

INTERVIEW WITH JEAN-SERGE POLISI

Archives vivantes des Rwandais exilés au Canada suite au Génocide et aux violences
antérieures

Living Archives of Rwandan Exiles and Genocide Survivors in Canada

Ubuhamya bw'Abanyarwanda bahungiyeye muri Canada Jenocide n'itotezwa ryayibanjirije

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Name of interviewee: Jean-Serge POLISI (JSP)

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Biography of interviewee:

Born in Kigali, Rwanda in 1991 [translators' note: correct birth year is 1971], Jean-Serge Polisi has been in Canada for fifteen years. He has two little sisters. His father, a former seminarian, is an accountant and his mother is a teacher. He spent his childhood in Rwanda and Burundi, land of refuge, every time there was violence in Rwanda. He experienced the joy of living with his parents and grandparents and uncles, who taught him hard work, loyalty, self-sacrifice and responsibility.

00:00:12**SG: Before starting, I'll ask you to introduce yourself.**

JSP: Ok...[laughter]... well, I'm originally Rwandan, Rwandan-Canadian, and my name is Jean-Serge Polisi. So, it's been about... fifteen years I think that I've been in Canada and I was born in 1991 [1971] so... there, I could introduce myself...

SG: Where?

JSP: Where? In Kigali, I was born in Rwanda, in Kigali, at the time it was called Nyarugenge or Rugenge, and now it's become Kigali-Ngali; so it's really in the city of Kigali, very close to the prison, I don't know if you know the current Kigali prison, it would probably be that; unless you want me to get into more details but ...[laughter].

SG: [inaudible] ... this interview is a life story, so we'll start with, chronologically with your memories of your grandparents, did you know your grandparents?

JSP: Whoah ...you're going too fast [laughter]. Ok, my grandparents..., I think that on my mother's, side I'm very lucky, I really knew them..., both of them, and at an age when you learn

everything about life, so I knew them from the age of fifteen; and I had heard so much about them, then I got to know them at fifteen and it was ... they lived in Shyorongi, it's a hill, upon leaving Kigali to go to Butare or towards Ruhengeri, which is really between the two, pinched by two roads that lead as much to Butare as to Ruhengeri. And how did I get to know them? It was like a return to Rwanda, and I really had the chance to get to know my paternal grandfather and my maternal grandmother. I think that they were around sixty at that time, and they had almost perfectly succeeded in life, almost everything that they had undertaken, I think they had really succeeded. On my father's side it's different, because my father never knew his father; so, I only got to know my grandmother, an exceptional woman that I knew my whole life and who, through the great luck of life, is still alive; I would even say that she's 94 (ninety-four) today. So, I knew this grandmother, tenacious, strong, who did not really have the pleasure of living with her other family members, due to what happened at home with the war. So unfortunately, I'll never have the pleasure of knowing my paternal grandfather, but I still have something that remains in my name because at the time, he was, he had dedicated his life to the police, the municipality; so it's from this that we bear our family name.

SG: And what was the relationship..., so the grandparents that you knew, what was their relationship with your mother like? What did they pass on to your parents?

JSP: I think that the best value was that everything comes from hard work. My mother had a certain ease, flexibility, she laughed all the time, a kind of relativism, of resilience, not fatalism, but she knew that everything is acquired somewhat through work; but in daily life, it wasn't seen, everyone laughed... it was a more or less easy life, somewhat *mu kinyarwanda baravuganga ni abatesi*: naive, innocent, slightly caricatured people, otherwise when you had the chance to see, you felt that there was much rigour and requirements from work, manual labour, physical

and also a form of construction, development of self and he has that from his grandfather who was a very, very hard worker, really a very, very hard worker which explains even maybe why sometimes events somewhat saved him because his, his skills , his .. were somewhat needed somewhere. He worked on construction sites, he made roads, there were farms, so he worked really...a tillage of the land. I think, on my mother's side, I could say this, I could go further but I take it as a [inaudible]. On my father's side, for him I think that he ..., what he had as luck, he had it..., like..., the relatives at home, on the father's side, they sent him to school right away. They went..., one good day, they said to him: "you are no longer a child at home, you have to just go to school." He started school, I would say catechism, don't know what they called it at the time. Well, he was going to jump the gun because he started a little older than the others, I imagine; I think he was eight or nine years old, it was a bit late but at the time maybe it was done easily; then he would continue his entire life for the church and with the church. So, he's a real Catholic Christian who would really almost finish the Seminar. When we talking about this, it means five years maybe in primary school, six years in secondary or maybe five years, but five years also of post-secondary. So, you'll research like..., what they call in Catho... Christian language, having completed the Seminar; so, you've done all the philosophy, psychology, social sciences before doing the practice. He just had [mimes with his fingers] a half second left to become a priest; ... which gave him much of what he was until the end of his life in intellectual terms.

SG: When you look at them now, what have you inherited from your parents today, from each of them?

JSP: I inherited many things! One, I once in a while, have the opportunity to say..., that they worked tirelessly so that I could get the best schools! So, everything I got from school is thanks

to them, the joy of living : it's undeniable that without my parents, I wouldn't have it, whatever the moments, the most mundane moments or the hardest or the best ones, always flavoured with an after-taste of laughter ..., really, as if one didn't have the right to have ... to feel frustrated by life. So, for a long time we knew that everything was possible, and then there is always a saying at home, with an after-taste that said: "you make yourself or you're nothing", so that means that you are what you want to become no matter what happens, it's you that has to decide your destiny somewhat. So, I think that describes the situation a bit because ... we experienced ... life was not stable and consistent so; sometimes we found ourselves in situations where it was totally your personality that would help you get out of it: it's not the stuff that you studied at school, but rather the little proverbs, the little : "you'll make it" pat on the back and this is important, you need to do this, otherwise it's some of this richness that we received at home, and one very, very important thing, I think, is something like loyalty and faithfulness; so it's like..., there was no room to lie to do..., we knew what we had to do or not do; so, once the beating came, you knew that you deserved the worst, there was no room for discussion [laughter]. It's education that I owe to them, and self-sacrifice; self-sacrifice in all that..., whether it be at work, whether it be..., not to sleep when there's a job to be done..., responsibility..., it's really a Rwandan-style education. I really don't have anything else to add to these words.

S.G: You spoke about your grandparents' occupations, what were your parents' occupations?

JSP: My father became..., my father he had..., in my life, from what I remember, my father was an accountant. As I am born and I live, my father is an accountant. However, I know, perfectly that he's not an accountant. So, I said that he had done sociology, psychology, he did the Seminar, it's a package deal, later he'd do one or two years of agronomy at the Butare National

University; he'd stop, he had an accident, and then he didn't have the luck to have what, at the time, was called..., insurance; so he had to stop and then ..., it's maybe at this time, a point of reflection, to get to know himself and to refocus on himself because he had seemingly lost everything, that's when he started the accounting classes and in an informal way, but as he was among the pioneers of the time, so he went all the way with that, he went looking for real expertise, of the kind that..., when people spoke of accounting they knew what he could do; not just at the family level but at the level..., he made a name for himself. He even managed to open a practice at the time; I would say a private practice in Burundi at the time; which is still something to acknowledge. He had many private practices or things..., he made a name for himself.

My mother, she was a schoolteacher, I could say a teacher. I think she had done what we called social..., normal social, am not too sure about the ..., but at the time, when she met my father, she was a teacher. She knew Burundi very well because it's where she lived, studied ..., Burundi or Gitega? They met in Rwanda. They met in Rwanda in the seventies and I was born in seventy-one. Then in seventy-three they were forced to flee Rwanda. So, they had..., two or three years in which they can say that they led a peaceful life as a couple, when I was born, but very quickly, they were forced to leave Rwanda. So, that's the knot, one of the knots that...to which all Rwandans find themselves grounded in facts: there is 1959, there are the events of 1970, there's 1973, there's the sixties..., in short, it's a historical path in which ..., if I can, in fact, take it all back since we're here, my father, sometimes I laugh, he turned eighteen in '59. He is from *Ruhengeri* which is in the northern region; so, at eighteen, '59, at thirty, '71, and at about fifty years old, the FPR war began. So, you're old enough to understand things and to take lessons from them. And..., when they searched my family in seventy-three, it's sort of the result of all of

that; so the guy tells himself ..., I imagine myself, I put myself ..., because now I understood all that was happening, the words, the half-words, the unspoken words, but now I really understood, seriously what happened to them, even leaving the clergy which is not what he wanted, it's because they were ejected from the clergy, and I imagine that there were years ..., in the 25 years maximum or approximately and when they were taken out of the clergy, they were not very happy, because they were three or about that, if my memory is good, and they were about to finish. So, they didn't choose to leave the clergy, maybe I wouldn't have been born, but it's an event that follows you and leads you to say: "life is not easy" especially in Rwanda at the time and especially for certain types of people.

SG: Who was in charge of your education, for example..., at home were chores assigned ..., [inaudible]?

JPS: This..., my mother ..., I think my mother had the whole task to herself, completely, she had ... [whistling and hand gesture to indicate that she did everything] she had... [laughter] but one thing is very certain, my father was always there. I think they shared chores ..., by far by father could see, my mother's professional training, she's a teacher, so she can't leave that, that's her life, teaching, also I wasn't my mother's only one. My mother, she didn't consider us to be her only children, so she would sometimes say that's my son too, that's my eldest, at some point, you know about the people she had taught, except that at home she could also be our accomplice, which means we could speak to her without ..., we weren't really afraid of our mother, as a mother who could hit or be hard on us, it was rather the father's role to be hard. And..., more or less, at that moment, when he wanted to be hard, she'd be the one to protect us ... But when I finished my primary school, even before, I think then I felt the change a bit..., I was becoming a little more under my father's thumb and it was he who would, from time to time, come and hold

me accountable, rather than my mother; maybe my mother was busier at that time with my two little sisters, ... who were not easy either. You know when you have three children, two young girls and a boy who is starting to grow, [inaudible, being...I...?] in Rwandan society anyways it becomes clearer: the boy goes to the father and the girls to the mother. Overall, I can say that that's it. But, being from a big family, that at some point [inaudible: due?] she came to live at grandpa's, I fell under grandpa's charge and then it was clear, the ..., the boy has to report to dad more, to grandpa and the girl or the girls are grandma's responsibility. The line is not very visible but that's sort of the key points: the son and the grandpa and the ..., the female gender under the grandmother's thumb. From time to time, it could change depending on family obligations or due to the urgency of a moment. And then the other thing that would be pretty interesting to say is ... my grandfather insisted on the physical aspect of education. So, he's the kind to say "why did you spend five hours today reading?" Because, for him, reading didn't cut it, reading, big philosophical reading, spending life reading, was not really his style, I imagine that it was from another time, he was more for tasks while my father was more into books, big intellectual discussions, but not necessarily into tasks.

SG: [inaudible: So, you were confused?]

JSP: Very confused. It really wasn't easy because at the beginning I arrived..., when I had a book that I read at home, within our little family, this was very good. But when I arrived at grandpa's, it was maybe not the thing to do, if you did it it's because it was evening and there were no more chores on the farm; so it's after certain hours, at six o'clock, six or seven or eight o'clock. At the little [inaudible] at home, grandpa, rather six, seven, eight in the evening, little family I had to be at home at grandfather's, he didn't care too much, you could go but tomorrow at six o'clock you had better to be up. So, you find a balance ..., but it's also an asset I think, once in the North we

don't tend to have this luck to "..."; otherwise my uncles, my uncles played an incredible role in my life. These are all models I used. So the education I received is rather ..., I went poking around everywhere, except the rigour was the same and my family knew more or less what I was doing or where I was and they knew very well where I shouldn't go and they had explained it to me very well. So, this is kind of the education that I will get [inaudible] you know, *ugafata ahantu hose mu babyeyi bawe*.

SG: You mentioned your two sisters to me ..., describe your sisters and especially the relationship that you had with each of them.

J-SP: Well, the one after me is now married, so I don't really have control, she's married; when we were young, it was a bit ..., she had a kind of tomboy style, so she's not a girl who necessarily does housework no, she's a girl who stands up for herself and she is rather strong and tall so she stands out, she basically contradicts me all the time which gets on my nerves in the end [laughter]. But the little sister, she's a little reserved; so she observes us, and she has ... she's a [inaudible], she has everything that comes from our parents, she has our parent's generosity, but at the same time, she is more disciplined I would say; she is more rigorous towards what she ..., she has like, she is sequential, which means that, basically, very fast ..., maybe she watched what we could or couldn't do so she knew very quickly where to look, as far as possible in the family. And she settled for that and for a long time; except that at some point we no longer lived with our father, so I imagine also that she grew up faster than us. She said "Ah, dad's not around anymore", so her mind opened very quickly ..., she maybe grew up faster and more necessarily than us. One good day, she was maybe nineteen, and I was 15, so as we lost, we lost our father when I was 20 years old, she, she must have been 13-14 years old, that too must have marked her while I, at 15 years old, was still a baby [laughter]. But both of us are

really ..., the only thing that bothers me is that we're spread out on the continent and ..., one is in Germany, I'm here, and the other one is in Rwanda, so we look for each other somewhat, we call each other on the phone, so we're not really what one could call a perfect example of a close-knit and united family, living under the same roof, speaking to each other every day, it creates a kind of independence; so then when we do meet, we feel like two adults who aren't necessarily brother and sister; we complete each other but we still have this, like, family spirit, hovering through, and which ..., which means that we are more inclined to listen to each other and hear each other quickly rather than to clash.

