# Transcript: C851 Linux Career Discussion with John Galliano and Guest Brandon Glenn

*The following transcript is a verbatim account of the video or audio file accompanying this transcript.*

Speaker #1 (Narrator):

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Speaker #2 (John Galliano):

Hello. My name is Dr. John Galliano, and this is a podcast installment in the WGU IT Audio Series on pursuing a career in Linux. I'm joined today by Mr. Brandon Glenn, a Senior Systems Engineer at Parkstar, affirm that designs, manufacturers and integrates hardware and software systems that enable the rapid deployment of enterprise class communications across the globe. Brandon serve 10 years in the United States Air Force as a satellite wideband and telemetry systems technician. After departing his military service in 2009, has held multiple positions as a field support representative and systems engineering and technical assistance contractor within the United States Armies Tactical Network Program Office. Brandon is also a current WGU student in the Bachelor of Science network operations and security program. Brandon, welcome, and thank you for your service and also thank you for joining the podcast.

Speaker #3 (Brandon Glenn):

Thank you. It's a pleasure to be here.

Speaker #2 (John Galliano):

Well, let's get started. According to the open source jobs report, 97 percent of hiring IT managers are looking to add Linux talent this year. The report also noted there are more than 50,000 open jobs on dice.com requiring Linux experience, and individuals with Linux experience are being recruited at an unprecedented rate. Now, these statistics tell us that if someone is interested in pursuing a career in Linux, there are ample opportunities available. So Brandon, that's why I asked you to join me in this podcast as someone already working in the industry. I'd like to get your perspective and I know that our students at WGU really value real-world experience from industry. Especially our career changers, who may not know what to expect when they're trying to break into information technology and cybersecurity, does that sound good to you?

Speaker #3 (Brandon Glenn):

Yeah, absolutely a great idea.

Speaker #2 (John Galliano):

Let's begin with, tell us a little bit about your career trajectory, what attracted you to Linux?

Speaker #3 (Brandon Glenn):

I had always played in the Linux, dabbled, I guess, but when I left the Air Force, I accepted a position as a field support representative working on satellite terminals that the army used. They had introduced a new modem, that's a modulator. It ran an embedded Linux system then the modem software ran on top of that. Between my training on an old version of this modem and getting to my first assignment and working on this new modem. The old modem had abstracted the Linux layer and I was lost, I had no idea how to get from Linux to the program that ran the actual modem software. I called friends, they hadn't seen the modem, I was given bad advice like doing a knit six and it'll back into the software. That didn't work so I had to start digging in and it did, it kick started me on a path of learning the file system, how to start generic programs, specifically how to run that program and run it well, and dig into why it worked the way it did. That just took off from there. I undertook a lot of this learning in my personal life, my personal time, and honestly, I upset my wife and daughter because they just wanted windows back on all the computers in the house and I wanted to run Linux.

Speaker #2 (John Galliano):

It's really an interesting anecdote to Brandon because I had a similar experience where I was thrust into a position as the so-called accidental sysadmin on a Celera System back in the early 90s. The first command I learned was sudo shutdown Tac-H now because the field reps would call me and I served as their touch maintenance and I was not IT at the time. That sounds like a great story about how you kick-start your career. With that, why don't you walk us through a typical day in your current job role, what are some of the tasks that you carry out?

Speaker #3 (Brandon Glenn):

My current job is all over the place, one day I might be given advice to our software development team on how the army uses certain features of network management software. Another day, I'll be writing the documentation or configuring one of our hardware systems. But there's always once a week, a task that involves me creating some VM or something for maybe another business unit or something. Just a couple of weeks ago, I ended up one of our business units needed a bridge between two hypers visor V switches, one to connect to a private network, and the other one to the Internet. They had been using a Windows system and they were using lots of RAM and storage. I just threw together an arch VM with a minimal install and bridge the two nicks together. Very minimal resources, very minimal processor, and it runs way better.

Speaker #2 (John Galliano):

That's fantastic. Then what lessons learned would you share with our students just getting started and looking, are considering a career in Linux.

Speaker #3 (Brandon Glenn):

Immerse yourself in Linux. Learn the basics and the foundational principles such as file system, file structure, built-in kernel programs like LS and grep less than man. Start out with an easy distro, banned to Fedora, come to mind, mint. As you get more comfortable, challenge yourself to do more advanced things. Maybe install a more advanced system, more customizable system, and just really dig into. That's going to get you into a place where you really understand, it's just a good base, a good foundation.

