

The Ugandan Asian Archive Oral History Project

An Oral History with Errol and Delphine Francis

Archives and Research Collections

Carleton University Library

2016

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Narrator: Errol and Delphine Francis

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Date: April 17, 2015

Session #: 1/2

Length: 60 minutes

Location: Toronto, Ontario

Abstract:

Errol and Delphine Francis were both born and raised in Uganda and held fond memories of life in East Africa. They reflected on a very comfortable life with warm weather and a great balance between work and family life. Errol completed his high school and pre-university courses in Uganda and began a career in the travel industry in Uganda. Delphine completed her teaching certificate abroad and returned to Uganda to become a teacher trainer at the Shimoni Teacher Training College.

Delphine was 7 months pregnant when the expulsion decree was announced. Since both Errol and Delphine held Ugandan citizenship, they were admitted for resettlement in Canada. They both flew into the Longue Pointe Military base in Montreal and then were relocated to the YMCA in Montreal. Delphine quickly landed a job within just a few days as a tailor in a shop close by. They both recalled an overwhelming amount of support in Montreal from immigration officials and Canadians as they received winter clothing and other items for their newborn.

Within a few months the couple moved to Toronto in August of 1973 as Errol had secured employment in the travel industry. Delphine took up a position as a teacher in the Catholic School Board. Over the years the couple raised their children in Canada and progressed in their respective careers. They are happily retired and pass their time traveling and spending time with family and friends.

This oral history was conducted in Errol and Delphine's home in Toronto, Ontario.

Shezan Muhammedi: “Awesome, so this is an oral interview on Friday, April 17th. Thank you guys very much for being here and yeah, I guess I’ll just start with, what was life like in Uganda?”

Errol Francis: “Well for us life was wonderful. Always we had a great quality of life, and maybe a lower standard of living. There’s a lot of people who don’t go through that, don’t understand the difference. When I say quality of life, we went to work at 8:30 and had home help, so you’d have a nice leisurely breakfast, go to work at 8:30 and have a coffee break at 10:30, go home for lunch and have a three-course meal. Maybe have a little siesta, go back to work at two o’clock, come home at 4:30, 5, have a cup of tea and go to the club, either play cricket or hockey, field hockey or soccer, and then maybe pop in for a beer and then go home and have dinner and you know... so that was that part of your daily life. The weather was just unbelievable, and Uganda being at the equator but above sea level, didn’t need heating, didn’t need air conditioning, didn’t need anything and you know, you had a lot of quality time for the family and the relatives to spend more time... So from that perspective it was really great until you know the political instabilities caused all the issues. And my dad died at an early age, he died at the age of fifty-four so we were young, my mom brought us up to eighteen, my older brother was twenty I guess. So, but you know, things worked out. I finished high school, like pre-university we had to do A-levels there and I didn’t go on to university, I went on to work and I was in the travel business and things were good. We got married at a young age, I was twenty, twenty-three at the time, and Delphine was pregnant when trouble broke out so we came to Canada in October of ’72.”

Delphine Francis: “Yeah mine was more or less the same. I was very fortunate that both of my parents came from abroad, my mother and my father from India, and then they came to Uganda to get jobs. They were not married at the time, met each other there and got married. So I’m one of four sisters, the third of four sisters and I was born there. And so life was, as Errol mentioned, very comfortable. My first experience in Uganda was, I wanted to be a teacher and my mother was adamant that if I did want to do any training I should leave the country and go out to get international rather than get the training at Shimoni TTC [Teacher Training College] or go to the Kyambogo [University], which were the colleges there because the qualifications would only be recognized there. She somehow felt that there was a possibility there would be a situation where I would be in a different country and she wanted us to have that.

So my sister was out for her education as a nurse. At that time it was quite expensive to leave and go and get that education. So my parents tried - I had a British protected passport and so I gave that up because I was born in Uganda, I took up Ugandan citizenship, had a Ugandan passport. I applied for a bursary or you call it...”

Errol: “A grant.”

Delphine: "...A grant to go and study and come back but the fact that I was not a black Ugandan, I did not have the opportunity of getting that grant. So my parents anyways sent me off... I went there for three years to Edinburgh, came back and very fortunately they were thrilled to have me back in Uganda to teach and I did start off in an elementary school, that's what I was trained for, to be an elementary school teacher. But they thought I was over qualified so I started teaching at the Shimoni Teacher Training College, so really I was teaching students to become teachers, they didn't call us quite professors because I wasn't a professor, but they called us tutors.

So that was my job, and then at that time I met Errol, we got married and of course, as he's mentioned we married young and our hope was that we would stay in Uganda for a while, enjoy the home help that we knew was very important to all young couples, and when the children get older we'll then apply to go out. I knew at the time that teachers were well paid in Canada because I did come when I was in Edinburgh, I did come for Expo '67 [1967 International and Universal Exposition], and visited here and did a bit of my... what they called teaching during the holidays, you had to come for a certain number of hours and I knew that I would love to come and live here but it was just too far away... I never dreamed that it would one day be my home when I left. But nonetheless when I did make inquiries I heard about the points system and how difficult it was to get to Canada. But anyways, before we could even think about anything to travel to a place I was in my seventh month of pregnancy when I took that flight and came over here. So basically that was it after that."

Shezan: "And both sets of parents, were they born in Uganda as well? Or they came from India?"

Errol: "No, they both came from India. Yeah, they were born in Goa. So, that's where they were born and they came to Uganda in the '30's, mid '30's."

Shezan: "So that was when still the Portuguese were in Goa, right?"

Errol: "That's right. The Portuguese were there until '61. Yeah, and then... I guess in both cases our dads worked for the government. But because they came to Uganda under the British expatriate terms, the British government, you know... we used to get vacation in Uganda, you'd get two types, one was called short leave, that was one month every year. And long leave was every four years you got six months' vacation and the British government would pay for us to go back to Goa. So we would actually take the train to Mombasa, and then take a ship... a seven day trip on ship to Mumbai and then take either another ship to Goa or a bus to Goa. We'd stay in our village home in Goa for six months every four years."

Shezan: “Yeah, that’s what I found was very interesting, that anyone that worked in the civil service was mainly Goan and they were given that opportunity to go back. I guess for a very long period of time.”

Errol: “Yes, you’d find East African Goans because they were all British colonies, have a lot more contact with Goa than even Goans who were in other parts of India. Yeah, so that was... I think I told you I have two brothers and... so life I think in Uganda was wonderful. As I said right from the beginning we have a great quality of life, but a lower standard of living, not such fancy homes and all these things but less pressure in life... and the education system was good because it proves that all of us that went to elementary school and high school in Uganda did very well in Canada, but by Canadian standards maybe the schools would be considered inadequate. So it’s not materialism or that you have it all in life... it’s the quality of the other stuff that you get. And then I had said to Delphine, what she said I think was we’ll get married and have our kids in Uganda because we have home help and then we will leave. Because I had kind of said to her that I don’t think it’s going to be nice here going down the road.

So, I figured that in three or four, five years we would definitely leave. And we intended to go to Australia from a climatic point of view, right? And so we had that in the back of our mind, but then this whole thing happened with [Idi] Amin so... it accelerated I guess in a way. We had our papers for Australia, we had our papers for Canada, but Canada was willing to put us on a plane immediately. And so... I had a friend of mine who owned a car rental company, he was of Indian descent and the army wanted to take over the car rental company and for some reason he was resisting it, which was silly. I told him, “Just give them the keys, it’s worth nothing anyways.” And this was in the midst of the problem. But he didn’t, so they picked him up and they actually killed him so then they came to see me and they were starting to ask questions and I said, “We’ve got to leave.” So we made the decision on Monday at two o’clock, and on Tuesday at eight o’clock we were at the airport getting on the plane. And we had gone before that for the interviews and processed the papers. So the only thing that we had to do was our medicals, and so they sent us to the Canadian High Commission and said, “If you can leave tomorrow...” Because initially what had happened was when the planes and stuff was coming into Uganda nobody wanted to leave, people wanted to wait...”

Delphine: “Pack up, take their luggage...”

Errol: “...Take their time, so the first plane left I think with fifty percent, even our plane was not full. We were on the second plane out.”

Delphine: “Even part of the reason why we were a little bit more anxious of course... this was the main reason... the other reason was I was in my seventh month of pregnancy and I knew that if I got into my eighth month of pregnancy my fear was they would not take me on the plane for a long trip like that. So it was October when I got on, my baby was born in December.”