00:20:38

SG: What are the memories you have of your childhood ..., primary school, the first memories you have of your childhood?

JSP: There is something that ..., that really bothered me; in my life, we traveled a lot or moved a lot when I was young, and then, I asked myself why we couldn't stay put? For me that was called stability. OK, there are those that would say that Dad is working, he's found another job and we're moving because of that, a bit like co-operants: I moved according to my parent's work. But for us it wasn't like that, it was rather ..., we're in the same city but I had the feeling that we'd moved, we left such and such a neighbourhood for another neighbourhood. And later it ..., it brought me very quickly to a form of impatience; you can't have the same friends during a whole life, you have to change them ..., and then I was asking myself, trying to understand what was happening and later I realized that it was really ..., that it depends more on the history of Rwandans and also of history at all times, of our history in Rwanda, in Burundi and, you come to Canada, you have to move every first of July, you return to Rwanda after the genocide, that's when you realize that all you can do is and that what's left, in the end, are the connections

you have created with people hoping that these connections stand the test of time, and so ultimately to retain the friendship ties rather than the locations where you've lived, because otherwise you're lost. I remember shouting: "I don't want to move!" Mom saying very simple: "yes, because the school where you go is now over there and you'll be closer to school". I say: "no, it's been two or three times that we've come", she says: "no, well..., it's this or ...", but it stays a bit ... And the other thing that marked me ..., in life, in my childhood?

SG: Yes, the neighbourhood, the childhood home, because now you are in Burundi?

JSP: Even in Rwanda! Even in Rwanda.

SG: Even in Rwanda! You were born in Rwanda and two years later you went to Burundi?

JSP: That's it, then after 13 years of living in Burundi, in '86, exactly, we found ourselves in Rwanda. I lived in Rwanda from '86 to '91, and..., I attended secondary school there, and then, we first arrived at our grandparents' place, who took care of us for one or two years, then we moved, we became autonomous, we had our house. After one or two years, we had to somewhat change schools, then the war started, then we moved again! [laughter]. Then at that time, '91, life became impossible in Burundi..., in Rwanda, what do we do? We were already imagining a little tunnel to go somewhere else, so as not to be caught; we found ourselves back in Burundi, we..., started again, then we lived there two, three years, then the end of the war, we told ourselves but, first the time it takes to stabilize, we found a first job then after one or two years, we could find better, but after, oops, it's maybe time to..., we found Rwandans because the war has just been more or less atrocious, then we absolutely had to go home and fill the void in Rwanda. So, that's a quick little tableau, but that's dynamic... okay, we had some pretty unstable, pretty great years, so I had a really adorable childhood, I think that if I'm speaking of a bit of instability, it's

because it made its impression on me, but otherwise, I was very lucky, I really had a dad and a mom that I find, still today, exceptional. And..., I say it because they're my parents, often when I speak of my parents like that, I tend to tell myself: "ok my parents are great, but you tell yourself: "wait, but every child has a great dad and mom", but then you assess them objectively, and you realize that maybe there are others who more or less value your parents from X angle, and then you tell yourself: "did my parents do anything that would make them... exceptional?" At some point you say yes, it's true they did. Really, I only saw my parents helping or working and helping others and at no time did I see my parents being selfish. So, if I can say that it affected me, it can also go inside..., at the very least one would say: "no, we've had enough of..., yes, we'll go see auntie after" or..., you know a form of African- or rather Rwandan-style socialization where others always have a place, that too made an impression on me, a big moment that comes up, a Sunday at home or a Saturday, or at six o'clock in the morning, it comes from your upbringing, then one day when you're thirty years old, you tell yourself: "okay well ..., that's maybe what life is!" This little selfish comfort in which we find ourselves, you say, that's maybe somewhat what life is, once I'm grown up, I'll do it that way, huh! [laughter].

00:26:00

SG: And..., how was it at primary school, in Burundi..., your adaptation..., how did that go..., do you have memories of your school in Burundi?

JSP: I was really lucky at primary school where..., on an educational level, I think that my father, was very strict..., really when speaking of education, there was no room for negotiation. So we arrived in Burundi, he had the opportunity to do a really good job, it was after the events in Burundi, [inaudible], a good accountant, with a full CV, he arrived in Burundi, he found work right away. And I, to go to school, I went to the primary school of the French school at the time.

And..., you tell yourself that you're at the French school, you're a Rwandan refugee, in Burundi, it's not a given for everyone. And ..., I knew I was lucky, but strangely my mother didn't really want me to go to this white man's school that had all the makings of a wealthy education, etc., she was a teacher, so she had said to my father: « *don't place our son there because he'll encounter an ... enormous challenge* » ; you see, speaking French in a school, when you come home to a neighbourhood where more or less you live a more or less normal life, so you go to a school with a more or less Oriental, Occidental education, and you come home to a simple, normal neighbourhood, every day, *mu Ngagara*, where all the people have access..., how to explain? So, there are two access points that don't join, because often the people that go to French school are people who don't manage to live in the neighbourhood where I lived. But my father he, he was above all that, he said: "no, no, he said confrontation, challenge, first, ..., language first, he will have access to the best education, and then after that, the rest we'll manage at home"; except that he paid an enormous amount of money. He didn't pay as a co-operant because they have grants that they give, I think intergovernmental organizations... or I..., or otherwise, he didn't pay..., he couldn't pay like a Burundian because rare case, so he was in a third category that paid more, and really very expensively. When I think about it, I ask myself..., I ask myself why did he do that? And then I tell myself that it was important for him that I receive a good education. Except that I wouldn't stay long, I would do five years and I would really witness one of the best educations, sometimes it was hard, I admit that I wasn't always the perfect kid, it would also allow me to discover..., I know why I speak of this, a kind of racism, of the white man in Africa, even after decolonization and..., imagine, a school more or less entirely made up of whites, with a lot of people from Europe: Belgians or French, co-operants, right, but still with this seed of neocolonialism, I couldn't ..., how to explain..., where, it happens in Burundi, it's in a country of..., you know, of Africa, but those who are there, who were there to

help, for example this enlarged community, still this seed where they feel different, the hard nature of things and this is even transmitted to the children with whom we played. And, it made its impression on me, and I think it conditioned me very fast to the difference of colour, of race and ..., there was this part in my education that loomed a bit. And then I remember, speaking with my father who thinks I'm lying, and one day he wakes up with my mother, they tell me, that they had noticed a kind of intolerance and ignorance in that school; it had been four and a half or five years that I'd been there; so..., but my sisters, it's strange, I think that it cost the family a lot, they couldn't join me at that school, they were in a public school. Maybe too, they had the chance to learn in relation to what was happening to me, and my mother I think at the beginning really wanted that ..., she wanted us to have the same education as the people in the environment that we found ourselves in. Anyways, well, in short, anyways I left there, and I went to a Rwandan school.

SG: In Burundi.

JSP: In Burundi. So I arrived there, private school in Burundi, *École libre*, and then, I fall into the Rwandan community, completely, one hundred percent immersed; and then, I realize that yes, it's different, and I still do everything to pass my national exam, that was difficult because the first year, I would say the first six months, because I hadn't done the full year, I had to adapt, and the last year of primary school, I had to pass my official exam, and then I succeeded, we were four, then..., I had the right to go to Saint Albert secondary school in Burundi. Then after that, I would go to *Saint Esprit* school, I tell myself I could have it even a bit better, [laughter]..., then after, later I would finish at the APACOPE [Association of Parents for the Contribution to the Promotion of Education] which is in Rwanda, so that's where I finished my secondary school. And..., briefly, I don't know if I said everything that...

SG: And ..., do you have memories of your favourite teachers ..., from Burundi, in the different schools precisely that you attended [inaudible: that made an impression on you?]

JSP: Yes, I knew a teacher...unfortunately I don't recall the names right away, I remember his face ... ; they called it CP [Preparatory Course] at the French school, it was a teacher, a school master who was very, very, very interesting, I think that he's the one who gave me the energy to ..., despite my being different from everyone else but..., my behaviour, he really gave me joy and energy; I believed in him and he believed in me, and everything became possible in that moment. And, it's true also in kindergarten there was a lady, I think her name was Ms. Nathalie, she really gave, gave energy ..., like a blast of possibilities to what I was doing in primary school. Very quickly, okay I'm skipping ahead because I don't want ..., I went to the *École Libre*, and there, there was a man named Rwirangira, Brother Rwirangira, it was he that was like the principal of the primary school where I was, who was in charge of education. He was a Brother, [inaudible: as it was African ..., it was what kind of Brother?] Anyway, he was in charge of the whole *École Libre* where we were and each time, I said hello to him, I felt him to be an educator, a teacher you know, an educator, someone who is really a teacher. He was the one who welcomed me when I changed. He's the one who made sure ... that when I succeeded, he even came to the house to congratulate me personally. So, it's after-sales service. You arrive, they welcome you, they follow your journey... You're maybe the twenty-fourth because I had just arrived at the school. He followed me, he told me that it was alright. I arrived, I was the eighth, he told me you've made progress. The next session he told me very good, perfect, and when I finished, he said to me ...; he was a gentleman ..., he really came to congratulate me, hand in hand, as if I was his age! And this really made an impression on me; and then at school ..., at secondary school, I had several teachers who really "...” There was one ..., there was a

priest named Jean Christophe [inaudible, De Fay?]. He was a Jesuit, a Jesuit father who really made an impression on me. Because I think that at that time, at secondary school, he's the one who kind of shaped my way of reading, writing and speaking. He was in charge of language, he taught French. Then..., it was a bit like my dad, so it was important to speak well ..., all that is said is clearly stated, yes, the words to say it come easily. You see! And..., you know how ..., he was adamant that everything be done according to the rules ..., the rules ..., the rules of the art, I don't know how ...; and..., he would even, I would say, make me want to write, which means that later, it would become easy. Except that after, each time that I went to public schools, I realized to what extent it was difficult for the other students, the other students to write, to speak French spontaneously while I didn't have this problem. Which means that I would even somewhat regress a little so as not to seem marginalized. So, it needed to be flexible and easy for everyone, otherwise you were *tagged* [*targeted?*] as different, though it's not important; it's borderline harmful when you're *tagged* [*targeted?*] as different; so you even accept to speak like others even if it's not necessarily the case, you could do better. So..., and the last [inaudible: loop?] was a teacher called Marshall Charles. When I was in Burundi he was there. And I see him speaking ..., he says: "I'll be your ..., new Prefect of Studies, I think, or of discipline. He had just been put in charge of being head of discipline, and then he spoke to us, and at some point he said to us: "I'll do what I can, and I hope you'll do what you can so that we can work together." But then, I didn't know that this gentleman, who was a refugee in Burundi, who maybe lived in Burundi would end up at the APACOPE which would become my ..., the school where I would finish my secondary and I would find him there as a teacher, a teacher of geography and history. A very good history teacher, never saw a teacher like him, he knew everything. You could ask him any questions and he was ready with an answer. He spoke well, dictated very quickly ..., old-fashioned teaching and... masterful; the ultimate teacher but, he

would become prefect of studies, I think, he would even become principal, but he would be killed during the genocide. So during the last day when I asked him: “could you give me a document ..., of success, certification, anything to prove that I finished here”, he gave me a document, I’m skipping details, but I’m going to Burundi with my little document, waiting for my diploma to come; a diploma that would never come due to a small error ... And people were not motivated to send you this kind of document once you had left the country. When I came back to Rwanda, he was killed, his family, no more children! When we speak of families who were exterminated there... Marshall Charles, his wife and I think his three children, who lived not far from the airport in Kanombe, no longer exist. So, these are stories that leave an impression on you [inaudible] you know a great teacher, that everyone can ..., can..., who was a role model to others. Luckily, some of them are left, but..., when someone tells you: “the best teachers that you had, like this one is no longer”, and then they tell you: “he was killed ...”, well..., it still gets to you. You tell yourself, at least, school isn’t really the point, right..., however I know how hard it was for him to assert himself in Rwanda at the time and ..., to make a place for himself ..., because some people will say : “Yes, the Hutu-Tutsi problem no longer existed in Rwanda between seventy-three and ninety-one ». We lived as if everyone adored each other even if no one no longer knew necessarily what we were. It’s true for certain families but for many others there was always this dividing line. Which means that when I returned to Rwanda in eighty-six, I was fifteen years old, I think, sixteen years old ..., I needed a document ..., the first identity card that I had at the time was ..., temporary identity card. And so you say: wait, a temporary identity card is a bit like a temporary driver’s license “...” You come back from Burundi and, you have ..., you’re not listed anywhere, and we’re in a reconciliation process between Rwandans from the diaspora and those inside. “So we know your mother, she is still registered due to the fact that her father is still alive, so we can register her, but your father, he is

