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NAME OF INTERVIEWEE: Roger Boccini Nincheri

NAME OF INTERVIEWER: Joyce Pillarella

NAME OF VIDEOGRAPHER: Adriana Rinaldi

TRANSCRIBED BY: Melina De Guglielmo

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

ABSTRACT

Roger Boccini-Nincheri was born in Florence, Italy, in 1935. His parents Elfie Iussa and Berto Boccini immigrated to Vancouver before WWII, leaving Roger in Italy in the care of his paternal grandmother. He remained in Italy for the duration of WWII. Roger vividly recounts his early life in Italy during the war years, including bombings, and being forced to move to several locations in northern Italy to remain safe. In Canada his father, Berto, was interned at Camp Petawawa for his involvement with the Vancouver-based Italian newspaper *L'Eco Italo-Canadese*. Berto Boccini contracted Tuberculosis while at Camp Petawawa and died shortly after his diagnosis. Elfie Boccini then moved to Montreal and married Gabriel Nincheri, son of artist Guido Nincheri, who was also interned at Camp Petawawa during WWII. Roger recounts the history of his biological father and also of the Nincheri family during and after WWII. This includes coverage of the life of Guido Nincheri and visual examples from the Studio Nincheri, as he discusses the inspiration for Guido's art including the famous painting of Mussolini at the church of Notre Dame de la Defense in Montreal.

INTERVIEW

RBN: Roger Boccini Nincheri, interviewee

JP: Joyce Pillarella, interviewer

[Title screen]

[Fades in at 00:00:10]

JP: Ok, it's July 21, 2011. My name is Joyce Pillarella and I'm interviewing Roger Boccini Nincheri, today - that was for the ID.

RBN: Ok.

JP: So, Roger, why don't we start first with uh, telling, telling us a little bit about, uh, your life story; where you were born, and, uh, we'll eventually, let's just talk first about your dad.

RBN: Well the story actually begins in Vancouver. And my mother, Elfie, Iussa uh, was, went to Italy in 1934-35 to complete her piano career. And she ended up in Florence. And she was, uh, one day she was practicing the piano, playing the Campanella, which has very high notes, and all of a sudden she hears a knock at the door, and, uh, she opens up and there's this young fella and he says look, miss, he says I have a terrible toothache and your high notes are just driving me crazy! So she says, "Ok, fine" but the moment the two of them saw each other that's it, it was a spark. So, um, in 1935, obviously, I came along. And a year later in 1936. And uh, from there obviously then from Florence they moved into Trieste which was actually sort of the residence of the Boccinis in Trieste. And there they stayed from 1935 until 1936. In 1936, mom, Elfie, and my father Berto Boccini, and my brother of a year old [clears throat] actually not even

a year old, left then for Vancouver. They ended up first of us in LOs Angeles they had parents out there in Los Angeles and then from Los Angeles they moved then into Vancouver to join up with her mother. Who had—

JP: [Unclear]

RBN: Her mother was in Vancouver already for many years. Because they had, the Iussas, had migrated let's say into Canada years before. As a matter of fact my grandfather Iussa, was a miner - a pioneer in Braylorn. And uh what he did , he left actually Canada, dying of Silicosis, and he left the mother Ida and the two girls behind and he went out to went back to Italy to a little village in uh in Northern Italy San Pietro del Natisone. And there he died. [Clears throat] So, grandmother Iusa, had to bring up these two girls and of course she made all kinds of sacrifices, you can imagine I mean a woman alone, in Nanaimo, and she managed then she managed to give a classical education to both girls. Elida was a cellist, and mom was a pianist and she eventually became a concert pianist. So [unclear] they left in 1936 from Italy. Landed back in Vancouver as I told you and I was left behind in Italy with my grandparents. My grandfather Carlo Boccini and my grandmother Berta Boccini. [Clears throat] They uh mom and dad were intending to come back in 1938 to pick me up but then the war broke out and we were separated. So I went through the whole war from let's say through the whole period let's say from 191939 to 1945 ok we went through the war we went through bombardments and all kinds of stories and so on. Meanwhile, what was happening then to Berto Boccini in Vancouver. Now Berto— [clears throat]

JP: I'm just going to stop you there.

RBN: Mm hmm.

JP: So your parents left you there.

RBN: Yup.

JP: You were 1, 2 years old.

RBN: I was a year old, not eve' a year old, that's right.

JP: And at that point, you didn't even know your mother or your father.

RBN: Oh, I mean, I didn't, I didn't, I didn't know them. Yeah, as a child, who remembers?

JP: And you're in Trieste.

RBN: We are in Trieste.

JP: And, do you know why your parents decided to leave you there and come back to Vancouver without you?

RBN: Well, they, r, the problem was for the very well there were two that is one big question really actually that I always has haunted me all these years. Why they left me behind. Um, apparently from what I can understand is that my grandfather and grandmother they were sort of at odds with each other and I was the glue that was going to keep them together. So that was probably the reason behind they left me and obviously that is essentially what did happen. Uh, as far as, that's as far as I know because I asked my uncle and actually both my uncles and I never really got an answer and my mother always kept her mouth shut about this whole story so there you are. I was left behind. And it was actually it was a good thing in a way because I got

an European background I got an European upbringing and my grandmother was really actually something special. Incredible. And my mother and Nonna Berta they became such incredible friends, they were really actually almost like twins. She was closer to Nonna Berta than to her mother, Ida. Aw, they corresponded over the years and everything I mean they there was an incredible love between the two of them - and as a matter of fact, uh, my mother learned how to cook then from Nonna Berta,

JP: Ohhh.

RBN: And her cooking was just something phenomenal. Ok, so anyway let's go back to Vancouver in 19, oh, make it 1937-38 during this particular time, Greg, father Boccini, Berto, became the director of the newspaper Eco Italo Canadese and of course this was a period let's say, where when fascism was very strong in Italy and there was really a great deal of pride among the Italians of the accomplishments of Mussolini I mean it was it was an age. So actually so Berto in his editorials actually tended to be actually fairly well let's say leaning toward the fascist type of um philosophy if you want to put it that way and I remember, again talking to my grandmother Ida, that grandmother Ida always had arguments with my grandfather Berto to say look you should not do this and you shouldn't do that. And you should not be too lenient on the fascist side, but of course, he had his own ideas and grandmother had hers and that was it. At the break of the Second World War when Italy declared War, then obviously things changed. Now, in Vancouver, and Italian Community of Vancouver uh the uh one of the most important persons in there was a fella by the name of Branca, Angelo Branca, lawyer, representing Italians and he told them to the, to the assembly he said look you gotta swear then allegiance to Canada and to the Crown because this is a point over here you're going to make sure that you are truly representing Canada, not fascist Italy. And they agreed, but, unfortunately father Boccini (hmp) just he had his own particular ideas and again too, (unclear) the arguments between Branca and Boccini were phenomenal. And as a matter of fact they another

interesting thing why the Brancas and Boccinis were so close together was the fact that Alfie taught piano to both girls. Dodo Branca and I can't remember the other girl's name. And uh so they were part of the family. So essentially then when the uh the war broke out and people start getting to be rounded up I can't remember the exact date but it was at 3 o'clock in the morning. And the uh, the RCMP came over, knocked at the door, and of course they picked him up and off he went and he was brought to Petawawa. And no, actually, not to Petawawa he went first to Kananaskis and then from Kananaskis they were transferred then to Petawawa in Ontario.

JP: Now just before we move on I just wanted to comment (unclear) on what had happened there. Because obviously the arguments he had with Branca were political.

RBN: They were political (unclear) see but I don't know anything about it because I mean I was just, I was in the other side ehehehe you know I was in the other side I was in Italy under bombardments and all that kinda stuff.

JP: How did you learn about this?

RBN: These stories did not come from my mother, nor Nonna Ida, or Lida, the three of them really actually didn't say anything to me but I got it from the stories come from friends of ours, Lorinne Wilkinson who is still alive today at the age of ninety-some, and she was a very close friend actually of the family a very close friend of Lida, my aunt. So she was able to sorta give me certain amount of this background of what happened - you see these stories of Angelo and Berto Boccini and the Italian community and so on. So it's only second hand because obviously I wasn't there. Ok. So let's go back then to then he arrived then in Petawawa.

JP: to Alberta.

RBN: No, eh, no, he went into Kananaskis, then I told you he was transferred to Petawawa.

JP: Afterwards.

RBN: Afterwards. In Petawawa he had a bit of a hard time and toward the end of the period, close to 1945 toward the end of the war, 44-45, he contracted Tuberculosis and he was dying. So the uh so what happened was this now - during the time Berto was in Petawawa my mother left Vancouver leaving behind Rolli, my brother, with the mother and the sister. And came here to Montreal. Alright? And he was working at the Ritz-Carlton, as a pianist and also receptionist, whatever, I really don't know. And uh, during this particular interim period she befriended ah the daughter of Guido Cassini one of the Italian artists here in Montreal. As a matter of fact the statue of Giovanni Caboto that it is right there by the forum was done by this artist. So she befriended the Cassini family, and uh one day she was at the Cassini residence, also Guido Cassini was also interned in Petawawa, ok, along with Guido Nincheri, I'll come back to that story and that linkage it's coming now. So anyway, one day she was in the Cassini's residence and uh door rang, the bell door rang and this young man walks in. He takes one look at my mother and he goes "boing!" So, in order to impress her, he sits down at the piano and plays then, the Moonlight Sonata. First Movement. After he was finished, with a smile on his face, he sits down, and my mother without cracking a smile, let's say, nothing, she goes back to the piano, and plays the second movement. And that's how Gabriel Nincheri, the son of Guido Nincheri, and my mother, met. Mk. So, they they was part then of a whole group of friends that they live together and so on. Mother every so often left Montreal took the train went to Petawawa to visit father. Mk. In 1944, as I told you, toward the end of the period, ok, he'd contracted Tuberculosis.

