



BUDDY LARRIER INTERVIEW

Disclaimer: This interview contains some offensive language which, following careful consideration, has not been removed in order to serve as a powerful and necessary illustration of a person's memories and experience of racism.

Key:

EHdK: Dr Eve Hayes de Kalaf (Interviewer)

BL: Reverend Buddy Larrier (Respondent)

Date/Location:

1st March 2023. St. Ann's Garrison, Barbados.

EHdK 00:01 I'm here with Reverend Buddy Larrier in Barbados and we are going to talk about a very fascinating story that Buddy has about his experiences in the UK. Could you tell me about yourself, please?

BL I am approaching 80 years old because I was born on the 2 of July 1943. A strange coincidence, we might say, about my date of birth is that it is the same date of birth as my mother and my grandmother. So, lead me then to say I am the father of seven children.

EHdK 01:03 Where were your children born?

BL 01:09 Five was born in England and two was born in Barbados. The mother of the children, three Barbadians and one Trinidadian born. So, obviously, my children are not from one female but from four females which I regard to as my wife. And the reason I regard that calling my wives because the relationship between a man and a woman... We now have to look at it differently than how we were taught in recent times. Because in Africa, the African culture traditionally, a woman was not expected to give birth to a child before she was married. And because of the importance of the child. A child is not concerned about who gave birth to the child. It's about who care for that child. So sometime a sister might have a child, a younger sister. And because part of the tradition was that a younger sister shouldn't give birth to a child before an older sister because the marriage is about negotiation between families so two people not getting married are two families not getting married. So, if a younger woman have a child before the older person then that child is given to the older person because, as I said, the child is interested in who nourishes that child. So that is why at this point in time in our history, I am trying to promote the idea, the female energy. The importance of the female energy. I don't believe that woman was made to be a helper to a man. You get what I mean? Because it's a woman that goes through the process of preparing and nursing the foetus to be born. So, she would need help.

EHdK 04:15 Tell me about your life in Barbados. Where were you born?

BL 04:18 So that's why the importance of my date of birth between my mother and grandmother is linked. So, what happened here in Barbados. I had an experience where my...Barbados had a very unique history which you will learn about as I share some information with you in writing. And my father was...went missing in the worst national disaster we had in Barbados which is Hurricane Janet, right? And he was a fisherman. He went missing. And because of that and the impoverished situation that was in Barbados...but most of us didn't know we was poor. You was living the life that you had. Because if you say you're poor, you have to compare yourself against someone else. Yes? So, because my father's body was not recovered which if it was recovered and even in our poverty we would have had to bury him. But because his body was not recovered the government came to our rescue and helped the family in a way that my father could not have helped. Because at that time you had to pay for secondary education and things like that.

EHdK 06:14 So you received assistance from the government. Were you a child?

BL 06:21 Yes, myself I was under 16 years old. I was only 12 at the time. So, I received assistance from the government by their sending me to apprentice training which I chose tailoring to help the family. And so that was their assistance to my family. In particular, six of us that was under 16. And my eldest sister from my father was given a free passage to England. Let's say from Barbadians because I don't think it was the government. I think it was an entrepreneur link with the government. You get what I mean? Private sector.

EHdK 07:16 They were buying tickets for people to travel to the UK? What year was that?

BL 07:21 That was 1955 just after Hurricane Janet.

EHdK 07:27 Would you say the hurricane was, for some people, a factor in them leaving Barbados? The impact of the hurricane?

BL 07:36 It was, what one would say, the most important event in Barbados history that caused that migration. If you're looking at England because prior to that the next great migration was the building of the Panama Canal but that was not to England. So, we stick to England. As a result of that, my sister was given the free passes to England in 1955 immediately after Hurricane Janet. And as a result of that, that started a migration process by my family.

EHdK 08:28 So your arrived sister first. Can I ask...Can you remember about the documentation process at that time? Your sister had her ticket. What would she have

then done to then get identification to be able to travel? What would she have had to do?

BL 08:45 She would have to get a British passport which they would have rushed through, you know, to facilitate that.

EHdK 08:52 She would have had to go to the British High Commission to apply for a passport?

BL 08:57 That's right. That was given. And she went up to England. At that time, it was by ship.

EHdK 09:06 Where did the ship leave from?