not from here, and even if he comes, he has to go to Ruhengeri in the North to get his identity card and then you will have a right to your ...”, and then it gets complicated. And in all this hubbub what do we propose to do and they propose a temporary Rwandan identity card where it also says: “biffer hutu ou tutsi”. And then, you ask yourself the question, you tell yourself: “wait, I’m in my country where I’m somebody who is in the process ..., in the immigration process as we say here in Canada. First, I have a right to an identity card what do we call that ...? Residence card, then an identity card after if ever I ..., so there is always this kind of border space, between the people who were in fact there during my youth, who soared, and my resilience will accept it as a fact. In a way we don’t fight too much there ..., it’s something that exists there ..., but it mustn’t spoil my life too much, you have to keep living, keep fighting. Which means that still today when I think of my [mark?] when I feel that someone wants to push someone aside just because of his or her skin colour or race, or ..., it affects me from a deep place. If you push someone aside because of his or her ..., incapacity..., lack of loyalty ..., if you push someone aside due to concrete actions they have committed, that don’t make sense, are disgusting ..., this I can understand, but when you’re just basing it on appearances, very partial and ignorant appearances, this affects me from a very deep place. And I can tolerate it and at some point when I no longer really know ..., what my reactions could be to this kind of thing, because in our country it simply degenerated into a genocide..., so that’s it, I don’t know if I covered the whole question.

SG: Et... donc vous revenez à..., au Rwanda... a quinze ans. Vous y restez combien de temps ?

JSP: Quatre ans, juste le temps de terminer mon école secondaire...

SG: And... so you come back to ..., to Rwanda... fifteen years ago. How long do you stay there?

JSP: Four years, just enough time to finish my secondary school ...

SG: Why did you go back again [inaudible...]?

JSP: Because the war was resuming in Rwanda. So basically, by the way, to make a long story short ... '71 ... I was born in '71 with my parents, who are in a kind of family cocoon, a small family. But in '73 there were these events, so very quickly they realized that they needed to leave. And then my father was locked up. Of course, in '73 with everything that happened in Bugesera, he was released very quickly, I think, I imagine he must have used his connections if he had any. But then what happens, he is warned, right... '59 he was there, he knows what his grandmother experienced ..., his family, in what position they grew up, he knows the clergy very well, he was born in '41, he know the whole ..., the whole..., I could say the reigning religious class in Rwanda. And I'm not afraid to say and to give names, if you look for people who were born in '41, you'll really be surprised. "... we can start with Bagosora I think he was born in '41, I think he's from Ruhengeri or from Gisenyi ; you take a guy like Lizinde he's from the North, maybe younger but in the forties I think he would have been born; you take a guy like Habyarimana, he himself was a little bit ..., I think he was born in the thirties ..., "38, '39 I imagine. A guy like ..., all the people, all the people who marked the..., the..., in the seventies, my father ..., the priesthood, we don't even talk about it, he knows them all because he lived with them. He knows everything that's been ... about the Bigirumwami, he knows the Kagame, he knows ... Gahima, Gahamanyi, Gahima or Gahamanyi. He was a "... So, he knows the whole clergy, he knows the whole ruling class and when you take that, you make a man that's doing very well; where are we going ...? Because he knew what would happen, he was almost killed, so he takes his wife, quickly and leaves. They go to Burundi, they arrive, where the

Tutsis, where the Hutus were killed in '72 or otherwise, to be [done...?] there was animosity between the two communities. So, he's welcomed with open arms. To escape, they escape, they conducted impossible charades. They say okay, we're in Kigali, we won't go to Burundi or the Congo. However, if we say we're going to Ruhengeri because I'm from there, we'll be able to arrive in Ruhengeri, from Ruhengeri we'll get to Gisenyi and from Gisenyi we'll take small roads to get to Goma. That's the first stage, the second stage, takes place in Burundi. Like many other cases, by airplane, but once in Burundi they settle. In '73, all Rwandans are welcomed ..., mostly. At least for those who have a good education, because they could fill a societal void; and he uses his knowledge of accounting except that in 1980, 1981, 1982 until 1990, there is a kind of Burundian nationalism that is taking hold. So there is a kind of crisis maybe that has taken hold and which not only the fear of one another, because there's a kind of hysteria in the society between those from the South and those from Central Burundi, and then there's also the Rwandans ..., and when there's a kind of nationalism that's taking hold in this entire region from where we came, mainly in Burundi, who was ... the most ... equipped to pay the bills basically ..., it's the Rwandans because they're the ones who are most numerous as foreigners in Burundi. It's not necessarily that the Burundians don't like the Rwandans, but it's because the facts are there, the land, the crisis leads to narrow-mindedness, and then the crisis leads to seeing foreigners as a problem and not as a solution. And so, I think my father he'll bring ..., broken pots, he'll begin to be ..., he fought a bit. You can imagine due to his age maybe, a bit of his leadership and there are many others, right, he's not alone. Then there was the fight to have Burundian nationality, do people want it or not; and I think he found himself not having it maybe, but what's important to note [inaudible...] in the 1980s, he finds himself unemployed, whereas in the 1970s, he was so needed. Unemployment, wanted or not, and I think that he was a

bit *tagged [targeted?]*? like, we don't want your services actually; though he worked but not to the best of his ability.

SG: And..., and the accident?

JSP: No..., that's a long time ago. Which means that in 1986, we had no way out, my family told itself: "if my children are to have a good education, which is very important to us, we'll have to go elsewhere; or we're going home", and at home there was still ..., at the time a structure that could welcome them in Rwanda. That could also just take a bit of time, you know, you think of leaving for a short while, then come back and find better but it lasted four years! And it wasn't going better. In Burundi in 1988, it gave the movement a reason to go to Rwanda ... I think that in 1988 in Rwanda [Burundi?] there was what we call Ntega-Marangara, an event on a national scale in Burundi. First a coup d'état in 1986 or 1987, '88 we had just won Marangara why would you return to Burundi? [inaudible] that, we said to stay in Rwanda because at the time they considered us the Switzerland of Africa. In 1990, the Burundians are slightly more stable, but in Rwanda there is war. In Uganda, in 1984 ..., it was hot, but Museveni established himself, and then what ..., convergence of energies, the Rwandans want to go home because they can't stand it anymore. By the way, anyway, at the beginning of the war, first lie of my life, a soldier comes into our home and I tell myself: that's it, we're screwed. He asks a question: "where is the Dad, the old one?" And my mother, very quickly, very big liar [snapping of fingers], I've never seen my mother lie so fast and says: "... he's in the North, he's in Ruhengeri-Gisenyi!" when he was actually in Burundi, my father was never in Rwanda after..., in 1986, until ..., because if he came he was [tagged?] immediately in jail. He felt unsafe. There were already two to three examples that said that if ever ..., I know a man who died because he made the mistake of coming home, of having a decent job in Rwanda. But lying, she said: The Dad, he's in Gisenyi

and, the soldier believed her because ..., it's true my father was born in Ruhengeri and... it was easier to get that across. We were really lucky, the soldier left, he didn't hang around; but when he heard Ruhengeri he said OK, it's fine, it's not a big deal ..., but we, at home, we were shocked, like the first time in my life that we saw our parents lie. And..., afterwards that was what we'd always say: our father was in the North and..., we were from there, we dreamed of going to see [Ruhengeri]. But we never did it, up until today, I think we we've gone once or twice. But... which means that we would go back to Burundi after eight months of war in Rwanda, which means I did eight months of studies, eight months of studies really from day to day with the start of the war in 1990 or 1991. The war started in October, and I was in Rwanda in the month of July. We were coming back from Burundi, we were lucky to make just a little move to go see our father, then in 1990, the war started. And... yes, it was my birthday. Actually, that's also a little thing that I can share, I'm not sure anymore where I am, in all that I'm saying, and ... my father and my mother, you know "... I was born on October 1st, October 1st is the start of the RPF war [Rwandan Patriotic Front], and my sister was born July 2nd. July 2, if you ask, in the history of Rwanda, I think that it's ... synonymous with ... the taking... Habyarimana I think, celebrated the taking of power and all that went with that "... So the Second Republic always celebrated July 2. For some reason they had taken power I don't know when, they called a revolution ... I forget the name. A quiet or empowered ... I don't know what ... revolution...; but it's for the masses. And the last one, my little sister was born April 6, April 6 which symbolizes the war ... the beginning of the massacres in Rwanda [inaudible...] Each time I celebrate my birthday I laugh, but there's a small nuance, it gets easy, I never forget the dates we're born because they're so easy to catch. And then my mother was born December 24, which is Christmas. So, there's just my father that we never knew when he was born [laughter]... In real Rwandan, it's only the year that's written, it's in 1941; ... so ...

SG: So, in October the war starts, you're still ... studying...

JSP: Yes...

SG: [inaudible...], but afterwards you leave for Burundi?

JSP: I finish in July 1981, I finish, I am, I think the second, yes, the second at school, in the promotion..., the second APACOPE promotion and in the economics option. And then... ah! There's another teacher who had made an impression on me because when you ..., a child studies in a moment of peace, it's impossible, inconceivable for him to study in times of war, until... when..., when someone touches you and says: "basically there is nothing else that you can do. You're a child, you can't even go to war, and all that you can do is to absorb as much knowledge as you can, because it will be of use to you afterwards. And if you need to help find solutions, it's now or never that you have to learn because tomorrow, you're not guaranteed to have us with you." And, there was a man among many others who made an impression on me, actually it's true that there were many teachers that made an impression on me ... This one was called Roger Millard, he was Haitian and he taught law at the time at the APACOPE; and then he came to see us, he spoke to all students without distinction ... His story would make an impression on us because he would tell us: "you know, events like these ones, I had the good or bad luck to experience them, I'm Haitian, do you know about the Duvalier era and all that went with it?" And then, he made an impression on me, why? Because he spoke several languages, he was a real polyglot. He had done the Seminary and he spoke French very well, Creole, he spoke English very well, he spoke Spanish, due to the proximity of the surrounding islands, he spoke German. The man, then one day, he told us that he also spoke Portuguese. And what's more, law, which he mastered very well. [inaudible...] I was really amazed and then we asked him: "what are you doing in Rwanda now, why are you in Rwanda as a teacher? You couldn't find a better

place, another planet to go live and evolve?” We asked him questions and then he said to us: “I chose Rwanda and unfortunately there is the war; and at the beginning before coming here I was in the Congo, in Goma, and I left because I lost my whole project there, a production project I think, a kind of strong alcohol that he wanted to bring into the region. And then, he found himself doing law, part-time for our school. And those kinds of people who have so much baggage, when you cross paths with them in a war period, they give you energy to finish. And then, I find myself nonetheless in Burundi, but then, the problem is in Burundi during the genocide, or during the war in 1994, I have no one, basically, to give me energy to finish my school there. Which would have been great because I had only two, three years, I finished in 1997, 1998, 1999, and I got my bachelor’s in economics. I could help in Rwanda but no! What’s going on, during the genocide, we all became a little bit crazy ..., it’s all over the news, we don’t feel like going to class, we want to know how things are developing ... Your mother tells you: “have you heard news from so-and-so ... Go see so-and-so ...” You also take initiative. In class you watch the teacher speaking for five hours, but nothing gets absorbed, you come back the next day, nothing gets in. For a week you were there every day and at some point, you say “no, but wait, who’s cheating who here? Am I deluding myself that I’m listening to what the economic geography teacher ... is telling me?” I think I said goodbye to school, I was in economic geography. At the time, it was called economic ... yes, economic geography. I forget the name of the title. So, I was learning geography versus economy, a bit the border, then the externality of a city like Montreal. And then the teacher was very intelligent, he talked, talked, talked, and never stopped. Then I said: it’s very interesting what you’re saying but I feel like I’m not in the class. And I think it was end of May, beginning of June, in 1994 and I said: now, there’s no way, I can’t follow and go to class. It’s too bad ...

