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Oral history interview with Edouard Du
Buron, 1993 March 9-May 13

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Edouard du Buron on March 9, 1993 and May 13, 1993. The interview took place in Kingston, Massachusetts and was conducted by Robert F. Brown for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

ROBERT F. BROWN: In Kingston, Massachusetts. This is March 9, 1993. Robert Brown the interviewer. I thought we'd just begin by maybe talking about some of your early memories. You were born, I believe in Worcester, Massachusetts.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Exactly.

ROBERT F. BROWN: About when was that?

EDOUARD DU BURON: 1905.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Nineteen five. What are some of your earlier memories of childhood?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Rather tragic, sad. I felt as if somehow whether—I didn't belong to the world.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why was that would you say?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well I do remember being told that—by my grandparents to-be later that if they—my father to-be didn't get going that there was going to be a shotgun, you will have to face a shotgun. In other words, I was conceived out of wedlock. And I guess he took it out on me later. I do remember my earliest years that I can recall, seeing a blazing live, fireball coming towards me. And for years and years that bothered me. I could not figure out what that was until I was 19 and I saw my mother later on. And I told her about that, and grandma happened to be standing beside her. She says, "Mon dieu, mon dieu, Edouard remembers. He remembers." And my mother's eyes began to get moist and wet. She'd never said a word. She said, "Do you know what he did? He threw a lighted kerosene lamp at you while you were nursing at her breast. You weren't even a year old." [00:02:00] And so that's what it is, because I did recall, and I had said to them at the outset that I remember, if I recall a crash of glass and a male's voice and the slamming of a door. He threw it and walked out. And the Bolgique [ph] French living up above came down.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was, oh their name was—

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, Bolgique. She had thrown, my mother had, while I was in her arms, threw herself on the floor. I mean, it was a perfectly natural reaction, threw herself, still holding on to me for dear life. I do remember falling in space and I remember the total darkness but that fireball, that's all I could remember. Now, this may sound strange, but I've recently read somewhere, possibly Freud, that things can happen as a child and it becomes imprinted on you and that remains with you for life. And you can't forget it. That will stand by while you may not be able to explain it, but it will remain in your subconscious or whatever. So once it was explained to me, I threw it out. That was that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative]. Before it was explained to you there was this great mystery and it was rather disturbing.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Very disturbing. It bothered me for years and I never dared to talk about it for the simple reason that I'd be considered deranged or possibly something to that effect.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But then in fact when you brought it up, both your mother and your grandmother said of course, it's remarkable you remember, but of course. [00:04:00]

EDOUARD DU BURON: They explained to me what it was naturally.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now your family, what did your father do?

EDOUARD DU BURON: My father—my grandfather straightened me out a lot, off and on when I saw him, that was his own father. He stood apart from the eight children that he had. My grandfather, Louis. And he said to me, "Edouard, I must tell you something. You're the only one that should know about this in the family." Never

spoke to them. And it can't be verified. We come from a very ancient family from the middle, mid-France. We were supposed to be aristocrats, but we've gone downhill. You have skipped all these generation, I see something in you that is different." Whatever. Well I looked at him and I was completely appalled. I said, "You mean, we're going back from an aristocratic family?" I said, "There's nothing to indicate this in my present day except you." He said, "That's all right." And he says, "It should be D-U or D-E, I can't remember." And I picked one when Ethel and I met, I decided, make it legal, but it should have been D-E.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see, so it varied within your family.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right, le Chateau de Buron is still in ruins [speaks French]. And I have a cousin who passed on, he was at Harvard, and I met him as a matter of fact at the International House back in 1929. I gave a recital then.

ROBERT F. BROWN: International House where? New York?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right on the Hudson River.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Near Columbia.

EDOUARD DU BURON: It's near Grant's tomb and that part. And I had to step in one day and the clerk said to me, "You have a member of your family here." And I says, "No way, there are very few of us in the world, in the country." So he rang him up and on the phone he says, before he asks me, "What was your grandfather's name?" [00:06:00] The minute I said "Louis" he said, "Hold on, I'm coming down." [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: I guess he knew about the grandfather.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, he knew about Louis. And he was born—I don't know. His father was in the Sorbonne.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well they weren't people who had come down from Quebec, or they hadn't been in Quebec at the time.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, I think to a certain extent some of them went. But the point was he was studying, at that time, Gaston, his name was Gaston, was studying at Columbia. And later on he took courses at Harvard. Now to make things strange now there's always a raison d'etre as they say in French. While he's taking courses at Harvard, who did he befriend, but the oldest, the eldest of the Cronin boys in Waltham. And he used to stay at their home in Wellesley.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And this is the family for whom you worked later, right?

EDOUARD DU BURON: That's right. And when I went there, I didn't go there for that reason because I didn't know about this. My second wife, Carol, her family—she had a sister who lived on Worcester Lane. And her mother was living there for a while, so it would be nice to get a job at Cronin's. My career had gone more or less to hell and I was about, was roughly about 40 years old. So when I arrived at Grover's, I didn't meet Grover until several months later, he was very, very ill.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Grover Cronin?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Of Waltham.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, he lived in Wellesley but his father had started the store—

ROBERT F. BROWN: In Waltham, Massachusetts.

EDOUARD DU BURON: —that's right. He says, "Did you know Gaston?" I looked at him, I says, "You know Gaston?" He said, "Oh yes, he stayed—he and my son, who's at Fordham, he's going to be president someday"—which he became president. Used to—the two of them used to teach languages at, oh dear, the Coast Guard Academy in New London. And they became real good friends. [00:08:00] So when my cousin was taking courses at Harvard, they used to stay at their family's house. So it completed sort of a cycle, and it was very interesting.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What did your grandfather do? Was he in Worcester as well?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, he was in Worcester. I am not too sure what he did. I don't quite remember.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But your father, was he around that much, or not?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well my father and mother were broken up from—the judge Thayer who had the Sacco and Vanzetti case, he had our case.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh you mean it was a divorce case?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh, a very violent, my mother was in the hospital most of the time. Very ill, her hair turned white before she was 30. And in those days men could beat their wives, you know, and get away with it. And Judge Thayer finally—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Judge Thayer?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Judge Thayer decided it would be best to part, but she should take the baby because she could not take care of both daughters and I because she would not be able to take care of us.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They were two of you?

EDOUARD DU BURON: There were three children all together. I'm the eldest.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You're the eldest, and then there were younger?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Doris and Irene. Right. They're all in their 80s now, all of us.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you then stayed with your mother? No, you and your older sister—

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, when—the Judge Thayer made it, felt that I should be put in a convent. Both children should be taken away from him because my mother was afraid that he would kill us sooner or later.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He had a particular antipathy towards you.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, he liked Doris very much. The one who's living in Pittsburgh right now. He adored her. [00:10:00] And I took more to my mother. So it seems. But anyhow, I was put in the convent, and that was rather weird too.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Where was this convent? A convent school?

EDOUARD DU BURON: In Worcester.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In Worcester.

EDOUARD DU BURON: It was an orphanage. And Sister Superior took particular interest in me because of the unusual case ordered by the court. And my mother used to come during the week, once a week. It was the tradition that you could only visit on Sunday afternoons, but she made a special arrangement with mother that she could come during the week because she didn't want to run into my father in case he would show up. And one day she said to me, with tears in her eyes, "I've got to go away. Someday we'll get together. Please remember you mean a great deal to me," and so on and so forth. Well of course I broke down, and Sister Superior was standing right beside her. And she took me by the hand and walked me away.

ROBERT F. BROWN: About how old would you have been?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I was about six. Five or six. Now one result, I dislike going into this because it's rather personal, but I'm going to do it. One day I found myself—one night I should say—around two in the morning, in the cold winter, it was a snowstorm outside locked out. There was this big enclosed plaza where the boys all played, built-in bench on three sides all around the building. Two glass doors, about three or four steps, very wide hall that went all the way down at the other end of the building into a chapel. And I was in bare feet, wearing a nightgown dress and pounding the doors. [00:12:00] I was freezing, freezing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Had you been outside playing?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No. Wait a minute, now, this was around midnight, after midnight. Everybody's in bed, asleep. And I could see two nuns running back and forth. They thought it was a ghost, they didn't dare to open the doors. Finally a woman shows up and tells the nuns that the minute they heard—when saw this woman they rush up, opened the doors, and the minute they did I fainted dead away. And They took me and put me to bed. I had made my bed as a matter of fact. What happened is that a streetcar, in those days there were the real old-fashioned trolleys that stopped right there. It was the end of the line and they would turn that, what do you call, this trolley.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They would turn it around, the hook.

EDOUARD DU BURON: They would turn it around, so the car would go back, the hook exactly, and I went to wait. I wanted to go see my mother. I had a nightmare in other words. Now, what happened was on the second floor, what I believe was the second floor, there was a woman who had a candlelight, she was reading or something, and the stairs, the outside stairs [laughs] came right by across her windows and she saw this ghost.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah. She got scared. She kept looking and looking and she was able to make out my going outside into the snow. This is about eight inches of snow.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were sort of walking in your sleep?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I was walking in my sleep. Then that figure came back again, it went upstairs. She says, "My God." [00:14:00] She says—this was all explained to me a week later, and she told the nuns what happened. She didn't know who it was. But there was another experience which is—this is rather dreadful. Okay. Come—when summer came, I think it was a year later, I was there about five years, five or six years.

ROBERT F. BROWN: At the convent.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, after 11 I had to leave. By the time I was at 11 years old, they wouldn't keep them.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They wouldn't keep young boys?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No. On the porch, there was this dais, dias [ph] [inaudible], you know where they sit down in front, a shape, there was a desk and there was a chair. And this nun, I can't think of her name, would sit there and read. And there was a man, he was a novitiate, who lived on the grounds in the back of the building who used to help with the mass. There was a mass by the way every morning at 6:00 AM. We had to get up and go to mass, which I did. And he would stand beside her. They were the grey nuns, you know, I don't know if you've ever seen the old habits that they wore, but they were really encased in this—and very hard dressed, you know the black hood and the big black bow-like, bow, and the grey gown and they were very voluminous. And he would stand there and push his hand down in her robes. And of course it was always, he was fondling her sexually, but I didn't understand that. [00:16:00] Now I was not at all, should I say, ever very, very friendly or played with the boys. Oh we were friendly, I had some friends, but I did not at all get myself involved to get myself to go and play. I was lonely and I liked the idea of being alone. And I sat in a corner of this, near the corner of the building—that's my favorite corner—and watched everybody else play, and I enjoyed that. Contemplating. And I was seriously thinking of possibly becoming a priest. There was a possibility in that, it crossed my mind. And by nature I have a monastic temperament. I still do. But not at all oriented toward the Roman church. If anything possibly Buddhist. It seems to satisfy me more as I went on.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, how about the nuns as teachers and mentors?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, back to the incident that I was observing. This went on for about two weeks off and on in the summer.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The novitiate?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, the novice fondling her. And every once in a while she'd stand up, "Rush away!" She'd say to me, "Go play!" In other words, she wanted me away from there because she suddenly felt guilty suddenly because I was observing her. So finally after probably the fifth time after he left, she comes over and grabs me by the hand and very, very, very brutally, or I shouldn't use the word brutally, but strongly drags me down those steps and into—down the hall, and into a room fairly dark. And she pulls out, I heard a drawer opening, she pulls out, you know these things they were like little tinier than this old-fashioned sewing machines, the rubber—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What were they? The rubber belts? [00:18:00]

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, it was actually leather. The sewing machine—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, the treadle from the sewing machine.

EDOUARD DU BURON: She let me have it across both hands until they bled. Now, naturally I let go—just screamed out loud. It was very sore, very painful. I could barely see her doing it because it was dark. Now, I remember coming into the hall and I didn't know what to do. I say bloody, well there were welts anyway, they were raised.

ROBERT F. BROWN: On the palms of your hands?

EDOUARD DU BURON: The palms of my hands. And of course you know, a child of that age, hands are very tender. I remember walking towards the chapel, and walking towards the chapel, crying. Now this part I cannot recall clearly, but it seems to me whether it's my imagination or maybe perhaps my wishing on my part, that she was out there being very contrite and confessing what she was done. I cannot—I see the picture, but I cannot say it was real, I cannot say it was true. It could have been on my part as well as I grew older that she must have been—feel contrite. You know, I was hoping so, perhaps, or wanted it to be.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh [affirmative].

EDOUARD DU BURON: I never could discern—as you grow older you have to analyze these—nuns and priests very often were—became something that families very often were very proud to have one of their children join. Usually they had large families and they wanted at least a boy to be a priest, a nun—a girl and so forth. [00:20:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: You wished, or you assumed, that she was contracted.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right, and I didn't feel that she belonged there. She was a very unhappy lady, but in those days all I could think of was that she was very cruel. I didn't fully realize, even as I witnessed it, that was wrong, but I knew something was not right because the way she used to move her legs, you know. He was masturbating her obviously. So then, now there was a nun that I loved dearly and she went out of her way to see that I was all right. Her name is Soeur David. She called herself David.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was this a French order? There was French speaking mostly?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, I rarely heard them speak other than French. She used to, when she looked at my hands, she knew about I mean, because she started to look at my hands. She put her arms around me and she said to me, "The novitiate wants to see you." So I went.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The novitiate? You mean the novice?

EDOUARD DU BURON: The novice, the one who played with her. She showed me how to get to the building and he was there. He tried to be as friendly as he could. He gave me a handful of money that I refused to take. In other words, he felt guilty, trying to buy me off, keep quiet. I just found myself, my eyes got wet again, I wanted to get out of there [laughs]. I didn't want any part of it. [00:22:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you have much schooling while you were there?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Very little that I can remember. As a matter of fact, I've had very little schooling at all in my entire life.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Some of the nuns were fairly kindly and took an interest in this?

EDOUARD DU BURON: The one, yes. They were very, very strict. Another thing I recall which was a very, very uncomfortable experience was when on the Saturday night baths. It was a room about this size, and they had an electric bulb like it is there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean a room for taking your bath? Twenty by twenty feet?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, exactly. And it was—looked very black, dark, there was no light, just one bulb from the ceiling. And there was two steps and a bench where each one would come up and this nun would wipe you, and let you go.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean you'd go take your bath?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Everybody would get in that thing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, I see, and then they would dry you off.

EDOUARD DU BURON: They would dry you off, you'd take one on Saturday and I hated it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why is that do you suppose? Because you were among everybody else?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, because it was scary. I was very frail. And it was scary.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You said that your mother and a younger sister went to Vermont to live with relatives.

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, no. Canada. Their father was a builder. Homer, that was my middle name.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How do you spell it, H-O-M-E-R?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, Homer [pronounces in French] in French. He built—near Lake Quinsigamond, he built the first—in Worcester—the residential area all around there. And uh, he made a lot, a lot of money. But he had one trouble: gambling. When I say gambling, I mean gambling. Big-time gambling. And there were two families, if he went to hell they'd join them. Trombley was one. [00:24:00] I've forgotten the other.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Trombley.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Trombley was one, and I don't—forget the man's name.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who were also gamblers you mean?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah. Well, more, not like him. And he would come home with a case of champagne periodically, he had won. And two or three times he lost the house, they had a beautiful home with crystal chandeliers, in Worcester. And one time grandma discovered that they didn't own the house anymore. She couldn't take it any longer.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So did they move back to Canada?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, they were born here. All of them.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, they were born here.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh yes. He always had two cars, I remember the Hopsmobile [ph], the Oberlin [ph]. Buick was one of the early cars, it's one of the few that's still around. And I remember what the brakes—the dashboards, and the brakes, they were wearing dusters and what not. Very interesting. Cars were so rare, that people would stand by and they—there were no highways. There were dirt roads and the dust fumes. Well, to make the long story short, grandma went to the railroad station and bought long two tickets for Saskatchewan, Canada. And it was explained to me later that the government would give you three—forgot how many acres, 300 I think? One hundred and sixty, I'm sorry.

ROBERT F. BROWN: If you went out and settled?

EDOUARD DU BURON: They gave you a square, but you had to prove it in three years and if you developed it in three years, it was yours, otherwise they'd take it away from you. Now, it seems from all accounts they did the same thing here in this country.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That's right, I was going to say. The Homestead Act. So your grandmother—

EDOUARD DU BURON: So my grandmother says "Homer, I am going." Well, she knew that he would follow. Said, "Here's your ticket, it's up to you, but I am going." "And besides," she said, "the government could use you, you're a builder." [00:26:00] Well he did go. He no longer owned the house. He owned nothing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So they both went to Saskatchewan.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Saskatchewan, that's right. And within one year, listen to this, within a year he owned a thousand acres. Building schools, churches, and whatnot. And I can see him now, very tall, very handsome man, he looked the actor, what's his name, very masculine? He had a lot of charisma. Unlike my grandfather on my father's side, who was petite, small, intellectual. The other grandfather was bright, too, but in a different sort of way.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Then did your mother and your younger sister go to join them?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, she went to join them.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was after they divorced.

EDOUARD DU BURON: That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: When you and the older sister went to the convent, your mother—

EDOUARD DU BURON: My mother did not get the divorce. My father did, later.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But your mother and your younger sister went to Canada with Homer, the grandparents.

EDOUARD DU BURON: That's right and she was only two, three months old.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The baby sister?

EDOUARD DU BURON: The baby, Irene. And she became quite a horsewoman, riding horseback.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But she was raised in Canada?

EDOUARD DU BURON: She was raised in Canada, and she's still alive. I went and spent a month with them a year ago. It's the first time in 12, 13 years. Now uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So after about the 5th grade, according to what you've told me, you had no more schooling, is that right?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I've had no schooling whatsoever. The interesting thing about that is that, when I say no schooling, that's not quite right. [00:28:00] When I left the convent at the age of 11, I was sent to Betseyville Canada, Le College St. Joseph for one year. Mother heard—my mother and my grandmother heard about it, but they weren't sure where it was. They knew I was in Quebec somewhere. It's not—it's in the province of Quebec. You know, it was on the St. Lawrence River, Betseyville it's called. Yeah, I was there one year only. And all I can remember is this monk, brother they were called. He had a very thick, bushy beard, and those piercing eyes and every time—he was a night watchman. And he had a corner where he slept. Now, just like—it reminded me of the convent in a lot of ways, because in the corner there would be a white, sort of sheet, hanging on the rings of the bow, and they would swing it and close it so they could hide themselves, you know, just perfectly isolated from—so they could have their own privacy. It was very interesting. But every time he'd come out walking and I saw him coming, I would cover—[laughs] scared the hell out of me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you must have had instruction there, didn't you have some instruction?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, but I don't remember.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you had some because school was required by then, wasn't it?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Not then, not necessarily. Now, they call it a college and they started from grade school up into college level. Some of them were much older. Then one year later—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you enjoy that place at all?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, I began to play baseball a little bit and I was struck by a ball one time running in between the catcher and the pitcher, hit me on the head. And they carried me. For a week I was in bed, don't remember—all I remember is one of these firework things, sparklers, it felt as if like sparklers all around. [00:30:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, I see, in your vision.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Vision, it felt like I was in space. They carried me in bed, I was unconscious for a long time until I came to.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well you spent some time also with your grandparents in Vermont you said.

EDOUARD DU BURON: I have no grandparents that ever lived in Vermont. My father lived there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, I see. I thought you said—

EDOUARD DU BURON: That's where he lived.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you stay with him at any point?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Never. Yes, I did when I came back. He sent me on the farm.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm? Now this is when you came back from Quebec?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Betseyville [ph], not Quebec, in the province of Quebec. Stayed on the farm, Boucher at St. Albans, Vermont. That I found very, very interesting. They were very good to me, and I learned what bucolic meant. It stayed with me, close to nature.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And these were people that your father knew?

EDOUARD DU BURON: He knew. They were supposed to be distant cousins of sorts.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Boucher.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Boucher, on the St. Lawrence River. They had 56 acres. Eight, 10 cows, and two horses. And I learned to ride horseback and I fell in love with a—there was a little red school house and I fell in love with a girl by the name of Mary Wheeler. To me, she was beautiful. Then I was sitting next to the back row, and in back of me there was a woman—a girl named Rose who is crazy about me, and I couldn't take her. I just got triangled, it was very funny.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now were you largely French speaking until this time?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Dad was English, no French.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But in Worcester?

EDOUARD DU BURON: All was French.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Most of those people were Canadian French, come down to industrial towns in New England.

EDOUARD DU BURON: When we say Canadian we not forgot, we must remember I should say, the patois is among the uneducated Canadians, but those who are well-educated who have gone on to, let's say the university level, speak more a French that is understood and recognized in France. [00:32:00] Now even in France they have their own district way of talking, their patois. For instance, the Parisians talk one way, certain parts of the south talk another way, and the northern part of France—same as they do in this country. The way of expressing themselves is highly different. So, this Mary Wheeler who rode horseback, she owned two or three horses, and she used to come by once in a while with her sister, her ugly duckling sister I used to call her. We used to go horseback riding, she taught me how. And Rose, she, and of course the teacher knew what was going on. She was an American, I mean she came from somewhere else, and she was hired to teach there. And she stayed with the Wheelers. They were the leading citizens of the town, who had a big house and everything.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was in the province of Quebec, or in Vermont?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, no, no, still in Vermont. St. Alban's. Then as I said I went one year. And toward the end of this, when school is all over and I was to go back to Worcester, my father—the Wheeler's threw a party for the students, the class. See, the classes I believe went up to the eighth grade, sixth or seventh grade or somewhere around there. She threw a party, I danced with Mary most of the time. And finally the teacher came along, she said "Edouard, that won't do. Look at Rose. Her eyes are wet." [00:34:00] She was sitting down. Actually she was more beautiful than Mary, but there was something about Mary that got me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So did you go over and gallantly—

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, I gallantly danced with her. I danced with her three times, and she was shaking she was so nervous. And I felt sorry but that's the way it is, it was. Finally I left and I went to—home.

ROBERT F. BROWN: To Worcester?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, I was living—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You stayed with your father?

EDOUARD DU BURON: He was living on Main Street, number 25 I believe, across from Mechanics Hall.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And what was he doing? Was he of a profession?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, he was blacksmith. Remember I told you.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No, you didn't tell me that.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh yeah, my father was a blacksmith. He headed the blacksmith shop in Northworks [ph]. The North, Southworks in Worcester. Worcester is known for its steel factories.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And he headed a blacksmith shop in one of the steel factories? The Northworks?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right, he was head of the whole department. He was very good. So I went to work downstairs in the restaurant cafeteria. I was 14 years old. And one day, my day off, I found myself roaming around and I saw this museum, the Worcester Museum. At that time it was a smaller building, and there were very few people in it. When I say very few, very few people did go. [00:36:00] I remember walking up the staircase, and there were two Roman guards on each side, went up the staircase.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Roman guards?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well they were sculptures. I'm sorry, made it look as if it was real, didn't I? And then this large room, which is sort of a wash line of little paintings, but in the corner was the Moses, Michaelangelo's *Moses*, replica in plaster, which is about eight feet. Frightened the hell out of me. And um, I've never seen anything so dramatic before. And I kept looking at these little pictures. And coming toward the front of the building, a large window, several windows rather, there was a large marble female nude lying on her side with a baby coupled close to her. I was so impressed. Kept looking at it and looking at it. And here I am, 14, there was nothing sexual, anything of the sort. Something was so beautiful so—that I analyzed. Finally I heard some footsteps and a bunch of keys. He say, "You know, we're closed. How long have you been here?" And I says, "I don't know." "I never heard you." And I said, "Well, I'm here." And I said, "I'm trying to figure out whether I violated the ten commandments that Moses is holding in his hand." I made some remark like that and he laughed. [00:38:00] But I was looking at this lovely thing. He says, "You been here before?" I says, "No." He says, "Please come back, but let me know when you come so I can help you." And sure enough, he had to unlock the door to let me out. Whether he was the night watchman or what, I don't know. That was the opening, that was the start.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you were terrified by the one, but on the other hand you were very moved.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Very moved. Right, very moved by the beauty of mother and child.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The mother and child.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Because by the same token, you see, it reminded me of my mother that I missed so much.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yep. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EDOUARD DU BURON: So there was an association.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now the paintings you describe as just like being out on a wash line?

EDOUARD DU BURON: They're out on a wash line. [Laughs.] They were tiny compare to this Moses.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They didn't impress you?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No. The Moses overpowered the whole room and he stood, even though at the other end of the room I'm studying this lovely situation that's taking place. And I felt bad, the ten commandments, and yeah, what am I doing? I can't help it, this is so beautiful, and it was nothing at all related to sexual, it was simply motherhood. And I did a dance later called *Mortal Trinity*, I want to show you the picture later on I think you should see them.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you were on the way toward being hooked by the art museum, right?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right, well I wasn't aware of it at the time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you begin going when you had time off?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, I went to the—I found out about a library and then I was thrown out of that too, I got so involved looking at books and everything. There was no such thing at home. The word college I'd never heard of.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you talk much to your father?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Very little. No relationship at all. [00:40:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: You worked downstairs, though, for a while in the restaurant?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, and I cooked his dinner at night on a gas plate. And every Sunday we used to walk down Main Street, down Front Street, down on Church Street, where the church was and we used to attend.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Really?

EDOUARD DU BURON: And then periodically we'd walk down across South Street to visit grandpa who lived there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: His father? Now what was his father like?

EDOUARD DU BURON: He was my favorite. He's the one who was so kind and nice to me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Can you describe him a bit?

EDOUARD DU BURON: He was, I'm trying to think of someone, funny, I've never thought of anyone he reminded me of.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You said earlier he was small.

EDOUARD DU BURON: He was small, he had very delicate features. And he had married, I didn't know that, but his wife was his second wife. She was a very big woman. And he was very stern, according to my sister Irene. She heard he was very hard to his first wife. He had seven or eight children. Four boys and four girls. And every two years it was either a boy or a girl and they would—he used to say to the doctor, "In two years I'll have a girl." The doctor, after it happened four times, asked, "How do you do it?" He said, "That's a secret." This has come down to me. I'm not the only who that heard it. It's a secret I can't tell you. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: When you visited him, what would you talk about?

