

Interview With Eileen Sullivan Walsh

E. Testing: one, two, three. Eileen Sullivan Walsh, March 5th, 1996.

J. ... on March 5th, 1996, interviewing Eileen Sullivan Walsh. Testing. Testing: one, two, three, trying to see how we sound. Okay. Okay, beginning again: March 5th, 1996. Jane Latour at Wagner Labor Archives interviewing Eileen Sullivan Walsh.

Eileen, tell me a bit about the job, and your position with the Union, and what happened with the airlines?

E. The position I'm in now, you're talking about? ??

J. No. No, when ... when you left your Union position with the Transport Workers and your job ... in the airlines. All the people lost their jobs ...

E. Oh, okay. December 4th, 1991, Pan-Am went out of business. Prior to that, Delta had made a bid for the entire operation and people were scrambling as to whether or not they wanted to go with Delta or stay with what was called Pan-Am II, 'cause Delta was going to finance a Pan-Am II Corporation. People were selling their homes in New York and moving to Atlanta, and the rug got pulled out from everybody. Eleven thousand one hundred and ten workers were left high and dry when Delta decided, after winning the bid, that the company was no longer viable. It wasn't any longer viable because they had taken everything: key personnel, key routes and key management people, and so there really was nothing left. They literally raped the airline and then walked away and left us all--you know,--stranded with no jobs.

Q. Um-hum.

E. They were going to take eighty-eight hundred people out of the eleven thousand, and it wound up they took a couple of hundred people.

J. Um-hum. So what ... what was the Union's role in trying to deal with that?

E. The Union didn't take much of a progressive role at all in that they kind of said, well, there's nothing we could do. There's

Chapter--you know--Eleven and then Chapter Seven that occurs, so it's out of business and there's not much we can do. We, the employees, started a group called SELF:

J. Um-hum.

E. Severed Employees Legal Fund to try and sue Delta for what they did. We just received word on that and it's ... it's five years old now, that we lost in court. The bankruptcy judge ruled against us. One of the other things we're doing now is trying to fight for our proper pension now, because people who left prior to age fifty-five

Q. Um-hum.

E. will be only given forty-seven percent of their pension, when they were entitled to eighty-nine percent if they had worked after age fifty-five. So we're saying, in essence, we didn't choose to leave the pension plan. The company forced us to leave the pension plan by going bust.

J. Um-hum.

E. So that's something that's still being fought right now.

J. So how .. Was your pension vested?

J. Yes. Yes. We were vested, but unfortunately, the government gave Pan-Am five waivers to the tune of something like eight hundred million dollars that they did not have to fund the pension plan with the amount of money that was supposed to go into it. So your seeing your senior employees with thirty-five and forty years of service, now getting three and four hundred dollars a month pension with no medical coverage at all, so it's really a travesty what happened to these workers at Pan-Am. And we hold ... we hold a lot of the CEOs responsible for what happened as well as -you know, -Delta

Q. Um-hum.

E. for making commitments and then not following through on them.

J. So this group, did you look for a specialist in terms of pensions or what ...

E. Yes. We worked with some Washington people for a while, and we're still working with those people on ... on that end. But the ... the original law suit to sue Delta for losing our jobs, is over.

Q. Um-hum.

E. And there's no longer a cause of action there. That's been ruled against by the bankruptcy judge so ... But we ... we are still pursuing the pension issue.

J. Um-hum. So what was your position, at this time, in the Union?

E. At the end, I was Vice-President of ... of the Local. In 1991, I was furloughed, about three months after all the workers were. And, like I said, there was a scramble for people to move and follow these jobs to Atlanta and other places with--you know--Pan-Am II. And more than anything else, what we were trying to do was help these people relocate a lot of their furniture and housing kind of things, and trying to help them get back on their feet with routing them to other jobs and working with a place called Career Connections at the airport which helped, as a networking group, to get a lot of people re-employed. I went through the program myself and became a paralegal, through some funding that we were able to acquire from the government for all these displaced workers. So, pretty much, we accepted that it was over,

J. Yeah.

E. and there wasn't really much we could do to get Pan-Am back, or nothing we could do to get Pan-Am back. But the networking began with the workers and trying to help them get relocated.

Q. Um-hum. ... Has there been much effort to stay in touch with people?

E. Yeah. There's been a lot of effort. The department I was in,--the Motor Pool Department,--that I was originally in, we ... we ... It's funny! So many people working together for so long ... I don't even think we went to dinner once, while we were working together. But now, we have a picnic twice a year. Well, we have a picnic once a year, and then a Christmas party--you know,--once a year.

J. Um-hum.

E. So we're still meeting twice a year and keeping ... keeping,--you know,--keeping each other going, really,

J. Um-hum.

E. as well as ... There's a group called the Association of Former Pan-Am Employees, and we meet regularly, again, for networking and job placement and that kind of stuff,--support,--you know;--that kind of stuff. And we have another picnic once a year as well.

J. So what have you seen? I mean,--how ... how ... It's probably ... What's some of the employees' broad range of different types of experience?

E. Yeah, of course. Yeah. We've seen more ... The men,--the senior men,--devastated by this issue and very unable to carry on. I mean,--they just keep waiting for Pan-Am to open again. And ironically now,--you know,--there is word that Pan-Am is coming back. But these people are in their sixties and ...

J. But whether or not they'll be hiring,--you know ...

E. Yeah. Yeah. There ... There was a tremendous reluctance, on the part of most men, to get on with their lives. On the ... In fact, we did a TV show on that: the McNeil/Lehrer Report. I can get that ... a copy of that for you, ★

Q. Um-hum.

E. about the resiliency of women,

Q. Um-hum.

E. and how they just picked themselves up, dusted themselves off and said, Okay,--you know,--what am I going to do now?--where most men couldn't do that. And some that tried,--you know--really weren't very successful. This Career Connection facility that we were working through has documented that more women were successful than men were, trying to get on with--you know--finding a job, getting a new career, and doing that kind of thing.

J. I don't know if you've seen The (New York) Times, the

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series that they started on Sunday. It's a front page story, and they're doing it for six issues with ... a six part series on job loss. It said that there are millions and millions of people,--you know,--epidemic job loss throughout the country.

E. It wasn't just the job loss to them. Pan-Am was ... was an extended family.

J. Um-hum.

E. Many of the people that worked there were generation after generation after genera--. Mostly the men,--you know,--

J. Um-hum.

E. I have to say. But the things you could get done, on any given day at work, was anything from banking to getting your hair cut, to going to the doctor, to doing your job, buying gifts at the ... at the local store that they had,--you know? I mean,--it was ... It was a community of ... of people, not just--you know--workers working together,--you know,--quite unique,--you know,--and like I said, generation after generation.

J. Um-hum.

E. But it's certainly the loss of a job is ... is, in what I've read about--you know--that kind of thing. What I've seen is .. is worse than losing anything else because your whole identity is gone,--you know,--especially for people with thirty and forty years.

J. So how did this McNeil/Lehrer show come about?

E. Well, they were doing a follow up on this Career Connection;--

Q. Um-hum.

E. this facility that was at JFK Airport, helping the Pan-Am workers, and they got them hooked up with a few of us who successfully went through the program. And ... And it was televised ?? . A couple of years ago, when it ... when it first began, in like, '92, and then again around '94, to follow up on the women that had--you know--gone through Careers Connection and then going on to other careers,--you know,--and the men.

