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**Bernard K. Punikai'a**

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**SUBJECT:** Life Experiences of Bernard Punikai'a  
& Hansen's Disease in Hawaii

## Introduction

Bernard K. Punikai'a has a unique life story. At the age of six he was diagnosed with Hansen's disease (leprosy.) He spent much of his life in treatment centers; Kalihi Hospital, the colony in Moloka'i and in Hale Mohalu. Despite these challenges Punikai'a has remained optimistic as he found peace through his religious faith. In addition, he has been active in bettering patient rights throughout the State of Hawai'i both politically and socially.

In this interview Punikai'a discusses religion and how he found purpose and meaning as a member of the Catholic Faith. He describes his conversion process and the role that religion continues to play in his life. He also addresses patient rights within the healthcare system of the State and the role he has played in bettering conditions. For many years patients with Hansen's disease had little to no rights. He was very active in altering these policies. Besides these topics he also discusses the life experiences that were particularly hard for him. For example, being separate from his mother and testing experimental medicines.

Toward the end of the interview Punikai'a talks about his hobbies and the goals that he has for the future. He has a great love for music and has been inspirational through his use of this talent. Currently he is trying to write down many of his songs so that he can get them copy righted and published. He also continues to be influential in the government. In the interview he gives advice on how Hawaiians can have their voices and political opinions heard without causing contention. Punikai'a has had many unique experiences and he continues to be an active, positive role model to fellow patients, the Hawaiian people and the general community.

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TAPE 1, SIDE A

INT Thank you so much for doing this. It's really important to me. A lot of the questions that I want to ask are really based on your life. This is for a class called "Oral History and Public History, and Oral Traditions", and we are trying to learn about history from what people can tell us. First, I wanted to ask you the normal questions, if you could state your name.

BP My name? My full name is Bernard Punikai'a, Pu-ni-kai-'a.

INT Pu-ni-kai-'a, 'okina right there.

BP Part of the 'okina is a true name. Do you understand 'okina?

INT Yes, I do.

BP When I write it, I write it with the 'okina in there. I write my signature, (demonstrates writing signature) P-U-N-I-K-A-I'-A. But usually, 'okina is up chucked and they barely use the 'okina anymore. To me that is as Hawaiian as anything, as well as my last name and everything about it.

INT That's true.

BP Now the name, I got the name from my godfather. He gave me that name. It has meaning to me. Now, I don't use the name all the time, you know Punikai'a, but I write it P and the dash and then the 'okina, and then that's okay. When people write my name I like them to put my either the initial, (Demonstrates writing name) or like that. I like to see my name do that because it has meaning to me as a Hawaiian. I got the name from my godfather and at one time I didn't understand how important it was, but then... From my mom I mean, see I was too young, I was only six years old, so it was a long time after the cleverness, I had to adjust myself to society, to know how I feel and I just accept society and all the things that come to me. And, you know basically, I'm a pretty good guy.

INT Yeah.

BP Yeah, I feel happy and I feel things like that. I'm still active in political activities, and I need to get involved in government politics again. I ran for office at one time, and they kicked my butt. hahaha. Some people say well you know you'll advance because people know who you are, and they know who I am because I got arrested for trespassing and I challenged the state, and then they know who I am. And then they write they're stories, and only the stories that I participate in the writing of are stories of truth. If I wrote that part of that story is mine, then everything is accurate. When other people write about me, I am very cautious about what they say. Sometimes they cover things and make things more gracious and decadent and its not, they are ordinary things that I have done. And

