, roughly, somewhere out there—no idea of how far it was. The long and short of it was, we got hired and the two guys I'm with, I said, 'I'm not going to work up high. I don't buy that.'

**JS** [00:37:05] 'Don't worry, we'll do it.' Oh, they'd been done, quite recently, he knew all about iron work and there's no problem. Well, I was a metal worker, but I knew I wasn't entirely green at that end of it. It was just this climbing up there. I didn't know. He says, 'No, this, every crew has got a ground, some to stay on the ground, some climb. You stay on the ground, we'll do the climbing.'

**JS** [00:37:25] Yeah, that didn't work out as planned. We got up there and neither of them would bloody move ten feet of the floor and not only that the other crew. I met—we went up there and a guy called Ray Walker, they called him "Sweetwalker", he's from Cumberland, a real nice guy. He got this crew and we were up there to build these towers.

**JS** [00:37:48] I mean I'm working in an oxford. I've got regular shoes, clothes like this. I'm going right up into Kildala Pass. Went to the bloody coldest, miserbalest places you ever saw. The first day I go there and I lost a shoe in the mud; I walked around with a bare foot. No kidding.

**JS** [00:38:05] I end up at the commissary. You could get all the stuff, first pair of Dayton boots and mackinaw and all that. I come out dressed like that. A real Canadian there after the first day. The thing is, we went out there and nobody would climb. There was about three or four guys, and Ray Walker says to me, 'Somebody's going to have to do this,' he said, 'Because if I go down there, he'll fire the whole bloody crew.' I said, 'I'll bloody do it today, but get somebody else.' Well, there again, that didn't work out so I finished up doing it. The interesting thing is there was two guys on that crew. One was Don Regan and Robbie Robinson. I don't know his first name. They called him Robbie Robinson. They were old CSU guys. That's when I really started to connect the dots and I got to talking to them. .They were talking about the union and the CSU and Hal Banks had been here and all of that stuff, like. I don't exactly what part of that they were discussing, but he was talking about it. He talked about their union like I never heard anybody talk about a union. Their union was, like Valhalla, kind of thing. They had real feelings for the union and the way they talked about it.

**JS** [00:39:23] That was part of my memory, mind, but I thought the IBEW this was great. We got free room and board. We were $2.40 an hour. They'll all double time, with all overtime was double time, and over 85 feet, everybody on the crew got double time again. You know, $7.80 an hour, something like that it was. All I could think was, God that's so many beers and find some beers. It was hilarious, you know. So that was that. That was my first, we was up there. It was a union job like, we knew that.

**IM** [00:40:08] Were you building the towers or were you stringing the lines?

**JS** [00:40:10] I was building the aluminum towers. Right on the top in Kildala Pass, right at the top. That was where my first initiation was, there. When the job finished at Christmastime, they opened the, that was in '53. Yeah, '52 I got here and that was the end of '53. I left there and went back to England for a holiday because Christ I come out of there about 15–1,200 bucks in my pocket. I paid Jack Barry back the money he'd paid for my fare over here. I didn't have the money to do it. Paid him off and I had about 1,200 bucks when he's—we got shipped back to Toronto. They shipped us out and back. I went back to England, come back here and walked around town. Walked my shoes off looking for a bloody job. Finally, I think it was the next time I went up there, I think it was '55. I could be wrong. I think it was '55. When the snow come down and knocked the towers down just below the ones that I had worked on up in the Kildala valley. The native people had told them that, by the way, the snow will come down and knock them down. Everybody laughed at them, you know.

**JS** [00:41:36] What happened, we got the job going back up there because I had experience on these aluminum towers. I went back up there and that's when I got my hand smashed up. They were building, the valley was here, going up to the top peak there, and all these towers that had got built, knocked down here, they decided not to rebuild them

from each side of the mountain, based on like the Capilano Suspension Bridge, only a lot bigger. It was from each mountain, they just strung it out there and had a catwalk 700 feet up there, 650 feet in the air, and on the insulators from there. They missed out all the towers below. I worked up there and got my hand smashed in a block up there. That was then, and the only other time, just to just jump ahead, I went back up there later, on the other side of went some snow, when the towers got knocked down, that was about '58, I think it was. That was the last time I worked up there.

**SG** [00:42:42] So you were there for quite a period of years.

**JS** [00:42:44] Oh, no, no. On and off, we'd just go up there and that. Of course in between then I'd worked elsewhere at other places.

**SG** [00:42:50] Jess, I'm just going to take a break here from the interview to see that blue light blinking at me, which tells me that the battery's about to go. Okay. I'll just change that battery and just going pause here for a sec.

**JS** [00:43:01] I don't know.

**IM** [00:43:02] Plan on maybe taking, you know, couple of breaks.

**SG** [00:43:05] Yes, absolutely. I just stopped it. That was stupid. It's going to be a little different cloud. That's their problem. No, they said actually it was fine to do that. So we're now—you're at Kemano and you've gone back and forth to various places to work. What were you doing sort of in between those jobs?

**JS** [00:43:39] Oh, Christ, I used to joke and I say I had about 45 steady jobs in all in Canada. I worked as a welder, a sheet metal worker, and I worked for the city waterworks. Interesting thing there. In '54, we walked around, couldn't get a job anywhere. I got a job on the city waterworks. You may remember they just put the Granville Street Bridge up then. They just opened in '54, I think it was when it opened at the beginning of '54 or maybe '53. There used to be Sweeney's Cooperage down the road by the old bridge, the old Granville Street Bridge. They were dismantling that and they were taking out a water meter for Sweeney's Cooperage. The water meter was about, must have weighed several tons, you know, it was a great massive thing, (12 inch black one), and we was working on doing all that, and there were some guys painting the Granville Street Bridge.

**JS** [00:44:47] I knew who they were, they worked for Bolshier. I had gone down there to see if I could get a job doing it. They just hired these French-Canadian kids there to go painting. They was working on the bosun's chair, painting the bridge, so I was aware of that. I saw these guys and thinking, Jeez, I could have been up there doing that. Well, as it happened, I was working there and we heard a scream and a shout and all that. We rushed over and there was a guy that had fallen off the thing. This where the bridge is built, the concrete footings and then the bridge is up. He'd come down and hit one of the concrete footings and then got into the water. I tried to, with the other people, trying to get him out, because I had boots on and clothes on. He went down and got stuck in the bloody mud there. By the time we got him out, he was dead.

**JS** [00:45:45] It was interesting because— I mentioned it only in this way—is that the next, I went in there and they gave me some coffee and warmed up and threw a blanket around me and drove me home. I lived just over in Kitsilano. We were over there ten years before the hippies got there. You know, in Kitsilano, Fourth Avenue I think it was. Next morning,

I used to walk along the railway line, you know, go from Kitsilano all the way on that railway line there to go to the Cambie Street yards and past the Sigurdson Mill and all the old Vancouver Ironworks, old places all went round there. You wouldn't recognize it today of course. I walked in, into the yard, just walked in, and all these horns, trucks, all the trucks lined up, tooting their horns, this, that and the other, toot, toot, toot, toot. I'm looking. Everybody's looking around to see what the hell's going on. Well, they treated me like a bloody hero. It was kind of silly, you know. It would have been different if the guy'd been alive. He wasn't. I never thought, I don't know, what's going on?

**JS** [00:47:09] A guy comes over and says, we want to go into the office. He took me into the office and the superintendent or somebody, I don't know who it was. It was somebody saying, how wonderful it was, a city worker doing this. I was kind of bit embarrassed. I didn't know what the hell he was all on at, making a big deal about. The guy says, 'We need people like you. You got a job for life here.' Well, I never thought much of that, a job for life. I hadn't planned on staying there for life anyhow.

**SG** [00:47:40] Right.

**JS** [00:47:40] I think it was three weeks later I got laid off.

**SG** [00:47:43] So much for the job.

**JS** [00:47:48] I thought it was hilarious.

**IM** [00:47:51] About this time you decided that Canada was going to be your home for life?

**JS** [00:47:54] Well, when I come back, when I went up to Kitimat, I'd never seen anything like that. It was so stark and clear. When you walk, like on the way up to Kitimat, flying up there in a little Norseman plane. I was just captivated looking at all this stuff here, you know, the islands. We went down to Sullivan Bay, put down there, and it was just beautiful and I look in the water and see these fish floating there. We went from there and there was snow, couldn't get through to Kitimat. We were forced down to a little village, Butedale, little fishing cannery or something.

**SG** [00:48:46] Yeah, there's a cannery there.

**JS** [00:48:48] Yeah and I was astounded you know. We set down at Bella Bella or Bella Coola, I could never remember which one we put down. You could see the lights that they had for the plane. We made about three stops on the way up there. I was just captivated by all this here and I thought, just amazing. Then coming back on the boat from up there, I come down under the Lion's Gate and looked up there. I think I'll stay here for a little while.

**JS** [00:49:17] That said, I had no inclination literally to go anywhere else then. I've been and around this area since, except for I went to work up in the Yukon in 1956 because that was the highest paid job in Canada, at $3 an hour, free room and board, climbing poles for the telephone line from Skagway to Whitehorse. In them days, there was no electronic stuff, it was all hard line. That was paid for by the American government because that was their link to Alaska. The White Pass and Yukon Railway, the narrow gauge railway, that was where we built, change the, put new poles in, new cross arms and transferred wires over and that. I worked on that for about five months up there. My buddy who I'd teamed up with from Birmingham, a fellow called Pat Connelly, he knew a guy called Gordon

Perry. Gordon Perry was a 1,500 metre runner who was one of Roger Bannister's pairs when he broke the five minute, four minute mile.

**IM** [00:50:34] That's right.

**JS** [00:50:35] Not that I remember these things, but—

**IM** [00:50:38] That's good.

**JS** [00:50:39] He wanted to go and see Gordon Perry run. Well, I was an Olympic fan. I was a boxing fan, a sports fan all my life. I thought that'd be a good idea. We'd talked about it. We come down here and, you know, I used to drink a fair bit in them days.

**JS** [00:50:59] Finished up half corned. Next up, the next day on the bloody boat, the Ocaides. Don't know how we got there. I didn't know nothing about it. I had a passport and the money. A buddy arranged it all. We got on a boat called the Ocaides and I woke up the next day.

**JS** [00:51:15] I honestly thought I was on the boat to Nanaimo because I'd been that trip once before. Because we used to travel from there on the Blackball Ferry, wasn't it then?

**IM** [00:51:24] Yes, I think it was.

**JS** [00:51:25] I think if I remember right.

**SG** [00:51:26] Yes.

**JS** [00:51:26] You'd get on at night and you'd get an overnight cabin and go wake up in Nanaimo or some bloody thing.

**SG** [00:51:32] No, that was the CPR ferry.

**JS** [00:51:34] CPR, I can't remember what, anyhow it was one of them up there. I remember we were doing that. A group of us went there for some reason. I can't even remember what it was about, but I remember going there.

**JS** [00:51:47] I wake up bang, bang, bang. It's the screws on the boat, you know, banging into the water. I looked and I thought Christ, they're all like waving. I'm on the boat to Nanaimo, and I said, hey, where are we going? The guy says, 'Honolulu'. I'm a little mixed up. That's where my friend, Pat Donnelly come in. 'You drunken sod, you know, get up'. So went up there. Anyhow we finished up going to be put down in Hawaii. We was there for a day or so. Could tell you a lot about that.

**JS** [00:52:25] We finished up in Fiji for a day or so. I had a great time there, met up with some guys, went to a little village off the beaten track. Met a guy there, saw a guy jump in the high jump stand in the middle of little villages, little grass huts and all that. My buddy jumps over it. The guy comes out, says 'Oh, he says,' We're chatting away. It turns out, I'd met this guy when he was in Vancouver. He asked me directions, the guys from Fiji, there was only three of them, I think, it was three or four of them. He remembered me and I remembered him, met him right on by the Hudson Bay corner, right on the Granville and Georgia there with me. Strange, eh?

**SG** [00:53:07] Yeah.

**JS** [00:53:08] That's a coincidence. It doesn't mean anything, but it was interesting. Then we went to New Zealand. The idea was the boat was only—we only could get passes to New Zealand. We thought, well we've got lots of time. We'll look around New Zealand for a while and then go to Australia for the Olympics in Melbourne, and never did get there.

**SG** [00:53:32] Really.

**JS** [00:53:32] I spent a year to the day in New Zealand, got there on the 25th I think it was and left on the 26th of September that year. It was a great experience. I really enjoyed it. Here again, I like New Zealand and I could have stayed there, but I got a phone call. The police come and rousted me out of the place I was staying. They'd had an alert out for me. My brother was trying to contact me. His wife Elsie, who I grew up with, and we, I was best man at their wedding and all that stuff. She was having a serious miscarriage, and she was, they didn't expect her to survive at the time. Tom, I phoned him immediately when the cops got hold of me, and he booked me a ticket to come back to Canada.

**JS** [00:54:25] So I went down to the places. In them days you didn't pay as you earn, income tax. I can't remember exactly what it was, but if you left within a year, you didn't have to pay some health things or something or other. I didn't even care about it. They said go down and see, you've got to get a clearance anyhow to leave the country. I went to this place, I forget what it was. It was in Wellington. She said, 'Oh, yeah.' She looked at the things and she said you've got a rebate and give me about £45 or something, which I didn't have to pay because I was leaving in a day.

**SG** [00:55:10] So that's within a year.

**JS** [00:55:11] I said, oh yeah, that's great. When I flew back to Canada, as soon as I got into Vancouver, I phoned my brother. Elsie's out of danger, no problem at all.

**JS** [00:55:25] I looked around and my old friend Ernie Fulton, I looked up Ernie and we used to stay at 1656 Pendrell Street, all of used to use that as our—an old English couple had a house down in the West End there. Ernie and I went over to Victoria and got a job for the Power Commission. It was the transmission line they were building from Dawson Creek to Fort St. John. Ernie and I went up there. I taught Ernie how to climb a pole on my way up there, and that's how we finished up there.

**SG** [00:56:07] So are you still carrying your IBEW memberships along with (unclear )

**JS** [00:56:13] No, I was a member then, at that time and I kept my membership up. I kept my membership going all the way through to the Lenkurt deal.

**SG** [00:56:23] Yeah.

**JS** [00:56:23] I'd worked after that. What happened was that I worked on the pipeline, different jobs and different things. I didn't know at the time, but Local 344 would send me, sent me out at a job when they had members out of work. I didn't know about that. It was a real crooked outfit, you know, and that's how some of us got to go up to work on those breakdowns on the powerline. The guys would be paying dues. They'd send us up there and get us permit dues, while there was members out of work. I didn't know that. It was only years later I found out.

**SG** [00:57:03] That bring in more dues for them? They had permits.

**JS** [00:57:04] Oh, yeah. They'd have the guys been paying their dues that was out of work and send us out there and get us paying dues. I didn't know any of that. If you ever looked at Jack Ross and Les Scranton you'd know, should have tumbled to it a bit earlier. In them days, I always looked on union officers, which I still do, by and large, as nothing like a priest or nothing like that, but somebody I respected that they were there to serve the working guy.

**SG** [00:57:36] Right.

**JS** [00:57:36] I always had respect for them in that position. It was not like a lot, I wasn't cynical about it at all.

**SG** [00:57:45] At what point do you end up in Phillips Cables?

**JS** [00:57:48] Well, what happened was that, I bummed around, staying with different people living in hotels and what have you. Then I started with a Scotch couple down in Pacific Street. There are still the old heritage houses, you know, the little old heritage houses. I lived in three of those four, different ones. I got a job with Phillips Cables.

**SG** [00:58:17] Was this through the IBEW?

**JS** [00:58:19] No. I just happened to be walking around. I just went and knocked on the door, as I always did and see if there was anything. I got hired there. I didn't know, I was working there for a short while and they went on strike. You don't mind if I inject a little humour?

