

Stanley Grizzle: I have Ms. Ivy Lawrence at her home regarding the origins of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in Montreal. Um, on this is 12th day of February 1992. Uh, what is your full name, please?

Ivy Lawrence Mayniar: Ivy Lawrence Mayniar.

Stanley: How do you spell that?

Ivy: M-A-Y-N-I-A-R.

Stanley: Where were you born?

Ivy: In Montreal.

Stanley: Uh, can you give me the date of birth? Or would you care--

Ivy: Mm-hmm. Uh, 1921. Don't mind a bit.

Stanley: What date? What month?

Ivy: January 29th 1921. Uh, is that loud enough.

Stanley: Yeah. It's loud. Your parents' names. Your father's name.

Ivy: My dad's name was Alexander Lawrence.

Stanley: Mm-hmm. And he was born where?

Ivy: And, uh, he was born in British Guiana.

Stanley: And your mother's name?

Ivy: It was, uh-- and my gra-grandmother, my-my grandmother, no?

Stanley: Your mother's name.

Ivy: Mother's name was Bernice Edwardina, uh, Herbert.

Stanley: H-E-R-B-E-R-T?

Ivy: That's right.

Stanley: Right. Were there any other siblings?

Ivy: I have an older brother-

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: -Keith Arnold Lawrence.

Stanley: Keith?

Ivy: Keith Arnold Lawrence.

Stanley: I see.

Ivy: And you would know him, I think.

Stanley: Mm. Uh, you have, another brother?

Ivy: Mm-hmm. Bertram Alexander Lawrence.

Stanley: Alright. Are you-- were educated in Montreal?

Ivy: Mm. Mm. Partially, I went to Verdun High School-

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: -and then McGill University, And after I finished-- When, uh- when I'd finished McGill, I went, um, over to um, England-

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: -where I want-- becau-- I went to England because I didn't think I was going to get very far in Montreal at that time. And I wanted to do law, so I went over to the Inns of Court.

Stanley: To what?

Ivy: The Inns of Court in London.

Stanley: Oh, yes.

Ivy: And, um, there I took a-a law degree.

Stanley: Uh-huh.

Ivy: So I'm a member of the London Inns of Court.

Stanley: How do you spell it? Inn-Inn what?

Ivy: Inns. I-N-N-S.

Stanley: Oh, I-N-N-S.

Ivy: Uh, and then Courts.

Stanley: Oh, I see.

Ivy: Yes.

Stanley: So you graduated in law in, uh- in-in London, England.

Ivy: Mm-hmm.

Stanley: Why didn't you go to law school in-in-in Canada?

Ivy: 'Cause I didn't think there was that much chance for young people of colour-

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: -particularly women. And I thought, I w-- instead of just staying in Canada and knocking my head on a-

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: -door that I would, um, go to the Inns of Court, which would allow me then to practice in the West Indies.

Stanley: I see. Now, w-- um-- so you were, were you able to prac-practice in Canada at all after you graduated?

Ivy: No, I-I did-- I worked in lawyers' offices for money here, but I did not actually practice here.

Stanley: Oh, in-in Montreal or Toronto?

Ivy: In Montreal.

Stanley: Oh.

Ivy: In Toronto, I'm sorry. In Toronto.

Stanley: Not in Montreal.

Ivy: No, I never practiced it anywhere.

Stanley: Oh, I see. But did you practice in England?

Ivy: Yes.

Stanley: What year did you graduate, approximately, if you can't remember the exact date?

Ivy: Sure can. Uh--

Stanley: This makes you a very important--

Ivy: Stop it for a moment and let me just think--

Stanley: Did it in what year?

Ivy: In 1942.

Stanley: That's the year I thought. That's the year I have-

Ivy: Mm-hmm.

Stanley: -in mind. [chuckles] Um, now, what was your father's employment?

Ivy: He-- My dad was a porter on the CPR line.

Stanley: Right. Do you know how long he was on the w-- CPR as a porter?

Ivy: Uh, um, I can't say closely. But I can say that he was there for a long, long time.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: Like I think from the time they arrived in Canada, probably and-- 'Cause that was the only job that you got at that point.

Stanley: What year did he arrive in Canada?

Ivy: Um, I don't know. But like-- well, I think it would have been at '14 or '16, something like that.

Stanley: I see.

Ivy: Uh, if I can check some of these things afterwards, if you want to put a little X beside them. I can go to papers.

Stanley: Okay.

Ivy: Okay.

Stanley: Right. Um, uh, do you, uh, recall your father working to sleeping car porter?