Errol: "When the expulsion was announced in August of that year – the same year '72 – I think that everybody laughed because you know... they thought this is a joke. How can you expel your own citizens? And all of these things. And it happened just at a... Amin was at a military thing and he was parading I guess and suddenly he came out with this announcement that he had had this dream, the Asians were ruining the economy and they were not good for the country. He had given them ninety days to get out of the country, and that was it. It was August ninth or something. So anyways we thought, this is nonsense. The rest of the world said you can't kick your own citizens out of the country, and there was a bit of pressure. But then they found this technicality on our passports, because when we gave up our British citizenship and took up Ugandan citizenship we were supposed to technically renounce your British citizenship, which most people didn't do. They never asked for it so then they made us all line up and go through this whole process. And then they said, "Well you didn't renounce it, you can't have Ugandan citizenship." And they'd just take your passport from you." So that's what they did for us."

Delphine: "So we became stateless."

Errol: "We became stateless, yeah. We had to sleep overnight on the curb to be able to line up for this..."

Delphine: "To line up to be verified, for our passports to be verified. The lineup was just incredibly long."

Errol: "So I think then things just got worse, the army they started having road blocks, checking people and looting started and..."

Delphine: "Looting started because they knew people were packing stuff and things like that so they were breaking into homes while people were there at night and just taking whatever they had."

Errol: "Then the rest of the world came and said, "You know what, we'll take these people." I think that's what backfired on him [Amin]. He never thought this would happen. And then he started saying, "Okay, doctors can stay, teachers can stay, this can stay, and these people can stay.""

Delphine: "Non-professionals have to leave. And it didn't matter if your spouse was not professional and you were professional, the professional stayed, the non-professionals had to leave."

Errol: "Everything he was doing was just shooting from the hip. You know, I mean he had no concept whatsoever. He was really... I mean there's so many theories about that. He suffered from syphilis and he was nuts, he was crazy. So, but I think the big plus was that these countries

came. Because Canada was there, the U.K., India, all these European countries came, the U.S. came, you know. I think that he never expected that. And he never expected that people would leave. People said, "You know what? We're leaving." And because your life is worth so much more than anything else, right? The money, the value of the Uganda shilling had just gone... plummeted. It was worth nothing. So the people just said, "You know what? We're going." And they left. When you think ninety days... thirty thousand left in ninety days... I think that's the number. It was just amazing, every day. And then as the days went by the planes were full, everything was full, I mean it was..."

Delphine: "And in my case I was teaching at the teacher training college, our year end is December so around October or September, October you start to preparing the students for the final exams and everything to get certified as teachers, they did a two year program. And I realized that they were not to know that I was planning to leave because I was considered to be the professional and so I could not even tell my students, I could not tell the principal, anybody, anything. So when this decision was made Errol literally... we went at night with the lights off, he got into the house because we were living in campus. I had a quarters in campus, he went inside he just picked up our documents. That was the most important you know, marriage certificate, birth certificate, diploma, whatever it is. Picked up all of that stuff, picked up a few of the clothes and put them in a bag and we left the house as is. Food in the fridge, clothes, whatever we had, possessions left. Cars in the driveway and literally crawled out late, got into the car and my brother in law drove us. We stayed the night at his mum's place and the next morning he drove us to the airport."

Shezan: "I was going to ask if there was a push for you to stay since you were a teacher."

Delphine: "Right, yes. So my students... I never said goodbye to them and they had no idea I was leaving. They must have been shocked to find we were not there, but we just grabbed the opportunity because I was terrified that I would have to be there longer and then my fear was he would leave and I would be on my own."

Shezan: "Yeah, and you were pregnant at the time... that's very interesting. And then I guess, yeah you guys had applied for visas and done the screening process. Do you remember much about the screening process itself? The questions or...did it seem pretty straightforward?"

Errol: "Well, I don't think it was complicated."

Delphine: "It wasn't complicated but I would also say that I favoured them in the sense that they knew they wanted us unless it was something really... probably if you had a disease or something like that and they might have been concerned. But knowing that I was pregnant and I was having difficulty producing these... do I have these certificates... medical certificates or whatever. They just let us go. But he was a little concerned because he said they do the vision

test... they have a vision test, hearing test, and whatever. And he said you know there might be an issue because Errol had an accident when he was young and he had sight in one eye. So... but they didn't bother about all that. They did the main thing and it was almost like we want you to go, we want you to come with us."

Errol: "The only... what do you call it? I guess after they did the interview and everything their communication to us was through the newspaper, they would publish in the newspaper. All those papers that had been approved, right? And I think there were some that were rejected."

Delphine: "There were some that were rejected for whatever reason, I don't know. But they also put our numbers Errol, they didn't put our names. We had numbers and you went to look for your number."

Errol: "That's how you knew you were going. But I think in the end they took everybody who... because when people were left over they took them all. Because they had the Red Cross and the Red Cross..."

Shezan: "UNHCR [United Nations High Commission for Refugees] was also in there."

Errol: "Yeah so we had some friends who ended up in Austria. So it was great, I mean Canada was really good and even from the time we arrived the reception was fantastic. We actually flew on... three airlines came in from Canada, Air Canada, Pacific Western Airlines in Alberta I think, and CP Air I think. So we left, we got on the plane in Entebbe. And of course with a lot of tension because you know until you are out of the airspace they can call the plane back, right? And these guys were crazy."

Delphine: "And they did check us. I know for myself, I had long hair and it was a big huge bun but they made me take it out just to check if I had any gold or any stuff in there. So that was checked. They checked me inside out, you know because although I was pregnant, there were no guarantees that I was not hiding... I think they were concerned about cash, paper money and the jewelry, gold in particular, especially..."

Errol: "Foreign currency, local currency meant nothing. So that was a big issue, and the other thing was what had happened was people in the airline business had... and I was in the airline business at the time... you know they had, in those days they had what was called and MCO a Missions and Charges Order. So let's say you came to me and said, "You know what? I'm going to London and everything and I'm going to issue you tickets because from London you want to go to say... Zurich or somewhere in Europe, or you're not sure yet and you don't want to carry any money with you. I could issue a voucher it's called, that's what they called it a Missions and Charges Order...it was like a voucher worth X amount of pounds or dollars or whatever, but then you could go to a travel agent in India and say, "Oh I want to buy a ticket to Zurich or something, and I'm going to pay you with this voucher." So what happened was, Asians are

smart, they figured that this is the way to get your money out. So they started going to the airline people and saying, "Well I need a voucher for ten thousand, twenty thousand," and people just take it. Then the government caught on to that... then they started going after airline people and that's how we ended up with soldiers in our offices and things like that. So that was an issue that came up. So they were looking for this at the airport among other things they were looking for. So we had nothing, we had two suitcases and that's it. That's all we had, that's how we left. Two suitcases when we arrived in Montreal, so..."

Shezan: "And then your family..."

Errol: "When we left, my brother – just coincidentally – my younger brother Tom is married to Delphine's younger sister. So he was not married at the time, he was dating her, a serious relationship. So when we left because my mum was still there, my mum was a widow, and my older brother with his wife and his two daughters had just left before us I think... they went off to England because they had a British protected passport... so they're going to go off to England and they had applied also to come to Canada and from England they were going to come to Toronto. So they left but then Delphine's other sister, the older sister also had a British passport, so she left for England. The other sister, her second sister, her husband was on a training course, he works for American Life Insurance, AIG now. He was in Delaware on a training course in the U.S. and they said to him, "You know, you're not going to go back, it doesn't make any sense. We're going to process papers for your wife to come to the states." Because he was married, they married in April of that year and I think it was May, June, he was over there. So she left and went off to the states, so when we left it was my younger brother, the younger sister, her parents, my mum. And her dad said to her younger sister, "If you want to go with Tom, you should get married."

So the day before they left they got married in the church. Yeah, so then they all came together. We came on the fifth of October, they all arrived on the nineteenth of October. Yeah, so they all came and the older sister was still in England, then came to Toronto, my brother ended up in Toronto. Her mom and dad were sent off... Montreal was like the distribution point, you stayed the night at the barracks at Longue Pointe when you first arrived, and that was really nice about the Canadian government, they didn't check your papers, nothing. They said, listen... they took us to this hall and had all this food laid out, you know, eat, drink, you had a long flight and a lot of stress and in the morning they'd process the papers. And from there they were saying that everybody wanted to go to either Toronto, Montreal, or Vancouver, right? And then from there they were convincing you to go here, go there, her parents... well, when we came on the fifth of October, they saw that I speak French, I had studied French in school so they said... and she was you know, at that stage..."

Delphine: "I was little... I was not well and there was slight bleeding so you know, they said, "You better stay here, be stable." And he made up his mind, you know what we've got to make sure that this baby's fine... once the baby arrives then we'll worry about going."