Speaker #2 (John Galliano):

Yeah, that sounds like really, really sage advice. I really like your focus on learning the basics and getting familiar with the commands but also starting easy and working your way forward, building that experience. Thank you for those valuable inputs. Let's shift gears just a little bit then, what would you say is the key to success as someone who did quite well in RC A51 Linux Foundations Course and the LPI Linux Essential Certification Exam.

Speaker #3 (Brandon Glenn):

This one, it's a lot of the same advice. Learn your basics, get the foundation down but really take the time, look at your instructor. Welcome e-mail. Dr. Galliano has a great GitHub page with cheat sheets and stuff. A lot of this test, if you have the foundation, it's going to be easy for you and other parts of it are just going to be memorization. There's stuff that you just have to know. There's not a good way other than just memorizing what the flags on a file are, things like that and those cheat sheets really help. Then another, go to the lpi.org site, look at their detailed objectives for the exam and the study materials that they recommend also.

Speaker #2 (John Galliano):

Perfect. Then I've saved the hardest question for last, are you ready?

Speaker #3 (Brandon Glenn):

I think so.

Speaker #2 (John Galliano):

Okay, what's your favorite Linux distro, and why?

Speaker #3 (Brandon Glenn):

I've thought about this one quite a bit and Distro preference is ultimately about recognizing how you personally use and maintain your computer and choosing the best distro for your situation. With this in mind, I use almost every flavor, Red Hat, the Ubuntu, Debian distros. But with all that said, Arch has to be one of my favorites. It's super customizable. I can build a very small instance, or I can build it up with the full GUI, the full desktop. It's the rolling distro but if you upgrade it in a conservative manner, you can have a stable operating system or you can live on the bleeding edge. It's that customizable, whereas the others, you're tied to their release cycle. I do like the Arch.

Speaker #2 (John Galliano):

That's awesome. I'm thinking of one of several Arch memes that I've seen.

Speaker #3 (Brandon Glenn):

Oh, yeah.

Speaker #2 (John Galliano):

We won't get into that now but I do appreciate your choice of Arch. I've told myself recently that I'm going to try Gen2 at some point, but I'm a fan of Arch myself. What I've heard from what you shared with us Brandon were some things. You got started by being introduced to Linux in a situation in which you had to learn about it. You encountered it in an embedded system. You took that as a challenge and it turned out to be something that kick-started your career really as you learned Linux and the various systems that you worked on. Even today, you are engaged in a lot of different tasks that do involve Linux and you approach it with a very much a problem-solving approach as we would expect a systems engineer might do. Another theme that came out in what you shared with us was your willingness to immerse yourself in Linux but always learning the basics. Not being afraid to get your hands dirty in the command line and going from there. I think you've iterated some of those things when you mentioned that this LPI Linux essentials certification exam is going to be much easier if you lay the correct foundation. The other thing that I heard that you mentioned that I just wanted to highlight was make use of the exam blueprint and the LPI study materials. That's something that I always like to stress because who better to go to than the people responsible for the certification, right? It makes sense though. Any last thoughts or comments before we depart?

Speaker #3 (Brandon Glenn):

Like I said, the basics, immerse yourself in it and even if you don't see a specific requirement in a job. Even if it doesn't say you need the LPC-1 or the LPI essentials or something to that effect at your job. If there's any Linux being used anywhere in the system and you show that you have any knowledge of it, you become an invaluable asset on that team. Because frankly, not a lot of people have a lot of Linux experience or they're afraid of it. So just get what you can and then just build on it.

Speaker #2 (John Galliano):

That's a really good observation. I have seen that myself. Where somebody who's willing to spend a little time and effort to learn Linux or bring their existing skills to bear, They often will become a SMI in that area. Wonderful. Brandon, once again, I want to thank you for your service and also for joining me in this WGU IT Audio Series podcast. I think you've provided some extremely insightful advice here. I know that our students will find what you shared valuable. With that, I will bid you adieu, take care of my friend.

Speaker #3 (Brandon Glenn):

Thank you.

Speaker #1 (Narrator):

WGU, a new you.