

Interview with Ann Jochems

J.L. This is Jane Latour on December 16th, 2004, interviewing Ann Jochems.

Okay, Ann. So tonight we're going to talk about /// pick up from where we left off. Last time I interviewed you was ten years ago. And so in 2001 you were ranked number twenty-two on the promotion list for Supervisory Mechanics at the Board Of Ed and shortly thereafter a lot of stuff started to happen. And do you want to talk a bit about that? What happened in terms of your situation at the Board Of Ed?

A.J. Well, things got very tense around that time because-you know--the Supervisory Mechanic title is the highest 220 Title in city service so it's like the pinnacle of one's career, and hundreds and hundreds of people took the test and--you know--most didn't even pass. And so after it was pretty much certain that ... I had passed ... I'm forgetting the exact order of how this happened, but after ... after I found out that I had passed, I don't know; there was really a lot of intangible stuff, like, there would just be a lot of hostility and then, shortly after that, I--you know--became increasingly isolated among my peers and supervisors. But--you know--I ... I mean, I kept doing my job and then eventually I--you know--well, the ... the rest is history sort of. I mean,--you know--I found out that ... I was under surveillance. And, I mean, my behavior wasn't a hundred percent pure because--you know--I was extending my lunch hour to attend these AA meetings but I feel like that my mistake was falling into .. Again, I always say that--you know--I had forgotten to work twice as hard as the men. I mean, I don't think that I was doing anything anybody else wasn't doing, but that ... that was really no excuse, certainly not in the mind of the Administrative Law Judge who recommended termination. But even in my own mind I know that--you know--that I'm responsible for my own behavior and that even though everybody else was doing it, it still didn't really justify it. But I felt like, where it was coming from, I felt like that it was a witch hunt and that I was targeted and ...

J.L. You think that actually somebody actually did turn you into the Department of Investigations and

A.J. Oh, definitely. Yeah. I definitely think that ... You know, they started laying for me and--you know--knowing that--you know--they could get anybody if they wanted to,--you know--and who they wanted to get was me. You know? And I was put under a microscope and--you know--I think that it was like,--you know--their worst nightmare to think that I might get this promotion.

J.L. And you would be supervising all Mechanics ?? the Carpenters?

A.J. Right. Yeah. Like instead of just supervising the--you know--ten I was supervising I would have supervised--you know--a hundred or ...

J.L. Yeah.

A.J. Men.

J.L. And there was a great pay increase?

A.J. Yeah. Yeah. It was a huge, huge pay increase. You know? I think it--you know--had about--I don't know--eighty-three thousand or something. So, yeah, plus overtime.

J.L. You ... Now, in our past interviews we've talked about diverse corruption within the system

A.J. Right.

J.L. and clearly when Susan D'Alessandro's case came out and was written about in "New York Magazine" and--you know--she won her case, but a lot of the gross corruption within the Board Of Ed with the custodians came out. And then there was a really great piece about corruption with skilled tradesmen in the Board Of Ed and that was--you know--with photos and listing of all the different ... That was after your case. That was ... that was in nine--well, June, 2003. It was an expose. And so I know that when you were interviewed by Jack Schierenbach you talked about the disproportionate penalty that you received because there were other carpenters who had been brought up on charges and had padded their time sheets and they were just given thirty days suspension without pay.

A.J. Right.

J.L. and ...

A.J. and my ... and my pal, the Union Rep, also testified about that at the ... the ...

J.L. He did, in your favor.

A.J. Right. He testified and he brought ... his whole testimony was based on all the Carpenters who had been caught breaking the rules.

J.L. Um-hum. and they even had ... like, some of those carpenters had forty-nine instances of gross ...

A.J. Oh yeah, hundreds ... there were hundreds of those ..

J.L. Yeah. Yeah.

A.J. Months and months of ... he had been under surveillance and, yeah, some of them were, like,--you know--had been convicted of extortion and .. I forget some of their crimes that they had been convicted of, but all of them remained working.

J.L. So they apparently thought that that was ... that wasn't relevant?

A.J. Well,--you know--I guess it's-you know--the legal system,--you know--they probably had a different judge,--you know--so this judge that I had didn't really care what anybody else had done. All he cared about was what I had done. And you know--it wasn't in a context at all. Like, he wasn't interested in any sort of context to it, even though that was what my whole ... My whole case was based on, context, not--you know--not just what I had done out of context.

J.L. So give me a little description of what happened when you went before the Civil Service Commission. Did Jan Goodman, the attorney, get to represent you in some way?

A.J. Yes.

J.L. Did she participate?

A.J. Yeah, she did. Yeah. She was great. It was ... Yeah. NOW--you know--gave Jan Goodman to me to --you know--along with my attorney, to

J.L. Sipser?

A.J. Yeah, William Sipser,--to--you know--sort of argue my appeal. And,--you know--he just ... You know, it was kind of like ... Again ... I felt like it was the system .. It's like, even with the Administrative Law Judge ... so-you know,---I mean, I know that's the system; I know that's the way it's set up, but it's like,--you know--what's the Administrative Law Judge going to say?--you know?--like ... Although I guess it happens on occasion. But in my particular case I felt like they ... they just ... You know? They're City employees and they know what side their bread is buttered on, and so they're going to do what the city wants them to do. And I felt like it was clear that what the city wanted them to do was--you know--boot .. kick me out of there. And the same with the city Civil Service Commission. I mean, it just seemed like--you know--Oh-they're not going to Why ... What would motivate them to overturn this--you know--

J.L. the lower judge

A.J. Right. The Judge's

J.L. What did Jan Goodman have to say about thethe whole

A.J. Well, she . she had a lot of case law and which I thought was pretty interesting that-you know .. I mean,--you know--and I wished that I had had her all along 'cause--you know--Sipser only drummed up one case, I think, that ... you know,--and the system's all based on case law, I guess, so he had only come up with one case that supported me. and she had--you know--a few things and ?? Title VII things. And,--you know? But I don't know--I don't know what sunk the ship. You know? They just weren't going to go against each other. You know? It just seemed like the ...

J.L. So what ..what are your thoughts on the level of representation you got from the union?

A.J. Well, I think it was .. I think it was .. it was limited.

I mean, I think that it was .. I think that it was--you know... I mean, I still believe ... Even though I believe that Mike Power's personally did all that he could for me, I feel like in the ... I feel like the union failed miserably because I feel like the union could have saved my job if they wanted to. Now, I'm not sure how 'cause I know they don't pull rabbits out of the hat, but

J.L. Well, one thing that they could have intervened in ... in the way that you were being treated earlier on.

A.J. Yeah, right! Like fifteen years before or something, which they never ... they refused to do. I remember ... I'll never forget Charlie Fanning--you know--about fifteen years ago saying, well,

J.L. Well, you have a job...

A.J. when I was put ... was put on probation

J.L. You have a good job. What's the problem? Yeah, ??earlier.

A.J. Yeah. And that was sort of their whole attitude all along. And then here's Mike Power who, I mean, no offense but--you know-he's a carpenter. He's not a lawyer. Yeah. And to go up against this--you know--what I felt like was a battery of--you know--legal pythons that the Board Of Ed had set upon me to get what they wanted because they wanted ... they wanted me out so bad. But I feel like Mike Power was certainly no match for them

J.L. Yeah.

A.J. and that I should have had union lawyers.

J.L. And you had to run around and try to find, like, Jan Goodman and ?? and everything.

A.J. Yeah, like piece together my own thing.

J.L. and you paid for Sipser or did the union pay for your representation?

A.J. Yeah. Oh no. Oh no. they don't pay for anything. Yeah. I had to pay for him. I had to pay ... NOW gave me Jan Goodman, but I had to pay for him. I had to pay Francine [Moccio], and I had to pay ...

J.L.1 Expert witness.

A.J. Yeah. I had to pay my expert witness, and I had to pay my doctor. So ...

J.L. So after sixteen years you left with ... What did you come away with?

A.J. Gosh. I'm still licking my wounds. I'm glad to be gone, but it's .. but it's, like, what a rude thing that was because--you know--it was huge financial setback. You know? You talk to people who leave their jobs at that time and they're like, well, you know, I did get the buy-out and all that. And it's like,--you know--I

mean, all I did was ... You know? I feel like ... And nobody knew anything. It's, like, nobody knew what was going to happen with my pension or--you know--my time and leave balance or .. Yeah. No

J.L. They didn't tell you anything. And so what did happen? Did you ...

A.J. Well, I found how .. Only after I got my next job working for the State that--you know--I [found out].. that my pension was safe and that .. that they--you know--that they couldn't touch it and that it came with me;--you know,-it came with me to my next employer. But no one .. no one knew that. I mean, ?? was ,like, all cryptic about it. You know? Like, I mean,-you know--Mike Power's didn't know that? You know? I mean, nobody knew it because nobody-'cause-you know-nobody had ever had such a horrible thing happen to them before, so--you know--I guess I was the test case. And then I had to find out everything--you know--the hard way myself because certainly had never happened to any guy.

J.L. Um-hum. So then you went to Stony Brook after how long a period of unemployment?

A.J. I think it was like, four months, so I was unemployed for four months. Then I landed ... You know, It was really ... Stony Brook was really a great opportunity because-professionally, because even though it was a pay cut it was

J.L. How much of a pay cut about?

A.J. Oh huge, like twenty thousand dollars a year less and,--you know-and the commute from hell. I mean, it's like,-you know .. Like, I live in Nassau County on the South Shore, and Stony Brook is, like, not near anything. You know? It's like, you know,--sixty milesYeah.

J.L. So it would take you how long to drive out and back?

A.J. Well,--you know-probably like--you know--three to four hours a day. But that's what I spent going to the city to do the other .. for the Board Of Ed also so that part was, like,--you know--pretty comparable. But--you know--it was a good opportunity. I was a Manager,-you know?-so now I'm in family housing so I was ... now I'm supervising the first line supervisors, instead of being a first line supervisor. So in a way it was, like,--you know--more responsibility. And,--you know--you know-but that was ... It was great to be doing something different but in some ways it was the same situation in that-you know--I was the only woman in my title, only now I didn't even have staying power. Now I'm new so came as a new manager and again, I felt like that there was resistance against a woman

J.L. Being in ...