Ivy: Oh, yes. [chuckles] We really didn't know of that because they were having a hard time-

Stanley: Uh-huh.

Ivy: -living on tips, supposedly tips.

Stanley: Uh-huh. What do you remember about your father being a sleeping car porter? Any incidents, situations, uh, come to mind? Did he ever talk about the work?

Ivy: No. Uh, well-- No, dad never complained. Uh, thi-this had to be done. That was the only thing he was going to be able to do to take care of his family, and that's all what he did.

Stanley: Well, of course, I'm not looking for complaints [crosstalk]

Ivy: And what he said was, um-- No, he just said, "What you- what you had to do, you had to do," and that was all right.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: And, uh, he was anxious to get my brother-- my older brother then, my younger brother as well-

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: -through school, go to university, which he did. [chuckles]

Stanley: Mm-hmm. And did his fa-- did he help you get to-- through university?

Ivy: No, I was very fortunate. I won, uh, scholarships because dad had said quite plainly since I-- they were the boys. I knew that they would-- But, um, I would have to-- I would be a girl. I would just get married, eventually [chuckles] And, uh- and tha-that was, you know-- Uh, I don't think-- I-I think he was just satisfied that I did it on my own. And I was very happy that I had done it so much on my own.

Stanley: But there weren't many scholarships or c-- scholarships weren't comprehensive in those old days, were they?

Ivy: Oh-- Or what-- Um, I-I had a college- a co-- a scholarship at McGill, partial scholarship after the first year.

Stanley: Partial scholarship?

Ivy: Yeah.

Stanley: Yes. Do you remember that a-amount in terms of dollars?

Ivy: No, I couldn't tell you.

Stanley: Oh, I see. Do you ever have any memories of, um- of your father, uh, being involved with the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters?

Ivy: Oh, yes. All the legitimate-- [laughs] Because I was living in, um-- I was living in Montreal, but going through school at the University of Toronto. The reason I did that was that I wanted to go to England to do law. So I couldn't do-- I didn't want to do Quebec law, I wanted to do Canadian-Canadian law. And, uh-- No. That about tells that part of it. Oh, and what did I have in mind now. Oh, and-- So I--

Stanley: Quebec-Quebecis-- law is different to the--

Ivy: At that time, yes. You didn't have-- You had to study, uh, separate French law.

Stanley: Is that what--

Ivy: It was French. You know, yes, so quite different to what it is. It wasn't the same all the way across the country. Quebec had its own--

Stanley: But-but today it's straight across-- the same across the country.

Ivy: You're right.

Stanley: That's right. Yes. Well, the French law at that time-- the-the law governing the province of Quebec was-- cc-ame from France, was it?

Ivy: Um, I don't really know. I didn't pay that much attention to that.

Stanley: I see. Uh, getting back to the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, do you recall your father being involved in any way with that organization?

Ivy: Oh, yes.

Stanley: Yeah.

Ivy: Dad at one time was the vice president and a president. And a president once, uh, for some term [crosstalk]

Stanley: Of-of what?

Ivy: Of the, uh, the Porters--

Stanley: The Montreal division.

Ivy: The Montreal division.

Stanley: CPR division. Oh, I see. Uh huh, and, uh-- So do you recall any of-- Was he an organizer for-for the union? Do you know?

Ivy: Oh, yes, a very strong organizer.

Stanley: Mm-hmm. Do you recall anyone else who was involved with him as an organizer?

Ivy: Well, uh, like this one.

Stanley: Who?

Ivy: Marcus Dash

Stanley: Yeah. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Ivy: Um, and he and dad did a lot of work with-- for the, uh-

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: -uh, sleeping car porters.

Stanley: Right. Any the other organizers that you-you can recall who worked with your dad?

Ivy: Uh, no, not really. There were names always that-

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: -I heard when-- like sometimes there was meetings at our house, sometimes at other houses and that-- But at that stage of my life, I didn't really-

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: -pick up on anybody. At most, they were very, very close as a-- And I would say--

Stanley: Are you sure you--

Ivy: I'd have to work it back hard, but I know-- I'm afraid there are lots of names I would not forget now.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: At the age of 70, you kind of forget the names unlike on 14 or 15.

Stanley: I'm with you.

Ivy: Mm-hmm.

Stanley: Um, so can you recall any-any stories of your father? Uh, that your father may have told about being a porter?

Ivy: Dad didn't talk about it a lot. Um, he just- he-he had an attitude of the-- 'cause-- "This is what I have to do now. And that's all I can do." And he never complained.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: You know, he-he-he never sort of gave you the illusion that he was terribly unhappy about this. And though he-- although I'm sure he was. I became aware of how unhappy he was only after I got to be an adult myself. And I have to say, you know-

Stanley: Mm-hmm

Ivy: -Dad could have done so many things. He knew so much. And it was so heartbreaking that he could never use-use it in Canada.