JP: At the camp.

RBN: At the camp. And since he was dying he was released. And uh umm mother at the time did not have the necessary money to take Berto and bring him over to Sant'Agata Sanitorium in St. Agata. Cuz that's where it was the Sanitorium for Tuberculosis. Was well known, was actually well known throughout Canada. So in, in despair they said ok well now we'll go back to Vancouver maybe the sea air and everything ill be different. So they left in August, yeah, I think it was in August 45 or 44 I can't really, ee, they left then, in August and uh, I have a letter where uh Berto writes to Ida, my grandmother, explaining the situation there, the financial problems that they had, and that he's looking forward to going to Vancouver to finish his days there. Actually the letter is really quite moving. Mk. And um, so they ended in Vancouver and eh by December of a I think 44I think it was he passes away. So I never knew my Dad I didn't know my Mom, either of them, whatsoever. So over the period over this period of time my mother, and Gabriel Nincheri in Montreal, corresponded. And in 1947 Gabriel actually sorta proposed to her. And she accepted. And I remember this, because I remember one day, in Florence, by that time my grandmother and I were living in Florence, we left Trieste, we went through all various places throughout Italy during the bombardments during the civil war, especially that period in Florence. And uh, I remember grandma saying to me "Roger I gotta tell you something" she used to call me Ruggi, "Ruggi, ti devo dire qualchecosa" and she told me that mom remarried. And um, what could I say, I mean I didn't know father, Berto Boccini, I didn't know him, and it's all (draws a question mark in the air) a big question mark for me all together so, in 1949, Gabriel and Elfie decided to have enough money to have me to (motions toward himself) join them. So in 1949 I still remember grandmother (shakes his head and smiles sadly) she took me over to Venice, where I boarded and A-Freighter "Mont Roland" of all the names, because Rollie was my brother's name, coincidences eh (taps his head) just...strangest stuff! So I boarded this freighter as an only passenger, and we left from um Venice we went down then to Leghorn, from Leghorn we went to Spain then to Morocco, and then eventually we crossed then the Atlantic and landed then in March close to my birthday March the 10 we arrived in St. John, New Brunswick. (Unclear) Quite strange. So I remember we docked at nighttime in the morning

the ah everything is set, and the captain he says, "Ruggi," he says "come over here" he says "there is somebody here that is waiting for you on the dock" (pauses) "it's your mom" (pauses). And all the crew were around me, ok, making sure that I was ok, properly dressed, etcetera etcetera, I was supposed to learn English - they learned Italian (laughs) it's a funny thing. And I walked down the plank, to the dock, (points upward) 1 lonely figure in the middle of this empty dock over here - my mother, waiting for me. And I walked up to her and I said "Hi Mom", as if I had seen her yesterday. So from there, then, and the next following day, we took the train from let's say from uh St. John and we landed in Montreal, Central Station. And there waiting for me was grandfather Guido Nincheri, Giulia Nincheri, grandmother Ida and Lida, ok, plus my brother - that I didn't know - and there it is, all of a sudden, here I am, ok, finding a new family, the Nincheri family, and I became part of them. And Gabriel, not only was a friend, but he was a father, first, but a friend second, and that's very rare for a stepfather to feel like that. And really actually in the household, of the Nincheris, I grew up. I became then a young man. So I would say from 13 until the age of 18 actually to the age of 20 I uh lived at home, then eventually I went to University I studied to become a geologist and from there on I was on my own. And then I became a teacher. So this is is the story really actually of how then a Boccini because a Nincheri. Ok, so now, the Nincheri chapter is going to be the next one that I'm going to tell you.

JP: Before we get into the Nincheri chapter, it's a big one also, um, that's as far as uhh, I don't know what insight you can give us in terms of your dad --

RBN: Oh here's my daughter. Will you stop it.

(Screen fades out at 19.19, resumes at 19.21)

JP: You want to tell me a story.

RBN: No, now I'll go back a little bit. Ok, because I mean you were curious to know about my life in Italy what it was during the war.

JP: During the war in Italy.

RBN: This, it was, quite interesting really - as a young man, danger, bombs, partisans, Germans, and everything (gestures with hands) you know, you take em in stride type of thing. It was my grandmother, Berta, that was actually the rock behind of it all, it was amazing the way just how she kept her cool throughout everything. Just to give you an idea, uhh it was in 1942, we were residing in Pisa at the time, and I remember it was at 10 o'clock at night, the alarm went on, and next thing you know the bombs start coming down. Now just think of a block of houses we were more or less in the middle of the block. By the end of the bombardment which lasted for fairly well about an hour, all the houses on both sides were down, only ours remained in tact. Now ask me if this is one of the things that kind of happened...and I still remember the fact of there during that particular period, things were raining down and it was a real terrible, terrible noise, you know what I was looking at? With a flashlight?

JP: What?

RBN: On Dante's Divine Comedy, hell. I was looking at the illustrations of Gustav Dore's hell. (Laughs). Of all things! And I still remember that image as if it were yesterday. (Pauses). And at the end of the bombardment then umm, hold it, at the end of the bombardment then what happened was this that the uh we decided then to go to the air, the air shelter (unclear) it was beyond, you know, and I remember picking our ways through all the ruins ok, with one of those handheld dynamo pocket lamps, may picking our way through the ruins eventually we ended up to the air raid shelter. And it was actually quite remember it was between there was my grandmother, my uncle Luciano, and I, walking over there. The afterwards we had other

bombardments in Pisa. From Pisa then we moved to Florence, outside of Florence, actually in a small town called Impruneta. And that's another story too as well. We had a small we resided in a small country house. And it was just actually delightful as anything. And that was on very good little period of my life, let's say, there was delightful. In then what happened was this that um Luciano came over to pick us up in a let's say in the middle of August, let's say in the middle of the summer, he says "we've got to get out of here" -- hold on just wait shut it off for a second.

(Fades out and then back)

RBN: So uh, le, the reason why I told you he came over to pick us up in Florence is because in that particular period the impruneta was actually taken over by the German army. And they were all hidden the whole army was actually hidden beneath the Pineta. Because you see the pine trees here you see they are fairly spaced apart and they (unclear). So Luciano said, mmm, this is no good. I'm going to take you out of there probably they are going to bomb the the the German landscape that are camped in there. So we left in a truck, and we left you see in viale Amadeo 31, in Florence. A day later, the Impruneta was leveled. The house in which we were actually lived in was just completely centered with a bomb and there was nothing left. Ask me again to (shrugs).

JP: What were your impressions of

RBN: See these things these are memories but as a child you don't think of it. Look, also too we were in Pisa, another one of the bombardments we were in Pisa, one of the safest places let's say to be during a bombardment was also in the camposanto Pisa. You know where you have the leaning tower of Pisa and all that kind of stuff? The alarm had gone off, so we were sort of,

so as a child so there was uncle Luciano, my grandmother, and I, and I started driving around there with the other children on the expanse of the Cathedral. And all of a sudden, "pshshshshawoooo" bombs start falling. So I run, into a portico into the walls. In order to (gestures closeness with his hands) to feel protected. What happened is this north about a hundred feet away to my left a bomb hit the walls and put a big breach. The people that were in front of me got it, and I managed to escape and join my grandmother, and my uncle, who were just absolutely terrified. And there we were lying flat on the ground bouncing (waves hands up and down to mimic bouncing) from the explosions of the bombs. So see these are little stories.

JP: As a child, in Italy, I realize your reading of the world around you is different, than that as a full grown

RBN: Well what do you know at the age of 8, 7,8,9 10. You you don't know anything. You don't you have, you have no recollection.

JP: Do you have the visual recollections, of like the Fascists or the Germans? Do have the visual?

RBN: Oh yeah (unclear)

JP: Do you have from a child's point of view an idea of good guys, bad guys?

RBN: Oh no I never looked at it that way.

JP: You never looked at that way?

RBN: But I still remember right there in Florence when we were just residing there in the apartment building in Florence a huge tiger tank parked (motions hands in front of himself) right in front of us. And of course we didn't have much food, eh. In those days. And I remember one of the German fellas over here then he gave me then a big (shapes a loaf of bread) chunk of black bread (whispers) I said, aw, my God, food! (Stops whispering). And I brought it over to my grandmother. And grandmother refused to eat the black bread because it was not white (snaps his hands down on his legs) and it was German (snaps hands down on his legs and laughs). I ate it though!

JP: You think it was fear?

RBN: No, it was o no, it was a cultural bias (shakes head "no"). That's what it was - she had her own...ideas about things...(lowers voice) she had her own ideas. It, it was really quite strange - I still remember (raises hands in the air on top of his shoulders and looks up) going begging for the dread (brings hands down in front of him as though he is handed the bread) and and the young German fellow gives it to me...so you know what it is? They are soldiers - whether they are American British or German or whatever, they are human beings that look after things, you know (motions hands in a circle) that they are sensitive and (raises left hand toward the sky and lowers it) who knows what happened to him (voice breaks slightly). And afterwards they the Germans left they retreated to Fiesole, in the hills behind Florence, And then the Canadian army came in. The uh it was actually under the uh I would say British eighth army and the Canadians were a contingent of the uh let's say the British army and they were the first ones actually to enter into Florence. Strangely enough. By that time (with flat hand cuts across in front of him) starving (pauses) ok. And we didn't have very much, we had only just potatoes. I don't know how in the devil we got but we were able to have just potatoes. No remember now, grandmother Boccini is of French descent, and she speaks the three, two languages fluently. She spoke it, I mean. SO one day, after the occupation went back to normal because there was

a period of about two weeks where there was a lot of in-fighting between partisans and the Germans and the Canadians and so on - it was a nasty period, it was tough. And um, I remember seeing piles or carts piled with the bodies being buried in a mass grave not very far from where we used to live, just right down the street, there was a cemetery. And (motions dumping with his hands) and I still remember that - bodies, katumph (motions dumping with his hands) thrown in there.