J. Um-hum.

E. And more often than not, you saw the men not successfully completing a lot of what their goals were,

J. Um-hum.

E. but you saw the women successfully completing what their goals were. ??

J. And what do you think accounts for that?

E. They ... They became stuck,--you know,--and unwilling somehow to really accept that this was over. I ... I think that they kind of went forward with it as .. as maybe rote, but not really believing that this whole thing was over.

J. Um-hum.

E. I mean,--I still have people, before--you know--the news that Pan-Am was going to open up again,--I still had people calling me saying "When is the jet center going to open again? When is this going to get back,"--you know. I would just encourage them,--you know--to get on.

J. Um-hum.

E. But the devastation was not just for the workers but their families as well. We had an incredible number of suicides and--you know--heart attacks related to the loss of the job. But I'd like to see that,--you know--the articles you talked about, because--you know--I'm sure I can identify with some of what I've seen,--you know--

J. Um-hum.

E. ??

J. What qualities do you think that the women bring to it? What .. What accounts for the difference ??.

E. I saw much more flexibility, much more acceptance of the situation, and taking stock of what they wanted to do with their lives now and making a ... a decision that it was time to move on. There just wasn't that reluctance. Why? I think ... I can speak

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for myself, personally. There have been so many things in my life that have made me have to evaluate my position and decide which way to move.

J. Um-hum.

E. I was always progressing and always moving in a different direction. I never got into a career or a job and then just stayed there. There was always--you know--room for advancement and a need for change for me personally.

J. Um-hum.

E. And I think a lot of women experience this kind of thing. And we're challenged every day,--

J. Um-hum.

E. you know--with some new item--topic-- (?)

J. Emergency.

E. you know,--whatever,--you know. There's always something that challenges us,

J. Um-hum.

E. and I think we're always in a forward mode. (laughs)

J. What ... What would you say about the quality of the training? But you studied paralegal.

E. I think it afforded me the opportunity to look at law for the first time,--you know,--intensely. I was in a four month program at Hofstra,--I'm sorry,--Adelphi. And I really enjoyed it and considered going on to be a lawyer, until this other position--you know--came up. It was a positive experience for me. I was very--you know--glad to take the opportunity to do it.

J. Um-hum. So you moved from that into working for the Association for Union Democracy as the Director of the Women's Project.

E. Right. Yeah.

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J. So tell me about that experience.

E. Sure. I knew Susan Jennik because, when I worked at Pan-Am, I became very familiar, as a shop steward and a union officer, I became very familiar with the Association for Union Democracy and the work that they did for union people. And I admired everything that they did. And she called to say that the Women's Project needed somebody. Would I be interested in it? And I said, Gee, this is ... this is great. It wasn't a lot of money at all. It was very little money.

J. Tell me about it.

E. I was very reluctant ... Yeah. I was somewhat reluctant to do it because,--you know--because the money was so bad. But I had just gotten out of paralegal school,

J. Um-hum.

E. and I knew working with her, I could learn more about the law, since she's such a fantastic attorney and--you know,--I would learn about the civil rights law and--you know--that kind of stuff. And I just fit in like a duck to water. It was such a great opportunity for me to be able to talk to women all over the country about problems at work,

J. Um-hum.

E. and how to resolve them, and what to do about them. And,--you know--it was really very challenging and very good. And ... And it validated what I had learned

J. Um-hum.

E. as a struggling worker at Pan-Am,--you know--being the first woman there, and that kind of stuff.

J. So what were some of the cases that you worked on? The issues

E. A lot of sexual harrassment issues,--discrimination,--women looking for non-traditional employment, knowing full well that they could do it,

J. Um-hum.

E. 'cause I ...

J. 'Cause you had a lot of experience with that.

E. Right. Right.

J. You could give them a lot of advice.

E. Yeah, a lot of ... a lot of moral support and advice,--
yeah,

J. Um-hum. Um-hum.

E. about how we did it. And I don't necessarily,--you know-- *
I didn't necessarily, at the time, really want everybody to go out
and shut down the job site like I did. But if that's the kind of
means that you need to use,--you know,--develop your support group,
get other people involved ... other women involved that wanted to
do it.

J. Um-hum.

E. Here ... Here is the Executive Order that protects you
and allows you to get this--you know,--this kind of a position,

J. Um-hum.

E. And see--you know--which direction that you want to go in.
And ... and I would meet with them, on occasion, or there was just
one woman individual. Sometimes I would talk to her or,--you
know--about what she did in getting her going,--The Boston
Tradeswomen Network ... I mean,--there ... there were networks of
non-traditional women all over the ocuntry

J. Right. Um-hum.

E. that AUD had connected with. So,--you know,--so the
system was really a lot there.

J. Yeah.

E. Just the women needed support.

J. The Boston Tradeswomen seemed to be ...

E. Very progressive.

J. really had a lot ... Yeah, very progressive;--a lot going on.

E. Yeah. Yeah, for whatever reason, there didn't seem to be that much of a ... Well, I shouldn't say that because I wasn't really involved in ... in the struggle that they had in getting it going, and so I don't know exactly what the struggle ...

J. Yeah.

E. But there seemed to be an acceptance--you know--in their State that this was something that was going to happen. We ... I guess we'd better work with it,--you know.

J. Um-hum.

E. Whereas, in New York, there was such a tremendous reaction ?? and such sabotage to kil it,--even now, to destroy it as best they can. ??

J. Um-hum.

E. But, yeah. They've got a great network going in the ... It's wonderful. It really saddens me that the NTN,--National Tradeswomen Network,--didn't continue,--you know--to ...

J. Um-hum. Yeah. They had a lot of trouble getting funding.

E. Yeah. ?? And they had a lot of internal problems, too. They didn't want tradeswomen actually on their Board of Directors. Yes.

J. Wow.

E. So I know there was some kind of political stuff going on inside,--you know--that ?? which was sad because they were doing a good job.

J. Because they did terrific work, yeah.

E. Yes. Yeah.

J. So it's like the only thing pulling them together

nationally, the tradeswomen, is the Tradeswomen magazine.

E. Yes. Yes. Yeah, that's all ?? doesn't do a whole heck of a lot. We're really on our own. You know,--the women out there are really very much on their own except for ?? Cincinatti ??