SG: [inaudible]

JSP: Yes... actually I had one, he didn't help me keep studying, he said to me: "come on, come on, let's stop; science without conscience only ruins the soul." That's what we say, in this case. And the other thing was the school's motto, it was..., it's in Rwanda or in Burundi, *Et salus populi* it means the slogan of the school where we studied, or this sign where we studied is the salvation of the people. I think the Burundi one was the light ..., here is where we'll find the light that will guide the people ... And you're there, on the other side, we keep killing each other and what are we doing here, who's, who's running the show [inaudible...] that's when ..., you ask yourself questions [inaudible...] and you don't go back to school ..., it's all over. It's only later that I'd get a taste for school again and it would take a long time; it would take me from 1994 to 1997. I remember the first time in a conference, I panicked. I didn't even have the ability to line up even one question, I was so disconnected from this intellectual context where people want to discuss for the sake of discussing. Because for me a discussion gives me more of a strategy or a ... the capacity for an understanding of things, but when you see a conference where people are throwing each other the ball but without ..., at a certain point necessarily taking a document, moving forward ... I thought it was good but I was thinking "Where's it going? What's it all about? [inaudible] I lost it a bit ..., reading without interest, to move towards a ..., a touch of solutions or the implementation of solutions, I don't know if I'm explaining myself well. So, as a result, going to class didn't mean anything anymore. And since that day, if I can say it without necessarily putting too much into it, I no longer necessarily felt like being first, like how I was before. You know, like you go to class, people fight to be the first and you watch ..., it's so ..., it's so, how can I say ..., first for, but first at what price? I really didn't feel like it anymore, I was looking for a long time, because before I had studied to be first, to please people. They asked you, oh! You're first and it's going well ... and you're proud [hands clapping] and

the grandfather from elsewhere, the great uncle, everyone comes and congratulates you. But then you're there, you tell yourself, even if I'm first ..., it related a bit to what my uncle had said to me one day, he says to me, one of my uncles,: "yes, study, yes, we'll see after that ..." because he explained to me the fact that having reached a certain age, you are what you are, and there's nothing to prove to anybody. You study for yourself in relation to events that happen to you. And as he worked hard to pay for his studies, he no longer had what it took to necessarily put everything into school to always be the first. This means that you consciously need to cut into school time to do other things. So, if it's really the life you're leading you're no longer able to be first, you can no longer always be in the first boat, maybe the following one but never the first. Because if you're called for emergency X, there's a good chance that you'll say "okay, I'm coming " and you won't finish the work. And when you want to concentrate, you'll say "it's really hard, right ... it takes too much energy", you have to concentrate. So, you no longer have a 100% mind for school to be able to maximize. Yet you've got all the material spinning in your mind, you can stop that for this precise moment, you'll get there huh ... I can stop there, otherwise, I'll [laughter...]

SG: After your studies, what year did you finish your studies?

JSP: Secondary? '91, July '91. Yes July '91 I finished school.

SG: What did you do afterwards? Did you work right away...?

JSP: Work where? What? How? In Rwanda or in Burundi? No, forget about it. I fought, actually I always hopefully saw myself going to study in the North and then ..., my father always told me "really it's no longer necessary to study in the North, so ...", my mother too; so I told myself "I'll do university in Burundi" and then, another drama. There, you know not having a country at a certain point, is really serious. I finished economics, which was rather ... I think it's the

APACOPE's toughest option, and there was a lot of math, and there was a lot of science, you know ..., I arrived in Burundi, what was I going to do there? I ask for economics spontaneously, and then I didn't have a right to economics. Because what was happening? I came from a system that's not theirs, yes and, they say it's saturated. So that means that the best Burundians must go. Very understandable, really, I understood this. Except that if I don't have first choice, what do I do, now I'm going to, either it was languages or else it was polytechnic. So, I got my courage up and I did polytechnic. So, there I told myself: I see myself as an engineer rather than someone in languages. So, I did the first year of Polytechnic B1. I got in, then fifty hours of mathematics, like analytical geometry, 100 or more hours of physics, forty-five hours of trigonometry. I was counting the hours of math and then I'd like ... reached a saturation point and I told myself "it's not possible"; it wasn't made for me, but I couldn't have known that before being there. Then I told myself "okay, I'll pass my time, I'll do the maximum " especially since I was managing to get a certain percentage, that maybe gave me the option of coming back and seeing the first choice elsewhere. And then, I managed to somewhat get through. I was, like, passing. So, then it wasn't brilliant, not sufficiently brilliant to be forcibly kept at this Polytechnic or it was sufficiently passable to be given the choice to go where I wanted. So, then I chose Economics, Law as second choice. Then, I didn't get Economics. They told me, "no, sorry, we're going to give you Law ". So, I said: « no, that's not right ... maybe the choice ... », they tell me "no, you don't have a choice ". I came to Law, I did a good month in Law, to realize that by doing courses in Law, I was lucky, I'd been accepted into Economics. So, you'd been going to all the law classes for a while, the professors came and gave you a drink...

SG: It was before ...

JSP: Starting? ..., in economics? No, I made an appeal, during the appeal you have to go to school. And so during the month I was with colleagues who are now lawyers, sometimes I look at them and I tell myself, I could have been a lawyer. So, certainly, I don't want to name names here [laughter] But..., after that, there's a gentleman who had followed me a lot, his name is Patrice Nahimana, unfortunately he died, who I loved very much. And so, the gentleman who said to me: "Serge, Economics or Law it's the same thing, right; don't ask too many questions." He told me I did ..., I think he had done Law, sometimes he did economic management and well, he had done economics and then he managed legal affairs. And then, in the end, when the elder tells you that, the old wise man, you don't understand. Because you're really in your youthful life with all that energy, you really want to do what you want to do, the rest is just possibilities and it doesn't feel right ... And then, he helped me understand that I actually didn't have much of a choice, but with elegance I could come back later and do a master's or specialize in Law. And then, I'm stuck in Economics, I begin the first year, my secondary comes back [hand clapping ...] at full speed to help me because I had a *background* in Economics, [finger snapping]" first year I pass, with no problem. It's in the second year when I was studying that the genocide happened in Rwanda. So, there were three years left. If I finished my second year, my third and fourth years would be left, just two years. But then what happened? I stopped, but, I skipped some events. My father died in 1991, so that didn't really help me: neither in my choice, nor to pay for school and all that ..., my sisters didn't have it easy, they too would go to Saint Albert school, but little sister I think it was *École Libre*. But at least we knew the environment. We knew all the people. Life was becoming possible, and most importantly, we didn't have someone telling us: "we're going to kill you ..., we're going to kill you ..." So I was studying in these conditions..., which weren't easy, right! Sometimes in Burundi we asked ourselves what are we doing here? Because they were going into a democratic process, the first supposedly free

and open election. The Hutu President who was replacing Buyoya, Ndadaye who would be killed ... When he was killed, exactly what we were fleeing in Rwanda, we found in Burundi. Wait: we left Rwanda to come here ..., because what happened in Burundi in '92, is worse than ... it would even be unimaginable to happen in Rwanda. Because in Burundi, yes '93 ... the Burundians killed the President of the Parliament, they killed I think ... the Attorney General, they killed the leaders of the opposition parties. There's a lot of people from the high sphere, the really high sphere, who died. But just afterwards [inaudible...], the Hutu undertook revenge right away. I think we're talking about like two hundred thousand Tutsi dead in Burundi, in all the surrounding areas in the countryside, even in Bujumbura there were abuses. So I was fleeing Rwanda, and then, I go to Burundi thinking to be a bit ..., already when they were shooting I would go in the hallway and I have friends who would say why do [you?] go in the hallways, I said: « the bullet when it passes, it comes through the windows, so it's better to be sitting in the hallway ». Already, at the time that we were already in the action, except that those who were in Burundi didn't have this reflex to go in the hallway, corridor, as we called it. Then, later, when Ndadaye died, I realized that in Rwanda we had never seen it as bad as that. Because the story of the *Bagogwe* that happened in Rwanda in..., in the North was ten thousand to twenty thousand dead, six thousand or ten thousand in Ruhengeri, my father's native region, and then when they took in Bugesera which happened later it was maybe another ten thousand or twenty thousand maximum, I ... don't know the numbers but it wasn't in the order of one hundred thousand. If I consider what happened in the years '73 when there were killings but, never like one hundred thousand dead ... It's a lot but, in Burundi in '93, in the month of November, July to November, it was the apocalypse. I told myself: "wait, what world are we living in?" In Rwanda there's war, you can't even go back! Yes, I remember in '93, in December, my grandmother who died and was buried in Rwanda and I told myself ... because I no longer had a passport, to ask for a visa,

to go to the North with a refugee pass or a "refugee passport ", didn't work. I had to have a Rwandan passport in good and due form. So then, I did everything to go back to Rwanda, to have a passport. I would get it ... as not everyone in Rwanda is a bad guy. Even in the worst of moments you could always get a passport. And then, I went back to Burundi, and then I realized that Rwanda was still a lot more dangerous. Something was brewing, I don't know ... it's especially the account from my grandfather that told me that Rwanda was a ticking time bomb, no one knew what could happen; better not to be there. If you were there it's because you knew, and you were ready to pay the price. And then, I would only understand later too that all my relatives that were in Rwanda, knew the price they could pay very well in relation to what was happening, but they had no where to go ... Because for a long time I didn't necessarily understand their lack of motivation in leaving Rwanda to go elsewhere. They could go to Uganda I would tell myself. They could have crossed, I don't know, Mulindi, crossing, crossing ... it was already the front line, they couldn't go in. In the Congo, it was almost impossible, you had to cross ... even for the Congolese it wasn't easy ... and in addition, what's some people's drama, when they have responsibilities, it means, you're a grandfather, it means you have children, you have your children's children, and you also have people around you that depend on you entirely. This means that if you flee, there's a pyramid that has just crumbled, and you can't leave. I... it's later that I understood that people with responsibilities couldn't necessarily leave Rwanda, people who ..., because if they left, they had to leave with all their people. So, their grandchildren, the children could leave. So, if there were people like that in Rwanda; many, many, many. That's what someone explained to me oh ! ... Because they chased me right ..., when? In '96. When I was there, my grandfather told me: I don't want you here. I said, "but wait." "But you ... [inaudible]" "I want you to leave as quickly as possible." And then, I didn't understand too well. Yet he was doing the ..., he felt that I could ..., but he had ..., he was ready

to fight on another level. Then it was also their way of handling certain disputes that had dragged on for too long since '59, '60, '73 ... You know my grandfather is someone who had never travelled in his life. Some will say for example, I know Rwandans very well, they'll say: my grandfather never wanted to flee. "He wanted to keep what he'd acquired and stay rich ". And the Hutu let him prosper a bit, live with them in this Rwanda that was his too. It's true that he had a lot of Hutu friends, that he had some ..., even blood brothers, because this existed in Rwanda people *baranywanaga [made a blood pact]*. But was there really freedom of movement? No. This means that his entire life, my grandfather lived using half of his skills, of his possibilities. If he'd had the possibility, I think it would have gone further ... I imagine.