JP: When the partigiani (partisans) were there what was the?

RBN: They were young fellas too as well. Young fellas that they actually were you know, shooting every left line and centre you know that stuff. You know, it was civil war, really in essence. And um (looks down pensively and looks up) so after things got quiet and and they the uh Canadians sort of put things back to right and they we could move around without any fear whatsoever, then grandmother went then to the uh the Canadian club, and she made, and two days later, two jeeps with two, lets say uh um nurses of the Canadian army came over with bags of food for us. And I still remember when we opened up that can of pancetta (motions opening a can with his hands), and the smell of that food (pointing to his nose) it's still in my nose today (snaps his hands down on his legs then one hand back up pointing the number 1) that was the first meat that we had in a bout two months. I mean, these these these are small memories not in my how do you call it? Experiences they are nothing compared to others. Really nothing.

JP: No, I know, but I'm curious in terms of like, from the child's point of view, how you saw this stuff cuz I mean that's why I even asked you, in your mind, were there good guys and bad guys, I mean

RBN: Naw, ooo, na

JP: What do you think?

RBN: It was a kaleidoscope of situations, which never really actually I never I didn't even reflect on. I mean the Germans that gave me the bread were good guys. The Canadians that came there and brought me food they were good guys. The partisans who shot the Germans that were shooting us they were good guys. You know it... (Motions out then in with hands). It's, it's like that.

JP: (Unclear) according to the situation.

RBN: Because I even carried ammunitions under fire for the partisans during that particular period, at the age of, whatever it was, 9.

JP: Now, you're living through the war, and just part of that your father is in Vancouver, Berto Boccini is in Vancouver, and from what we know, from what's been written I mean he had uh he'd bought the newspaper.

RBN: But see, I didn't know any of this you see because during the war there had been no correspondence. See, my mother'd sent me packages from, uh from Vancouver right up to 1940. And I remember I got my first set of mechano set and my first tinker-toy set. And I fiddled around with these things over here and that's one of the reasons why I can do anything, let's say, in terms of building. It's because of that introduction to the mechano set which sort of made me mechanically inclined. I wouldn't, you see, it's stories like that. But I mean the uh (breathes out)

JP: In Vancouver though it's it's interesting with the the lawyer. Who had to

RBN: Branca, yeah

JP: Branca, were at the (clears throat) - pardon - who had the Italians sign that document. That would have been probably the week before June 10th

RBN: I cannot tell you the dates because I really don't know them. And the best way really is the reference in eh, Mr. Culos' book. The Italians of Vancouver. And that gives you also the only gives you really actually a very good background story of what happened to Berto Boccini his uh, his dealings with the newspaper etc. So, that kind of background

JP: (unclear)

RBN: That kinda background I only know it through Culos' memoirs - I didn't know anything of that.

JP: Is there anything you can talk about from what you've read in uh Culos' memoirs?

RBN: Not really because they are basically the same kinds of things that I told you. Except uu Culos goes into more detail of the relationship between Berto and the original editor. And how he came about to become and eventually be the director of the newspaper. But um I mean this is news that I got through his book only that I picked up just recently. So I mean it's not really a personal really, reflection so I can tell you I can't tell anything about uh the mentality of the Italians at that particular point, their own particular points of view - I don't have it. And uh frankly, and really it doesn't interest me, it interests me only from an historical point of view to see how things, you have to look at things from the history of the time you cannot look at it from the point of view from today with today's eyes you got to think in terms of them in that particular period then you have a different perspective.

JP: And what could you offer in terms of tools in terms of how we should be looking at that time?

RBN: Well you see the question this - you gotta look at it actually the Canadian society at the time, how their mental consort and how they look at things, you gotta look at it also from the Italian community how they looked at the kinda things and uh, it was a different type of mindset, and as a matter of fact really actually they were narrow minded they were really in essence. And see and this when of course you have narrow minded let's say mindsets, and you have actually a conflict let's say a political conflict, combine the two of them together and of course excesses actually take place. I mean not only the Italians got hit over here the Japanese got hit and so on all the way down the line. Internment is a, it's uh, it's hard. It's very hard, and as a matter of fact and also to the population not being educated if you want to put it this way as they are people of today with the internet and so on, they also have their own particular narrow mindset. So, whether or not you were a good person in the Italian community in let's say the Vancouver community at the time, the moment you're you're labeled fascist (points toward the screen) over here then you're, you know persona non grata. Although he was your next door neighbour, you were very good friends, all of a sudden (slices the air his hands) poom, that's it.

JP: How do you

RBN: And you see this is his is the and and uh a lot of good relationships between Italians and the people of Vancouver were really actually soured to the enth degree because of this particular mindset as a result of the war.

JP: In your mind did that repercussion remain for many years to to follow?

RBN: Oh, there were repercussions of course after everything was repatriated things went back to normal etc. (puts hands up in the air and slaps them down on his legs) what can I tell you? You know the the grandmother Ida actually sort of kept on going living through it no problem because she was a Canadian citizen by then. But my mother, (points to Joyce) because she married an Italian she lost her Canadian citizenship and you know, yeah she did and the interesting part of it was this - when she retained, when she got her Canadian citizenship back, was only in 1950. Mom married Gabriel as I explained it to you, ok. Arriving in 1949, I got my citizenship paper in nineteen fifty...two, I think. If I remember. Mother got it at the same time. Because she had lost her Canadian citizenship because she married Berto Boccini, who was not a Canadian citizen. So, (pauses) it's interesting I still got the Canadian citizenship paper of hers, it's a I mean it's a piece of document that that is quite interesting to keep, you know. Anyway,

JP: What else could you offer us, cuz, in terms of how to look at that period? Do you think, at that what do you think it meant to the Italians at that time to be part of organizations like the Sons of Italy the fascio, Casa D'Italia? (Unclear)

RBN: I can't tell you anything because I have no idea. I have no idea.

JP: No but I'm asking you cuz you're , uh, of the many roles that you have you're also an historian. Looking back, um, then, how should we look at that?

RBN: Well I, I told you, how you should look at that. History is you see the problem it is with history it is interpreted by the historian. And depending upon what what the the let's say uh the kind of mindset the historian has you may have one idea on one hand or another in the other. And sometimes trying to find the middle ground between the two of them probably that's when you reach the truth. You see and that's in order then to really understand history you have to read several aspects of it. And I think actually a lot of it actually really comes through

the newspapers but even at that, newspapers are biased to as well. Depending what political leanings they adhere they are in. So there again to there is a bias in there involved. So probably the only way really to get an idea is what you're doing right now by interviewing they say the residual (draws circles with index finger families if you want to put it this way. And get their points of view. Again too, they are personal points of view.

JP: Well, they are personal points of view but they are all truths. Personal truths.

RBN: They are personal truths, but (does air quotes). Because Ideas, over the years, are either embellished, or or are reduced. Depending who you are. Actually there are actually the Jewish people who were interned at Buchenwald. I met, I mean years ago, my um my mother-in-law had an apartment she rented an apartment above then let's say two Jewish people who were in Buchenwald. And you know they never spoke about it. And uh whenever we mentioned it you should see there was pain in their eyes so I mean they they you know?

JP: (Unclear).

RBN: So these kinds of experiences, that you have from translocation, these types, these kind of experiences, that you have because of translocation, ok, taken from a cocoon, a social cocoon of where you lived, thrown into a concentration camp, thank god the Canadian concentration camp is nothing like you got into Germany and Buchenwald and Dachau and Auschwitz, you don't see that, (raises hands in the air) thank the Lord. ok. But again too, it is a psychological impact that it has. You know, because all of a sudden you feel violated - like somebody over there wither walks into your home and uh steals your things, I mean you feel violated, and all of a sudden you are a nobody. I mean that's hard! And God knows what went through my father's mind, let's say, otherwise (shakes head).

JP: Your mother never told you.

RBN: My mother never spoke about it. And she refused to - even to her last days. And her last days probably would have been the right time to do it but except she couldn't talk she got a stroke, and she was paralyzed from head to foot for six years.

JP: Did you ask? Did you want to know?

RBN: I wanted to know also I wanted to know the history why I was left behind - but by that time it was too late. And also, life it is like this, how you get married and you have children and you lead your life and your parents, well you see them every so often type of thing and you don't think anymore really of asking these questions because you're too busy raising your own family. You know. I'm kicking myself now, but it's too late! But you see that is a problem of youth. And that's a problem of growing up. And you see and this is a thing that right now you see especially with Tracey with my daughter over here she is actually she is interested in finding out what happened. Who our family history, It's now for me to tell her, and she's interested. See I don't want her to make the same mistake that I did. But, you know, such is life.

JP: Let's move on to Nonno Nincheri.