Stanley: Mm-hmm. Did he have a special training, a-any special training?

Ivy: Yes, dad was a- dad was, uh, an engineer. What was it now? He had his own special field.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: Um, something. I can't remember which area that was. He was an engineer area trained in Trinidad-Trinidad. I don't remember. It was a long time ago.

Stanley: He graduated?

Ivy: But he-he graduated. Yes. He had a paper.

Stanley: Oh, I see. Degree?

Ivy: No, they were, um-- I-it wasn't then done by degree, but by certificates.

Stanley: Oh, I see. Yeah. Do you-you recall, uh, how, uh-- W-w-was he absent from home, uh, often?

Ivy: Well, it depended, on what particular runs he was doing.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: If he was going to Vancouver, for instance, uh, uh, and that-- um, from Montreal that was-- it ran right through to Vancouver, well-

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: -he would be away for a good, I don't know, 9, 10 days. And, um, it was u-- those runs, uh, I-I think he-- I think he preferred those runs to tell you the truth. Even layovers were nicer when he got back. He didn't have to be tearing off again. So we'd miss him, but he would get back-back to us.

Stanley: He got more layover after the union was--was recognized than he did before?

Ivy: Yes. After the union was recognized, they did. I know.

Stanley: Mm-mhm. Um--

Ivy: They had to fight for-- Marcus and dad were one of the two people that fought really hard. Marcus Dash.

Stanley: Right.

Ivy: Mm-hmm.

Stanley: Do you think his absence from home affected the home life at all?

Ivy: I don't think so. Really-- Uh, that-- The-the kind community in, uh-- stuck together so closely at that time. It was just-- it wasn't that enormous community that is, you know-- has - that-that it is now. But in those early days, people worried about each other.

Stanley: Right.

Ivy: And I-I-I can remember times where there would be a group of porters in the-in the house. And they would be divvying up, uh, their-their money to see how they can help those that had not got as much in ta-- In-in, um, what do you call in-- you know the word,

Stanley: Tips?

Ivy: In tips.

Stanley: Really?

Ivy: Oh, yes. You-- They took good care of each other. It was a very, very close thing.

Stanley: Oh.

Ivy: And they-they-- You know, as each one sort of passes, you know-- You-you remember dad. And I remember dad. And, uh, you know, he did-- he-he just gave all he could for his kids. And that's-- I think that was all that the West Indians that had come hoping for a better life could-could do, they hung, they helped, they were close. And that was a good thing.

Stanley: How did the, um-- Or did the porters help to promote, uh, organizations in the community or support organizations in-in the Montreal community?

Ivy: I don't know. I-I'm not sure I know which way as-- No, the-- it-- they-- the porters had their own, uh-

Stanley: Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

Ivy: Brotherhood. That's the one.

Stanley: Oh, yes. Mm. Yes. But were the- were the porters, generally speaking, uh, strong supporters of the church or of any other-other organizations?

Ivy: They were strong supporters of Revered Este's Church.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: And, um, the-- And, uh, that in fact was much of a little home for us, too. 'Cause the Sunday school there.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: It was at Sunday, we all had to attend.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: And, uh, there wasn't another coloured church that I can think of in Montreal. Well, I'm pretty sure there wasn't. Not when I-- Not-- At the time when I was growing up. The church now is wonderful. They've done a beautiful job on that church.

Stanley: But you can't give me a-any little anecdotes about your dad working as a porter or as a representative of the union?

Ivy: Oh, yes. I can tell you some of those things. I'll tell you one **[unintelligible 00:15:19]** I-I will never forget as long as I do. And, um, I used to, um, go to uni, um, going up to university is-- if I was late at the university, and then dad's car, dad was going out at that time. I would walk down to the station. And that's not the station where it is now. You know, where-- I mean, the new station is at the time-- Not, uh- not-- Uh, Union was the closest thing to that station. CPR Station, I remember **[inaudible 00:15:46]**

Stanley: Right.

Ivy: And, uh, I would go.

Stanley: Is that the Windsor Station now?

Ivy: Windsor Station?

Stanley: Oh, now, it's Windsor Station.