J. Well, I keep hearing about different parts of the country, like the Northwest, California, Boston ...

E. Oregon Tradeswomen Network. There's one there, too.

J. Yeah. Um-hum.

E. But they're so--you know, few,--you know,--it's really sad. Some of the stuff that we did with a group .. that I did with a group of women in AUD and The Women's Project was to critique the jobs and physically go to the job sites at five in the morning and count how many people were in, and then count how many of them were women to see is this 6.9,--you know? X

J. Yeah. Right.

E. Is this two percent, four percent,--you know,--one percent?

J. Did you ever get close to 6.9?

E. Yeah. As a matter of fact, we did!

J. Wow!

E. In the Federal building in ... I guess it was ninety ... *
Oh my goodness ??

J. The one down near Foley Square?

E. '92. Right. Was that '92?

J. I had heard about that. I had heard that women were really even formed a bowling team, there were so many women.

E. Um-hum. Um-hum. Yeah. There were just under thirty women out of five hundred and twenty-five men, so that was the 6.9 percent. *

J. Um-hum.

E. Yeah. And thirty is not a lot our of five hundred and twenty-five men, but

J. And what ... How could you characterize them? Were they younger women?

E. Yes. Yes.

J. Oh. Um-hum.

E. And very frightened about losing what they had;--very reluctant to speak to us.

J. And who were they .

E. when we came;--when we showed up.

J. Uh-huh. Uh-huh. And were they like, a disparate group in terms of trades and color? And what ...

E. Very diverse.

J. Uh-huh.

E. Yes. Yes.

E. And out of the thirty women, the majority were younger women, but with plumbers, carpenters, spacklers,

J. Uh-huh.

E. glaziers ...

J. Iron workers?

E. Yes. Yes, iron workers, a few of them;--just a couple,--maybe three of them. But it,--you know--it ran the gambit of all the trades,

J. Um-hum.

E. which was exciting to see!

J. Yeah. Yeah.

E. Of course, we wanted more than just thirty women. But-- you know,--it was exciting to see that they were there.

J. Um-hum.

E. But very competitive. Didn't even want to talk to us.

J. Um-hum.

E. And, in fact, one woman asked us to go away because she just ??

J. Now, who was "we"? You went with ...

E. A group of out of work ... No, women in the non-

J. Tradeswomen.

E. Yeah, tradeswomen in the non--trad---. Yeah. There were about four of us: Norma (Names ?) ??

J. And ... and whose idea was that?

E. It was mine, actually. ??

J. Great idea!

E. Let's go see if there are 6.9 percent women,--you know? Let's go count.

J. So you went to that job site. What other ones?

E. After that, there was one other construction site on the west side by one of the piers. I don't even remember the name of the company, but they were doing some work. And we watched there, too, and they had ... they were in compliance ... ?? I mean,-- there were two women and twelve men or something like that.

J. Yeah.

E. And we were excited to see them in there. Still, always the need for more women--you know,--to get more involved. But that really validated for us. We spoke to the Women's Bureau about

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that, to the Department of Labor... *

J. Uh-huh.

E. and told them about what we had done. And they were very excited that we were actually out there critiquing what was going on,--you know. *

J. Um-hum. What are some of the other things you did ??

E. I did a lot of speaking on sexual harassment, training and education of ... of different groups,--male groups. One, in particular, were the Marine Engineers Benevolent Association. *

J. Oh.

E. I would go to Maryland and ...

J. So after they changed leadership, they decided to institute some of that training?

E. Yes.

J. Oh!

E. Yeah. As soon as Larry O'Toole came on board. He was very open to it. And I went there, I would say, every two to three months when they would have a review ... *

J. And what kind of response did you get?

E. It was a very interesting group. It was ...

J. And did you ever see any women there?

E. One, out of about six visits,

J. Uh-huh.

E. there was one woman who was on the ships.

J. Um-hum.

E. A lot of the men voiced a lot of objection to having their little domain changed because there was one woman now. Some men,--

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you know--felt that it benefitted both males and females. But the majority of it, you saw the men were--you know--very concerned that this had to change. They didn't want anything to change. And I saw a lot of nervousness on the part of the men, not knowing how to speak to the women and what to say. One of them didn't even know what to call me.

J. Um-hum.

E. And until the end of the day, he wouldn't even speak to me during the class. So finally he came up to me and he said, "I don't know what to call you? Are you Mrs. Sullivan? Are you Miss Sullivan? Are you ..."--you know. I said, "My name is Eileen,"--you know. And that was just so bizarre to him,

J. Um-hum.

E. because he had an experience where he called a woman ma'am because that was his train--you know,--that was his upbringing, and she was furious at him for calling her ma'am. How dare ...--you know. So there ...--you know,--all those kinds of things were brought into play. And it was very interesting. I really enjoyed ... I learned a lot.

J. So did you get a chance to talk to this woman?

E. Yes. Yes, I did.

J. Um-hum. And what was her ...

E. She gave me a few horror stories from the beginning.

J. Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

E. But she said, for the most part, every ship she's been on, she's been respected and hasn't really ... You know,--the horror stories were more verbal. You know,--people would say things to her as she was coming on board. Nobody,--you know--touched or--you know--did any of that kind of violation. But,--you know--"We don't want women here." It was that kind of stuff that--you know,--in the beginning, that she had experienced. But, for the most part, it was ... had been a positive experience for her. And she was in about four or five years. She was an officer of some kind or other.

J. So were you able to break down the resistance, do you feel?

E. Yes. Yes. I felt very successful in that. We all seemed to part friends and have a genuine respect for each other. There was a high level officer in the room one day, and I'll never forget what he said,--you know. He was talking about, "I know how to motivate one of the guys. +

J. Um-hum.

E. I tell them, Hey ... " He used a dirty ... He used a dirty word, part of the male anatomy,--you know--

J. Um-hum.

E. "Pick up those tools and get going,"--you know. "But I don't know what to say to a woman to get her motivated the same way,--you know. What ... What What curse can I call her that's accepted."

J. Yeah.

E. So I asked the class "How do you feel about that?" And two fellows said they resented being called a name, part of their male anatomy. And how dare he do that. He was floored. He was absolutely floored,--you know,--and realized that he had to evaluate his own behavior,-- *

J. Um-hum.

E. you know,--as a senior officer,--you know. So, a lot of those kinds of things happened,--you know,--the more I talked about how--you know--the people in ... in the room felt about some of the things that were being said,--you know. I found it very beneficial for myself as well.

J. What did you learn? What kinds of things?

E. About communication and how important it is to listen to people and give them an opportunity to speak,--you know,--and not just classify everybody as one group of--you know;--negative--you know--classification of ...--you know,--stereotyping people, X really. And, Oh, these groups can never learn, and--you know--these guys will never be able ... They don't get it,--you know. They did get it. By the time the day was over, they did get it.

It was a very good experience.

J. And did you develop the program that you were ...

E. Yeah.

J. Yeah?

E. Yeah. I still have it.

J. You do?

E. Yeah! Yeah!

J. I'd love to see a copy of that. Yeah.

E. I developed that. And then I developed another program for NOW, teaching women about--you know,--what is a non-traditional job? How do I get into one,--you know,--all that kind of stuff, with a video.

J. And you did that for NOW, New York City?

E. I did that for ... No, excuse me. It wasn't for NOW. It was for Cornell, the UCLEA?

J. Oh, yeah.

E. What is that: The United College Labor Education Association (University College Labor Education Association). They asked me to come up and do a program women in non-trad-- ??

J. Now, who ... who was the audience?

E. The Cornell Women Trade Union ... Trade ... Some of them were trade union women. Some were looking for car-- ... career changes, to go into--you know-- non-traditional fields, or whatever.