RBN: Nonno Nincheri. Ok, now as I told you I became I say a part of the family. Now the story of Nonno Nincheri actually again too it is second hand. Because obviously I wasn't there. And uh, Nonno Guido came in Canada; actually he left Italy in 1913. K, he had graduated from the Academy of Bos Art in Florence with great honours, he was an architect, designer, uh painter, you name it. He was really actually in terms of education he was really a rounded Renaissance man. You know like all the great painters like Michelangelo, etc. etc. Raphael and so on. They they did everything. They were architects, they were painters they were writers and etc. Da

Vinci type of stuff. Anyway, he came in uh his original idea he had finished a big contract in Florence, the Palazzo Nanni, and he got really actually quite a great deal of money for that and that allowed him then to leave Italy and his idea was actually to resettle themselves in Argentina because many of his fellow students had migrated over there. So they'd say hey look, you know, here in Argentina it's really things are looking good why don't you move? So they decided then to um, move over there. It had just barely, they had just newly married, Giulia was sixteen her was twenty-eight (pauses). Mk. So, they left Italy, on a ship, in 1913. The exact date I still have to figure but I think they left sometime in May in 1913. And they landed in Boston, 1913-1914, you know, in that time. The war broke out. So they were stuck in Boston. Stuck in Boston they found some employment with a friend of theirs that uh the uh the beauty the uh they were befriended by friends of uh the family. And uh he found employment with the Opera Boston doing backgrounds for the opera. Then he heard about Montreal. And there was a French city, French-speaking city they are more or less European with the attitude etc. etc. So they picked up and left and landed in Montreal about six months later. And there again too quite interesting I'm trying to find out how Guido Nincheri found employment with Pierre Gaborieau Stained Glass Window Studio. I still, it's a big mystery. We're trying to sort of re-trace it the steps but um there are no records of the in the Gaboriau papers they were all lost. And of course the of the in the Nincheri papers too also we lost them a lot of the stuff that was in Providence, Rhode Island were lost, so, there's a great deal sort of there is a gap in there not knowing essentially how they made the connection. But anyway, he ended up working for Pierre Gaborieau and this is him the became the chief artist of the studio of Pierre Gaborieau Studio. And as a matter of fact, uh, nine months later Gabriel was born in December 28, 1914. Mk. And Pierre Gaborieau was actually the godfather. And I have the birth certificate downstairs which says, you know, such and such and um, so, uh, so Gabriel was born in 1920, 1914, yeah December 28. And there again too so he he worked for Gaborieau closed the shop. By that time, Guido Nincheri had finished a big big job for the church St. Viateur Outremont in Montreal. And the uh whole contract was about 35,000 dollars. In those days, 35,000 dollar was

(whistles and expands hands) big money. mk. So he also had done already by that time not only he was producing cartoons for the stained glass windows, so Pierre Gaboriau's shop, but he also worked for in conjunction with a fellow named Emanuele Briffa. And he decorated actually theatres. Briffa, Maltese, was also a well-known artist at the time and he was actually doing interior decorations at the theatres and the Belmonde theatre was actually Nincheri's one of his best pieces of mythological art. Because all of the you should see I have only the photographs of the interior in black and white that I got from the Archives of Canada. And the theatre got let's say leveled in 1955. And I'm it's too bad that my father Gabriel never photographed them. Anyway, lost. But that was actually part of then of that period which we call Guido Nincheri profane art. It was based on mythological stuff that you see in the Chateau du Fresne. Uh, so there you go, so in 1922-23 he left and came to Italy. And really actually it's quite interesting. He reconnected not only with his family, but also reconnected with his old teacher, Decarolis. And I have letters Mrs. Decarolis written in 1935, well after the death of Mr. Decarolis in 1928, and uh she describes the encounter between Guido and Decarolis both of them now are equal in stature

JP: That's right.

RBN: By that time Guido had made a name for himself here in Montreal. By that time he was known as the Michelangelo of Montreal and he was starting actually eventually he was going to get the contract to decorate the Notre Dame Della Defense. But you see by the time he had left in that particular period 1920-23, he had St. Viateur behind him, he had Mariavale, he had St. Michael the Archangel behind him, and his name really actually was really well-known in terms of being an interior decorator and an architect. There was nobody in the French-Canadian society at the time that could equal the expertise of Nonno Guido. So very quickly his name really the contract really came along uh what you call it the depressing that was really bad the there was full work, let's say in the studio. And you can see it I mean in the records that you

have with the number of churches that he did all the way through. So the boys at the studio really had it something really going very well. They had steady employment. Mind you - he never made really a fortune out of it because trying to squeeze money out of the clergy is one thing they wanted things delivered in time but when it had come to pay then (mimics squeezing his pocket) emmmeme squeezing here so you should read the letters in the correspondence between Guido and let's say the parish priests. Sometimes they are really actually they are uh hilarious really to say. Really it's quite interesting. So by 19, so when he came back then from Italy, in Italy he met the Dufresne brothers. Let's say in a museum in Florence. And this is how that he met the Dufresne. And I guess probably I suspect, that as they met probably Guido took them to the Palazzo Nanni to see the kind of decorations that he did. They must have been quite impressed so when he came back over here, so Guido Nincheri decorated the interior of the Chateau du Fresne in exchange for the studio in 1832 Pine Effe Boulevard. Because that building at the time was actually the DuFresne construction company. The top floor, was actually all the engineers and then the bottom floor was the studio of Guido Nincheri. So the exchange - I do the painting, there it is you can use the downstairs. So, the amount of things that he produced was incredible. Ok, by the time, by 1941, he had then he had made over 2000 windows by that time. Cuz I got records I got them all listed, you know, type of stuff.

JP: The ones you photographed.

RBN: The ones I photographed but also from the records you see and through the photography that I've been that I did that way I was able actually to calculate a number of stained glass windows, aside from the decorations that he did. So now we are in 19- August 1940 in he's painting in 1940 he's in St. Amelie of Mecomio. A painting in fresco this time, not marufle not secco, fresco. Which is a different, let's say, technique. And he painted the interior of the church; it's approximately 1400 sq. meters of fresco surface – BIG. Really quite big. K.

JP: Do you wanna before you go on do you want to just mention why his fresco is much more difficult, the style that he uses?

RBN: Oh you don't know, you want me to explain? The uh the, well the o the the technique of fresco, is actually it's Michelangelo's technique. Ok, that's essentially what he did in let's say in the Sistine chapel. And it's really quite interesting because what he did was when you read the biography of Michelangelo, written by Ross King, ok, he describes Michelangelo actually painting on his back let's say on the Sistine Chapel. And the way he actually starts at 6'oclock in the morning or even before that, a plasterer covers a section of the wall, that is, that particular section you have to have one figure,. Before. That is known as la giornata, in other words, in one day, you gotta paint that section over there. So then Guido, or Michelangelo, if you wanna say, comes in and just after the plaster is set in there and it's still wet, then with the let's say paints, he starts then to sketch along. But now, before sketching, that is nota sketch just like this [draws small square with his hands] they have a cartoon, which you have the dimensions of the figure...the cartoon is actually pointed with little dots you put the cartoon on the fresh plaster and you take then a bag of charcoal dust and you go tac tac tac tac tac tac tac [mimicking drawing spots on a circle with his hands] until then you get the outline. Mk. And then you start painting. In Sant'Emilie Becomo (check spelling) with close-up photography you can actually still see the pointiage. And's that's a how you know that it is fresco.

JP: Because it will leave that residue.

RBN: It leaves little dots [points with finger] as a matter of fact I mean even with my close-up photography I was able really actually when I really zoom in I'm able to see [points dots with fingers] the dots in there. Connecting the dots. So you have to do that in in essentially one day before they actually the plaster sets. And you can no retouch it, eh...once the paint is in there

[draws line with hands from top of screen to bottom and pauses] you can't go back in like you do an oil painting you can't do shading oh no you can't.

JP: It doesn't forgive.

RBN: It doesn't forgive – so. So therefore, I mean, the artist has to see in his mind, the picture. And put it in there. And this is actually a very difficult technique you really have to be [points hands upward]. Cuz with oils, or uh watercolours, the way de say de aquarells you can do you can retouch it you can add you can subtract you can and so on, naah, with fresco. So there he was, lil guy, I would say not even 5 feet maybe 2, hunchback, because uh when he was young, the age of 16, uh he had an accident and he developed tuberculosis of the spine. As a result all of his life he suffered then from back pain so you can imagine how.

JP: He worked with that back pain all his life.

RBN: Oh he lo that's it. Michelangelo as a matter of fact after he finished the Sistine Chapel he was actually walking this way [cranks head back and looks up in the air] he was looking at you like this [he looks at the camera with his head cranked] and it took him several months to go back with his neck to go back to place [moves head back down to face the screen normally]. Because of [cranks his head back down to face camera] see he was painting this way, eh. Now can you imagine can you picture this five-foot-five five foot something or other with a back you know with a hunchback and a quite a severe curve – yeah.

JP: Yeah it was notable from the side.

RBN: Yeah.

JP: So, he had to actually work on his back with that curve.

RBN: Yeaah.

JP: Dolore. [Pain]

RBN: [Wiggles hand upward] But thank God when you look at the uh let's say when you're looking at the interior in St. Marleine [unclear]...Westmount, most of them they are like this [hands out facing in front of him]. Didn't do too much but still was a hell of a strain. No because when you get into the vault then in St. Leo's in Westmount then, [puts head upwards as though on his back] he had to be like that. So I dunno how the heck he did it really to be honest with you. So we're back so then 1940, in Becomo he's doing his painting. And all of a sudden he's up on the scaffold and with his assistant Poggi, two of them were working away, and all of a sudden the uh parish priest sends a young fellow up that says uh "yes, Mr. Nincheri the parish priest wants to speak to you could you please come down?" [Clears throat] and um, the young fellow knew what it was all about. So he said, "look Mr. Nincheri," he says, "you could always sort of escape [points to the side] that a way" but Guido said "no". So he came downstairs [draws line down with hand] down to the main floor then to the parish priest who introduced him to then to burly [motions to describe a tall, big person] RCMPs. And there they picked up not only him, but also Poggi. Because Poggi was also an Italian working for uh, Guido. And Poggi had his own ideas too as a young fellow. So, anyway, so they were put in then a flown from Becomo I think to Quebec City. Or I dunno if they took the train from Becomo, I dunno what it was anyway. Anyway was actually directly transported into Petawawa. Now the story I'm going to tell you right now is a story that was told to me by the father of uh friends of ours that was actually on the same train as Guido. And he said that they had put on his chest, I think it was either "traitor" or "fifth columnist" this type of stuff over here, and on his way over to Petawawa passengers passing buy [spits to the side] spat on him. Now, phewf, so, can you

imagine now can you think in terms of [unclear] psychological impact of a thing like this – a man of letters, an artist, well known, to be treated that way. And imagine I mean the psychological impact on the individual. You know.

