

Jim Sinclair, Jim Durocher, and Ron Laliberte:

Métis Political Activist Interviews (April 17, 2004)

Tape 1

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RON LALIBERTE: When you think back in, in your younger days, did either of you ever have sort of a role model politician, you said, "Now there is a person I would like to emulate because, you know, that person stands up for what I believe in." Is there anybody that ever inspired you, you know, back, that you can think of, what was it, what was around **(inaudible)**...

(Video Tape: 3:02.15.27) JIM SINCLAIR: Well, in my days it was Gene Autry and Roy Rogers. You know lets face it that's the way it was, we used to cheer for the white people, killing all the Indians in every god damn movie that we ever watched and that was understandable because again of our, of our, of our teachings in the school. We were told that Louis Riel was a traitor. We were told that the Indians stood in the way of the railroad and have, had to be hauled off the way of the tracks and they had to be punished and they had to be jailed and for good reason because Canada had to be built. We were told the RCMP was out there to protect the Indians from the bootleggers but they were out there to help the settlers take our land. You know, the missionaries, the old red power movement in the days when I was there, our slogan was, "When the white man missionaries came over we had, they had the bible we had the land and now they got, we got the bible they got the land." You know, so that was a slogan that was amongst us and then how to we gain back these, how do we shed all of these things that were pushed upon us. So, you know we actually, we actually learned by facing all

this, all this, all these situations and it was almost based, like you say, on institutional racism. They were all there in the institutions so our heroes were really, local people again who I realize now what they went through. You know, it took me all this time because anyone who was a leader in those days was put down by government and put down by the RCMP and put down by everybody as really nothing but a, but a, but a, sort of a, a person who is just trying to raise hell, you know and not...

RON LALIBERTE: Troublemakers, stuff like that.

JIM SINCLAIR: Troublemakers, you know so. We were treated, they were treated that way and you know, the day the people that I thought the most, that I have the most feelings for is people like Geronimo, who stood up to the United States Army. Sitting Bull, who again eventually was shot by his own people and Geronimo was taken in by his own people and given up. You know and I feel that way myself at times because when it came down to the nuts and bolts of things always somebody had to be sacrificed for the next move and people like Howard Adams, even though Howard and I had our problems, Howard was actually the guy who set the stage for the movement in terms of the way he done things and the way, things that he done through understanding the black movement, the movement amongst ourselves and to be able to, with a PhD when he spoke people listened. Those days, when we spoke nobody listened. Nobody listened until we started to haul out two thousand people at a time, then people started to listen. So that's what it took from us, it took numbers and that's why I said in those days we were far better organized and our leadership came from right within, rather than looking outside.

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