

## Chatter Box #27 – Ricardo Dasilva

### Transcript



Robin: Hello everyone, this is Robin. And we're here with the Chatter Box podcast on Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com. And in this podcast, we like to talk about culture and interview interesting people from all around. If you'd like more information, you can go to our website, where you can find the Lipservice. And in the Lipservice, you'll have the detailed explanation and a transcript regarding this episode. Today in the studio we have a special guest, and a personal friend of mine: **Dasilva**. Today he's going to be talking a little bit about his travel experiences, his life in Montreal, and his writing. So everyone welcome to the studio **Dasilva**. Would you like to introduce yourself?

Dasilva: I'm Ricardo, but I'm also known as **Dasilva**.

Robin: Hi **Dasilva**. And can you tell us a little bit about yourself? Where are you from?

Dasilva: Sure, I'm from Montreal. I was born in Montreal, in **Lachine**, and raised here as well.

Robin: You were born and raised in Montreal. What was it like growing up in Montreal?

Dasilva: Growing up in Montreal was fun. I liked it a lot. I like the fact that I grew up around lots of people from different backgrounds, different cultures. Montreal is a really multicultural city.

Robin: Absolutely. I notice a lot of people who grew up in Montreal end up speaking French and English. Are you bilingual as well?

Dasilva: Yes, yes I am. A lot of people here, it's true, like you said before, a lot of people here can speak both French and English. And when I was younger, I remember, in school, because I am English and most of my friends are English and my school was mostly an English school, we didn't want to learn French. When it was time for French in class, we were kind of unhappy about that. But now that I'm older, I really appreciate the fact that I learned French at an early age.

- Robin: Did you learn any other languages when you were younger?
- Dasilva: Well, after high school I studied languages in college and in university. I studied French and Spanish and Italian also.
- Robin: A lot of our listeners haven't necessarily been to Montreal. What types of things would you recommend they do if they come to the city? Or what are the types of things that you like to do around the city?
- Dasilva: Well, what I like to do... I like the summer more than the winter. I like sunshine, I like, I don't know... winter is a little bit too cold for me. There's a lot of snow. When you're a kid, when you're young, the winter is fun. There's lots of things you can do in the winter. You know, you build **snow forts**, you make **snow angels**, you... what else do you do in the winter? **Snowball fights**... things like that are lots of fun when you're a kid in Montreal, because there's so much snow. But the older you get, the less you like winter, it seems. For me, in the summertime, I like to ride my bike on the **bike path**. I'll ride along the canal—the **Lachine Canal**. I'll take my bike from downtown Montreal and I'll ride all along the **Lachine Canal** to the west part of the island
- Robin: OK.
- Dasilva: There's a lake. You can sit by the lake and relax. I also like to go to **Mount Royal** in the summertime. It's really fun. It's relaxing.
- Robin: I hear it's an interesting place, especially on the weekends.
- Dasilva: Yes on the weekends, on Sundays especially, on the mountain, it's a lot of fun. Sometimes people have picnics in the summer, there's something called **Tamtams**, also; people play drums and listen to music and dance around.
- Robin: I know you've grown up in Montreal, and you said that you met a lot of different people from different places; it's very multicultural. Have you had a chance to travel?
- Dasilva: Yes, my family is from Barbados, so I was born in Montreal, but my mother, my father, my sister, my brother, they were all born in **the Caribbean**, in Barbados, a small island. So I've been to Barbados a few times and I've also travelled a little bit. I've been to Japan and some other countries in Asia: Vietnam, Cambodia, Singapore, Thailand, Korea, Bali in Indonesia...

Robin: When you **look back on** those experiences, are there any special experiences that stand out in your head?

Dasilva: There are lots! A lot... a lot of different experiences I've had. Some really positive experiences, meeting people that were really kind to me, really nice, and really helpful. Because travelling, you get lost sometimes and you need help, you know. You rely on the help of strangers sometimes. I remember one time when I was in Japan, I was looking for a festival in this small town, and I couldn't find where the festival was, so when I got off the train there was an older man there. He noticed I was lost, so he asked me if I knew where I was going and I said, "No, I don't know where I am. I'm looking for this festival." He said, "Oh, I think I know where it is, I can take you there. Please come with me." And at first I was a little bit nervous, but I went with him and he drove me, and he said, "Oh, it looks like the festival finished already, but I know in these mountains there's a really nice waterfall. Would you like to see it?" So I said OK, and I went with him. He brought me and he showed me the waterfalls and then, walking back to his car, he said, "Do you like Japanese food?" and I said, "Yes, I do." And he asked me what kind of Japanese food I liked, and I told him I like **okonomiyaki**, for example, etc., etc. And he called his wife and told her he's bringing a guest home for dinner, so please go to the store and buy these items. So he brought me back to his house, I met his wife, and she made dinner for us. I was really surprised, I really couldn't believe it. I was really, really **touched** by the kindness of this person that I didn't really know. And even to this day, we still keep in contact, they send me letters sometimes, around New Years, and I send them a letter and tell them how I'm doing.