A.J. Yeah, a woman supervising blue-collar men.

J.L. And how did it manifest itself?

A.J. Well, just--you know--you know--everything from--you

know--just, like, overt disrespect to--you know--we're not doing what you say to--you know--and no .. no back up really from

J.L. Higher up.

A.J. Yeah, no back--you know,-no back up again from the system so that--you know--again, in a way I had the hands tied behind my back feeling,-you know?-like, how am I going to be effective if--you know-it's set up this way that--you know--there's no support from the top, and--you know--no respect from ...--you know? Only the .. the reasons were different this time. Like, this time it was because I hadn't been there very long. You know? So

J.L. So how long did you stay there?

A.J. There I was a year and a half. So ...

J.L. So meanwhile you were ... you have been, since last we met you have a Master's now. You have a new Master's?

A.J. Yeah. About a year ago I finished my Master's. I finished my thesis finally and--you know-so

J.L. You got your Master's from Baruch College?

A.J. Yeah. I got my Master's in labor relations from Baruch and, I mean,-you know--that--you know--was good. Like, I accomplished a goal and ...

J.L. Right. And you were chosen as a Mayor's Scholar?

A.J. Yeah. I was cho-- ...

J.L. And what did that mean?

A.J. Well, it was--you know--something offered to city employees in the--you know--in the late '90's. Well, it was offered ...

J.L. And it helped pay for your tuition?

A.J. Yeah. It paid for my tuition to

J.L. to get your Master's ??

A.J. Yeah. Yeah.

J.L. Good.

A.J. Yeah, so I was happy about that. Yeah.

J.L. And you've been attending a program for your new job, getting certification or ... So tell me about that?

A.J. Yeah. So finally I--you know,--pardon my simplifying my life, I guess. I no longer have to commute at all, but I--you know--I continued taking civil service tests and got

called off of this Last spring I took this test for Property Appraiser for the county--Nassau County, and I got called off of that list in October and started that .. this job in October. And--you know--right way I found out about ... 'cause ... well, actually, I refinanced my own house a few times, but once gain refinancing my house then, once again, after taking this test I got and .. I've always loved houses, so then I got an interest in appraisal. It seems like one of those hidden careers. Like, what's that? You know? You just don't hear about that much...that--you know,--hear about it that much. But what you do is you just look at a lot of houses and establish value. So ...

J.L. And your construction background in estimating comes in handy because

A.J. Well, that's how I qualified to take that test. I qualified to sit for the exam based on my construction background

J.L. Um-hum.

A.J. So there ... there's a good side to it.

J.L. Um-hum.

A.J. And then ... So then I found out about, from the appraiser who appraised my house last summer, these courses that are given and that's there's State certification and there's a process to get certified to be a New York State Real Estate Appraiser. So now I 'm working towards that.

J.L. Okay. And does that pay well?

A.J. It's a living. Like,--you know,--you're not going to get .. there's two tracks, residential and general, and

J.L. General would be commercial?

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. Uh-huh.

A.J. Well, general is commercial and residential.

J.L. Oh, okay. So which track you were ...

A.J. Well, I've just finished the--sort of like the Liberal Arts degree,--I've just finished the basic courses that you need for both tracks. Now I need to decide which one.

J.L. Um-hum. Which track? And which do you think you're going to take?

A.J. Well, I think I'm leaning towards residential, even though commercial,--I mean, general is a lot more lucrative. Like, I think you could make like--you know--eighty or ninety thousand dollars being a general appraiser and,--you know--fifty, sixty thousand being a residential appraiser. I think I'm going to go

with the residential unless I get a big burst of energy.

J.L. Because the other one's more ...

A.J. Yes, more ... Yes, more classes. I mean, I've just been in school so much here, and now again,---

J.L. Right.

A.J. I'm in school two nights a week,-you know?-and again

J.L. And how many courses do you have to take?

A.J. Well, six. You have to take six classes, which, if I keep going, I'll be finished with this residential by May.

J.L. Um-hum.

A.J. Then there's three parts to it. There's these classes, then there's the two to three thousand hours you need, which I'll get on my job which I have now, and then there's the State exam.

J.L. Oh yeah. Is the exam hard, or do they have a book or ...

A.J. Yeah. there are, yeah, a bunch of study guides.

J.L. Yeah. Okay. So how would you compare doing this new job, not exactly what you were doing today,-you were telling me about filing today,--but doing the actual appraisal and the satisfactions of doing this work. Compare this .. You might say it's a more traditional career. You're working with more women, I mean, males also, but it's not a nontraditional career path for women.

A.J. Well, it used to be.

J.L. Uh-huh. Well, everything used to be.

A.J. Of course, everything used to be except for teacher and nurse. Right? But ...

J.L. clerk and seamstress.

A.J. Right. But not that long ago. I mean, it wasn't even until that long ago,--I mean, I think probably like--you know--the last ten years or something, more women have been doing appraising because when you think of real estate most women are ... sell real estate, but-you know--like, I've never had a woman appraiser here. You know?

J.L. Right. Right.

A.J. But, I mean, doing my own appraisals for my house it always has been--you know-- ...

J.L. But still there are more women in it than there are carpenters.

A.J. Right. Oh, absolutely. Yeah. There's more women everywhere than there are carpenters. You know? But, yeah. So, yeah. For me, like, that's a good point is that---you know-- I'm partnered with a woman, my supervisor is a woman. There's all sorts of women all over the place that ... You know? It's great if you don't want to just sit at a desk all day. I mean, that's ... The parallel is that once again it's not just sitting at a desk all day. It's,--you know--it's field--you know? It's measuring, analyzing, investigating, data collection and report writing. You know? It's an interesting kind of blend of work that ... you know? And not the physical work, and not the--you know--like the skilled blue-collar trades that have such resistance to women. You know? Like, I haven't felt any resistance because I'm a woman at this .. not for that ... Yeah. And I'm just ...

J.L. And how did that feel?

A.J. It's like,--you know--I don't even know what to do with it. You know? It's like,--you know--there are .. It' so new. You know? It's like .. I figure in my . in my entire working life, since-you know--the '70's, I haven't had that experience. So

J.L. You know, just watching your face talking about that and listening to this, it reminds me of interviewing Janine Blackwelder and her realization after she left, that she basically was experiencing post-traumatic stress from all she had gone through and had to eat; sort of suck it up.

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. And I'm wondering if you're experiencing any of that?

A.J. Yeah. Yeah. No, I think that's true. And also it's just, yeah, the residual effects of it all: of the over compensating, .. Of course, some ?? don't ?? You know? but,--you know,--like,--you know--will I be good enough? Will I--you know--sort of cut the mustard at the new career? All that--all the standards that you hold yourself to anyway, and then . but without the obstruction that I felt like--you know--I was doing all that before too, and I had the obstruction. Like, not only was I hard on myself the whole time, but then I had no acceptance or support. So now I feel like I continued to be really hard on myself but it's without the sort of sabotage and under the magnifying glass and--you know--the--you know--like, they're out to get me and all that stuff I don't feel like is going on.

J.L. When we did those stories about your situation and tried to get some publicity for your case and one of these young women from "Newsday" wrote about you, and one also injected, that was writing about you. And there was a man who called up and called me at the Association For Union Democracy and spoke on your behalf when he read about you, and he said that it was true that you were basically tortured and that was enough that you were a woman that when you came in you were targeted. And he was talking about what a good carpenter you were. And then he allowed himself to be quoted in Jack Schierenbach's [news column] although anonymously. But I'm wondering ...And also reading through your interviews, you spoke about your

crew and that you like working with them. You thought they were a good team. And,--you know--just the idea that ... I'm just thinking about the point that there's some men who make it lousy for ... for women. I mean, it just takes a few men. And Brenda [Berkman] was talking about that last week within the fire house that you have ... She had an official term for it which I can't remember, that they call it in the fire house; that somebody runs the kitchen with a big mouth and they make it crappy for everybody.

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. And I'm wondering what your experience in terms of looking at your--you know? I mean, because we don't want to ... I mean, what .. how do you sum up the experience of working with these men for all these years? And then there's the situation that they won't stick themselves out on a limb to come to your assistance when the situation is basically lousy.

A.J. All right.

J.L. So what are your thoughts about ...

A.J. Well, yeah, I'm glad I'm out of there and I feel like that, yeah, that I have post-traumatic stress, although there were some of .. I mean, the two guys that did testify for me at my trial I'll be forever grateful for. But,--you know--in many ways it was too little, too late. And, yeah, that's why--you know ... I don't know. I don't know what to say about it. You know? It's like, it was so negative that--you know--I feel like I just--you know--like I almost have a .. Like, even when some mail comes from the union--some piece of mail now comes from the union or something, I just don't even want to get it on me. You know? It's like, ugh! You know?

J.L. Yeah.

A.J. I just want to detach.

J.L. You have to detach and process and ...

A.J. And then ... And then you want to detach with love. You know? You don't want to be embroiled in the--you know--resentment from it all, too, because--you know--because I did take such a financial hit and emotional hit, but the financial hit was so tangible. You know? And just now I'm starting to, like,--you know .. I mean, fortunately, I didn't lose my house and--you know-- and all that.

J.L. So now you're in a new union, the UUP,

A.J. Yeah. Yeah!

J.L. the United University Professions? what ...

A.J. Well, no. that was that was what I was in at Stony Brook.

J.L. Stony Brook. but now you're in ...

A.J. but now I'm in CSEA.

J.L. Civil Service Employees Association. And how is that?

A.J. It feels really comfortable. You know?

It feels like ... it's such a huge union and it's such a ... Again, it's a diverse range of ... I mean, it's amazing who's in it. I mean, everybody's in it, from--you know--janitors to lawyers, I mean, so it's like a .. It almost like,--you know--transcends class, this union.

J.L. Uh-huh.

A.J. You know? It's like, ... You know, with the Carpenters it was pretty much, except for the women,--you know-it was pretty much just like one type of person, it seemed,--you know?--men. No. But (laughs) but it's like .. and then UUP I wasn't really in that long to ... and I supervised CSEA at Stony Brook so now I'm in CSEA. And I remember the whole time I was at Stony Brook thinking--you know--I wish I was in CSEA. So now I'm in CSEA.