Ivy: And I was then going to- to the university. And then I walked down to the-- to work at the library for a while. And I walked down to the, uh, uh, station and looked for dad's car. And I remember one night, it was bitter, and it was a bitter night. And I-I-I myself was just so upset about this. And-- But I wanted to go down 'cause I knew daddy was going on standby. He was standing out. And I went down, went to the station, went and looked down the track for dad. And there he was standing outside. Dad was a short man and this, you know, tight little person. And I looked down there to catch his eye. And there he was standing with snow on top of his cap, and his shoulders pushed-- pulled together like this, and the wind was going down that line there, just brutally. It was just awful. And he was just standing there, and, uh- and the snow piled up on him. And, uh, I went and I sat down in the concourse outside from where- from where the trains left.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: And I just sat on a bench and cried, I'll never forget that.

Stanley: Why?

Ivy: I-- that-that-- What dad had to do-

Stanley: Mm.

Ivy: -in order to-- What-what he was going through in order to stand there. And this quite old and head tucked in, and this wind is blowing and-and, you now, to-to-- You-you weren't getting anything in tips that counted for anything at that time.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: If you got a quarter from somebody, you were doing well, [chuckles] you know.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: And, um, but I always remember that. And I was-- I went and sat on the bench. They didn't have the bench for the backs. They just had the p-- the benches at that time.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: I went and sat on one of them and I just balled. Oh. And a little old lady came over to me. And she sat down beside me, and put her arms around me, and she said, "I don't want to ask what you're crying about. But I just want to say, you're gonna be alright. Everything is gonna be alright." I always remember that old lady.

Stanley: Mm-hmm

Stanley: What was the, uh, employment of both of the men in Montreal at that time? Were most of them porters or--

Ivy: Porters. [laughs] They were porters. Um, they-they-they could have come up from the islands with any kind of training. They ended up here as porters.

Stanley: Mm-hmm. And how about the-the-the-their women?

Ivy: Women went and worked in the houses a lot. They-they did a lot of housework, um, maid's work, in other words in people's house. My aunt Thelma. Aunt Thelma at, uh-- She worked with a l-- a family. It was a l-law, um, for-- Francis' family that had a house way up in the hills above Montreal, those gorgeous hills in Mount Royal at the-

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: -top. When you go up the top. And you had to- you had to climb or you could drive if you had a car. But you'd climb these steps up the side of the mountain. You kept climbing, and you kept climbing, and you got to the top. Then you got to the Scotts' who auntie was working for.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: And that little thing, l-- She just was just so tiny. You just couldn't imagine her climbing these steps, but she did it.

Stanley: What's her name?

Ivy: You-you-- do you know—you remember Mr. Simpson?

Stanley: Oh, it's the same family you've referred to before?

Ivy: Yeah, l--

Stanley: Gordy Simpson's mother?

Ivy: Gordy's father.

Stanley: Oh yeah, no, I don't know them.

Ivy: Yeah. Up to, uh, always-- I said, "How can she do this? How can she climb these steps?" She did it.

Stanley: Any other little anecdotes?

Ivy: Mm. Let me think about-- There's always something that you could laugh at most of the time.

Stanley: Well, perhaps you can think about that while I ask you the next question.

Ivy: Yeah.

Stanley: Um, uh, what was the social climate like in Montreal at the time the porters were being organized into the union? Were there any restrictions, in other words-- uh, social, um-

Ivy: And what do you mean by that? That there were places where they couldn't eat or things like that?

Stanley: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Ivy: Um, well, I don't think so. 'Cause the places where we would be told not to go to are probably places we couldn't afford anyhow. Um, [chuckles] uh, the- uh, entertainment was most generally in people's homes. It wasn't that kind, it wasn't the, "Let's go out and have a good evening time," for people-

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: -particularly poorer people. People left you with no job. You-- M-- There were times when porters were laid off for the simple reason that there wasn't-- they were in the middle of a recession. And everybody would get together and figure out some way to give them or get money to them, you know, help them through.

Stanley: The social center for this community was?

Ivy: Yeah, that was the center of our-- of everything.

Stanley: What? Where was that?

Ivy: That was right where the church is now in the basement.

Stanley: Oh, Is see.

Ivy: [unintelligible 00:21:51] to the church 'cause it's not even the same church anymore either.

Stanley: Right.

Ivy: But, um, that is where the meetings took place.

Stanley: Mm-hmm. Well, that's--

Ivy: But it was a nice, warm time in so many ways.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: It was warm. Verdun has, had, had its own little, enclosed Black community. You know, what-- and don't-- and I don't mean enclosed from everything else, but then you had Montreal, which was the big collection of, um, people-

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: -from the islands. The Verdun came second. Verdun was French, and there were not that many families.

Stanley: Right. How would you assess the worth of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters to the community? Was it a good move on the part of the porters and why? To join the, uh, RS--

Ivy: To-join the?