Errol: "And I think the overall Montreal did the best for people... they put us all up at the YMCA or the Windsor Hotel, there were two places. And they gave us the boarding, all the food, everything, it was all complimentary. And free transportation on the subway system."

Delphine: "And then they put us into an initiation course. So by going to the initiation course which was supposed to last for two weeks, you would go and learn about the history and the transportation, because there were a lot of people who had never left Uganda and so they initiated us into the... orientation. And they paid us ten dollars per day for everyday you attended. Yeah, so I was not feeling well, I was sick as ever, I was out of sorts. I had been to Canada, I had an idea... but I sat on that chair so I got my ten dollars and I could use the ten dollars to buy diapers and to buy stuff for the baby. You know? But they were amazing. Montreal was very good."

Errol: "Yeah, so that's what happened. So we stayed in Montreal and then her mom and dad arrived and they sent them off to what is now called Cambridge. At that time it was called Galt, so they combined I think Galt, Preston and Hespeler I think, became Cambridge, they were the three towns. So we were in Montreal and fortunately for me... this initiation course was the most boring thing you could have gone to but you know, at the end of the day they gave you money. But fortunately for us after three days they said, you know there's going to be a strike and the teachers are going on strike so there will be no more initiation classes for the next... until they reach an agreement. So I put my hand up and said, "What about the payment?" they said, "Oh, you get your money." I said, "Oh, okay that's good because I can go job hunting."

So right enough, after three days we stopped, I went job hunting and I ended up with three offers in the travel business, which was great. And then I said to Delphine, "There's no point in you going to work now, you're seven and a half months and you've got to take care of the baby and everything." So what happened is, I actually ended up taking the job which was not in the travel business, it was paying me a little more than the travel business, and every dollar mattered at the time."

Shezan: "Yeah, of course."

Errol: "And so we were staying at the YMCA in Montreal which is right on Drummond Street, right downtown Montreal just off I guess Rene Leveque now, it used to be Dorchester, it's now Rene Leveque... right down by the Queen Elizabeth Hotel, right in the heart of things. So when I started working she was wandering around, walking around with some friends of ours also from Uganda, and they noticed in a store..."

Delphine: "Yeah, in a store they were selling using beautiful, new kind of pants that had come out for ladies, palazzo pants, they kind of came out wide at the bottom and I did sewing at home but I never went to any courses or anything, so I happened to say to the girl, "Oh, I love those!" And of course everything we saw we multiplied by seven, because at that time seven shillings to the dollar. So you know, you bought a toothbrush, it was a dollar but we said times seven, seven shillings, you know. So we saw this thing and I can't remember how much it was, but times seven and I said, "Oh my god that kind of money?" I said "Don't worry, Valerie, Gladys, if you want to get it it's not difficult to sew that we can go get the fabric" and I know there's a place called Fabricland where they sell rejects, I said, "If I only had my scissors," because my scissors are back home, "I could hand cut it." So this guy called me aside and he said, "Excuse me madam, do you sew?" I thought he was upset because I was not encouraging a sale and I said, "Yes." And he said, "Would you like a job?" My eyes lit and I said, "I'd love a job but I'm pregnant." So he said, "Oh, how pregnant are you?" Because I had a long coat, and I said, "I've still got about six weeks to go before the baby arrives." He said, "Madam, if you're willing to come and work here, you don't have to worry. Come here tomorrow and I'll give you something to sew, its fine." He says, "You can sit here at these machines, I just need help and I'll pay you ten dollars a day." So I thought this is marvelous, every day I go I can get ten dollars, but I said you know, "I've got to check with my husband."

So I checked with Errol, Errol came with me and talked to the guy and he said, "Listen, no more than five, six hours a day, she's welcome to stop when she wants to stop and whatever, but I'll give her these jackets and some skirts and I just need her to do the basic sewing machining and then you pass it on." It was like a factory thing at the back. So I said, "Look, Errol I'm going to take that job." I did it, I took it for three weeks, so I got a hundred and fifty dollars, and it was a lot of money because I times it by seven and I said, "Now we have..." at least I thought it was enough money to start doing the basics for the baby that was arriving because we had nothing... but I have to tell you Montreal was amazing. They tried to look for people to donate and to give stuff for just generally speaking for the refugees and they went to The Bay and at that time Simpsons, Eaton's and all the big stores, if you have furniture or anything, anything that was like a reject, had a scratch or whatever, they put it in a special place that you could go and get it. So I got myself a crib for the baby, a high chair for the baby, and a few other things..."

Errol: "And the YMCA, we set up a flow... like a warehouse, so they were donating all the stuff in there and then we had an inventory and the people elected me as the chairman for the Ugandan refugees so we could have meetings with the Canadians and... so we set this whole thing up and then you know our people generally speaking they go in and they take one coat, take a second coat because everything is free, so we have to put some rules in of how much you can take, you can control it..."

Delphine: "And they were looking for somebody... there was a lady who arrived there and she was more advanced than I was, she was eight months pregnant. So they asked her, "Would you appear on T.V.? We want to just talk and have you on T.V." and I can't remember if it was CNN or what it was and they said, "We want to interview you and ask you some questions and then we ask for donations to come to such and such a spot." She didn't speak very fluent English, so then they came to me and they said, "Would you?" and I said, "Sure." You know, it didn't bother me. So I appeared on T.V., and maybe it must have been a three or four minute interview and then came the pouring of different stuff for people who were pregnant or with babies, infants who were arriving and everything so... Montreal was very open..."

Errol: "Montreal was so good because it was a centralized point. I mean in Toronto and all these people came here but it was not a central location. People would move around in the back and everything, but Montreal was great from that perspective because all the people were either at the YMCA or the Windsor Hotel which was only about a fifteen minute walk from there, so things went well."

Delphine: "They had people coming and even asking whether they could take you to the Laurentian Mountains for the weekend to see the changing of the colours..."

Errol: "Thanksgiving weekend, we came on October fifth and the first weekend was Thanksgiving so you know... even we got tickets to the Montreal hockey game."

Delphine: "That's why he's a staunch Montreal Canadiens fan."

Errol: "At that time we didn't know much about ice hockey so we watched it on T.V. a bit and we saw these people chasing the black little thing all over the place so when they offered us the tickets actually nobody wanted the tickets and then two months later we were hooked onto the game. But yeah so then I was working and you know, I decided okay we need to move out of the YMCA, so by the beginning of November we moved out of the YMCA to an apartment. Fortunately for us in Montreal, Montreal rents apartments with furniture. I think you get that here now, but in the '70s you didn't. Here it was just a bare bones apartment. So there you got the basics, you got the bed, kitchen table with chairs and one sofa and a couch and everything. So you got kind of the basics for furniture. So we moved out and also in the YMCA there were these other.... I don't know if... did John Nazareth give you the name John Nohorona by any chance?"

Shezan: "Yeah, he's moved I think, to Mexico or something."

Delphine: "No, this is John Nohorona, maybe different."

Errol: "John Nohorona, he's with Royal Bank. Yeah, so anyway there were four or five of them, single guys who we knew from Uganda and then there were these two girls, they were both

single, two sisters. So when we moved to that apartment they said, "Oh, you are moving? We're going to move there." So they all moved, so we had three apartments."

Delphine: "We all wanted to stay together, I guess for support, emotional support."

Errol: "So that's when we moved to Cote-Vertu which is in the West end of Montreal. So then what I would do also is I would... Delphine still kept doing the work at that shop and what we did was we..."

Delphine: "Took two hundred and fifty dollars and bought a sewing machine."

Errol: "We bought a big sewing machine."

Delphine: "Which I still have. Not the machine, but the desk. And then Errol would bring the jacket, the stuff that he cut to the house, I would sew it, he'd take it back. Because I could not go back and forth because I was advanced in my pregnancy."

Errol: "Yeah, so we did that and you know the baby came in December which was wonderful and so it was such a pleasure because you know we come from all of this and we have a baby coming. And my younger brother and his wife, when they arrived he was in the middle of his master's in Uganda in agronomy and his professor was I think Canadian and is quite well known here, so he gave him a recommendation. So upon arrival he got a scholarship and he went to McGill, the St. Anne and Bellevue campus because that's the agricultural campus, and he and his wife went there, he did his master's there. So they were the only family there in St. Anne, which was an hour away. So anyways the baby was born and her mom and dad were in Toronto and by that time they moved from Galt to Toronto and her sister was in Toronto. So we stayed there you know, but I figured at that time because it was soon after when we arrived, it two years after the whole FLQ [Front de la Liberation Quebec] problem, so the French language and this and that... I just felt that you know we had left Uganda which was basically discrimination we had come out of. And then in Canada we're here in this place and they didn't recognize her Scottish qualifications..."