BL 09:08 Because there was only one harbour and the ship...I can't remember the one she went on. It was called the [inaudible]...it doesn't matter. She went up and then quickly after that the family start leaving because she then provided information of where they would stay. So, she as a woman was a pioneer in the movement for the family.

EHdK 09:48 And what did what did she work in?

BL 09:52 She worked in the...We call it the private sector work. She worked in the private sector.

EHdK 10:05 Did she start sending money back?

BL 10:06 Oh, yes. That was part of the agreement...that she would help the family back home.

EHdK 10:17 So yesterday I was with a researcher at the University of the West Indies who was telling me about the five pounds...the famous five pounds that people would tell her...slipping five pounds into an envelope and then sending it to Barbados.

BL 10:34 Yes, at the time when she went there wasn't a programme in place of sending money back. So, you would write a letter and put five pounds in it which was a lot of money. Yes.

EHdK 10:51 So when did you go and join your sister?

BL 10:53 I went in 1963.

EHdK 11:00 Eight years after she had arrived in the UK. Is that right? She left in 1955.



BL 11:07 1955. I went in 1963. But my going to England was different than most people. After Hurricane Janet, we started the process because we were all British subjects, yes? All what you needed was a passport and somewhere to stay when you get there. So, people were going to England which was part of the Windrush generation. In 1948, started this concept of the Windrush people going up to be part of rebuilding after World War Two.

EHdK 12:01 Yes and then Barbados gained its independence in 1966.

BL 12:04 But before we get there, this is very important. The difference between going up in 1955 and the 1960s when I went is that Barbados was now in a position that it was the only country that a British national born outside of Britain could get a job before they leave the island. That was an agreement by basically the only country that people were recruited to work. So, I went as a process of the London Transport.

EHdK 12:58 So London Transport came to Barbados to recruit people to travel. Do you remember speaking to somebody?

BL 13:12 Well, as I said, there was a programme in place. We had to go to night class for three months and take two exams and then an interview to be a bus conductor. Enoch Powell came to the Caribbean. I can't remember which country...to recruit people for the nursing. My second wife was recruited to come up the year after I did. She came up in 1964. So that recruitment on the other islands, they were not recruited but once they booked their passage and they go to England that was it because they were British citizens.

EHdK 14:12 That's really interesting to hear about the recruitment process. Can you remember, where did you take the night classes? And can you remember what you learned?

BL 14:19 Yes, my classes was at the Christ Church Boys School which is the same school I went to school at.

EHdK 14:27 And who was the person in charge of the course? Was that a British person? Or was that somebody from Barbados?

BL14:33 That'll be a challenge for me to say.

EHdK 14:37 Do you remember the content of the course?

BL 14:42 The interesting content is pounds, shillings and pence because that was the period, right? But how to behave in public. How to, in other words, as if we were so far back in modernity. So, how to use a knife and fork(!) Yes, it was that(!)



EHdK 15:13 How did you feel that the time?

BL 15:15 I was just interested in the programme. Myself and some of the people I knew. We didn't have no feeling about it. It is what you had to do to get where you wanted.

EHdK 15:32 And can you remember how many people were on the course?

BL 15:35 At the time my course...there were courses having different parts of the island. Yes. Mainly in Christ Church as I said I went to school out there. My course was at Christ Church Boys' School. And there was one in town I know about. I didn't know about the other parishes.

EHdK 16:01 Ok, so you attended night classes for three months, you took two exams, you passed with flying colours and then you were provided with a ticket on this...was it on a boat?

BL 16:15 By that time it was an aeroplane.

EHdK 16:18 You had your aeroplane ticket. You also went to the High Commission, is that correct, to get your paperwork? Can you remember anything about that experience?

BL 16:27 By that time, the Barbados government would pay our fare. Because we didn't have the money to pay it, right? But this government would pay our fare. And it was a loan between the government and the British government.

EHdK 16:49 OK. So, you had to give that money back?

BL 16:51 Yes, that was the agreement. It was an agreement that we would pay back the money because we had to sign a contract that we would stay with London Transport for a year I think it was.

EHdK 17:05 Was that money taken out of your wage or was it something that you had to give back separately? Can you remember?