EDOUARD DU BURON: All I can remember in that house, he played chess a lot. And she had a brother who was a Jesuit.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Jesuit priest? [00:42:00]

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right, and one time they were playing chess, and I brought up, I asked a question about the trinity.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Just out of the blue?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right out of the blue. He said, "It's a secret, it's a mystery."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who said this, the Jesuit?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah. "Well, that's the three person into one," he said, "it's a mystery." And I said, "Father, aren't we been given a mind to use." He says, "Yes." "Then aren't mysteries supposed to be something you figure out, like a revelation, or perhaps it represents the three dimensional world or does it represent father, mother, and child?" He'd get up from playing chess, he got up and walked out into the living room. This was happening in the kitchen, it was a big kitchen. And Grandpa said, "Let me have your hand." [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: And your grandpa shook your hand?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah. He shook my hand. He says, "*Ou le fait raison*. You're using your head," he said to me in English. "This is good, I like that." [Laughs.] He wouldn't play chess after that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who, the Jesuit?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No. It bothered him. I was already, see by the time I was 19 I broke from Rome, but it was always, around that time I must have been around 16, 17.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were asking questions. [00:44:00] Your great-uncle wouldn't discuss such things, he just walked out of the room.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, yeah. See, because he wasn't blood, that wasn't his wife. He had no children with her.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No, but I thought you said it was your grandfather's brother, was the Jesuit. No, her brother.

EDOUARD DU BURON: It was her brother.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now your grandfather and you talked, what kind of things did you do together?

EDOUARD DU BURON: We used to talk [coughs]. Pardon me. We used to talk a great deal about France.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now had he been—

EDOUARD DU BURON: I don't know, I don't recall.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And what would he talk about of France?

EDOUARD DU BURON: He used to say to me, "Your father, Edouard, does not know how to bring up children. I know he's been hard on you and on your mother. But we don't like to discuss it in front of my wife. She's completely in favor of your mother, she doesn't like your father." And in the beginning, he refused to have her talk in front of me. He was trying to figure out what was going on in my mind before he opened up. When suddenly that he felt comfortable that he could talk, he did more. In other words, his son, Andre did not know how to bring children up. And he was hard on your mother. Well, it turns on he was hard on his own wife. But not the same way, not brutally.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. What did your grandfather discuss of France?

EDOUARD DU BURON: The family that he came from. [00:46:00] There was a chapel. The chapel was being used by the natives until the day that I talked to Gaston back then in the '30s.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was still being used?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, and I saw an etching. Oh—while I was at college, so-called College St. Josephs, one of the priests said to me, "You have a relative that lives up, Madame Lambert, about two miles along the river, going towards north."

ROBERT F. BROWN: How do you spell that?

EDOUARD DU BURON: L-A-M-B-E-R-T, Lambert. He said, "She's about 90 years old, you should go someday." Well, she was not 90 then. Years later, when Ethel and I got married, she was—taught at Emerson College, we decided to take a couple of weeks off and go, drive to Quebec. And we stopped at the college, and it was when this priest told me to go see Mrs. Lambert. And he says, "It looks like a—it's reminiscent of a castle. It's got four turrets on the corner of the building, straight up."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Where she lives?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Where she lives. "You can't miss it. It's all stone." So, we drove up, on the way to the city, we had another hundred miles to go—

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EDOUARD DU BURON: —a ring, a knock at the door—it's a heavy wooden door. And uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Quite a big place.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Not that big, but straight, it was very formal. Very, very formal. And this woman answered the door, she says, "I'm Madame Lambert. Attendez." And this lady came along, a little short lady, she reminded me of grandfather. She was wearing all in black with little white—and her hair was done like this.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Her hair was pulled back into a bun.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah. She says her name's *Du Buron*. [Speaks French.] She opened the door, and walked in.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So when you said what his name was.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, the minute I said, "Louis." And I'm in, I don't know if you'd call it a parlor, from the hall, but right over, I don't know if it was a mantle, a fireplace, there was a print, and there was the Chateau. Chateau du Buron. I regretted that I didn't try to get a copy of that and get it. She said to me, [Speaks French.] Chateau du Buron. Then she had an old wall clock made out of wood. And she kept saying it was handed down, and I was so intrigued—Ethel was so intrigued by her. Finally she said to me, "Would you like to stay overnight?" She was very, very, very royal in her bearing, the way she walked, the way she carried herself. Extremely proud. She was 90 years old, unbelievable, just like that. Straight.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Very straight. So you did stay there? [00:02:00]

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, the only thing is, we couldn't breathe, no open windows. You know, the [in French], that will kill you. [Laughs.] They believe in that. Oh, we couldn't hardly breathe, but we slept and she wanted to know if we would be comfortable enough, she'd bring a warming bedpan. "Oh my goodness. No, no, no madame." They were terrific, and this woman waited on her. Finally for breakfast we had soft-boiled eggs and toast, and chocolate. And Ethel says, "I never ate eggs like that in my life. Never." I don't know what those hens, I would have loved to have had some of those hens lay those eggs. But we kept in touch for a while but then we lost contact, but Ethel was very impressed by the whole situation.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you never found if there were other relatives up there?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No. Well, she knew about—she knew about Gaston, and she knew even more so his father Raymond who was teaching at the Sorbonne.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So it sounds as if the family members had come over in the 19th century.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Probably. No, he wrote—he published some of his articles right at the Université Laval in Quebec. Some of his writings were published at the University of Laval which was known as the [speaks French] de Francais.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Published?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Uh, some of his writings were published in the Université Laval which was known as the Canada de Francais.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who published? Excuse me.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Université Laval. [00:04:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: No, which person's articles? Who?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Gaston's father, Raymond, who was at the Sorbonne. And two of the—they were given to me by Gaston later, or was it—I believe Madame Lambert, come to think of it. No, it was Madame Lambert, she gave me six of them. Two of them had to do with our ancestry. He took a [speaks French] there was part one and part two. And he describes going to a small, fortified little village, Le Pud [ph].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, we can—so he published—

EDOUARD DU BURON: [Speaks French]. So the first part, it's about his going there. The second part is about our family, our ancestors. And he describes, of course, this is all written in French.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He describes their coming to America in any of them, or does he not do that at all?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, no, no. He describes about the 12th century du Burons, the way they lived in that big chateau where the chapel was still being used, and there are troubadour songs that the natives to that day were still singing. For instance, one of them goes "Je Suis Buron. . . [Speaks French]" [00:06:00] In other words, impregnable, very high or rocky. And impregnable. They were at war very often with other areas. Now, there is another troubadour song that goes on, Sire Robin, Sir Robin de Buron. At the head of a black charge during the midnight mass would gallop into the chapel and with his sword, brandish it, jump over the altar rail, clear the altar, while his followers took money from all those. And he was sort of a Robin Hood. And he would give it to the poor. And all that was heard was a diabolical laughter in the blackness of night [laughs] as he took off. It was quite a song, a troubadour song, and they knew all this by heart. That's all written there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This must have been very strengthening for you to learn.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh, it was. And then Ethel, years later.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Wait just a second—

[Audio Break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was very good then, you're learning more about this—at least this one side of your family.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, well not only that but now it seems that Frederick's been doing a little research.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Frederick?

EDOUARD DU BURON: My son. He discovers about 100, 150 maybe more in this country Burons. And they all get in touch with one another but they never get in touch with me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well you'll have to reach to them [laughs]. It sounds to me as though you were beginning to —

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh what time is it? We've got to be leaving in a half hour.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I thought we had—what time do you wish to leave?

EDOUARD DU BURON: We have to leave at one. Is it 12?

[Audio Break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mentioned something else that happened when you were in the convent. In the convent school, in Worcester.

EDOUARD DU BURON: This part of my life is rather—I kept pretty secret until I blow it once in a while. [00:08:00] So I'm going back to the convent now, Soeur David is with me, we're walking in front of the building. It's in the summer, and I looked up, now the building is shaped like a shoebox, it's a wooden building. And up on the upper floor above it there was a statue of St. Anne, this was known as The St. Anne's Orphanage, and a niche into the wall and I was told that I pointed up to her and said "Fur, fur," three times, and several days later it was struck by lightning right there. And for some reason—they considered it a miracle, she did not fall, but on three, two sides she was all burnt out. But she still remained stationary. The nun who had been very hard towards me said "He's an offspring of the devil," and Soeur David says, "No a gift of God." She put her arms around me and embraced me and we walked away. That was—I did not want to reveal that because all through my life, I've had experiences like that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Bizarre, indeed.

EDOUARD DU BURON: So, let's skip it [laughs].

[Audio Break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: We're continuing the interviews with Edouard Du Buron in Kingston, Massachusetts. This is April 1, 1993. That correct?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: We've discussed now certain aspects of your childhood and I think there's another one at least that you'd like to bring up today. [00:10:00]

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, I would like to start in the beginning, it goes against my belief that you should live in the past, and to a certain extent this is expressed in an epic poem that I wrote of certain dimensions, and I've done nothing about getting it published because I'm not quite satisfied with it. But here it goes, here's a section comes to mind. [Du Buron reads.] *If you're not vivified by the fire in your breasts, if you're going to stray from the throb of the moment, the span of your journey in this world is in vain. Shatter the images that have spoken, destroy the roads after you, break the cup that is not a fountain, destroy within and make a pyre of your city.* So I found it very difficult. And still—

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is something that you've written and composed years and years ago?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, about 140-odd pages.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And it goes way back?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh yes, actually I started it in Central America when I was down there 1931. It's going to be controversial of course, but that's not the point. And I was in the process of doing my life. People have been after me for many, many years to do so, and I've been putting it off, putting it off, but now that I've gone, I'm legally blind I find that since I cannot see the printed word anymore for almost five years, I find myself searching for words. Because I work slowly when I write, I've never had what you would call a formal education, and it was by hit or miss that I developed myself as much as I could. But I would like to go back to certain areas of my life, before I was five years old, before I went to the monastery, the orphanage I should say. I remember my father dragging my mother by the hair. It was on a Sunday morning. [00:12:00] I know it was Sunday because he took me to church. Dragged her naked right across into the kitchen.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He took you to church before this?

EDOUARD DU BURON: After. Now this was very frightening to me, and of course I forgot to tell we that we had a dog, he was a mongrel, a yellow dog. He was called Sport or Spot, I don't recall. I do know that this dog was kicked around a great deal, and I do mean literally kicked off the floor. And this dog, when my father would leave the house, he would come to me or my mother, and cry out and you know, trying to help. He would lick my face, my hands, and show a great deal of love and attention. I do remember this vividly because what comes to mind, there was a trap door in the middle of the kitchen floor, which was used to keep the butter and milk cold. You'd go down these little steps, there was a little Jacob's ladder, it was a very frightful thing wondering if any one of us could be entombed in this darkness down below.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Frightful to you as a small child.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh my God, yes, that's right. I do remember that Sunday, we went to church and the *Ave Maria*, I didn't know then what it was, but I do know the *Ave Maria* because I got to know it better later when I was in the convent. And hearing my mother cry.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Somewhat singing it.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Singing it. My mother's crying and it's the song and asking the virgin if she knew what was going on, did she know about my mother? [00:14:00] And I saw her as my mother, and I'd be praying to this statue as my mother. I mean, it was—I wrote a story about that which someday maybe will be made public. That's beside the point.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But your mother was crying and so were you.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, yeah, of course the *Ave Maria* and then her voice, the two of them—it was a conflict between the two. And they harmonized a great deal. Now as to the operation in my throat. This was due to the fact that I'd been left in a bedroom for three days, three nights I believe. My mother was in the hospital, I believe the birth of my sister Doris who was born about three years after I was, and I was just about three. And his sister Laura discovered me, he was gone.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Your father's sister, your Aunt Laura.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right, Laura and she once in a while she would come in to see what was going on. And she found me there no heat in the house, no food, nothing for three days. And I was very sick. As a result, I was operated on a kitchen table. Two doctors, that I remember.

ROBERT F. BROWN: For what?

EDOUARD DU BURON: For this.

ROBERT F. BROWN: On your neck?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I had developed an extremely large lump and they kept it open for many, many months—what would you call it—with wicks to get the puss out because they didn't want it to heal. Medication in those days was quite different than it is now.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Quite primitive.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right, and they gave me ether I believe, or whatever. [00:16:00] Pulling these every week, they would remove it and put it back in again. I wasn't expected to live. So, and I do remember another experience, now in the window of the kitchen there was a cactus plant with thick leaves. Very, very thick, and they had the little needles, very prickly, and I used to go and touch it once in a while, wishing and praying that mother had such coating so no one would hurt her. And I used to talk to it when both of us were alone. I'd say, "I wish mom, you had those, so nobody would hurt you." And she said, "Get away from the plant." And pull me away. Now, another occasion is rather interesting and it is five years later. I remember being outside with the dog, the dog always stayed close to me, very, very close. I heard a noise, and it sounded like an old fashioned egg beater and right over the house, a little ways over the horizon, fairly low. Of course to me it was high, was some sort of a contraption moving very slowly. Now we lived in Orient Heights in Worcester, and I don't know why it was called Orient Heights, and now I don't know. There might have been some Orientals there. Who knows, but I do remember this contraption going very slowly and sounding very mechanic like an old fashioned egg beater. It turns out, I'm told, that back around that time, was around 1907 or 1908.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were very young then.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Nineteen nine. It was around then the first planes, they were in Worcester. Worcester people had developed a plane. [00:18:00] They were flying them, trying them. It had a little shine to it, metallic, and it just hovered slowly. Never forgot that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So that was a rather pleasant and amazing memory of early childhood.

EDOUARD DU BURON: It was. I couldn't figure out what was it. [Laughs.] To me it was like some wild creature that I didn't know about. The only time I ever seen that, once. The typical boiler red fire engines, you remember those? You've seen pictures of them?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, I've seen photographs.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Horse driven.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well you had occasional fairly happy memories. Worcester was a very lively and fairly large city at that time, wasn't it?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, well there was three iron works, north, south, and I forget the other one. And the population of Worcester hasn't changed very much through the years.

ROBERT F. BROWN: When you lived on Main Street in Worcester—

EDOUARD DU BURON: I never lived on, oh yeah, right—

ROBERT F. BROWN: With your father. That's what we were about to talk about I think.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Okay. Now let's jump. I've been to the convent, I've told you about that period. I've also spoke to you about that mirror I stood in front of and saw my body naked for the first time. Did I mention that?

ROBERT F. BROWN: You may have. That was when you were in Worcester?

EDOUARD DU BURON: In Worcester, when I was at that Main Street, the rooming house. And a new sense of consciousness about the body. And I had lost, I could not paint—

ROBERT F. BROWN: I was going to ask. You began to paint when you were a teenager or even earlier?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Earlier.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And did he ever say why he didn't want you to paint?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, it was about—he didn't want me to because it's not a man's profession. Whatever, he would destroy them, and then there was a fire that occurred, at the continuation school. There was a wooden shack and one of the boys, that I don't know whether I worked with in the restaurant or not, he borrowed it, he wanted his teacher to see them, and the teacher wanted more and they hung it up for the class to see. [00:20:00] Somebody that was self-taught. The building burned down that weekend.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was a continuation school you said. What does that mean?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Continuation school is supposed to be for those who have had very little schooling, no high school

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see, you were teenage—a young man almost but youth.

EDOUARD DU BURON: I was young, very young, around 12 or 14 when my stuff was being destroyed. So I never painted after that. Now little—if I knew then would happen to me later, no.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Of course not. Were you aware that early in life of the nearby art museum?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I believe I talked about that, didn't I? I wandered off to the Worcester Museum?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. That's right you did.

EDOUARD DU BURON: And I was locked in almost. I talked about that. Now let me, something else occurred. To try to express verbally what seeing my body for the first time in the nude was a discovery of myself that I didn't know existed. In other words, life, the meaning of life. And years later when I saw Leonardo da Vinci's well-known drawing of the nude male within a square within a circle, are you familiar with this?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

EDOUARD DU BURON: And it's only about several, eight, nine years ago I was studying, I had a book. and I decided to do some measurements. If you measure across the square the genitalia is in the middle. If you measure across the circle, the umbilicus is in the middle. [00:22:00] Now this gives a new perspective about what life is all about. The circle is not only a—the represents the aura one might have but the universe, where life comes from. Not the genitalia has to do with a three dimensional world where we come from, a watery world, and we do, we are—we have sprung from a watery world, all of life from the oceans originally if you go way back. This is my belief. But the umbilicus is where life really is. Beyond the three dimensional. The sense of consciousness, which I believe the East understands fairly well. And as Suzuki once said, "Let me hear the sound of one hand clapping." Once you have achieved that, then that refers to that world. This is what I'm interested in. Once I saw that then I knew exactly what had happened to me when I saw myself for the first time going

back, all those years, 60, 70 years ago.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What did you see?

EDOUARD DU BURON: It's not so much, I saw my body, I felt there's something incomplete. I was not very strong, but at the same time I felt a sensation of the full meaning of life and this has motivated me ever since.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Also—shortly thereafter, you told me you went to these amateur nights at the Elm Street Theater.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Did I mention that?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well you haven't talked about it yet, so you became interested in dance fairly early, is that right? [00:24:00] How would you have learned about dance?

EDOUARD DU BURON: That I learned more later. But while I was there finally I heard that there was something called amateur night at the Poli Theater which was on Pleasant Street in Worcester, just off Main Street.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Poli, P-O-L-I?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Poli. And so, I made myself a costume, an Egyptian, something that I had imagined and I went over. I didn't even have any music.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Had you even seen people dance before?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No. Never. I just went there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you have friends who were interested in this as well?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You went on your own.

EDOUARD DU BURON: I went on my own. I told a few of my cousins and they're still laughing I bet. But there was a big stepladder in the middle of the stage, well on one side not quite in the middle. Somebody had used it, they were doing acrobats. I could hear people howling and there I made myself put on my costume and I went in, and of course the manager, I forgot his name now, but he made himself known year later.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mentioned a Tom Meehan [ph], was that the man? Tom Meehan?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Did I mention him?

ROBERT F. BROWN: You did. Was this the manager?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I don't know, then I must have spoken about it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So what was the result? What did you do when you got out there?

EDOUARD DU BURON: When I got on the stage they asked me if I had some music and I said no. They took one look at me and they started playing some [laughs] comical Oriental music.

ROBERT F. BROWN: There was an orchestra, was there?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh yes, and I danced. And the audience, well to this day I can hear that hall reverberating with laughter. Just howl, and howl and the ladder was there and I kept on going. And I could hear them laugh, I didn't pay any attention. So finally this big hook comes along, you know they pull you off the stage.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They literally had a hook?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh yeah. And the manager finally came in and took the hook off and they would give everybody dollar and he gave me an extra buck and said, "We want you back, you were the hit this evening, there's two." [00:26:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: How did you feel, humiliated?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I felt mixed, it was mixed feeling. But I was determined I was going to do it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you also liked being out on the stage perhaps.

EDOUARD DU BURON: I'm not aware of that, no. I wasn't even aware—I couldn't even see the audience because you know the stage is lit, but I could hear them. The hall shook and thundered it was incredible. And even the musicians were howling. So finally, about a year later, or maybe—I don't recall exactly the time involved, but I saw a sign *Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn, the Denishawn dancers to appear at the State Theater* I believe. I forget the name of it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you know of them at all, had you heard of them at all?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, never heard of them. Well, it was on some afternoon and I managed to get there, and I was the only man sitting in the orchestra. Not a man in the place, all women. For the most part they were uh, middle-aged or maybe younger, some of them. I felt so uncomfortable I sat right in the orchestra, three rows from the front and I remember sliding myself trying to hid, feeling so self-conscious until the lights went down. Then finally, this was the turning point. [00:28:00] I'll never forget the first number was *The Spirit of the Sea*, and of course they were very theatrical in those days, St. Denis, Martha Graham was there, she was only one of the pupils, all these girls that became so famous, Ted Shawn was. She's a wave, the water, they did that with lights and drapery. And what's his name? Ted is on a cliff on his stomach, looking over the cliff and watching this spirit of the sea coming out. And they did all sorts of things. I was so impressed and so moved that I walked right backstage and the stagehands didn't want to let me backstage. There was a commotion or something. I said, "I must see them. I'm sorry, but I must see them." Finally, Miss Ruth came over and said "Please let the young man in." And I told her how much this meant to me, and that I would like to dance for her. So, I don't know what I did but I took my coat off, my shirt off, and I jumped all over that place.

And she said, "Where do you live? Do you live here in Worcester?" I said, "Yes." She said, "I'm going to see to it that you've got to come to Boston and you're going to get in touch with the Breggiotti [ph] sisters which is the one of our schools. They're very well-connected socially. And we want you there. I want you there." She introduced me to Ted but he didn't show too much interested. She did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was she like to you?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Very nice, very nice. Of course she was obviously older than Ted, it must have been at least twenty years.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, she was not a young woman by any means.

EDOUARD DU BURON: No. Have you ever seen her?

ROBERT F. BROWN: No.

EDOUARD DU BURON: You've never seen her?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well I can't recall.

EDOUARD DU BURON: She and Isadore Duncan were the two moving forces in this country.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was it about that performance do you think that so moved you?

EDOUARD DU BURON: What moved me was the sincerity, the dedication, the great deal of research and scholarship that went into their numbers. Theatrical to be sure. And through the years I would say she was my main inspiration. [00:30:00] Her number like *White Jade* for one thing was so beautiful.

ROBERT F. BROWN: *White Jade*.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Which led me to do the point-on [ph] years later as an inspiration for that. Plus, the orient itself, even though I'd never been there. So then, finally—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You then went over to Boston?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Not right away.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because you had a job still in Worcester, right?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I was around 19 by the time I left. My father left two years earlier and he had mentioned something about my mother and I told him that if he ever, ever said anything about my mother I would kill him. Now I've never been known to kill a fly, but I reached a point finally I said to him, "Dad, there's one thing you're not aware that I do remember." That did it. From then on he was as gentle, when I says I remember everything.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That time when you were an infant, right?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I remember everything that. He finally got himself a touring car and he took off.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you ever see him again?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh yeah. But not many times.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you were working. What was the job you had?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Washing dishes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Washing dishes, just a menial job.

EDOUARD DU BURON: These big lead baskets you had to fill up, you know. Finally, Christmas would come and I would decorate the place which they'd never seen before. The manger, Leo his name was, it was Leo's Lunch it was known. It was a very popular cafeteria.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were you, by the way, through these years still French-speaking to a degree?

EDOUARD DU BURON: To a degree, but not very good. [00:32:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were pretty much bilingual by now.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Now, I had a—my grandfather whom I adored, didn't see as much of him as I would have liked, but I remember saying to him, "My birthday comes around about every year on the 23rd of December." And he says, "We found you there Edouard in a little basket and I felt sorry for you and I brought you in. It was a big snowstorm." [Laughter] Turned out that I was born the street beyond that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you saw him regularly, right? Not regularly, but occasionally.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Not regularly, but whenever I could.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, did you begin working more and more on your dancing before you left for Boston?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, very much so.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did Ruth St. Denis suggest how you might train and what you might do?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No. She said the Breggiotto sisters and then when they feel I'm ready then you go to New York. Which, it didn't occur at the time. Now, I don't like to reveal this, but I might as well reveal this. Prior to my leaving, I had bought myself a wardrobe trunk for one thing. And I managed to, oh there's one thing I haven't told. Did I tell about Doris running away?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Your sister? I don't know, you may have at some point. Go ahead and explain. This was your younger or your older sister?

EDOUARD DU BURON: This was Doris, my sister Doris came and lived with us for a short while. I believe I talked about that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That's all right, go ahead and talk about it again.

EDOUARD DU BURON: She disappeared one day. Broke into dad's trunk. You see, every penny I earned, he got. I never had any money. And she took all the contents of that wardrobe trunk. Not the wardrobe, it was one of those regular round top trunks in the large pantry and disappeared and she was gone for about a week. [00:34:00] Detectives found her in Boston living at a, I forget what it's called.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was this a special place for young people?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And well-protected, you say.

EDOUARD DU BURON: They were. Of course when finally the detectives call that they are bringing her on the train, on a certain date, it was a Saturday I believe. She'd been gone about eight, ten days. When we met her, "My God, he says to the detectives, "she looks like a whore." She had cut her hair and curled it, she was wearing high-heeled shoes, beautifully dressed, a smile, she was brave as can be, and he couldn't get over it. And yet there was something about him that—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Your father?

EDOUARD DU BURON: My father. He was proud. And yet at the same time he was worried. Naturally. So was I, and yet in a way I was happy. I said to her, "Why didn't you take me with you? Why didn't you let me know you were going to do this?" She booked herself as being 18 years old, and she was anything but 18, which—the way she was made up, and dressed, very ladylike. Finally, he liked her, he treated her—he never abused her, he never harmed her, and his oldest sister Dora came over, lived in Plattsburgh, New York, picked her up and she said, "This is no place for you."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Doris was the youngest sister?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, she's the second one. Right, Doris. So she took her away and she brought her up. Oh, she went to a convent before that for a while. Another convent which was in Boston. [00:36:00] Whether dad knew about, he must have known about it, and from there she moved to Plattsburgh and lived with our aunt, lived there all these years, ever since. So that's over. Now here's the thing I don't want to talk about but maybe I should. A young man who works at the restaurant, had worked, brought over a girl he wanted me to meet. He felt I should have a woman. Well, it was exciting—didn't know what it was all about. I sure found out. Three days later I'm in Boston and I have gonorrhea. And I remember waking up. I have never went through anything like this. It was as if it had become an arm, and it was so painful I could feel it in my joints and in my hips, feel it all over the lower part of my body, and of course there was a great deal of pus. And I finally managed to get it to abate and found myself walking the streets. And there was, I don't know where exactly it was, but I came to a sign that says "Dr. Cox."