01:12:11

So that means, in the year '76, I heard about my grandfather and so I asked myself each time: "why doesn't he come here?" They told me "no he can't ", like that. My grandfather couldn't, he was, like, imprisoned. We call that *gufungisha ijisho* [to be under house arrest]. The old man couldn't move, he didn't even have a passport, he couldn't even get a pass, if he wanted, he would leave his wife there? How would that work? If he could do it will ... Also, he is too important to flee easily. One thing leads to another, you realize that you are free yes, but at the same time, you aren't as free as you think. And..., my father, he understood, but except that when he did ..., I think we're talking about before he fled so, you had to go with half the family, except that my father assessed the ability to come back to Rwanda, he told himself: "if I come they'll be waiting for me. [long silence...] they'll be waiting for me. They'll be too happy to wait for me, to welcome me in a certain way.". So, to be quick ..., I told myself, okay ... Rwanda, basically even in Rwanda, during the genocide, I didn't want to return to Rwanda because I told myself ... "I know Rwanda in a beautiful light, people talk amongst each other, why would I go

there to find a void? There's nothing, death everywhere." I told myself: "I'm not going back to Rwanda; I'm not going back." If you don't go back, what do you do? Already, you're in class, nothing's sticking. "... in Burundian society you can't have the right to work. Even if they pay you, how much will they pay you? You won't even be able to support a family. You'll go where? The passport I was already asking for at the time, I wanted to leave for far away, go North, somewhere I don't know, but leave, but the ..., sometimes you get what you want, sometimes you don't get what you want and the contests made it so that, my mother applied very easily with the equation, she said: "they killed all of our loved ones, they want it to be that there's nothing there anymore but we have a task, we need to fill that void." And that will make an impression on me for a long time because ... I'll tell myself ... she's figured it out. They did everything to ... to empty the country, and when people return from the diaspora there will be nothing left. We're just going to count down the time, and the people who killed will take back power ... not only power, but they're even going to live as they please after the horrors they committed. The equation was simple. We are [inaudible]..., they create an empty lot, they burn, they search, the country will be ungovernable, then they'll come back to an empty lot and my mother saw that, she ..., I realized that this was the thing not to do. And this would really motivate my return to Rwanda, in May-June '94 ..., that's it. A bit on a whim, we were several students, we said "no, no, we have to ... you know we're young, we have energy, and ... we're going to build Burundi up a bit in the opposite direction ..." [mimes the direction taken] no, a bit in the sense of the war won by the FPR. So, we told ourselves "we don't have the right to go West to Rwanda but we can pass through the East." So, we headed back East to Burundi. We went up a bit to Kibungo, from there, we entered Kigali, and we followed the movement of the war, telling ourselves, taking the facts into account and telling ourselves could we do something ... No, there was nothing to do. Just count, and count, and count ... And it's only later that I'd find myself in

Butare, with many other students and telling ourselves "what can we do?" Here we call it *community work* because there's no one taking on the job but there are so many things to do. I never understood why I never went back to ..., my grandparents' family home. In fact, there was also a movement to stop you from going back to where these events had taken place. As soon as people knew directly that you were from such and such a place, they didn't really want you to go, they stopped you. If you went it was at your own risk. And they didn't want you to go there, because the people, the settlement of accounts..., there were only punitive expeditions, people who rebelled, who..., there was a kind of discipline. This brings me to say that during the genocide, there was really a kind of ..., the seed, the seed of reconciliation already existed during the genocide because there were people who stopped others from committing the irreparable when you know very well what the person did, but it stopped you from going ... You know, I know soldiers who didn't have the right to go see their parents, because if they went, they would lose their minds. And also, I know a girl who had just ..., she always made me laugh at her innocence, she arrived in '95, because I also started at the Butare University. And when [inaudible...] I thought to start there and she told me: "what it would take..., it would take giving amnesty to the people who committed the genocide, those who killed others, and she would say: we give everyone amnesty, we start from scratch." And I said to her: "but wait, what you say is possible, but in the best of worlds! ...except that here we live in horror. People have not finished killing. There are people here who have suffered, there are orphans, how do you tell it? I don't understand you." But I think it would take what was left of my faith that day, it's as if we were told: "Jesus forgives, and you too must forgive." So..., except that I had also run into a priest named Mana. The priest was really bewildered and said to me one day: I don't understand anything anymore ... Apparently he had also left the priesthood to found a family [inaudible...] his followers, those who came to his church, he understood nothing of what was happening; and

when you no longer understand anything and you're not necessarily able to give with ..., your all, you try to find your centre again. And in relation to the genocide I think that he understood that he had to remake a little family, that he bring his loved ones back to a semblance of a home, that he try to put the focus back on himself. You can preach faith, but before preaching it, you need to make sure that you're able to be sure that your home and your loved ones are able to ..., to have a minimum. Maybe not even married, basically but you live like man-woman. I also remember a certain point when I crossed paths with a girl who was 17 years old, nothing was left of their home, a very beautiful girl, I was 24 years old, I looked at her and said: "if I don't marry her, someone else will take care of it". A bit innocent, but no ..., if I married her, I'd have just solved a problem? [Inaudible...] And I would ..., you know like to help her avoid falling into the trap of ..., of war, or those who have killed can always come back, or the one who won the war, a little a bit crazy, who needs a bit of affection would be able to take this ..., a bit like that, right. And then I told myself, I could bring her home to us. She could become another child to mother. Except that I was dreaming awake, I never went beyond. You know, there are many of these ideas that came to mind, and I mostly didn't want to end up there, on that little piece of land, I saw myself ending up in the countryside, in a little family. Having lost the ambition to do higher studies, do my master's, what I did afterwards. I could say that ..., so I stopped school at Bujumbura, I went to Rwanda, we did community work for almost a whole year and then we went back to school before realizing that even at school, at the National University of Rwanda there, everyone was like protected there, we were in a little camp, protected from anything that could come and hurt us. Because we, we thought the war was over, but it wasn't over yet because it wasn't over yet in the Congo ... There I told myself "I'll go back to Burundi, I'll leave Rwanda." My mother once again looked at me and said: "You've done what you can, it's time you left again. You have a life to live, get out of here fast and go study as quickly as possible and

elsewhere.” Because I think that she had just come to understand that the Rwandan problem was far from being over and that ... and that it would take years so ...

01:22:04

SG: During the year that you left to go back to Rwanda, did you get news from home, from people?

JSP: You know when they tell you that someone is dead, you always say, someone else died but not one of ours. So..., we would realize very certainly that my grandfather had died ..., almost all the people that were around him. My maternal uncle who was handicapped who had managed to found a family, let's say that they just came and shot at everybody ... Unfortunately, or fortunately, many died, but there are three that remained. Three children, with the whole unimaginable hardship of the weapon that passed through them, hurt everywhere but not dead, even his wife. They left only the people who should be dead, but they didn't die, God had decided differently. And... I have my uncle Pierre too who died, but we always thought that he wasn't dead. He was a bit special, we told ourselves he's young, he can run, his wife and his children were alive. And then we'd tell ourselves ..., for a long time, he must have sneaked away to hide but ..., no we were wrong, later rather, we realized that the person who we believed who had ..., who had helped half of the family to flee, who had gone to get him at home for reason X, we thought that this was the person who had helped him hide too; no, no, it has been approved today that he might have been the one who left him out in the cold... And we're still not able to prove it. Because if *Gacaca* today it will stop it will be still another case to prove, but it's also an energy to go and look for because people think that *Gacaca* is easy but when you think that someone will have to go in front, prove it, make people speak, that's an energy there, sometimes you have energy but sometimes ..., it's already difficult to go to mass on Sundays so imagine

going on Sundays to like confront [snaps hands] people to know the truth. So, there are moments where, people are tired. Whether it be those who killed or those who didn't kill who want to know the truth, both sides are tired. We just feel like packing it in, and it starts up again [inaudible...]. Which means yes, people are dead, yes, I didn't do everything necessary to know who did it, because sometimes, it's a little fatalistic. Deep down inside me, I tell myself "okay, I'll never know, then what's it going to be ...", it's not the attitude to take, if I can adopt it on my level, one day or another, if it's not at the institutional level or something that we'll have to ..., otherwise life becomes impossible. Those who committed crimes will be able to recommit them tomorrow. That's why this girl, speaking with her I didn't understand necessarily what she was getting at ... Forgiveness yes, but forgiveness for the devil! Forgiveness with whom? Who are you forgiving? Even God does not forgive the devil. He forgives someone who has [inaudible...] exactly. So... for me, genocide consumed, I finally found myself in Canada but when I got here ...

SG: Why Canada?

JSP: Canada was simple, because I had thought about it my entire life. I had seen a story, a film about Canada, the whiteness, the whiteness of the snow, a film that had made me dream ... a finite land ..., a bit of an Eldorado, it's not the United States but at the same time French, English is spoken, at that moment I was more into French, I told myself that the United States was too anglophone. And then I arrived in Belgium, I looked closely at Belgian society and I realized that it had all the flaws that we fled from in Burundi and Rwanda, so I told myself "it's not possible. Two peoples who don't like each other, they speak French and the others speak Dutch. It's easy, right, they just need to export their problem and that's it. How will I live there?" Forget that they are maybe not an example, but I quickly realized too that life was difficult there. In terms of

fleeing the people who had killed, I saw them everywhere there, I saw them ... I saw one day, one evening, on Belgian television an interview that was granted by one of the people that had been in place in Rwanda at the time. I saw him speaking, so intelligent, so articulate, I said "what, they're in Belgium? No, no, I'm leaving here now " [rubs his hands]. France was not possible ..., I don't know why. But if I could do it again, maybe Canada would necessarily be the best choice, but I can say that Quebecers and Canada, it's really a land of opportunity, it's a welcoming land ..., people are really ..., they have what they call ..., they're ready to welcome people. In Europe everything is saturated, right, and more of a confrontation than a welcome. But I arrived, then for a year I'd feel, alone, because I realized, yes I'm alone, and I'm going to have to figure things out myself, [inaudible...] Mom who sends you a little hundred dollars, a scholarship that comes from I don't know where ... I'm going to go ..., I think that day I really grew up, I told myself: "that's it, I'm of legal age, I'm physically fit, Canada is ready, [inaudible...] there's a chance"; it was very difficult, because the unemployment rate at the time ..., when I see people here sometimes, who immigrated, you ask them "where do you work?" The person proudly tells you: "I work in a call centre" or something, you know, it's a bit of an office, at home in Africa when you have an office, we like that! They say, my first job was in a factory. And still even a factory was very difficult to obtain [laughter]. The person says like that? You say, no, no, the unemployment rate was about eight percent, nine ... maybe even ten, I'm not very sure. I would say in Montreal maybe thirteen, fourteen, I'm not sure. But for an immigrant, we could say even eighty percent [laughter]... For an immigrant to even have a job was ... saying that you worked, that was pride, everyone asked you, "where is it, I want to do it like you, I want to work". And... yes, I think I was paid, my first salary, I was paid six dollars maximum per hour, which was the minimum in fact. But to have a job, you had to go to what's called a placement agency, an employment agency; and they gave you what's called ..., they

contacted an employer, and you, you were ready, you got up at six o'clock, you were there, five o'clock you got up, at six thirty you were there, and you didn't know if you'd work. You were sort of like on call. And on call wasn't enough because on call, they called you the night before and they told you "you're working tomorrow", and you said no, no, no, you got up and [inaudible...] you had to go work. They gave you the address and then you went to work. Except that I told myself: "no, I can't live this way", that's when I told myself that, things like ... are very important. All the baggage we have, sometimes the hierarchy decides something else. That's why sometimes it's important to speak to friends, because reinventing the wheel is useless. If someone tells you "you have five choices, this one is the best", he gives you the reasons, you believe in him, sometimes, it's better not to check. Anyways, I was told that there was work in the West. And so, I found myself on plantations in Vancouver, Prince Georges with eight hours of driving. So that means that if Montreal to Toronto is already far it's six hours, so over there, it's ..., leaving Victoria to Vancouver to go to Prince Georges I think it took us 8 hours. If I'm not mistaken. You drove, you drove, you drove, and you got there, we thought to find work there, *tree planting* they called it. Because all the young students, whether they were from here or elsewhere, who really wanted work, they went there to make a bit of money because Montreal, everything was taken there, cafés, working in a McDonald's forget about it, ... it's work you couldn't get necessarily. Then we got there, we realized, oh no, magically, the work you wanted, there's more demand than supply, yes ..., the companies want to be wanted and it's true there was no more work like we thought, maybe we had been numerous there given the supply and demand.

01:31:47

There what happened, you waited, you were camping... When you were camping you realized that the cold ... When they say that fifteen degrees isn't cold it's because you can go inside when you want to. Five degrees in a tent every day began to feel cold. With mornings at maybe zero or three degrees in a tent, you got up and you warmed up, oh but no. After a week there, you realized that you needed to eat more, find other ways. I managed to get a job, unfortunately while I was working, I realized that I had to pay attention because I was losing track of my landed immigrant process obtained here. I came back to Montreal quickly, and I was lucky to have all of my documents before the end of the year. This means that ... '97, I was ready to start school. Because I wanted to continue school more than doing these little jobs that paid no more than the minimum, basically. And so, I went back to school in '97.

SG: [Arriving in Canada...?] You didn't have too many friends ... [inaudible...]?

JSP: I knew three or four people. I had a family acquaintance that I called uncle ... Truly I still thank him for all that he did for me. Except that as we say, you can never thank someone or give to someone as well as what was given to you, in the moment when you want to. You may get there one day but never when ... It's the ... So, the gentleman really helped me and ... a little anecdote that made me laugh and cry at the same time. It's that when you flee a country you think that people are always more likely to help you. And then, during my whole process of coming to Canada, I got what we call low blows. And I was astounded to see a family uncle, because he's not a direct uncle, that we really had, in the families at home we truly have blood ties, which ..., you know that makes me feel a little cheap and, I'm obligated to fork out five thousand dollars ..., five thousand Rwandan francs ..., five thousand Belgian francs at the time to have a right to a service that would allow me to get to Canada. While these five thousand ..., they were nothing in this system ..., this is what we call a kind of Jewish escape story, it's as if

there's another Jew waiting for you at the border to Germany and France who taxes you before you

[inaudible...] Germany to enter France. Or... so that you may just see the exit door to have the right to sunshine. There was a Tutsi Rwandan guy who was waiting for me and who taxed me five thousand Belgian francs. And there, I look at him, it was approximately one hundred, two hundred dollars. I had never had possession of money before and I realized it was a lot. Later I would know that there was nothing to do in this case. As much as there are good people ready to help you, and there are as many others that are taking advantage and benefitting from this process of ..., after he realized. There's a genocide, we need to help this youth to develop himself, to go farther. No, no, no, there are others who [inaudible...] and they're ready to ... That really struck me and when I arrived in Canada, he..., I had this gentleman who truly helped me a lot. And I told myself: "not all people are as nice ". And... I don't know if it's unconsciously, but I retreated a bit. And I made as many friends of my age as possible, but the people who I didn't understand who were behind the outrage ..., it was up to them to help me, but I never sought them out because I told myself: "if they can, they can do it, if not for me it will be hard to go and seek them out because I'm not too sure about this, and I don't know them." Finally, I was on my own, right. In fact, I had grown up, but in a minute.