**SG** [00:58:43] Sure, go for it.

**JS** [00:58:45] I wasn't involved, except it was 213 there, but it was in the industrial sector and I don't think I'd been to a union meeting then, because I'd just gone to work at the plant. I knew the IBEW and respected that end of it. The guys were in negotiations.

**JS** [00:59:07] I was having trouble with— the first time I ever really realized I had trouble with a hiatus hernia, which had plagued me all my life. I didn't know what it was, but I just, and a doctor put me on a bland diet. I got constipated. I had never been constipated in my life. I'm working this coiling machine, coiling stuff for the BC Telephone Company. It was a bloody big spool and I'm in pain and a fellow called John Brecke who was our health and safety guy. I said, 'I've got this bloody pain.' He says, 'Oh, you're constipated.' Talked to him. He says, 'Here, I'll get you some stuff.' He come back and give me some Epsom Salts. Now I didn't know about Epsom Salts, I'd heard about it and all that. It didn't taste very good. He says, 'You'll be okay,' he says, 'But don't go too far away from the toilet,' he says. I said, 'Why?' He says, 'Well, you'll feel it.' He left and man, I felt it. I rushed. Well, I tell you, not to get gory about it, but I exploded in there in the right place, fortunately, you know. It made one hell of a noise. I'd never suffered anything like that in my life, so I must have been in there for it seemed like ages and ages. I got out of there and I was really feeling wiped out. There's not a soul in the bathroom, thank God. I go out and wash my hands and that, walk out in the plant and there's not a soul there. It was quiet and I thought, Holy Christ I scared everybody. I thought I'd—the explosion I thought. I passed through a line, and I looked around and I was, what's going on? I didn't know but

there'd been negotiations upstairs, and they come out and shut everything down. They broke off; they went on strike.

**SG** [01:01:01] And you're in the can.

**JS** [01:01:02] I was in the can, so anyhow, I digress. I was at Phillips and we went on strike.

**SG** [01:01:09] What year was this?

**JS** [01:01:10] That would be 1962.

**IM** [01:01:13] Yes.

**JS** [01:01:14] Yeah. because we got married. I got married in '63. I come home one night from Phillips Cables and some people that was friends of this Scotch couple and another Scotch guy from Edinburgh, Frank Scott. His spouse, my wife's sister as it turned out to be, was there and his wife had gone into hospital having another baby, so he was staying in the house where I was staying. I get off shift. I come in, must have been twelve o'clock at night or something like that. My wife walks in with this guy just brought her in. She'd come to babysit her sister. Her sister was taken into the hospital a couple of days early, so she'd no place to go. She's there in this room and I just saw her and that. I just come in from work with Phillips and I said, okay. I always jokingly tell my kids first night I met her, she slept in my bed. I didn't, but she did. She went in there and so I met her. I was working there, but I was on strike a couple of days later, was on strike. Long and short of it was, we were going to get married, we decided. Of course, we was on strike and she got something wrong with her tonsils or some bloody thing, and we delayed it. We got married the following year. I was on strike when we got married. So I was working at Phillips Cables.

**SG** [01:03:01] How long did that strike last?

**JS** [01:03:03] Oh, it lasted several months, four or five months.

**IM** [01:03:05] And you found that Local 213 the IBEW wasn't paying?

**JS** [01:03:12] This is the genesis of my eye opening to the union, the fallacy of the big strong union. We was on strike there I think it was four and a half months. We never got a penny from the International. I started to look at the bloody constitution and that, and, I by the way, I started doing some installing some storm and screen doors. A guy told me you could get some jobs doing that. I reported every penny I got to the strike people, always. We got about $15, $20 from the local and other people—never a penny from the International. When I looked in the bloody International constitution, it said: 'The strike fund shall be maintained at no less than $2 million', I think it was, if I remember, words to that effect. So the guy says, 'Well, it's just down below that.' 'So what's that got to do with it? That means they've got to replenish it.' He said, 'No,' I said, 'Well, that's like a guy going to the doctor and saying, 'Doc, I've just been bit by a poisonous snake.' And the guy saying, 'Well, I'm sorry, we've only got one antidote serum here, and we've got to save that for an emergency.' You know, I said, 'Come on.' That stuck with me.

**JS** [01:04:40] Later on, I never got rehired. Several people didn't get rehired after the strike, because after the strike, they didn't hire everybody back. Ted, the Personnel

Manager told me that any time I was looking for a job, as soon as they were hiring, I could get hired anytime. So I never thought any more of it.

**JS** [01:05:01] I went in doing and installing doors and stuff of that nature. What happened was that—let me see—when I didn't get to work there, I went to work at Lenkurt. I worked at Lenkurt for a while. I didn't go into construction because I was married by this time.

**JS** [01:05:25] Right.

**JS** [01:05:25] I was trying to get work in town. I went and got a steady job at Lenkurt, worked there for a few months.

**IM** [01:05:32] You start going to union meetings then.

**JS** [01:05:34] Just occasionally. Here again, just by chance, it was the same union. It was not by design.

**SG** [01:05:43] It wasn't by design.

**JS** [01:05:43] By the way, I was still paying my full dues. I kept paying my full dues. I was the only A member. They had an A member and a BA member, I think it was. They told me I didn't have to pay the rest. I said, it doesn't matter to me. I just carried on paying. I always do and still do think, the best investment anybody can make is their union dues. I never got hung up on that end of it at all.

**IM** [01:06:08] What did you think of the assistant business agent for Local 213? The guy responsible for the manufacturing section was John Morrison.

**JS** [01:06:16] John Morrison, yeah, and he was a bit of a chancer. I used to listen to him at sometimes and I had a real run in with him. I can't remember exact details of it.

**IM** [01:06:31] '65 actually.

**JS** [01:06:33] Yeah, that was later on when I had a run in with him and I started to see some of these guys that they weren't the sort of character people that I thought they were. When I went to work at Lenkurt, I quit there because it wasn't my thing just doing the same old thing over, spot welding or setting up a machine. I just decided I was not cut out for that. So I quit there.

**IM** [01:07:05] It was repetitive work, eh?

**JS** [01:07:06] Yeah. That's where I met George Brown. George Brown and I had something in common. I was a real boxing fan. His brother was Jackie Brown, who was the British Empire titleholder at bantamweight, and fought Guillio Lloyd, for the world title.

**JS** [01:07:26] I had a real rapport with George, and occasionally I would pick him up and drive him to work when his wife wanted the car. She was a standby teacher or something like that, a teacher on call, you call them now. Occasionally I'd go and drive him to and from work. We used to have a lot fun with George that way. He worked in the metal shop just alongside, right in the tool and die section, and I worked in the metal shop just alongside it. So that's how I got to know him.

**JS** [01:07:59] I quit there and I got, I still got some cufflinks and that. They give me some really nice things when I left there. I was really surprised. They always give people a little going away present. I got some quite nice stuff, some Alaska black diamonds and a tie pin all that stuff, quite expensive. That was there. Then about, I can't remember exact dates, but I know that it was in 1966. The door business had just dried up over Christmas. In that time, nobody's putting in storm or screen doors on then. They've either put them on before Christmas, or they're going to wait till after. So I'm sitting there thinking, Jeez, I've got to make some money some way, and the phone rings. It's Wally Westerman, the foreman from the metal shop. And he said,

**SG** [01:09:05] At Lenkurt?

**JS** [01:09:05] Yeah, Lenkurt, where I'd left there, some months, six, eight months or at least before. He said, by this time I'm thinking, Jeez, I should have stayed with them. I got married and had bloody kids and all this stuff. Jeez, I should have maybe looked for a steady job, but up until then I never had to give a bother too much about steady employment or nothing. I started to realize I've got to change my ways a little bit.

**JS** [01:09:36] I get this phone call and he said, 'How's things going?' I said, 'Oh, pretty good. Not too bad, no complaints, you know.' He said—I'm thinking why the hell would Wally phone me? He'd hardly ever talked to me when I was in there, the bloody place, you know.

**JS** [01:09:51] He said, 'Have you ever thought about coming back here?' I said, 'No, not really.' Which I had. It was amazing. I said, 'Why?' He said, 'Well,' he says, 'I've got a position,' he said, 'that you might be interested in.' I said, 'Oh yeah, what's that?' He says—I said, 'Well, I remember saying aren't you in contract negotiations?' 'Oh, yeah,' he says, 'but don't worry, you wouldn't be in that.' He said, 'I want you to come back as a supervisor in the metal shop.'

**JS** [01:10:29] Now, I'm looking for a job. I needed a job. I dreamed about going back there for a couple of weeks. I'm was just trying to—so I said. He says, 'Is there any chance you can get [unclear] does it matter?' I said, 'Well, as a matter of fact,' I said, 'Wally,' I stretched things a bit, I said, 'I've got a call out that way this afternoon.' He said, 'Would it be OK if you drop in?' Which, I didn't have a call there at all. I just didn't want him to think that I was desperate or nothing. He says, 'Oh, that'd be great.' So I went out there and got hired as a supervisor in the metal shop, which just, like a lead hand kind of thing. They were doing some experimental welding, soldering, and silver soldering different parts and all that, they were having trouble with them, which I helped to cure, by the way, I did cure it. But that's the by bye.

**JS** [01:11:26] I was back there only for a few weeks when the bloody dispute took place. All I knew about it was that there was a foofaraw coming. If there was a strike, there was a strike. I'd been through it before. I didn't—I wasn't involved emotionally or any other way. If it took place, so I thought, I'll get a job someplace else. That's what I thought. Things turned out and changed my life completely, because—

**SG** [01:11:49] You weren't at this point really invested in the IBEW, you were—

**JS** [01:11:52] No, no more than anything else. By then I realized that I could only get work there when they needed me and I wasn't like a wireman, they'd got more steady job. I

wasn't—I was only a construction lineman. I never tried to pass myself as a journeyman lineman.

**SG** [01:12:10] Your union membership was sort of incidental to the job.

**JS** [01:12:13] Yeah. I always kept me in good standing. It was just a matter that, well, why wouldn't I? You know, I wasn't trying to be cheap about the union. I didn't care. I supported the union. I thought I—my background from my dad always knows that the unions can't survive without bloody dues and so I, it never never become an issue with me.

**SG** [01:12:36] This changed your life here.

**JS** [01:12:37] Well, it certainly did, because what happened is circumstances and events, changes which have been recorded, Ian has recorded them quite well, is that I got involved there. And then, like the catalyst was that, when the international moved in and usurped the power of the labour movement to support the workers, and the issue, the collusion of the government and the union headquartered with the employer and using the court and all that. It was the invasiveness of it, the injustice of the situation got me involved. I could have still then said screw that and walked away.

**JS** [01:13:30] When I looked at all them bloody women, and what had happened leading up to that was when they had an agreement with Mark Swails, who was the vice-president, and he'd agreed there'd be no overtime, because women were asked to work overtime. A lot of them were single parent mothers. They had no way of, they couldn't just drop; they had to get home to look after their kids. I'd go in the car with them sometimes and I'd hear them talking about it and that. I'd think, Jeez, you know, I was empathetic to them. I understood the problems they were facing and that really got me going. I was mad. I could have told them shove it, gone and got a job someplace else. Didn't bother me. What happened is when they started to fight, I thought, I'm not going to let them down. I'll stay with them. That's how I got on the hook there. One thing led to another, led to another.

**JS** [01:14:28] When the betrayal came, it was Ian's father, Les McDonald who stood up at the meeting, and said, you know, he gave a really eloquent speech, he was a great speaker. He talked about the need for having our own bloody union controlled by the workers and all that. Calling on my memory of the old Canadian Seamen's Union guys, having been aware of how the union had been smashed. I knew a little bit about the Ironworkers being smashed. I didn't know a lot, but I knew that the pieces were starting to formulate. What he said made complete sense to me. That was on the Tuesday, I think it was. On the Wednesday, we called another meeting. We get there, and of course as I thought had happened as Ian pointed out to me, the Party then influenced his dad and others to say that's not the way to go. George Brown then became the leader of the voice to carry on.

**JS** [01:15:42] I supported him. George Brown was the leader. A lot of people try to rewrite history and say that it was me. It wasn't. That would be a complete fallacy. I was there as a supporter. What he said made sense. What his dad said made sense. What I'd learned about the union movement, and the more I found out about it made sense, to have our own union.

**JS** [01:16:03] I've never been a flag-waving nationalist. I'm a true internationalist. I abhor nationalism for the sake of nationalism, but I do recognize that we have to have a country if we're going to participate in things on an equal footing with everybody; not looking down

on anybody and not looking up at anybody. One thing I like about Canada is just like my dad taught me, 'Nobody's any better than you, but you're not better than anybody else.' Basically, that was the basic yardstick. When I look at our kids winning Olympic medals and that, they're really good. As a complete aside, when I look at what's happening in Florida right now and I see the young people standing up, fighting against this bloody gun mayhem they've got there, that's what I feel is just marvelous. Young people are picking up the torch, you might say, and fighting for what's right. You get inflamed in that way and also you got to remember in the sixties and seventies, there was a real fight going on in Canada for national identity. Things were different, and I thought that all those things seemed to make sense to me.

**SG** [01:17:28] I want to take you back to that meeting that you held. After, there was a meeting of the Boilermakers Hall where Ray Haynes and others were there and so on. Then you had a subsequent meeting where you had discussed setting up the Canadian Electrical Workers' Union. Can you give me a recollection of that meeting and how you proceeded from there?

**JS** [01:17:49] Well when we got to the meeting, I can't even remember who bloody chaired the meeting, to tell you the truth. I know that Jack Codey was there and Tom Constable was there, I think. There were some people from the Gas Workers. Les was there, of course, and George Brown, and Donna Pooghkay. There were quite a few of the Lenkurt people there. I can't remember, I imagine there were about 40 people there, I think, give or take. I can't quite remember. I think something like 40, 45 maybe. Things were said back and forth and all that. George Brown gave a really good speech. All the Lenkurt people were all right, and a lot of the linemen too. I remember George Angus was there and a few of them and Dave Unger and Johnny Woods who were self-avowed Maoists. I used to, I still don't care about the name labels people had on them.

**JS** [01:18:59] I didn't give a damn about labels, never have done. I've always felt when you're dealing with people, nine times out of ten, they'll forget about the labels and they'll do what's right. People say, you got to watch this guy, you got to watch that guy. He's a Trotskyist, this guy's a CPer, that's guy's a this, a Maoist. We had a meeting there and I'd say that's all the different groups and 45 people, not six different groups. I couldn't care less. Just do what's got to be done, you know.

**SG** [01:19:29] What were you actually considering on the table at that meeting? What was the?

**JS** [01:19:33] Well, they said we'll set up a Canadian Electrical Workers' Union to basically replace the IBEW with a decent union. That's what I understood it to be. That's all it was. As a result of that, I said to them, look, if you set up the bloody union, (I didn't know anything about setting up unions, if you waved a wand and they appeared or what) I said, 'You do that. I'll organize the first place for you. I'll organize Phillips Cables place. Because I felt that those guys know firsthand that this international bullshit is a fallacy.

**JS** [01:20:14] They never got any. We always knew that they'd use the strike funds. You need a big strike fund to fight a big company. I didn't think that would wash with the Phillips workers and so I just cavalierly more or less said, do that. You set up the union and I'll do it. When I went to the founding meeting on November the sixth, 1966 down in the basement of a church, in the church basement on Ingles Avenue. I lived on Ingleton Avenue later, as it turned out. I went to that meeting and I think it was 17 people showed up. There'd been hundreds that showed up at these other meetings, you know.

**SG** [01:20:59] Right.

**JS** [01:21:01] What happened is that we set up the meeting and I just took a job on the executive. We set up the executive. I was just an executive board member, but I agreed to be the organizer for the first plant.