ROBERT F. BROWN: And this was after you'd left Worcester to go to Boston.

EDOUARD DU BURON: I was in Boston. By the way, my grandfather came to see me off when I left. He says, "I believe in you." Of course he didn't know, and I didn't know, what I was to face. I never told him later. Didn't tell anybody as a matter of fact.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mentioned earlier getting your wardrobe together before you went to Boston. [00:38:00]

EDOUARD DU BURON: That came too. But I rented a room, and I'm walking the streets and I see Dr. Cox. Well, that, to me sounded right up strange, and is he advertising this thing, or is it real? I didn't like the idea, but when the ship is sinking you don't wait for another boat to jump into the lifeboat, so I rang the bell [laughs]. If you know, it has an implication of humor which it does have, but I needed help, I had to do something.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were in great distress.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh, and how. Dr. Cox. So, I rang the bell. I didn't want to, I didn't know if it was real or what so I rang it. And this man was very, very nice. As a matter of fact his wife answered the phone. And it was in the hall, to the left into the room, and I told him I didn't know what this was all about, didn't know anything about this before, and I told him what had happened. He says, "You're new here?" I says, "Yes." He says, "Okay, let's go in the other room." And he made me lie down, pull my pants down, and he took one look and he says, "Well it's going to take some time, it's going to take several weeks." So he brought out a little enamel white pan, low, then the syringe, some kind of liquid which looked like a wine color and kept applying it. Let it drip for the pain, and this went on for about a half hour. Then he took a cloth with a hole in it and put it over the head, and pulled the foreskin over. Now for several weeks I had to go through this and it gradually disappeared. [00:40:00] Of course, today they take penicillin, that's it. Now in the interim, he was the one who told me, he says "Well you don't want to go see the Breggiotti's." I said, "No, not right now."

ROBERT F. BROWN: You had to postpone your lesson [laughs].

EDOUARD DU BURON: He says, "Okay, but I got an idea." There's a ballet teacher in town, the Russian will do anything to get a guy. "Maybe they can make arrangements for you to live there, you're physically okay." I says, "Long as I can get the treatments." So it was at 295 Huntington Avenue across from Jordan Hall. I went upstairs and there was a lot of noise. The women, girls all around. There was a practice, they were rehearsing or something, and I told them that you had been recommended. He says, "Come on in."

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was his name, do you recall?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, Scnia Rusnikov [ph].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Rusnikov. First name was Scnia?

EDOUARD DU BURON: S-C-N-I-A. Jewish, of course. Very gentle. He says, "Yeah, I could use somebody like you." I says, "I don't have any place to stay." He said, "Don't worry about it, don't worry about it."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, so you'd left your boarding room.

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, I still had it but I didn't want to say. He said, "Don't worry about, you stay here." And he gave me, do anything I want, he wanted to see me move. He says, "You're okay. You're going to learn something." [00:42:00] And so I lived there. Our place was arranged in the corner of the studio where he had a couple rooms and I lived there. He used to take me out to eat once a day. There was a Jewish restaurant, you eat there that meal took care of you for a week.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Very filling.

EDOUARD DU BURON: I used, between classes, he would watch me occasionally and his wife would watch. And I would develop, do my own things. And she resented it. She was afraid that—I don't know what she was afraid. But she had nothing to worry about. There was only one other male dancer. He did adagio with this Naomi Andrews I remember her, she was lovely, I fell in love with her.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now the adagio was what, a particular form popular at the time?

EDOUARD DU BURON: It was where the man would throw the woman around. I learned the basic rudiments of ballet training and that's about all.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How old were you then? Eighteen, 19?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Nineteen. And I stayed there for the better part of a year or less. He featured me, I did my own number in a group, a big oriental thing, which I created my own and was featured. Now, then I went to see the Breggiottis and they had heard about it already, and they didn't like it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The fact that you'd gone to this man, Rusnikov?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, that I'd gone there first.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Their names were Breggiotti?

EDOUARD DU BURON: They treated me very, very royally, they were wonderful. Francisca Breggiotti, and then Berta, the younger sister, and there was a younger one, Gloria who never danced. They were, her studio was on Berkeley Street. [00:44:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: And were these people working, this was part of Ruth St. Denis's school?

EDOUARD DU BURON: A branch. They had one in California, one in Boston, and there's three of them altogether. Francisca was absolutely beautiful. Berta was more severe, she was the eldest, and she died while I was there, and the funeral was an extraordinary thing. It was much more Japanese, I'm sorry, Balinese. Everybody dressed in white. The coffin was white. Beautiful, absolutely beautiful.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It sounds as if orientalism as very pervasive at this time.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, this was because of Ruth, Miss Ruth. Now she had a brother who went to Hollywood. I forget what his name was, Breggiotti. He was well-known. He became a star like—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now with the Breggiotti sisters you weren't learning ballet any longer.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, it was Denishawn. But I was on my own again and they finally, I decided, I had to go on my own. I couldn't bring myself to go to New York. Perhaps I made a mistake. We can size a lot of parts of anyone's life—one can look back and say, "I should have done this."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ruth St. Denis I gather had suggested you go to New York.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Which I did eventually.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You did eventually.

EDOUARD DU BURON: But my career had already begun It was before I went to Central America, 1931.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So about 1925 you said you made your debut in Boston.

EDOUARD DU BURON: That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: On your own, away from the—

EDOUARD DU BURON: On my own. Well, when I say on my own, that's when I discovered myself more and more. [00:46:00] I began to make some appearances. I began to teach my own methods of teaching and I had a fairly good number of students. Now, they're current about that time, four Harvard boys, one of them was Leo Shapiro, we became—remained friends for several years, and the other is Lincoln Kirstein. Did I tell you about that?

ROBERT F. BROWN: No.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Then there were two others which I don't recall. Now they came to me and said that they wanted ballet, and I says, "I don't teach ballet. I do know the rudiments of it, but I'm not interested in it." They said, "We know about Rusnikov, we know about the others, there were others too, but we want you."

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was based on what? They'd seen you dance, maybe?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I don't know. All I know is—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You never learned.

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, I never learned, if I did I might have, I don't recall. So I remembered Lincoln Kirstein, he was tall, very nearsighted, and gauche. Leo—who became a criminal lawyer later—remained with me after the other three left. Now they were with me, all four.

[END OF TRACK AAA_duburo93_3573_r.]

EDOUARD DU BURON: —says, "Edouard, you better get off," I don't even remember what magazine it was, or the *Times*, or what it was, "you get it, you're in for a surprise." So I got it, and there was a section on the dance. And there was an announcement, Lincoln Kirstein was bringing Balanchine to New York and opening up a ballet company. So that was the last I saw of him.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How would you describe your own dancing at that time, and what made it distinctive?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I was still doing some oriental things, but they had matured.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What were they based on, the oriental things? Just watching what the Denishawn people had done?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, I used to read about the orient, in photographs, I don't recall ever seeing oriental. I did see some Nautch dances at one point, the real ones.

ROBERT F. BROWN: From Indian tradition.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Indian, right. Well anyhow, now Leo Shapiro, we used to go to Chinatown periodically. He lived at 105 or 103 Charles Street. Now when he left for New York after he graduated from Harvard, he gave me this etching. Granted me with an etching and you can, I don't know if you can read what he wrote back here.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. This was somewhat later, 1933 or '38.

EDOUARD DU BURON: That was when he left for New York.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I—let me see this—

[Audio Break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: So your own dancing then, do you think you did these oriental themes as an escape? Was dance in fact at this time an escape because you had a very harrowing childhood. As you look back. Among other things.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Now, all of my, the Boston transcript, Parker was the critic, world famous. [00:02:00] He wrote, "When you enter Mr. Du Buron's recital it's like entering a temple." I am more or less by temperament monastic and this was carried on in all my work. Of course, you've seen the photographs. So I never deviated from that approach. I did not intentionally, but I couldn't help it. However, from the orient then went into representing ideas like into the sun, him on the threshold, him of joy, things of that sort, where music is used as a backdrop rather than interpreting music. All pretty well-calculated. I started some of my concerts very often with procession, medieval procession, state and church subtitle, because in medieval days, the church controlled.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean, you would have others dance with you?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, all alone. All alone, that would suggest state and church. That was, by the way, I moved all to drums. I did have some students that I did, I presented to men once in a while. One of them joined the monastery, and he had three children, he left. It was very hard when he joined the monastery. The other one, Walter Terry. Not Walter Terry, I can't think of his name, he did my two masks for me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Your masks.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, [inaudible] for one, and then the Japanese dance. Which I still have those masks. That's the only thing I've kept.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So did you train, did you continue during this time you were still going to the Breggiotti's classes by then?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, I had left by then. By the '30s I had left.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But back in the '20s you made your debut in 1925. [00:04:00] Were you still—

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, 1925, I did not make my debut, that is when I came to Boston.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That's what I meant.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right, but I didn't dance publicly right away. I was working and studying by myself, I was developing myself all along. Then I got myself a studio, I had some students and I was still developing my own.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were you able to make a living dancing and teaching?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Teaching mostly, at that time. Now dancing, to say I made a living? No. The most I ever got for a recital was in Washington, DC, \$300.

[Audio Break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is something of a brochure about you.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, this is a recital that I gave in Washington, DC.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Nineteen thirty-five.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Okay they didn't call them Afro-Americans in those days, they called them negroes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EDOUARD DU BURON: And now I had been engaged to appear before this—my pianist maintains that this was at Howard University.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This says "Armstrong High School Auditorium."

EDOUARD DU BURON: That's the auditorium. But, it's the 25th something.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, the concert, you mean, the date was March 15, 1935.

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, but I mean, what was the organization?

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Brown reads.] *The college alumni club presents Edouard du Buron concert dancer, assisted by William Richardson baritone.*

EDOUARD DU BURON: Richard, Richard, let me tell you.

ROBERT F. BROWN: William Richardson.

EDOUARD DU BURON: William Richardson was very interesting. He was a negro living somewhere in Boston, or maybe I don't know where, probably where the Museum of Fine Arts is, where all the blacks are in that area. [00:06:00] And he had a beautiful, beautiful voice. Now I used to rent space—when I got my own studio it was under the Rusnikov studio. I shared it with Maude Cuny Hare. Probably the most beautiful woman I've ever met in my life.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Maude—

EDOUARD DU BURON: Cuny. She came from New Orleans.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How do you spell Cuny?

EDOUARD DU BURON: C-U-N-Y. Beautiful chiseled features, so elegant. Absolutely elegant.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was she too a dancer?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, she wrote plays. And extremely sedate and extremely, well, to me, she was queenly, she was aristocracy. Now, this gentleman, black, he had a beautiful baritone voice.

ROBERT F. BROWN: William Richardson.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Richardson. Now, one of them was married, I don't know if she had a husband or he had a wife, but it was obvious those two were in love with each other. But they kept their respectful distance. Now I used to rent the studio, and it was there that Lincoln Kirstein and my other boys would dance, I mean they'd perform.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You taught them.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right. Now one day she said to me, "Edouard, would you dance in a play? I would like you to make yourself up as Adonis and have four girls as nymphs dancing around you, and you're going to be a statue in one of my plays." I wish I could remember the name of that play. Well, I was delighted. In those days whites and blacks did not mix that way. [00:08:00] And then this to occur several years later was interesting.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was the woman from New Orleans black or white?

EDOUARD DU BURON: This woman?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

EDOUARD DU BURON: She was café au lait.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, I see.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Beautiful. She was more white than black. Her hair was not crinkly at all. So I danced, and I almost passed out because I had covered myself with this white stuff, with glycerin. I did such a total job that if it wasn't for the fact that one of my girls—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean one of your other dancers?

EDOUARD DU BURON: —yeah one of my girls who was one of the four, had not hit herself, struck the corner of the pedestal I was on. And blood—her leg became a little bloody that kept my eyes riveted. And for that, I think I would have passed out. And I did move towards the end, and then it was that, "Oh it's alive, it's alive," I could hear that through the audience, "It's alive."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh my. Now what would the audience in Boston in the '20s and '30s have been? What sort of people followed this?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I had a good following. Once in a while they'd say, "Du Buron has a big audience." I didn't appear very often but I had a good following. I was the only one that had that kind of following. *The Christian Science Monitor* gave me reviews all the time. *The Herald* used to knock me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why do you suppose it did?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I was a social crusher. Society crusher, which I wasn't. *The Herald* at that time was not a Hearst paper.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was quite conservative old guard Boston, wasn't it?

EDOUARD DU BURON: That's right. Very conservative.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What were they concerned about? That you were trying to advance yourself?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Whoever was in charge, and it had to do with the fact that Mary Winslow was a student of the Breggiotti girls and she was related to the owners of the paper. [00:10:00] There's a lot of money. And she used to come backstage and say, "You're a wonderful artist." and I'd say, "Please tell that to your critic." She said, "No, no, no, I have nothing to do with that Edouard, you should know me better. I never miss a performance of yours, remember that." However, when I came back from Central America—

ROBERT F. BROWN: That was in 1931.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes. She—I heard that five or six years later she left for Argentina, and I never heard from her since.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Could you describe your teaching? How did you go about it?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No barres. I use the floor a lot.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean what? Working on, lying on the floor?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, and movement on the floor. Very little hopping and jumping around. Some. But the men, when I got through with them, they were exhausted. They really worked, stretching and everything.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did someone like Kirstein appear to you as a student to have quite an interest?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh yeah, he had interest but he had no talent whatsoever as a dancer.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But he was intense, and he was determined.

EDOUARD DU BURON: None of those boys, they were simply, I think it was simply an outlet for them. But it was obvious that Lincoln was interested in the educational part of it. Because he was heir to \$10 million at the time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Of the Filene's Department Store.

EDOUARD DU BURON: That's right, and he surely did a fantastic job at bringing Balanchine, who proved to be the most outstanding choreographer the Russian ballet—and of course Russia lost him, they wish they had kept him.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you take great pleasure in your teaching or was it simply a necessity to make money?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, it was not to make money. That was the problem. Then too, as I have said before I was paid \$300 for that recital—

ROBERT F. BROWN: For this concert in Washington, this is some years later in 1935.

EDOUARD DU BURON: I have a letter here, as a matter of fact.

[Audio Break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, when did you go then finally to New York, about when? [00:12:00]

EDOUARD DU BURON: I went to New York—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you decide to—

EDOUARD DU BURON: In the meantime I fell in love with, oh this is another story I should tell before I went to New York.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is when you're still in Boston.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Still in Boston. I was much older then, 22, maybe.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So that would be—

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, I was looking for space, I was going to change my studio. I went down to around 30—Huntington Avenue, I believe it was number 30, Emerson College used to be in those days the headquarters, that's where they were. Now you know with 30 Huntington right around the corner was Dartmouth Street where I lived and Trinity Court, where I lived with Ethel for a while.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Okay, so what happened, you fell in love?

EDOUARD DU BURON: So what happened was—this large ballroom and it was too, too, too open, windows all over the place, there was nobody around, the doors were wide open, and I'm walking around. And finally I heard [inaudible], and finally I heard some steps, and turned around, and there's a short, masculine-looking woman. Crew cut, beautiful smile. She says, "Is there something I can do for you young man?" I said, "Well I was looking for space but I'm afraid this is too public." She said, "You a dancer?" I says, "Yes." She says, "You want to come in to my room?" This was right next door. And they had frosted glass that said "Homemakers."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Homemakers.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Homemakers. So I walk next door and there was a roll-top desk in the corner above it was a portrait of a woman which I learned shortly that was Madame Blavatsky, who wrote this very famous work, *Isis Unveiled*. [00:14:00] And there was a head of [inaudible]. This was the opening to another part of my life which I was experiencing but didn't know what it was all about. She was the one who opened my eyes. So we got to talking and talking, and I said, "Will you please explain the door, what it says?" She says, "Well, I have some sponsors who take care of me weekly. And they give me so much money. And I have to look after the poor, those who need food, those who are alcoholics—the men—and their wives and children who are neglected, I take care of the house, see that they get heat, and nothing is publicized, it's all done quietly, I've been doing this for several years."

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was her name?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Maude Morgan. I'm sorry. Maude Brigham [ph].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Maude Brigham, huh.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Maude Brigham. And I saw this face of hers, she always had a beautiful smile. She was short and almost as wide as she was tall, and absolutely wonderful. Then, she says, "Will you please come back?" Which I did. I kept visiting her, as I was intrigued. So one afternoon, she said to me, "What are you doing tomorrow afternoon around 3:00 PM?" I said, "Why?" She said, "Can you be here, I would like you to meet someone." I says, "Okay." She wouldn't tell me who, very mysterious. So I showed up and she said, "We're going to take a little walk." So we went into—across the square, went into the Copley Plaza Hotel. [00:16:00] Now in those days the Copley Plaza Hotel had palm trees along the walls, and big, easy chairs with cuspidors between chairs, and people would smoke, and their pipes and their cigarettes, it was quite something. It was [laughing] disgusting in a way, because you could smell all these cuspidors. And I felt out of place, just rather nervous. She said, "Don't be worried."

ROBERT F. BROWN: It seemed too luxurious?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, sort of. I'd never seen anything quite like it before. So finally we get into the elevator, we get upstairs and, we walk through this long, carpeted corridor. Finally we heard a voice, "Don't knock, come right in." And then she turned around and it was obvious she had not been there before. And the door opened and there was an apparition the likes of which I have never witnessed to this day. The beautiful, lustrous eyes of this man with long, black hair, and a saffron robe right to the ground. I did something that I had never done before to a person. I did this [gestures].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sort of a gesture of prayer with your hands.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Like they do in India. I didn't learn the meaning of this until years later. But the one is, you're—is the best of you to the best of the one you're meeting and you put them together, and it's a beautiful greeting. He did the same thing and smiling. "Where did you find him? What is he doing in this country?"

ROBERT F. BROWN: He said about, asking about you?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, he turned around to Maude, "Where did you find this young man? What is he doing in this country, in this world? He's one of us." [00:18:00] And he takes my two hands and he has me step over the threshold, and he walks around me, sits me down, holding both hands. "Oh," he says, "he's going to stay with me." And then he turns around and looks at me, and he says "Your mother, it's a long time since you've seen her isn't it? What that woman has gone through," and he spelled out the whole thing about my mother. He didn't go into details, about how she suffered and how she missed me. And prayed, "You will see her and in spite of all the things she's gone through she'll live a relatively long life." It turns out, she lived to be 93. But finally, he says, "I'm going to ask each of you to join me in California." He was on his way to California, but he was teaching a crash course in Brookline.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In what? Mysticism?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was his name?

EDOUARD DU BURON: [Paramahansa] Swami Yogananda.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yogananda.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh he's famous the world over. Now the story about this man, three different times

through the years he's asked me to join him, now he knew right then and there and she had never revealed to him as to what I was doing. Neither did she reveal anything to me about him, when we met as strangers, and yet he kept saying that he wants to do his own thing, he wants to find out what it's all about on his own. And I suppose that's his destiny. That's what they call his karma. Now finally, he said to her, "Okay, I want him to join the Brookline group, no money of course is involved, and he's got for two weeks every single day he's got to be there." A two-hour class. [00:20:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were you willing to drop everything?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I did. Well, it was only two hours. I did. I was very young, don't forget, I said around 20, 21, 22, I didn't have that involvement at the time. Now, I remember—he sat me down at the front row in the middle, and there was a row in back of me. There must have been about 25 people. Now, I do remember toward the end on the last day, he said "I'm going to touch three people on the forehead." You know, the eye, the all-seeing eye between the eyes. And he says, "You must understand that these three, they have reached a point where it should be done. Don't—the time will come when it will occur to you. Maybe not this lifetime, but later." It's an awakening experience. So when he touched me, I did feel something, I can't explain it. Also, I cannot recall anything he said that whole two weeks. I cannot recall anything, but I took it all in.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And that was true at the time too, probably. You took it in, but you didn't recall the very words.

EDOUARD DU BURON: And he knew that, he was aware, he said, "You have to find things out for yourself. Now on that day, that afternoon, it was later, and he served and cooked the supper himself. And he wouldn't eat. Hindu cuisine, the food, delicious.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He wouldn't eat.

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, he didn't eat. Now, to finish the story, I'm going to jump quite a few years because this is—I got to tie it all in together. [00:22:00] At that time, I'm head of display at [inaudible] and I'm living in Needham, I have my own home with my second wife.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is 1950s or so.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right. And I had the—every evening, every day when I would come home is around six o'clock or so, I'd have a little glass of wine, sit down and relax, turn some music on, and right on my little table, which that table happens to be in the bedroom—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Here.

EDOUARD DU BURON: —little marble top, right here, was the *Time* magazine. And just for, I don't know what, I happened to open it, and when I did open it, it fell to religion, and there is Swami's portrait, which is well-known. One side with the long hair and those eyes. And I started to read. When I got through reading that I had to go upstairs take a shower, and this is what the content said: It seems he had been asked by Washington to host the ambassador coming from the West Coast on his way to Washington. Would he host him?

ROBERT F. BROWN: The ambassador from?

EDOUARD DU BURON: From India.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see.

EDOUARD DU BURON: And he had been asked to do so. So, being the kind of a person he was, he agreed. But unbeknown to the audience and even his disciples who were all there, something occurred that shook the scientific world. When he got through introducing the ambassador, and the ambassador had delivered his speech, Swami got up and he says, "I'm sorry, I could not say no, but it had been my appointed hour to leave this world and I'm going to leave the world right now." [00:24:00] When he stood up, he died. Now, a document was found that his body—he had requested that his body be not touched. Rigor mortis would not set in for two whole weeks. They could observe night and day if they wished, rigor mortis will not set in. It was to be sent to India and cremated. His body at the end of two weeks would be just limp, limber and the color would still be there. And that's exactly what happened and science is still baffled. Now, the book called—something about the yogis—is well-known, in fact I've got on cassette. Oh, I'm going to tell you, I dropped everything. I forgot about the wine, I didn't want to eat, I went up, took a shower, and I was taken care of for the rest of the day, I couldn't touch a thing. I was so moved by this.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And so were you when you were a very young man when you went to this class in Brookline and were touched by the Swami.

EDOUARD DU BURON: That's right. When he wanted me to join them. Then I wanted to dig in, did I make a mistake? Should I have gone?

ROBERT F. BROWN: He wanted you to go with him to California.

EDOUARD DU BURON: This went on for about three or four years, whenever he would show up in Boston. And when he did appear, he would have a vast audience. And he had a wonderful sense of humor. For instance he told—of course in the old days they traveled by ship, and when he would go to the men's room they'd throw him out, and he'd go to the women's room and they'd throw him out, so the captain would have him use his, because of his robes and his long hair. He had a wonderful sense of humor, he was a terrific speaker. [00:26:00] There was something extremely magnetic about him. And his eyes, they glowed. He's reputed to have produced quite a few miracles which is in his book. However—

ROBERT F. BROWN: That was an experience you had not too long before you left Boston.

EDOUARD DU BURON: That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You left Boston about—

EDOUARD DU BURON: Now, what happened is—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Had you married by then or not?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No. What happened is that Ethel Vienna Bailey, she was at Emerson College, and put on a play.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ethel Vienna

EDOUARD DU BURON: Bailey. She was my first wife. She had—she made a lasting impression on me. She put on a play called *The Little Clay Cup of India*. An ancient play, 2000 years old or older which was shown at Jordan Hall I believe, but I don't quite recall what hall it was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: She was an instructor at Emerson of drama.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Of drama. And costume, she did everything, she taught Shakespeare, she was an all-around. Ethel was 15 years older than I was, at least. Strange because my second wife is 15 years younger, in which my son, Frederick, which you haven't met yet, I don't believe. I remember I was so moved and I loved the play. And I went backstage and they were—a meeting was being held, and Gloria Breggiotti sat there. I don't remember if she was in the play or not, but she sat across the table. Then, there was a Hindu who was playing, he was at MIT, he was the leading character in the play. And Ethel was sitting on my right. [00:28:00] We got talking. And finally there was sort of an argument, the men that were there wanted to do *The Light of Asia* which is Edwin Arnold's wonderful poem, the life of Buddha.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They wanted to do that, you mean they wanted to recite it?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah. No, write a play. You know there are two Arnolds, they are both writers. Matthew Arnold, of course, is the more popular, worldly. Edwin was the one who wrote *The Light of Asia* which was very beautiful. I owned it at one time. But anyway—so, finally someone said, "Maybe du Buron should play the Buddha because he does religious things." So Ethel turns around to me, she says, "I saw you dance, and I was going to invite you all to come to my apartment, little place, would you come?" And I said, "Yeah, I would." I was fascinated by her voice, fascinated, she was not what you would call a beauty, but there was something about her, she was very magical, I just loved her. And this was what year? I don't recall.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is before you went to New York so it would be late '20s probably.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah. So finally, we went there. Now she lived, first street on the left from Charles Street. Very short street, Mechanic? No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Maybe River Street?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, River Street, I know where that is. On the top floor, strangely enough it was Conger Metcalf, with a big picture window.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That would have been later that he was there, right? The painter, Conger Metcalf? [00:30:00]

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, he was there first before he went to Otis Street, he's there now, he's been there for

many years.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh yes. But she, Ethel, Ethel's place—

EDOUARD DU BURON: She had a roommate, Ruth Young.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So she invited several of you over there to what?

EDOUARD DU BURON: To serve tea, to discuss *The Light of Asia*, and if not *The Light of Asia*, this business of the Buddha, to do something. We never did of course. And some of her students were there, two boys, very well-read and very much interested in the theater and Shakespeare, they were all there. And one thing led to another, and I saw more and more and more of her. She always wanted to better her ambition to have been a dancer. She came from Dexter, Maine. She was one of the—she was the results of the old first landings of the British, the pilgrims coming to this country, the old Bailey Island, you know.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see. So she was from an old Maine family.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh yeah, an old Maine family.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you began seeing quite a lot of her. And did she go to watch your dancing?