Delphine: "Yeah I studied in Edinburgh and a three year course but they said, "Absolutely, no. You don't have a Canadian degree, you don't speak French. You can't teach."

Errol: "Yeah, it's very provincial. Education is provincial. Whereas in Ontario they recognized it, so we knew that so we said, "You know what? Most of the family is here." She could go to work, her mom could help looking after our daughter so I just didn't feel right, I felt that in Montreal this language thing was going to be an issue and initially I thought it would be language but then I thought it would become deeper than that. You could be fluent in French but unless you were a Francophone you were going to be disadvantaged so I said to Delphine after ten months we just need to save some money because we had no money at all. So I

worked to save some money and then in August of that year... so we arrived October '72, in August '73 I came to Toronto and found a job at the airport with an airline and just when I went to get ... I rented a van, packed whatever I could fit in..."

Delphine: "Not too much because we didn't have furniture, we had rented."

Errol: "So we went to Toronto, and that was it. We got an apartment here and started life in Toronto. And that was great because the school year started in September, so she went out..."

Delphine: "I did supply teaching for about a month. And I was not too happy about supply teaching because it cost me ten dollars to take a cab – because I didn't have a car – to get to the school, I taught the whole day, and ten dollars to get back home. And I was paid twenty one dollars a day. But Errol said to me. "You're not going there for the money, you're going there for the contact. And right enough, within a month there was a teacher who had just had her third child and said she wasn't coming back, I went down to the principal at that time... in a way who you knew and all of that."

Errol: "It was a catholic school board..."

Delphine: "It was a catholic school board and I told them that I had gone to Edinburgh and studied in a catholic college and whatever it is... and that might not have been the only reason, but one of the reasons but I did get the job in November of 1973 and then I taught there since that day."

Shezan: "And then I guess you stayed after?"

Delphine: "We stayed here and I taught for twenty-nine years..."

Shezan: "At the same school?"

Delphine: "No, no, I kept moving around within the school board, I stayed for the school board. I went back to university, I upgraded myself, got a Canadian degree from York University and at the same time – as a part time, I was studying in the summer time and at night school, and full time teaching and with the kids. Errol was working, and he managed to hang in there and it was the best thing I did because thirteen years ago I was fifty six and I had put in twenty-nine years of teaching and it was eighty five factor, I could get a pension. He said, "Time for you now to do what you wanted to do but you couldn't do before and enjoy your retirement."

Errol: "In '75 our son was born, Gavin, he came in '75 so that's when we had the two children."

Shezan: "So three years apart?"

Delphine: "Three years apart."

Errol: "Less than three."

Delphine: "Two years, nine months."

Errol: "So I was with the airline at the airport and they ended up owning a tour company, a tour operating company... it's like a wholesale company so you know these charter packages and everything and so they distributed through travel agencies. So I... because when I was back in Uganda I had some experience with tour operating and airline, they shifted me to the tour company and I ended up rising pretty quickly to the GM [General Manager] of the tour companies and I was with them. I didn't like, I guess I didn't like one of the managers so I quit in '76 or '77, I started a small travel agency on my own with someone else just to keep going, and then I got another consulting offer with another tour company, a very large company. And I ended up becoming president of that company in '79 or '80 I guess and then that company was owned by an airline in Quebec called Nordair at that time they were in Canada, you really had... Air Canada is the main national, international carrier and then you have CP Air, which was mainly international and more Pacific, and then you had in each of these provinces there were airlines like Quebec Air, Nordair, Eastern Provincial in Nova Scotia, there was Pacific West Trans Air in Manitoba, Pacific West in Alberta and CP Air.

So I was running this company called Treasure Tours and I had a staff of about one hundred and twenty people there. Then these airline mergers took place in the mid-eighties, like CP Air ended up buying Nordair, and Nordair had bought Quebec Air and then they bought Eastern Provincial and then PW Air decided, they were a small carrier, but very profitable out of Alberta and they owned all these 737's that they had paid for. So what they did was lease buy backs, they basically gave all this cash to buy CP Air which was a big airline and they both had tour companies – Pacific West Airlines had a tour company called PW Air Holidays and CP Air had a company called CP Air Holidays and Treasure Tours... so even though their parent company bought my parent company, my tour company was more profitable and they ended up appointing me as president of the whole thing. So it ended up merging them all in the late... '89, '86, '87, '89, and we changed the name to Canadian Holidays so there were two airlines in Canada at the time, Canadian Airlines and Air Canada, and we had the largest tour company across Canada, I had about 500 employees so I ran that company right until '96.

And then in '96... you know there's no room for two large carriers in Canada so they were struggling, Canadian Air were struggling, American Airlines decided to buy Canadian Airlines, so they bought Canadian Airlines but in the U.S. they never had anything like tour operators or large charters, because we couldn't run scheduled flights North – South because you couldn't get the licenses and everything. So we could run charters, we could run a lot of charters everywhere to the Caribbean, Mexico, in the U.S. Florida was a big destination, California, you know. So American said, "Oh we don't want this tour company, we don't believe in these charters," so they said, "We're going to get rid of it." So I put together my management team and I got Air Transat out of Montreal as partners and we bought the company.

So I ended up acquiring the company, we all... the management team had shares, majority shares but Transat had the option – because they had already financed the deal – and for them it was great because overnight they picked up a lot of flying, because we were with Canadian, we moved all the flying to Transat. Canadian didn't know that I had Transat as a partner, you know, so they sold it for nothing basically, we picked it up for a pretty good price. And then Transat had the option to take me out, which they exercised in 2001, which I was very fortunate because this was in April 2001, and in September 2001 was 9/11, because had it happened after and I would have come out with nothing. So I did very well, I came out of it and then they basically wanted to centralize a lot of things in Montreal because that's where the head office is and so they packaged me off but I had a non-compete for two and a half years so they paid me to stay out of the business, which I did. And then later on I got involved with another business and that company we basically wound it down and when the recession hit in '08, '09, things weren't so good, so we just said... and then I decided you know what? That's it.

And prior to that I had gotten involved in real estate so I was involved with a group... a friend of mine was a civil engineer by profession and had his own construction company and we started building condominiums actually... in 2001 when Toronto was really not a condominium city is when we got in. So we have... we put up around ten or eleven buildings in the city, all on King Street, on Sherbourne, Bathurst and West, yeah and the most recent project is the building next to the Royal Alex theatre, it's called Theatre Park, it's on King Street, King and University. So that has been very good and then the good thing for us was when Delphine retired... because she was always concerned with what she is going to do. I said, "Well you've worked hard and there's a lot of things you want to do in life." And then fortunately for us she retired in June 2002 and soon after that our daughter said she was pregnant and she was going to have the first grandchild and Hannah who is now twelve was born in 2003, March. And then of course then she's...

Delphine: "Never looked back. There's just not enough time... it's not just grandchildren though, I do put a lot of time that I enjoy into being there to help out and just bond with them."

Errol: "We never babysat the kids per se, like they went to daycare and they went to Montessori..."

Delphine: "Montessori and then now full time school."

Errol: "...But the beauty of it was we had the option to go at three o'clock, three-thirty, to pick them up, take them, bond with them so that the parents can work late, and to this day we still do that so it worked out really well..."

Delphine: And the two of us enjoy golf. He does, he's an avid golfer and I play for a senior ladies group and so summer time we are doing a lot of golfing, I did quite a bit of gardening and now I

sort of eased a little bit. Those are the types of things that I said, “I have no time, I have no time, I’m busy teaching.” So retiring... and the travel has become even more extensive, he’s already finished seeing over a hundred countries already.”

Errol: “We travelled even before when the kids were younger...”

Delphine: “But this way we can travel at the non-peak times and being a teacher I went during the monsoons to India the first time, I went to Australia during the winter because I had no choice, it was July – August. But now we are free to choose the time as we wish to travel and go around and that’s what both of us are really passionate about, travelling as well.”

Errol: “I actually have – I just remembered now, I’ll email it to you – a whole bio of mine because my daughter had put it together and I’ll send it to you... so it has more details and you can look at it. But so now you know we are sitting back and enjoying life, we are both in our late sixties, we spend time with the grandkids. But as I said, you know they are growing up fast and we know there is a window and in 2010 we bought real estate in Florida at the bottom of the market, it was slipping and there was stuff to pick up for a steal. So my younger brother and I bought a house together because we are very close, two brothers, two sisters, and he is a golfer as well. The house is a large 3100 square foot home, you know. And the reason we did that was because when we go down and we have friends and family coming, we can have ten, twelve, fourteen, so we’re not snowbirds just yet, we don’t go in November and stay til April. We go down, stay two, three weeks then come home because we miss the grandkids, but then they come in March.”