**IM** [01:21:15] So who is the driving force then behind the CEW you and—

**JS** [01:21:18] George Brown.

**IM** [01:21:20] George Brown and so—

**JS** [01:21:22] And Donna Pooghkay. Definitely.

**IM** [01:21:26] So George the philosophy was—what was the underlying philosophy of the CEW, just simply not to be an international union?

**JS** [01:21:35] Well to build a decent Canadian union that was a good. It's got to be a democratic Canadian union. You've got to understand that George knew far more about it than I did. I didn't know nothing about it.

**JS** [01:21:48] George Angus knew a fair bit. He was a pretty well, astute guy. He took that job knowing full well he was going to get the wrath of God from the IBEW. He was the president, George Brown was the Vice-president, and Donna Pooghkay was secretary-treasurer. We were there and the first thing we had to do was set about. Here we had a bit of paper saying we'd set up the thing. An old friend of mine, Jim Taylor, another old trade unionist from Britain had written the first minutes. Him and George conspired to (not conspired, wasn't what they did) what to do, and they did it.

**JS** [01:22:25] I didn't know anything about setting up a union or anything about that. We put some motions on the floor, passed and all that. I was going along with the crowd, kind of thing. We had this union.

**IM** [01:22:39] So truly a Canadian nationalist movement.

**JS** [01:22:41] Yeah. By the way, we were all internationalists. These people used to brand us as, you know, 'heil nationalists', you know. No, we were true internationalists, but we felt, the only way we could participate is on equal footing. That's how we started off there.

**JS** [01:23:08] From then on, the idea was to get established and get recognized by the labour board. We'd heard, George had told us then, and we'd had some communication with the Pulp Workers. We knew some of the rigmaroles that we'd have to go through to get certified. You know, recognized. I made some contacts with the guys at Phillips Cables. After a while I was able to make some breakthroughs. We signed up a majority there.

**IM** [01:23:39] Did you get help from the new Paper Workers Union in Nanaimo, which was the union at Harmac?

**JS** [01:23:42] That that would come a bit later.

**IM** [01:23:44] OK.

**JS** [01:23:46] During that period I went to some meetings down to 505 Hamilton Street where Tommy McGrath, the remnants of the old Ironworkers, they were still fighting, still in the courts and they've been smashed, but it was still in the courts and a whole bunch of old socialists, communists, whatever you want to call them. There's everybody there from old Bagpipes Campbell, to a guy called Frank Izzard, Jack Greenhall who was very active in the labour movement and his wife Rhoney, and old Maggie Black was there and a woman Olga Simpson, and God Almighty, Alex Ferguson, one-armed Alex. He was nearly blind at that time and one-armed. They were all motley crew of old socialists. They were all of them, more or less, given up on each of the parties that they'd belonged to, what they did, as my understanding was. They were all, had been supporters of McGrath and his fight. They had formed this Committee for Canadian Unions, which I didn't know anything about until then. I used to go every Sunday we'd have a meeting down there.

**JS** [01:25:04] They were a bloody inspiration to me. They were all old timers and I listened to them and I found out about some of the bloody struggles that they've been through. I thought, Christ if these guys can do that, what the hell?

**SG** [01:25:14] Did George Brown take part in these meetings too?

**JS** [01:25:17] Oh yeah, George. He was the one who got me going and that's how I got to know Tommy McGrath very well. We become friends. As a matter of fact when Tommy died, I was the first person they phoned to see if I would speak at his funeral. I spoke to the meeting before that for McGrath, they had before he passed away. I don't know if you were there, they had one when they found out he was not going to make it. I spoke there and at that meeting there, I remember talking about 505 Hamilton and all these meetings. McGrath called me over and he said that was the highlight of the night there, and that he remembered all these guys. I'll never forget those people because not one of them wanted anything for themselves.

**SG** [01:26:10] No, that's true, that's true.

**JS** [01:26:12] As I say, I got the most. Some of the people that disappeared, I disagreed with, and they would write things that were wrong. I never criticized anybody on the left. Not once, ever. I always figured there's enough people bloody doing that without me doing it. I never have done and I never would. I just say, we've got differences of opinion on it. I always figured everybody on the left had their heart in the right place. Their head might have been up their backside at times. That's fair enough, maybe mine was too.

**SG** [01:26:47] The constitution that you folks wrote for the CEW seemed to be at the time a really pioneering document.

**JS** [01:26:52] Oh, yeah, definitely.

**SG** [01:26:55] Real rank and file democracy.

**JS** [01:26:56] Yeah, what happened, it's very interesting, that is, because most people are not interested in that. These are the things where I come into the picture more and more, was the technical side of dealing with the labour board for getting the union recognized, and having that responsibility.

**JS** [01:27:16] In the constitution you know, how do you have true democracy, cut out the bureaucracy and all of that? I had a lot of discussions and it was trial by error, but we set up the Canadian Electrical Workers Union, a good union, and very democratic. Then we merged with CAIMAW. One of the big problems we had with it, aside from the fact that they lied to us about the size of the union, and the finances and all that, which wouldn't have affected us anyhow if they had been level with us. What happened was that we looked at their constitution. Literally what they'd done is took the old IAM constitution and put Canadian on it, just like a lot of, some of the new Canadian unions did. They just took out the name, like the Autoworkers did basically when they set up. They just took out the UAW and put the CAW in. I was to help to rewrite that later on. I tell you, we had a big influence in the CAW and democratizing the union there.

**JS** [01:28:21] At that time, when we joined CAIMAW, in 1969, December the first, the merger was effective, I stepped out of it and I've got some notes here that you can have a copy of. What I did was say, I got to get out of it. I was badly in debt. I had two young kiddies then and was expecting the third one. I had to sell my house. I sold my house originally in Marpole, moved to Burnaby, used the equity in that to keep me going. I was going in the hole again. I had to borrow money off a couple of my friends. I borrowed $500 bucks here, not a lot of money, but it was in them days, you know, and another five, $600 there. That's how we kept the union going. As I see in my notes, I never drew a penny from the CEW at all.

**SG** [01:29:14] Through the CEW?

**JS** [01:29:21] Yeah, right. I never drew a penny in wages. It was all voluntary contribution because I was—I didn't want any ties. I wanted to help them get going because I never envisioned myself cut out to be a union officer or nothing like that, the farthest thing from my mind. I wanted to support other people. Anybody was there was good enough for me if they wanted to do that.

**SG** [01:29:44] How were you earning a living at this point?

**JS** [01:29:47] I went back installing screen doors.

**SG** [01:29:49] Oh, I see.

**JS** [01:29:52] What happened is that during that period I couldn't get a job anywhere. My name Succamore stands out like a cockeyed carpenter's thumb, you know. Jess Succamore. I'd been in the newspapers a bit and they passed it around and the employers it was obvious. When I went back to Phillips to get a job before we started to organize it, they knew that we'd set up a Canadian Electrical Workers' Union. The personnel manager was a real nice guy and he said, 'I'm sorry, you're in with this—you started this new Canadian union.' I thought, how the hell does he know? I'm going to be a fifth columnist, and mole my way in. Well, there the very guy, he says we can't hire you because you're involved in that.

**JS** [01:30:39] I had a hard time there, but installing these storm screen doors, that left me free doing some work for the union.

**JS** [01:30:50] Then in 1966, after the Lenkurt deal had gone on, I'm looking for a job. I also got a friend of mine—he said a friend of his had an old company called Justesen Manufacturing. Their retail outlet was Burnaby Fireplace Screens. He said, 'Well, you can

weld, why don't you go down there'. I got a job there. I started in the morning as a welder. In the afternoon he took me down to the retail outlet down in Brentwood, just off the Lougheed Highway. The next day he put me in charge of the whole lot. I went from there. It was modest pay, but 15 percent of the gross. I made over 2,000 bucks a month. He immediately reneged on the situation. I was really, evidently unbeknownst to me, I was quite good at something.

**SG** [01:31:56] Oh, I see.

**JS** [01:31:57] I had no intention of being a salesman. The reason I was there, I never tried to sell anybody anything. I told them what we had, what I thought was good for them and all that. I done quite good at that. I was doing quite well at that on the side and I could keep the union going.

**SG** [01:32:17] So you were actually, as were many members, contributing money.

**JS** [01:32:19] Oh, yeah. I didn't draw a penny from the union, as I say.

**SG** [01:32:23] You were actually contributing money to keeping it afloat.

**JS** [01:32:26] Oh, yeah. What happened is—all I'm trying to do is get it going.

**SG** [01:32:30] Right.

**JS** [01:32:31] My wife done all the typing and he insisted that we pay her. I never paid her. I was the secretary-treasurer. We didn't have any money. I'd kept the money in the union because we had done it the way we did. The only way I could see out. We had to build the union, to have enough money to stand on its feet, then I could leave, my wife didn't have to type, I could go raise my family, go and do something else. That's what the whole idea was. I thought it was always hilarious when people were saying I was trying to build an empire. It was some empire. Anyhow I digress, as always. That was roughly the situation there.

**IM** [01:33:09] How many plants did the CEWU manage to organize?

**JS** [01:33:13] Well, I think we organized—God, I think at the time of the merger we had about 350 members. We organized that place. We organized—

**IM** [01:33:27] Alberta you had a plant.

**JS** [01:33:28] It's Local 2 in Alberta. We organized the Cascades Electronics, which is the founding group for the cablevision, first ones ever.

**IM** [01:33:41] What's interesting too, Jess, at this time, George Gee, former Business Manager from 213, he comes back into the scene as organizer for the United Electrical Workers.

**JS** [01:33:52] That was the thing, they come in—

**IM** [01:33:54] Did you have contact with him, talk to George?

**JS** [01:33:56] Yeah. They tried to talk us into joining with the UE and the big problem there was the constitution. We'd looked at all the constitutions by then. We were not going to have anything to do with anything that was—

**IM** [01:34:13] International.

**JS** [01:34:14] Well an arbitrary nature in the constitution. That didn't go anywhere. I was more open to discuss it than anybody else was. I was never prepared to shut any doorways. I'd talk to anybody about anything, it doesn't bother me. You know you just don't do things flippantly, but I never, not prepared to talk to somebody. What happend there was that the rest of them was not interested at all. What really upset us a bit was that they then started to run interference where we were trying to organize. It would have been one thing if they had come and tried to do a parallel organization and go organizing, but they were basically interfering in our efforts to organize, it seemed.

**IM** [01:35:08] So was it the constitutional issue or was it the fact that George Gee was a member of the Communist Party and UE was Communist run? George Brown had been in the Party, come through, was possibly a Trotskyist. Did those things come to the surface?

**JS** [01:35:25] I remember. I knew about George Gee, and had a lot of respect for him, because of what I learned from Art O'Keefe and all the other people that were there. I had no hangup with George himself and Jackson was the head of the union back East. Ruel, he knew all them guys. He said they're not bad guys. He was never dogmatic about that. Irish was the other guy wasn't he?

**IM** [01:35:53] Yes. Jackson, George Jackson.

**JS** [01:35:55] God, I haven't thought of them for bloody half a century.

**SG** [01:35:59] And Bill Bjarnason.

**JS** [01:36:00] Well. Val Bjarnason—

**SG** [01:36:02] Val's his brother.

**JS** [01:36:05] Yeah. You know that Val was married to Kent Rowley's wife, Madeleine. I knew all them lot. I had no hangups myself. There was a real aversion to the UE at that time. I can't remember exactly.

**SG** [01:36:29] They didn't have Canadian autonomy at that time.

**JS** [01:36:29] No, and I think that's what, I if I remember right, it was that and we had some discussions and it just wasn't an option that was considered very much at that time. Then, of course, the first thing they did, it seemed to us, was, if my memory serves me right, they seemed to run interference, and that was the end of that discussions at all. Later on I got to know Dick Barry, he was a leader of that union. We got along very well when they joined the CAW years later. There was interesting times, you might say that. There was never a dull, bloody moment, I'll tell you that.

**SG** [01:37:09] You said to me earlier, too, that in the course of writing the constitution for CAIMAW, as you merged with them from CEW, that the union that emerged from that and

the constitution was a very different one from what had been the original. Tell me a bit more about that.

**JS** [01:37:27] You're talking about the Canadian Electrical Workers vis-a-vis CAIMAW.

**SG** [01:37:31] Yes.

**JS** [01:37:32] Because what happened, in the CEW we had a really good basic constitution.

**SG** [01:37:35] Yeah. Then you merged with CAIMAW.

**JS** [01:37:36] Yeah, and then we merged with CAIMAW. In the merger discussions, that I had been delegated then to deal with, because George was servicing and trying to organize and doing the business of the union. I had to go into Winnipeg and discuss it and talk about their constitution wasn't democratic. Now, the rank and file is there, were all ears. The leadership, 'Oh, that's great.' Gugulyn, I remember him saying, 'Well, you know, we just threw this together, you know. If we'd have had the sort of input you've got,' he's saying, 'We're open to that, of course'.

**SG** [01:38:16] This is John Gugulyn.

**JS** [01:38:17] John Gugulyn, says all that, manna from heaven. We'd no reason to dispute that. You've got to remember this, we thought they were in the same struggles as us, we thought. Some of the rank and filers there were good guys. Evidently, and then I stepped out thinking that's going to take its place. I'm going to go on my merry way. Still I give them a commitment that I would carry on organizing, help them to organize. But that was it.

**JS** [01:38:44] I was going to get my home finances on firm ground. I borrowed some money, remortgaged my house. I was going to set up, you know, go. I set up then, I learned about the fireplace screen business. I've got to tell you why I didn't carry on working for Justesen's, the Burnaby Fireplace Screen, because I was doing well there. He wanted me to stay there. Until he's driving this Ford convertible down the road, and he heard me on the Jack Webster Show, with George Brown, talking about Canadian unions. And he drove into a telephone pole. It's true. He got mad and he got mad at me. He used to come. I didn't know, but I thought, something that, you can get feelings. You know, you hear about in industry somebody's falling and you get a sense. He kept, he wanted to know where I was going. I said, well, what does it care to you? Part of the deal was that I worked for him, I'd get a call and the name, somebody'd phone in, I'd get the name and the address of the people. I would phone them up, make an appointment with them, day, night, morning, any time, go out, show them what we could do with a custom made fireplace screen. I would measure it from all that, give an estimate and that. If they wanted, I would take it back, give it to them, they would make it. I'd go back and install it. My time was flexible. I was my own time, because you couldn't work 9 to 5, because very often have to go out at night.

**JS** [01:40:18] All of a sudden, Pete gets, 'Where you going?' Well, we was negotiating the Phillips Cables contract. I couldn't go and tell him that. That's how we was hitting it in, you see, so I was hitting it into him. So I said, 'Have I ever I missed a call?' 'No.' 'Have you had any complaints?' 'No'. I never knew why he was mad at me. This is so crazy, it

sounded. I didn't steal off him. Everybody else stole off him. 'How come you don't steal nothing?' I said, 'Why would I steal stuff from you? I work for you.'

**SG** [01:40:52] He was pissed off because he had an accident when he was listening to you.

**JS** [01:40:56] Seen from the thing. I eventually I took a poke at him, anyhow, the long and short of it.

**JS** [01:41:06] During that period, and when we were getting to the end of the road with the CAIMAW merger, we all thought it was the best thing for everybody concerned. They agreed that George Brown would become the full time rep here and I would only keep the commitment to help them to organize if need be.

**JS** [01:41:29] I set up a little—we moved out to Surrey, we remortgaged my house, just on King George Highway, just down the road here. Got a little welding machine and all that, and went home and started my own little company, Campbell Firescreens. Started doing my own calls. I'd made some contacts here and there. As a matter of fact, ten years or so after I was out of the business, I would get calls from people, 'are you still in business?' I'd had the same number, but that's an aside. That's what I was doing. I got this little van and I got Campbell Firescreens put on the side and all that, set up my base where we used to have our union meetings.