nobody else can believe in some things, and that's about it. For me that's how I live my life. Me, I'm not too fixed. I walked the road, every step of the way, I've walked the road; I've been there. I've been there. I was admitted when I was six years old to Kalihi Hospital. It was a long time! The idea was that during those years whatever people with religion, my godfather, godmother, and other people of the same religion as I am, they helped me early to accept God and anything that happens. I don't think I am especially better than anyone, but for me, religion has always been in my life, even though I was not a Catholic when I left, a Chinese guy come see me. He was our father and took care of us boys and there was no women allowed, but I was raised Catholic. He said, "Eh, like go church tomorrow?" Me, I always said yes, and I was not Catholic. He said, "You like go church tomorrow?" "Yeah, pick me up!" Six o'clock we start church and mass, and I wasn't up yet, I was dead asleep so he come in and said, "eh, you better get up for mass" and I was not Catholic. Where we lived that was the church and I used to see people and then I went to church and I found out that I didn't understand anything about Catholicism and I'm not in the church, I'm not a Catholic, I wasn't baptized. I always go with the other guy who was a Chinese guy, and I always go, and he would say, "You like go church?" Yeah. And I don't know what church is, I don't understand very much. Me, I understand that God was there. But that was how my... I was six years old. That was how my mind thought as a kid and that's a thought that still think to be to this day, I remember that I didn't understand anything they said. The words had no meaning to me, everybody else said, "You're lucky you're in God's love!" I don't know what that means! I had no idea... "Life is in front of you" I still get to call Amen you know, and eat my breakfast, but that's how it was! And I had no understanding, cause I was just six years old. At that time I became active in Catholicism. The children were not just Catholics, they were all religions, I had no religion! I was not religious to any content; I did not belong to a church before Kalihi Hospital. I still remember attending, sitting in church in Honolulu and I used to wonder, "What are all these people all about?" I had no idea what to do. I went church then I sleep. You have to always contrast it. With communion, I had no idea, all that they were saying. I used to think as a kid, "Maybe it's some kind of candy, we must be getting something good!" I go to confession, and everybody act nice to me, everybody treat me nice. One of the things that I did as Roman Catholic I used to pick up news of other people's words against Catholicism, and I used to wonder why, I had no idea why they were so uptight about Catholicism. They had; as I got old I understand the hatred other people had towards Catholicism was very deep, and I wasn't a Catholic but I heard these people talking and they would look at the differences about Catholicism. They would say, "They don't believe in God." I said, "I know that's not true." And I wondered why they would say that. I've heard in the protestant church that they talk about God. How come God would be in their church and not ours? I didn't understand that. And it took me a while for me to understand that God was merciful in the early days of Catholicism. In the early days of Hawaii, people hated those who were Catholics. And I didn't understand that hatred until later. I used to read a lot, and when I read that I, understood that Catholicism was not a common way of

thinking. Eventually I have to accept who I am for my religion, just because I go to my church, and you go to your church and that's how its resolved, because that's, you know, in life there are so many good parts and so many bad parts and for me, church is one of the most important parts of my early life. That's how I learned about Christianity, I read about every other religion there is. When I started understanding Catholicism, I knew that God was everywhere, and you believe or not, and I believed even though I was not baptized. I got baptized when I went to Kalaupapa, and that's how I got the faith. And that's how I live my Christian faith. About loving each other more, and that's the hardest thing about different religions telling me that my church is not right. It's hard to accept that, and I heard them speak about what religion is correct. I learn from what I was told and I believe what people taught me. I am a very religious person. You have people coming to preach the gospel. What religion are you?

INT Mormon.

BP For some people, religion makes a difference.

INT How did your faith help you?

BP It made me more understanding. My faith has such understanding. My understanding of my faith is very intense. I'm not a religious fanatic but the idea is that religion is someone's personal tool to God; it's what we believe in. And whether one religion teaches really different, another teaches really different, but everyone talks about God.

INT In your family you weren't raised in your church?

BP No. I was not baptized.

INT Until you went to Kalaupapa?

BP No. Kalihi Hospital.

INT Oh, Kalihi Hospital, okay.