Delphine: “But we’re also very blessed because he received the benefit of passes...”

Errol: “Because I fly on Air Canada”

Delphine: “Yeah so he can fly on standbys, he got a high priority so this gives us the opportunity of going back and forth. So we do that quite often.”

Errol: “And so her parents, her mom stayed at home and helped with the grandkids... their grandkids, our kids and her dad, at the age of 59 I guess... he started working with the provincial government. So he worked for them and then he retired with them and then my mother was working with Shell in Uganda.”

Shezan: “Okay, interesting.”

Errol: “so she was 47 when she came here and they actually gave her a job back at Shell so she worked with them. Then Shell moved their head offices to Calgary in the eighties I guess it must have been, late eighties or whatever, and then she continues working at Price Waterhouse until she was 69 and she still wanted to work I said, “No, it’s time you retire” and she retired and she lives in a condo that we own just over here, for how many? Eighteen years she’s been there. On

her own she was great, but at 82, 83 she developed dementia and so now she's in a home and she's 90. Just turned 90 in February, yeah and her parents both passed away at the age of 88. And her sister, the older sister did well, she was a nurse by profession and she got into St. Joe's hospital in Toronto. So she was there and she worked in the health centre... family planning, women's health centre, then she retired and the other sister – the one with the husband at AIG... so she retired, she retired last year. They're still there they had two children and as I said my younger brother, he retired, he was with Northrop Kings in Jenta it's a Swiss company anyways. So now you know we are looking back and we say you know it was the best thing that happened to us, the best thing that happened for people in their twenties and thirties. It was terrible for people in their fifties and all the way up..."

Delphine: "Well it was more traumatic, I would say."

Errol: "Traumatic... well they lost everything, especially if they had worked for the government, their pension funds, in if they hadn't sent their money out they lost everything. But they all adjusted and worked well, it was not easy adjusting to the winter and stuff but I think you know I always say that when your back is up against a wall you can't go back any further, you can only go forward. So in a way when you come as a refugee... of course as I said right from the outset the biggest plusses we spoke the language, right, that's a plus, we came at a young age and Canada needed people, so jobs were plenty available, the provincial governments were expanding and Goans... I guess it must be a cultural thing because most Goans end up in civil service which is funny, maybe 10% of the Goan population are business people, 90% work for somebody, mainly in government or they work for somebody. Whereas if you look at the Ismaili or the Hindu, this is reverse, 90% are businessmen, 10% maybe work for people, you know? There's got to be something in the culture. So to this day now we are quite happy to see our grandchildren growing up, our kids are doing well, and as I said my daughter and my son in law were there. He did a B.Comm in finance..."

Delphine: "But he is not Ugandan, he came from India, his parents from India, got married here..."

Errol: "He's Goan."

Delphine: "He met my daughter here... you know after he was out of university and then they got married. But... the same with my daughter-in-law. Her parents from India, they came here and she was born here – from Goa – but neither of them are Ugandans, but they're always fascinated with our story and whatever. But I was just going to add that we have travelled so much and in all of our travels we tend to look for the friends or family who have settled in different continents, and we've travelled to all the continents, and wherever we go we're looking for these people, we meet them, we chat with them, visit with them. We always come back to Canada saying how fortunate – and I'm not saying they are not happy – but how

fortunate we were that Canada opened their doors, we accepted it, came to this country because I am not saying materialistically, materialistically is different.

But basically here were the opportunities, here you took advantage, education, jobs, everything, for us, for the next generation, and now for the next generation it has worked out just wonderful in comparison to the others. I recall meeting the principal I worked for at Shimoni Teacher Training in Sydney and he said to me, "What are you doing?" And I said, "I'm working towards my degree, because I want to upgrade myself to get more money. But..." I said, "I have a job that's permanent." And he said, "You're teaching and you're working?" Because at that time I think in Australia you did not have the opportunity to study and work at the same time. You either study, or work. But doing both, and how were you going to get your degree. I said well there's night school, there's summer school, there's all these opportunities that we have here."

Errol: "I went to Australia because my grandmother, I had my grandmother and my aunt went from Nairobi to Melbourne in Australia. So the first time we went there was in '81 and they were way behind Canada, you know. Just even we just mentioned the concept of working and then studying at night or whatever. They went to their, they were still writing in the old ledger books, and receipts, and it was absolutely backwards. They are advanced tremendously now but those first few years, and the other thing that was very obvious was that there was discrimination, there's no question about it. You would not see nonwhite managerial positions or anything... they couldn't believe that I was the president of a company in Canada..."

Delphine: "At your age..."

Errol: "At my age, thirty-two I guess at the time. They couldn't believe it, said it would never happen in Australia at the time. Things have changed. Australia is still very much very close, but it's different. So Canada has been really, really, good I think for everyone who wanted, anyone who really wanted to succeed here the opportunities were there, you know. I know that among the Goan community, was very, very, practically no unemployment. Nobody on unemployment, everybody had a job who was working, within a year of them coming here. You know, so we here celebrate – we haven't recently – but we celebrated our tenth anniversary of the Goans here in Uganda, and then we had the twentieth, twenty-fifth..."

Delphine: "And we had people come from Australia, come from London England and all that, the Goan community to meet, reunite and to celebrate our exodus."

Errol: "So we also had a club in Kampala, called the Kampala Goan Institute and it... I guess it would have been a hundred years a couple of years ago, so we had a big celebration..."

Shezan: John had showed me the magazine..."

Delphine: "That's right."

Errol: "Yeah so it's been wonderful. It's a great country and I can't... I think it was the best thing that happened to us at that age because there's no question I mean now in Kenya in the last twenty years or so they got the news, even if you're a Kenyan citizen, if you're not black then you don't get priority for university. I mean that's just blatant discrimination, right? So we were very fortunate here. So I don't know, I think we've covered everything, or if you feel we haven't..."

Delphine: "No, no, no, I was just waiting..."

Shezan: "Did your parents struggle at all to find jobs? Or was that..."

Errol: "No, that's what I was saying, my mom got a job with Shell, you know at the age of forty-seven they took her and she rose up, she ended up being in charge of the record department and in those days everything was manual like paper, right? So you had these massive filing cabinets with five shelves and everything, I guess they had the inventory on paper, but she knew everything. In fact she was very good because in Uganda when she worked at Shell she was a receptionist and in those days – you would not have seen this – but in those days they'd have these switchboards and so, and you'd have extensions, right? So she would manage a switchboard of 200 extensions. So if somebody called in, you couldn't call the person directly, you called the switchboard and said you wanted to speak to Mr. Smith and then she'd unplug this cord and plug it in here. And so... and she knew all the extensions by heart, so they really loved her.

Anyways so she came and she took this job and did well. And as I said, then finished with them, they moved the head office and she wasn't going to move to Calgary, and then she got a job at Price Waterhouse doing the same thing and she did well. Delphine's dad did very well in the provincial government, worked for the provincial government until he retired and he was successful, enjoyed life and mom stayed at home, helped with the grandkids, our kids I guess, their grandkids came along so she was very helpful. So I think big plus is the fact that we all spoke English, big, big plus, you know? It's tough for immigrants coming to Canada if you don't speak English, it's much harder for them."

Delphine: "And I also agree with Errol, there are people who have immigrated from different parts of the world and they make a choice, they start looking back sometimes and wonder if they made the right decision, should they have come? Should they go back?"

Errol: "They second guess..."

Delphine: "Second guessing and all... we had no choice. And there's a big advantage, I mean I hate to use the word advantage but that way coming here it's a big plus because I know that I

couldn't say, "I wish I had stayed longer, or maybe I should have come later, or maybe we should never have left" because really we had no choice. We were literally kicked out, you know. And so we just had to move along."

[End of first audio].

Session #: 2/2

Length: 45 minutes

Errol: "So I was saying, over the years being in the business and I was lucky enough to meet with a lot of celebrities, got to play golf with Wayne Gretzky, played a few holes with him. Met [Pierre] Trudeau, the Trudeau meeting was spectacular, actually. What had happened at the time was he went to work for a company called Heenan Blaikie, a legal firm in Montreal, the ironic part of it was that Heenan Blaikie was head of the Conservatives. And Jean Chretien did the same thing, they no longer exist, either. A couple years ago they shut down and all the lawyers went to other companies. So what had happened was, we were using them in Montreal, the legal firm, the lawyer there was Danny. And so I said to Danny, "You know what? I'd love to meet Pierre Trudeau." I said, "You know, he brought us to this country, blah, blah, blah." He said, "Okay, I will organize something." So one day he calls me up and says, "Mark this date in your calendar, you're going to meet Trudeau."