J. So they were younger women?

E. Yes.

J. And they publicized this program, that that was the topic?

E. Yes. Yeah.

J. That's good, UCLEA. Yeah.

E. Yeah. It was a whole lot of fun to do.

J. And about how many women were there?

E. About thirty.

J. Um-hum.

E. And we were there for a whole week.

J. Wow!

E. Yeah. It was a lot of fun.

J. That's good.

E. We developed some ... some exercises that they had to do. You know,--you can ... If ... If you take a pipe and you have to thread it in order to put another pipe on top of it,

J. Um-hum. Um-hum.

E. how do you do it. Well, there's a pipe threading tool,-- you know.

J. Oh.

E. because I remember going to a plumber's meeting once, and they challenged me by saying, "Well, here's a pipe. Do you think you know how to thread this thing?" And all these big Union goons,--you know,--cigar smoking guys,--you know,--that kind of thing. And I said, "No. I don't think I know how to thread it unless you show me that there's a tool that you use to thread it,"--you know. And so, they became somewhat embarrassed and said, "Well, there is a pipe threading tool, but--you know--it's not here right now. I said, "Well, I don't think anybody can thread this pipe unless you've got the tool." *

J. (laughs)

E. So I set up some pullies and things to show them how ...

Lifting things are heavy. But if you use pullies, you can lift things,--you know,--and that kind of thing. And we talked about transferring skills. If you've been a homemaker and used a sewing machine,

J. Um-hum.

E. you can use a machine in a factory,--you know. You're transferring some of your abilities and skills over. It's exciting! ?? doing it.

J. Did you have a little ceremony at the end?

E. Well, the UCLEA does like a graduation exercise,--you know;--that kind of thing. So that's where the ...

J. So that was up in Ithaca?

E. Yeah. Um-hum.

J. That's great.

E. It was a good program. I really enjoyed it.

J. So anything else about AUD that you ...

E. Gee, I spoke at se--at hearings,--sexual harrassment hearings for ...

J. What about affirmative action? Were you dealing with that at all?

E. Not really. No. In what sense ??

J. Well, just because there's always debate now. And there have been hearings about ...

E. Yeah. No. This was prior to the new push on,--you know--ending affirmative action.

J. Getting rid of it. Yeah.

E. Affirmative action had been there, and they were really just ... just kind of accepting the fact that--you know--we would enforce it.

J. Um-hum.

E. But there was no challenge to it,

J. Okay.

E. while I was there. I left in '93.

J. So, anything else that stands out in your mind as really one of the high points?

E. Well, we did another TV show, and ?? I know it was while I was at AUD. ?? Oh, it was about sexual harassment. It was called, "Dangerous Propositions." It was a Lifetime Channel show. That was kind of the highlight,

J. Uh-huh.

E. to get back in a truck,--you know. I hadn't been in a truck for a while, and to do a little driving and to answer a lot of the questions about sexual harassment;--what I had experienced and ...

J. Uh-huh.

E. And the first time I ever spoke about sexual harassment was after I got employed with AUD and I was asked to speak at a ... at a meeting,--a Solidarity meeting. And I ??

J. Solidarity Network, New York City?

E. Yes. Yes.

J. Okay.

E. And I opened up about ... I mean,--one of the very first things I said was "I don't know if I can really speak about sexual harassment. I've never been raped." And then the more I talked, the more I realized that every day on the job I was experiencing sexual harassment, but I never called it that.

J. "Cause it just seemed like the environment that you swam in.

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E. To me, it was survival.

J. Right. Right.

E. It was every day survival, because it wasn't just at work. It was at the supermarket, and it was at the library, and it was ...--you know.

J. Yeah.

E. You know,--it was wherever you went, if you were a woman. It was on my jobs before I had gotten--you know--into AUD,--you know. And I just never realized what I had been fighting,--you know--all those years,

J. Yeah.

E. until I started to speak about it. And then I really got very excited about the whole topic and was really able to identify ... This movie, "Dangerous Propositions," I've got to show it to you 'cause it was dynamic. For me to tell you everything that was in it,--you know--

J. Yeah.

E. is .. is ... It would be quite lengthy, but I'll get you a copy of it so that you might want to use ... And I ... I identified ...

J. We'll have it copied here.

E. Oh, you have it.

J. No. I said we will keep a copy ...

E. Okay, good. Good. And for me, it helped me identify how X I survived,--the things that I did,

J. Um-hum.

E. which were really very much direct action. X

J. Um-hum.

E. Do you want me to give you a for instance? ??

(21)

J. Okay.

E. Okay. When I would deliver freight, when I worked for the Airline, I would go to other airlines and deliver freight. X

J. Um-hum.

E. And there was a table that I would have to write my ... my papers on.

J. Um-hum.

E. Like, the receiver, which was always a guy, would take my papers and sign them off, and I'd leave. And the table had a glass top in many of these places. It's called a highboy.

J. Uh-huh.

E. And under the glass top were all these pornographic pictures. I mean,--disgusting pictures of women. And I would put my paperwork down, and as he would go to sign it, I'd move it, exposing these pictures. And I'd say, "Gee, are these members of your family? Is this your wife? Is this your daughter?"

J. Wow! You weren't afraid they were going to pop you?

E. Is this ... Nah. Is this your aunt?--you know. Because obviously, this is someone's daughter and someone's sister, and some ... perhaps, someone's mother. How proud you must be of your family?--you know. And they would get all shades of red and not know what to say or what to do. So, in a situation like that, I would make them uncomfortable and ??--you know? I was angry about what I saw, X

J. Yeah.

E. and knew it was inappropriate.

Side Two

E. All right. You get the ring. You get the necklace. Like I have a lot. I don't have a lot. But anyway, you'll see that in the movie.

J. Okay. Well, let's ... Yeah. So another example?

(27)

E. Another example. There ... Tom. There was this guy named Tom. I didn't know his name at the time.

J. Um-hum. Um-hum.

E. But every time he would look at me or another woman at work, he would lick his lips in this disgusting manner. I mean, - just disgusting. And one day I said to him, "Why do you do that?" And he said, "Well, isn't that what you like?" And I said, "No. It's not what we like. This is what we like." And I reached out my hand and I said "My name's Eileen,"--you know. "I work here,"--you know. "What's your name?" And he told me his name. And then I said, "Well, what do you do here? I do work ..." I mean,--he really thought that this ...

J. That he was giving you ... paying you the highest compliment.

E. Absolutely.

J. Yeah.

E. He thought that this was what we wanted to see. This was what we wanted to ... It was grotesque. It was awful. So I would do those kinds of things. If a woman complained ... 'cause I was very active in the Union. If a woman complained to me,--even a shop steward,--a lower level person,--if they complained to me that somebody harassed them, or said something wrong, or whatever, I would get a clipboard and I would pretend I was investigating for the Union. And I would go over to the guy and I'd say, "Listen! Mary told me that last Thursday you said something to her." "Oh, no, no, no. She doesn't know what she's talking about." "Well, okay. Look. I have to make a report." This is what I used to tell them. "I have to make a report. I have to give it to the Union. Now, part of this report can include me going to your house and speaking to your wife and interviewing your other co-workers and every--. So if this ..." "no!" By that time, they'd be saying, "What? What are you talking about?"--you know. "No. I won't do it again. Mary'll be fine,"--you know. "I ..."--you know.

J. Yeah.

E. So a lot of it was bullshit.

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J. Yeah.

E. A lot of it was just acting as a ...

J. ??

E. Yeah,--you know,--acting as if I knew what I was doing. (laughs) And I really didn't. I had no idea whether these things would work or not.