BP That's where I went the first time. To me, in my life, Kalihi Center people here touch my heart. They have a good religion, they believe in God. Now, when I went to Kalaupapa we had one guy, I was not baptized at the time, and I asked the reverend to help me what the topic was. The people were so nice. I had my friends from all different places, but they believed in God so intensely. I also knew the truth of Catholicism. The Nuns I used to see in their costume, but that's what I saw it as, a costume. Until I got baptized, then I understood. I understand more about; I understand different people's beliefs. I have a feeling that God knows exactly what were doing. And knows when were good and when were bad. He knows how bad I was. I'm not a religious fanatic. I may be sounding

like one. The idea is that when I went to church I never had a religion until Kalupapa, I got baptized there, and that happened because suddenly, my Godmother was a patient, a resident of Kalaupapa. She asked me if I was Catholic. I said, "No". "Would you like to become a Catholic?" "Yes". I attended mass, so she wrote a letter with me to my mom, asking permission for me to be baptized. It was the first letter I wrote to my mom, and I said, "I've attended the Catholic Church in Kalupapa, I would like to become a Catholic and I'm asking your permission for me to become a Catholic." As an adult I could have joined any time I wanted to, but as a kid, I had to have consent from my mom. Because I didn't belong to any religion, so I had to get her permission before. That was a major thing for me. That was how it was done.

INT And she wrote you back?

BP Yeah, she wrote me a letter, giving permission for me to be baptized. My godmother taught me all the prayers, what to say. And that's how it was in the early years.

INT Can you tell me a little more about your family, and what it was like when you were separated?

BP Well, uh...

INT If you don't want to that's okay

BP No, I no problem. Kalihi Hospital, I spent many years at Kalihi Hospital. I was taken on a wagon to Kalihi Hospital. I was about six years old when I went to the hospital and it was that that let me know how very hard it was. There is a picture of me that would show. Have you seen the picture of me?

INT Yeah I have.

BP You have?

INT Which picture? I don't know exactly. When you went to Kalihi?

BP How was I dressed?

INT You had no shirt on. Is that the one?

BP Yeah. I need to make sure you're accurate. hahaha. The picture was taken at Kalihi hospital. Now, I took the picture, and years later I look at the picture, and they took my picture and I hated what they did to me. I really did. And I know that someday I'm going to get these guys and punch them out. I didn't like what they were doing. They take off your clothes, you were a concern, the doctor come and look you up we only knew, and lifting up your shirt and looking all around. I



hated that. I hated going through that process, I was only six years old. I hated it, I was frustrated and it really was painful at the time. I, someday in heart, and in my mind, someday I'll get even with these guys. These people standing there, watching me as they poke me, and saying "here, and how does it feel to do that?"... I hated it. There's nothing I liked when I went through that. Even at home, I've gotten spanking by my mom, but actually my stepfather was the one who beat me up, and my mom saved my life one time, I was put in the hospital, she saved my life. My stepfather drank, but he's all good now. I started thinking all the time that he was mean, 'cause by the time the hate I had for him had disappeared, because he was a mean son-of-a, he was Hawaiian, big guy. In my heart, I used to call him daddy, and someday I'm going to knock him out. I was a kid, but I remember that's how I was feeling. To me, I would say, "Someday I'll get you".

INT Do you think that this is a problem that a lot of Hawaiian people are facing?

BP I think so. In this lifetime, or any other lifetime. I was six years old, then I got diagnosed with the disease, and after several days, I got really ill. And when I left, the idea was that I wasn't going to make it to come Kalaupapa and live. There was no intention that I would make it there. I was dreading it. I hated it. If I had to bet on my life, I don't think I'd make six months. I was extremely ill.

INT How long did you live at Kalihi Hospital?

BP Until the Second World War. 133 went to Kalaupapa. When I went to mess around, sometimes they would take us riding once a week or once a month, they took us on the bus around town, around Honolulu town. Because of the condition that we had, there was no way that we could visit anybody. We could not stay with anybody. Do you understand? There's no hand touching, nobody could touch. No one. My mom couldn't. But my mom did!

INT Your mom did anyways?