Stanley: The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

Ivy: The Brotherhood. Oh, yeah. I think there's no doubt about that. They needed-- They had to depend on each other. Brotherhood, they needed.

Stanley: Mm.

Ivy: Believe me.

Stanley: Why?

Ivy: Mm?

Stanley: Why did they need the Brotherhood?

Ivy: Because they were paid so poorly. Because every now and then someone would-would have something happen to them that they-they would really need to have a little collection taken up by the group for them or things like that.

Stanley: You had a defense or legal defense fund?

Ivy: And I don't know about that.

Stanley: Oh.

Ivy: That way I wouldn't probably have been thinking about it-

Stanley: Oh.

Ivy: -in that sense. I was thinking mostly of, um, you know, seeing mother or someone say, "Take this over to Mrs. so and so. I know she's not well, and she hasn't had that." But, um, higher level than that, I would've been pretty young to be concerned with

Stanley: Sounds as if, uh, you-you're referring to a-a caring community.

Ivy: It was a very caring community.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: Very much so, very caring. And you had the [unintelligible 00:24:00] family, I remember them.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: And they were a very powerful family. It was a good church up there also in Verdun?

Stanley: Pat Morris?

Ivy: No, this is-- Um, I'm thinking of, um, I don't remember the name of him 'cause Mr. Stukur was involved with it too. But--

Stanley: The porters union?

Ivy: Mm-hmm, it is in Verdun, uh, uh, separate from Montreal.

Stanley: So he was involved in what? You said he was involved with it.

Ivy: There, um, I don't-- I'm not following on 'cause we've lost one string.

Stanley: Oh.

Ivy: 'Cause I was thinking of the Black community that was in Verdun, which was just, as you know, was just a one, uh, little section of, uh, larger Montreal.

Stanley: So there was a separate Black community?

Ivy: So you had- so you had two communities

Stanley: Did they interact?

Ivy: Mm-hmm.

Stanley: Did they interact with-work together on any--

Ivy: Well, they would work together-

Stanley: Yeah.

Ivy: -if there was anything going on. This was no problem.

Stanley: Mm.

Ivy: It was just easier to get to church than for people in Verdun to get all the way down to church, particularly in the winter.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: And, uh, so you had one church with a Mr. Reverend, um, Stukur. And the one church, uh, with the Reverend. It was at the, um, Union United.

Stanley: Where was Reverend Stukur's church?

Ivy: It was In Verdun.

Stanley: Oh, I, uh see- I didn't think Verdun was that far from, uh--

Ivy: It's quite a way. It's quite a way when you're not going in a car-

Stanley: That's a-- that's all--

Ivy: -or a bus or--

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: You were walking.[laughs]

Stanley: Right. [crosstalk] Philip Randolph.

Ivy: Oh, I thought he was a wonderful man. I was-

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: -I-I was awed-

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: -by him and um, I think largely because he was such a quiet man.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: He would never re-- you'd never-- You don't think the people trying-- who are trying to break down barriers as being as gentlemanly and as absolutely determined without being angry in it. I'm-- I admire him enormously.

Stanley: Mm. Yes. Mm. I was reading an article not too long about him, and it referred to him as the gentle warrior.

Ivy: Oh, the gentle warrior's the perfect word for him. That is a lovely expression for him.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: He had though-- he had a guy-- Oh God, I can't remember his name, but I liked him enormously. He used to travel with a, um, great, big fellow.

Stanley: Webster?

Ivy: Webster. I loved Webster. What a big bully-looking type. [laughter]

Stanley: [laughs] You said it right, you know, Webster--

Ivy: I loved him. He looked-- But he-- [laughs]

Stanley: Oh, he was, uh-

Ivy: Oh, jeez.

Stanley: -tough old boy.

Ivy: Oh, he was. He was really tough. [laughs] Webster, yeah.

Stanley: How about the Ladies' Auxiliary? Have you any--

Ivy: Um, by the time that I was old enough for the Ladies' Auxiliary, I was already into the university, school.

Stanley: Was your mother a member of the Ladies' Auxiliary to the Brotherhood?

Ivy: Mother-mother didn't-- no mother was not a joiner.

Stanley: No.

Ivy: Mamma was a very quiet, rather shy person.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: And she-- Also, I think, like so many of the women who were pulled away from their homes because they thought there would probably-- there would be a living in Canada-

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: -you know. [laughs] And um, I think that they just felt-- they-they-they-- those that were to come up from Halifax and places like that, then, um-- they were all right. They had friends, they had relatives, they had cousins and some other place or the other. They-- those that came up from the West Indies had- had-

Stanley: Excuse me.