J. Speaking about acting as if you knew what you were doing, you told me, in your last interview, that you were, for a short term, the President of NOW in Nassau County.

E. Um-hum.

J. And we really didn't talk about that. But I was interested in what you learned and what you did, and what that experience was like for you.

E. It was a group called South Nassau NOW. X

J. Um-hum.

E. It wasn't Nassau NOW or NOW New York or any biggy, biggy group. It was a very small group of non-traditional women and women who were looking to break into the male jobs.

J. Um-hum.

E. That was our motivation. We knew that if we got the name NOW behind us, it would help us a lot.

J. Um-hum. Um-hum.

E. There was a tremendous fight to get a charter,--tremendous fight. We had to go to Albany. NOW didn't want any part of it. Unfortunately, for a period of time, NOW was kind of an elitist group,--you know,--

J. Um-hum. Yeah.

E. a lot of women--you know--that didn't share ...

J. I was glad to see so many blue collar awards recently ??

(Now NYC's Susan B. Anthony Awards Ceremony).

E. Right. Right,--didn't share--you know--the same ideas that we had about this being a place for women to get work, and to get blue collar jobs and good jobs.

J. Um-hum.

E. But we finally convinced NOW that we needed this chapter, and they put our ... their name behind us. And we used that as a networking tool to get women jobs.

J. Um-hum.

E. And one of the things that we did was getting these the first thirteen women on Long Island into construction. So what I learned from that was that there was a tremendous need for women to get better jobs and to do well. And a lot we had to learn. I mean,--we uncovered, through NOW, that a woman could not own her own home improvement business. It had to be owned fifty-one percent, by a man. X

J. Oh my God!

E. Nassau County law! That was a Nassau County rule, ordinance, law, - whatever it was, at the time. But this group--you know--allowed women to get together that wanted to make a change and wanted to do things differently. It only lasted about two years, I would say, the formal group.

J. 'Cause you all got jobs. And then you didn't have time to make it ...

E. 'Cause we got jobs Exactly. Exactly. That was kind of--you know--the thing that we wanted. But yet it became our demise,--you know--for the group?

J. Yeah. Um-hum. Yeah.

E. I think there's still a need for it. The charter, I think, has expired, so I don't know that we could do that.

J. Um-hum. But still, it shows what needs to be done ??

E. Absolutely. And as you said, NOW is ... is welcoming--you

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know--labor people

J. Um-hum. Yeah. Um-hum.

E. and blue collar people now because they see they have to reach out to everybody. We had women of color. We had African-American women. We had Native-American women, Hispanic women ...

J. How did you all get together in the first place?

E. That's a very good question. What were we doing? A lot of us were going to this group called Women's Liberation Center? Did you ever hear of that on Long Island? We were doing some consciousness raising groups,

J. Um-hum.

E. and we were very conscious of the fact that we needed jobs.

J. (laughs) Good paying jobs.

E. So that's really where a lot of us started. There was a group called the Women's Liberation Center, and I was the coordinator and one of the ... We didn't have presidents. We had coordinators and co-coordinators of this group, because we were very democratic.

"Everybody can

J. Um-hum. Right. ^?? be a leader."

E. Yes. And that's where it came from, just meeting with women and sharing our--you know,--our consciousness-raising. I don't know if you've ever ... Have you ever been to ...

J. Yes, sure. Oh God, yes!

E. That's where it started.

J. I had my consciousness raised. (laughs)

E. Yeah. I mean,--that was ... that was great. I remember my first experience with that. It's got to be thirty years ago, and it was just wonderful. And to speak to women about these topics? We never go together and talk about--you know,--talked about these things before,

J. Um-hum.

E. and how it affected us as women. Everything from make-up to sex. I mean,--it was just ... You know,--everything, we talked about. So it came from that group. That group is no longer ...

J. The whole peeling of barriers you think are holding you back, and like they're not really there. You have to break on through.

E. Fear

J. Fear ...

E. was a major topic. I think we talked about fear for months ... months. It wasn't just a one night--you know--topic. We talked about it and talked about it for a long time. So there was a need.

J. Um-hum.

E. And we just started networking on that level, and then decided that we needed to get--you know--a powerful name behind us.

J. And so then you ... you started learning about the law, and you got NOW behind you? And did they advance any resources to help you do the work, too?

E. No. We were pretty much on our own.

J. Uh-huh.

E. As I say, there was reluctance to really do this whole thing. I don't even remember what year it was, at this point. It had to be early '70s, maybe, or mid-'70s?

J. Um-hum.

E. So, no. I don't think that we knew that we could tap off them for resources or really how to do it.

J. Um-hum.

E. We were so green.

J. Yeah.

E. We didn't know what to do.

J. Um-hum.

E. We just knew we wanted jobs. And we knew that we had been speaking to Unions and companies for years and nothing was coming, until the day we shut down a job site. That's when we got the work ???. That's when it all happened. *

J. So now, I'd like you to speak about leaving AUD, you ... due to finances. Right? And ...

E. Well, there were a few reasons.

J. Okay.

E. I mean,--AUD was having a lot of financial problems.

J. Um-hum.

E. It was all funded, and I ... I really felt very guilty for even taking the small salary I was taking, because it was not in a good financial state. One of the things I was doing was, I was giving training classes for this labor organization, Local 295 of the Teamsters.

J. Um-hum.

E. And the fellow in charge at the time, liked my style and thought I could ??

J. Uh-huh. Now, who was this fellow?

E. This was Mike ??

J. Okay. So the Deputy Trustee, Mike Maroney.

E. Right. Yeah. He spoke

J. And this is (Local) 295, International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

E. ... Teamsters. Right. Susan sent me in to do training

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and education for them. And while I was there, Mike, ---you know, --
-I got to meet Mike.

J. Um-hum. Um-hum.

E. And he knew my background as a truck driver. He thought I might be able to--you know--give something to the membership as far as representing them and--you know--doing a good job for them. So he went to Susan and asked Susan if--you know--it would be all right

J. To steal you away. Yeah.

E. for him to offer me a job. And she said no. (laughs)

J. Um-hum.

E. Then, a couple of weeks later, she came to me and she said,--you know,--"Mike is asking for you. Would you like to do that?" I said, "Well, first of all, this is going to end,"--you know.

J. Um-hum.

E. And "Yes. Can I help the workers? "Cause if I can help the workers, I want to go."

J. Now it's interesting, because 295 is the ... the people who deal with air freight,

E. Um-hum.

J. and it's basically eighty percent is the Airborne Company,

E. Right. Right.

J. and it's mostly male, I would say. Right? Would you say ... What's the percentage?

E. Yeah. Out of about twenty-seven hundred members, we have eighty-eight women.

J. Oh, wow!

E. So if you can do that math, you know whatever that

percentage ...

J. And do ... do the women drive, or ...

E. Yes. For the most part, they're drivers, warehouse people, but mostly drivers.

J. Um-hum.

E. The Airborne people are van drivers. There's about sixty of those from Airborne. And the other twenty-eight or so are in the outside mom and pop shops that we represent at JFK Airport. One or two ... There's a tractor trailer driver,--you know. One is a tractor/trailer driver, and the others do some warehouse work;--

J. Uh-huh.

E. that kind of thing..

J. So is this a good paying job or ...

E. Yes. For me or these women?

J. No, for these women?

E. For these women? Yeah. Well, the Airborne people start off part-time, \$28.00 an hour. But most of the women in the airport start at seventeen, eighteen dollars an hour.

