

Interview: Jim Quail (JQ)
Interviewer: Carmela Allevato (CA)
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Transcription: Cathy Walker

CA [00:00:05] This is April 16th [ed: April 18th], 2024. It is an interview on behalf of the BC Labour Heritage Centre. I'm Carmela Allevato, and I'll be interviewing Jim Quail. Full disclosure I have been married to Jim Quail for 51 years this year, and many of the struggles that he's gone through, I'm quite familiar with. Jim, tell us your full name and where were you born?

JQ [00:00:36] My name is James Lane Quail. I was born in Toronto long ago, in 1953.

CA [00:00:42] Were you raised in Toronto?

JQ [00:00:43] I was mostly in a place called Thistle Town, which has since been swallowed up in the northwestern part of Toronto.

CA [00:00:52] Tell us a little bit how you grew up. Were labour issues or politics a part of your family?

JQ [00:01:00] Politics to some extent. I was born into a sort of middle class professional family. My grandfather was actually an early activist in the CCF, and before that, in his youth, he was a police officer in the Winnipeg police force during the general strike. They voted to join the strike and the strike committee told them to maintain services. He became much less progressive in his later years.

CA [00:01:29] When was your first experience with labour and work?

JQ [00:01:34] First direct one in an organized setting was a summer job that I had when I was, in my later years of high school for three years working at a slaughterhouse in Toronto, Swifts, no longer there. I learned a great deal about life and about work through my summer jobs. I thought at the time I was learning more during the summer than I was at school. This is the latter years of high school and the beginning of university.

CA [00:02:06] You grew up in Toronto, and then when did you move to British Columbia?

JQ [00:02:11] Moved to British Columbia in 1975. This is after we finished our postgraduate degrees in Toronto, came out here, went into law school, lots of other adventures in between and during that time as well.

CA [00:02:27] When did you become politically active?

JQ [00:02:30] First real political activity was at that time, shortly after arriving in Vancouver, got involved in Vancouver municipal politics, and particularly COPE, which was then the Committee, now the Coalition of Progressive Electors, which had Libby Davies, who I met at that time, Bruce Ericksen, Bruce Yorke, Harry Rankin and all the sort of, leading lights of that generation of the Vancouver left.

CA [00:02:57] I want you to tell us a little bit about the period, 1976 to 1980, when you were in law school. Were you involved in community activism as well?

JQ [00:03:11] To some extent, I was involved in trying to organize a tenants' group in the West End. There was a West End Tenants' Association, but it never really gained momentum. A number of us worked at that. I was quite active in municipal politics, in particular in terms of electoral politics. That's where I put most of my efforts.

CA [00:03:29] Let's go to the 80s. In terms of your municipal politics, what was your role?

JQ [00:03:36] I became the president, as it was then called, of COPE, from about '81 till about '88 or so, very actively involved in that. Meanwhile, I had become a lawyer. I articulated with the Legal Aid Society, then got a job at a community law office out in the Fraser Valley, out in Abbotsford, and immediately set to work setting up a project to work with the Farmworkers' Union, in order to be the legal wing of the effort to organize and improve the rights of farm labourers in the Fraser Valley. We were lobbying and working in many ways for law reform as well as representing individual farmworkers and had significant success in conjunction with the union.

CA [00:04:32] What were some of those successes?

JQ [00:04:35] We won Employment Standards coverage for farmworkers for the first time, including a minimum wage for picking crops. It was a piece rate, which we weren't happy with, but there was nothing before whatsoever. We won health and safety regulations under the Workers' Compensation Act and other forms of workers' compensation coverage. We won municipal legislation concerning the quality, the condition of housing that farmworkers were put in. They were atrocious. There was a situation where an infant died in a little cabin because there was no proper running water or anything like that. It was a very bad situation. Working with the union, we achieved a number of significant breakthroughs and that went on for a few years. That was sort of the central focus. I was also a community Legal Aid lawyer representing low income people with whatever problems they might have, and meanwhile, to give us something to do, organized the office there into a CUPE local and negotiated the first collective agreement there and became active in CUPE politics.

CA [00:05:39] Tell us a little bit about the organization of the CUPE office, of the Legal Aid office or the, sorry, the Community Law Office.

JQ [00:05:48] This caused some waves with the Law Society because this was the first bargaining unit that included lawyers and non-lawyers in the same bargaining unit. The Law Society wasn't sure that this was fit and proper. They actually formed a committee to investigate and report on this. I made a submission about rights under the Constitution and under the Labour Code. The committee went away and the issue went away. That's no longer a novel thing but it was back then in '81, '82.