EDOUARD DU BURON: All the time. But she used to before I knew her, and I didn't know that. Finally we decided, we became engaged, she was afraid, really scared, and I don't blame her, she had good reasons which proved later. But I had to go to see St. Denis. And I wanted, I had—now there was a lady who taught ballet, Lilla Viles Wyman or something like that—she was the grandmother of dance and she had about a thousand students. She gave a big recital every year. Everyone appeared in it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was in Boston?

EDOUARD DU BURON: In Boston. That was *the* school in Boston for families. She was a southern family. Everyone who had a child studied with Mrs. Wyman. They did everything, ballet, they did waltzes, they did everything.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was for children learning to dance mainly. [00:32:00]

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah. And she showed—every one of them appeared in public. So she called me one day and she says, "There is a gentleman in Costa Rica, he's looking for somebody, and you're the only one I can recommend."

ROBERT F. BROWN: She means someone who produced dances?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Who could teach.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, someone who could teach.

EDOUARD DU BURON: And David Sequaris was his name. He was a composer.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How do you spell his last name?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Sequaris. S-E-Q-U-A-R-I-S. He is socially active and he has an orchestra, some of his children or relatives play in the orchestra. And he gives recitals at the Teatro Nacional every year, and he's very popular. His wife once started school for the people that—she says, "You're the only that I'd recommend." Well, being adventurous.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I thought you said you were going to go to New York though, to see Ruth St. Dennis.

EDOUARD DU BURON: That's right. I gave her a recital before I left. That's what happened. I thought I'd go there first. So, I'd been in touch with Miss Ruth and I told her I'd like to perform for her, that I was leaving for Central America, for San Jose, and I'd bring my pianist, and I'd do several numbers. She was delighted, she'd heard in the interim what was happening. So I took Irene Epstein, she is now married and has two children, she's 83, and she worked with me since 1928. And Irene keeps telling me it could be 1927, she has all kinds of documents. [00:34:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you went to New York.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes. I lived in back of the International House, and I appeared there, also.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Up in Morningside Heights.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh God, I jumped again. I went to New York before I went to Miss Ruth, I'm sorry. I did go to New York first to appear at the International House. It was oriental night. It was in 1929, I have a document on that, and I had an experience there which, I don't know if I should talk about it, it's rather strange and weird. One day at the desk somebody says, "You have a relative here." I says, "No way." He says, "Oh yes, you do, B-U-R-O-N, Buron. He lives here." And I said, "Please ring him." So he told Gaston the same thing, his first name was Gaston, he says "Put him on the phone." "What is your father's name" I told him. "What is your grandfather's name?" I says, "Louis." He says, "I'm coming down." He says, "So, your grandfather's Louis." I says, "Yes." He says, "Mm, you're in for a surprise. Did he ever tell you about our ancestry?" I says, "Yes he did." And I says, "I've changed the name." "What is it? "Du Buron." He says, "You made a mistake, it should be De." If you are a direct descendant from—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you met a man from France.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, his father was teaching at the Sorbonne. He also lived in Canada for a while, so Gaston was studying, or rather teaching, or studying—I forget now—at Columbia. And he took courses at Harvard later which we became friendly. [00:36:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you were down there, you stayed at International House.

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, I did not stay at International House. I stayed across the street from it down below, not near the river, but on the other side.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You gave a performance there.

EDOUARD DU BURON: I gave, okay, another thing, after the performance, or was it before, I don't recall. One day I saw several gentlemen, they were obviously French, they were speaking in French. And one of them says "Rex." So finally, one disappeared and they brought this woman and they looked at me, I heard her say "Yes, it is Rex."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Speaking of you?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, speaking—I could hear them in the distance. So they came over and said, "Would you like to join us, we're going to the Russian Bear, you'll be our guest?"

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was the—

EDOUARD DU BURON: I couldn't understand what this was all about. Very mysterious. So we went down with them.

ROBERT F. BROWN: To the Russian Bear, what was that?

EDOUARD DU BURON: We took two taxis, it was a restaurant, in New York, lower New York. I think it was on the East Side, but I don't recall. So, we spent a whole evening, two three hours, we danced. I wished I would have danced with her, none of them would dance with her. They never mentioned Rex, only that first time, and then on a second occasion or third occasion I heard it. Now Rex didn't mean anything to me, and it wasn't until later that Rex appeared in *My Fair Lady*. You know who Rex was?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Rex Harrison. [00:38:00]

EDOUARD DU BURON: That's right. I reminded them of Rex. Now, what happened, and one of the boys told me, was her name Margot—Was a concert pianist, and those two were engaged.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Rex, this English actor. He must have been about my age. In 1929, I was 24 or going on 24, I was 23 or somewhere around there. And he discovered, or thought he discovered that she was having an affair with someone else, so he got furious and dropped her. She couldn't play anymore, left her country and came to New York, stayed at the International House, and these men were watching over her. Whether they were students at Columbia or whether they were being paid, or she was paying them or what so she wouldn't be alone or what, but there was four of them. And they took me places, we'd spend hours—she would stare at me and I didn't know until this one gentleman explained to me what this was all about.

ROBERT F. BROWN: A very curious experience for you.

EDOUARD DU BURON: It sure was. Because, who in the hell was Rex?

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you went because it was fun, you had a good time dancing?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, they treated me royally, you know? And there was an occasion where the two of us really got together alone and it was obvious she wanted me to make love to her, and I tried, it was complete flop. I had botched it. I felt subconscious. It's amazing, I didn't know, as I still, up to then, I was quite, quite inexperienced. [00:40:00] As I've said to you, or more or less intimidated, a very monastic approach to this life.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes. Well this was on your first time in New York, then?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, my first time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And then before you left to go down to do that concert for Ruth St. Dennis—

EDOUARD DU BURON: Then when I returned to New York I got in touch with Miss Ruth. She knew who I was, and she wanted me to stay with her and I told her I was giving this appearance and I was going to appear on the 19th, in San Jose, I may be gone a year.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Nineteen thirty-one? Had you married by this time, or not yet?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, not yet. So I took my pianist, set her up in the same house on another floor and there was no dingling between the two of us, it was just purely—Irene laughs about that when she looks back. She says, "You gave me such a wonderful time showing me the city." Which I hadn't seen myself, as a matter of fact. But I gave—presented her, I showed my work, I did, I think, four or five numbers.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And this is where?

EDOUARD DU BURON: In her studio, on Van Cortland Park, that's where her studio was. It was a beautiful big place, Spanish overtones, there's something about it. Ted then more or less laid it out for her. Once he set her there with the school, he left.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, he did.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh, yes, they broke up which was bound to happen. So I did dances, when it was all over she came over. She said, "You are indeed an artist, and when you come back you come back here." [00:42:00] So she says, "I see myself." I says, "Well you were my inspiration." I see myself. But I did think she had never done, but she saw the quality apparently because she leaned toward that direction.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What were you doing that no one else had done?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I don't recall.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You don't remember.

EDOUARD DU BURON: No. So when I arrived, when I went to Central America, that's quite an experience which I'll never forget.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Can you describe it a bit?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes I can. I took three boats.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Three boats to get to Costa Rica?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Two, no one to get there. No, two. Two. There were three of them that were to go through the canal. New York to California. And usually they stop in Cuba on the way. I think it had two classes, or is it three? But I was in the least expensive, of course. We went to Cuba. And I'll never forget the poverty. People in the streets, starving to death. Incredible. When I got off the boat there were so-called taxis. They were open cars all lined with linen, white linen. And once I got in the driver was very, very polite, said "Would you like so much for the day?" I said, "Okay." So the first place he wanted to take me was to a cemetery. [00:44:00] I says, "I didn't come here to go to a cemetery." "Ah, senior, different." So I says, "Okay." Curiosity got the best of me, so I said, "Okay." I shall never forget. Talk about marble, the various colored marble, the altars, the cut-out, bronze letters, not on the tombstones but the altars, the partially elevated marble graves. Full-length. Rows upon rows of that most unbelievable, the luxury. Then he says, "I want to show you something else." So at the very end there was a wrought iron gate, some sort of a [inaudible] fence, and little stairways going down, and there as high as you can see and everywhere, there's nothing but bones, skeletons. He says, "If you can't afford, they take your name off, they take your bones out, they put you back here." So much a year. I says, "Who runs this?" He says, "The Church." I says, "You mean to tell me that when they can't afford to pay so much a year, they take the bones away and put them here." He says, "Oh yeah, they put another name up, they rent it to somebody else." Well, whatever travel in the past or future, there are two places I used to go. Not cemeteries, believe me, that was too much for me. There's museums of course, and churches. Cathedrals, and palaces or

whatever, both in France and Italy especially. [00:46:00] And while I was there in Cuba. I went to some of the churches. They had tile floors, all the saints in the statuary were dressed in real clothes, galvets and satin, they were made up like Hollywood star theater people. Makeup, even had earrings, rings on their fingers. Very, very theatrical, and very corny. And they had lit lightbulbs around for halo. But the houses they had nothing like that. People lived, slept on the ground, they were walking barefoot, and they had cases—glass cases where parts of the body, whether it was testicles, penis, breast, arm, foot where the church would sell these things if you wanted children, or if there was something wrong with you they would sell you the part of the body that was wrong.

ROBERT F. BROWN: These were little images of that part of the body.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Exactly.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So this was very vivid, this time spent.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Very vivid. So the—

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ROBERT F. BROWN: —within its grip. I sense there was already, was there some anti-clericalism as a theme in your dances?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, definitely. It was satire, funny. Some people didn't laugh. Some people took it seriously. It was controversial. So you could not enter Costa Rica by way of the Gulf. You had to go through the canal and enter through the backdoor and there was a reason for that. In those days there was a railroad from—San Jose's in the middle, it's about five or six thousand feet above sea level. From the capital to the east coast is owned by United Fruit. It was sliding down, all the way down, straight.

ROBERT F. BROWN: All the way down to the Caribbean.

EDOUARD DU BURON: All the way to the Caribbean, right. On the Puntarenas side was the backdoor entrance to the country, it was the only way you could enter the country then. There was no highways, there was no planes. And that was owned by the government. And this was the most extraordinary train ride that one could experience. There was nothing more dangerous in the world. It was written up in the *National Geographic*, I discovered about a year later.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean once you landed on the west coast and then you took a train?

EDOUARD DU BURON: You took a train. But that train was something. But the top of that to make matters more interesting, Panama, where I had to stay overnight in Panama City, the locks, there were three stages where they—

ROBERT F. BROWN: On the canal.

EDOUARD DU BURON: —on the canal, which was very interesting. You would be, the sun would be nice and bright, and you were wearing light clothes and all of a sudden you could see a wall of water and the boat going right [laughs] pulling out of the lock right into it and everybody would make a dive for the—below so they didn't get wet. It was very interesting. So finally the boat pulled up, this was Lake—Gaston, I forget the names. It's the largest lake. [00:02:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Gatun, Gatun.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Something like that. And pulled up to this hotel, no, pulled up to the coast where we get off and we had to take a ride to a hotel, Panama City proper, some little distance from where you landed. And that experience there was repeated exactly the same as I saw in Cuba.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In Havana.

EDOUARD DU BURON: In Havana. And I remember at the entrance to the hotel a couple of merchants came up to me begging and I happen to give somebody a dime and that did, they came out of everywhere, the woodwork, they jumped up. The concierge came up from the inside, he said, "No no, no. Don't, don't, don't. We can't have this bothering our customers. Look at them." If you paid everybody you wouldn't have any money left, you just couldn't take care of it. But the hotel was dirty, oh the people were so poor. I remember—I don't recall if this happened in Havana, the sidewalks are only about two feet wide and the streetcar would run along the sidewalk. You could step from the doorway one step into the car [laughs]. One day I saw this Cardinal with his robes walking down, he was three feet wide at least, and everybody had to get out of the way to let him pass. Well, he owned everything and these poor natives, no shoes, nothing, so sad.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was it like when you got to San Jose?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, before I got there, let me tell you. When—two days later I took the boat called the *Panama Mailboat*. [00:04:00] It was a small boat, all Chinese help on board. Now that mailboat would go all along the Pacific coast delivering mail. And I was the only passenger, no I'm sorry there were two or three others come to think of it, who got on the boat, I was the only one that got off at Puntarenas, in Costa Rica. They went north, yeah, they went north. So that boat ride was the most dramatic I've ever experienced. There, I remember sitting on the upper deck, the only deck, it was a small—only 40 passengers on board, that's all he could take. And I remember sitting on the chair, and I could hear the little vibrating of music, a radio, the ocean would disappear, no water at all then all of a sudden I think that ocean went up 60 feet, at least, 40 feet, and I said, "Oh my God, that's it." Then it went up like this, it was a maneuver of the waves and the boat and you were like a little, a leaf on the ocean.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you were in a very heavy storm.

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, it was perfectly normal. The banks, now you hear about the banks of Newfoundland on the east coast, but these are much larger but they're quieter. If there is a storm there is a storm but this was considered normal. But oh my God. Beautiful. Absolutely beautiful. I was intrigued by it. Finally I heard someone tapping me on the shoulder, and I turned around and it was a man, the captain was there, and he says "Are you all right?" I says, "Yes, I'm all right." He says, "Everybody's sick, my crew's all sick except one." [00:6:00] "Do you want me to come down? Are you all right? Do you want me to help you?" He says, "No, no stay where you are as long as I know where you are. So I got to go back to the wheel." So this [laughs] was my experience. So finally, when I go to my state room I could go several times and everything was fine. When I was ready to go to bed my blankets was turned, I had a beautiful state room, and if I felt like taking a hot water bath, freshwater, it was turned on. If I felt like taking a saltwater bath that was turned on. I said, "What's going on?" There was a Chinese boy, and I hardly ever saw him but he knew exactly what I was going to do. It was an amazing experience. Finally when I did leave, I was put on a rowboat and I was rowed with the trunk bounced—I didn't think we'd make the shore.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And your accompanist was with you in all this, right?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, no, she didn't come with me. Only New York. Oh no.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you did make it ashore, and then you had that—

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh, I did make it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —perilous.

EDOUARD DU BURON: And it was a huge wooden building, Grand Hotel Europa. It looks like a gigantic hen coop, oh badly. It was going to blow—any storm would blow it apart. It was low tide and it smelled to high heavens. And the vultures, they were the most horrible-looking vultures on the ground but in flight they were beautiful. And again, I went through same experience again as I did the Swami with this little Chinese on deck. [00:08:00] He came over the rail and I tipped him and he did this [gestures]. He sensed that I was probably Buddhist which I was not exactly, but pretty much in that direction and I did the same thing. How did he know, in other words, I have to repeat myself because to me it is puzzling all these years. He knew exactly when I was going to bed, he knew whether I wanted salt water or fresh water in the bath, and he would turn it on. It was beautiful and he smiled. I wanted to bring him home. I would have loved to tucked him in my pocket and bring him home. But anyhow, once in the hotel they signed me in, I was signed in, and I could hear corrugated, somebody walking on corrugated roof and there was a courtyard. And these women [inaudible] putting washing out to dry, and I was taken upstairs, my trunk remained downstairs. And when I got in this room it was unbelievable. I could hear water running and I could see a pair of bare feet in the corner of the room. In other words, a shower—each room had a shower, but they used the same drain and you could see the feet, you know, the next door. There was a john in the middle against the wall. No privacy whatsoever. The bed looked as if it might be a thousand years old, the frame, oh my God it was rusty, and no windows, and the bugs flying in and out of the rooms. Unbelievable. Look, it's the tropics. So finally this woman came, very jovial, she made me feel at home. She put on clean sheets and everything. And she was talking in Spanish. [Laughs.] I couldn't understand a word. [00:10:00] And went down to eat, and just then two men came over they said they wanted me to open the trunk. Customs. Which I did. And they saw all these costumes and things, and said "Oh women! Where's the woman?" I said, "No women." There's a lot of robes and things and they couldn't figure it out. And I had some new shoes, because I figured if I'm going to stay there you can't buy shoes there, and might as well have some new shoes. So, to make matters worse, someone convinced him that I was expected, apparently the papers.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well you could give a name to check with someone in San Jose, right?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Finally, to make matters worse, they locked the key into the trunk.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.] And you aren't anywhere near San Jose.

EDOUARD DU BURON: No. And so now, as the crow flies it's about 75, under 100 miles from the coast to the capital, but it took all day to get there. Little wood—chug, chug, the little train.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Train.

EDOUARD DU BURON: It would look for its tail every time it would go. It would go around these mountains so slowly, climbing slowly, through two little waterfalls. Dangerous, but so beautiful, so beautiful. The mists below, purple gray, mists below. I was in the back—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were climbing quite rapidly then?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, but slowly. Because sometimes they said to me, when I got in, sometimes the train doesn't make it, and that's the end of it. Everyone on board is a loss. Every once in a while they'd stop, about every half hour to stop to a village, and many of the natives would jump to these openings—no, the cars—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The windows?

EDOUARD DU BURON: —the windows. There was no glass, nothing. And they would have some kind of a container with drink and people would drink out of the same cup and pass it around [laughs]. [00:12:00] And the knife, the gendarme would have these long, naked blades, and when the whistle would blow, they would push it around, hit them on the fanny to get them out quick, and it went by nose a couple times about an inch. Of course they all look at me, I was a curiosity they'd never seen anybody like me before.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why, were you dressed different?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, I was a Westerner. They were all natives with the exception of the passengers, which I was the only one as I said, to get off. So that train ride was unbelievable, it was so extraordinary. I could see the engine more often than I could see anything else because it would go around, slowly climbing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: When you got there was everything arranged for you?

EDOUARD DU BURON: When I got there, they met me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You had a manager or your host?

EDOUARD DU BURON: David Sequaris. He and his wife. They took one look at me and they saw the trunk and they began to wonder. But they took me to their home.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What do you think they began to wonder about? That you were so young?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, I don't know, there was something about it they figured well we got more than we asked for apparently. So I stayed with them. And they kept talking about school. And I said, "I would like to appear, could we appear? I would like to give a recital."

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, your agreement there was to teach as well as give recitals.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, they wanted me to teach. But they didn't come out openly as that teacher in Boston did, that Lilla Viles Wyman. They didn't spread it, because when they saw me they realized I was not just a teacher. That I was a performer, they had a way, they saw my trunk, and they saw my costumes, and they suddenly realized. So I said, "I would like to appear."

ROBERT F. BROWN: What do you think they thought—had they met you up here?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, never, just all the suggestion from Lilla Viles Wyman.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How do you spell her name, excuse me? [00:14:00]

EDOUARD DU BURON: Lilly Vile, V-I-L-E Wyman, she's an old, old lady, she was in her late eighties when I first met her. She was very, very popular in Boston.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They recommended you to the Sequarises. So you went down there to teach?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I went down there, well I didn't know. As a matter of fact it was exciting the fact that I was going to go in the tropics, in another culture, and it was a change and St. Denis thought—she wanted me back. And there was a possibility I would not come back, stay a year or travel. The idea is that if they would accept me at the opera house that I would like to tour all through Latin countries. It would have been wonderful,

especially Mexico. Well when, the first I rehearsed—two rehearsals, I'll never forget that experience. The opera house, the seating capacity is actually minimal compared to the building. The building is beautiful. Definitely a scaled down copy of the grand opera house in Paris, I don't know if you're familiar with it. Outside there were two bronze sculptures, I forget one is Moliere or Shakespeare or what. Life size statues right outside the entrance. Very, very classical, monumental building but on a smaller scale, of course. Lot of reception halls and everything. But the seating capacity I doubt it's more than 1500, 2000, maybe I doubt it's more than 2000. Stage was ample. So, I started to rehearse. He had gone through my music that I had. Some of it was handwritten.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who was this, the orchestra?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, no the pianist. I was not going to use an orchestra. [00:16:00] Now the orchestra was there, they had rehearsed for their performance which is going to be the same thing. And they all hung around to see me, because they'd never seen anything like this before. A barefoot man. A male, barefoot back in 1931 [laughs] in Central America? No way, they weren't sure—shoes and everything. During—I could feel the pressure from the height.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was a mile high, this city, yes.

EDOUARD DU BURON: And during intermission I was lying down, down on my knees, kneeling down with my head between my knees, my hands like this, resting, and during the interval the pianist, who was a composer, played an Indian piece called *Lamento del Caribe*, [ph] which I had never heard of and it was published in Boston. You could pick it up at the music store.

ROBERT F. BROWN: On Boylston Street?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right. He came to America quite often, this man. He spoke English very well, so did his wife. It so moved me that when he got through I was at the other end of the stage. But instead of being this way, I was back, on my back, with my hands still on my knees. One of the musicians busted his violin was so excited. He was so moved by it. [Laughs.] Busted his violin, you know I heard it, they were yelling and everything. So, the composer got up, he said, "You want to do it again?" I said, "Of course." [00:18:00] I didn't do anything. He says, "Oh yes." I says, "Okay, I will compose something. I would like to hear it. I have a wig that I could wear. I'll figure out something to wear." So we did it that night for the performance and it caused a sensation. It was at the intermission it closed—*Lamento del Caribe*. So fortunately the concert wasn't right away. In the audience was Satigetti [ph] an artist who was also a critic. Salomon de la Selva, who wrote for the *Directorio Americano*, also wrote for *Le Monde* I believe. He was the one who had been thrown out of Nicaragua for, you know, protesting what the Marines—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Our invasion.

EDOUARD DU BURON: —our invasion. Costa Rica had received him with open arms. He had gone to Harvard, he had published two books of poetry while he was there. He loved the American people but detested our corrupt government, which was more or less ample as it is now. More so now, but just as much in a way then in proportion to the times. So he wrote a long story to prepare the public for what to see. And he went on to say, and it's all in Spanish, and I have it translated somewhere, he says, "We have received," what was her name? A singer from Chicago, an opera singer, [Amelita] Galli-Curci. she was a coloratura. [00:20:00] So homely. Oh they loved her when she sang but when she—she was homely that our gallant gentleman would not throw the capes for her on the floor to get into her carriage because she was too homely. But let's not forget, she came from a corrupt city like Chicago, where they have that corrupt criminal, what's his name?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Al Capone.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Al Capone. They did admire, appreciate Galli-Curci, we did her up but we did not appreciate because she was so homely. And he went on and on and on, this, "You're going to see a male dancer. He's barefooted." In other words they prepared the public. So I was very well-received, and as a result there were three artists who painted me, they made some sketches. One of them worked in stone. I never saw the stone, but I have the others. A drawing was made of my *Lamento del Caribe* which I've made into a plate and used over and over again. So, I used to roam around. I had drank some water or some food—I don't know what I did, and I got ill. And I used to hang around a—there was a park. Wild. Is this on?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

EDOUARD DU BURON: [Laughs.] I didn't know if it was on. Sort of a very, very agile babbling brook. When I say babbling it was more so than that, the boulders were quite large. And the boredom helped as we would call it. The buzzards were beautiful in space but down on the ground they were horrible. I used to sit there for hours, listening to the water and writing. I had a pad.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And there were vultures around you said?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, and that's why I started my epic poem, *The Mountain*. [00:22:00] And, Salomon used to seek me out. And we used to take long walks, and he told me some wonderful stories. And one of them I shall never forget which is very important. He had studied at Oxford, and one of his interests was poetry and literature, English literature. He was very, very much impressed with Francis Thompson's great poem, *The Hound of Heaven*. Are you familiar with that poem? You never read it?

ROBERT F. BROWN: I know of it, yeah.

EDOUARD DU BURON: It's in [inaudible] *Anthology of English Poetry*. The story about this man is an extraordinary story. Something I'm not familiar with, very few people are even to this day. Now, there was a—hope I remember her name, it will come to me, she published a little monthly book on poetry, she and her husband as a matter of fact. It will come to me, and he decided to go look her up, because she had discovered him. So, he had enough time to take himself over there to her home. When he arrived at the door, a butler answered the door, and he said he wanted Alice Maynell, was her name.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was her name?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Maynell, M-A-Y-N-E-L-L, I believe. She's somebody to look up. She and her husband published a monthly book of poetry, a pamphlet. She was a gracious lady, according to him, she was coming down the steps, putting on her gloves getting ready to go out, and her carriage was about to take her. [00:24:00] And he introduced himself and told her that he came to pay her homage because of what she had done for Francis Thompson. She was enough interested in him she removed her gloves, took her hat off, and told the butler to prepare tea. And they spent the rest of the day talking about Francis Thompson. According to the story he told me, they had been receiving poetry of his without any signature. She decided that they ought to investigate. So she surmised he might have been in the slummy part of London, which he was. It took her several days to locate him.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is Salomon?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Salomon de la Selva. So, when she did discover him she brought him home. They took care of him. Then she made him known to the world. His poetry, through her. She—he lived right there. She also noticed something was wrong, something missing. He was unhappy and finally it dawned on her, there must be a lady involved. She says, "If I may be blunt can we go see the lady friend that you miss." And he looked at me, she told him, quite surprised. "You know that?" She says, "No, I don't, but I suspected there must be a lady." "Well, she's a young lady that I'm very, very fond." So he went to look for her.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is in England?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh yes, all in England, all while he is at Oxford. And he looked and looked and looked and she went with him, they couldn't find her. [00:26:00] They finally came across friends of hers. She committed suicide. She was a prostitute. She committed suicide in order not to disgrace him, if they ever find out that his friend was a prostitute. Isn't that a story?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EDOUARD DU BURON: She killed herself. She loved him dearly, and she was so happy for him that they were publishing his work, and she was given a home, and she did not want to disgrace him. Which is very sad, and so she done away with herself. So, I don't remember what he came back to, when he told me this he might have, I don't recall. All I know is that when he got back to her house—oh, I'm sorry, when she got back, she made up her mind that she was going to do something about it. She didn't know what—how to take care of him. Now I don't know whether he came back to live with her or what, but according to Salomon, she said—Alice said to him, "Would you like to see his room? We've kept it locked all these years."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, Francis Thompson's room.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right. So she told the butler to open the door, unlock it, and go in and do some dusting if necessary. He prepared the room. He went in to Francis Thompson's bedroom, and he walked around and looked at it, and Alice said to him, "Would you like to stay overnight?" He says, "Yes I would." So he stayed overnight. Isn't that a story?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So is he someone you got to know quite well? [00:28:00]

EDOUARD DU BURON: Quite well.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How long were you there in Costa Rica?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Couple of months.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Couple of months.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Now, then another time he said there was an earthquake in Cartago. Now Cartago is quite a familiar town, there are quite a few Cartagos in Latin America.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Carthage, yeah.