J. Um-hum.

E. So yeah. Yeah. The contracts there are very good. Not so with Airborne. But you can get .. You can work your way up in seven years to \$18.00 an hour at Airborne.

J. So, now, what's this experience been like? What are your job responsibilities? Was your title Business Representative?

E. Business Agent.

J. Business Agent.

E. I started off as a Business Agent, and my responsibility really was to do training and education. But there was such a need

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... There was one Business Agent representing them and twenty .. and twenty-six hundred members, with grievance handling. And it was just impossible to do.

J. And was there a long history of people feeling that they couldn't put forward grievances? Wasn't there ...

E. There's a lot of intimidation;--

J. Um-hum.

E. a lot of attitudes with the old administration, you're lucky you have a job. Leave me alone,--you know.

J. Um-hum.

E. But if ... if ...

J. It's hard to think of Anthony Calagna doing anything about grievances.

E. Yes. They didn't do anything about grievances. They didn't handle anything, unless you were one of their fair haired boys.

J. Yeah.

E. If you were one of their fair haired boys, ...

J. Then you probably didn't have too many grievances.

E. You didn't have to

J. right? Yeah.

E. because they would just go in and say, "We're going to shut you down or kill you unless you ..."--you know. "Stop doing what you're doing," whatever it might have been. They had total control of ...

J. Um-hum.

E. of the employers,--you know,--for years and years and years. But just towards the end, before we got in, it was payback time for the employers, and you saw the contracts get worse and

worse. So this hold that they had on the companies, financially, when the companies were doing well, started to decrease.

J. Um-hum.

E. And instead of just giving up--you know--on certain ... certain contracts, they started giving up on a lot of contracts and allowed concessions, part-timers and that kind of thing. So you started to see that ...

J. And conditions deteriorating,--working conditions.

E. Yes. Yes, a lot of that happened.

J. So what are ... What are some of the ways that you've been turning that around in the Local? What's been ... What's our experience with ...

E. Yeah. I'm there now two and a half years.

J. Um-hum.

E. Mike Maroney and Mark Reader were the two people who were there when I got hired;--Mike hired me. They're gone.

J. Um-hum...

W. Max Bloom was another ?? Max Bloom was another Business Agent that they brought in right after me, and he was originally Airborne management, so ...

J. Um-hum.

E. Unfortunately, the government had no idea of how to run a labor organization.

J. Yeah.

E. I mean,--for them to hire a management person was such a slap in the peoples' face. The members hated Mark and Mike and now Max,--hated them,--and they saw me as their only salvation 'cause I understood them. I understood what they were going through, and how important their no lunches were,--and how important a real grievance was,--and--you know--all of this kind of stuff.

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J. Um-hum.

E. So there was a system in play that Mike had set up for grievance handling.

J. Um-hum. Um-hum.

E. But Mark couldn't do it because he was the only person. So then my duties started to increase, and I started getting involved. But the more I got involved and the more the people liked me, Mike would move me around from area to area so that I didn't really get any continuity with the people.

J. Um-hum.

E. He saw me as a big threat. I challenged the things he did and the things he said from the get go and I think, from about two weeks after I was hired, he started to get me fired;--he tried to get me fired,

J. Um-hum.

E. because I confronted him on things. Not knowing about labor relations and contract negotiations, he would sit with the company, and the company would say things to him like we need to change this, or we need to change that. And he would just sign off on changing the collective bargaining agreement without understanding the impact on the members. And the members would be outraged, and come to meetings and scream and yell that it was crazy. And he would confront me and say, "What's our position?" And I would say, "My position is the same as theirs. What you're doing is wrong." And this lasted a long time. I mean,--he was there,--see, I came in in '92;--he was there till the end of '93? I would say at least .. No, the end of '94. I came in in '93. He was there till the end of '94.

J. Yeah, May.

E. Is that when it was? Okay.

J. Yeah, something like that.

E. I can't even remember. I know he got paid till the end of the year though.

J. Um. Um.

E. He was making incredible money. The money was just insane, what ... what was happening . So it went from crooks taking money from these members to white collar crime, --you know, --

J. Yeah. Yeah.

E. a \$250,000.00 a year salary for Puccio, \$175,000.00 a year salary for Mike Maroney, eighty thousand for Mark, --you know, --and it just became insane. And there was a lot of pressure. I know I helped educate the membership to put the right amount of pressure ...; -to go to Puccio and say, We can't ... We can't put up with this any more. So he started to watch what Mike was doing

J. Um-hum.

E. and he realized that there was a problem. So they hired a new Deputy Trustee named Micky Tobin, --

J. Uh-huh.

E. Michael Tobin. He's been there a little over a year. He's fantastic! In fact, I found out he was supposed to come in originally, but he was busy. *

J. Uh-huh.

E. So things have changed now. We have two Business Agents from the rank and file, which is wonderful. They're doing wonderful work.

J. --That's good. Uh-huh. You have a steward system? I know they talked about having elections for steward?

E. We do. We're ju-- ... By the end of this month we'll be finished with our shop steward selections. They don't call it elections,

J. Okay.

E. because the Trustee has the right to remove anybody ---- you know, --

J. 'Cause, yeah, --I understand. Um-hum.

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E. if they show signs of being corrupt or are connected with organized crime. So that'll be finished by the end of this month. All the shop stewards are in place, and the elections are just being finished now.

J. And they have training for stewards?

E. Yes.

J. And are you involved in that?

E. Yes.

J. Uh-huh.

E. In fact, I took on so much of the Business Agent work, with grievance handling and arbitration and the contract negotiations;--we had ninety-three contracts to negotiate by the end of 1994;--it was insane,--that I was doing a lot of that. And a lot of the training and education stopped for about a year, a year and a half. We're just gearing that up now.

J. Um-hum.

E. We just started in November with monthly training and education meetings for the entire membership,

J. Um-hum.

E. and monthly for the steward body, specifically.

J. Do you see a ... a turn around? Are you starting to see

E. Absolutely.

J. Uh-huh.

E. There's a big change in the membership. They respect what we're doing now. They're thrilled that Mike and Mark are gone. They know ... we've made a commitment that we will do no contract changing unless it's ratified by the membership,--you know.

J. Um-hum.

E. All of that is happening. The ... The big picture,--the big political picture is not fixed, because they blame the General President, Ron Cary, for the position they're in.

J. Um-hum.

E. When this was in Trusteeship,--the International Trusteeship,--Ron put in somebody that the government felt was corrupt,--

J. Genovese.

E. Right,--and the government came in and took it over. So they blame Ron for us being under a government Trusteeship.

J. And then he was later indicted.

R. Right. He's no longer allowed to even be a Trustee,

J. Yeah. Yeah. Um-hum.

E. in any affiliation whatsoever,--Bill Genovese. And now what the members don't understand is he can't fix it. You know,-- maybe he was responsible for ... It was going into government Trusteeship anyway. ??