01:36:15

Even the little that didn't remain I told myself: "you left." When I arrived here I realized how much I was still [a baby?] in Africa. I think in Africa we truly grow up when we are thirty years old. While here we grow up when we're maybe eighteen, nineteen, twenty years old ... It took me a while to realize that the family was no longer always there. And then I would walk on my own until ... today [laughter].

SG: ... what were precisely the greatest difficulties ... in settling into Montreal?

JSP: "...” Montreal was simple. When I arrived, there were no jobs. I’m not blaming any kind of racism, no, no, there just weren’t any jobs The unemployment rate was high, there was a kind of bizarre crisis that had settled in during the ‘90s ..., it was better to be studying than working during that time. So, even at the end of my studies, because I ended up in business informatics, this was in 2001, 2002 ...

SG: You had completed a bachelor’s?

JSP: A bachelor’s in computing science. I didn’t want to redo computing too much ..., I didn’t want to do economics because that would be like starting from scratch. Equivalency stuff didn’t work too well. So, I finished my bachelor’s in computing science, and right away it’s after the ... [inaudible] of 2000. 2000, 2001, if you search on the internet, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003 ... technological crisis in computing. So, the whole effort to train computer scientists, in 2001, 2002, 003 we didn’t need it too much [pushing gesture] it would take off again around 2004, 2005. And then ..., yes, we told ourselves "yes, I could have remained an economist or done sociology to face other *challenges*... [smile] but it’s okay." In the end, I was going to top that off, I’d tell myself bah: “all that I’m up to today, I will [inaudible] it with a masters. A masters ..., it’s not a master’s in economics, because I’m not ... overseen in economics. I tell myself I’ll do a master’s in business administration, that will oversee all of my experiences, and it’s true. As much public relations, as much if I’m asked to manage a computing project, as much as doing a bit of finance ..., management, as much in terms of leadership. I was kind of enlightened and then I thought to myself "yes that will do it, a master’s in business administration". In any case it’s what I wanted to do. Except that I was propelled to do it faster than I wanted to and to find

myself in that except that it wasn't at all that easy either, because I had to relocate, leave for Sherbrooke rather than do it in Montreal, as UQAM was no longer necessarily able to give me my best anymore. Then I chose to live in the village to know Sherbrooke a bit, which was also the only University at the time that trained in what was called, a COOP training. I did a COOP Masters, so, we do it together, several of us, as cohort and we have access to internships; so, at the end when I got out, I had access to all the others. Whether it be a 55-year-old police officer, whether it be someone who worked as ..., in the public service in Sherbrooke, whether it be an engineer, we trained groups of five-five, four-four, three-three, until we finished. And it had to be done in sixteen months, and really with seven credits per session. It was pretty intense, you had to do it, and thank God I went through it, and I told myself: "yes, I'm tired, I'm at the end," and when we speak of school, of course on my CV I would have the essential to go and seek out my best without complacency ... without having to say [hits hand] I've reached the maximum.

SG: ... Did the Montreal Rwandan community help you in your integration? [inaudible] but afterwards, did you find a community here? You... [inaudible]

JSP: Okay, it was really not easy in '96 because the best, I'm inclined to say, the best of a community who could help those coming, if we're speaking of community, the best ones who could welcome these young people like me, had been pushed to go see how to help Rwanda. That means, we're in what situation, '94, there's a genocide happening in Rwanda. And then, the best, I mean the Rwandans who tell themselves: I've just lost my loved ones, I need to help this country get back on its feet, need to confront this genocide, what is happening there ...? Those who even want to understand. They all left for Rwanda. Except who didn't leave for Rwanda, in my view, was maybe someone who had lost to the FPR or who had other reasons, or who just didn't feel like it because they had lost too much and told themselves: "I'm taking a break now

and not going back to Rwanda” but for most, some others that I know, that I maybe even counted on seeing here, they had all left. In ‘95, ‘96, ‘97, ‘98, all the capable Rwandans ... who had somewhat fled the previous eras and who had lost everything and maybe who were also in the diaspora told themselves: "it’s time to go home." So, when I arrived in Canada, I found an emptied community. Okay, basically there were still a few people, but that also felt, as alone as those people ... They were no longer able to help or even to receive ... They were also disillusioned; they were asking themselves “what’s happening over there.” In any case, worse case, when they saw me, they were happy, they asked the question: “and... so-and-so is he alive? So...” They asked you questions, they were looking for information. There’s a little void that set in. You told yourself: « ok, the guy is maybe as lost as I am. He may have the house, but he is missing a bit of hope and ... ». And you realized, basically we have a community to rebuild. Which maybe also explains our trouble in finding work. Maybe the others found some and we others didn’t. But very quickly, I think too, there was a kind of energy ... a self [inaudible]. Also the youth that were coming also had a lot of energy, so we would move very quickly in 1997, 1998, 1998 [translator’s note: logically it should be 1999]. All the youth at the time that I really knew, they just wanted to go to school. They weren’t necessarily people who were coming to make money in Canada. It was all about education. So, there were communities..., we started with basketball, later even dance troupes [laughter]. There was something that was happening and overall I will say in 2002, for me, I told myself, the community in 2002 really had the image maybe of the community that we could have found in ’94 here in Canada. And it’s at that time that I told myself "basically I don’t even need to go to this community anymore because it has reached its maximum" ...As well age was catching up to me and I wanted to experience other things, because in leaving Rwanda I wanted to flee this community, grow up a bit, study. And then, you arrived here, you realized that you were living with a ghost, you were only living with

Rwandans. You didn't have a single friend from the community welcoming you. It's later that you told yourself: « oh..., I may have missed a beat ». And since we live in the North, Northern people are also cold, and... they have ... their way of living. They have empathy, they want to understand, but at the same time they will never welcome you or only very little. You have to provoke these things. Really, I could say that in 2002, I did some catching up. I'll go seek out all of these people that I saw. And every chance I got I would go into the host community; I would speak to people. I grew up with them, I shared my experiences with them, while when I arrived in '96, it was a focus on myself, I wanted to understand what had happened to me. I would call the home country all the time though I didn't think I would ever call again ... who are you calling again? [Inaudible] and at the same time, it's a process, it's not finished yet. I'm still finding myself but I imagine but ... [laughter] I have more hope than I've ever had before.

01:45:50

SG: Precisely, would you like the host community here to know your story?

JSP: ... As a Rwandan or as Serge? Because here ... [laughter], I've mixed everything up here, I was no longer speaking in terms ...

SG: It's interesting because there are questions that ... [inaudible] specifically, do you have Anglophone or Francophone friends ...? How do you find this division here ...? And what do you say to Francophones and Anglophones? In any case, to the host community, do you speak to them of Rwanda or do you prefer not to talk about it [inaudible]?

JSP: I think that when we say Canadian, it's a big word ..., it's a big word. First, we're proud to be Canadian but you only feel the fact of being Canadian when you're abroad. So, when you're in Canada, the word Canada means almost nothing in the small details of everyday life. Because

everyone ... is Canadian, so this word, Canadian, doesn't mean anything, or else it means a space where we're trying to do what we can. When we speak of identity, at the level of when we got out, then the word Canadian catches up to you. So that's where you ask yourself if someone who is in Toronto due to the fact that I cross paths with him at another point on the globe does he understand me, does he see me as a Canadian too? That's where I realized too that you introduce yourself as a Black Canadian to a French Canadian who is, for example, in Belgium or in France and no one is surprised. She didn't realize as spontaneously that one evening you could see each other again. So, what I'd like people ..., the others ... the host land gives space for the fact that ... to this community that comes from all over the place. Here it's easy, when someone runs into me, they say to me: "where do you come from?" I'll say, "I'm Rwandan ", they'll say: "your country, Rwanda? " I'll answer. And then I'll ..., it makes me a bit ..., [inaudible] but I still have a country here in Canada and I feel a bit Canadian. Does the fact that I'm entirely living my little Canadian, Quebecer, Montrealer side, take away from the other? So, it's a bit of a dilemma, right ... And when you run into certain people you realize that they are completely ... basically for them, you're not a Quebecer yet. Or, basically you're not really Canadian. They're able to make you feel, even when you ask for work ..., there are institutions..., for example the army! I am ..., I did ..., I applied for the Canadian army, and then I realized ..., I wasn't crazy, I didn't necessarily want to become cannon fodder, far from that. Because I had found three types of jobs that I liked and no Rwandan here will tell another Rwandan the three only experiences that you want to have, you'll only be able to fully have them, experience them, in the army. Because the army for Rwandans is frightening, even the Quebecer is pretty peaceful, so it's someone who wants peace, peace, peace. So, to think of the army, it's kind of a big word. And when you really analyze the positions, you say "wow! " But... the three positions that I'd like to have! But to have them, as you've already finished your bachelors, you can only be an officer. You fill out

this document, they tell you “you need eight years, ten years living in Canada without having left Canada.” That’s when you realize, oh yes! So, to be ready, to be really ..., eight years, ten years. Ok, shit! But I don’t have ten years in Canada! I understood them, I had no problem, they wanted to protect a bit. Who are you? A stranger. Ten years to be an officer in the Canadian army ... You understand very quickly that it’s not 100% your country yet. You can pretend, you can imagine yourself but it’s up to you to go and seek out the difference. So, I applied but I only had eight years in Canada. And then, if they’d taken me at that moment, maybe my life would have taken a different turn. So, they took two years to tell me in not so many words, okay you have to wait until ten years. So there, you reinitialize your file because you’re happy that it’s been ten years. You’re perseverant ..., an immigrant will often not have limits, he’ll wait. Ten years you wait, and you send the file again. Oh! They see it, yes, they take you. It’s actually changing. In this country we’re pretty procedural, once you ..., the conditions, they welcome me, they make me do tests, everything is good. Relax, it’s going up, up, up; but at a certain point there’s facts or chance and the ..., the chance is given to the person. Unfortunately, I wasn’t selected but I know that I was at a level where it was possible to be selected. Because I was interested in becoming what’s called an aerospace controller.

01:51:12

The little door is open to Quebecers or to people from Toronto or to people from Vancouver in their respective circles. They don’t do it, they don’t experience it. Every Rwandan calls another Rwandan two or three times a day. There is no Quebecer that he calls as often. And I can’t say that he does it out of good [inaudible]... I think that he doesn’t know what he’s doing and the opposite too. When the little ones at school, I do see them, they’re more open ..., they still live

their integration to the fullest. I elaborated there, I'm elaborating too much, I'll have to ...
[laughter]

SG: You made a transition; you said the little ones at school ... What are your plans?

JSP: [laughter]...

SG: [inaudible...] marriage? Planning to have children? How do you see your future?

JSP: ... That's too personal, no ...! [laughter]

SG: I asked a question.

JSP: No, my dream would be, my dream would be, if truly in Rwanda they accept what they call double nationality, in Canada they truly accept, it's to create a connection between the two. Rwanda is small. They've been through a lot of ... They have kind of an interesting history. In fact I even ask myself if Canadians today know what happened in Rwanda..., the average Canadian; because we're talking about reconciliation in Rwanda, we're experiencing it, we're talking about peace, and I'm asking myself, in Canada there's peace, but people know what is happening in another country like Rwanda where people are fighting to have ... *they are rebuilding their country*, and they are succeeding ... Is this experience that is being lived over there known on the other side where they are. Because at this moment there is a way to build a bridge; not a bridge necessarily based on the top that has the ..., but a bridge of friendship, of solidarity.

SG: [inaudible...] in Rwanda recently...