BP Yeah. But she came in with treats for me, so she pulled me back. And these that stay in the office yelled, "Get away from that boy!" And by that time I was too small to understand. I am now. I would tell them, "How dare you, she never met you, and you say she's not allowed to touch me!" It's just the hardest thing. There you are just a little child and your mom is not allowed grab you or hold and touch you, and that is rudest shame when the people you love the most are not allowed to touch you and all people.

(Someone comes in and we make small talk about that person.)

INT I wanted to find out how you traveled to Kalaupapa and what that was like to travel there and know that you were being sent there.

BP The first time?



INT Yeah, the first time.

BP That was a lot of years, during the war. Remember the war?

INT I heard about it but I wasn't there. hahahaha

BP I was diagnosed in 1937. (Someone comes by and teases Bernard about his stories, and then tells about how great Bernard is. They talk for a little while.)

INT So, about traveling to Kalaupapa, knowing that you would be sent there...

BP It was that long ago, when I went to Kalaupapa I was young, I was six years old at Kalihi, then after a while after five years, they sent me to Kalaupapa, and life on Kalaupapa was special. You've been there yeah?

INT I've only seen the view, I haven't gone down yet. I will be going down in April though, next week with Kerri.

BP Are you going to take the tour with Richard?

INT Yeah, we're gonna take the tour with Richard.

BP I want to tell you the thing about Richard. The thing is there's so many good things he can tell... stories. He has never taken the time to learn. Somebody would say something that's...that's...you gotta listen to what I tell you, that's the truth, not... when we came here, he was not allowed to... he had to go out with closure, and he had. The fact is that the moment he was clear, was the moment that there were great expectations from everybody. The doctors, say that the patients lie to us. And the doctors, they tell us there's no medicine. There wasn't any back then, there was no medicine, and how are you gonna say there's no medicine when they're advertising it in the newspaper? When are we gonna start with that medicine? It was out, and we read the stories about the promine medicine they were using, and after all that we asked the doc why can't we have the medicine? His answer was, "Too experimental". For us, we've been under the banner of the hospital. Cases were being cured, and we're reading the newspaper talking about this drug. Well, why can't we get the same thing? But no, no it was too experimental. There were a lot of people dying at that time! Those who were dying stopped dying and they were leaving. Why can't we have the same thing? And so, I got well because of that. Every other accident happened through other accidents during the years with that. And that's how.

INT And the drugs they were giving you before the promine, wasn't that experimental?

BP Promine was a major one.

INT But before that, did they use chaulmoogra oil?

BP That's only bologna, it doesn't work!

INT That was more experimental than Promine then.

BP Yeah, it was too experimental, it didn't work at all. I just hated that damn thing. I got sick from the injection. It was terrible. It really was sore, and we all got worse, I got bad. But the idea was that the medicine did not work. But Promine, that had its affect, because I started getting well. That's how you judge how the treatment affected the severity of the disease. Does it work? How many have been released? That's how you tell. You count how many have been released. If you don't get released, forget it, I don't want to do that. When we started a new medicine we all had to sign a note saying that we're not going to sue them. The idea is that it worked, I got well and I traveled the world. I went to Africa, I went all over the mainland, I've been to Brazil. I've traveled a lot, a lot of miles traveling. But, that's how I've managed to survive on life, by living this day, promising to fight for the next day. Well, I don't know how much you read about me. What do you know about me?

INT I mainly read from *Ma'i Ho'oka'awale*, and I read about how you lived on Kalaupapa, and I've read a lot about Hale Mohalu and that incident. And one thing that I found was interesting was when you talked about, how you've taken your situation and you've chosen to be outspoken, but a lot of patients had a fear of being outspoken, and I was wondering how you've been able to do that, and what made you want to be outspoken?