JP: It's...horrible.

RBN: eee but you see what it is it's I told you the men the mental set of ignorance the mental set of really actually of conflict and we have the same damn thing today anyway. Same kind of thing. Disrespect.

JP: Guido Nincheri was on a train.

RBN: Was on a train. And event.

JP: With a sign.

RBN: Yeah with a sign on it yeah.

JP: Like eh, like [unclear]

RBN: You see the story over here was never told either Giulia or by Guido to his children – nothing. He never mentioned a word about the let's say the way he was treated. Through his eventually he ended up in Petawawa. And he shared the bed; they shared the bunks, with Camillion Houde. Eh the famous Montreal Mayor. Mk. And it was quite interesting because, uh Nonno Guido actually sketched Camillion Houde which he eventually later on used it for his Mayor campaign which he actually explained to you people

JP: When he uh showed us the sketch.

RBN: I have downstairs in the studio [clears throat] a packet of letters let's say exchanged by Guido and Gabriel. Now during the time obviously that he was incarcerated, and he was there for three months, thank God, and eh remember George told you that story of how then his wife for managed for really actually to prove to the authorities that actually he was not a Fascist, that he was actually coerced to paint Mussolini then in Notre Dame Della Defense. And um anyway she proved it and he was released but during that particular month, three months, the studio actually was working very really with difficulties. They lost a lot of contracts that way too as well. Again too, mental attitudes. But anyway they managed. So both the Gabriel and Giulia looked after the Studio during that particular period. Anyway after he was released, he went back then to continue finishing the job at in Becomo. And that was during the city uhh no actually it after that he went back to continue the work that he was doing then in St. Anne of Windsocket in Rhode Island. He had started that contract well in the forties. Ok, actually in the 1940s. It took him well part of it at least eight to almost close to the years to complete the interior of uh St. Anne of Woodsocket. And that in my opinion is the Sistine Chapel of Guido Nincheri. It's enormous. Again too, all in fresco. Should see it I mean it's magnificent. There is a, there is a um a scenery over here of the last judgment, which is absolutely phenomenal – it's actually grandiose. It is actually it's based on one of Giotto's last judgment that you see in the Scrivini Chapel in Padua.

JP: Oh.

RBN: It's it's it's gorgeous, absolutely gorgeous stuff. So in December, ok, he was released let's say, um, August, September, October, by November he was out of the camp. Mk. So he went back then to Windsocket to continue the work and then the following summer he came back

over there to finish the job at St. Amelie Becomo. Now, one of the things, ok, I'll come I think I'm going to jump in what you're going to try to ask me.

JP: [Laughs]

RBN: The thing is this that now, uh once he established himself he continued the work after he finished St. Amelie of Becomo he remained in Woodsocket and continued the work to finish the work that in St. Anne, meanwhile he got additional contracts in Rhode Island, to do painting as well as stained glass windows. The reason that he did, and actually he moved then to uh what do you call it providence Rhode Island, and bought a house and established himself there, and eventually the Cana the American government in came over and asked him to become citizen of the United States. The American Government did that, you see. And he accepted and he became citizen. Mk. And one of the reasons probably why he remained in the United States is because of the treatment that he had let's say during the during the war. I think I mean that's what I suspect. In that sense he had dual citizenship you want to put it that way, he had both Canadian and American. But he remained his main residence was in in the States. And he used to do then, la navetta, as they say in French, back and forth let's say between providence and Montreal usually he came in Montreal during the summer time and he did his work here and he supervised the boys here in the studio. And what you saw the video, no? Didn't you?

JP: nooo

RBN: And remember what George said. Nonno Guido always made sure he said "you gotta keep your nose to the grindstone, no messing around" and he was actually quite a task.

JP: He was a disciplined man.

RBN: He was a very disciplined man. Very much.

JP: And he actually it's interesting because Gabriel, by 1948, he uh became the general manager of the studio – so he looked after the affairs, the accounting, eh you know, searching for the uh what do you call it the contracts, etc. And uh Guido was the artist. But you see but there came a point, hold on this is an interesting it's quite interesting, hehehehe [laughs] where uh as uh the nineteen fifties came along, obviously the price of glass, because most of the glass, that in the early days, in the 30s based up until the outbreak of the Second World War, was imported from Europe. Yeah because the quality of glass was much better. And then eventually by the fifties we start getting much of the glass from Blendheim in New York. Good stuff, but actually you could see the differences in samples, because I mean uh I can see it from the stained glass windows that were done in the 30s versus those done in the fifties. So now, Gabriel, is caught between a hammer and the anvil, because the art and profit. You see, and so therefore they have you know then in order to have both ends meet, with the studio and make some more money, of course you know he's a business man, Guido is the artist, and you know, you've got two different points of view. Some, there were some real good arguments between the two of them over the years. And I think now I've realized that the fact that probably was over this particular business you know. Uh, let's say, profit, versus quality of the artwork. Cuz Guido I mean you know [raises hand then brings it down] always wanted to be the top. No two ways about it. And it's really quite interesting to see when you get into in the uh Church of the Cathedral of Three Rivers, the windows in there they were done in the 30s they're magnificent! They're the best stained glass windows that you see in North America. Those are the ones, it's been declared as such. Oh yea, they are, But, later on, in the late 1950s they had another windows done over the doors of the cathedral. And you look at the difference in the quality of the glass, in the quality of the workmanship – and there it is. It's noticeable. You can see that. And also too I can I noticed it the windows that they were done in uh in St. Anthony of New Bedford, and they were done in the late fifties, again, too, when you do, you know, compare

you know, with photography, you see the differences. In the characteristics. So, that's, that's the story. Ok, Ok.

JP: Maybe this is a good time to link this- there are so many stories.

RBN: I know!

JP: Cover everything

RBN: And I am as I told you I can tell I can talk tuh huh...well go ahead

JP: I'm just, I'm just try but no it's just that this is great place just to link right now cuz we were talking about the stained glass and one of the things that fascinates me about your grandfather's work is just how it tells a story and it's uh so 3-dimensional. But even, um, has opened my eyes as to how you analyze your grandfather's work and your formation as a geographer and um a cultural geography, landscape,

RBN: Geology and so on.

JP: Geology,

RBN: Because actually my formation I'm a geologist, really,

JP: Geologist, right. But how you've taken those disciplines to analyze your grandfather's work as opposed to using traditional eyes or as an art historian you discovered and you've opened my eyes up

RBN: Well you see up not but it is actually is coo really

JP: Do you want to give us one example?

RBN: I'll give you an idea now. Of course my background, ok for example I mean [counts on fingers] I graduated as a geologist and I became a teacher I taught geography. I got a degree in geography, then I taught also history and I specialize actually in Renaissance uh let's say, early Renaissance right up until the um French Revolution. And that's the area that I [waves hands side to side] actually sort of studied. With the kids. See, studied with the kids. I learned a great deal by teaching. I mean it's terrific, eh. And also too I taught cultural geography and other things at St. Joseph's Teacher's College as I was explaining to you lil earlier. Cuz I taught at St. Joseph's High school, St. Joseph's Teacher's College, Vanier College, then I did a stint at the Ministry of Education developing geography programs for the uh for the Quebec Department of Education, an Italian, speaking English, in a French environment at the education, hehe [chuckles] can you imagine?

JP: I can – unusual.

RBN: And, very unusual then anyway because I was Italian actually I spoke in English over here therefore I was accepted [laughs] it's a funny thing, but, that's what life is. Anyway, so, and then eventually I finished my days at Savin House School. Teaching all kinds of stuff. Anyway, in 2002, mk, I uh took my retirement, and the Chateau du Fresne, Paula Bondider, who is the director today, asked me then to do the inventory of the studio, with an idea then of developing an exhibit of Guido Nincheri's art. Ok. And I said ok. By that time, I was retired. Mom was not in the building any more because she was paralyzed and in the hospital, so there was therefore I had the time to allow them to do that. So what I did I started watching there was Ginette La Roche, and another assistant, the two of them worked like dogs, let me tell you,

and the actually did an incredible job of the inventory. I was I watched them work. So I said, “well look!” there were all these marquettes architectural drawings, etc. You describe them but you don’t know here they come from, but they were to busy doing the inventory, so I took it upon myself then to do this job. Years before already I had taught photography, at St. Joseph’s Teacher’s College, part of the uh audio/visual department uh, let’s say, curriculum. And uh so there I off I went. So I started photographing, he did 130 churches to-date and I photographer 114. The interesting part – [clears throat] was the fact that as I was doing this kind of work I came across several priests, who said Roger, look, you’ve got to do something with that, you’ve got to interpret. So I started asking them, so ok, how do I go about it? So I learned all about how to do iconography and of course with the kind of background that I have, I was able then to see many things let’s say in Guido Nincheri’s art. Because Guido Nincheri’s art is realistic art – it’s not in one of those kind of Renaissance let’s say make-up or derealization, or nativity, when you look at Nincheri’s windows, or paintings, there are actually see, there are actually situations of that particular period. You’re looking then, let’s say, at Jesus in the temple, that is described in there is based on the actually archeological research. And you see the interior. A lot of this stuff actually has been based on as I explained to you before, uh, the James de so works of Jesus Christ that were done in the 1870s, 1880s,