J. Yeah.

E. Definitely.

J. It was a lousy choice, but ...

E. Yes, a very bad choice. He's made some of those bad choices.

J. ?? The business with ??

E. Yeah. Yeah.

J. Yeah.

E. He's still better than ?..-you know.

J. For sure.

?E. So our ... our concern, at this point, is that a lot of people in the Local will be supporters of Hoffa.

J. Um-hum.

E. And certainly a move for Hoffa is a vote for the mob. There's no ... I don't care what you call it or what you say it is,--you know,-it's going backward. So we're working on that right now,

J. Um-hum.

E. to try and do something. And we're not sure what to do

J. Um-hum.

E. to fix that. But we're very concerned about that right now.

J. So what's your experience been from the point of view of being a woman in there?

E. It's been very frustrating., from the point of view of being a woman. My ... My main goal,--one of my main ... Well, my main goal is training and education of the membership, -- the entire membership. But the other main goal that I have is getting another woman to take my place when I leave. And I won't be here forever,--you know. This is a Trusteeship and it's eventually going to end, and the membership will get back their Local. There needs to be at least one woman that will do the work that I'm doing, and feels as though--you know-she can. So what I've been doing

J. Is trying to cultivate leadership?

E. Yeah, I mean--all the time. I'm sending them out personal letters about coming and getting involved. The International put * on a women's ... a women's conference last year. It was fantastic. I had nine women there.

J. Uh-huh.

E. I'm thrilled about that.

J. Wow.

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E. Unfortunately they then went ... kind of went back,--you know--to work,

J. Yeah.

E. and back out of--you know--coming to the meetings, and getting involved, and doing all that. The ... So now Cornell is offering training and education, and I'm setting up a scholarship for them to come in and ... and get involved in that. I'll ... We'll pay for it, one way or the other,

J. Um-hum.

E. either through my own scholarship or the Local; -- however it has to be done. If I can identify a woman, two women, that want to go further and get these leadership skills,--you know--this is what we need to do.

J. Um-hum. That's great.

E. Yeah. Yeah. Well, it has to happen because to leave here without--you know,--a women's voice involved in negotiations and ... and--you know--in arbitrations and all this kind of stuff, would be a travesty. It has to ...

J. Why do you think it has to be a woman? Why do you think there has to be ...

E. Well, there have to be men. But there has to be at least one woman,

J. Right.

E. because there are there are issues that are important to women that get negated when the guys get together and discuss conscious ...

J. Um-hum. Even though there's only eight of them, still

E. Yes. Absolutely,

J. Um-hum.

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E. because most women's issues are workers issues. They're not just women's issues.

J. Right. Yeah, right.

E. But they're the items that the men leave out.

J. Um-hum.

E. You have the day care issues and ... and

J. Health and safety ...

E. Of course, the health and safety! Absolutely. They just leave that out. We don't do any of that, --you know?

J. Um-hum.

E. One of the things ... Yeah. One of the things that I will be starting to do too, soon, because we're bringing on another Business Agent, I'll be released completely to do the training and education, and setting up all the committees and ... and doing the newsletter. That's going to be my role, within the next couple of weeks,

J. Um-hum.

E. that's changing. We're bringing on a new guy, probably in two weeks, from the rank and file.

J. So you're happy about that.

E. Oh, thrilled.

J. Yeah.

E. I'm thrilled. I won't be out of the day to day hands on with the people because I'll still be involved, because it's just my nature to get involved. I won't be--you know--so much handling the day to day grievances, but I'll be involved in policy making and the training and education, which is the key. And I'll have that ??

J. Now, with the training and education, you set up the

program?

E. Um-hum. Um-hum.

J. And you do it in conjunction with other people, like ...

E. Well, yeah. The International will come in. The Department of Labor will come in,

J. Um-hum.

E. and do--you know,--some ... This is this is what's so unique about it. When Mike was there, the only thing we could train and educate about was handl-- ... grievance handling.

J. Um-hum.

E. That's all he would allow. He wouldn't allow any union democracy issues, any leadership issues. Now we're starting to get into all of that;

M. Um-hum.

E. developing new leadership techniques,--you know, and working with the International, and bringing them in and getting them involved in some of the things that are going on: problem solving, direct action,--you know,--what you can do at the job,

J. Um-hum.

E. which is limited. In our particular Airborne it is because--you know--their ... the job is so strict,--you know,--that there's very little time and access to really ... because you go in, you get your freight, and you leave,--you know.

J. Um-hum. Yeah.

E. So there's very little time to do a lot of direct action. So it's a very challenging thing that we're ... that we're developing now. We're developing a lot of .. a lot of good hands on tactics.

J. So do you ... Have you had time to develop all your materials for this training, or are you still working on it?

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E. I'm still working on developing a lot of it. You know,-- I've had the opportunity to use a lot from AUD,--the classes that Susan and I put on at AUD every week.

J. Um-hum.

E. We did leadership training, sexual harrasment, how to run--you know--for a Union office,--you know;--what's your Union,--what's your structure,--you know,--the bylaws ...

J. Terrific programs.

E. all of that. Yeah. Yeah. I learned a lot of that through Susan.

J. Um-hum.

E. I meant ... I left that out. With my ... my advantage of being at AUD

J. Um-hum.

E. was doing the training and education. I got it from her. I really did. You know,--and just developing what I know and how I've done it.

J. Um-hum.

E. And what we do now ... We're doing a training program on Saturday for Local 966 and 819. And Susan will do kind of the lecturing part,

J. Um-hum.

E. and I do the hands on. I break them up into groups,

J. Uh-huh.

E. and they have to solve problems and report back. And,--you know--I'm very good with the touchy feely part,--you know,--you know.

J. Uh-huh. So what characteristics do you look for in the women that you're trying to develop?

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E. The ability and the desire to make a change. The ability to learn,--you know. A lot of women, you'll hear them say, over and over again, I'm not ready for this. I can't do this,--you know. And I tell them, "Do you think these guys know what they're doing when they first come in? (laughs) They pretend they know what they're doing. They don't know what they're doing. Do you think I knew what I was doing when I first came in. You're going to learn with the job." I need to see that they're willing to learn. X

J. Um-hum.

E. And certainly they're capable of learning, but I want to see that they're--you know--that they're willing to learn and learning to take a challenge,--you know. ??

J. So how do you .. How do you feel that you've changed in ... since the last time we talked, which was quite a few years ago, ...

E. Oh boy! I've done a lot of growing up.

J. out at the airport?

E. Yeah, a lot of learning. My experience at Pan-Am was such an incredible learning experience for me, and it took me, like, through the first third of the alphabet,--you know--with learning about labor relations, and all that kind of stuff,--and the National Labor Relations Board and all that kind of stuff,--and dealing with people ... I mean,--I've been a people person all along, so it was just putting it in the right context,--you know. But now, with this ... with this particular group, I've learned even more about--you know--also the National Labor Relations Board and all those kinds of ...--you know,--contract issues ... I didn't do contract negotiations, except one contract, when I was with the TWU.

J. Yeah. And you've really been thrown into them.

E. Yes.

J. And was ... was it terrifying at first?

E. Yes, very frightening;--very frightening ??

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J. Do you have the feeling of, Oh my God, I'm going to ... like, these people will be short changed, 'cause they should have--you know,--somebody else, not me all alone?