J.L. Uh-huh. And you've gone to a meeting and you're gone to a party?

A.J. Yeah. Yeah, and--you know--inquired about the Women's Committee.

J.L. Uh-huh.

A.J. I don't know if there's any Gay and Lesbian Committee, so that's next.

J.L. But there's ... Yeah. Okay. Well, I just want to look a little at the Carpenter's.

A.J. Oh no.

J.L. You had mentioned that ... You sent me a copy of the survey that the new ... the new reformed Women's Committee sent around and.. but you said that you didn't feel like because you're not in that union any more and you didn't even complete it. And that's part of your feelings of detaching ...

A.J. ... detaching from the Carpenters.

J.L. Yeah. It's a little too late.

A.J. Yeah! Yeah! Like, I feel like ... Yeah. I feel like I'm not part of that any more and .. You know? I mean, I had such a .. such a dreary exit that,--you know--it just brings up bad feelings to even--you know? I don't know what ... I'm not sure what I can salvage from the experience because--you know--I don't have a proud, good feeling about it. You know?

J.L. You had mentioned to me that this ... the Carpenters

finally started having National Conferences for Women and you said that there's going to be scholarships for some women from New York to go to this conference?

A.J. Yeah. I just got that letter today where--you know--from Ellie [Spicer] saying that there's going to be seven scholarships available,--you know--and write your letter saying--you know--why it should be you. You know?

J.L. So they keep you on the list as a Carpenter and they ... do they know that .. I mean, you're just going to keep getting this till you're

A.J. Yeah. I mean, I guess I could tell them,--you know--like I told Bill Lacy when I kept getting my--you know--I kept getting the cards to show up for picket duty,--you know?--so--you know?--and I kept telling Bill Lacy, who replaced Mike Power as the Union Rep,--you know--that Oh, and then I got some ...

J.L. Is Mike Power retired?

A.J. Yeah, he did. I got some threatening letter from the union in D.C. about--you know--how I'd gone against the constitution or the bylaws, or whatever it was, about not .. not doing my picket duty and all that. And,--you know--I called Bill Lacy and said that I'd been on the out of work list for--you know--three years and hadn't gotten a single call despite all my calls to them saying--you know--inquiring about--you know--where am I on the out of work list, and also calling the harassment hotline and never got--never even got a call back.

J.L. What's the harassment hotline?

A.J. Oh, they have some hotline about--you know--if you're not being treated right on the job, some phone number to call where you never even get a real person and nobody ever calls you back.

J.L. Is that for like, sexual harassment or anything ...

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. Sexual harassment. So that's a new thing that they've set up?

A.J. Yeah. Well, it's a few years now,

J.L. Uh-huh.

A.J. But--you know,--but it's not working because--you know--nobody ever called me back to find out what the story was or .. You know? It's just something else they can print. And figure probably, like, the whole thing with me still being on all the mailing lists is just that, other than oversight, but that they need the--you know--they still have so few real women members that they just use .. use you as a number. You know how they ... how they just keep counting--you know--people .. women that they probably never put to work for years, you know,--but they're just, like, Oh yeah. We have women! You know? Look! We've

got . now look. Here's Ann Jochems or something. You know?

J.L. Okay. I want to ask you ... the head of the carpenters,-
we're -- ...

Side Two

J.L. This is side two of the tape and I was just asking you a question about the head of your District Council, Michael Ford, was found guilty of taking bribes and he's been appealing it for a very long time,--years. So ... Wait one second. So, Ann, my point is that his case is still out on appeal and at the same time he's still the head of the Carpenters. And how long did it take for them to get you out of your job?

A.J. It's funny because ... Forget it. I mean, it's not funny, but I'm ... I'm kind of forgetting but wasn't it--wasn't it like, about two years. I can't remember if it was one year or two years but I think it was two years from

J.L. Yeah. I think it was two years,--

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. right,--from when we first--you know--had that first visit about the

A.J. Yeah. Right.

J.L. Okay. So any thoughts on having a convicted felon at the head of your former union that you paid dues to for sixteen years?

A.J. Well,--you know--it's just--you know---to use an old golfing term,-you know--par for the course. You know? I mean, that's .. that's it. You know? It's kind of like the Bernard Kerik thing. You know? It's like ... I mean, if anyone thinks that the reason that he isn't going to be the Homeland Security person is because of the nanny .. You know? I mean, he was a City employee. That's what it was. It's like, I mean, you can only imagine the skeletons in his closet. You know?

J.L. Just keep tumbling out, a new one every day.

A.J. Of course ?? (laughs)

J.L. Okay. So, yes. Well, and it's true that every head of the District Council has either been indicted, ethically

A.J. The Carpenters especially.

J.L. found floating in the river so it's Yeah. Okay.
So ...

A.J. Yeah. I mean, The Carpenters were ... I mean, the Carpenters are especially bad because they're the oldest union, for one thing, and so they're the most ingrained in all of this ... You know?

J.L. Mob stuff.

A.J. Yeah, all this corruption.

J.L. Yeah. So

A.J. And now the ... now this whole thing with the Women's Committee. I mean,--you know--good luck to them but I feel like it's hard not to just--you know ...

J.L. It's a contradiction.

A.J. I mean, talk about too little, too late. You know?

J.L. Right. But it's a very interesting ...

A.J. Yeah. Yeah. You know? Now they're going to pay for seven women to go. You know? I mean ...

J.L. You're trying to be good union members in the institution that's fundamentally very flawed. Right?

A.J. Yeah. Yeah.

J.L. So I hate to ask you this question; I know it really seems like cruel and unusual punishment, but I'd like to hear what you have to say about women in the trades at this point, having been a pioneer, struggled to learn your craft, made a living, tried in so many, numerous ways to help other women and be a spokesperson. So what are your thoughts?

A.J. Well, it's like I can do ... It's like I told you earlier. You know? I mean, the thought of it still excites me. I mean, it still excites me when I hear about a woman that's doing nontraditional work. And then, of course, it's always like a bigger mystery when I find out that they're being effective somehow; that they're either effective ... You know?--'cause I always felt like I wasn't effective in my own ... it's like I wasn't effective in my own life except I did bring home a paycheck for many years. But it felt like I wasn't effective as far as, like,--you know--getting the respect on the job or .. or even doing work with other women to change things. I mean, I feel like I tried to do it but I always felt like I was so stymied myself,--you know--even depressed from what was going on in my own life. So even though I went through the motions of showing up at things I don't feel like I was that good of [an] advocate for women,--you know?--despite the--you know--the attempts that I made at joining and being part of. But ... So when I ... when I hear about women that are doing that, either just--you know--doing the work 'cause they like it and they're good at it and they're earning the big bucks and they're doing it;--I mean, I know several that are doing that now,----and--you know--at different levels: like some have been doing it for a long time; some are just starting doing it,--and every time I hear about it it's kind of like it's .. it's a familiar thing. I mean, I feel .. I think it's a great. But the whole thing about critical mass. You know?

J.L. Um-hum.

A.J. It's like, I mean, part of me just always thinks, like, either ... I mean, I just have a totally different makeup than me;-- either they really just, like, are in it for the individual solution; like, somehow they've made their peace with it .. But the ones that are organizing with others for change, that's the ones I can't see how they can--you know--like ... like, who's the woman in Oregon that I met in Chicago?

J.L. Ashland .. Connie .. Connie Ashford or Ash--

A.J. Yeah. Yeah! I mean, like, I almost saw ... Like,--you know--that kind of thing,--you know--where she just, like, seized upon it and made it be so,--you know--almost from the Chicago experience. And,--you know--that just ... that just wasn't my experience. And I feel bad about it. But--you know--good for them if they can do it.

J.L. Okay. So one ... I want to go back and fill in some of the gaps that that we had in .. in earlier interviews. And,--you know--originally this wasn't going to be a book and now it's turning into a book so we just want to fill in some gaps. So we'll just quickly run through these questions on page two, which is:

Okay, the name of the college that you attended in Kansas?

A.J. Well, there were two of them. I started out at the Catholic women's college, Mound Saint Scholastica in Atchinson where my mother had gone and my father had gone to the men's college, St. Benedict's, and of course, now it's coed and it's Benedictine. But then, I mean, I actually dropped out of college in my sophomore year. And I only half jokingly say this but it is kind of a joke because all the trouble I got into at the Board of Ed from saying that I was going to change my title to Homocidal Lesbian Terrorist--that was based on a cartoon by Hothead Paisan. So, anyway, I don't know if I told you that whole story. But then I heard that over at--you know,--this was, like, 1970 and I heard that in Lawrence, Kansas, at the University, they had bombed the computer center and set the Student Union on fire so I transferred there immediately--you know?--because--you know--it was like ...

J.L. political action.

A.J. Right,--political action.

J.L. And you graduated?

A.J. I did graduate.

J.L. and... and what was your major?

A.J. It was psychology and speech communications and human relations. Oh dear.

J.L. All of which you had to call on at the Board of Ed, thanks to ??

So you attended a CETA program. Was that in Kansas?

A.J. Yes. It was ... Let's see. When was that? I did something CETA in Kansas because .. What did I do? No. I think I just .. I think I did ... I think I had a CETA job when I was in Kansas and I went to a pre-- .. I did go to a pre-apprenticeship program while was in Kansas.

J.L. And pre-apprentice for which trade?

A.J. That was for masonry, actually.

J.L. Masonry? Oh, okay.

A.J. Yeah. It was the Mason's pre-apprentice, kind of like NEW for Masons only it was, like, male run.

J.L. Marty Pottenger was in Masonry in Florida.

A.J. Really?

J.L. Yeah. That was how she got in.

A.J. Yeah. It was Masonry. And also I went to ... I did go to Kansas City, Kansas, Voc Tech to Carpentry school too. And then I became a handywoman for this slumlord.

J.L. Right. You talked about that. And what about the community college program? Was that at Onondaga BOCES or those are two separate things?

A.J. Well, then I moved to New York. Okay? In 1981 I moved to New York and I did a CETA program at Onondaga Madison BOCES in the multiple trades.