Ivy: -had-- Didn't have that.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: It was a different thing. I didn't want to practice in Canada at all. [chuckles] You know, because I-I-I just felt-- No, I can't say alienated because I wasn't joined in the first place. It was-- I belonged with the people who still stood out there-

Stanley: Mm hmm.

Ivy: -hoping for the best, right. But, um, I-I don't know. I think it didn't do me any great harm to have that experience.

Stanley: What law did you specialize in?

Ivy: I went to the Inns of Court. I didn't do specialized.

Stanley: Oh.

Ivy: I wanted- I wanted to go into, uh, international law.

Stanley: International?

Ivy: Yeah.

Stanley: Oh.

Ivy: But I didn't, uh- I didn't get to it in the end but--

Stanley: Oh.

Ivy: Because it was really-- that would've been something I couldn't manage as well. 'Cause by the-- I had the-- I had a scholarship to, um, uh, to the-- in support to England.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: And there was no hope really, for me, more than that.

Stanley: Now you were the first female Black lawyer-

Ivy: Mm-hmm.

Stanley: -in what jurisdiction?

Ivy: Um, not in England. I-I-I went-- after I had-had-had completed what I was doing, I worked for quite a long time in, um-- quite a while in, uh-- Oh, I-- You know, I-I should have brought out my book. **[inaudible 00:29:33]** bring that all up to date. 'Cause I kind of-- You've got--

Stanley: Black woman, female lawyer in Canada.

Ivy: Oh, yeah.

Stanley: And

Ivy: I'm pretty sure of that. I don't know of another one.

Stanley: I see. Mm hmm. But 1942 is the year?

Ivy: But I didn't want-- I was so fed up with life in Canada for us-

Stanley: Mm.

Ivy: -that I was determined to go and practice law in the West Indies, but in order to do that-

Stanley: Mm hmm.

Ivy: I had to go through the Inns of Court for years.

Stanley: In other words, you were the first Black woman lawyer, Canadian woman lawyer-

Ivy: Mm-hmm.

Stanley: -to graduate in law? Although you didn't practice law.

Ivy: That's right.

Stanley: Um, now you practiced law in the West Indies?

Ivy: Yes.

Stanley: Where?

Ivy: In Trin- um, Trinidad.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: And, uh, well, in the islands generally. You could go through back and forth. Or if you wanted to highlight, I practiced in Trinidad.

Stanley: Did you know Dr. David Wyke?

Ivy: Mm-hmm. Very, very well.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: Delightful and a dear person.

Stanley: He was our family physician.

Ivy: Yeah. David was a sweet person.

Stanley: And his wife Marguerite?

Ivy: Marguerite. Tall Marguerite--

Stanley: They're both dead now?

Ivy: Elegant, always elegant.

Stanley: Both dead, eh?

Ivy: Yeah.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: Mm-hmm. Well, David was a dear person.

Stanley: He was our family doctor all those years after he graduated.

Ivy: [crosstalk] Dearest people ever.

Stanley: Mm-hmm. You remember a lawyer, Belinda Blackwood out of Montreal?

Ivy: That name rings a bell. You should be asking my brother Bert. He always remembers these things.

Stanley: We've lost track of her. She came to Toronto-- She's a Montreal girl. Her father worked for the CPR porter, Blackwood. And, uh--

Ivy: She probably-probably lived in Montreal proper.

Stanley: But--

Ivy: Because they were-- uh, um-- They, um-- We-we lived in Verdun.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: And, uh-- so that we wouldn't necessarily know--

Stanley: But you don't know of her?

Ivy: Mm-hmm.

Stanley: She graduated, uh, uh-- practiced law here in Toronto.

Ivy: Mm-hmm. Good for her, yeah, great.

Stanley: Yeah.

Ivy: Mm-hmm.

Stanley: So many people have been talking about her over the last year or so. I've been trying to find out where she is.

Ivy: [inaudible 00:31:36]

Stanley: What do you mean the same as you?