JP: Give us the example of the uh when the the one with the vision. Give us that as one of the

RBN: Now there is one that there is one window, in um St. Pier de Chanwinagan (check spelling) and there are some of the that are based on the life of St. Peter. Mk. And um one in particular is actually a meeting of uh St. Peter and uh St. Peter and Jesus. When Jesus tell to St. Peter and St. Andrew I think it was St. Andrew to tell say cast your nets into the water and you’ll have then full of fish. Because that’s when he tells says to become fish or men. And it’s interesting because he’s standing on a black rock, beneath the shade of a walnut tree, ok, there’s a shallows, in there, with uh weeds coming through it, see Peter is holding a net in his hand and is

looking at Jesus with kind of a skeptical look [skeptical hand gesture] , are you telling me to cast my net when I spent my whole night trying to catch something and now you are telling me that there are fish over there? Come on! – that kind of a look. And really actually it's quite an it's really and Jesus is looking in the distance, not looking at St. Peter. There's a ray of sun there's a ray that is touching the top of the saint, Saint Peter. Which obviously I guess would be diving enlightenment. If you want to put it that way. But Jesus is looking in the distance and now looking at this photograph, of this painting, I say to myself "why is he looking into the distance?" I said he must be doing something. The geology and the geography of the area. And I found out, not very far from Capernaum, where this particular event took place, very close to the shore there are warm hot springs, that warm up the water. And the fish at nighttime they come over here to sleep and get warmed up. And then in the morning they come up to the surface. So Jesus, being God as he was, or as he is if you want to put it that way, knew, it wasn't a miracle, but he knew nature. So he said throw the net out now, bring in the fish. And you see it's simple things that look and you see looking at pictures like this you see of Guido. You can get a natural history behind it all that, he even I found that a photograph ok, on the internet that is exactly the same photograph as that painting. And I said to myself "how in the devil did he know that? Because I mean when you look at the same photograph, it's almost you can almost picture Jesus standing on that black bazaar Celtic rock that was in there.

JP: But this is incredible, because Guido Nincheri put so much into and and like you said if you have, uh, se stai accorto [if you pay attention] and you know uh, that you can approach his work because it goes way beyond aesthetics.

RBN: yeah

JP: He's telling us a story and which brings the question, how could he have known so much?

RBN: And that's one of the big question marks that I have. Now, the natural aspects, a lot of it is based on James Thesos writings. Because in the life of Jesus in the life of Jesus Christ his descriptions, there really actually his environment. A lot of that let's say, information, comes from there. But also there's another aspect of it. Which is came through, as one of the courses that I took let's saying university was geography, let's say historical geography. Which tells you, [to the videographer] you got enough in there or are you running out of time?

AR: No I haven't.

RBN: You haven't?

[Fades to black for .02 then back in]

JP: My brain is boom boom. Uh, what was the story we were you were doing the analysis of the artwork. We'll we'll, are we on? We're on.

RBN: Well, that was just one instance, I was trying to explain. Of the many paintings that he did. If you look at for instance the interpretation of Jesus in the temple, the interior architecture of the temple is based on archeological, let's say, data. Which it was not only does it come from the interpretation of James Thiseau, but also it got books from archeologists from Jerusalem, which sort of duplicate and which proves then this kind of thing. So you see you have to look at these things from various aspects.

JP: So what books then do you have of Guido's?

RBN: The books then that I have from the studio, are lives of the saints. As a matter of fact there's collections that I have in there there's one book uh lives of the saints, there is ahh!

There's one window in La Baie, St. Eduard, St. Edward the Confessor, it's a huge window – three, it's a triptych. K? And it's based on the life of actually St. Edward the Confessor. Beautiful, beautiful thing. And I have the original maquette downstairs. And when you read the life of the saints from this French author, when you read the lives of the St. from this French author, every single sentence is reflected in the window. OHHH There's another one! [Laughs] another one! I have to tell you!

JP: [laughs]

RBN: In the same area there in Sagony, at uh in uh the Eglise of St. Therese de Lisieux, in Jeanquire, there is all the windows are then based then on the history of the Saint. And there was a small published booklet on the life of her, with illustrations in it, and Guido used these illustrations, and Guido used these illustrations taken by the sister, of, let's say, of uh St. Therese de Lisieux. So I found the original photographs, ok, and I compared it with what he had produced in the windows and here they are. So they are actually a historical reconstruction actually of the birth of St. Therese. Of the uh let's say the photographs. She's there in a bassinet, surrounded by angels, looking down into here. And to me it's not St. Therese of Lisieux but it's the birth of my daughter. To me.

JP: Oh!

RBN: And I, had seen this, uh, this sketch, so I was invited to do some photography, I was invited to do, investigations of um, the churches in the area, so I walked in to St. Therese de Lisieux not knowing, what was there. And uh, I remember the lady that welcomed me, she said "well these are the windows of your grandfather" and the first thing that my eye caught was the side window with the birth of St. Therese, and I started to cry. And they said, "what are you crying for?" "I said, look, it's awww" I get emotional with this kind of stuff! Hahaha [laughs]

JP: You know what I want to know from you is, tell me what he was like as Nonno.

RBN: To be honest with you, it's eh, it's a lost memory because eh, I used to see him every year in the summer or in Christmastime. When he'd come over and have uh, he'd celebrate Christmas always here in Montreal. And Nonna Giulia and my mother they did some tremendous cooking! I mean, ah! The feast that we used to have were just out of this world. And I mean Nonno Guido I mean...I got photographs over here when we're opening let's say Christmas packages together and so on and you see it is a happy atmosphere. I mean – they loved me, that's all I can actually say. And I as a matter of fact when I remember when Nonna Giulia saying both to Elfie as well as Gabriel, when I arrived I was [raises pinky finger] thin as a rake where as Rolli was all [props up elbows at his side] he had all the Canadian food in him whereas I had just the Italian food which just made me like this [laughs and raises pinky finger again] and they found me so pathetic looking. But they fattened me up pretty soon, though. The looked after me. I mean look, with Gabriel as a father as he was, ok, and with Nonno Guido – no problem. Unfortunately I mean I left the house early, because eventually I went to Mc Gill and I started Mc Gill in Geology and then I went to Newfoundland that summer, first year of Geology and I met a whole bunch of people there from Mount Allison University and I decided I'll move over to Mount Allison, I wanted to be away from the home, you know as they say you're young, eh, it's natural. And I had fun at Mount A, really I enjoyed it so much.

JP: What do you think your grandfather would be saying to you now?

RBN: OH! I would give anything! Because right now we could exchange a great deal of ideas, so many ideas you see? You see, another thing too about Guido actually and...aside from the knowledge that you see then through these paintings but I said to myself all alright, partly must have come from readings, because he used to do a lot of readings but also, he was luck though in essence, because when um, he uh, he started to get involved then with Italian let's say,

community, and um, with the Notre Dame Della Defense, he met then, um father Evangelisti, who was also a doctor in theology and they would [moves his hands back and forth] exchange a lot of ideas, as a matter of fact, Evangelisti sort of helping him to visualizing the decoration of the interior of Notre Dame Della Defense. Guido put it all together [raises hands in a round shape] but they they must have done a lot of discussing. And you see Evangelisti [points upwards with left hand] up there in the painting.

JP: Is this a good time to give us the story behind the story on uh Madonna Della Difesa?

RBN: Well if you...well [raises right hand toward interviewer] you already heard from, from George.

JP: Uh, right but I wanted to hear your story because you, George gave us the uh, personal story from being in the house when um uhm these elders came in the house

RBN: The elders came in the house

JP: and insisted that uh

RBN: and they said how dare you to to say to tear my contract you have no right whatsoever

JP: Right

RBN: Well you see that was quite interesting you see what it was

JP: I want to get your story your version of the story

RBN: You see again too I picked up these things again through photography. Because when you're down below let's say at the bottom and your looking up Mussolini is by far too high up [raises both hands straight in the air] really to see the expressions on the individual and um.

JP: Do you want to start it at the beginning at um uh the elders...

RBN: Well um I told you about hat you already ee George told you of the fact that uh the older man over here uh Guido did not want to do it. K? and uh

JP: We're talking about the painting

RBN: We're talking about the painting. You know Mussolini, because he said look, a painting like this with all the state here all the people of the state of the Mussolini the fascist state and so on this is not part of a church situation really it could be at an embassy, in a theatre, but not in a church, but they wanted to celebrate the Lateran Pact. Which in essence it makes sense because it was really actually really quite a very important really in church history, let's put it that way.

JP: The pact did

RBN: and the Lateran Pact and by that time over here eventually then all of a sudden and the Vatican became the Vatican state. Ok. So there probably we would have probably pictured him in a different manner, but they wanted to have him on a horse. K. With his kind of [arms crossed] imperial look.

JP: Now the picture you showed me of Mussolini on the horse

RBN: Yeah.

JP: That, there's no way of knowing whether if that was a picture that was given to to him or if he [unclear]

RBN: I that the picture of him [clears throat] her actually got that from I don't know what sources. But we have it. In the studio.

JP: And that uh you explained to me also that that was the setting because you were by looking at the background there were some people in world war one uniforms. The the setting of the photograph.

RBN: You see, yeah, the setting of the photograph is actually Mussolini sitting on the horse with an imperial look really I mean the typical Mussolini look [models the look]

JP: The chin up

RBN: yeah the chin up, hmm [models again] I mean, it's typical.