CA [00:06:26] We're still talking about the 80s and, during this time you're involved in tenants' rights, municipal politics. You're working as a legal aid office lawyer at the community law office in Abbotsford, working with the project for the United Farm Workers. And what else did you do?

JQ [00:06:47] I should mention, the tenants became a significant focus. I did quite a lot of representing tenants. It was also a time when, people may know at that time, there was

sort of a real estate bust. Interest rates were very high, and a lot of family farms and family homes were being foreclosed. I did a great deal of work representing people who were in danger of losing their homes or their family farms. Also very involved in tenants, tenant law and tenants' rights. We had a little group that would get together of advocates for tenants. We sort of had an inkling something nasty was coming up very soon from Victoria. One evening when we were meeting, we formed the Tenants Rights Coalition, and prophetically, the next day, Bill Bennett's government introduced a whole slurry of bills, including one that would have eliminated the landlord tenant legislation, would have eliminated any security of tenure for tenants. It meant that a landlord could evict a tenant as long as they gave them enough notice, absolutely no entitlement to a rental property as though it were your home. They eliminated any recourse to arbitration or any kind of tribunal so that if you had a problem with a leaking toilet, I guess you'd have to go to the B.C. Superior Court and apply for an injunction to get the landlord to fix your toilet.

CA [00:08:09] That was part of the 19 Bad Bills.

JQ [00:08:13] That was it. It was one of the centrepieces of that.

CA [00:08:16] That then led to Operation Solidarity.

JQ [00:08:19] And got involved very early on in the Solidarity Coalition. I was the tenant representative. There was the Lower Mainland Solidarity Coalition, which morphed into the province-wide one. I was on the steering committee of the Solidarity Coalition through all of that time involved and coordinated political work. We achieved the only clear win on the social legislation front.

CA [00:08:43] What do you mean by that? The clear win.

JQ [00:08:46] The total withdrawal of the legislation by the government. They capitulated entirely. There was sort of a high point in that where, there's a lot of backstory to this I won't get into, it's entertaining. Wound up with a meeting with the minister, who was Jim Hewitt, in the cabinet offices in downtown Vancouver. I was there with Jim Green and Jean Swanson and a lot of usual suspects. I was there as the main spokesperson. We invited all of the news media without telling the government we were doing that. We had this meeting with Jim Hewitt. I remember him telling us verbatim, "A tenant has one right, one fundamental right. He could move if he wants to." That was after consulting with the tenants and the antipoverty people. Okay, tuck that away. Walk out the door and there is a bank of TV cameras, radio, microphones all over the place. I saw Hewitt sort of worming his way out of a back door to avoid this, and I just let them have it. I quoted what he'd said and denounced it. It was on the front page of the paper the next day. It was sort of the beginning of the end of that. I forget what bill number, Bill 18 or something like that in that onslaught. They withdrew that entirely. Because of that tenants were safe in their homes.

CA [00:10:06] What happened with TRAC, the Tenants Rights [Action] Coalition?

JQ [00:10:10] We formed a tenant office and got funding from the Law Foundation which uses the interest on lawyers' trust accounts for all kinds of worthy things. We got money for this, for ongoing advocacy, because in all that time, the province was formulating what it was going to do about tenants' rights and basically put in place essentially what we've got now. It's evolved. Also provided, sort of one-on-one representation services with paralegals who would assist tenants dealing with rent increases, evictions, repair notices and things.

CA [00:10:44] TRAC continues to this day.

JQ [00:10:46] Yeah, I think it's changed names and it's become a bit less radical than it was back then, shall we say. I think is a fair characterization.

CA [00:10:57] You were involved in Operation Solidarity, and at that time you were also co-president. What were some of the highlights in the 80s in municipal politics?

JQ [00:11:10] There were huge breakthroughs after years of Harry Rankin being the only voice of the left on council for a long time, more than a decade. We had Bruce Ericksen, Libby Davies getting elected on the city council, Bruce Yorke. There was a challenge on the most inane technicality of Bruce Yorke's election. He was number ten of the slate of ten so if there was a defect, he's the one who was sort of within the margin of error to get knocked off. Phillip Owen, who became the mayor some time later, brought a challenge on the basis that the procedure used for swearing oaths for tenants who had to swear to identify themselves hadn't been done properly. Purely, you know— And that resulted in a by-election and we absolutely wiped the floor, and Bruce Yorke was, and it really strengthened the organization in a lot of ways.