BL 17:09 I think it was...to be honest, I cannot remember because that was not our concern. That was the government. So, whether we were paying it back or they were taking it out we didn't worry about that. All we know is that we had to pay it back.

EHdK 17:29 What do you remember about the day that you got on the aeroplane?

BL 17:33 The day was very interesting because it was the 5 of November. And you know what the 5 of November meant especially here...because you had the same thing in

England. Starlight nights and bonfires and all of that. It still goes on now, right, in England? The 5 of November? Not in Barbados now but at that time, it was the biggest thing in Barbados because we would have starlight. Ask any person over the years of sixty.

EHdK 18:15 You celebrated the 5 of November in Barbados...Guy Fawkes?

BL 18:16 Yes. That was a big celebration. That was big. So, for me to leave Barbados on the fifth of November was just like...why?! The fifth of November we would have so much...is a part of the culture of Barbados. Okay? And they ripped me from that. So, I was not happy going on the fifth of November. But that is how it goes.

EHdK 18:44 So you got on the aeroplane and where did you arrive?

BL 18:47 I arrived at Heathrow.

EHdK 18:53 And was anyone there to meet you?

BL 18:47 Yes because we were recruited there was someone there to meet us to take us to our residence.

EHdK 19:04 Was it a commercial plane or was it a plane specifically for...?

BL 19:07 No, it was a commercial plane.

EHdK 19:11 Can you remember how many people were on your flight and leaving for the transport service?

BL 19:16 I can't remember. There was about 20 that went to work not only on London Transport because Lyons [Lyons Corner Houses] were recruiting at that time.

EHdK 19:34 Can you remember any other companies that were recruiting?

BL 19:38 I don't think the Post Office was recruiting at that time, but I could be wrong. But a number of British...because Barbados was special and the companies know..."The mother country needs you." That was the slogan, right? So, a lot of people were good. And the thing about it is that it didn't matter what level of education you had, you still had to go through this training.

EHdK 20:17 Were there any women on your training course or was it all men?

BL 20:20 No, it was all men. It was all men on my training course because we was going up to be a bus conductor at that time. There were no women being recruited. Even in England, I don't think in the 1960s that you had women as conductors.

EHdK 20:43 So women were recruited essentially for the NHS?

BL 20:46 That's right. But the women was also recruited for Lyons because one of my sisters went up.

EHdK 20:56 Fascinating. So, you arrived in London. Where did you stay?

BL 21:00 I stayed...I was assigned to Merton Bus Garage. So, I lived in Colliers Wood, south London. And I stayed in the common accommodation which was a new experience because it was one room with three beds in it. And that was a challenge.

EHdK 21:31 How old were you at that time?

BL 21:33 Twenty.

EHdK 21:34 So, you were young man. Just arrived in London. Did live far from your sister? Did you have a lot of contact with her?

BL 21:41 Yes, my sister, who was expecting me, had provided accommodation...sought out accommodation for the family that was coming one by one. She lived in Kentish Town which is north London. So, the important aspect of that period is that all of us that was going, we had agreed to stay for five years. Because the streets of London, as we were taught, was paved with gold. So, within five years, you would have returned. And my first child was born in Barbados in September 1963.

EHdK 22:49 So you left a young child then?

BL 22:51 Yes, two months old. And I went to England. That was a new experience because at the time I was a self-employed tailor working from home. I was very popular in the area at making pants in particular for young men So I was well known, making a good salary and then with the perspective of a good business. And then because most of my peers was going to England, I then decided to join. So, it was a challenge. I left on the 5 of November which was a terrible day for me to leave. Then I left a child who was two months old. So that was... that journey was not very comfortable. And when in November I get to England now what did I experience? The cold.

EHdK 24:12 You were saying it was a difficult time, but you had the expectation in your mind that you would be there five years and then you would have enough to come here and come back to Barbados?

BL 24:25 That's right. And what was interesting was I told my mom, who was now going to make sure that my newborn child, you know, was looked after. I told her that if she helped

with the raising of my child that I would be back in five years and if I'm not back in five years, I would send her for a holiday. As I said, I just put that in because as we discussed you would see how important that conversation was with my mother. So, I went to England and was met by the officials from...there was a liaison process where people from Barbados was there to receive us as officers of the government with the recruitment programme and take us to our place of residence and then give us the programme of what is now expected. The next morning going to Chiswick which was the training centre for London Transport. So, we met. We went to the - no family member was there to greet us - just the process. And we was given preparation and the next day, the boss would come and pick her up and take us to Chiswick. So that was the initial process.