Ivy: That I wouldn't have to be putting up with the-the e-efforts made from time to time not to let you get where you want to do. You wanna maybe about my f- my first day at, um, McGill University. I'll give you a great story on this one. [laughs] I had to-- gone up-- you know, you had to walk to walk all the way up. You had to. McGill University, at that time, you remember, it was standing on the hill all by itself in its splendid glory.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: Anyhow, the first day I was going to- going-- when I was first going to, um- going to sign up for-- At the time, I was supposed to come get into the university. Gotta get my papers and everything going. And I went in and I was really, I guess, very excited or something, I don't know. But anyhow, after I'd gone in and I w- I was standing in this little classroom. And I-I started a nosebleed.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: And I mean a nosebleed. When of my best nosebleeds. And a little nurse who was in the women's hall, may have- may have worked in the women's hall, came over to me, and she was so upset. She'd gotten me wrapped and wrapped tight, plugged my nose, everything

and got me over to the doctor on-on-on campus. And, uh, so up the stairs we went. And she probably got-- laid me on his bed, laid my head back. And by this time, you know, some blood on my clothes, some blood on everybody, and, uh, she-- That women stood over me and looked down at me for a long time without saying a word. And I-- And then she turned to the little nurse. I-- By that time she might-- She-- I had, uh- I had asked someone to call dad. Dad said he would be right up there because he was going to come right up to the-- to the hospital. And that woman came in, started, and she stood up over the bed and looked at me for a while very quietly-- And so-- And then she filled up this thing. And she said, "Put your head far back," [inaudible 00:33:59] And she said, um, "Where does she work?" She says "No, she doesn't work, she's a student at-at-at-at the university." And she turned around back, she looked at the small woman. She said, "She should be in somebody's kitchen" and plunged this needle in and the needle broke. You hear me? Well, then by the time--

Stanley: Oh, is this in your arm?

Ivy: I'm talking in my nose. [chuckles]

Stanley: Oh.

Ivy: Where something in had been a-a break in a little vein in my nose. I am talking about up my nose and [chuckles] It's not-- You know, they say thank God that you never remember pain. You remember that you suffered pain, but you'll never remember the pain. Like, I-I-- Anyhow-- I called, dad came up. I refused to cry. and I'm lying there, and I just thought as I-- "I'm not gonna cry. I am not gonna satisfy that woman by crying." And I came, Dad came in. And, uh, I-- then I started to cry. And then he saw-- I--and he sat beside the bed. And he waited until I stopped crying and he said "All right," he said, "Now, I'm gonna take you home." Oh, the other nu-- another nurse came in and took care of her at the same time. And I said "Okay." Says, "Now--" Says, "We're going home, and we're never gonna talk about this again, ever. Never are we gonna talk about this again. Because those kind of people are not to be remembered."

Stanley: Yes.

Ivy: And that was my dad. That's why I-- You've heard me say so often how wonderful my dad was.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Ivy: He wouldn't let me. I-I cry-- I didn't cry. I stopped crying. I was determined I wasn't gonna cry anymore.

Stanley: Were there any Black lawyers in Montreal whe-when you graduated?

Ivy: Yes, there was a great big one. Archie, what was his name?

Stanley: This was, uh, when you graduated then?

Ivy: Mm. Yeah, when I graduated from Toronto-- from, at Toronto. No, that was when I graduated from McGill, I guess. There was a Doctor. Doctor-- Oh, big fellow.

Stanley: Lawyers I'm talking about?

Ivy: I know. Oh, you're talking lawyer?

Stanley: Yeah.

Ivy: There was a lawyer, one lawyer. I don't remember what his name was-- I don't remember what the last name.

Stanley: And-and you had a Black doctor, too, you say?

Ivy: There was a Black doctor.

Stanley: Mm-hmm. This was in 1942?

Ivy: It would have been in '40, '42. Um, was that-- Burt-Burt will know this lawyer. I don't remember a lot because I-- well, I wouldn't know. Remembering [unintelligible 00:36:55]

Stanley: End of interview with Ivy Lawrence Maynier M-A-Y-N-I-E-R. Interview of Oliver Davis by Stanley G. Grizzle on this the, uh, 31st day of March 1992. Your full name, Oliver, please.

Oliver Charles Davis: Oliver-Oliver Charles Davis.

Stanley: Right. And, uh, when is your birthdate? What is your birthdate?

Oliver: Birthdate is November 27th, 1917.

Stanley: You were a porter with the Canadian Pacific Railway, weren't you?

Oliver: Mm-hmm.

Stanley: What was your seniority date? The date of starting with the CPR?

Oliver: June 21st, 1939.

Stanley: Right. And, uh, who was the porter instructor when you started?

Oliver: Um--

Stanley: Was it Cyril Woods?

Oliver: Cyril Woods

Stanley: Right. Can you remember the names of any other- any other porters who were with when you sta-- in your class?

Oliver: Oh, I think so. Sure. [inaudible 00:38:13]

Stanley: Fowler?

Oliver: Fowler. L-- Fowler.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Oliver: Percy Nuwby.

Stanley: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Oliver: Um, oh, goodness. What's-what's that cousin of, uh- of-of, uh- of-- What's his name in-in Chatham? M-- Oh, goodness.