Now, I'm assuming Trudeau is going to be speaking at some massive event and at the end of it he'll just take me up to introduce me and shake hands or whatever. So a week before he calls me and says, "The date's on." I said, "Yeah, okay so where is the event?" He said, "What event." I said, "I'm assuming..." "No, no, no, no" he says, "You're going to have a private lunch with Trudeau at our offices." So I go to this... Danny, the senior executive of the law firm, and Trudeau, just the three of them. Right when I walk in, Pierre Trudeau greets me and pours a drink for me, and it's amazing... three other customers... two others and myself, so we are three of us, and that was it. We were in a room like this, and the table... and the food was brought in and he spent two and a half hours with us. It was just amazing, I mean... and I had gone prepared but I was not sure, you know the forum or what the environment would be in terms of can I get an autograph in a book, can I get a picture with him? But I went prepared, I took my little bag and kept it there and then I found that he was so casual and everything and the board was amazing.

In 1982 they had the prime ministers commonwealth conference, they have it every two years and they had it in Goa, actually in Goa. And the hotel that was there was called they were using actually still exists there. So Trudeau was there and it was amazing, just ironic that he loved

tennis, played tennis every morning that was one thing he did, was play tennis and the so-called pro at the hotel was Delphine's first cousin."

Shezan: "No way!"

Errol: "Yeah so he played with him every morning. So I reminded him, I said, "By the way you know in Goa there was..." He said, "Yeah, I remember I played him. I can't say I remember his name, but I remember him." I said, "That was my wife's first cousin." So he was great, so then I took out my camera and I got pictures I'll take you downstairs – and then... yeah so we talked about that and then I took this book and he wrote two messages, one to my daughter Jeannine, because I told him she was born in Montreal so he wrote it in French, and then he wrote a message to Gavin in the other book in English, because he was born here. And these other guys came in with nothing, so I had the camera so I got pictures and then I took their pictures and sent it to them later.

So that was a big meeting, you know. And then the other big meeting was when they had the World Youth Day in 2000 I think it was, in Toronto."

Delphine: "2000, 2001..."

Errol: "I think it was 2000..."

Delphine: "2000? Yeah I was teaching at Mother Cabrini at the time."

Errol: "...and they had this huge event at the Skydome and what had happened was one of the executives on that committee of organizers, they knew me and he approached me saying, "Listen, you know we want to bring in these native Indians in from these different areas – Northern areas, Northern Manitoba, this and that – to Toronto to meet with Mandela. You know, and we went to Air Canada and Air Canada said they were not going to do anything, can you help?" So I said, "Okay, let me see what I can do." So I called Pacific West and I called Nordair, and I called all these other airlines that I was dealing with, contacts and said, "Guys give me four tickets here, four tickets here, I can get these kids in here." So I called him back and his name was Gordon Chresse, I said, "Gordon, I've got it done." He says, "Great, in return for this you are going to meet Mandela – it's going to be short, photo op, couple of sentences, talk with him for a little... and so that's the other guy I ended up meeting. And then through the business... I used to do a lot of business in Cuba, in fact, opened up a lot of Cuba to the world for destinations and they were always grateful and I said to them, "you guys owe me a visit with Castro, I've got to meet Castro, make it happen."

So then they called me up and said, "Okay Errol come on down, you have to come down to the opening." They had a hotel in Havana called Hotel Nationale. So in the old days there was a big casino there and everything. So they renovated it and refurbished it, and opened it up in... I

forget what year but anyway they said, “You have to come for the opening.” I said, “Listen, I’m not going to fly all the way just for the opening of a hotel, I’m busy.” “No, no, no, you have to come.” I said, “Part of the deal is I have to meet Castro.” They said, “We’ll call you back.” They called me back and said, “Okay, we’ll make it happen.” So I went down and I actually met him so I was saying... and I’ve met a lot of other celebrities like sport celebrities, like Michael Jordan used to have his golf tournament in Nassau every January, so we’d be invited and you’d meet all sport celebrities from Horace Becker to basketball players, everyone you could think of, NFL players, musical artists, Fergie, the Black Eyed Peas... I was standing there, honestly I didn’t know who Fergie was. People were coming saying, “You’re next to Fergie.” I was saying, “Who the hell is Fergie?” Then I golfed the next day with this guy... Gretzky was there, but that day I was golfing with a guy named Andrew Young who was the drummer for the band... No Doubt.

Shezan: “Oh, yeah!”

Errol: “He’s a drummer and I had to go the night before and google it, who is this guy? So we’d meet all these people, we met a lot of celebrities over the years but I always said that Castro, Mandela, and Trudeau... even Gretzky would fit in there. When we met them it was like as if an aura – even I think the Pope... when the Pope came and you were among the hundreds and thousands – there’s something that the Pope does, you know? And the same thing with Trudeau, same thing with Mandela, and same thing with Castro. So I could show you the pictures downstairs, but over the years I was very, very, fortunate. Sometimes I think back and the places I went to, the golf courses I’ve played at, you know, access to... just for business and all. I look back and say I’ve been really, really fortunate. The important thing is also, I still keep in touch with these people. We do an annual Christmas greeting and newsletter, we do it... send it out and it basically recaps the year from January to December. So this way I keep in touch with people who I haven’t seen in a few years but they all keep in touch, it’s just great, a great way to do it.”

Delphine: “And even myself, I feel that I was so much wanting to be a teacher and my parents, especially my dad – not my mother, my dad – said, “Why a teacher? You know, they’re not well paid.” That was the first thing in his mind because a secretary, you get better pay... I wanted to be a teacher. I’m glad in a way they sent me out because by coming back I was able to teach and if I had stayed in Uganda, trained in Uganda, maybe I might not have gone back and pursued completing a degree which would have taken me even longer had I not gone over there. Mind you I had to take ten credits versus fifteen, even after three years in... but I have no complaints. It gave me the opportunity to continue teaching and make that my career, then I taught in seven different schools in the area, I taught from grade one to grade eight and special education, ESL [English as a Second Language], you know, all of that mix in 29 years getting much, much satisfaction from that. In fact just last week I went to the school – I go sometimes – and I volunteer in my grandchildren’s school as an assistant or a volunteer just to help out in

the classroom and I get a little nostalgic for being back into a classroom though I say I have the best of both worlds now, yeah.”

Errol: “I think you know, as a country, Canada I have to say did not... I didn’t witness any discrimination or racism. And you know I go back to the time that I became GM and then president in the late 70s and early 80s, and it was rare to see a non-white in managerial positions. And over the years then I was on advisory boards and I was always the single non-white, but never felt it. Now in the U.S. when I used to go in the early 80s, I’d go with my VP’s who were all Caucasian and you could see the presentations that were being made, they were addressing them because I wouldn’t give my business card at the outset, I would just give my name. And then they’d soon find out that I was the president of the company and there would be a sudden switch, and you could see that. I could tell you in Canada I never came across that, never felt that at all.”

Delphine: “And I feel the same way.”

Errol: “Even when I joined my golf club here at Markland Woods it was predominantly Caucasian, you know I mean I actually ended up on the board. The director is the one who approached me and I took over the whole social activities of the club, I ran the social things, I used to MC the thing and everything. Nobody... never felt like I didn’t belong. But in the states to this day you know some of the southern states... you can see it. You can see it. I mean it still exists there, unfortunately.”

Delphine: “I would say that as well because in my capacity as a teacher I never, ever would miss at all, neither from the parents, nor from the staff or anything. I did not feel that if I wanted to pursue and do something else would it have been a hindrance because I wasn’t white-Canadian. Now too I say to Errol, I’m the golf captain of a little group... I say little but there’s about sixty of us, seniors who play golf at Centennial and I’m the only coloured person... I don’t feel that I’m the only one, I just notice it. But nobody else makes note of it, it’s just like they’re all together. I think I’m so fortunate to be in Canada, it’s such a beautiful country. I say to my children, “You haven’t witnessed it.” Because we travelled a lot and even went to South Africa, took them at the time when...”

Errol: “The apartheid was just getting over, ‘91...”

Delphine: “Yeah.”

Errol: “And from there we went back to Uganda. We went back to Uganda.”

Shezan: “Because you guys hadn’t been back, right?”

Delphine: “We did go back.”

Errol: "In '91."

Shezan: "How was that?"