EHdK 26:32 How long did you work for London Transport?

BL 26:34 I worked for London Transport from 1963 until 1972. And I left London Transport in 1972 because I felt that I couldn't handle racism in England anymore. And I came back to Barbados to resettle and said I would take back up my profession as a tailor.

EHdK 27:15 And would you like to elaborate more on the examples of racism that you encountered while you were in the UK?

BL 27:26 What we encountered, not just me but almost all conductors...was that at that time the racists in England, and most people, would be considered racist because the only information they had was about Black people as inferior to white people. So, there's no discussion to talk about racism at that period. So, as a conductor, people giving you money they hold their hand up so that the money dropped that the hand cannot touch you. I had...it was so bad that...two examples I'll give. One person tried to spit in my hand. That was the worst but there was a lot of other... one that hit me was one of my colleagues on the buses...a woman who would catch the bus. You know, the bus would come at a particular time and you had to wait for it, right? Even at that time, you had a schedule. And this woman used to catch the bus in the morning. So, she said to my colleague..."You know something, you remind me of somebody but I can't remember". Anyway, about three mornings she said this...And then the fourth morning, she said, "Right, the G***** on the jam jar!" And that hit him. So, we talked about it, you know, and the thing about it, you couldn't complain. He thought he didn't want to hear your complaint. So that was somebody...

EHdK 29:48 Okay, thank you for sharing that with me. So, you're back in Barbados. It's 1972. And you said that you had plans to reestablish yourself?

BL 30:01 Before coming back...this is why I shared about my mother making the promise that...That experience in the early time. We expected...we dealt with it. Yes, you didn't like it. You couldn't complain. So, you dealt with it. A year later in 1964, I sent for the mother of my child. So that leaving my son, he would be eight months old and not really knowing either his mother or his father. And in 1967, I then sent for my mother because I realised I could

not be back in the five years. And between 1964 and 1967, I had two other children from the woman I sent for. And so, I sent for my mother, yes, in 1967. The two that was born in England was living with me and my first wife...So I sent for my mother to give her that holiday that I promised her if she looked after my son in Barbados. And what happened is what draw my attention to my experience of racism. To look at it differently. And this is what's happened. My mother came up and she said to spend Christmas. Ooh, the cold. But she didn't mind the cold, you see. She saw snow for the first time. But what she was concerned about is that every morning, I had to put the children in the pram to take them to a minder which you dropped them off at the door, pick them up in the evening at the door. And you never saw inside of the house of where they were staying because there were no child minders that were Black. And that horrified her. She said, you're taking your child to a complete stranger to look after her. She didn't say a white...blah, blah, blah. You get the picture. She said, when I'm going back to Barbados, these children are going with me. One was two years old and the next one was six months old. So, she took them back. So, my first three children had no real relationship with their mother or their father. She raised them...the grandmother. So that is what I wanted to say.

EHdK 33:30 You're known because of a very important case that happened. And you've had a really very traumatic experience. And something that has stayed with you for many years. Would you like to elaborate on that?

BL 33:50 Yes, now we get into that because I came to Barbados then in 1972. And I was determined that I couldn't handle that anymore. And the thing is, my children was in Barbados. So, you know, I'm cool, right? What happened is one of my sisters, my eldest sister, not the same one that went to England because the one that went to England was the eldest of my sisters from my father. But my mum had two children before she met my father and the eldest of her...eldest daughter of her children was in Barbados. She had also went to England as part of the recruitment but she then left England and then to America to live. So, she was in Barbados on holiday. And she said, "No, I don't want you staying in Barbados. You know, come to America." I say, "No, I come to Barbados. I'm settled." And she went and paid this... the elders could take advantage of the youngers at that time...she went and paid all my passes to America and then said, "You don't want me to lose my money". So go and pay the rest of the process. And I went to America December.

EHdK 35:40 You travelled from Barbados to the United States?