JP: With medals

RBN: yeah with all the medals also the way he's been carra, caricature, the way

JP: And a hat

RBN: And a hat and all that, ok. Uh then see then see Guido made let's say an aquarelle let's say a watercolor representation of it, the horse is perfect. Mussolini is ok. But the interesting part

– Guido had the last word. You see. And he said I’m gonna fix those guys over here and I wanna do it I’m going to paint Mussolini in a different way. And of course when you look at this photograph over here, and here it is [raises paper with three photos on it of Mussolini on the horse, including some close up shots] Mussolini on a horse [pointing to the bottom of the page] with that kind of then imperial look that he’s got in here. K?

JP: That’s the photograph

RBN: That’s the photograph, that’s the photograph. Now, [looks over the page with the photos] this one, [points to top of page first photo] is the photograph of the original sketch. And he’s got that kind of determined look about him. But then [chuckles] and see if you can zero in in here, I’m coming closer for you – right here [pointing to the middle of the page at a photo of Mussolini] the expression here on his face ok it is a face of when he says “well, what am I doing here? [Puts down the paper]. He’s looking like a kind of uhin Italian we say “uno sguardo smarrito” you know,

JP: Si [yes]

RBN: Perplexed; lost. And see that’s not the Mussolini of the time.

JP: So the top one, do you mind turning it Roger? Um

RBN: The top one

JP: That was the one that was okayed...by the elders.

RBN: By the elders yeah.

JP [unclear] and which is similar

RBN: And which is similar but then when he painted the face he put a different expression.

JP: And

RBN: and when he painted the face they couldn't do anything about it because it was done in fresco. Hahaha [laughs heartily]

JP: He removed cuz when I looked at the last the the the the final result he removed the political aspect of the man. A Giuseppe Chiunque [Joseph Whoever]

RBN: No no, not a Giuseppe Chiunque – with a Giuseppe over here that has really his thinking about what is his future

JP: [gasp]

RBN: And you can almost see in his eyes over here the end that he eventually received by being shot by the partisans, dragged by let's say, on the ground for about uh thirty kilometers brought over then to Milano brought over to the main square in Milano hanged upside down, I have the photographs of that, aspect of that it just, that was actually the worst things that the Italians could have done to an individual. And that was actually was not the Italians but the reds. That, the partisans.

JP: [unclear]

RBN: But that I mean is a political, let's say, parenthesis over here. But I mean to me to me to me

JP: [unclear]

RBN: To me when I saw the ending of Mussolini that way I mean it was disgusting. Really it was disgusting and really it was not necessary. They could have shot him, and that was fine, but to drag him and hang him upside down really that was disgusting. That is a disgraceful thing let's say to human nature if you want to put it that way –

JP: well, Alessandra Mussolini [unclear]

RBN: To uccidi un uomo morto – you know. [you kill a dead man]. You know that's it.

JP: [unclear] Cera un intervista con ah Alessandra Mussolini [there is an interview with Alessandra Mussolini and] and she said that the first time she saw that picture of her grandfather she was in London. And could you imagine a family member, as a grandchild, seeing your grandfather like that?

RBN: Yeah [shakes his head]

JP: And that just put it into a human perspective.

RBN: A human perspective, yeah. But essentially you see but Guido then in essence then when you know when you look at that expression I said to myself I wonder, it's almost prophetic if you want to put it that way in nature, that kind of a look,

JP: You know, it could be, it's amazing, what you've said about Guido so far, what you've said of how he's portrayed, all the major scenes, he's taken every single detail, into consideration, and, that's why your background allows us to discover so much more about his stained glass work than an art historian could ever give us and in this case if he did that type of extent, that extent of analysis on his work it's obvious he did it there too.

RBN: Yes, oh yeah.

JP: It wasn't casual.

RBN: No no, it's not, obviously that was uh he knew what he was doing. And of course he did it in fresco. That was it [laughs] and you've got to look at it, it just hit me [scratches head] right now because I was describing the technique of fresco and all of a sudden once you made that picture in there you can't remove it. Unless what you do is you have to make a hole into the wall and re-plaster it, but then you gonna see it.

JP: So Roger you can't go back over fresco and re-paint the drawing?

RBN: No, no you can't. You can to with tempera, but it shows.

JP: And as far as you know, years later, obviously not at the time, but years later, did anybody, um, ever point that out to you, that hey from the church themselves

RBN: No, No, I discovered

JP: You discovered

RBN: I discovered them myself through photography and because obviously I started to analyze Guido's art.

JP: You're right because when you stand, on the ground

RBN: No, you can't see that detail you can't. What it is actually what it is is actually ironic and that's the thing it just gets you get a kick out of that one. But you see now another idea, uh, in terms of the accuracy of things of uh Guido, there's a painting in a church in uh south Boston. He did a number of let's say paintings in there and there's Jesus healing the sick on eh uh let's say on the edge of um, the baths of Bethesda. And he actually you could actually see the um, people sick over here [points to the right] people doing something over here [points to the left side] here like that and you see a series of steps leading then to the pool. Recently I got a book an archeological book on Jerusalem at the time of uh Christ, where they show that, actually sort of excavating from the pool of [claps his hands] same. See and there again too it's based on archeological data that probably dates back to the time of the uh the uh Palestinian excavation fund of in Victoria in the 1800s.

JP: But going back to that big question mark before how Guido could have known all these things do you think part of it was the formazione [formation] that he had in Italy?

RBN: Oh most probably. Probably. But also too again too from my own experiences, eh, as a kid, when I uh was growing up, I did a lot of reading let's say of [unclear] stories ok, they are geographical novels per say in essence – Jules Verne, was the same kind of thing. When you read the book on mysterious islands, or the Sons of Captain Grant, or also 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, the description that he does of various localities they are actually geographically accurate. But there is also an age of exploration – they were the greatest geographic explorations were done during that particular let's say in between in the first and the second

world war. In the 30s actually well, for example, Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom. Ok. That kind of stuff over here it's an Indiana Jones type of story. So there was a great deal of knowledge, geographical knowledge, in in let's say popular culture. So probably who knows he must have got a lot of that, but also as I said the Orientalists, these painters went over and painted a great deal of the landscape of Palestine that's how he got the information. He had these books at home. But they're gone.

JP: It's interesting that in that period, it was in shaping the geography like you said was shaping stories popular culture at the time

RBN: Popular culture

JP: And he he actually was able to grab not only from that time from the past but also from and condense it and [unclear]

RBN: Yeah because I mean it's just such an actually an interesting period from the mid 1800s to let's say into the 1930s the geographic the history of the geographic exploration is really fascinating, it's really adventurous stories of really of uh let's say the Indiana Jones type of stuff. It's really actually it's a new revolution now most of the novels that are being published now, the whodunits, they're all archeological because then again it takes me back to when I was a kid, you know, and it's fun it's really really fun, you see for me I'm revisiting a lot of historical facts that brings about, ah

JP: You said to me we were talking about...you go!

RBN: Eeee, I've got something to tell you after that

JP: No, because one of the things you said about how, um, you know you wish Guido would know what you were doing now, and how sometimes you feel his presence, remember what you said to me earlier [unclear]

RBN: yeah I mean see again too, in that research I was telling you about the story of Jesus looking in the distance um, I was looking for information really actually to explain it to you and all of a sudden I came across a book and all of a sudden there it is, that information so sometimes I figure he probably is guiding me, that sort of stuff, you know it's like that

JP: Ok what were you going to say

RBN: There's a set of windows in the chapel of the sisters of the of the uh um in Chigutemi and they're all based actually on interpretations, symbolic representations of the old and new testaments. Ok. So there is a series, the ones in the old testament so the ones in the new testament are actually based on uh the story really actually of actually the exodus, you have the manna, you have the uh rock of rocket, and there's a whole bunch of them in there like that. And the manna that really actually bugged me. And I said to myself now, let me start reading something about the exodus. So I figured out that says that um according to historical uh, stories over here, uh the they think that the number of Israelis that left let's say Egypt must have been maybe close to maybe 6000 maybe a little bit more and they were running around in the desert for about forty years. Desert, ok. They have cattle, they have sheep, they have a bunch of mouths to feed, say how in the devil did they manage. You wake up in the morning and have mud ion the ground, and you can't eat it, but hmm [sucks in cheeks as though eating something dry] you need, you've got to look at the historical so I started getting some information and I started really looking then into the geological history and the climatic history of that time and then all of a sudden I asked I said wait a minute what was the pluvial climate of that period at the time of the exodus. And what how the cause then of that pluvial period. And

you come up then of the explosion of the volcano of Santurini. That created an incredible cloud that affected actually all of the landscape that the weather landscape that that probably lasted over so many years. So I said says that interesting, said to myself. So I got additional information I contacted a geologist in Texas and we're being exchanging information and we were having a great ball – but then, something else I cam across, and I ha, when I was teaching history of the French revolution, ok, I found out that there was one period really a tremendous drought, ok, and all the crops really actually destroyed within the region of the Paris region, and a lot of the the population obviously blamed that and the monarchy for that so actually that's how the evolution started, but then when you look at the geological records of that particular period, there was actually a general climatic change occurring throughout northern Europe, why? In Iceland the lackey fisher, it's one of the explosion, created an incredible explosion, worse than the one that we just saw recently in the news. That created then a cloud of acidic gas that spread over Europe that triggered the French revolution. But you see then nature worked in a particular manner and then you're able then historical explanation of what happened in a particular population. So they it this is the fun of doing Guido Nincheri's actually art. Takes me through

JP: Takes you through

RBN: But you have to have a varied background in this information.

JP: Well that's where you come in. I'm I can't get myself over that image, of your grandfather on the train. It tears my heart.

RBN: And that's what it was, and its well what I told you

JP: And I It's like you said, [unclear]

RBN: That's how they but there he is, I mean, that's what he looked like in the 40s, well this it would be in the 30s or something like that [lifts up a photo of a young Guido Nincheri] he was a young man over here well he was born in 1895. No 1885.