Robin: That's an incredible story.

Dasilva: They said that I can call them my Japanese grandmother and grandfather.

Robin: OK! You said that your family is from Barbados.

Dasilva: Yes.

Robin: OK. So, going back or visiting Barbados, do you have a special relationship to that place?

Dasilva: In a way, yes I do. Because growing up, I heard stories that my parents would tell us, you know. They would tell us about Barbados and what it was like, and they would tell a lot of **old wives' tales** and describe, you know, different areas of the island. And I really couldn't relate to it a

hundred percent, because I was born and raised in Canada. But then the first time I went to Barbados, a lot of things that my parents told me started to make sense. I could see the places that my parents told me about and I could meet the people that my parents talked to me about. And in that way I started to develop a really... I don't know... strong, I guess, love for Barbados the island even though I'm not from there, I kind of am from there in a way. But my parents were very traditional **West Indian**, traditional **Bajan**, **Barbadian** parents. They come from the countryside. And I started to understand my parents more when I visited Barbados—their culture, their way of thinking, their background.

Robin: Were there a lot of differences?

Dasilva: Well, it's a different, completely different, culture. I mean, even their use of English, the way they speak English in Barbados, is different than the way we speak English in Canada. And, you know, I grew up listening to my parents at home speak English, but at school it would be a little bit different than what the teacher was teaching us, you know? So that, for me, was also interesting, to go to Barbados and everybody spoke like my parents and everybody, you know, was similar in some way to my parents. So that's really interesting, when you grow up in a family in Canada, when you're born in Canada but your parents are born in another country, when you're **first generation**, it's a unique experience to have.

Robin: I've heard that you have some interesting hobbies, and I'm sure our listeners would like to hear about them. Could you tell us a little bit about your writing?

Dasilva: Oh, writing, yeah. One of my main hobbies is writing. I'd like to become a writer some day, fiction. You know, I'd like to write novels. Maybe even scripts one day. Maybe a script for television—a television show—or a movie or something. But that's a dream. That's a way off, like, way way from now. But maybe one day.

Robin: OK, but you've written some things and published some things up until now?

Dasilva: Yeah, one or two short stories here and there... interviews.

Robin: So everyone out there, make sure you pay attention in the future to the work that comes out, all the works of **Dasilva**, because I'm sure he's going to have a lot of interesting fiction out there in the future. So what languages do you speak?

Dasilva: I speak... well, English, French, Spanish, and Italian, and a little bit of Japanese.

Robin: OK.

Dasilva: Just a little bit.

Robin: Which one has been the most difficult language to learn?

Dasilva: Definitely Japanese, but it's fun. I like learning languages.

Robin: Have you found it useful in Montreal knowing all these different languages?

Dasilva: Yes, very useful, because Montreal is so ethnically diverse, so multicultural, lots of people from different countries. Sometimes you're on the bus or on the train or on the metro, you might sit next to somebody from a different, like, you know, from a different place, or they might be a tourist. And I can sometimes communicate with them or talk to them. If they're lost, maybe I can try and help them in their language.

Robin: So we'd like to thank you here at Culips for joining us for our episode and listen out in the future because you might hear a little bit more of **Dasilva's** voice in some of the upcoming podcasts. For now, this has been Robin...

Dasilva: ...and **Dasilva**.

Robin: And we're signing off for Culips.com.

## Detailed Explanation

### Dasilva

Our guest's name is Ricardo **Dasilva**. **Dasilva** is technically his middle name. Often people are given more than one name. They have a last name (either their father's or mother's) and are given a first name. Sometimes additional names are given.

In some cases, like **Dasilva's**, people do not use their first name, but use their second name or middle name instead. Sometimes it's the choice of the person and sometimes it's their parents' choice. For example, a baby might be named Christina Elizabeth, but everyone calls her Elizabeth.

In this episode, our guest uses the name **Dasilva**. You will see him again in upcoming episodes, where he might also be called Ricardo. But it's the same person.

