**Bill’s Interview – Part I**

Andy: Well my name’s Andy-

Bill: Hi Andy

Andy: and I’m from CCSU and uh-

Jacob: I’m Jacob! Nice to meet you.

Bill: Okay hi

Andy: That’s Jacob he’s going to take notes-

Bill: Yup

Andy: and uh uh you’re from Willimantic?

Bill: Yes

Andy: That’s a nice, nice place, and uh –

Bill: I’m a business owner in Willimantic

Andy: Oh! Are you?

Bill: Yeah

Jacob: Excellent

Bill: You ever hear of Hosmer Mountain Soda?

Jacob: Yeah! I love Hosmer.

Bill: We’ve been in the business for 110 years so… That’s just, on the side.

Andy: Okay

Bill: I’m uh um and activist I’m uh a very progressive businessman.

Jacob: Awesome

Andy: I see

Bill: Small business people should all be progressive cause y’know the corporate world is the problem

Jacob and Andy: mhm mhm

Bill: That’s the way we see it so… We work with our help everyday. We make one and a half times what our help makes ha ha ha instead of… what is it now? 300? [percent]

Andy: 3000-

Bill: Ridiculous

Jacob: Yeah

Andy: And uh what is your name please?

Bill: Bill

Andy: Bill

Bill: Potvin

Andy: How do you spell that?

Bill: P-O-T-V-I-N

Andy: French…

Bill: It means jug of wine. Pot de Vin. It’s French Canadian.

Andy: I see

Jacob: Awesome

Andy: Okay and uh… let’s see it’s uh… 4/23…

Bill: What is the Heritage Fiesta?

Andy: This is it

Bill: Oh this-that’s the name of this event?

Andy: Yeah that’s the name of this event

Bill: Okay. Have you done it before?

Andy: I mean it’s been done before by other uh classes of this, of this class…

Bill: Okay

Andy: but uh yeah I guess the last one-

Jacob: It was before COVID. They stopped doing it because of the COVID

Andy: Yeah I guess the last one was like twenty eighteen or something

Bill: Oh okay yeah that’s been a blip on everything huh?

Jacob: yeah

Bill: This this piece of stuff that’s just tossed out and hopefully we can get back to regular.

Andy and Jacob: yes

Jacob: Fingers crossed

Andy: Well uh well someday… Every time you think it’s getting back to normal-

Bill: I know

Andy: - They have another uh variation that comes along

Bill: I know. Frustrating.

Andy: And uh or China it’s really uh-

Bill: I got through the first ones and could no problem then this one just hit me

Andy: Yeah

Bill: y’know because it’s more contagious than the old ones even

Andy: You had symptoms or?

Bill: Uh yeah all I had was uh I had some fatigue and some coughing

Andy: Yeah

Bill: And a runny nose that was it. It was like a cold

Andy: right

Bill: It was just had a, I just had a cold that’s all so

Andy: Okay. Would you mind giving me your date of birth?

Bill: Yeah! 3-28-46

Andy: Three- Twenty Eight- Forty Six…. Alright the end of World War II

Bill: Yep I’m a Baby Boomer

Andy: yeah and uh how’d you find out about the Heritage Festival[sic.]?

Bill: Uh the professor came to an event that the Veterans For Peace had somewhere and I met him and uh y’know we like him. We like his message and uh y’know we’re… our message is constantly anti-war and anti-violence and all that an then… His book that he’s written is uh, y’know, another big slug of injustice. I mean, y’know when you see that level of injustice we want to pull it in and uh hopefully we put all the pieces together there’ll be enough people to go ‘yeah those guys are right’.

Jacob: mhm

Bill: It’s ridiculous what we do to other countries, and what to our people who volun… these guys who have served in Vietnam, I’m a Vietnam veteran myself. How could you serve in ‘Nam not being a citizen, wind up a prisoner, and then you come back and you get deported. I mean at somepoint .. ha… it’s a headshaker. Like what. Are we exceptional?

Andy: Yeah well uh

Bill: Exceptional shitheads is what is amounts to.

Jacob: yeah

Bill: I hate to use that term but that’s uh

Andy: Well it’s uh…

\*\*\*\* END OF BILL INTERVIEW PART I - BEGINNING OF PART II \*\*\*\*

Andy:… it’s always been like that y’know. When, when the wars over then they are done with the soldiers y’know and then they’re just a problem.

Bill: I know it

Andy: Going back to ancient times-

Bill: yeah

Andy: it’s always been like that

Bill: But you’d uh hopefully uh uh we want to be able to learn a little from history. Unfortunately the Veterans for Peace are probably one half of one percent of veterans. There’s a little sliver of people who see it that way and a lot of other veterans they tend to be warmongers. Believe it or not.

Andy: So, so the, so the group that, that you belong to, is it Veterans for Peace?

Bill: Yes

Andy: Okay

Bill: Yup

Andy: And uh is that like a national organization?

Bill: yeah, yeah it’s actually uh international

Andy: Okay

Bill: Yup

Andy: How long have you been a member?

Bill: Probably for twenty five years

Andy: So it’s been around for a while

Bill: Yup. It started in the late ‘80s I think it was. I forget the uh thing.

Andy: Okay and um what, what does heritage mean to you? Does it have any meaning for you?

Bill: Well… Heritage would be the, the history of somethin’

Andy: mhm

Bill: y’know just like we – I have a company that’s a hundred – so our, our company has a heritage. Y’know it started before World War One so

Andy: So this is a company started by somebody else in your family?

Bill: No, nope it was started by a certain family, went to another family, and another, we’re the fourth family. We-Our family has now owned it from the late ‘50s through today, which is a longer period than the other three families.

Andy: Oh I see

Bill: Yup

Andy: Let’s see, and um, y’know, what um, what was the name of the company again?

Bill: Hosmer. H-O-S-M-E-R Mountain

Andy: Hosmer Mountain uh soda company?

Bill: Yeah

Andy: and you’re uh an owner?…

Bill: Yeah, I’m one of the owners

Andy: Alright and uh… what’s your cultural identity? You said French Canadian?

Bill: Yeah

Andy: and uh, do you have any uh-uh, strong uh, connection to that uh heritage?

Bill: No, not really, no, it’s just uh, y’know…

Andy: How, how long ago did uh-

Bill: Willimantic has had a wave of different ethnic groups over the years because they had the biggest thread mill in the world.

Andy: right, yeah

Bill: So they would, y’know, the French Canadians came down, y’know, in the late 1800s and then there was uh another wave of uh displaced persons-

Andy: right

Bill: …after World War II.

Andy: right

Bill: And then the Puerto Rican community too. So that when you got that type of a big business it, it draws uh people looking for work.

Andy: Right

Bill: There was five thousand people in one company.

Andy: Right so um so your family came down from Canada in the late 19th century?

Bill: Yeah

Andy: Okay uh… do you? uh… and they came right to Willimantic?

Bill: Yes

Andy: and is this uh both sides of your family?

Bill: Uh no that’s my fathers side, the Potvins. My mother is Scotch-Irish and she, she, y’know she grew up uh… They were both… from the-

END OF BILL INTERVIEW PART II