J.L. Oh.

A.J. It was kind of like--you know,--it was all the building trades. It was, like, carpentry and electrical and things like building maintenance.

J.L. And were you the only woman?

A.J. I'm trying to remember. It seems like there was one other woman. It was all ?? though.

J.L. Okay. And then the community college program? That was separate?

A.J. Yeah. And then I went ...

J.L. Okay. So you went to many programs trying to learn how to do this.

A.J. Yeah. Yeah, I did.

J.L. Okay. Now, it was interesting in ...in that program you talked about you fell in love with woodworking.

A.J. Yeah.

A.J. And tell me about .. I mean, describe ... What did you ... How do you fall in love with woodworking? What attracted you and what's special about it?

A.J. Well you know--really I think ... I think it was, like, I had a great teacher; Like, I had this Professor, Liz Bradbury, and she had ... I had never ... She had her Master's in wood from ...

J.L. Who knew?

A.J. Yeah, I know. Exactly. Who knew? She had her Master's in wood from I think the Philadelphia College of Art or some place--some school in Philadelphia she had gotten a Master's degree in wood and she was truly an artisan and a technician. Like, she was .. she was kind of like .. She had all the skills but definitely not blue-collar; definitely not carpentry, although she could do all that, but it was like, almost like a different level. Everything was art with her. You know? And she was really great on the machines. I mean, she had mastered all that so well that it wasn't even an impediment. You know? It was like ?? she was just into creating. And she was only twenty-six, so it was like,--you know---

J.L. And she wanted to transmit her knowledge.

A.J. Yeah. And she was a college professor so

J.L. And she was supportive.

A.J. Yeah. Yeah. Like, yeah. Like,--you know--really, really nurtured the women.

J.L. And were ... were there ... there were other women. That was a whole other environment.

A.J. Yeah. Yeah. And there were other woman that she actually favored so it was, like, you couldn't help but sort of thrive under her tutelage because she made it be that way. You know? I mean, she was so .. You know? She was a personal friend. She's still a personal friend. She's--you know--like ...

J.L. And it only lasted one year and you felt like you would have liked to have it last longer.

A.J. Right. I felt like I would have liked to have it longer but--you know--there was the class issue,--you know?--like, I needed a job and I wasn't good enough to be a one of a kind artisan yet or I felt I wasn't. And I wasn't.

J.L. And what did you love about the wood working? I mean, what ... what is it? Tell me what's special about it or

.....

A.J. Well,-you know--the whole thing about--you know--the connection to nature, I guess: the wood. The wood is a living ... You know?-unlike all the other building trades. I mean, wood is like--you know-the .. It fit in with everything else. You know? You know? It's alive. It's from trees. It's unpredictable. It's un--you know,--in many ways it's unstable. I can relate .. No. It's,--you know-it's like--you know-you never know what it's ...

J.L. ??

A.J. You know-it's going to, like,--you know--that's going to change no matter what you do to it, it's always going to change anyway. You know? It's going to ... You're never going to be able to ... I mean, you can shape it. You can do all this stuff to it, but it's going to .. it's going to do it's thing anyway.

J.L. Do you think that you will in years to come, work with wood on your own, like build things?

A.J. I do.

J.L. You do?

A.J. Believe it or not, for somebody who doesn't do anything with wood I have a garage full of tools and I think, on a regular basis, how I'm going to get back to it. You know? I'm going to--you know--like, get back in touch with those skills and ... because the thing is, there's .. I feel like,--you know-I got to a certain level and then never went any further. You know? I never went to the part where now it's just pure creativity 'cause I have so much confidence and skill. My skill level is so great, my confidence is so great that now all I get to do is create. I never go there. And you don't get there without working. So I got bogged down in oppressive work,-that's my excuse;-I got bogged down in oppressive work and life in general,---you know,--like country/western dancing; we can't take away from that,--and then could never really commit to the hobby. Because I think it would be a great hobby.

J.L. And it still can be.

A.J. Yeah, and it still can be. I mean, I have a lathe. I have a brand new lathe that I spent a fortune on that I've had about-Oh I forget now if it's one or two years only that' sitting out in my garage that--you know--I haven't really made the commitment You know? And I feel like, okay, the lathe is an intimidating piece of equipment,--you know,-like the shaper is intimidating---you know? It's like,

J.L. But you know how to use it?

A.J. The wood's whirling at you.

J.L. Uh-huh.

A.J. Well, I've studied it. I was taught,--you know--at community college and I've taken .. I've been to week long classes at the Brookfield Craft Center. But now I've been away from it for ten years; I probably ...--you know,--except for the .. After I bought my lathe I spent a month on it, and then some little piece ... You know? There was a fatality in the New York Public Schools in the shops there was one fatality and it was on a lathe. You know? A piece jumped loose and hit some kid in the head and killed him. It's like, it is ...

J.L. Scary.

A.J. You know, wood's .. wood is unstable. You know? It broke ... You know, it broke apart and--you know--killed this kid, so you always think--you know--go to the--you know--worst possible scenario; things that could happen. But ... but then I think, okay, well, the solution of that and what I want to do anyway is well, you work in ?? You know? Like,--you know--make small objects. I mean, there's a woman,--I think .. I think her name's Bonnie Klein, famous woman woodworker, her whole thing is miniature turnings. She's got videos. She's got--you know--all this stuff. You could just--you know--learn from her. So it is a fantasy to get back to it but ...

J.L. Um-hum. It sounds like more than a fantasy. I mean, you have the equipment and the skills and the dream. So ...

A.J. Yeah. Yeah.

J.L. Yeah. It's nice. I like that idea, I who can't build anything. So you worked on the National Trust for Historic Preservation at Lyndhurst in Tarrytown and you described that program as a sham. So I'd like to know, how so? And you use the description of being taught how to strip rubber and I .. I didn't know what that means.

A.J. I don't either. What could I have possibly meant: strip rubber?

J.L. Okay. Well, you were saying, though, that the program was a sham. So how was it a sham? I mean, you ...

A.J. Well,--you know--for me I mean, at risk of being the most negative person you ever interviewed,--you know--I never in a million years ... You know, I'm not really a city person so I never in a million years thought I would end up in the New York metropolitan area. But the reason why I came here is because after my ... getting my Associates degree in Wood working from that college in Western New York, I got an apprenticeship with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which I had applied to over a several year period and hadn't been accepted. And this time I had been accepted. You know, I love old houses. You know? I loved the lost arts, quote, unquote,--you know--all the fabulous handiwork that went into making all these ornate and beautiful old homes and properties. And so I go to Lyndhurst which is a spectacular place and everything, but now not only am I working

with all men, but living with them too. You know? So now it's like, a twenty-four hour a day thing. You know?

J.L. Sleeping with the enemy.

A.J. Yeah. You know? So it's, like, now I don't even get to go home at night. And part of it was my own thing once again,--you know--finances. But ...

J.L. 'Cause it was low paid.

A.J. Right. It was low paid.

J.L. You're out in the country.

A.J. Yeah. Well, yeah, but, I mean,--you know-it was in Westchester. It wasn't ... You know? But it was like, this mansion on the Hudson River. But I don't know. It's like,--you know-- I felt like, once again, I felt like that I wasn't given the same opportunities. Like,--you know--we would go out and do field work. Like some of the people were sent to do the work on Gracie Mansion. Some of the people were sent to do the work on some spectacular homes in the area. You know? You know,-- the good jobs. Like, I felt I was never given the good jobs. I felt like I was, at one point, I .I was sent to paint a house in Ossining, but I felt like .. and,--you know-I went and I did it and everything,--you know--but I felt like,--you know--that's a whole lot different than,--you know--reproduction moldings at Gracie Mansion or--you know--some of the stuff that I had been at the armory

J.L. And were all the teachers male?

A.J. Oh yeah.

J.L. Oh yeah.

A.J. Everybody was male.

J.L. I'm wondering what the numbers are now for that National Trust Historic Preservation or if there's any females and ...

A.J. I know, or even if it exists. I don't know because, once again, then I got tired of that subject because ...

J.L. And you went from there to Central Park.

A.J. Yeah. Just .. Again, that was a financial decision.

J.L. And you said that you saw the notice for the Central Park job at the Apprentice School. So was that the Carpenter's Apprentice School?

A.J. No. It was the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

J.L. Oh. Oh, there. Okay.

A.J. Their,--you know--their shop. I saw it on the bulletin

board in their shop. You know? The Central Park Conservancy had contacted them about

J.L. And that's why the Central Park Conservancy you were working alongside city workers who were getting ... They were city workers. Right?

A.J. Right. Right.

J.L. And then you were working for the Conservancy so that was non-Union so there were two different wages ... Union and non-union.

A.J. Right. And so that was sort of like ... that was kind of like another take on where .. You know? Here I was doing, like, kind of the more interesting work in Central Park for no money, and then you had the City workers who were doing--you know--making bench slats for huge money.

J.L. Yeah.

A.J. And that's how I became a City worker. Money won out. You know? That's what-, you know--really inspired me to take the test to be a City Carpenter because all of a sudden it seemed like--you know--even though the work in Central Park was pretty interesting and we worked in ... it really was. I mean, it was like,--you know--long construction,--you know?--making things out of cedar logs that they were bringing these logs--you know--truck loads of cedar in from upstate and you would craft all this stuff with--you know--basically ...

J.L. Like what kind of stuff?

A.J. Well,--you know--the pergolas, all ... everything in Central Park;--all the structures in Central Park,--you know?--the Cob cobs, which are, like, gazeboes. It's another word for gazebo;--all the benches--everything .. all the cedar in Central Park is made by the Conservancy, not the city workers. All the City workers do was ?? Park Workers, the

J.L. Right.

A.J. The high pay--in the Carpenter's Union

J.L. Okay.

A.J. in the Parks Department that make bench slats or--you know--some sort of, like,--you know--not creative but ...

J.L. routine ...

A.J. Yeah, routine or

J.L. but for big bucks.