### Snow forts, snow angels, and snowball fights

In past episodes, we've talked about many different winter activities. The activities that Dasilva talks about are mostly things that children do. Adults might play, but there would probably be children playing too.

**Snow forts** are constructions made out of snow. A **snow fort** usually has some walls and possibly a roof, like a small house. These are often made by digging a hole through a snow pile, or could be created by gathering snow.



A fort is an army or military space, often with walls and ditches. Children make many different kinds of play forts, which are really just play spaces. Children's forts can be made out of snow, or blankets and furniture, or they can even be built in trees.



**Snow angels** are angel shapes that people make in the snow. We make them by lying on our backs in the snow and then moving our arms and legs back and forth. The traces left by our arms and legs look like the wings and gown of an angel. After a person has created a **snow angel** they must get up carefully and then look down to see the angel shape.

**Snowball fights** are when people throw snowballs at each other. This can be organized or happen in the moment. There aren't any set rules for a **snowball fight**, as they most often happen in the moment. This is almost always played for fun, but people can sometimes get hurt.





### Bike paths

Montreal is a nice place for bikers. There are many **bike paths** throughout the city. Montreal's **bike paths** are two smaller lanes beside the lanes for cars. If you are visiting, you can get a map to help you find your way around on the city on **bike paths**.



Photo: CurbsnBenches

### Lachine Canal

A **canal** is a long and narrow man-made waterway. The **Lachine Canal** is a waterway that passes through the southwestern part of the island of Montreal. Montreal's Old Port is on the **Lachine Canal**. It is a historical part of Montreal and is about 15 kilometres long. **Lachine** is also the name of a small city just outside of Montreal, and the **canal** also passes through it. Like Dasilva says, you can bike or walk along the **Lachine Canal**, and in some places it is quite beautiful.

**La Chine** is the French name for the country China. When French explorers first came to this part of Canada, they thought they were in China, so they called the area **Lachine**.



Photo: Ryan King

### Mount Royal

**Mount Royal** (or Mont Royal in French) is a small mountain in the middle of Montreal. There are parks around the bottom of **Mount Royal** where many people go to hang out and play in the summer. On top of **Mount Royal** you can walk around and see great views of the city. There is also a lake on top and in the winter there is ice skating.

### Tamtams

The **Tamtams** are one of the events that happen in the summer at Mount Royal. On Sunday afternoons many people gather at the bottom of Mount Royal and play drums together. This is an event that was not originally planned but happened naturally when some people started drumming there. Now, every Sunday when the weather is nice, you can plan to see the **Tamtams**.



Photo: Ryan King

### The Caribbean

When people talk about the **Caribbean**, they are talking about the islands and countries in that area. Something that's interesting about this word is that there are two acceptable pronunciations of it.

To explain these two pronunciations, let's break down the word into sounds: Ca-rib-be-an. The difference in pronunciation is in where you put the stress. In this episode when Dasilva says the word **Caribbean**, he puts the stress here: Ca-**RIB**-be-an. But some people put the stress like this: Ca-rib-**BE**-an. Both of these pronunciations are correct.



Photo: Ricardo Dasilva

### To look back on

**To look back on** something means to remember something in your past and to think about the experience from your perspective in the present. In this episode, Dasilva **looks back on** his experience learning French in school. When he was a student, he didn't want to learn French, and didn't like his French classes. But now, when he thinks about his French classes (when he **looks back on** them), he thinks that it was a good experience because now he can speak French.

Because we **look back on** the past, we need to make sure that some time has passed before using this expression. For example, you usually do not **look back on** something that happened very recently. You usually let some time pass in order to reflect on the past and see it differently.

With this verb, you need all three parts for it to mean thinking about something in the past from today's perspective: **look back on**.

Here are some more examples with **to look back on**:

Steve: So, are you still sad about breaking up with your boyfriend last year?

Jan: **Looking back on** it, I'm not really sad, I'm mad. He was such a jerk to me.

Lisanne: When you **look back on** your days in high school, do you have any regrets?

Nathan: No, I don't have any regrets. I would do everything the same.

Bob: Are you happy with the way your life has turned out?

Paul: I guess I am. But when I **look back on** it, I wish that I'd been more serious about doing well in school and getting a good career.



### Okonomiyaki

This is one of the Japanese foods that Dasilva said he liked when he was asked by the Japanese man from his story. **Okonomiyaki** is a Japanese pancake that can have many different ingredients in it, including vegetables, meat, seafood, and sometimes cheese. The batter is made from ingredients like flour, eggs, yams, and cabbage. If you are travelling in Japan, it's usually not difficult to find this dish.