**SG** [01:42:14] At this point, really, being a union organizer here is a side job for you.

**JS** [01:42:19] Oh, it always was, you know, to that degree. It was just that I got roped in when Donna Pooghkay left and I become secretary-treasurer of the union. Nobody else wanted the job. So I'm going to step out, go into business for myself.

**SG** [01:42:33] Right.

**JS** [01:42:34] I didn't want to work for anybody else. I hated regimentation, still do. What happened was that George goes to the convention and we had some arguments with there, about money. They didn't give us the money that they said they were going to give us for organizing, and that. That was a bit of a foofaraw. We said, well, we'll sort this out at the convention.

**JS** [01:42:58] I didn't go to the convention in Winnipeg. That would be in 1970. May, I think it was in 1970. I've got that stuff all written down in notes here. You can refer to them after, if you need be. What happened? The boys get to the convention, and they realized that the leadership, at least, was no intentions of giving up their stranglehold on it. They weren't interested in a democratic union. George Brown made his case. Of course these guys, 'No, we can't do that. That'll never work.' and all that. They were really desperate. So when the election comes up, president, vice-president, second vice-president, George evidently (I wasn't there) gets up, 'I nominate Jess Succamore'. Well it can't be, he's not here. There's nothing in the constitution that says he's got to be here. They had a big fight about that. The guys, you know, I'd be frank about that, it doesn't say you can't do it, he's eligible. George had written out I, if nominated, I would accept any position, wrote my name.

**SG** [01:44:15] He had the signing authority?.

**JS** [01:44:17] Oh no, he wrote it out. I didn't know nothing about it. He says, 'I've got his nomination here'.

**JS** [01:44:22] Nobody bothered to look at it. This is how things turn on little things in history. The long and the short of it was, I got elected.

**JS** [01:44:36] Immediately he comes back, 'Come out to my house'. I went to pick him up at the airport, him and Gene Lane, and he says, 'Congratulations'. 'Yeah, what's that?'. You're the Second Vice-president. I thought they were bullshitting. I went off on either one. I was really upset. I mean, not that I didn't want to support the union, but I'd pledged to my wife. We'd been through hell. We went through hell, trying to feed the kids, borrowing money. Coming home and had to go down and borrow 20 bucks just to go and get the bloody groceries.

**JS** [01:45:14] I said, 'You know, that's just not fair'. 'Well,' he says, George, 'You've got a president there, see. He's coming on a later plane.' I was really upset. George Brown wouldn't come round to my house for six months. She'd have killed him. Well I mean, it's understandable. She'd been through hell.

**JS** [01:45:39] Every night I'd be working there, coming back and was going out trying to organize and that. It was just about every day and every night, and my kids hardly knew me. It was harder on them than it was on me, you understand what I mean. It was hard on the family, it always is, in cases like that.

**JS** [01:46:00] The long and short of it was, that from then on, I insisted that I get copies of the financial stuff and all that. They sent me little or nothing, and I waged a war writing letters to them and all of that. They were arguing about the phone bill to Winnipeg. I said, I remember one time we got at convention where they were talking about phone bills. Seems silly to worry about phone bills. I said, one trip to Winnipeg I could come here, a couple of trips every month. You could buy the telephone company with that bloody cost of that. Everybody saw how supercilious their arguments were and stuff like that. The long and short was that in 1970, November, I think it was, I've got it written down here somewhere, I got suspended from the union for non-payment of dues.

**JS** [01:47:11] Gugulyn had got a section of the constitution. They said, if the money doesn't show up on your checkoff for three months, you're automatically suspended. Well, of course, I wasn't working in the union. There was a provision you pay your dues. I paid a year in advance my per capita so that I didn't have to worry about it. As a result of that, I thought it was hilarious. My first reaction, I'd been trying to get out of it, finally, they kicked me out. I phoned George and he was livid, and all the guys, and none of them could see the funny side of it. I could. I thought, here, I'm trying to get out of it, and then they'd done it for me. Then we realized that you can't let them get away with this. We said that we didn't put all this effort in to build a rotten Canadian union, it was to build a decent one. George and I took the decision that if we couldn't make it good, then we're going to destroy it. That that was our position. We weren't going to go along having a rotten union. We weren't going to be party to that.

**JS** [01:48:26] In January of 1971, we went to an executive board meeting in Winnipeg. We took a delegation there. Old Pop Jacobs was there, myself, and a couple of other guys from the Phillips plant, and we went to that executive board meeting. Their first initial reaction was, no, they're going to uphold the suspension and all that. We'd got a couple of guys from the big aerospace plant to come as observers, Jim Gibbons and Mike

Kostanski. When they took that decision to me, Jim Gibbons got up, very quiet, slow speaking guy from Edinburgh, 'What you guys are doing is just wrong', he went deliberately. He started the conversation and George got in. I'm sitting right there watching it all. My inclination, and I'll tell you the truth, I'm going to bloody go over there and clean that guy's clock. That's what my inclination was. This was my out. George gets up and talks, and you could see these guys, they're behaving like this. The next thing you know, the motion come on to rescind the bloody thing, to do that and call a special convention.

**JS** [01:49:46] In the special convention in May, I think it was, I'd worked at preparing our resolutions committee. George is up to his ears servicing. We had to keep that up because if we didn't service our plants, even those small ones, the American unions were around every day, leafleting us and all of that. We couldn't do that. So I took on the task of writing the constitution amendments, but all the amendments so that—

**SG** [01:50:19] So CAIMAW is paying you?

**JS** [01:50:20] Oh, no, no pay. I never got paid until eight months after I was national secretary-treasurer of the union because we didn't have the money.

**SG** [01:50:31] Right.

**JS** [01:50:31] What happened is that I conducted classes. Cathy Walker was there and a couple of other guys. A crucial thing, I was only thinking about it this morning. We used to have meetings up there. We had about, a meeting there at least once a week, sometimes twice a week. We was going through the constitution and doing it, and I would write it all out and my wife would type it up there and we got it. We rewrote the constitution, but we had to do it all according to Hoyle, this section and all that, and whereas's and all that.

**JS** [01:51:04] We get it all done and we're conducting a meeting and we decided. George Brown, not me. As I was saying, that George was the leader and he was my leader. He said, 'We've got to carry on organizing.' I said, 'How the hell do we organize when we've got this bloody mess we've got to clean up?' He said, 'We can't stop, we've got to do it now'. There's just the two of us sitting there (by this time Donna had took a back seat, she was having some family problems too) I said, 'Well, you know,' I always begrudgingly followed him at times, but every one of those times I thought he was out to lunch, but nevertheless in for a penny, in for a pound. 'Okay.' So we started to organize the Kenworth plant.

**JS** [01:51:58] A fellow called Martin Amiable, an old left winger of some sort, he's trying to come to us and said, the IAM has just sold these guys out. They're ready for it. That was with the Committee of the Canadian Unions. He come there. That's why we went there. We started to organize there. While I'm conducting, I think it was the last meeting. Oh, the second last meeting, I think it was of our resolutions committee, a guy knocks on the door, he comes in with Merl Rodocker, he's one of our organizers in the plant at Kenworth. He saw, 'I'm sorry'. I said, 'Come in', and I took a decision then and I said, 'Merl, you going anywhere?' 'No'. I said, 'Come in, sit down over there. I'll answer any questions after,' I said, 'Just sit and watch.' He sat down. He was an old Mine-Miller, well he was a young guy then. He's sitting there, we're conducting this thing, and I'm telling them how we're going to present the stuff. Now remember, the only thing I had learned about meetings was by observing three people up to that time really. That was his dad, George Angus,

and George Brown. I'd seen the guys from the head table doing things, and the only guys I'd seen handle it from the floor were those guys.

**JS** [01:53:18] I'm not the brightest guy in the world, but I'm not bad at picking up things, you know. I was going through this with people who had never been to a convention. I'd only been to our own little convention of the CEW, about 20 people there. Here we was going to go into the lion's den, kind of thing, and I wanted our guys prepared.

**JS** [01:53:39] When Merl Rodocker come in and watched it, after the meeting, I said to him, 'Merl, you may as well know, this is what we're trying to do and this is the reason for it.' That guy was sold right then. That appealed to all the better angels, they say. He said, 'This is great stuff.' He was right with us all the way, right to the day he died, one of our best organizers he was. I thought, I made a snap decision. I always count on people to respond to the right things. They do, every time.

**SG** [01:54:14] Right.

**JS** [01:54:15] As long as you're level with them.

**JS** [01:54:18] I thought if I'd have made that, he'd be thinking, what are they doing there? What's it? I know he'd just thought it was a meeting room, and I just involved him in it.

**JS** [01:54:29] I got some of the guys there, and then we involved the guys at Freightliner, so they knew what we were trying to do. To me, that was one of the first critical decisions made, that I made, you know, right there. I think it was the right one that turned out, paid off in spades.

**JS** [01:54:46] We went to that convention, and people like Cathy Walker, who's become one of the best health and safety representatives of the union, I think, in the world, not just in Canada. That was her first convention, she hardly, I don't think she spoke at the convention. Peter Cameron, I think he hardly spoke at the convention. He was there. I spoke so long I couldn't, I've lost my voice, but I handled everything from the floor. George Brown and Gugulyn co-chaired the convention. I was the only one of 11 national officers re-elected.

**JS** [01:55:23] I think I told Ian, that night when we set the—I'd been there to the resolutions committee beforehand. Gugulyn was there and I nominated him as chairman. It was one of the tactics, you know, put him in the chair.

**SG** [01:55:42] Yeah, it silences him.

**JS** [01:55:45] It silences him a bit, you know. What happened is there was them, we had a guy from our Local 2, there was a guy from Local 5 in Bristol, which is a good guy, and he was open, he was listening. We didn't want anybody, we never set, I never set up meetings saying so you got to vote this way, or that way. Let them think. There was a guy from Morris, Manitoba, a little, very religious community, just south of there, we had a little local, Local 7, I think it was down there. There's just like one, two, one, two, three from there. Five of us, and Gugulyn's in the chair. We went through, they adopted every resolution that I put forward. They recommended.

**JS** [01:56:31] The next day they tried to—Gugulyn sat with these guys. They tried to call off the convention, tried to do that. Well, there was, we had a big fight then. They were

going to just say that everything was ultra vires and all that. We fought that, got them to go.

**JS** [01:56:49] We agreed that George Brown and Gugulyn would co-chair them, take him off the bloody floor. We went there. They adopted every resolution I put forward. Rewrote the constitution. Part of that was—I always took the point that we worked on the basis that they were do good guys, [unclear] the bad apples at the top. The guys would respond to the right things, it was George Brown taught me that. My dad always taught me, George did, he reinforced it. We appealed to them on that basis.

**JS** [01:57:26] We also said there'd been a centre of power and it's understandable that that group then felt responsible and didn't want to give up any control. But we can't carry on like that. They've done that job. We've got to spread that out. The way we put it in was that we had five locals at that time, that the three top officers had to come from different locals. We said, now I say that's undemocratic. I don't like putting restrictions on like that. But for the first year or so to make sure there's no centres of power that we really try to broaden out the things, we would have somebody in the top three positions. Well, it went through. Then they figured, well, everybody is saying, well, we knew what was going on. Everybody agreed that the president would come from the big Bristol Aerospace plant. Vice-president would be possibly me or somebody else that's the secondary position. The secretary-treasurer's job would be in Winnipeg, and that's where they would have the control of the finances.

**JS** [01:58:40] What happened was, Bill Behma gets nominated from Bristol. He gets elected. They nominate everybody in the room, these guys. They nominated just about everybody from the West. I was nominated by our guys. Oh, they nominated me, too, after that. To make sure they got somebody from there, you know. It got all down the list. It comes to Pat McEvoy, who we'd nominated last. He was the full time rep there. They said, and I remember Gugulyn saying, 'Oh, McEvoy, well, he ain't going to run.' He says, 'Wait a minute, I accept.' Bang, everybody says, 'You can't accept. You work for the union.' 'It doesn't say in here you can't do.'.

**JS** [01:59:25] Gugulyn was too smart by half. He looked everything from where his position was—what was in it for him? He forgot got to look in the fine print. He said, 'Well, you won't be able to work for the union.' He says, 'well, we'll have to sort that out after' because there was nothing to stop him from being, working for the union.

**JS** [01:59:42] What happened then? Then the lights go on. Holy Christ. If he does that, the secretary's job can come from Canada, from BC. Well, what they didn't know is I spent that Saturday night half the night, trying to talk Peter Cameron into taking the secretary-treasurer's job. Jim Gibbons from the Bristol Aerospace plant was in a cot in our room and he recalled that I didn't know, I thought he was asleep. He said, 'I listened to you.' He said, 'God, you really didn't want that job.' I said, I thought that, they started calling me 'The Godfather' in Winnipeg, and I didn't know what 'The Godfather' was. I didn't know the movie or nothing. I was the Godfather to them. I was the guy that come in and bloody, went to the mattresses and bloody cleaned everybody out there, see.

**JS** [02:00:36] I didn't know what that was, when they called me Godfather. I thought it was just a colloquial Winnipeg thing. What happened was that I felt that I'd done all this fighting. That I was the demon. George wasn't recognized as the demon at all. I was the heavy that went in there, done all this, done all that, and exposed Gugulyn and bloody done all that. I thought now get somebody in that won't be viewed as such a bloody

controversial figure, for the want of a better way of putting it. What happened that Cameron just wouldn't accept, 'Oh no, I'm not going to bloody take that.' The biggest thing he'd done up to that time was get elected as a steward at Phillips Cables. I said, 'Okay', so bloody went up and that's how I become secretary-treasurer of the union.

**JS** [02:01:38] One of the proudest things I did then was two years later in Vancouver. The first guy up to nominate me, a fellow called Jack Costa. He was one of the original groups that really tried to nail me and suspended me. He got up and he says, 'I still don't like it, because what he done to us and all that, but he's been the best secretary-treasurer, and I'm going to support him as long as I have.' I thought, well, that's a nice left-handed compliment. That's how it was.

**JS** [02:02:11] I insisted that every member had the right to know where all the money was going, what it was being spent on. I never got accused once of misspending a penny. I never spent a bloody penny of union dues on the wrong thing at all. I cut our own wages, we like. We could get, even then, there was ten thousand and I, as an officer, I could get an extra thousand dollars. I never did and sometimes we didn't get what we were supposed to do.

**IM** [02:02:45] You guys have the same idea as the Fishermen's Union that no officer of the union could make more than the highest paid worker in the industry?

**JS** [02:02:55] Here's an interesting thing. One of the things we found out from the Pulp Workers. They had that. Now the Fishermen's Union, it's my understanding—and I had great respect for the leadership in that bloody union. How they ever did it is beyond me, still is. I got to know some of them quite well. They were an industry that was very sensible and good.

**JS** [02:03:19] What happened with the Pulp Workers, I found. We had a similar article, but then they had a sweetheart deal with a plant. There they had one guy getting about $3, $4 more than anybody else. I found out about this. I thought, well, that was, the guy who told me was the guy from their Local 5 and they had a specialist thing, a deal with the employer obviously. Somebody had done some skullduggery and they had a super, super rate in one plant, so all their officers got paid that.

**JS** [02:04:00] I looked at that and changed ours so they had to be the highest rate within three plants, two from each—and two or three or four plants, whatever it was—from each region of the union with a plant of more than 200 workers, I think it was, two or 300 workers. In other words, there had to be a real connection, not just one super little thing. We learnt from that, from the Fishermen's Union and theirs is right for them. We saw the way it had been abused, and so we done things like that.