JQ [00:12:06] A couple of years after that, we elected a majority under the Vancouver School Board. At present, cover yourself being one of the trustees, Carmela. The school board then, chaired by Pauline Weinstein, who was a force to be reckoned with, simply refused to implement budget cuts. The government dissolved the board and appointed a trustee who, shortly after looked through the books and said, 'Oh, I can't cut anything. There's nothing to cut here. They were telling the truth.' After a great deal of political pressure, a legal challenge that didn't succeed but certainly focused attention, with Harry Rankin arguing and I assisted him on that. There was a by-election and we swept the entire board. Sometimes, triumphs could be pulled out of adversity.

CA [00:13:06] I want to move to the 90s and the next phase in your career and political involvement. At this time, where were you working?

JQ [00:13:19] I was basically a legal aid bureaucrat. I was working at the head office of the Legal Services Society that ran legal aid offices, funded community law offices, like the one that I had started out in Abbotsford, and programs like that, prison legal services, Indigenous legal services, various other other programs, legal education, maintained a law library.

CA [00:13:43] Did you have any union involvement at that time?

JQ [00:13:46] Yes. I was, actually, I was a representative of management in negotiating at one point with the BCGEU. Across the table was Joanne Fox, the spokesperson for the BCGEU. We had quite a packet of money that we wanted to make sure that the employees got. I was terrified that Joanne was going to accept our second last offer, some members saying, almost slipped her a note saying, I gotta warn you, we're getting really close because we put a number on the table that was already quite a bit more than they'd expected. We're getting really close as far as we can go here, just hold her off. We proposed as the employer, as the Legal Aid system proposed, same sex extended health benefits, which were novel at the time. Sometimes, having a progressive lawyer or progressive employer can be a pretty useful thing for working people. I was working in that

system for a while and then itchy feet, time to move on. I became the, I was briefly the executive director there.

JQ [00:14:59] I moved on and got a position with what was then the Vancouver Municipal and Regional Employees Union, VMREU, which was about 7 or 8,000 member union that represented City of Vancouver inside workforce, Vancouver School Board support staff, civic theaters, community colleges, civic museums, GVRD support staff and police. It's quite a large and diverse union, a number of other and community.

CA [00:15:26] What was your role there?

JQ [00:15:27] I was the business manager, so I was sort of supervising the staff. I was the lead negotiator. I was the communications department as well, and doing some legal work. It was quite a variegated kind of role, led a couple of strikes, did a fair amount of bargaining. That was sailing along. We got into a long rotating strike the way these things happened in municipal strikes. You hit one department one week and then another the next. You make yourself popular by putting bags over the parking meters so people aren't paying for their parking. We would pinch off things that were revenue sources for the employers, sort of rolling along nicely. Meanwhile there were internal issues in the union. That needs to be said. Things were running reasonably stably because I had support from both of the groups who each saw the other as an opponent. Having been around the labour movement myself, I thought these people, if you line them up, they'd be almost side by side on the spectrum. Especially it was an independent union and it should be said that it lacked the perspective you get by being an integral part of the larger movement. I realized that I was putting enormous efforts into holding a lot of things together and preventing things from following the natural course flowing from people's decisions and choices. I was sort of the buffer or as, one of the people told me from one of the groups who was not happy with what I wound up doing, told me I was the ballast. I said I never signed on to be ballast. I resigned and I did it with a big splash. I sent a letter to every member of the union telling them why a number of things were set in motion, pieces falling up in the air and then magically landing on the ground as CUPE Local 15, sailing on a stable [unclear]. Life is always complex, but basically the problem was solved. The most useful thing I ever did for that union was to quit. You should draw a lesson from that (laughter).

CA [00:17:33] What did you do after that?

JQ [00:17:34] After that, I got a position as a staff lawyer with the nonprofit law office called the BC Public Interest Advocacy Centre. They do test case, social rights litigation and it would also represent low income consumers in things like telephone rate hearings, BC Hydro, what's now Fortis, in those days, BC Gas hearings, basically utility regulation, a lot of stuff like that. I got involved in a fair amount of telecom, fighting against deregulation, which was really marching away in Ottawa at the time, and BC Hydro and other things. I did manage to, I'll take personal credit, put sand in the gears of an effort (I hate to say this was under a friendly NDP government) to break up BC Hydro the way Ontario was—

CA [00:18:24] That was back in the 90s.