BP Well, first of all, when you're paraded on by the state, and all your rights are taken away, and I'm one of those, you know I'm on the patient's council chairman for many years on Kalaupapa. And some of the guys who helped me they're still good friends of mine. Like Wally Inglis, you know his name? Wally Inglis. Kerri, she knows him. He was with us; he was a supporter of us. We still write letters, we're good friends. I haven't seen him in the last couple years, but the idea is he's a guy I listen to, give advice, and I know he's on my side. And I only want to stay here for a little while; I was planning to leave here soon.

TAPE 1, SIDE B

INT About the Hale Mohalu incident, when I read about it, I thought that the way they were treating the patients was not only inhumane, but also illegal, can you tell me about your experiences with Hale Mohalu?

BP First of all, as patients, for us who lived at Hale Mohalu, we had no rights. First of all, we had no rights at all, and the only way had rights, we had to challenge them. That's how we won a case. And nobody had any idea how bad it was. We got interviewed by the press at the end of that. The idea was that everyday was like that. We had to challenge them. I said, we can't do this, you cannot do this. It's against the law for you to do that. The state would say, "Who are you to tell me the law?" They had all these attorney generals working for the state, but they used all these different tactics to kick me out, but that's the system. And if you know how to fight back, you fight back. And me, I know how to fight back, so how I fight back is, I go through every angle I know, the media, everything to tell them what story's here and there, and tell the story. Then to other people from different areas and we said, "You can't do this". And the law says you need to have an official part to all rights. We wanted to challenge them, that's how. We went by sheer guts and heartache. They finally arrested us, but that's true, you can't do that it's against the law. They never thought we had guts. We were under the state for several years and then they thought they could do anything they want to us, and that's not true. They had to learn a lesson, and it was a hard lesson. I can't deny what the other guys gave up. And that's how it was.

INT But within the State and City government there was a lot of conflict with what was happening, for example, how Frank Fasi provided the water and electricity. What do you think would have been the best way for the State to handle it?

BP They didn't handle it the right way. They shouldn't conceal it. They shouldn't conceal it, should have surrendered, and give us what we want to do what we want, but no. No, they use every reason in power, everything. They took the water system in our house. My house. They shut the water system in our house. They turned off the water. We gotta go outside and turn the light on. They never knew I could operate a water tunnel. It wasn't easy.

INT So, in a sense the conditions there weren't the best for the patients, but how would you have wanted them to take care of this problem? Would you have wanted them to renovate Hale Mohalu?

BP It was still there. The idea is that the system has changed. We made them change the system. In the old days, we had no rights. Even till now.

INT With the closing though, I read in an article about a term used called "transfer trauma", and I wondered if you would be able to describe this to me. (Interrupted by leaving nurse and Bernard starts to talk about her).

BP See she's one of those. Me and the other guys give money to go buy stuff at the store for us. I gave money to go buy Poke Aku, and then she come, and she told the driver no buy Poke Aku for me. I said, "What!" I go to the doctor, I tell him, "hey doc, I've been having Poke Aku everytime, and now she tells me I cannot have Poke Aku, I need you to tell her, get her off my case." She's not the boss, I don't consider her the boss. That's why I say stay away from me don't give me any trouble, I'll kick your butt. She just come over here, she like tell me what can and cannot eat. Who made you my boss? I don't need your permission. I have a doctor. The doctor that stays here and my doctor sent me here. They don't have a right to tell me your well, go home. Only the doctor can do that, and some of the nurses here. Who is she that can come here and tell me I gotta do what she like? Anything I buy I buy myself. I have money. I have pension. I have food and everything else I need. I don't need anyone to get anything for me, I do it, I do it. If not I give the guy the money, but a lot of times Poke Aku is what I get. I don't need them to tell me what I can eat, what I can have. I have no respect for this nurse that is here. She has no respect for me, why should I respect her? Unless there are some things that are not prescribed to me, but I know what I can have. My mom had to be in St. Francis hospital. My mom died. So, I used to cook it for my mom. Every Sunday I'd go to church, then I would swing by every Sunday, I would buy her Poke Aku. Then I would take it to St. Francis hospital where she was. When I walk in the hospital, she would see in my hand what I had. I'd say, "What you looking at?" She was a really good lady. After a while, I took it to my house and cut it up small, small pieces were easier for her. Nobody told me I cannot do that. It meant so much to me.