**JS** [02:04:40] I've got all the constitutions there, every one of them, right back from when they started and all that, but that was my forte. When we got involved in that, we took a decision to help form the CCU. George Brown, Maggie Black, Olga Simpson and Jack Greenhall got in the car and drove all the way across country, went up to Sudbury in 1968 to lay the groundwork for the founding meeting a year later. They camped all the way there and all the way back. That's the way it was done.

**JS** [02:05:28] We made a commitment then and I went to that founding meeting because George couldn't go. I went there and it was the first time the merger, working out the merger with CAIMAW and going to the CCU was the first time I got paid expenses. I didn't

get paid lost time. I got paid expenses for going to those two trips. That was the first time I ever drew any money from the union. I never even got bloody reimbursed for gas money or nothing like that. I went there to the founding of the CCU. It was a really magnificent experience. I met some of them old timers from Sudbury, some of the greatest trade unionists you'd ever meet, met Jim Tester, Normie Stevens, oh Christ, a plethora of guys, Joe Ashton. God, I was just like a little boy in a candy shop, you know, listening to all the old timers and that. It was really an interesting time.

**JS** [02:06:34] One of the things that we'd had meetings here with the Pulp Workers, because they were the dominant union here then, and the only one apart from us, out on the West Coast. Well I needed was, was the time right to do this? Angus McPhee was very poor. Orville Braaten said we should do it. I didn't know that because I wasn't involved with them at that time, to that degree.

**JS** [02:06:59] We started up the CCU. We went there and I went there. One of the things I was asked to fight for to get them in, was on the resolutions committee, was to get a Western representative. We didn't want to be dominated from back East. We expected most of them to be there, but we wanted to make sure we had a western vice-president. We got in. Nobody was opposed to that. We got it in there. The only problem was, nobody would accept the bloody job, because there's only us, the Canadian Electrical Workers and the Pulp Workers. The Pulp Workers wouldn't join. They participated in it, but they said they'd have to go back to their thing. They were not sure their national union would join it, it would have to be their locals. They were super democratic, super democratic to such a degree it was unworkable.

**IM** [02:07:51] And nothing happened.

**JS** [02:07:53] Nothing happened. I remember old Rowley going by and he says, 'What about you, Jack?' It was old Jack Greenhall. Jack says, 'Christ, I'm bloody 50 odd, I can't bloody do that. You know, it's silly.' He says, 'My name would be poison for, and all that.' Rowley, 'What about this guy? Can you get this guy from the Pulp Workers, Reg Ginn?' 'No, he won't do it, I tried.' 'If nobody else would take it, you'll have to bloody take the job.' Then he looked at me and he says, 'No offense meant.' I said, 'None taken.' It was hilarious. That's how I become western vice-president.

**JS** [02:08:35] I come back here. I said to them, 'I'm working for myself. I set up my little shop. I'm not even in the bloody union.' Well, how was it going to survive otherwise? Somebody had to do it. That's how I got that.

**SG** [02:08:47] Right, right.

**JS** [02:08:50] This great plan that people used to accuse me of having this great master plan to set up this empire, they should have been there to see it. It was quite interesting. The long and short of it was, I stayed in that position. Then we had a meeting in Vancouver in 1971. The Pulp Workers insisting that we have a referendum for officers. It's no good electing them at convention, they got to have.

**SG** [02:09:21] This is for the CCU or CAIMAW?

**JS** [02:09:22] For the CCU. Well, everybody in the CCU, except the Pulp Workers, said this is crazy. The cost alone was fantastic. Send all the best people there and let them know, like, who they want to lead this thing. No Pulp Workers wanted that. So in 1971, I

went there as the western vice-president. They had set the elections for a referendum. There was two people nominated from Western Canada, myself and Dick Duncan, the guy from our Bristol Aerospace plant. He put his name up. Somebody put his name, just for fun. That's the danger of these sort of things, where people.

**JS** [02:10:16] Well, there was a campaign on in the Pulp Workers. They were by far the dominant union. I mean, we only had a few hundred members. They had CAIMAW there. The Pulp Workers had more members than all of CAIMAW put together. I got beat in the election by about ten votes, six votes or something like that. It turned out that the Local 5 had been paying their per capita payment for about 300 members, 350 members or something and they turned in 500 and odd votes.

**SG** [02:10:58] Oh, wow.

**JS** [02:10:59] Every one of them, that you could see them, they all come in. They're all marked exactly the same, by the same person. It was either to sabotage it, or to sabotage me, either way. Rowley asked me to go in early to the next meeting where they verified the thing. He said, 'Well,' he said, 'according to this here, you got beat by Duncan.' I said, it didn't bother me to that degree. It was Dick Duncan. He knows what they'd done. Well he knew and he showed me the paperwork. I say, 'Well, seems to me some people are trying to sabotage the organization one thing. Either way,' I said, 'forget about it and don't go back to it'. He says, and he looked me in the eye. He says, 'Are you sure? Because this is, we could get all these ballots thrown out.' I said, 'No, let it go'. I said, 'Duncan doesn't know which end is up, don't worry.' So we made a pact there. We didn't say a thing, we let the elections stand.

**JS** [02:12:07] Now, nearly—he got five votes from CAIMAW, Dick Duncan, five votes. I got a lot of support in the Pulp Workers but not enough with them other, fake ballots to overcome that. They also done a job, the Pulp Workers did. Now when I say Pulp Workers, I'm not talking all of them but some people in there.

**SG** [02:12:34] Right.

**JS** [02:12:34] They tried to do a job on Rowley, too. They nominated a guy called Tom Long, who's an American draft dodger, that's fair enough. He didn't even know anything about Canada and they had nominated him. A vast majority of the Pulp Workers voted for him. That to me then showed well, some people are just not very nice, you know, and I just put that in my quiver.

**JS** [02:13:06] I always remembered how people that preach democracy and, 'Super Democrats' I call them, when somebody started, you see it in the American political system more than ever. Donald Trump, the best example that anybody could ever dream of. If he says one thing, he means that he's that guy he's doing that.

**SG** [02:13:28] What happened to these guys?

**JS** [02:13:30] Well. Dick Duncan—I stopped in with him on the way back with a fellow called Len Derksen from the Pulp Workers. He knew about it. He was told about it, good guy from Prince Rupert. We stopped in at Winnipeg on the way back and let Dick Duncan know he'd been elected. He was astounded. 'What do I do? I mean,' he says, 'this is a joke.' He says, 'Why would anybody vote for me?'

**JS** [02:13:59] I said, 'Well, learned a lesson, Dick?' He was one of the most successful western vice-presidents we ever had. I done all the work for him. Done everything for him. He told me, I'd write everything for him. Do it. Set up a meeting here. We had a conference here, Western Conference. He chaired the meeting. I wrote the agenda, sign it to get the minutes and everyone thought he was just the greatest thing since sliced bread.

**JS** [02:14:25] About six months after, he quit. He moved to Australia. That was Dick Duncan, and he was a nice guy. He wasn't interested in the union at all, or nothing, but that's what you got. I just, I could have had sour grapes and said, well, that's it, but by then, I was really committed.

**JS** [02:14:49] I'd heard Rowley speak in the Fishermen's Hall. That was before the CCU was founded. He was the best speaker I've ever heard, period—and I worked with some great speakers. He had it really down, and I really took a liking to him. We met and then later on I met Madeleine, and they were two of the greatest people I ever met.

**IM** [02:15:22] We should make it clear for the historical record we're talking about Kent Rowley and Madeleine Parent.

**JS** [02:15:26] Kent Rowley and Madeleine Parent. He was the president of the Textile Workers Union. He was the Canadian director out there. They had a big strike in Valleyfield in 1952, I think it was. Lloyd Slanyert, the secretary-treasurer of that union come into town, signed a deal with Blair Gordon of the bloody Valleyfield Cotton Mills. He signed a deal there with the help of Duplessis. He just phoned Rowley, went up to his room. He says, 'Well, what are you doing in town? You let me know and I'd have come to pick you up, you know.' 'Oh,' he says, 'Here,' and he handed him a paper. He said, 'Sign that.' Rowley goes, and it was an agreement, he worked out and he says, 'I'll never sign that.' It was a Yellow Dog Agreement is what he's worked out. He got fired the next day and they went in and mutilated, as he said, his offices and files and all that and threw him out of the union, with the help of Louis Laberge and all those guys.

**JS** [02:16:41] I didn't know all that then. I knew some of it. The more I found out, the more I become committed then, that I had a responsibility and I thought well, I want to get this done. Then, now we got a year, my objective then was like earlier, when you get the first plant to do that and get out. Now my objective was, we've got this bloody union, worked it out that CAIMAW's on a solid footing, get people so that we can afford to have an office, and office staff and all of that. Then I can get out. So, 26 years later, I got out.

**SG** [02:17:22] Right.

**IM** [02:17:22] Can we take a break now?

**SG** [02:17:23] I was just going to say, it's time to take a break and we'll come back in what, five minutes?

**IM** [02:17:28] Sure.

**SG** [02:17:28] Is that okay? Let's shut this sound down.

**JS** [02:17:33] Do you want a cup of tea?

**IM** [02:17:37] So I'll start.

**SG** [02:17:39] Yeah, go ahead, sure.

**IM** [02:17:42] Jess, you wrote, you helped to write, or you wrote the constitution for the Canadian, what's it called?

**JS** [02:17:50] CAIMAW.

**IM** [02:17:54] By this time, you're no longer an innocent, with the CEW. You've been to conventions. You've read other people's, other unions' constitutions. You'd been to Sudbury. You liked the Mine-Mill people.

**JS** [02:18:09] Yeah.

**IM** [02:18:11] I suspect you've read the preamble to the Mine-Mill constitution?

**JS** [02:18:17] Oh, yeah.

**IM** [02:18:16] Let me just read you, not the whole thing, but a couple of sentences from the preamble of Mine-Mill's constitution. The first sentence reads: "We hold that there is a class struggle in society and that this struggle is caused by economic conditions. We affirm the economic condition of the producer to be that he is exploited of the wealth which he produces, being allowed to retain a portion barely sufficient for his elementary necessities" and so on.

**JS** [02:18:44] Yeah.

**IM** [02:18:47] What kind of philosophical background, the preamble, to the constitutions that you wrote. Did you agree with that, or do you not agree with it?

**JS** [02:18:57] The basic concept, yeah. I think that one of the things we run into was that whenever you mentioned class struggle, people would get turned away. If you said the struggle of working people, they would join you. It was semantics to me, but it was semantics that meant something. I think that during the red-baiting period, the more I, a lot of it was in retrospect. A lot of people, if they were communists or socialists, they were 'vile creatures' and going to do whatever. I think that they'd been, the words, the red-baiting issues and all of that, kind of still affected people. I found that there was ways around it without avoiding the issue of where you stood on an issue. It was often. I very seldom, I can never remember using like the words 'the class struggle' because I thought to me it didn't help the cause at all. I always talk about the struggle of working people. To me, they're synonymous, they mean the same. Yet people didn't affect it that way.

**JS** [02:20:31] In the preamble to our union, one of the things we did in our union, I'm talking about preamble. We said that we wouldn't be affiliated to any political party, but we would support, urge our members to support those political parties that served the interests of working people. It means the same, but it was couched in more modern thing.

**JS** [02:20:55] Now today, with the way of the computer age, I mean, I be old fashioned but then I was, it was kind of a change in outlook in a way. When I looked at the old Wobbly stuff and stuff of that nature, I was not fazed by it at all. To me, it was all duck soup, you might say, but it was just the way you approached it and dealt with it. I've always found that we had to. That's why I did it, anyhow. You know, and—

**IM** [02:21:25] But broadly speaking, you would consider yourself a socialist?

**JS** [02:21:28] Well, I can't figure any other box that I would fit into. My biggest problem was being undisciplined. In the sense that I couldn't find a party or anything that didn't become kind of manipulative—'Well, that's okay, but let's leave that for another day'.

**JS** [02:21:56] My problem is I could only go forward. In my old age I learned to step sideways but I never learned how to step backwards. It's just that I found that I couldn't go along with parties because there's something there, it just didn't feel fit. I could support them and you never hear me knocking them, but it wasn't my, not in my makeup to do that. I would rather have a good, honest liberal than a crooked lefty.

**IM** [02:22:32] Good point.

**JS** [02:22:32] You know, I mean, that's the reality. I mean, I've met a couple of Conservative MPs that I had great respect for because they were honest bloody conservatives. That's a very few, far between, I know.

**IM** [02:22:51] Did you use or did you copy or did you borrow from Mine-Mill's constitution?

**JS** [02:22:57] All of those things they looked at. It was, by then I'd become, that was my niche. I wanted to look at it and I talked a lot, say to the whole community, the Canadian unions. They had various political pamphlets and stuff that I saw that they put out and things of that nature. So when we drafted our constitution, it was that in mind. We took that approach.

**IM** [02:23:28] The preamble to the IBEW constitution, did it strike you as very positive?

**JS** [02:23:33] That, when you see it was only in the Lenkurt dispute. Well, originally in the Phillips Cables strike some years earlier, then I became acquainted really with the constitution. It was the first union's constitution I really looked at. I'd heard about some of the things from the CSU guys that their constitution was that, and that was the first time. To me, it was a kind of an abstract thing; the union constitution must be good because it was a union. Then I started looking at it and I see: I don't like that; this doesn't make sense. Started questioning those things. The more I questioned it and talked about it, the more I realized there was no, you didn't need that sort of thing.

**SG** [02:24:18] One of the things that did get changed in this CAIMAW constitution was when they first drafted it before the western part came along, they had an anti-communist clause.

**JS** [02:24:29] Yeah.

**SG** [02:24:30] I think the wording was they had, the executive board had the right to bar nominations to elected positions to anyone who proved to be a communist.

**JS** [02:24:38] Yeah.

**SG** [02:24:39] That came out in the constitution that you were instrumental in writing.

**JS** [02:24:42] Yeah, definitely got it out. Well it was—

**SG** [02:24:45] Was there were discussion on the floor about removing it?

**JS** [02:24:48] Yeah. There was a discussion on everything. I lost my voice. I mean no kidding, I told them everything, and talked about it. I talked about the difference between Canada and the United States on those issues and that there was no place in our society, people had the freedom to belong to the party with their choice and all of that. I never got any pushback for any of the stuff like that.

**JS** [02:25:16] The only things that come into being was when Gugulyn was fighting the more the things about what his position was going to be. All the other stuff, he was, wait. Now, you got to remember, I never mentioned this before. When our merger took place with CAIMAW, one of the things they omitted to tell us, that Guguyln was a full time organizer with the Liberal Party. He was working part time for the union. We thought he was a fulltime director. He had been. He took a leave of absence and still got paid about 350 bucks a month or something, which was a lot of money. He was there on call to do things as they need be. He'd actually, he was getting paid by the Liberal Party. If they'd told me he was an organizer of the Liberal Party in his spare time, that wouldn't have bothered me but he was a full time paid organizer for a political party, and they don't even tell us. Not the fact that it's a party that I didn't support, that's not the issue.

**SG** [02:26:16] The issue was that clause had just been a remnant from the previous union?

**JS** [02:26:19] Yeah, it was. Then I found out that Gugulyn, when we went in, I never forget. I was going, it was in the hotel. God, I can't remember the name of the place right now. We went in this hotel and a guy was going up to the resolutions committee meeting, I was telling you it was the day before the convention. This guy Ed something or other, he come in and he says, 'Oh, is this going on?' 'Yeah.' I knew it automatically I knew who he was, I just knew. I said, 'Are you Ed Jones?' He says, 'Yeah'. I says, 'Oh, you're going to the CAIMAW thing, you're the representative. He said, 'Yeah.' I said, 'I'm Jess Succamore, I'm one of the communists from the Coast. He goes, 'Oh!' like that. He went like that. I says, 'You heard all the stories?' 'Yeah.' I said, 'Well, Ed,' I said, 'All I ask you to do, just listen. I'm not telling you what to do. Listen, before you make up your mind. Don't vote for anything because I say to, or somebody else says it. Make up your own mind.' He voted every bloody same with us, every one.