Errol: "It was very nostalgic. You know, I mean I had... the circumstances we left with... I was not that keen on going, Delphine was very keen on going. So on the flight from Nairobi... we had been in South Africa for two weeks and we stopped in Nairobi and the next day took the flight over. I was kind of nervous you know, going back. But it was sad to see in a way because the country had... when we went back in '91. When you think about it until '87 it was civil war and all the rebels and everything, so the country had really been run down I mean the roads were terrible, hydro would cut off, the water situation, you know. But for us it was extremely nostalgic to go back to the schools, we went to every school we had gone to, went to the homes we lived in, and our main focus was to show the kids, you know of course they had no affiliation, any affinity to it at all. For them it was, my daughter put it, she said the biggest pleasure she got was seeing how happy we were."

Delphine: "She said, "Just looking at your faces, and the excitement." Because he was welcomed in such a big way to his school because "OB, OB, OB," because he was the old boy, that's what it was. Then I went to the teacher's college and when I went to Shimoni all of them came out and they kept on saying, "Oh my god, you used to teach here, you were the tutor over here, come back, come back, we still need you." You know? And I just felt that..."

Errol: "Then we went to our elementary school where we both went to school there was a teacher there who kept staring at us and finally said to her..."

Delphine: "Your voice is familiar."

Errol: "Your voice... and then we figured out that she was..."

Delphine: "She was a student teacher when I was teaching at Shimoni. And she said, "Are you the Dsouza?" Because before I got married I was a Dsouza. I said, "Yes." She said, "My, I thought I knew you." And she hugged me as though she knew me forever and anyways they were very nice. When we went to see those... the Kabaka's palace and all they kept telling us..."

Errol: "We met the Kabaka's wife. And because I as I said it was another stage and they hadn't seen Asians come back. And then she said to us – one of the Kabaka's wives said to us, "So, do you live in Canada?" We said yes, she said, "Are you happy there?" We said, "We are very happy there." She said, "We are glad to know you are happy there, but remember this will always be your home. And anytime you want to come back, this is your home." So we said, "No we are very happy in Canada." And the other thing was, for so many years in Kololo, where they used to live there had not been any non-blacks go there, so when we were there the kids came running, running and started addressing us as Mzungu which is white. Mzungu, I kept saying,

“Oh, what a compliment.” [Laughter] And then they had not seen a non-black there because we left in the early '70s. But it was great, it was great to go back. It's kind of sad, I read... I sort of keep up on Uganda with what's going on there and I look at the newspaper quite often. And you know it's sad the corruption there and everything. But now what's amazing is – they just produced this statistic – there's more Indians now in Uganda than there were in '72. Yeah and then of course and the Chinese...”

Delphine: “The Chinese as well...”

Shezan: “There's been a lot of economic growth, especially in Kenya and Uganda recently...”

Errol: “Well Uganda is from oil, right? So that's a big plus.”

Shezan: “Uganda is really interesting now I find because you still have a lot of issues with homosexual rights, that's kind of been their world stage news...”

Errol: “Stupid. I mean it's absolutely ridiculous, I couldn't believe that.”

Shezan: “And then there's the whole Kony 2012 thing...”

Errol: “Oh yeah, yeah, right.”

Shezan: “...child soldiers.”

Errol: “That's in northern Uganda, yeah. Have your parents gone back?”

Shezan: “No, so my mom has never been back.”

Errol: “No interest?”

Shezan: “I think she really wants to go but my mom has never been the type to spend that kind of money on herself. So I'm trying, that's the one thing when I'm finished... to take her. That's one thing I want to do...”

Errol: “Because your dad was not from Uganda?”

Delphine: “So he doesn't have the same...”

Shezan: “Yeah. I know my mom does, when she thinks about it. She still thinks of it as home, she thinks of herself as more of a Ugandan-Canadian, a mix.”

Errol: “So any of you were born... no you were all born here.”

Delphine: “She was seventeen when she left.”

Shezan: “She got married when she was 21, 22... then she had us three boys. So I badly, badly, badly, want to take her back.”

Errol: "So the names that John Nazareth gave you, do you have them?"

Shezan: "I have the whole list."

Errol: "I just want to see, maybe I can give you some other leads as well."

[Break]

Errol: "If Ramina was still living that would have been a good interview because they were sent to Quebec City. They had an incredible adjustment. Don't worry, you can send it to me later if you find it."

Shezan: "I should be able to find it faster than what I'm doing right now. Interview list, there we go, perfect. There we go. All the names are on the left."

Errol: "Oh you've so got John and Gladys Nohorona."

Delphine: "In fact Gladys was the one I was talking to about the palazzo pants."

Shezan: "Oh, really?"

Delphine: "They were there, and John stayed with us."

Shezan: "He's on there?"

Errol: "Yeah, he's on there."

Shezan: "I've reached out to everyone on that list, yeah."

Errol: "Okay, yeah. Muria's on there. [Inaudible]. Anyone else you can think of?"

Delphine: "That's a good cross section."

Errol: "Good cross section, yeah. Okay."

Shezan: "I'll just pull up the calendar. So I have a whole bunch booked. I have Tom and Joan on the 8th of May, Tanna Jay on the 9th. They're all back to back. Then Edmond and Phina on the 11th and Gomez on the 12th."

Delphine: "Busy May."

Shezan: "Yeah. It'll be fun though, it's been the best part. And then I'll be going across Canada. So I'll be going Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton for the summer."

Delphine: "Oh, lovely."

Shezan: "Yeah, so I'll get to interview more people."

Errol: "Well maybe then you'd want to interview my brother then in Vancouver."

Shezan: "Yeah, I would love to."

Errol: "Yeah, so I'll send him an email and copy you and just say..."

Shezan: "Perfect. Yeah, I'll be there for a whole month."

Errol: "He did very well, he was in the airline business and he rose to senior vice-president of Canadian Airlines. So then over the past few years he's been on the boards in Hong Kong and he was the honorary chairman of the Pacific Association of Travel Agents, so he's done really well. It was interesting because he has a different perspective. He was in Toronto and then went to Thunder Bay and came back here and then from here went to Calgary, from Calgary settled in Vancouver. He's got two daughters, one is the principal of a school and the other one just finished her doctorate and so she's with UBC [University of British Columbia] right now."

Shezan: "Oh, fantastic. I guess my last sort of question for the interview is, adjusting to life in Canada and I guess changes in food, weather, the people, community."

Errol: "See we... we'll start with community. Community was strong because we came here and since 1970 there was an association called Goan Overseas Association, mainly Goans from East Africa, they formed an association so it was great because when we came here there was a central meeting point. Goans are big in socializing, you know dances and all of these things. So we were there. You met a lot of people, you met a lot of Ugandans Goans, you had the Kenyan Goans... so the community was great, always stayed in it. Musical family, acting and everything, and we had formed a group called the Goan Theatrical Group. So we would put up theatre shows in our mother tongue Konkani. And so we'd sing and have a play and everything in Konkani and we did that for quite a few years. So that stayed in play. I think the food adjustment was not an issue for us at our age. I didn't think at all... we adjusted pretty quickly. Maybe my mom, maybe different. But on the other hand, even when we came yeah, we might have to drive a little to Malton to places to get spices – but you got it. But as years went on you get everything."

Delphine: "But basically the two of us enjoyed all kinds of..."

Errol: "We were never really..."

Delphine: "Not to say we don't enjoy all kinds of Goan food, all the spicy food. But now today everything is becoming so..."

Errol: "And I think, you know it all comes back to that... did we like the winter? We never really thought about it I think because as the years went on the winters actually got milder here. Right? So when we first came it was snowing in November and it would stay til April, basically. We started out in Montreal which was worse!"

Delphine: “Having said that I did have a friend who was teaching with me non-Goan and she said if you want to enjoy the winters and Errol said, we better get involved in a winter sport. So right enough we got both of us and the children into skiing. I mean of course we wanted to do downhill skiing, because she gave us all the equipment her children did not use, passed it on to us and we bought our stuff. So we did downhill skiing, the kids do a bit of that, we quit it after we were in our mid-forties. We said you know, afraid of the accidents and falling down and things like that, or the late fifties.

Then I would say that in a sport in Uganda I played field hockey and I represented Uganda in international field hockey, yes. So I came here after my daughter was born and I played for about two years only, part of it never was the same for me. I was not as fast and swift as ever after having given birth to a child, but also the time. You know to go for practices, and the distances and all that so after two years I quit. But I did go to New Jersey with the team playing there as well as to Washington when they would have these tournaments. Errol on the other hand continued with his cricket, he played some hockey, he played some...”

Errol: “Yeah I played some sports, which was cricket and field hockey, but then the business was coming in the way like, you know I was travelling and everything and then I had to pull back from organized sports, but then I played squash, which is a great game. I played that until I was 55 I think, played in the leagues and I was really enjoying that. We keep very active, we always... when we bought this house in 1980 one of the things I liked about this house was that I had this vision to put an indoor swimming pool. So we actually have an indoor pool, we just put in a new liner in there, but this is.... So we’ve had it since ’86. So we keep fit and everything, and we adjusted.