A.J. Yeah, right. Right. You know? And they don't work very hard, basically. You know? We worked so hard. You know? Like, that was the thing. And that was, well, of course,--you know--you could say that--you know--says a lot about my character. But,--you know,--

then I decided that I needed lots of money and less hard work even though the work wasn't as fulfilling,--you know?--because that's what it was. You would see all these City Carpenters that weren't doing anything were making a lot of money, and here you were a craftsperson,--you know--you were doing all this really fantastic, stimulating work but you were making eight dollars an hour.

J.L. Tell me what year did another woman show up when you got to be a Carpenter for the Board Of Ed? You were the only woman for a long time and then another female Carpenter came.

A.J. Yeah. Yeah. It's funny how I've blocked all that. All of a sudden I can't even remember her name. I can see her face and I can't even remember her name. Lisa ...

J.L. Lisa.

A.J. Her name's Lisa, yeah. And it was a while down the road there, like,--you know--the '90's,--like the early '90's.

J.L. Wow!

A.J. I think I was already a foreman. I don't think she came while I was still a Carpenter.

J.L. In 1988 you took the Supervisor's test and you did very well. Do you remember your ranking the first time?

A.J. I don't remember. I don't. I'm thinking ... I'm thinking it was like, twenty-three or something, the first one.

J.L. But the other one was twenty-two, the one right before the ...

A.J. Yeah, I know. That's why it's possible that I'm always twenty-two or twenty-three?

J.L. It is. Yeah. quite good. One of the references you made in our first interview was you said at the Board Of Ed they did the opposite of anything you wanted when .. "They" that you were talking about was Supervision? Like, if you wanted--you know--to do X, they would always give you the opposite, you were saying then.

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. So it'd be people who had power over you, Supervision.

A.J. Yeah. Yeah. That's the way it ... That's the way it felt. It's kind of like, the--you know--the same thing about--you know--they were--you know--they want to give you any ... any tools to succeed. You know? they just You know?

J.L. Information or ...

A.J. Right. It's was just, like,--you know--well, she wanted to do this so--you know----

J.L. here you are.

A.J. Right.

J.L. You told me in that interview that you didn't get called from ?? and you should have sued them just on affirmative action grounds. Can you explain New York City requirements regarding affirmative action, 'cause you were the only female on the list so I'm assuming that's what ... on those grounds that-you know--...

A.J. Yeah. Well, of course, now it's all ... I don't even know if there is affirmative action, it's all been so watered down now.

J.L. Yeah. Yeah.

A.J. But at that time I think it was kind of like a ...--you know?--they'd have all these ... all this stuff in writing about--you know--all these affirmative action policies and all this stuff that--you know--many places .. I mean, ?? would have been honored to give preferential--quote, preferential treatment to a woman having, of course, the background and understanding to see that if a woman even showed up on the list she already must have done ten times as much as--you know? But that's just the feminist orientation that I have that doesn't really ?? much in this system.

J.L. You mentioned a black man - a Carpenter who wanted to run for Shop Steward and he was told that he couldn't. Who was he told by? By the union?

A.J. You know, I'm trying to remember who that was.

J.L. There probably weren't many.

A.J. Conrad? Yeah. No. I think that was my friend Conrad [Headley] [sp?] that ...

J.L. You also ... I mean, to switch to a broader topic, you said that the experiences of the minorities in the Board of Ed mirrored those of tradeswomen.

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. And how .. how so?

A.J. Although now I think that's changed, 'cause now there's more more men than-more minority men than women. But--you know-it's just like a very--you know--predominantly white, blue collar place and so there was resistance to ...

J.L. The other.

A.J. Yeah. there was resistance to the other. But then the more .. the more the other got removed, you know--like ...--you know? First there was resistance to minority men, but then, if there was a woman it was like, OOO! You know?--worse resistance to her. And then if it was a .. if there was a lesbian or a woman of color or a lesbian woman of color,--you know--you know--the ladder

J.L. Well, you had talked about when you were Acting Supervisor, and you said that the corruption that goes on in the rank and file you can't even imagine. And you still find it rather astounding that there was a lot of corruption daily

A.J. Yeah, that ... Well, some of those white ... I mean, I don't know. Some of it I've seen, like, it's just endemic to New York City. I mean, I had never seen anything like it. And I .. really ... I participated in it, which is ultimately how I lost my job.

J.L. Okay. So, yeah. We were talking about the corruption and you were saying it's endemic to New York City and ...

A.J. Yeah. I mean, I don't know ... Or maybe it was just, like, -you know-it's the first time that I had really had a job for so long so I saw the way thing worked. Or maybe it was ...it's like the union and civil service, or the combination of civil service and the union or something, because, I mean, I know that ... I think that New York City is the only municipality in the country that pays union scale, -you know?--the City workers. Like, I think that it's ..that part is unique to New York.

J.L. You mean that Union Carpenters in the City will make the same as Carpenters, like, on commercial construction.

A.J. Right. Right.

J.L. It's prevailing rate? Is that what you call it?

A.J. Yeah, prevailing rate. And I don't think that that exists anywhere else in the whole world, or I'm not sure but I heard that at one time. Do you know?

J.L. I don't.

A.J. I think that's the truth. So ... But so separate from that is the part about-then there's the part about if they're good enough for government warped mentality. So then they're making all ...

J.L. meaning?

A.J. Meaning that--you know--everybody's kind of working at half steam. So they're making all this money; then they aren't producing a whole lot. I mean, and ... and the worst part of it ... I mean, there were times at the Board of Ed where--you know--I mean, periods where--you know-years would go by and--I mean, this is what I meant by the corruption is that the production was so low, I mean, it was practically at a stand still.

J.L. Well, you know, it's interesting because I'm so used to reading and knowing about the custodians. They're kind of like ... they're .. It's so well known that--you know-how the work rules work to their advantage and they make so much money and nothing gets done.

A.J. Right.

J.L. That's fairly well known. The stuff with the trades in the different agencies isn't well known,--you know?--

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. Even though some of these exposes have been coming out. And, of course, it confirms what you had told me.

A.J. And I think it's particularly bad at the Board Of Ed. Of course, I didn't work for any other agency, but I think it's the worst at the Board Of Ed because they were a non-Mayoral agency. So some of the other stuff at the Mayoral agencies

J.L. There might have been more accountability?

A.J. Right. But probably not, like, a normal amount of accountability but probably ... I can't imagine that any place had less accountability than the Board of Ed.

J.L. Well, it's interesting because now it is under the Mayor's supervision. It's the Department of Education

A.J. Right.

J.L. and we have a new system for, like, the last two years/

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. And it's ...--you know,--some of these investigations have been going on,

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. and the exposes and the Mayor says he's shocked and appalled. But I wonder how much they're really going to work to change it.

A.J. I know. I know. I wonder too,

J.L. Yeah.

A.J. Although certainly on my way out I did see a ... a change happening. There was a change happening.

J.L. I know. And how was that manifesting itself?

A.J. My exodus being a huge change. But (laughs) but--you know--it's like--you know--I mean, that I was the first Carpenter fired, I mean, since .. There have been other Carpenters fired since. But,--you know--you figure how long has the agency been going? I'm the first one fired.

J.L. Really!

A.J. So ...

J.L. Another distinction.

\ A.J. Yeah.

J.L. Another pioneer!

A.J. (laughing) Right. Right. And a distinction of-you know-- being fired from a job that's impossible to get fired from. What an honor!

A.L. Congratulations. Now, you told me about a meeting where you were the acting Shop Steward and Charlie Fanning stuck up for you to a degree and allowed you in a meeting of stewards as a guest rather than really sticking up for you.

A.J. Right.

J.L. And you described a man who ... you were back up to this other guy that--in Queens that they had chosen to be their Steward and you said: "It's just incredible who they picked to represent them, somebody having an inability to articulate grievances for the others." I mean, what have ... what did you see with Stewards? You were trying so hard to be a Steward.

A.J. Right.

J.L. But what was the system like with Stewards and did it improve with Power's? I mean, was there ... Did he try to .. I mean, did it make a dent?

A.J. No! And it was so interesting because at the Civil Service At-Large meeting, -you know-I would see Irene [Soloway] and it would seem that she was sort of effective, although, of course, she exited too, but--you know--under much different circumstances than me. But ...

J.L. But she was in a different agency.

A.J. Right. She was in a different agency. But she was a Steward and she--you know-- had a different relationship ...

Tape Two

J.L. So this is tape two, on December 16th, with Ann Jochems, and we're revisiting the Union meeting from hell. So, Ann, could you just quickly speak about this?

A.J. Well, I was very interested ... Oh, go ahead. I'm sorry.

J.L. No, no. Go ahead. It's your story.

A.J. I was very interested in ... Oh, I was very interested in labor unions and unionism,--you know?--and so I went to the Cornell program, the Trade Union Women's Studies thing and tried to be active with other tradeswomen, and then--you know--figured, well, bloom where your plant is so I thought I might--you know--try and get involved with the union on my job. Like, I had attended ... Oh,

what was it called?-some .. some .. some political group at the Board Of Ed. Oh, I forget. But anyway, I thought-you know--I asked the union rep, Charles Fanning, how you became a Steward and he said: I appoint them. And you can be one, or something. You know? Or ... Like, I didn't know .. I didn't know. I mean, in some places they're voted in and in some places they're picked.

J.L. Uh-hum. Right.

A.J. So he said I could be one. So ... so I went to this meeting ... and I forget how long I'd been there now but maybe--I think I was a foreman, but-you know---

J.L. That doesn't matter in the trades.

A.J. Right.

J.L. Okay.

A.J. It didn't matter. So anyway, so I go to this one meeting and--you know--the guy .. I guess I was a back up to the .. You know, I can't remem-- ... This was so long ago I can't remember the details, but I I remember that it was very negative and one guy was, like, ... like, vicious against me. Like, he didn't even want me in the room or he didn't want me at the meeting. He certainly didn't want me talking, and there was no way in hell he was going to let me be a Steward.

J.L. And this was a union brother?

A.J. Yeah. Yeah.

J.L. (laughs)

A.J. So he's, like, what's she doing here? Or something like that. You know?