E. That was my first reaction.

J. Uh-huh.

E. However, I knew I was better than they ever had before.

J. Okay.

E. I knew I was better than they had ever ... And I would say that to myself.

J. Um-hum.

E. I know I'm going to do the best I can, and I know I'm better than anyone they've had before. Maybe I'm not as good as someone they'lll have in the future.

J. Um-hum.

E. But I know today, I know I'm better than anyone they've had before.

J. And how did you find it, the experience of negotiating?

E. Very challenging. And it was an incredible learning experience. And there were some mistakes I made. You know,--there were mistakes I made, and I told the people: "Listen, I don't know everything about it, but I'm going to give you the best representation I possibly can. And what I don't know, I'm going to find out." And they appreciated that honesty.

J. Um-hum.

E. They worked with me. I always developed a committee of people to negotiate with. When Mike was there, he wasn't allowed to involve the steward,--the shop steward or any of the people.

J. Um-hum.

E. But as soon as he left, that's the way it ran.

J. Yeah. Um-hum.

E. And more often than not, the people guided me,--you know. And I knew what was right in my gut,--you know,--to fight for and what not to fight for, and not to be so--if I can say--chicken shitty,--you know.

J. Yeah. Yeah.

E. You know,--there's little stuff that you have to let go of.

J. Um-hum.

E. But the bigger picture became much clearer to me. But I ... I was very confident that they were getting better than they had ever had before;--very confident of that.

J. So it's been a real ...

E. But exhausting,

J. Exhausting.

E. because it's been ... And I find this all the time. It's not just getting a job as a union representative and fighting the employer. It's fighting within.

J. Um-hum.

E. It's trying constantly to educate people about union democracy: people that you're working with,--people that are your comrades in this struggle,--

J. Um-hum. Yeah. Right. Yeah.

E. that don't get it. They just don't seem to understand it,--you know. And getting my strength from the membership,.

J. Um-hum.

E. when I know I've done something right and something good, and they feel good about it. And then, I see them doing it,--you know.

J. Um-hum. Yeah.

E. That's ... that's so rewarding.

J. Now, what about a person like ... Do you have time to replenish yourself anywhere ...

E. Well, I was re-married in 1992,

J. Uh-huh.

E. so I'm a fairly new newly-wed,--you know.

J. Um-hum.

E. But my kids are mostly grown,

J. Uh-huh.

E. so it's just ... I ... I have to ... except during contract negotiations. I mean,--I ... there was no personal life.

J. Um-hum.

E. It was like a year of--you know--insanity. But now that that's calmed down quite a bit, I ... take the time I need to keep myself sane,

J. Um-hum.

E. and keep the people that support me--you know--close,--you know.

J. Um-hum.

E. And go to them when I'm falling apart and feel so stressed out that I can't work any more. From the time I came on board in September of '93, I think I took a half a week one time and another week another time. I took the entire month of November off in 1995. I needed time ... All my contracts were done

J. Um-hum.

E. and I said, That's it! I'm out of here for a month. I have never done anything like that before.

J. Um-hum.

E. And I needed it. I needed it for my sanity. And it really helped me--

J. Um-hum.

E. you know,--to regenerate myself all over again.

J. ??

E. So I do ... Now, I do take the time that I need to take.

J. So what about plans for the future?

E. Well, this training and education,--

J. Um-hum.

E. you know--is really--you know--taking off, and ... and I'm doing very well with it. And I see my direction, and I'm pleased about that. I see myself in this Local for maybe another two years, and then moving on to another Local and helping people there.

J. Um-hum.

E. I've established great credibility with the Teamsters as a whole.

J. Uh-huh.

E. My name is out there. They know me. They know that I do good work.

J. Um-hum.

E. And I've been asked to go to other Locals. But I just felt--you know,--it wasn't right to leave these people yet;--just not quite yet.

J. Um-hum. Yeah. They have further to go.

E. Yeah. So I see myself for about another two years here.

J. Um-hum.

E. I don't want to leave unless there's another woman ready. I really, really don't want to do that. So I'm working very hard on that.

J. Uh-huh. Um-hum.

E. And then, I'll move on, and I'll do it for another Local before I die.

J. What about Diana Kilmury?

E. Yeah, a great inspiration.

J. Have you had any opportunity to ...

E. Sure, through AUD,

J. Uh-huh.

E. and through the Women's Conference, and ... You know,-- she knows my work. We've spoken quite a bit. She knows the good things I'm doing with women. She's very excited about that. Her movie, by the way, is going to be on Sunday night.

J. What is it?

E. It's her life story.

J. Wow!

E. Yeah.

J. Is it on cable or network or ...

E. Oh gosh! Where did I just see it. I just saw it in Convoy Dispatch

J. Okay. Okay.

E. so it's--you know--you know,--read about that. She's going to be on Sunday night.

J. ??

E. Yeah. I admire--you know--the things that she's done and the position that she's taken ??

J. You have a real kinship with her.

E. Yes. Yes!

J. Wasn't she a truck driver?

E. Yes!

J. Yeah.

E. She's a tractor trailer driver,

J. Uh-huh.

E. going to Vancouver,--you know,--Canada. My family's from Canada. We spoke about that a lot. She knows about my background in trucking and ...--you know.

J. Uh-huh.

E. And I,--you know--I kind of see myself in her,--you know,-

J. Sure. Yeah.

E. where she is and what she's doing, and I think it's ... it's just great. And she's also now brought on board another woman from UPS

J. In what ...

E. to run on her slate for ...

J. Oh, great!

E. for a position ...

J. Do you know what Local or from where ??

E. She's from 804, right here in New York.

J. Yeah. Ron Cary's Local.

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E. Yes. I'm trying to remember her name. Lorali Anderson, I think, is her last name,--a woman of color.

J. Uh-huh.

E. And it's so exciting to see this happening now. And she's going to get elected.

J. Truck driver?

E. Yes. Yeah,

J. Um-hum.

E. a part-time truck driver at UPS.

J. Um-hum. Great.

E. Yeah, so that's exciting. You'll ... You'll be hearing a lot about Lorali ??

J. Uh-huh. So ... And what ... what do you have to say about the question of affirmative action, and any--you know,--any thoughts about where women are at, in terms of working women's issues now in this God awful era we're in?

E. Well, it's devastating to think that it's going to be sabotaged and destroyed and cut apart and ... And,--you know--people are talking about it like it's yesterday's lunch already,--you know. *

J. Um-hum.

E. It's ... It's frightening because women wouldn't be where they were unless there was affirmative action. *

J. Um-hum.

E. Whatever I can do--you know--to keep it alive and well,--you know,--I certainly--you know--will try to do. I think we have to educate our people about--you know--the big ... the capital P, the politics, and who's on what position and what side, and just show them--you know--that we have to keep this thing going. It's ... It's just so critical for, not just for women, I think for everybody, to keep--you know,--to keep ... to keep the balance of *

work where the balance of work should be. And we certainly don't have the balance that we need yet, but it was certainly headed in the right direction. It gave women an opportunity to see what they were capable of doing,--you know,--once they were given the opportunity to do it. +

J. Um-hum.

E. We can't We can't lose that. We've got to fight,--you know. Whatever it takes, we've got to maintain that. It's critical for ... +

J. So any other thoughts that you'd like to ... Did you ever envision yourself in this role, when you were starting out back ...

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