JQ [00:18:25] In the 90s under Dan Miller to break up BC Hydro into three separate companies like Ontario Hydro, Hydro One and all these other things. I just sort of managed to prevent the process from working properly so that didn't happen. That's a funny feather in your cap that you prevented something. I've got a history of preventing things from

happening. It was quite a varied role there. The sort of a whiff of gunpowder in the labour law trenches were getting starting to attract me again. I went to the Hospital Employees' Union. I became the legal director, settled in there. I was the only lawyer there at that time. About two years after, I was only a lawyer, except that there was a CUPE lawyer who was assigned to work with HEU, who was also present company, Carmela, who was in that role. We were the, for practical purposes, the legal department. Then, early 80s, Gordon Campbell's in power—

CA [00:19:34] Early 2000.

JQ [00:19:35] Early 2000s, brings in Bill 29 that guts the collective agreements.

CA [00:19:40] Tell us about that.

JQ [00:19:44] It was like a bomb going off in the health sector as far as not just workers' rights, but workers' lives and their livelihoods. They did things like eliminating seniority and bumping rights, for example, and had this plan to sort of start shuffling people around and to use that as a vehicle to get rid of people they didn't like. Through legal maneuvers we managed to get this issue back in front of the board.

CA [00:20:13] The labour board.

JQ [00:20:14] The Labour Relations Board. This was a part of the whole process of doing a successorship, because they reorganized all the health authorities and the board can attach conditions. We went through must have been 15,000 documents over a weekend. We had demanded documents and the Health Employers Association thought they'd teach us a lesson sort of backed a truck up and dumped them off. Some other unions just looked at it and gasped. We got a whole crew of people together going through and we found what we're looking for. The key thing was an email that was a clear example of them making use of this Bill 29 to get rid of somebody that they didn't like. We had the smoking gun and persuaded the Labour Relations Board to basically construct a bumping, a rudimentary bumping mechanism that would take place during this reorganization. It restored people's right to be able to land in their own place and their own job which had been designed to be obliterated.

CA [00:21:22] Tell us more about the legal fight against Bill 29.

JQ [00:21:29] We were constantly at the board and in court and winning a lot of things, a lot of peripheral issues. The big thing was, could they really get away with this?

CA [00:21:39] Could who get away with this?

JQ [00:21:41] The government.

JQ [00:21:42] Gordon Campbell and the health employers and the public, the private sector that wanted to privatize all of this was all part of that scheme. We were thinking about designing a charter challenge to this. The problem was that there was well-established Supreme Court of Canada jurisprudence saying that the right of access to collective bargaining is not protected under the charter. This is a big problem. There had been a couple of cases that were little glimmers of light. Were those folks in Ottawa prepared to take another look at this? Maybe.

CA [00:22:20] When you mean those folks in Ottawa.

JQ [00:22:22] The Supreme Court of Canada.

JQ [00:22:24] Beverly McLaughlin then was the chief justice and liberal minded and sympathetic in a lot of ways to social rights. We were contemplating this. I got a call out of the blue from Murray Rankin, who was then a partner of Joe Arvay. He's now the Minister of Indigenous Affairs provincially. He called me up from Arvay Findlay, his firm, and said, 'Hey, Jim, we'd like to do a test case to defend Medicare.' I said, 'No, that's not what you're going to do. You're going to do a case to challenge Bill 29.' We started discussing this. In this situation we needed, first of all, the absolutely best lawyer we could get. On constitutional issues, that was the late Joe Arvay. We needed somebody that all of the unions, could be the flagship for everybody. Not one of us, not one of them, we got Joe. Without a history, really with the labour movement. He had done work for unions, but he wasn't a labour law practitioner. He was the best constitutional lawyer in the country. We started working with him, designing the case, putting together arguments, working through a lot of things, gathering affidavits, lining everything up. Off we go. We knew we had a good case with one problem, which is what the Supreme Court of Canada had done back in 1989. We knew that the case would get stronger as we ascended through the courts but until we got to the Supreme Court of Canada, we weren't in a court that had the firepower to deliver what was needed, but we had to go through the process.

JQ [00:24:14] What you do at the bottom level creates the platform for everything that happens up above in the higher courts that you're just appealing or reviewing what the the lower court, the B.C. Supreme Court had done. A huge amount of effort put together the case. The case gained more and more momentum as it rose. As it was going, after it went on, immediately started dealing with headwinds from a lot of the labour bar. I maybe shouldn't say this, but the labour bar, my sense was they thought that these people from British Columbia can't handle complicated things like—that's unfair. They worked very hard to talk us out of it. They said, 'All you're going to do is set a bad precedent. Challenging head on. Is there now a constitutional right to engage in free collective bargaining?' They worked mightily to persuade the unions to back down. One of my major tasks during all this time was a lot of heavy duty diplomatic keeping people going. It's okay guys. We know this is going to be a big process. We know it's going to cost a lot of money, but we think that in the end the prize is there for the taking.