BL 35:45 New York. Within one week in New York, someone came to rob a potato chip manufacturer, not manufacturer...distributor that I went to visit, you know, one of my colleagues that was working there. And I had a gun pointed at my head because I was dressed, you know, as a visitor. Everybody else there was just as a worker. So, the chap thought that I was the manager and told me, "Open the safe" and got the gun and I said, "You must be joking!" The man tell me, "If [you] say that one more time, I'm going to blow your head off. Open the safe" So I said, "I don't even work here!" So, then the manager

said, "Ok, I'll open...I'll open the safe." If the manager hadn't that man would have shoot me because he actually believe I was the manager. So, I call my sister after the ordeal. The security firm turn up just after the people left. And they was so angry because they wanted a shoot-out(!) [laughs]. And I called my sister and I said, "Look, book me the first flight. I'm going back. And if I can't stay in Barbados, I'm going back to London," because I'd never seen a gun, right? And she said, what's happened? I told her and she said, your problem now is getting home because we hope someone [won't be] robbing you or shooting you(!)

EHdK 37:41 So how did you get back to London then?

BL 37:44 I spent one year...nine to 10 months, I think, in America and then working in the US. Because I was a British citizen, you didn't have to get a visa. And it was, you know, there was some slack. So, I worked in America, and I left America then and I came back to England via Barbados, the same way that left, right?

EHdK 38:44 Right. And what year was that?

BL 38:35 That would have been 1974.

EHdK 38:44 Can you remember what passport you travelled on to return to... the British passport? Okay, so then you're back in the UK.

BL 38:54 Yes. And this is what happened then. We start the process now that we are getting to. What happened is I re-joined London Transport as a bus driver and I think I re-joined London Transport at the New Cross branch and was accepted as a bus driver because I had a clean record when I left, right? You're going to hear the story in another context. But what happened...as a party man and whatever, my...which would now be my fourth child...was born shortly after I got back to England. And as a party man, I went to a party and being tipsy I was...I took a knife...which was a common thing in Barbados...I chipped the ice rather than an ice pick. And my hand slipped on the knife and it severed a tendon in my little finger. No problem, it was just a cut. I put bit of plaster and some alcohol and that got better. But every time I go to get up and I put my hand here [holds hand up], I could feel a pain. And I went to the doctor and he said, "Oh. I can see what happened. You severed a tendon. I will send you to the hospital." I was sent then to Lewisham Hospital and they convinced me from the X-ray that all your tendons culminate in the palm of your hand and they could take out the bit that was recoiled in the palm that is causing the theme and it will be alright. No problem. I had the examination and this is what happened.

EHdK 41:43 OK, so just for the record, Buddy, what are you showing me now? For the people listening [shows his finger]?

BL 41:51 The operation was later deemed to be unnecessary, experimental and unsuccessful.

EHdK 42:03 And that had permanently damaged your finger?

BL 42:07 Yes, leaving me with a crippled little finger. While recovering from the surgery, I had what one would call an epiphany, a spiritual awakening. Which in my mind's eye, I saw myself in the future making a contribution to end what I went through in England. And helping to solve some of the problems of the world. That's how you can summarise that. That was the epiphany. And I was excited about it. And I started to share with my family when I came out the hospital...I'm excited about what's going on in my head. And as I tried to share my family thought something must be wrong because I'm talking about things that is going to happen in 30 or 40 years, you know. So, it must be the pain from...so we went back to the hospital at Lewisham Hospital. And an incident happened there with my sister and myself where as a big sister...Now this is the same sister who was now on holiday in England because she...not the one that encouraged me to go to but the one that was a first person that went to England. She had moved from England and went to Canada. And now we're back in England on holiday. Just like how the next one was on holiday and had me go to America. So, she and I had a confrontation. Someone mistaken it and call the police. The police came to arrest me, took me back into the hospital and I was given an injection and transferred to Bexley Mental Hospital on Section 25 of the Mental Health Act and a result of that after three weeks I realised that they was about to give me the ECT treatment. And the same energy force. God, the spirits, however you want to call it, informed me that the electric treatment would have destroyed my brain. And that I should leave the hospital immediately. So, I said, "Well, what are you talking about? I'm on sanction, you can't leave." The spirit convinced me that I'm going home that same day. So, I called an urgent meeting with the consultant. We met, we discussed and I demanded to be released from the hospital that very day. I was released and this created history in Britain because no one has ever...that was on section [has] ever demanded to be released and was released. As a result of that, ITV...I then started, as I was released, I started trying to find out how did I get in the mental institution. And I had no knowledge. This was not a black thing to me. This was simply, one day I'm walking down the street as a free human being and the next day I'm told I have no rights at all.