INT From this story, what does "human dignity" mean to you?

BP Human dignity is a respect for rights, and that's what it's all about. You respect the rights as citizens of this community. As citizens of the community, make it easier for me. And that doesn't mean you take away all they need to eat. They just need something that they can handle. The things they can eat without helping themselves. That's about what it means. 'Cause, I went to the hospital when my mom was at St. Francis, so I asked the nurse at the hospital, "I'm going to buy things for my mom. I'd like to know what kind of diet is okay" She said anything you buy her is fine, but she cannot eat anything she wants, so I just cut the Poke. She loved Poke, and that's why I brought it 'cause I know she loves it. She wouldn't eat it all. Eat a little bit, and that's all for me. I know she enjoyed it so much.

INT So, I hear you're quite a musician.

BP yeah.

INT Will you tell me a little bit about your music? I know you've composed some songs.

BP Yeah, I do write songs. I've got my Autoharp in the hospital there. I usually play the songs I wrote; because music is the thing I do that's right. It really is. I love singing. I've been singing since I was a little kid. I couldn't play anything, and then I got a ukulele, and it hurt my hand that thing. So I try to play the Autoharp in the other style (and shows how it lays flat). I guess it sounds all right. I write a lot of songs.

INT How many songs do you think you've composed?

BP I cannot count.

INT What are the songs usually about?

BP Love, sweethearts. With Hawaiian songs you have to be very careful what you write. You need to write the words correct, first of all. If the words are correct, people understand the meaning, and they understand the English kinds of songs. And sometimes in some other songs you let the people know, in your song, you let them know, and they understand the words more, especially if they don't understand Hawaiian. And that's important, 'cause if they do understand they can follow, and I have written so many songs a long time ago, and I told her that I wrote the songs from heart and she asked me to sing them, and I don't want to do that. I didn't want to do that. I'm not too sure why. The idea is that when I wrote the song, we were kind of close to each other at Kalaupapa a long time ago. She asked me to sing to her, I said I don't know I don't know. I could I just gotta think about what to sing. I loved her. I really loved her. She was a life for me. It's helped me through my music. (Sings a piece of the song). As I said, I love music. I grew up with songs at my feet, and I learned to sing as a young kid. They used to teach us how to sing. And eventually I learned the words. The words helped, and I still manage to do all of that today. Sometimes we like to play concerts. My friend Wally comes, and other guys come jam inside the hospital. One play the guitar, I play the Autoharp, other guys play ukulele and that kind. For me, music is to make the heart jump, make the heart love to love society, to love each other. That's what music is to me. I'm telling you this because I'm going to start soon, I'm going to start writing all the songs together and make a copyright. To have all the words made and have it put down and copyrighted, to pass it on to myself to have a look at it. Just so I can look at it. I used to sing when I was on the mainland, and I wrote some others, which is good. Some of the songs are nice. You know, I tell people that this song is nice. And they say, "You wrote um that's why." Well of course I wrote um, that's why I think it's nice! There are other songs I didn't write, and I love these songs. The best is a song I didn't write, E na kini. Have you heard this song? (singing) "E na kini o ka 'aina, e ala mai..." you ever heard this song? (singing) "...E na mamo o Hawaii nei.... (sings the rest of E na kini). That's a song written by (?). I first heard this song, and he was teaching a band the lyrics, and I loved the song. It's a beautiful song. And me, doing that kind of stuff for myself, it touched my heart. I really, I love songs. You ever heard of Eddie Pomai? He's one of the artists of



Hawaiian music. He wrote a lot of songs. He was a friend of mine too. (sings E na kini). That's the songs I love. See, I love the songs, even though I didn't write the songs, they are so beautiful. That is why this song, E na kini, written by , he taught a Kalaupapa choir, and the lions club sings this song. The three verses, very 'akamai. (singing).