JP: This man, who is doing so much work and he was on this train and afterwards,

RBN: You spoke to him didn't you, Mr. Tiezzi,

JP: Yeah I spoke to him and he told me the story and I was in tears, I was in tears, they told me how exactly what you've said and the name calling and the spitting and just being degraded

RBN: Yeah

JP: Here's this man who is created this most incredible works of art,

RBN: Yeah but really

JP: The patrimony to this country!

RBN: Yeah but put it this way for the average population who is Guido Nincheri, you know he's a prisoner, he's an Italian fellow over here, he's labeled as such over here, I mean Guido Nincheri fine is probably know by a let's say a small uh portion of the population, a fragment, no, not even one percent of Quebec would really know who Guido Nincheri was. Or would even recognize him. So you've got to look at it from that aspect of it, you cannot say, it's life.

JP: But if you look at it from the Manza's point of view, him knowing what he did, and who he was and he's being treated in such a, I mean it's beyond...

RBN: yeah I know but see

JP: I wouldn't do that to a dog!

RBN: I know I see but that's the way, uh mob irrationality that what it really is, look what happened to the riots in Vancouver, or the riots let's say in eh what was it during the G whatever in Toronto, even after our hockey games in Montreal.

JP: yeah

RBN: Mob does not think, people do things and then all of a sudden they realize afterwards and they say what the hell was I doing? Because see it the mob does not think, it reacts, and this essentially of what happened to Guido, but that's what is expected, and it's not what you think, people do things, and then all of a sudden they realize afterwards they say what the hell was I doing? Because see, the mob does not think, it reacts. And you see this essentially you gotta see what happened to Guido from that kind of perspective. I know it's hard on the individual we know that, I mean like you, you know it affected you and it affected me as well, and I can actually feel for him, but you gotta look at it from [clears throat] that particular moment in time, the political condition, how actually the newspapers pictured the Italians, the Italians that were rounded up and all put into busses, [unclear] name calling, and of course you know a lot of the Italians too, they were uh what do you call it they were businessmen they were really successful, people that did a lot of things over here so the local people are like ah finally that guy is out of the way

JP: Less competition

RBN: Less competition so there is a lot of that involved I can't

JP: how do you, how do you think of your grandfather after because we were talking about how the silence, you're dealing with you have to read the silences here your mother didn't talk about it, your father didn't talk about it, your grandfather didn't talk about it, like nobody in your family talked about this, so what is that saying?

RBN: It's saying that it was probably a very painful experience. And you see painful experiences you don't want to, you're trying to suppress them as long as you can. And then what's the point actually telling them? Is it going to make you feel any better? I know probably it's history that you can pass on, but what are you going to do with it? Nothing. You know. It's [unclear] the kind of research [coughs] the kind of research that you're doing now brings back to the front the kind of situation that happened then. Let's say we hope that it's not going to repeat. But you know, history repeats itself! If it's not here in Canada then it's in some other place in the world. In our newspapers, we have all kinds of ah situations occurring in other parts of the world, it's humanity, it's irrational humanity.

JP: It's also a comment on that time, Guido was a very proud man like you said, he was a you know, so many things point to how he was a perfectionist he wanted things done right, he was very particular about how he did things, and then to be put into this position, how do you go on? How do you live with that even though you know you did nothing wrong?

RBN: You live with that you know how?

JP: How?

RBN: Because he was a creator. His art, he immersed himself into his art. Simple as that. And you when you paint, you forget, you forget, because you live in a other world – like I do, I live in another world. My wife says geez you spend hours on there [waves arms up in the air] “we live

here in a menage a trois – you, me and Guido Nincheri!” [Laughs] you know, and that’s what it is, all this shit, pardon the expression, you forget, and then it sublimates, and then you try, and it’s better to do it that way, what’s the point of getting up and ruminating, and it ruins your health – you’ve got to do that you’ve got to forget. Leave the past things that happened in the past, leave them where they are. Put them in a little compartment and shut the door.

JP: As a history teacher, what would you teach children or kids or teenagers or whoever yeah adults what would you teach them about this period? And how do you feel, that this stuff, the whole history of what happened to the Italians doesn’t exist as part of regular books?

RBN: Well I couldn’t tell you because I haven’t done much reading in this. What you would have to teach you would have to start from scratch from there and again too you see one of the things that I used to do when I used to teach, just for an example, there was both my wife and I taught Canadian history. Now the curriculum in here is different from the curriculum in Ontario. Two different topics, quite interesting. But in order to really bring out the as close as possible to the the true Canadian history as it happened ah you got to read several books several interpretations and you say look at that sentence that book why does it tell you this when actually this happened and that happened and this happened, and this is an interpretation, so a true historian, will bring about this kind of development, so it’s not easy teaching history Because...

JP: Do you think this should be taught, as part of the curriculum?

RBN: Oh I don’t know I don’t want to get involved in the curriculum development like this.

JP: I know but I mean

RBN: No, um, Joyce! On this particular score I mean the uh each let's say curriculum developer has its own particular optic and this essentially is what society dictates through the department of education so this is what is supposed to be taught and essentially what the the what do you call it? The generation of today should only know. And you see there again too, you see the way teaching it's only when you get into University that then you start getting a let's say exposed to other points of view to other history because a good historian, history teacher will give you a research paper to do but you gotta have a bibliography that big [makes large gap with this hands] to prove that you didn't copy but you got this opinion and that opinion and eventually you come out with your own. So that's then what an individual builds his experience, then he says, Ah, I was taught that in high school, but now I know different. You see and again and too from one university to the other, you gonna have obviously each individual teacher is going to have his own little axe to grind. So uh eh it's education through knowledge that you really have to interpret things. And it's not easy. Because there are so many currents actually pulling and today with the information technology that we have you have to be very carefully what you read

JP: yeah

RBN: Even when I do my ecclesiastical research, I mean uh, it's quite interesting because I mean when you have an account of Jesus' life written by a protestant, versus one written by a Jesuit, versus one written by a Franciscan versus one written by somebody else, and you got to say wait a minute now. And even from one to the other let's say on the life of Christ, it's fascinating how many interpretations you can get. And you have to be very careful how you see things. I'm learning I'm just learning right now I'm just actually I'm a kid. Really. I'm in University right now as I was when I started let's say in Geography and Geology. Because obviously it's a new field. And it's fun.

JP: I want to ask you an opinion.

RBN: Ok.

JP: About something based on a lived experience. Well, partially based on a lived experience. Do you think that the era of Fascism that you lived through and through the war, you lived through it, but of course you lived through it as a child so it's a very limited experience in terms of what you saw. And the era that was lived here in Canada, how do you think they were different? How do you think the Italians that were involved in fascist organizations in Canada perceived things versus what was going on then? Again, I'm asking for your opinion

RBN: A friend of mine [clears throat] actually my neighbor uh gave me a whole collection that he downloaded from the internet dealing actually with uh Mussolini's speeches, the March on Rome, uh all the photographs and actually footage of that particular period, fascinating to see it, and you look at the way actually the people, the mobs, reacted. And you actually say to yourself, in looking at it from this point of view today, doesn't make sense, but that was the mentality of the day. So I you, cannot explain, you have to see it from, you look at the photographs the movies and you say to yourself "My God, look what happened!" and today would probably be a different type of situation all together. Different interpretations, but also you've got to think of what happened to Italy before Mussolini's period, torn by social conflict was incredible. I mean the Italian government is helpless in certain and Mussolini turned around and put order to it. Come un manganello [Like a club]

JP: Do you think some of it over here was also a sense of patriotism and nationalism?

RBN: Really I can't tell you because I don't know. I can't even give you an opinion on that because I put my foot in it.

JP: Right

RBN: Because really actually I haven't lived in here. And if whatever in here would really be through the eyes of somebody else.

JP: But that's really important what you said that you don't know tells us that we can't really assume that we know anything.

RBN: And that's in yeah

JP: So any opinions we form today,

RBN: It's an opinion

JP: It's just an opinion that is not grounded.

RBN: Sometimes it's grounded on actual fact, I mean, Oswald shot Kennedy, well probably that is a fact. But, are you really sure? [Laughs] still you know? Again too there's all kinds of uh you know conspiracy theories and so on and so you know you see again too and what you see written in the newspaper with the Murdoch affair. I mean the way things are twisted it's it's terrible. So that's why we have to keep an open mind and don't be so judgmental.

JP: [unclear] Is there anything that you want to add about your dad or yourself?

RBN: No I mean all that as I told you to my grave I will never know why I was left behind. And it doesn't matter because eventually you see no matter what I really went through I was destined to do what I'm doing today [shrugs and puts hands to the side] figure that one out. Strange eh?

JP: yeah because it's like everything prepared you for this.

RBN: yeah yeah.

JP: yeah. We're very lucky that we have you doing what you're doing today.

RBN: Well I hope I helped you out a little bit.

JP: No just everybody's lucky you helped me a lot, I mean you helped contribute your story which is wonderful and for this insight but also for the research work that you're doing

RBN: Mmmhmm

JP: On Guido Nincheri's work is really going to help us understand

RBN: And eventually I'll be able to publish it I mean already published one section on the one at St. Peter's Chonwinagan and that is published in Stained Glass Quarterly. The whole this it is. So I right now I've been sort of many other things have occurred that I've stopped writing now I've got to start over again. I lost one year really but I'm still reading. I'm acquiring knowledge and then eventually I'll get back to it [laughs]

JP: Well if there's nothing else then I'm good.

RBN: Well thank you very much I really enjoyed the afternoon.

JP: I really enjoyed the whole day too thank you so much Roger.



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RBN: Ok, good.

JP: Thanks

[Fade out black at 1:57.21.6]

[End of interview]