**JS** [02:27:34] I'll never forget it 'Oh!' because by then Gugulyn had said that they went to the RCMP and he'd been shown files that we were all communists from the Coast. It was, well, I don't know how true that was by the way the RCMP operated. I don't doubt they did have files and called us communists or whatever. It doesn't matter. But that's—

**SG** [02:27:57] They would have showed them to him.

**JS** [02:27:58] They just showed them to him. The thing is, he tried all that sort of stuff. We just instead of just trying to say we're not, we'd say, wait, we're the communists from the Coast and everyone, 'Oh!'.

**IM** [02:28:13] Were there Communists in CAIMAW?

**JS** [02:28:14] I think there was. I mean, Mike Kostanski was an old Party guy, I'd heard. Some of the other guys. We had a lot of guys in the foundries with that. It was like, if I,

well, why would I? You know, I, it never entered into me. Other people did. Oh yeah, you got to watch this guy, you've got to watch that guy. I'd need to be bloody like an octopus with an eye on every tentacle to keep the eye on all these people. It just never washed with me.

**JS** [02:28:46] I was brought up. We had Preston, just north of Chorley where I lived. This Pat Devine, I think his name was. He was a communist rabble rouser they used to say. I heard him speak a couple of times. Ah, it's okay. Made a lot of sense to me, you know. I just, like the labels, as I say, I'm I'm different than most. Never.

**SG** [02:29:10] Well, you would have had a lot of people coming into CAIMAW at this time who were kind of New Left, weren't they?

**JS** [02:29:14] Oh, yeah, that's right. All them young guys. We had the young people from the universities, you know, all of a sudden didn't want to go out there. They come in with Mao jackets on. I mean, I thought it was hilarious. I thought it was great you know, let them. Then they were gonna do this and Mao with this. Johnny Woods come and give me a little book, a little red book and signed by Mao. I wish I had have kept the bloody thing. I don't know where it went. He actually met Mao. He was one of Jack Scott's proteges, you see. When he come back, if anybody'd come to my house, they would have thought, 'Oh, I'm a Maoist.' My little, my youngest daughter was always walking around with this little red book. I never read the bloody thing. I read some but I just looked at it. It was interesting.

**SG** [02:30:03] They would have just for you, fallen into the category of being more of an activist than you could, you got along with all of them basically.

**JS** [02:30:13] I know that some of them never openly. I know that some of them behind the scenes, I heard, they were saying, 'Oh, this guy's no good.' I mean, one minute I was a bloody raving bloody communist. The next minute I was bloody a second coming to George Meany. Jim Kinnaird wrote a leaflet once. We was getting Peking gold, that's how we was running our union, you know. Peking gold.

**SG** [02:30:43] Peking gold, that's a good one.

**JS** [02:30:43] I said don't let my wife see that, she'll get mad, thinking I'm hiding it from her.

**SG** [02:30:51] That's something else to that I wanted to ask you about. You've mentioned that it was tough at various times, you were trying to raise a young family. How did you find that kind of work-life balance with your family life and taking on all the tasks that you did.

**JS** [02:31:11] I can say this. My wife was very supportive and that was very hard on her. That's why, by the way, when I retired, I said, 'That's it'. I only got into it. I promised her to get out of it back in 1966, '67, '68, '69, going on and on. The first time I, if George Brown hadn't died in '74—

**SG** [02:31:38] Mm hmm.

**JS** [02:31:39] I would definitely not have stayed around because we got the union set up when we could hire people and do all that. I just come to, elected in '71. It was the end of '70, I think it was either the end of '71 or the beginning of '72 that I went on the payroll.

That was only after George Brown was hired and we had another person hired, although in the constitution, I was the only one guaranteed to be full time.

**JS** [02:32:12] I didn't do it because we couldn't afford it and it was more important we organized. The old saying, you know, you organize or die. That's one thing I knew right from the first. We had to organize to survive. That's where my impetus always was. Although technically under the constitution, by the way, I was basically a bookman. That's why I say that I was in charge of the finances, but in essence, I was the only member, full-time member on the executive board. As such, I had more influence than what you would see in the constitution. I'd argued in the '73 convention, I realized, the way things were unfolding, that I was in a very, the most powerful position in the union.

**JS** [02:33:04] We had rank and filers all on committee, the president, the vice-president, all the rank and filers. Still, if you're a full-time official, you've got more sway and you got more information and all of that. I recognized that and so at the '73 convention, I pushed a resolution to amend the constitution to have the two regional vice-presidents also on the executive board. It was one of only two resolutions, I mean, not minor ones, but major ones, that I got defeated on. I jokingly refer to that. I got up and I gave this lovely speech. I thought the saying that I found out that I was in a position just like Gugulyn basically was there. He was, it didn't show it in the constitution, he had more power. I said, 'I don't think it's right that one person should be, have that,' and I said, 'You get on the executive board and although the other people are there, we tend to look at like 'well, we're members, they're not'.'

**SG** [02:34:08] Right.

**JS** [02:34:09] I said, 'The only way I can see to make sure we don't get that, too much power in one position, was to have the regional vice-presidents on there, after all elected and they're in charge of servicing and contracting.' I got slaughtered. George Brown coaxed his buddy old Pop Jacobs to get up. I'll never forget. Old English guy, a real old character, a bit of a conservative guy but, salt of the earth, he got up and he says, 'I don't know this Pat McEvoy very well. I've met Pat, he seemed like a decent young guy and I'll take everybody's word for it. George Brown, I've never met a finer guy in my life. He's one of my closest friends and all of that. But I don't want him sitting on the executive board.' He goes on this tirade about we want to get rid of all these full-timers on the executive board. I remember George Brown saying to me, 'And that's my buddy.' It was hilarious. The thing is, we awakened in people that democratic rank and file control.

**SG** [02:35:14] Right.

**JS** [02:35:15] Years later, by the way, I talked to several others and one of the few discussions I had with Jack Scott. I met him occasionally, and said hello to him and that. The only real discussion I ever had with him was talking about how the hell I could eliminate the one bureaucrat in the union. He looked at me and said, 'You got it down to one, for Christ sake, you're done better than anyone else ever did.' I always looked at myself as a bureaucrat, because I was the one that basically I had sway, more than that. I was never once accused of abusing it. As a matter of fact a lot of people say, why don't you get and do that job? It was a responsibility. I was idealistic at that time.

**SG** [02:36:02] One of the other things that CAIMAW did for which they gained a lot of renown is the some of the unique and innovative methods they had for organizing metal

miners, coming out with secondary pickets and joint bargaining and that kind of thing, which was fairly new at the time.

**JS** [02:36:20] Yeah.

**SG** [02:36:21] Who was the instrument in developing those tactics? Was that part of your—

**JS** [02:36:26] I think that we should never overlook the contribution by our Winnipeg group. Most people look on CAIMAW was here. If you read the history of a guy like Pat McEvoy. Man was those guys as good as trade unionists as you'd ever meet in your life. We had discussions about all those things. To us, a picket line was sacrosanct.

**SG** [02:36:51] Right.

**JS** [02:36:52] We had fights in Manitoba at the Bell Foundry. We had fights there. We had a big division in the labour movement there where CUPE and the CBRT and all that was on our picket line. The Steelworkers were trying to undermine it and trying to scab on us and stuff like that. That all came there.

**JS** [02:37:15] Then when we was out here, Len Guy and George Johnston, when they come in there. Now, I would look on Len Guy as a real conservative guy. He was recognized as such. When Len Guy become president, secretary-treasurer I think he was at that time. The main position was secretary-treasurer. It changed to president when Kinnaird come along. When I looked at, met with Len Guy, we talked about that, they developed that picketing policy. We had some discussions with them about that, but nobody knew that. I used to talk to Len Guy, he would phone me and have some really good, nice conversations.

**JS** [02:37:58] I remember one time we were going to go and picket. We had a strike going on in one of our mines and we were going to picket the Brenda Mine up in Peachland because they were a conglomerate, part of the Noranda group, I think it was. I could never remember how these bloody companies change bloody names, and all of that, and corporate entities. We were going, wanted to go up there.

**SG** [02:38:23] This is secondary picketing?

**JS** [02:38:23] Yeah, we wanted to go up there and of course under the Fed policy, which was a really good one, we notified them, because affiliates and non-affiliates did. We went up to a meeting. I think Peter Cameron and I went for a meeting in Kamloops and Monty Alton was there from the Steelworkers with some other people. George Johnston and Len Guy was there, and we're all talking about that. They said, well, you two, we've heard what you're saying and all that and we'll discuss it. We went outside and went and had a coffee. We could hear the shouting and screaming going on in this bloody thing. Len Guy and George Johnston, they just ripped the Steelworkers all to ratshit because they were going to say, 'Don't let them come there, we should walk across their picket line', and all that. People never knew about that stuff.

**SG** [02:39:16] Right.

**JS** [02:39:16] There was a lot of guys in the labour movement. Some of them even wrote leaflets supporting the Steelworkers, the IAM and that. They would phone us up and tell

us, 'We've had to write that because they are affiliates.' 'Forget about it. Don't worry.' I mean the amount of times that happened, it's amazing.

**SG** [02:39:37] There were a lot of back channels sort of arrangements.

**JS** [02:39:39] Definitely. I mean, everybody was sympathetic to us. Nearly everybody. An interesting thing is, talking about the CEW constitution, the first one was run off in Local 1217, the IWA Hall on Commercial Drive, in there. Walt Pooghkay, who was one of Syd Thompson's right-hand men in them days, big Walter, he was a bloody good guy. His wife, Donna, was part of our group. We was down in the IWA Hall and he was running them off on the Gestetner in there, because that was the way you produced stuff. Syd Thompson walked in. I wasn't there, but Walter tells me, he walked in and says 'What the bloody hell is this?' Walter says, 'None of your business.' He says, 'Okay,' and he walked out. He knew what we're doing. The next thing you know, he's saying, 'These goddamn guys, they're not (real) Canadian unions', and all that. That was the dynamics of the situation. It was kind of funny, but I never betrayed the trust either.

**SG** [02:40:48] No.

**JS** [02:40:49] You never, they'd get up and say things and all that. That's okay. Let them carry on.

**IM** [02:40:55] What about your argument there's a huge philosophical underpinning for Canadian unionism? It's a latent strength that is there, it's never really been tapped as much as it should be.

**JS** [02:41:04] Yeah, I think it was twofold. There was the underlying need for that, but it sprung from the fact that the international unions had lost touch with their membership and were not responsive to the needs of the people. There was no way that you were going to change that. I remember hearing Art O'Keefe and your dad and people like that went down there tried to change things, didn't get anywhere. I remember Kent Rowley telling me he went to a union convention in the States. There was some resolution on the floor, and they said 'all those for', 'those against' or something and Rowley said, 'I abstain'. 'What you mean 'I abstain'?' So Rowley gets up to the mic and says, 'Well, this is an entirely domestic affair for Americans. I don't think it's right that I, as a Canadian, should be taking that.' The chairman says, 'There's no abstaining in this union.' He said, 'Okay, I'll vote against it then'. That always stuck with me, that sort of spirit.

**JS** [02:42:17] You got guys like Homer Stevens, really good guys, whether one liked this that and what they did and that. I always had great empathy for them and understanding. We had a meeting with Rowley. That was the fight when they were trying to get back into the CLC, they'd been red-hated out. The CCU was used as a buffer. They were threatening to join the CCU. That's one of the reasons they got back into the CLC. Most people didn't know that.

**IM** [02:42:51] Is that true? Did you meet as well?

**JS** [02:42:54] I know that. We was all for it. We didn't give a bugger about that because we thought, well, that's okay. It was the issue of what was best for them at that time. I was in on them discussions. Why would we try to stop them getting where they felt it was best for their union?

**JS** [02:43:17] When the merger with the CBRT joined the CAW, it was after we joined. I would have to go to several meetings both at Mine-Mill and CBRT and CASAW to tell them about our experience within the CLC. I never once told them to do it. My position was tell them why we joined, and what reception we had and answer any questions.

**JS** [02:43:49] The question that, what was I going to say? The CBRT. Christ, I lost my thread. What was I saying there? As I told you, you get old, you know. The CBRT. Lost my train of thought.

**SG** [02:44:12] Are you going to say that Local 400 didn't—

**JS** [02:44:14] Oh, yeah, that's right. It was Local 400, that's right. I was in a meeting with them and I talked to Local 400, the Seamen's Union.

**SG** [02:44:24] Right.

**JS** [02:44:24] And they talked, Al Engler, I think it was, and McGrath and some of them people.

**SG** [02:44:31] It was Terry Engler, right?

**JS** [02:44:33] Terry Engler, yeah. They said, they give me a reason, another guy who was this other young guy. I got to know him.

**SG** [02:44:42] Yeah. Crane, maybe?

**JS** [02:44:44] Dave Crane is another guy. A young guy. He talked to us. He said, 'Look, we feel better off going to the Longshoreman,' I think it was.

**SG** [02:44:54] That's right, yeah.

**JS** [02:44:55] If I remember right, so I said, 'Makes sense to me, boys.' They supported us in the Lenkurt dispute. They got jobs for bloody guys on the picket line. What am I going to say? No, you got to join our group. What they wanted to do, that's what they wanted. They wanted to join an American union that should be their right, but it's also their right to join a Canadian union. That's always the position I took.

**JS** [02:45:18] I went to the CCU, an executive board meeting here in Vancouver, or back East, maybe, back East. They sent a couple of guys, Dave Crane and somebody else, I think it was. They then petitioned to be left out of the merger. I got up and said that we should do it. We should do that. Christ, you could have heard a bloody penny drop there. I said, 'Look, there's a history of these guys there. They're going to support us, regardless of where they are. They fought for their own independence. They had their own bloody thing and give them a big spiel about it. I said some of the best trade unionists I've ever known are these guys and I have no qualms about that at all if it's the best thing for them.

**JS** [02:46:08] I'll never forget, I think it was Jim McNeill, the secretary of the new union gets up and he says, 'So what you're saying is the best guys in the CBRT, that the merger with the CBRT, the best guys in it, you want them to go someplace else?' 'I think when you put it like that, yes.' It was hilarious. They unanimously endorsed that position. And that's right.

**SG** [02:46:39] Just back up for a moment. This was when you were discussing you're going into the merger with the CAW.

**JS** [02:46:43] No, this is after we was merged with the CAW. We had. It was when the CBRT was talking about merging.

**SG** [02:46:50] Right. This wasn't the CCU. You said it was the executive of the CCU.

**JS** [02:46:53] No, this is the CAW. Sorry.

**SG** [02:46:57] Yeah. I want to back up on that too. What were the circumstances when CAIMAW came up against the situation where CAW looks like a good merger point for what had essentially been a Canadian union?

**JS** [02:47:11] Well, what happened—I can't remember the year when the CAW broke away.

**SG** [02:47:17] 1986.

**JS** [02:47:18] '86 was it. I remember getting a call from Pat McEvoy in Winnipeg and he said, 'Hey, did you hear that the Autoworkers have broken away?' I said, 'No, I hadn't.' He got it there and he said, 'Yeah,' he said, 'that's really good, you know.' I said, 'Well, it's a terrific development, you know.' I mean that's all we'd been fighting was to foment changes, but we never thought we were going to be the Messiah, although everybody accused us of it, a lot of people accused us, not everybody. I just said, 'Well, that's really good.' Pat McEvoy, the first thing he says, 'You know, maybe we can get together with them.' I said, 'Well, Pat, maybe you give them a chance. Let's see what they do first,' I said, 'But, you know, we'll see how it turns out'.