EDOUARD DU BURON: So we went there. I don't remember, but I do recall this. I'll tell you one. So much as I can sense him, I do recall that when we had arrived the church had been destroyed, and all the natives were sitting on the ground. Some were crying, some were nursing babies, none of them had any—were shod.

ROBERT F. BROWN: With shoes.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Nothing. And the priest, a pompous so-and-so was giving them hell. "You have sinned, therefore God has destroyed your church and we're going to rebuild it again." Never once did he say, "Are you hungry? Have you got any food?" It was sick.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you witnessed this?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I saw this. And Salomon was shaking. He was shaking. He said, "Let's get out of here." Now I couldn't hear, I could hear what was going on, but what was being said, but he explained to me on the way, he said, "That bastard. He's supposed to be a man of God, he's not concerned about his parishioners, he's concerned the church is gone. His livelihood is gone." That was really the thing that got me to do the proselytizing. I showed you the picture, remember the cross and black. It was amazing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you then perform that in San Jose?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No. I created it after I got home. They were two of them I did, two satires. [00:30:00] One was the *Old Saints for New*, where I dressed in brown, with a hood. And I had a big gold heart—instead of having gold, it's a dollar sign painted gold made out of leather, and boy, did I play that. I'd throw myself on the floor, roll without stopping, never losing a beat, still playing it. People were laughing, some were shocked, it's true. And then I went around shaking, swinging it around.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The dollar sign. But this is something you did when you got back?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh yes. I only did that dance twice because it was too controversial. The other one, the proselytizing I did more of.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you do it in New York as well?

EDOUARD DU BURON: In New York and in Boston. The first time I showed it in Boston there was—a priest came to see me after the final curtain came down. He said, "We deserve this, and I agree with you 100 percent, but my companion was shocked. He left, he didn't wait until you were finished, he just walked out of the theater." He says, "I agree with you." So there was a diversion among the priesthood.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well you left after only two months because you were ill? Was that the main reason you left Costa Rica?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, I left—well all right. What happened is, first of all I was entertained by the Mexican ambassador. He wanted to see me. He had attended the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Attended the recital.

EDOUARD DU BURON: —the recital, and he wanted to meet me in person. And I forgot his name. I think it was Mattis Boleo [ph], but I'm not sure. I know that river was named after there was a Boleo. He was a very nice gentleman, ambassador from Mexico. He says, "If you're ever here, you're going to be received with open arms. [00:32:00] We have a lot of talent, and you should appear there. Please come, and I will recommend you very highly. I will prepare the way if you come." Now I tried very much to get David Sequaris to go with me. He'd play his own music, but—well, he is known in Latin America as a composer it would help, double billing. But he said he had too much at stake, family and so on.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And he'd done that very well-received song hadn't he? The *Lamento del Caribe*? Yeah. But why did then you leave, you found there were no prospects?

EDOUARD DU BURON: There was no prospect—no, not only that. Now, two weeks before I left there was a new

election in San Jose, and was it two weeks after or two weeks before? There was a bombing. Whoever lost the—election fought back, but they were defeated. And there were a lot of bombings around and destruction, but I got out of there in time. I mean—oh I have a wonderful story to tell.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The United Fruit Boat.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, but before that. I went to get my visa. I went to see the man who was supposed to be in charge. He was a—I had to go to the chief of police. It was on a Saturday, I believe. Yeah, it was in the morning. He says, "I can't give it to you." I was leaving on the next day, I believe it was on a Sunday. He says "I can't give it to you. Come back Monday." I says, "Well I already got my ticket, I have to go." He said, "I can put you in jail." There were two officers standing beside him. It was a long room, very formal. And there was the chief of police. So I was walking back and forth. I said, "Senor, I have to leave, I'm an American. I have to go back." He says, "I know all that." [00:34:00] Finally after about a half hour, wondering, he was getting really tense, I was a little worried. Finally someone came and whispered in his ear. All of a sudden, "Artist, artist," he called me, he says, "Okay, I understand." He knew. Someone told him they had seen or read about me in the papers. Oh, he couldn't do enough. But he said to me, "I've got to go to my other office because I don't have—I have to have—I need the another signature. I've got to go to the office where I'm governor. I'm chief of police here and I'm governor there." [They laugh.] A shortage of politicians, incredible. I couldn't believe it. So, I was escorted by one of his guys to the other office, and I had to be there before one o'clock, because he was through, no more work for the day. So, we got over there and he bowed and excused himself. [Laughs] Chief of police and the governor. Today it's a different story, the population has tripled, quadrupled. If a woman walked through the streets in those days in San Jose, you would be a prostitute. There was no women ever walking. If um—oh there's a lot of things I could go on. One day, I'm walking along by myself, there were a lot of walls everywhere. Everything was in walls. Houses.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That would be typical of a Latin Country, right?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh, yes. All walls, courtyards. And sometimes the windows were barred and courtyards inside. Very much like China, the Chinese used to do. And—for protection, I suppose. One day I'm walking along and I run into—oh I'm sorry what is that right across the street from the Teatro Nacional was the hotel Costa Rica, where occasionally an American salesman would come. [00:36:00] They did not like to do business with Americans. They liked the Europeans. They bought Spaniards, Italians, French, and everything came from Europe. Very little came from this country. They wouldn't buy from us. The only thing they liked was our shoes, this I had heard. So I got—I happened to go in there, I don't remember for a drink of wine or something. Very small lobby, some chairs. And they introduced themselves, and I introduced myself. So we—they took me around and showed me here and there. One day I am walking along and we see two men carrying a grand piano on their heads. A small grand piano. They were having a verbal disagreement, they couldn't keep in step. They have to keep in step. [They laugh.] Now this piano was upside down on their heads, a little bit of a towel, the legs are on the inside. It was remarkable to watch this. Finally they got it into the room. And another time, this is—I saw this without the men. Three women carrying bananas on a stem. You know what a stem of bananas is, it's like that long? Weighs about 85 to 100 pounds. They were carrying it on top of their heads. Perfectly upright, stately, very short, thick necks. Spines very erect. And they were discussing and laughing and only one hand balancing them. Well, that's the proper case to carry your weight, you couldn't carry 80, 90, 100 pounds this way, on top of your head. You've gotta start young. [00:38:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: So your time down there was pretty memorable. So you resolved to go back to New York, or what happened? I know you said you fell ill having drunk the water.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah. Well, then I went to, I was told about the museum. Salomon was the one who told me as a matter of fact. I went alone, and when I entered this place the director was a German. His name will come to me. He spoke English, Spanish, and German. I could of have had anything I wanted.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Really? From a museum.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh yeah, they had so much sculpture they didn't know what to do with it. They didn't have the space for it. I'm going to describe one piece which is—will shock a lot of people I suppose. *The Three Graces*, but they were males, and they had erections and they were holding a dish on their head. They were that high.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They were what, about three feet high, two and a half feet high?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Roughly. They were three male nudes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Are these Indian pieces, or native pieces?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Very native. Yeah, they had long erections that they were holding atop like a vase, like a

birdbath. Incredible. He said, "You want that?" "Well, what would I do with that?" But there were other pieces which today you couldn't touch for hundreds of thousands.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They were selling from the national gallery?

EDOUARD DU BURON: They were giving, he said I could have them. He'd seen me dance.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh I see sort of a tribute to you and he—

EDOUARD DU BURON: They had so much of it they didn't know what to do with it. It was not known then. Now there was some seated figures who were Aztec, Inca, I don't know. Beautiful. He said to me, "We'll ship them for you. United Fruit will ship them to you." Big mistake. Big mistake. I was involved with my career. [00:40:00] I had a trunk, and I didn't know what I was going to do. It looked obvious that I was going back to New York, back to the states anyhow, and he was willing to ship them. He said, "You can have three pieces, anything you want." His name should come to me, it's a well-known German name. Today you would have been hung.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, sure.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Now years later I was in New York and near the galleries there was a shop, there was some Costa Rican pieces there that were twenty five thousand dollars apiece, a few years later. Today you couldn't touch them for that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You said you left there on the United Fruit Boat, how did you happen to—you returned on the Caribbean side?

EDOUARD DU BURON: On the Caribbean side this time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why was that?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Because it's the only way you can leave the country. By boat.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, I knew that, but I meant you couldn't go back to the Pacific side.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh no, that's the way I entered, the back door. See the trains all went in one direction, from the Pacific to San Jose, from San Jose to Caribbean. United Fruit Boat. Now it's different, they have highways.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sure. But now you decided that you couldn't develop a series of recitals in Latin America?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, no. Well, I could have stayed. Oh, they had me appear in a very special, the government asked if I would appear it was some kind of school, graduation or something. I've forgotten now what it was. It was not only children but the whole business. To do one number. So, that was a disaster. I decided to do the dance of Shiva. Are you familiar with Shiva?

ROBERT F. BROWN: And it didn't work out?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, when they saw me in costume the whole house came down with laughter. And I went off the stage, and they tried to get me back. And Salomon was there and he felt terrible. [00:42:00] And finally, they were shouting from the balcony to shut up, they should learn, and they talk about Master of Artist du Buron, and going back to his country [inaudible]. I made a mistake, I should have gone back but I didn't. I was too damn involved with me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Shortly after that you left the country.

EDOUARD DU BURON: I left the country. Well, I was bound to leave anyhow.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, but did you—were you then, I gather, you went to New York? Is it this time?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, when I came back—

ROBERT F. BROWN: In 1932.

EDOUARD DU BURON: —oh, I missed out something, I don't know if I should tell you that. The three men, two men rather. No, two men.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Where was this?

EDOUARD DU BURON: The two salesmen.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In Costa Rica.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right. They says, "You'll need a woman." I says, "I know." They says, "You need a woman, and we'll take care of it." So, at the hotel the clerk took care of everything. And I says, "Oh, to hell with it, I'm going home." Now, I had boarded—I had left the Sequaris, I had boarded at the German pension [ph]. And it was the first time I'd ever had coffee, well I'd had coffee but not like that, the best I've ever had in the world, and I've never had coffee like that since. It was cafe au lait, where they would serve it hot and they would pour the two together. Now, Costa Rican coffee is tops. I learned a lot about coffee when I was there. The flat bean is okay, but the round bean is even better. Those are hard to come by. You know what I mean by the totally round bean? They are red when they ripe, then they have to be roasted and then they turn brown. [00:44:00] I've seen them grown. Now, good coffee must be grown at elevations. They make the best coffee, but they don't grow enough because they don't have the space. Colombian coffee gets all the credit. It's so superior to Colombian coffee. So, they charge a little extra if they have the coffee, which is something unheard of. So, out of curiosity, it was about a dollar a week. So they came out with beautiful silver. Coffee in one—hot milk. Oh my God! I had two, three cups a morning, ah! And I had it for lunch. Oh, it was delicious!

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was before you left?

EDOUARD DU BURON: This was at the German pension.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well then, when did you leave, in 1932?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, it was still 1931.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you went directly to New York?

EDOUARD DU BURON: But, when these two men, they finally set a date, and they produced a taxi pulled up and we drove to some house somewhere in the evening. And it was a true pathway, there were trees, a rough jungle, we went into a very small house. When we got there we could hear guitar music. It was an open room about this size.

ROBERT F. BROWN: About twenty by twenty feet, something like that.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, something like that, and there was a small bar and there was a man playing the guitar or something and there were finally, three girls showed up. Very young. They couldn't have been over 16. And they were jovial. One of them was very quiet, serious. And I, being the youngest I suppose. There victim, they wanted to treat me, so they said, "Pick the one you like, what girl." I was embarrassed, I said "Let me out of here." They said, "No, no, no you're staying." [00:46:00] And two of the girls came over to hold me down. But the one I didn't I went for her, she was quiet. So finally I said, "Okay." So well, we spent two hours there, more or less. So they—when I got back they were still, they were dancing, drinking. So after I got back I had a drink and we went back again to the other room and the two—oh one of the other ones wanted to take me, and the one who was with me fought against them and took me. So when the bills, they decided to pay for it. But I pitched in, it was their idea. So that occurred.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, what happened when you got back here?

EDOUARD DU BURON: So when I came back here—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You continued your dancing.

EDOUARD DU BURON: When I came back here I saw Ethel in Boston.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ethel Bailey?

EDOUARD DU BURON: The one I was going to marry, right. And I says, "I'm going to go." Some students were waiting for me so I continued teaching for a while then finally I decided I'd go see Miss Ruth.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you went to New York, to see Ruth St. Denis.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right, she wanted—I promised I would.

ROBERT F. BROWN: She wanted you to join her troupe, is that right?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, she didn't have much of a troupe. She didn't have any male dancers at all. She had one who would teach once in a while, and he was terrible, terrible.

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EDOUARD DU BURON: —oh there was an interval that occurred on board ship, but forget it. Somebody wanted me to go to Europe with them. Mother and son. That was a crazy situation. She wanted me to join.

ROBERT F. BROWN: As a dancer?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I don't know. All expenses paid. I had no experiences that way. They wanted to pay all my expenses. No way. So—

ROBERT F. BROWN: In New York.

EDOUARD DU BURON: —that was on the boat, the United Fruit Boat, but forget about that. Those things happen to a lot of people, they have opportunities but they don't take them, for good reasons. So, in New York, I went to see Miss Ruth again, and this time I brought—I don't remember if I brought my trunk or not, but I did go. I stayed at Denishawn for about six months at the most at Van Cortland Park.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Up in the Bronx, that is?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, Van Cortland Park. Beautiful

ROBERT F. BROWN: What did she have there, a studio, a house?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, she had, there were rooms—there were dormitories for students, for women. There were dormitories for boys which weren't there, I think there was one dormitory for boys. I don't remember—I didn't go through the whole building. She had her own apartment which is very, very nice with a big Cherokee white bird, cockatoo, you know, throws its feathers up in its head.

ROBERT F. BROWN: A cockatiel?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, a cockatiel. With voices. It's—protests or whatever, she was very fond of it. And once in a while she would have me come up and keep her company. She was trying very hard to get me to stay with her.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was the arguments she used—to suggest?

EDOUARD DU BURON: She said we should have gotten together years ago, we should have danced together. Well the thing is, she's old enough to be my mother. [00:02:00] Now Evelyn was doing very well as a dress designer to Susie Perez. She got to be very well-known throughout the country. She was also a pupil of hers, very talented. And we remained friends until she died, and her husband calls me once in a while. Her name is Winn now.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But how did you—what role did she play in your life at this time?

EDOUARD DU BURON: She played, well we appeared together once at St. Dennis at the—what's that big stadium, it was a big public thing?

ROBERT F. BROWN: There's a Lewisohn Stadium.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, we appeared there. I have the pictures in the newspaper together. [Inaudible] white. Didn't do much for me, but whatever she—St. Denis had gone by, she couldn't—she was not what you would call a real teacher. She inspired people. She had people—for instance, Doris Humphrey was her best teacher she ever had.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Her best pupil you mean.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Her best pupil and best teacher—she was also a great teacher. And she went out on her own until she became a wheelchair patient, which is very sad. I got to know her very slightly but she was really—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What about Martha Graham? Did you get to know her?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Martha Graham she found, she considered Martha Graham very ugly, her work. She was with Louis [inaudible] at the time, of course Louis used to be Miss Ruth's accompanist. But he got fed up with the sort of music he was playing for them. He was more interested in Martha's projection, ideas that he could encourage her and helped her, he inspired her. Without her—without him I doubt that Martha would have gone as far as she did. And I became a great admirer of hers. [00:04:00] And when Martha first came to Boston, when I was active she asked Margaret Lloyd of the *Monitor* if she would bring me backstage to thank me for what I had done in Boston. "I do feel that Mr. du Buron should be in New York and continue there, he would have gone much further." And I agree with her. "But I would like to meet him." So, after the whole performance Margaret

Lloyd took me backstage and introduced me to Martha. It was fabulous.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, when you went up to Boston—

EDOUARD DU BURON: So I stayed with her for a few months, and then finally I told Miss Ruth—she used to tell me things about [Ted] Shawn which I didn't want to hear. Of course, he was gay. And she says, "I'm tired of picking the hairs slow, little by little, getting rid him." But he was going—he studied for the ministry as you know, I don't know if you ever knew that. Have you ever seen him? Never saw her. He died when he was around 80. Miss Ruth was much older when she died.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, you stayed there some months and then you went—

EDOUARD DU BURON: Then I left. I told her I was going to marry a woman, so I had to go back to Boston. She says, "Why don't you bring her here?" I says, "Well, she's got a position at Emerson which she's dedicated to." Emerson College. And I was already started over there. She said, "It's a mistake." But we remained friends, and she came to see me, that's another story. At the studio. And we corresponded, I still have the letters.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is when you had the studio on Boylston Street?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right, 1126. [00:06:00] So it came back, Ethel and I got married. We set up house at Trinity Court for a while until we could find a place. There's a wonderful story about Erica Karawina. I believe I mentioned her, who's still alive, just turned 90—highly respected artist in Hawaii for her stained glass—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Where she lives.

EDOUARD DU BURON: —windows, and I've got a lot of stuff of hers, which I'll show you someday, she did of me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you got to know her at this time.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh, I had known her before then. I knew her before I ever went to Costa Rica. She met me, she said she saw me dance before 1930. She followed and she kept doing sketches of me then. And I—there's a story [laughs]. There's a lot of stories about her that I could tell, but I'll tell you one. Now I used to robes. Barefoot.

ROBERT F. BROWN: When you were dancing?

EDOUARD DU BURON: At home, all the time. Whether I was dancing or not, I always wore—barefoot, and sometimes with sandals on if I went out. With trousers on, of course. [Inaudible.] The robes were open like this across, and wide sleeves, and I felt at home. There was one black I remember, and I had one beige, one greenish, I forgot, two beige, one blue.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You must have appeared to the unknowing citizen as a monk or something, I suppose.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well probably. I made them, I made my own costumes. My mother used to make her own clothes. When I was a child she—they used to dress boys like girls up to a certain age. I have a picture. I'm on her shoulders, and I've got a big hat on, I look like a girl. Little dress, incredible. [00:08:00] Well anyhow, so I made my own costumes, no one ever taught me I just did it. So one day, Erica is visiting us, she said—she had a little four cylinder Ford, a 1930 Ford, which we ended up owning, she gave it to us. And did I get my money's worth out of that little thing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What's the anecdote of her?

EDOUARD DU BURON: The anecdote, she says "I want to go for a ride and I want you to come." "No, no, first I've got to change." "No, no Edouard, please don't. I promise we're not going to go anywhere, let's go for a ride." It was a hot summer day. Already I had my eye on two places I was considering, 1126 Boylston and the other place was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was before you had your studio, but you had just been married.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right. We had just been married. So finally, we went for a ride. We went around the Charles River, oh it was lovely. Finally she says, "I'm hungry." I said, "Come on. You wait until we get home." "No, we're going to stop somewhere at Old France." "What do you mean, Old France?" Right in front of symphony hall on Huntington Avenue was a Childs [ph] restaurant called Old France, they had candles on all the tables, and the atmosphere was lovely. I said, "Look. You want to display me, I won't do it." "Edouard, oh please, I'm hungry, let's come in." Well, she was putting on a scene, so we pulled up right in front of Old France, which was called Old France. I think it was a Childs restaurant, one of the Childs' restaurants, this one's special for the symphony crowd. So, she went around the car, opened it, I says, "You open the door. I won't." I says, "If you

want me on display, then do it correctly." So she opens the door and we come out and all of a sudden people stopped—well in those days there wasn't the traffic like now. [00:10:00] They were mostly young people, a few here and there. And of course they're all eyes; what the hell this way, who is this character? And when I walked—the two of us—there was a silence, all the way through. There must have been 100 people scattered around, maybe less. So we sat at a table, ordered coffee and something. And people kept chatting. The waitress was shaking as she came over. And I told her what I wanted, two items, and she brought up different things to keep my mind off—finally when it came time to pay, she says, "Now, I got you, I don't have any money." I said, "Well, you should have thought of that." I walked out towards the door, she walked up to the cashier, paid her, by the time I got outside the crowd had tripled because they had been looking through the windows and into the car. I was fuming when we got into the car. Didn't say a word all the way to Trinity Court. And Ethel sensed something, so I finally burst out. And she started to laugh. "Well that was naughty of Erica," she says. "She's always naughty, she's famous for being naughty." I thought I could depend on her now, wondering, worried about her. Well, it was two months later I got a letter from somebody in Chicago giving me hell, "Who the hell do you think you are, Raymond Duncan?" Raymond Duncan was Isadore—in France, he used to wear a Roman toga all the time with sandals. Said, "Who do you think you are?" [Laughs.] So that was Erica. Then one day she said to me, "I haven't heard from my Chinese friend that I'm engaged to in China." He was working for—he had been a student of Frank Lloyd Wright, the architect, Erica had worked there too for a while with Frank Lloyd Wright. That's where, uh—Mr. Connick. [00:12:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: The stained glass company, Connick.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, the stained glass that was *the* window place in the country. He made famous, great rose windows, St. John the Divine in New York. Many of the most outstanding windows—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, she had worked for him.

EDOUARD DU BURON: For a little, short time. And she always wore a monk's robe like I did when I first saw her at work. Sandals and gold hair. She was not aged.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And what was her training, was she from some—

EDOUARD DU BURON: She was from Germany. She remembered as a child there was always Chinese people help in the house. She was half-German, half-Russian. She spoke German, but not Russian. Katerina was her name. Erica Katerina. Lovely, not pretty, but she had an air about her. I have a sketch of her in—so one day she said to me, "I haven't heard from him." I said, "You're engaged to him?" "Yes, he was going to send for me or come and pick me up." I says, "Erica, You will never hear from him again." "What an awful thing to say to me," she says. I says, "Erica. If they could afford to send a son to study with Frank Lloyd Wright, upper class, they have a girl already picked for him." Married women are given to them, this is planned among the family themselves, no way would he be allowed to marry a westerner. No way. Now in those days, to be sure. [00:14:00] She never did hear from him. So I remember she was living with Daphne Dunbar. Daphne Dunbar was an elderly lady, oh—she must have been in her 70s at the time. Owned her house and Erica had a floor by herself. And Daphne below, she was an old lady, old maid who never married.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, she was something of an artist herself.

EDOUARD DU BURON: She was. And she did that wonderful sketch of Erica that I have. And she studied in France, Daphne, she spoke French, understood French. She was very lovely and sophisticated. She reminds me a little bit of Frances Andrews. That same look about her. And she was—had very strong ideas of her own, about life in general and so on. Very protective, she didn't trust everybody. Old maid, as some people would say. But, I liked her. So one day, I could see she was terribly hurt and depressed. I says "Okay, let's go to the museum." So I remember walking across the street, Huntington, into the museum. We went up on the second floor, and you stood in front of the 12th century [inaudible], wooden, had one leg up. I says, "Let's look at that." I said, "You will marry a Chinese, but not this one." She said, "Will I marry a Chinese?" I said, "Oh yes." I wish she was here to verify that, "Oh you'll marry Chinese. You can't help it. You paint like one, you use a brush like one. Left hand or right hand, very freely."

ROBERT F. BROWN: You told her this, because by this point you knew quite a bit about some of these things.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh yeah, well it was off and on it would come up. [00:16:00] It did all my life. So finally one day, three gentlemen from Harvard came. One of them was Chinese. To this event. Then it continued. Two or three weeks, and he was the handsomest Chinese I ever saw in my life. I never saw Chinese—he was like a—he had come out of a painting, porcelain, beautiful, black hair. His eyes were not slanted at all like the average Chinese, they were different, they were luminous. He was very, very quiet. I says, "My God, if those two ever look at each other—spy each other, that will be it." So I called and Daphne answered the phone. I said, "Daphne I want to talk to Erica, it's very important." I took a chance. "Yes, what is it?" I says, "I want you to come over next Thursday night and don't miss it." "What's the program?" I says, "Never mind, I can't tell you. I want you

here. I don't know, I can't tell you. I feel you have to be here." So she showed up all excited. I said "Just go sit down." Sure enough, they showed up. It just turned out that they took an aisle seat. She took an aisle seat ahead of him and he was in back with his other companions. There was music and they were eying each other. The following week he didn't show up. The other two showed up, but he didn't. I didn't see Erica. Finally, one day, of course during the summer, the Thursday nights we're not operating. I got a phone call. "Can we come to tea?" I says, "We? Oh, Erica, please come." [00:18:00] It didn't occur to me. Finally it dawned—so the bell rang, and sure enough there they were. She was grinning from ear to ear so was he, very bashful and shy. This was the first time we'd actually met formally. She introduced me to him. "Oh I've seen you before." She says, "Yes, you have, my name is Sidney, I pronounce it." I have it written down. "You're the first one to know, we're married. We've been secretly married." They went to New Hampshire and got married. Just like that. We can finish this? By that time, Chiang Kai-shek he wanted to go to the war, he lost two of his family to the Japanese.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. The Japanese were invading China at that time.