J.L. And .. and Fanning didn't even really say,--you know,-- Well, she's a steward or she's a carpenter and she's a member of the union and

A.J. Right. That's what he should have said. Yeah. But instead, he tried to water it down and say, Oh,-you know,--she's here as a guest,--you know?--after he told me he was appointing me to be the Steward 'cause I'd asked him to. You know? So he watered it all down and--you know--and then he just you know? I mean, you know,--that kind of thing. He basically just, like,--you know--bad vibed me out of there.

J.L. And this other guy who ... Does he stand out in your memory as this person who they chose to represent them that you ...

A.J. You know, that's what's so weird because I'm trying to remember what the issues were. And it gets all mixed up because it was so corrupt,--you know?---like, the job was so corrupt; the work rules--everything was so corrupt there, and then .. and then the Union--you know,--and they're so corrupt but then

they kind of try and have this moral high ground about--you know--workers' rights. And then they're corrupt, and then the job's corrupt. And then you try to bring the two together and make some good happen. I mean, what's the chance of that? You know?

J.L. Yeah.

A.J. I mean, you take garbage and garbage and put it together and hope something good comes out of it and it was like,--you know--how's that going to happen? You know? But I can't even remember what the issues were. I mean, they got all corrupt money.

J.L. Well, I remember ... Yeah.

A.J. It was always money.

J.L. And also, at one point, they were trying to demand accountability and that was another thing,

A.J. Oh yeah. And that's when .. You know?

J.L. That they really wanted--you know--to let the union defend them from accountability.

A.J. Yeah. Right. Yeah. They wouldn't want that,--you know?--because ... But then there's .. And then there's the safety stuff which is--you know--a horror show

J.L. Yeah.

A.J. because the thing about the Board of Ed was that--you know--this whole asbestos thing,--you know--of how .. but even before I started working at the Board of Ed they already knew that asbestos was carcinogenic.

J.L. Right.

A.J. They already knew that asbestos was everywhere in every school. So,--you know--I mean, if they had really gone by the law from the beginning--you know--no one would have been able to do anything because--you know--it's in the plaster, it's in the floor tiles, it's in the ceiling tiles, it's ... You know? Asbestos, it's in ... certainly the Fire ?? put out their stuff and all that, but it's in everything so it's like .. The floors are built with it. Everything was asbestos. And if you even mention ... Like, I mean, even when I was on probation,--you know,--like, you're drilling a door--you know--and the white--you know--the white asbestos would come flying out and everything, and I'd like,--I'd be, like, that's asbestos! You know? And they'd be, like, Oh,--you know--don't say that,--you know?--like it was ... You're on probation and you don't make an issue out of that. And ... And I remember one guy, Bill Platt, who did make an issue out of it and he was such a good ... he was such a great guy. He was such a hard worker. That was the unusual thing about him is that I remember he was a Jesus freak and he was .. just had a personal work ethic. I mean, he was very unusual. You know? He was the only person I knew there (laughs) that had that,--you know?--that just worked hard,--you know?--and actually did his job. But he was concerned ... You

know? He had, like, six kids or something and he was concerned about the health issue. And thy really blackballed him over that specific issue, the asbestos,--you know?--because that he wanted to work by the book.

J.L. Safe.

A.J. Yeah. He wanted to work safe,

J.L. and

A.J. And they were, like, ...

J.L. How did they blackball him?

A.J. Just giving him horrible jobs; putting him in horrible
.... treating him like a woman.

J.L. Like they did to you.

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. Treating him like a woman.

A.J. He finally left. He actually ... I mean, they could never have gotten anything on him. He's probably the only person that ever worked for the City that they couldn't get anything on. So they could have never gotten anything on him about--you know--how
....--you know,--his long lunch or anything. You know? He was ...

J.L. Well, see, you were talking about Irene [Soloway] being effective, but that's the issue she organized around, asbestos. But they were in the hospitals and it was different.

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. I mean, they fought about it. But she had back up from her ... It wasn't, like, don't talk about. It was like, let's organize around it.

A.J. Wow!

J.L. But it's a very different scenario. So you mean all these City carpenters who were making a lot of money are being exposed to asbestos?

A.J. Yeah. Oh yeah.

J.L. What about the school kids?

A.J. Oh yeah, everybody.

J.L. Everybody.

A.J. Everybody, yeah.

J. L. The principals and the kids and the trades and ...

A.J. Yeah, the trades ... anybody who worked there or went there ...

J.L. And especially the trades people,--right?---'cause they were drilling into it.

A.J. Yeah, 'cause they're more ...

J.L. More at risk.

A.J. up close to it.

J.L. More up close.

A.J. Right.

J.L. Yeah.

A.J. ?? Yeah. It's a night--it was a nightmare. But he .. that guy quit and he moved down to Al--

J.L. He moved down South with the six kids.

A.J. Yeah. He was just, like, Oh!

J.L. Okay. So you mentioned that you spoke at Central Park East School at a program for carpentry for the elementary school kids.

A.J. Yeah. Didn't I do that with Cynthia Long?

J.L. I don't know.

A.J. I thought she and I went to that.

J.L. Okay. Well, were there girls in that program? Can you remember?

A.J. I can't remember. I don't know.

J.L. Now, you have a license to teach carpentry, you mentioned.

A.J. Well, I got ... I did get a license to teach carpentry.

J.L. How .. how do you do that? How did you get ...

A.J. It's long since expired, I'm sure, because it was a license contingent on teaching, which I didn't really do. You know?

J.L. Oh! Yeah.

A.J. I mean, I did work for a year as the teacher's aid in the--what was that program for New York City?-Access For Women Program.

J.L. Access For Women.

A.J. which I got release time to do, which was ... Actually, there's a positive thing about the Board Of Ed, that they gave me release time to do that one .. I think it was, like, one morning a week for a year.

J.L. One semester/ For a year. And how .. What was that like?

A.J. It was great! It's like ...

J.L. Yeah? 'cause I've always been impressed by that program.

A.J. Yeah. It was like NEW. I mean, it was like NEW. It was all like,--you know--economically disadvantaged women who were trying to upgrade their job skills. And who was ... I think Michelle Olinek;--that was the instructor's name,--and she was dynamite.

J.L. And you were teaching carpentry?

A.J. Yeah. Well, all

J.L. And it was all ...

A.J. It was all .. It was, like, building It was building maintenance. It was almost like the program I did at ?? BOCES. It was a little bit of everything,--you know?--like wiring a lamp, setting tile, taking--you know--rudimentary plumbing and, yeah, and some carpentry,--you know?--like some joints and woodworking and ...

J.L. So how did you find that classroom experience with the girls? I mean, was it ...

A.J. It was great! I mean, they were so,--you know,--like eager to learn and--you know--all that. But the thing with me is, I didn't feel like I could .. I didn't feel competent that I could teach. I just felt ... I felt more comfortable being with Michelle. I felt like co-teaching I could do,--you know?--but I didn't want to just be the teacher. I didn't want to be the responsible adult in the situation. You know? I loved doing it. I loved helping Michelle and helping the women and,--you know--interacting with the women and everything, but I shirked from--you know--being the .. You know? I'm shy and I'm not loaded with confidence. You know? It's like .. I mean, I did jump through many, many hoops

J.L. Getting used to teaching is a challenge.

A.J. Yeah. that was ...

J.L. I mean, you have to ... it takes a while.

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. And the first year I taught it was--you know--it was

really a difficult year.

A.J. I mean, I jumped through a million hoops to get my provisional certification,-you know?-including, like .. I think I was .. I think I was third in the City on the Teacher Carpentry Prep .. On the Civil Service Teacher Carpentry ...

J.L. So you could have gone into a voc ed school?

A.J. Yep. and .. and the plumber that did it is now a principal. So look back, George Tromer. He was a plumber with the Board of Ed and ... and he taught at some vocational school in Staten Island.

A.J. Oh, and this was the thing, it was--Talking about the money, there was this chancellor's regulation where they wanted trade teachers so bad,--not like now where they've diluted it and they've done away with all the shops and everything,--but at that time,-this was the late '80's,--they were starved for carpenter teachers and--I mean, trade teachers, and there was a Chancellor's regulation that anybody who worked for the Board Of Ed as a tradesperson who would teach got the same salary. So it's like ...

J.L. But you didn't take advantage of that. You ...

A.J. Well, I ... I meant to and that's why I went to City College and--you know--I had twenty hours of vocational education. I prac--I passed the practical exam and was third on the Carpentry Teacher list, but I didn't seize the moment because I was too scared to teach. You know? I mean, George did it and he thrived. You know? He taught for about two years ...

J.L. So he was teaching ... Mostly it's boys in those programs,--right?--and he would have been teaching boys.

A.J. Yeah, mostly boys and bad boys. Boys who were tracked. Boys who other teachers can't handle and they track them into voc ed.

J.L. Oh yeah. Now, you said that the program has been diluted. They've gotten rid of the shops. How ... Why has that happened, because of money or ...

A.J. That's horrible. Yeah. I think it's money and I think it's culture. Again, they're just-you know--the kids ... the kids don't want it either. I mean, or they aren't given the opportunity to know if they want it. They're like, Oh yeah ... they turned .. They took all the shops and they made them be like--and Industrial Arts is this way too and Technology Education is this way. Technology Education used to mean vocational education. Now it means computers so that's the whole thrust. You see? They've turned everything into computer labs instead of Industrial Arts.

J.L. And the shop is Why have they gotten rid of them?

A.J. They took ... They brought dumpsters to all the schools. They literally just threw all the shops into the dumpsters. They

just totally did away with vocational education. I mean, there's probably like less than a handful of schools in the entire New York City school system that have a shop class.

J.L. Rebecca Lurie is working with this program that's like a pre-apprentice .. It's with vocational ed schools. But I wonder what's happened to that?

A.J. I know. I wonder too.

J.L. Yeah. In 1990 your photo was in the National Car--Carpenters Magazine. Why? What was that?

A.J. Oh, I forgot about that.

J.L. Was that a feature on women in the Carpenters Union or had you done something special?

A.J. I can't remember, Jane. It's like--you know,--it's a faded memory.

J.L. You haven't made a scrapbook of all your high points.

A.J. No. It's all in boxes somewhere but if you take ... You can take a look around here and see that there's not too much order to anything.

J.L. You said that you joined CLUW at one point.