JSP: It took sixteen years before a governor, the Lieutenant Governor went there. [Inaudible: I don't know ??] if Jean Chrétien... he never went ..., so that sort of means that the Canadians

they helped with Dallaire and all that went on. There are those that do it in an impersonal way, but it's guilty, you know like they wait a bit until people are able to have acquired or reached a level where you can go visit them. When maybe they needed Michael Jean to go as soon as the first day, but you can't begrudge a country that has its internal problems ... and also the genocide, okay... We are guilty of having committed it. Sometimes I don't even want to blame it on one ethnicity versus another. Rwandans committed a genocide. Yes, which Rwandan? Hutu against Tutsi maybe. But is it enough? The equation is too fast. There's a ..., there's a difference ... without wanting to take the easy way out, you know we can learn. And how is it that this minority in Rwanda managed to reconcile with the majority? This means that there's a majority of Hutu who can understand that we can manage to get along. In that moment, if we understand each other, are the critics in the North, are they really aware of what is happening in the South? Is Canada which purports to set a good example or understands what's happening in this ..., that has all the so-called small community beacons that live among each other and that allow complete personal and individual fulfillment at the same time as the communities versus the big country, the federal. Do they necessarily understand the theme that's playing out there? Because for me, if there was a way, a way to give a course on that, in the universities here ..., because that's it the ultimate in science is to allow people ..., but I'm losing myself a bit in a kind of ..., personal fantasy.

SG: ...but what would you have to submit to the ... ?

JSP: No, it's, it's kind of playing on ..., if it was possible, it will be done. It takes a generation to build this kind of "... I've run into a lot of Rwandans in Canada for example who are there, who want to do projects. As much as there are Rwandans maybe [inaudible: proportion?] there are some. I was disappointed to see so few in relation to the others. You know, at some point I told

myself "Americans", I told myself "Americans have fewer things to do in Rwanda than Canadians, given the history of the two countries." I saw more Norwegians and Swedish in Rwanda. I asked myself "what are they doing there? Why are there no Canadians? Why are they absent? " What do they have to "... The National University of Butare, it was Canadians that established it. Where are they? They're disengaging. Why are they disengaging, right? There are little questions that I can ask myself but getting to the point of saying: ok, there's still work to be done for a harmonization of perspectives. And, in regard to my life, yes, I see life in Canada, but at the same time, I see it in Rwanda, I'm incapable of disassociating the two. Because if I remove Rwanda from my mind, I've messed up. I can't, I can't. Maybe I feel that I should go back one day, one way or another, but at the same time I'm not able to give all to Rwanda by forgetting Canada... Because if one day I was able to understand the world in a global way, it's because of Canada; to have inner peace, to have an education, to believe, to make friends that I never could have imagined, to create a network. These are all values that mean that at some point, I'm one of the happiest people, when I see that in Rwanda, they'll accept double nationality. How we get the most out of both, I have no idea. So, it's an issue that's up in the air, and I don't think I know anyone who lives in these two worlds and who would tell me the opposite. One day he's in Kigali, he's thinking a little about Montreal with nostalgia, or the opposite, someone who says one day I'd like to go there.

SG: ...and in your case, you went back to Rwanda.

JSP: Yes, I went back, yes, yes. Going back to Rwanda, like many people, I thought about it. You know you evolve by questioning yourself at some point; and my first time back was ..., I had done business management informatics, because I told myself it's a new science. So, a new science accepted in the North and also accepted in the South, there was no way I'd be

unemployed. But then, the verdict of life as I was saying before, I finished, I had no money. If you want to go to Rwanda and you're really alone in the North, what do you do? It means you take the time to find a ticket that will bring you back to the country. And as I absolutely needed to work, to save and all that, I had never gone through this process in my life. So, the first year, before finding the first quick job, to try and make a bit of money, to save, I realized that saving money in this country is very difficult. So, my trip back that I wanted to do in a year, I realized that I would have to do it in two years, maybe three because life also brings other responsibilities. When you're no longer a student, there are other things that ... So, at this point I'm in 2004 telling myself that going back to Rwanda is now possible. And then I did it. I arrived there, I realized that in the great drama of my life, Rwandans hadn't been idle, Rwandans had secured the borders, Rwandans had started ensuring that justice was being done, that reconciliation was underway ...; it's a train that doesn't stop ..., that keeps going. And I arrived in 2005 and I believed myself to be the best computer scientists or one of the best, no, the Rwandans had a few computer scientists. And since I came from the North, I did have some demands. I wasn't ready to work on the cheap. I won't say that I'm still ..., I think it wasn't easy for me to have the work that I wanted there. Because if there's a fight, the return ..., people already had preconceived notions, when you came, they needed to know where you had come from, how? Why would he have that and not me? So, there's a little fight that sets in, applied like everywhere. So then, I told myself: "oh my God, in my life, I didn't expect that." Except that I had come for six months. I wanted to assess the situation and if I needed to, I would come back. So, I made a little trip, I came back, to realize that at the end of 2005, my coming back was not concluded.

02:05:31

SG: [inaudible...]

JSP: I [inaudible: reoccupied] yes, yes, I could say all of the year 2005, I was ..., focused on Rwanda if I can say that briefly; but I told myself: “computing science in Rwanda was a failure for me.” While the country was claiming itself to be *high tech*; so, you say it to someone up high there he won’t understand, who’s a big shot there. He’ll even be disappointed because below, it’s not happening that way that the one up there would like it to. And it’s okay, we’re talking under [inaudible: through?] But I had promised myself specifically to study and that’s where I did my Masters. And then, doing my Masters, I heard so much talk about project management, project management, projects in Rwanda, everything was projects. I even told myself: “but in Canada there’s projects too”. Everyone’s talking project, project, project. And it ends with project management. Project management is sometimes, it’s a diploma, huh, it’s just a certificate ... I tell myself no, no, no, it’s too small, I’ll maybe do an MBA. And I’ll, I’ll take that as a process towards an MBA that I’d do in 2000 ..., from 2006 to the end of 2007. And once again I fell into the here- or-there loop. Luckily, I had a contract over there that I was about to stumble upon that honored me and was well worth it. And then I fully experienced my first return to Rwanda. And then, I told myself: « Ah! It’s cool right, with people who understand you.” You’d call someone and say: “we’re going to the commemoration”, he’d say to you: “it’s the whole country that’s in commemoration”. You’d call someone you’d tell them anything, everyone understood you. Actually, you were kind of going in the same ..., in the same [inaudible: direction?] socially, but though you still had your little side that came from elsewhere. Some even called you "you come from elsewhere" Ah! the *muzungu*. Why? Because relations with abroad had changed. I ran into a foreigner in Rwanda, I encountered him like ..., basically I saw him as a foreigner. So, we had this facility. And... the tragedy is that sometimes when you went back to Canada, you spoke with Rwandans, if you had the opportunity, they saw you with a ..., Quebec eye or other people.

And they'd say: "ah! He's like that, he's always with the *bazungu*, the Whites "; ... from the community I mean. They didn't see it as a simple normality that must be ... And so in Rwanda too it's kind of the same thing. So, it's a ..., the task; you had to tell yourself "ok, no one can play this card except me ". And so, you imposed yourself, you created an identity for yourself or you told yourself: "here's my life. I know that some ..., or situations, I experience it this way. And when I go to Rwanda I want such and such work, and I don't want such and such a salary. I am somebody else". If you come to Canada you tell yourself: "ok, I want such and such a job with such and such a salary because I'm Rwandan". Because you'll never be able to be 100% Canadian, Quebecer by forgetting that you're Rwandan. I don't know if you understand. And at some point, you must find yourself and create your path. And it's not an easy task, right! So, going back to Rwanda or returning home, yes, but not at any price. Because it's a process, because there are people who are experiencing it. Yes, yes, yes, I met a gentleman who told me: "if ever you want to choose between the two it's better if you choose here or there". Wait: you say, even you, it never happened that way..., it never happened that way. Some, yes, but not everyone, and why do it that way? It's rather ... drastic to do it that way. Going back, yes, but it's a process. Something that I see rather as a journey. So, you can have an opportunity, you tell yourself: "it's a good one ", you take it. And that's the benefit of having understood. I tell myself: "I've understood so I can benefit from what life gives me or has brought me ..." And to go South as I can ..., not only to Rwanda, I can go elsewhere. Except that me, my age maybe told me: "but you must always go back, they need you". I always had trouble understanding people who were here after '94 until 2006 who didn't necessarily want to go back because they didn't want to, because they ..., I don't know how to explain it. Basically, they believed that they didn't have anything to do there. They were maybe right. Except that there are people who can set up projects there ..., who don't need money, who can give hope. They didn't even do ...,

they have never done this for even one year of their lives. Maybe someone who goes there, who is [inaudible: betrayed?] who falls for a situation, either he is not trusted or his money is taken or his project is stolen ... I can understand that person who says: "I did what I could but now I'm retreating." But someone who has never tried, with all the orphans over there who can be a million here or one hundred thousand, who never even sent one hundred ..., one hundred dollars. There are some, right. I tell myself: "no but wait, we should maybe, but maybe they're doing it otherwise, maybe they're doing it here too; they're helping the community here too." Am I trapped in a Canada-Rwanda prism? Yes, I must admit, I can't get out of it [laughter]... I can't get out of it otherwise I, I "...". But actually, that's true even when you're over there, right. Life ..., you say, I..., when I was in Montreal, when..., or when I spoke "...". So you're really on a border that you alone can get out of, where loyalty becomes important. So that means, if I experience a situation with Rwandans in an intense way, I experience it and consume it like a Rwandan. I don't even want anyone to say to me: "okay, I'm there, that I'm Canadian." It irritates me, it irritates me because I'm Rwandan but when I'm here, neither. But when I'm here, neither would I want a Quebecer to tell me 100% that I come from elsewhere. It has actually been a while since you've been here, and you've made your place in society. So, I don't know if I can stop there. [laughter]

SG: So, we're getting to the end of the interview. I wanted to ask you concerning everything we explained, do you consider yourself a survivor?

JSP: Oh! Definitely, yes. Because if I'd stayed in Rwanda I wouldn't be here... If my father had not fled in '73 ..., I don't know. Look at me walking in the street in '94 ..., does that work? I ..., I don't know, for me it doesn't work. Did I stay alive? Yes. Already I'm just taking the way ..., a few images, right ..., a few images. It seems that in '73, when my father fled, he carried me on

his shoulders when he crossed the border. So, I didn't walk but they told me: flee ... The others thought for you and made you flee. Were they wanted? In '90, in '91 when we left Rwanda..., when I left Kigali, every ..., every ten kilometres, there was a barrier. So, if you had to go from Kigali to Butare, you crossed at least five barriers. So, you arrived in Butare, I, I didn't just leave simply there ... a survivor, yes, a survivor again, why because when I got to Burundi, I was misunderstood, right. People ask you where did you come from? How did it go? How did you get here? Then, later when I count the people with which I studied at primary school when I was in Burundi, some went to fight the war for the FPR side. Even if they were in the diaspora, and they had the possibility of living without being worried maybe physically, around 1990, some decided to take up arms, to go and make a place for themselves in their country of origin. So, the two sides, if I wasn't necessarily killed at the front like the others who were in the diaspora, I would certainly be dead in Rwanda, like a "genocided" guy. So, the two sides, if I think of the people that I was with at primary, secondary school in Burundi, I don't see them, I see a certain number of them but the [inaudible], I don't see them. They are numerous. If I think of those in Rwanda, at the APACOPE school who made up to eight hundred students, how many are there? I count them. Each time I see one, I jump. So, they were maybe one thousand in total, all levels combined when I finished. Maybe three hundred are left. And... still. So, I tell myself: ... they're alive, yes, without exception ... without..., without hesitation. Basically, I should ..., I never thought about that for ..., for real; to, to put inside, even after the war. You know, when we were in Burundi..., going between the two wars [inaudible: of the world?] was I really sure of staying alive? No. When I went back a bit to Rwanda, no. It was a genocide, a genocide mainly targeting an ethnicity, if I can say it like that, the Tutsi. I'm part of it, and they did all the unimaginable crimes causing it to be called a genocide... I know a ..., I think it's going, it's going to drag on and on but, there are people, who I cross paths with them in Rwanda, today they pretend that

they don't know me. Because, I understand, it's 2010, you get to Rwanda for example, you go see lots of people, and so people who were there before '90, who were in Rwanda, between 1980 and 1990 ..., major, who had important positions and who would have just ..., even in 1994. There, when you run into them in the street, they don't want to say hello. You're walking, and at some point you realize that you know the person, you manage to identify them. But you identify them and it's blocks that stay in your head ..., sometimes memory is so terrible, right. You identify them as not from Bujumbura, you identify them as not from Canada, no, you identify them as from Rwanda during the events, whether before or after. And then, you tell yourself "but why would they want to greet me?" You can go and greet them, the person. Except that you remember too, what it was that was behind it, the risk, what would ..., what will it bring me ...? A kind of reconciliation? No, he knows my parents, very well, he may have been around them, he maybe ..., I..., but they are no longer. Okay, at this point, you tell yourself "but maybe too this person has repented. Maybe the person knows very well that even if they committed ... enormities, now we're living in a moment of peace". Except that shaking your hand, saying hello to you, is already a problem. So, saying that if ..., survivor? Yes but okay I also tell myself, we say that ..., it targets, you know like I was very astounded to see that in Rwanda, people who had lived completely in the diaspora and who came back later, now they are also having their turn. They are a bit like in April, they're traumatized by the way. And, I didn't understand. Because that ..., because that phase there was experienced by that phase there that was in ..., to the direct survivors of the genocide. Direct, I mean in confrontation. But those who came from the diaspora and everything, what were they doing at the time, either they confronted the people who killed, but the other thing is that they fought for construction and reconciliation. They never had time for drama ... bereavement. So those people were always solicited. They are the ones that had the first tribunals ..., they are the ones that trained the first students. They had so much work that

they never really stopped and tried to understand what happened to them on an individual and physic level. And now in April, it's not surprising to see a former soldier or soldier say to you "I feel like going to Mass " or..., you say: "you, go to Mass?" Or to see someone that tells you: "... I want to have a beer with you or something like that ...". When it's been five years, no one has really spoken to you. And then, the person starts speaking to you. And you look at the individual and you say: "what just happened to you?" You realize that the person just woke up and has accepted living. Maybe she just had children who are now ten years old. She looks at the children and finds another issue. I want them like that, they play well, they go to school and it reminds you that you have responsibilities and all that, and it reminds you of your past and ... When I run into them, I tell myself "but wait: we're not out of the woods yet on what happened to us? " That's why, when people talk about genocide, for example, the fifteenth anniversary in Rwanda, it was ... hope. It's very good. This way we can think of the future. But another question comes up ...