EDOUARD DU BURON: That's right. And he wanted to go to fight, and Chiang Kai-shek said, "No way, we need people like you for the recuperation of China. We need people like you. He went to school. We need you, we need all the talent we can get—Western training we can get, to rebuild the country." But he couldn't stand it, so he joined the missionary, both of them joined the missionary group to go to China. In the interim, prior to their going, our Erica decided to throw an auction, all the things she owned, all the paintings, would sell in the studio. For the benefit—she asked me if she could do that, and I said "Absolutely." It was a turned out—quite a full crowd and they bought most everything and at the end she gave me one thing which is that Coptic Christ which is in the bedroom. You saw it? She gave me that as a gift. And they went to China. They landed on that horrible road, that Dover Road. What is it called, thousand mile march? They were bombed, they both starved to death, they landed in the hospital. The most horrible thing to witness, what they went through. [00:20:00] They were there through the whole duration of the war. Finally he got a position to replace a professor on 14th Street at University of New York for one year.

ROBERT F. BROWN: City College, maybe?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, then from there he was appointed professor at Hawaii University of biology. That was his subject, biology.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see, so they got out and they came here.

EDOUARD DU BURON: And they traveled a lot, from China they went to Cambodia, she gave me a stone rubbing that she did herself, and one of the stones which I have in the bedroom. And you know, I never saw them, I was invited—they had a lovely rainforest garden, studio where she continued she did her stained glass and he did his writing and research. So that's the story about Erica. Part of it, it's not the whole picture. Oh the museum with Taylor, but we went go into that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: With Taylor, about this time, or later?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, later.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was that?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Umberto Romano the painter was with the Grayson Gallery at the time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In Boston.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, you might as well put this on. Um, I got involved with Umberto Romano who was head of the Worcester Art School, and Taylor who was the director.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Francis Henry Taylor.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Francis Henry Taylor—had heard about me and knew about me. He heard that I was from Worcester. And he had plans to have me dance there [00:22:00] at the museum, I don't know where, but of course by that time it had been rebuilt and it was more or less enhanced, enlarged.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They had an auditorium.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Wonderful collection. So Umberto used to say to me, "If you paint, you would paint like me, and if I dance, I would dance like you." Well, I couldn't see the connection whatsoever. Well, we became friends, and he gave me a small painting but I don't know what happened to it, I don't have it anymore. So, we went to a big party that Umberto threw, it was—he owned his own beautiful home. [Laughs.] But what impressed me was all the walls painted red downstairs, all the woodworks highly glossy white. Over the divan, a Victorian divan was a painting of Ode de Lys, of a female nude on her tummy resting on her arms, on her cheeks, and her

fanny right up in the air. Very, very sexual. And I kept looking at that, and I thought "I don't believe this. Umberto," I says, "Come on." "Oh," he says "That's to entertain my friends. I don't show it anywhere." It was very well done, he could paint. He also had a self-portrait which I don't know, probably the museum owns [inaudible].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were you ever asked to go out—you were asked then by Taylor to go out and dance at the museum?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, he did say, also, we did get fairly high, there was a bar upstairs.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And did you know Taylor, or is this when you first met him?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, the first time I met him. And I remember him saying that our friend du Buron holds his liquor better than most of you, maybe we should definitely plan to have him down soon because he's not at all high. [00:24:00] Well I was a little high, I didn't show it apparently. So when he came home, it got to be very dark, so Erica and I decided well, we can't—she was very high too, she didn't want to go home, she was afraid of what would happen, she would have to take me back to Ethel, who we were living—at that time married. So we went to this hotel, the State Hotel.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Where, in Worcester?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Worcester. I got mixed up, Street Theater or State Hotel, it's off Main Street. It was horrible, oh my God it was horrible, there was no air in that place, terrible. So we got in bed, and I said, "Erica, we're doing wrong. I says, "Darling, we're both going to say a prayer, we'll both kiss, then we'll go to sleep." She says, "That's all I want to do." That's all we did. No sex whatsoever. And if anybody should have had for a wife who was roughly my age, it should have been her because she was very, very fond of me. But we honored this. She had not met her Chinese at that point. So, the next day we go all the way into Boston, no one is going to believe this—nobody's going to believe this that we went to bed together and no sex. She had this wonderful sense of humor, high-pitched voice of hers, very high-pitched and laughed all the way. "Edouard, I don't dare tell anyone. They won't believe it." I says, "I know dear, but we will tell Ethel, she will believe it. I know she will." So when we arrived Ethel was calm and collected. She said, "I know. I can trust you both." Just like that, "No, I trust you both." [00:26:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were very lucky, you had a very mature first wife.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh Ethel. I loved her. Finally she was the one towards the end said, "You should remarry, have children. You should." No, she was very mature. That woman did more for me, but she says, "No, I believe you, I believe you both, after all he's just a kid you know." Erica said, "Don't you believe him. I shouldn't tell you, you're his wife." [Laughter.] That's it.

[Audio Break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Okay, we're continuing the interviews in Kingston, Massachusetts. This is May 13, 1993, right?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, don't forget it's a Friday.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It's a Friday, oh boy. I thought we might start talking today about those Thursday evenings, salons you held in the later 1930s in Boston, to which you had various artists, and readings and so forth. How did they get underway?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, it's a long story, but I'll make it as brief as I can. I was asked at several times during that period—it was in the '30s of course—due to my struggling in life to—in my own career, I was hungry for knowledge, music and all these things that thought about growing up, and the needs spiritually or—and psychologically, or whatever. And as a result, my own work suffered because I was easily influenced by artists. And I know I was learning then that a work of art, like a human being, there's a confrontation that deserves attention and respect.

ROBERT F. BROWN: A confrontation?

EDOUARD DU BURON: It is confrontational, oh yes. When you look at a work of art there's a confrontation that deserves attention and respect. [00:28:00] And, in one instance while you're looking and remain silent we learn that way. Now, here I am preaching and I find that very difficult to do, and I get excited over a human beings, a work of art, sometimes I get all excited. But this is the way one learns, by remaining silent, and keep looking and listening. Now so, the Thursday nights more or less filled that gap that I needed. And detrimental to my own work as a dancer, which I was controversial in my own work as it was. And however, so I decided on the very first day, the very first month that the studio was open at 1126 Boylston Street, it was in the fall.

ROBERT F. BROWN: About what year was that?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I believe it was 1932. I made—a lot of friends came over, Margaret Lloyd from the *Christian Science Monitor* was there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Margaret Lloyd?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Lloyd. She was a dance critic, her husband was Sloper [ph] the drama critic and music. And George Brinton Beal the *Boston Post*. And there were several others I can't remember their names, and of course several friends were there. And I made an announcement and gave the date, that on a Thursday, which I believe was going to be in two weeks, we were going to begin that series.

ROBERT F. BROWN: A series?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Of lectures, and so on. Art. Beal said to me he would like to present a lecture on the circus of Barnum and Bailey. I was the only one allowed to travel with it and take photographs behind the scenes which was never allowed.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And this was a man named Arthur Beale? [00:30:00]

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, George Brinton Beal.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He worked for a newspaper.

EDOUARD DU BURON: *The Boston Post*, and he wrote about me off and on. And it was an interesting lecture and he did a beautiful job. Now, there was never a Thursday that I didn't have someone to present and they were booked several weeks ahead except during the summer period. Which actually, it was closed. Now there are some that stand out and one of them was this lovely lady who had been taking [inaudible] without my knowing it, and introduced herself, Patty Boyd, later Wilson. She was also a concert pianist and she wanted to give a lecture on Bali. Naturally Bali was an island that was supposed to be magical and very few people knew much about it. It was under Dutch control and her husband, had some kind of assignment from the Dutch government, and allowed—I believe they were both allowed to stay for about six months because of his working with the government, so she got to know the people very well. She said to the audience if there ever was a beautiful people and a beautiful land, it was in Bali. Their life is like a ritual, not something that you perform for the sake of being, like the mass of the Roman church for instance, not at all. Every moment of the day was a ritual. You couldn't tell whether people were praying, playing, or working. [00:32:00] That there was an migration [ph] of all three together. And she said "What is work, without play, and worship? It's brutality." And she went on to explain how wonderful these people were. There was no wheelers on that island at all. She doesn't even remember seeing a bike, never mind cars. People would walk. People would be playing, and the only time she ever heard any crying was in a single missionary. People did not cry, children were—part of the family didn't cry, they were not brought up with that sense of guilt, the Judo-Christian heritage that we know. And for instance, the priests would bless the parishioners as they came in in the morning. And I have a bell she gave me, it's about a little over a foot high, and it's got a solid, heavy base. The bell itself. [Rings bell.] The handle is black and you hold it between your palms, and I'm pretty sure that on top of that is a lotus. And this is what they do [rings bell]. And she also gave me two Balinese masks. Which I have in the chest here. I'll show it to you later.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Is she someone you got to know quite well?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I got to know quite well through the years. And she used to say to me, "Edouard, if I didn't respect Ethel, I'd flirt with you." She was as beautiful as Elizabeth Taylor. [00:34:00] And I'm not exaggerating. She went on to go on with her talk, she said when someone died, if they could not afford to prepare for a funeral they were put aside in a very special house and when they could afford it, whether it was a year or two years later, they would dress—there was a celebration beyond belief, there was no tears. And the bodies were placed and it was very special—[inaudible] that they would carry. Then they would take to the sea and set it on fire, and it was a celebration of joy. Everybody dressed in their very best. And if you should be walking along the street and someone was eating something, no matter who you were, strangers, come and eat with us. You could not tell those who had and those who have not have.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was very appealing to you at that time.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Very.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And people in your audience, what kind of people in your audience were they?

EDOUARD DU BURON: They were very receptive to her talk, because of her talk. Very receptive, because they'd never heard anything like this before. Work, play, or worship. They were all one thing, and that was natural.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were there other talks that were memorable?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Not quite as revealing as that one was, because it had a psychological implication to a human being, you know, how to approach how you live your life.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You did give me a description of Joel Disher who was a lecturer on Elizabethan period. And how had you got to know him?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, of course being involved with the *Christian Science Monitor* due to the dance critic, who was the most outstanding one at the time—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And that was?

EDOUARD DU BURON: —and then not only that, but the *Monitor* had published some of my poetry. I sold them eight at different times. Well, one of them was republished somewhere else.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And Fisher was a proofreader at the *Monitor*. [00:36:00]

EDOUARD DU BURON: He was a proofreader and he also at the time acted as a—and he came to see me one time with a friend of his, John Richie. And he was also pretty [inaudible] of a reader. And they were both married. I was very fond of Esther Disher, Joel's first wife. So they both came to see me one day and asked to give a lecture on Queen Elizabeth, no—the Portrait of a Queen or something like that. It's listed in the—you've got this, didn't you? Turned out to be on Baconian theory.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean about Francis Bacon, the writer.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right. Alan Hovhaness happened to be in the audience.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And he's someone you knew pretty well, the composer?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, We still keep in touch. The results of that lecture given, the Portrait of A Queen. Ethel my wife taught who Emerson College became a Baconian immediately, I became a Baconian, Alan [inaudible] became a Baconian.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Meaning that you felt that Bacon has—was the principal writer of that time.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Not exactly the principal, he was the one who organized, he had a group called the House of Solomon. And Ben Johnson was involved and they both lived in Gray's Inn for a number of years. And the Earl of Oxford, who now a lot of people feel he was the author. There was no single author. They all worked together. Fletcher and Beaumont and so on. Now it's a long story, and I think you might be interested to have that as a separate tape, I could go through the whole story, it's very convincing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And Disher as a lecturer was very convincing. [00:38:00]

EDOUARD DU BURON: Excellent. Excellent writer also. So, we got very friendly and he would come over and talk to a few people sometimes—I had a big Russian samovar a long table with eight, nine, 10 people in the studio, and we used to sit along, brass candle sticks in the summer, and we'd sit there for hours just using candles. I was always using candles, you see them here in the house. [Laughs.] Part of my monastic training that I had as a child.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And it gave a nice, restful feeling.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Exactly.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You also knew Gretchen Osgood, Mrs. Fiske Warren, and I gather you got to know her in the '30s as well.

EDOUARD DU BURON: She was the Mrs. Fiske Warren was at eight mile [ph] at Mount Vernon Place. She was the —

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was that time when you got to know her—

EDOUARD DU BURON: She was president of the New England Poetry Club, Mrs. Fiske Warren.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was that a group that had readings and poems published?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes. John Holmes was one of the outstanding poets of the time, then there was a doctor something, who lived on [inaudible] avenue, who was supposed to be the most prolific writer of sonnets in this

country. Over a thousand, he would publish, quite a few of them. He and John Richie was a poet also, was part of our group.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you got somewhat involved with them?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, they used to invite me. One of the reasons they did that, that when she would close up her home in the summer and go abroad which she did every year, some of the poets would come to my studio. So we got to know—and I did find a document of a letter she wrote to me back in those days. [00:40:00] She talks about her mother, Mrs. Osgood, was the author of *The City Without Walls*, a compiling of sacred writings of people from around the world. I mean, various nations, around history. It took her 40 years to compile this book. And it made a great impression on me when Mrs. Fiske Warren sent me a copy. Now, Mrs. Osgood was a Victorian.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean Gretchen's mother?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Gretchen's mother. Her mother was a Victorian. As Victorian as her daughter was—what's the other?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sort of a free thinker?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, she was that, but there's a word for it, what followed Victorian, but what age?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Modernist, you could say to be very general.

EDOUARD DU BURON: There's another age. Well, anyhow.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Edwardian.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Edwardian, that's it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I've got to flip this. Just a second, I've got to—

[END OF TRACK AAA_duburo93_3576_r.]

EDOUARD DU BURON: —She was Victorian, and her daughter was Edwardian.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hovhaness—you noted to me—first that had been inspired by Jean Sebelius, the Finn. The Finnish composer.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, one day he and Martha Mott Davis, his wife, she taught at the museum and she was an artist, and she was not known at the museum. But Priscilla, I can't recall exactly.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, his wife in the '30s I gather, was Priscilla, the first of five wives.

EDOUARD DU BURON: The first of five wives. And when they rang the bell one afternoon and I answered it and there they stood, two human beings very tall and very slender. With eyes that made me expound later. They looked as if they had stepped out of an El Greco painting. Those beautiful open eyes, such innocence. And Allen [inaudible], remember him, would walk with a hunch, would sway his body as he would walk, long steps. He's over—he's at least six feet. Very slim. And he walked through the gate and he went into the studio and he started playing Chopin. And, "Oh, Al," and "No, no, no. We want Mr. Du Buron to hear your own work, please." So he played, and I says, "You're it." Well, I set a time for them on Thursday night, and we had some wine and they left. When they—when he played I was very moved. Not from what I heard so much, but his possibilities as a composer. I think he was in the very beginning and it showed that he was developing. [00:02:00] And his second appearance during intermission I made an announcement which has stayed with some people. Well, there was a slight applause but most remained silent. As I walked towards the back, there's—on the end in the back of the hall, studio, there stood two gentlemen, Brendan Keenan, and his pupil Oliver Daniels. Of course a lot of people know about Oliver Daniels, he became the psychologist, and the critic for the *New Yorker*, did very well. And they said to me, "Dubie [ph]"—they called me, short for du Buron, there were only two people who called me Dubie. He says, "Dubie, you missed the ball on that one. No way will he ever make it. I'm sorry Dubie, you have good taste but this one you missed the ball on." And I said, "Okay, within your lifetime you will discover this will happen." So he appeared four times and recorded on my document that he appeared again the following year, because I wanted him to appear. I think it was something like 12 or maybe 15 years later, Oliver became his manager. Not exactly his manager but part of a group of contemporary composers he was sponsoring in New York. He also wrote a beautiful essay on Hovhaness's *Mysterious Mountain*. Which was printed in the uh—the uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, the program

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, it appeared on the record. Beautiful. The Chicago Symphony on the Reiner, he was a great conductor..

ROBERT F. BROWN: Fritz Reiner.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, Fritz Reiner, he did a beautiful job. [00:04:00] And every now and then when Alan appears his music is played they always play *Mysterious Mountain* because that was the piece that established him. It's a beautiful piece. Also I learned that he had gone to see Sebelius, Martha Mott saw to it because she had the money. They owned that little house on Winthrop Street near Harvard, little short street. Next to it is the restaurant there now. So Alan, the Hovhannesses became very close friends to the point that when I did close the studio in preparation for my two concerts I was giving in New York, one in the Brooklyn Museum, and the other at 92nd Street Y which had a series of music and dance under [inaudible]. There two—a scout by the name of Hans Salin.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How do you spell that name?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Hans, H-A-N. S-A-L-I-N. He's supposed to step into the shoes of August Strindberg, the great Swedish playwright.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, but he was a scout for?

EDOUARD DU BURON: For talent, he was also a penchant by the king, life [ph], as a playwright. he wrote [inaudible] and others.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He spotted you in New York?

EDOUARD DU BURON: He spotted me—he saw me at the Brooklyn Museum, he came introduced himself, says "I'm going to appear the next Saturday at the Y, and I'm going to bring a friend I want to see how he feels about you." Their ballet—the head dancer in Sweden, had committed suicide and they were looking for a replacement. But when they both saw me at the Y, they felt I should appear at the [inaudible] museum archives in Paris as a dancer. [Inaudible] can have managers from around Europe see me, to people, [00:06:00] like what's his name used to do in New York years ago, I can't think of his name right now. He used to go to Europe. He brought Shankar, the dancer. Uday Shankar, his younger boy, son became the famous Indian musician, travelled the world.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ravi Shankar.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Ravi Shankar, right, that was his brother, youngest brother.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So did you then go to Europe?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, the war stopped that. And one day he lived in a hideout in the Village on Fourth Street, when I say hideout, one room with a bunk up above it like Jacob's Ladder. Always had a bottle of scotch on the table and always writing. And we had made three different occasions, a point to go see him, talk about Europe and whatnot. One day I happened to mention some quote, Shakespeare something, and he says "Shakespeare, there was no such person. There was Shakespeare [ph]." And I said, "Don't tell me you too." He said, "What do you mean, Edouard?" I said, "Well, I'm a converted Baconian." He said, "The king set me straight." I said, "What, come on, I want to hear this." So when he was invited quite often to have supper with the royal family.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Where is this—you're in Stockholm, Sweden.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Stockholm, right. He said on one of these occasions the Prince of Wales, Edward the prince the one who married—Wallis Simpson was there. And I said something about Shakespeare, and he said, "There was no Shakespeare." [00:08:00] "The author of the plays is a relative of ours. You better have your king straighten you out." He says, "Your highness, am I hearing you right?" He says, "Oh yes, Francis Bacon. Francis the First, the uncrowned king of England, we're all related." He said, "Tell your king he'll straighten you out."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh my, what a fascinating thing to have followed.

EDOUARD DU BURON: It was, it was. To me, it was—I looked at him, I got so excited. I put my arms around him and I said, "Thank you, wait until my friend Joel Disher hears this. And Hovhanness. And my wife Ethel, wait till they hear this." This actually happened.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, this is going back a little bit, but you mention that in the 1920s that you appeared with Cyrus Dallin. You were engaged to dance while Dallin talked.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Let me finish. No after the 92nd Street recital I was asked to appear right backstage. Hovhanness, by the way, came to New York to see this performance at the Y. Two Swedish gentlemen, they were there, and Evelyn Dawson, who was a pupil of Ruth St. Denis, met her there, at Denishawn earlier in my career. They said, "You are going to be the guest of honor at the Bombay—the Bengal Tiger, tonight. They're going to close the doors, there are going to be 50-60 people there, and you're the guest of honor."

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was the Bengal Tiger?

EDOUARD DU BURON: It was an Hindu restaurant. And don't ask me if it was east or west, I don't recall, but the thing that stood out when I got there—there was a very tall, handsome, Hindu. He wore no—

ROBERT F. BROWN: He was dressed plainly.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Plainly. And he sat open in a big dais with his musical instrument and he played like I had never heard Hindu music before, and I have never since. [00:10:00] His followers were persuade him now and then to give a concert at Town Hall in New York, sold out. He was a brahmin who was never allowed to return to India for some reason, no one knew.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was his name?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I don't remember. But he stood there, sat there, he didn't stand at all, he did once to leave and then came back, probably went to the bathroom, who knows. And he played and played, and he would sing. Extraordinary, I never forgot. He hypnotized you. Evelyn did a nautch dance in one of them, in the back, behind him.

ROBERT F. BROWN: To the accompaniment of his music?

EDOUARD DU BURON: He played two, three instruments. And I never forgot that evening, never. And I understand he died shortly afterwards. The Bengal Tiger, the restaurant, I know a lot of people who remember it. It was uncommon. But people appeared in the doors, but they locked the doors, they weren't allowing them in.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well now, what does this relate to?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well it relates to—it just finishes the episode, my period of those two recitals in New York. It didn't lead to anywhere else. But it was an evening I should remember.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I just want to ask, can you talk at some point, you danced on some point, with Cyrus Dallin giving a talk on American Indians.

EDOUARD DU BURON: In 19—

ROBERT F. BROWN: That was in the '20s evidently.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Late '20s. I have no documents of that, and I can't find anybody who remembers. But what happened is, I had been asked by Cyrus to appear with him, or somebody did. He was a short man, very delicate. He lived in Arlington. [00:12:00] He did the appeal, *The Appeal of the Great Spirit*.

ROBERT F. BROWN: By the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Exactly. That bronze. So I did a dance, he gave a talk on the American Indians.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You danced while he was talking?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, before.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Where would this have been held?

EDOUARD DU BURON: That's the thing I don't remember—whether it was Jordan Hall, or where it was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So this was an early high point for your dancing.

EDOUARD DU BURON: It was, because I met an extraordinary person—I received a note three days later from—she called herself—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was it an artist?

EDOUARD DU BURON: She was a sculptor.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, Enid Yandell.

EDOUARD DU BURON: You found out about her. Enid Yandell, well she wrote me a letter. She says, "I saw you dance, I'm a sculptor, and I want your body." Just like that. Well, when a woman writes to you and says she wants your body, your wheels are turning. What does she mean, what does she mean? She says, "I want you to pose for me," and she gave me her phone number and address. So I called out of sheer curiosity, so naturally I went. It was near Tremont Street, almost on the corner, right across from the fountains, top floor. And I walked up there and knocked the door, she says "Come in." And when I came in she was smoking. Crew cut, very chiseled face, almost masculine. [00:14:00] And she said, "Did you come to pose?" I said, "No, no I want to talk about it." She said, "Well, I was hoping you'll pose for me now, I don't want any more professional models. I want you, and I want your body." I said, "I'm sorry I can't do it, I'm very busy teaching." So she said, "All right, I'll give you five dollars an hour, three times a week for one to two hours each time." Well, five dollars an hour in those days was a lot of money. This was before 1930, it might have been '30, I don't remember.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you accepted the offer?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh naturally, so I made arrangements. I wasn't that busy teaching I could make an arrangement. So when I did appear, listen to this, there's a screen in the corner. She says, "Put your clothes in back there. You don't have to back in there if you don't want to." I said, "So I will." So I came out wearing a Hindu cloth, which is a very narrow, tight. Oh she says, "You have to take that off too." And I says, "I'm sorry. She says, "No, no, no." I says, "I'm sorry. I want to go back home." She says, "Okay, so will you take the pose where you threw yourself on the floor at the end of the dance? I want that pose."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Recalling the dance you'd done.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right. Then all of a sudden she says, "Where are you?" I said "I'm here." She said, "No, no, no." She had a student, a girl. Now she was tucked between the desks and the window. It was one of those big roll-top desks. She was right there, locked in, and she got up, very shy. It turned out she was a student from Rhode Island, I believe, and she was highly paid, she traveled wherever.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean she was her assistant?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, she was just a student, very young. Old enough to be, way older than to be her mother, because I would say Enid must have been around her late 50s at the time. [00:16:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: What did the student then do while you were there?

EDOUARD DU BURON: She did one, too. She worked on both of us. So, one day she said to me, "What do you think of *The Appeal of the Great Spirit*?" I said, "I think it's very poetic." She says, "Poetic? And sweet. Don't you think it's oversweet?" "I never gave it a thought that it would be oversweet." She said, "I'll tell you something he didn't do that alone." I says, "What?" "That was done in Paris and I know the two sculptors who helped him with it." I wish now, Bob, I had gotten their names, I didn't. She never revealed them, I wish she had. She said it was done over there, and it was brought here with the plaster cast and everything. And she says, "One thing, Edouard. When you get a chance sometime, check the other things he did and compare them. This is the good piece. But, as far as I'm concerned, it's decadent. It's 19th century decadent." A lot of 19th century stuff was decadent.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Is that what she said?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes. I says, "I have to say that it is very moving just the same. There's something about the way those arms." She said, "I know, I agree with that, but that was 19th century approach. Compare that to later on, I compare that to [Ivan] Mestrovic's Indians and Horses in Chicago, quite a difference." [00:18:00] Well anyhow, she says "Now I studied with Rodin—as a child." And she told me things that were extraordinary. She said Rodin was like a big bear, very short, broad. And when he would come behind you and look at you, you could feel his breath. And he thought nothing of touching one's breast or one's womanhood, "See how round," he would say, you know, this sort of thing. And too, he had the—an arrangement where his models both men and women, stark naked, would walk around. And every once in a while he'd say "Arretez." And everybody would stop, nobody moved. Wherever they happened to be. Then he would say to his students, "Three minute drawing of the nearest one near you." And when the three minutes were about up, they'd start walking and he'd take the drawings and tear them up and throw them on the floor and stomp on them. Then tear another one up, and then another up.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Really.

EDOUARD DU BURON: He said, "You mean to tell me you don't know the length of one's nose? Is that your impression? A whole figure standing there."