CA [00:25:32] And was it?

JQ [00:25:34] In the end it was. We'd since moved on from HEU. Every few years I changed careers.

CA [00:25:41] Where did you end up?

JQ [00:25:43] From there I went back to BC Public Interest Advocacy Centre. I became the executive director there, set to work on a project to challenge the voter rights idea that Stephen Harper's government had brought in that was disenfranchising tons of people, even like the First Nations person couldn't use their status card, wasn't adequate ID under their rules. It was just appalling. We worked up a major court challenge to that. The government responded by softening a lot of the details, so suddenly the status cards were put in the list of acceptable documents. A number of things to ease, they made it easier to be able to get vouched for by other people, took a bit of the edge off it. In the end the case wasn't successful in terms of the verdict but we did manage to achieve some

improvements. What we got now, I don't like it. There's still ID requirements, but there's a lot more leeway to find solutions. Chalk that up. Meanwhile, quite heavily involved representing low income consumers especially before BC Hydro, Fortis Gas and other utilities and ICBC which came under Utilities Commission jurisdiction.

CA [00:27:02] Where did you end up after BCPIAC?

JQ [00:27:07] Whenever I find myself away from labour law again, I'd sort of miss the gunpowder and the bugles of the trenches of labour law. I got a position with what is now MoveUP, COPE, Canadian Office and Professional Employees, as their legal and regulatory director. They were starting to get involved at the Utilities Commission because they represent Hydro inside workers, Fortis gas and electrical workers and ICBC workers. They have a big stake in what the regulator does to their employers. It also gives you mechanisms where you can find out all kinds of stuff about your employer's insides. You can force them to disclose all kinds of financial information, disclose what their big plans are, disclose what their plans are for staff. Why other utility unions don't engage in this stuff is beyond me. Part of my role there, similar to what I was doing for low income consumers at BCPIAC, I was at the union representing the union at the Utilities Commission, and also doing a lot of their labour law, supervising and training their staff representatives, doing some of the other cases myself. I did that for a while. From there went into private practice, basically doing the same thing. I'm now in private practice. I am that union's lawyer at the Utilities Commission. That is a particularly interesting time with climate policy and all of the things that are hanging over, especially gas and utility workers.

CA [00:28:38] Tell me about that.

JQ [00:28:41] One approach that one might take and that some people take and that's their business is just to sort of resist movement in the direction of decarbonizing the economy, that is hang on to all of the natural gas product that we use now with all of the greenhouse gas emissions it causes and just fight against change. My view and the union's view, my client's view is that this is self-defeating. What is much more useful strategically is to play an active role in how change takes place, because there's a lot of very different possibilities. If you barrel along like there's no problem, you go over a cliff. If you keep your eye on where things are coming down the road two years, five years, ten years, 20 years out, you could start to modify things to achieve what I call a soft landing. The union was onto this big time before the company was, because the people who really have a long-term stake, especially in the gas utility, are the employees. Shareholders can put their money anywhere they want. Everybody knows managers come and go. Consumers can put in baseboard or electric heat pump and they're out but people have their careers, their pensions, their lives basically structured around these positions. They've got a long-term interest. Ratepayer groups representing consumers care mostly what are my rates going to be this year and next? We have kind of a unique perspective.

JQ [00:30:19] I think it's fair to say that we've had a significant impact on the Utilities Commission's thinking and also, on the way that Hydro and Fortis are approaching some of these issues about how you plan your resources to achieve transition to a lower carbon economy, where, for example, Fortis is going to rely more on hydrogen. They were heading that way anyway. Hydrogen, so-called renewable natural gas, various other ways to change from a one trick pony selling gas that's been fracked out of the ground into a more diverse energy services company. That can be done but you need runway to do that. That means you've got to start thinking and planning ahead. That's been probably the main thrust over the last while of what I've been working out on behalf of the union.

CA [00:31:13] I want to change topic a little bit and ask you to tell us who were some of the people that influenced you the most in your labour and political career?