02:21:00

Because there are a lot of people who said no. Not one bit of hope. It's too early to have hope. First, we have to... you know? But, but..

SG: [inaudible] That we heal first?

JSP: That's it. It's as if ..., many revisionists or people who ..., who are currently experiencing a kind of open form of criticism because the problem of genocide will fall into a kind of criticism ... You are too ..., stopped..., arrested ideas, you leave no room for critics ..., for criticism. I say but no, criticism began during the genocide and even afterwards. Because during the genocide, it was necessary to know what kind of government you would put into place? The first government in Rwanda was led by a Tutsi ..., rather by a Hutu. So, reconciliation, the seeds of reconciliation

began during the genocide. There were people who were thinking at that moment. Hope was among ..., even during the genocide. And it grew, it never stopped. Except that at some point you stop yourself and you say “OK, but one hundred percent hope? Does that mean that there’s nothing more? Are there not still people in Rwanda who want to bring the country farther in the dark years ...?” There are many, many, many. There not even people that you can put names to. It’s ideas... It’s, uh ..., the beacons are very important and when I think about it, even today I tell myself that I’m lucky. I’ve kept my joy of living, we still laugh at home. I’m surrounded by ..., but at the same time, there’s always a little ... something there, as if tomorrow there would be some kind, a semblance of war based on ethnicity, it will be *never again*. We are ... it’s guaranteed that everyone will say *never again*. But this, all this reflection came during the war, I was still a baby then. I have to admit to myself, at the sociological level, personality level, I had nothing. It’s now that I’m stopping and I’m putting myself in perspective, I’m telling myself “wait, was I ..., I..., I was really a survivor? Yes. It’s not even a question. Survivor? Yes.” Actually, the proof is that my parents are no longer here. If they didn’t die from the way, they maybe died from something that eroded them and ... a kind of life for others, you know? Exhausted by life. My grandparents are no longer. The only living proof between my parents and them, is just my grandmother who is still alive today. How did she do it? Because she wasn’t in Rwanda. So..., mind you, that doesn’t mean that I’m *genocided*, no, I’m someone very lucky and I think that I did too much ..., if life lends me ... , if I can go more ..., if I have the luck to live for a long time, maybe I won’t be able to accomplish several of my ambitions concretely, because often what is left of a man is ..., what is concrete. While up until today, what I’ve done is rather small contacts. A kind of life that’s a bit [inaudible: boom?] social, or even when you work, you work for someone else, rather for a system, you have what was initiated ..., for a project... So, at the end, people will see what ...? It could be a child you know? No, it happened

that I categorically told myself: "OK, I'll have a child. It's all I want, because if I die, that will be it. There's no negotiating, I want a child." You get up one day it's uh [snaps fingers] I swear [laughter]. Any girl, she'll be the ideal woman and we'll make a child and then I don't care about the consequences. But it's a thing that you fight against. Because if you think like that you'll do it right away. Because there's nothing that can stop you from doing it right away when you think it because it's an emergency. So, if I say "I'm not a survivor ", yes but am I aware of what is happening to me? No. Worse case, I'll leave here telling myself that I need a child right away, it's something concrete that I would have left. And from there, I would no longer necessarily be a survivor because I's have a child. But for me it's, ..., how do you call them ..., they're shadows that you remove. You don't pressure yourself, and you try to experience it, to take it easy, to experience it like someone normal. To tell yourself yes, time belongs to me now. And I can prepare myself, organize myself, and even go towards my projects without necessarily being a survivor who is on alert. They're looking for me ..., I live with a past that haunts me ..., all those people are where? Do Canadians understand me? You know, there are people who live that way, I know some in Montreal, I know some in Kigali, I know some who never let go. And you can't blame them for it because ..., you know I know people who tell you stories and then you say: "Wait, do you leave room for hope?" Because you feel like telling them that if you don't give yourself a chance to clear your guilty conscience, to get out of there, you'll never breather. But at the same time, well, it's a journey, it's a process, you can't ... No, I remember, my ..., the first girl I dated in Montreal was a Rwandan survivor. And I spent a long time trying to understand why, I didn't understand.

SG: What did you try for a long time to understand why?

JSP: Why I dated this girl? Because you know, it's like when you realize that after a certain number of years that you don't necessarily call each other, I know that your paths have gone completely off course. But at the time we were very close. But when I'm going to get the person at their place one day, I say "but wait, you were really the only person in the world who could speak of genocide and I could understand." Because she had nothing left; And when she spoke I understood, and when I spoke, she could understand. So, we had like a set of circumstances that led us to grow. And when I spoke to other communities, other people they didn't understand. They were, like, not there for me. So, that's how strong we felt, I imagine, it's each to their own pathm and I took mine; for the time being, we were survivors. And when ..., survivors what are we doing, we were trying to put ourselves together. Except that there's a risk too, right, you don't see other things, ambitions. You stay a bit closed, and you live in the past rather than in the future.

SG: So, we're going to ... make concluding remarks. What would you like to leave in this interview? Whether it be for your children...

JSP: ... [laughter]

SG: For you, what would you like us to take away from this ... from this interview?

JSP: I think that you're not nice because you never gave me the questions so that once in a while, I could basically direct my answers, and think beforehand. Which means that I embarked on a story where I don't really master the comings and goings, you know; I don't know the questions very well, and ... when you speak of yourself, I'm sure that it's ... [pause] you can't, in fact, end the life story of a person, it's actually very ambitious as a project ..., you can ... Myself, I ... [laughter], my way of seeing things is ..., if I can bequeath something, it's that you have to, in

fact, try to fight against ignorance. And... every day of my life, I, I..., at a certain point it's true, I judged for a long time. When I was a child, I saw someone, an adult person for example come to our house drunk, and everyone fled. Ah! He is completely drunk, he is really shouting. Really, you know, a golden child or when someone comes to your place completely lost, falling, it was a scandal for me. I..., and then one day I started to detach from that. Because when my father would arrive, the guy would calm down, or when my mother would arrive, I would see that the gentleman would calm down. And become as gentle as a lamb and I told myself "there's a story behind this person. What is it?" I slept at a certain point, with a lady ..., who was good at home and then at some point she would shout at night. At home, when someone sleeps and shouts at night, we call them *umusazi*, the crazy one. But it was nightmares and I was young, I was like twelve years old and we judged, everyone called her the crazy one. And very quickly we came to understand that she wasn't that crazy, she had experienced events that caused her to often have nightmares. And the gentleman, in spite of all his desire not to fall into alcoholism..., and God knows he made some, some..., he made efforts. It's that every time he fell into it, there were very few people who could understand him. And people who could have experienced somewhat of a similar life or if not, he needed to talk about it ... So, if I put aside the active judgement of people that we meet everyday in the metro, against ..., according to skin, like in bars ..., first impressions are often very, very dangerous because it's often our filter working. And if we don't have a very developed filter that allows us to understand people in their entire psyche, somewhat like in a drawing, it's abstract or we want to have all the contours, we'll make a very quick judgement. And at that moment, we are really very ignorant. And I run into them, I have run into ignorant people, and I can say that it hurts. It hurts at school, it hurts at work, it hurts when you run into someone ignorant because you tell yourself "my God, to say that it's because of people like them that we can't evolve, that we can't go beyond the challenges of life." Because

basically, no one is good it's true, but ... you know how to judge actively, and draw a conclusion, and touch wood, as we say and do something. Someone speaks to you, you don't even have time to listen and you ..., go. So my life, if I was meant to die today, I would be very, very sad [laughter] in my tomb because I would tell myself: "you know what, I had other things that I wanted to do and that I didn't have the time to do." Because I know that I'm alone to be able to understand them, and I haven't even gone through, I don't even know if I'll have time to do them. Because I'm realizing that those that have some semblance of success, that can do it, they don't do it. Why don't they do it? Because they are exhausted. The time it takes to understand this we're already asking ourselves the question, I need to sleep, I need to do something for my grandson. And when I speak of Rwanda, I have like, visually, people who help me in everything I do. For example, I can go through an interview, and I leave like that, because I've just seen an image and then you see another, you leave ... If you want to faithfully render all these people who necessarily live in us in one way or another, you realize that only if I talk about him can I do it. And if I speak about him it's already a pact in my life because sometimes, I react like him without knowing it. They are there, right. They are there, and they are like men who are around me and I tell myself eventually: "we live for a reason and if we live for a reason, we need to go and find that reason." It can be just a witness, it can be just ..., you know in a management course that I was doing we spoke about leadership and we say of leadership; there are two kinds of leadership where the expert of the moment... [pause] I had never understood when I was in a space ..., you know like here in Montreal, I don't feel inspired to be the leader. I want to advise, or wait and see, to understand. And it's during this course that I understood that there are experts of the moment, what we call experts of the moment. Life will take care of it, we'll arrive in a moment in our lives when without having wanted it, people will come find you and tell you, now it's your turn. Because they don't know what to do. They will call you so you can tell them what

to do. But as we live in a moment that sometimes goes quickly, you have to impose yourself, at work, you have to impose yourself at ... at home, you have to impose yourself, you have to impose yourself, to take your place, but we have a tendency to skip steps and ..., it brings all the mistakes and the damage that I see around us. The steps are sometimes skipped by people who absolutely want to take leadership in a moment when they shouldn't, they might have been good as advisors but not more. But when you become expert of the moment when you aren't because you want to force leadership and then I think that's when all the, all the problems come and then ... in things as a Rwandan that I appreciate enormously the fact of having been welcomed in Canada and to benefit enormously from this space of freedom ... because we have a tendency to forget sometimes ... When I returned to Rwanda, I had this guy that I'd run into, he was a soldier, he had given all he could and now he is even poorer than before ..., a bit of family at least that he managed to build up and he told me: you know Serge, the problem in Rwanda or in countries of the South if I can say that, he said: it's when there are too many people who are hungry ... And those people, the problem that could be resolved easily, it has a tendency to become amplified and then the solution is a bit far away or there will be more that will try to do harm whereas in the North, since we aren't necessarily too hungry, we have another form of hunger [laughter]..., we'll realize that the problem that is in Rwanda, it would have been easy to solve ... or rather ..., what do you call that ..., the problem that was amplified exorbitantly for nothing in Rwanda, here it's nothing, people don't even see it, they pass it because people aren't hungry. And the opposite is also possible, in Rwanda the problems that we don't see because we're hungry ..., how many people I've crossed paths with ..., tense, panic attacks here in Montréal, you go see them, where's your problem? People, they don't have an answer. I always, when I get the chance, I tell them: "take a trip to the South, just, I'm begging you, take a little trip, take a little trip, it will cost you four thousand dollars, you have it in your account, take a trip

but not a tourist trip, no, no, no..., go, settle down, live with the people at their pace, two months maybe and then come back, and you'll see how much good it did you ..." Unfortunately, you tell them, they decide to stay [laughter]. I'll stop there, I'll stop there [laughter]..., I won't continue ...

SG: Thank you, very, very much ..., really to have taken the time to share this moment with you ...

JSP: *Murakoze cyane, thanks very much* [laughter]