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. Did you have any good experiences with CLUW?

A.J. Not really, but I'm just a joiner. You know? I'm just a joiner. You know? It's like ...

J.L. Well, there was CLUW that was active that you could join, that you knew where to go. And they were at least active at that point.

A.J. From the Cornell thing,--you know? After doing Trade Union Women's Studies at Cornell some of the women there were in CLUW and it was kind of like a--you know--a bridging ... trying to build all the bridges.

J.L. Now, I know you also worked with the New York Tradeswomen and do you want to talk a bit about that?

A.J. What was that? All I know is I went to ... You know, some of it was--some of it was that Northeast Tradeswomen conference. You know? Like ...

J.L. Oh yeah. Well, that was separate, though. I mean, the New York Tradeswomen was Barbara Trees ...

A.J. Yeah. But that was the impetus. Yeah. But that was kind of an impetus to

J.L. Oh, that coming out of working with them ???

A.J. Yeah. Yeah, 'cause they were successful. So then ... then--you know--we would come back here all fired up from .. with that kind of energy.

J.L. So did you used to go to those events on Friday night With Barbara Trees--that they used to have

A.J. Yeah. Yeah, I'd go to all those. Yeah.

J.L. Yeah. Some of them ... What kinds of things did .. Was it ... It was a long time ago.

A.J. Yeah. It was a very long time ago. You know? she ?? ... different things like safety issues and

J.L. But you did participate with that. Uh-huh.

A.J. They did. I ??

J.L. I knew that she was talking about mentoring for a while.

A.J. Some social skills.

J.L. Okay. You know, one of

there's a couple of notorious stories that you ... I hate to make you revisit this stuff but you mentioned that you were fighting to get pornography removed from the Carpenters' shop

A.J. um-hum.

J.L. And then you--after that you were sort of like much hated.

A.J. Um-hum.

J.L. Did that happen early on when you got to the Board Of Ed? What .. Describe what happened with that?

A.J. It seemed like it didn't happen until I was promoted to supervisor,--you know?-'cause it was from Brooklyn.

J.L. So it was to harass you they put it up?

A.J. You know? It was in Brooklyn. No, it was always up. It was always up but they .. I think, although--you know--there's the race ...

J.L. But you were new and

A.J. Right. Right. Right. I was just appalled by it. You know?

J.L. And so ...

A.J. And as a new supervisor--you know--I was especially appalled by it. And-you know,-I just felt like--you know--you know--just take it down. You know? But, well,--you know-it wasn't that ... So then they're, like,--you know,-one old timer--you know--**Nick** Mattera, who's like ... he just, like, basically, like, bring it on! You know? Like, that was here before you and it's staying;--you know?--that kind of thing. You know? And it was just, like, again, the feminism collided with ...

J.L. blue-collar culture.

A.J. Yeah,--you know?--and it was like, and I just didn't pick my battles .. I mean, I don't know how women make peace with that and say: Oh, that doesn't bother me, or--you know?--because it was so offensive.

J.L. Barbara Trees ... one time I used that expression in a question with her and she said: I hate that expression, pick my battles.

A.J. Yeah. You know? I mean, I know because that was the whole thing is like .. And even now I'll be talking on the phone to my parents,-you know,-now that I once again in a new profession and they'll be like,-you know,-don't stick your neck out!--you know--(laughing)--because they don't want me to be unemployed. You know? Let someone else stick their neck out!

J.L. But, so there was a lot of fall out in the pornography thing?

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. But you did get rid of it.

A.J. It was like the big ... main ... Yeah, I got ... Yeah. I won the battle but lost the war. You heard that expression?

J.L. Uh-huh.

A.J. (laughing) So ... But I did get rid of the pornography, although it still stayed in pockets of ... like in the electrical plant, but it got less visible. You know? But you'd still, like, see it some places. Like, I wanted to completely wipe it out but it was still .. It still was in some of the places, but--you know--like this big, right in front of me, it wasn't any more. But the hostility towards me was what eventually led to my demise. I believe that. You know? I believe it was just a building ... You know how you build a relationship; ?? Like I built my demise by-you know--trying to make a habitable work place for myself. You know?

J.L. Yeah.

A.J. And it's like they just ... I can't believe that the hatred that ensued just from wanting the dirty pictures down. You know?

J.L. So the situation of pornography in general, over time did it improve or ...

A.J. Well, on the surface it improved, but it manifested--you know--in other ways and it manifested in--you know--pockets of hated and sabotage directed at me throughout my tenure there, which I believe ultimately led in a whole conspiracy to ouster. You know?

J.L. Um-hum. Let's get to another subject that's painful but

A.J. Oh no! Another painful subject?

J.L. Just lesbian status and this male hostility.

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. So that was another hot topic, another way that ... You were ... identified yourself as a lesbian?

A.J. Yeah. Yeah. Well,--you know--I always did identify myself as a lesbian. And it's funny, even now I can hear people say,--you know,--like, like it's best not to say anything 'cause once you say it you can never take the words back. You know? You can never unsay anything.

J.L. It's kind of like ... I was thinking last night about interviewing you tonight and I was thinking it's sort of like saying don't be who you are.

A.J. Yeah. Right. You know? You don't ask, don't tell. You know? And it's like, that's just like a policy, like,--you know--we get to be a discriminatory employer so the policy is we discriminate. You know? Don't tell. You know? And that's the best ... That's, like, a policy. But it's like, then--you know,--the way it meets out is much, much worse,--you know?--and it's like, ... You know? So here that is,--you know?--and it's like ... I mean, it's so integral to who I am and it's so, like, contrary to the dominant culture in the trades,--you know?--in the maintenance field or,--you know--blue collar work: the Carpenters Union. And it's like, yeah, it's like the antithesis of their value system and and --you know,--who they are and all that. But again, I feel like,--you know--most people are just normal, decent people and everything else--you know,--al the other stuff is just, like, labels,--you know?--seventy percent normal; it doesn't matter. But then it's the few,--you know?--it's the--you know--

J.L. Who rile people up and who take action and who do mean things and

A.J. Right. You know? Very, very few that ...

J.L. Basically torture people.

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. Yeah. So ...

A.J. But it dominates you. And that's what makes--you know--all the havoc in the whole world, really,--you know?--those people

that ...

J.L. So that became a big issue for you at the Board Of Ed.

A.J. Yeah, it did. It did. And some of it,-you know--was 'cause--you know--like, I insisted on--you know--saying who I was out loud, which gave them fodder. You know? And then ... but it was interesting 'cause later I'd hear .. I'd here women say that--you know--they would never, never offer it, but if they were asked directly they would never lie about it. But ... so it's funny 'cause on my new job now--I've been there two months ... At the Board of Ed, like, the very--you know--very first week I was already out to everyone. But now I've been on my new job for two months, I've only come out to one person because I've kind of like ... part of it's like gun shy, not that I'm back in the closet or anything because, if asked directly, I would never lie.

J.L. Um-hum.

A.J. But it's amazing how you won't be asked directly.

J.L. Yeah.

A.J. At the party--at the union party last night, there were three of us standing in a circle,--you know,-the retired firefighter, our Union President, a man, so two men and me. And none of us knew each other very well, and the retired firefighter says to the Union President,-you know,-So, Ray,--you know,-do you have a family? And he's like: No, not yet. How about you all? And the guy goes: Yeah. He says ... Well, he says his thing. He says: Yeah, I have a wife and two daughters. And they both kind of looked at me but they don't say anything else. You know? Like, that's it. And I felt like ... and I'm not out to them, but I felt like: Well, that's don't ask, don't tell. I mean, it felt like that was ... You know? And I don't know if that was what it was or not, but I feel like that's what it was. You know?

J.L. Uh-huh. Yeah. Yeah.

A.J. And it's like,-you know--they didn't. Either it was such an ingrained homophobia that they didn't want to give me the opportunity to say who I was or I was just--you know--a coincidence and just a normal flow of conversation moving along. You know? I don't know. I don't know. You know?

J.L. So the Department of School Facilities put out a newsletter and they profiled this steamfitter--you had given me a copy of that--and it sounded like her experience was pretty positive in that newsletter article. And did you know her?

A.J. All of a sudden I'm totally blanking on a woman steamfitter, although ...

J.L. Well, anyway,--you know---all of a sudden--you know--they put this newsletter out and paid attention to the women in the ... in the skilled trades

A.J. Yeah. yeah.

J.L. Very few of them. There was a handful.

A.J. Do you know what year it was or ...

J.L. It was when I was as AUD so it was probably two thousand ... 2000.

A.J. Well, ... Well, some of it was .. Huh. 2000. Wow. I can't remember who that was. But, yeah, some of it was like ... You know, with every .. I mean, that's part of the thing too, part of the thing about-you know--pitting people against each other, too, is that--you know--is the negativity that I was embroiled in .. Well, naturally part of their success was that ...

J.L. Was keeping the other women away.

A.J. Yeah, and building the other women up. Like,--you know-it's not women; it's her,--

J.L. Oh yeah.

A.J. you know?--that whole thing. You know, it's not women. Like, look, we've got a good one over here. You know? Like,--you know--she's--you know--never--you know--said anything. Like, she doesn't care about the pornography. She just does her job. You know? That's all we ever want from anybody. You know? We just want them to just do their job and--you know--

J.L. Or not do their job, as the case may be.

A.J. Right. Yeah. That's even better if they don't ... You know? Just don't ... You know? They don't even care if they do their job if they don't talk, if they don't ask and don't

J.L. You had mentioned a black woman working as a plumber's helper and your .. your quote was "they just chased her out."

A.J. Yeah. I can't even remember who ...

J.L. Yeah. But ...

A.J. Oh, that .. No. That was ... that was Gayle Feinstein. she wasn't . She wasn't black. She was Jewish, actually. But, yeah. She was ... You know? I mean, she didn't let them get away with anything and so she had to go,--you know?--

J.L. Yeah.

A.J. Basically. And she was another one that was--you know--kind of had a work ethic ???

J.L. And she was a skilled plumber? She was a licensed plumber?

A.J. I .. I don't think she was a licensed plumber. I think she was a

J.L. plumber's helper.