I think weather... I think you know, for the first time maybe now, after I turned 65. Maybe part of it is that I don’t have to get up to go to work or so anything like that and so I hate the cold weather because otherwise I’m golfing, I’m out and everything. And I think psychologically after we bought our house in Florida in 2010 knowing that you know, every day you look at the temperature down there and its 25, 26, so what the hell am I doing here, right? And so psychologically we tend to curse the winter. Before that, no. I think we just adjusted. I think I really go back to this whole theory that we couldn’t second guess. We didn’t have an opportunity, we were out of Uganda, our lives were the most important, that’s what we concentrated on. And then you know, pursue that dream. I always said just think of what you want to do and go ahead and do it, you know? And we did what we wanted to do.

And you know I personally from an education point of view I finished high school and then I did what they used to call A levels, you did two years of pre-university and then you go to university. I was doing... intended to become a chemical engineer so I was doing physics, chemistry, math, biology and English. I wasn’t really enjoying it so I kind of went to school,

didn't go to school. I was into music and I had a band, I drummed and my younger brother played guitar... |

Shezan: "I'm a drummer, too."

Errol: "Oh, are you? So we played, we had our band, we made good money, it was all cash. Then I was... I think I had business in my blood. I started buying and selling motor scooters and motor bikes when I was in Uganda at a young age, even cars and stuff so I didn't go to university. I actually sat through the exam, sat through chemistry and biology and English and math, but failed physics. I could have repeated but I really had no interest. So I fortunately got into the travel business, liked it and did well with it. So I never looked back.

Yeah and we adjusted, I think our adjustment was pretty much.... Pretty much determined by the fact that we couldn't go back. I see a lot of immigrants who come now, they come in... they come in with a lot of money some of them, especially from the middle east and all... and then they compare. "Oh you know over there you did this," if you keep doing that you're never going to be happy. You've got to come here and look at what are the positive things here, the reason you came here in the first place. You made that decision is because of the positive things, don't look at the negative things. Yes the weather is an issue, maybe yes certain things, and look at it for the future of your kids, because no matter what... I mean I know Modi is here from India now. But if you look at it from a private perspective India has progressed tremendously, from a government perspective, zero. Zero, you know?

So I have these... we have our two Canadian friends, a couple. Very good friends of ours, who they've always wanted to go to India, but their second daughter was still in high school so they couldn't take the time off. They were there in January, they did a three and a half week tour, they had a really good time but he's... one thing that he said to me, he sent me an email from there and he said, you know – because prepping them for the fact when you go to India you have extreme contrast, I mean you've got extreme poverty to absolute riches, filth to absolute cleanliness. So the thing that he was, struck him most was... and he sent me an email back saying, "Errol, all that you talked to me about, the hardest part I had was to see these kids not in school." You know we are driving around and you see kids out there and he says, "Where is the escape for them?" and you know I never, ever thought of that and it's so, so true. And that's really a government's responsibility, right?

So you look at that and... when you look at people who come from India and keep comparing, don't look back, Dubai and everything, don't look back. And Dubai to me is an absolutely out of sync place. It's... it's a bit, what do you call it? What's the word? [33:28] areas, but anyway. They hate the Americans but they build another America, you know? If they blindfold you and drop you in Dubai you'd think you're in Dallas. That's the stupid part of it, right? So you talk to people and say, listen, those places, there's no human rights in those places. Look at how they

treat the Indians and the Pakistanis and everybody, everything. So you come here and you are on equal footing with everyone and yes maybe the winters are not good, but look at all the other positives. Look at where the future is for your kids, you are bringing them to a place where they have a tremendous future, right? So that's it. Anything else?"

Shezan: "I guess now that you guys have been in Canada for a while, how do you sort of identify yourselves? Do you feel that you are a Goan, Canadian, Ugandan, East African? If I was to ask you who are you and where are you from?"

Delphine: "Well when people ask you, "Where are you from, what's your background?" I tell them straight my parents are of Indian origin, I was born in Uganda but I'm a Canadian citizen since 1972. So really I'm..."

Errol: "See the problem is if we say to them we are from India, immediately they'll say, "But you don't have an Indian accent. Because they... I guess, what do you call it? Match that Indian with some Indian accents, right? Then they come to visit and people who know our food is not typically Indian, it's a mix of Portuguese and Indian. And then if we say we're Ugandan, they look at us and people say, "Ugandans are black." That's in their mind, right? So when they ask me, "Where are you from," or, "What are you?" I actually say listen, I'm going to have to tell you the detailed version for you to understand. I say, "I'm Indian ancestry. Indian ancestry for sure, colonized by the Portuguese..." and why I tell them colonized by the Portuguese because if we don't then they try to figure out how come we're Catholic. So I say, "Listen, this is where my parents were, they were Indian ancestry, the Portuguese colonized Goa, then they came to East Africa because of the British colonies, and that's where we were born. So we have an Indian ancestry, mainly Portuguese with some Indian culture, background, Catholic based religion and British upbringing. It's really British because while in Uganda the education system was all British, you know we had to take that senior Cambridge test and all which is sent by England. English taught, British/English upbringing. And being born there, our names are more English than anything. Like my name is Errol, it's an Indian name, it's not a Ugandan name, Portuguese name, you know?"

So that's how... I explain it to them in that way. Then they ask me, what do you feel? Now I've lived more in Canada but I also say honestly, if you answer "Where are you from?" with, "I'm Canadian." People are not... don't accept that as an answer, right? That unfortunately will last for the next umpteen generations, I don't care what if... because people associate if you are Canadian you have to be Caucasian, right? I mean that's how it will always be because they want to know your ancestry and they want to know where you actually come from. They want to know what's behind... so I think that will always exist.

There will be less explanation as you go forward. Like I'm sure my son will basically... the explanation will be, "Oh my parents are Indian descent, and I was born in Canada. That'll be it. I

don't think he'll talk about Uganda or anything like that, so once our generation goes I think that's what will happen and then the next generation I think will be the same answer. I think... but at some point I think where you come from I think will not be... my grandchildren, that generation and older, I don't think they'll talk about India and things like that. That's what I'm thinking. Because it's still funny. Like yesterday my grandson and my granddaughter, my son's kids... after school they go to a home, there's this couple that takes them and keeps them there until 4:30 when their parents pick them up, or we pick them up. And so she's from the Caribbean for sure and so we are having this discussion yesterday and I asked her, "What is your ancestry?" You know, now she is seventh generation Canadian, right? But she still said, "Oh, I'm originally from Barbados, and then I went to Nova Scotia." So she is from the old blacks who settled in Nova Scotia, she's like seventh generation, but still they talk about it, right? So that's how it is. I think now we've lived in Canada twice as much as Uganda."

Delphine: "Yeah, but also if you look at – if you're talking about Tyson's school – but when Gavin first went to school he might have been a minority. Today Tyson goes to school – his son – and I would say it's not the minority."

Errol: "It might not be the minority in terms of the different backgrounds, but in terms of colour he's still a minority."

Delphine: "Yeah, yeah. In colour..."

Errol: "He cannot say tomorrow or if you ask Gavin. "Where are you from?" And if he says "I'm Canadian." You know that that is not satisfying the answer."

Delphine: "That is true. But when I went to the classroom, if I took a picture – when I was volunteering the day before yesterday at my granddaughter's – you'd have no idea which part of the world I was in. Because they were Chinese, they were Pilipino, they was the brown skin, there was Caucasian... it was just such a mixture to me... just beautiful, you know. Sitting there thinking, how lovely. And one of my favourite subjects when I was teaching was the multicultural part of it, you know? Always started off in the classroom ask your parents what's your ancestry or where they come from and make your flags, and then we'd hang our flags all in the classroom. And then when the parents came in how beautiful it is that all parts of the world are brought into this place."

Errol: "What's really good for us I think is, it's good to know your identity or where you came from, but you have to assimilate in the society, and you leave that behind right? And part of the problem we're having now is some immigrants coming in and they want things to remain as they had it over there and that's going to cause a problem, you can't have that here. You know what I mean? So that's unfortunate. I think you can keep your culture, your identity, but in the general stream of things you should be able to assimilate and not show the differences, right?"

And especially not having the people that were originally from here, the five, six, seven generations, getting them to change to accommodate you, I mean that's a problem. And I think that's with us, with our British kind of background in Uganda and we fitted in much easier here, and language. Language is a big plus.

Shezan: "That's perfect. That's kind of all I had for the interview questions."

Errol: "Okay, perfect. Thanks."

[End of transcript.]