JQ [00:31:27] Harry Rankin. I learned a lot of politics and a lot of how to practice law from Harry Rankin. There were people like Ben Swankey, who was sort of a mentor and educator to a lot of the left in British Columbia. I learned a lot from Ben, Maurice Rush, some of these other folks. Those are some of the ones that really set me on my early course and people like Libby Davies were very close friends and co-conspirators, you might say in a lot of ways, I don't mean that nefariously. We see eye to eye on a lot of issues. The left in Vancouver is, it's basically a small town and people know each other. It's fallen into an unfortunate state, specifically right now with fragmentation. People need strategies to find their way out of that. That's been achieved before, and I think it can be achieved again.

CA [00:32:33] What was your proudest moment as a labour lawyer?

JQ [00:32:38] Proudest moment? Probably. I wasn't even there. That's when the Supreme Court of Canada declared that freedom of association incorporates a right to access to free collective bargaining.

CA [00:32:52] How do you think that from your perspective, that the labour movement in B.C. has changed over time?

JQ [00:33:00] Oh it's changed massively. For one thing, the workforce has changed so much. When I was starting out I was president of this little CUPE Local, 2699 doesn't exist anymore. It was the Abbotsford Legal Aid office. We had maybe a dozen people, but I was very active in CUPE and BC Fed, and I'd go to CLC Conventions. The Woodworkers were a huge force at the time. The IWA, International Woodworkers of America as it then was, had 70,000 or more members in British Columbia. It was absolutely massive, 80,000. It was very active in all the labour councils, and it was really the lifeblood of a lot of labour councils. There's a lot of good work being done today by labour councils, but they were all over the province. They had this energy, these resources that were flowed into them by the IWA. There emerged what was called the Action Caucus, which was sort of a loose grouping or alignment of some of the more progressive activists in the labour movement. I was quite involved in that. It would sort of get tooled up, especially at Fed conventions, and deal with making sure that the important points are being expressed at the microphones, making sure that issues were being addressed that needed to be addressed, and taking positions on things like the election of officers, which was not quite as pro forma as it is today.

CA [00:34:38] What do you think is the most important or are the important issues facing workers today from your perspective and your history?

JQ [00:34:46] The biggest issue facing workers is that our civilization is in danger of becoming extinct over the next century because of climate change. I mean that overwhelms everything. There's going to be enormous loss of human life. People have really important issues in their lives. If they could imagine forward what things are going to be like in 20 or 30 years, that would create a different perspective. People get upset about a few cents on their gasoline over carbon tax because it's easy to wrap your head around that. Difficult to contemplate what life is going to be like for each of us with what is already baked in. I don't want to sound too negative. If we have our eyes open and we're intelligent

in how we conduct ourselves, we can have a big impact on how things land. There's still room to do that. I'll just say that sort of swamps everything else. There's all the economic issues that afflict working people everywhere in Canada, especially in Vancouver, the cost of housing is horrific. People just, working families just can't live in this town anymore. There is the overarching that, and really overarching in some ways, the climate crisis and how we got there, was the fact that we've got a tiny number of extremely wealthy people who own the planet, they own the global economy, they own governments, they own the legal systems, they own and run everything. They produce nothing. What they do is they operate these gigantic so-called high tech IT, social media that enslave us and turn us into commodities.

CA [00:36:38] What's the role of unions in that?

JQ [00:36:41] The role of unions always is to be the organized, progressive voice of working people and to address workplace issues. Obviously, it is important, but also to look up at the broader horizon and see where those issues are really coming from, because all these other problems ultimately manifest from who is running our world and the enormous obscene disparity of wealth which exceeds anything, way worse than feudal times, worse than the so-called Gilded Age, the beginning of the 20th century. We've never seen anything like this, where the group of people you could fit in a medium-sized room, run everything in their own interests and are absolutely sociopathic in the way that they do it.

CA [00:37:37] I want to finish with a couple of other questions. Why is it important that we commemorate workers and people who contributed to the building of the labour movement in the past?

JQ [00:37:50] First of all, if we don't know where we've come from, we can't figure out where to go next. People have struggled very hard to achieve things that we take for granted. They're very precious, but easily lost. Maybe we're in a time where people are going to start recognizing things they took for granted are fragile and easily lost. We see that politically in the United States with the Roe v. Wade decision. Everybody sort of assumes their rights are secure. They're only secure as long as the other side lets us keep them. That's a lesson that workers learn the hard way over many, many decades. Let's make sure we don't forget it. We need to produce and we are producing a crop of activists. I'm very heartened by the calibre of a lot of the young activists and working people that are emerging right now.

CA [00:38:40] Thank you.