Stanley: [Unintelligible] Oh, don't worry about that. Tell me, can you recall, uh, your first trip or one of your first trips on the road? Can you describe for me the experience, your feelings, where you went on your early trip?

Oliver: Well, my first-- my first trip was a bit-- They-th-they deadheaded us to Winnipeg-

Stanley: Mm.

Oliver: -to work out of the West. Our first summer.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Oliver: So, the experience was beautiful in that we-we hung out of those windows-- o-out of those doors just looking at the- at-at-at the view. You know, no-none of us have ever seen this before.

Stanley: Mm-hmm. This was on the way-- on the route-- on the way to-to Winnipeg?

Oliver: On the way to Winnipeg.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Oliver: And the following morning after getting into Winnipeg, I was assigned to a tourist car on the, uh, 9:30 train going to Vancouver, from Winnipeg.

Stanley: Wow. Was this an air-conditioned car?

Oliver: Oh, no. [inaudible 00:40:10]

Stanley: Why don't you sit up, so we--

Oliver: This was a hot car. We called it a hot car.

Stanley: Oh, yeah. Mm-hmm.

Oliver: I didn't see anything. It was hard to recall my experience. I had a full load of-of people that consist of, uh, kids going to a camp. And, uh, about five or six grownups were with these-these kids.

Stanley: Right.

Oliver: And they work and run me to death, man.

Stanley: So did you find that traveling on a train a-a thrill as a young man, your first trips? Was it exciting?

Oliver: No-- Yes. E-e-e-exciting because of the newness, but after-after I became accustomed to the job, it was still fascinating in that, uh, we met interesting people in those days. And the reason being, unlike traveling today with the majority of-of famous people, well-known people, travel by plane, not by train. In those days, they traveled by train. You know, I mean to-to-to be able to-to be assigned to a car, to an observation car, and deadhead you from Toronto to-to, uh, Windsor to pick up the Mr. Ford of Canada-

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Oliver: -whose name was Simpson at that time, and take he and his family to Banff. Take you off the train at-at Banff, and you spend the time there, too, then go from there to, uh- to, uh, Lake Louise, drop you off the train again, spend some more time. And then, uh, I can't recall the-the-the places we stopped at-- farther on through the mountains. But, uh, I-I suppose in a way, Stan, the most interesting people, apart from the world-famous people that you-- not necessarily on your car, but on your train. And if you run the observation cars, I did for a long-- quite a long period of time, you get to meet these people, come in contact with them.

Stanley: Tell me about, uh- about the meals. Uh, I seem to recall that when we were away from home, I recall-- I seem to recall being in Vancouver and having not being able to eat in the restaurant, had to eat in the commissary. Do you recall that?

Oliver: Oh, of course. My first experience was-- that would be in Calgary.

Stanley: Yeah.

Oliver: My first trip into Calgary, of course, never-never had been there before. We, uh, finally found the-the-the-the sign-out office. And we asked when we got through there, where we could have breakfast, and we were told to go in to the basement, and we'll find a kitchen down there, where we would eat. And that's exactly what we had to do. It was-- we were segregated.

Stanley: Right.

Oliver: And, uh, we couldn't- we couldn't eat in the- in the- in the restaurants upstairs on the-- in the main restaurants in-in-in the C- in the CPR station in-in Calgary.

Stanley: On the trip--

Oliver: And then another experience was in-in-in-in-in Regina. You couldn't even-- I can recall being refused- uh, uh, uh, being refused a chance to eat in-in, uh, restaurants, in-in Regina.

Stanley: What-where did you eat in Regina?

Oliver: Didn't eat-- we-- until the following morning.

Stanley: Really?

Oliver: C-- Uh, that's a fact. We-- My-my-my first trip into Regina-- I'd been through Regina many, many times, of course, but Regina was not a stopping point as you know-

Stanley: Mm.

Oliver: -for any of our carriers from the east. But on this particular trip we'd been to-- we-we-we'd gone to New York, and we had picked up troops in New York, and went from New York direct to-to, uh, Regina. And we got in there ten o'clock at night. And of course, we porters wanted to have something eat before we went to bed.

Stanley: Mm-hmm.

Oliver: There was no facilities there for us. No-no quarters for-for-for porters in Regina, so we would have to sleep on the cars. And when we went up into the town. We were told this [unintelligible 00:46:55] that you can't eat your meal. We don't serve Blacks.

Stanley: Mm-hmm. [silence]

Oliver: So, of course, we return to the cars.

[00:47:19] [END OF AUDIO]