A.J. Yeah. I think she was a plumber's helper but she just got tired of fighting. She was religious and she just said ... And that was the same thing with [Bill] Platt, the man, who took on the .. the safety thing. What it was is they felt like-they felt like the negativity, all of a sudden they felt like it was their moral obligation to put down arms. You know? They felt like,--you know ... I mean, it became so horrendous. I think this was the same thing for both him and her is they .. they all of a sudden they felt like now it was messing with their ... their faith--you know?--that it was so negative that they could no longer continue to be painted by participating in it.

J.L. You mentioned that the Department of School Facilities ... that they did sexual harassment training and you said nobody took them seriously. So what kind of sexual harassment training did they ...

A.J. Well, they actually,--you know--tried to--you know-- I forget what year it was. It was ... I think it was the early '90's or maybe it was the mid-90's where they--you know--whatever--you know--all of the best minds in the country had put together,--you know--when people had recognized that this might be a problem

J.L. Yeah.

A.J. If you put, like, one woman in with a hundred men things might not go very smoothly. So all the--you know--the great minds,--you know--from Cornell--you know,--like Casey Wagner; people who had .. who had really, like, studied sexual harassment--you know--and how to ...

J.L. in non-traditional settings ...

A.J. Yeah. Yeah. You know?

J.L. It was a very different thing.

A.J. Yeah. And so they put together these--you know--really great programs to try and make the work place more woman friendly. And it just wasn't time. You know? (laughs)

J.L. They just couldn't hear it.

A.J. Yeah. Right. You know? Or it just was, like

J.L. You can lead a horse to water ...

A.J. Yeah. Yeah! and it was, like, they were so immature and they couldn't--you know--wrap their feeble little mean spirited brains around it for two seconds,--you know?--and they just harassed the inanimate object called training. And they just, like ... I mean, they would just, like ... You know, they were cynical and sarcastic and, I mean, not one of them was open to it. You know?

J.L. Or at least they weren't going to show that they were.

A.J. Right!

J.L. Yeah. Talk about the one-in-three rule. Can you explain to me how it works against women?

A.J. Well, it's--you know,--it's made to give management control over the hiring process of . I mean, it's kind of a confusing thing but I think it's that when you pass a civil service test they ... they're .. you're called in threes, so-you know--they call one, two and three, and then they have to pick one of the three. But I don't even know if that's true. Maybe they don't even have to pick any. But I think ... I think the whole idea is--or they can pick one,. Do you know I'm not sure if they have to pick one or they can pick one. But anyway, then ... then it becomes two, three and four .. Say they pick one. Then it becomes two, three and four. Say they pick three. ?? Only gets three tries and now two's dropped twice. So then they pick two, four and five. then if they pick three, now two's out.

J.L. And then they're out.

A.J. Right, So,--you know?--and it's all for intangible reasons. You know? They don't really ... It's just subjective factors. You know?

J.L. Well, you mentioned that all this vocational education has been gone by the wayside. So the School Construction Authority had a program which was called Project Connect to reach out to minorities and women. Do you know anything about that?

A.J. I don't know anything about it.

J.L. It probably hasn't been a great success. In the article about Susan D'Alessandro in '94 it mentioned she was trying to organize craftswomen and she was doing this the same time as she testified as those hearing, the Commission on Human Rights, and shortly thereafter she was fired. And how was she trying to organize craftswomen at the Board Of Ed?

A.J. Well, I mean, again, I think that her experience was similar to mine, although she was a greater threat than I was at the time because she had reached a higher title;--you know?-like she had a high pressure license. And I think she was the only woman in the whole city to have a high pressure license, so--you know ...

J.L. One by one by one.

A.J. Yeah. So danger! Danger! Danger to the men. But-you know-you know--now she's got this incredibly competent credential. And so she became--you know--a target and under the microscope and-you know--felt like she needed support. You know? Of course, she was just--you know--like a big-hearted woman that liked helping others too. Her own experience ...

Side two

J.L. And also to muster some support for herself by bringing the women together. And that didn't go very far or ...

A.J. Right. I mean, well, there weren't very many women all along,

J.L. Yeah.

A.J. But throughout the five boroughs I think there was, like,- you know-four or five of us, I think. I don't think there was any .. really more of that.

J.L. Yeah.

A.J. I think there was, like, the plumber's helper and ...

J.L. the steamfitter

A.J. Yeah. Yeah, the steamfitter and ...

J.L. So .. but,-you know-there was a meeting or You really can't ...

A.J. Yeah. I really can't remember. You know? I just ...

J.L. But anyway, they do mention that. and I .. I know that- -you know-she was interested in doing that.

A.J. You know, and I know ... And, Yeah. And I know that she did get targeted. You know?

J.L. Okay. So when she left describe the ... I mean, she eventually was vindicated. But describe the ... what were the ramifications within the Board of Ed when that happened to Susan and then her case. Do you want to talk a little about that?

A.J. I don't know. I'm not sure. I mean,-you know--I mean, it was like ... it was really weird. I remember the last day on the job. I remember I was with her the day she got fired. I remember helping her carry boxes out to her car and ...

J.L. What was her spirit? She was angry?

A.J. She was pretty low. You know? She was pretty ... Yeah. I'd say Yeah. No. I'd say she was pretty depressed.

J.L. After working so hard to get it.

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. Yeah.

A.J. You know? She was--you know-- cleaning out her desk and all of that. You know? But, yeah, I mean, there was that undercurrent, and she did go on to prevail and win. You know? But

J.L. Did she go back to work when she won?

A.J. She did, even though she said all along she said she wouldn't. And that was what was ...

J.L. I know in that article she said: Maybe I'll win and I'll go back for one day,

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. And then I'll quit.

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. But she went back to work.

A.J. She did. She went back to work. And she seemed really changed by it. I mean, she seemed like ... Of course, she was so sick and we didn't know, or I didn't know. You know? She must have been very, very sick even when she went back and I didn't know. And she was very, very, like, quiet. You know?

J.L. She wasn't that feisty Susan fighting and ...

A.J. Right. She got ... No. She got totally changed. You know? I mean, she won the battle but lost the war also. Well, she won big. I mean, she won big but it wasn't ...

J.L. And there's probably no high pressure plant managers in there now, Female.

A.J. No. I'm sure there I know when I left there wasn't.

J.L. You know, it's interesting to me 'cause I was reading all the things you sent me over the years and all the newsletters from the Department that you worked for, School Facilities and there were a lot of women at the top in there. There were a lot of women managers. And all the things that I read say that women can make a difference when they're at the top. They can really reach out and they can really set a tone and they can really .. It didn't seem to work that way at School Facilities.

A.J. No, it didn't. And I never understood why it didn't. Just none of the right ... Just ... just they wouldn't ... You know? They had pressures ... I don't know. They couldn't really ... I guess none of them were feminists or it wasn't important enough to any of them.

J.L. Well, or maybe they couldn't see the forest for the trees,

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. because it seems like some of them got brought under the wing of some of these men who were pretty crooked.

A.J. Yeah. And the ones that did get a clue also knew ... Like, I remember Anna Tringle.

J.L. What was her position?

A.J. She was Director of Human Resources, which is a pretty powerful position.

J.L. Um-hum. Yeah.

A.J.J You know? I mean, it hires and fires. Right. It could be. And I remember she kind of got a clue but she's another one that's too .. funny, 'cause her husband was a firefighter. I remember I had lunch with her one day and she said all the stuff that I think helped Susan D'Alessandro win her case. Like, she told me, like, Oh, off the record this and off the record, that. You know? But one thing again she said at lunch was ... I asked her if she knew Brenda Berkman again and she's another one that said: Well, she had an agenda. You know? And it was like,--you know,--I couldn't believe she said it because she was saying all this other stuff. And she eventually left the Board of Ed because I think she just got sick of them or she saw the writing on the wall, or something. You know? But she was ... she had a lot of skills but--as a manager. You know? But, I mean, she just bailed. But then this woman, Fern Rosenfeld, who they got who was kind of an understudy to Anna, she just got horrible. I mean, she turned out ... She started out not too bad but by the end ... I remember I used to tell her,--you know--like, this was going on and that was going on and this was going on, she she-by the end she was just saying .. I mean, it was like--it was like "The Stepford Wives." She was like, I don't see it. I'm, like: Well, maybe they're just completely different people to you than they are to me, but I'm telling you this is how they are. This is how they are at home,--you know?--on the job. Back at the office this is how they are. Like, when they come over here to pick up their check maybe they're different. but,--you know--I've work with them day in and day out and this is it. She's like, Well,,--you know You know? But she made you feel like you were crazy. You know? Like, she was she wouldn't like, get it. You know? And it was so weird. And of course, she's still there. But,--you know--because--you know--it's systemic so

J.L. A woman who you think helped in the things that she said about ... helped Susan win the case, did she testify for Susan?

A.J. No, she didn't testify for Susan but I testified for Susan and I said a lot of the stuff that she had said off the record to get it on the record. Right.

J.L. ?? Good. So it was a systematic harassment of Susan to ... And she was also challenging the corruption right up front.

A.J. Yeah. right. You know? And ... and, yeah, and she-you know---she ..she was another one that--you know---called it like she saw it and--you know--didn't collude and

J.L. Um-hum.

A.J. You know? And she's a big dyke. You know? Basically,

that's what it was--was that-you know?

J.L. And that ... and she was out

A.J. Yeah.

J.L. and that drove them crazy.

A.J. Right.

J.L. Yeah. Can't have this.

A.J. Right. Right.

J.L. Okay. So Annie, well, I just want to thank you once again for participating in this, and I

A.J. Oh, I'm just getting started with this ??

J.L. hope that you,-you know--that you can recover from this and don't internalize this kind of thing that you went through that you just had to relive. I apologize. But thank you. How many women--how many carpenters did you work with? I ... I've got a couple of different numbers. I have two hundred and thirty and I have a hundred and forty-seven. But it probably varied over time. Right?

A.J. Right. Right. Yeah, it varied because different budgets; different budget cuts; lay offs, firings You know?

J.L. Uh-huh. firings

A.J. There were a few hundred.

J.L. Well, I want to wish you good luck in your new career.

A.J. Thank you.

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