ROBERT F. BROWN: And this was his device for getting to look at the whole figure.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, his device when you see anything you get an impression, never mind the details. Now Rodin, and it wasn't until years later that I discovered Rodin's drawings are pretty free that way. They were never detailed.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No, they certainly aren't. Did she say that she profited from her study with him?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Exactly, made her—gave her how to look at art. That's why I say art is a confrontation, just a human being and a work of art is a confrontation that deserves attention and respect. But you cannot—you can get an impression if you really listen and look. Rodin, they happen to have one at the Museum of Fine Arts, as I recall, was one of his very, very early white marbles. [00:20:00] You know, very primitive, 19th century. He was a child, he did things like that, they have one at the museum. So unlike the gate of hell which, I don't know where that is, it's an extraordinary piece. One of his greatest works.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you continue to know Enid Yandell?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes I did. Then once in a while she'd go to the club on Walnut Street, or was it Beacon Street?

ROBERT F. BROWN: What club was this?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I can't remember the name. Now, one day she said to me, "We're going to have a friend, a lady friend of mine's is coming over, wants to talk to you. Senator Butler's wife."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who is Senator Butler?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Senator Butler of Massachusetts, his wife. And "She wants to talk to you," she says. "And when she comes in, don't you move from that spot. Stay right where you are." "Well I want to get dressed." "No way, stay right there." So she finally came in, sat down, she says, "May I call you Edouard?" I says, "Absolutely." She says, "We're going to have a big costume party, the Copley Society, at the Statler Hotel. We want you to dance." Francisca Breggiotti will appear.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That was the one that taught with Ruth St. Denis.

EDOUARD DU BURON: They had a branch school, the Breggiotti sisters.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Right. You've told about that.

EDOUARD DU BURON: They were high society. In fact, there were three girls, but I never met Gloria until years later. And Francisca was absolutely beautiful, well anyhow, getting back to Mrs. Butler. "There's going to be four [inaudible]. Francisca, you and I forgot who the other two were. Maybe Dallin, it might have been.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who was that?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Cyrus Dallin. He might have appeared, I don't know. This was a costume ball. Now the Copley Society in those days was highly social. The one paper, this is before it became a Hearst paper, it was the *Boston Herald*.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean the one, that was the principal society paper.

EDOUARD DU BURON: That was the principal society paper. Now, there was a more—the more distinguished paper, the *Boston Transcript* which they spoke about, and to be written about even if they knock you it was just considered a privilege. They would take, they would give you that space, every musician, every writer, they all—

ROBERT F. BROWN: They all aspired to get in the *Transcript*.

EDOUARD DU BURON: And the *Monitor*, too, to some extent because it went all around the world. So, I did my dance of Shiva, which was quite something. Then I was asked, oh, when it was all over, Francisca introduced me to Cabot Lodge, that was her fiancé. She married him and they left the state. I think they went south, they went somewhere, but I never saw her again. She married Cabot Lodge, you know who that was?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, who became a senator.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes. Lodge, and I never saw her after that. Now, I did this—I appeared there—now I have a write-up on that, where the *Herald*, it was only this much. Knocked me. She says I was "ungraceful." That was anything—if I did certain things I was over graceful if anything. I mean, I was a social crasher. They didn't like

that idea. Well, I should have been included with the rest. The *Herald* didn't like that at all. And they continue, off and on, and it finally, in one of my recitals, they said "He had a big audience." They seem to like this, or they seem to like that, they went on talking that way. They said, "There were people like this or like that. [00:24:00] But they never commented what they felt.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The Boston papers then were quite stratified then, socially.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah. What happened is that they reacted differently to what the *Monitor* would say. It was a tug of war between the *Herald* and the *Christian Science Monitor*. It was so obvious. Now, there was a Winslow girl, I forgot her first name, who's associated with the *Herald*, her family is part ownership, and she'd never miss a performance of mine, she'd come backstage, she says "You are a great artist." I'd says, "Tell that to your paper," she says, "Mr. Du Buron, I have nothing to do with it." I'd say, "I know." However, now at the end, when I stopped posing for them—for Enid, she wanted me to come to Paris with her.

ROBERT F. BROWN: To do what? Be her model?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Be her model, all expenses paid. She says, "I want you to come to Paris, and so does so-and-so wants you. You don't have to worry about expenses. Come for the summer at least, but I have an idea if you come, you will never leave because you'll be received with open arms. The artists, everyone will receive you." I turned her down. Now in the '20s, I turned down Paris. Now when you stop and think of it, oh my God, that's when it was jumping. What's that famous American bookshop? [Shakespeare and Company.] Sylvia Beach.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sylvia Beach. Yes, it would have been a great time.

EDOUARD DU BURON: And what's his name, the playwright, the author, who wrote *The Old Man and the Sea*.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, Hemingway.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Hemingway. [00:26:00] All these people were there, active and Sylvia Beach.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you later regret that didn't you?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I did, I did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In fact at the end of the next decade—

EDOUARD DU BURON: Then—when she came back from Paris she came right to the studio, right away to see me. She says, "Oh did I miss you." [Inaudible.] She came twice. And she lived on Martha's Vineyard and this Mrs. Butler lived there. So, I often wondered if they weren't very close. Very friendly. It was obvious to me that the Butlers were supporting her. She was decorated by the way, by the French Government during the First World War. She ran an ambulance. And that was rare in those days for a woman.

ROBERT F. BROWN: For a woman, yes.

EDOUARD DU BURON: She ran an ambulance and she was highly decorated by the French government, so she was highly respected in France.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well now, about a decade later you were going to go to Europe as a dancer once more, but war was coming on.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Hans asked me—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What's the last name?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Hans Salin asked me if I would dance on a few things for the archives in Paris, the [inaudible] archives. I had a metal structure that Katerina did, about 15 inches.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, you'd already met her.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh, I met her in 1929. Twenty-eight, '29.

ROBERT F. BROWN: As an artist.

EDOUARD DU BURON: She was always sketching. Before I even met her she was sketching.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was in Boston. She was in Boston.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right. So I donated that and then some photographs, and then a few write-ups. And I

have the letter somewhere with the archives, the museum, thanking me. [00:28:00] Then it was time to go to Europe, there was a very brief notice that was cancelled because the war was entered. I hate to go into what I went through, the extraordinary experience, the long and short of it was I never danced again.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That's when you went up to Canada, to Quebec City.

EDOUARD DU BURON: I got in the car, Ethel realized what was happening. I took it personally, she did too actually.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The fates had intervened.

EDOUARD DU BURON: But I took it personally, they changed their mind about me, they didn't want me. After all that preparation. I got into the car, my little four cylinder, and I drove and I landed in Quebec. And I went Chateau Frontenac and suddenly realized what I was doing, came to. What am I doing here? And I got out of there quickly.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why did you—what do you think you were doing there?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I wanted to go and hide somewhere. Think about it all. What am I going to do now? So I stopped at a little pension at the side of a hill, and I knocked the door, and this elderly old lady answered. Asked if they had a room. "Oui, monsieur." She took me upstairs, and showed me the very nice room. I went to bed. For four days, maybe five, I hardly ever got up. I didn't have the strength. I was completely exhausted from the experience. She used to bring me, she was terribly worried, she wanted to get a doctor, "No, no, no, madame. *Non pour doctor.* [00:30:00] She used to bring me a tray with chocolate and a few little things. One morning I got up, and she was jubilant, and yet at the same time she was upset. [Speaks French.] "We French won't fight." And suddenly the tray went flying, and I'm standing there, and I say "What made her act that way?" I happened to look in the mirror, and I'm stark naked [laughs]. There was a big mirror, and she didn't see me, but she saw my reflection in the mirror. [Laughs.] Well, then I realized it was true. The war. I had got notice from Sweden, and France, that they were going to be attacked, there was going to be a war. So I got my clothes on, I cleaned the place up the best I could. She came over to help after I got dressed, I came downstairs. I had no bag, nothing. I said, [In French] She said "No, no no. [In French.]" She didn't want any money. He stood there beside her, I had never seen him before, her husband. "Non, monsieur, non." So she put on her apron, started crying, started walked away. She was furious the war, she knew I was there for that reason, because the way I reacted.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean what, that you two were?

EDOUARD DU BURON: The fact is that I was a victim of the war, she realized I had something to do with it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, not knowing what.

EDOUARD DU BURON: And so, I went out and I took some green, there was a little table with a covering, and I shoved it under the covering.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Some money.

EDOUARD DU BURON: And I addressed it to her. Then I got in the car and came back to Boston. [00:32:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now were you in danger of being called up to the war?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes. I went to New York. I said, "Ethel, I'm going to New York, I can't hang around here." Now we were not living at the time, 1126 Boylston Street. We had left and were living with—we had been living with Hovhaness, we shared potluck.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And this was in Cambridge?

EDOUARD DU BURON: In Cambridge, on Winthrop Street. Something occurred, I didn't go into this, I might as well do it now and get it over with. She, one morning, would put her arms around me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mrs. Hovhaness?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Mrs. Hovhaness. She says, "I wish, you know why you two are here? She says, "I know why, it's to keep your marriage together. That's right." And this is in the morning before Ethel had ever left the room, she finally came in and saw in the kitchen that she had her arms around me. So Ethel disappeared like terrible, and I got terribly worried. And she came home that night, she didn't have supper. She went out, I couldn't find her, and I ran all the way to the studio. And she was sitting there by herself. She says, "I don't know what to do." I says, "Neither do I." But I says, "You mustn't take it too seriously." She finally left the studio. And I sat there for a while and I suddenly realized, I've got to get rid of this place. I had rented it out, by the way, I

forgot to mention that, for one year, I've got to get rid of it. So turned out I couldn't get rid of it right away because the teacher who had it had another six, seven months. [00:34:00] So I went back to the Hovhanness'. Ethel wasn't there, so I called Emerson.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Where she worked, Emerson College.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right. And I talked to Mrs. Chipman. And the Chipmans were very involved, they both died now. Chipman had to do with Sandwich, a Sandwich family.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Massachusetts?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right. He was also on one of the Boston papers, possibly the *Post*. I don't recall. Nettie was a register. They lived on the street in back of Charles Street, residential area. We used to visit them a lot. They were very good friends of Ethel and I. So I called her and I says, "You've got to get Ethel out of Emerson." Now she took a course last summer in New Hampshire at the university there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who did?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Ethel did. She was taking a course. And she said, "Is she planning to do it this year?" And I said, "Yes, but I think she should leave now, don't wait. Leave right now," because I told her what happened, she said, "She's going to have a breakdown. I'll take care of that with Ross."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Her husband?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, the president, that's his name. Ross was the president at the time. Sure enough Ethel came home, packed her bag, says "I'll see you later." I said, "Look, there is nothing between us, please remember that." It was a confrontation that I wish I hadn't faced it. So she was there. Then, Alan never got up until noon because he always composed at night, so when he came down he asked what happened, he had heard some confrontation, some noise. [00:36:00] I says, "Well, Ethel and I had it because what's her name had her arms around me."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Priscilla, I think.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Priscilla. She was known as Priscilla as an artist, but her real name was Martha Mott Davis. He says, "Well, this gives me an idea that this is a time we both should part." So I even helped him to pack. And he moved over the old Hearst—in front of Symphony Hall, it was by Old France, I don't know if you're familiar with that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No.

EDOUARD DU BURON: It was part of a Child's chain of operations, this one's called Old France.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So he moved away.

EDOUARD DU BURON: He lived up there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So that left you alone with Martha.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right. There was one serious—we did once. Just to satisfy them because apparently he was not—that didn't help any, it made it worse. So finally when Ethel came back, I found a place on Chamber Street, number nine, on the hill. We moved up there on the top floor. It was quite a place, very large, very, very long. And that's when I found my Japanese [inaudible] at auction. You've never seen that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you moved there and you stayed.

EDOUARD DU BURON: And she found out about it and she came to see me once when Ethel was at school. [00:38:00] And I nipped it right then in the bud. And finally I realized I have to move, I have to get out of here, I have to go to New York. But I couldn't leave her there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You couldn't leave Ethel then.

EDOUARD DU BURON: No. So finally, do you remember, there used to be, on Boylston Street, across from the railroad track, a large store that sold medical supplies?

ROBERT F. BROWN: No. Is that where you?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Mahavey's [ph] I think it was called.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mahavey's?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, she had a house at 324 Beacon. Red brick, very much like the Anderson structure with a big arch [inaudible]. She had four men living in that building, occupied the whole building. Beautiful, as you entered—mahogany walls, there was a big Tiffany dome at the top, and there was, she knew about me, she had seen me dance once. And she said, "I don't know how I heard about you," but she wanted to see me or something. She probably suspected that there was a problem. She says, "I want you to come here and live." She showed me this huge living room with a fireplace you could almost walk into.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you moved out?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, we both moved in before I left. We both got settled there, and then I moved to New York. She charged me only \$38 a month for that place. There was a bath, there was a kitchenette, and in the hall there was a place you could put your wood for your fireplace. [00:40:00] You used to buy a cord of wood for \$28 a cord and they would bring it upstairs, could you imagine that? But half a cord, only had room for—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So this was the last you really were with Ethel when you left and went to New York.

EDOUARD DU BURON: First time. I did come back later on after four years. She came to New York to visit me once. That's quite a story, never got involved. That part of the life I want to stay clear for a while, what happened there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, you went to New York about what, 1938, '39?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Thirty-eight, '39. I would say '39.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you stayed there for a few years.

EDOUARD DU BURON: I stayed a few years. Miss Ruth, I didn't tell you, I appeared—when I came back from Central America. When I danced down there, San Jose, Costa Rica, which was in 1931.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were with Ruth St. Denis for a bit.

EDOUARD DU BURON: I appeared there before I went to south [ph]. And she said, "You better come back here, I want you to come back here and live with us." I gave my pianist from Boston—Irene Epstein—I took her to New York.

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ROBERT F. BROWN: —in the '30s, one person we wanted to talk about was Erica Karawina. How did you get to know her? What did she mean to you?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I met her at a social function, and she says, "I did some drawings of you, Edouard." I said, "You did?" She's a little, petite, high cheekbone, glossy skin, blond, and I have a wonderful drawing of her that was done by the lady who she lived with on, I believe it was Mechanic Street, they tore all those buildings down—red brick buildings—Daphne Dunbar owned the building and she lived with her. She was also an artist, spent many years in France. Have you ever heard of Daphne?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, I have.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Okay, well Erica lived in the same house—she roomed with in her house. She had her own floor. Erica introduced me to Daphne later, and she attended our Thursday nights, and she began to show me all these wonderful drawings she had done for me. Some of them in color, some in black and white. I have 16 of them, they're all in my closet there. Her husband, she was to marry later, made a case for them. And then many other things, she did—drawings.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was her background? Where did she come from?

EDOUARD DU BURON: She had been working with Frank Lloyd Wright, and when I first met her. She told me all about this, but now she was no longer there. But she was with—stained glass—

ROBERT F. BROWN: She was with Connick, Stained Glass Studio in Boston.

EDOUARD DU BURON: —right. On Ipswich Street, I believe. A very short street. It's the last building. And I visited her, she'd wear a monk's robe like I did, I always did in my studio, year-round—the only time I went out is when I put shoes on. The only time I put shoes on is when I went out. [Laughs.] I should say the reverse. I always had a robe with wide sleeves. A rope around. [00:02:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was that just because you felt comfortable?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, it was part of my dancing, you saw my photographs. So, she used to come quite a lot, and I used to go to their place and we always had Chinese tea. And then one day how she met Connick was that he had been out west somewhere and he persuaded her to work for him. And she remained there, working on cartoons for the windows, whatever they were working on, the rose window of St. John the Divine in New York, it's probably the greatest stained glass in this country.

ROBERT F. BROWN: She did the design for that?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, she, no one person could do that design.

ROBERT F. BROWN: She worked on the cartoon for it.

EDOUARD DU BURON: She may have, she doesn't remember working on it exactly, but she worked on many things. Periodically they would have an opening. They had Robert Frost one time, reading. Every time there was an opening to a window they wanted the public to see before it went out—or part of a window, because they can only show part of it because of the space.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The sheer size.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right. And they had musicians, they had poets and singing. The sort of thing that—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —you were doing yourself.

EDOUARD DU BURON: I had—this was before I had done it. But it probably influenced me, so finally, oh about the same time come to think of it—but anyhow, one day, I said to her "You told me you met a Chinese and you were engaged. How long since you've seen him?" She says, "At least several months." I says, "You'll never see that man again." She says, "Awful, what a terrible thing to say to me." I says, "Erica, if he could afford to be sent to study with Frank Lloyd Wright, they had the means to do that, then they also had the daughter, his wife, picked up for him." [Inaudible.] [00:04:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: It would be arranged.

EDOUARD DU BURON: He would not be able to marry a Westerner. No way. They had his marriage already planned, so you will never hear from him, believe me. So I says, "Let's go to the museum." So we took a walk, we went to the museum, we went up on the second floor and stood before [inaudible], the 12th century wooden sculpture, which they removed unfortunately. The paint used to be chalky white which was lovely. I liked it, but not as well as I did before. And I says, "Concentrate on it. You are part Chinese, you know. You always told me you had Chinese friends at home where you were brought up." She was half-German, by the way. And she was half-Russian.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Where was she raised?

EDOUARD DU BURON: She was born in Germany, then came here. I believe I'm right on that, but I could be wrong, well anyhow she never heard from him. But anyway, one night at my Thursday nights there were four students from Harvard showed up and one was Chinese, and the handsomest Chinese I'd ever laid eyes on. And they showed up, oh this went on for several weeks. I says, "If Erica ever laid eyes on him, he's cooked." Or vice versa. I called Erica, she wasn't home, Daphne picked up the phone, I said "Will you have Erica call me immediately today when she gets in." I said, "Erica, next Thursday, you've got to come. there's something special I want you to see." "What's the program?" "I can't tell you, please come." I don't know why, but when things like that happen to me I have to act upon them. [00:06:00] She did show up. She says, "What's going on?" "Just sit down and relax." It turned out that she sat in the middle aisle, on the outside, and he sat on the same row a few feet away. They were staring at each all along. So, when the whole program was over. That was it, he never showed up after that. The other boys kept coming, she didn't come. It was close to the end of the season anyhow. One afternoon I get a phone call, "Edouard, this is Erica, can we come for tea?" I says, "We? Okay." It didn't quite hit home, we, but I remembered the we. So finally when they came I opened the door, the two of them were there, smiling. I says, "Oh, that's the we." She said, "Can we have some tea?" I said, "Of course you can have some tea." They sat down very quietly, he didn't say anything, he just grinned. She says, "We were just married, you're the first one to know." About three months from the time they met.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And this is someone you've stayed in touch with all your life.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah. And they were married in New Hampshire for some reason. Now, he graduated, I forget the year now, 19—just before, 1938, '39, somewhere around there. And he had lost his father to the Japanese. He had lost a member of his family, Chiang Kai-Shek did not want him to come to finish—to leave

school because we need people like you, he was a marine biologist. We need people like you in our country, please stay there. But he couldn't take it, he had to go fight the Japanese. So he joined a missionary group, both of them joined a missionary group. Erica had a big auction of everything she owned, mostly her artwork, in the studio and it was very profitable. [00:08:00] They took in a few thousand dollars, and there was a big banquet in Chinatown, a private room—the private quarters of where they live, that was some banquet, I'll never forget it. She presented me with this here.

[Audio Break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is a photograph.

EDOUARD DU BURON: This is the original she's given me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: She's given you an image of Christ or whatever it is.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Coptic.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Adopted from a Coptic work.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right, it's an icon really. I pickled the frame, it was a dark oak frame [inaudible].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did her work have certain religious or traditional elements to it?

EDOUARD DU BURON: All her windows, she did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, of course they did. So she was somebody whose friendship you made then that's last all these years.

EDOUARD DU BURON: All these years. Same as my pianist, and Hovhanness. And [inaudible] he disappeared, died.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Your pianist Irene Epstein and Alan Hovhanness.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Bob, that's all that's left practically. They're all gone. They're all passed away, and many of them younger than I was. It's amazing. I understand that some of these people are still alive.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I noticed in one of your announcements for the season of '36/'37 you had Wilbur Burnham, another stained glass person. He was going to give a lecture.

EDOUARD DU BURON: He did. Wilbur Burnham was on the top floor of the same building.

ROBERT F. BROWN: As with Connick, as Connick.

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, my building.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see, On Boylston Street.

EDOUARD DU BURON: I occupied the two—my studio was in the lower two-story building, and then the five stories is where we slept and the reception room, but the studio itself was in the other building. [00:10:00] He—I approached him, because he had started with Connick, he got his training with Connick. And he did some windows and some of the churches with Connick. But Connick was far better. But Wilbur was very nice.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What would he talk about?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Lecture on stained glass.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And that was a topic of some interest at that time?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Very much. Then I had Reverend Schwank [ph] call me one time. He said, "You know, Eugene O'Neill's play *Within the Gates* has been banned in Boston." I said, "I heard about it." He says, "It's definitely banned. Now, I've had theater experience, I would like to present the play to your audience, if I may." And I says, "Well, it will have to be done right away, I'm booked for three weeks." He says, "I will ask them to move back a week, I'm sure they won't mind." And he said, "I would very much like to read the play." I said, "Okay, you're in." Of course, what was it about? A prostitute. The word prostitute in those days was taboo.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who was this playwright?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Eugene O'Neill. Great playwright.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Eugene O'Neill. And he came and—

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, no, no. The play had been banned.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And who was this man?

EDOUARD DU BURON: He was a minister, Schwank [ph], he's listed there in the program. *Within the Gates*. A prostitute. And then, listen to this, during intermission someone outside was smoking and they saw some policemen hanging around. They came up to report us. I said, "Forget it, they won't touch me." Which they wouldn't, it's private. They probably ask what's going on, it's a lecture, so there's nothing they can do. If it was some [inaudible] then it would have been a different story.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, you moved out of Boston and to Greenwich Village in the late '30s, early '40s. [00:12:00] How did you find Greenwich Village, what was it like?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I knew the Village pretty well.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Earlier, but you moved down there to live for a few years.

EDOUARD DU BURON: On Bedford Street.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And what was it like? How would you compare it with Boston?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh, it was quiet like Boston was. Even quieter. It was a hideout, some places was a hideout, the wealthy to-do uptown, might have a mistress or two. But for the most part it was very quiet, it was very interesting, and my friend Hans Salin had a place down there on Fourth Street. And across the street from where I lived on Bedford Street there was a restaurant there, you'd never know it was a restaurant, it was just a door in the wall, it was Chumley's which is still going strong. And believe it or not it was owned by a Vermont family, a New England family, and Mr. Chumley had passed on and Mrs. Chumley occupied it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now what did you do in New York?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh that's another story.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You started different jobs? You no longer danced.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Evelyn put on a class for me, which I did for a little while. She wanted me—

ROBERT F. BROWN: A class in Boston or in New York?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, in New York. In the Village. She was very, very active as a designer. She was known as Susette—Susie Perez.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is Evelyn who?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Evelyn Dawson, her name is. She, I introduced her to a man by the name of Fitzsimmons who wanted very, very much wanted to start a magazine in Europe called *Art in Europe* and it became international whatever is in the letter, which I sent you—she financed that. [00:14:00] But she saw very little of him after he decided he wanted to study with Freud.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was someone that—had you known Evelyn Dawson before you went to New York?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I knew Evelyn through when I stayed with Ruth St. Denis. But she used to stay with me in Boston and bring some entourage to visit me at recitals. They used to stay at one of the hotels and go back to New York. So when I did move to New York and told her my career was over she couldn't get over it. So she put a turban around my head and took me to the Fifth Avenue restaurant. I became a reader.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sort of like a fortune teller or something.

EDOUARD DU BURON: That's what I didn't like about it. But I had an extraordinary experience. One time, listen to this, one time was it three or four men came, and one of them opened their jacket, "FBI," he says "I understand you knew about Pearl Harbor six months before it occurred." I says, "I know nothing about Pearl Harbor." So one of the men stepped forward and he says, "Do remember me?" I said, "No." He said, "You told me that the first week of September something was going to happen to this country would take a long time to get over it, but we would eventually." Now I'm telling you this because the results will be that the next day you'll be out of a job. The next day I lost my job, on the 8th of December. I was in charge—the cable from Japan was cut, the *New York Times*.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were in charge? Of what?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I was stationed to one table. [00:14:00] I had people come to sit at my table, or I would be called, sometime the manager would send me, and I would read whatever came to my mind. I would look at their palms, just the idea of holding their hand made an impression. Let me finish on the FBI. And he said, I would be out of a job the next day, and I said to you, "Impossible." That was June, and it happened December 7th if you recall, Pearl Harbor. He says, "It did happen." I no longer had a job. That was my job, to Japan. The communication was all severed. So one of the three men said, "That's a lot of bullshit." Now I remember the whole story because of what this man said to me. Otherwise I would have forgotten. He said to me, "That's a lot of bullshit." I says, "It's very strange for a man who'd kick his wife or a woman down a flight of stairs just last weekend." Now, this came out, just like that. They grabbed him, he was going to kill me, and he was shaking so, and he was so mad. And one of the men smiled. In other words, you were right. He was an alcoholic, he was drunk, and he kicked his wife down a whole flight of stairs. I don't remember his wife, but he kicked her down a whole flight of stairs. He had something to think about when he got home. Hit him right between the eyes, now this came to me just like that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: A sort of psychic ability.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yeah, I've had that all my life.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now I don't understand though, the fact of the Japanese communications. Were you actually doing some work on cables? No.

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, I had nothing to do with that. He was just a perfect stranger, like if you'd been here for the first time, I've never heard you talk before, never met you before, and I sit at your table, you're a perfect stranger. And it happened, my God [inaudible] I sat on the bus and got going again, and she wouldn't let me go. [00:18:00] Perfect stranger, that's what I do with strangers. And it just came out of a blue sky. I says, "Something's going to happen the first week of December. We're going to be in a tough position."

ROBERT F. BROWN: They were worried.