EHdK 46:58 How long were you in the hospital for? Three weeks? But was that the only time that you were in...?

BL 47:05 Yes. With the exception of years later, going back to the same hospital to carry Christmas dinner for patients.

EHdK 47:22 So in total it was three weeks but the experience for you was a very big thing?

BL 47:27 It was bigger than that because the 28 days that I was sentenced for, Section 25, could have been extended for a year. So that's what frightened me. And the same people

that signed me in for 28 days...it was just a matter of transferring me on, Section 26. So, I got out. And what happened? I went to...I tried to find out, how can this happen to a person? And I was led then to the National Association for Mental Health. Right? And we then worked...they then called ITV when they heard the story.

EHdK 48:22 ITV, the news network?

BL 48:23 Yes. And said, look we have someone that you should talk to. ITV had already gathered the information about people who were wrongly put in a mental institution. And, you know, the history of mental health. But they didn't have anyone credible that didn't have a history of mental health and demand it to be released from the mental institutions. It is big news to them. So, they interview me and make the two documentaries based on my experience.

EHdK 49:17 And what was the documentary called? Can you remember?

BL 49:22 Patients or Prisoners which I'm going to let you have a copy of. And that was shown at the event last night. That's why I tell you...

EHdK 49:17 So tell us about the event last night.

BL 49:40 The event last night was basically to help people understand mental health. That was basically...the degree of mental health. The fact that Prince Harry and his brother is now looking at racial injustice and mental health. Big news, yes? So, I had to give them the background on how that came about because in the process I met Prince Charles, when he was Prince Charles, and I also met and had a discussion with Lady Diana before she passed away because of my work in the community.

EHdK 50:41 You've been a campaigner and you've been committed to raising awareness about mental health issues which was the event that you were talking about last night that took place in Barbados. But over the years, you've organised all sorts of events. And you said to me, at the time you didn't think that it was a black issue, but over the years...how did that change?

BL 51:04 Yes, that changed because I found out that the 1959 Mental Health Act, which was brought into play after the 1958 race riots in Notting Hill Gate. And that Mental Health Act 1959 has some strange features in it where unilaterally a police can take you to the mental institution. If the police take you to court, the court can send you from the courts to the mental institution. If the court send you to prison, the prison can transfer you from prison to the mental institution. And the Home Office then had authority, once you were under section, to send you back to where you were born. You sound like you are familiar with that process...So a lot of persons were sent back to the Caribbean.

EHdK 52:26 And have you met these people here in the Caribbean?

BL 52:29 I met some...but this is now the work that I know I have to do...I met some but Barbados being "Little England"...classism in Barbados is as bad as racism in England. So, people didn't want to hear a lot from me. Because what I was talking about is madness. I am mad because I was diagnosed as being a schizophrenic. So, nothing I say should be taken really serious. And, as a result of that, the authorities here would not entertain me about the seriousness of what I was talking about.

EHdK 53:26 What you identified was extremely serious and extremely important in the fact that there's an infrastructure that was built at that time that effectively put people on a conveyor belt. And then people were...if people were identified or tagged, basically, as mentally ill, it meant they were within a system that could effectively deport them. They could effectively take away their rights and have control over their entire lives.

BL 54:00 Yes and what is interesting...I was putting it into context. Because I was finding out things that was going on in my head that was not written down but, somehow, the doctor was being...the 'i's were being dotted and the 't's were being crossed. And I was beginning to put things together. And what I realised is that when we were being recruited to England, two things were happening simultaneously. The Barbados government...I say recruited because it's different than just...The Barbados government did not expect us to return to Barbados because we are now going to be sending back remittances, right?

EHdK 54:56 Which is obviously beneficial for the government.

BL 55:00 Yes and we're going to be helping families, right? So, they had no interest in re-returning. Britain, on the other hand, was benefiting but they had no interest in we staying there to get old.