INT You grew up with a lot of music around you then?

BP A lot of music is in the heart. First of all, I'm Hawaiian, and that makes a difference in my songs. And then, Hawaiian songs, I love Hawaiian songs. But, I don't write every son a Hawaiian song, but Hawaiian songs have so much meaning in the words. As for me, that means a lot. So, sometimes when other people try the song, I really didn't know the words, so that's okay. I get the words mixed up but that's okay.

INT If someone asked you who you are, and what kind of person you are, what would you tell him or her? If you could describe yourself by some type of trait that you have, what would you say?

BP It's hard to say. For instance, I'm not busy, I write a lot of songs. You only heard one or two, but I write songs. That's what I do. The truth is that since I love the songs, I sing the songs.

INT What do you think are some of the major accomplishments in your life?

BP I think one was that we got the state to recognize that what they were doing was wrong. That's a major accomplishment. They had to restrict the way they had any truth towards us. They all had to reconsider the way they did things because they couldn't do that. It was illegal, first of all to do the things they did. They didn't have the right. I don't understand. They were trying to help us, they try too much. They didn't try in a time that it would mean something. The only thing I had to do was to fight for my rights and other people's rights. And that's it. It's that basic. The basic thing is that you have to believe in what your doing. And when you believe it, and then decide what you want to do. I had to define the key of justice, for the key to me. Not only as myself, but for all the people in this country who had to go through this type of activity with the state. We had to challenge them, and mostly that's what I've been doing most my life. I served as a Patient's Council Chairman for many years, until I decided I had other activities I wanted to do. I stepped out of the Patient's Council because I had to do other things. But how could I do that? I had to get out of what I was doing and do other things. And that's how I learned to do more. I got some other things done. Sacred Heart things, challenging the state on every bad thing they did, and using all my ability to fight for what I believe in. Some of those guys, they don't give a s\*\*\*. The state, look where the state sent me, they don't give a s\*\*\*. They're smart guys, very smart guys. I never heard them speak for anybody yet. I never hear them. We really challenged them.

INT Why do you think that is?

BP They don't have the guts. If everything you believe in is the truth, and I would say this is how I'm gonna do it. What I do is my own fault, I choose to do these things because I believe that's what is right. The people here, some care, some don't care. They have so many bad things to say, I don't want to talk to them. I'd rather fight for liberty. They don't want to do that. They're discouraged with the, they have all the things that they have in mind, but they just leave it up to them, and that's not good enough for me. It's not. For me, when I speak, you know I'm speaking about something I believe in. I've been in the legislature, I've been all over. These guys, they never do that. I've spoken in the legislature many times. How often do they feel that the things that they have to say mean anything. I never hear them say that. Oh, you come over here it's easy. They don't have the guts. I have never heard them say anything. I'll tell you what I think, there's no doubt. If you believe that you're afraid to speak out, then you're no good. As a society, as a member of society we must talk in this society. When we allow other people to make decisions for you, you have to be a part of that decision making. And when you accept that you can do the things you can... I don't know how much you know about me, but I've done these things for a long time, and I'm going to be around a long long time. I have to finish my songs, I want to write them down and direct it. That's my interest now with the songs. I cannot write so good now. I used to write, but since I had the speech impediment, I cannot remember what I wrote.



TAPE 2, SIDE A

BP You have to take a step, you have to say this is what I believe is wrong. And then you can tell them what is wrong, and if you don't do that, you just gave up your right. You give it up, your rights. When your rights are there how you gonna act? You can't act like that. You have to challenge what they say, and all my life, that's how I've been. I'll tell you how I feel, you can tell me how you feel. And that's about how we handle those things. That's what we have meetings for, and that's how we tell each other what our ideas are. You have to tell me what your thoughts are. You don't wait until we're out of the meeting and talk behind my back. Talk when it means something, when your there, explain what your thoughts are, how you intend to do it, that's about how it works. You can't go someplace else, and complain, "We didn't say anything". Yeah, I didn't hear you say anything either. But, the thing that matters to me most is my music. I did other things, and I still want to go one more step with the music.