**JS** [02:48:03] Well, it was some years later that they, back East, made a decision and come to visit the CCU meeting. John Lang had talked with them there. It was Hargrove and White, I think it was, and Bob Nickerson. They said, 'Well, have you given any thought to the CCU coming in?' We had to point out to them that the CCU couldn't affiliate with them. It wouldn't mean anything, all our unions were independent. That wouldn't be the way to go. Some of them in the CCU were prepared to put it to a vote. I said, 'Well, that's silly. Just a waste of time and it's going to get shot down. If there's going to be any mergers there's got to be some real discussion and talk about that.' I said, 'We've got to get to know one another and all that.' Remember, I'd been through this, the other merger before, and that this was a far bigger one. I said, 'You know, I've looked at their constitution, and while it was a lot better than the original CAIMAW one, it was still needed, some things needed to be decided, and we got waivers on stuff that in that case. We still retain the right, and still do, our locals to leave, vote to leave anytime they want. That was part of our merger document with them. I always believed that a local should have the right to retain its assets and leave if they wished because so many of the unions left the international and lost everything.

**SG** [02:49:46] Yeah, that's right.

**JS** [02:49:46] That was one of the conditions we joined there. There was quite a few discussions. Then I got talking to Hargrove— he sought me out—and we found a lot in common and we chatted away. I said, 'Look, if you want, I don't mind if you want to send some observers.' We had a convention coming up and all that. I said, 'By all means.' We

agreed that we'd have some of our people go to some of their meetings and we would reciprocate.

**JS** [02:50:18] When we first started off, it seemed there were some real roadblocks. There are different structures. In CAIMAW, we were a highly centralised national union whose only purpose basically was to service the locals.

**SG** [02:50:32] Right.

**JS** [02:50:33] Because of the various plants, small groups here, there, mines here and there, each one of them. The Pulp Workers, on the other hand, was a union, apart from their group down here, were big units all around the province. Each one could have their own business agent do it, and they were self-sufficient. You couldn't do that with the sort of a mixed group that we had, you know, all the various plants, small plants, and all that, all in one local. A miscellaneous local kind of thing.

**JS** [02:51:04] We had to sort out the different way that the CAW structure was and how we would meet. We found out a couple of things and one of the things is that we had far more reps working with the National Union per person than what they did. It meant reducing our lot way down, which I said right at the start, if that was the case, that I would waive my rights completely to do it. Talked with Pat McEvoy, he was really keen on the merger, pursuing that. He agreed. Well, the first guy after myself was Tom Warren, one of our reps. Remember, we were getting hammered by the closures due to the NAFTA.

**SG** [02:51:52] Right.

**JS** [02:51:54] It was at that backdrop and we could see what was happening. Tommy Warren said 'Jess,' he said, he was, I think he was about, after me, Cathy Walker, I think it was Tommy Warren, or Peter Cameron and then Tommy Warren. He said, 'Look, you've got to do this.' He says, 'I know that the problem you got, I'll, count me out. If I can get my severance pay, I'll take it and go.' So that was me. Then I talked to Pat McEvoy, he agreed. So that was three of our guys right there and a couple of other people we figured. Denise Kellehan, we figured that she could maybe work for the local because the local was big enough in the hospitality industry. Then Susan Spratt, who was, that was, we had three in the Winnipeg office. Pat agreed to go, Susan Spratt who would lose her job. She agreed that it was the right thing for the members and that she would lose her job, and a couple more people here. That was going to be it. That opened the door then.

**JS** [02:52:57] To be impractical about things, the only hang up was joining the CLC and the BC Fed. To me that was an ideological situation that affected me. In reality, most members wouldn't know the difference between one or the other. I wasn't gonna let that be a stand in the way. I reported everything. By the way, I'd stepped down as president of the CCU by that time, in '89. I think that I'd been president there for four years. I levelled with them. I reported every time to every executive board meeting of our meetings with the CAW. We decided to merge. Yeah. The same guys that had been sitting around the table were, I had told them what we were going to do, said, 'How come you're doing this? You never told us.' I was the only guy that did report everything to them. It's all in writing, anyway it was there.

**JS** [02:54:06] The interesting thing is, as an aside to that, I realized and I think any conversation, we knew, whether before we talked about the CAW, when that question come up, some of the people were saying, 'Well, what are you going to do? What's

CAIMAW going to do?' I said, 'Well, look, you know, we're faced with a situation. Most of our people say, why not?' You know, what's the big deal because we were pretty open about it. We didn't try to hide it. I thought maybe we should give it serious consideration and I was the person in charge of it for our lot.

**JS** [02:54:46] Our national president was with me at every meeting. We never met once in CAIMAW, an officer with the employer, without rank and file representation on anything, any time.

**JS** [02:54:59] We're having these discussions. Then they said, 'Well, I don't know we're going to do that.' We had a meeting in Winnipeg. It was a CCU meeting and I met—there was Rick Briggs of Mine-Mill, there was a couple of guys from the Pulp Workers, because they were always affiliated by each local, there was Hunter Wallace from the Independent Canadian Transit Union, and Ross Slezak, from the Kitimat group. I said, 'Well, you know, there's an alternative. The only one that I can see is that we're all faced with different problems and that, and each of was maybe going to survive, but it's not going to be the way we are. We're going to have to adapt or die. I said, 'You know, the alternative that suits me is if we all join up, have one national union, and we all group together.' Even if we eventually finished up joining the CAW, at least we'd have more impact.

**JS** [02:55:56] I never forget that because they're all looking around the table and I started, 'Well, what's the problem?' I said, 'You know, we've each got a national union, but each of us, you're involved in the local affairs, many of our local officers are national officers'. I said, 'Is there a need for each of us to have a national union? We could all get together.' 'Well, why would that work?' I said, 'Well, I could, I'm prepared to draft a constitution, listen to everybody's concerns and do some work drafting a constitution that would fit everybody's needs. Then get it ratified by your members, take it back there. I would then have a founding meeting where we all go without delegated authority there. Each person would come there and we'd do that. Then we could elect officers and take it from there.' 'Well,' he says, 'that's okay,' he said, 'but you'll get elected.' This is Ross Slezak from Kitimat. I'd never even thought about that. I said, 'Well, what's that got to do with it, Ross?' You know, we'd have it open, we'd have elections. 'Yeah, but you'd get elected and all that'.

**JS** [02:57:15] I said, 'Well look,' I said, 'stop it right there.' I said, 'This is nothing personal with me.' I says, 'Look, I'll do all the work. I'll go around to each of your locals, do the spade work. Telling people what we're trying to do. Each one of you will have a referendum on it. We'll go to a meeting and I'll give you in writing, I won't run for office. I'll do this on the basis that I can finally get out.' I thought ah, the lights on, I'm finally going to get out.

**SG** [02:57:46] Would that option have been your preferred option at the time?

**JS** [02:57:49] Definitely. Definitely. I thought that we had enough common interest. We'd been through too many battles. We knew that. I thought eventually we'd have more impact on the labour movement that way.

**SG** [02:58:00] If you were later to merge.

**JS** [02:58:01] Yeah. It related to merging and we could set the groundwork, the ground rules a bit better. I said, 'Look, that's what they're doing.' The guy, Slezak says, 'But if you're not leading it, who the hell is going to do all the work?' I thought, well, it was

straight from his heart. He was a good guy, Ross. I liked him, but it was one of those things. I said, 'Well, you can't have it all ways, you know.'

**JS** [02:58:30] I was prepared then, as I always was. I was never once, like when we merged with the CAW. You see the document. There's one person wasn't covered by anything in the constitution—me. I was elected to see a transition period for from the merger day for a year to get all the certifications changed over, all the internal things, all the properties disposed of and all that for the year, and that was me out.

**SG** [02:58:57] Right.

**JS** [02:58:58] Hargrove got up. I never forget it. Him and Bob White come to our convention. Just as we put it out to a referendum to all of our members and we worked out the final details. He got up and he said, 'You know, we've worked out many mergers,' he said. 'But we've never met any, done any negotiation with a guy that refused, that didn't start off the conversation and say, 'Wait a minute, what's in it for me?'' He said, 'We still don't know what's in it for him.' I think there was nothing in it.

**SG** [02:59:33] Just to back up, so Ross Slezak's intervention in here, that basically shot down any further conversation?

**JS** [02:59:40] We were just a group of us sitting around in the pub. It wasn't an official part of the CCU meeting. This was really about the leader. It was an informal meeting because we were going to a meeting where the issue had been raised about the CAW. Then they said, 'Well, what are we going to do, because come on', I found one of the problems that I always found is some people would rather be big fish in a little pond. I don't want to be a fish.

**SG** [03:00:12] Just to clarify, did the CCU unions ever formally consider a proposal whereby they would merge into one group?

**JS** [03:00:21] No, because that was my attempt at doing that. It was only an attempt in the sense that my prognostication was that as the CAW was turning out to the militant organization, it was, still. It was fighting for the right things. The NAFTA stuff had been really good. I didn't see any real hurdles to go in there. I said, then I thought, well some of them are saying they don't want to do this and all that. What's the alternative?

**SG** [03:00:57] Right.

**JS** [03:00:57] To me, I've always looked at things. People always thought I was very decisive. I suppose I am, but it's not that I can just jump on a thing. I think about things before. I'm great at eliminating what we don't want to do.

**SG** [03:01:12] Right.

**JS** [03:01:13] What were the options?

**SG** [03:01:14] So that—

**JS** [03:01:15] There was only two options left. If we had stayed as we were, that's okay, but some of us would go out of existence, like Mine-Mill, for example. If that mine shut down, bang, that's Mine-Mill gone, right?

**SG** [03:01:25] Right.

**JS** [03:01:28] Same with some of the pulp mills, which proved to be very prophetic in that sense. I was looking at it from very pragmatic look. Any other view of it. I just said, if we don't change, some of us won't be here. You know, then the other people come along. I said, if we want to keep our independence and the sort of structure that we have, then one way we could stick together is all become our own union. One. I didn't get anybody responding to that. It's kind of always bemused me a bit. When I put that out there, I didn't expect to be immediate response one way or another, but everybody rejected it. It's really strange.

**JS** [03:02:15] It was similar when we voted in 19—when we merged with the CAW in 1992, at our convention, I think was the year before that.

**SG** [03:02:29] In '91 I think.

**JS** [03:02:30] In '91. That's when we had the final details about that, we're going to put it to a referendum. I said to our convention, I had a resolution to change the name of the union to the Democratic Canadian Union, the DCU. My reasons were that there was so much B.S. put around about CAIMAW. The Steelworkers, we'd sued them several times in lawsuits for defamation, but the Steelworkers started to smarten up. Get all this stuff that they'd written about us, which is: starving workers on the picket line, doing this outrageous things and all that. We got an injunction against them, but the employers started to put it around whenever we was organizing. CAIMAW, as soon as we got organizing, all this stuff was out and it was in collusion with them, they were getting all this stuff. It was CAIMAW to us, and in it, we were so proud of it. I've never been caught up with the names, by the way, but most people, our members, CAIMAW they go through bloody hell and hellfire and brimstone for it. I was into practical use, saying, for Christ sake, if we could call ourselves the Democratic Canadian Union, and I could envision every time somebody tried to knock you, and they'd say that bloody rotten Democratic Canadian Union, I thought, man, that's good.

**SG** [03:04:00] It's a breakthrough.

**JS** [03:04:00] Yeah, it's a breakthrough, the DCU. Every time they'd try to knock us they'd have to say, Democratic Canadian Union, so that to me, I said it would help us in organizing and do that.

**JS** [03:04:12] I get up at the convention, now I couldn't tell them, because if it had got out, I thought we were going to go down hill, because we couldn't, we was having so much trouble organizing with all the bullshit the way the employers were coming up on us. I couldn't get up and say that because then that would have been leaked out to the press some way or another. I would have been quoted as saying Succamore said the union's dead.

**SG** [03:04:36] Yeah.

**JS** [03:04:37] I couldn't say that but I tried every other persuasion to get up. I got slaughtered. It was the second time I got slaughtered at a convention. I think about three of us voted my bloody resolution to change the name. What I found was so crazy, the next resolution is whether we should join the CAW and they voted to change the goddamned

union. They wouldn't change the name of the union, but they voted to put it to a referendum, which I always found, amusing and ironic, right?

**SG** [03:05:13] Was there a sense the CAW was going to provide a lot of resources and all of that?

**JS** [03:05:19] I think that's what it was. I think it was the organizing, that we would have the resources to organize. Here again, that to me is my credo. If you don't organize, you're not doing any good. You know you can't sit back. I think a lot of American unions had their bailiwick. They had a sinecure. They got members in this, like some of the printing trades and all of that. Remember when we started off, the fishermen was in the Fish Union, these ones were in that, those were in that, different groups.

**JS** [03:05:54] Now all the unions' structures have all changed. We adapted to that quicker than most. It was just another step. The Autoworkers itself were dominated by auto workers. Now, they're not. They're in the minority.

**SG** [03:06:09] How was it you came to be the first area director of the CAW in British Columbia for a guy who was wantin' out at this point.

**JS** [03:06:20] I was elected as—I can't remember the bloody name, what it was.

**SG** [03:06:26] Oh, what's happened here?

**IM** [03:06:27] The light's on.

**SG** [03:06:27] Oh, it's run out. I suspect the tape has run out.

**IM** [03:06:44] OK. Ask him about George Angus.

**JS** [03:06:46] Is it still going?

**SG** [03:06:47] Yeah. Well, we're going to count on this one because I think we've been around. I think this tape is dead. Thing is gone.

**JS** [03:06:54] Anyhow, what, where was we at there? We were just talking about?

**SG** [03:07:02] How you became area director.

**JS** [03:07:04] Area director. I was elected, but I always insisted everybody go to an election for me and they said, 'Oh, well, you be the person that carries out all the instructions.' All our staff were given a year, even those that were getting laid off, or they could get, take their lay off and get the severance pay. That was it, but I was the one that was in charge of the transition for all the property and certifications and all of that.

**JS** [03:07:41] We was in a meeting later in that year, and I was having one hell of a time with them over John Bowman, who was really invaluable, the most valuable asset we had, I think, him and Cathy Walker. The staff union, that's why I had some problems with the staff union and the Autoworkers. They were saying no, he, they weren't going to have any more. I said to them, he doesn't service and that; he does all the legal work. I said it would cost you a fortune going to the labour board using lawyers. They'd been using lawyers. They had staff lawyers and all that. I said, 'Bowman does all that and he does it better

than your guys.' They wouldn't believe me. I made it a condition that the day Bowman was fired, I was out the gate.

**JS** [03:08:29] We were having a staff meeting in our old library down in the old CAIMAW hall, and I get a— Janet Hall there, the office manager comes in and she says, 'Jess, Buzz Hargrove's on the phone'. I said, 'Oh, yeah, what does he want?' She said, 'He wants to talk to you.' I said, 'Just a minute' and I get up and walk out. He said, 'Did you get my fax?'

**JS** [03:09:00] I said, 'What bloody fax?' I don't know. He says, 'Go and get your fax,' he says, 'and I'll see you.' I said, 'See me why?' 'Read the fax,' he says, 'I'm off now. Give me a call tomorrow.' Janet comes in, 'You got this.' I looked and it says that you've been appointed area director of the CAW.

**JS** [03:09:24] I said, 'Hey, what's this bullshit?' I said, 'You know, I told you that I'm not doing that. You know, I'm not interested in that.' He said, 'Well, that's done, see you.' Bang and he put down the phone. I walked in the library and I said, 'That bloody jerk.' I said, 'You know, he's done this,' and they all clapped. I said, 'What the hell.' That's how I become area director. That's the start within three weeks I told him to stick his job. Three times in three weeks. I phoned him up. I said, 'I don't want you sticking your bloody nose in what I'm doing and I know what I'm doing.' I called him a wet-nosed punk and that, all sorts of stuff. We had a bit of fun. I was (going to get ahold) of him, actually, but it was some of the stuff he was. They did things like he was sending stuff about, to Georgetti. Saying basically, it was inferred that we all thought he was a wonderful guy. I said, 'Don't you ever bloody well associate me with that.' I had a few things and there was some other things. He was, I forget what they were. They didn't mean much to anybody else and it was just my way of going about, doing things with rank and file participation, not acting unilaterally, and stuff. I just told them I wasn't going to be part of that sort of stuff.