EDOUARD DU BURON: "But I'm telling you this because the next day you're out of a job." It's personal with him. But it would happen to the whole country, but he loses his job as a result, so they thought I knew something about Pearl Harbor, naturally. So that's why I was interviewed. Twice I had relations with the FBI.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well now, your own job eventually in New York was as a store display designer? Not in New York at all.

EDOUARD DU BURON: That's all I did for several years.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What about the war? You weren't eligible for the war?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I wasn't. I was 38, 39.

ROBERT F. BROWN: A little old.

EDOUARD DU BURON: And they did, and they couldn't make up their minds and I told them what I had been doing, they decided well you better strip him. They went and looked me over. I told them I had been a dancer, they probably figured, "Well maybe he's gay." Maybe I am, I don't know, I said. They wrote some report on me, so I was dismissed but I was to keep in touch, if the war got worse I might have been called.

ROBERT F. BROWN: When did you come back up here then, to Boston? [00:20:00]

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, what happened—I wasn't through yet. When I got through with the Fifth Avenue restaurant, I was walking down 42nd Street one day on Times Square—42nd and 57th street and I saw the brass kettle on the corner. I said, "Gee, that's better for me. Maybe I should try that." And it's a tea kettle, a gypsy tea kettle. I walked up, and they had no men, just women readers. And Lucille, her name was, a very lovely lady. She says, "We could use you. Do you having a name?" I forgot to tell you, I'd been using a name, Indra.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Indra?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Indian

ROBERT F. BROWN: To suggest you were from the, were you rather swarthy in appearance at that time, or no?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, Indra. I wore a turban, but I did not wear a turban at the Gypsy Tea Kettle. At the Fifth Avenue restaurant I did. And I had—on all the cards, at all the tables was this card, Indra. Which they

knew, I was somebody.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It didn't matter.

EDOUARD DU BURON: No. So there are a few occasions that I do recall. It took some time before I got to be known, and word got around. I never gave them my real name.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you got to be quite successful there.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes. So one day, this English sea captain came with his American girlfriend. He was captain of a ship, warship. And he was all in uniform and everything. He sat at my table. She said, "I want you to meet—" I said, "I don't want to know his name. I will read the gentleman, but not you." She says, "I understand." "I don't know what I'm going to say, but I see you on a ship, you go out so far and then you turn back because you have engine trouble." He didn't say anything. [00:22:00] I told him not to respond until the whole thing was over. Then I said the second time, "You go out and this time the sink ships, and you lose everybody except maybe a half dozen including you are safe. The third ship I see you, you're standing on deck and you raise your hands up and say 'Nothing is going to take this ship away from me, Lord. Nothing's going to take this ship away from me.' And is that ship being cleaned right now in the harbor?" He said, "Right on the button, I did exactly that, all three." There were times when I was so much on the ball it was unbelievable. I got scared. Now, I said, "Gee, your ships are dirty." He said, "We have a reputation for having the dirtiest ship in the world, after all we are the oldest navy in the world. Your ships are so much cleaner than ours." But he says, "We're afraid the Italians stab us in the back." Are we on?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

EDOUARD DU BURON: "The Italians will stab us in the back in the harbor and we have to watch out." Because this was during the war, you know. And the war over there. He says, "Sir, if we were at peace I'd have you on board and introduce you to all our officers, and celebrate, we'd love to have you on board and stay a few days, but we can't not during wartime." I says, "Hold on, who's Charlie?" I feel hot around the collar. "Uh-oh, my brother's on a submarine, what's wrong with his ear? Left ear, no it's his right ear?"

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was the British captain?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes. I said, "What's wrong with his left ear?" "No, it's his right ear. That's another story, he'll make it out he always does." [00:24:00] As he was leaving I said, "Hold on, come back." And Lucille didn't like that because there was someone waiting, losing money. I says, "Only a second Lucille. You're worried about a mantle, there's something on that mantle you're worried about."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Not at the place where you were, at home.

EDOUARD DU BURON: The guy's home in England. He says, "I'm so worried the house, part of that will be destroyed." "Don't worry about that. I will never hear from you again, but don't worry, you will not lose it." So we shook hands and he rewarded me royally, she thanked me and kissed me. She says, "I want to come back." I says, "Maybe." I don't like to continue, I want to drop it all. The more impersonal the better, but I fell apart with one woman. I will never forget her. Mildred Russell. I will never forget Mildred Russell. The most sophisticated, feminine. I was going to call her something, but I don't dare. Those eyes of hers. Long eyelashes. She came and sat at my table three times. The third time I was hooked. She lived on 72nd Street, on the West Side, it's not exactly a hotel, but it had the ambience of a hotel with a counter and phone, and a gentleman at night. She was up on the second or third floor. I was there five days, night and day, never left. Unbelievable, unbelievable. [00:26:00] Then on the last day we went to a very special place in New York, and I think it must be the same one, what's his name, blind, black pianist, very famous today.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ray Charles.

EDOUARD DU BURON: I think that was Ray Charles singing away. And when we walked in everybody would turn, they must have known. Look, you couldn't help but notice. Finally we had a beautiful meal, they waited on us forever. The bill was extraordinary but I paid it. [Inaudible] I said, "never again," it's a lot of money in those days, \$30 dollars, \$35. It was special, very expensive. So we went again, but there was no charge. There was no charge whatsoever, no ticket, nothing. They said, "Don't worry about it. It's on the house, no charge." Well, she was paying for it. Well, this went on for the better part of a year off and on we'd get together. And when we did get together there was no upstairs, downstairs in that apartment, we were all over the place. I never met an equal. You read that poem I gave you, it's all on her, she was an inspiration to that. I just wrote it two years ago. It's considered—they tell me it's very difficult to decipher but they get the picture. Desire doesn't even play. Desire implies luck, you don't desire something that you—it just happens, what belongs to you, it just happens.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But in the end you moved away from her.

EDOUARD DU BURON: I couldn't take it any longer, my health. [00:28:00] Finally she said, "Let's go to Las Vegas, let's get a divorce."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was she married herself?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well she had been. I got her [inaudible.] But what happened is she was walking down Fifth Avenue one day, she was stopped by two men. They were from Hollywood, "We're looking for someone like you, would you come? We'll take care of all your expenses we could use you in the movies." To see her, there was something, she was charismatic as a female as I ever met in my life. So she did go, and her husband went with her, she was married. He settled not in Los Angeles, but farther north. And she signed a contract, and she discovered while she was on set that he had set the house on fire. He didn't approve of her being in the pictures. Didn't approve at all. He was drunk and set the house on fire. She tore up the contract, went over there, and went straight to Las Vegas and got a divorce, came to New York and I met her [inaudible].

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you decided you weren't going to go out west?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, I was not going to go out west. She drank a lot. That's all she wanted to do, was make love and drink. Half the time we didn't eat we were so busy. I remember standing in her bathroom one day and a big beautiful bottle of perfume, about \$100, oh she, that was wonderful, she splashed it all over me. Oh no, I had to leave. What I did was I moved.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Out of New York?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, another address. [00:30:00] Mildred Russell. I'll never forget her. She—her family ran a cemetery, a tombstone something, in New Jersey, I saw the direction I was going. No, she had a sister who was in a Broadway play. I met her sister. She said, "Finally, Mildred found somebody." I said, "I'm afraid." I didn't tell you the surgical end of it. One day I burst an artery, you know where, it's very rare. In the middle of the night. So she called a doctor in the middle of the night. Says, "Pack it in ice." She says, "That's what he wanted and I already gave him ice." "The best thing in the world, as much ice as possible. Bring in the morning to the hospital." So, we get a taxi, we went to the hospital, Sinai. And there happened to be a specialist there, he took one look. "Oh my God, 50/50 chance" he said. He says, "You know, is that the woman? Boy, I'd give up." I said, "For her, anything." She sat there and smoked a cigarette. I did re-cooperate. But five days later we're back again. Burst an artery right in the middle. I let out a yell, and she did the same thing, withdrew. She took one look. Oh my God, it was a big purple plum. What they're afraid of is blood poisoning. So, Mildred was something. When that was all over I told Evelyn Dawson, my friend Evelyn, she had married this man, Jim Fitzsimmons, and when he joined Freud, she gave up. She no longer sent him any money. She did go to Paris every year for the great couture. She set up a business on 58th Street, or was it 59th. Evelyn Dawson, two floors. She met this man, Winn. He contacts me once in a while. Evelyn died.

ROBERT F. BROWN: She went on to be a dress designer.

EDOUARD DU BURON: She was a dress designer. Oh, she became famous.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you stayed on in New York for a bit, then you eventually came back to Boston.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Then I came back to Boston. Ethel said she was quitting Emerson.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were you still married to her?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh yes, legally married. What I did with Mildred was not right, but we were. It was understood. Ethel felt all along that I should remarry and have children.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, you mentioned that.

EDOUARD DU BURON: We did not have what you call a normal sex life, to the point where we had careers, we were so busy in our work, that meant everything. By the time I reached 40, I was more like 24. I was more like 20. I made up for lost time. That's what happened. So, and she did this to me. Evelyn suspected it. I liked Evelyn, too, but she got involved with two or three men. But this man, Jim, she was very fond of, but she broke away. And she decided to continue on her own and then she met Winn. She lived at 23rd Street, what was that famous hotel?

ROBERT F. BROWN: The Chelsea?

EDOUARD DU BURON: The Chelsea, I used to visit there. [00:34:00] She was there for a while. It was a very interesting place.

ROBERT F. BROWN: When you came back up to Boston what did you come up to do? Did you have a job up

here?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, I had no work, nothing. I had saved a little money. And Ethel said that we had both been offered—was it the 16th? This house belonged to historical society with the headquarters on Beacon Hill, do you remember the historical society? The old antique old house.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

EDOUARD DU BURON: That is correct.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And she had been offered a position.

EDOUARD DU BURON: She was offered to take care of this one and Falmouth.

ROBERT F. BROWN: A house in Falmouth.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right. It was a very big one, and she said, "Your husband could run an antique shop, they'd anything you want as long as it's open two afternoon a week for an hour or two. Do anything you want, you have the whole house to yourself." Well, I knew if I did it, I was tempted, but I knew if I did it, I would hurt her.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You would hurt your wife.

EDOUARD DU BURON: I would hurt her. She was 16 years older than I was. When I married, she was 40, she was a virgin. And the way we met was rather interesting, but anyhow. So I knew I would hurt her, and I didn't want that. I told her point blank, I says, "Look Ethel, I'll always love you, you're always number one in my heart because you've done a great deal for me." "You've done the same thing for me," she kept saying. "I wouldn't have known what life was all about. Look what you've done on your Thursday night, look at your dancing. This meant a lot to me. Here I am, literary, insightful, you've written things I was never able to do. You are a natural born poet." [00:36:00] She went on, I said, "Look Ethel, forget all that, I will hurt you, period. I'm afraid and I don't want to do that." So, I had a chance to go to Europe in the '20s. I don't do it. That's my life. The war. I don't dance after what happened. I go to certain places and stop, just like that, I cut it off. That's me. I can't help that. Why? Perhaps it has to do with when I was a child and my father. I was brutalized. So, I'm that way. "I know I lived before, I know I lived many lives, I know I may come back. I feel, I believe in reincarnation, and I never gave it much thought before I met you," she said. I says, "I will hurt you, I don't want to do that. You don't deserve that. I want you to marry again." And she did marry finally. She went there alone, then one day, I think it was something like two weeks, Lee Court of Filene's came to see me, he was a display director. In those days Lee Court was a big shot at Filene's. He was also involved with American Airlines, he was social, very active. He came to see me, he says, "I understand your theater experience, we could use somebody like you in the display department, it's not much money, but would you try it?" So, I said, "I know nothing about displays." "Mr. du Buron, I understand you make some of your own costumes, you did this, you did that." Well, I says, "Okay, I'll try it." I wasn't there long before I felt a resentment. They had two groups of display people. [00:38:00] There was the window group and the interior group. Today, they don't have anything like that, everyone's on their own, they don't have display departments like they had in those days. I even met Mr. Hodgkinson, the director, he wanted to meet. They had something in mind, well whatever, I think within a week, week and a half, one day Lee Court had me in his office, he locked the door, he said, "Brownie who is our chief decorator, does the corner window, it's all he ever does, is on vacation, we have a special assignment. We have to promote now bridal underwear. Bridal underwear and I want—going to be in Brownie's window." I said, "Oh my God he'll blow his top." He said, "I don't care if he blows his top. You come up with an idea by morning. And I will give you his assistant." Murphy, he name was. So on the way home, from Filene's to Beacon Street, where I was living, 324. Remember those paper weights, little glass there's a snow scene?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, you can turn them up and down and snow falls.

EDOUARD DU BURON: That's right. Little snow. So, next to Filene's there was a place they sold all kinds of things, so I bought one of those and I put it on his desk. This is what I want to do. "Have you ever done it before?" I said, "No, I never do things I've done before, I like to do something different." He says, "You can do it?" I says, "With a display house, yes." He said, "There is one called New England Decorators, let me call them up." So he introduced me over the phone, he's coming over with an item, he'll tell you how he wants it done. [00:40:00] So I went over there with him and I said, "I would like to have this eight feet tall, eight by eight round, and the base has got to be done in sections like an orange. Being eight feet across, each section should not be more than 18 inches or less. It's got to tip at the top, tip down, wider, because it's going to sit on the base, right. And I says, "When I get back to the department, I'm going to test a piece of glass, a sheet, because inside I'm going to have a couple of theater lights with different colored gelatins that turn on a turntable, they're going to turn around and light the whole thing. I want a cover with very fine silver fabric." He says, "We have this here, we'll build this frame, we know what you're getting at. Let us know how the base, how high before you

break the glass." I says, "You understand, orange sections that all tie at the top then I will devise some white satin that will hang from the mirror without a frame. Perfectly round, so she can look into it and they'll see her profile on the street, while she's dreaming on the eve of her wedding. She'll be wearing underwear. And outside is going to be a trousseau, my assistant will be arranging, beautiful big thing, all opened up. Then on the left side, I'll have a French dress form with the wedding gown and the maid arranging it." It sounds great, they wanted to do it. I walked out and I started. And I discovered that 21 inches just the right proportions, I think it was around 20 inches, the platform. [00:42:00] With a opening for a piece of frosted glass inside about six inch base to hold the glass.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Under which you would put the searchlights.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, but also a fan to keep it cool because each one of those lights was 500 watts, 1000 watts, you have to have a fan constantly turning around.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So the result was very successful?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, we were there until three in the morning. And of course, I'll never forget Murphy, that I want to see. Now he started to cover one of these orange sections. He would do the center first, as I told him, then he'd take it and [inaudible]. I says, "Murphy, no way. It's gotta be smooth, not a single wrinkle." He said, "How do you do that?" "You keep pulling it in, then you staple it and then you cut it. I'll do it." "All right, I'll take care of the merchandise." So I did the whole sections.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why'd you have it in sections, by the way?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Because, how else would you get it together? How would you get an eight-foot ball together? Okay, and painted white, and very slim, and each, these two sections were slim, and bolted together with white bolts, you couldn't see them. And they were covered by the cloth anyhow on the inside anyway. I would get inside, and when the whole thing was done we lifted it and set it on its platform. And he couldn't wait till we plugged in the lights. "That I want to see!" I said, "Well, so do I." He said, "You've never seen it?" Of course I'd never done it before, it was just an idea. So he went outside and I opened the curtains, all the curtains were closed so you couldn't see it, he came back inside and said, "I don't believe it, it's beautiful," he said. "Christ, it's beautiful, Christ it's beautiful." Now, he's swearing. [00:44:00] Anyhow, the next morning they had Mr. Hodgkinson wanted to see me. He said, "Have you been in Sweden?" I said, "No," I had a chance to go, but I never did go." He said, "This is the sort of thing they would do up there, very contemporary, very modern, very beautiful. I hope you're happy here." I said, "Well, they try. But I'm not quite satisfied, something's missing." So I went outside and looked at it, I says, "I've got to get a French poodle somewhere. Because I wanted to put that little model on the sign, and the dog with his nose on it looking at it. I wanted to give it little human touch, a little warmth. Couldn't find a poodle, but we found an Airedale [ph], broke it's legs.

ROBERT F. BROWN: A toy.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, it was nosing the thing. And perfect as a poodle. Beautiful job laying out all of the trousseau, all of the stuff. What's his face had me in his office. He said, "What did Hodgkinson say to you?"

ROBERT F. BROWN: Lee Court?

EDOUARD DU BURON: He was jealous as hell. I said, "Well he wanted me—asked me if I had been to Sweden, I says no. I had never been to Europe until 1961.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now Hodgkinson was?

EDOUARD DU BURON: The big boss of the whole store. Then the advertising manager took offense. She was a Jewish girl, very bright. I left about nine months later, I'd had enough. I found the people were, theater people were one thing, but store people can be—well, they get too personal, I lost interest. [00:46:00] And then I was given another problem on the ground floor. They wanted to put a choo-choo train along the wall with smoke blowing all along from the choo-choo train. Fake of course. I said, "Give me a day to think it over." The guy in charge of this was Jewish, very nice man. Oh Lee Court tried to be nice, but he was afraid of his job, that's what he was afraid of. So I said, "I've got an idea, I would like a big display, chicken wire, and make cones. One bigger than the other, start very small and then they grow and we'll fill them with spun glass and put different colored pink and blue or green. Just a little bit of color, smoke will do that, and they get bigger and bigger and then they come through a column and separate and go around." They couldn't get over that.

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EDOUARD DU BURON: —left me, they didn't give me any—I didn't go around with the other design people in the department. When they had an idea, they come to me, something fun, something they wanted to have a special

promotion of a bride ready to wear, as you got out of the elevator there was kind of a large niche along the wall they wanted me to do a bride.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you do that?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you were happy to leave when you did?

EDOUARD DU BURON: I used the same principles I did in the corner window, I forget to tell you that I used black velvet background. You don't make curtains like that, you staple them on with cleats. You just staple, you never know, it looks as if they were made special. You turn each panel inside. So I did this one in black. No, in blue, the window was black.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You left Filene's after about nine months, did you go on to do this work elsewhere?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Yes, went to Cronin's, that's what happened.

ROBERT F. BROWN: We'll talk about that.

EDOUARD DU BURON: So finally, I did the bride, and the way I lighted it, the way I displayed it, the way it looked caught—Lee Court had a meeting over this. He said, "If you notice the way du Buron did the niche. You get out of the elevator, your eyes are automatically drawn there, you forget about the rest of the store. Why? Simple, just a simple light. But the way he arranged the gown, the simplicity of it, he dramatized the way it was done. I want you to look at that very carefully." Well this did not help public relations.

ROBERT F. BROWN: For you, within the store. [00:02:00]

EDOUARD DU BURON: Within my department, but finally, Brownie, I forgot to tell you, Brownie returned from his vacation.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was his first name?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Brownie, I forgot his first name. He threw a hammer and he missed me by a foot. He missed me intentionally, but he wanted to scare me. He was mad as hell. He probably saw the window, probably somebody called him and said come see the window du Buron did. Brownie was mad they had me do it and didn't wait for him, they wanted me to do it, but what he didn't know and was told later was that it had to be done then and now. However, before I left, they threw a party, I don't know what the party was for, they had asked display to provide the entertainment—and not Lee. I don't think it was Lee, it was the interior display manager, the Jewish fellow who came to me, "Would you do a dance?" I said, "Oh my God, I haven't done that for several years." "Please, we want to see." Well, I remembered I had my wig that I did the *Lamento del Caribe*—and that I used for an Indian dance. I decided to do a Hindu number, religious. And I wore a red, loose loincloth with my hair made up like a Hindu. And I sat what looked like a lotus, barefoot, bare-bodied, and I did this dance, no music. There was a tremendous silence and an applause. [00:04:00] Brownie rushed over, "Forgive me du Buron, you're an artist, forgive me. For Christ's sake, forgive me." I said, "You're forgiven, I don't hold grudges." "Forgive me, you're an artist, that's what you should be doing." I says, "Oh, I stopped years ago." Then the advertising manager said, "I heard rumors you might be leaving, I want to tell you something, we have something planned for you yet." So anyhow, she stopped me in the stairway twice to talk to me. I think she was looking for more, frankly. She lived in Beacon Hill somewhere, well off. I didn't go for money, it just didn't interest me. That I could have had many times, that's not the point.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What did you decide then?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, then, of course I had remarried.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, you had remarried?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Oh, yes. Married Carol Call.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Carol Call.

EDOUARD DU BURON: C-A double L. Her father was at Groton School where he taught for a number of years. He had five daughters, she was next to the youngest.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How had you met her?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Met her on Western Avenue at the Geneva McDonald, who was a potter, she was Alan

Hovhaness' second wife, I introduced them.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who? Oh, Alan Hovhaness' second wife.

EDOUARD DU BURON: When Alan was on, living over Leo Hirsch, a men's store. They had very fine clothes. One day she came through to see me, she said to me, "What do you think of Alan and I getting married." I say, "Geneva, that's one thing you don't do. If you're going to get married, you don't ask someone what you think." [00:06:00] "You do or you don't, you love them or they don't, but you don't go ask someone unless it's really, really part of the family, if it's that kind of arranged relationship you can, but you don't ask me. After all, I lived with Hovhaness, I knew his first wife." But they did get married, he might have walked in the front door, but within the year, he walked out the back, that didn't last. Because she was always throwing parties to get men's attention because she wanted to meet somebody. And Carol was one of, her youngest sister Leslie were both living there at the time. I felt sorry for Carol, no one ever took her out. And Geneva said, "Why don't you take Carol out?" Finally her older sister Olga was living in New York near the ocean, and her husband worked in stocks, he was a broker, very bigshot brokerage. And she was doing a lot of welfare work.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Social work. So you did take her out.

EDOUARD DU BURON: I called Olga one day, I says, "You know, her mother doesn't approve of Carol and I." She was 15 years younger, so there was 30 years difference between my first wife and my second wife. Here I had married a woman years older, now I'm about to marry one the same difference younger. So, I decided, get rid of her for one year. I don't want to see her, for our own good. And her sister Olga was very glad, because she felt she needed to change, it would be good for her to get out, she never goes anywhere. Every time mom and pop go to Switzerland, where she came from, everybody came from Switzerland, spoke six languages, active in the [inaudible], she was the lady in charge of all the faculty. She was social, some people loved her very much, some people disliked her, which is natural in any situation.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you let this go for a year.

EDOUARD DU BURON: For one year, I left her. Then she corresponded one summer. Finally I says okay. So we got married.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Where'd you get married?

EDOUARD DU BURON: New York, because finally I called Ethel, says "I'm going to be married, this has got to be done right away." You can't get married within three, four days after a divorce in Massachusetts. I don't know now, but you couldn't then. We went to Olga, and we married at that church near the Hudson near Grant's tomb.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Riverside, probably.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Not a church, part of Columbia.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, International House?

EDOUARD DU BURON: No, that's something else, I danced there, too.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, you talked about that.

EDOUARD DU BURON: Nineteen twenty-nine.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So then you were married in New York.

EDOUARD DU BURON: We married in New York, and we had a very nice breakfast on the rooftop. And my friend Mark Bloom, who shared the same apartment.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Same apartment on Beacon Street, right?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Three Twenty-Four, he came over, the best man stood up, and we were married then. I have photographs of that somewhere, I don't know where. [00:10:00] Then she became pregnant, and our child was unfortunately born—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, water on the brain?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Terrible. Lived to be almost three years. It was quite a story.

[Audio Break.]

EDOUARD DU BURON: What happened, Carol said—when I left Filene's, Carol said to me, "Eduard, you know, my mother's living now, on Worcester Lane, and my sister Emily lives there with her husband."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Where's Worcester Lane?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right in Waltham.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Waltham, Massachusetts?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right, and she said, "There's a big store there." It's very interesting that this came about because it turned out that my cousin that I had met at the International House had stayed overnight many times at the Cronin's home in Wellesley. That Grover Junior. Junior and I were friends, and we taught together at the Coast Guard Academy in New London.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He and your French cousin?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Right, and he took courses at Harvard and when he was at Harvard Grover Junior was to invite him to stay, and he met the old man Grover Cronin himself. That was an extraordinary experience which I had forgotten about to tell. Mr. Cronin was alive then, he came to see me, after I'd been here a few days. He said "I know who you are." He told me the whole story, and I said, "Oh my God, don't tell me, that's right, I'd forgotten." He told me the whole story later, of course. So a relationship was already started.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you got a job quite readily?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Well, what's his name, the one who was in charge of advertising who was way ahead of his time. In the sense that he would have become vice president. [00:12:00] He was an Irishman who liked to drink, he'd come to work drunk, but he was more on the ball with a few drinks than most of them were sober, including James Gray who became vice president in his place.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But they hired you as what, display?

EDOUARD DU BURON: In charge of display.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was about 1945, wasn't it?

EDOUARD DU BURON: Nineteen forty-five. When I entered there, and it was a long, because by that time we had moved to—Ethel and I, I mean Carol and I, had moved to Milton, away from 324 Beacon. And East Milton and we lived in one of those big chateaus, big homes, all surrounded with a gate and very, very formal. We shared with the family, can't think of the name. He was a retired army officer with two children. And he lived in this 16-room house and we were introduced and went over there and stayed. But the commute from there to Waltham was a hell of a trip without a car. Finally, Dr. Scienza—

ROBERT F. BROWN: How do you spell that?

EDOUARD DU BURON: S-C-N-E-N-Z-A. He was a family doctor who brought Frederick into the world later. We became very good friends all due to a float that I built for the Holy Main Society, which he got me involved with the church. We became very friendly. So I got involved with the Cronin's that way. Then I discovered young Paul had graduated from Holy Cross, and his father saw to it that he would be treated like everybody else. [00:14:00] And pray, the staff overdid it, he resented it. He finally—when father died his mother made him in charge of the second floor of ready-to-wear. And that's where the gallery started.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That's how you got started.

EDOUARD DU BURON: So—

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]