And I think, people like to hear what I got to say, and I have a lot to say. Sometimes it might not be the right time to say it. All you gotta do is say, "I disagree with you" and know what you disagree on. If you disagree with something, tell me what it is. That's how we make the discussion better. Talk about what we disapprove of the society, and then okay that makes sense, oh, I can agree with that, and that's good, And we can share inside of the truth of the matter, and you do it by being able to talk with each other, without shouting. I've done many shouting in my time.

INT What would you change today when it comes to patient's rights? What would you like to see done?

BP One thing I would like to see done, one thing I would like to see people recognize is their rights, their rights. I don't know what their rights are. Do they understand what their rights are? They know that. They know how they feel about something to the core. They need to know that. They need to speak out and say, "Hey, I think that was a good idea" or "I think that was a bad idea and I should tell them". If you don't speak out, your only trapped between you and your skin here. You've got to speak out. And that has been it if anybody can learn from me anything, maybe that's what they have to convince me about. Because, the things that bothers me are the people who ignore their rights, ignore the rights that we have, and allow other people to give and take what their life should be. You have the right to speak out, to tell them how you feel inside, and if you don't do that, how will they know? No one will know. It doesn't mean nothing. You must tell people. If you don't tell, you lose. You lose. And then they don't understand. And you don't have to yell. You can do what's best; you gotta understand what's best, and just appreciate what your rights are.

INT How do you think this applies to the Hawaiian situation today, and Hawaiian Rights?

BP With Hawaiian rights, first of all, we as Hawaiians have to understand what it is we want. We have to step up for it. We have to say, "Hey, I don't think that's right!" If you don't say anything, and somebody else says "yeah we should do that," you gotta tell them how you think. That has been my past in life. I believe that there's a time to talk. When it's the time to talk, you gotta talk. You have to tell people even if you disagree. You have to say, "what they did the other day, I didn't like it, but I want to see if we can do any better." Cause, actually, that's how the nuns do it. Would you rather punch a guy in the nose? No. Well, how do you tell them? Well, you say, "Can we do it the other way?" Can we find another way to make it easier for the other people to accept? It makes a big difference, and we're able to help each other. We can, and if you believe that then we can have something great. And even that, when people agree, and they agree sincerely that the right way is not to pound a guy out of business, or pop him on the head, and that's how we need to be. To be rid of all the past issues, we always have to talk, we always need to talk. That's how we find out what an issue is. In anything you do there always has to be any kind of communication. We always have to understand that what is said it doesn't mean that it is the final word. It doesn't mean that at all. It means it's what's up now. If I hear another piece of argument contrary, then I can hear that one too. 'Cause let's discuss things. "Is that the right way to do things?" Or maybe there isn't any other way to do things, but you can see if it doesn't work. And that's about it. Things can go right or wrong any old time, only if you allow it to pile up. And that's about it. You do the best you can. If you, yourself feel it's the best thing, then it is the best thing. Of course, a lot of people would disagree with that, but there are a lot of disagreements. Examine the disagreements. Do you understand that? As long as you understand that, you can come to a great deep understanding of things. Some things may pass, some may not, and that's all right. As long as you hold the most of what we understand. The major thing is to keep things back, and not to kick things.

INT Do you feel that Kalaupapa is becoming too much of a tourist attraction?

BP Yes and no. Is that enough?

INT That's fine, whatever you want to answer. haha

BP The idea is that you have to listen to what they say. I really cannot tell you what the consensus is. You have to decide. If there are too many guys coming to the center, there's always someone who says that's too many. But what is too many? People want to know more about Kalaupapa. It's something that has been done for many years. People want to educate themselves at Kalaupapa. And basically, do the right thing, and what is the right thing? Respect us. And that's about it.

INT Thank You so much for your time.