EHdK 55:20 Which entails recognising pension rights, making sure that people have access to a health system and a whole series of social benefits.

BL 55:30 Right so you got it. And also, what was feeding in...because at that time now a lot of people were coming more than what Britain, say, wanted. Because by recruitment, you can choose. But if the floodgates is open and that's what Enoch Powell then said...Look, do you understand what's happening? Which is happening now with the refugees and whatever. So, it's just repeated differently now. It's recycled. Okay, so Britain had no plans for us getting old in Britain. So, if you could get back some of them to where they were born, and the Caribbean and Barbados saying, we don't want them coming back. We want them to get old so that they could also get pension coming back. So, it was all economics. That is how that went.

EHdK 56:40 So, what about your life today? I know that you, as you've said, you've organised mental health awareness activities. Have you worked with returnees as well? With people who've been affected by these sort of...?

BL 56:53 Oh yes well in England what I did...because, remember, nothing change but one of the big impacts was the New Cross Fire of 1981. I was at the centre of that where my second mother, or the person who helped through, is Reverend Sybil Phoenix who...and you could learn a little bit about her because she's the first person in England that was given both the OBE and the MBE. Yeah, she was given two. They usually give you one. But she was given two for [being] a social worker. So, between she and I we then, based on my experience, then adopted Bexley Mental Hospital where we could carry Christmas lunch for the people there. As a result of that, I did much work. I was concerned and I set up the Society for the Resettlement of Caribbean Nationals which is one organisation that had the event last night to encourage people if they want to come back home instead of the government deporting them. To resettle with dignity and pride. So, Barbados then adopted the programme for resettlement...the facilitating unit which was set up for the settlement of Barbadians. The other Caribbean countries then started to do that, making it easy for us who want to return not to exploit us.

EHdK 59:26 How big is your organisation? The Society for the Resettlement of Caribbean Nationals?

BL 59:28 That was set up in England along with other organisations that I was part of.

EHdK 59:45 Okay, so we're coming to the end of our interview now. I wanted to ask, is there anything else that maybe we have missed out or that you would like to add to maybe conclude some of these points today?

BL 59:57 Yes, as you would know it is linked to the Windrush scandal. And what is important for we to understand is that David Cameron came to the Caribbean in 2015. In Jamaica. And he was asked the question about an apology and reparations. And he said no...you know the story. But he would help them to build a prison to facilitate the people that would be sent back to Jamaica, right? Okay. Now he said there would be no apology. No reparations. He went back to England and within a year he was no longer prime minister and Theresa May took up as the second female prime minister in England. This is very important to put all this into context. You've given us the Compensation Scheme...Theresa May was one of the persons that introduced some of the policies that become known as the Windrush scandal. So, she came under a lot of pressure as prime minister. So, in 2017 as prime minister she was under tremendous pressure being criticised for the policies. So, what happened in 2018? The Queen passed on the Head of the Commonwealth to Prince Charles [King Charles III became Head of the Commonwealth after the Queen's death in 2022]. Now, David Cameron had the full support of the Queen that there would be no

apology and no reparations. Theresa May and Prince Charles as head in 2018...when the Commonwealth conference was held in 2018.

EHdK 1:03:01 You're talking about the CHOGM conference? The Heads of Government conference?

BL 1:03:06 That's right. She would have had to seek permission from Prince Charles as head and as prime minister, if she can apologise. So, let's assume that she had that conversation and he said, yes, you should apologise. So, she [would have to] apologise. The same year, 2018, Barbados had the general election and something happened where the female opposition leader won all the parliament. It caused a revolution in the whole of the Caribbean where an opposition and a female wins. Now, I said there must be something between the two female prime ministers in England, and we know the Iron Lady, and the one female in Barbados. And this is what I found out. Late Margaret Thatcher's birthday was on the 13th of October. Theresa May's birthday is the 1 of October. Mia Motley's birthday is the 1 of October. And I tell you, it is not coincidental. And as a result of that apology in 2018, in 2019, the government set up the Windrush Compensation Scheme

EHdK 1:05:32 Thank you very much for your time today and for sharing your really interesting story with me.

BL 1:05:38 But you seem to got a lot of the information already. So, you're welcome and I would now present you with some information...

EHdK 1:06:04 Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much.

[END OF AUDIOFILE].