Photo: Woinary

### Touched

Dasilva says that the kindness of the Japanese man **touched** him. In this case, he's not talking about physical **touching**. Dasilva is talking about something that's emotionally **touching**. It's easy to know the difference between physical **touch** and emotional **touch** because when we speak about emotions we usually use abstract terms. For example, the man's *kindness* **touched** Dasilva. *Kindness* is an abstract term, and cannot be physically seen or **touched**.

So when we say that something (emotionally) **touched** us, we mean that we had an emotional reaction to it. It does not say a specific emotion, but the emotions are usually deep sadness or happiness. When something **touches** a person, that person is affected on a deep emotional level.

Here are some examples with **touch**. Included is one example about physical **touching**. Can you see the difference?

Ivan: I can't believe how sweet your friend Kiley is.

Shannon: Yeah, she's very generous, isn't she?

Ivan: Yeah, I was so **touched**. She really helped me out when I was visiting her city.

Jen: The book I just finished really **touched** me.

Heather: Oh, really?

Jen: Yeah, it was so sad, and it really made me think about my own life.

Pete: I can't believe you **touched** it!

Jack: It had been in the fridge for a week, I needed to throw it out.

Did you guess that it was the last example that was about physically **touching** something? If you did, you're right!

We can also use this as an adjective. As in **touching**: The movie was really **touching**.

### Old wives' tales

We'll talk about this expression in much more detail in an upcoming episode about urban legends, myths, superstitions, and **old wives' tales**. An **old wives' tale** is an old piece of advice about life. They are generally not believed anymore and have been scientifically proven to be untrue. But some people still believe some of the advice anyway.

The origin of this expression is based on the people who gave the advice. Old wives or older women would offer their advice, and this became known as **old wives' tales**.

Here is one example of an **old wives' tale**: If you eat a lot of carrots you will have good eyes. It is an **old wives' tale** because many people have heard this advice for a long time from different people. It is also an **old wives' tale** because there is no scientific proof that it is true! If you find this interesting, check out our upcoming episode.

### West Indian, Barbadian, Bajan

These are three terms that Dasilva uses to describe his parents, who were born in Barbados.

The West Indies is another term for the Caribbean. Just like the French explorers thought they had reached China when they were actually in Montreal, when the Italian explorer Christopher Columbus reached the Caribbean, he thought he was in the Indies, which was a term used to describe South and Southeast Asia. Later on, once the Europeans figured out that the Caribbean wasn't in Asia, people began to call the area the West Indies to distinguish it from Asia, or the East Indies. So today, people who are from this area can be called West Indian.

A more specific word that Dasilva uses to describe his parents is *Barbadian*, which simply means that they're from the country Barbados.

The word Bajan is an abbreviated form of the word Barbadian, meaning *from Barbados*. Bajan is also the name of the form of English spoken in Barbados, which as Dasilva mentioned, is a little different from the English spoken in Canada.

### First generation

To be **first generation** means that you are the **first generation** in your family to do something.

**A generation** is your brother, sisters, and cousins. Your parents are from the previous **generation**, and your grandparents are from the **generation** before that. If you have children or nieces and nephews, they are from the next **generation**. So, you could be

the **first generation** in your family to go to university or the **first generation** to travel abroad.

When Dasilva uses this expression he means that he is **first generation** Canadian. His parents were not born in Canada, so his **generation** is the first in his family to grow up in Canada.

**Quiz** (see the answers at the bottom of this Lipservice)

**1. Which winter activity is NOT mentioned in this episode?**

- a) snowball fights
- b) snow cones
- c) snow angels
- d) snow forts

**2. What does Dasilva like to do in the summer?**

- a) bike on the path along the canal
- b) boat in the canal
- c) make snow angels
- d) have snowball fights

**3. What is the name of the little mountain in Montreal?**

- a) Lachine
- b) Mount Royal
- c) Tamtams
- d) Mountain

**4. Whenever I \_\_\_\_\_ my past I feel a bit sad.**

**Please fill in the blank.**

- a) look on
- b) look back on
- c) look up on
- d) look up at

5. Dasilva says he was touched by someone's kindness.

What does touched mean?

- a) angered
- b) physically touched
- c) upset
- d) emotionally affected

6. Dasilva says that he is first generation. What does he mean?

- a) He is in the first generation in his family to travel abroad.
- b) He is in the first generation in his family to go to university.
- c) He is in the first generation in his family to be born in Canada.
- d) He is in the first generation in his family to go to Barbados.

**Answers:** 1.b 2.a 3.b 4.b 5.d 6.a 7.c