**IM** [03:10:42] Jess, do you see the Canadian labour movement going in that direction of consolidation? It's history repeating itself. We're back to the vision of the One Big Union, 1918.

**JS** [03:10:52] I was going to say they had it right, but circumstances didn't allow it, you know, and the evolution. I'm not opposed to the comparison with the OBU. The only thing I'm worried about, always have been, is bureaucracy in the union movement and high pay for union officers. I always fought against it. I think the biggest, one serious biggest problem, the union movement side is high pay for union officers. I think that first hand observation is that you get people then trying to get the job opportunistic.

**IM** [03:11:34] For the wrong reasons.

**JS** [03:11:34] For the wrong reasons. Unfortunately, I saw so many of Party guys like Fred Frumlin, for example, who used the Party, in that case, the Communist Party, used it till they get their foot in the door and then slammed it on everything else. Opportunism in the union movement is, I found that is really [unclear], it could be a right wing, left wing or anything else. They become part of the establishment more interested in, like most politicians, getting elected.

**JS** [03:12:10] We had guys in our union, many of them in the mines especially, where they were a lot higher paid than we were, would say, we'd try and get them to come to work for the union and they'd say, 'I'm not going to work for that money.' That was fair enough,

they were honest about it, but they were good union guys and they did it. Guys like Darcey Blomquist from Williams Lake.

**SG** [03:12:30] One of the things that a number of unions like Local 400 and Local 598 of Mine-Mill—

**JS** [03:12:38] Yeah.

**SG** [03:12:38] Said that they wanted to retain their rank and file character as part of them, and that's one of the reasons they didn't want to merge. Did you see or do you see any loss of some of that rank and file sort of direction and democracy in the CAW merger?

**JS** [03:12:55] What I saw is this, that when we joined, I set up a Western Council for BC and Alberta. We would meet once a year, get them all together and have some rank and file input. I don't think all the staff members ever went, but it was the officers and getting all the leadership of the local unions. They were very good. We had, I conducted elections for who would be the representative. I insisted on elections for who would be our representative to the BC Fed and the Alberta Fed and stuff of that nature. It was all very good. After I left, that all went down the wayside. They finished up appointing them from back East.

**JS** [03:13:48] There were those things there, and they were dear to me, and I think they're endemic in a good union. I think some of those things have been lost, definitely. Here again, you can't lead from the grave. I'm a firm believer that the people there is got to do it. If they're not interested in doing it, you can't make them think of democracy and stuff like that.

**JS** [03:14:18] I don't know the quote and I am not sure of the person who said it. I think it was one of the founders of the U.S. constitution. Who would it be, Thomas Jefferson, I think, said, 'Well, now we have got democracy, make sure, can you keep it?' or words to that effect. They are so prophetic so many of these people, like Churchill's words about democracy: 'It's the worst of all possible systems, except for the other systems.'

**JS** [03:14:50] Democracy is, to me I believe that and I learned from it. I learned that you can have differences of opinion. When the membership said one thing, even if I didn't agree with it, I accepted the democratic right. I learnt that more from a couple of old timers like Tommy Brown. He was a real activist in the IAM. We had a vote at his place where he worked, what the hell was that, International Harvester, just right on the corner of, Christ, by the CN Station just down there, that old.

**JS** [03:15:42] Terminal Avenue and Main Street. I remember we had the vote there. It was 49 to 1.

**SG** [03:15:49] In favour of CAIMAW.

**JS** [03:15:50] Yeah. Tommy Brown, he'd been the steward for the IAM. He was the only guy from there that went to union meetings and all of that and he got the only one. I thought, Jesus, you know, this guy, some of the guys say, 'that bastard, he didn't want to carry on'. 'Leave it go, just let it go and see.' That guy become our best, one of our best supporters. It was the same with other guys in other plants.

**JS** [03:16:18] They were supporting the union there for all the right reasons, just like I would most likely have supported it. We come along with something alien, they didn't know about it. They didn't understand it.

**SG** [03:16:28] Yeah.

**JS** [03:16:29] When I saw Tommy Brown and people like that accept the fact that the membership had spoken. Well, that's what they chose. What am I to do? It stirred something in me, and made me responsive to that.

**JS** [03:16:44] I could never get chicanery. I never once had a meeting with anybody before a meeting at any time to discuss, somebody might have discussed an issue with me, but I never plotted with anybody who would do this or do that or all that. Never once in my life. I always like to think on my feet and go there and take it there. I've never been unhappy about that decision. Some people have an agenda. My only agenda was what was in the constitution, and that was it.

**SG** [03:17:18] Just two final questions. We're going to wrap up here, Jess. One is, when did you finally get out? When did you finally retire?

**JS** [03:17:26] In 1995. I've been—our merger went through in 1992.

**SG** [03:17:33] Mm hmm.

**JS** [03:17:35] I was looking after things, and I said to Hargrove, 'Look who are you going to get to replace me?' He says, 'You could work till you're 65.' I said, look, I was getting bigger paycheques than I've ever had in my life. It didn't impress me when I was broke and didn't have any money, just had the house and that, and not starving, I wasn't complaining. I'm just saying. He says, 'Well, that.' I said, 'Look, I went seven years at one time, never took a holiday, for 14 years I never played a game of golf. I'm never going to get that time back. I'm going to bloody well—' What he says, him and White, 'Oh, go and play golf. We don't care. You run things there.' I said, 'Me, go and play golf? While I'm spending union, getting paid by the union.?' I mean they didn't understand me to that degree. They never did. No, most people never did understand me.

**JS** [03:18:38] To me, the most sacred thing was union dues. Case in point, Merl Rodocker and I were sitting in a pub. We've got hundreds of dollars in our pocket in initiation fees, and went and borrowed money off somebody to buy a beer for ourselves. We ran out of money. We wouldn't touch the bloody money. It's not ours. It wasn't our money.

**SG** [03:19:06] Well, so getting back to the date. What was the date of your retirement?

**JS** [03:19:12] Christ, it's on that painting over there. Go have a look at it. I think it was June something in '95, wasn't it?.

**IM** [03:19:24] June 30th, 1995.

**SG** [03:19:26] So you hadn't turned 65 by that time?

**JS** [03:19:28] No. I was 63 and a half. Here's the tale. I told Hargrove several times that we had some differences of opinion, especially around Georgetti. To be in the same room with him was more than I could stomach at the time. I always treat everybody with

respect. I wouldn't let my feelings show, but I had nothing in common with some of those people. I just felt it was rather than, I'm not going to make a big deal of it because that's the way I felt. You put the interests of everybody else ahead of it, but I was fed up.

**JS** [03:20:04] Then my second daughter had a child who was severely handicapped.

**SG** [03:20:09] Hmm.

**JS** [03:20:10] Little Emma. She had severe brain damage. I, my wife and I wanted to help. She was going to, my daughter was going to, and her husband, as you met there and they'd just got married, to Simon Fraser. You met Ray. It was her husband. I insisted that, I suggested, when she got pregnant. I said, 'Why don't you come home and live at home?' She says, 'Well, you can't'. I said, 'Look, come home. You've got to finish your schooling. Ray, he's got to finish his. He can get a job. Then you're going to have the baby. Then you got to go back to school and do it.'

**JS** [03:20:55] I always felt a big responsibility in the sense, my kids, I hadn't done for them what I thought I should have done, all those years. There was one way I could put things right there. When she had the baby and Ray finished school, he finally got a job teaching, at my kids' old high school, as a matter of fact, the one that Sandra went to. I insisted, the only time I insisted with my kids once in my life I did, that she go back to school because she was going to get the job. No, I'll help you and all that, go back to school. She went back to school. We stayed there. Emma had the problems. We, my wife, more than me, we cared for the little one.

**SG** [03:21:45] Hmm.

**JS** [03:21:47] I just said, 'No, that's it. I'm quitting.' Six months before that, I said to Hargrove, 'Make my time out, then.' Well he literally persuaded me, let's put it that way, to stay on at least another six months. He said, 'I get bloody problems from everywhere in the country.' He said, 'The only place I don't get any problems from is BC.'

**SG** [03:22:18] Well, that's fair.

**JS** [03:22:18] As an aside to that, in them days everybody was starting to get phones, you know, in their car. All the area directors were given a phone. They thought it was Valhalla. I never got one. He says, 'Hey, I tried to get you on the cell phone. Is it not working? Haven't you got the number here?' I said, 'No, I'm going to get one, don't worry'. I never did get one. He says, 'Well, I.' I said, 'What do I want a phone for? I know what the bloody hell I'm doing. If I'm not doing, I shouldn't be here.' All the other area directors, 'Oh, Jeez, I got my cell phone.'.

**JS** [03:22:52] The long and short of it is, I finished up staying six months after I'd given him an ultimatum. When I did, the guy replacing me was Frank McAnally. Good guy and he come out here and he fit in okay. We had all the same things, elect people and all that. Then Hargrove, after I left, of course, he inveigled old McAnally that his Ford plant, where he'd been before, 'needed him in negotiations, it's important'. He talked McAnally into going back there. Then he appointed, I think it was Len Ruel or somebody, God almighty, and so that was the end of that.

**SG** [03:23:43] That leads me to my last question, which is in all of the things that you've stood for in creating this independent Canadian union, you think they've found a new and good home in Unifor?

**JS** [03:23:55] Well, it's up to them. I mean, I found out that one thing that you can't deny, is that the Council meetings every year, at least once a year, if you get up there as a rank and filer, as a delegation from your local, you go up there, five or 600 delegates there, and man, regardless of what the guy at the head table goes, the rank and file will support you if it's a good issue. I found out that. I think they're very open. I think that my biggest concern is that the bureaucracy, of appointing representatives and currying favour. I found out also that when a person was a good local officer and then they got on the executive board, that was a stepping stone for a lot of people to becoming a fulltime rep.

**SG** [03:24:55] Right.

**JS** [03:24:57] To me, that's ass about face. There's some people that are cut out to be a rep. To me like negotiating a contract or something like that, it leaves me uninspired completely. I can do it. There's nothing hard about it or nothing like that. That's not it, it's the union, it's the organizing and the social activity, and the causes you get involved in. That to me, is what the union is. You can go and argue for bloody, I've always said you can argue, you can always try for an extra $0.10, and inflation takes it away the next bloody day. You're on the picket line for nothing. On the other hand you can do what we did, make breakthroughs like in the mining sector where over in Endako we were locked out for 18 months. Then we struck for another six months when they lifted the lockout and we got bigger advances than anybody in the history of the mining, and things like that.

**JS** [03:25:55] I think that we were quoted as saying that the trouble with CAIMAW, one of the bosses said, 'You never know where they stand.' That was okay with me. Why should we let him know exactly? He said, 'With the Steelworkers.' I've got the quotes here somewhere in the magazine article. He said, 'With them we always knew where we was going. We'd have a meeting before negotiations. We'd discuss over what really mattered. Then we'd go through.' He didn't say the charade of negotiation, but that's what he meant. He said, 'That's the way you should do things, you know, responsibly.'

**IM** [03:26:33] Jess, do you think that the trade union movement can survive, unless it starts to do things differently. I mean, rank and file democracy is one thing, but one of the aspects of the trade union movement that has really interested me in other countries, because my mother's French, is the social cultural aspects. For example, I worked, I was in Paris and I worked there for a year. I'm a sports guy and I belonged to the Metro Workers' Union Sports Club. They had every facet of the Summer Olympics, even some that weren't in Paris, which is the section of, and the Metro workers that were involved outside of the trade union movement simply being a vehicle for economic advancement. Well, that's a huge social aspect. They were so loyal to their unions. They paid their subscription. I get the impression that the Sudbury Mine-Mill Union was like that too.

**JS** [03:27:29] One of the things that I thought was good about the CAW and you give Bob White and the leadership, he deserves a kudo. They set up that Education Centre. They spent an enormous, millions of money that they got in the breakaway. That Port Elgin facility, it was just marvelous. The stuff is there for them to do it.

**JS** [03:27:53] Mine-Mill had their summer camp there where I stayed when everybody else was staying in hotels. I slept on straw mattress out in their little campground out there, south side of town and stuff like that.

**SG** [03:28:06] In Sudbury.

**JS** [03:28:07] In Sudbury, yeah. It was quite different. We used to have picnics. We'd get several hundred people, close to a thousand people at one time, down at the bloody, for picnics, Labour Day picnic or something. Those things have changed.

**JS** [03:28:30] When we were fairly fighting the Steelworkers, they raided us about a hundred-odd times and they had 19 votes against us. We won every one. We were doing all this stuff and it was continual raids all the time, every day. We never had a day in our existence where we didn't have somebody raiding us. That was my job, keeping tabs on all of that and keeping the organization.

**JS** [03:28:59] The commitment we made to the CCU. If you look at all these unions that I helped to form, now I was the instrument from it. Everybody's got to understand that I was just the instrument. Our members supported me doing it. They were paying my dues. I never put one bill into the CCU and directly helped to organize CASAW, CUTE, and ICTU. All those spent an enormous amount of time with their rank and file leadership teaching them how to do it and all that. All of that stuff was done but I never once billed the CCU for any of that.

**JS** [03:29:39] We took a decision, years ago, when the guys in Yellowknife wanted the join the union. They contacted Rowley. We had a difference of opinion on that and I think that was a mistake that they made. They thought that they should join CASAW. CASAW, we'd helped to organize and that, but we'd done a lot of the work for them. We set up seminars and that for them and conducting trade union. George Brown went up there, Peter Cameron up there. I went up there teaching seminars and stuff like that. We done the organizing, we organized the place for them. Here it was choose between tweedle dee and tweedle dum. We never made a big deal about that. Kent's from back East, thought well Yellowknife search of the map looks at it and Kitimat there, that's the northern community having a union. He forgot to get from one to the other you had to come down here to go there. It was a two day trip where it could be a one day trip. That sort of stuff. Now, they took the decision back East that they thought it was better to have the guys in Kitimat going to Yellowknife. I said I thought you were wrong. I thought, you know, if anybody's going to do it, we should do it. They said no. I accepted the thing. Who organized the Yellowknife mine? I went up there. I had to do all the stuff. Wrote the bloody founding bloody thing, done all the work, wrote all the leaflets for it and all that. We looked on the CCU, as if we were an endemic part of that. We helped to build it, which we did. The interesting thing is, of course, when we merged, many of the so-called leaders in that lot, said, 'No, our members will never go for that.' Well, their members did go for it because once they looked at it. We joined. The CTCU joined. CASAW joined. CUTE, and all the rest, all joined there.

**JS** [03:31:47] I think that the proof is in the pudding. There was 70 percent in American unions when I got started. Now, don't get me—I've no grandiose thoughts that I did it. I'm just saying I was part of the struggle, and an integral part of it. When we started there was 70 percent in U.S.-based unions. When we finished our job, when I left, there was only 35 percent in American-based unions. Unions like the Chemical Workers, the IWA, who finished up going back to the Steelworkers, because somebody got paid up. I know all

about that.  Just like the original Mine-Mill deal, Harvey Murphy and all them guys got their pension from the Steelworkers.

**IM** [03:32:32] Okay. A silly question in closing, perhaps.

**SG** [03:32:35] Okay.

**IM** [03:32:37] If it was 1952, and you had a time machine that went back then, would you do the same thing all over again?

**JS** [03:32:41] No. (laughter)